WORKING CONDITIONS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN OPERATING SUGAR MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN WESTERN KENYA

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Abstract

Purpose: The study aimed at determining the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya.

Methodology: The study adopted a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach in which the explanatory correlation method was utilized. The study’s target population was 3818 permanent employees of operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Yamane’s formula for determining sample size obtained 362 respondents from the target population. Proportionate stratified sampling was used to get a representative sample from each of the sugar firms with simple random sampling used to select the study participants. Data were collected by use of a self-administered employee performance questionnaire (EPQ). Content and construct validity were ensured by expert judgement and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin technique and Bartlett’s tests respectively. Reliability of the instrument was established by Cronbach Alpha Coefficient at 0.7 level. Descriptive statistics and inferential models (Pearson correlation and linear regression) were utilized in analysis of data. Findings were presented using frequency tables, percentages and narration.

Findings: The Correlation results show a strong positive correlation between employee performance and working conditions as indicated by; \( r = 0.623, \) p-value\( = 0.000 < 0.05 \). The study findings under regression coefficients showed that the unstandardized beta coefficient for working conditions was significant, \( r = 0.546, p = 0.000 < 0.05 \); the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that working conditions had a statistically significant positive relationship with employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: Findings contribute new knowledge to existing theories of motivation, HR practitioners can make decisions based on the study findings and adopt working conditions as a strategy of improving employee performance in order to enhance overall organization performance. Policy formulators can develop policy guidelines on working conditions based on the findings especially for the sugar manufacturing sector which would guarantee a conducive work environment for the employees to enhance performance.

Keywords: Working Conditions, Employee Performance, Manufacturing Firms, Productivity
INTRODUCTION

Employee performance in the form of performance assessment and management is an essential part of effective HR management and it is a most sought-after developmental intervention in HR portfolio (Bateman, & Snell, 2007; Fay, & Luhrmann, 2004; Hellriegel et al., 2004). Job performance is so important that its improvement has become a central concern in present-day organizations. Employee performance now stands as a widely researched domain in literature of organizational behavior (OB) and human resource (HR) development (Lawler, & Worley, 2006; Schiemann, 2009). Because of its importance, a considerable interest is now focused on how to measure and evaluate employee performance data. Izquierdo (2021) a Software Systems expert explains that the importance of employee performance metrics is not only in measuring how staff are doing for the purposes of raises and promotions but that the right metrics propel a business to success. The expert states that every company with employees faces the same struggle of knowing the best way to evaluate employee performance. According to Rajendran (2019) performance management is a process for setting up a shared understanding of what is to be achieved at an organization level which involves the alignment of organizational objectives with delivery of results. The focus being performance improvement through learning and development in order to achieve the overall business strategy of the organization.

Staff performance is usually considered in terms of results even though it can also be measured by behaviors and traits (Armstrong 2016). Crouse (2015) posits that staff performance is considered alongside the set levels of performance standards by the firm and that tracking employee performance benefits both the organization and the employee and therefore HR must have methods to measure performance of employees. Besides traditional methods of measuring employee performance through outcomes such as productivity and profitability, some measures of evaluating employee performance data presently include graphic rating scales, self-evaluation where an employee is asked to evaluate their own performance, management by objectives (MBO) or management by results where management and employees form objectives together, and checklists that identify employees that have deficiencies in performance areas. In Kenya, performance contracting whose main principle is the devolved management style that lays emphasis on management by outcomes (results) is part of the broader public sector reforms aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness in the management of the public service both of national and sub-national governments. Performance contracts (PCs) are necessary in ensuring the set government structures and systems facilitate effective delivery of public services which is achieved through staff performance appraisal systems. It is important that in this competitive era, organizations maintain and improve employee performance continually. According to Chien (2004), a successful organization requires employees who are willing to do more than their usual job scope and contribute performance that is beyond goal's expectations. For organizations to meet their objectives, they must have a workforce that is motivated and works towards achieving the said objectives (Steers & Porter, 2011). Goodin, (2007) describes that to maintain the performance of employee at the highest-level firms must keep them motivated. Steers & Porter, (2011) also acknowledge that motivating employees improves the organizational performance; however, they contend that keeping them motivated is a great challenge.

It has been observed that the workplace environment affects the performance of employees Khan, (2013). Scott (2000) reported that working conditions is associated with employee job
involvement and job satisfaction. Study by Johnson & Goldstein, (2012) revealed that one’s environment can impact one’s behaviour. They explained that our choices and preferences can be crafted by the environment around us showing that we don’t need to be motivated or incentivized to take action, we just need to be surrounded by the right cues.

From published sources, industrial sugar was introduced in Kenya in 1902 and the first processing factory opened in 1922. In the 1960s, a new government policy encouraged expansion of commercial sugar production with new factories opening in western Kenya. By the mid-1970s, Kenya was a sugar exporter. But from the 1980s, the sugar sector started to decline both in production and profitability, with the country becoming a net sugar importer by the 1980s. Although the area under sugarcane has expanded over the years to cover 220,000 ha, productivity is low achieving only 55 tons per hectare. Meanwhile, production costs have been increasing, averaging US$1007/ton in 2018. Over 80 percent of the sugar is grown rain fed by smallholder farmers mostly in Western Kenya using low inputs, with consequent poor productivity (Kenya National Assembly of the eleventh parliament 2015). It is against this background that this researcher investigated the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya.

It is established that staff productivity also known as employee performance is a main determining factor of a business’ ability to turn profits, essential for growth of the organization and also to the government since it represents the total volume of output measured in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). A survey by the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) in 2018, revealed that staff productivity ratio in Kenya government sugar manufacturing firms was at 26.4% while that in private owned sugar manufacturing firms was at 46.2%. This shows that employee productivity in Kenya sugar industry is low which prevents the sugar firms from making profits as indicated by the same survey which reported low profitability indices and liquidity ratios for both the government and privately-owned sugar firms. Low staff productivity also leads to low customer satisfaction as shown by the same survey which put customer satisfaction index for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 at 33%, 35% and 31% respectively. This is relatively low compared to the module average of 50% and an indication that most of the clients of sugar firms were not satisfied with the services provision.

Previous empirical and theoretical literature indicate there is a relationship between working conditions and employee performance through motivation Herzberg (1959). The researcher investigated the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya since there is no evidence of a similar study having been done.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Herzbergs Motivator Hygiene Theory

This study was guided by the Motivator and Hygiene theory developed by Frederick Herzberg (1959). He identified that motivators or intrinsic factors such as achievement and recognition which are inherent in the job itself and which the individual enjoys as a result of successfully completing the task, produce job satisfaction and motivate employees to work harder and hygiene or extrinsic factors, such as working conditions and job security which are external to
the task and often determined at the organizational level can lead to dissatisfaction and lack of motivation if not present in positive degrees. The theory has been criticized for assuming that satisfied workers produce more which may not be the case.

The theory is important to this study since it is used to explain employee performance under working conditions which in this study is conceptualized as the physical work environment and employee health and safety. The theory states that when these extrinsic factors (working conditions) are present in positive degrees, they prevent dissatisfaction hence maintain motivation which in turn leads to productivity (employee performance). The implication for HR practitioners is that, understanding the relationship between working conditions and employee performance and availing the right working conditions can motivate the employees of the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya to perform.

**The conceptual Framework**

The independent variable of the study is working conditions and the dependent variable is employee performance. (Fig 1)

![Conceptual Framework](source)

Fig 1 Conceptual Framework
Source: Researcher, 2021

**Empirical Literature**

**Working Conditions and Employee Performance**

Nur, Florianna, Helmi, & Sheila (2019) researched the relationship between the working environment and employee performance of administrators from different departments in a local municipality located in Kuching, based on five dimensions of the working environment; the quantitative survey design was utilized and data were collected by use of a questionnaire from 68 respondents. The data were analyzed by using Pearson’s Correlation Analysis to measure the
relationship between the variables. The findings showed there is a significant relationship between the working environment and employee performance.

Raziq and Maulabakshi, (2015) studied the effect of working conditions on employee performance in Tunisia using quantitative research design in which a questionnaire was used to gather data. Simple random sampling was used to identify 210 participants from banking, education and telecommunications sectors in Pakistan. The findings indicated that working conditions correlated positively with staff performance, and that poor hiring practices, poor leadership style, lack of recognition and poor monetary pay also affect employee performance negatively. There is a difference in the context between the cited study and the current study.

Collins (2018), conducted a study on working conditions and employee performance in the hotel industry in Uganda. The findings showed that some of the things respondents considered as poor working environments included bad employee policies, poor recruitment policies, and poor practices of supervising, inadequate motivation and bad grievance solving procedures. These reasons were found to be the leading factors for staff turnover.

Watetu (2017) assessed factors affecting performance in an organization, case of Postal Corporation of Kenya. The study used descriptive research design and a sample size of 350 respondents selected using stratified random sampling techniques. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, analyzed through the use of qualitative and quantitative techniques. The study findings showed that employee motivation, job design, management style and working conditions have a positive relation with that of employee performance. The gap between the cited study and the present study is the difference in the independent variable constructs and the population under study.

**Research Gap**

Based on the review of empirical literature above, the researcher identified that; A contextual gap exists since studies on working conditions and employee performance have not been conducted in operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Nur, Florianna, Helmi, & Sheila (2019), Raziq and Maulabakshi, (2015), Collins (2018), and Watetu, (2017) conducted studies in the local municipality in Kuching, the telecommunications sector in Tunisia, the hotel industry in Uganda and the postal corporations in Kenya respectively. The population of employees in the operating sugar firms in Western Kenya is not adequately represented in the reviewed studies. Majority of the researchers in the reviewed studies have conceptualized employee performance as either quality, quantity, profitability, customer satisfaction, commitment (Cheboi 2014) and even procurement performance (Muvunyi & Mulyungi, 2018). The concept of employee performance as productivity job/task performance has not been exploited. The researcher conducted the study to fill the gaps.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Research design**

Research design is a plan, a roadmap and blueprint strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions (Kothari (2004) The descriptive research design was used to describe the in operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya and to present the facts of the state of working conditions in the sugar firms (Creswell (2014). Correlation method was used
to describe the state of the relationship between working conditions and employee performance. Correlation research design uses a correlation statistical test to describe and measure the degree of association/relationship between two or more variables or sets of scores (Creswell, 2012) The explanatory design which is a correlational design was used to establish the extent to which two variables (or more) co-vary, that is where changes in one variable are reflected in changes in the other was utilized.

**Target population**

The target population for the study was the 3818 permanent employees of the sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya as shown below;

**Table 1: Target Population**

| Sugar Company                      | Permanent Employees |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Nzoia sugar Factory               | 761                |
| West Kenya sugar Limited          | 998                |
| Butali Sugar Mill                 | 961                |
| Busia (Busibwabo) Sugar co. ltd   | 675                |
| Olepito Sugar Industry            | 423                |
| **TOTAL**                         | **3818**           |

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique**

Yamane’s (1967) formula for calculating sample size from the population was used. According to Yamane, for a confidence level of 95% and a precision or margin of error of 5%, size of sample is;

\[ n = \frac{N}{(1+Ne^2)} \]

Where;

- \( n \) = minimum sample size
- \( N \) = Population size
- \( e \) = Level of precision set at 95% (5% = 0.05)

In this study, \( N \) is 3818
- \( e = 0.05 \)

\[ n = \frac{3818}{1+(3818 \times 0.0025)} = 362.0673 \]

Sample size = 362

Sampling was by proportionate stratified sampling to get a representative sample from each of the sugar firms with simple random sampling used to select the study participants which ensured
that every item in the study population had equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

**Data Collection Instrument**

Data were collected by use of a self-administered employee performance questionnaire (EPQ) which were distributed to 362 respondents of which 326 were returned representing 90% response rate. The study tool’s content and construct validity to check the degree to which the questionnaire measured what it was supposed to measure was ensured by expert judgement and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin technique and Bartlett’s tests respectively. A pilot study was conducted on 36 respondents (10% of the study sample) prior to administering the questionnaire to ascertain reliability which is about the level of accuracy of a study tool (Blumberg, Copper and Schindler, (2017), Mohajan, (2017). This was established by Cronbach Alpha Coefficient at a confidence level of 0.7.

**DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Analysis of the collected data was done by descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, standard deviation, Skewness and Kirtosis). Inferential statistics of correlation and regression was then applied to test the study hypothesis and to make generalization about the population under study. Findings were represented using frequency tables, percentages and narration.

Working conditions was measured by questions on a 5- point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

**Descriptive Analysis for Employee Performance.** *Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Somewhat Agree (SMA) = 3, Agree (A) = 4, Strongly Agree (SA) = 5.*

| Statement                                                                 | SD  | D  | SMA | A  | SA  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| I managed to effectively plan my work so that it is done on time.         | 14  | 21 | 137 | 103| 51  |
| My planning of work has been optimal (the best) all through               | 17  | 20 | 80  | 171| 38  |
| I kept in mind the results that I have to achieve in my work              | 13  | 21 | 138 | 103| 51  |
| I was able to separate main issues from side issues at work               | 96  | 22 | 77  | 53 | 78  |
| I consistently accomplished the set job tasks and meet all job goals      | 15  | 108| 65  | 98 | 40  |
| I completed all job assignments in the given time frames                  | 15  | 21 | 172 | 80 | 38  |
| My work output was of outstanding/excellent quality                       | 14  | 17 | 107 | 148| 40  |
| I understand my job performance objectives                                | 26  | 28 | 83  | 139| 50  |

| Average level of Employee Performance | Mean(%Mean) | Std. Dev. | Std. Error of mean | Minim um | Maximum |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|---------|---------|
|                                    | 3.4578 (69%)| .63401    | .03511             | 1.63    | 5.00    |
The findings of table 1 shows that majority of the respondents, 42% and 32% somewhat agreed and agreed respectively that they had managed to effectively plan their work so that it is done on time. In terms of planning work, majority of the respondents, 52% agreed that their planning of work has been optimal (the best) all through their work at their respective work station, 42% and 32% somewhat agreed and agreed respectively that they have kept in mind the results that I have to achieve in my work. Majority of the respondents, 33% and 20% disagreed and somewhat agreed respectively that they consistently accomplish the set job tasks and meet all job goals, 53% completed all job assignments in the given time frames. Also, majority of the study participants, 43% seem to understand their job performance objectives as shown in table 4.8 above.

On average, the overall level of employee performance was 69% (Mean = 3.4578, Std. Dev. = 0.63401) rated moderate; this is an indication that majority of the employees in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya are not performing to their full potential thus need for improvement.

It is important that in this competitive era, organizations maintain and improve employee performance continually. According to Chien (2004), a successful organization require employees who are willing to do more than their usual job scope and contribute performance that is beyond goal's expectations. For organizations to meet their objectives, they must have a workforce that is motivated and works towards achieving the said objectives (Steers & Porter, 2011). Goodin, (2007) describes that to maintain the performance of employee at its highest level firms must keep them motivated. Steers & Porter, (2011) also acknowledge that motivating employees improves the organizational performance; however, they contend that keeping them motivated is a great challenge. The descriptive results reveal that on average, overall employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya is 64% rated moderate. The sugar firms could apply the findings of this study to improve employee performance in the sugar firms because employee performance is a contributor to productivity of the organizations.

**Working Conditions among Sugar Manufacturing Firms in Western Kenya.**

The study sought to assess the descriptive statistics of working conditions and its influence on the employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. The findings were as shown in table 2.
Table 2: Descriptive Analysis for Working Conditions. *Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1, Disagree (D) = 2, Somewhat Agree (SMA) = 3, Agree (A) = 4, Strongly Agree (SA) = 5.*

| Statement                                                                 | SD | D  | SMA | A   | SA  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|-----|-----|-----|
| My working space is neat, clean, and well ventilated                      | 12 | 19 | 43  | 172 | 80  |
|                                                                           | 4% | 6% | 13% | 53% | 25% |
| My working environment is free from loud noise and distracting sound      | 15 | 140| 16  | 109 | 46  |
|                                                                           | 5% | 43%| 5%  | 33% | 14% |
| The temperature in my working area is normal and well-regulated throughout the day | 5  | 107| 74  | 55  | 85  |
|                                                                           | 2% | 33%| 5%  | 33% | 14% |
| The lighting in my work area is enough and comfortable for the work I do. | 23 | 23 | 43  | 165 | 72  |
|                                                                           | 7% | 7% | 13% | 51% | 22% |
| The walls in my work place are well painted with a pleasant color and the furniture is sufficient | 9  | 16 | 137 | 61  | 103 |
|                                                                           | 3% | 5% | 42% | 19% | 32% |
| I feel safe, free from danger, and comfortable in my work place          | 15 | 16 | 140 | 109 | 46  |
|                                                                           | 5% | 5% | 43% | 33% | 14% |
| I am provided with protective wear (gloves, apron, overall, boots) to wear when at work. | 15 | 10 | 129 | 99  | 73  |
|                                                                           | 5% | 3% | 40% | 30% | 22% |
| Potential hazards are addressed immediately and regular maintenance conducted to prevent re-occurrence | 9  | 18 | 135 | 61  | 103 |
|                                                                           | 3% | 6% | 41% | 19% | 32% |

| Average level of Working Environment | Mean(% Mean) | Std. Dev. | Std. Error of mean | Minimum | Maximum |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------|--------------------|---------|---------|
|                                      | 3.6196 (72%) | .72408    | .04010             | 1.13    | 5.00    |

The findings of table 2 show that majority of the respondents, 53% and 25% agreed and strongly agreed respectively that their respective working spaces are neat, clean, and well ventilated. Majority of the respondents, 43% disagreed that their respective working environments are free from loud noise and distracting sound, and 33% disagreed that the temperature in their respective working area is normal and well-regulated throughout the day; this indicates that the temperatures in most of the working environments in sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya are not very conducive for effective working thus need for improvement. There seem to be enough lighting in the working areas among the sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya as indicated by majority of the respondents, 51% who indicated that the lighting in their respective work areas is enough and comfortable for the work they do. Also, most of the respondents, 42% somewhat agreed that the walls in their respective work places are well painted with a pleasant color and the furniture are sufficient; implying that not all walls are well painted and not all employees are supplied with furniture for working. Similarly, 43% of the respondents somewhat agreed that they feel safe, free from danger, and comfortable in their respective work place; and indication that not all employees are feeling safe and comfortable at work place. 40% of the study participants claim that they are not being provided by protective wear (gloves, apron, overall, boots) to wear when at work and 41% somewhat agreed that Potential hazard are addressed immediately and regular maintenance conducted to prevent re-occurrence; implying that they are not sure if the potential hazards are dealt with effectively.
On average, the overall level of satisfaction with the working environment among the employees of the operating sugar manufacturing companies in Western Kenya was 72% (Mean = 3.6196, Std. dev. = 0.72408) rated moderate; the results imply that the working environments among the sugar manufacturing companies in Western Kenya are not adequately satisfactory for effective working thus need for improvement.

Tefera, (2013) studied influence of working conditions on employee performance, case of Development Bank of Ethiopia, 79% of the respondents agreed that working conditions was a motivator for them to perform with only 19% and 2% of the respondents not believing that working conditions was a motivational factor for them. The findings agree with that of Bushiri (2014) in which majority of the employees constituting 26% described their physical working environment towards performance as moderate to influence them to stay in the office and work comfortably. The findings however contrast with that of Nanzushi (2015) in a similar study among mobile telecommunications in Nairobi, in which employees were satisfied with their physical work environment aspects like furniture, spatial layouts, lighting and noise levels. These aspects of the physical work environment help improve employees’ performance therefore working conditions for all employees in the operating sugar manufacturing firms ought to be scaled up.

**Correlation Results**

Pearson moment correlation (r) was used to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Gravetter et. al, (2000) indicates that correlation coefficient r ranges from +1 to -1 where a coefficient, |r| ≥ 0.5 indicate a strong association, 0.3 ≤ |r| < 0.5 indicates a moderate association, 0.1 ≤|r| < 0.3 indicates a weak association and |r| < 0.1 indicates a negligible association. The Correlation results show a strong positive correlation between employee performance and working conditions among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya indicated by; r = 0.623, p-value= 0.000 < 0.05.

**Linear Regression Analysis**

**Simple Linear Regression between Working Condition and Employee Performance.**

The study sought to determine the relationship between working conditions and employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. To achieve this, the researcher tested for the following hypothesis;

H01: Working Conditions has no significant relationship with employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya

The findings were as shown in table below;
Table 3 Linear Regression Analysis for Working Conditions and Employee Performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya.

| Model Summary |
|---------------|
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|-------|---|----------|------------------|-------------------------|
| 1     | .623 | .388      | .386             | .49668                  |

| ANOVA |
|-------|
| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | p-value |
|-------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|---------|
| 1 Regression | 50.712 | 1 | 50.712 | 205.569 | .000    |
| Residual    | 79.927 | 324 | .247 |       |         |
| Total       | 130.639 | 325 |       |       |         |

| Coefficients |
|---------------|
| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients | Standardized Coefficients | t | p-value |
|-------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------|
| 1 (Constant) | 1.483 | .140 | 10.561 | .000 |
| Monetary Pay | .546 | .038 | .623 | 14.338 | .000 |

The study results of ANOVA (above) shows that F (1, 324) = 205.569, P = 0.000 < 0.05; these findings indicates that the simple linear regression used to model the relationship between working conditions and employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya was a good fit to the data. The simple linear regression model (working conditions) explained 38.8% of the variation in the employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya as indicated by the R Square = 0.388 (see model summary of table 4.3). The study findings under regression coefficients shows that the unstandardized beta coefficient for working conditions was significant, β = 0.546, p = 0.000 < 0.05; the study therefore rejected the null hypothesis and concluded that working conditions had a statistically significant positive relationship with employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Working conditions had a positive standardized beta coefficient = 0.623 as shown in the regression coefficients results; this indicates that a unit improvement in working conditions improves the employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya by 62.3%. To predict the employee performance among operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya when given the level of working conditions, the following model is appropriate for use;

Employee Performance = 1.483 + 0.546 Working Conditions

Cheboi, (2014) concurs that good working environment keeps employees focused on their work which is supported by the findings of Bushiri (2014) that there exists a strong relationship between physical working environment and motivation for employees to perform.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following conclusions were made based on the findings the study; there is a strong positive correlation between working conditions and employee performance. Working conditions had
significant positive relationship with employee performance in the operating sugar manufacturing firms in Western Kenya. Increasing working conditions by a unit causes an improvement in employee performance by a similar amount in operating sugar firms in Western Kenya.

**Recommendations**

HR practitioners should adopt working conditions as a strategy for improving employee performance. This may be done by providing a conducive working environment for their employees in order to enhance performance. The researcher recommends that scholars and other academicians use the findings of this study as a reference tool since the findings add to the existing body of knowledge on motivation that working conditions motivate employees to perform. To policy formulators, the findings of this study should be used as a basis for developing policy guidelines on working conditions and employee performance especially in the sugar industry. Further study on the relationship between other aspects of working conditions not covered in this study such as legal rights and responsibility, organizational climate and work load and employee performance may be conducted.

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