

**PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION ON EMPLOYEE  
PERFORMANCE IN BARINGO COUNTY GOVERNMENT**

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**DECLARATION**

**DECLARATION BY THE STUDENT:**

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted for examination in any other University.

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**DECLARATION BY THE SUPERVISOR:**

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University supervisor.

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Date: .....

**MR. GEORGE OMONDI**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my husband who has been my source of inspiration, strength and my motivators throughout the entire period of my study. I therefore dedicate this project to you. This is my blessing to you.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Special thanks to the Almighty God for giving me the gift of life, wisdom, good health and the strength to complete this program. I wish to thank the management and staff of the University Of Nairobi, School Of Business for the support during the entire study period.

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God bless them all.

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## ABSTRACT

Disciplinary procedures are necessary because no organization can survive without inculcating discipline into its employees for performance. Human Resource department in any given organization is the most important department since it regulates the human capital and oversees the process of production and have a drive to make sure that an organization has a competitive advantage. The objective of the study was to establish the perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government. The study was guided by red-hot-stove, progressive discipline and surveillance theories. This study adopted a descriptive survey design. The target population comprised of 500 employees comprising the top level, middle level and lower level and lower cadre employees at Baringo County Government. Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. The study revealed that performance of employees at Baringo County Government is influenced by verbal reprimand, that employees' performance at Baringo County government is influenced by written reprimand, that suspension without pay influences Baringo County employee's performance, that the performance of employees of the County government of Baringo is influenced by termination of employment and that suspension pending investigation influences Baringo County employees' performance. Based on the findings the study concludes that verbal reprimand and written reprimand influences employees' performance, that suspension without pay, termination of employment and suspension pending investigation influences employee's performance. The study recommends that since performance is influenced by verbal reprimand, there should be increased practice of this disciplinary action and new employees should go through proper induction and this will ensure performance throughout the employees stay in the organisation and that the County the government should come up with policies on how to discipline the employees and the mechanism should fast be vetted to ensure they are not harsh so that employees don't fear the process of discipline but respect it.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Disciplinary action is usually initiated by management in response to unsatisfactory work performance or unacceptable behaviour on the part of the workers. Discipline can be defined as action or behaviour on the part of the authority in an organization (usually management) aimed at restraining all employees from behaviour that threatens to disrupt the functioning of the organization (Chelliah, 2010). The primary objective of disciplinary action is to motivate an employee to comply with the company's performance standards. The failure to perform as expected could be directly related to the tasks performed by the employee or to the rules and regulations that define proper conduct at work. A second objective of discipline is to create or maintain mutual trust and respect between the supervisor and subordinate. Improperly administered discipline can create such problems as low morale and resentment between the supervisor and the subordinate. The proper administration of discipline will not only improve employee behaviour but will also minimize future disciplinary problems through a positive supervisor-subordinate relationship (Grobler, Warnich, Carrell, Elbert & Hatfield, 2006).

However, a proper procedure must be followed when exercising discipline. The Labour Relations Act's codification of unfair dismissal and Code of Good Practice relating to dismissal is regarded as the basis for policy statements on disciplinary procedures (Finnemore, 2006). It is evident in the context of current employment law that discipline is regarded as a corrective rather than punitive measure. A disciplinary code endorses the concept of corrective or progressive discipline, which regards the purpose of

discipline as a means for employees to know and understand what standards are required of them. It empowers employers to seek to correct employees' behaviour by a system of graduated disciplinary measures such as counseling and warnings (Nel et al., 2007).

This study will be hinged on the red-hot-stove theory, progressive discipline theory and surveillance theory which opines on the perceived influence of disciplinary action, on employee performance. The Red-Hot-Stove theory emphasized on how rational discipline could be affected in an organization. The progressive discipline theory signifies an approach to modify undesirable employee behaviour through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employees' misconduct. Surveillance theory emphasized the importance of the structures of society such as economic and social institutions in creating the individual, and saw the emergence of the prison as marking the institutionalization of the power to punish (Brent, 2010).

Baringo County Government has used a fairly standardized procedure to handle familiar personnel problems such as absenteeism, poor performance, and other misconduct. Cases of lateness, negligence of duty, desertion, misuse of public office, and resources had been identified but many times little was done to curb these malpractices. The Review Committee states that proper management of disciplinary control is essential for effective service and the inability to deal with cases at source tend to have disincentive effect on dedicated employees. The number of employees being fired while others on suspension has increased for the last three years (The Public Service Integrity Steering Committee, 2002).

### **1.1.1 Concept of Discipline**

Discipline and disciplinary measures in the public service has for a long time been a subject of discussion among observers, critics and policy analysts that are concerned with discipline. Public servants have been accused of having too much of freedom which allowed them to roam about, while others engage in the marketing of their merchandise. Fayol has emphasized that a sense of discipline should be present in all employees of the organization at all level so that the organization can perform and achieve its objectives in the best possible way. He further suggests that for discipline to be maintained in the organization managers should consider: Clear explanation of the rules; Effective supervision; Reward system on better obedience; possible provision for penalty on non-obedience (Fayol, 1927).

A sense of discipline is needed in all employees at all levels in the organization for the smooth functioning of the organization as well as the achievement of the organizational objectives. Some employees inherently possess this quality but some employees need to be induced with the sense of discipline, and the manager must give proper attention to this type of individuals to maintain and improve discipline in the organization. Top level managers are greatly responsible for maintaining discipline in the organization and for this first of all they have to strictly accept the rules of the organization and follow them so that other employees get encouraged to accept and follow the rules. Positive impacts of this principle are: Helpful in achieving organizational objectives; improved efficiency; cordial relation between management and employees; better working environment in the organization; minimization of wastage. Fayol has further described the consequences of violation of this principle as height of disorders,

confusion and chaos, wastage of time and resources, and conflicting situations (Fayol et al., 1927).

According to Preston and Zimmerer (1978), discipline is behavior which is in compliance with the agreed upon rules and regulations. It also involves the steps taken by supervisors to correct the undesired actions of employees who violate rules. Meggison (1978) view the root of discipline at instruction and training. He opined that even when discipline is punishment, it is intended to correct wrong behavior and train the individual to perform correctly. Heimann and Hilgert (1979) perceived discipline as a state of affairs, a condition in an enterprise in which there is orderliness, in which the members of the organization behave sensibly and conduct themselves according to standards of acceptable behavior as related to the goal of the organization. Membrano (1975) views discipline as the application of authority to secure good conduct and the willing compliance with the lawful orders and command of the authority. This brings us to the purpose of discipline where Adesina (1990) opines that the purpose of discipline is to create a committee of people who would freely and willingly learn the norms, principles and ways of life of that community. In the process they may have to subdue or repress some of their natural inclinations, not because they are afraid of punishments or because they desire specific rewards but because of their sense of commitment at fellowship and the ideals of the community.

### **1.1.2 Disciplinary Action**

To discipline means to instruct a person to follow a particular code of conduct or order. For instance, in the field of child development, discipline refers to methods of modeling characters and of teaching self-control and acceptable behavior. Disciplinary action is

any action taken by the company in response to an unsatisfactory employee performance or behaviour. The primary objective of discipline is to bring an employee back, where possible, to an acceptable standard of performance and behaviour rather than to punish an employee Mintah (2011). Perhaps the most unpleasant task for supervisors and managers is the task of disciplining an employee. While some staff seems to think that managers take some perverse pleasure in the process, the truth is that it is usually dreaded, and often done in an ineffective way. This is so because there are some psychological factors at play that militate against constructive disciplinary processes.

One of the most prevalent errors some people make about discipline is based on the idea that discipline is a punishment. The manager that perceives discipline as a punishment process tends to apply negative sanctions, expecting that those negative sanctions will have some sort of positive effect; for example, to eliminate the unwanted behaviour simply through the threat of additional sanctions (Ganapathy, 2006). Unfortunately, the use of negative sanctions on their own, bring about unpredictable results. In rare cases, they may work, through the fear factor. In other cases, they have an effect opposite to the one intended, and can contribute to escalation in the manager-employee relationship. Discipline can be considered as requiring a supervisor and a subordinate or a staff member to work together to solve a problem. The fundamental task, when possible, is to create a situation which encourages the supervisor to work with a subordinate in mutual terms in order to identify causes of problematic behaviour and to take action to correct those problems.

While disciplining an employee, it is always important to make sure that the disciplinary action meted out to the offender is always commensurate to the offence committed. Like earlier said too, it is important to mete out the same punishment to the same category of offenders. Certain mild offences should also be punished with mild penalties; According to Treasury board of Canada Secretariat, guidelines on Discipline (2011) outlined some measures; oral warning; written warning; loss of entitlement; suspension; demotion; termination of appointment and dismissal.

### **1.1.3 Employee Performance**

An organization consists of employee who performs actions that should be in sync with the strategic goals of the organization. In theory, if the people within the organization are performing optimally based on the organizational goals, the organization should be a successful one. In theory and in practice, it is essential that employee performance be optimized to ensure organizational success. Research findings have established that improved workplace performance and business results, if they occur, are caused not just by training, but also by a myriad of other organizational influences, which are beyond the control of trainers. For example line manager behaviour, remuneration and incentive systems, hiring practices, work environment, tools and equipment and a host of other aspects of the culture that influence workplace performance and business results (Monappa, 2008).

Improved performance requires the effective management of continuous development addressing the core competencies of the organization and the capabilities of individuals and teams (Monappa, 2008). Besides, management can set performance dimensions when hiring an employee, during his/ her performance review, during strategic planning

or at the start of a new project (Bruce & Pepitone, 1999). It is crucial that employees know what is expected of them, their role as part of the group and the organization, what is considered unacceptable performance and what they have to do to reach the management's standard of performance (Rothwell, 1999). Contemporary trends in human resource management show that within the dimension of skills and abilities, there are several criteria which may be applied depending on the nature of work assignments (Mathis & Jackson, 1994).

Performance measurement is the process whereby an organization establishes the parameters within which programmes, investments, and acquisitions are reaching the desired. Organizations measure performance by analysing financial and non-financial metrics over time, across departments, between different entities (e.g. employees, organizations, investments, systems), and against benchmarks and targets to gauge success. To correctly measure for performance success, the benchmarks and targets comparisons must be aligned with the corporate strategic goals. The ultimate purpose of measurement is to improve performance. Behn (2003), gives eight reasons for measuring performance; to evaluate, control, budget, motivate, celebrate, promote, learn and to improve performance. Performance measurement enables organizations to assess their progress and identify strengths and problem areas. A simple example of performance measurement is the measurement of time to meet deadlines of targets (Monappa, 2008).

#### **1.1.4 Influence of Disciplinary Action on Employee Performance**

Daft, 2000 defined organizational performance as the organization's ability to attain its goals by using resources in an efficient and effective manner. While discipline is



necessary in many occasions, Daft argues that managers should dispense it carefully to avoid the employees involved from giving up on an attitude of high performance. This is supported by Drucker and Blanchard et al. (1985) who assert that how well managers manages for business is dependent on how well they manage the worker and work. The employee's behavior is highly affected or a true reflection of the managers attitudes. In discipline management attitudes are seen especially in cases where they cannot separate a worker from work. In as much as organizations need work to be done they should be careful not to hurt the human resource that does the work. The imposition of discipline sometimes results in reduced performance of individuals, teams, or departments. For obvious reasons, management wants to avoid this result, yet it can occur because of the method of discipline used. It is thus imperative that managers should focus on correcting behavior without them getting emotionally involved in disciplinary issues at hand.

Chien (2004) echoed that, successful managing the balance between discipline and high performance is a combination of manager and employee personalities, workplace situations, pressures as well as effective management techniques and strategies. He indicated that very few managers find it easy to address performance and discipline since poor performers require a unique skill set, a combination of conflict resolution techniques, an ability to empathize, high levels of emotional intelligence and an understanding of the impact of the legislation. It should be noted that most employers only appreciate the challenges of managing performance and discipline once they have been subjected to reinstatement or compensation order by the bargaining council. The starting point for management seeking to properly address discipline and performance issues is to gain appreciation of statutory requirements.

Chelliah (2010) substantiates that the primary purpose of progressive discipline is to assist the employee to understand that a performance problem or opportunity for improvement exists. The process features increasingly formal efforts to provide feedback to the employee so he or she can correct the problem. The goal of progressive discipline is to improve employee performance. The process of progressive discipline is not intended as a punishment for an employee, but to assist the employee to overcome performance problems and satisfy job expectations. This line of thinking was further substantiated by Grote (1995) who argued that there is a synergy between discipline and corporate performance. He noted that performance feedback is of great influence to the disciplinary system as it holds employees accountable of their actions.

In analyzing the relationship between disciplinary action and performance Crote (1995) came up with a Performance Assessment Guide (PAG) which stresses emphasis on a number of factors, first the guide emphasizes that the organizations need to make sure that job standards are communicated; employee receives feedback on performance and job standards achieved. The guide puts emphasis on the notion that if job standards are achieved then an employee is liable to continuously receive feedback on performance, if not it is the duty of the supervisor to investigate reasons. After investigation action plan may be developed, implemented and or modified, in this case discipline may be imposed. Examples of performance problems include poor productivity, inability to perform task responsibilities, lack of knowledge, skills, abilities in the area of responsibility, and ability to meet performance standards and or expectations. Problems such as these are not always completely within the employee's control. It is incumbent upon the supervisor to play an active role in assisting the employee to meet the

minimum requirement of the position through performance management, Halachmi (2005).

### **1.1.5 Baringo County Government**

Baringo County is perceived as one of the poor counties in Kenya, with a poverty index of 57.4% against a national average of 47.2%. Only 11% of its population live in urban areas (KIRA, 2014) while the rest live in mainly rural areas which are considered poor and disadvantaged. (Ngugi et al, 2013). The civil service in Baringo County is one of the employment sectors in Kenya and constitutes various departments in which the operational arm of the Government is included. The major objectives of the civil service are to enhance the economic growth, improve the standards of living, and ensure the prosperity of the nation. This arm of the government has from its inception not lived up to the expectations of its citizens. The Public Service Integrity Steering Committee (2002) reports that there has been rampant lack of integrity, indiscipline, inefficient supervision, and weak management structures. While this is a report done before the devolution which saw the creation of County Governments, it also applies to the County Government of Baringo as well. This has resulted in low productivity, integrity, accountability, inefficiency and overall economic stagnation. Cases of lateness, negligence of duty, desertion, misuse of public office, and resources had been identified but many times little was done to curb these malpractices.

The civil servants in Baringo County are expected to render effective and efficient services delivery to the members of the public as well as help government in carrying out developmental programmes that will improve the quality of life of the people. Unfortunately, this has not been so as a result of many factors which emanate from poor

employee performance management. Civil servants have complained of poor conditions of service, lack of transparent performance appraisal process, selective administration of disciplinary measures and lack of training opportunities all of which have resulted in undesirable labour management relations hence negative work attitudes such as absenteeism, lateness to work, and general lack of commitment to duty. The Review Committee states that proper management of disciplinary control is essential for effective service and the inability to deal with cases at source tend to have disincentive effect on dedicated employees (The Public Service Integrity Steering Committee, 2002).

## **1.2 Research Problem**

Disciplinary procedures are necessary because no organization can survive without inculcating discipline into its employees for performance. Various organizations have their own codes of conduct and ethics intended to establish standards of ethical conduct of employees and to be applied consistently with the organizational requirements (Storey,2010). Human Resource department in any given organization is the most important department since it regulates the human capital and oversees the process of production and have a drive to make sure that an organization has a competitive advantage. Estimates have suggested that between 3%-5% of working population receive some form of disciplinary action each year. This would mean that in an organization of 10,000 employees, about 50 would receive some form of disciplinary action (Armstrong, 2009).

According to the Kenyan government sources most counties have been performing poorly and that they have been eating into the Central Governments bottom-line. Cases of lateness, negligence of duty, desertion, misuse of public office, and resources had been identified but many times little was done to curb these malpractices. Baringo County, civil servants are expected to render effective and efficient services delivery to the members of the public as well as help government in carrying out developmental programmes that will improve the quality of life of the people. Unfortunately, this has not been so as a result of many factors which centre on poor employee performance management. Civil servants have complained of poor conditions of service, lack of transparent performance appraisal process, selective administration of disciplinary measures and lack of training opportunities all of which have resulted in undesirable labour management relations hence negative work attitudes such as absenteeism, lateness to work, and general lack of commitment to duty. The Review Committee states that proper management of disciplinary control is essential for effective service and the inability to deal with cases at source tend to have disincentive effect on dedicated employees (The Public Service Integrity Steering Committee, 2002).

Local studies on disciplinary action include; Owele (2007) studied employees' perception of disciplinary procedures in the Kenya Civil Service: a study of selected ministries. Maikara (2012) studied the effects of disciplinary procedures on employees' performance in Postal Corporation of Kenya. Apalia (2017) established the effects of discipline management on employee performance in an organization: the case of County Education Office Human Resource Department, Turkana County. Yvonne (2010) studied the challenges faced by teacher's service commission in transferring teachers on disciplinary grounds. However, none of the studies focused on influence of

disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government. These gaps in knowledge thus necessitated the proposed study which sought to answer the question: What is the perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government?

### **1.3 Objective of Study**

To establish the perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government

### **1.4 Value of Study**

To the management of Baringo County Government, this research will be useful since it will add in strategic decision making on disciplinary action on employee performance and also help the management to focus on achievement of organizational goals. To the line manager it will be the end user of the research which will benefit from the findings on their disciplinary action on employee performance because it will add on their knowledge on human resource function and be able to understand better the need for disciplinary action in implementing human resource function.

To the government, the findings will also assist government's policy-makers gain vital understanding of how strategies need to be formulated and implemented at the same time. The study will be useful to the human resource policy makers in crafting strategies in disciplinary action on employee performance aimed at mitigating the challenges facing the organization. To the human resource professionals this study will bring out benefit of disciplinary action on employee performance by increasing their effectiveness. It will be able to show challenges faced by the extent of involvement of

line managers in disciplinary action and therefore they could be better equipped for effective management of their employee performance.

To academics and researchers, this report will add knowledge on disciplinary action on employee performance and they can use the findings of the study as reference as well as a source of secondary data while conducting research within the same field, identify the research gap and eventually venture into further research. The findings of this research will act as a stepping stone to researchers who may wish to study further into the area of disciplinary action on employee performance.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers the theoretical foundation and influence of disciplinary action on employee performance.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

This section focuses on the theories on which the study is anchored. It specifically looks at the red-hot-stove theory, progressive discipline theory and surveillance theory.

#### **2.2.1 The Red-Hot-Stove Theory**

The Red Hot-Stove Theory of Douglas McGregor (1960) gives a good illustration of how to impose disciplinary action without generating resentment. This theory draws an analogy between touching a hot stove, and undergoing discipline. When you touch a hot stove, your discipline is immediate, with warning, consistent, and impersonal. The Red-Hot-Stove theory emphasized on how rational discipline could be affected in an organization. For discipline to be rational, the theory draws a comparison between touching a hot red stove and experiencing discipline. The reaction is immediate, consistent, impersonal and without warning. The burn is immediate and the redness of the stove is a warning indicating danger. Also, as many times as the stove is touched, the same burn is experienced, that shows its consistency.

In view of this, the study would be guided by the Red-Hot-Stove theory, and how are they practiced or applied? What are the reactions of workers affected by these measures? And finally what is the effect of these disciplinary actions on the moral and performances of the workers. The study will equally draw a line between what disciplinary approach is practiced and how disciplinary action is taken (McGregor, 1960).



In Baringo County Government, the behaviour and conduct of the employees is being guided by the County rules and regulations, which is the Red- Hot-Stove. When employees err either as individual or group, it means the Red-Hot-Stove has been touched. When such act is committed it is expected that disciplinary action be taken. When the Red-Hot-Stove is touched, the reaction is immediate, consistent, impersonal and without warning (McGregor, 1960). As such the question is, is the disciplinary action or measure taken against erring staff of the County immediate, consistent, impersonal and without warning? In other words, are the rules and regulations as applied on erring staff for an act of misconduct in consonance with the basic principles of Red-Hot-Stove theory?

### **2.2.2 Progressive Discipline Theory**

This theory was advanced by Brent (2010) through his research on implementation of disciplinary policies in the UK firms. The term progressive discipline signifies an approach to modify undesirable employee behavior through the use of a range of disciplinary consequences that are applied depending upon the nature and history of the particular employees' misconduct. These disciplinary actions often include verbal warnings, formal probationary notices, suspensions without pay and demotions, Brent (2010). He further stated that most undesirable behavior does not result in immediate discharge, but rather in imposition of some lesser sanctions. If the behavior is repeated, progressively more severe disciplinary action is taken, ultimately leading to termination.

Although progressive discipline as a practical matter is nearly universal, the manner in which employers communicate and apply progressive discipline varies greatly at one end of the spectrum lays a very formal, written policy, in which exact sequences of progressive disciplinary action are mandatory for specific offenses or categories of offences (Bragon, 2009). Employers generally follow at least informal procedural guidelines in disciplining and terminating employees, which can in turn subject them to lawsuits for breach of implied contract, promissory estoppel and other claims. If carefully drafted, reviewed and implemented, progressive discipline policies can minimize employer's liability and improve employee performance. Employees who utilize progressive discipline may successfully correct a problem and enjoy many years of productivity from the employee (Brent, 2010).

### **2.2.3 Surveillance Theory**

Michel Foucault (1979), a French philosopher and historian, was interested in the rise of a distinctively modern form of disciplinary power. As a structuralist, he emphasized the importance of the structures of society such as economic and social institutions in creating the individual, and saw the emergence of the prison as marking the institutionalization of the power to punish. Here punishment has become more rationalized to punish better. He saw the prison as an administrative apparatus, a machine for altering the minds and therefore, makes individuals. He stated that the strategies of confinement in the modern prison eventually became the model for the modern society, based on the regime of observation, surveillance, classification, hierarchy, and discipline. Therefore, discipline pervades other organizations that came to the fore in the 19th century with capitalist industrialization such as schools, barracks, factories, offices, hospitals, and other places of work.

To Foucault (1979), this technology of power was "more numerous, bureaucratized, more efficient and more impersonal". It involved surveillance, not just of criminals in the penal institution but to the entire society. To him, the success of disciplinary power derives from the use of three instruments namely, hierarchical observation, normalizing judgment and the examination. Hierarchical observation is the ability of officials to see all they control with a single gaze and surveillance forms part of it. Since to him, work in the industrial society such as filing and filling figures is repetitive, dull and drudgery, surveillance is necessary. Surveillance consists of direct and indirect supervision, the latter being through files, records, case studies and character assessment used to monitor behavior and assess recommendations (Foucault, 1979).

Normalization indicates the extension of control and self-regulation and discourses define what is normal and should be conformed with. To Foucault (1979) therefore, individuals and groups become "socially inscribed" and "normalized" through the routine aspects of the organizations. Bio-power operating through writing, debate and discussions, establish and define what is normal or abnormal, acceptable or socially deviant. It is targeted at society in general and thus controls us. At the level of the organization, once employees do this, they become self-disciplining and no longer require management to keep them under control, just as in the case of the inmates and the pan option. Further, Foucault's broad use of the concept 'discipline' may serve to conceal the differences between disciplinary practices, or the differences between liberal democratic and fascist societies.

## **2.3 Disciplinary Action**

Discipline is the ability to do the right thing even when no one is watching or suffer the consequences of guilt which produces pain in our bodies, through pain comes discipline." , United States Marines Corps (2009). The success of every organisation depends on the commitment and performance of its human capital. To make both employers and employees be committed to each other and for the progress of the organisation, Companies have designed disciplinary procedures to harness, enhance and encourage all employees to cultivate and maintain standards of conduct, attendance and job performance. Some of these procedures are being made available to employees in employee handbooks whilst others are being displayed in the offices of such organisations. In the ideal situation, they should apply to all employees and must be consistent and fair to all in the organisation.

At each step of the discipline process, the supervisor must insure that certain things occur: · Meet with the employee privately; Provide opportunity for representation for the employee during the investigative meeting as well as in any follow up meeting; Clearly identifying the problem and attempt to ensure the employee understands; Allow the employee the opportunity to explain; Conduct a thorough investigation and make sure the employee has done (or not done) whatever you are considering disciplining for; Verify just cause extras; Clearly explain to the employee the expected behavior (Corps, 2009).

### **2.3.1 Verbal Reprimand**

This is the initial step of progressive discipline. Whether "spur-of-the-moment" or "after-the-fact", the verbal reprimand is given in a private setting; and the discussion is

conducted in a friendly, but firm, "low-key" manner. A verbal reprimand is generally used when a problem persists after the supervisor has brought it to the employee's attention through counseling. The purpose of this step is to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction of the problem (Atwater, Waldman, Carey & Cartier, 2001).

Most performance problems are resolved at this stage. If the problem continues, the supervisor may want to repeat this step before proceeding to a written reprimand. The verbal reprimand is used to bring a problem to the attention of the employee before it becomes so serious that it jeopardizes the employment status of the employee. The verbal reprimand must be documented on the appropriate form (Jac & Davidson, 2001).

### **2.3.2 Written Reprimand**

When the employee has not satisfactorily corrected the problem as outlined during the verbal reprimand, proceed to the next step -- a formal written reprimand. A written reprimand may also be the initial disciplinary action in cases of a more serious nature (Chelliah, 2010).

The process is essentially the same as in the verbal reprimand step. The written reprimand includes a review of any prior related disciplinary action taken, a thorough statement of the circumstances causing the current disciplinary action, and a clear picture of future expectations. Documentation is critical; the supervisor must complete the appropriate form. If the supervisor wants to explain the problem in greater detail or clarify the expectations, a letter can be attached to the discipline form. Make sure to keep the letter clear and simple. If the supervisor would like assistance, employee relations should be contacted (Adams, 2003).

### **2.3.3 Suspension without Pay**

Suspension is the last corrective step in the disciplinary process and is normally preceded by a verbal reprimand and a written reprimand. In a few extremely serious cases, suspension may be warranted as the initial step in the disciplinary process. Contact Employee Relations if considering the suspension of any employee. A suspension involves the temporary removal of the employee from the work place for a specified period of time. The employee may not accrue vacation and sick leave benefits during this non-working, non-paid period of time. Again, the purpose of this disciplinary step is to correct the identified problem (Kabandize (2004)).

A suspension is the strongest warning to the employee that the problem is, indeed, extremely serious, and it is the last chance the employee has to correct the problem. The length of the suspension is determined by the supervisor and Employee Relations and generally ranges from one (1) to five (5) working day. Most suspensions average three (3) working days. A suspension longer than five (5) working days may be imposed in certain cases. As in previous steps, complete the appropriate form. The disciplinary form includes the specific days of the suspension as well as the date and time the employee is to return to work (Cole, 2004).

### **2.3.4 Termination of Employment**

If all the previous steps have not been successful, the employee may be terminated from employment. Termination of employment is the final step in the progressive disciplinary process and obviously is not corrective. As in the previous steps, it is critical that the employee be given an opportunity to hear the charges, understand the evidence, and offer an explanation (Kabandize, 2004).

Again, after this discussion and upon completion of the investigation, document the action by using the appropriate form. In any situation serious enough to justify termination of employment, University policy requires the supervisor to contact Employee Relations prior to taking any action. Employee Relations will review the case to verify that there is just cause for termination of employment and that the employee has been afforded due process (Cole, 2004).

### **2.3.5 Suspension Pending Investigation**

There are situations where the employee must be removed from the work place immediately before an investigation can be conducted. Examples of these situations might be suspected theft, potential sabotage, disorderly conduct, or where the employee presents a threat to other employees. In these instances, the employee can be suspended pending the results of the investigation. The supervisor must contact Employee Relations immediately. This should be done before sending the employee home, unless there is a need to remove the employee immediately because the employee presents a clear and imminent danger if left in the work place. The suspension pending investigation is imposed with the understanding that a final decision, relative to the appropriate disciplinary action, will be made after the investigation. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, the employee will receive pay for regular earnings lost during the suspension (Adams, 2003).

### **2.4 Influence of Disciplinary Action on Employee Performance**

Both sides of the consequences on the application of discipline are reported by Atwater, Waldman, Carey and Cartier (2001) in their qualitative study on recipient and observer reactions to discipline: are managers experiencing wishful thinking. Even though

scholarly evidence indicates that discipline and punishment are unfortunate facts of organizational life. Few conclusions have been drawn about the effects of punishment or the relationship between punishment and employee performance (Jac & Davidson, 2001). Atwater et al build on a study by Bahemuka (1998). In the presented results the authors indicate that both recipients and observers believed that punishment can have positive influence on employee performance.

The negative effects on employee performance of the application of discipline was reported by Chelliah (2010). He presents his findings in power sharing in progressive discipline new rules of engagement arising from an Australian perspective. He views progressive discipline as a form of managerial power, which ultimately results in domination of the worker. Chelliah found that the application of progressive discipline on employees is particularly concentrated around industry and occupational class workers. These employee performances are more susceptible to disciplining by employers. Chelliah argues that an unequal power balance exists between employee and employer in the progressive discipline system because progressive discipline follows the traditional 'power over' model. Chelliah however does not completely discard the use of disciplinary measures.

According to Adams (2003), Organization rules and regulation are among the strategies designed to instil good conduct of employees just like students in a school. This implies self-control, orderliness, good behavior and obedience to organization authority (Adams, 2003). Also on employment, employees are given prospectuses, which spell out some of the expectations (Adams, 2003). These rules and regulations specify in most cases what new staff should do and what they should not do. Kabandize (2004)



carried out a study on employees control through rules and regulations set by individual organizations in Uganda and observed that, rules and regulations are enforced through management, disciplinary committees, supervisors and every one involvement in the process affecting employee performance. According to Matsoga (2003), during his study on discipline in organizations of Botswana, he discovered the wide spread violence and misbehaviour that existed in many organizations. This lack of discipline, which interfered with the normal organization working process, manifested itself in various ways including absenteeism, vandalism, alcohol consumption and substance abuse, truancy, inability or unwillingness to do delegated work by the supervisor. Theft was also identified as a common activity among staffs performance.

Cole (2004) concludes that organizational discipline is essential because of the interdependence of employee performance and management. In termination, the organization loses many experienced and trained employees. Discipline and grievance are words used to the working relationship between employees and the employing organization; both are seeking a good fit in the foundation of the employment relationship (Ngige, 2011). Thus, the manager acting as the employer's agent and the employee seeking for better conditions of service, disagreement may arise. As a last resort, either can terminate the contract, but there are many possibilities of mutual adjustment before that final step is taken. The employer seeks adjustment through process of discipline, while the employee seeks adjustment through process of grievance settlement.

Wedaga (2012) did an assessment of the effect of disciplinary procedures on employee performance at AngloGold Ashanti, Obuasi Mine. The study revealed that employees have knowledge of disciplinary procedures in AGA and how they can transform employees positively to fit into the working environment. Other findings indicated that the impact of disciplinary procedures on punctuality and performance is positive. Though effectiveness of the disciplinary procedure is high, there are challenges such as inability of management to educate workers on disciplinary procedures, inconsistency in the application of disciplinary procedures and above all unnecessary interruptions by the union influencing employee performance.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter covers the research design, population, data collection and data analysis.

### **3.2 Research Design**

This study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design is suitable for the study because it enables the description of the current status of a population or phenomenon being studied (Babbie, 2002). This approach is suitable for this study, since the study intended to collect comprehensive information through descriptions which was helpful for identifying variables. This research design also portrays the characteristics of a population fully (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

### **3.3 Target Population**

The target population comprised of 500 employees comprising the top level, middle level and lower level and lower cadre employees at Baringo County Government (Baringo County Government, 2017).

### **3.4 Data Collection**

Primary data was collected using a semi-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had two sections. Section A focused on the demographic data while section B covered the perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government. The questionnaire was administered through drop and pick later method.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Findings were presented using tables and figures for ease of understanding.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter covers the response rate, demographic characteristics of respondents and perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government.

### 4.2 Response Rate

Out of five hundred (500) questionnaires administered, a total of four hundred and twenty nine (429) filled questionnaires were returned. The response rate for the study was 85.8%. A minimal value of 50% response rate is required.

### 4.3 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic characteristics include their gender, age group, highest level of education and also the duration they had worked for Baringo County Government.

#### 4.3.1 Gender of the Respondents

Male were 52.9% while female were 47.1%. This shows that the researcher was not gender biased in data collection and hence obtained information from all genders.

**Table 4.1: Gender of the Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male	202	47.1
Female	227	52.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 4.3.2 Age Group of the Respondents

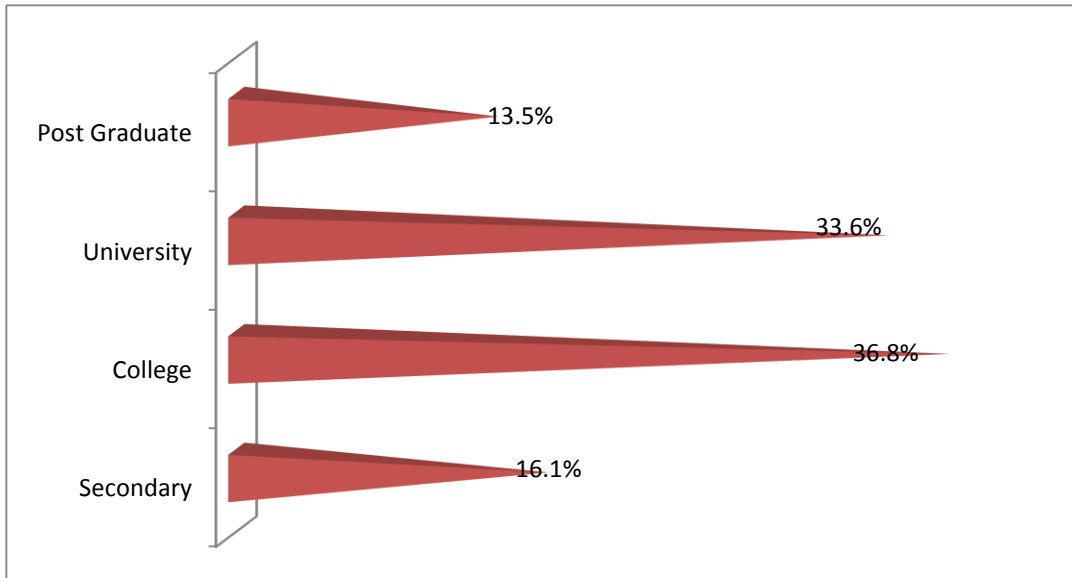
As per the results, 33.8% of the respondents were aged between 46 and 55 years, 26.8% were aged between 36 and 45 years, 22.1% aged between 26 and 35 years, 10% aged between 18 and 25 years whereas 7.2% indicate above 55 years. This implies that majority of employees at Baringo County Government were termed mature enough to comprehend and give all the required information.

**Table 4. 2: Age Group of the Respondents**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Between 18-25	43	10.0
Between 26-35	95	22.1
Between 36-45	115	26.8
Between 46-55	145	33.8
Above 55	31	7.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>429</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### 4.3.3 Highest Level of Education of the Respondents

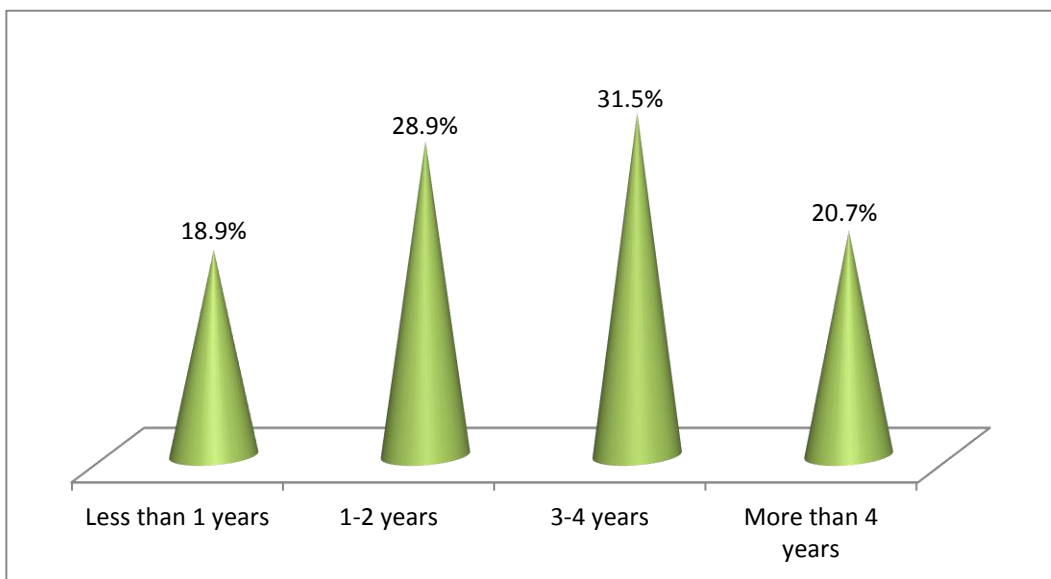
36.8% of the respondents indicated that their highest level of education was college, 33.6% indicated university, 13.5% indicated post graduate and 16.1% indicated secondary. This implies that respondents were literate enough to interpret the topic of the study.



**Figure 4. 1: Highest Level of Education of the Respondents**

#### **4.3.4 Period Worked for Baringo County Government**

31.5% have worked for Baringo county government for a period between 3 and 4 years, 28.9% for 1 to 2 years, 20.7% for a period of more than 4 years whereas 18.9% indicated less than 1 year. This implies that most of the respondents have worked for Baringo County for long enough to comprehend the subject under study.



**Figure 4. 2: Period Worked for Baringo County Government**

#### **4.4 Perceived influence of Disciplinary Action on Employee Performance in Baringo County Government**

The disciplinary actions discussed in this section were verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension without pay, termination of employment and suspension pending investigation. The perceived influence of each of the disciplinary actions to employee performance is presented below.

##### **4.4.1 Verbal Reprimand**

The employees at Baringo County Government had a positive perception of verbal reprimand on employee performance as shown by a mean of 3.6398. This is supported by Atwater, Waldman, Carey and Cartier (2001) who argued that a verbal reprimand is generally used when a problem persists after the supervisor has brought it to the employee's attention through counseling where the purpose of this step is to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction of the problem.

##### **4.4.2 Written Reprimand**

The employees at Baringo County government further revealed that written reprimand fairly influences their performance as shown by a mean of 3.3392. In line with this, Adams (2003) argued that documentation is critical; the supervisor must complete the appropriate form where if the supervisor wants to explain the problem in greater detail or clarify the expectations, a letter can be attached to the discipline form. This makes sure to keep the letter clear and simple. If the supervisor would like assistance, employee relations should be contacted.



#### **4.4.3 Suspension without Pay**

The Baringo County employees revealed that suspension without pay positively influences their performance as shown by a mean of 3.574. This is in agreement with Kabandize (2004) who noted that a suspension involves the temporary removal of the employee from the work place for a specified period of time where the employee may not accrue vacation and sick leave benefits during this non-working, non-paid period of time since the purpose of this disciplinary step is to correct the identified problem.

#### **4.4.4 Termination of Employment**

The employees of the County government of Baringo revealed that termination of employment as shown by a mean of 3.7389 influences their performance positively. In line with this, Cole (2004) agreed with the finding by arguing that in any situation serious enough to justify termination of employment, University policy requires the supervisor to contact Employee Relations prior to taking any action where employee relations will review the case to verify that there is just cause for termination of employment and that the employee has been afforded due process.

#### **4.4.5 Suspension Pending Investigation**

The Baringo County employees indicated that suspension pending investigation influences their performance positively as shown by a mean of 3.9199. This was in agreement with Adams (2003) who noted that the suspension pending investigation is imposed with the understanding that a final decision, relative to the appropriate disciplinary action, will be made after the investigation. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, the employee will receive pay for regular earnings lost during the suspension.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter covers summary of findings, conclusions, recommendations, limitations of the study and suggestion for further studies.

### **5.2 Summary of Findings**

The study revealed that performance of employees at Baringo County Government is influenced by verbal reprimand, written reprimand, suspension without pay, termination of employment and suspension pending investigation. This was attributed to prevention of employee from committing further offence improving their productivity, thorough statement of the circumstances causing the current disciplinary action, temporary removal of the employee from the work place for a specified period of time influence performance of the staff and termination of employment which makes other employee improve their productivity. It can also be attributed to employees being suspended they always do their work with a lot of struggle when they resume.

The perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance was also attributed to the fact that disciplinary action is a step to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the direction for necessary and successful correction of the problem where thorough statement of the circumstances causing the current disciplinary action improves employee performance. It was also clear that temporary removal of the employee from the work place for a specified period or being given last chance to correct the problem of time influence performance of the staff as well as his/her customer relations.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Based on the findings the study concludes that verbal reprimand and written reprimand influences employees' performance since it prevent employee from committing further offence improving their productivity and if given in a private setting it influences staff confidence. The study further concludes that suspension without pay, termination of employment and suspension pending investigation influences employee's performance since these improve their productivity and when staffs are suspended they always do their work with a lot of struggle when they resume.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

Based on the research findings and conclusion, the study recommends that there should be increased practice of this disciplinary action and new employees should go through proper induction. The study further recommends that the County the government should come up with policies on how to discipline the employees and that the county government should seek to address the pertinent issues like complex disciplinary regime that has impeded employee performance in the country. The study recommends that the organization should focus on linking individual performance with organizational performance and goals, thereby, enabling supervisors and appraisers to continually assess work progress, and assess, on a timely basis, the learning and developmental needs of staff and that the organization should invest in promoting accountability and communication amongst employees.

### **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

This was a case study focusing on one county government. The study would have covered more counties across the country so as to provide a more broad based analysis.

### **5.6 Suggestion for Further Study**

Similar study should be done based on other county governments in Kenya.

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## APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly answer the questions by putting a tick in the appropriate box or by writing in the space provided.

### SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1. What is your Gender ? Male  Female
2. What is your Age group?
 

Between 18-25 <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 26-35 <input type="checkbox"/>
Between 36-45 <input type="checkbox"/>	Between 46-55 <input type="checkbox"/>
Above 55 <input type="checkbox"/>	
3. What is your Highest Level of Education?
 

Secondary <input type="checkbox"/>	College <input type="checkbox"/>
University <input type="checkbox"/>	Post Graduate <input type="checkbox"/>
4. How long have you worked for Baringo County Government?
 

Less than 5 years <input type="checkbox"/>	5-8 years <input type="checkbox"/>	9-13 years <input type="checkbox"/>	14-18 years <input type="checkbox"/>
Above 18 years <input type="checkbox"/>			

### SECTION B: PERCEIVED INFLUENCE OF DISCIPLINARY ACTION ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

5. To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to perceived influence of disciplinary action on employee performance in Baringo County Government?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<b>Verbal Reprimand</b>					
Verbal reprimand highly prevent employee from committing further offence improving their productivity					
This step is to alleviate any misunderstanding and to clarify the					



direction for necessary and successful correction of the problem					
Most performance problems are resolved at this stage					
Verbal reprimand is given in a private setting influencing staff confidence					
<b>Written Reprimand</b>					
A thorough statement of the circumstances causing the current disciplinary action improves employee performance					
When a staff must complete the appropriate form in disciplinary action it draws his/her attention to resolve					
supervisor use assistance of employee relations which enhance accountability of the staff					
Through this stage supervisor explains the problem in greater detail or clarify the expectations that triggers the staff to stop the bad behaviour					
<b>Suspension without Pay</b>					
temporary removal of the employee from the work place for a specified period of time influence performance of the staff					
When staff fail to accrue vacation and sick leave benefits during this					

period his/she does not quit the bad behaviour					
Non-paid period of time deteriorates staff performance					
This last chance for the employee to correct the problem determines his/her customer relations					
<b>Termination of Employment</b>					
Termination of employment makes other employee improve their productivity					
When employee are terminated they have a employee be given an opportunity to hear the charges and may develop negative attitude towards management					
Employees are negatively influenced by other employee termination					
<b>Suspension Pending Investigation</b>					
Suspension pending investigation improves productivity of other employees					
When staff are suspended they always do their work with a lot of struggle when they resume					
Staff that were suspended have a poor relation with other staff affecting their performance					

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME**