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Abstract

Human Resource Management strategies and practices vary but are all interrelated. They include planning, acquisition, development, integration, compensation, maintenance and separation. Kenya's public sector faces a lot of pressure to enhance their performance levels as well as accountability and transparency in their operations. To do so, various agencies have adopted different strategies of decentralized HR practices and functionalities including decentralized training and development practices. How well the independent commissions manage their programmes to achieve their objectives is crucial to their success. Despite proof of devolved HR practices being beneficial, there is little research on the effect of devolving HR practices on the performance of employees. Based on this background, the study sought to examine the relationship between decentralization of training and development on employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive research design and targeted the heads of departments and HR coordinators and technocrats from the 10 constitutional commissions in Kenya resulting in a target population of 206 respondents. Census sampling was adopted and as such all the 206 respondents formed the sample of the study. Data used in the study was collected using structured questionnaires and was tabulated and analysed using SPSS Version 22. Qualitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, standard deviation and was used to show the characteristics of the variables being investigated. The study also computed inferential statistics which included bivariate correlation and multiple regression analysis and they were used to show the association between the dependent and the independent variables. Analysed data was presented using tables and charts. The study found that decentralization of Training & Development significantly affects employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. Furthermore, it was established that organizational culture significantly affects the relationship between decentralization of Training & Development and employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. The study recommends constitutional commissions in Kenya to provide Training & Development opportunities to its

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employees. This is achieved by offering various forms of Training & Development such as management development, soft and technical skills development and well as Training & Development on personal effectiveness.

Keywords: *Decentralization, Training & Development, Employee Performance, Constitutional Commissions*

1.0 Background of the Study

In order for an organization to achieve managements and employees' cooperation, competence, commitment, motivation, satisfaction, presence, and retention it is important to ensure that formulation and implementation of HRM policies is done by HRM specialists with help from line managers. These policies on appraisals, Training & Development, employment security, selection, promotions, and compensations (Klein, 2004). According to Andrews and Boyne (2010), management leadership and capacity are important factors for achieving service delivery. The partial or whole decentralization of HRM practices is conducted to enhance management as a key level in decision making and leadership. These functions include employee hiring and firing, defining the compensation package; nature of tenure, management transfers, skills mix and Training & Development, promotions, and sanctions; Transfer of authority to a local level is beneficial to the government because its responsiveness to the local conditions will be enhanced this includes having a dynamic market, having availability of staff, meeting the preference of citizens and also ensure resource availability.

With regards to reference to efficiency in administration, using local level to recruit might reduce the time needed to fill up a position, and also eliminate the many steps involved in approval by central level. Also, matching of candidates is done better because in the long run it is the local level that does the final selection. The same principle is applicable when dismissing an employee and therefore their sanction could be done with less time. In addition, allowing local units to be in charge of salaries and allowances is most appropriate because they are aware of conditions existing in the market. For instance, to attract staff in certain areas might require higher salaries but using the national scale of payment might restrict discretion by the locals (Bae, 2012). However, if monitoring and oversight is not done effectively, then efficiency can be affected negatively.

HRM decentralization can only work if the functions needing matching and devolvement are thought of carefully. An example is that involving the transfer of firing and hiring authority; if this function is transferred without transferring the authority for skill mix setting, the effect brought by this change will be insignificant. Salaries department can't be useful if it lacks the authority of regulating the amount of budget to be spent on salaries. Therefore, it is important to have appropriate match between the fiscal function and the administrative (Dipak, 2014).

In Central and Eastern Europe, for instance, decentralization has been associated with 'local identity, local representation, and local decision-making' whereas in most developing countries decentralization was inspired by World bank's and other donors' instrumentalist perspectives on improvement of delivery of service, reduction of poverty and preventing corruption (Devas & Delay, 2016).

In NPM (New Public Management) approach, decentralization of management is considered to be most pivotal. However, the extent of decentralisation of HRM responsibilities varies from one country to another. Shim (2011) categorized some of the developed nations into three groups denoting the level of devolution of HRM responsibilities to line departments and/or

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managers, and these are: Those with more extensive devolution of HRM responsibilities such as New Zealand, Australia and Sweden where central involvement in HRM activities of departments and agencies has been limited. Those that have significant devolution, for example Denmark, UK and the Netherlands that have been more circumspect than the other three mentioned above. Countries where decentralization and devolution are not a priority, such as Japan, Greece, Portugal and Turkey.

Even with decentralization of HR units, the central HR maintains the primary role of controlling procedures as well as processes for the purpose of creating uniformity. In addition, there are times when the state HR lacks authority for example the higher education systems, judicial system, legislative branch, and adoption of policies developed by HR or the civil service for the purpose of benefiting from best practices. State of North Carolina fits as the best example since its HR state office have developed good relationship with the judicial system and acts as a mentor helping with the creation HR environment that works best serving all employees within the state (Naspe, 2016).

Decentralization of HR in Africa would be challenges because of the political pressure experienced in those countries. The practice of decentralizing HR is wide and a number of political stakeholders are involved. Some of the stakeholders are in the government. For example officials of the civil service, politicians, health managers and there are from the private sector for example unions and professional bodies. Some of the stakeholders might oppose decentralization of the HR because of a number of reasons. For instance, in Bolivia efforts to decentralize HR have failed twice despite fiscal decentralization because majority of unions, professional associations, and the stakeholders in the government have resisted (World Bank, 2014).

The appreciation of human resources as a key factor in ensuring gains in efficiency, effectiveness and economy in service provision has almost become universal. Not only should the numbers of personnel be sufficient but they should also be appropriately trained and developed (Hussein, 2013). Globally, the adoption of ‘Western ideas on “public management” are embraced as instruments for improving human resources management’ and this includes most of the countries in Africa (Soeters & Tessema, 2013). HRM, and especially Strategic HRM (SHRM), is strongly linked to the New Public Management (NPM), and NPM-type reforms associated with ‘new approaches to service delivery’ have been attempted also in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in Morocco and Algeria as well as other developing regions of the world (Manning, 2011; McCourt, 2016). These reforms are more often than not imposed on the developing countries by lending and donor institutions (Adamolekun, 2015; McCourt, 2015).

The role of the HR is to provide its internal clients with services and most of the time it is challenged to improve the quality of services and in turn nurture further developments in the organization (Heskett *et al*, 2014). With time, there has been increasing interest in Africa to devolve government systems. A HRM function that is devolved is more preferable for centralized management structure and systems. It was expected that reforms made in the public sector will address these challenge but according to Africa Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM, 2015), very little has been achieved. One key feature in current debate on SHRM approach is importance of devolving HR functions (Budhwar & Khatri, 2012).

The implications of the new approach has led to moving away from permanent and pensionable terms of service and introduction of fixed contracts of service for some categories of senior staff. Current performance management systems have been strengthened and an effective rewards and sanctions framework introduced. Replacement of schemes of service with career progression

guidelines, outsourcing of non-core functions, multi-skilling and introduction of flexible work arrangements and rationalization of the public service have also been embraced (PSC, 2016). Implementation of these specific actions is expected to result in effective and efficient service delivery that meets expectations of Kenyans as contemplated in article 232(b) of the Constitution of Kenya. Economic use of the public resources through enhanced transparency and accountability; improved performance management and employee productivity; higher standards of professionalism in the service; encourage and promote creativity and innovativeness and adherence to public service values and principles. The new approach is expected to ensure that the civil service is supported by an adequate human resource planning and policy architecture that will enable the government to deliver on national development goals (RoK, 2015).

The constitutional commissions in Kenya are a creature of the Constitutions of Kenya, 2010. The constitution dedicates Chapter 15 to commissions. It lists ten constitutional commissions and they are: the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), National Land Commission (NLC), IEBC, Parliamentary Service Commission, Judicial Service Commission (JSC), and Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA), Public Service Commission (PSC), Teachers Service Commission (TSC) and the National Police Service Commission (NPSC) (Katiba Institute, 2016). The Commission has appointed Principal Secretaries in State Departments as Authorized Officers to assist in the discharge of the human resource function and the day to day management of the human resource.

These commissions differ from previous commissions under the 2010 Constitution. These have an express provision outlining their independence from other arms of Government, and are supposed to be administratively and financially delinked from the executive, parliament and judiciary (Sihanya, 2011). The commissions are expected to check presidential and public authority at two levels. The demands of the Kenyan people keep on changing depending on the prevailing situation, such as economic, political and social dispensation. Consequently, the constitutional commissions should continuously change and accept change in order to meet the aspirations of Kenyans.

The Commissions introduced a decentralized model of HRM in the civil service in 2014 to address the challenges of lack of control by the Cabinet Secretary over such staff; increased inefficiency; unethical behavior and patronage; disruption of service delivery and achievement of performance targets due to transfer of officers during the year; Bureaucracy in implementation of human resource issues; and dual reporting relationship in support functions. The Commission justified introducing a decentralized model of HRM in regards to employee performance as decentralization was purposed to address the challenges experienced in service delivery (PSCK, 2015). Successful implementation of the model required key actions including: institutional realignment and strengthening. These includes full empowerment of Commissioners; development of career progression guidelines and reviewing of current human resource (HR). HR practices to be reviewed included recruitment and selection, Training & Development, discipline, promotions, rewards and sanctions, employee performance management and implementation of contributory pension scheme (PSCK, 2015). This study aimed to establish the relationship between decentralization of HRM practices and performance of employee in constitutional commissions in Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

HRM practices have several practices but are related with each other: planning, acquisition, development, compensation, integration, maintenance, and separation (Dessler, 2007). According

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to The Kenblachard Companies report of 2017, only 60% of employees operate at 65% of their potential. The study concluded that the remaining 40% of the employees' potential could be exploited by conducting a research on the factors that determine employee performance. Majority of the organizations are faced with the challenge of identifying the factors that influence performance of employees. Poor performance of individual employees can affect the productivity of an individual or a group of employees; this puts the organization at a risky position (Salleh, Yaakub & Dzulkifli, 2016).

Kenya's public sector is plagued by problems of poor employee performance (Republic of Kenya, 2016). Poor employee performance in public sector in Kenya is indicated by work absenteeism and tardiness and lateness, poor quality of work and poor quality of service, delay in expected output deliverables and high rates of professional employee turnover. Additional indication of poor employee performance is decreased alertness from worker fatigue, long work hours and extended or irregular shifts (Cheruiyot & Kaswira, 2013). According to a report by WHO (2016) absenteeism cases in public sector in Kenya comprised 40% of the total discipline cases reported in the organizations. Most of these discipline cases were from staff working in operational areas. During 2015/2016 financial year, the Man Hours lost in public sector and due to absenteeism and other factors were 10,206,976.57 which translated into Kshs. 3,867,996,698.19 (RoK, 2016).

In Kenya, public sector is facing a lot of pressure to improve their performance and increase their levels of transparency and accountability. Because of the increasing pressure, shifts have been witnessed in their operations. Different strategies of change management have been embraced by various agencies in the public sector and most of them have decentralized their HR practices (Wheatley, 2014). The transformations made in the public sector have tremendous effect on social development and regional development of the economy. In today's environments, learning about change, planning for and implementing major changes must be considered highest priority for prosperity of an organization. This is because HR management is a complex process, which many organizations get wrong (Bentley, 2018).

The dynamic changes that commissions go through require that they modify ways of responding to the environment. HRM is crucial in making sure that the commissions are successful in their processes of change. HR devolution strategies have potential gains in the country, despite its potential gains; there is little research that has been conducted on the impacts of devolved HR practices on performance of employee. Alande (2013) in his study in the public sector did focus on the function of HRM in counties devolution in Kenya while Mwikali (2015) and Mutua, Kabare and Namusonge (2013) focused on generally on devolution in the counties of Mombasa and Nairobi counties respectively. Therefore, there was a need for more research carried out on the relationship between decentralization of HRM functions and employee performance.

1.2 Research Objectives

The study sought to examine the relationship between decentralization of Training & Development and employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was guided by the Equity Theory.

2.1.1 Human Capital Theory

The human capital word was originally used by Nobel economist Becker, (1993) to refer to the stored valued of knowledge or skills of members of the workforce in an organization. This theory <https://doi.org/10.53819/81018102t6024>

states that people possess innate abilities, behaviours and personal energy and these elements make up the human capital they bring to their work (Davenport, 2013). The theory says that it is the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that create value. As a result, focus has to be on the means of attracting, retaining and developing human capital. According to Armstrong (2012), individuals generate, retain and use knowledge and create intellectual capital. The individual's knowledge is then enhanced by the interactions between them i.e. social capital and generates institutionalized knowledge that organizations possess.

According to Armstrong (2010), human capital theory sees people as assets and that organizations that invest in people improve employee performance and this generates positive results to the organization. Block (1990) has argued that Human Capital Theory is a poor concept of capital. It is unable to understand human activity other than as the exchange of commodities and the notion of capital employed is purely a quantitative one. This misses the point that capital is an independent social force where the creation of value comes about through its capital accumulation. Given this explanation then, human capital is an abstract form of labour as a commodity and not capital (Davenport, 2013).

Another criticism argued is based on the assumption that education improves productivity and thus could explain higher wages. The theorists here did not take into account the transfer of learning. Does the duration of education and Training & Development increase productivity? A higher productivity indeed does not increase the wages. But many other factors could influence productivity (Becker, 1993). The pay could depend on the industry, while wages differ in different regions and in some organizations, and unions regulate pay system. In linking this theory to the decentralized HRM, the study notes that the decentralized HRM is a key resource in constitutional commissions in Kenya (Block, 1990).

This theory explains that skills, abilities and knowledge can be used for value creation (Becker, 1993). The main focus of the theory is on the knowledge employees possess, their skills as well as abilities and insists that the organization should make sure that employees hired into the company are talented. This can be assured by a decentralized system that mainly focuses on recruiting and developing employees. This theory supports the variable decentralization of Training & Development since it discusses workforce knowledge or skills and abilities and emphasizes that these abilities from employees create value to the organization.

2.2 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework assists a researcher to organize their thinking and complete an investigation successfully. It also explains the relationship among interlinked concepts and explains the possible connection between the variables (Kombo & Tromp, 2009).

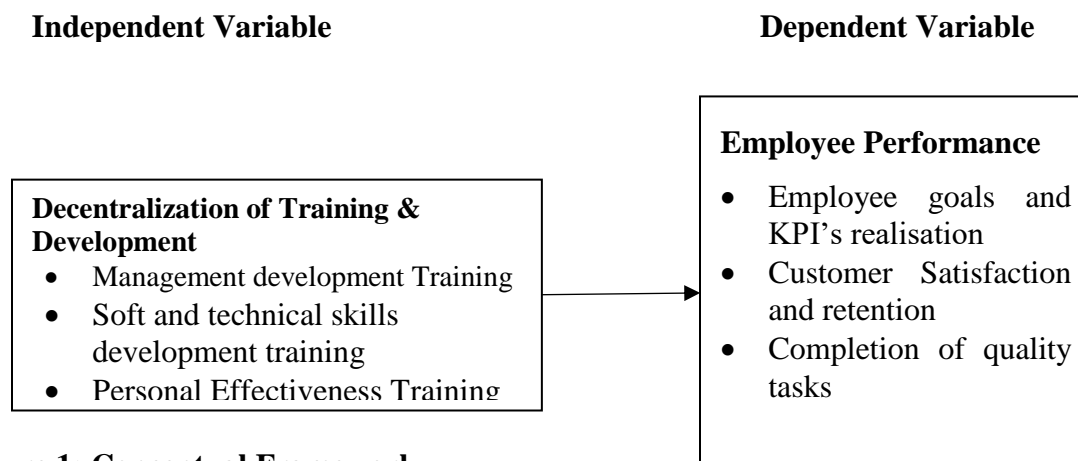


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.3 Empirical Framework

2.3.1 Decentralization of Training & Development and Development

Research by Zappala (2014) indicate a relationship between enhanced Training & Development foundations (competencies, efficiencies, and intelligence) and advanced development of best functions, cross Training & Development, mentoring, and technology changes for all employees. Training & Development needs to coincide with other commitment generating HR policies to result in reduced levels of employee turnover. Scholars have established that commitment policies alongside Training & Development have the tendency of affecting mobility of employees negatively. A HR approach seeking to “bundle” policies of commitment like linking Training & Development to commitment of employees and plans for compensation results to enhanced employee commitment (Green *et al.*, 2010).

Research conducted recently has argued that workers have less propensity of leaving if they are feeling that they are learning and developing. Conversely they instigate to externally seek for better alternative job opportunity. Employees’ level of commitment is improved by social support and access to Training & Development. There is a higher likelihood for employees to place high value on Training & Development which fellow colleagues, managers and supervisors respect. A company with the ability of creating an environment where it supports Training & Development and values its employees has a greater chance of having high levels of employee commitment (Bartlett, 2011). Guest (2012) indicated that there is increasing proof that Training & Development and opportunities for promotions are the leading reasons for increased employee turnover.

Through research it has been established that Training & Development assists in minimizing attrition of employees since its job performance security. Training & Development is the major retention factor and it’s critical for development of employees both professionally and personally. Training & Development correlate with a 70% increase in employee retention rates (Deckop, Konrad, Perlmutter, & Freely, 2006). Kemoni, Ngulube and Stilwell (2011) have affirmed that proper records management is significant to governments’ realisation and achievement of their goals such as: the rule of law, accountability, management of state resources, protection of entitlements to its citizens, as well as enhancing foreign relations. Ngulube and Stilwell (2007)

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observe that proper records management facilitates planning, informed decision making, supports continuity, consistency and effectiveness of public service delivery.

According to Galaletsang (2012), service delivery is a topical issue for most governments and scholars' alike. It is a consensus amongst scholars that public service delivery is critical to ensuring the national wellbeing and stimulation of economic development. This is because governments carry out several activities on day today basis to provide citizens with services and at the same time guarantee that these services are provided in accordance to the rule of law. Pemberton (2011), Ngoepe (2008) and Galalestang (2012) also assert that better service delivery begins with better records management functions. Proper records management supports efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in a variety of ways. These include, among others, documentation of policies and procedures that inform service delivery such as: the type of services provided, who are to be responsible for carrying out the work, and costs involved.

2.3.2 Employee Performance

According to Jamwa (2015) in order to improve performance of the organization, good management practices should be put in place. Managers should be trained in order for them to acquire the leadership skills which will enable them to lead the organization effectively. Performance Consulting is used to address the organization's failures as well, in fact the organizational system is the biggest unconscious conspirator to inadequate or poor performance (Rummler & Brance, 2015). Some organizations fail to focus on stakeholders' needs, which lead to producing inadequate services; still others fail to encourage employee's involvement and support or fail to manage performance, (Founies, 2014). Most organizations fail to focus on long-term results or to remove barriers and obstacles preventing adequate performance (Fuller & Farrington, 2009).

According to Mullins (2013) organizations need to be effective in doing the right things, in the optimum use of their resources and in the ratio of output to input. But organizations must also be effective in doing the right things in their output related to some specific purpose, objective or task. Performance should be related to such factors such as increasing Customer satisfaction, Timely completion of tasks and Delivery of quality work. Organizations must also ensure that they meet and or exceed their customer expectations and are adaptable to specific requirements, change in the external environment and demand of the situations. Rational decision making in organizational strategy suggests environmental analysis, assessment of internal strengths and weaknesses, explicit goal setting, evaluation of alternative courses of action, and the development of a comprehensive plan to achieve organizational goals (Porter, 2010).

3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive research design to establish the associations between the variables. The target population was the 10 constitutional commissions in Kenya while the target respondents were the heads of departments and Human Resource coordinators, practitioners and technocrats in the constitutional commissions. The sampling frame listed head of departments in all the constitutional commissions in Kenya and the census sampling approach was employed therefore forming a total of 206 respondents. Structured questionnaires were used to collect data for this study. A pilot study was conducted to establish the validity and reliability of the study instruments. In addition, diagnostic tests on the normality, linearity, multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity were conducted. Data was collected, tabulated and analysed for purpose of clarity using the statistical program for social sciences (SPSS) software version 22. The study

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conducted a correlation and regression analysis to establish the strength of the relationship between the independent and the dependent variable.

4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Training & Development

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Decentralization of Training & Development ensures personal effectiveness Training & Development is carried out for the development of employees	197	3.9898	.76258
Decentralization of Training & Development will ensure both soft and technical skills are imparted to the employee that are necessary for carrying out duties	197	3.7107	1.07026
Cross Training & Development staff is easier to accomplish	197	3.6701	1.19000
It is easier to develop Training & Development specialists who have different levels of expertise.	197	3.6497	1.21813
Trainers more easily develop relationships with the business unit they support	197	3.6244	.86956
Decentralization of Training & Development ensures that each employee gets an opportunity of being trained on the area they need most	197	3.6091	.87161
Decentralization of Training & Development provides opportunities to develop new talents in employees	197	3.6091	1.03239
Decentralization of Training & Development will ensure proper and effective management development Training & Development on employees	197	3.5990	.91841
Aggregate score	197	3.683	0.992

Respondents indicated their level of agreement on statements about the relationship between decentralization of Training & Development and employee performance. Table 1 presents the findings obtained. Based on the findings, the respondents agreed on average on the statements on the influence of decentralization of Training & Development as indicated by an aggregate mean value of 3.683. The findings also showed that the respondents agreed that decentralization of Training & Development ensures personal effectiveness Training & Development is carried out for the development of employees (M=3.9898, SD=.76258); that decentralization of Training & Development will ensure both soft and technical skills are imparted to the employee that are necessary for carrying out duties (M=3.7107, SD=1.07026); cross Training & Development staff is easier to accomplish (M=3.6701, SD=1.19000) and that it is easier to develop Training & Development specialists who have different levels of expertise (M=3.6497, SD=1.21813).

The findings further showed that the respondents agreed that trainers more easily develop relationships with the business unit they support (M=3.6244, SD=.86956); that decentralization of Training & Development ensures that each employee gets an opportunity of being trained on the area they need most (M=3.6091, SD=.87161); they also agreed that decentralization of Training & Development provides opportunities to develop new talents in employees (M=3.6091,

SD=1.03239). They were also in agreement that decentralization of Training & Development will ensure proper and effective management development Training & Development on employees (M=3.5990, SD=.91841).

The study findings concur with those of Zappala (2014) that commitment policies alongside Training & Development have the tendency of affecting mobility of employees negatively. It also concurs with Green *et al.*, (2010) that employees' level of commitment is improved by social support and access to Training & Development. There is a higher likelihood for employees to place high value on Training & Development which fellow colleagues, managers and supervisors respect. A company with the ability of creating an environment where it supports Training & Development and values its employees has a greater chance of having high levels of employee commitment. In addition, Galalestang (2012) assert that better service delivery begins with better records management functions. Proper records management supports efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery in a variety of ways which include documentation of policies and procedures that inform service.

4.2 Correlation Analysis

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

		Employee Performance	Training & Development
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1.000	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
	N	197	
Training & Development	Pearson Correlation	.537**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	197	197

The study established that Training & Development has positive relationship with employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya ($r=0.537$). The p-value (0.001) was less than the selected level of significance (0.05) an indication that the relationship was significant. Therefore, Training & Development can be said to have a strong positive and significant relationship with employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. This agrees with Bartlett (2011) who asserts that a company with the ability of creating an environment where it supports Training & Development and values its employees has a greater chance of having high levels of employee commitment.

4.3 Regression Analysis

From the results of the Table 3, the regression equation model was fitted as follows:

$$Y = 2.328 + 0.517 X_1$$

The model equation above reveals that holding the variable Training & Development to a constant zero, employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya will be at a constant value of 2.328. The findings further show that Training & Development is seen to have positive and significant influence on employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya when all other variables are held to a constant zero ($\beta=0.517$, $p<0.05$). Therefore, a unit increase in Training

& Development will result to an increase in employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya by 0.517units.

Table 3: Overall Beta Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	2.328	0.268		8.687	0.000
1 Training & Development	0.517	0.065	0.502	7.954	0.003

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

5.0 Conclusions

The study found that there is a relationship between Training & Development and employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. This shows that a unit improvement in Training & Development would lead to an improvement in employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that decentralization of Training & Development significantly affect employee performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya.

6.0 Recommendations

Training & Development was found to positively influence employee performance. The study recommends constitutional commissions in Kenya to provide Training & Development opportunities to its employees. This is achieved by offering various forms of Training & Development such as management development, soft and technical skills development and well as Training & Development on personal effectiveness. The study focused on the relationship between decentralization of Training & Development and employees' performance in constitutional commissions in Kenya. The study thus recommends a study to be conducted using other HRM practices as well as other variables such as career planning and mentoring that can further explain employee performance. In addition, the study was also limited to constitutional commissions; the study thus recommends a study to be conducted in other government/public institutions to facilitate generalization of research findings.

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