



# **HOTEL EMPLOYEE OPERATIONS INVOLVEMENT AND ITS CONSEQUENCE ON HOTEL PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF CLASSIFIED HOTELS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA**

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## **Abstract**

*With increased competition within the business environment, many businesses world-wide are struggling to survive through searching for mechanisms and ways to increase their creativity, innovativeness and competitiveness. This paper sought to examine the effect of employee involvement on the performance of classified hotels. It adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design to determine the causal relationship between employee involvement and the performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County in Kenya. The study utilized Yamane's formula to determine the sample size. Proportionate sampling technique was applied in generating the sample. A sample of 205 employees, out of the 420 targeted within the 12 classified hotels domiciled in the county, was used in obtaining the relevant data to this study. The data collected was primary data and it was obtained by use of questionnaires. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) V2.0 was used in data analysis. The study determined that*

*employee involvement impacted positively on performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County,  $\beta = .676$ ,  $t = 10.903$ ,  $p = .000$ . The results implied that a unit increase in the level of employee involvement in the hotels would lead to an increase in the performance of the hotels by 0.676 units.*

*Keywords: Employee Involvement, Hotel Performance, Classified Hotels, Hotel Operations, Consequences*

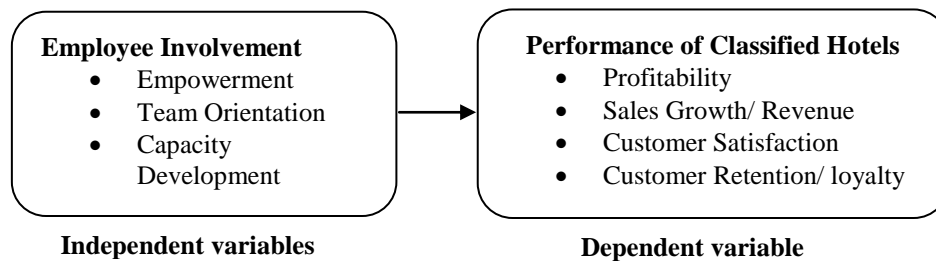
## **INTRODUCTION**

With increased competition within the business environment, many businesses world-wide are struggling to survive through searching for mechanisms and ways to increase their creativity, innovativeness and competitiveness. The performance of a business is determined by various elements within and outside the firm (Duke & Edet, 2012). Employee involvement in hotel operations is with no doubt an element within an organisation that requires better understanding as it also forms part of an organisational culture. Employee Involvement is whereby employees actively participate in making decisions and finding solutions to problems in addition to enhanced independence in job processes within an organization. Organisational culture is a representation of a firm's internal environment and is a major element impacting on the overall performance of firms (Ahmad, 2012).

Each and every firm possesses its specific outlook in conducting its operations and this impacts almost each and every facet of working life. The culture of an organisation refers to the shared conduct of individuals forming part of the establishment as well as the connotations attached to individuals' actions. It comprises of values, dreams, customs, language used in the workplace, structures, codes, beliefs as well as habits. The culture cultivated in an organization influences the manner in which individuals as well as groups undertake their interactions with one another, clients as well as stakeholders. It is stated by (Ravasi & Schultz, 2006) that the culture of an establishment refers to collective mental presumptions guiding elucidation as well as actions within an establishment through the definition of proper conduct for different circumstances. Denison (1996) assert that these main beliefs as well as practices are sustained since they possess a meaning for employees and other stakeholders within the organization. They are a representation of a firm's strategies for its survival that have been found to work well earlier and individuals associated with the organization believed that such strategies would work once again in the near future.

Kenya has experienced turbulent times regarding practices in organizations for the past two decades. The result of this has been basically reduced profits across a number of industries within the economy and this situation is equally experienced within the Hotel sector (Namusonge, Kabare, & Mutua, 2012). Declines in global tourism have totally impacted the sales of hotels in addition to threatening the operations of hotels since hotels in the Kenyan market to a large extent are dependent on the International Tourism Market (Oketch, Wadawi, Brester, & Needetea, 2010). Mburugu (2015) argued that in Kenya, declines in incomes have been witnessed in the agriculture as well as manufacturing industries. Consequently, the country had turned its focus on tourism as a way of intervening the various economic challenges within the nation. Likewise, the hotels in the country had become highly complex to manage as a result of the needs of the business environment that was dynamic. Hotels were finding it challenging to deal with the issues related to customer demands and complex service technologies as well as production processes. Therefore, the prospect course of hotel sector is dependent on management practices besides how employees of an organization interacted and collaborated among themselves, with clients as well as other stakeholders. Therefore, the organizational culture exemplified in these hotels determines their ability to survive.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



## LITERATURE REVIEW

Ismail (2013) explored involvement of employees in Lebanese hotels using a case study of luxury hotels. The study saw that these inns were portrayed with low levels of representative association in their activity and during the time spent evaluating their execution. The discoveries demonstrated that inn staff once in a while got the chance to effectively participate in the change or modification of their work benchmarks. The staff stated that now and again, their employments ended up being extremely unexciting. It was additionally discovered that the staff contribution in assessing their execution was consistently discouraged and it appeared that such execution assessments were a one-sided practice in these lodgings. The investigation noticed that making an atmosphere that effectively guaranteed staff contribution, the association's administration should impart to its staff expanded data relating to key and in

addition budgetary issues. Likewise, evaluation of execution should be set up with the end goal to warrant expanded worker support in characterizing their execution targets and destinations, considering their vocation improvement desire in the lodging. Representatives should have been allowed to make recommendations relating to instruments for making their occupations exceptionally intriguing. The results of including staff in every aspect of the organization came about to expanded staff responsibility and in addition execution.

Sofijanoval and Zabijakin-Chetleska (2013) explored the association between involving employees in the process of making decisions and also solving problems and the apparent firm performance using a survey involving 36 firms that belonged to the manufacturing sector in Macedonia. The study found that effectively using employee involvement had a positive relation with the apparent firm performance. In particular, the participation of staff and programs meant for empowering them in addition to using self-management teams had a direct as well as statistically significant association with the management's perceived performance of their firms. The inquiry concluded that these firms ought to embrace programs meant for employee involvement so as to increase performance, firm growth as well as their competitiveness in various markets.

Rieu and Kamara (2016) examined the drivers of employee commitment within the hotel sector in the case of rated hotels in Nairobi Central Business District. The study established that employee involvement influenced employee commitment in the hotel industry in Nairobi County. The employees' suggestions for improvements were considered by the management. The employee given a task at work, they know what they are expected to achieve and step up and take action without being asked. To a small extent the employees adapt to a new or difficult situation and devise ways to overcome obstacles and employees feel their department does a commendable job of orienting new employees. The study recommended that there should be improvement on employee involvement to enhance employee commitment in the hotel industry in Nairobi County. Since the employees were a representation of sources of knowledge as well as ideas, they needed to be involved in the process of making decisions and problem solving did not only empower them in making a contribution an organization's success, but also enhanced their commitment to the organization

Kuyea and Sulaimon (2011) studied the link between involving employees in making decisions and the performance of firms in the Nigeria manufacturing sector. A cross-sectional survey design was employed. The results from this inquiry revealed that the involvement of staff in making decisions in these firms was very low on average. This implied the mentioned situation could be as a result of the firms' cultivation of cultures that encouraged high power distances. In which case, the expectation was to see the employees but not hear them out. The

results demonstrated that a substantial connection existed between involving staff in making decisions and the performance of these firms.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Design

This study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive research design. Mugenda & Mugenda (2008) observes that, it provides a detailed description on the causal relationship between variables and as such describes true state of affairs as they currently exist pertaining the study phenomena.

### Data

The data collected was primary data. It was collected from staff in 12 classified hotels in Nakuru County, Kenya. These hotels were identified using a list developed by the Tourism Regulatory Authority in Kenya.

### Target Population

The study was conducted in all the 12 classified hotels in Nakuru County. The target population is as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Target population distribution

Hotel Classification	Target population (N) (No of Employees)
1. 2 Star	131
2. 3 Star	149
3. 4 Star	120
4. 5 Star	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>∑N=420</b>

Source: Tourism Regulatory Authority, (2014)

### Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The study adopted Yamane's formulae (equation 1) to determine an adequate sample size,  $n$ , of the survey (Yamane, 1969).

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \dots \dots \dots (1)$$

Where;  $n$  is the optimum sample size,

$N$  the number of staff in the classified hotels in Nakuru County (420),

$e$  the probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, i.e. 0.05 for 95% confidence level).

Sample size,  $n$

$$n = \frac{420}{1+420(0.05)^2} = 205 \dots \dots \dots (2)$$

Proportionate sampling technique was used in generating the sample. The respondents were however, selected randomly as this reduced biasness (Table 2).

Table 2: Sampling frame

Hotel classification	Target population per hotel N	Sample size (48.8% of the target population in each classified hotel) $n = \frac{N}{\sum N} * SAMPLE\ SIZE$ $\{n = \frac{N}{420} * 205\}$
1. 2 Star	131	70
2. 3 Star	149	73
3. 4 Star	120	58
4. 5 Star	20	5
<b>Total</b>	<b><math>\sum N = 420</math></b>	<b><math>\sum n = 205</math></b>

### Research Instruments

Semi-structured questionnaires were used. Questions that were close ended were resourceful in offering guidance to the answers of the study within a set of choices presented. Questions that were open ended were resourceful in gathering responses that were comprehensive and detailed particularly in situations whereby the researcher did not possess options that were pre-determined.

### Pre-Testing

A pretest was conducted so as to assist the researcher in checking whether the questionnaires were valid and also reliable in collecting the study data. A pre-test should range from 1-10% of the actual sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). For this study, pre-testing questionnaires were administered to 21 hotel employees (5.0% of the actual sample) who were not part of the study sample.

### Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the data collection instrument was estimated using Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient which is a measure of internal coefficient. A reliability of at least 0.70 at  $\alpha=0.05$

significance level of confidence is acceptable (Cooper & Schidlers, 2008). Table 3 shows the reliability analysis table. The results revealed a Cronbach's alpha value of over 0.7 for inter-item reliability in each of the questions. To enhance the validity of the content, the evaluation of the questionnaire was undertaken by two autonomous hotel managers, randomly picked from the management of hotel industry.

Table 3: Reliability Analysis

Variable	No of Items	Respondents	$\alpha$ =Alpha	Comment
Employee Involvement	6	21	0.786	Reliable

### Data Analysis

Total 205 questionnaires were administered. The collected data was coded and appropriately entered in SPSS. Descriptive statistics were employed in providing a description of the gathered dataset's characteristics. Pearson's Correlation, Analysis of variance (ANOVA) as well as Regression Analysis was applied in establishing the relationships that existed among the variables under study. Evaluation of the  $R^2$  statistic, F statistic as well as regression/beta coefficients for significance was conducted by the use of p values to test the causal relationship existing between the dependent and predictor variables. The critical p value was set at 0.05.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Response rate

Table 4 shows data on number of staff sampled and the response rate. (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003) asserts that 70% response rate is very good. The response rate was 74.63%.

Table 4: Response Rate

Response	Frequency	Percent
Returned	153	74.63
Unreturned	52	25.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100.00</b>

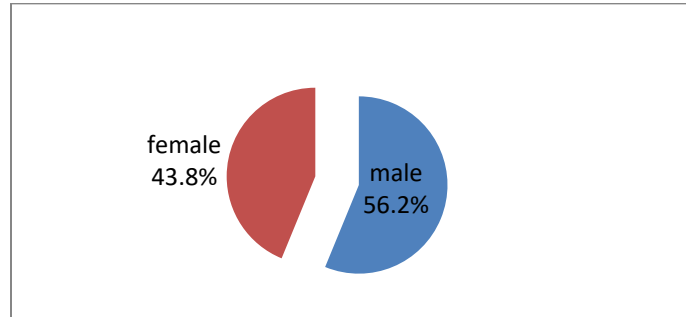
### Respondents' profile

#### *Gender of Respondents*

Figure 1 shows that male employees were more than female employees agreeing with a study by Taylor (2002) who asserted that male employees were favoured by odd working hours, shifts

and longevity of the shifts. Subsequently, this study established that male employees were 1.283 times the number of their female counterparts.

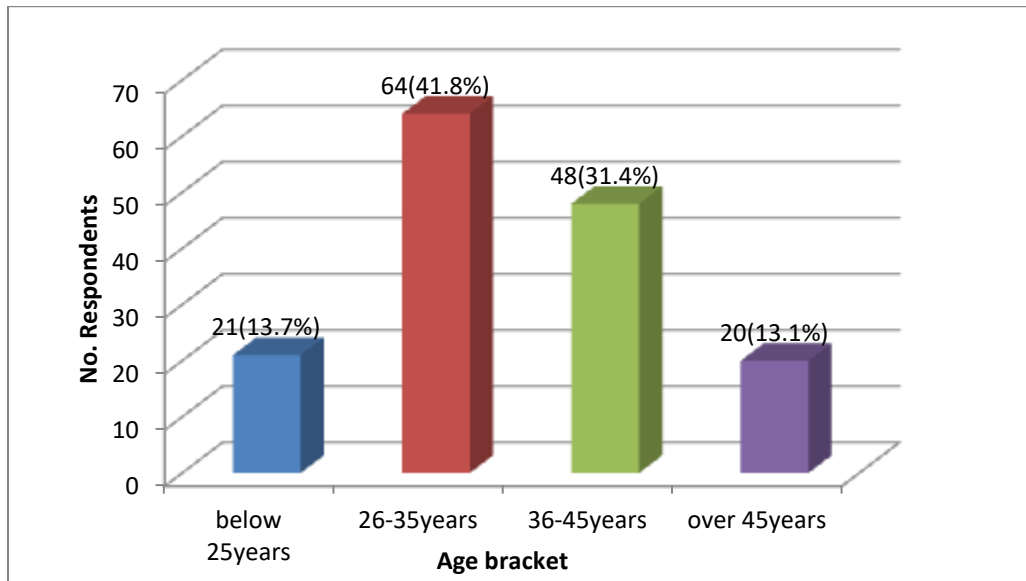
Figure 1: Gender of the Respondents



**Age of Respondents**

Figure 2 shows that a majority of the hotel employees were young.

Figure 2: Age of the Respondents

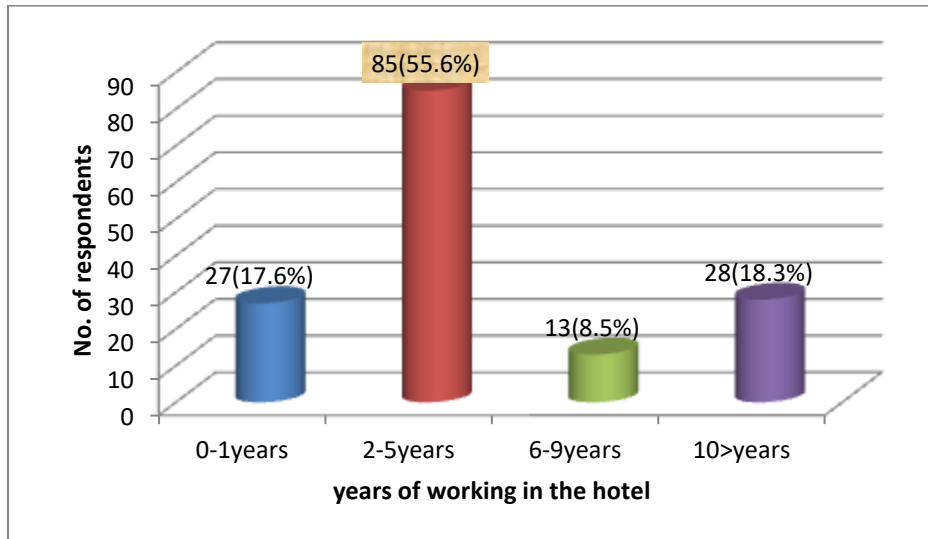


**Years of Working in the Hotel**

Figure 3 shows that a majority of the employees had worked over 2 years (82.4%) in the hotels and as such they had rich information pertaining to the operations of their respective hotels and hence, they were in a position to give resourceful information regarding employee involvement and performance of the classified hotels under study.



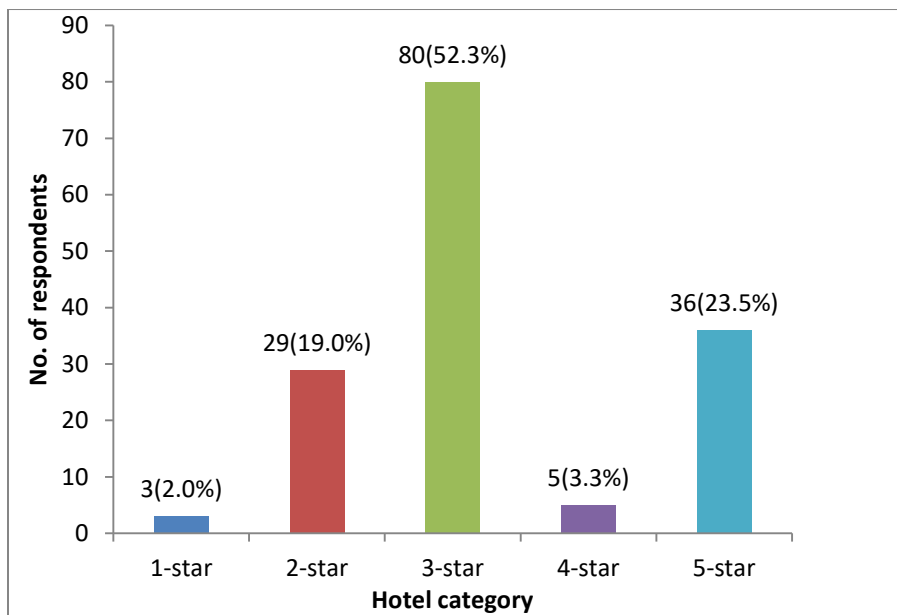
Figure 3: Years of Working in the Hotels



**Hotel Category**

The star rating of the hotels is as shown in Figure 4. Having employees from all-star categories participate in the study ensured that the study was all inclusive.

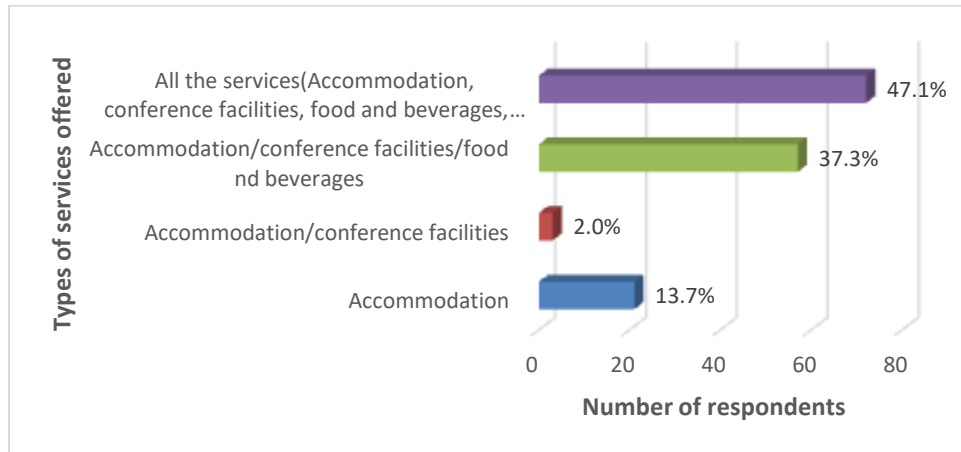
Figure 4: Hotel Category



**Types of Services Offered**

Figure 5 shows that a large number of the hotels offered all services. This implied that the areas in which employees would be involved in the performance of the hotels were many.

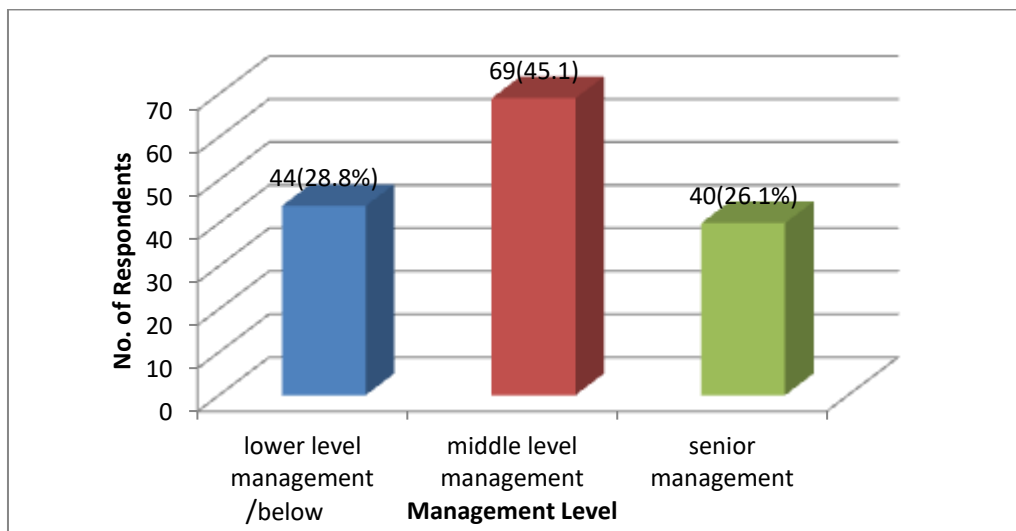
Figure 5: Types of Services Offered



**Level of management**

Figure 6 shows that most of the employees were involved in some form of management.

Figure 6: Types of Services Offered



The participation of employees in all cadres of management was crucial because involvement of employees in hotel operations was a cross cutting concern throughout an entire hotel. Having the opinion of employees in all levels of staff ensured that the true picture of employees' involvement and performance of the classified hotels was portrayed.

**Performance of Classified Hotels in Nakuru County**

Table 5 shows the descriptive statistics on the performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County.

Table 5: Performance of Classified Hotels

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std Dvn
The hotel has been attaining sustained profits	9.20%	6.50%	27.50%	28.80%	28.10%	3.60	1.22
The sales of the hotel have expanded significantly	7.80%	5.20%	19.00%	34.60%	33.30%	3.80	1.19
Most of our customers have expressed great satisfaction with our services	2.00%	11.10%	32.70%	20.90%	33.30%	3.73	1.10
We have retained most of our customers and that customer loyalty in the hotel has been increasing	4.60%	6.50%	25.50%	36.60%	26.80%	3.75	1.07
The employees in the hotel are very loyal and express satisfaction in their work	5.20%	13.10%	28.10%	29.40%	24.20%	3.54	1.15
There is efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in the hotel	3.30%	8.50%	29.40%	32.70%	26.10%	3.70	1.05
Generally, our return on assets has increased	2.00%	7.20%	26.80%	28.80%	35.30%	3.88	1.04
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.71</b>	<b>1.12</b>

56.90% of the respondents agreed that the hotel had been attaining sustained profits while 67.90% of the respondents, agreed that the sales of their respective hotels had expanded significantly. 54.20% of the respondents agreed that most of their customers had expressed great satisfaction with their hotel services while 63.40% of the respondents agreed that their respective hotels had retained most of their customers and that customer loyalty in the hotel had been increasing. The study also discovered that 53.60% of the respondents agreed that the

employees in their respective hotels were very loyal and expressed satisfaction in their work. The study also determined that 58.80% of the respondents agreed that service delivery was efficient and effective in the hotels. The results also found that 64.10% of the respondents agreed that generally, their return on assets had increased. In all cases, those who agreed were the majority.

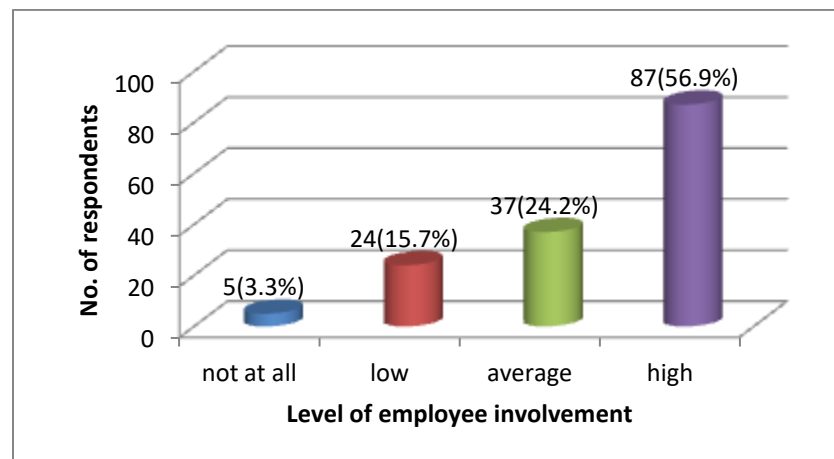
The mean of responses of 3.71 implies that, on average, the respondents were agreeing with most of the statements on performance of the classified hotels and that their responses were varied given a standard deviation of 1.12.

### Effect of Employee Involvement on the Performance of Classified hotels in Nakuru County

The study sought to explore the effect of employee involvement on the performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County. To achieve this objective, both descriptive and inferential analysis were conducted. Figure 7 shows that 56.9% of the respondents who were also the majority agreed that level of employee involvement by the management in their respective hotels was high.

Those who stated average, low or no employee involvement noted that most of the decisions were made by the top management where managers dutifully made decisions without involving the subordinates. They also noted that employees' contribution in strategic decisions was low and were consulted in particular times, majorly during crisis which led to inconsistency in employee involvement. They also noted that, due to working in shifts, most employees never met hence different opinions and ideas were mostly from management and in many cases, only supervisors were involved.

Figure 8: Level of Employee Involvement



Those who cited high involvement indicated that decisions in the hotels were consultative and that there was teamwork in proposing ideas. They also noted that there were work committees that presented employees' views to the management. They also pointed out that everyone participated in chores and helped where necessary and that employees were given opportunities to air their grievances through meetings between staff and management. They also noted that most activities and operations in the hotels were performed by employees and that managements were friendly.

The respondents were also asked to state the mechanisms or ways through which they were involved in the hotels' matters. Some of the mechanisms included union representation, monthly meetings to air issues and brainstorm ideas, daily management sessions where section heads met with their departmental employees, monthly seminars and trainings, work committees, working in teams to achieve a goal, raising grievances through questionnaires, meetings or writing suggestions through suggestion boxes, interdependence among departments, open participation forums, delegation of duties and minimum supervision.

They were involved in generating new ideas of handling customers and work and also suggesting areas of improvement in services offered and how they could be tailored. They were also involved in promoting the hotel, suggesting ways of adapting to the environment and new skills besides providing feedback on customers.

The respondents were further asked to respond to a number of statements in their respective hotels pertaining employee involvement in the classified hotels. The results on Table 6 shows that 68.60% of the respondents representing the majority agreed that in their respective hotels, the managements encouraged employees to propose new ideas and different opinions regarding the hotels' activities. The results further showed that 94.10% of the respondents, a majority, agreed that there was continuous investment on the skills and knowledge of employees through training in their respective hotels. The study also revealed that 55.60% of the respondents agreed that authority within the hotels was delegated so that employees could act on their own and they represented the majority. It was established that 83.60% of the respondents representing the majority agreed that cooperation across different parts of their respective hotels was actively encouraged. It is also shown that 83.10% of the respondents noted that teams were the primary building blocks within their respective hotels and they represented the majority. Similarly, a majority of the respondents, 56.20%, agreed that managers within their respective hotels showed that employees were important.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics on Employee Involvement

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Deviation.
The management encourages employees to propose new ideas and different opinions regarding the hotel's activities	5.90%	16.30%	9.20%	37.90%	30.70%	3.71	1.23
There is continuous investment on the skills and knowledge of employees through training in this hotel	1.30%	2.60%	2.00%	44.40%	49.70%	4.39	0.77
Authority within this hotel is delegated so that employees can act on their own	7.20%	15.00%	22.20%	31.40%	24.20%	3.50	1.22
Cooperation across different parts of the hotel is actively encouraged in this hotel	3.90%	10.50%	2.00%	34.60%	49.00%	4.14	1.13
Teams are the primary building blocks within this hotel	3.90%	3.90%	9.20%	45.80%	37.30%	4.09	0.99
Managers within the hotel show that employees are important	8.50%	16.30%	19.00%	28.10%	28.10%	3.51	1.29
<b>Average</b>						<b>3.89</b>	<b>1.10</b>

Based on the mean of responses of 3.89, the study concluded that on average, the respondents were agreeing with most of the statement on employee involvement in the hotels and their responses were varied given a standard deviation of 1.10.

### ***Correlation Analysis between Employee Involvement and Performance of the hotels***

Correlation analysis was carried out so as to establish the association between employee involvement and performance of the hotels. The correlation test was conducted at the 5% level of significance. Results presented in Table 7 indicated that employee involvement had a positive and significant correlation with performance of the classified hotels ( $r=0.664$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

Table 7: Correlation Analysis between Employee Involvement and Performance of the classified Hotels

		Performance of The Hotel	Employee Involvement
Performance of The Hotel	Pearson Correlation	1	0.664**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	153	153
Employee Involvement	Pearson Correlation	0.664**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	153	153

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

### Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between employee involvement and performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County. The following hypothesis was therefore tested:

*H<sub>0</sub>: Employee involvement does not significantly affect the performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County*

The findings presented in Table 8 shows that employee involvement explained a significant proportion of variance in the performance of the classified hotels. The R Square of 0.44 implies 44.0% of the changes in the performance of the hotels was attributed to the level of employee involvement in the hotels. Other factors not considered in the model explained 56.0% of the changes in performance of the hotels.

Table 8: Model Summary for Employee Involvement

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.664a	0.44	0.437	0.467328

a Predictors: (Constant), Employee Involvement

The fitness of the model used to link employee involvement and performance of the hotels was also tested by conducting the analysis of variance test. The findings obtained indicate that the model used was fit given  $F = 118.871$ ,  $p = 0.000$  which implied that the model used was significant. The results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance for Employee Involvement

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	25.961	1	25.961	118.871	.000b
	Residual	32.978	151	0.218		
	Total	58.939	152			

a Dependent Variable: Performance of the hotels

b Predictors: (Constant), Employee Involvement

The study found that employee involvement impacted positively on performance of classified hotels in Nakuru County. Table 10 shows coefficients for the employee involvement at  $\beta = .676$ ,  $t = 10.903$ ,  $p = .000$ .

Table 10: Coefficient for Employee Involvement

Model		Unstandardized		Standardized	T	Sig.
		Coefficients		Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.103	0.242		4.547	0.000
	Employee Involvement	0.676	0.062	0.664	10.903	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Performance of the hotels

The results implied that a unit increase in the level of employee involvement in the hotels would lead to an increase in the performance of the hotels by 0.676 units. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and an inference made that ***Employee Involvement significantly affected the Performance of The Classified Hotels in Nakuru County***

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study found that the level of employee involvement in the classified hotels in Nakuru County, Kenya was high. This was as a result of consulting employees in decision making, having work committees presenting employees' views and issues to management, allowing employees to perform most of the hotels' operations and also having a friendly management team. The mechanisms used in involving employees in the hotels' matters included union representation, daily departmental meetings overseen by section heads, monthly meetings, monthly seminars and trainings, work committees, questionnaires, meetings or writing suggestions through suggestion boxes, open participation forums, delegation of duties and



minimum supervision. They were involved in generating new ideas of handling customers and work and also suggesting areas of improvement in services offered and how they could be tailored. They were also involved in promoting the hotel, suggesting ways of adapting to the environment and new skills besides providing feedback on customers.

Average, low or even no involvement was linked majorly to cases where managers dutifully made decisions without involving the subordinates, being selective in involving employees consulting them majorly in times of crises and not in making the strategic decisions.

The study found that a large number of the hotel management acknowledged staff creativity by allowing employees to suggest new ways of improving the hotels' operations and that staff development through training was undertaken on a continuous basis. The study noted that there was an attempt to cultivate self-management among employees through delegation of duties which allowed employees in these hotels to act on their own. This was also the case of recognizing employees as important given that those who agreed that this was the case represented just a slight majority. The study however noted that the management of the hotels actively encouraged cooperation in the various segments of the hotels besides promoting teamwork or group culture in the hotels. The study established that employee involvement significantly affected the performance of the classified hotels under study.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper sought to examine the effect of employee involvement on the performance of classified hotels, a case of classified hotels in Nakuru County, Kenya. The study concluded that employee involvement in hotel operations positively and significantly affected the performance of the hotels as affirmed by the descriptive statistics and the inferential statistics afore-discussed.

The study also concludes that different mechanisms should be employed in involving employees in the hotels' matters. These mechanisms may include among others; union representation, daily departmental meetings overseen by section heads, monthly meetings, monthly seminars and trainings, work committees, questionnaires, meetings or writing suggestions through suggestion boxes, open participation forums, delegation of duties and minimum supervision. Hotels can also include employees in generating new ideas of handling customers and work and also suggesting areas of improvement in services offered and how they could be tailored. They can also participate in promoting the hotel, suggesting ways of adapting to the environment and new skills besides providing feedback on customers.

## POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that management of the classified hotels ought to ensure that they are not selective of the areas that employees can be involved so as to ensure consistency in employee involvement. Employees should play a greater role in strategic decision making. This can only be achieved if management regard employees as the most crucial assets in all the hotel business processes. Additionally, the study recommends that the hotel managements ought to increase the level of delegation of tasks to increase the level of self-management among the employees.

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