

# ENHANCING THE ROLE OF EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION TOWARDS IMPROVING PERFORMANCE: A SURVEY OF KENYATTA NATIONAL HOSPITAL, KENYA

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## ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this paper was to establish the role of employee recognition that can be tapped to improve performance at both individual and organizational levels. The study examines the relationship between employee recognition (independent variable) and performance (dependent variable) among forty medical services staff drawn from three cadres at the public wing of Kenyatta National Hospital, Kenya. Previous studies have pointed out the significance of employee recognition as one of the key factors that affect performance in organizations. Based on this understanding, the study was conducted in order to establish new ways and avenues of enhancing employee recognition in order to improve performance at both individual and organizational levels. The study adapted a cross-section survey to obtain data from a target population of four hundred officers. Data was collected using a survey questionnaire and statistically analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences through descriptive statistics in an attempt to answer the research question. Among the key findings it was shown that recognizing the employee's accomplishments, through provision of career advancement opportunities translates into improved performance both at the individual and organizational levels. The paper concludes by advocating for the formulation and implementation of appropriate employee recognition strategies in an effort to improve performance at both individual and organizational levels.*

**Key Words:** Employee compensation, employee recognition and performance.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, socio-economic challenges have seen many organizations face competitive pressures among themselves. This has forced them to formulate and execute strategies that see them do more while spending less and less resources. As such they have to design effective and appropriate systems to compensate their human capital (Chenevert and Tremblay, 2011). Recognition of employees has been cited as one of the key

elements of a compensation package, used to motivate and retain employees in an organization (Hamel, 2008). Employee recognition refers to the general acknowledgement or confirmation of a given occurrence or performance (Petrescu and Simon, 2008). According to Harrison (2012), “employee recognition is a timely, informal and/ or formal acknowledgement of a person’s behavior, effort or business result that supports the organization’s goals and values, and which clearly has been beyond normal expectations”. Indeed employee recognition is now globally more relevant and embraced in any organization that is determined to succeed in an economically competitive era.

Past studies have shown that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators can be used to predict outstanding organizational outcomes, especially in job performance and productivity (Ferguson and Reio, 2010 and Boshabelo, 2009). Employee recognition plays a key role in enhancing relationships which are meant to improve performance in an organization. According to Manjunath and Rajesh (2012), in order to achieve organizational strategic goals, the human resource managers should endeavour to provide motivation mechanisms that can drive employees’ potential to perform to optimum levels possible. Actually, individuals have the potential, skills and the required expertise to drive performance to higher levels, but needs to be triggered for this to be realized possibly through employee recognition (Ferguson and Reio, 2010). Additionally, employee recognition on the other hand has been given coverage as one of the mechanisms to address the feelings and emotions of the employees, given that not all people get psyched to work with just attractive basic salaries and allowances (Nolan, 2012). It is indeed cited that employee recognition contributes to building self-esteem among the employees which in turn leads to their willingness and commitment to exert extra effort in performing their assigned tasks in the hospital.

In the Kenyan situation Schemes of service are established in all Ministries of the Government for all civil servants, with the Ministry of Medical Services being one of them in this aspect (Ministry of Health Report, 2007 and Ndetei, et al. 2008). However, these schemes of service do not spell out how employee recognition is to be executed but rather it is the obligation of the individual ministries or sectors to design convenient systems to appreciate their employees. It is common knowledge that organizations with a work force that is not appropriately and adequately motivated may not meet its goals and objectives optimally (Torrington, et al. 2008). Additionally, the (Ministry of Health Report 2007 and Ndetei, et al 2007) show that the few health professionals available, are unequally distributed in the public hospitals combined with the constant threats of strikes and go-slows. A clear indication that there exists a problem in the public health sector in Kenyan that requires to be tackled in order to improve performance in public hospitals. Incidentally, there has been a general public outcry concerning the nature and quality of services that members of the public receive from public health sector, giving a negative impression in public image. According to Ndetei et al. (2007), the significance of the role of health professionals cannot be underrated especially in the process of ensuring the effective and efficient functioning of the health-care systems. They need to be recognized and appreciated where and when the situation demands. Surprisingly, according to the WHO Report (2010), the Kenyan health sector appears to be performing poorly compared to its standards in 1991 relative to other countries globally.

Therefore, the problem addressed in this paper is that most organizations do not embrace the role played by employee recognition in improving performance at both individual and organizational levels. Often the employees in such organizations are demoralized and demotivated by the nature and quality of the

compensation packages that are usually offered to them by the organization. The high cost of living, high inflation levels, complaints of underpayment from the medical staff and possibility of go-slow, cost of educating or training a medic, increased workload based on the number of patients versus that of medical staff available in a given hospital and lastly the nature of work including exposure to dangerous, hazardous and risky working environment complicates the problem further (Ndetei, et al. 2008). As such employee performance is hindered, translating into poor performance and productivity of the organization.

The study was based at Kenyatta National Hospital, established in 1901 as a Native Civil Hospital with a bed capacity of forty and has since developed currently into a National Referral and Teaching Hospital in Kenya with a bed capacity of 1800. The public has 1591 bed capacity. It is supposed to be a leading quality healthcare provider in the region. In the recent past Kenyatta National Hospital has experienced irregular strikes staged by doctors, clinical officers and nurses. Among the demands raised by the staff is the need to register the union of nurses and payment of other allowances. Registering the union of nurses may be one way of recognizing the profession and its membership. Past strikes have equally greatly hindered performance of the hospital and in some cases led to loss of resources and lives.

The paper, therefore tries to bring out an understanding and appreciation of the role and effect of employee recognition towards improving both individual and organizational performance in a public hospital. It examines the link between employee recognition and performance and possibly how this can be enhanced towards increasing the individual and organizational outputs. For example, in Kenya employees in the broadcasting sector have been recognized in their exemplary performances both in news coverage and reporting. Similarly, the outstanding sportsmen and women are equally appreciated through the identification and crowning of the excelling personality in various sporting activities with some receiving presidential awards. Nurses on the other hand have a programme that identifies and awards the “Nurse of the Year” in Kenya. New ways are needed so as to empower such programmes to yield more results among all medical care staff.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 The Study Conceptual model

The research model for the study was based on two main variables. Employee recognition was basically the only independent variable while performance was the dependent variable seen at two levels namely, the individual performance and organizational performance. It is derived on the assumption that a variation on the employee recognition creates an impact on performance at the two levels simultaneously. The sum total of individual performance is the resultant organizational performance, indicating a close link between the two performance levels. This was illustrated in the conceptual framework as shown in figure 1.

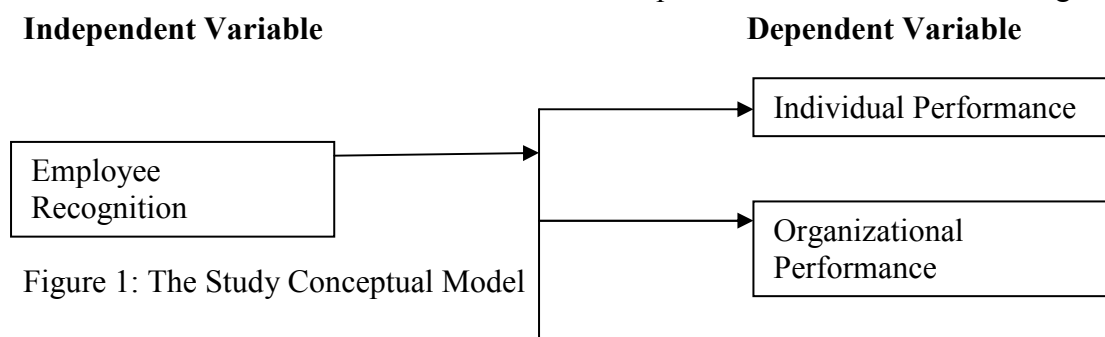


Figure 1: The Study Conceptual Model

The performance indicators included the met or exceeded targets, absenteeism levels, employee satisfaction, higher self-esteem and confidence, budgetary savings or losses, minimized resource wastage and relative ranking. The model further provides a mechanism through which upon realization of the increased performance, a positive feedback is relayed to the individual employees who deserve it because they are the ones who actually performed the various activities reflected in the increased productivity. The study model is designed based on the Total Rewards Model (<http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adim>) which examines the reward strategy in totality so as to attract, motivate and retain employees in the organization. The model provides a framework of strategies required to attract, motivate and retain employees. The objective of the study was basically to establish the ways of enhancing the role of employee recognition to improve performance. This gave one specific research question for the study: how can the role of employee recognition be enhanced so as to improve performance? The purpose of the study was therefore to contribute and expand the knowledge base through available empirical evidence based on the relationship between employee recognition and performance. For example, the paper looks into new ways of employing the positive aspects of employee recognition to minimize staff absenteeism, negligence and resource wastage while increasing commitment and employee satisfaction at their place of work.

According to Chenevert and Tremblay (2011), when employees are compensated commensurately with their contribution, their perception of equity and overall individual commitment to job performance increases. In the contemporary world, organizations have endeavoured to offer both short and long-term compensation systems and policies so as to meet their overall goals, especially in attracting, motivating and retaining both skilled and competent staff. This has however not yielded much especially based on the fact that they are irregularly reviewed (Mirabella, 1999 and Corsby et al. 2005). In a similar manner, (Chapman and Kelliher, 2011) found that some organizations were adopting a blend of a number of elements in their compensation strategies. For example, the authors cited the move towards merit pay, incentives and other benefits such as retirement, leave, holiday, rental and commuter allowances, away from the traditional approaches to employee compensation as part and parcel of recognizing and appreciating the role of employees in the organizational performance.

## **2.2 Expectancy Theory**

The expectancy theory, developed by Victor Vroom, has tried to lay emphasis on how employees make choices from the possible options available leading to their resultant behaviour and effort. On the basis of expectancy theory, anticipation about the consequences, outcomes, or results influence both short-term and long-term behaviour indicators in an individual (Vroom, 1964) and (Torrington et al. 2008). The expectancy theory simply points to the expected compensation. Similarly, according to Claydon and Beardwell (2007), the expectancy theory enables the individual to exert effort and skill on a task based on the possible options available. The expectancy theory is solidly founded on two variables namely, the valence, which is seen as the perceived value of the outcomes, and the expectancy on the other part which is viewed as the probability that the behaviour through action and effort will lead towards the desired outcomes (Vroom, 1964). Both valence and expectancy are therefore understood to influence employee performance. The theory is also based on two assumptions namely; employees are motivated to receive positive outcomes while avoiding negative outcomes and that the employees are rational, careful processors of information (Lawler, 2003).

According to Claydon and Beardwell (2007) individuals choose work behaviour they believe will most likely

result in the realization of specific outcomes that they highly value. Thus the employees assess the worthiness of doing a particular task before devoting their energy and time. The significance of the expectancy theory in the study is majorly to empower the individual employees based on the higher value attached to a set of rewards and the probability of the rewards recurring, calling for equivalent levels of effort, employee relations, commitment and participation (Poulikas, 2009 and Botshabelo, 2009). The study limited itself to employee recognition as an element of compensation in relation to how it influences service delivery in public hospitals in Kenya.

### **2.3 The Relationship Between Employee Recognition and Performance**

Employee performance is the main ingredient in the organizational performance without which the overall productivity will be very meagre. Performance involves the alignment of the organizational, team and individual efforts towards the achievement of organizational goals, based on the established employee expectations, skill demonstration, assessment, feedback and continuous improvement. According to Shaun and York (2002), motivation is seen as a product of the worth or value that is held by an individual on the possible results of their actions and the expectations that their targets will be realized in due course. The employee performance can therefore be attributed to an individual's extrinsic and intrinsic levels of motivation which to some extent will be influenced by the compensation systems and related policies instituted in an organization.

According to Lawler (1981) employees tend to improve their performance when their compensation is related to the actual work that they do. People need to be recognized and appreciated accordingly in relation to their achievements and accomplishments by the employer or immediate supervisors. Effective employee recognition leads to increased productivity as a resultant of enhanced satisfaction as seen in their commitment and devotion. As a pointer to poor performance, some patients have suffered in the hands of the medical practitioners; presumably due to negligence and fatigue. The role of the health-care workers is important, especially in ensuring effective and efficient operations of the health-care facilities (Ndetei, et al. 2007 and Ministry of Health, 2007). Performance in the study was measured through indicators such as the level of employee retention, absenteeism levels, commitment, met or exceeded targets, employee satisfaction, higher self-esteem and confidence, budgetary savings or losses, minimized resource wastage and relative ranking.

On the other hand recognition refers to the general acknowledgement or confirmation of a given occurrence or performance (Petrescu and Simon, 2008). Employee recognition is the acknowledgement of an employee's accomplishment and effort towards organizational goals. It includes the act of giving special attention to employee actions, efforts, behaviour or performance, which can be either physical or psychological or both. It is actually one way of dealing with the employee feelings. Employee recognition is one of the ways of motivating staff in an organization, making them feel valued and in improving the overall attraction and employee retention ([www.cuttingedgepr.com](http://www.cuttingedgepr.com)). The attraction and retention of talented, engaged and committed employees results into improved performance. Essentially not all employees get motivated to work an extra mile with the salaries and allowances alone (Nolan, 2012). As such there is need for an organization to consider the provision of some relevant awards on merit as a form of employee recognition.

Organizations should endeavour to recognize their employees appropriately so as to portray the expected behaviour, loyalty, retention, commitment and job performance (Dessler, 2008 and David, 2008). For example, there is need to establish and maintain innovative and strategic structures, based on extensive training and development efforts to generate greater workforce commitment, teamwork and cooperation (Dessler, 2008 and Saraladevi, et al. 2009). According to Keller (1999) non-monetary recognition can be very motivating, helping to establish confidence feelings and satisfaction on the part of the employee. Empirical studies show that employees who receive recognition at their place of work end up with a higher self-esteem, self-confidence and an induced feeling and willingness to take up new challenges while embracing innovativeness (Allen and Kilmann, 2001). Employees who feel appreciated often go above and beyond the organizational expectations, are likely to be more productive and essentially more likely to stay in the organization (Welsh, et al. 2012). Such employees become positive about themselves, and as a result of their positive self-esteem, they end up becoming the best and reliable employees in the organization. This later translates into enhanced performance, a situation where one does his job with minimum supervision. While one organization may use recognition to address individual performance, others may use it to enhance overall organizational performance.

According to Manjunath and Rajesh (2012), competency management has been characterized by increasing trends of strategically positioning organizations to maintain a higher competitive edge above their potential competitors. Additionally, the compensation systems in an organization are understood to have direct potential to influence the employer's ability to attract, motivate and retain employees in order to ensure optimal performance levels on the part of both its employees and the organization (Welsh, et al. 2012). Similarly, according to Chiu, et al. (2002) compensation contributes to the improvement of both employee and organizational performance, as well as in the retention and involvement of employees in the successes of the firm. This agrees with a study carried by Mitchell (2012), that at least 17 percent of employees leave an organization due to lack of employee recognition programmes. Of particular interest is the employee recognition aspect of compensation that the paper addresses.

Additionally, whereas the classical school of thought views motivation in monetary terms (Mirabella, 1999), the human relations school of thought view motivation in terms of cognitive processes (Claydon and Beardwell, 2007). On the other part, Lee and Chen (2011) found out that one of the major reasons for lack of commitment and high turnover rate among teachers could be attributed to the nature and quality of compensation offered to them. Organizations can offer employee recognition in various ways ranging from the provision of gift cards and certificates, shopping vouchers, saying thank you, praise, dinner, trophies, opportunity, appreciating their ideas and respect where it deserves (Nolan, 2012). What is done in five minutes leaves a big impact on both the employee and the employer. By doing this the employee realizes that his contribution in the organization matters, especially when done on a regular manner with respect of the organizational culture. Relevant studies indicate that the most common problem in most organizations currently is the lack of inclusion of recognition as a component of compensation (Ndetei, et al. 2007). Incidentally it has been found to be the least expensive (Corsby, et al. 2005). The aim of recognition is to appreciate and value the employees in the organization. Employee recognition allows the individuals to know and understand that their work is valued and appreciated, provides a sense of ownership and belongingness, improves morale, enhances loyalty and increases employee retention rate in the organization. Employee recognition is viewed as one of the key dependent variables of performance because it is

understood to have a direct impact on employee performance. A positive impact is felt when one feels valued, satisfied and more engaged in an organization. According to Nelson (1994), recognition should appear to come from people who hold high esteem position such as a manager or immediate supervisor. It is seen as a key drive to employee engagement and consequent organizational performance. For example, the use of simple thank you letters or cards, speak more powerfully to the employees.

According to Allen and Helms (2002) regular expressions of appreciation by managers and leaders towards encouraging employees to reach the strategic goals of the organization, enhanced the individual employee performance. For effective employee recognition, it must be sincere and heartfelt. It must be timely so as to be effective. Individuals are different and therefore what one appreciates it may be the exact opposite to the other person (Nolan, 2012). Recognition meets the psychological need for appreciation which is usually valued by human beings. Similarly, Keller (1999) says that people are motivated to higher levels of job performance by positive recognition from their managers and peers. For example, assigning an individual to work in a task team, is motivating enough in that it will help him gain new skills and experiences, and demonstrates trust in their abilities. The study attempted to find out if at all the hospital staffs are given recognition and relevant appreciation when they do exemplary work, such as carrying out an extraordinary operation or responsiveness to emergency.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research design:**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design to obtain data from a target population of 400 medical staff of the public wing of the Kenyatta National Hospital in Kenya, giving a sampling frame of 40 officers, represented by ten percent, through stratified random sampling technique. According to (Sekaran, 2009 and Saunders, et al. 2008) at least ten percent of the population is appropriate. The sample covered three cadres of staff, namely doctors, clinical officers and nurses. A total of forty questionnaires were administered with one hundred percent response rate. This was possible based on the fact that the respondents were required to fill and return the questionnaires immediately.

#### **3.2 Data Collection:**

Data was obtained from the responses using a survey questionnaire, designed to specifically elicit the relevant data to aid in answering the research question. Both primary and secondary data were collected and used in this paper.

#### **3.3 Data Analysis and Presentation:**

Opinion details were recorded on a Likert Scale ranging from 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 equivalent to strongly agree. Data collected from the field were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques, so as to determine the relationship between the study variables, namely employee recognition and performance. Descriptive statistics were used to highlight the existing relationships further (Saunders, et al.2008 and Mugenda, 2008). All these analyses were possible through a computer software known as the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences.

### **4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Demographic Characteristics**

A total of forty questionnaires were analyzed for the study. The respondents were represented in the ratio of 1:1:2, for doctors, clinical officers and nurses respectively. The age bracket of the respondents was 50

percent in both 31-40 and 41-50 years, with the male participants represented by 62.5 Percent and 37.5 percent for female. It was also found out that 62.5 percent had completed Diploma level of education while 37.5 had an undergraduate qualification. At least 37.5 percent of the respondents had worked in the current station for more than 7 years, with an equal portion working for 3-4 years. However, 12.5 percent had worked the hospital for less than two years.

#### 4.2.1 Opinion Details

Further analysis on the personal opinion details, revealed that 37.5 percent strongly agreed with an equal number of participants agreeing that his or her performance in the hospital is enhanced when recognized for the individual accomplishments. This makes them to exert effort and work harder towards an outcome they value in line with the expectancy theory (Beardwell and Claydon, 2007 and Vroom, 1964). Interestingly, 12.5 percent were undecided as shown in table 1. People are unique and therefore perform differently (Nolan, 2012).

**My performance in the hospital is enhanced when I get recognized for my accomplishment:**

	n	percent
Strongly Agree	15	37.5
Agree	15	37.5
Undecided	5	12.5
Disagree	5	12.5
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Further information derived from table 1, is that none of the participants strongly disagreed with this statement.

On the part of provision of advancement opportunities as one way of enhancing performance, 75 percent of the respondents strongly agreed that it is true and that this can be revealed in the targets met or exceeded at a given accountable period. Indeed all the respondents were of the opinion that provision of advancement opportunities, giving room for individual to train and develop their careers was a necessary in order to improve performance. The medical staff who have been identified and recognized by being given further training opportunities to enrich their skills have in most cases contributed positively towards the overall performance of the organization (Saraladevi, et al. 2009 and Dessler, 2008).

Detailed analysis revealed that 100 percent of the respondents were in agreement that adequate recognition and appreciation of the hospital staff improves their performance because it leaves a long term impact on them. Essentially appreciated and recognized employees perform beyond organizational expectations (Welsh, et al. 2012). Such employees end up becoming very productive.

Concerning the role of material and non-material recognition, at least 50 percent were in agreement that the later enhances performance more that the former. However, 37.5 percent disagreed with the statement, with 12.5 undecided. Indeed non-monetary recognition can be very motivating (Keller, 1999 and Claydon and Beardwell, 2007). Essentially, this calls for the involvement of encouraging expressions such as saying 'thank you' when a given employee has excelled in a given area without necessarily attaching any material



token as an appreciation (Allen and Helms, 2002 and Allen and Kilmann, 2001). For example, is said to leave a tangible emotional impact on the recipient.

The study also found out that 87.5 percent strongly agreed and 12.5 agreed that recognition from immediate supervisors leads to higher self-esteem and confidence, inducing feelings of willingness and commitment to take up new challenges towards enhancing performance as revealed in (Nolan, 2012, and Tremblay, 2011). This revelation is so strong in that the immediate supervisors usually heads of departments are well placed to recognize and appreciate the medical staff working under them in the hospital. It is at this point that an individual's outstanding and exemplary can be noted and brought to the attention of the other stakeholders. Hence the role the immediate supervisors play in enhancing employee recognition whose overall impact will be felt on performance both at individual and organizational level.

The aspect of employee retention was also analyzed with respect to employee recognition with 75 percent and 25 percent of the respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing respectively to the corresponding statement. Essentially all the participants were of the opinion that recognized and appreciated employees are likely to stay in the hospital longer due to increased job satisfaction, (Welsh, et al. 2012 and Lee and Chen, 2011). Indeed serious and committed organizations cannot afford to let go their high performers to their perceived competitors.

The study also looked at a condition where a recognition programme is missing in an organization. Data analysis revealed that a total of 75 percent of the respondents agreed that in the absence of employee recognition in the compensation system of the hospital performance was likely to be hindered.

Further analysis was carried out on the information obtained through an informal interview. The respondents identified three main ways through which employee recognition can be enhanced in the hospital can be enhanced. At least half of them advocated for an all inclusive and consultative approach. This will ensure that key stakeholders involved in the designing and implementation of proposed employee recognition strategies. Similarly, 87.5 percent of the participants identified the establishment of a variety of employee recognition awards that run throughout the year as an important aspect of improving performance in the hospital. However, it was pointed out that irregular review of such programmes greatly affected their effectiveness (Mirabella, 1999). Interestingly, all the respondents indicated the need for the hospital administration to provide dinner for the night staff on duty in recognition and appreciation of their efforts and determination to work during 'odd' hours. It is indeed a matter that should be brought to the attention of the hospital management team.

At least 62.5 percent of them said that they would prefer a system of employee recognition where various awards are established and maintained at departmental levels so as to benefit the staff in the hospital. On further interrogation, the officers were of the opinion that similar employee recognition programmes be established targeting all the cadres in the hospital ranging from the support staff to the Chief Executive Officer as one way of improving performance at both individual and organizational levels. The employee's uniqueness and differences should be appreciated, because people come from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles and way of living based on the prevailing socio-economic differences. Definitely these differences bring

along with it challenges into the organization that should be addressed through an appropriate employee recognition policy (Harrison, 2005 and Nolan, 2012).

#### **4.2.2 Pearson Correlation Coefficient**

The correlation coefficient between employee recognition and performance as a single statistic determined in order to describe the degree of relationship the independent and dependent variables of the study. A very high relationship given by  $\alpha = 0.750$  was obtained between employee recognition and performance. Further analysis indicated equally a very high relationship of between  $\alpha = 0.800$ , between career advancement opportunities given to the medical staff and performance in the hospital. Generally, there was a significant relationship between employee recognition and both individual and organizational performance.

### **5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Discussion**

Based on the findings identified above, the paper highlights the key areas upon which employee recognition can be enhanced in order to increase their output in the hospital, especially with the understanding that people are unique and that they have the potential to perform provided they are triggered to do so. The individual differences and challenges should be converted into strength rather than a weakness, by formulating a relevant employee recognition strategy so as to provide an opportunity for the staff to exhibit their full potential with devotion and commitment in serving the people (Nolan, 2012). For example, provide dinner or snacks while on night duty will spare the officer time to attend to the patients instead of working out for the services, given that food is a basic need. According to Chenevert and Tremblay, (2011) appropriate and effective systems are needed to address the employee compensation needs, with recognition as one of its elements. Indeed employee recognition will serve to produce significant outcomes within a specific timeframe when appropriate motivational strategies are administered. Therefore, to attract, motivate and retain high performing employees in the hospital, an all inclusive and consultative recognition strategy should be instituted (<http://www.worldatwork.org/waw/adim>, and Manjunath and Rajesh, 2012). The fact that all the participants indicated that employee recognition contributes to increasing confidence and self-esteem, the implementation of such programmes in an organization is likely to provide an avenue through which the workers voluntarily provide their creativity and innovative skills to enhance performance in the organization (Chenevert and Tremblay, 2011). Its role is to encourage them to work harder and devote their energies and effort towards the realization of the strategic goals of the organization.

#### **5.2 Recommendations**

The paper gives strategic and informed recommendations for policy-makers and implementers and further research based on the above findings.

**5.2.1 Policy recommendations:** Given the significant role of employee recognition identified above, there is need to redesign the existing compensation systems in order to enrich the aspect of appreciating and giving honour to the individual employees in order to exhibit the desirable behavior, loyalty, motivation and commitment (Dessler, 2008, Saraladevi, et al. 2009, Chapman and Kelliher, 2011, Hamel, 2008 and David, 2008). Otherwise, this is the only way through which the individual performance will enhance the overall organization performance. There are many ways through which employee recognition can be enhanced in the hospital ([www.hr.unt.edu](http://www.hr.unt.edu)). However, only the relevant and affordable strategies can be adopted. For example employing 'thank you' expressions does not have a financial implication, but rarely do you find

organizations using it to appreciate their employees when they perform beyond expectations (Allen and Helms, 2002). Where necessary, non-verbal expressions such as a smile and active listening will leave a more permanent mark on the feelings and emotions of the employee being appreciated. Equally important is the need for organizations that have no recognition programmes in their compensation strategy to introduce a variety of them including the provision of gift cards, trophies and praise, so as to elicit the full potential of their employees to the benefit of the organization and by ensuring that it is aligned to the overall organizational strategy (Nolan, 2012 and Ndetei, et al. 2007).

The focus should now be directed towards individual performance through enhanced employee recognition since it is the resultant sum of the individual contributions that translates into organizational performance. Thus more effort by the management should be on identifying opportunities and avenues of reaching the employee's ego through adequate and appropriate positive recognition strategies (Nelson, 1994 and Keller, 1999). Thus embrace the role of the managers and peers in positively enhancing employee recognition at the place of work.

### **5.2.2 Further research recommendations:**

The paper presents findings from a study that was carried out in a service industry set up. It is therefore necessary for further interrogation to be done in a production industry to see whether the similar results will be obtained. Kenyatta National Hospital deals with the treatment of patients. It will also be interesting to know the experience in a private sector, given that the study was conducted in a public institution.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Employee recognition is actually more relevant and applicable in the contemporary organizational settings than it was previously, given the competitive nature in the business environment. Based on the foregoing findings and discussions employee recognition, if well utilized under stable and viable systems and structures can be a powerful tool in enhancing both individual and organizational performance. This will serve as a boost towards the realization of organizational strategies. "Although money is important, an organization can get more benefit from various forms of recognition that are personal, creative and fun" (Nelson, 2012). Thus organizations should be re-engineered to ensure that excellent performance is realized through repackaged compensations systems targeting all employees, with more preference given to employee recognition. Conversely, in the absence of appropriate and timely employee recognition, an organization is likely to fail due to low staff retention levels and demoralized staff. In essence, there is no organization that will risk its performance by neglecting to recognize and appreciate its outstanding employees. Lastly, all organizations, small and large should embrace employee recognition as a way of improving performance by giving it a trial in totality, starting from the simple techniques such as "thank you and facial expressions" to more complex ones like "recognition of the year awards". And that the employee recognition programmes should be designed to run throughout the year or project period rather than waiting for the end of the assignment. Gradual milestones should be recognized so as to serve as a motivation for the next stage. Remember employees are human beings and not machines. They want a humane approach in the application of recognition strategies; rather than doing it because it is a requirement of the organization.

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