FACTORS INFLUENCING EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION OF EMPOWERMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE STAFF OF THE UNIVERSITYOF NAIROBI

BY

MONARI FRONICA

A MANAGEMENT RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (MBA), SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

OCTOBER 2007

DECLARATION

This Management Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signed.........NElonari...........And.........Date....7/11/07.................
FRONICA MONARI

This Management Research Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University Supervisor.

Signed.....DKobonyo.................Date...06/11/2007.......
PROFESSOR PETER O. K'OBONYO
Department of Business Administration,
School of Business,
University of Nairobi.

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DEDICATION

To my dear parents,

Mr. George Hudson Monari Ogeto and

Mrs. Teresa Bosibori Monari

For their love of Education

And

A special dedication to my children,

Stephen Ogeto Otundo

Peter Osinyo Otundo

Natasha Moraa

For their immense encouragement, patience and support

throughout the entire course.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would to thank the Almighty God through whose grace that I have come to the completion of this programme.

My very sincere gratitude to all those who contributed immensely in one-way or another to the completion of this research project. My special gratitude goes to my supervisor, **Prof. P.O. K'Obonyo** for his unparalleled patience and guidance throughout this project.

I am greatly indebted to my parents, **Mr. & Mrs. G.H.M. Ogeto** for their support, my brothers, **Evans, Kennedy, Geoffrey and Dennis** and my late sister, **Lilian** for their encouragement, my children, **Stephen, Peter and Natasha** for their patience and understanding and my colleagues and friends, **Bernard Otieno Judith Obam, Agnes Andollo, Grace Lelei,** and many others for their constant guidance and encouragement .

My special thanks go to all those friends and relatives who wished me well during the course. Their encouragement and support was much needed and appreciated.

To all my respondents, **"I couldn't have done it without you"**

ASANTE SANA

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ABSTRACT

The objective for this study was to determine the factors that influence employee perception of empowerment at the University of Nairobi. The University being an agent of change is also looked at as an environment where empowerment of employees should be greatly fostered. Empowerment consists of sharing power and authority. Empowerment means letting go of the authority to make certain decisions. For the University to achieve its key objective of becoming a world-class institution of higher learning, it has become necessary to seriously involve members of staff at all levels. This calls for staff members to be fully empowered to take the initiative, make decisions and solve problems promptly. Presently there is a discrepancy between the management and employee perception of empowerment of University of Nairobi staff. The literature herein has looked at various issues relating to empowerment such as the concept, need, context, benefits and limitations of empowerment, empowerment as a management tool, empowerment policies and perception. The study used survey research design within one organization. A sample size of 312 respondents was drawn from a target population of 3917 staff members of the University of Nairobi through stratified random sampling procedure. The primary data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using tables, means, percentages and factor analysis. The major findings indicated that the following were the factors that influence perception of employee empowerment at the University of Nairobi: requisite competence/capabilities, management, peer, technology support, organizational culture, the meaningfulness of the job, self-determination, impact and participation in decision-making. The University of Nairobi staff indicated that they are highly empowered with a mean score of 60%. They further stated that they would feel more comfortable if they were allowed to make decisions regarding their work (76.7%). The lowest rated aspect was involvement in decisions that affect one's job (49%).The study recommends more training for staff to gain mastery of skills, and involvement in decision-making with an aim of achieving world-class status.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1:1   Background

Over the last few decades, organizations have realised the need to change the way they and the people in them conduct business. This change is necessary considering the escalating development of global markets, increasingly rapid changes in work technologies, shifting work force and customer demographics, and flexibility in products and services. In this new world order, the tradition management model of 'the manager in control and the employees being controlled' doesn't work. Instead, top managers have to grapple with reengineering at the same time that they search out ways to empower the work force – both tactics aimed at getting more done with less'. Bureaucracies, these managers have found, limit people and bureaucratic people limit themselves and their organizations. The shift from a bureaucracy to an empowering management demands a thorough understanding of both the nature of empowerment and mechanics of moving from bureaucracy to empowerment.

1.1.1 Employee empowerment

Employee empowerment is one of those terms that everyone thinks they understand, but few really do. Ask a dozen different people and you'll get a dozen different answers to the question, "what is employee empowerment? Some writers indicate that empowerment consists of sharing power and authority, (Cole 1997). Others say that empowerment occurs when the organization's processes are set up to allow for it. Empowerment of public employees has been touted as an important mediating step in improving public organizational outcomes, yet such a relationship depends on an assumption that employees value what is offered as empowerment (Spreitzer, 1995).

Empowerment must consider what each individual employee values. For empowerment to be allowed, leaders must be visionaries who can provide ideas to which employees will want to dedicate themselves, supervisors must change their ways of supervising and learn to be coaches and mentors, and all members of the organization must dedicate themselves to sharing information and to training.

Empowerment has been in the forefront of quality improvement efforts. Employee empowerment, the enlargement of employee jobs giving them the responsibility and "authority to make decisions about their work without supervisory approval" while still creating value for the customer (Spreitzer, 1995) will be the focus of especially if an organization adapts a culture that of empowerment of employees.

In recent years, organizations have rushed to adopt an empowerment approach to service delivery in which employees face customers free of rulebooks or guidelines and are encouraged to do whatever is necessary to satisfy the customers. But that approach may not be right for everyone. Aspects to be considered include clarification as to why to empower (there are costs and benefits), decision on how to empower (there are alternatives) and determination on when to empower. This often depends on the situation.

In the new knowledge economy, independent entrepreneurship and initiative are needed throughout the ranks of the organization. The commitment to quality today is very present in service industries, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and educational institutions (Spreitzer, 1995).

Total Quality, also known as Total Quality Management (TQM), is seen differently by different people. Chief Executive Officers, vice-presidents, managers, supervisors and employees from several distinct companies, areas, and departments see TQM positively or negatively as a good or evil device to be implemented. There is growing need for changes in the way universities conduct themselves. This is because universities now, more than ever before, operate in a tougher, more competitive and changing environment. These changes include, development of global markets, increasingly rapid changes in the work technology, shifting workforce and customer demographics, organizational restructuring and retrenchment, the increased emphasis on quality and flexibility in products and services.

In view of the above, organizations such as universities have to shift from the bureaucracies and hierarchies in an attempt to improve their operations. Universities have to adopt strategies that free their resources, and more so their employees to perform their roles effectively. They have to shift their burden of day-to-day

organizational operation, discipline, planning and management of resources to 'empowered' employees, both individually and in teams. As Schein (1985) puts it, the shift towards structures where a central core of knowledge-based workers control the technology and the operations of the companies is directed by the belief that value is added not through the 'muscle power' but through an input of knowledge and creativity.

There is need therefore for employees to be committed to their work and to feel empowered to perform their work. TQM can be specified as the ''never-ending process of continuous improvement that covers people, equipment, suppliers, materials and procedures...so that every aspect of an operation can be improved...and the end goal is perfection, which is never achieved but always sought'' (Blanchard & Randolph, 1996).

TQM can be described as ''a philosophy of management that is driven by the constant attainment of customer satisfaction through the continuous improvement of all organizational processes''; accurate measurements; and employee empowerment, while still keeping the costs down and maintaining a profit (Morgans & Dennehy, 1997).

Employee empowerment and its aspects will be the facet discussed and the main focus and development of this thesis. The essence of Empowerment can be described as the enlargement of employees' jobs giving them the responsibility and ''authority to make decisions about their work without supervisory approval'' while creating value for the ultimate customers (Spreitzer, 1995). The University of Nairobi is no exception.

1.1.2. Factors influencing employee empowerment

Empowerment means letting go of the authority to make certain decisions. This is partly a good management practice and partly about-facing reality - the reality those modern employees won't accept jobs where they have no say in their day to day operational decisions. Still, old habits die-hard and some managers will struggle for a while to change their roles from prime decision maker to facilitator.

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Several factors contribute to effective empowerment. The organizational culture must support empowerment. It won't work if managers feel threatened by a loss of authority, for example. There is also the question of what to empower and when. In addition, self-awareness is essential to be sure that one is not actually disempowering employees. According to (Jay,1996) factors encouraging employee involvement include high performance expectations combined with frequently expressed confidence in staff, autonomy from bureaucratic constraint, meaningful goals, celebration of successful achievements and removal of sources of adverse emotional arousal for example job insecurity or high levels of uncertainty.

The need for employee empowerment arises when employees are close to customers and ready, innovation is critical, technology is complex, processes are changing rapidly, the environment is uncertain, employees want growth and motivating, responsibility and development, initiative has a high payoff value, close supervision is impossible, the boss can genuinely let go and is supportive and a good coach.

1.1.3 The University of Nairobi

The University of Nairobi became a full-fledged University in 1970, and is the largest among the five public universities in the country. The University has six colleges namely the College of Humanities and social Sciences (CHSS), College of Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences (CAVS), College of Architecture and Engineering (CAE), College of Biological and Physical Science (CBPS), College of Education and External Sciences (CEES), University Calender, 2006/7. The University has a variety of disciplines within its staff agenda as well as having the largest concentration of scholars and members of staff in the country.

The vision of the University of Nairobi is to be a world-class African University and a community of scholars committed to the promotion of academic achievement and of excellence in the research as an embodiment of the aspirations of the Kenyan people and the global community (University Of Nairobi, Varsity Focus, 2007).

The mission of the University is to a centre for learning and scholarship; preparing students for academic pursuits, professional development, enhanced personal lives, and responsible global citizenship; extending the frontiers of knowledge through research, creative works, and scholarship; fostering an intellectual culture that bridges theory with practice; contributing to social, economic, and cultural development; and through intellectual products, enhances the quality of life of the people of Kenya and all humanity, (University Of Nairobi, Varsity Focus, 2007).

The University core values include responsible citizenship, good corporate governance, excellence and professionalism, freedom of thought in academic enquiry, teamwork, creativity, innovativeness and adaptation to change, (University Of Nairobi, Varsity Focus, 2007).

The University is faced with various challenges that need tackling systematically within the context of its stated Vision and Mission. In its service charter the University pledged its commitment to provision of quality service on observance of the rule of law, skilled human resource, hard work, transparency, accountability, fairness, and timely service delivery in all units (University of Nairobi Service Charter, 2006).

The University in its pursuit of world-class excellence has over the last few years undertaken various changes in its human resources management. In this era of globalised and powerful new information technologies and challenges of enhancing knowledge, the university has worked towards providing high quality and cost effective information and communication technology services that meet the changing learning, teaching, research and management needs of the university (University Of Nairobi, Varsity Focus, 2007). In this regard and the fact that knowledge is power, the university management has undertaken to train staff of all cadres on various aspects that will enhance their performance (Information Booklet University of Nairobi, 2006). It is expected that after these trainings, the staff will be empowered to render better services to the clientele, in strict compliance with the service charter that was launched in 2006. The University has also undertaken to improve the work environment such as beautification program, networking. Despite the aforesaid, a survey by the Steadman Group revealed that not all staff members are satisfied with

the University and feel empowered to give their optimum, hence the need for the study.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

The existing literature presents a strong case for empowerment of employees. It is considered a necessary condition both for gaining a competitive position and, more important, for survival.. This proposition has very serious implications for African organizations, including those that are operating in Kenya. What complicates the situation of African organizations is the fact that organizations and management studies have, almost without exception, characterized African organization as highly bureaucratic, and as exhibiting extreme forms of over centralization of decision-making. This highly centralized structure tends to disempowerment employees, often resulting in alienation, low levels of job satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and productivity. But, given the competitive forces unleashed by the process of liberalization and globalisation, can managers of African organizations afford to perpetuate the outmoded systems of management? This question has given impetus for the proposed study. That is, there is need to find out what African organizations are doing to develop self-managing work force, one that exercises self-direction and control in the service of objectives to which they have committed themselves.

All the above behavioural outcomes occur largely because of reduced management control and flexibility in decision-making. In the context of employee empowerment perception can influence the outcomes of activities. It is therefore crucial that employees' interest in being empowered is nurtured and consciously sustained. Staffs deliberately become active participants when empowered and believe in the ability of empowerment to have a positive impact on their work performance, a strong organizational culture of management and sharing of knowledge and experiences.

Over the last few years, the University of Nairobi has initiated various programs intended to change its management systems aimed at achieving world class status. The University aims at being proactive by being responsive to the needs of stakeholders, both internal and external. For the University to achieve its key

objective of becoming world-class institution of higher learning, it has become necessary to seriously involve members of staff at all levels. This calls for staff members to be fully empowered to take the initiative, make decisions and solve problems promptly. So far, no study has been conducted, apart from the Steadman Group Survey on customer satisfaction focused on establishing stakeholders' perception and satisfaction levels with various issues at the University. Steadman Group Survey identified areas of dissatisfaction by employee that relate to empowerment such as training, development, and participation in decision-making. Despite the availability of specific channels of ownership of decisions in the university, Steadman Group's survey found that members of staff did not feel empowered enough in their work areas/stations. The University operates through committees that start from the departmental/ sectional level up to the Senate where all employees and students' interests are represented. However, employees still feel that they are not fully involved in decision-making on issues that affect them and the University in general.

The differences in a university setting between academic and non-academic staff result from the fact that academic and non-academic staff may have similar qualifications but perform different duties/activities; academic staff are involved in the core business of the University, but majority are not managers. The distinction manifests itself more in the decision-making process whereby most policy, strategic and academic staff with only passive support of the non-academic staff makes operational decisions. These differences create situations where a non-academic member of staff feels disempowered in relation to academic staff. Thus, non-academic and academic staff feel less empowered but for different reasons.

From the foregoing, it seems that there is a discrepancy between the management and employee's perception of empowerment of the University staff. However, the magnitude and cause of these perceptions have not been established. The proposed study is motivated by the need to fill this gap in knowledge.

1.2   Objectives of the Study

To determine factors that influence employee perception of empowerment at the University of Nairobi.

1.3   Importance of the Study

The study is important to: -

Top management of the university of Nairobi- focus on empowering their employees for overall performance

Heads of Departments–for management of empowered staff for maximum outputs. They may use the study to find out more about empowering, creating satisfying and challenging jobs to the staff and also enhancing teamwork among staff..

Employees- To know whether they are empowered and satisfied with their jobs or not. And to also find out the benefits of empowerment to them and their organizations.

As *a source of secondary data* for future references especially the findings

Broadly, this study seeks to survey the perception of staff towards their utilization by their employer, the University of Nairobi.

1.5   Structure of the Research Report of the Study

The study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter one consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objective, Importance of the study and Structure of the Research Report of the Study.

Chapter two covers literature review, which is also divided into various topics.

Chapter three constitutes the research methodology, which is divided into research design, target population, sample and sampling procedure, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

Chapter four contains an analysis of the collected data and a presentation of the findings. The findings are also discussed in this chapter.

In chapter five, a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations is presented.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Empowerment is closely linked to other employee involvement schemes that vary from informal mechanism to full blown democratic systems where employees have as much say in the decision making process as management. It is therefore closely linked to the organizational cultural change schemes such as Total Quality Management (TQM), Customer Service Initiative and business process reengineering.

2.2 The Concept of Empowerment

The word "empowerment" has been in focus since 1980s and the 1990s but the concept has appeared in various forms throughout modern literature since 1940s. According to (Whetten, 1996), the concept appeared in the human relations theories around the 1940s/1950s the motivational and sensitivity needs of the people of the 1960s, employee involvement schemes in the 1970s and the team building and quality circles initiatives of the 1980s. Employee involvement schemes flourished in the 1980s with the rise of Human Resource Management and the realization that people are the most valuable resource of the organization. There was therefore, a need to develop, adequately reward, and involve them in the policy-making particularly because of the rediscovery of the intrinsic worth of the employees that was also driven by the relative decline in the US economic performance, particularly in comparison to Japan. Beadwell (1998) links Japanese economic success to the involvement of employees in work groups such as quality circles.

Wilkinson (1997) saw the foundations of the modern empowerment movement in 1982 publication of Peters and Waterman's *In Search of Excellence: Lessons of Americas Best run Companies*. Peters and Waterman documented a new management approach that understood employees as entrepreneurs, who, if allowed to function without bureaucratic rules, could take 'destiny into their own hands".

Historically, most researchers agree that, in our times, it was Kurt Lewin's influence that focused questions about democracy. While studying the difference between totalitarian and democratic social environments, Lewin, Lippitt & White (1939) discovered a third variant that they called laissez-faire.

In laissez-faire contexts people are free to do whatever they want. This is chaos or anarchy rather than empowerment. These environments are characterized by uncertainty, no clear purpose, and the absence of structure, rules or regulations. The consequences for people in such environments are negative since the social environment is fragmented and conflicted with relatively high negative affect. Democratic social environments have a clear social purpose, a well defined and legal structure and agreed upon rules and regulations. These environments are healthy for people and characterized by high performance and high positive affect. The key difference between totalitarian and democratic social environments is that, in democracy, the formal and legal framework and its consequences are agreed upon. In totalitarian environments only the elites decide what the purpose, structure, and rules are. Everyone else is destined to follow or to get out. The elites, or leaders can consult employees or citizens or invite them to participate in roundtables, town hall meetings or summits to test opinions and responses to their agendas if they so choose, but they do not really have to consider what is said. Whereas, in democratic social environments, all participants are involved in making the decisions about purpose, structure, rules and regulations and these are implemented only when and if there is broad social agreement. Anyone breaking the policies thus created can be expected to responsibly accept the consequences precisely because he was involved in creating them.

The twin threats to democracy are regression into totalitarianism and disintegration into chaos, anarchy, or laissez-faire. To maintain democratic social environments that truly empower people either in the workplace or in the community, two conditions must be met. The majority of members need to be aware of the issues of the day and there needs to be some formal way for members to discuss these issues and to participate in decision-making (Emery, 1989).

Gratton (2004) and Hackman (2002) focus largely on the work environment; this may be because empowerment efforts recently have been focused largely on the workplace with perhaps more specific learning that can be generalized to other social environments. Emery (1999) takes a broader perspective developing approaches to empowerment useful in both organizations and communities. All three authors are speaking about a direct participative form of democracy, not representational democracy and therefore identify empowered employees and citizens as those who are directly involved in making the decisions that affect them.

When most people refer to employee empowerment they mean a great deal more than delegation. It is for this reason that many authors provide their own definitions. Candron (1995) articulates empowerment as *"When employees "own" their jobs, when they are able to measure and influence their individual success as well as the success of their departments and their companies.*

Ettore's (1997) definition of empowerment is "employees having autonomous decision making capabilities and acting as partners in the business, all with an eye to the bottom line". Effective bosses worldwide now are called "coaches, advisers, sponsors, or facilitators." Good managers and good "coaches" are expected to help employees refine their job achievements by encouraging, instructing, guiding and giving them advice. The power that managers have - the capacity that managers have to influence the behaviour of employees - and work responsibilities, must be now shared with employees through the creation of trust, assurance, motivation, and support. Work-related decisions and full control of the work is being pushed down towards the lowest operating levels (Robbins 1996).

Self-conducted teams have also emerged, which are groups of empowered employees with no or very little supervision. These groups are able to solve work problems, make choices on schedules and operations, learn to do other employees' jobs, and are also held accountable and responsible for the quality of their outputs (Spreitzer & Quinn1996).

Dr. W. Edwards Deming, a statistician, quality expert and one of the leaders in the fight for quality, pointed out that to improve quality, the production processes were to

be controlled as they were happening instead of corrected later. He then concluded that the best people to perform such control were the workers themselves. The only problem was that the average workers did not have freedom or necessary skills to do so (Shipper & Manz, 1992). Rarely a problem turns out to be the employee's fault. The causes can normally be tracked back to incorrect product or system designs, or even to inappropriate training received by the employees (Block, 1987).

Lee and Koh (2001) noted that the term is ambiguous conceptually and often used interchangeably with similar words such as authority, delegation, motivation, self-efficacy, job enrichment, employee ownership, autonomy, self determination, self management, self control, self influence, self leadership, high involvement, and participative management. Most writers, however, agree that empowerment is focused on an individual's feelings, as it relates to the way people think about themselves, and at encouraging commitment and performance through liberating human capabilities. Empowerment therefore generally means reducing top-down control over employees with a view to enable them solve issues as they arise and permit them to invent new process and products as needs are identified (innovation).

In a perfect world, employees would take responsibility as if they were an owner or at the least, had a vested interest in the success of the company for which they worked. It is possible though, to create an employment environment where employees will take on responsibility. This is the activity all successful employers desire of their staff. The acronym **PARTNER** can be used to discover the necessary partnering elements for you to achieve success (Lee and Koh, 2001).

Participation and involvement is the first of the *Partner to Empower* elements. The employee activities you must reward are risk taking, cooperation, mentoring, innovation, value adding, and challenging. **Acceptance of your employees** as fully functioning, rather than apprentice human beings is the second partnering element necessary to *Partner to Empower* **Recognition** is the third element for your *Partner to Empower* model. It's crucial that you embody that which you choose to praise and reward. The activities that you recognize, reward, and praise are the activities that will most likely be repeated.

Tell the Truth about what's really going on in your company is the fourth key aspect for your *Partner to Empower* endeavour. Withholding knowledge generally will only serve the one who withholds in retaining power. Power is limitless, unfortunately many think that their power comes from their position. To the contrary, it comes from within--this is true leadership. *Net-of-Safety* is the fifth element in your conversion to *Partner to Empower*. If you truly want your employees to actively embrace the activities in the participation section, you must create a climate of safety; nobody desires to get shot down for sticking their neck out in an effort to improve the workings of their organization.

Enthusiasm toward your employees, their growth, and their risk taking is the sixth necessary element to *Partner to Empower*. Be excited about the growth of your team; be excited when your people take a risk, regardless of the success. *Renewal* of your commitment to excellence. Your employees are watching your actions much more than they are listening to what you have to say. Have a commitment resurrection; your commitment to your employees and your customers.

Evidence from the literature suggests that empowered employees enjoy high levels of motivation and performance. They are self-driven, take initiative, and enjoy a high degree of self-confidence, esteem, and efficacy (Wilkinson, 1997)

2.3   Need for empowerment

Employee empowerment can be a powerful tool. This "new" form of administration challenges the hierarchical forms of leadership where the final authority was at the top of the tower watching the working mass (Bourke, 1998). The now advanced leadership style can increase efficiency and effectiveness inside an organization (Byham, 1997). It increases productivity and reduces overhead. Overhead expenses are those needed for carrying on a business, i.e. salaries, rent, heat and advertising. It gives managers the freedom to dedicate their time to more important matters. Managers can highlight the talents and efforts of all employees. The leader and organization take advantage of the shared knowledge of workers. Managers at the same time develop their own job qualifications and skills attaining personal advancements (Byham, 1997).

Empowered employees can make decisions and suggestions that will down the line improve service and support, saving money, time and disputes between companies and their customers (Honold, 1997). Empowerment of qualified employees will provide exceptional customer service in several competitive markets therefore it will improve profits through repeated business (Bridges, 1991).

Customers prefer to deal with employees that have the power to manage arrangements and objections by themselves, without having to frequently inquire of their supervisors (Spreitzer, 1995). Customers want their needs met without having to pass through "layers of approvals, referrals or excuses"... they want "on-the-spot" decisions; they want to hear what can be done instead of what cannot (Honold, 1997).

Empowerment is a strong tool that will increase "revenue and improve the bottom line" (Gandz, 1990). The U.S. Labor Department stated that empowered employees are more likely to produce higher profits for their organizations than non-empowered ones (Spreitzer, 1995). Empowerment is also the best way to promote a good long-lasting employee-customer relationship (Gandz, 1990).

It is quite difficult for a manager to accomplish organizational goals on his own. Empowerment is thus needed when other people must become involved in the accomplishment of tasks. An individual does not work in isolation thus the need for teamwork. Organizations are under pressure to attain flexibility, responsiveness and accountability towards its workforce in order to be functional in today's changing environment. There, thus is need to develop a self-managing workforce, one that will exercise self-direction and control to enable provision of quality and quick service (Gandz, 1990).

According to Cole (1997) employee empowerment entitles having increased authority i.e. legitimate power and job enrichment. He adds that empowerment increase individuals discretion over how they do their work and provides additional opportunities for groups' problem solving on operational issues. However, it definitely does not hand over unqualified power to junior management or radical file employees. It is probably best thought of as a method of delegation, which enables

work decisions to be taken as near as possible to the operating units and their customers-both internal and external. Benefits come with changes in the organization's culture itself. Benefits require changes in management and employees (Honold, 1997).

For empowerment to succeed, the "management pyramid" must be inverted. Old-fashioned managers must step off their "pedestals" and for the first time serve their subordinates and give up control. Old-fashioned employees must also agree to changes. They could see empowerment as a threat, especially if they became use to the convenient old style of management structure where the rules and decisions came always from above (Mohrman, 1997). Cole (1997) states that a participative management style that encourages real delegation of authority implies that all employees will be encouraged to play a part in the decisions affecting their work i.e. empowerment through delegation. Managers are learning to give up control and employees are learning how to be responsible for the actions and decisions (Ford, 1995).

In summary, it is fundamental that management share information, create autonomy and feedback, and train and create self-directed teams for empowerment to work properly. Managers often prefer not to communicate with employees, and not to share some extremely important information with them (Ginnodo, 1997), but an effective leader must have no hidden agendas. They must treat employees as stakeholders for the road of success (Mallak & Kurstedt 1996).

Employees must have a clear vision of success, because if they are not aware of what success means to the company and where the company is heading, there is no way they can feel empowered to help accomplish this success. Managers should teach the basics of cost and revenue to employees. They should open their financial books and inform employees of the situation so they can feel more related to the company (Ginnodo, 1997).

"To empower means to entrust," it is much more than just telling employees they must create answers and be responsible for those answers, "that's passing the buck" (Mohrman, 1997). Greater empowerment and control given to frontline staff

and to their teams' means that a greater degree of freedom in controlling their own working lives. However, even though staffs welcome this, they also expect specific recognition for these new responsibilities in terms of payoffs.

Autonomy and feedback evaluations must also be created to achieve correct empowerment. Feedback improves the ability of making decisions. It can provide employee evaluations through the exchange of information where the company's missions and goals are stated. With feedback, managers can show employees how far they can go to satisfy a customer and how much they can exceed their expectations. For autonomy to work, management must equip employees with the correct special tools to provide them the necessary and specific guidelines on how to act during certain issues and to make certain decisions (Ginnodo, 1997).

2.4 Empowerment as a Management Tool

In every organization it is imperative to enable people make decisions to do the right thing especially in their areas of operation. Those in management positions have achieved their positions through work, formal education, and in-house training, and they have traditionally been expected to make decisions and manage their employees. The challenge to management, then is that its attempt to empower employees must be genuine in both reality and employee perception. Argyris (1998) believed that all employees are offended by managers who encourage an internal commitment that is providing opportunities for empowerment, and at the same time continued with traditional management practices. Perception is as important as reality: an employee's perception that the organization does not support their empowerment or that the supervisor cannot be trusted in this new empowered relationship will reduce a willingness to accept the organization's efforts to build an empowered environment.

Employee empowerment is therefore double-edged. For employees to be empowered the management leadership must want and believe that employee empowerment makes good business sense and employees must act to improve the business. For an organization to practice and foster employee empowerment, the management must trust and communicate with employees. Employee

communication is one of the strongest signs of employee empowerment. Honest and repeated communication from elements of strategic plan, key performance indicators, financial performance, down to daily decision. The management must therefore enhance effective communication (Argyris1998).

Empowerment therefore does not occur through decree since supervisors do not easily delegate their authority over resources and decision-making. Supervisors are accustomed to organizational environments where they are accountable for mistakes made by their employees. In an environment of empowerment, supervisors who are comfortable with making decisions may find it difficult to sanction employee decisions, without the equivalent recognition and benefits (Argyris1998).

In an empowered organization the managers and supervisors take on a different role than they usually would in most organizations. If a manager does not perceive her or his role is to help those she or he supervises to grow, then any empowerment implementation effort will not be successful. A change in role perception is called for in this instance when implementing employee empowerment.

According to Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, (1985) the supervisor must see potential in the employee and work to bring that potential out through the process that is best described as mentoring or coaching and which entails: determining the skill level of the employee, sharing information about the goal to be achieved and why it is important to the organization as a whole, providing for employee training as needed, depending upon the employee's skill level, providing appropriate supervisory support, a directing style for those tasks where the employee has a low skill level, coaching for those tasks with which the employee has some skills but is lacking experience or motivation, a supporting style for those tasks where the employee knows what to do but is still lacking confidence in their abilities and delegating style for those tasks where the employee is motivated and fully capable.

The supervisor should also ensure that the employee is consistently growing in skill by providing new responsibilities for which a higher level of supervision is needed and consistently growing in skill by providing new responsibilities for which a higher level of supervision is needed, mentor the employee such that they absorb both the

organizational culture and the value of empowerment, remove barriers to empowerment present in the organizational structure, ensuring that appropriate skills to obtain needed resources, provide support for the continued empowerment of the employee and share information about the employee's and the organization's effectiveness (Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi, 1985)

2.5   Empowerment Policies

Supervisors and personnel in the field have been charged in today's competitive environment with being responsible for customer value – for being the "front line" of the company's effort to truly meet customers' needs.   Meeting customer needs, becoming obsessed with quality service was the buzzword that started organizational revolutions in the 1980's. Efforts to do often failed because employees that were the real contact point between the business and its customers were not empowered to make decisions or act to fulfil customer needs.   One solution has been to empower operating personnel by pushing down decision making to their level according to Cole (1997).

Empowerment is being created in many ways. Training, self-managed work groups, eliminating whole levels of management in organizations and aggressive use of automation Cole (1997) are some of the ways and ramification of this fundamental change in the way business organizations function. At the heart of the effort is the need to ensure that decision-making is considerable latitude to operating personnel. One way operating manager do this is through the use of policies.   Policies are directives designed to guide the thinking, decisions and actions of managers and their subordinates in implementing a firm's strategy.

According to Cole (1997) policies communicate guidelines to decisions. They are designed to control decisions while defining allowable discretion within which operational personnel can execute business activities. They do this in several ways such as establishing indirect control over independent action by clearly stating how things are to be done by defining discretion, policies in effect control decisions yet empower employees to conduct activities without direct intervention by top management. Promoting uniform handling of similar activities thus facilitates the coordination of work tasks and helps reduction of friction arising from favouritism,

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discrimination and the disparate handling of common functions – something that often hampers operating personnel. Policies also ensure quicker decisions by standardizing answers to previously answered questions that otherwise would recur and be pushed up the management hierarchy again and again – something that required unnecessary levels of management between senior decision makers and field personnel and institutionalise basic aspects of organization behaviour. This minimizes conflicting practices and establishes consistent patterns of action in attempts to make the strategy work – again, freeing operating personnel to act. They also reduce uncertainty in repetitive and day-to-day decision making, thereby providing a necessary foundation for coordinated, efficient efforts and freeing operating personnel to act counteracts resistance to or rejection of chosen strategies by organization members. When major strategic change is undertaken unambiguous operating policies clarify what is expected and facilitate acceptance, particularly when operating manager participate in policy development and thereby offering predetermined answers to routine problems. This greatly expedites dealing with both ordinary and extraordinary problems – with the former, by referring to these answers; with the later, by giving operating personnel more time to cope with them. Policies afford managers a mechanism for avoiding hasty and ill-conserved decisions in changing operations. Prevailing policy can always be used as a reason for not yielding to emotion – based expedient or temporarily valid arguments for altering procedures and practices and they may be written and formal or unwritten and informal. Employee empowerment through policies provides another means for guiding behaviour, decisions and actions at the firms operating levels in a manner consistent with its business and functional strategies effective policies channel actions behaviour, decisions, and practices to promote strategic accomplishment.

Byham (1997) claim that empowerment gives non-management employees control over many aspects of their own work in that actions are taken that empower employees that include delegating authority, fostering employee decision making, encouraging self-management facilitating autonomous work learns and generally moving power down the hierarchy to levels below management.

2.6   Benefits of Empowerment

Employee empowerment benefits the organizations which implement it effectively is widely noted in the literature. Many authors cite, "*anecdotal and case evidence… to show that empowerment does produce more satisfied customers and employees*" (Bowen and Lawler,1995) go beyond this end provide additional evidence" considerable research on practices such as gain sharing, communicating programs, work teams, job enrichment skill-based pay and so on has shown the results of these practices are consistent and positive. They go on to cite survey research conducted by the Centre for Effective Organizations at the University of Southern California to determine the degree to which firms are adopting practices that distribute power, information, knowledge and rewards and the effects.   The data suggest that empowerment may have a positive impact on a number of performance indicators. Respondents report that empowerment improves worker satisfaction and quality of work life. Quality, service and productivity are reportedly improved as a result of employee involvement efforts in about two-thirds of the companies. Approximately one-half of the companies also report that profitability and competitiveness have improved; the finding of a relationship between empowerment and the firms' financial performance supports this.

Empowered employees provide, quicker on time response to customer needs, during service delivery employees feel better about their jobs and themselves and employees will interact with customers with more warmth and enthusiasm. When employees felt that management was looking after their needs, they took better care of the customer great work of mouth advertising and customer retention according to Bowmen and Lawler (1992). Randolph (1995) indicates that employee empowerment increases trust in the organization.

2.7   The context of Empowerment

The organization, which successfully implements employee empowerment, will have certain values at their core from which the process of empowerment can flow. Among these values are respect and appreciation for individuals and the value they bring to the organization. The culture of the organization must support the thrust of empowerment if there is any enhance of success. Quinn and Spreitzer (1997) noted

that manifestations of empowerment include people with a sense of self-determination, meaning, competence and impact. An organisation seeking to implement empowerment is likely to examine its structure and reward systems as well. But it must be noted that 'it is nearly impossible for un-powered people to empower others' according to (Quinn and Spreitzer, 1997).According to Jay (1996) factors encouraging employee involvement include high performance expectations combined with frequently expressed confidence in staff are autonomy from bureaucratic constraint, meaningful goals, celebration of successful achievements and removal of sources of adverse emotional arousal for example job insecurity or high levels of uncertainty.

2.8   Approach to Empowerment

To Zemke and Schaef (1998) empowerment means "*turning the frontline loose*" encouraging and rewarding employees to exercise initiative and imagination.

Successful empowerment approaches are built on the principle 'no blaming, no complaining' which means that an employee who identifies a problem can't blame someone else or simply complain about it but must move to fix it according to Ulrich (1997). Ulrich (1997) further claims that empowerment efforts are more than suggestion systems in which employees offer random suggestions for improvements; they are focused on translating a specific mindset into specific employee behaviour.

Modern thinking about power is that you gain more power by empowering others. Giving subordinates more poor results in the leader having more influence. The importance of delegation of authority is not only talked about but also practiced by many leaders. Steward (1990) cited a few illustrations: Reuben Mark, the CEO of Colgate-Palmolive Company, states that, "You consolidate and build power by empowering others. I don't like to talk about power. I prefer to think about it as responsibility and authority. Jack Welch, CEO at General Electric Company, has dismantled the centralized power system and emphasizes decentralized decision-making. Ricardo Semler of Semco a Brazilian Company has empowered workers to set their own hours, reviews all accounting records of the firm and make decisions. The workers at Semco designed the layout for a flexible manufacturing system. The

workers also voted not to acquire a firm that Semler wanted to buy. He complied with their wishes.

Heinz Corporation CEO, Anthony O'Reilly emphasizes the importance for a leader to provide inspiration, in any manner that works best. He also cut out many staff jobs so that the employees feel close to where the action is and have the power to make decisions. Out of a worldwide force of 50, 000, only 150 are on the corporate staff and Mark, Welch, Semler and O'Reilly have empowered subordinates through their actions. They have concluded that subordinates must have and use power to remain committed to their companies. The very practice of empowering others is difficult for individuals who have relied on their positions in organizations now seem to depend on more than just a position or a title.

In Kenya, Aosa (1992), in his study of large private manufacturing companies, found that 40% of the companies reported high level of management involvement while 60% reported low involvement. The commitment of the top management is essential because the first objective to be set begins at the top and filter down (Schwartz, 1984). The subordinates should be willing and able to assume added responsibility.

Empowerment is marked by management's encouragement of employee participation in improvement of organizational efficiency and effectiveness, focus on the customer, emphasis of the importance of teamwork, promotion of organizational learning or continued education, sharing of success stories and lessons learned throughout the organization, and demonstration of strong interpersonal skills (Cole, 1997).

2.9 Perception

Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment. However, what one perceives can be substantially different from objective reality. There need not be, but there is often disagreement. For example, it's possible that all employees in a firm may view it as a great place to work—favorable working conditions, interesting job assignments, good pays, excellent benefits, an understanding and responsible

management—but, it is very unusual to find such agreement. Perception is important to the study of organization behaviour because people's behavior is based on their perception of what reality is, not on reality itself. The world as it is perceived is the world that is behaviorally important.

A number of factors operate to shape and sometimes distort perception. These factors can reside in the perceiver, in the object or target being perceived, or in the context of the situation in which the perception is made. When an individual looks at a target and attempts to interpret what he or she sees, that interpretation is heavily influenced by the personal characteristics of the individual perceiver. Personal characteristics that affect perception include a person's attitudes, personality, motives, interests, past experiences, and expectations. For instance, if you expect individuals holding public office to be unscrupulous you may perceive them as such regardless of their actual traits. One may not trust such people to be objective in handling issues. Characteristics of the target being observed can affect what is perceived. For instance eloquent people being recognized more in a discussion looked at in isolation; the relationship of a target to its background also influences perception, as does our tendency to group close things and similar things together. For instance, women, people of color, or members of any other group that has clearly distinguishable characteristics in terms of features or color are often perceived as alike in other, unrelated characteristics as well.

The context in which we see objects or events is also important. The time at which an object or event is seen can influence attention, as can location, light, heat, or any number of situational factors. One may not notice a 22-year-old female in an evening gown and heavy make-up at a nightclub on Saturday night. Yet that same woman so attired for Monday morning management class would certainly catch the same person's attention (and that of the rest of the class) neither the perceiver nor the target changed between Saturday night and Monday morning, but the situation is different.

In the context of employee empowerment perception can influence the outcomes of activities. It is therefore crucial that employees' interest in being empowered is nurtured and consciously sustained. Staff deliberately become active participants when empowered and believe in the ability of empowerment to have a positive

impact on their work performance, a strong organizational culture of management and sharing of knowledge and experiences gained during their work experience is institutionalized and most important management affords opportunities and a friendly climate for staff to apply the new concept on the job. Then, an organization can fully realize a return on its empowerment investment.

In this study performance is the dependent variable. The principle independent variable is empowerment, perception, motivation and work environment are independent variables, which have been included as control variables and are included in only one stage of the study. The independent variables cause intervening variables, which become determinants of the dependent variable.

Empowerment influences the levels of competence, knowledge, skills and attitudes that employees possess as relates to the tasks and responsibilities assigned to them. Besides it also affords employees opportunities for growth and development influencing their creativity, innovativeness and confidence all of which influence performance. *Perception:* Personal characteristics affect perception includes a person's attitudes, personality, motives, interests, past experiences, and expectations. This in turn influences performance. *Work Environment:* It influences work design, client relationship, teamwork, managerial relations and mechanisms, which provides workers with feedback on their performance. Work environment influences whether employees get challenged to use their skills and take responsibility for quality control. The manager's support, peer support, technology support, climate for transfer as well as opportunity to use newly acquired technology impact on employees' output. *motivation:* It influences job satisfaction, commitment to work, attendance rates and longevity all of which impact on employee performance.

2.10   Limitations of Employee Empowerment

Empowerment has not necessarily achieved its lofty promises in either the public or private sector. Expectations often exceed the reality in actual implementation. Argyris (1998) believed that the reinvention movement of empowering people has not produced highly motivated employees. It failed because the organization and the people within the organization have not been properly prepared to give

empowerment. There is little support for the assumptions that a link exists between empowerment and overall performance according to Forester (2000) there are several reasons for this. Forester (2000) says that organizations have not been adequately prepared for empowerment efforts and can also empowerment to create two groups empowered and those not empowered.

Management's fears of letting employees make decisions, which can impact the profitability of the company. Middle managers often object to employee empowerment because they perceive that the effort will take power away from them (Blanchard and Bowles (1988). Unions perceive that their power comes from collective bargaining with management of behalf of the workers. Employee empowerments break down barriers to communication between individual workers and the organizations management thereby reducing the role of the union. Employees sometimes object to empowerment efforts.

Aeppel (1997) noted that one of the complaints of Eaton employees in the responsibility the group has for each individual with everyone watching everyone else; it can feel like having a hundred bosses. Other employees don't want any more responsibility then they already have. In the traditional organization, power brings accountability, but management may try to protect the employees from the accountability of their decisions or their newly empowered employee may not be willing to accept the possible consequences of their behaviour.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the method and procedures that was used to conduct the study. It includes the research design, target population, the sample and sampling design, data collection and data for analysis.

3.1.1 Research Design

This was a survey within one organization. This design was considered appropriate because of the need to collect and analyse comparative data.

3.1.2 Target Population

The target population for this study comprised of 3,917 staff of the University of Nairobi.

3.2 SAMPLE

The sample size was 392 members of staff drawn from the Colleges, SWA and Central Administration. This number constituted 10% of the target population. Mugenda & Abel (1999) suggested that for descriptive studies 10%, of the accessible population is enough.

The researcher used stratified random sampling technique. First the target population was sub divided into strata of six colleges, Student Welfare Authority and Central Administration. Using this technique, we arrived at the sample sizes for the different strata as presented in table 1.

Table 1: sample for the study

	Strata Size	Sample Size
Central Administration	804	80
College of Agriculture & Veterinary Sciences	561	56
College of Architecture & Engineering	327	33
College of Health Sciences	390	39
College of Education & External Studies	209	21
College of Biological & Physical Sciences	511	51
College of Humanities & Social Sciences	499	50
Student Welfare Authority	616	62
TOTAL	3917	392

3.2.1 Data Collection

The primary data was collected using a questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into sections, in line with the research objectives, and contained both open and closed ended questions. The questions were both multiple-choice and open ended. Most questions in the questionnaire employed 5-points Likert type scales. The questionnaire contained two main sections. The first section dealt with the general information. Section two had questions on respondents' perceptions of employee empowerment at the university. Questionnaires were administered through mail.

3.2.2 Data Analysis

Data was first edited for completeness and consistency. Descriptive statistics highlight features of a set of observation and do not support or falsify a relationship between two variables but simply help in description of variables according to their numerical properties (Baker, 1994). The procedure was used to help the researcher understand the data collected in order to interpret the data using percentages, frequency distribution tables and pie charts. Factor analysis is a statistical approach that was used to analyse interrelationships among a large number of variables and to explain these variables of their common underlying dimensions (factors). The statistical approach involved a way of condensing the information contained in a number of original variables into a smaller set of dimensions (factors) with a minimum loss of information (Hair et al., 1992).Factor analysis was used to verify the conceptualisation of a construct of interest.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The Research Objective was to determine the factors that influence employee perception of empowerment at the University of Nairobi. The data from the completed questionnaires were summarized and presented in tables. Percentages and mean scores were used for to summarize and describe the data. Factor analysis was used reduce the data into a few meaningful dimensions or factors. This statistical technique involved condensing the information contained in a number of original variables into a smaller set of dimensions (factors) with a minimum loss of information.

4.2 Response Rate

Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed only 312 were returned. The average response rate was therefore, 78%. The pattern of response in presented in table 1.

Table 1: Response per unit

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
CAE	15	4.8	4.8
CHSS	60	19.2	24.0
CHS	42	13.5	37.5
Central Adim,Health Services,Security,BCUC, ESTATES	84	26.9	64.4
CEES	21	6.7	71.2
CAVS	25	8.0	79.2
SWA	31	9.9	89.1
CBPS	34	10.9	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by gender

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	165	52.9	52.9
Female	147	47.1	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

As per table 2 above 52.9% of the respondents were male while 47.1% were female.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by grade

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1 - IV	69	22.1	24.0
	A/B	61	19.6	45.1
	C D	71	22.8	69.8
	EF	36	11.5	82.3
	Lecture/equivalent	30	9.6	92.7
	Senior Lecturer/equivalent	17	5.4	98.6
	Professor/ equivalent	4	1.3	100.0
	Total	288	92.3	
Non	Response	24	7.7	
Total		312	100.0	

Table 3 shows that of the staff that responded, the highest number was from grades C-D (22.8%) while only 1.3% were from the professorial grades. Most respondents (82.3%) were from grades I-IV and middle grades. However, 7.7% did not indicate their current grade.

Table 4: Response by academic qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
KCPE	21	6.7	6.7
KCE/EACE	105	33.7	40.4
EACE/KACE with diploma	105	33.7	74.0
Bachelors	33	10.6	84.6
Post Graduate	48	15.4	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 4 above shows that most respondents (33.7%) have certificates in KCSE/KCE and 33.7% have diplomas. 10.6% are first degree holders while 15.4% have postgraduate degrees. However, some of the respondents (6.7%) have only KCPE certificates.

Table 5: Response by marital status

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Single	60	19.2	19.2
Married	234	75.0	94.2
Divorced	3	1.0	95.2
Widowed	15	4.8	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 5 indicates that 19.2% of the respondents were single, 75% were married, 1% divorced and 4.8% were widowed. The response was on this question was 100%.

Table 6: Response by age

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
22-24	15	4.8	4.8
25-30	33	10.6	15.4
31-34	48	15.4	30.8
41 and Above	84	26.9	57.7
Non Response	132	42.3	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

57.7% respondents from table 6 were 41 years and above while only 30.8% were between 22 and 34 years of age. Majority of respondents (42.3%) did not indicate their ages.

Table 7: Respondents grade at the time of employment at the University of Nairobi

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 - IV	138	44.2	44.2
A/B	81	26.0	70.2
C D	57	18.3	88.5
EF	3	1.0	89.4
Lecturer/equivalent	27	8.7	98.1
Senior Lecturer/equivalent	6	1.9	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

From table 7 it is clear that most staff joined the University at very low grade and over the years has risen to higher grade(s). At least 44% joined in grades I-IV, 45% in the middle grades while only 11% joined at academic grades.

Table 8: Respondents year of entry at the University of Nairobi

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	1970-1975	9	2.9	3.0
	1976-1980	27	8.7	11.9
	1981-1985	27	8.7	20.8
	1986-1990	84	26.9	48.5
	1991-1995	54	17.3	66.3
	1996-2000	48	15.4	82.2
	2001-2005	48	15.4	98.0
	2006 and above	6	1.9	100.0
	Total	303	97.1	
Non	Response	9	2.9	
Total		312	100.0	

Table 8 shows that most members of staff (44%) joined the University between 1988 and 1995.The number entering the university decreased over the last few years with only 1.9% having joined the University of Nairobi in 2006.

Table 9: Span of control

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Administrative Assistant	33	10.6	10.9
	Chairmen	24	7.7	18.8
	Dean/Director	36	11.5	30.7
	Assistant Registrar	36	11.5	42.6
	Registrar	39	12.5	55.4
	Admin assistant &Dean/Director	15	4.8	60.4
	Bursar	15	4.8	65.3
	Dean/Director & Assistant Registrar	3	1.0	66.3
	Principal	3	1.0	67.3
	Admin assistant & assistant registrar	6	1.9	69.3
	Auditor	6	1.9	71.3
	Pricipal, DVC & VC	3	1.0	72.3
	Medical Officer	3	1.0	73.3
	Foreman	6	1.9	75.2
	Senior Accountant	9	2.9	78.2
	Principal,Registrar & Dean/Director	3	1.0	79.2
	Chief Technologist	6	1.9	81.2
	Manager	6	1.9	83.2
	Finance Officer	12	3.8	87.1
	University Librarian	30	9.6	97.0
	T/G Cordinator	3	1.0	98.0
	Chief Technologist & Chairman	3	1.0	99.0
	Vice Chancellor	3	1.0	100.0
	Total	303	97.1	
Non	Response	9	2.9	
Total		312	100.0	

As shown in table 9 most respondents (12.5%) indicated that the Registrar assigns them duties, 11.5% are assigned duties by either the Dean or Assistant Registrars. Of notable concern is the fact that only 1% is assigned duties by the Vice-Chancellor. Some respondents also indicated that they are assigned duties by more than one boss, for instant, 9.7% of the respondents are assigned duties by both the Dean and Assistant Registrar, Administrative Assistant and Assistant Registrar, Principal, Registrar and Dean and Chief Technologist & Chairman and so on.

Table 10: Supervision of staff

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Non-Academic	69	22.1	22.1
Academic	9	2.9	25.0
Subordinate	60	19.2	44.2
Casuals	9	2.9	47.1
Others	3	1.0	48.1
None	162	51.9	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Most respondents (51.9%) do not supervise anybody within the University of Nairobi as per table 10 above; but of those that supervise, 22.1% deal with non-academic staff, 2.9% supervise academic staff, 19.2% supervise subordinate staff and finally 3% supervise unspecified staff.

4.3   Factors Influencing Employee Perception of Empowerment

4.3.1 Overview

Factors influencing employee perception of empowerment include high performance expectations combined with frequently expressed confidence in staff, autonomy from bureaucratic constraint, meaningful goals, celebration of successful achievements and removal of sources of adverse emotional arousal, for example, job insecurity or high levels of uncertainty.

The respondents' perceptions of empowerment are summarized in Tables 11 and 12 below. The respondents were asked to rate their perception using a scale ranging from strongly agreed to strongly disagree. The responses are captured in percentages, frequencies and means for the various attributes used to measure empowerment.

Table 11: Mean scores of Respondents' ratings of empowerment attributes.

Communalities

	Mean
My work gives me the opportunity to contribute to the success of my section	.695
I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job	.572
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my work	.657
In my department employees are encouraged to take quick action to improve quality or to correct quality problems in their jobs	.637
I have sufficient resources to do my job	.782
My supervisor involves me in decisions that that affect my job	.500
I am encouraged to develop creative and innovative ideas	.672
I have controll over those aspects of job for which I am accountable	.555
All the staff in my organisation have the level and kind of training they reqiure	.628
My supervisor trusts me	.559
My supervisor delegates authority to me	.667
There is enough flexibility and independence allowed in the organisation	.617
My work gives me the opportunity to contribute to the success of the University	.710
I have mastered the skills necessary for my job	.586
I am proud to work for the University	.619
In the University, there is a clear system for handling employee discontent	.593
My supervisor encourages team work	.652
I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions	.689
I feel men and women are provided with equal opportunities to fulfil their career potential at the University	.506
The university has taken the initiative to empower its employees	.617
I feel more empowered today than a year ago	.712

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 11 shows that most respondents were agreeable with the statements on the attributes of empowerment with a mean score of about 60%. The statements that had the highest mean scores include:

1. I have sufficient resources to do my job (78.2%).
2. I feel more empowered today than a year ago (71.2%).
3. My work gives me the ability to contribute to the success of the university (71%).
4. I receive appropriate recognition for my contribution (68.9%).
5. I am encouraged to develop creative and innovative ideas (67.2%).
6. My supervisor delegate authority to me (66.7%).

The above statements imply that University of Nairobi staff have sufficient resources to do their job, feel more empowered today than a year ago feel that their work gives them, the ability to contribute to the success of the university, receive appropriate recognition for their contribution, are encouraged to develop creative and innovative ideas and their supervisor delegate authority to them.

However, the respondents were only moderately agreeable to the following statements:

1. My Supervisor involves me in decisions that affect my job (50%).

2. I feel men and women are provided with equal opportunities to fulfil their career potential at the University (50.6%).

3. I have control over those aspects of the job for which I am accountable (55.5%)

4. My supervisor trusts me (55.9%).

5. I have significant autonomy in determining how to do my work (57.2%).

6. I have mastered the skills necessary for my job (58.6%).

7. In the University, there is a clear system for handling employee discontent (59.3%).

The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement /disagreement with a series of statements depicting various aspects of empowerment. The results are presented in table 12.

Table 12: Respondents' perception of their Empowerment

Communalities

	Mean
Do you agree that your work gives you the ability to contribute to the succes of the University	573
Are the University employees encouraged to take action to improve quality or to corred quality problems in their jobs	692
To which extent do you use tools and principles of outcome assesment and effectiveness in daily work?	557
Do you have sufficient resources to do your job?	651
Does your supervisor involves you in decisions that affect your job?	490
Are you encouaged to develop create and innovate ideas?	602
Do you have control over those aspects of your job which you are accountable?	560
Are you proud to work for the University of Nairobi?	646
Can you accurately answer the question,"how is the University doing?	563
Do you feel empowered at your work place?	557
Do you feel competent in solving problems at your work place?	619
Are you more comfortable if you are allowed to make decisions regarding your work	767
should Staff members be given leeway to make independent decisions regarding their work	701
Do you feel frustrated when your decisions are challenged?	678
Does your current work procedures limit your work outcome?	560

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

As shown in Table 12, most respondents were more agreeable to the statements and almost all of them had a mean score above 50%. The statements that had the highest mean scores include:

1. University employees are encouraged to take action to improve quality or to correct quality problem in the jobs (69.2%).

2. Staff feel more comfortable if they are allowed to make decision referring their work (76.7%).

3. Staff members should be given leeway to make independent decision regarding their work (70%).

4. Staff members feel frustrated when their decisions are challenged (67.8%).

The above mean scores imply that most respondents believed that they have the ability to take action to improve quality of work, and to have leeway to make decisions regarding the work however feels frustrated when their decisions are challenged. However, the respondents were not agreeable to the following statements:

1. My Supervisor involves me in decisions that affect my job (49%).

2. Current work procedures limit my work outcome 560 (56%).

3. My work gives me the ability to contribute to the success of the university (57.3%).

4. I have control over those aspects of my job for which I am accountable (56%)

5. Can accurately answer the question, "How is the University doing? (56.3%)

6. I feel I am empowered in my place of work (55.7%).

4.3.2 Requisite competences/capabilities

Respondents were asked to indicate how many training programs, relevant to their work, they have attended and the responses are shown in table 13.

Table 13: No. of training programs attended

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
None	84	26.9	26.9
1-5	198	63.5	90.4
6-10	24	7.7	98.1
10 and above	6	1.9	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

63.5% indicated that they have attended between 1-5 training programmes that are relevant to their work. But 26.7% have not attended any training programme relevant to their work while 7.7% have attended between 6-10 and only 1.9% have attended over 10 training programmes.

The respondents asked indicate aspects of their jobs they have mastered. The responses are presented in table 14:

Table 14: Aspects of the job mastered

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	several	105	33.7	34.0
	Few	63	20.2	54.4
	Very few	45	14.4	68.9
	None-new to UON	33	10.6	79.6
	None-no effort	63	20.2	100.0
	Total	309	99.0	
Non	Response	3	1.0	
Total		312	100.0	

From the table 14, it is shown that 33.7% have mastered several aspects of their jobs, 20.2% a few aspects,, and 14.4% very few aspects while 30.8 % have not mastered in any aspect.

Respondents were asked to indicate aspects of their jobs in which they still need further growth; the results are presented in table 15:

Table 15: Opportunities for career growth

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Several	63	20.2	20.2
Few	96	30.8	51.0
Very few	54	17.3	68.3
Many	42	13.5	81.7
None	57	18.3	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 15 reveals that 20.2% of the University of Nairobi staff feel that they need opportunities for career growth in several aspects, 30.8% in a few aspects , 17.3% in very few aspects, 13.5% in many aspects while 18.3% don't feel the need career growth opportunities.

4.3.3 Manager's/ Management Support

Respondents were asked how many times they need to seek approval for action they believe to be correct in a week. Responses were as indicated in table 16 below:

Table 16: No. of times approval is sought in a week

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
none	48	15.4	15.4
Few	66	21.2	36.5
Very few	60	19.2	55.8
Many	96	30.8	86.5
Very many	42	13.5	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

From the table it clearly 30.8% sought approval many times in a week, 13.5% very many times a week, 21.2% few times, 19.2% very few times however 15.4% did not seek any approval.

Respondents were given a series of questions to illustrate managerial support and responses are outlined in table 17. One of the questions on whether they would complete a task/project and access the needed resources if their immediate

supervisor was away and a client or another department asked them to do so. The responses are given in table 17:

Table 17: Completion of task without authority/supervision

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Yes, after seeking approval	177	56.7	56.7
No	18	5.8	62.5
Yes	60	19.2	81.7
Sometimes	45	14.4	96.2
Don't know	12	3.8	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

As shown on table 17, most respondents (56.7%) said that they will complete the task/project after seeking approval and only 0.06% said they would not complete task if the immediate supervisor were away.

The respondents were further asked what their supervisor/boss's response would be if they decided to accept the task/project any way if the request slightly exceeded their known capacity. The respondents answers are shown in table 18:

Table 18: Supervisor response to acceptance of unauthorised task/project

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Praise	72	23.1	23.1
Don't know	102	32.7	55.8
Anger	18	5.8	61.5
Reprimand	18	5.8	67.3
Caution	102	32.7	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

A considerable percent (32.7%) felt they will be cautioned if they acted without authority while 23.1% felt that will receive praise; however 32.7% did not know the supervisor/boss's response. These results are in table 18:

41.3% respondents felt that the University will be affected positively by the above decisions however other respondents felt differently as shown below in table 19:

Table 19: Effect of unauthorized decision

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Highly positively	21	6.7	6.7
Positively	129	41.3	48.1
Negatively	72	23.1	71.2
Highly Negatively	21	6.7	77.9
Don't know	69	22.1	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 19 shows that 48.15 % felt that the University will be affected positively when the staff make unauthorized decision, 29.8% felt that the University will be negatively affected by taking unauthorized tasks or projects. 22.1% did not know the effect the decision will have on the University.

4.2.4 Peer Relations

The respondents were further asked a series of questions on resolution to disagreements with their peers on decisions, number of friends and mentors they have at the University. The responses to these questions are presented in tables 20, 21 and 22.

Table20: Response to peer's disagreement with a decision

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Discuss the resolution	285	91.3	91.3
Go over her/his head	6	1.9	93.3
Ignore him/her	6	1.9	95.2
Fight him until he agrees	3	1.0	96.2
Don't know	12	3.8	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

The respondents were asked to explain what they would do if another member of their department disagreed with them about the decision to accept the project that are unauthorized

As shown on table 20 above 91.3% said that they will discuss the decision to resolution, 1.9% will ignore, and 1.9% will just go over the colleagues' head while 1% will fight him/her until he/she agrees. 3.8% did not know what to do.

When asked how many friends respondents have in the University, most replied that they have many friends (56.7%), 15.4% have few, 8.7% very few, 14.4% very many and 4.8% have none as per table 21 below:

Table 21:No.of friends at the University

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Many	177	56.7	56.7
few	48	15.4	72.1
None	15	4.8	76.9
Very few	27	8.7	85.6
Very many	45	14.4	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

However, when asked how many mentors they have within the University the response was presented in table 22 below:

Table 22:No. Of Mentors at the University

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Many	54	17.3	17.3
Few	126	40.4	57.7
None	78	25.0	82.7
Very many	15	4.8	87.5
Very few	39	12.5	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 22 shows that 17.3% have many mentors, 40.4%have a few mentors,4.8% have very many mentors and 12.5% have very few mentors while 25% have no mentors within the University.

4.2.5 Technology Support

78.2% of the respondents agreed that they have sufficient resources to do their work but when asked to indicate the last time a project or work was delayed due to lack of resources, they responded as shown in table 23.

Table 23: Project Delay due lack of resources

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Long time	21	6.7	6.7
Recently	60	19.2	26.0
All the time	60	19.2	45.2
Never	30	9.6	54.8
A few times	141	45.2	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

From table 23, 19.2% indicated that projects or work is delayed due to lack of resources all the time, 19.2% respondents indicated that recently work was delayed due lack of required resources while 45.2% said that the delay has occurred only a few times. 9.9% of the respondents have never experienced any delay due to lack of resources and 6.7% experienced the delay a long time ago.

4.2.6 Vision of the University of Nairobi

Respondents were asked to indicate whether the vision of the University of Nairobi could be easily stated. 30.8% could not easily state the vision as shown in table 24 below

Table 24: Ability to state the UON vision

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Easily said	114	36.5	36.5
Not easily said	96	30.8	67.3
Answered	30	9.6	76.9
Don't know	24	7.7	84.6
No response	48	15.4	100.0
Total	312	100.0	

Table 24 also shows that 7.7% did not know the University of Nairobi's vision while 15.4% gave no response.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The foregoing analysis brings to light the fact that there is need for managerial, technological, peer, organizational support and appropriate training training/skills to foster the staff's perception on employee empowerment at the University of Nairobi.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

In this study, factors that influence employee perception of empowerment at the University of Nairobi were determined using the structured questionnaire. The literature review focused mainly on the concept, benefits of, approach to and context of empowerment, the need for empowerment, and empowerment as management tool empowerment policies, perception and the limitations of empowerment.

5.2 Discussion

From the research findings as presented in chapter four of this research project, several conclusions can be drawn in determining the factors that influence employee perception of empowerment at the University of Nairobi. These are discussed below in relation to the objective of the study. The questionnaire used identified various factors that influenced perception of empowerment of members of staff of the University of Nairobi.

5.2.1 Requisite competence/Capabilities

26.9% of the respondents indicated that they have not attended any training programme relevant to their work. However, majority of them (73.1%) have attended a varied number of training programmes relevant to their work. 68.9% have mastered in various aspects of their job and 30.8% have not. The study also revealed that at least 81.7% require a varied number opportunities for career growth. According to Blanchard, Zigarmi & Zigarmi (1995) the supervisor must see potential in the employee and work to bring that potential out through mentoring: determining the skill level of the employee, providing training as needed depending upon the employee's skills level. For autonomy to work, management must equip employees with the correct special tools to provide them the necessary and specific guidelines on how to act during certain issues and to make certain decision (Ginnodo, 1997). This is consistent with the findings of the study and the respondents' responses. The University Of Nairobi management should equip employees with the required skills to enable the staff to perform their duties efficiently.

5.2.2 Manager's/Management support

The study revealed that within a week, 84.6% of the members of staff sought approval to perform a task and just 15.4% did not. Respondents were given a series of questions to illustrate managerial support. One of the questions was whether they would complete a task/project and access the needed resources if their immediate supervisor was away and a client or another department asked them to complete the task without approach. The responses showed that more than 50% will only perform the task after seeking approval and only 19.2% will complete the task. Most respondents (43.8%) felt that they will be reprimanded, cautioned or even face anger if they exceeded their mandate. Moreover, 48.1% felt that making an unauthorized decision would affect the University positively while 29.7% felt it will have a negative effect. According to Cole (1997) employee empowerment entitles having increased authority i.e. legitimate power and job enrichment where individuals' discretion over how they do their work and provides additional opportunities for groups' solving on operational issues is encouraged. Cole (1997) further states that participative management style encourages real delegation of authority imply that all employees will be encouraged to play a part in the decisions affecting their work. In a study carried out on Colgate-Palmolive Company by Steward (1990) supports delegation of authority and responsibility to employees which the employees of the University of Nairobi desire. The commitment of the top management is essential because it is important to set begin at the top and filter down (Schwartz, 1984). Aeppel(1997) noted that one of the complaints of Eaton employees in the responsibility the group has for each individual with everyone watching everyone else: it can feel like having a hundred bosses. This is the case at the University of Nairobi. The University managers should be trained to entrust their subordinates and delegate accordingly.

5.2.3 Peer Support

Respondents, 91.3%, also revealed that there was need to discuss disagreement to resolution rather than overlooking and ignoring their colleagues, or fighting them until they agree with them on issues. 95.2% of the respondents have a friend or so within the University, which could imply that there is teamwork in the University. This is

emphasised by 75% of the respondents indicating that they have mentors within the University.   Teamwork is an element to be encouraged by the University management.

5.2.4 Technology Support

Only 9.6% indicated that they have never experienced lack of sufficient resources to perform their duties. 90.4% of the respondents have at one time or another experienced the shortage of resources to finish a task. Ulrich (1997) claimed that empowerment efforts require the provision of required resources to perform their duties. So technological support is an important element in employee empowerment. Provision of required resources is mandatory.

5.2.5 Vision of University Of Nairobi

Only 46.1% of the respondents were able to state the vision of the University, which is clearly less than half the number of the respondents. Employees must have a clear vision of success because if they are not aware of what success means to the company and where the company is heading, there is no way they can feel empowered to help accomplish this success according to Ginnodo,(1997). The University Of Nairobi management should widely share the University Vision to all staff so that its tenets can be embedded in all.

5.3   Conclusion

The study showed that most employees of the University of Nairobi are empowered in their jobs with an overall mean score of 60%. Recognition of employees' of contributions, being proud to work for their organization, and being encouraged to develop creative and innovative ideas and the organization's effort to empower the employees are among the factors that influence perception of being empowered.

The three key elements of empowerment include the meaningful work (I receive appropriate recognition for my contribution (68.9%), self-determination (University employees are encouraged to take action to improve quality or to correct quality problem in the jobs (69.2%). Staff feel more comfortable if they are allowed to make decisions

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regarding their work (76.7%), staff members should be given leeway to make independent decision regarding their work (70%) and impact (My work gives me the ability to contribute to the success of the university (71%).

The aspect that was rated lowest is 'participative management' (My Supervisor involves me in decisions that affect my job (49%). The University of Nairobi has currently put in place strategies aimed at empowering their employees such as training, teamwork, flexibility and accountability.

5.3   Recommendations

1. In order to increase staff output, the University of Nairobi need to train their staff on relevant job requirements so that they are able to gain mastery of skill.
2. Supervisors should be encouraged to involve staff members in decision making.
3. There is therefore need for more employee empowerment without which it would be difficult to carry out technological and other changes required to meet the demands of global competition and be a world class University.
4. The University of Nairobi members of staff are encouraged to make independent decisions when necessary.

5.4   Suggestions for future research

1. There is needed to replicate this study to other universities, both private and public and other educational institutions.
2. Further studies should attempt to achieve a larger sample to determine whether the results can be generalized.

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leeway to make independent decisions regarding their work.					
I feel frustrated when my decisions are challenged.					
Current work procedures limit my work outcomes					

13. In the course of a week, how many times do employees need to seek approval for action she or he believes to be correct?
a) None
b) Few
c) Very few
d) many
e) Very many

14. What is the vision of the university?
a) Easily said
b) Not easily said
c) Answered
d) Don't Know
e) No response

15. In what aspects of your job have you reached master status?
a) Several
b) Few
c) Very few
d) None- new to UON
e) None- no effort

16. In what aspects of your job do you continue to grow?
a) Several
b) Few
c) Very few
d) Many
e) None

17. When was the last time a project or work effort delayed due to lack of resources?
a) Long Time Ago
b) Recently
c) All the Time
d) Never
e) A few times

18.   If your immediate supervisor was away and a client or another
        department asked you to complete a project/task for which you knew
        there was capacity to complete, would you be able to agree to
        complete the project/task and access the needed resources?
a)   Yes, after seeking approval
b)   No
c)   Yes
d)   Sometimes
e)   Don't know

19.   If the above request slightly exceeded the known capacity to complete,
        what would be your supervisor's boss's response if you decided to
        accept the project/task anyway?
a)   Praise
b)   Don't know
c)   Anger
d)   Reprimand
e)   Caution

20.   How would such a decision affect the University?
a)   Highly Positively
b)   Positively
c)   Negatively
d)   Highly Negatively
e)   Don't Know

21.   What would you do if another member of your department disagreed
        with you about the decision to accept the project?
a)   Discuss to resolution
b)   Go over her/his head
c)   Ignore him/her
d)   Fight him until he agrees
e)   Don't know

22.   How many friends do you have in the university?
a)   Many
b)   Few
c)   None
d)   Very Few
e)   Very Many

23.   How many of your mentors are within the university?
a)   Many
b)   Few
c)   None
d)   Very Many
e)   Very Few

24. To what Extent do you agree with the following statements about your job in the University?

Statement	Agree	Strongly Agree	Disagree	Strongly Agree	Don't know
My work gives me the Opportunity to contribute to the success of my section					
I have significant autonomy in determining how I do my job.					
I have considerable opportunity for independence and freedom in how I do my work.					
In my department employees are encouraged to take quick action to improve quality or to correct quality problems in their jobs.					
I have sufficient resources to do my job.					
My supervisor involves me in decisions that affect my job.					
I am encouraged to develop creative and innovative ideas.					
I have control over those aspects of job for which I am accountable.					
All the staff in my organization have the level and kind of training they require.					
My supervisor trusts me					
My supervisor delegates authority to me.					
There is enough flexibility and independence allowed in the organization.					
My work gives me the opportunity to contribute to the success of the University.					
I have mastered the skills necessary for my job					

I am proud to work for the University.				
In the University, there is a clear system for handling employee discontent				
My supervisor encourages team work.				
I receive appropriate recognition for my contributions.				
I feel men and women are provided with equal opportunities to fulfil their career potential at the university				
The University has taken initiative to empower its employees.				
I feel more empowered today than a year ago.				

25.   Have you experienced any problem employee empowerment related?
[Yes][No]
Explain..
....