



## EFFECT OF RECRUITMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEES' PERFORMANCE IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN NYANZA REGION, KENYA

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**ABSTRACT:** *Employee performance is integral to organizational success, yet public universities in Kenya have faced challenges in achieving satisfactory performance despite implementing human resource management (HRM) practices. This study aimed to investigate the effect of recruitment practices on employee performance in public universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. The target population comprised of 3,129 individuals, and the sample size of 355 teaching and non-teaching staff were determined using the Yamane formula, employing random sampling techniques for data collection. A structured questionnaire was utilized as the primary data collection tool in a quantitative research design. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each scale in the questionnaire. Data analysis was conducted using both descriptive statistics and inferential statistics with the aid of SPSS version 23. To ensure reliability, the results were as follows: recruitment practices have a significant positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.165, p < 0.05$ ). The study concluded that recruitment practices have a significant positive effect on employee performance. The study recommended that hiring decisions in universities should always be made on the basis of a person's potential to do a job. The study recommended that hiring decisions in universities should be made on the basis of a person's potential to do a job. The recruitment process should continue to be done in a transparent manner and the recruitment processes in the universities should keep on being improved to enhance employee satisfaction. The employee selection process should always be done in an ethical manner and in a manner that is fair.*

**KEYWORDS:** Recruitment practices, employee performance, public universities, Kenya.



## INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a crucial aspect of any organization, as it is directly linked to the attainment of organizational goals and objectives (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017). High levels of employee performance can lead to increased productivity, efficiency, and profitability, whereas poor performance can result in decreased productivity, increased costs, and reduced organizational effectiveness (Sivakami & Samitha, 2018). Employee performance is generally measured through various indicators such as productivity, job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover rates, and quality of work (Robbins & Judge, 2019). In public universities, where the primary goal is to provide high-quality education, employee performance is particularly important, as it directly affects the quality of education provided to students. Several factors influence employee performance, including individual characteristics, job characteristics, and organizational factors. Individual characteristics such as personality, motivation, and ability can influence an employee's performance (Robbins & Judge, 2019). Factors such as organizational culture, and recruitment practices have been found to have a significant influence on employee performance (Boxall & Macky, 2014).

Globally, the impact of recruitment practices on employee performance has been the subject of extensive research. Effective recruitment practices are expected to stimulate a firm's innovation performance (Arvantis et al., 2016). For instance, a study by Wang, Yi, Lawler, and Zhang (2011) found that recruitment practices positively affected employee performance in Chinese universities. Internationally, recruitment practices and performance management have been found to have significant impacts on employee performance. For example, Gamage (2014) highlighted that effective recruitment practices are positively associated with employee performance, while Kollitz, Ruhle, and Süß (2019) found that recruitment practices motivate employees to perform at their best. In 2010, the Malaysian Government launched its economic transformation program (ETP) which is the road map for fast-tracking its economic development. One of the sectors which will play an important role is education, especially the higher learning institutions. The nation needs more human resources capable of performing different activities both in the public and private sectors. Subsequently, higher learning institutions are expected to produce high-quality human resources.

United States firms were advised to take up various HRM performance-enhancing initiatives to increase competitiveness in the global market. This recommendation was in agreement with the assertion of many researchers and practitioners that an organization's performance can be influenced by the way employees or human resources are treated (DeCenzo, Robbins, & Verhulst, 2016). In East Africa, there has been a growing focus on the role of recruitment practices in public universities. Studies by Odendo (2018); and Otoo, Assuming, and Agyei (2018) suggest that the effects of recruitment practices on employee performance in Kenyan public universities have not been exhaustively researched. Nonetheless, anecdotal evidence suggests that recruitment practices positively affect employee performance by providing necessary tools and resources and creating a motivating work environment. Manzoor et al. (2019) found that recruitment practices were associated with higher levels of employee performance in public universities in Kenya. However, the impact of recruitment practices is not always positive (Etebu, 2016).

Locally in Kenya, public universities play a critical role in providing high-quality education, which directly affects the quality of education provided to students. Effective recruitment practices are essential in these institutions to ensure employee performance and, consequently,



the attainment of educational goals. However, many Kenyan public universities are understaffed and overstretched in terms of resources, leading to poor employee performance. Inadequate recruitment practices are often cited as a major cause of this problem (Hassan, 2016). Research indicates that implementing appropriate recruitment practices can improve university performance by fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee satisfaction and commitment (Girsang, Tarigan, & Sipayung, 2023); Sarinah, Gultom, & Thabah, 2016).

### **Statement of the problem**

Employee performance stands as a cornerstone of organizational success, pivotal for ensuring operational excellence and achieving strategic objectives. The attainment of optimal performance hinges not only on the implementation of effective Human Resource Management (HRM) practices but also on the cultivation of a supportive and nurturing organizational culture. Existing literature underscores the significance of a robust organizational culture in fostering employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction, all of which are instrumental in enhancing performance (Chand & Katou, 2017; Shin, Jeong, & Bae, 2018; Bakker et al., 2017). Furthermore, it suggests that a synergistic alignment between recruitment practices and organizational culture amplifies their impact, resulting in heightened employee performance and productivity (Li et al., 2020).

Research suggests that a robust organizational culture enhances employee engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction, pivotal factors for improving performance (Chand & Katou, 2017; Shin, Jeong, & Bae, 2018; Bakker et al., 2017). However, public universities in Kenya, particularly in the Nyanza region, face challenges in achieving optimal employee performance. Despite implementing various recruitment practices, employee performance remains a significant concern (Mutua et al., 2012). A survey by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (2016) indicated widespread dissatisfaction among university staff, with over 60% expressing discontent with existing recruitment practices.

While previous research (Munjuri, 2011; Busienei, 2013; Mutahi, 2015; Kidombo, 2012) has explored the relationship between HRM practices and organizational performance in public universities, the specific impact on employee performance remains inadequately addressed. The shortfall in employee performance within public universities can be attributed to ineffective recruitment practices, inadequate support systems, and a lack of alignment between organizational goals and employee expectations. Despite the significant investments made in recruitment practices by public universities in the Nyanza region, challenges persist in achieving optimal employee performance. These challenges include high staff turnover rates, low morale among employees, and difficulties in retaining top talent. Moreover, the lack of alignment between organizational goals and employee expectations exacerbates these challenges, leading to decreased productivity and hindered institutional effectiveness. Therefore, this study aimed to address these gaps by examining the effect of recruitment practices on employee performance in public universities in the Nyanza region, Kenya. The remaining sections of the article are as follows; section 2 covers the literature review, section 3, research methodology, section 4 results & discussion and Section 5 conclusion & recommendations.



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Recruitment Practices on Employee Performance

McAleavy, Choi, and Arlikatti (2021) conducted a study in the United States on the determinants of recruitment, career development, and retention of Emergency Medical Dispatchers (EMDs). Their research, underpinned by interpretivists, involved 11 inductive interviews with serving EMDs, aiming to identify factors affecting recruitment. While not directly related to public universities, this study sheds light on how organisational culture and other factors influence recruitment processes, which could be relevant to HR practices in the context of public universities. They analyzed interview data using Atlas.ti software, resulting in 20 thematic codes, condensed into seven categories, forming the "optimum skill-set theory." The study provided visual representations of the relationships between codes, categories, themes, and participant quotations, offering insights into the recruitment and retention of EMDs in the USA.

Setyawati, Setianingsih, and Udin (2019) conducted a study in Indonesia, focusing on the Effect of Recruitment on Employee Performance within companies in East Jakarta. While their research primarily examined the influence of recruitment on employee performance, its relevance extends to a study on public universities in the Nyanza Region, Kenya, where HR practices are under investigation. The findings suggest that recruitment has a significantly positive impact on employee performance, explaining a substantial portion of the variance. This underscores the importance of recruitment in enhancing employee performance, which could provide valuable insights for understanding the influence of recruitment and training practices on employee performance in public universities. However, a research gap remains in exploring how organizational culture may moderate the effects of recruitment and training practices on employee performance within the specific context of public universities in the Nyanza Region, Kenya. Further research is warranted to investigate this moderating effect comprehensively.

Osadume and Onoriode (2022) conducted a study in Nigeria, focusing on the Effect of Referral Recruitment on Workers' Efficiency, specifically using Fidelity Bank Plc, Lagos, Nigeria, as their focal point. Their research highlighted that recruitment practices significantly influence employee performance, emphasizing the importance of objective recruitment methods in enhancing employee efficiency. This notion of objectivity in recruitment practices is relevant to the study on public universities in Kenya, where the investigation centres on how organizational culture may moderate the effects of recruitment practices on employee performance. A research gap exists in exploring how organizational culture influences the fairness and objectivity of recruitment practices within the context of public universities in Kenya's Nyanza Region. Further research is necessary to comprehensively examine the moderating role of organizational culture on the relationship between recruitment practices and employee performance in this specific setting.

Selase (2018) conducted a study in Ghana, focusing on The Impact of Recruitment and Selection Criteria on Organizational Performance, using GN Bank in Accra as a case study. The research found that recruitment significantly influences employee performance, a finding highly relevant to the study on public universities in Kenya. It underscores the importance of understanding how recruitment practices affect employee performance within the specific context of public universities. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on the impact of selection



criteria aligns with the broader exploration of HR practices, including recruitment, in the public university study. Investigating the selection criteria used in public universities and their relationship with employee performance, while considering the moderating role of organizational culture, could be an area of investigation. However, Selase's study leaves room to explore how organizational culture influences the recruitment-performance relationship, particularly in public universities in Kenya's Nyanza Region, where further research is needed to comprehensively examine this moderating effect.

Mwita, Nzulwa, and Kamaara (2022) conducted a study in Tanzania, focusing on the influence of recruitment on the performance of savings and credit cooperative societies (SACCOs). Their research emphasized the significant positive relationship between recruitment methods, selection criteria, selection process, and SACCO performance. Moreover, workforce diversity was found to moderate the relationship between recruitment and selection and SACCO performance. These findings are relevant to a study on the moderating effect of organizational culture on HR practices and employee performance in public universities in Kenya's Nyanza Region, as both studies delve into the impact of recruitment on organizational performance. While the Tanzanian study highlights the importance of effective recruitment practices and workforce diversity in enhancing SACCO performance, further research is needed to explore how organizational culture influences the effects of recruitment practices on employee performance in the context of public universities and how factors like workforce diversity may shape this relationship.

Janet (2019) conducted a study in Kenya, focusing on the Effect of Recruitment Practices on Employee Performance within the country's life insurance companies. Employing a quantitative research design, the study assessed the impact of the employee recruitment process on employee performance, with objectives concentrating on aspects like interviews, placement, selection processes, and induction. Findings highlighted the statistically significant impact of recruitment practices on employee performance, recommending structured interview processes, diversified recruitment sources, appropriate employee placements, and the establishment of induction procedures to enhance employee performance. This information is pertinent to a study on the moderating effect of organizational culture on HR practices and employee performance in public universities in Kenya's Nyanza Region, as both investigations centre on the influence of recruitment practices on employee performance. However, the study on recruitment practices in life insurance companies leaves an opportunity to explore how organizational culture moderates the relationship between recruitment practices and employee performance in public universities, which warrants further research. The literature reviewed led to the development of the following hypothesis statement:

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Recruitment practices have no significant effect on the performance of employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya.



## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a quantitative research design to establish the effect of recruitment practices on the performance of employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. This design was appropriate as it allows for the measurement of variables, statistical analysis, and the examination of relationships among variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Given the research objectives, a quantitative approach enabled us to explore the effect of recruitment practices on employee performance. The target population was 3129 respondents who comprised employees (both academic and administrative staff) and management personnel (human resource professionals and senior administrators) in public universities within the Nyanza region. The public universities in Nyanza region, Kenya, include; Rongo University, Maseno University, Kisii University, University of Nairobi Kisumu Campus, Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology and Tom Mboya University College. The sample size was 355 respondents who were determined on the basis of Yamane's (1967) sample size determination formula.

The study further adopted cluster sampling, stratified and simple random sampling techniques to select the respondents from the sampling frame. Data was collected using structured questionnaires specifically designed to measure the study variables; recruitment practices, and employee performance. Validity pertains to how well an instrument measures what it's intended to measure, encompassing various aspects like content validity (ensuring comprehensive coverage) and construct validity (confirming alignment with theoretical concepts), criterion and face validity also play roles (Rominger, et al., 2022). Reliability is used to address the consistency of measurements over time or across different situations. Test-retest reliability examines consistency when measuring the same individuals at different times, while internal consistency assesses interrelatedness among instrument items (Dalati & Gómez, 2018). Interrater reliability applies when multiple observers are involved. Ensuring validity and reliability is crucial because it validates the instrument's accuracy and consistency, bolstering the credibility of research findings. A pilot study was conducted at two university campuses in Eldoret, Kenya namely; the University of Eldoret and Moi University. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentages and frequencies and inferential statistics which include correlation analysis and regression analysis. The regression model for the study was as follows;

$$Y = \beta_0 + C + \beta_1 X_1 + \epsilon$$

Where; Y is the dependent variable (Employee performance)'  $\beta_0$  is the constant, C is covariates (gender and experience),  $\beta_1$ , is the parameter to estimate,  $X_1$  represents recruitment practices and  $\epsilon$  is the error term.



## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

### Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive statistics when used helps a researcher to provide a description of scores or measurements by use of statistics or indices. The types of variables and the scale of measurements used in a study have an influence on the type of statistics or indices adopted. In this study, frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations were adopted to provide a description of scores or measurements.

### Recruitment Practices on Employees' Performance

The objective of the study was to establish the effect of recruitment practices on employees' performance in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. Findings are presented in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics for Recruitment Practices**

Statements		SD	D	NAND	A	S. A	Mean	Std. Dev
Hiring decisions at this university are determined by a person's potential to do the job.	F	61	45	25	82	109	3.4130	1.53065
	%	18.9	14.0	7.8	25.5	33.9		
The university employs the most qualified candidates.	F	65	39	35	44	139	3.4752	1.60441
	%	20.2	12.1	10.9	13.7	43.2		
The recruitment process is carried out in a transparent manner.	F	67	31	30	115	79	3.4472	1.55241
	%	20.8	9.6	9.3	35.7	24.5		
I am satisfied with the recruitment processes at this university.	F	70	30	26	125	71	3.4689	1.58870
	%	21.7	9.3	8.1	38.8	22.0		
The employee selection process is done in an ethical manner.	F	52	51	25	118	76	3.3571	1.41193
	%	16.1	15.8	7.8	36.6	23.6		
I consider the employee selection process at my university to be done fairly	F	35	32	24	69	162	3.9037	1.39650
	%	10.9	9.9	7.5	21.4	50.3		

The study sought from the respondents whether hiring decisions at this university are determined by a person's potential to do the job, 106 (32.9%) of respondents disagreed with the statement that hiring decisions at this university are determined by a person's potential to do a job while 191(59.3%) agreed that hiring decisions at this university are determined by person's potential to do the job. Hiring decisions at the university that are determined by a person's potential to do a job were further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (Mean= 3.4130, Std Dev = 1.53065). Findings resemble that of Mahmood



(2021) that hiring decisions that are determined by a person's potential to do a job affect employee performance. In regards to whether the university employs the most qualified candidate, 183(56.8%) agreed while 104(32.3%) disagreed. The university employing the most qualified candidate was further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (Mean= 3.4752, Std Dev = 1.60441). The study by Kidombo, K'obonyo, and Gakuu (2012) also established that employing the most qualified candidate affects employee performance.

The study sought to determine whether the recruitment process is carried out in a transparent manner, 194(60.2%) agreed while 98(30.4%) disagreed. Carrying out the recruitment process in a transparent manner was further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (Mean= 3.4472, Std Dev = 1.55241). Findings are in tandem with that of Agoi (2016) that carrying out the recruitment process in a transparent manner affects employee performance. In regards to whether the respondents are satisfied with the recruitment processes in this university, 100(31.1%) disagreed while 196(60.9%) agreed. Being satisfied with the recruitment processes in this university was further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (Mean= 3.4689, Std Dev = 1.58870). The study by Mayes, et al. (2017) also established that satisfaction with the recruitment processes affects employee performance.

The study sought to determine whether the employee selection process is done ethically, 194(60.2%) agreed while 103(32.0%) disagreed. Doing the employee selection process in an ethical manner was further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (mean= 3.3571, std. Dev. = 1.41193). Findings resemble that of Girsang et al. (2023) that doing the employee selection process in an ethical manner affects employee performance. In relation to whether respondents consider the employee selection process in the university to be done fairly, 67(20.8%) disagreed while 231(71.7%) agreed. Employee selection process in the university that is done fairly was further established to affect employee performance in Public Universities with (Mean= 3.9037, Std Dev = 1.39650). The study is in agreement with that of Suwanto and Subyantoro (2019) that how fair the employee selection process is, affects employee performance.

### **Inferential Analysis**

Inferential analysis was adopted to make estimates about the population. It was also adopted to test hypotheses so as to make conclusions about the population. The results presented in this section include correlation analysis, multiple linear regression and hierarchical regression analysis.

### **Correlation Analysis**

Correlation analysis was done to determine the direction and nature of the relationship that exists between the study variables. The intensity in the linear relationship between the study variables was captured by use of correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) which is a value between 1 and -1, where -1 implies a perfect negative relationship while +1 implies a perfect positive relationship and if it is zero it implies that there exists no relationship (Okoli *et al.*, 2020). According to Pandey and Pandey (2021), if the correlation coefficient value ( $r$ ) ranges from 0.10 to 0.29, it is considered weak and if  $r$  lies between 0.30 to 0.49, it is considered medium while an  $r$  that ranges from 0.50 to 1.0 is considered strong. The correlation matrix is presented in Table 4.2.



**Table 4.2: Correlation Analysis**

N=322		Employee performance	Recruitment practices
Employee performance	Pearson Correlation		
	Sig. (2-tailed)	1.00	
Recruitment practices	Pearson Correlation	.869**	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	(.000)	1.00

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

Note: The values in brackets () are the p-values

Recruitment practices were found to have a significantly strong positive relationship with employee performance ( $r = 0.869$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This implies that an improvement in recruitment practices enhances the performance of employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. Findings resemble that of Adeola et al. (2016) that recruitment practices enhance the performance of employees. Reward practices had a significantly strong positive relationship with employee performance of ( $r = 0.843$ ,  $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ ). This implies that an improvement in reward practices contributes to an improvement in the performance of employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. The study is in agreement with that of Noorazem et al. (2021) that an improvement in reward practices contributes to an improvement in the performance of employees.

### Regression analysis

Experience and education level were adopted as control variables in this study and they were included in regression analysis and the findings were presented in Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.775 <sup>a</sup>	.601	.593	2.62024

a. Predictors: (Constant), education, experience level, Recruitment practices

Results obtained in Table 4.3 reveal that when control variables (education and experience level) are incorporated in regression analysis, the value of adjusted Square is 0.593 improves which shows that the model explains 59.3% of employee performance in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya from the predictor variable (i.e., recruitment practices). Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test the model fitness and the results presented in Table 4.4;

**Table 4.4: Results of Model Fitness**

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	3254.313	3	542.385	79.000	.000 <sup>b</sup>
1	Residual	2162.681	318	6.866		
	Total	5416.994	321			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), education, experience level, Recruitment practices

The findings as per Table 4.4, revealed ( $F=79.000$ ;  $p = 0.000 < 0.05$ ) which implies that the model was fit for the study and therefore employee performance could be predicted from recruitment practices and the following control variables; education and experience level. Regression coefficient analysis was done to ascertain beta values which were used to determine the extent to which each predictor variable is able to affect the outcome variable. Findings are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Regression coefficient**

Models		Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	t	Sig.
		$\beta$	Std. Error	B		
	(Constant)	9.555	.700		13.653	.000
1	Recruitment practices	.164	.102	.051	1.434	.001
	Education	.147	.102	.051	1.434	.027
	Experience	.060	.121	.018	.499	.018

a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Table 4.5 shows the regression coefficients results where recruitment practices had a positive and significant effect on employee performance in Public Universities in Nyanza Region ( $\beta=.164$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) This implies that an improvement in recruitment practices by one unit improves the performance of the employee in Public Universities in Nyanza region by 0.164 units. Findings resemble that of Aldhuhoori et al. (2022) that recruitment practices have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Hypothesis one ( $H_{01}$ ) stated that recruitment practices have no significant effect on the performance of employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. The findings of Table 4.5 reveal that recruitment practices have a significant positive effect on employee performance as indicated by ( $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Since recruitment practices have a ( $\beta = 0.164$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), we fail to accept hypothesis  $H_{01}$  and conclude that recruitment practices have a significant effect on the performance of employees. Findings are in agreement with that of Kyagulanyi (2019) that recruitment practices have a significant effect on the performance of employees. Education (Control variable) had a positive and significant effect on the performance of the employees in Public Universities in Nyanza region ( $\beta=0.147$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that an increase in education level by one unit improves employee performance by 0.147 units. The study by Juliani and Windu (2017) also revealed that education has a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees. Experience level (Control variable) had a positive and significant effect on employee performance in Public Universities in Nyanza region ( $\beta=0.060$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). This implies that an



increase in experience level by one unit contributes to an improvement in employee performance by 0.060 units. Findings resemble that of Dewanti and Artaya (2019) that experience level has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The regression model was as outlined below;

$$y = 9.555 + 0.164x_1 + 0.147x_2 + 0.060x_3$$

The constant value of 9.555 has the implication that at zero, recruitment practices, education level and experience, the performance of employees in Public Universities is at 9.555 units.

## CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that there was a significant positive effect ( $p < 0.05$ ) between recruitment practices and employee performance. When hiring decisions in universities are determined by a person's potential to do the job, it helps to improve employee performance. Recruitment practices that involve employing the most qualified candidates and when the recruitment process is carried out in a transparent manner contribute to improvement in employee performance in public universities. In most of the public universities, the employees were satisfied with the recruitment processes in the universities which had a significant influence on their performance. When the employee selection process is done in an ethical manner and fairly, it contributes to improvement in employee performance. The study recommended that hiring decisions in universities should always be made on the basis of a person's potential to do a job. The recruitment process should continue to be done in a transparent manner and the recruitment processes in the universities should keep on being improved to enhance employee satisfaction. The employee selection process should always be done in an ethical manner and in a manner that is fair. The focus of the current study was on the effect of recruitment practices on employee performance in Public Universities in Nyanza region, Kenya. Further research should be conducted on the moderating effect of organization culture on recruitment practices and employee performance in Public Universities in other regions in Kenya.

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