

**EFFECTS OF SUPERVISION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: A CASE OF KENYA TEA
PACKERS LIMITED (KETEPA) COMPANY, KENYA**

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine the effect of supervision on employee performance at KETEPA Company. The study was guided by the following specific objectives; to identify the effects of delegation of authority in supervision on employee job performance; to establish the influence of teamwork in supervision on employee job performance and to determine the effects of supervisor behavior on employee job performance. In exploring the theoretical framework: the study employed Contingency theory and; Fiedler leadership contingency theory. The study employed descriptive survey design as it sought to describe data and characteristics about the population or phenomenon. The target population for the study was all the employees of the company drawn from top, middle, lower management levels and subordinate employees. Both primary and secondary data was collected for the purpose of this study and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Purposive, stratified random sampling methodologies were employed in selecting a sample of 152 from a target population of 507 employees. Data collection was through self-administered questionnaires and analyzed descriptively and presented in form of graphs, tables, percentages. The respondents provided information relevant to the study. The outcome of the study indicated that supervisors could offer delegated powers to other employees to foster performance; this delegation of duties challenged the employees to adapt to diverse working conditions and become proactive at their places of work. The study made it clear that on-the-job teamwork improves individual output; this individual output accumulates to organizational enhanced productivity due to reduced conflict and enhanced efficiency. The researcher recommends that Supervision plays a major role in ensuring delegation of authority is done with minimal resistance from the staff, hence supervisors should be empowered by the management to be able to perform supervisory roles effectively in delegation of authority. The delegation authority may include authority in decision making regarding supervised staff, supporting them through resources and facilitation of employee job

performance. In order to have maximum benefit of teamwork on employee performance, there is need for organizations to capacity build staff to ensure that they have requisite skills in leadership, employee management, interpersonal relationships, communication skills and problem solving.

Keywords: Supervision, Delegation, Teamwork, Employee performance

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Supervision is important in all operational undertakings of a business or a project. Benard (2005) described supervision as the competence in superiors to influence actions and behavior of their subordinates towards a particular goal. The efficiency and effectiveness to get this guidance and behavioral influence therefore constitutes the quality attendant to supervision. In the event that goals are not being met by the employees, Bernard (2005) noted succinctly that often the problem could be tied to challenges in supervision and an implication of an autocratic leadership style. Consequently, it is argued that supervision is important for the progression of employee performance (Armstrong, 2006; Pollit, 2003).

Armstrong, (2006) defined employee performance as the employee ability to enact activities that lead to production in any organization. This is achieved through task execution through efficient supervision. Of course, there have been numerous strategies employed to harness the potential that employee performance demands. However, scholars have argued that with the advent and consequent progress of supervision, the concept of productivity is the current workable strategy (Sreesha and Joseph, 2013; Anja et al., 2010). Basically, to achieve organizational outcomes every business must be deeply concerned about the performance attributed to employees. Singh, Markus and Chen (2010) further asserts that such organizational performance and business success can be accredited significantly to supervision.

There have been numerous studies done across the globe and in Africa on the link between supervision and employee productivity. Singh et al (2010) did a study in the USA to ascertain the level of influence supervision has on employee performance and found a positive statistical influence. Anja et al (2010) did theirs in Asia and noted that ideally, with efficient supervision, many of the productivity challenges would dissipate. Laporte (2012) did an exhaustive study in Ghana and noted that businesses that were more autocratic had dipping productivity levels and therefore advocated for a robust and empowering supervision process.

The Kenyan situation is no different as a study done by Gichuhi, Abaja and Ochieng (2016) which sought to establish the aspects of supervision and appraisal and how they impact employee productivity in Kenya; found out that aspects of efficient supervision and appraisal criteria had a positive effect on employee productivity. However, the study did not

comprehensively measure the aspect of productivity as it only looked at general output of employees but not the produced volume against the target set as this study will particularly at KETEPA that has a long standing history of packing processes with employees exceeding 500.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

It has been argued initially that supervision is an important component in measuring and improving organizational performance and consequently employee productivity (Dzinkowski, 2010). However, it has also been argued that when the supervision is done devoid of proper efficiency index and considerations the desired productivity may be pointedly and negatively hampered (Jocelyn, *et al*, 2013). KETEPA has shown varied performance in the last two financial years despite having a robust supervision mechanism. However, the extent to which the supervision as exercised by the company has influenced the aspect of employee productivity remains significantly uninvestigated and thus unknown and this study will help to describe the situation.

1.3 General Objectives

The general objective of the study was to establish **the effects of supervision on employee performance at Kenya tea packers limited Kericho.**

1.3.1 Specific Objectives

- i) To identify the effects of delegation of authority in supervision on employee job performance at Kenya tea packers limited.
- ii) To establish the influence of teamwork in supervision on employee job performance at Kenya tea packers limited.
- iii) To determine effects of supervisor behavior on employee job performance at Kenya tea packers limited.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Contingency Theory

This study will be anchored on contingency theory as espoused by Fiedler (1986). The Contingency theory also referred to as business continuity planning is theory that is well associated with threat management, the basis of this theory is that since all business risk cannot be fully eliminated in practice, there is need to offer a planning construct to deal with business risks and performance. With reference to this study contingency theory can be used to mean controls, plans, process and the totality of activities, it's the act of preparing for major catastrophe and occurrences, articulating malleable strategies and rationalizing appropriate assets that will come into play in the event (James, 2013). Also, the theory suggests that there is absolutely no best method to strategically deal with any organization except the said organization understands that it is dependent on internal and external situations. Consequently, all strategic decisions must be dealt with situationally and not universally.

Avramović, (2010) explained supervision practices as the efforts an organization takes to give direction towards tapping onto both internal and external resources that would serve the organization in the long term and bearing in mind the ever-changing business environment, meet the market needs and satisfy the expectations of the stakeholders. This in itself is a realization of contingency constructs because any management practice needs planning and execution for it to flourish. Some of the notable supervision practices that have a bearing on the internal and external workings of organizations include delegation, supervisor behavior and teamwork. Consequently, in this study contingency planning theory involves the preparing for the unexpected and planning for the unknown. The basic purpose of contingency planning theory is to minimize the adverse consequences of catastrophe and occurrences (James, 2013). Contingency Planning Theory will be adopted in this study because it describes and explains the effects of supervision on employee performance.

2.2 Conceptual Framework
Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

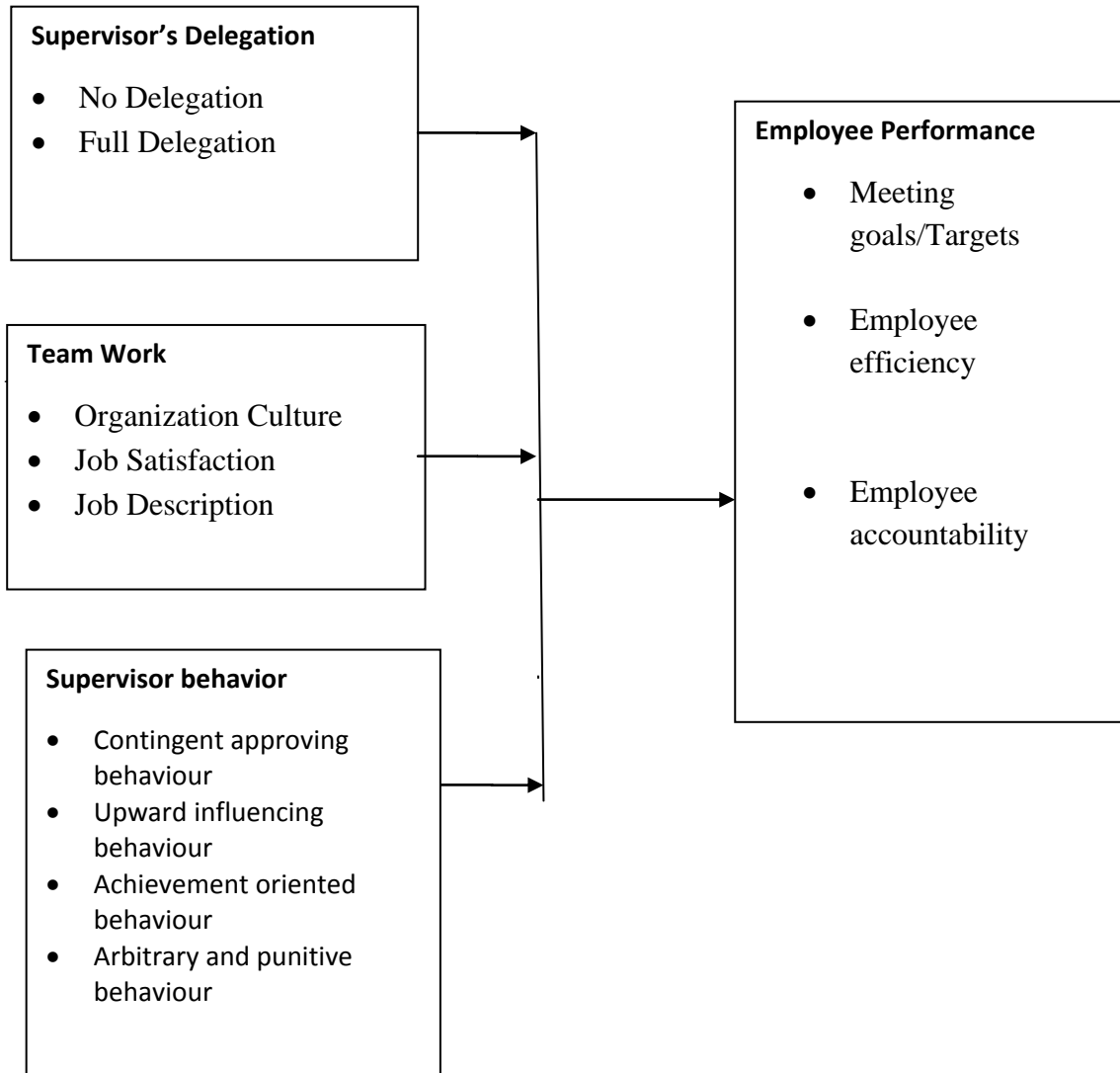


Figure 2. 1 Conceptual framework

2.3 Empirical Review

Najeeb (2011) studied Supervision in Pakistan targeting the Habib Bank Limited in a descriptive design but also using inferential statistics and found that clear and reliable appraisal system is important in an organization and the outcomes accruing from the supervision positively impacts the performance of any employee significantly. The study also highlighted that criteria is important to base the appraisal on fairness and reliability and that the criteria aspect was the

single thing that rendered any appraisal valid or invalid. The study however did not link supervision and its criteria to employee productivity as this study will do.

Saeed and Nosheen (2015) examined employees' perception about the results of Supervision and distinguished certain salient forces which do injure the fruitful application of supervision. The study was descriptive in nature and sampled 120 employees at management stages of the manufacturing sector in Punjab area in Pakistan. The findings show that the selected employees were cognizant of the practicality and worth of the supervision. However, they did not have the knowledge of applying an efficient supervision. There were also significant differences in the employee perception about supervision at the organization. The study did not however again link supervision with employee productivity.

As far as appraisal criteria is concerned, a reliable and accurate technique through which current and contemporaneous levels of performance is determined must exist. This is then compared with laid down acceptable and conversed standards so as to offer reliable measurements (Sing *et al*, 2010). There is consequently the necessity to have quantifiable standards associated with job descriptions and expected outcomes.

Humble (2016) did an explanatory study to look at supervision criteria in the service industry in the UK. From his findings he noted that a performance standard as a declaration of the circumstances which exist when tasks are achieved is needed. He suggested that when an organization is setting standards it would be necessary to consider standards that relate to quality, quantity, time, process and cost. This are aspects that will be used in the present study but most importantly link it to whether it influences employee productivity in the manufacturing company as this link is missing in the reviewed study.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design as it permitted the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques. Also, the design is useful as it offers an accurate and precise description of the events or happenings in the study area (Babbie, 2013).

3.2 Target Population

This study focused on the experience of decision-makers actively involved on the effect of supervision on employee performance at KETEPA Company limited. The population of this study was drawn from all the management levels i.e. top management, middle management, lower management and union employees. The target population was 507 employees that worked at the company.

3.3 Sample Design and Size

From the target population, 30% was selected to represent the others. The sample size is clearly seen in table 1 below.

Table 1 Staff Distribution and Population of Kenya Tea Packers Limited

No	Category	Total	30%
1.	Top Management	9	3
2.	Middle Management	20	6
3.	Lower Management	72	22
4.	Union Employees	404	121
TOTAL		507	152

3.4 Research Instruments

The study collected primary data. The researcher collected data through self-administered questionnaires. The primary data was collected from the company using closed ended and open ended questionnaire.

3.5 Data Analysis and Presentation

The collected data was then analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The quantitative data had the responses from the questionnaires tallied, tabularised and scrutinised in percentages and frequencies using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) which according to Martin & Acuna (2002), this software can handle large amounts of data and it is efficient because of its wide spectrum of statistical procedures that are purposefully designed for social sciences.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This section highlights the results and discussion based on the objectives; delegation, teamwork and supervision behaviour

4.2 Delegation on Employee Performance

The following figure answers the objective on delegation and employee performance.

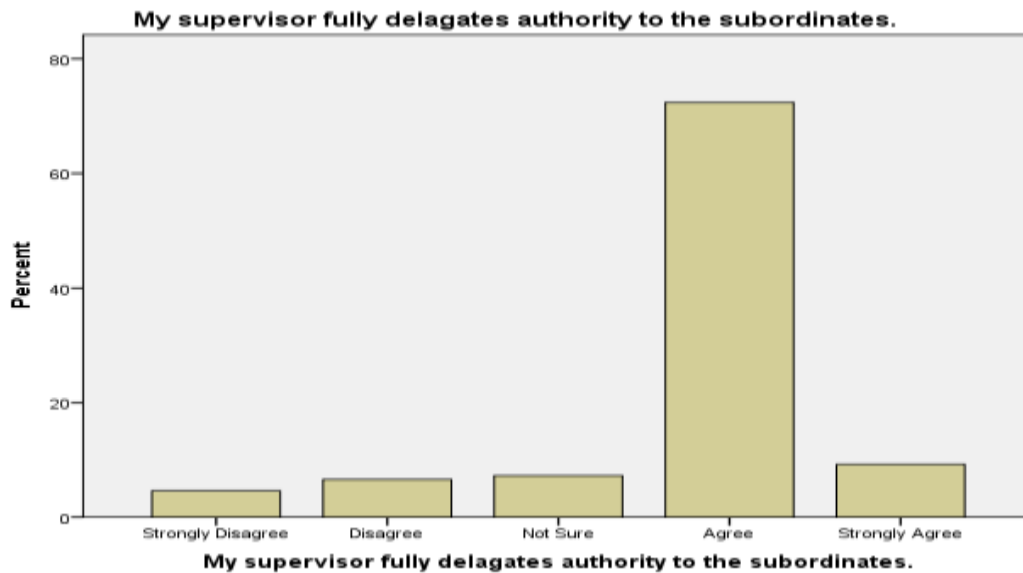


Figure 1 Delegation of Duty

Figure 1 shows a summary of responses on availability of delegation of duties by senior staff. The study showed that 110 (72.4%) of respondents agreed their supervisors delegated duties while 11(9.2%) strongly agreed, this is an accumulation of 81.6% of respondents. This result agrees with significant literature on delegation. Joiner, et al. (2016) conducted a study on delegation, job satisfaction and subordinate performance: The mediating effect of leader-member exchange. The path analysis of the regression results indicated that delegation of authority is positively related with leader-member exchange (LMX) relationship. Kiiiza and Picho (2015) investigated an empirical study on delegation and staff commitment. The results indicated that staff commitment is positively correlated with delegation of authority. Al-Jamma et al (2015) examined the impact of the delegation of authority on employees' performance at great Irbid municipality. Their findings indicated that efficiency, effectiveness as well as empowerment of employees are statistically significant to delegation of authority in Irbid municipality.

4.3 Teamwork and Organizational Productivity

Table 2 shows the results that answer how teamwork influences employee productivity.

Table 2 Team Work and Employee Productivity

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	5	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Disagree	5	3.3	3.3	6.6
	Not Sure	8	5.3	5.3	11.8
	Agree	56	36.8	36.8	48.7
	Strongly Agree	78	51.3	51.3	100
	Total	152	100	100	

The overall productivity of the organization has been improved through teamwork; teamwork not only makes work shared but also improves on the morale of the employees. In KETEP A Company limited the respondents strongly agreed 51.3% that teamwork increased organizational productivity while 36.8% agreed to the same. This agrees with literature for instance, Huddleston et.al (2003) described Teamwork as an idea of working together in a group to achieve the same goals and objectives for the good of the service users and organizations in order to deliver a good quality of service (productivity). Employees' teamwork is seen as constituting a larger group of people than what job position describes, the essence of teamwork is that workload is reduced and broken into pieces of work for everyone to take part. Teamwork is a grouping of professionals whose members work intensely on a specific, common goal using their positive synergy, individual and mutual accountability, and complementary skills. Employees take every step toward accomplishing key action items and nothing important is finished.

4.4 Supervisor Behavior on Employee Performance

It is known that supervisors can have a significant influence on employees' morale and their work behavior (Fleishman & Harris, 1962; Walker, Guest, & Turner, 1956). Since the 1970s,

researchers have learned that supervisors affect employees' psychological well-being (Gavin & Kelley, 1978; Sheridan & Vredenburg, 1978). This in turn has an impact on their general performance. In this study employees were asked to respond on various aspects on how the supervisors' behaviors affect their general performance. See Table 3 for results.

Table 3 Guidance of supervisor

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	1	0.7	0.7	0.7
	Disagree	4	2.6	2.6	3.3
	Not Sure	2	1.3	1.3	4.6
	Agree	61	40.1	40.1	44.7
	Strongly Agree	84	55.3	55.3	100
	Total	152	100	100	

The respondents agreed that most of the supervisors in KETEPA do give clear guidance so that tasks are executed efficiently. Table 4.12 indicates that only 3.3% of the respondents disagree that supervisors at the company give clear guidance that support daily tasks, while 95.4% agree to the same. Accordingly, Kohli (1985) identified four different types of supervisory behavior, which he described as; contingent approving behavior; upward influencing behavior; achievement oriented behavior and; arbitrary and punitive behavior. Contingent approving behavior consists of a supervisor giving recognition to his or her subordinates for work performed outstandingly, praising when need arises and criticizing when performance seems to be bad, including approval for best efforts exhibited by employees. Accordingly, Kohli (1985) found a significant strong relationship between job satisfaction among employees and contingent approving behavior.

4.5 Performance Effectiveness

Table 5 Performance effectiveness

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	6	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Disagree	10	6.6	6.6	10.5
	Not Sure	7	4.6	4.6	15.1
	Agree	81	53.3	53.3	68.4
	Strongly Agree	48	31.6	31.6	100
	Total	152	100	100	

The respondents in the study responded also on the effect of supervision on the staffs' ability to complete tasks effectively, 4.6% of the respondents were not sure; 10.5% were in the category of disagreement while 84.9% were in agreement (Table 4.17). This thus shows that supervision enables employees in KETEPA Company limited to accomplish assignments effectively. These roles of supervisors confirm or agree with Mills (1997) that supervision has direct effect on employees' performance, since they assign tasks and clear responsibilities for performing activities. Providing feedback brings to bare Komaki's (1994) assertion that supervisors check on employees indicating their positives and negatives regarding the employee performance through the right direction.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study sought to bear the importance of supervision on staff performance. It indicated that the effect of supervision on staff performance in KETEPA is crucial that attention has to be paid to develop it. As indicated in the findings, it can be concluded that it is the general feeling of respondents. Majority of respondents agreed that delegation of duty motivates staff *inter alia* which in the long-run affects the performance of staff in the company. Respondents also had preference on establishment of a teamwork scenario in the company. This establishment of teamwork in the company also worked positively in the individual performance of the employees. This thus implies that for organizations to improve performance both at individual

and at the overall levels, there must be strong advocacy for creation of teams that are mandated to deliver outputs at given points of output.

The study also ascertained that the behavior of the supervisor has an impact on the performance of the staff under supervision. Negative behavior will impact negatively on the performance of the employees while positive behavior will impact positively on the performance of the staff. It is hence prudent that the management must have checks and balances in ensuring that the behavior of the supervisors does not affect negatively the performance of the employees in the company.

Using the parameters under study as measures for role of supervision on the performance of the employees, it is evident that supervision plays a cardinal role in improving the general output and efficiency of organizations; however the vice must have internal checks and balances for it to have optimal use to the organizations.

From the findings of the study the following recommendations were made: Supervision plays a major role in ensuring delegation of authority is done with minimal resistance from the staff, hence supervisors should be empowered by the management to be able to perform supervisory roles effectively in delegation of authority. The delegation authority may include authority in decision making regarding supervised staff, supporting them through resources and facilitation of employee job performance.

In order to have maximum benefit of teamwork on employee performance, there is need for organizations to capacity build supervisors to ensure that they have requisite skills in leadership, employee management, interpersonal relationships, communication skills and problem solving. In order to improve supervisor behaviour and enhance satisfaction amongst all employees, the management should promote motivation amongst all the employees. This is through recognition as well as rewarding efforts using diverse techniques.

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