

EFFECT OF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION ON EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA

ABSTRACT

Human resource management encompasses all aspects of an organization's interactions with its personnel, including hiring and firing, benefits administration, goal setting and monitoring, employee performance evaluations, and handling employee departures. Public universities in Meru County have established rules and processes to provide their highest possible quality of service to their students. Similarly, these universities' human resources departments have helped establish procedures to guarantee staff members' adherence to legal frameworks, punctuality in reporting for work, absence-free attendance, audits of risk management practices, and a focus on workplace health, safety, and succession. Despite their best efforts, they are experiencing poor and substandard staff performance. Staff morale is poor and employees are not committed to their jobs, which results in frequent walkouts. Employees vent their frustrations, citing the high turnover rate as a reason why they too are looking for new employment. Nevertheless, there is paucity of conceptual and empirical knowledge. Thus, the ground for the present study was to determine the effect of recruitment and selection on employee performance in public universities in Meru County. The study employed descriptive cross-sectional research design. Academic, administrative, and human resources personnel made up the 90 study's target population. The study employed census method to obtain the study respondents. The study employed structured questionnaires to collect data. A pretesting of data collection tools was undertaken at university of Embu due to comparative characteristics. The pilot study enhanced validity and reliability of the tools. Using a statistical software for the social sciences (SPSS) window version 25, numerical data obtained in the field via surveys were sorted and recorded. The researcher used descriptive statistics (such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) to describe and summarize the data, and inferential statistics to draw conclusions from the data. Pearson's bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis were inferential statistics that was used to learn more about the correlation and effect of the variables of interest with regard to the continuous variables of interest. The study observed the ethical considerations of the research. This research uncovered a noteworthy positive correlation between various human resource functions, including recruitment and selection within public universities in Meru County. Through regression analysis, it was determined that approximately 46.1% of the variations in employee performance across these public universities could be attributed collectively to the utilization of recruitment and selection. Consequently, this study concludes that recruitment and selection exerted the most significant influence on employee performance. As a result, it is recommended that universities prioritize the enhancement of individual components within their HR functions rather than opting for a holistic approach.

Key words: Recruitment, selection, expectancy theory

Introduction

Human resource management encompasses all aspects of an organization's interactions with its personnel, including hiring and firing, benefits administration, goal setting and monitoring, employee performance evaluations, and handling employee departures (Ozkeser 2019). As a result, it is seen by professionals to be an updated form of human resources management (Storey, 2023). The people who work at educational institutions are crucial to their success. They are essential to the teaching, operating, and general efficiency of the institution (Edward, Ali & Anwar, 2021). But, for the university to function well, it must have workers who adhere to the "right man in the right position" philosophy (Chen & Vanclay, 2021). The first step in achieving the university's aims is to fill open positions with qualified individuals. Hence, recruiting is described as the process of organizing efforts to attract, locate, and hire individuals who possess the knowledge, abilities, and perspectives that are in line with the needs of a business (Dean & Sykes, 2021). Benslimane and Moustaghfir (2020) agree, adding that recruiting is the act of selecting a pool of candidates from whom to fill open jobs. The Asian university has made the recruitment process a top priority. According to research (Zhang & Lu, 2021) the Chinese recruiting procedure starts with the search for potential employees and continues with the presentation of applications completed by candidates for open positions.

University recruiting practices were also analyzed in Grindle's (2019) research conducted in Mexico. The first phase, as detailed by the report, is to count all the unfilled jobs and estimate how many new workers the institution will require. Second, you may get a job alert along with a detailed analysis of the position. Third, identifying qualified job applicants. Consideration of the position's requirements is the fourth phase in the university's recruiting process. We're looking for applicants who meet the requirements for the open job. Finally, student worker recruitment and selection. It has been shown via research that the university's recruitment procedure has a favorable effect on the quality of its personnel.

Ability of Kenyan universities to retain their best employees has been a source of competitive advantage and success in meeting institutional goals and objectives. High employee turnover rates may have an adverse effect on university strategy execution, leading to decreased output (Muma, Nzulwa, Ombui, Odhiambo, Wekesa, Omondi & Charles, 2019). Failure in recruiting may have repercussions, such as a negative influence on a university's profitability and incorrect levels of personnel or talents, therefore it is an essential part of any university's management process (Muma et al., 2019). Staffing shortages or misguided managerial decisions may result

from inadequate recruiting. Universities in Nyeri County were found to have a poor selection of candidates due to a lack of transparency, competitiveness, objectivity, and competency, according to research conducted on the region's educational institutions (Wangui & Felistus, 2021). The lack of high-quality work being done by university staff may be traced back to a lack of merit-based, professionally-managed recruiting and selection processes (Nanor, Owusu, Senyah, Owusu & Agyei, 2022).

Academic institutions can only achieve this level of achievement with the help of faculty and staff that have received extensive training and development. Because of the rapid evolution of both the technical and economic landscapes, private colleges now provide formidable competition to public ones. To rise to these difficulties, public institutions must invest in their staff members' education and growth (Karim et al., 2019). The entrepreneurial university as catalyst for economic development and social change: a descriptive study by Wangui and Felistus (2021). Strategic problems identified as important now need institutions in Nyeri town to address the training and development needs associated with adapting and increasing their diverse staff. Because of this, training is thought to have a significant effect on whether or not personnel are able to successfully complete their assigned tasks. Research further demonstrates that the existence of Kenyan institutions in a technical and dynamic setting creates a continuous push to maintain excellence in service delivery (Achola, 2016). Because of this, it's crucial to foster more optimistic attitudes and consistent training in the workplace. In the same vein, universities in Kenya rely heavily on incentive systems, both monetary and non-monetary, to monitor and improve the performance of their staff (Tumwet, Chepkilot & Kibet, 2015). When faculty and staff are inspired to perform at greater levels of efficiency and effectiveness, universities as a whole benefit. Paying workers more for their efforts has been shown in several studies to have a positive effect on productivity (Ndungu, 2017). Intrinsic compensation comes from inside, whereas external compensation comes from outside the company. As a result, colleges and universities need to analyze their pay and benefit structures to determine what incentives would best encourage workers to do their best. As a result, the goals and objectives of the institution are intertwined, in certain cases, with the incentive system (Tumwet et al., 2015). Jean, Ngui, and Robert (2017) found that low working morale, such as strikes, is related by inadequate pay and benefit systems in an effort to encourage and keep the workforce engaged.

In addition, a manpower expanding beneficial element of comparable cutting-edge is resource management for universities in today's global learning environment. HR professionals put in long hours in an effort to find, recruit, train, and keep the best workers (Nanoret al., 2022). Managing talent will provide colleges with a competitive edge due to the fact that skilled employees are the only assets that generate innovation. Universities may achieve a durable competitive edge if their staff members possess special skills that their rivals just can't replicate. Thus, the institution places a premium on developing a wide range of systems, procedures, and talent management strategies to oversee this exceptional human resource (Kuria & Mose, 2019; Naitore& Wanyoike, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

Educators and other staff members are a university or college's most valuable asset. Public institutions in Meru County have established rules and processes to provide their highest possible quality of service to their students. Similarly, these universities' human resources departments have helped establish procedures to guarantee staff members' adherence to legal frameworks, punctuality in reporting for work, absence-free attendance, audits of risk management practices, and a focus on workplace health, safety, and succession.

Public colleges in Meru County, despite their best efforts, are experiencing poor and substandard staff performance. Staff morale is poor and employees are not committed to their jobs, which results in frequent walkouts. Employees vent their frustrations, citing the high turnover rate as a reason why they too are looking for new employment. Nevertheless, there is paucity of conceptual and empirical knowledge on the present phenomenon. Thus, the ground for the present study to determine the effect of recruitment and selection on employee performance in public universities in Meru County.

Purpose of the study

The study sought to determine the effect of recruitment functions on employee performance in public universities in Meru County.

Research question

The study sought to answer the question, what is the effect of recruitment and selection on employee's performance in public universities in Meru County, Kenya?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical literature review

Expectancy Theory

Model developed by Victor Vroom (Suciu et al., 2013). In this theory, he argues that people (or workers) are driven to act in a certain manner because they anticipate some kind of gain from doing so. He argues that the reason people act in one manner rather than another is because of their expectations. He goes on to detail the three key tenets upon which this system rests: hope, material gain, and personal worth (as cited in Baakeel, 2018). He defines expectation as the firm conviction that an individual's demonstration of a certain behaviour would unquestionably help that individual achieve his or her intended performance outcomes. The person may use this expectation as a map to figure out what kind of knowledge and practice they need to carry out a certain job. He argues that people are less motivated when they are asked to achieve something that is out of their reach (Abdul Rehman et al., 2019). An individual's instrumentality may be improved via the practice of providing incentives for the actions you want them to do. This increases people's drive for goals with higher payoffs. He arrives to the conclusion that people are less motivated to complete a wide range of jobs when they are all rewarded equally regardless of how they perform (Dewettinck & van Dijk, 2013). According to Vroom, the importance of a reward for a person when they demonstrate desirable performance results is its valence. He argues that different people will place more weight on the variable having the most motivating power to them when evaluating incentives, and that this will vary depending on their motivation sources, objectives, values, and personal requirements (Freeman, 2019).

Almost every school has implemented the concept, and it is used in every facet of human resource management. Its primary applications, however, are in the areas of employee performance monitoring and analysis of training results relative to predicted institutional performance outcomes, as well as in the targeted recruiting and selection of personnel. Moreover, the theory is applied to the task of determining what drives workers and how to make sense of their actions (Lee, 2018; Nsofor, 2009).

According to research conducted by Nsofor (2009) in Lagos State, Expectancy Theory may be used as a technique for motivating workers. As employees' motivations vary, he warns managers to exercise care while using the Expectancy theory of performance management. So, they need to make an effort to learn what drives each individual and then provide them that. Not only will they get material benefits, but they will also be given the opportunity to develop their character. For their expectation model, Porter and Lawler (1968) relied heavily on Victor Vroom's

Expectancy theory. They developed their expectation theory by arguing that the simplicity of the Vroom model misleads readers, leading them to include new variables. They said it was dishonest to claim that increased production resulted from these kinds of programs when in fact the two were not related. Yet, this claim may be made only if the award is seen as meeting a genuine and important need on the part of the employee.

Some writers, including Graen (1969), Porter and Lawler (1968), Lawler and Porter (1967), and Lawler (1971), have challenged the Expectancy theory for its seeming lack of nuance. Some of the detractors, such as Lawler (1971), began making modifications to Vroom's model based on the following four arguments: When workers are given a choice between two or more possible outcomes, they will almost always choose for the one that will benefit them the most. Moreover, everyone believes that their activities will lead to the outcomes they want, and that their actions will lead to the outcomes they desire. Several of the critiques raised by other writers, including the need for the theory to be enlarged to integrate the results and suggestions of another research, were shared by Vroom himself (Smith & Hitt, 2006; Smith, 2006). This theory is pertinent to the investigation since it instructs university administrators in the best ways to meet the needs of their employees by learning what it is they really value and expect from their educational experience. The theory is also relevant because it describes how features of work systems like comprehensive training, fair performance review, and job rotation policies may influence employee behaviour. To be more specific, they inspire workers to work more and better themselves, which benefits the company as a whole.

Empirical Literature

Recruitment and selection and employee performance

At a time when they need to be more skilled than ever at recruiting talent to public service, public universities throughout the world are experiencing unprecedented staffing issues (Waterbury, 2019). Employees in both administrative and teaching roles at these institutions are the conduits through which students are equipped and fostered to become productive members of society who may aid in the development of the country (Waterbury, 2019). This means that screening and evaluation of candidates' abilities and knowledge is crucial throughout the recruiting process. According to similar research conducted in Europe, universities and educational institutions make concerted efforts to hire experienced and knowledgeable professors who can have a positive impact on their students' academic growth (Pokrovskaia,

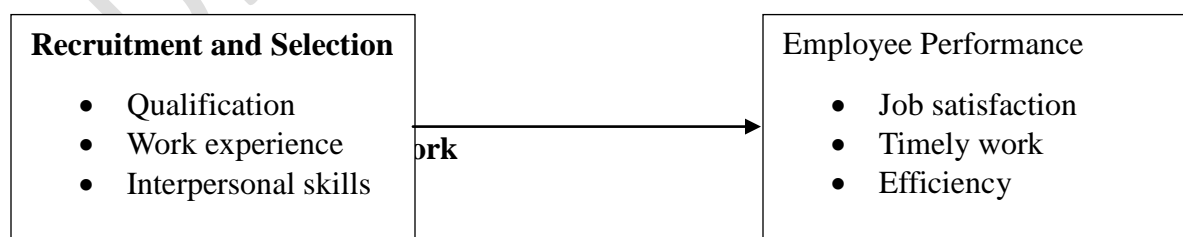
Ababkova&Fedorov, 2019). According to the findings of yet another research, productivity increases when the workforce is staffed by individuals who possess the necessary levels of education, experience, and training (Munir, 2022). Unfortunately, not all private institutions in Indonesia were found to be adhering to the recruiting rules (Afrianty, Artatanaya& Burgess, 2022). It's possible that the Educational System's recruiting and selection procedures leave certain universities without enough trained and competent staff. Human resource departments play a crucial role in ensuring that universities are able to fulfill their missions by ensuring a steady stream of skilled personnel is available for hire. Consequently, hiring entails not only strategy for staffing but also developing a job specification, assignment evaluation, and increasing exposure amid other things, whilst choosing is the means by the universities pick who will or won't be permitted to serve the enterprise so as to attract large pool of qualified. Application and résumé screening, performance testing, portfolio evaluation, in-person interviews, reference and background checks, and finally, final selection (Karama et al., 2020). Hence, selection is the process of selecting competent workers from a wide candidate pool via the use of various methods. Human resource managers in African countries like Zimbabwe have unique difficulties in the recruitment and selection of university staff (Tsvuura, 2022). Brain drain, corruption, nepotism, high turnover rates, a lack of qualified workers, and expensive recruiting expenses are only some of the problems that have been identified (Tsvuura, 2022). Unqualified people are often hired by these colleges. On the contrary, research conducted by Manus (2020) on the staff at the University of Pretoria in South Africa found that academic institutions are aware of the consequences of a subpar selection and recruiting procedure. Hiring errors are incredibly expensive for all colleges, no matter their size or whether they are public or private. Mistakes in the hiring process are a major source of conflict in the workplace. Poor performers drain resources from the rest of the team, resulting in lower productivity and actual financial losses (Aspalter, 2023). Furthermore, management has to make an effort to take remedial measures by allocating sufficient time to do so. Managers' attention is diverted from their other duties as a result of this. The first step toward a more strategic and value-added human resource management system is a formalized recruiting method. In a similar vein, Omotunde and Alegbeleye's (2021) research on Nigerian institutions found that merit-based hiring practices were significantly correlated with increased productivity on the job. The results of this research indicated that a lackluster approach to hiring had resulted in the employment of

unqualified individuals. In addition, research on recruitment and selection in Egypt (Karim, Bhuiyan, Nath, & Latif, 2021) found that effective selection procedures had a major impact on the productivity of the workforce. Many cutting-edge HR practices rely on carefully selecting the right kind of employees—those with the personality attributes to be driven by and perform well in teams, or those with the requisite skills and competencies.

Employee performance may benefit from the recruiting and selection practices used by several Kenyan institutions (Nguti & Mose, 2021). Research has shown that public university staff productivity is poor because of the close relationship between recruiting and selection and the succession plan for upper management (Kuria & Mose, 2007). (2019). To a similar extent, significant personnel turnover is blamed on a lack of replacement planning at several of Kenya's public institutions (Okwakpam, 2019; Kuria & Mose) (2019). For instance, research on the most effective methods for personnel management at Moi University found that the university used a retroactive hiring strategy, in which applicants for open positions are reviewed at the same time that the outgoing officials vacate their posts (Egesah, 2019). Shortcutting the induction and training process in this way leaves new hires unprepared for their roles. Njagi (2020) compared the two in research. The purpose of this research was to examine the recruiting and selection processes of a sample of institutions in order to establish their relative value. The results showed that both public and private institutions want to implement more equitable procedures for hiring and promoting faculty. University administration also values a merit-based hiring and promotion system. Yet, the research showed that the current political climate did not permit university administrators to remain impartial when hiring new faculty.

Conceptual Framework

This is a graphical and methodical representation of relationship between the independent variable (recruitment and selection) and the dependent variable (employee performance).



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

A research design is the overarching approach used to rationally and consistently integrating the many parts of a research project (McGregor, 2018; Karanja, 2016). Specifically, descriptive research design was used for this investigation. The objective of a descriptive research design is to provide an accurate picture of the current state of affairs without resorting to artificial means. A qualitative research design, such as interviews, was given a more in-depth knowledge of the study topic, however this approach is best used when a description of "what existing" is important in relation to that problem (Omware, Atheru&Jagongo, 2020).

Target population

Samples are often obtained from a specified subset of a larger population, and this subset is referred to as the target population (Muhindi&Ngaba, 2018). Academic, administrative, and human resources personnel made up the study's intended sample. The total target population was 90 including 34 secretariat, 20 human resource and 36 administration. The rationale for focusing on this group of workers was that they were essential to the day-to-day running of universities, performing tasks such as front-desk management, data capturing and processing, keeping custody of crucial information, and communicating with both students and faculty. Thus, students are aware of HR activities at their institutions and that these functions have an impact on their productivity. This is the kind of employee found in practically every public university's Academic, Administrative, or Research department. This means the researcher may collect information from almost all of the university's divisions, which made for a more objective study.

Sample and sampling size

As a result of the low population, every member of the staff was handpicked. As this method enabled data collection from all participants, it was appropriate for usage. This prevented sampling bias (Ponto, 2015). As these employees were found in almost every office throughout a university, their selection was also justified in that it would expedite the collection of data for all divisions. Many scholars, like Erhardt and Dennett (2019) and Erba et al., (2017) have endorsed this strategy, thus it worked well.

Research Instruments

The study employed structured questionnaires divided into two sections: the first gathered information about the respondent's profile to be used in characterizing the sample, and the second collected information on study variables to be used in characterizing the research's constituent parts. The goals guided the development of the questionnaire, which included both

closed- and open-ended questions. Open-ended questions were used to give respondents a way to express their views in a more pragmatic manner by providing a more insightful understanding on the phenomenon under question, and encourage a higher response rate than closed-ended questions, which limited the respondents to given variables in which the researcher was interested. Given the study's time constraints and budgetary constraints, the survey questionnaire was chosen as the most appropriate data gathering tool (Krosnick, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

The sample selected for the study was 90 respondents. All respondents were issued with questionnaires for data collection but the researcher received back 86 questionnaires having been dully filled. The returned questionnaires translated to a response rate of 95.6% of the total questionnaires issued by the researcher. This response rate was excellent because as Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) asserts, a response rate of 50% and above is sufficient, 60% and above is good while that of 70% and above is excellent. Therefore, the study response rate of 98.6% was sufficient for analysis and reporting. The high response rate was attributed to the researcher's use of phone call and regular short messages to engage the respondents on the data collection purpose which created a good relationship between the researcher and the respondents.

Respondent Demographic Information

Demographic data was gathered to assess the extent to which the study's participants accurately mirror the characteristics of the intended population. The survey included inquiries regarding four demographic factors: gender, age, educational attainment and length of tenure at the university. These questions aimed to provide insights into respondents' backgrounds concerning their gender, Age, education and professional experience.

Gender of Respondents

The study sought to find respondent's gender. The obtained data is presented below;

The data regarding the participants' gender was gathered by the researcher. This information was crucial as it allowed for an assessment of potential gender bias in the research. The outcomes related to the participants' gender can be found in the accompanying Figure 2.

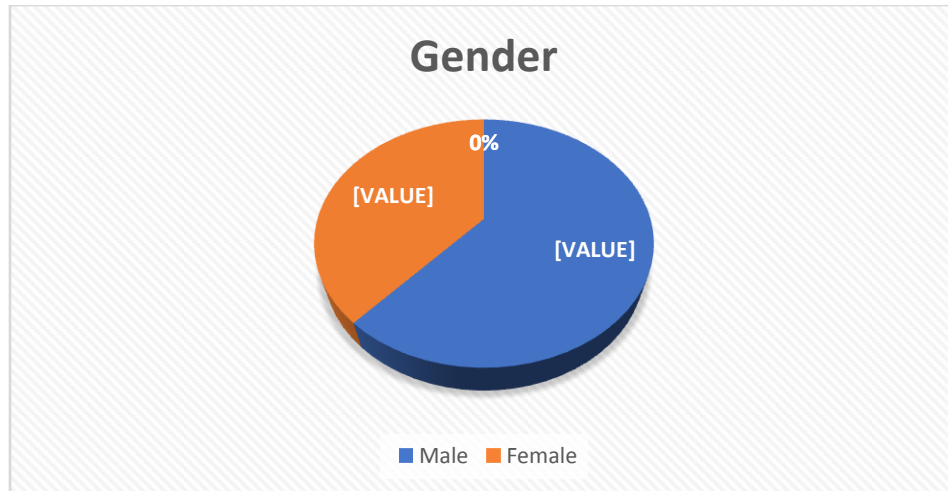


Figure: 2 Respondents' Gender

The results in figure 2 indicated that majority of the respondents 61.63% were Male, whereas 38.37% were female. These statistics underscore that the study was unbiased with regard to gender, as both male and female individuals actively participated in the study.

Respondents Age

The study sought to establish the age bracket of the respondents. The results are as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Respondents Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	18 - 25 years	12	14.0	14.0
	26 - 35 Years	27	31.4	31.4
	36 - 45 Years	21	24.4	24.4
	46 - 55 years	15	17.4	17.4
	56 years and above	11	12.8	12.8
Total		86	100.0	100.0

The findings in Table 1 indicated that majority 31.4% of the respondents were between 26 – 35 years of age, 24.4% were between 36 – 45 years while 17.4% of the respondents were between 46 - 55 years and 14.0% were between 18 – 25 years of age, the study further indicated that 12.8% were 56 years and above. This implied that universities in Meru County employ people who are of age. The age brackets shows that the staff in these universities have the required experience after working for a long time therefore they were aware of the HRM functions. The

research also indicated that a significant portion of the respondents from these universities fell within the age range of 25 to 45, representing a productive stage in their careers. These individuals expressed the importance of their organizations implementing effective practices for talent management, training and development and fair compensation and benefit, especially considering that many of them were still pursuing further education.

Education level

The study sought to establish the respondent's level of education. The results are indicated in Table 2.

Table 2: Education level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Diploma	21	24.4	24.4
	Bachelor's degree	32	37.2	37.2
	Postgraduate diploma	18	20.9	20.9
	Master's degree	10	11.6	11.6
	Doctor of Philosophy degree	5	5.8	5.8
	Total	86	100.0	100.0

From Table 2, majority 37.2% of the respondents had bachelor's degree as their highest professional qualifications, 24.4% of the respondents had diploma, 20.9% had postgraduate diploma while 11.6% had master degree as their high education level. The study further indicate that 5.8% of the respondents had PHD as their highest education level. This aligns with the conclusions drawn by the Commission for University Education (2018), which revealed a shortage of senior lecturers and professors. The report warned that if this pattern persisted, it could lead to a deficiency in research capabilities and hinder the provision of high-quality education. The data on the education level also indicated that the respondents were able to understand the questionnaire questions and provide accurate responses.

Job Tenure at the Institution

The information on the respondents' tenure of service at the respective university is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Years worked at the university

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	less than a year	15	17.4
	1 - 5 years	39	45.3
	6 - 10 years	17	19.8
	11 years and above	15	17.4
	Total	86	100.0

From Table 3 Most 45.3% of the respondents had worked for the university for a period of 1- 5 years, 19.8% had worked with the university for 6 – 10 years while 17.4% of the respondent had worked for less than one year and the same percentage (17.4%) had worked with the university for more than 10 years. In addition, all the study institutions are relatively young since being made constituent colleges and later full-fledged universities between 2012 and 2015. From the results, the universities are increasingly employing more employees as indicated for those who have worked 1-5 years.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

This section discusses the results derived from responses given in the questionnaire, the presentation of these findings was structured in accordance with the research objectives and research questions. The measures used to describe the data set are measures of central tendency and measures of variability or dispersion.

Recruitment and compensation and performance

The study first objective sought to determine the effect of recruitment and selection on employee performance in public universities in Meru County. The research subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with various elements of university's recruitment and compensation functions using a five-point Likert scale; strongly disagree, disagree, Neutral, agree, strongly agree. A detailed descriptive of the assessment is indicated in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviation of recruitment and selection functions

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
The employment of a qualified workforce has impacted productivity levels.	86	1	5	3.92	1.267

Recruitment of staff that is experienced in work has had an effect on employee performance	86	1	5	3.88	1.269
Selection of employees who has the necessary and required training on a certain work has led to efficiency at the workplace.	86	1	5	3.81	1.260
The incorporation of merit-based hiring practices has had an impact on the productivity of the workforce.	86	1	5	3.92	1.258
The selection of workers with great interpersonal skills has had an effect on timely work by employees	86	1	5	3.81	1.242
Surety of the human resource in ensuring a steady, stream of skilled personnel for hire has affected employees' performance and productivity	86	1	5	4.02	1.148
Well job specifications by the hiring department have attracted a large pool of qualified personnel thus having an impact on employee efficiency.	86	1	5	3.98	1.255
Evaluation of candidates' abilities during recruitment has had an effect on timely work by the employees.	86	1	5	3.91	1.243
Valid N (LISTWISE)	86				

From the descriptive information in Table 4, the respondents agreed with the statement that surety of the human resource in ensuring a steady, stream of skilled personnel for hire has affected employees' performance and productivity as indicated by a mean of 4.02 and a standard deviation of 1.148. the respondent were in agreement with the statements that well job specifications by the hiring department have attracted a large pool of qualified personnel thus having an impact on employee efficiency and that incorporation of merit-based hiring practices has had an impact on the productivity of the workforce as indicated by a mean of 3.98 and 3.92 with a standard deviation of 1.255 and 1.258 respectively. The respondents also agreed that employment of a qualified workforce has impacted productivity levels (M=3.92, SD=1.256). Evaluation of candidates' abilities during recruitment has had an effect on timely work by the

employees the respondents agreed with a mean score of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.243. On whether recruitment of staff that is experienced in work has had an effect on employee performance, the respondents agreed (M=3.88 SD=1.269). The respondents further agreed that selection of employees who has the necessary and required training on a certain work has led to efficiency at the workplace and with great interpersonal skills has had an effect on timely work by employees as supported by a mean of 3.81 and a standard deviation of 1.260. The results align with the research conducted by Fitri, Handaru, and Yohana (2021) which underscored the importance of implementing effective recruitment processes and competitive salary structures to attract personnel possessing the required expertise. In situations where qualified candidates are scarce, there may be a temptation to temporarily relax public service constraints by providing appealing contracts to consultants. Nevertheless, this approach carries significant drawbacks, as it may lead to a decline in morale among customs staff in general and pose challenges concerning the continuity of specialized mission personnel. A study by conducted by Suwanto and Subyantoro (2019) recruitment positively influences employee performance since it involves the selection of suitable candidates to fill open positions within an organization. When done effectively, recruitment can result in a high-quality workforce capable of achieving the organization's objectives.

Employee Performance

The respondents were asked to rate various elements related to their work performance.

Table 5: Means and standard deviation of employee performance

Statements	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Efficiency					
The amount of work I complete at a given time always exceeds the expectations of my boss.	86	1	4	3.92	.663
I am able to meet deadlines by completing tasks assigned to me on time.	86	1	5	3.97	.736
I can reduce the total time needed to complete a routine task.	86	1	4	3.82	.912
In performing my work, I always surpass the objectives set by my boss.	86	1	4	3.84	.998

Effectiveness						
I can make creative and useful suggestions for the university.	86	1	5	3.85	1.017	
I always satisfy the customers' needs.	86	1	5	4.19	.553	
I have never caused my boss or the university any inconveniences due to incomplete tasks, lateness or personal carelessness in discharge of my duties.	86	1	5	4.24	.725	
Quality of Work						
I have never received any complaints about poor work performance.	86	1	5	4.32	.535	
My boss is always satisfied with my work performance.	86	1	5	4.03	.785	
I cooperate with my colleagues, thus earning their respect and support.	86	1	5	4.50	.576	
I interact well with my colleagues outside my department and have their trust and respect at work.	86	1	5	4.56	.601	
Valid N (LISTWISE)	86					

From the results in the table 5, respondents agreed with all elements of employee performance. Specifically, they agreed that they consistently exceeded their boss's expectations ($M=3.92$, $SD=0.663$), met deadlines effectively ($M=3.97$, $SD=0.736$), reduced the time required to complete routine tests ($M=3.82$, $SD=0.912$), and surpassed objectives ($M=3.84$, $SD=0.998$). They also indicated their ability to create meaningful suggestions ($M=3.85$, $SD=1.017$) and more. Equally, respondents strongly agreed that they consistently interacted well with colleagues outside their department, earning trust and respect at work ($M=4.56$, $SD=0.601$). These results align with the findings of Maria et al., (2021), which suggested that employees consistently strive for optimal performance. Another study by Nikolaou (2021) indicated that employees are likely to rate their performance positively. Therefore, the data may indicate their belief that they are meeting performance expectations.

Diagnostic tests

The relationships between the variables were assessed using multiple linear regression model. The regression model has various assumptions namely linear, absence of multicollinearity, no autocorrelation and normal distribution.

Normality test

The normality test was assessed through the use of P-P plots as indicated in figure 3.

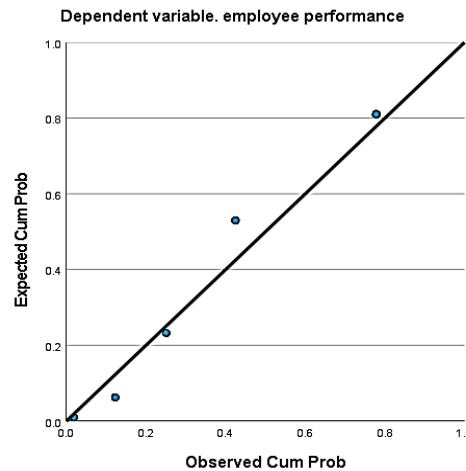


Figure 3: Normal P-P plot of Regression Standardized Residual

P-P points plotted against a theoretical normal distribution should form a straight line (Gupta 2011). From figure 3, the data was normal because the data points form an approximately straight line.

Homoscedasticity

Homoscedasticity indicates that the variance in one variable is similar to other variables. Specifically, the situation occurs when each level of independent variable residuals has similar variances (Issa & Nadal, 2011). To assess homoscedasticity residual scatter plots were used.

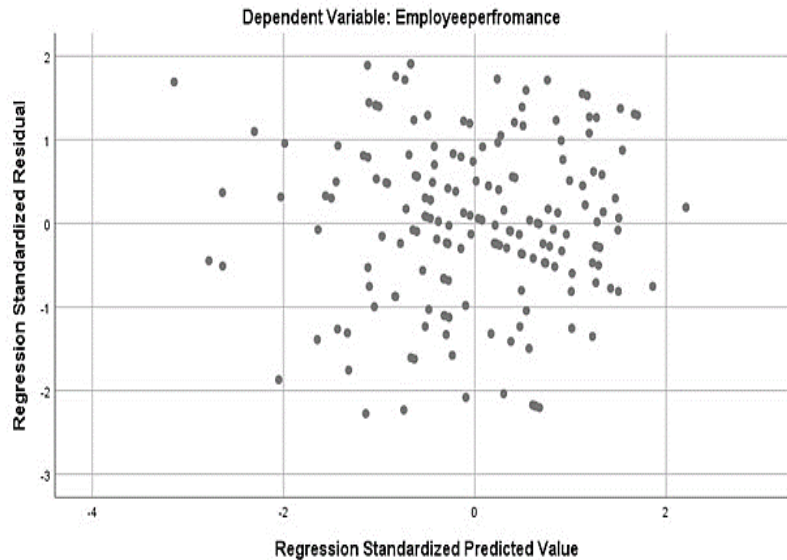


Figure 4: Scatter Plot

In line with the findings of Issa and Nadal (2011), it is emphasized that the data points should not exhibit a distinct arrangement. Specifically, this implies that the data points should be distributed both to the right and left of the X-axis and above and below the zero point on the Y-axis. As illustrated in Figure 4, it is apparent that the data exhibits homoscedasticity.

Multicollinearity

This situation occurs when there are highly correlations among the dependent variables. The assumption was assessed using VIF values and tolerance values. The acceptance value of tolerance levels should be less than 0.1, while the acceptable value of VIF is between 1 and 10 (Akinwande et al., 2015). Table 6 shows that the correlation levels were within the acceptable levels.

Table 6: Collinearity Statistics

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1 (Constant)		
Recruitment and selection	.699	1.430

Autocorrelation test

The linear regression assumes that there should be no autocorrelation. In other words, the observation should be independent. The Durbin Watson test was used to assess the presence of autocorrelation. The test value should be between 1.5 -.25, (McBurney& White, 2013). The value of the test was 1.680; an indication that the data did not violate statistical independence violation.

Inferential Statistics

In this section, there is presentation of the inferential statistics related to the study variables. These statistics encompass Pearson correlations and multiple regression analyses. Pearson correlations were employed to ascertain the connections between the variables, while regression analysis was conducted to uncover the link between recruitment and selection functions and the performance of employees in the public universities in Meru County.

Correlation Analysis

This aided in demonstrating relationship between dependent and independent variables. This entailed r coefficient and whether the correlation is positive or negative. Results illustrated in

Table 7. Correlation Results

		Employee performance	Recruitment and selection
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Recruitment and selection	N	86	
	Pearson Correlation	.516**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	000	
	N	86	86
	N	86	86

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

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The correlation findings in Table 7 suggest a robust and positive connection between recruitment and selection functions and the performance of employees in the public universities in Meru County. This is evident from the Pearson coefficient of 0.516 and a statistically significant P-value of 0.000, implying that effective recruitment and selection leads to enhanced employee performance.

Table 8: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.679 ^a	0.461	0.407	.396676

a. Predictors: (Constant), recruitment and selection

The research results presented in Table 8 reveal an R square value of 0.461, indicating that recruitment and selection, account for 46.1% of the variability in employee performance in public universities in Meru County. It's important to note that there are other factors not addressed in this study that contribute to the remaining variation. Furthermore, the R-value of 0.679 suggests a robust relationship between the predictor variable (recruitment and selection) and employee performance in public universities in Meru County.

Table 9: Analysis of Variance

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.238	4	2.560	8.550	.000 ^b
	Residual	104.750	81	1.293		
	Total	114.988	85			

a. Dependent Variable: employee performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), recruitment and selection

The findings presented in Table 9 provide validation for the model's significance, as evidenced by an F statistic of 8.550 and a p-value of 0.000. The outcomes of the regression analysis reveal the extent to which recruitment and selection impact employee performance within the public universities located in Meru County, Kenya.

Table 10: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.266	0.742		3.810	0.000
	Recruitment and Selection	.274	0.098	0.199	1.856	0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

The findings presented in Table 10 reveal a strong correlation between recruitment and selection and the performance of employees ($\beta = 0.274$, $P < 0.05$). These results indicate that a one-unit increase in recruitment and selection leads to a corresponding improvement in the performance of public universities employees by 0.274.

The resulting regression model can be represented as follows:

$$Y = 0.266 + 0.274X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where:

Y = Employee performance,

X₁ = recruitment and selection,

Summary of the Results

This research main objective sought to determine the effect of recruitment and selection on employee performance in public universities in Meru County. Results brought out that the universities in Meru county have a well job specifications in their the hiring department which has attracted a large pool of qualified personnel thus having an impact on employee efficiency and that incorporation of merit-based hiring practices has had an impact on the productivity of the workforce. The study also indicated that selection of employees who has the necessary and required training on a certain work has led to efficiency at the workplace and with great interpersonal skills has had an effect on timely work by employees. Correlation results established a robust and positive connection between recruitment and selection functions and the performance of employees in the public universities in Meru County. The regression findings revealed that a unit change in recruitment and selection resulted in 0.274 change of employee performance.

Conclusion

The study concluded that recruitment and selection affect employee performance positively. This was reflected by the regression and correlation results that support a positive relationship between recruitment and selection and employee performance.

Recommendations

According to the research findings, the recruitment and selection processes have a positive impact on the performance of public universities in Meru County. The study suggests that universities that have not yet implemented recruitment and selection policies should make efforts

to establish internal organizational policies and a culture that fosters best practices in these areas. This recommendation is supported by the significant variation in responses, indicating that while respondents generally agreed on the topic, their responses varied.

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