# EFFECT OF INTERGENERATIONAL WORK ATTITUDE ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF EGERTON UNIVERSITY, KENYA

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*Abstract:* **Working with people from the different ages appear to be an overwhelming task in light of the fact that no single structure will keep every one of the ages profitable at work. To maximize the productivity of this multiple generations in the universities; an appropriate work related behaviors needs to be in place where all cohorts of the generations feel welcomed and appreciated for the contribution they make so as to enhance the performance of these employees. An intractable administration style coordinated toward any one group will estrange a greater number of representatives than it will rouse. This difference in working behaviors by the different generation necessitated the need for this study which sought to find out the effects of intergenerational work behaviors on employee performance: a case study of Egerton University in Kenya. The study used descriptive correlational research design where all issues pertaining intergenerational work behaviors was cross-examined. The target population for the study was all the 2646 staff of Egerton University where 347 of the staff were randomly sampled. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data for the study. The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS version 24 so as to generate quantitative and qualitative results as well as inferential statistics. The study concludes that the work environment was not good and that employees were not treated the same way and that employee did not respect one another in workplace. The study recommends that there is need to inculcate respect for diversity and age for staff at the University so as to create a good working relationship between the older generation and the younger generation.**

*Keywords:* **Attitude, Work Attitudes, Intergenerational, Employee Performance, Intergenerational work attitude.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

A generation is a group of people who were born in the same year, have same age and their livelihood has been molded in the same way. A generation involves recollection between groups of persons linked by age and that people who were born on the same year and went through similar past and socio-cultural background have a familiar language constitutes a generation. In a workplace, individuals who have a positive attitude about their job and like what they are doing would be eager to work longer and harder. This illustrates that attitudes propel individuals to act in a specific way and context (Kreither & Kinicki, 2010).

Attitude towards someone or something is the influence of; cognitive components, affective component and behavioural component. Cognitive component entails person's perceptions, opinions and beliefs. It is the consideration processes with emphasis on consistency and judgment. Evaluate beliefs held by a person are an important element of cognition and are manifested by favourable or unfavourable impressions individuals feels towards an entity, person or situation. Emotional

elements of an attitude are the feelings or emotions one has about an object or situation. The work-related attitudes can either be positive or negative assessments representatives hold about their workplace, (Kreitner & Kinicki, (2010).

## 1.1 Statement of the Problem

Every person is a product of his or her environment, so it's no surprise that the modern work place consisting of Baby Boomers and Generation X, Y, Z, is a complex mixture of varied work expectations, attitudes, work habits and social competences. Because of this diversity, a clear cut balance needs to be adapted in order for an organization with all generations to thrive. Organizations works force comprises of the different generation mostly managed by the Baby Boomers have different work related behaviors. Working with individuals from multiple generations may seem like a daunting task because no single structure will keep all these generations satisfied on the job. Behavioral conducts like attitude or work habits are regarded differently by the different generational group. This difference in working behavior by the different generation necessitated the need for this study.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Employee Performance

Employee performance is a sign of the capacity of an individual to efficiently achieve independent goals (Venkatraman & Ramanujam, 1986). One of the elements that is assessable is the employees' performance through the level of their productivity which is influenced by the following; work attitude, work habits and social competences among others. Performance of employees is evaluated to identify Quality of work, Quantity of work produced Job knowledge, Working relationships and Achievements. Organizations need employees that are able to get the job done, because employee performance is critical to the overall success of the company. Managers need to understand the key benefits of the different generational in their performance so that they can develop consistent and objective methods for evaluating employees. Doing so helps determine strengths, weaknesses and potential managerial gaps in the organization. Although performance evaluations are never fun, they help managers determine performance levels for each employee.

One of the most important factors in employee performance is to achieve goals. Different generations have different goals and same organizational goals. When employees do not perform effectively, consumers feel that the company is apathetic to their needs, and will seek help elsewhere. Employees at the same time if they find that the company is apathetic to their needs the will plan to exit the organization. When people are doing their jobs effectively, morale in the office gets a boost. Employees who aren't motivated to get the job done as indicated, can bring down an entire organization. It is important to foster a positive, energetic work environment. Using employee evaluations on a consistent basis helps employees see their growth, so that they can feel good about making progress over time. It also helps them set new goals, keeping the energy in the office high. Watching employees grow shows the potential they have for advancement and leadership.

When employees are not performing well, it negatively affects productivity and ultimately, the bottom line. Managers should not make the mistake of thinking that poor performance indicates a poor employee. Look for common trends in which groups of employees are succeeding and where there are deficiencies. Smart managers evaluate the deficiencies to see if it is a talent issue or a management and development issue. Ultimately, good employees are productive, which creates great working environments and increases overall productivity.

### 2.2 Work Attitudes on Employee Performance

Boomers tend to value work more than younger generations and see work as being more central to their lives than younger generations (Family and Work Institute, 2006; Smola & Sutton, 2002). Smola and Sutton (2002) found that Boomers perceived work to be a crucial part in one's life more strongly than younger generation. Thus this generation performs their work better than the younger generation since they value work and perceive it as a crucial part of their lives.

Gen X are independent and individualistic, placing more value on their own career over being loyal to organizations (Beutell & Wittig-Berman, 2008). Instead of seeking job security, they pursuit challenging jobs and better opportunities to develop their own career (Kupperschmidt, 2000). This shows that Gen X work and perform their work diligently since they do it as a challenge hence they put more effort to the work. They also value autonomy and freedom from supervision in the workplace (Jurkiewicz, 2000). Although Gen X have a stronger desire for rapid job advancement than do Boomers,

they are not work-centric and more likely than older generation to value work-life balance (Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, 2010). Gen X also reported higher external locus of control (Twenge, Zhang, & Im, 2004) and self-esteem (Twenge & Campbell, 2001) than Boomers which shows that they will perform better in their work than any other generation.

Millennial generation has been characterized by economic prosperity, advancement of instant communication technologies through the Internet, social networking, and globalization. Similar to Gen X, Millennials value freedom and work-life balance more than Baby Boomers (Cennamo & Gardner, 2008; Smola & Sutton, 2002; Twenge, 2010). They also have high leisure work values, preferring a job that provides more vacation time than older generations hence their performance in work which are more demanding is poor (Twenge et al., 2010). Despite of their lower work centrality, Millennials have higher expectations about promotions and pay raises in the workplace (Ng et al., 2010). Further, they place a greater value on meaningful and fulfilling work and are not tolerant of less challenging work (Corporate Leadership Council, 2005; Lancaster & Stillman, 2002). In spite of prevailing beliefs about Millennials' high expectation is about work environment and status, prior research found that Millennials are as satisfied with their job as their older generations, even reporting marginally higher job satisfaction, and are more optimistic about their career development (Kowske et al., 2010). Previous research in personality traits among generations found that Millennials are likely to have distinct personality traits from older generations (Twenge & Campbell, 2001; Twenge, Konrath, Foster, Campbell, & Bushman, 2008). Millennials are found to demonstrate higher narcissism, self-esteem, and assertiveness than their older generations but are weak in their performance of work that are involving or demanding (Twenge & Campbell, 2003; Twenge et al., 2008).

## 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research adopted a descriptive correlational research design. It was used to determine the factors under study accurately. This method was used in research to get the views of different respondents who are in the different generational groups. The study was conducted in Egerton University in Nakuru County both academic and non-teaching staff specifically targeting the four different generations. Egerton University is the oldest institution of higher learning in Kenya. It was founded as a Farm School in 1939 by Lord Maurice Egerton of Tatton, a British national who settled in Kenya in the 1920s. In 1950, the School was upgraded to an Agricultural College offering diploma programmes. In 1986, Egerton Agricultural College was gazetted as a constituent college of the University of Nairobi.

The institution was chosen because of its age which accommodate all the generations. The study targeted all the 2646 staff both teaching and non-teaching staff from Egerton University which comprises of Baby boomers Generation X, Y and Z. Yamane (1967) simplified formula was used to calculate the sample sizes of this study which was 347 staff from all the teaching and non-teaching departments namely; Professors, Senior Lecturers, Lecturers, Registrars, Administrators and support staff

## 4. FINDINGS ON INTERGENERATIONAL WORK ATTITUDE AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with the statements on work attitude. Their responses were on a Likert Scale of 1 to 5 where 1 - Strongly Disagree (SD) 2 - Disagree (D), 3 – Undecided (U), 4 – Agree (A), 5 - Strongly Agree (SA).

**Table 1: Work Attitude**

| Work Attitude | SD | D | N | A | SA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| In general I like working here . | 174 (56.3%) | 70 (22.7%) | 4 (1.3%) | 48 (15.5%) | 13 (4.2%) |
| As far as I know I plan to work at the University for long | 62 (20.1%) | 150 (48.5%) | | 59 (19.1%) | 38 (12.3%) |
| I am satisfied with the job security I have | 27 (8.7%) | 80 (25.9%) | 7 (2.3%) | 112 (36.2%) | 83 (26.9%) |
| I am satisfied with the respect I receive from the people I work with | 90 (29.1%) | 84 (27.2%) | 7 (2.3%) | 86 (27.8%) | 42 (13.6%) |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I feel like I am part of the University. | 98 (31.7%) | 95 (30.8%) | | 31 (10.0%) | 85 (27.5%) |
| I have asked for training to do my job better | 32 (10.4%) | 56 (18.1%) | | 137 (44.3%) | 84 (27.2%) |
| I could do better at my wok if I had some/more training or professional development | 135 (43.7%) | 86 (27.8%) | 5 (1.6%) | 15 (4.9%) | 68 (22.0%) |
| I have the right tools and equipment's to do my job | 39 (12.6%) | 55 (17.8%) | 13 (4.2%) | 120 (38.8%) | 82 (26.5%) |
| I agree that the level of my performance determines my salary | 70 (22.7%) | 73 (23.6%) | 5 (1.6%) | 52 (16.8%) | 109 (35.3%) |
| In my decision to work at the University benefits plaid a major role | 65 (21.0%) | 81 (26.2%) | 5 (1.6%) | 60 (19.5%) | 98 (31.7%) |
| In my opinion there should be different treatment towards older employees and younger employee | 140 (45.3%) | 80 (25.9%) | 14 (4.5%) | 26 (8.4%) | 49 (15.9%) |
| I receive the right amount of recognition for my work. | 67 (21.7%) | 115 (37.2%) | 13 (4.2%) | 67 (21.7%) | 47 (15.2%) |
| I am aware of the advancement opportunities that exist in the University for me. | 13 (4.2%) | 91 (29.4%) | 4 (1.3%) | 109 (35.3%) | 92 (29.8%) |
| The amount of work expected of me is reasonable. | 86 (27.8%) | 82 (26.5%) | 15 (4.9%) | 63 (20.4%) | 63 (20.4%) |
| I am willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help this University to be successful. | 64 (20.7%) | 65 (21.0%) | 12 (3.9%) | 78 (25.2%) | 90 (29.1%) |
| I am proud to tell others that I am part of this University. | 61 (19.7%) | 74 (23.9%) | 5 (1.6%) | 91 (29.4%) | 78 (25.2%) |

Source: Researcher (2021)

Table 1 shows that majority of the respondents who were 174 representing 56.3% strongly disagreed as well as 70 respondents representing 22.7% who disagreed that they generally like working for the institution. The respondents who were 48 representing 15.5% agreed as well as 13 respondents representing 4.2% who strongly agreed that they generally like working for the institution while 4 respondents representing 1.3% were undecided.

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents who were 150 representing 48.5% disagreed as well as 62 respondents representing 20.1% who strongly disagreed that they plan to work at the University for long. The respondents who were 59 representing 19.1% agreed as well as 38 respondents representing 12.3% who strongly agreed that that they plan to work at the University for long.

Respondents were satisfied with the job security they had. This is as per the response of the majority of the respondents who were 112 representing 38.2% who agreed as well as 83 respondents representing 26.9% who strongly agreed. The respondents who were 80 representing 25.9% disagreed as well as 27 respondents representing 8.7% who strongly disagreed that they were satisfied with the job security they had while 7 respondent representing 2.3% were undecided.

Majority of the respondents who were 90 representing 29.1% strongly disagreed as well as 84 respondents representing 27.2% who disagreed that they were satisfied with the respect they receive from the people they work with. The respondents who were 86 representing 27.8% agreed as well as 42 respondents representing 13.6% who strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the respect they receive from the people they work with. The respondents who were 7 representing 2.3% were undecided.

The findings as per Table 4.2 reveals that majority of the respondents who were 98 representing 31.7% strongly disagreed as well as 95 respondents representing 30.8% who disagreed that they feel like they are a part of the University. The respondents who were 85 representing 27.5% strongly agreed as well as 31 respondents representing 10.0% who agreed that they feel like they are a part of the University.

Majority of the respondents who were 137 representing 44.3% agreed as well as 84 respondents representing 27.2% who strongly agreed that they had asked for training to do their job better. The respondents who were 56 representing 18.1% disagreed as well as 32 respondents representing 10.4% who strongly disagreed that they had asked for training to do their job better.

Most of the respondents who were 135 representing 43.7% strongly disagreed as well as 86 respondent representing 27.8% disagreed that they could do better at their wok if they had some more training or professional development. The respondents who 68 representing 22.0% strongly agreed as well as 15 respondents representing 4.9% who agreed that they could do better at their wok if they had some more training or professional development while 5 respondents representing 1.6% were undecided.

The findings reveals that majority of the respondents who were 120 representing 38.8% agreed so do 82 respondents representing 26.5% who strongly agreed that they have the right tools and equipment's to do their job. The respondents who were 55 representing 17.8% disagreed as well as 39 respondents representing 12.6% who strongly disagreed that they have the right tools and equipment's to do their job. Respondents who were 13 representing 4.2% were undecided.

Majority of the respondents who were 109 representing 35.3% as well as 52 respondent representing 16.8% agreed that that the level of their performance determines their salary. The respondents who were 73 representing 23.6% disagreed as well as 70 respondents representing 22.7% who strongly disagreed that that the level of their performance determines their salary while 5 respondents representing 1.6% were undecided.

Respondents who were 98 representing 31.7% strongly agreed as well as 60 respondents representing 19.5% agreed that in their decision to work at the University benefits plaid a major role. The respondents who were 81 representing 26.2% disagreed as well as 65 respondents representing 21.0% who strongly disagreed that their decision to work at the University benefits plaid a major role while 5 respondents representing 1.6% were undecided.

The findings revealed that majority of the respondents who were 140 representing 45.3% strongly disagreed as well as 80 respondents representing 25.9% who disagreed there should be different treatment towards older employees and younger employee. The respondents who were 49 representing 15.9% strongly agreed as well as 26 respondents representing 8.4% who agreed that there should be different treatment towards older employees and younger employee. Respondents who were 14 representing 4.5% were undecided.

Majority of the respondents who were 115 representing 37.2% disagreed as well as 67 respondents representing 21.7% strongly disagreed that they receive the right amount of recognition for my work. The respondents who were 67 representing 21.7% agreed as well as 47 respondents representing 15.2% who strongly agreed that they receive the right amount of recognition for my work while 13 respondents representing 4.2% were undecided.

Respondents who were 109 representing 35.3% agreed as well as 92 respondents representing 29.8% who strongly agreed that they were aware of the advancement opportunities that exist in the University for them. The respondents who were 91 representing 29.4% disagreed as well as 13 respondents representing 4.2% who strongly disagreed that they were aware of the advancement opportunities that exist in the University for them. Respondents who were 4 representing 1.3% were undecided.

The amount of work expected of the respondents was reasonable. This was not true since the majority of the respondents who were 86 representing 27.8% strongly disagreed as well as 82 respondents representing 26.5% who disagreed. The respondents who were 63 representing 20.4% agreed and the same number strongly agreed that the amount of work expected of them was reasonable. Respondents who were 15 representing 4.9% were undecided.

Majority of the respondents who were 90 representing 29.1% strongly agreed as well as 78 respondents representing 25.2% who agreed that they were willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the University to be successful. The respondents who were 65 representing 21.0% disagreed as well as 64 respondents representing 20.7% who strongly disagreed that they were willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help the University to be successful. Respondents who were 12 representing 3.9% were undecided.

According to findings in table 4.2, majority of the respondents who were 91 representing 29.4% agreed as well as 78 respondents representing 25.2% who strongly agreed that they were proud to tell others that they are part of the

University. The respondents who were 74 representing 23.9% as well as 61 respondents representing 19.7% who strongly disagreed that they were proud to tell others that they are part of the University. Respondents who were 5 representing 1.6% were undecided.

The findings imply that respondents did not like working in the institution since they did not have plan to work there for long yet they were satisfied with the job security they had. Respondents were not satisfied with the respect they receive from the people they work with hence they did not feel like they are part of the University. They had asked for training to do my job better so that they could do better at their wok hence they need some more training as well as professional development for they had the right tools and equipment's to do their job. The level of performance determines salary since it plaid a major role during the decision to work at the University. There should not be different treatment towards older employees and younger employee since they do not receive the right amount of recognition for their work. There were advancement opportunities that existed in the University but the amount of work expected was not reasonable yet respondents were willing to put in a great deal of effort beyond that normally expected in order to help University to be successful hence were proud to tell others that I am part of this University.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

Egerton University had dedicated workforce who planned to work for the institution for more than one (1) year. The work environment was not conducive hence staffs are dissatisfied. Job security was the reason most staff opted to work for the institution for long. The respect for one another was lacking. Staff lacked training to enable them works better. Level of performance determines salary and that there was different treatment towards older employees and younger employee in the work place. Advancement opportunities existed in the University.

The study recommends that there is need to create a conducive work environment where all employees are treated the same way hence create respect for one another in workplace. There is need to enhancing staff training so that employees are able to fill existing advancement opportunities in the University.

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