

# The Effects of Placement Policies Criteria on Job Satisfaction among Employees of Defunct Local Authorities in Kenya: A Case of Employees of the County Government of Kericho

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**Abstract:** When the new constitution of Kenya was promulgated in 2010, 47 County governments were created from 175 local authorities which were in existence by then. In 2013, the process of transfer of functions and resources to the devolved units of government was carried out. This process was declared successful in time. Nonetheless, it faced many challenges. This study therefore sought to establish the effects of integration criteria on job satisfaction of defunct local authorities' employees in Kenya, with a case study of employees absorbed into the County Government of Kericho. Although employees who worked in the defunct local authorities before devolution were absorbed by county governments, it seems unclear whether or not these employees were satisfied with the deployment. As such, this study sought to establish the level of satisfaction of these employees. Specifically, the study sought to establish the effects of placement policies, qualifications alignment and condition of service on job satisfaction among the integrated employees. The study used descriptive survey design. It adopted mixed methods research, adopting both quantitative and qualitative approaches to collect data. A sample of one hundred and forty (140) respondents participated in the study. Key informant interviews, a questionnaire and document analysis were used to collect data. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the sample and purposive sampling was used to select the four key interviewees. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics while Chi-Square was used to test the hypotheses. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. The results were then presented in narrative, tables and graphs. The research findings revealed that majority (62.9%) of the workers were satisfied with placement policies in the County. The study concluded that majority of the defunct local authorities' employees in Kericho County were satisfied with the integration on the basis of placement policy. The significance of this study is in its practical contribution, which is geared towards addressing the employees integrated to the county government. The study recommends for appraisal of integrated employees to address the need of the minority integrated employees who are dissatisfied. The study also recommends that the County government to carry out performance appraisals annually and those due for promotion be promoted accordingly.

**Keywords:** Integration, Defunct Local Authorities, Devolution, Placement Policies, Kericho County, Kenya

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## I. Introduction

Job satisfaction has been linked with motivation, but the nature of this relationship is not clear. Satisfaction is not the same as motivation; job satisfaction is more of an attitude, an internal state. It can be associated with a personal feeling of achievement (Mullins, 2005). Job satisfaction may be considered as one of the main factors which determines efficiency and effectiveness of organizations. The new managerial paradigm insists that employees be treated and considered primarily as human beings that have their own wants, needs and personal desires (Smoke, 2012).

### Placement Policy

The placement policy of the staff in any organization must always be consistent with international applicable labour relations legislations- ILO laws. The placement policy of organization provide for procedures on how individual are placed in certain position in an institution for continuous and un interruption of operations of an organization. It provides for a structured way of engagement with relevant trade unions (GOK, 2006). The placement policy, matches employee's skills with the job content. Organization policy guide the employees to align his or her goals with that of organization hence employee will be satisfied with his job as well as the company or an organization.

Eggemeier (2011), suggests that deviation from adhering to the policy of the organization may be a pointer that the employee performance are not aligned with the goals of the organization that, he or she works for and that leads to conflict or clash and the ultimate will be dissatisfaction of both parties. Washburn (2009),

notes that adherence of the policy of an organization in the glance may seem to be an hindrance to creativity but looking at it from a broad perspective, it may be seen as useful guide that provide a boundary to creativity. This will lead to satisfaction of an employee as the policy provide framework for operations.

### **Overview of Devolution across the World**

Smoke (2012) points out that devolved system of government has been successful in most countries of the World like US, Sweden, UK, India, South Africa and Nigeria. The author also notes that there are different types of devolved systems of governance practiced by different countries. For example, the US, Nigeria and India use the federal state systems. South Africa also has a devolved system of government, having regional governments headed by a premier while the national government retains supervisory and oversight roles. In East Africa, Uganda has been documented to practice devolution through kingdoms/districts while Tanzania practices through *Jimbos*(regions). Other countries in Africa practicing devolved systems are Rwanda and Namibia (World Bank, 2012; Smoke, 2012).

All these different systems of devolution also experience varied challenges regarding the management of resources, key among them being the placement of human resources. Personnel are charged with the key responsibilities of delivering essential services to citizens of the particular devolved units. These challenges faced by devolved units, especially those of the human capital, if not handled well can lead to poor performance of these units in their quest for service delivery. In 1999, Indonesia reported to have had increased or worsened corruption in human resource management after decentralization of services. The World Bank (2012) posits that, in Indonesia, the levels of corruption have increased after decentralization which is evidenced by the sharp rise for the prices paid for civil service jobs.

The constitution of Uganda provided that each district to have its own commission or agency called District Service Commission (DSC), responsible for handling human resource personnel. This commission can be equated to the current Kenya's County Public Service Boards for each of the 47 counties. The DSC members are normally appointed by politicians, leading to a situation whereby DSCs were always used to influence public service recruitment for political needs.

Following the promulgation of the 2010 Constitution, the Kenya government put in concerted efforts to ensure that the constitution is implemented. The time-table for implementation of the new constitution was laid down under article 185 (2) and 197 (2) and expounded in schedule 4 of the constitution defined the distribution of functions between the national and County Governments (GOK, 2010). The Transitional Authority (TA) was established to carry out an audit of the existing human resources of the government and local authorities as outlined in the Transitional to Devolved Government Act, 2012, section 7 (i). Additionally, the same Act, in section 7 (m), mandates the TA to advice on the effective and efficient deployment of the human resource to either level of government. The TA conducted a human resource audit in 2013 and issued guidelines for deployment of the human resource to serve in either national or county governments, according to the distribution of the function between national and county governments.

It has been observed that the manner in which employees are integrated into an organization affects how they will be able to contribute to the organizational objectives and goals. Batt and Valcour (2003) aver that employers should be provided with workplace cultures that are conducive, reflected formally by the policies and values that support integration of all employees.

### **Integration of Defunct Local Authorities' Employees in Kericho County**

By the time the Government of Kenya implemented the new Constitution in 2013, the defunct local authorities across all the 47 counties had a total of 32,237 employees (TA, 2013). Kericho County had 402 employees, which consisted of 70% male and 30% female staff (TA, 2013). Integrating new employees into the organizational system has been known to have long-term effects. The costs of an unsuccessful integration are very high. In most cases, it leads to poor service delivery and injures the reputation of an organization, and it normally takes several years for such an organization to recover from the negative effect of unsuccessful integration (CLOD, 2016).

CLOD (2016) has studied the integration of new employees to work place in United States of America (USA). The study revealed that the newly integrated employees see and recognize the following aspects of employment as very important: good rapport and trust between the immediate supervisor and employees; opportunities to use talents and skills; compensation/pay; reliable and meaningful communication between the employees and supervisor; on-the-job training/professional growth; a competent supervisor; meaningful work that contributes to the organization's mission; clear expectation of the job; accountability; recognition and appreciation.

### Statement of the Problem

Since independence in Kenya in 1963, political leaders have held two divergent views about devolution. One view offers potential for the country to redress perceived ethnic and political biases by giving local communities control over resources, including human resources and decisions about service delivery. The second view holds that devolution could undermine national unity by fragmenting state powers or by decentralizing corruption leaving the citizens worse, or worse still local leaders and elites could capture resources to the detriment of the majority of the newly established devolved units (World Bank, 2012). When devolution was rolled out, there were indeed fears that the counties might fail to put in place systems to integrate human, among other, resources for effective service delivery.

Following implementation of the new constitution in 2013, the HR audit conducted by the TA noted that some of the staff in the counties were not deployed or integrated well. The most affected were those who had served under the defunct local authorities. Some of these employees were not integrated according to the skills, work experience and relevant qualifications they possessed, but on the basis of favouritism or political affiliations (TA, 2013). It was further observed that the work environment of some of these employees were not conducive. Some of the officers did not have the requisite space, basic office resources, tools and equipment to enable them undertake their duties. As a result, the audit revealed that most of the integrated employees were demotivated and their service delivery to the public was low. There seems to be no evidence as to whether or not corrective measures were undertaken to rectify this problem. It is on this basis that the study sought to establish the effects of integration of placement policies criteria among defunct local authorities' employees absorbed into the County government on the job satisfaction a case of county government of Kericho, Kenya.

### II. Materials and Methods

The study was carried out in Kericho County Government, one of the 47 counties in Kenya. This study site was chosen purposively. According to the 2009 Kenya Housing and Population Census, the county had a population of 758,339 (CRA, 2013). Kericho County is known for its large tea industry. Its tea is among the best in the world largely due to its good quality and flavour. Subsistence farming is also practiced in the county. A large part of the Mau forest, considered Kenya's biggest water catchment towers area, lies in the County. The forest gives rise to some of the major rivers among them the EwasoNg'iro River, Sondu River, Mara River and Njoro River.

Kericho County lies between longitude 35° 02' and 35° 40' East and between the equator and latitude 0 23' South. The County is bordered by the UasinGishu County to the north, Baringo County to the northeast, Nandi to the northwest, Nakuru County to the east and Bomet County to the south. It is bordered to the South West by Nyamira and Homa Bay Counties and to the West by Kisumu County. The County covers a total of 2,479 km<sup>2</sup>. The County is composed of six sub-counties, namely Kipkelion East, Kipkelion West, Kericho West/Belgut, Kericho East, Sigowet/Soin and Bureti.

The target population for the research was 402 employees who were integrated to Kericho County government from the six (6) defunct local authorities that existed in Kericho by then, namely Kericho municipal council, Bureti county council, county council of Kipsigis, Town council of Litein, Town council of Londiani and Town council of Kipkelion. The instruments for data collection used in the study were questionnaire, interview schedule and document analysis. Among the relevant documents that the researcher reviewed include Transitional Authority reports and other available reports with information on deployment of employees. A total of one hundred and forty (140) employees filled questionnaires administered by the researcher, coded and analysed. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics while qualitative data was analysed thematically.

### III. Results and Discussion

Descriptive statistics were obtained, followed by testing of hypotheses and finally the predictive component of placement policies on job satisfaction was established. The study found that 37.1% of the employees were dissatisfied with placement policies while 62.9% were satisfied. This shows that a majority of the workers were satisfied with placement policies in the County. Table 1 below presents the descriptive statistics.

**Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Placement Policies and Job Satisfaction**

Statements on job satisfaction	1		2		3		4		5		Mean	Std
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Selection and recruitment	9	6.4	35	25.0	19	13.6	66	47.1	11	7.9	3.25	1.11
Deployment of personnel	34	24.3	15	10.7	10	7.1	66	47.1	15	10.7	3.09	1.41
HR management	27	19.3	29	20.7	22	15.7	45	32.1	17	12.1	2.97	1.34
Job designation in this institution	25	17.9	25	17.9	23	16.4	55	39.3	12	8.6	3.03	1.28

*The Effects of Placement Policies Criteria on Job Satisfaction among Employees of Defunct Local*

Opportunity given to make decisions	20	14.3	27	19.3	30	21.4	44	31.4	19	13.6	3.11	1.27
Job disciplinary measures taken against employees	11	7.9	31	22.1	26	18.6	53	37.9	19	13.6	3.27	1.18
Organizational policies of delivery of quality service	7	5.0	23	16.4	28	20.0	55	39.3	27	19.3	3.51	1.13
Promotion policies of deployed employees from former local authorities	51	36.4	23	16.4	25	17.9	36	25.7	5	3.6	2.44	1.31
Promotion policies	55	39.3	31	22.1	28	20.0	15	10.7	11	7.9	2.26	1.29

Key: 1 = very low extent, 2=Low extent, 3= undecided, 4=Large extent, 5 = Very large extent

As indicated in Table 1 above, 6.4% of the respondents were satisfied to a very low extent with the selection and recruitment process, 35(25%) were satisfied to a low extent while 19(13.6%) were undecided. Moreover, 66(47.1%) were satisfied to a large extent while 11(7.9%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score of this item was 3.25 with a standard deviation being 1.11. The mean was greater than the average mean score of 2.5, indicating that more than half of the respondents were satisfied with the process.

On deployment of personnel, 34(24.3%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 15(10.7%) to a low extent while 10(7.1%) were undecided. Additionally, 66(47.1%) were satisfied to a large extent and 15(10.7%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 3.09 with a standard deviation of 1.41, meaning most of the respondents were satisfied with deployment process. On human resource management, 27(19.3%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 29 (20.7%) to a low extent while 22(15.7%) were undecided. Another 45(32.1%) were satisfied to a large extent while 17(12.1%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 2.97 with a standard deviation of 1.34. This implied that more than a half of the respondents were satisfied with the management of workers in the county.

Though more than a half of respondents were satisfied by the human resource management, there were still concern over the dissatisfied employees. One of the key informant commented thus:

In this County we need a strong human resource department to continuously review policy on the scheme of service, as it is now the human resource department only manage leave schedules and other small matters when they are weighty matters to tackle (Personal Communication, KII 4, 2018).

Another key informant held the view that the human resource department seemed not to advice the recruitment authorities to avoid duplication of roles:

Here at the County, there are duplication of duties, new employees are recruited without exhausting or utilizing the available ones. In day today routine work there are a lot of duplication of responsibilities but when there is emergence the experience employees are sought after (Personal Communication, KII 1).

On job designation, those who were satisfied to a very low extent and to a low extent were 25(17.9%) while 23(16.4%) were undecided. Moreover, 55(39.3%) were satisfied to a large extent while 12(8.6%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 3.03 with a standard deviation of 1.28 meaning that more than a half of the respondents were satisfied with their job designations.

On opportunity given to make decisions, 20(14.3%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 27(19.3%) to a low extent while 30(21.4%) were undecided. Again, 44(31.4%) were satisfied to a large extent and 19(13.6%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 3.11 with a standard deviation of 1.27, indicating that most of the respondents were satisfied with opportunity given to make decisions. In regard to job disciplinary measures taken against employees, 11(7.9%) of the respondents were satisfied to a very low extent, 31(22.1%) to a low extent while 26(18.6%) were undecided. Fifty-three (37.9%) were satisfied to a large extent while 19(13.6%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score of this item was 3.27 with a standard deviation of 1.18. The mean was greater than the average mean score of 2.5, meaning that more than a half of the respondents were satisfied with the disciplinary process.

With respect to organizational policies on quality of service delivery, 7(5.0%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 23(16.4%) to a low extent while 28(20.0%) were undecided. Fifty-five (39.3%) were satisfied to a large extent while 27(19.3%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 3.51 with a standard deviation of 1.13. This meant that more than a half of the respondents were satisfied with the policies taken in ensuring quality service delivery.

Regarding promotion policies of deployed employees from former local authorities, 51(36.4%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 23(16.4%) to a low extent while 25(17.9%) were undecided. Again, 36(25.7%) were satisfied to a large extent and 5(3.6%) were satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 2.44 with a standard deviation of 1.31. The mean score was less than the average, hence an indicator that most of the respondents were dissatisfied with the policies on promotion from the former local authorities.

With regard to the current promotion policies, 55(39.3%) were satisfied to a very low extent, 31(22.1%) to a low extent while 28(20.0%) were undecided. Fifteen (10.7%) were satisfied to a large extent and 11(7.9%) were

satisfied to a very large extent. The mean score was 2.26 with a standard deviation of 1.29. The mean score was also less than 2.5 indicating that majority of the respondents were dissatisfied with the current policies on promotion. This was affirmed by one of the key informant who revealed that: We have never had appraisals or review for promotion since we were integrated into the county government almost six years now and this seems unfair to the integrated employees as review used to be conducted at the interval of three years in the defunct local authorities (Personal Communication, KII 1). On the issues of promotion, every key informant interviewed had a similar opinion on this. As one put it clear: Promotion of employees of former local authorities have never been effected since the coming of devolved units six years now down the line. On the other hand the implementation of salary increments stalled since 2013 to date and from the look of things it seems the concerned authorities are not even ready to so (Personal Communication, KII 3).

**Hypothesis Test Results**

To test whether or not placement policies had any significant effect on job satisfaction, the following null hypothesis was advanced: There is no significant effect of placement policies on job satisfaction of employees of defunct local authorities. The test was conducted using Chi-square and the results presented as shown here.

**Table 2: Hypothesis Test Results**

Variable	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig.
Chi-Square	51.286 <sup>b</sup>	25	0.000

This shows that there is significant statistical association between placement policies and job satisfaction ( $\chi^2=51.286$ ,  $df=25$ ,  $P=0.000$ ). The null hypothesis is then rejected, implying that placement policies affect job satisfaction. In order to determine the direction of the relationship between the two variables, Cramer's V statistic was obtained and the results were as shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3: Cramer's V Value for Placement Policies and Worker Job Satisfaction**

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	0.784	0.000
	Cramer's V	0.784	0.000

Table 3 shows a significant and positive relationship (0.784) placement policies and worker job satisfaction. This implies that when job placement policies are favourable to the employees, there will be a high level of job satisfaction.

**Prediction of Job Satisfaction from Placement Policies**

Binomial logistic regression analysis was carried out to determine the predictive power of placement policies on job satisfaction. The results were as shown in table 4 below.

**Table 4: Binary Logistic Regression of Placement Policies on Job satisfaction**

Variables in the Equation		B	S.E.	Wald	Df	Sig.	Exp(B)
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	PLP	-.206	.032	40.379	1	0.000	0.814
	Constant	4.744	0.829	32.735	1	0.000	114.896

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: PLP.

*Key: PLP- Placement Policies*

The results in the table above indicate that placement policies is a significant predictor of job satisfaction among the workers of Kericho County (Exp (B) =0.814,  $p=0.000$ ). This means that the odds of being satisfied with work is 0.814 times higher when policy placements are favourable than when they are not.

In summary, 62.9% of the employees were satisfied with placement policies while 37.1% were not satisfied. This shows that majority of the workers were satisfied with placement policies in the county. To allow for testing further whether placement policies had any significant effect on job satisfaction, the null hypothesis that there is no significant effect of placement policies on job satisfaction of employees of defunct local authorities was tested. The results showed that there is a significant statistical association between placement policies and job satisfaction among the employees of defunct local authorities hence the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis accepted.

#### IV. Recommendations

The county government should carry out appraisal to each integrated employees from defunct local authorities to ensure that the minority who are not satisfied with integration can have their concerns addressed appropriately in order to achieve 100% job satisfactions among the employees to improve service delivery. This is because the study established that there are minority who are dissatisfied with the integration and need to be brought to join the group of the majority who are satisfied in order to achieve the mandate of the County government as outlined in County Government of 2012.

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