

## The Role of Participatory Management Practices on Employees' Performance in Water Service Providers in Kenya

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### Abstract

The focus of this study was to examine the influence of participatory management on employees' performance in water service providers in Kenya. The study was inspired by worries on employees' performance in water service providers in Kenya. Despite the various participatory management initiatives adopted by the institutions to enhance employees' performance the performance remains unsatisfactory. The study embraced a descriptive research design. A sample of 206 employees was selected from five water service providers namely: Murang'a Water and Sanitation Company Limited, Murang'a South Water and Sanitation Company Limited, Gatanga Water and Sanitation Company Limited, Gatamathi Water and Sanitation Company Limited and Kahuti Water and Sanitation Company Limited. Simple random sampling method was applied in picking the respondents for the study. Self-administered questionnaires aided in collecting primary data and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. A pilot study was steered on data collection tool to pre-test it's validity prior to the main survey. Data reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0 was used to aid in coding, entry and analysis of data. Conclusions and recommendations based on the findings were finally drawn. **The study** concludes that participatory management through consultative management, quality circles, representative participation and delegation is vital and significantly affects performance of employees in water service providers in Kenya. The *study recommends water service providers* in Kenya to engage more in participatory management practices as it positively and significantly affects employees' performance.

**Keywords:** Participatory Management, Employees' Performance

**Introduction**

Globally, performance of employees remains as a treasured advantage to achieve output, efficiency and value in giving taste to performance (Gabcanova, 2011). In describing employees' performance indicators, Lee and Sukoco (2007) propose that performance of employees is a dynamic concept and separately every performance degree is important regardless of the parameters used to measure it. According to Hitt, Ireland, Camp and Sexton (2011) employees' performance is the building block of an association irrespective of its scope and the lone element converting resources into goods and services to offer a competitive advantage.

David (2014) asserts that employees' performance when accepted by others in a firm is regularly compensated by monetary plus other paybacks. As numerous organizations cope with encounters to entice, holding and control the greatest faculty, composed of developing issues as regards to participatory management and performance of employees it's important that directors and executives use a variety of participatory approaches to realize employees' performance (Kombo & Oloko, 2014). Greenfield (2004) asserts that employees' performance is important in developing or developed countries as they depend on performance of public institutions which thrive from employees' performance.

**Employees' Performance**

According to Hitt (2011) insubstantial assets are further likely than noticeable resources to yield a competitive advantage to promote employees' performance. This was supported by David (2014) that a firms' employees' performance is influenced by its capacity to protect and use the intangible resources it generates which could be productivity, effectiveness and timeliness of output. Companies are forced to compete and act professionally to have capable employees to help them create competitive advantage in service delivery (Mwita, 2012). Jena and Rautaray (2010) argues that performance of employees is about the results obtained from employees after being allocated a certain task within the organizations. Frese(2011) contends that employees' performance indicators vary from effective service provision, high output, service value, and aptness of output. Yang (2008) on individual performance proclaims success by accomplishing the prospects of the shareholders.

In line with Memari (2013) employees' performance is greatly felt where reward of performance is practiced through participation. Productivity of employees is highly influenced by attendance, which is significant to guarantee justifiable performance to complete the obligatory responsibilities and evade administration conflict and reduced performance value of employees participation in the system (Ruokalanien, 2011).

According to Cardy (2014) performance is essentially the result of how input is well and timely transformed into output to demonstrate the ultimate efficiency in front of superiors, consumers, proprietors and co-workers. Tohidi (2010) argues that service effectiveness is the capacity of workforce to meet the estimated intentions or target. Timeliness of output is the characteristic of services with aptitude to gratify the quantified or inferred needs (Armstrong, 2010). Employees remain a central reserve therefore imperative to augment the participation of employees to the business and to understand determinants of employees' performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). According to Wall (2009) a human resource management relationship classic capturing functional concert processes such as effectiveness, output and timeliness is key. The study main focus was on non-financial measures of performance.

According to (Mutai, 2015) financial measures demonstrate biased opinions when scrutinizing employees' performance. Again, monetary dealings lead to a diminutive tenure positioning on the firm in regards to respect to the managing of human capital. This study adopted non-financial measures; service effectiveness, productivity and timeliness of output as measures of employees' performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

To clearly articulate vision twenty thirty (2030) GoK has acknowledged employees to be key in fast tracking the realization of the vision by improving access to clean and reliable water. To achieve this, the GoK) has implemented several reforms. They include the Water Act (2002) and the Water Act (2016). Despite these initiatives by the government water service providers in Kenya have faced employees' performance related challenges (Njanja & Njagi, 2013).

Mawia(2017) report on water service providers employees' performance indicated unsatisfactory performance with some almost failing to realize their mandate. Water services regulatory impact report (2018) specified that the administration might be excluding employees as associates of the firms in the decision building practice affecting their performance. The WSPs employees' performance indicates a downward trajectory an indication exposed by presence of ineffectiveness in revenue collection, poor quality service delivery indicated by less hours of water supply, low employees productivity indicated by low metering ratio, slow response rate exposed by unattended leaks and bursts (WASREB, 2017). Mutai (2015) and Orwar (2016) reveal that participatory management partake an affirmative and statistically substantial association with performance but have put little consideration to the role of participatory management on employees' performance. Most of these studies focused on cross- country and sector level. None of them focused on the water sector hence creating a contextual gap.

The above studies, attention have been given on participatory management through direct participation levels and less attention on indirect participation levels for example unions, joint committees and work councils in relation to employees' performance. This has created a knowledge gap dilemma in terms of knowledge advancement. The poor performance of employees of the water services providers had been mostly associated to misapplication of participatory approaches by the management of the water service providers. To address the gaps found in previous empirical analyses, this study investigated the effect of participatory management on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of participatory management on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To assess the effect of consultative management on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.
- To find out the influence of quality circles on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

- To determine the effect of representative participation on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.
- To examine the impact of delegation on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **Research Hypotheses**

The study proposed the following null hypotheses:

Ho<sub>1</sub>: Consultative management has no effect on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

Ho<sub>2</sub>: Quality circles have no influence on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya .

Ho<sub>3</sub>: Representative participation has no effect on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

Ho<sub>4</sub>: Delegation has no impact on employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

### **Literature Review /Theoretical Literature**

The study was anchored on the following theories: Role theory and Resource-Based View supported by two other models which include: Servqual Model and Collegial Model.

#### **The Role Theory**

Katz and Kahn (1966) are credited in articulating this theory which positions and indicate that the part personalities inhabit at work and in different place occurs relatively to additional individuals. Consequently, society partake prospects about the individuals' duty ones they honor these projections have capably performed the role. According to Hopkins (2011) the role theory is often used to scrutinize numerous characteristics of employees' performance. In any enactment of a role, performance becomes the creation of the form individuals for instance the operational framework or influence applied from high to low level or elsewhere in the organization and their own services, competencies and assertiveness (Devaro, 2008). In this study role theory is used in supporting participatory management which is the independent variable of the study. Employees must participate in a certain role for their performance to be felt and realized.

#### **Resource -Based View**

The perspective is initiated and primed through (Penrose, 1959) work. Barney (2007) postulates by arguing about institution improving reasonable plus by not solitary obtaining but likewise mounting, tapping together, and excellently positioning its bodily, social, and organizational possessions. In practice this always put in exceptional worth and challenges the opponents to imitate. Wernerfelt (2004) asserts that the perspective conditions create modest benefit originates within inward possessions a corporate preserve. Resource based view perspective speculates that corporations accomplish justifiable competitive benefit if by holding vital resources by commendably position these possessions in their selected arcades (Barney, 2007). The theory hypothesizes that an organizations' performance hang on its precise capitals and competences (Fotopoulos,Kafetzopoulos & Psomas, 2012). Imitable elements like productivity, effectiveness and timeliness of output are supported by this theory in this study. They are irreplaceable and therefore embedded with performance.

### **Servqual Model**

This model remains the work of Zeithaml, Valarie and Berry (1985) a team of academic researchers to measure quality of service and productivity in the service sector. The Servqual model assumes that an unwavering affiliation occurs between service aptness, service delivery and service effectiveness. According to Kumar (2009) the model is tagged and anchored on the following scopes: Tangibility which is physical facilities; apparatus, and attendance of personnel. Reliability encompassing capacity to realize service consistently and precisely. Responsiveness which involves the willingness towards assisting customers and staff in rendering timely services. Assurance which stands for employees courtesy plus the talent to motivate self-assurance and empathy comprising of considerate personalized attention the establishment delivers. Water service providers are expected to have facilities to make employees more productive for example employees who must be responsive, assuring and empathetic which are major components in servqual model

### ***The Collegial Model***

The theory is initiated through the work of (Davis, 1967). The term 'collegial' refers to a decision-making framework with structures designed to achieve specific goals in a predictable manner with working together cooperatively (Newsrom, 2011). This model comprises all those supports emphasizing that influence and policymaking ought to be collective or among all members of an organization. The autonomous component of official representation rests on the commitment shown by members to their population (Bush, 2007). This model symbolizes a crew notion. Additionally, its valuable in participatory situation, imaginative effort and substantial work liberty. It involves the organization shaping a sensation of partnership with workers where participation in decision making is a norm. The model supports this sturdy since participation is expected to be done either through indirect or direct initiatives for example consultative management, delegation or representative participation.

### **Empirical Literature**

Participatory management is outlined as a human right in the United Nations 1986 affirmation of right to progress which is based on a number of principles including consultative management, delegated power and its implication on job execution and the process of representation (Hamm, 2011). Employees participation is categorized as direct and indirect. Direct participation may take place through goal-setting plans by individuals, consultations, forming employees into quality circles, and delegating to others. Indirect involvement includes use of employee's selected agents or shop stewards (Noah, 2008). In this journal the participatory management initiatives are outlined and the results shown as captured by the study are: consultative management, quality circles, representative participation and delegation.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design adopted was a mixture of descriptive and explanatory designs. The combination is key since it delivers a precise and binding illustration of the variables pertaining or applicable providing the answers to the main research questions. According to Cooper and Schindler (2011) explanatory research focuses on why questions. In answering the why questions, the study involved developing causal effect explanations. The target population included 357 employees in the water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.

The study focused on the management and non-management employees. These employees included top management, middle level staff and lower cadre staff. The distribution of target population of the study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Target Population*

No	Cadre	Murang'a	Gatamathi	Gatanga	Murang'a S.	Kahuti	Total
1	Top Management	9	7	8	9	8	41
2	Middle Management	30	25	23	34	24	114
3	Lower level	50	32	33	52	35	202
	<b>Total</b>						<b>357</b>

Source: Murang'a County Human Resource Matrix Database (2019)

### **Sample Design and Size**

The research used randomly *selected sample size* since it's easy in application and taken as the accurate representation of the larger population. According to Kasomo (2006) a sample holds features existing in the target population and have independent possibilities of selection. Based on the random sampling formula, the study, picked a sample size of 206 as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2  
*Sample Size*

Cadre	Total population	Sample size	Percentage
Top level- Management employees	41	23	11.6
Middle- level management employees	114	65	32.1
Lower - level management employees	202	114	56.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>357</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Researcher (2019)

### **Instruments for Data Collection**

A combination of both primary and secondary data was employed in gathering data. A Semi-structured questionnaire aided in primary data collection. A documents evaluation list aided in collecting secondary data.

### **Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments**

Sekaran (2013) argues that validity denotes exactness and significance of interpretations made founded on results obtained. Suggestions were made and likened to the prevailing theories. Developed instruments was presented to the supervisors and the research specialists in the relevant school to assess the usability and aptness of the content, precision and tolerability of development of the instrument from a research perspective. The study terms operationalization was used to ensure construct validity.

Orodho (2009) argues that the level of the degree an instrument yields similar outcome repeatedly constitutes reliability. Reliability testing involved presenting to the employees of



Thika Water and Sanitation Company limited with twenty (20) selected respondents not included in the final sample size for piloting. to determine the internal consistency of the research instruments reliability computed using the versally accepted Cronbach Alpha coefficient beyond 0.7.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

Data was collected through the process of obtaining consent letter from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). The questionnaires distribution to respondents was done by the human resource management department.

### **Data Analysis and Presentation**

Questionnaires coding then feeding them to the SPSS computer software which summarizes data about a single variable was done as argued and analyzed. Frequencies, mean, standard deviation were used to analyze descriptive data. The inferential pointers aided on how to analyze qualitative figures with regression scrutiny being applied. The presentation of the findings was largely done using tables and figures to indicate frequency and percentage spread.

### **Research Findings and Discussions**

The subsequent extents covered under elementary data: response rate, respondents' gender, age, highest level of education qualification, current position held in the company and number of years in the current position.

#### **Response Rate**

This study considered 357 employees being targeted population with 206 employees captured as the sampled size grouped into the following strata: top management, middle management and lower level employees of the five (5) Murang'a County Water Service Providers. The total number of questionnaires which were administered to respondents in the three strata was 206. Overall, 163 respondents duly filled and returned the questionnaire representing a response rate of 79.13% deemed acceptable to conduct statistical analysis (Mugenda *et al.*, 2008). On the other hand, 43 questionnaires that were incomplete or not responded to were rejected. The busy schedules of the respondents accounted for the unreturned questionnaires. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007), a response rate of above 50% is justifiable for conducting statistical analysis while Ghauri (2005) asserts that return rates of above 50% are satisfactory. Based on the recommendations of the various

scholars, the 79.13% was appropriate to conduct statistical analysis and draw inferences of the study objectives. Figure 4.1 indicates the outcomes.

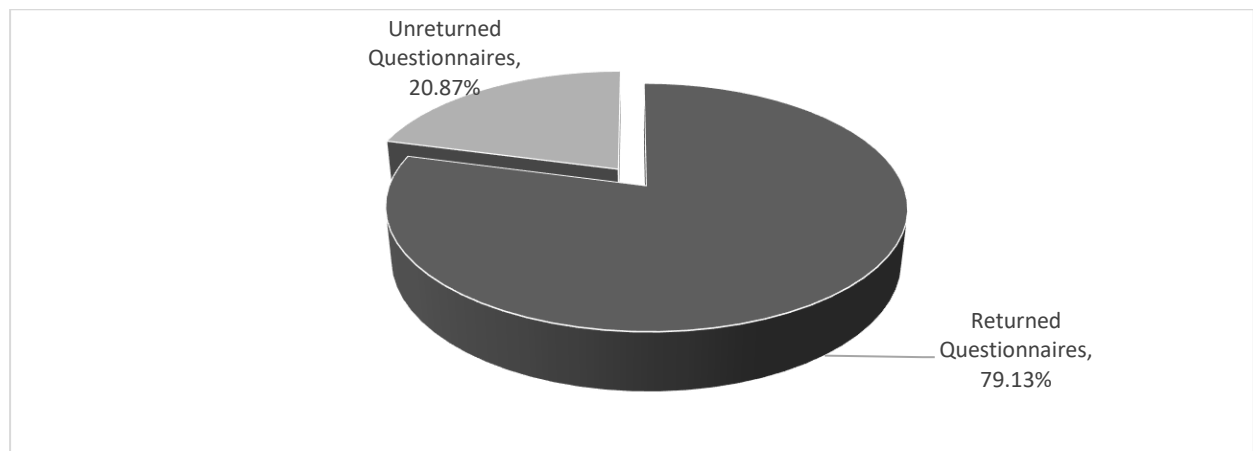


Figure 1. Response Rate  
Source: Research Data (2019)

### Age of the Respondents

The study sought to determine the age bracket of the respondents and therefore requested them to indicate their age category. From the findings as indicated in Figure 2, the largest proportion of the respondents represented by 44.2% were aged between 31 to 40 years followed by 22.7% who were aged between 25 to 30 years and further 20.2% who were aged between 41 to 50 years. Only 3.1% of the respondents were aged above 50 years.

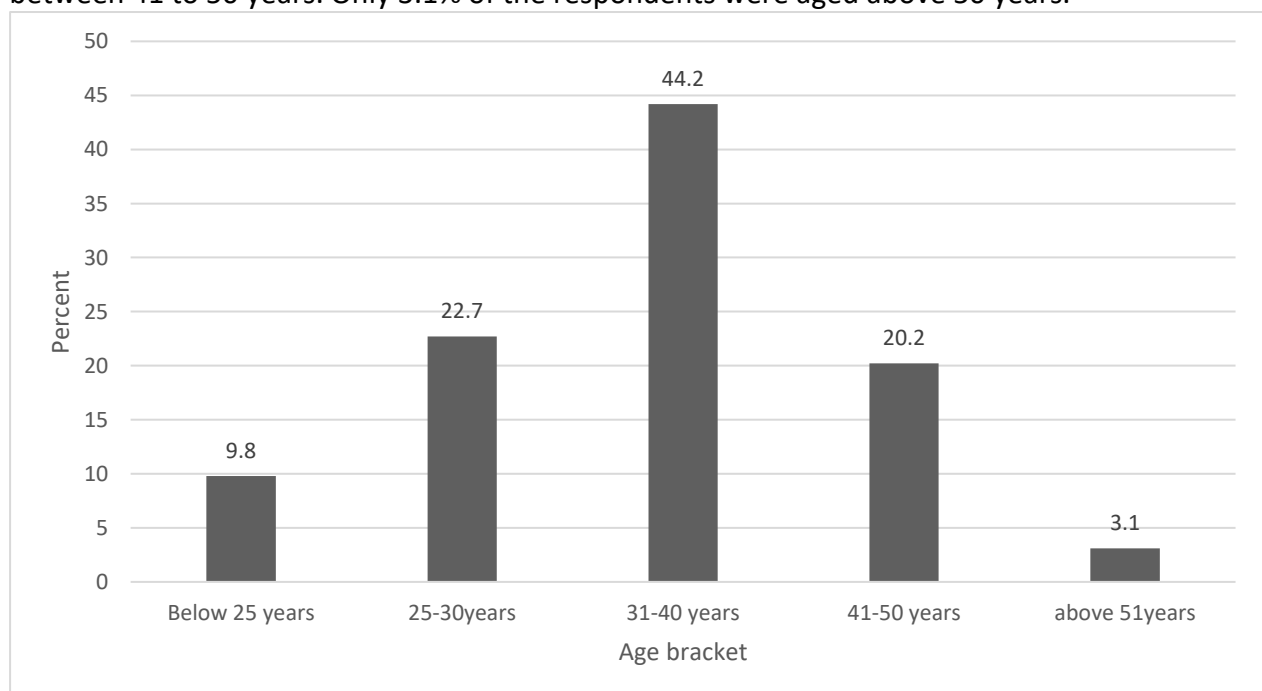


Figure 2. Age of the Respondents  
Source: Research Data (2019)

### Current Position of the Respondents and Years of Service

To further confirm the results, the study cross tabulated the current position of the respondents and years of service against their age and as shown in Table 3, the largest



proportion of respondents (11) who occupied top level of management were aged above 40 years while the largest proportion of respondents (14) who had worked in the current position for more than 9 years were also above 40 years.

Table 3

*Cross Tabulation of Age and Current position; Years of service*

Current position	Age bracket					Total
	Below 25 years	25 -30years	31-40 years	41-50 years	Above 51years	
Top level management	2	1	7	8	3	21
Middle level	9	10	35	17	0	71
Lower level cadre	5	26	30	8	2	71
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>163</b>
Years of service						
3 or less	12	18	1	2	1	34
4-6	2	19	20	12	0	53
7-8	1	0	45	9	0	55
9-11	1	0	6	9	3	19
More than 12	0	0	0	1	1	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>163</b>

Source: Research Data (2019)

**Respondent Years of Service**

In this regard, the results showed that the largest proportion of the sample, 33.7%, had worked in the company for a period of 7 to 8 years while 32.5% indicated that they had worked for a period of 4 to 6 years with a further 20.9% indicating that they had worked in the company for 3 years or less. Only 12.9% of the respondents indicated that they had worked in the company for a period of more than 9 years. The results imply that majority of the respondents had worked in the company long enough to understand it's management dynamics. that most of the interviewees were experts who had managed for long therefore provided correct data management dynamics in the company. According to Aosa (2011) long tenured employees are likely to participate in the management arrangement of a firm. The

findings imply that most of the interviewees were experts. The findings are presented in Figure 3.

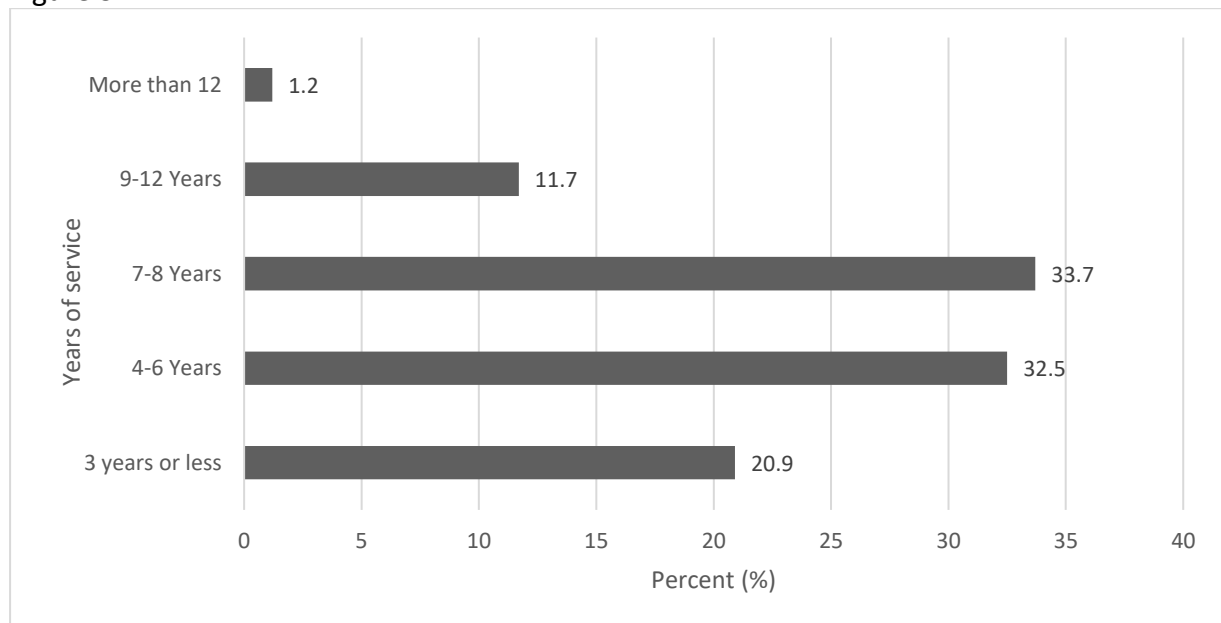


Figure 3. Respondent Years of Service

Source: Research Data (2019)

### Educational Level of the Respondents

From the findings in Figure 4 it was established that the largest proportion of the sample, 38.7%, indicated college Diploma as the utmost educational achievement with a further 23.9% holders of University Degrees while 4.9% had post graduate education qualification. However, 31.9% of the respondents indicated that they had high school level of academic qualification. The findings imply suitability of the respondents for the study as they had adequate level of education to read and understand the contents of the research instrument.

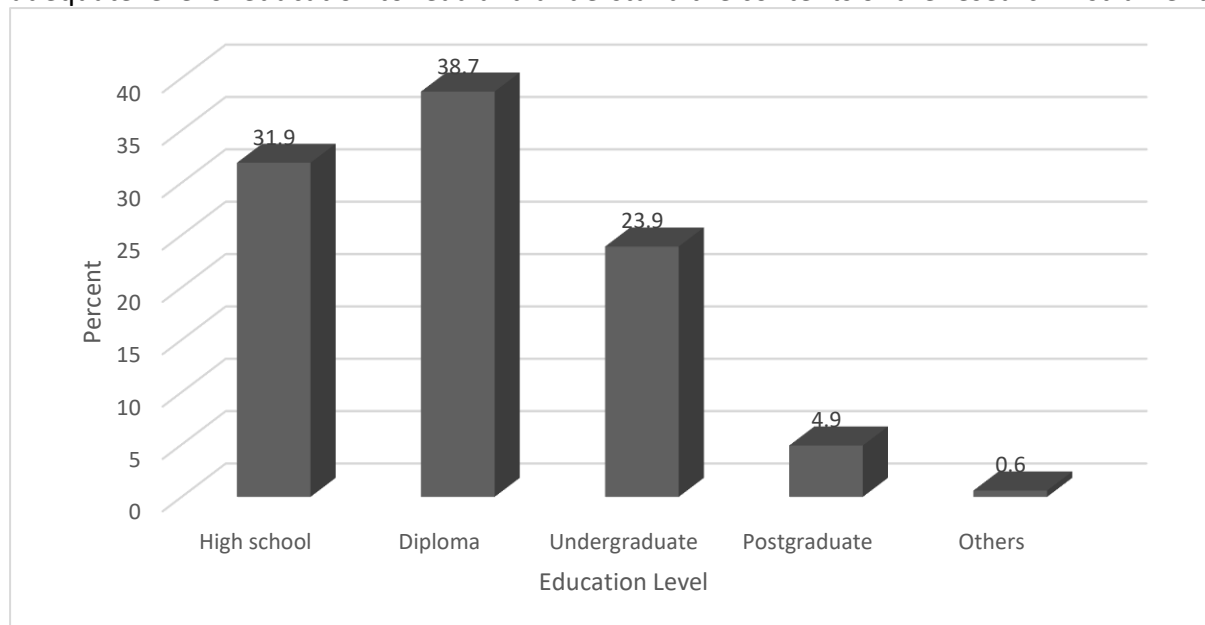


Figure 4 . Educational Level of the Respondents

Source: Research Data (2019)

### Gender of the Respondents

From the findings as indicated in Table 4 male respondents made up 46% of the sample while 54% were female. This is an indication that both genders were involved in this study and thus the findings of the study did not suffer from gender bias.

Table 4.

Gender of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	88	54
Male	75	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Research Data (2019)

### Consultative Management on Employees' Performance

Respondents were requested to specify the *level* of their *agreement* with various *statements* regarding consultative management in *the* company with *the* aim of establishing whether the embraced consultative management. The findings indicate that the largest proportion of the sample, 36.4% and mean value 3.91 agreed that their supervisor considers attitude surveys outcome always while a further 33.3% strongly agreed. On whether there exists information sharing during meetings with the supervisor and employees regularly use suggestion plans, the outcomes revealed that the largest fraction of the sample, 45.7% (mean=3.95) and 39.8% (mean=3.75) respectively, agreed to the statements.

The results also indicated that a larger proportion of the sample represented by 29.2% and a mean of 3.61 agreed that employee attitude surveys in the organization are regarded highly whereas 41.9% agreed that supervisor are always ready to listen to the juniors' views and proposals confirmed by a mean of 3.73. It was further established that respondents agreed that immediate supervisor suggests methods to advance group's production, 38.9% and mean value 3.7, and that seniors encourage work team participants to solve problems jointly as represented by 37.7% and mean of 3.83.

A mean of 3.73 also confirmed that the largest proportion of the sampled respondents agreed that managers openly discusses employee career development in meetings. Regarding the statement whether top management inspires work team members to interchange material information with one another, the largest percentage of the sample, 41.1 and a mean of 3.92 agreed. It was also established that the largest proportion of the sample as represented by 39.8%, 34.2% and 37.7% respectively agreed that outcomes completed in the joint consultative gatherings are communicated in good interval to workers, employees always know when changes that affect their job are conducted and that staffs are briefed with response once they give suggestions. The findings in this section generally imply that water service providers in Murang'a County practice consultative management by sharing pieces of information with employees with an aim of improving employees' performance.

### Quality Circles on Employees' Performance

The findings demonstrate that the major percentage *of the sample* represented by 34.8% and 33.5% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they would join alternative circle in case they were moved to another section or area of work responsibility. The findings are confirmed by a mean of 3.88. Similarly, the largest percentage, 38.50% and 37.50% respectively, agreed that they shared responsibilities with colleagues who are quality circle members in one's

department and that the top management has laid down supportive policies to promote quality circles.

Regarding the statement that opportunities given through circles increase material information distribution between employees, 43.5% of the respondents who represented the largest proportion agreed as confirmed by a mean of 3.68. Moreover, respondents averagely agreed that their relationship with work group was better than it had been in the past, 34.40%, whereas 42.5% and a mean of 3.68 agreed that quality circles assist development of employees' skills in needs analysis. It was also established that respondents agreed that quality circles have helped employees to be more active which improve their performance, 37.50%, members of the circles meet as a group to foster our circle efforts, 34.20% and that quality circles enhance the productivity of the employees than ever before as indicated by a mean of 3.99. The findings in this section are an indication that employees in water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya participate in quality circles to enhance their performance.

### **Representative Participation on Employees' Performance**

Findings further show majority agreed that personnel are represented by a chosen co-worker at the management board as shown by 39.5% and a mean of 4.04. Further, respondents agreed that they remained strong affiliate of a work team in the organization, 54.70%, and a participant of quality administration work squad in their department, 34.80% and mean value 3.89. A mean of 3.74 also showed that respondents agreed that a council of elected workers' representatives exist in the organization while 42.6% and mean 4.07 strongly agreed that there is a trade union representative in the organization. Regarding the statement that workers in the firm feel sufficiently represented at the joint union/management committee, the largest proportion of the sample, 40.7% and mean 3.73 agreed.

It was also indicated that there is a trade union representative on staff matters whereby 39.5% and mean 3.81 agreed. However, respondents averagely agreed that representation in numerous structures rises the self-esteem of employees, 38.30% and mean 3.72, and that a pleasant working association by the work councils and the management in the organization exists as shown by 38.9% and a mean of 3.67. Moreover, the results show that respondents agreed that decisions made in meetings with representatives are shared in good time to employees, 42.00%, and that representation in verdict making structures increases workers obligation to the organization, 40.10% and mean 3.89. The results presented in this section confirm that employees in Water Service Providers in Murang'a County are involved in representative participation and that the companies strive to ensure employee representation at all level of management and structures.

### **Delegation on Employees' Performance**

Respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or otherwise with various statements regarding delegation in the company. The findings presented illustrate that the biggest percentage of the Sample represented by 44.7% strongly agreed that their supervisor delegates and assigns duties and responsibilities to capable employees. It was also established that respondents agreed that they are afforded freedom to make decisions and account for results as represented by 50.30% and an average of 3.85.

*This outcomes* further show *participants* agreed they regularly design work schedules without waiting for managers to instruct them, they value input from employees mandated by the supervisor to regulate how work is executed and that they acknowledge authority given by

responding with actions as shown by respective means of 3.84, 3.99 and 4. Regarding the declaration that delegation accelerates decision making process among employees in this firm, 48.4% of the respondents agreed whereas 26.7% strongly agreed. On the statement delegation help one's colleagues gain exposure and growth, the largest percentage of the sample, 42.9% agreed, similarly, results show that 54.4% agreed that their supervisor inspires them to guide what happens in their division.

The results additionally show that respondents agreed that delegation makes them to adopt with different conditions at this organization, 40.40% and mean 4.11, and that delegation offers them a chance to depend on themselves in attaining work performance, 42.50%. The results generally imply that delegation is practised in water service providers in Murang'a County to ensure that employees benefit and grow from undertaking specific duties and responsibilities.

#### Overall Summary of Test of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Analysis Results	Conclusion
H <sub>01</sub> : Consultative Management has no significant effect on Employees' Performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.	( $\beta_1 = 0.313$ , $p = 0.000$ )	Rejected H <sub>01</sub>
H <sub>02</sub> : Quality Circles has no significant effect on Employees' Performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.	( $\beta_2 = -0.015$ , $p = 0.781$ )	Failed to reject H <sub>02</sub>
H <sub>03</sub> : Representative Participation has no significant effect on Employees' Performance in water service providers in selected Murang'a County, Kenya.	( $\beta_3 = 0.224$ , $p = 0.000$ )	Rejected H <sub>02</sub>
H <sub>04</sub> : Delegation has no significant effect on Employees' Performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya.	( $\beta_4 = 0.324$ , $p = 0.000$ )	Rejected H <sub>04</sub>

Source: Researcher (2019)

#### Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

##### *Summary of the Major Findings*

The main purpose of this study was to determine the effect of participatory management on *employees' performance* in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya. Particularly, this study examined the *influence* of consultative management, quality circles, representative participation and delegation on *employees' performance* in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya. Targeted were 357 employees of the five water service providers in Murang'a County where a sample of 206 participants were selected by random sampling technique. A self-administered questionnaire aided in data collection. A pilot study preceded the main study and was carried out to ensure reliability of the questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data collected. Multiple linear regression analysis was applied to test the hypotheses of the study.

**Conclusion**

Based on the results of the study, the following conclusions were made. Firstly, the study concludes that participatory management through consultative management, quality circles, representative participation and delegation is vital and indeed affect employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, Kenya. Secondly, this study provides evidence that consultative management positively and significantly affect employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County. Improvement in consultative management indicators comprising of employee attitude surveys, information sharing during meetings, joint problem solving, focus on juniors' views and proposals, material information interchange, methods to advance group's production, open discussion of employees career development and staff debriefing results to an increase in employees' performance.

The study concludes that though quality circles insignificantly influenced employees' performance in selected water service providers in Murang'a County, there was evidence that it is necessary to ensure employee participation in management processes. The main reasons for the negative insignificant relationship may be due to the poor manner in which quality circles are established and utilized.

Moreover, the study concludes that representative participation positively and significantly affected employees' performance. An enhancement of representative participation indicators including involving employees in quality administration, having a trade union representative, personnel representation through selection of coworkers to the management board, sufficient representation of employees at management committee, representation in numerous structures among others would result to an increase in employees' performance. Further, evidence was provided that delegation participation had absolutely and with a significant effect influenced employees' performance. The study concludes that any improvement in delegation through assigning duties and responsibilities to capable employees, giving employees freedom to make decisions and account for results, according workers the chance to gain exposure and growth escalates employees' performance.

**Recommendations**

The study made several recommendations based on the conclusions derived that if properly applied by the management greatly enhances employees' performance. The study established that consultative management, quality circles, representative participation and delegation are important participatory management practices and indeed affects performance of employees in water service providers in Murang'a County. The study recommends water service providers in Murang'a County to engage more in these practices as participatory management positively and significantly affects performance of employees. The investigations recommended that water service providers in Murang'a County should pay attention to representative participation of employees in management processes. This can be achieved through involving employees in quality administration, personnel representation through selection of coworkers to the management board, having a trade union representative, sufficient representation of employees at management committee and representation in numerous structures. Moreover, employees' performance in water service providers in Kenya can be improved by delegation of duties and responsibilities to capable employees, giving employees freedom to make decisions and account for results, according workers the chance to gain exposure and growth would result to an increase in employees' performance. There is need for the management of the companies to focus on these indicators of delegation.

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