

# Effectiveness of Human Resource Management on County Government Performance a Case Study for Elgeyo Marakwet County

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**Abstract:** This study endeavoured to look at the effectiveness of Human Resource Management on County Government performance. This paper looked at the key function of Human Resource Management, safety and health, and how it contributes to county government performance. The study targeted all the staff of Elgeyo Marakwet County and a sample of 148 employees randomly chosen. Both secondary and primary data was through existing literature and questionnaires respectively. A pilot study will be conducted in the neighbouring Trans Nzoia County to check the validity and reliability of the instruments. Quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS and results presented through tables, graphs and charts. Concerning the effects of health and safety on County Government performance of Elgeyo Marakwet. Chi square is applied to test the hypothesis. The result showed that health and security measures undertaken by the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet are more likely to enhance county government performance. The study recommends that health and safety can be achieved by provision of clean water, proper sanitation facilities, and health environment, knowledge of handling of machines, and equipment and hygienic practices.

**Keywords:** Clean water, County government performance, Effectiveness, Environment, Human Resource Management, Hygienic practices, Safety and health.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of human resource management (HRM) has attracted considerable attention from scholars and practitioners alike. While part of the debate has centred on its application and theoretical underpinnings (Armstrong, 2009), the other has been on its prescriptive value for the survival of organizations in a turbulent and volatile business environment (Antony, 1996; Brewster, 2010). More recently, the issue of the whether to situate the HRM debate in the organizational or the international context has arisen (Sparrow & Marchington, 2011). This is because organizational responses such as empowerment, work intensification, flexibility and redundancy appear to have gained as much weight as the macro-environmental drivers of HRM such as compensation, labour relations, staffing, economic recession, safety and health and political change (Kidomo, 2004)

Kidomo (2004), asserts that not only is HRM an innovative concept that addresses the fundamental question of managing employees in new ways and with new perspective but also a practice that is both located within and meshed with larger framework of the organisation's strategy. This is in contrast to traditional personnel management that has been described

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as reactive, instrumental and mostly concerned with administration and implementation of policies and procedures (Torrington, 2013)

### 1.1. Globally:

The term HRM was initially used by some American firms before any theory of HRM was developed (Kidomo, 2004). HRM writers in their preambles all agree that HRM emerged as a response to specific challenges faced by firms. Henry (2014) explains that HRM was born out of the perceived failure by American industry and management in the face of Japanese competition in international and domestic markets. The belief was that American firms failed to inspire the same kind of commitment that characterized Japanese firms. Henry (2014), compared American and Japanese management values and concluded that American firms were characterized by job insecurity, quick promotions, specialised careers, bureaucratic control, emphasis on individual decision making and responsibility and narrow focus on departmental interests. American firms were closely associated with the ideals of individualism rather than loyalty and collectivism. In pursuit of such short-term profit goals, American firms emphasized cost reduction measures such as removal of discretionary expenditures like training and research and reducing employee headcount.

### 1.2. Regionally

The practice and institutionalisation of devolution in Africa is not unique in Kenya Mwabu (2011), indicates that efficient delivery of public service in Africa and other developing countries has for a long time been hindered by highly centralised Government bureaucracies. Recognising the urgent need to achieve high economic growth, reduce income disparities, and restore public confidence in government, cure historical injustices and other poverty related inequalities.

Development of 'human resources' in both public and private sector organizations has become critical in an increasingly knowledge-based globalizing economy (Analoui, 2007). In particular, human resource capacity building for public service delivery has been recognised by developed, transition, and developing economies under the notion of the 'new public management' reform.

The strategic importance of the development of human resource capacity, for example, was raised at the African Leadership Forum on June 21st, 1990 in Nigeria. At that meeting, Robert McNamara, the former President of the World Bank emphasized 'the imperative of building local African capacities' as the cutting edge of Africa's strategic development agenda. In his view, the lack of 'necessary skills and well-managed public and private institutions for long-term, sustainable growth was a priority to be included in every development activity in Africa because of its implications for improved development management and good governance' (cited by Wood, 2012). Similarly, in a recent publication entitled 'Can Africa Claim the 21st Century? The World Bank noted that: 'Africa's future lies in its people. Indeed, Africa must solve its current human development crisis if it is to claim the 21st century. Africa's future economic growth will depend less on its natural resources, which are being depleted and are subject to long-run price declines, ... and more on its labour skills and its ability to accelerate a demographic transition' (World Bank, 2000) The World Bank observation is underscored by the reality that the most valuable and critical organizational resource is its people (Analoui, 2007). Recognizing that people conceive, plan, and execute all tasks, coordinate and organise inputs and produce outputs, it can thus be safely assumed that endeavours would succeed or fail because of the people involved (Powell, 2001: Alanda J. 2013)

### 1.3. Locally:

An exploratory survey of HRM practices carried out by the Ministry of State for Public Service in Kenya (MSPS), (2007) found out that the day to day work of HRM practitioners in the civil service revolves round activities like; Commutation of leave; confirmation in appointment; preparation of the payroll, deployment of staff, attending meetings, verification of personnel data; pension matters, statutory deductions and arranging for staff training among others.

The same survey enumerated challenges they faced to include: not so cordial relationship with other departments; little interaction with other departments unless they wanted HR to do something for them; inadequate capacity; lack of a forum to address issues and exchange ideas or bond with other departments

The number one requirement for any HR function is to ensure it is continually adding value. They have to be able to reach out to all levels of the organization to let them know who HR are and what they can do for them and demonstrating their

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knowledge of the business in order to provide a credible reason for business to approach them. HR must define the value they create. The challenge to HR professionals is to meet three (3) often competing aims: make it more cost effective through reducing costs of its services and headcount; improve its services to increasingly demanding senior executives, line Managers and employees; and address the strategic objectives of the organization. Therefore the purpose of this study is to find out the effectiveness of human resource development in the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet.

**1.4. Statement of the Problem:**

The practice and institutionalisation of devolution in Africa is not unique in Kenya. Mwabu, (2011) indicates that efficient delivery of public service in Africa and other developing countries has for a long time been hindered by highly centralised Government bureaucracies. Recognising the urgent need to achieve high economic growth, reduce income disparities, and restore public confidence in government, cure historical injustices and other poverty related inequalities.

It is imperative that we aim for a better understanding of the effectiveness and impact of Human Resource Management Practices with a view of making improvements to operations in the EMC. In light of these challenges set above, the study is intended to recommend effective human resources management practices which may prepare the EMC with the requisite skills and training for effective service delivery.

**1.5. General Objective:**

To find out the effectiveness of human resource management on the county government performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County

**1.5.1. Specific Objective:**

To determine effects of health and safety on County Government performance of Elgeyo Marakwet

**1.5.2. Research Hypothesis:**

*H<sub>0</sub>*: There is no relationship between healthy and safety and County Government performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

**1.6. Justification of the Study:**

The findings and recommendations of this study will benefit county Government and other Government ministries/ department's public service offices, line managers, administrators and human resource managers.

**2. LITERATURE REVIEW****2.1. Theoretical Framework:****2.1.1. Open Systems Theory:**

Systems theory is premised on the assumption that organizations have similar characteristics with other living organisms (Analoui and Karami, 2003; Analoui, 1998; Hanna, 1997). A system is generally defined as an arrangement of interrelated parts. The words arrangement and interrelated describe interdependent elements forming an entity that is the system (Jackson and Schuler, 1999; von Bertalanffy, 1950). In using a systems approach to understand a phenomenon, it is important to begin to identify the individual parts and then seek to understand the nature of their collective interaction to make the whole unique - it is the whole, not the parts alone that counts. An open system depends on its external environment for inputs that are transformed during throughput to produce outputs that are exchanged in the environment.

The general view is that managing organizations with the view to contributing towards socio-economic development requires effective deployment of three resources: economic (monetary), physical (material) and human (social). However, the most vital asset to any organization is 'the people' (human resources). Many contributors to the HRD literature are of the view that the development dimension of HRM is conceptualized as a sub-system of HRM, which is embedded in a larger organizational system (Analoui and Karami, 2003; Armstrong, 2001; Analoui, 1998; Kanungo and Mendunca, 1994). Analoui (2002) in his discussion of the 'choice' model of HRM, in the context of open system organisations, views the HR policies, including the HRD, as input to the process which will be expected to result in 'change' as a planned and desired output. Wright and Snell (1991) for instance, have used the open system theory to describe a competent

management model of organizations. They treated the ‘skills and abilities’ of employees as ‘inputs’ from the environment; employee behaviours as ‘throughput/transformation’ and their satisfaction and performance as ‘outputs’. Chalofsky and Reinhart (1988:31) argue that an effective HRD function as a sub-system of an organization should have a highly trained professional staff; demonstrating close working relationships with line and staff management; and develop a track record of delivering high quality products and/or services. This implies the capacity to acquire, utilize, train, develop, retain and displace the needed competencies for the organization, recognizing that ‘micro and macro level phenomena interact and influence each other’ (Cassar and Bezzina, 2005).

The study explores how these elements empirically occur or happen under EMC reforming local government administrative system or how the challenges become constraining situations imposed by the external environmental factors of the open systems theory.

**2.2 Conceptual Framework:**

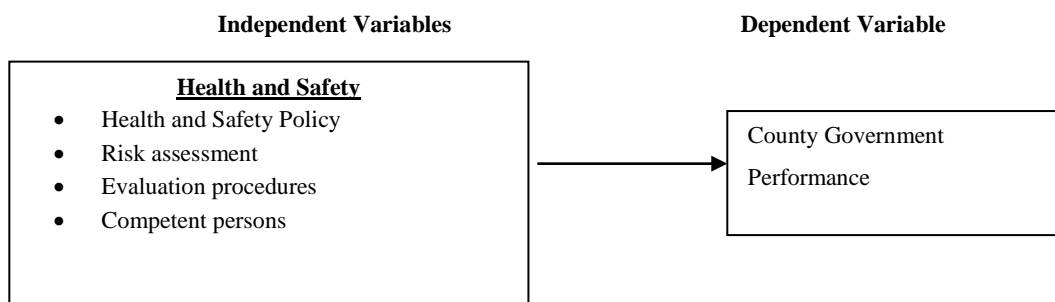


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework

**2.2.1 Health and Safety:**

The vital function of any government is to ensure workers’ safety in a modern construction industry (Helen & Stephen, 2005). A safe workplace is central to the ability to enjoy health, security, and the opportunity to achieve success in life. Health and safety at county government of EMC can be achieved by provision of enough clean water, proper and enough sanitation facilities, health friendly environment, knowledge of handling of machines, and equipment and hygienic practices.

Safety Hazards at the Workplace are those aspects of work environment that have the potential of causing immediate and sometimes violent harm to a worker. These safety hazards include: poorly maintained equipment, poor lighting, and exposure to hazardous chemicals among others. Potential injuries include: Loss of hearing, eye sight or body like cuts, burns, bruises, broken bones and electric shock (ILO, 2002). Njuguna (2007) asserts that providing a safe environment and minimizing potential risk are both the moral and legal responsibility of the organization and that a safety culture should be maintained at workplaces. He continues to describe a good safety cultures as one on which workers are rewarded when they are attentive to safety issues, Joy (2005) also advises that a positive safety culture at work can be developed through the allocation of praise, promotions and cash to employees who behave safely. This implies that when workers are well motivated to behave safely. This implies that when workers are well motivated they behave safely at the work place this minimizes the human error that may cause or create unsafe working environment.

**2.2.2 County Government performance:**

Performance is described by Lebas (2012), as “the potential future successful implementation of actions in order to reach the objectives and targets”. One of the significant changes introduced to Kenya’s National Government framework under the constitution of Kenya 2010 was the creation of 47 county governments tasked with major responsibilities in sectors like Agriculture, Health, Trade, Infrastructure and county planning among others.

The county government need to utilise the resources allocated to them efficiently and to ensure that the money allocated for development is significant that is at least 30% (Mule, 2014). An expenditure analysis contained in a report by the controller of budget (County Budget Implementation Review, 2013/2014) indicates that for the period July December 2013 counties spent 88.4% of their allocation on the recurrent expenditure and 11.6% on development expenditure. Recurrent expenditure comprises of: personnel emoluments, operations and maintenance, member of county assembly

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sitting allowance, domestic and foreign travels among others. This could explain why there is little development at county level hence the high level of discontent among citizens. The controller of budget has advised counties to come up with a policy to address burgeoning wage bill. The measures should include freezing of new recruitment except for essential services and downsizing of the work force.

**2.2.3. Empirical Review:**

HRM has frequently been described as a concept with two distinct forms: soft and hard. The soft model emphasises individuals and their self direction and places commitment, trust, team work, utilisation of individual talent, communication and self regulated behaviours at the centre of any improved performance (Lynda, 2011)

The soft HRM approach is seen as more development oriented with a humanistic focused based on explicit statement about the value of employee to the organisation (Kidombo, 2012). Soft HRM gives a strong recognition to employees needs such as training and development, recruitment and selection, health and safety and employees relations. It would be expected that, therefore, that soft HR practice will elicit emotional attachment to the organisation thus eliciting affection (Kidombo, 2012)

The soft version is also seen as a method of releasing untapped reserves of human resourcefulness by increasing employee commitment, participation and involvement. Employee commitment is sought with the expectation that effectiveness will follow as second-order consequences. Walton (1985) suggests that “a model that assumes how employee commitment and that is designed to produce a reliable if not outstanding performance simply cannot match the standards of excellence set by world class competitors”

Hard HRM is associated with HR practices that emphasize cost reduction, tight controls, and tight fit with performance. Under this orientation, employees are likely to feel threatened with job insecurity, are under pressure to perform and do not participate in decision that affect them (Kidombo, 2012)

Hard HRM is as calculative and tough minded as any other branch of management communicating through the tough language of business and economics. The hard HRM has some kinship with scientific management as people are reduced to passive objects that are not cherished as a whole but assessed on whether they possess the skills/ attributes the organisation requires (Legge, 1995)

The hard model also stresses HRM's focus on the crucial importance of the close integration of human resources policies, system and activities. Human resource is viewed as passive, to be provided and deployed as numbers and skills at the right price, rather than the source of creative energy (Legge, 1995).

It is evident that HRM does not provide a consistent set of policies and procedures. From the above observations HRM can be adopted to County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet. Two normative themes can be adopted, first, HR policies should be integrated with strategic business planning and used to reinforce performance which will in turn improve service delivery and secondly HR are valuable and a source of competitive advantage that are tapped most effectively through policies that promote commitment.

**2.3 Critique of Existing Literature:**

Some authors have suggested that there are inherent contradictions within this the theory of HRM. It is evident that HRM does not provide a consistent set of policies and procedures, the distinction between hard and soft forms of HRM offer management two sharply contrasting alternatives within supposedly single approach. Turnbull, (1994) suggests that there is simple relationship between performance and HRM. However there are problems in the integration of HRM policy with performance. Secondly the framework of HRM which elicits that what is good for the organisation is good for the organisation is good for the employees is problematic as the needs of the business do not always coincide with the best interest of the work force (Keenoy, 1990).

HRM has acted to obscure many of the core issues surrounding the question of control. Blyton and Turnbull (1994) suggests that the vocabulary and practice of HRM may be viewed as an attempt to re-legitimate managerial authority, redefine worker rights and redraw the frontier of control through a language of individualism, reciprocity and shared commitment.



**3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study used a descriptive case study design. The study targeted all employees of Elgeyo Marakwet County. The sample size of 148 employees was selected using krejcie and morgan (1970) table for determining sample size. The data collection instruments included questionnaires. The data collected was analyzed using the Chi-square to test the effect of the independent variable, health and safety on the dependent variable, County Government performance.

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E} \quad \text{Where:}$$

- X<sup>2</sup> - County Government Performance
- O - Observed frequency for
- O<sub>1</sub> - Health and Safety

**4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**4.1. Relationship between Health and safety and County Government Performance:**

The study sought to determine relationship between health and safety and County Government Performance and findings are shown in table 4.1

**Table 4.1 Relationship between Health and safety and County Government Performance**

Statement	County Government Performance		
	Observed Frequency	Expected Frequency	Chi-square
Health and Safety	39	34.25	0.6587
Risk Assessment	27	34.25	1.5347
Evaluation Procedures	31	34.25	0.3083
Competent Persons	40	34.25	0.9653
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>3.467</b>

As portrayed in table 4.1 the calculated chi-square for health and safety policy being clear and therefore well adhered to was 0.6587, Risk assessment has been carried out to identify possible hazards as required by the management and therefore better health and safety was 1.5347, There is a suitable and sufficient evaluation procedures was 0.3083 and there are competent persons trained to ensure that there is safe evacuation of all persons from buildings in the event of serious and imminent danger was 0.9653. The overall chi-square value for health and safety and county government performance was 3.137 and was lower than the critical table value of 7.81 at a significant level of 0.05 and at a degree level of freedom of 3. The results suggest that; at  $\chi^2$  (3.137) health and safety policy (ies) maintained by the County and the County Government performance was statistically significant among the County Employees. Therefore the results illustrate that health and safety policies influence the performance of the County employees. The study findings are similar to earlier findings by Njuguna (2007) that asserted that a safe workplace is central to the ability to enjoy health, security, and the opportunity to achieve success in life and overall achievement of organizational goals.

Safety Hazards at the Workplace are those aspects of work environment that have the potential of causing immediate and sometimes violent harm to a worker. These safety hazards include: poorly maintained equipment, poor lighting, and exposure to hazardous chemicals among others. Potential injuries include: Loss of hearing, eye sight or body like cuts, burns, bruises, broken bones and electric shock (ILO, 2002). Njuguna (2007) asserts that providing a safe environment and minimizing potential risk are both the moral and legal responsibility of the organization and that a safety culture should be maintained at workplaces. He continues to describe a good safety cultures as one on which workers are rewarded when they are attentive to safety issues; Joy (2005) also advises that a positive safety culture at work can be developed through the allocation of praise, promotions and cash to employees who behave safely. This implies that when workers are well motivated to behave safely. This implies that when workers are well motivated they behave safely at the work place this minimizes the human error that may cause or create unsafe working environment.

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Therefore Health and safety at county government of EMC can be achieved by provision of enough clean water, proper and enough sanitation facilities, health friendly environment, knowledge of handling of machines, and equipment and hygienic practices.

### 5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Summary:

The study sought to investigate on the effectiveness of human resource management on the county government performance in Elgeyo Marakwet County and the following were the study findings. The objective sought to determine effects of health and safety on County Government performance of Elgeyo Marakwet and the result shows that health and security measures undertaken by the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet are more likely to enhance county government performance.

#### 5.2 Conclusion:

Health and security measures undertaken by the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet are more likely to enhance county government performance. A safe workplace is central to the ability to enjoy health, security, and the opportunity to achieve success in life and overall achievement of organizational goals. Safety Hazards at the Workplace are those aspects of work environment that have the potential of causing immediate and sometimes violent harm to a worker. These safety hazards include: poorly maintained equipment, poor lighting, and exposure to hazardous chemicals among others. Potential injuries include: Loss of hearing, eye sight or body like cuts, burns, bruises, broken bones and electric shock (ILO, 2002). Njuguna (2007) asserts that providing a safe environment and minimizing potential risk are both the moral and legal responsibility of the organization and that a safety culture should be 'maintained at workplaces.

#### 5.3 Recommendations:

Safety at county government can be achieved by provision of enough clean water, proper and enough sanitation facilities, health friendly environment, knowledge of handling of machines, and equipment and hygienic practices.

#### 5.4 Areas for further Research:

A similar study to be done in other Counties so as to compare the study findings.

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