

**FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE AIR TRANSPORT  
INDUSTRY IN KENYA: A CASE STUDY OF KENYA AIRWAYS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The main objective of this paper was to establish factors that affect employee productivity at Kenya Airways headquarters Nairobi Kenya. The paper was guided by two objectives which were; motivation, and how working conditions affect employee productivity in the air transport industry. The paper adopted descriptive research design in collecting data from the respondents. The researcher targeted the staff of Kenya Airways. Kenya Airways has employed 3,986 employees. The sampling design adopted was stratified random sampling since it gave an equal chance to all the respondents while questionnaires were used as a data collection tool. The questionnaires contained semi structured and structured questions which were administered and used to collect data. The sample for the study constituted 45 employees of The Kenya Airways. Data was presented by use of tables, charts and bar graphs. Quantitative and qualitative analysis was used to analyze the data. It was found that in training, In Motivation, 83% of the respondents agreed that motivation affected employee productivity in the air transport industry. In working conditions, 71% of the respondents agreed that working conditions affected employee productivity in the air transport. The study suggests that Kenya Airways should conduct training needs assessment before designing any training manuals in order to have effective training programmes. The paper determined factors affecting employee productivity in the air transport industry in Kenya case study of Kenya Airways. Despite Kenya Airways being the national carrier in Kenya, it faces competition from other airlines and other modes of transport. The study recommends that Kenya Airways remains vigilant and alert to the changes in airlines business environment most of which are as a result of globalization. The airline should respond promptly to any changes for it to remain relevant in the competitive airline industry. Kenya airways should also evaluate the extent to which motivation and working conditions affect employee productivity in the air transport industry. Kenya Airways should also invest heavily in training of its employees so as to be able to stay competitive in the market.

## **Introduction**

It provided a basis for the paper which is basically to establish factors affecting employee productivity among employees in Kenya with reference to Kenya Airways as the study case. This chapter also outlined the background of the study, statement problem, study objectives, research questions, significance and study scope.

## **Background of the Study**

Employees are key resources in all organizations. The skills they possess and the roles they play in organizations give the firms a competitive edge. Organizations have realized that they have to develop unique dynamic characteristics that empower their competitive advantages in order to survive in a constantly changing market environment. (Wright and Snell, 2009)

Thus, they are focusing on the exploitation of their human resources (HR), particularly on Employee productivity, as a source of strategic advantage (Wright and Snell, 2009). According to Denny (2010), the understanding reasons why individuals work it's a motivation enough to make them perform well. Hence the success of an organization mostly depends on the productivity of the staff. For staff to be effective and efficient there must be an effective and efficient management too.

McFarland defines management as "A process by which managers create, direct, maintain and operate purposive organization through systematic, coordinated, cooperative human efforts". An important term in this definition is "Process". This term emphasizes the dynamic or ongoing nature of management, an activity over varying span of time. According to Donally & Ivancevich (2001) "Management is a process by which individual and group effort is coordinated towards group goals".

According to them, “Management is a process of designing and maintaining an environment in which, individuals, working together in groups efficiently and effectively accomplish group goals”. Management is key in the improvement of quality and productivity of goods and services provided by an organization, it also ensures that the employees’ skills are improved within time.

According to Koontz (2000) for managers to perform the functions of management efficiently they need to play certain management roles and possess certain management skills. There are three wide management roles and these are: interpersonal; figurehead role, leader role, liaison role secondly there is the informational role; disseminator role, informational role and spokesman role and finally decisional roles; entrepreneurial role, disturbance handle role, resource allocation role and negotiator role. Managers should possess the following skills: technical skills, interpersonal skills, conceptual skills, diagnostic skills and political skills.

Fayol (2002) also developed the 14 principles of management based on his experience as a manager. These 14 principles are: division of labor, authority, discipline, unity of command, unity of direction, subordination, remuneration, centralization, scalar chain, order, equity, stability, initiative, and spirited de corps. It’s amazing to note that cooperation towards achievement of organizational goals has been emphasized in the principles. An employee is an individual who works part-time or full-time under a contract of employment, whether oral or written, express or implied, and has recognized rights and duties. They are also called workers. The employee is hired to provide services to a company on a regular basis in exchange for compensation and does not provide these services as part of an independent business

The principle component of an organization is its human resources or ‘People at work’ or otherwise known as employees. Human resource has been defined as “the knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents and aptitudes obtained in the population.” Jucius calls these resources

'human factors' which refer to "a whole consisting of inter-related, inter-dependent and interacting physiological, psychological and ethical components (Tsui & O'reilly, 1999). Employment is a contract between two parties, one being the employer and the other being the employee. An employee may be defined as: "A person in the service of another under any contract of hire, express or implied, oral or written, where the employer has the power or right to control and direct the employee in the material details of how the work is to be performed.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

This focuses on the review of literature on factors affecting employee productivity in the transport industry in Kenya, a review of variables such as wages; training, working conditions work life balance, critical review, summary and gaps to be filled including the conceptual framework related to the study. An in depth looks at some of the factors that have been highlighted as those that affect employee productivity in the transport industry.

### **Review of Theoretical Literature**

The theoretical review is a logically described, developed and elaborated network of associations among variables deemed relevant to the problem situation identified (Sekaran, 2010). Smart companies know if managers are trained and charged with responsibility for the success of their reports, departmental and organizational performance will take care of itself. Companies that do not drive home the importance of this relationship to frontline managers, or to provide the necessary training, eventually pay the price via the loss of good employees and decreases in performance as a result of employee dissatisfaction (Talent management, 2012).

### **Instinct Theory**

Charles Darwin, in his evolution theory as contained in *The Origin of Species* (Darwin, 1859), suggests that humans are born with instincts which push them towards certain forms of behaviour, most basic, being the instinct to survive.

All human behaviour therefore is tethered primarily around the need for survival. Adding weight to this theory was William William James (1890), who suggested that humans are more strongly influenced by instincts because of the psychological and biological influence in them.

These instincts attempted to explain certain behaviors related to the fulfillment of either psychological or biological needs. This theory is relevant to the study since these instincts can propel one to be productive at the work place.

### **Systems Theory**

This theory was advanced by scholars such as David Easton (1950), Peter Singe (1990) and Lawry (2000). The theory observes that a company is composed of various sub systems operating under it.

The levels of the overall employee productivity and the company's performance will be greatly influenced by five issues such as personal mastery, shared vision, mental models, team learning as well as employee identification. This therefore means that if a company is to assess its overall productivity and performance, the company must evaluate its performance, responsibilities as well as functions from systems point of view. Therefore in order for the company to perform better and the levels of productivity to increase, all the departments and the subsystems within the organization must have the same vision, same goal, operate under one command, work as a team, promote team learning of all the employees and the responsibilities of each employee must be properly identified and finally the overall manager of the company must have a proper understanding of the functions of all the departments and the subsystems of organization (Cooper 2001).

This theory was also relevant to the study since Kenya Airways has different departments, which must support each other in achieving its goals.

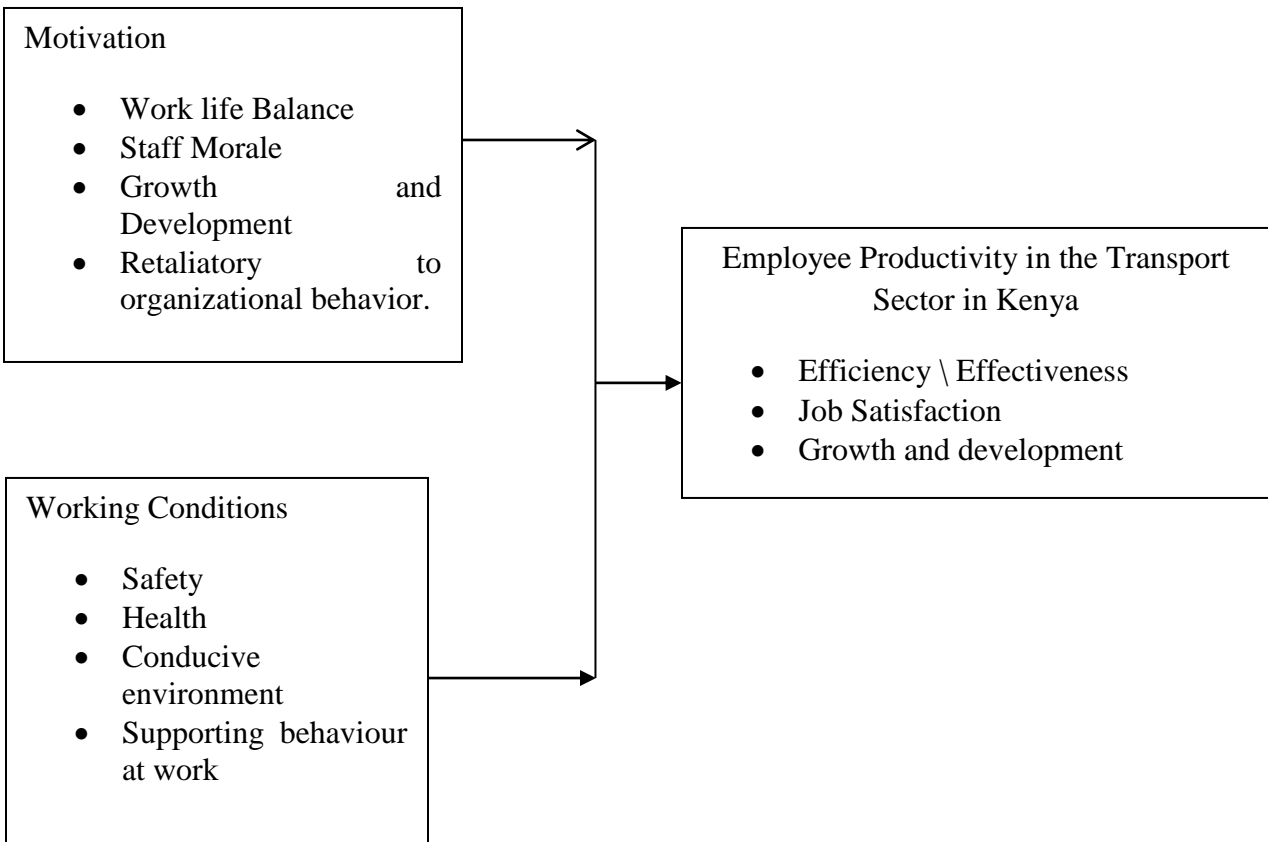
## Conceptual Framework

This section provides the independent variables in relation to the dependent variable, showing the inter-relationship amongst the variables in the context of the research problem.

## Conceptual Framework

### Independent Variables

### Dependent Variable



Source: Author (2021)

**Motivation**

Motivation involves juggling work life balance with the daily pressures of family, friends, and self. When employees feel a greater sense of control and ownership over their own lives, they tend to have better relationships with management and they are able to have their morale boosted hence leading to growth and development.

**Working Conditions**

The conditions in which an individual or staff works, including but not limited to such things as amenities, physical environment, stress and noise levels, degree of safety or danger. Working conditions and work environments have a significant impact on employee productivity and eventual success of a business.



## **Objectives of The Paper**

### **General Objective**

The aim of this paper was to establish the factors that affect employee productivity among employees in the airline industry in Kenya with reference to Kenya Airways as the study case.

### **Specific Objectives**

- a) To establish the influence of Motivation on employee productivity in the air transport industry;
- b) To determine the extent of working conditions on employee productivity in the air transport industry;

## **Findings**

The study findings indicated that (83%) of respondents believe that Motivation affects employee productivity while 17% believed it didn't. This was further supported by study findings that indicated that 49%, 21%, 05%, 08% and 17% agreeing that Motivation affects employee productivity to a very great extent, great extent, average extent, low extent, not at all.

The study findings indicated that (71%) of respondents believe that working conditions affect employee productivity. This was further supported by study findings that indicated that 38%, 13%, 15%, 05%, and 29% agreeing that working conditions affect employee productivity to a very great extent, great extent, average extent, low extent, and not at all.

## **Conclusions**

The Paper determined factors affecting employee productivity in the air transport industry in Kenya case study of Kenya Airways. Despite Kenya Airways being the national carrier in Kenya, it only faces competition from other airlines and other modes of transport.

## **Motivation**

The Paper revealed that motivation helps in managing workers' time more flexibly, it can help them to fulfill their commitments and can learn from others while working with them. It also gives a balanced life in terms of giving time to family. Secondly it gives leverage in taking days off when any type of emergency occurs. So we see that work life should always be given a priority in the transport industry.

## **Working Conditions**

It was also discovered that Staff got involved in workplace conflict especially when HR failed to investigate and resolve issues. Work place conflict was found to have a detrimental effect on employee morale, employer precautions include enforcing workplace policies that support fair employment practices, and implementing process for staff to report incidents that often arise at workplace such as bulling and sexual harassment. Organizations that regularly communicate with their staff less and the risk of creating a workforce that feels unappreciated and undervalued.

Working conditions should always be improved in the air transport industry for employee productivity to be achieved.

**Recommendations**

The paper recommends that Kenya Airways remains vigilant and alert to the changes in airlines business environment most of which are as a result of globalization. The airline should respond promptly to any changes for it to remain relevant in the competitive airline industry. Kenya airways should also evaluate the extent to which motivation and working conditions affect employee productivity in the air transport industry.

**Working Conditions**

The paper suggests that Kenya Airways improves its working conditions such that employees may always work without any hindrance.

**Motivation**

The paper recommends guidance and counseling to workers who seem to be facing challenges in life and also follow up on the social behavior of its workers if for example some have an uncontrollable drinking character they may be taken to rehabilitation centres.

**Suggestions for Further Study**

The paper suggests that more research and further study is carried out so as to conclusively determine and establish factors that affect employee productivity in the transport sector.

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