

**PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT  
STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY CHINESE OWNED BUILDING &  
CONSTRUCTION FIRMS IN KENYA**

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

**NOVEMBER 2014**

**DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has not been submitted to any University or Institution for any award.

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This Project has been submitted with my approval as the university Supervisor

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## **DEDICATION**

Special dedication to my beloved family, my husband Steve for his support and understanding during my time of study. Many thanks to Mr. Salesio Kivuti for his understanding and allowing me to take time off from work and study.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

My sincere gratitude is hereby extended to the following that have never ceased to help during my time of study. Special thanks go to my supervisor, Prof K'obonyo and my moderator Ms. Florence Muindi for their expert guidance, advice, encouragement, unwavering support and constructive criticism to the completion of this project. Members of my family who have played a great role in helping me shape my work and I thank them for the love and understanding they portrayed in my time of study. I am grateful to the University of Nairobi Fraternity for the opportunity and their excellent services. The support of colleagues and friends cannot go unnoticed. We have journeyed together and their encouragement and support will entirely be remembered. And above all, I thank the Almighty God for his immense providence during my time of Study.

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## ABSTRACT

Employee empowerment strategies are being implemented around the globe by small firms and big organizations. This is true for all economic sectors, including construction. A higher need for organizations to achieve business excellence makes employee empowerment a significant move in keeping a competitive edge. Employees have the most direct influence on customers' perception of quality services and feeling of satisfaction. Training should be provided in order to improve upon the service quality of the employee and therefore enhance customer satisfaction. Traditional literature research tends to be in agreement that service quality is a measure of how well the level of service so delivered matches with the expectation of target customers so as to enhance their satisfaction. The main objective of the study was to establish the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese Building and Construction firms in Kenya. The research design adopted was a descriptive survey design of all the 17 Chinese owned building and construction firms in Kenya. The study used primary data which was collected through self-administered structured questionnaires. The data was analysed using mean, standard deviation and percentages. The study targeted 75 respondents. 70 questionnaires were filled and returned representing a 93.3% response rate. In order to simplify the discussions, the researcher provided tables and figures that summarized the collective reactions and views of the respondents. The study findings established that various empowerment strategies are constantly adopted by Chinese owned building and construction firms and thus explains why service delivery by these firms remains effective. However, the unique characteristics of the construction sectors hinder efficient integration of high levels of training to build on employee competencies. Empowering employees through use of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, efficient leadership, high trust culture in the organization, imitativeness and creativity among the employees and sharing of the organization's vision and goals were some of the empowerment strategies adopted by the firms. It was however noted that the rendering of efficient quality services is one of the most vital and phenomenal tasks that confronts any service oriented organization in its objective of achieving customer satisfaction.

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

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

One of the most dramatic and significant world trends in the past two decades has been the rapid sustained growth of international business. Rapid environmental shifts are causing essential transformations that have a dramatic impact on the way organizations are managed. The transformations reflect a shift of paradigm from the old workplace (known as the old paradigm) to the new workplace (known as new paradigm) (Daft, 2003). This shift brings differences in various organizational aspects such as organizational strength and managerial competence in organizational management. Key among the organizational aspects in this paradigm shift is related to human resource. These organizations have shifted from dependable employees to empowered employees (Ratmawati, 2007)

Construction firms play a vital role in the process of economic growth and development, both through its products and the employment created in the construction projects. According to Sohail (1999), the construction industry is of immense economic importance as it contributes 10% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in developing countries. At present, local firms are facing fierce competition from global competitors. There has been a rapid increase of foreign firms in developing countries in the recent past (Stefanini, 2006). These foreign firms have demonstrated continuous improvement and have a strategic response to the market needs that has won the respect and admiration of many locals in developing countries (Shrednick, Shutt & Weiss, 1992).

It is becoming increasingly clear that the pillar for organizational development is not management but employees who do the work. Without involving human knowledge, skills and behavior, advancement in technology, organizational processes and structures are unlikely to yield long term benefits to the organization. Managing the human resource is therefore very paramount in an organization, In managing employees, most organizations not only make decisions on what to do and how to do it, but they also need to involve the employees the decision making process and determine their reactions towards the decisions made. In this regard, the

role of Human Resource Management is moving from the traditional configuration and control approach to a more strategic one of Employee Empowerment.

### **1.1.1 Employee Empowerment Strategies**

Successful management helps employees feel competent. Empowering employees is a managers' ability which allows them to reinforce and develop productivity by sharing power and giving power to their employees (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). Employee empowerment comprises of innovative approaches in working with people and a transfer of power from the top management control to lower level management of the organization (Tzafrir, Havel, Yehuda, & Dolan, 2004). Organizations therefore implement employee empowerment strategies with the hope of achieving the following outcomes; highly committed and motivated employee, individual and organizational peak performance, increasing employee's autonomy in their work, achieving quality work and reducing absenteeism among others (Spreitzer et al., 1997; Laschinger et al., 1999; Jun et al., 2006). There are various employee empowerment strategies that organizations can employ to empower their employees. They include participation in decision making, delegation of authority, training to improve competence, communication, sharing the shared vision and goals, provision of resources and building trust relationship among others. While management has the obligation to create an environment that fosters employee empowerment, employees have the responsibility to accept the opportunity and demonstrate their willingness and capability of being empowered. (Baertner, 2005)

Empowered employees see themselves as more effective in their work, they see themselves as innovative and show less fear of trying something new. Empowered employees are transformational in their leadership ability (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). Similarly Lawson (2001) argues that when an organization allows its employees to think independently and assist the company, they (employees) respond with increased work effort and greater efficiency. Organisations should therefore continually strive to be effective, successful and to be more productive and profitable in a constantly changing environment. They need the employees to be able to achieve organizational goals and these employees need to be well equipped, be trained well, and be able to work autonomously, adapt to this changing

environment and develop their skills and knowledge base. Therefore the organization and employees are interlinked and one or the other cannot be studied as an entity on its own

### **1.1.2 The Concept of Effectiveness**

Effectiveness is defined as the degree to which objectives are achieved and the extent to which targeted problems are solved. In contrast to efficiency which means doing the thing right, effectiveness means doing the right thing. According to Ulrike et al (2008) effectiveness is a measure of welfare or growth objectives and therefore may be influenced by multiple factors such as outputs but some external factors may also affect. Effectiveness measures the degree to which a business achieves its goals or the way outputs interact with the economic and social environment. Usually, effectiveness determines the policy objectives of the organization or the degree to which an organization realizes its own goals (Zheng, Yang, & McLean, 2010). Effectiveness-oriented organizations are concerned with output, sales, quality, creation of value added, innovation and cost reduction. Almost every organization strives to be more effective. Organizations often make important strategic and operational decisions based on how different alternatives will increase or decrease effectiveness. Improved effectiveness allows organizations to generate higher revenues, independent of resources required.

Measures of effectiveness (MOE) describe any study relating to the determining, assessment and analysis of factors that may be used in conjunction with other information to help determine the overall level of operations success. Effectiveness measures therefore provide the link between strategy and execution, essentially translating strategy into reality (Melnyk, Doughlas, & Morgan, 2004). Effectiveness measures also influence how decision makers assess the impact of deliberate actions and affect critical issues such as resource allocation as well as whether to maintain or change existing strategy (Gartner, 1997).

### **1.1.3 Chinese Owned Building & Construction firms in Kenya**

The construction industry in Kenya contributes about 40% of the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) and about 4% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in the country. It employs about 80,000 people (Economic Survey of Kenya, 2002). In the

three decades, construction research in Kenya has focused mainly on the entities that constitute the construction industry, particularly the projects, the contractors and the labour force hence deducing the performance of the industry as a whole. Key areas of research have been procurement methods (Mbaya, 1984; Kithinji, 1988 and Mbatha, 1993), project execution, that is, the cost and time overrun and construction resources (Wachira, 2008; Talukhaba, 1999; Gichunge, 2000) and indigenous contractors, marketing and labour practices (Mitullah & Wachira, 2003). The construction industry in Kenya like in many other countries is one of the most complex sectors (Mbaya, 1984). It consists of sub sectors, each subsector consisting of numerous projects and each project involving different stages of activities from project conception to completion

For the last ten years, the Government of Kenya has shifted its attention to the East in search of trade and development partners. Due to this many Chinese people have established their businesses in Kenya. Consequently, these Chinese building firms have won many construction tenders in Kenya, both public and private tenders that were mainly a preserve of the European countries & America. However, the developing bilateral relations between China and Kenya have seen the establishment of a China-Kenya comprehensive cooperative partnership. About 50 Chinese companies have been contracted for about 80 projects in Kenya with a value of Kshs. 172 billion. Analysts claim that half of all construction work underway in Kenya is now being done by Chinese firms. The projects are in roads, railways, housing, water processing, power upgrading, consultation and design, geothermal wells, ports and airports among others (Presidential Strategic Communications Unit (PSCU), 2014).

The Government of Kenya has also taken huge steps to create a friendly environment for foreign investors. For instance, the foreign investment protection act ensures that a foreign investor enjoys the same rights as a Kenyan investor. The law guarantees the right of an investor to repatriate any profits back to their home countries. It also guarantees against compulsory taking of any enterprise or its property by the government. There are also several tax based incentives available, mainly covering exemptions from duty and VAT on capital equipment and machines. The ties between China and Kenya will continue to grow because of the converging interests in infrastructure, innovation and natural resources. According to the Institute for Democracy and Leadership in Africa, there is also well coordinated cooperation

between Chinese public and private institutions in their competition with the west to win big infrastructure contracts especially where bilateral concession loans have been provided by Chinese Public Financial Institutions.

Chinese firms' dedication to their work, coupled with skilled workmanship and their timely execution of the projects has seen the get big construction contracts. Studies show that Chinese firms had scoped more than two thirds of the tenders for the fiscal year 2010/2011. In May and July 2013, Chinese firms secured tenders for Multi-billion-shilling private projects in the country as Kenya continues to embark on its most ambitious infrastructure investment program. In this regard therefore, the construction sector has unique characteristics that affect human resource development and HR management practices in a manner very different from other sectors like manufacturing, service, among others (Koskela, 2000). The construction sector relies heavily on workers. The capacity of the construction industry or potential is revealed in the use of different distinct resources (Pearce, 2006) and key being the technical skills employed for different building types and different construction sectors. To be able to maintain a competitive advantage in the industry, Chinese construction firms continually strive to take advantage of the opportunities available in the construction industry in Kenya.

### **1.3 Research Problem**

Employee empowerment strategies are being implemented around the globe by small firms and big organizations. This is true for all economic sectors, including construction. A higher need for organizations to achieve business excellence makes employee empowerment a significant move in keeping a competitive edge. Organizations tend to empower employees in their jobs by providing motivational incentives such as self-esteem, self-fulfilment and basic needs. The problem is on how empowerment effective in enhancing employee productivity and organizational performance.

Empowerment is one of the effective techniques for improving employee productivity and optimal use of capabilities and capacities in the organization (Naderi, 2008). Empowerment is the process in which employees are involved in decision-making, are appreciated, empowered and offered support in order to motivate them. Nowadays, many organizations are trying to delegate the decision making process to

the lower level employees. Laschinger, Finegan, & Sharmian, (2001), showed that empowerment leads to higher job satisfaction among employees. At the same time there are various empowerment strategies that can be used to improve productivity in employees, they include training, market competitive compensation, creativity and intitativity, employee participation and involvement. Effectiveness is one of the fundamental concepts in any organization (Sharif et.al., 2006). It refers to the degree or extent in which organizations achieves its goals (Daft, 1995). Effectiveness at all levels of an orgainzation is crucial as it is the key to organizational success. In today's competitive environment, the effectiveness of organization is the most important issue in management as it can ensure continuity of organizational life and survival.

The Chinese owned building and construction firms in Kenya have grown significantly over the past years and play a major role in the expansion of the country's economy. However, in Kenya many clients are becoming dissatisfied with the drawbacks brought about by the poor construction activities of local contractors. Performance of construction activities has been widely researched by a number of researchers (Baiden, 2006; Cheng et al., 2006; Chervier, 2003; Ochieng, 2008), and the findings have clearly illustrated that best construction performance is achieved when there is an empowered workforce which is fully integrated and aligned with the task objectives.

Many construction firms in Kenya do not provide continual training programs for their employees and compensation systems are not adequate to provide the required reward to the employees especially under the construction working conditions where less respect and recognition is given to their contribution (Mbiti, 2008). These factors have made employees lose their interest to their jobs resulting in poor workmanship. In addition, management sometimes neglects to clarify the objectives of development programs and performance management. This therefore leads to a communication breakdown among the employees which does not facilitate achievement of the organization goals. Moreover, an untrained supervisor might misunderstand employee engagement and give directives rather than coach and support the employees in managing their work (Gruman & Saks, 2011). This undermines employee's participation in engaging in critical decisions. This shows that there is a gap in the effectiveness of empowerment strategies employed by organizations in motivating their employees.

There are a number of studies both locally and internationally on the concept of empowerment. Some of the local studies on the concept include those of Gumato (2003), on the relationship between perceived empowerment and job satisfaction in commercial banks in Nairobi, Muindi (2011), on the relationship between participation in decision making and job satisfaction among academic staff in the school of business, University of Nairobi. Lwangasi (2008), conducted a survey on the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction on the employees in non-governmental sector in Kenya.

International studies include those of Parker & Price (1994) on empowered managers and empowered workers and Ratmawati (2007) on managerial competency and management commitment on employee empowerment among banking companies in Australia. The literature reviewed revealed no specific study on the effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies particularly in Chinese firms, although a considerable amount of information was available regarding the influence of employee empowerment in general on performance of both the employees and the organizations. It was also clear that the reviewed literature focused a lot on corporate organizations and institutions and in sectors other than the construction industry. It therefore appeared that no study had been done to address effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies, particularly in the building construction industry in Kenya. The construction industry has unique employment practices. The researcher therefore sought to investigate and document the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese building and construction firms in Kenya.

#### **1.4 Research Objective**

To establish the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese Building and Construction firms in Kenya.

#### **1.5 Value the Study**

The findings will contribute not only to the existing information but adding on to knowledge valuable to policy makers to make sound and objectives decisions when formulating policies. This research will also serve as an excellent reference material to person(s) who would like to carry out research related to this area. The findings



are also crucial in understanding the employee empowerment strategies' that are vital for overall organizational productivity.

The construction industry has a lot of dynamism in terms of growth. This has come along with higher expectations from the government and the industry players. The findings of this study will therefore be vital to the local contractors to help them know how to discern opportunities so as to remain relevant in the construction sector and how to position themselves more competitively.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of the related literature on the subject under the study presented by various researchers, scholars, analysts and authors. The chapter will provide an overview of theoretical foundation and the various employee empowerment strategies.

### **2.2 Theoretical Foundation**

The relationship between employers and employees can be characterized by economic and social exchanges. The economic exchange is the formal contractual relationship that is created when the employee is hired (Whitener et al., 1998). The employer usually offers a portfolio of pay and benefits in exchange for the employee's skills and effort. However, certain aspects of the employer-employee relationship go beyond a pure economic exchange; as long as both parties are mutually interdependent, repeated interaction generates a set of obligations for either party, resulting in benefits that are not always the result of an explicit contract.

Employees are becoming valuable assets and can be recognized within a framework of human capital. The human capital theory therefore explains more on the employee productivity. Human capital corresponds to all characteristics of employees that may raise his or her salary. It is the set of marketable skills that increases a worker's productivity (Schultz, 1961). It therefore determines the investment incentives and the structure of wages and earnings. The standard approach in labor economics views human capital as a set of skills/characteristics that increase a worker's productivity. This becomes the main use of human capital (Becker, 1993).

Nevertheless, some alternative uses of human capital are classified under the following views; The Becker view in which, the human capital is directly useful in the production process. It increases a worker's productivity in all tasks, though possibly differentially in different tasks, organizations, and situations (Becker, 1993). In the Gardener view, human capital should not be viewed as uni-dimensional, since there are many dimensions or types of skills. The mental versus the physical abilities are

emphasized as the different skills. The Schultz, Nelson and Phelps (1966) view is that the human capital is viewed mostly as the capacity to adapt. According to this approach, human capital is especially useful in dealing with “disequilibrium” situations, or more generally, with situations in which there is a changing environment, and workers have to adapt to these situations. The Bowles-Gintis view, “human capital” as the capacity to work in organizations, obey orders, that is, adapt to life in a hierarchical/capitalist society. According to this view, the main role of schools is to instil in individuals the “correct” ideology and approach towards life (Bowles & Gintis, 1975). Lastly, in the Spence view, observable measures of human capital are more a signal of ability than characteristics independently useful in the production process (Spence, 1974).

Despite their differences, the first three views are quite similar, in that human will be valued in the market because it increases firms’ profits. In many applications, labor economists’ view of human capital as a mixture of these three approaches. The Bowles-Gintis view has also very similar implications. Here, firms would pay higher wages to educated workers because these workers will be more useful to the firm as they will obey orders better and will be more reliable members of the firm’s hierarchy (Bowles & Gintis, 1975). The Spence view is different from the others, in that, observable measures of human capital may be rewarded because they are signals about some other characteristics of workers (Spence, 1974).

According to Acemoglu, (2013) the possible sources of human capital differences include the innate ability, that is, workers can have different amounts of skills/human capital because of innate differences. Schooling also is a source of human capital differences since it is the most easily observable component of human capital investments. However, schooling differences account for a relatively small fraction of the differences in earnings. Thirdly, school quality and non-schooling investments are also very important in understanding the structure of wages and the changes in the structure of wages and lastly training and pre-labor market influences also contribute to human capital differences.

According to Nelson & Phelps, (1966), there are also non-human capital sources which contribute to differences in earnings across workers that are not accounted by

schooling. They include: Compensating differentials, that is, a worker may be paid less in money, because he is receiving part of his compensation in terms of other (hard-to-observe) characteristics of the job, which may include lower effort requirements, more pleasant working conditions, better amenities etc., Labor market imperfections, where two workers with the same human capital maybe paid different wages because jobs differ in terms of their productivity and pay, and one of them ended up matching with the high productivity job, while the other has matched with the low productivity one and lastly, taste-based discrimination where employers may pay a lower wage to a worker because of the worker's gender or race due to their prejudices. In conclusions, everything on the human capital theory is based on the assumptions that schooling in fact improves productivity and can thus explain higher wages. However, it has been proved through the ability hypothesis that education only serves for signalling or selection. Family background or society circles and the financing capacity are very important in human capital. Unions regulate the wages and do not directly take individuals into account. And lastly, employee's earnings depend on the industry (Becker, 1993; Schultz, 1961; Nelson & Phelps, 1966).

### **2.3 Employee Empowerment**

In present day knowledge economy, it is important to know how to deal with the needs and characteristics of the knowledge worker and his degree of job engagement. A concept that concerns power and preferred autonomy is the concept of empowerment. There is a growing consensus that employee empowerment can be a source of competitive advantage for the contemporary organizations (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997). The concept of empowerment may play an important role in meeting organization's demand. According to Rodwell (1996), she describes that the concept of empowerment would appear to be a process of enabling or imparting power transfer from one individual or group to another. Spreitzer & Doneson (2005) define the concept with a focus on employees, and deepen the definition of Rodwell (1996) by stating that empowering practices allow employees to decide on their own how they will deal with a problem. Melhem (2004) also argued on the same line, that empowerment is a complex process which involves the act of developing and increasing power to the subordinates.

Aside from different definitions of empowerment, the concept is also in several ways divided in literature. Quinn & Spreitzer (1997) found two very different perspectives of empowerment. The researchers advocate two approaches, a mechanistic approach, referring to a top down process in which empowerment is about delegating decision making within a set of boundaries, and an organic approach implying a bottom up process in which empowerment is seen as process of risk taking and personal growth. Taking into account these different perspectives, empowering people partly appears to be about implementation and facilitating people and partly about awareness and allowing people time to get used to it. Saying to people they are empowered, is also not the same as feeling empowered

Today, employee empowerment is one of the primary causes of quality improvement in the work place (Hodgetts & Hegan, 2008). Empowerment is a process of enabling an individual to think, behave, take action, control work and decision making in an autonomous way (Cardy & Leonard, 2011). It allows employees to work independently and become initiative and creative, therefore bringing an innovative culture in an organization. Mullins (1993) suggested that by empowering staff through the organization structure, every employee will have the power to be innovative and ensure performance is good. The benefits that can be derived from empowerment include employee commitment, quality products and services, efficiency, quick responsiveness and customer satisfaction (Lynn & Susan, 2003). Effective management requires that empowerment be sincere accompanied by relevant information for the employees to carry out their tasks.

#### **2.4 Employee Empowerment Strategies**

Willis (1999) identified ten dimensions that can enhance empowerment in an organization. The ten dimensions include trust, accountability, leadership, initiative and creativity, knowledge, employee recognition, participation, shared vision and goals, rewards and delegation of authority. This clearly shows that empowerment is a multi-dimensional process which involves many systems of the organization and is an ongoing process. Effective management requires that empowerment be sincere, based on mutual trust, accompanied by relevant information for the employees to carry out their tasks.

### **2.4.1 Trust**

Enabling employees to freely contribute in an organization can have a substantial positive effect on an organization. Keeping employees informed and getting them involved in decisions that affects their work builds trust and feelings of self-worth. Involving employees helps employees feel that they are trusted and needed, which increases their contributions and production. There must be a true partnership between the worker and the workplace (Porter-OGrady, 1998). The partnership is both the basis of and result of trust. Trust is a tool where managers have faith that employees will do the right thing and make sound decisions that get the job done. This comes about by guiding employees by asking questions and allowing them to grow in knowledge and skills (Lin, 1998). It is also a tool that develops after employees have clear expectations from their managers so that they can focus their energy on accomplishing tasks and being productive (Willis, 1999). Consequently, trust as an employee empowerment tool helps reinforce employee contributions and accomplishments as it creates a space for open communication (Covey, 1999b).

### **2.4.2 Competencies Development**

In order to implement employee empowerment, the employees must be competent. Competency goes beyond developing job-task specific knowledge. Bowen & Lawler (1995) cite the importance of training in which employees are familiarized with how their jobs fit into upstream and downstream activities. Employees must be properly trained. It does not make sense to empower employees to things such as make decisions or approve or initiate action if they are not properly trained. Gandz (1990) indicates that among the characteristics of an empowered organization are empowering leadership, job and technical skills, interpersonal and problem solving skills, frontline customer service skills, empowering support groups. He also indicates that technical training, decision making skills, group process skills, all are required if empowerment is to be accepted and produce results

According to Armstrong and Baron (1998), training is seen as a valuable tool and an investment in organizations that helps to improve profitability, reduce costs and increase employee motivation, commitment and effectiveness. To a great extent, training activities are the key drivers of organizational development and growth. Armstrong and Baron (1998) further argue that training should be applicable to

performance in a current or anticipated task, providing all the necessary learning. By improving employees' ability to perform tasks required by an organization, training allows better use to be made of human resources and further gives employees a mastery over their work, leading to improved performance.

### **2.4.3 Delegation of Authority**

Delegation of authority as an empowerment tool can help employees develop new skills and grow as professionals. Rather than just delegate tedious unwanted tasks, managers should involve employees in tasks that will impart opportunities, such as engaging in product development projects, leading meetings and participating on committees. Additionally, allow employees to help problem-solve when setbacks occur to see if an issue with the work system that caused others to fail (Dobbs,1993). Delegation of authority therefore as an empowerment tool can assist employees to develop new skills and enhance their professionalism

According to Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (1995), delegation is the assignment by another person of formal authority and accountability for carrying out specific activities. Delegation is therefore vital in an organization especially when managers have excessive workload; they can assign some work to their subordinates instead of doing all the work themselves. Delegation is also a good tool in training employees for higher level duties, and these employees who desire more challenges generally become more committed and satisfied they are given the authority to execute these higher level duties.

Delegation therefore exists at both organization and individual or personal level. At the organization level, it has to do with location of decision making and it's reflected in the organizational chart, that is, it provides the structure of the organization, while at the personal level, it involves the passing of one's authority and responsibility to fellow workers to act on one's behalf (Mullins, 1993)

### **2.4.4 Employee Recognition**

Employees who feel under-appreciated do not perform as well as those who feel valued. A manager can show regard for her employees through her actions, words, facial expressions and body language. Demonstrating appreciation for each employee's unique value can help encourage and empower them. A manager should

demonstrate value and respect for the employee as a human being that never falters regardless of employee performance. Recognition goes a long way when it comes to successful employee empowerment (Dobbs 1993).

There needs to be a culture of participation in the organization, which in turn creates higher retention (Leibowitz, 2003). When employees do participate in the organization they feel more valuable, especially when they see the results stemming from their actions (Calder & Douglas, 1999). When management creates opportunities for employees to add value to the organization in ways other than those that fit the job description, it is unclear how to measure all the positive results that will occur. Companies can also demonstrate employee value by giving workers the information necessary to make thoughtful decisions. This sets employees up for a more favourable outcome.

In the process of having a recognition culture, an empowering work climate is achieved that creates a sense of responsibility amongst employees. Browne (2000) describes an empowering work climate as the shared perception amongst employees, set by the way they are treated by their superiors. An empowering climate is achieved through eliminating blame culture and developing high level of trust within the organization built through fully implementing, utilizing and communicating the program to all employees.

#### **2.4.5 Shared Vision and Goals**

When an organization shares its leadership vision and goals with its employees, and the visions and goals are realistic, employees can feel like they are part of a task that is bigger than their individual roles in the company. Sharing strategic plans and the overall mission with employees can empower them and give them a sense of ownership and pride. Progress on company goals should be observable and measurable so employees feel empowered to make their contribution towards the overall goal without needing close supervision (Dobbs 1993).

Leithwood and Riehl (2005) recognize that building vision and setting directions are one of the core practices of successful leadership. In other words, leaders mobilize and work with others to achieve shared goals. Leaders do not merely impose goals on



followers, but work with others to create a shared sense of purpose and direction. Leaders primarily work through and with other people. They also help to establish the conditions that enable others to be effective. A study undertaken by Leithwood & Sun (2009), likewise demonstrates that by developing a shared vision, building consensus on goals and holding high performance expectations, leaders have a significant positive impact on an institution culture and decision-making processes. Key employee related outcomes such as employee satisfaction, employee commitment; empowerment, efficacy, and organizational loyalty are achieved.

#### **2.4.6 Initiative and creativity**

Empowerment allows employees to do things in their ways and manners; expressing initiative and creativity in the job. This breeds creative and innovative culture of doing things in an organization. Coyle-Shapiro and Lynn, (2007) argued that management must encourage employees to try out new ideas and new methods of decision making. Carter (2009) stated that empowerment should focus on removing barriers that keep employees from exercising their talents fully. This dimension must include the belief that employees will not be punished for unsuccessful attempts but will be rewarded for trying (Lawler, 1992; Becker, 1992).

Even when employees fail in their efforts, management should encourage them to keep their efforts on. Employees should be able to realize that failures are stepping stones to success. With such supportive conditions employees are sure to ride the tidal wave of success on one day (Dobbs 1993). Empowered employees will be a source of new ideas and innovation. High performance employees are born in the empowered organization which will increase in its efficiency and productivity. If time, training and resources are given for the process to evolve, employees are expected to develop feelings of self-efficacy, job satisfaction, security, confidence and job significance (Hammunda & Dulaimi, 1997).

#### **2.4.7 Employee Participation and Involvement**

Participation refers to involvement of individuals or group of individual for a common purpose .Workers participation in management refers to the emotional and mental involvement of an employee to contribute to the goals and share responsibilities of an organization. Participation is a subset of empowerment. Hence efforts should be made

to encourage employees to take initiative in the participative process. The management are encouraged to remove bureaucratic hurdles coming in the way of employee performance, and employees should be imparted with necessary training and coaching to enable them to participate more effectively (Dobbs 1993). Participative managers consult with their employees, bringing them in on problems and decisions so that they work together as team. The managers are not autocrats, but neither are they free-rein managers who abandon their management responsibilities. They still retain ultimate responsibility for the operation of their units, but they have learned to share operating responsibility with those who perform the work. The result is that employees feel a sense of involvement in group goals.

Employee involvement is a process for empowering employees to participate in managerial decision-making and improvement activities appropriate to their levels in the organization. Involvement employees in the planning process will lead to higher chances of achieving the plans of the organization. Where employees are involved in the identification, discussion and agreement of personal objectives in relation to other corporate plans, there is a higher desire to ensure that the tasks for which one is responsible are carried out efficiently and effectively (Moye, 2005). Organizations should therefore seek to take full advantage of their employees' talents and abilities and make best use of everyone's time.

#### **2.4.8 Accountability for Results**

Employees should have conceptual job autonomy, which is the freedom and authority to design and manage the completion of tasks and the ability to make important decisions independently (Dobbin & Boychuk, 1999). This autonomy should ultimately result in accountability. Employees therefore must be aware of the expected outcome and they will be held accountable for meeting that expectation fully (Heimbold, 1999). Along with giving authority to the employees, they also must be held accountable for their results. The purpose behind that is not to identify their black spots and single them out for punishment, but to know that they are giving their best efforts. Experience shows that tagging accountability with authority leads to better use of authority (Dobbs, 1993). Such accountability helps the organization to hold on to valued employees. Accountability for results should be communicated to

potential employees as a recruitment tool and to existing employees as a tool of promotion and retention thus enhancing performance culture

#### **2.4.9 Leadership Culture**

Every aspect of performance in an organization is determined by the quality, effectiveness and commitment of those in charge. Waal (2007) notes that those in charge not only set performance culture in motion but also set the atmosphere to maintain the momentum that ensures ongoing sustainability of the culture. Browne, (2000) argues that the most effective way to set the motion is through the medium of inspirational leadership since individuals cannot be coerced into consistent, high performance. A high performance culture depends on the ability of leaders to inspire employees; leaders are champions and role models. Leaders across organization need to explain repeatedly why performance is necessary, its impact on the organization, and its effect on the employees (Risher, 2007).

Leaders and managers can get employees to think in similar mind sets through managing, creating and sharing knowledge, for this is an important ingredient for an organization on the road to excellence. Presence of devolved strategic priorities as opposed to everything being done at the top level is a powerful factor in performance culture leadership styles (Hill, 2007). He adds that leaders exercise flexible, fluid and rapid response, eliminating rigid policies and encouraging a win/win situation as opposed to win or lose situation to problem solving. The leaders' ability to maintain the right balance between making decisions and disciplined execution enhances a performance culture (Balmer, 2001). He emphasizes that those leaders in high performance culture organizations, invest heavily in what takes to be a game changing innovator in the future. Along the way, new ways of thinking are developed in the organizations that embrace creative and deep commitment to flawless execution as leaders commit to performance excellence.

#### **2.4.10 Rewards**

A reward is defined as all the monetary, non-monetary and psychological payments that an organization provides for its employees (Bartol & Locke, 2000). A reward is therefore presented after the occurrence of an action with the intent to cause the

positive behaviour to occur again. This is done by associating positive meaning to behaviour and it represents what the individuals want to obtain from work. While pay and benefits alone is not sufficient condition for high job satisfaction among employees, it is a necessary condition for the same. Nzuve (2010) indicated that besides direct financial compensation, organizations can also use other non-financial incentives to motivate and retain staff. This is true because employees want pay system that they perceive as just, fair and in line with their expectations. Financial rewards may include bonus, profit sharing, payment of various allowances, time – based and output –performance pay. Non-financial incentives on the other hand are activities that psychologically influence the behaviour and attitude of workers towards their work, colleagues and the organization .They may be in form of amenities and facilities.

According to McCormick and Tiffin (1979), rewards can either be intrinsic or extrinsic. Intrinsic rewards stem from rewards that are inherent in the job itself and which individuals enjoy as a result of successfully completing the task or attaining his goals and may include; receiving appreciation, positive recognition, a sense of challenge and achievement and being treated in a caring and considerable manner. Extrinsic rewards are those that are external to the task or the job such as pay, work conditions, fringe benefits, security, and promotion, contract of service, the work environment and conditions of work. For some reason, most organizations use rewards external to the job in influencing their workers. Vroom (1964), supported the assumption that workers tend to perform more effectively if their wages are related to performance which is not based on personal bias or prejudice, but an objective evaluation of an employee's merit.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The chapter presents details of the research design used in the study, the target population, data collection and analysis techniques.

### **3.2 Research Design**

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design as a descriptive survey typically seeks to ascertain respondents' perspectives or experiences on a specified subject. The descriptive research design was appropriate as data was collected from a sample and findings used to infer the characteristics of the population (Kothari, 2004). It was mainly used since accurate and factual data was needed from systematic descriptions.

### **3.3 Population**

The target population consisted of all the 17 Chinese general building Contractors having their head offices in Nairobi. The research was therefore a census study. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a population is a well defined set of people, services, elements and events, group of things or households that are being investigated. The contractors register at the National Construction Authority (NCA) as of August 2014, indicated that there were 250 foreign registered contractors. Of these only 17 Chinese firms are registered to carry out general building projects in Kenya (Appendix 3).

### **3.4 Data Collection**

The target population consisted of all the 17 Chinese-owned general building contractors having their head offices in Nairobi. From the 17 Chinese-owned building contractors, the total number of respondents was 75 in number. They consisted of the project managers, foremen, supervisors and employees with technical skills. Primary data was collected by use of semi-structured questionnaire and administered to the respondents using the drop and pick method. The questionnaire contained both open ended and closed questions and was composed of three parts, part one targeted the profile of the respondents, part two covered the various empowerment strategies, and

lastly part three focused on the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment in regards to the performance of the firm.

### **3.6 Data Analysis**

The completed questionnaires were analysed for completeness and consistency and the data was then coded. The researcher mainly used descriptive statistics to analyse data. This included frequency distribution tables, percentages, mean and standard deviation.

## CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

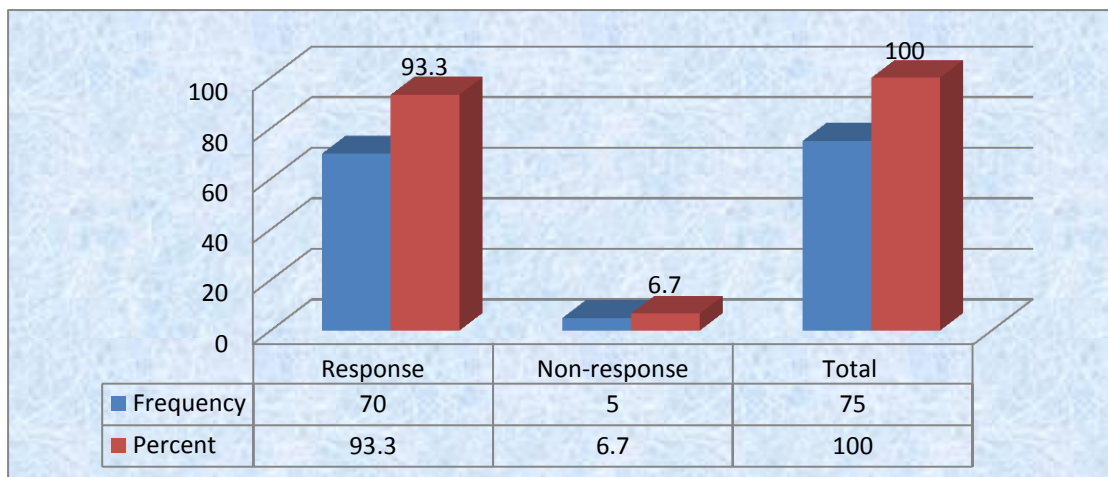
### 4.1 Introduction

The chapter covers data analysis, presentation and the findings. The data was summarized and presented in the form tables and figures. The main objective of the study was to establish the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese owned Building and Construction firms in Kenya.

### 4.2 Response Rate

The research targeted a population of 75 respondents. Of the 75 questionnaires distributed, 70 were received back within the given time frame of the two weeks. The 70 questionnaires represented a response rate of 93.3 %. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. This means that the response rate for this study was excellent and therefore enough for data analysis and interpretation as shown in figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1: Response Rate**



**Source: primary data (2014)**

### 4.3 Descriptive Statistics

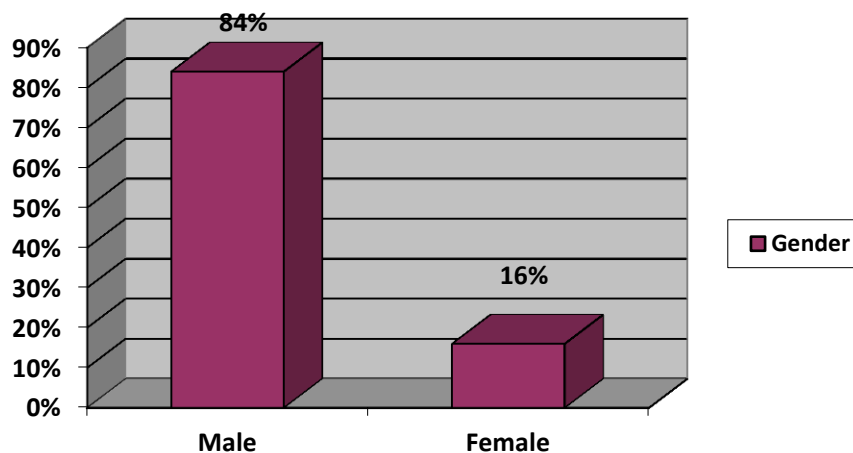
#### 4.3.1 Demographic Information

The study sought to establish information on various aspects of the respondent's background. The demographic information included the job position, age bracket, gender, marital status, academic qualifications, and length of service in the organization as well as the terms of employment of the respondents. This information aimed at testing the appropriateness of the respondents in answering the questions regarding the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment practices

#### 4.3.2 Gender of Respondents

The study found it paramount to determine the respondents' gender in order to ascertain whether there was gender parity in the positions indicated by the respondents. The findings of the study are as shown in Figure 4.2.

**Figure 4.2: Gender of the Respondents**



**Source: primary data (2014)**

According to the analysis it was evident that majority of the respondents were male which represented 84 % while 16 % were female. It can therefore be deduced that males were the most dominant gender in the Chinese owned building and construction firms in Kenya.



### 4.3.3 Age Bracket of the Respondents

The researcher sought to analyse the age distribution the respondents as shown in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Age Distribution of the Respondents**

<b>Age Bracket</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
18-25 years	13	19
26-30 years	21	30
31-35 years	15	21
36-40years	14	20
Above 40	7	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

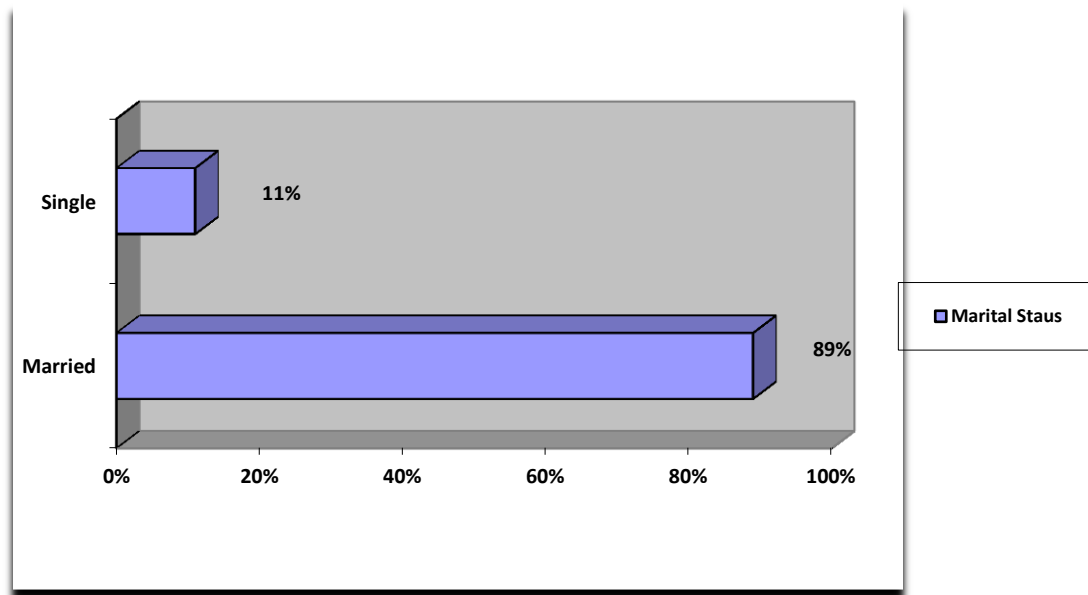
**Source: primary data (2014)**

The study findings indicated that majority of the respondents were between 26-30 years (30 %). The findings also indicated that 21 % of the respondents were between 36-40 years of age, 20% were between 36-40 years, 19% were between the age of 18-25years and 10% were above 40 years of age. The finding therefore implies that the respondents were old enough to provide valuable responses that pertain to the perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese-owned Building and Construction firms in Kenya.

### 4.3.4 Marital Status of Respondents

The Figure 4.3 displays demographic information according to the marital status of the respondents.

**Figure 4.3: Marital Status of the Respondents**



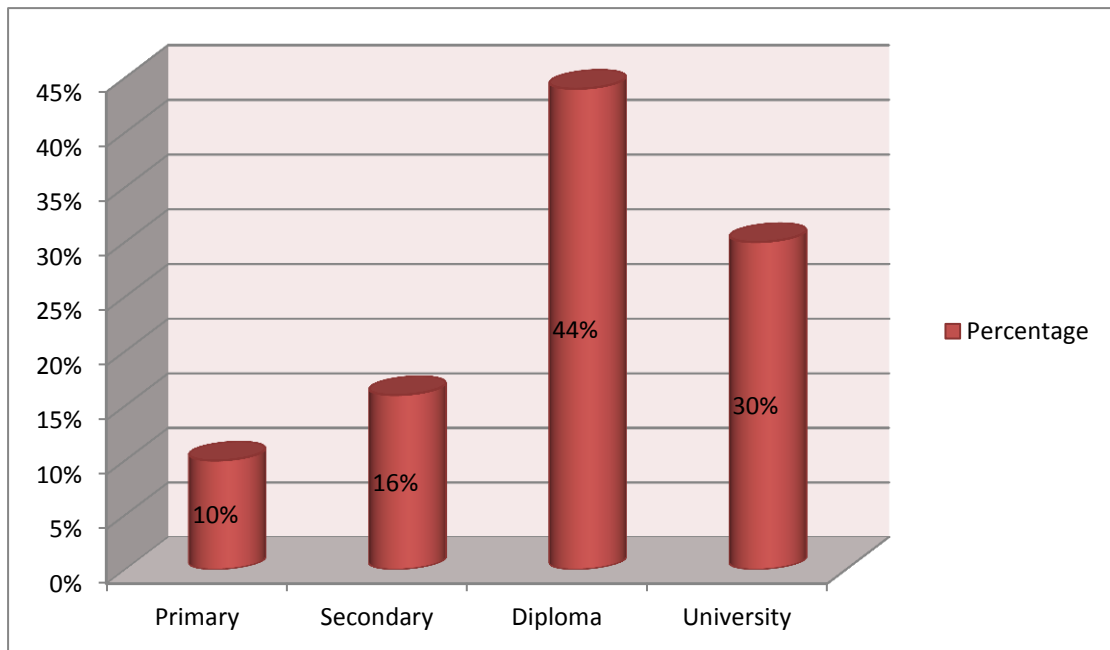
**Source: primary data (2014)**

The study found it paramount to determine the respondents' marital status in order to ascertain whether there was influence of marital status in the positions indicated by the respondents. According to the analysis it was evident that majority of the respondents were married which represented 89% while 11 % were single. It can therefore be deduced that most of the respondents working in the Chinese owned Building and Construction firms were married.

#### **4.3.5 Level of Education of the Respondents**

The study sought to find out the respondents level of education. The findings of the study are as depicted in Figure 4.4.

**Figure 4.4: Level of Education of the Respondents**



**Source: primary data (2014)**

From the findings, majority of the respondents (44%) had college diplomas followed by 30% who indicated that they had university education, 16% of the respondents indicated that they had attained secondary level of education and the remaining 10% indicated that they had attained primary education. Therefore from the findings, most of the respondents had at least basic education to provide valid information pertaining to perceived effectiveness of employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese owned Building and Construction firms in Kenya.

#### **4.3.6 Length of Period Worked**

The respondents were asked to state how long they have been working for their particular organizations.

**Table 4.2: Length of Period Worked**

<b>Length of Period Worked</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Cumulative Percentage</b>
Less than one year	18	26	26
Between 1 -2 years	32	46	72
Between 3 – 5 years	15	21	93
Between 6 -10 years	3	4	97
Over 10 years	2	3	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	

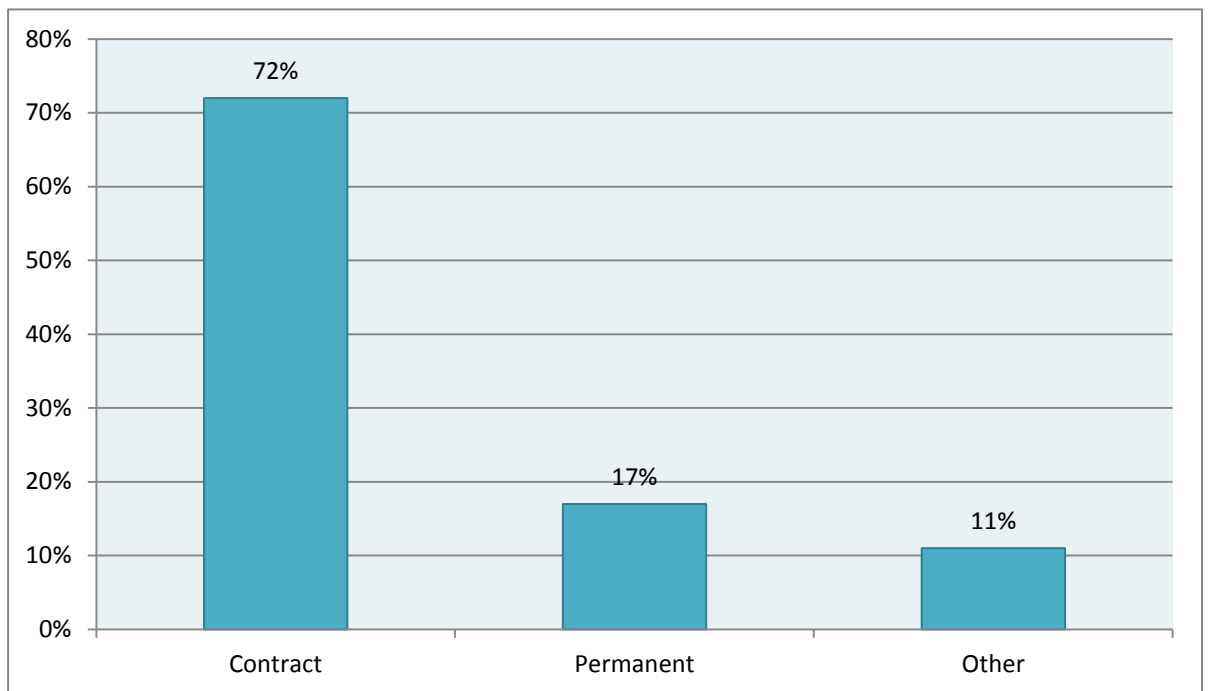
**Source: primary data (2014)**

As shown in Table 4.2, 46% of the respondents had worked for between 1 and 2 years, 26% had worked for less than 1 year , 21% had worked for between 3 and 5 years, 4% had worked for between 6 and 10 years and 3% had worked for over 10 years. This shows that the respondents had sufficient background information to respond to the perceived empowerment strategies adopted by Chine owned building and construction firms in Kenya.

#### **4.3.7 Terms of Service**

The respondents were requested to indicate their terms of service in the organization. The findings are as illustrated in Figure 4.5.

**Figure 4.5: Terms of Employment**



**Source: primary data (2014)**

The findings of the study indicated that 72% of the respondents were contract basis while 17% were on permanent, 11% were on temporal basis. This depicts that majority of the respondents working with the Chinese owned Building and construction firms were on a contract form of employment.

#### **4.4 Employee Empowerment Strategies**

The researcher sought to find out to what extent the respondents agreed with the statements about their jobs. The responses were placed on a five Likert scale where 5- Very strongly agree, 4 - Strongly agree, 3 – Agree, 2– Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree

**Table 4.3: Employee Empowerment Strategies**

<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
I have confidence in the leadership of my company	4.637	0.632
My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	4.112	0.797
I have variety of activities in my job.	3.917	0.590
I have input into decisions made in my organization.	3.439	0.481
I value my job as important.	4.001	0.924
My supervisor encourages me to suggest new ways of doing things.	3.921	0.901
I have control over those aspects of my job for which I am accountable	3.699	0.593
I have considerable opportunity for independence and autonomy in how I do my job	3.956	0.489
Underperforming employees are effectively and consistently dealt with	3.502	0.569
The organization has a well spelt out process of dealing with poor performance	4.227	0.748
The organization has wellness programs and I participate fully in them.	3.401	0.463
The organization has a comprehensive policy on training	2.027	1.891
Top management allocates enough funds for training	3.772	0.401
Employees have an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding training.	2.963	1.947
The organizations vision and goals are properly communicated to all employees	2.789	1.632
I am empowered with information, freedom given to help improve in my work processes	4.533	0.623

**Source: primary data (2014)**

The study findings indicated that most of the employees agreed with the strategies employed by the building and construction firms owned by the Chinese in Kenya. The respondents very strongly agreed that they had confidence in the in the leadership of the company  $m=4.637$ . They strongly agreed that their work gives them a feeling of personal accomplishment mean  $=4.112$ , had a variety of activities in their job mean $=3.917$ , they valued their job as important  $m=4.00$ , they got encouragement from their supervisor on suggesting new ways of doing things mean $=3.921$ , they had control of their area of operation  $m=3.699$ . They have considerable opportunity for

independence and autonomy on how they performed their job  $m=3.956$  and that they are empowered with information and freedom in order to enhance their work process (mean of 4.533).

However the respondents were moderately in agreement with the statement that the organisation had a wellness programs and they participated fully in the programs mean=3.401 and that they usually participate in the decisions made in the firm mean=3.439. The respondents agreed that the top management allocated enough funds for training  $m=2.772$ , the employees had an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding training  $m= 2.963$ , the organizations vision and goals are properly communicated  $m=2.789$ . However, they disagreed that the firm had a comprehensive policy on training with a mean of 2.027.

From the above analysis it can be seen that having a variety of activities in the job, constant encouragement from supervisors, job control and autonomy, empowerment through impact with information and freedom on the job are great empowerment strategies whereas other practices like provision of wellness programs, participation in decision making have a moderate impact on employee empowerment.

#### **4.5 Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment Strategies**

The researcher sought to find out the extent to which each of the following statements gives a fair description of the effect of employee empowerment strategies in your organization. The responses were placed on a five Likert scale where 1 = not at all, 2 = to a less extent 3= to a moderate extent 4= to a large extent and 5 = to a very large extent. The findings were as in the Table 4.4

**Table 4.4: Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment Strategies**

<b>Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment Strategies</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. deviation</b>
We promote a culture of trust among our employees. This makes them feels that they are vital to the success of the organization.	3.93	0.910
Our employees always participate effectively in decisions that affect their work	3.50	0.56
The organization shares its leadership vision and goals with the employees which creates a sense of ownership and pride among them.	4.57	0.622
We develop our employees' competencies through training, to enhance their commitment in achieving the organizational objectives.	3.39	0.481
Our employees are expected to take initiative on matters that are related to their work	4.21	0.343
We value and respect our employees therefore creating a sense of responsibility among them.	4.52	0.601
Empowering our employees leads to job satisfaction, job involvement, loyalty, performance and faster delivery of output.	4.73	0.712
Our supervisors delegate some authority to our employees leading to a reduction of top management workload.	3.63	0.597
Our employees have a high sense of efficiency accompanied by significant responsibility and authority over their jobs.	3.53	0.492
Management supports implementation of empowerment programs in the organization as a way of empowering employees.	3.40	0.483
Our organization uses intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as autonomy in decision making, assignment of challenging tasks which contributes to employee's motivation.	4.62	0.680

**Source: primary data (2014)**

The study finding indicated that the respondents had a positive perception on most of the statements on the perceived employee empowerment strategies. The respondents indicated that the organization highly promotes a culture of trust among employees with a mean of 3.93, the organization shares its leadership vision and goals with the employees which creates a sense of ownership and pride among them m=4.57, the management also strongly agreed that the employees are expected to take initiative on matters that are related to their work m=4.21, they valued and respected their



employees  $m=4.52$ , empowering the employees lead to job satisfaction, involvement and loyalty  $m=4.73$ , supervisors delegate some authority to the employees leading to a reduction of workload on the top management  $m=3.63$ . The respondents also highly indicated that the organisation uses intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as autonomy in decision making with a mean of 4.62. The respondents however moderately agreed that the employees have a high sense of efficiency  $m=3.53$ , they also develop their employee competencies through training with a mean of 3.39 and that there is management support on implementation of the empowerment programs in the organization  $m=3.40$ .

In summary, the respondents had a high perception on the effectiveness of most of the employee empowerment strategies. A high culture of trust on employees, participation in decision making, sharing of the organization's leadership goals and vision, high levels of value and respect for the employees, delegation of some authority and use of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are very efficient empowerment strategies to employees. Moreover, in moderation, there was a high sense of efficiency among the employees and the management moderately supported implementation of empowerment programs in the organization and development of employee competencies through training. Studies previous done encourage the above employee empowerment strategies that enhance performance culture in an organization

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

### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations made there-to. The conclusions and recommendations drawn were focused on addressing the objectives of the study.

### **5.2 Summary**

The study revealed various strategies used by management that contributed to employee empowerment. High levels of trust on employees, employee recognition by use of both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards, sharing of the organization's vision and goals, encouragement on employees' creativity in their jobs and having a strong leadership culture were rated highly as empowerment strategies.

The study revealed that training was moderately rated by the respondents. The management also moderately supported training through allocating funds to aid in training activities. The findings further revealed that there was a moderate support by management on implementation of empowerment programs in the firms. The study also revealed moderate levels of efficiency on the part of employees and a moderate involvement and participation in decisions making on matters that affect their work. In addition, there was a low rating on the presence of a comprehensive training policy in the organizations. The study further revealed there were presence of some wellness programs in the organizations and employees moderately participated in the programs.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The perceived effectiveness regarding the various employee empowerment strategies adopted by Chinese owned building and construction firms has not been a concern for researchers in the building industry. The insights and responses provided by the respondents proved that various empowerment strategies are constantly adopted by Chinese owned building and construction firms and thus explains why service delivery by these firms remains effective. However, the unique characteristics of the construction sectors hinder efficient integration of high levels of training to build on

employee competencies. The study indicated low results on the presence of a comprehensive training policy in the firms. The employees as well moderately contributed ideas regarding training. Efficient and effective training is intended to improve upon the service quality of the employee and therefore enhance customer satisfaction. Traditional literature research argues that service quality is a measure of how well the level of service so delivered matches with the expectation of target customers so as to enhance their satisfaction. The consistence delivery of quality service implies conforming to customer expectations on a regular basis. It must be noted however that the rendering of efficient quality services is one of the most vital and phenomenal tasks that confronts any service oriented organization in its objective of achieving customer satisfaction. Due to their unique characteristics, services become complicated to evaluate compelling customers to monitor closely at service quality during period of comparison with other competitors.

Finally, management should make a conscious effort to align employees' objectives with what they value most. Additionally, management should be precise about what is expected of employees and the objectives to be achieved. These objectives should not only be high but realistic and be targeted towards performance, not outcomes. Management therefore should exercise supervisory controls by periodically monitoring progress toward the objectives and workplace satisfaction (Heimbold, 1999). Majority of current written literature in relation to the challenges involved in employee empowerment tend to centre on the issues of trust and confidentiality.

Management can also be reluctant to empower employees due to personal dislikes whilst employees can lose their sense of security by being compelled to take decisions beyond their capacity. Additionally, employees may feel less empowered the instant they realize the creativity of management in the process of empowerment. This creativity can develop misgivings and actually lead to loss of revenue including productivity instead of an anticipated gain.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

As noted in this research, the role and significance of employee training and development needs not be over emphasised. This is due to the fact that these concepts from research literature can be initiated within an organization to address a performance, growth and opportunity gaps.

Performance gap simply refers to the studies required to meet set standards for current task and growth gap also implies studies needed in achieving career objectives by employees. Opportunity gap also implies studies needed by an employee so as to qualify for a recognized or vacant task or position within the organization. In order for management to address the grievances of the employees on the above concepts it is advisable to seriously take into consideration the training and development policies in order to continually improve the competencies of employees in respect to the changing trends in the construction industry.

Management should also pay attention to the venue chosen for the training including selecting the right people to train the employees. The training period should also be planned in advance so that employees will be aware in order to effectively prepare. Employees should be provided with the required support systems including materials during the training period. Training of the employees in the construction firms irrespective of its setup and location will have a mission to be fulfilled and a clearly defined reason for its establishment. In order to attain its long-term plan and objectives the firm must have a strategic plan including a suitable structure that will outline the responsibilities of the personnel in the organization. This strategic planning involves the identification and evaluation of the objectives of the firm in question and determining the particular strategies including resources that will be needed in achieving these objectives.

One of the resources so identified is the training of employees to gain the requisite skills, attitudes, capabilities and knowledge that will assist the firm in attaining its objective. Employees' with the requisite skills when recruited into a firm needs to be further orientated to enable them become familiar with procedural process within the organization. It is through training that employees' are equipped with additional skills that will make them more efficient in performing their work.

## **5.5 Recommendation for Further Research**

The analysis of the empirical study has indicated a number of relevant issues that the research project did not fully investigate, it might be important to get further research on the effects of leadership and employee participation in decision making. This study was conducted in Chinese owned building and construction companies and was taken from 75 respondents from the companies; other studies should involve more construction firms and more respondents in order to obtain holistic information.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX 1: INTRODUCTION LETTER



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**  
**MBA PROGRAMME**

Telephone: 020-2059162  
Telegrams: "Varsity", Nairobi  
Telex: 22095 Varsity

P.O. Box 30197  
Nairobi, Kenya

DATE..... 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The bearer of this letter ..... DWINE MUTHONI NJUE

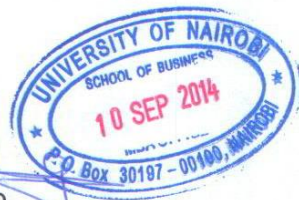
Registration No..... DG1/60529/2013


is a bona fide continuing student in the Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree program in this University.

He/she is required to submit as part of his/her coursework assessment a research project report on a management problem. We would like the students to do their projects on real problems affecting firms in Kenya. We would, therefore, appreciate your assistance to enable him/her collect data in your organization.

The results of the report will be used solely for academic purposes and a copy of the same will be availed to the interviewed organizations on request.

Thank you.



  
**PATRICK NYABUTO**  
**MBA ADMINISTRATOR**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS**

## APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE

Kindly fill in this questionnaire as instructed.

### PART I: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

Please tick (√) inside the box as appropriate.

1. Name of organization \_\_\_\_\_
2. Current position/job title \_\_\_\_\_
3. Age bracket: 18 - 25 ( ) 26 - 30 ( ) 31-35 ( ) 36 - 40 ( ) Above 40 ( )
4. What is your gender: Male ( ) Female ( )
5. What is your marital status? Married ( ) Single ( )
6. Indicate your highest academic qualification:  
Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) Diploma ( ) University ( )
7. How long have you served with this organization:  
(a) Less than 1 year ( )  
(b) 1- 2 years ( )  
(c) 3 - 5 years ( )  
(d) 6 - 10 years ( )  
(e) Over 10 years ( )
8. Please indicate your terms of employment.  
(a) Contract ( )  
(b) Permanent ( )  
(c) Other specify \_\_\_\_\_

### PART II: Employee Empowerment Strategies

*To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your job in your organization? (Use the key below to tick (√) as appropriate.)* 5 - Very strongly agree, 4 - Strongly agree, 3 – Agree, 2– Disagree, 1 - Strongly Disagree

No.	STATEMENT	RATING
1.	I have confidence in the leadership of my company	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
2.	My work gives me a feeling of personal accomplishment	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
3.	I have variety of activities in my job.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
4.	I have input into decisions made in my organization.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
5.	I value my job as important.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
6.	My supervisor encourages me to suggest new ways of doing things.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
7.	I have control over those aspects of my job for which I am accountable	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
8.	I have considerable opportunity for independence and autonomy in how I do my job	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
9.	Underperforming employees are effectively and consistently dealt with	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
10.	The organization has a well spelt out process of dealing with poor performance	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
11.	The organization has wellness programs and I participate fully in them.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
12.	The organization has a comprehensive policy on training	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
13.	Top management allocates enough funds for training	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
14.	Employees have an opportunity to contribute ideas regarding training.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
15.	The organizations vision and goals are properly communicated to all employees	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
16.	I am empowered with information, freedom given to help improve in my work processes	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

### **Part III: Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment Strategies**

*Rate the extent to which each of the following statements gives a fair description of the effect of employee empowerment strategies in your organization: Use the key below to tick as appropriate.*

1-Not at all; 2 – To a less extent; 3- To a moderate extent; 4-To a large extent; 5- To a very large extent;



<b>NO.</b>	<b>Perceived Effectiveness of Employee Empowerment Strategies</b>	<b>Rating</b>
i.	We promote a culture of trust among our employees. This makes them feels that they are vital to the success of the organization.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
ii.	Our employees always participate effectively in decisions that affect their work	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
iii.	The organization shares its leadership vision and goals with the employees which creates a sense of ownership and pride among them.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
iv.	We develop our employees' competencies through training, to enhance their commitment in achieving the organizational objectives.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
v.	Our employees are expected to take initiative on matters that are related to their work	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
vi.	We value and respect our employees therefore creating a sense of responsibility among them.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
vii.	Empowering our employees leads to job satisfaction, job involvement, loyalty, performance and faster delivery of output.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
viii.	Our supervisors delegate some authority to our employees leading to a reduction of top management workload.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
ix.	Our employees have a high sense of efficiency accompanied by significant responsibility and authority over their jobs.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
xi.	Management supports implementation of empowerment programs in the organization as a way of empowering employees.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]
xii.	Our organization uses intrinsic and extrinsic rewards such as autonomy in decision making, assignment of challenging tasks which contributes to employee's motivation.	[1] [2] [3] [4] [5]

**APPENDIX 3: LIST OF CHINESE OWNED BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION  
FIRMS**

<b>NO.</b>	<b>COMPANY NAME</b>	<b>NCA CATEGORY</b>
1.	China Wu Yi (Kenya) Co. Ltd	BUILDING
2.	China Jiangxi International Ltd	BUILDING
3.	China Zhongxing Construction Company	BUILDING
4.	China Communications Construction (K) Company Limited	BUILDING
5.	Shengli Engineering Construction (Group) Company Limited of Shengli Oilfield	BUILDING
6.	Anhui Engineering Construction Group	BUILDING
7.	China Railway No.10	BUILDING
8.	China Overseas Engineering Group Co. Ltd	BUILDING
9.	China National Aero-Technology International Engineering Corporation	BUILDING
10.	China Hebei Water Conservancy Hydropower (k) Co. Ltd	BUILDING
11.	China Fushun No.1 Building Engineering Co. Ltd	BUILDING
12.	China Express International (K) Limited	BUILDING
13.	China Engineering Ltd	BUILDING
14.	China Building Technology	BUILDING
15.	China Construction Engineering Kenya	BUILDING
16.	China Dalian International E.T.C.G Ltd	BUILDING
17.	China Gezhouba Group Co. Ltd Kenya	BUILDING

**Source: National Construction Authority (2014)**