# Assessment of Job Design on Employee Productivity in Public Water Companies in Kenya: A Case of Meru Water and Sewerage Services

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**Abstract**

*The demeanors of workers and the way in which they interact with one another both internally and externally are determined by the culture of a business. It also has an impact on a number of areas of employee treatment and interpersonal interactions. Increased productivity, improved staff morale, a positive impact on work attitudes, and increased employee devotion are all attributed to a cohesive company culture. This study sought to establish the effects of job design on employee productivity with reference to Meru Water and Sewerage Services (Mewass). The study was based on the Mc Kinsey 7 - S model to relate the research variables. The researcher adopted a descriptive research design with a sample size of 185 respondents drawn from employees of MEWASS. Data collection was done via the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The information gathered was categorized and analyzed using descriptive, diagnostic, and inferential statistical methods, as appropriate. In order to conduct data analysis and to generate tables, figures, and connections, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences Version 23.0 was used. For the purpose of establishing the relationship between the independent and dependent variables, inferential statistics such as correlation and analysis of variance, as well as multiple linear regression models, were used. The study revealed that there was a positive significant relationship between all the study variables with the employee productivity. The study concluded that there is well elaborated job description in public water company in Kenya and that employment gives the employee freedom to decide how to accomplish given task.*

***Keywords:*** *job design, employee productivity, the mc kinsey 7 - s model, and descriptive research design.*

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## I.    Background of the Study

Employees will go to great lengths to outperform their coworkers in order to get the respect and admiration of their superiors (Alvesson, 2013). This is a workplace that encourages its people to flourish and develops their potential. An organization with a strong culture and analogies is more effective than one with a weak, incongruent, and detached culture, according to organizational research by Cameron & Quinn, (2011).

Globally, employee development programs and strategies have aided in increasing the productivity and motivation of workers, which has resulted in increased gains for businesses in terms of productivity and job satisfaction. Employee productivity and career development initiatives in the retail industry have been shown to reduce employee turnover and decrease the need for supervision by retail companies, according to Gregory (2013), who studied the factors that influence employee productivity among major retail outlets in major cities in America.

When it comes to employee growth, there are many benefits to consider, but according to Blacket et al. (2013), most South African-owned businesses are reluctant to invest in Task Variety because they fear that doing so will divert time away from other responsibilities and lead to a shortfall in productivity. An organization's strategic purpose is best served when the goals of its personnel career development programs are clearly defined and specified. There are a number of basic steps or milestones that should be included in an organization's goals, but many companies especially in Africa and the region have not developed policies, strategies and adopted desired culture for employee productivity and development. This is especially true in countries like Nigeria.

Since Task Variety and staff development is one of the most expensive expenditures for firms in the area, many organizations are hesitant to implement new initiatives and tactics that might help their workers progress. It's easy to blame Africa's poor staff development cultures, but Ogutu (2015) found that when evaluating the factors affecting the implementation of career development programs in Kenyan electrical companies, there are also concerns that the company could lose its highly developed employees to competitors

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like Safaricom and Kenya Power, who are likely to benefit from the efforts that small electrical companies tend to put in during development

According to Misigo's (2020) research on the impact of company culture on the productivity of Kenya's public water companies, the study used descriptive and correlational research methods to examine Kenya's 84 public water firms as a sample population. The study's findings suggest that the development of Kenya's public water corporations is influenced by organizational culture. Water company development and organizational culture are linked in the research, although leadership values have a moderating influence. Public water company executives in Kenya need to manage culture in order to ensure long-term development of water services and, therefore, growth, according to the conclusions of this research. This research will look at the impact of MEWASS's job design on employee development in this light.

## Statement of the Problem

According to Blacket et al. (2013), many organizations are still hesitant to strategically develop their employees, thinking that devoting time to develop an employee in areas such as Task Variety also pulls the corporate personnel away from their tasks and contributes to a brief drop in productivity. As Wigand et al. (2011) have shown, despite the high expenditures involved, government organizations that do not emphasize Task Variety activities end up losing out on valuable opportunities due to a lack of personnel development. In the lack of current data on the skills required by industry, companies are unable to undertake effective Task Variety needs assessments and build realistic yearly Task Variety plans, according to a research by Natalie (2013) on organization productivity, transformational leadership and objective growth.

According to Ogutu (2015), a research looking at how career development programs in Kenyan electrical enterprises are implemented, small electrical firms are afraid of losing their best workers to the competition once they've been trained. Although there many elements that impact employee growth, many firms acknowledge the importance of employee development. If the correct culture is fostered by multiple companies both locally and worldwide, businesses may accomplish a lot in terms of employee development.

## Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to establish the effects of job design on employee productivity with reference to MEWASS.

## II.     Theoretical literature

### The McKinsey 7-S Model

An acronym for the seven elements of strategic fit, or the 7-S's, has been devised by McKinsey & Company. Organizational processes and flows are illustrated in the 7-S model by the division of tasks shown on the organization chart into seven distinct categories: strategy, structure, systems, style, people, and shared values. The 7-S model is comprised of these categories: strategy, structure, systems, style, people, shared values, and skills (capabilities Possessed by the organization).

There are seven variables that make up the model, and each of them has an important role to play in the success of the approach. As a result, shared values are the heart and soul of this framework, which is why a company can rally behind them in a way that helps employees thrive (Bhatti, 2011). In Figure 1 below, the interdependency of the components is shown and demonstrates how a change in one impacts the others. The model is important to the study since top management commitment, organizational culture, Autonomy and individual responsibilities should be part and parcel of the organization in order to enhance the productivity of the MEWASS Integrated Development Plan.
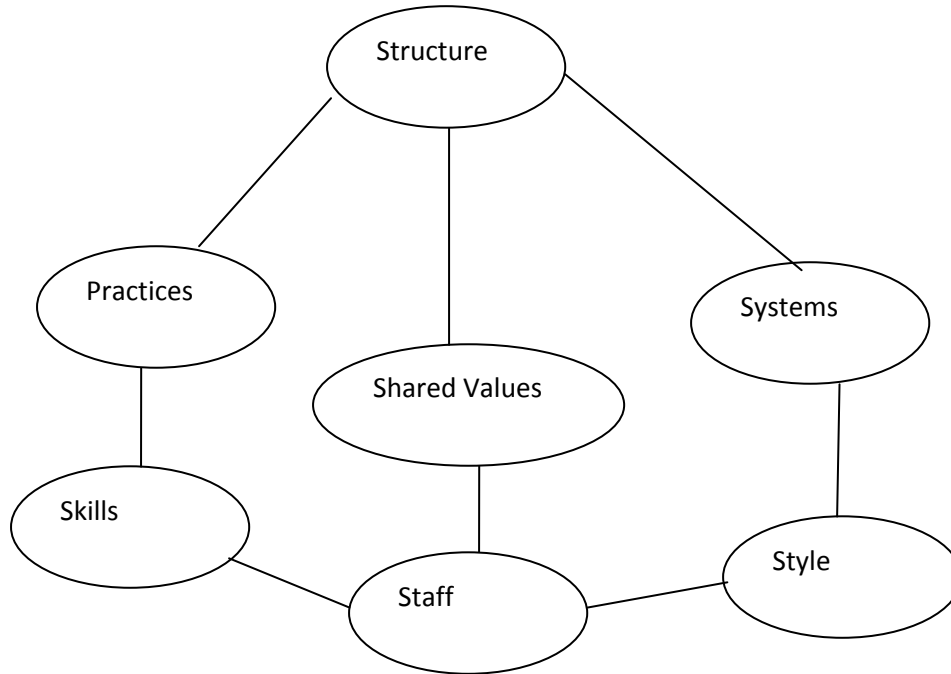
**Figure 1: McKinsey 7s Model**

**Source:** Waterman et al (1980)

The strategy that the organization develops will determine how they are going to be implemented by the organization. The organization culture that includes the shared values as one of the 7s is a hard factor in strategy implementation. The staff being one of the soft factors is critical in the implementation of the organization's strategy. The strategic leadership style that represents management commitment determines how the organization implements its strategies. Effective Autonomy applying the right skills will determine the strategy implementation in the organization. On the other hand the organization structure that defines all the staff responsibilities is crucial in the implementation of the organization strategies.

**Conceptual Framework**
This section gives a visual representation of the relationship between the variables in the context of the topic being studied
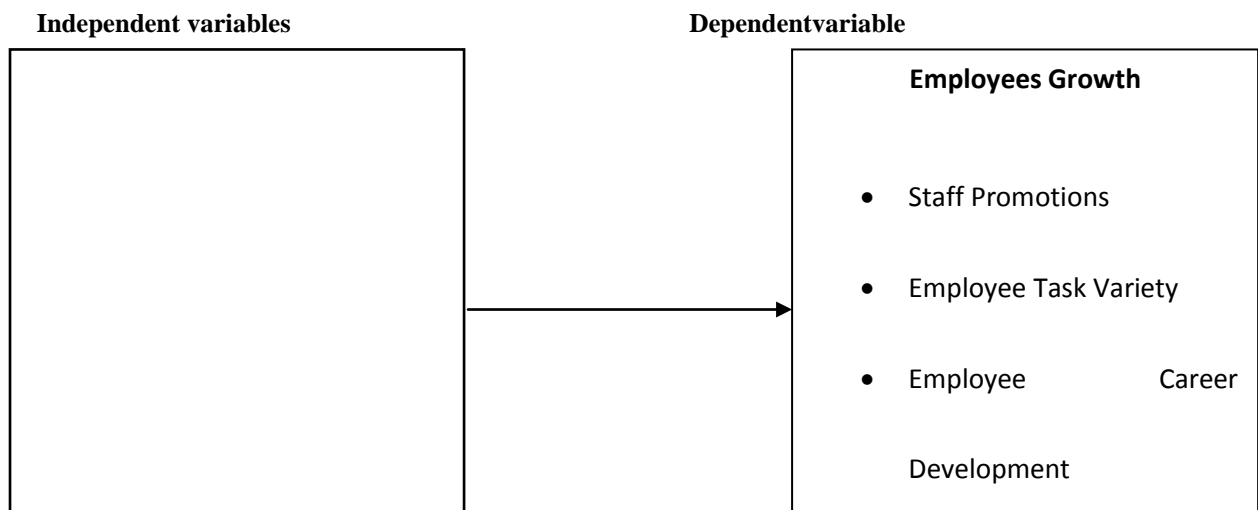
**Independent variables**                          **Dependentvariable**



**Figure 2: Conceptual Framework**

**Source:** Researcher (2022)

**Research Design**

The descriptive research approach was used in this study because it was necessary to get an in-depth knowledge of the issues faced by Meru Water and Sewerage Services in terms of the impacts of organizational culture on employee development (MEWASS). According to Cooper and Schindler (2001), descriptive studies are concerned with the questions of who, what, when, where, and how subjects are employed in situations where there is a basic comprehension of the subject matter being studied. Descriptive studies are useful in situations when the variables under investigation cannot be measured but can only be stated in statistical terms.

**Target Population**

The term "population" refers to an entire collection of persons or events that have certain observable features, as defined by Mugenda&Mugenda (2013). In this research, the target population comprised of all 1041 MEWASS workers, according to the list provided from the Head of Human Resources at the Meru Head office (2021). The talents of all workers working in public water companies must be maximized in order for them to successfully fulfill their mission for greater public benefit. This can only be accomplished via an effective culture that encourages people to develop and improves their level of engagement. Employees from all levels of MEWASS were targeted for this research. The population was made up of employees from the nine Sub counties in Meru County, namely: Igembe North, Igembe Central, Igembe South, Tigania East, Tigania West, Buuri, Imenti Central, Imeni South, and Imenti North. The group was divided into three categories: top-level managers, middle-level managers, and operatives who operate in the sub-counties. It was the responsibility of each sub county's respective Head of Section in the water company department to submit information on the number of top level managers, middle level managers, and operatives in each sub county. Table 1 contains the names and contact information for the top level managers, middle level managers, and operatives for each sub county.

**Table 1: Target population**

| Sub County | Top Management | Middle Management | Operatives | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Igembe North** | 3 | 10 | 30 | 43 |
| **Igembe Central** | 2 | 15 | 45 | 62 |
| **Igembe South** | 7 | 19 | 91 | 117 |
| **Tigania East** | 7 | 21 | 58 | 86 |
| **Tigania West** | 5 | 18 | 83 | 106 |
| **Buuri** | 10 | 24 | 67 | 101 |
| **Imenti central** | 9 | 14 | 58 | 81 |
| **Imenti South** | 10 | 16 | 53 | 79 |
| **Imenti North** | 53 | 69 | 244 | 366 |
| **Total** | **106** | **206** | **729** | **1041** |

**Source:** Head of Human Resources MEWASS (2021)

**Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

In statistics, sampling refers to the act of selecting a selection of people from within a population with the goal of generating predictions based on statistical inference (Saunders et al., 2007). For the purpose of facilitating in-depth knowledge of the variables, all MEWASS personnel from the nine sub counties were included in the research population. The personnel were divided into three job cadres, which were top management, middle management, and operatives, among other things. The sample size determination formula developed by Nassiuma (2000) was used to estimate the sample size, and the sample size was computed using the formula below:

$$n = \frac{Nc^2}{c^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

n is the sample size, N represents the population, c represents covariance, and e represents the standard error.
A coefficient of variation in the range of 21 percent to 30 percent and a standard error range of 2 percent to 5 percent, according to Nassiuma (2000), is generally considered acceptable in most surveys. Consequently, the coefficient variation is assumed to be 30% and the standard error to be 2% in this research. By using the above calculation, a sample size of 185 respondents was calculated, which represented 17.8 percent of the accessible population, which is more than the 10 percent of the accessible population that is normally suggested for descriptive research (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2013).

$$n = \frac{1041 x 0.3^2}{0.3^2 + (1041-1)0.02^2} = 185$$

For the nine sub-counties, proportionate stratified sampling was utilized to determine the number and percentage of respondents in each of those categories, which are: top management; middle managers; and operatives.

**Table2: Sample Size**

| Sub County | Top Management | Middle Management | Operatives | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Igembe North | 1 | 2 | 6 | 9 |
| Igembe Central | 1 | 3 | 8 | 12 |
| Igembe South | 1 | 3 | 16 | 20 |
| Tigania East | 1 | 4 | 10 | 15 |
| Tigania West | 1 | 3 | 15 | 19 |
| Buuri | 2 | 4 | 12 | 18 |
| Imenti central | 2 | 2 | 10 | 14 |
| Imenti South | 2 | 3 | 9 | 14 |
| Imenti North | 9 | 12 | 43 | 64 |
| Total | 20 | 36 | 129 | 185 |

**Source:** Researcher (2021)

**Research Instruments**

This research will use both primary and secondary data. A researcher's primary data is the information he or she collects in order to solve a research topic. For the sake of this discussion, secondary data refers to information that has previously been acquired and recorded by someone other than the user for a different reason. In order to collect primary data, a questionnaire was used to gather information on all of the variables under investigation.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

The research included both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods. Qualitative data was studied by creating themes from open-ended questions, which was then statistically coded and evaluated. It was reviewed for completeness before being placed into the cleaning analysis procedure. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 4 was used to conduct descriptive and inferential analyses of quantitative data. The frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation of the sample data was summarized in the form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations using descriptive analysis (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2014).

Statistical inference is based on correlation, simple linear regression, and multiple linear regression. The Pearson's correlation coefficient, which measures the degree and direction of the association between the variables under consideration, will be provided via correlation analysis. It is possible to determine the simple and joint coefficients of determinant from regression analysis, which reveal whether the independent variables are connected to the dependent variable, and if they have a substantial impact on the dependent variable (Gujarati et al., 2010).

The F-statistic and t-statistics for the coefficients of the association between the independent variables and the dependent variable will be provided for the degrees of freedom supplied in the research using regression analysis.

Multivariate regression is a technique that may be used to examine the effect of several independent factors on a single dependent variable.

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5$

Where: Y = employee productivity

$X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4$ and $X_5$ = Independent Variables

$X_1$ = job design

$X_2$ = Task Variety

$X_3$ = Autonomy

$X_4$ = Task Identity

$\acute{\epsilon}$. = Error Term

$B_1 \ldots B_5$ = Regression co-efficient of five variables

**Response Rate**

Data was collected from the respondents drawn from the employees of MEWASS in Meru County. Out of the 185 questionnaires that were issued to the respondents, 126 were fully filled and returned. This denoted a response proportion of 68% as demonstrated by Table 3. A response proportion of above 50% is considered adequate in social science research (Mugenda&Mugenda, 2003). The study's response rate of 68% was therefore deemed satisfactory for analysis and conclusion.

**Table 3: Response Rate**

| Variable | Frequency | Percent |
|---|---|---|
| **Response** | 126 | 68 |
| **Non- Response** | 59 | 32 |
| **Total** | 185 | 100 |

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

## Reliability Results

Cronbach's alpha was used to assess the reliability of the information gathering tools. The results are as illustrated by Table 4.

**Table 4: Reliability Results**

| Variable | Number of Statements | Cronbach's Alpha | Remarks |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Job design** | 6 | 0.836 | Accepted |
| **Continuous Task Variety** | 4 | 0.848 | Accepted |
| **Effective Autonomy   system** | 6 | 0.799 | Accepted |
| **Performance  Appraisal System** | 5 | 0.813 | Accepted |

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

Table 4 above indicate that job design had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.836, continuous Task Variety had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.848, effective Autonomy system had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.799, and Task Identity had a Cronbach's alpha of 0.813. Since the alpha coefficients were all greater than 0.7, it was concluded that the instruments had an acceptable reliability coefficient and were suitable for the study.

## Descriptive Statistics
### Job Design

The first objective of the study was to establish the effects of job design on employee productivity at MEWASS. The research subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with various elements of job design practice using a five-point Likert scale; strongly disagree, disagree, neither agree nor disagree, agree, strongly agree. A detailed descriptive of the assessment is indicated in table 5.

**Table 5: Job Design**

| | N | Mean | Std. Dev | Cov. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| My job requires the performance of a wide range of tasks which are importance for my professional growth | 126 | 3.97 | .95 | .885 |
| My job description is precise and elaborate | 126 | 4.00 | .88 | .809 |
| I am responsible for the outcomes of my job | 126 | 4.16 | .81 | .711 |
| My employment gives me the opportunity to finish all of the projects i start. | 126 | 4.00 | .87 | .801 |
| My employment gives me the freedom to decide how i want to accomplish a task. | 126 | 4.15 | .89 | .771 |
| My employment gives me the freedom to plan my work hours in a way that works best for me. | 126 | 4.07 | .90 | .801 |

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

From the descriptive information, the majority of the respondents agreed that their job description is precise and elaborate as supported by a mean of 4.16, a standard deviation of 0.81 and a covariance of 0.711, on employment gives the employee freedom to decide how to accomplish given task the respondents agreed (M=4.15, SD=0.89 and cov.0.771). The study also revealed that the respondents agreed that their employment gives them the freedom to plan their work hours in a way that works best for them as indicated by a mean of 4.07, standard deviation of 0.90 and a covariance of 0.801. The respondents also agreed that their employment gives them the opportunity to complete all the project the start as supported by a mean of 4.00, standard deviation of 0.87 and a covariance of 0.801 and that their job description is precise and elaborate the respondents agreed as indicated by a mean of 4.0, standard deviation of 0.88 and a covariance of 0.809. Respondents felt that their job requires the performance of a wide range of tasks which are importance for their

professional growth as indicated by a mean of 3.97, standard deviation of 0.95 and a covariance of 0.885. The study results were similar to the study by Al-Ahmadi (2019) that revealed that productivity is firmly associated with job attributes such as decision making freedom, feeling important before others, sense of task significance and identifying competence.

**Correlation Analysis**

Coefficient of correlation (r) refers to the determination of linear relation involving two variables. Pearson's coefficient of correlation is the most commonly utilized technique of evaluating the extent of relationships between variables (Orodho, 2009). The value of r is commonly used to summarize the association between two variables. Positive value of r implies positive correlation while negative value of r implies negative correlation. When the r value is +1, it implies that there is a perfect positive association among the two variables whereas while it is -1; it implies that there exists a perfect negative association among the variables. A correlation coefficient of 0 (r = 0) shows that there is no linear association among the two variables. This technique presupposes that the data is from a population which is normally spread.

**Table 6: Correlation Analysis**

|  |  | Job design | Task Variety | Autonomy | Performance appraisal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Job design | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .734** | .524** | .479** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) |  | 0.001 | 0.012 | 0.000 |
|  | N | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |
| Task Variety | Pearson Correlation | .734** | 1 | .147** | .544** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.001 |  | .000 | .006 |
|  | N | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |
| Autonomy | Pearson Correlation | .524** | .147** | 1 | .877** |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.012 | .000 |  | .005 |
|  | N | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |
| Task Identity | Pearson Correlation | .479** | .544** | .877** | 1 |
|  | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | .06 | .005 |  |
|  | N | 126 | 126 | 126 | 126 |

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Researcher (2022)

The results indicate the Task Variety was positively related to employee productivity (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of r = 0.734, p-value 0.001). This is statistically significant in the sense that p-value is less than 0.05.The findings also indicate that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between Autonomy and employee productivity ((Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of r = 0.524 at p-value of 0.012). Similarly, there is a moderate relationship between Task Identity and employee productivity (Pearson's Correlation Coefficient of r = .479 at p-value of 0.000).

**Regression Diagnostics**
**Normality test**
For Normality consideration, Shapiro-Wilk Test was applied. All of the data's p values were greater than 0.05. The data does not deviate from the standard distribution in any statistically relevant way. As a result, the data is normally distributed.

**Table 7: Normality Test**

|  | Shapiro-Wilk | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | Statistic | df | Sig. |
| Job design | .825 | 126 | .532 |
| Task Variety | .921 | 126 | .434 |
| Autonomy | .965 | 126 | .641 |
| Task Identity | .907 | 126 | .673 |

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

**Multiple Regression Analysis**
Regression analysis was used to determine the significance of the relationship between the organizational culture and employee productivity in MEWASS in Meru County.

**Model Summary**

**Table 8: Regression Model**

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std.Error |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .781[a] | .601 | .598 | .1821 |

a. Predictors: (Constant), job design, Task Variety, Autonomy   and performance appraisal.

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

From the findings in the model summary table 8, the value of adjusted R squared was 0.598 indicating that 59.8 percent of the employee productivity in MEWAS could be explained by organizational culture practices (job design, Task Variety, and Autonomy    and performance appraisal). This shows that 40.2% of the employee productivity of the public water company can be explained by other factors, other than the organizational culture.

**Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

ANOVA test was performed to ascertain whether the model was fit or not for the study. The results obtained are summarised in Table 9:

**Table 9: Results of ANOVA test**

ANOVA[a]

| Model | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 13.323 | 3 | 4.441 | 19.415 | 0.0022[b] |
| Residual | 12.123 | 123 | 0.229 | | |
| Total | 25.446 | 126 | | | |

a. Independent variables: job design, Task Variety , Autonomy  , and performance appraisal
b. Dependent Variable: employee productivity

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

The research used the ANOVA approach to further examine the model's relevance. The regression model had a significance level of 0.0022, indicating that the data was excellent for forming a judgment on the population parameters since the value of significance (p-value) was less than 5%, according to the ANOVA statistics. The computed f value (19.415> 2.779) was higher than the critical threshold, indicating that organizational culture drivers had a considerable impact on employee productivity in public water companies in Kenya. The model was significant since the significance value was less than 0.05.

**Coefficients of Determination**

The multivariate regression equation took the form

$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \acute{\epsilon}$.

Where: Y = the effects of organizations culture on employee productivity

$X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4$ and $X_5$ = Independent Variables

$X_1$= job design

$X_2$= Task Variety

$X_3$= Autonomy

$X_4$= Task Identity

$\acute{\epsilon}$. = Error Term, B1 … B5 = Regression co-efficient of five variables

**Table 10: Coefficients of the Determinations**

| Model | Unstandardized Coefficients B | Std. Error | Standardized Coefficients Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1      (Constant) | 3.473 | .403 | | 8.622 | .000 |
| Job design | .086 | .052 | .137 | 1.649 | .001 |
| Task Variety | .151 | .067 | .213 | 2.259 | .005 |
| Autonomy | .077 | .057 | .125 | 1.352 | .001 |
| Task Identity | .133 | .114 | -.082 | -1.169 | .004 |

**Source: Researcher (2022)**

Using the regression coefficients above, it was discovered that if organization culture were set to zero, the employee productivity would be 3.473. According to the findings, job design has a positive and substantial impact on employee productivity, as shown by a regression coefficient of 0.086 (p-value=0.001). Employee productivity would improve by 0.086 units for every unit rise in job design. The Task Variety variable was significant (p=0.05) at a 5% level of significance and a 95% level of confidence.

A regression coefficient of 0.077 (p-value=0.001) indicates that Autonomy has a positive and substantial impact on employee productivity in public water company. A unit rise in Autonomy would result in a 0.077-unit rise in employee productivity. The inflation rates variable was significant (p=0.001) at a 5% level of significance and a 95% level of confidence.

A regression coefficient of 0.133 (p-value=0.004) indicates that Task Identity has a positive and substantial impact on employee productivity. Employee productivity in public water company would improve by 0.133 units for every unit increase in performance appraisal.

$Y = 3.473 + 0.086X1 + 0.151X2 + 0.077X3 + 0.133X4.$

## III.     Summary of the Findings

The study found that job description is precise and elaborate in public water company in Kenya and that employment gives the employee freedom to decide how to accomplish given task. The study also revealed that the respondents agreed that their employment gives them the freedom to plan their work hours in a way that works best for them. The respondents also agreed that their employment gives them the opportunity to complete the entire project they start and that their job description is precise and elaborate.

## IV.     Conclusion

The study concludes that there is well elaborated job description in public water company in Kenya and that employment gives the employee freedom to decide how to accomplish given task. The employer gives their employees an opportunity to complete the entire project they start. The study concludes that the public water company trains new employees and that employee Task Variety is used to improve the productivity of the staff. The study also concludes that there is low intention to instill effective Autonomy in public water company in Kenya which makes employees remain neutral on importance of Autonomy on employee productivity. However, there is a good Autonomy between the employees and the human resource management.

**Recommendations**

The study results indicate that the public water company may require more investment in Autonomy, Task Variety, and Task Identity practices because they are associated with significant public effect on employee productivity.

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