

**QUALITY OF WORK LIFE AND COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AT
THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, KENYA**

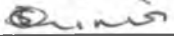
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**A Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements of the Award of the Degree of Master of Business
Administration (MBA), School of Business, University of Nairobi**

NOVEMBER, 2012

DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been submitted or presented for examination in any other university, either in part or as a whole.

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

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this research Project and the whole MBA Program would not have been possible if it were not for the assistance of certain people in my life. To Almighty God for ensuring that I had perfect health and strength throughout the period of my MBA Programme, I say thank you.

To my supervisor, Mr. Eliud Mududa, you have helped me push through. Thank you for the prompt turnaround times, positive feedback, encouragement and direction you provided me in ensuring that this research is a success. To my friends especially Abigael and Ruth, colleagues at work, family and extended family, that have been there to support me. Your support from the platform gave me courage and strength throughout.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the best and wonderful son in the world, Fidel. Only you know what a rollercoaster ride it has been. You are the fuel that kept me going when I often thought of chickening out. Thank you for believing in me. Your sacrifices have made it possible for me to complete this project and the MBA.

ABSTRACT

Quality of work life is proposed as one of the method that an organization can use to enhance its employees' productivities in order to gain competitive advantage. This requires continuous monitoring of employees attitudes to ensure that positive attitudes are maintained at all times; which can be achieved by organizations inculcating quality of work life concept in their work designs. The purpose of this research is an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between quality of work life and competitive advantage and whether by enhancing quality of work life of employees an organization can indeed gain a competitive edge over its competitors.

The study identifies four important variables whose existence/non-existence would determine the quality of work life enjoyed by employees, namely, working conditions, adequate and fair compensation, training and development and opportunity for growth. This was followed by face to face interviews with five senior top officials of the Ministry of Finance. The data collected was then analyzed using content analysis and presented as descriptive notes.

The study established that the availability and functionality of dimensions of quality of work life in the Ministry of Finance impacts on employees' wellbeing whose competencies are used as tools for gaining competitive advantages. This is based on the premise that when quality of work life is available and functional in an organization, it creates positive employee attitude which transforms into enhanced work performance and increased productivity. The research study also found that though the working conditions are good, they are not optimal, hence this affects the productivity of employees and ultimately the efficiency of the organization.

The study further established that the Ministry's compensation in terms of salaries, allowances and fringe benefits are both adequate and fair in relation to the private sector compensation and the economic situations prevailing in the country presently. Indeed all higher level management are well paid than lower level employees. Although the Ministry provides competitive opportunities for its staff to undergo internal and external training it must, however, be recognized that, those employees who solely rely on the Ministry to be trained and developed may lose because promotions do not come always. The study noted that employees in the lower level management have little opportunity to fully utilize their newly acquired skills and knowledge because they have limited scope of responsibility.

Moreover, the study found that the Ministry provides employees with competitive and equal opportunities for growth through internal promotion or redeployments, which are available for all the staff who meet the necessary qualifications. This research adds to the existing literature which suggests that if properly conducted, performance oriented programs such as quality of work life would enhance an organization's competitiveness.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The privatization of the country's economy and the associated increased competition in the various industrial sectors has resulted in the demand for increased employee productivity and corporate performance, and thus, the need for developing knowledge on using performance-oriented programs to enhance both employee and organizational performances. There is no doubt therefore, that organizations in Kenya, as it is with those in other developing economies, are faced with a highly competitive world economy underlined by various technological revolutions and corresponding changes in people's values and expectations. Each of these factors represents challenges which necessitate the development of more flexible and democratic forms of work organization. In meeting this challenge, there is the need to re-examine not only organizational structures and processes, but also those aspects of work life that incorporate and support the creation of positive organizational values to enhance employee-management relationship.

"Quality of work life" is an important concept that an organization can use to enhance its employees' productivities in order to gain competitive advantage in the industrial environments of fast developing economies. The attainment of such competitive advantage could be linked to the attitudinal characteristics of employees influenced by their organizational experiences, which could impact either positively or negatively on organisational productivity, performance and reputation. Positive attitudes of employees can be developed when employers satisfy their various needs continuously. Positive impacts such as high commitment and loyalty may lead to increasing performance through hard work while negative attitudes such as absenteeism, pilfering among others can result in poor performance. The development of positive employees' attitudes can,

thus, be achieved by organizations inculcating the quality of work life concept in their work designs. In other words, the organizational environment must have the capacity to satisfy meaningfully an employee's organizational and personal needs, and also the ability to shape organizational values that better support and promote employees' health and well-being, job security, job satisfaction, competence development and balance between work and non-work life (Aryeetey and Sanda, 2012).

The Ministry of Finance's performance has been wanting and the top management of the Ministry needs to recognize this fact. It is also evident that if properly conducted, performance oriented programs such as quality of work life would result in substantial return on investment by increasing productivity, decreasing costs and preventing accidents and wastages (Saufi and Balakrishnan). It is therefore suggested that the Ministry considers the implementation of such programs and evaluate their effects on its performance and competitiveness.

1.1.1 Concept of Competitive Advantage

One of the fundamental missions of strategic management research is to investigate and explain differences in performance among firms. The reigning incumbent explanation for heterogeneity of firm performance is based on the concept of competitive advantage (Wiggins, 1997). The concept of competitive advantage has a long tradition in the strategic literature. Ansoff (1965), define competitive advantage as "... (to) isolate characteristics of unique opportunities within the field defined by the product-market scope and the growth. It seeks to identify particular properties of individual product markets which will give the firm a strong competitive position. South (1981), drawing on the work of the McKinsey & Co. Consulting Firm in the late 1970s, defined competitive

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advantage as the “philosophy of choosing only those competitive arenas where victories are clearly achievable.”

According to Porter (1985), a firm may possess only two possible competitive advantages, a cost advantage or a differentiation advantage. Others, particularly, proponents of the resource-based view of the firm have extended the definition to include a wider range of possible advantages such as physical capital (Williamson, 1975), human capital (Becker, 1964), technological opportunities and learning (Teece, 1986), and organizational capital (Tomer, 1987)..

1.1.2 Quality of Work Life

Organizations are experiencing increased turbulence in the world of business, mainly due to factors such as globalization, information technology, world business competitiveness and scarcity of natural resources. This has changed employees’ outlook of how a good company is defined. According to Sheel, Sindhwani, Goel and Pathak (2012), the trend in past was to include financial figures in defining a ‘good company’. Latest trends like, ethics, quality of work life and job satisfaction are now being considered important predictors of sustainability and viability of business organizations.

The evolution of quality of work life began as early as 1900’s with F.W. Taylor’s scientific management principles which created a new awareness regarding human resources, who were earlier considered as mere instruments of production ready to work from dawn to dusk under whatever conditions and being motivated by the lure of money (Ganguly, 2010). In 1944, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) adopted the Philadelphia Declaration’s principles, which made improving the quality of work life a

priority and committed all its member nations to achieving this goal through public policies and programmes. However, the term gained importance in the late 1960s as a way of concern to positively influence the quality of a person's work experience. In 1972, at the first International Quality of Work Life conference held in Toronto, Louis Davis introduced the concept of quality of work life. Sheel *et al*, suggest that until the mid 1970s, employer's concern was still on work design and working conditions improvement.

The next decade of 1980s, saw the concept including other aspects that affect employees' job satisfaction and productivity such as reward systems, physical work environment, employee involvement, right and esteem needs (Cummings and Worley, 2005). In Kenya, according to Kavalu (2009), quality of work life movement is still young. Kavalu, however, states that as more organizations modernize the need to embrace involvement and participative management techniques, the more quality of work life is apparently taking root. Job satisfaction and other human resource strategies are increasingly being used in organizations to retain highly motivated employees.

1.1.3 Ministry of Finance in Kenya

The Ministry of Finance derives its mandate from the Constitution of Kenya. Based on this mandate the Ministry's functions are strategic in several ways: According to the Ministry's website, the Ministry is charged with the responsibility of formulating financial and economic policies. It is also responsible for developing and maintaining sound fiscal and monetary policies that facilitate socio - economic development. Another strategic function include management of revenues, expenditures and borrowing by the government and developing sound fiscal policies that ensure sustainable budget deficits.

Others are provision of IT, insurance, pensions, procurement, clearing and forwarding services, and divestiture services among others to other government ministries/departments among others. The Ministry's Mission is' "to create an enabling environment for accelerated and sustained economic growth through pursuit of prudent economic, fiscal and monetary policies and coordination of government financial operations". Among its core values is the recognition that staff is its key asset and hence continue to create conducive working environment for all staff by adopting the best work practices in the public sector through training and other forms of motivation so that they can deliver services to its customers.

1.2 Research Problem

Organizations are experiencing increased turbulence in the world of business. This has changed employees' outlook of how a good company is defined. The trend in the past has been to include financial figures in defining a 'good company'. Latest trends like, ethics, quality of work life and job satisfaction are now being considered important predictors of sustainability and viability of business organizations. Managers are therefore facing havoc as they struggle to define what actually quality of work life is to an employee.

In the same vein, quality of work life has become an important issue both in public and private organizations especially when it comes to productivity and efficiency among employees. Although it is argued that public organizations are not subjected to competition, this is no longer the case since the introduction of performance contracting in the year 2004. Looking at the performance evaluation reports, the Ministry of Finance has continued to perform poorly. For instance, in the financial the years 2008/2009,

2009/2010 and 2010/2011 the Ministry was ranked at positions 28, 37 and 26 respectively out of the total 46 ministries. Various studies demonstrate that improvement in quality of work life has definite potential and scope in improving productivity (Ledford and Lawler, 1982) and overall organizational effectiveness (Buchanan and Boddy, 1982) as also reducing grievances, turnover and absenteeism (Goodman, 1980) and industrial accidents (Havolovic, 1991).

In Kenya, just like many other developing countries, the need for firms to develop more flexible democratic and effective forms of work organization has reached at a critical stage. Yet, there is no research evidence in the literature providing knowledge on the impact of performance oriented programs such as quality of work life on employee productivity and organizational performance in Kenyan organizations. Further, despite the wide research on the subject matter, locally, there are generally limited studies done in the field. Kavalu (2009), in his research on quality of work life at Moi university concluded that whereas, working conditions were good, they were not optimal and hence affected productivity and the overall profitability of the organization. It is against this background that this study seeks to answer the question, can quality of work life influence competitiveness at the Ministry of Finance?

1.3 Research Objective

The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of quality of work life on the competitiveness at the Ministry of Finance, Kenya.

1.4 Value of the Study

The findings arising from this study may be utilized firstly, by a variety of organizations. Specifically, the Ministry of Finance and other government organizations can utilize the results to programme for interventions in different areas such as working conditions, job designs, work life balance etc. More importantly, this study will avail data on perceptions of quality of life by public servants that can be used not just to explain what aspects of work brings satisfaction and happiness but also to find out whether the quality of work life practices in place are in accordance to the international standards of quality of life.

The findings of this research will significantly be of value to managers of various organizations especially the human resource managers. In practice, improving the quality of work life remains a tough sell. Intuitively, many managers see the important links between quality of work life and organizational performance, however, they face barriers to progress. With the increased knowledge it will be easier for them to argue their case for taking action to improve the quality of jobs and work environment. Last but not least, the findings of this research will be useful to future researchers in the field.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter looks at the concepts quality of work life, functionality of quality of work life dimensions and competitive advantage as viewed by various scholars. Also provided in the chapter, is the empirical and theoretical review of the various concepts used in the study.

2.2 Concept of Quality of Work Life

There are many constructs in the literature about quality of work life. Hackman and Oldhams (1980) consider quality of work life as a work environment that is able to fulfill employees' personal needs by providing a positive interaction effect between their physical and mental well-beings. Therefore, quality of work life can be considered as a complex organizational issue, since it concerns the challenge of creating positive interaction between the physical and mental well beings of employees towards increased productivity (Lawler, 1982). In this regard, quality of work life represents the level of freedom that employees have in ensuring that their job functions match their personal needs and interests. The quality of work life is a program designed to increase employees' satisfaction with their work environment along with their productivity (Carrell and Heavrin, 2009).

Quality of work life is a reflection of the way of thinking about people, work and organization involving a concern for employees' wellbeing and organizational effectiveness (Cummings and Worley, 2005). In other words, quality of work life reflects employees' feelings towards their jobs, colleagues and organizations that have the capacity of generating a chain of performance reactions towards organizational growth

and profitability (Heskett, Sasser and Schlesinger, 1997). Quality of work life is, thus, a participatory organizational process in which job design and decision-making mechanisms are developed to address the needs of employees at the workplace (Robbins, 1998). Arguing from the perspectives of Lawler (2005), this means that prosperity and survival of organizations can be influenced by the way employees are treated. An employee who feels a great deal of work related well-being and little job distress is likely to have a good quality of work life (Riggio, 1990). In other words, employees experience a high quality of work life when the organization is able to get them fully committed to the realization of organizational goals (Kotzé, 2005).

Organizations are therefore, expected to treat their employees in ways that would invoke their organizational commitments and loyalty. Since employees also develop their own expectations when they join an organization (Woods, 1993), they expect the organization to provide them support and a degree of job stability (McDonald & Hite, 2005; Conlon, 2003). Serey (2006) views the quality of work life in organizations to include opportunities for employees to exercise their talents and capacities as well as face challenges and situations requiring independent initiatives and self directions. By implication, employees must see their job activities as worthwhile, understand the roles expected of them towards achieving overall goals, and have a sense of pride in their works by doing it well (Serey, 2006). Quality of work life is therefore, not a specific technique, but refers to overall satisfaction with the employee's working life and with work life balance. It thus, reflects an employee's senses of belonging to a working group and self-actualization at the workplace. The implication from these perspectives is that the quality of work life in an organization is reflected by several human factor emotional indicators that impact on employee productivity and organizational performance.

2.2.1 Working Conditions

In today's competitive business environment, employees of organizations can be viewed as representing a unique organizational resource, which can be used for gaining competitive advantage under a work environment that is conducive for human work. An organizational environment conducive for human work requires the creation of work conditions that can enhance the quality of an employee's work life in the organization towards increased performance and productivity (Rethinam and Ismail, 2008). In other words, the organizational environment must have the capacity to satisfy meaningfully an employee's organizational and personal needs, and also the ability to shape organizational values that better support and promote employees' health and well-being, job security, job satisfaction, competency development and balance between work and non-work life.

The prevailing organizational environment as well as the socioeconomic influences on the needs and expectations of employees can have either a positive or negative effect on the way they perceive the quality of their organizational life, with a consequential impact on their commitments to the organization. The organizational commitment of employees is a very essential factor that managers can use to improve organizational effectiveness. An organization's economic goals should not conflict with its goals relating to working conditions but should complement each other. Employees should not be exposed to physical conditions or work arrangements that are unduly hazardous or unhealthy. Furthermore, future standards may be imposed to increase personal comfort at work by minimizing odors, noise or visual annoyances (White and Bednar, 1991). Ensuring a safe and healthy environment is both a legal and an ethical obligation of the employer (Armstrong, 2007).

Due to the loss and suffering to be incurred by both employers and employees, health and safety policies and programmes should be a concern to all but more especially to management. The importance of health and safety measures in the workplace is for both human and business reasons. Close and continuous attention to employee health and safety is important because ill-health and injuries inflicted by a system of work cause suffering and loss to individuals and their dependents. Sufferings on employees due to no fault of theirs can have an impact on their performance. Where employees are always sick, time, money of the organization is drained, and its effects of absenteeism on productivity cannot be ignored. Indirectly, dependents of victims will have a bad impression about the organization and this can create reputational problems (Armstrong, 2007).

Quality of work life, as a philosophy, holds that employees are the most important resources an organization can have and so seeks to have an important concern for the creation of an environment devoid of stress and management of stress (Raduan, Loosee, Jegak and Khairuddin, 2006). The concept emphasizes the importance of employees having a positive attitude to work. When employees become less satisfied, they are less committed to the goals of the organization and this definitely can have an impact on organisational performance. The management of stress is both an organisational and individual responsibility. Employees must resort to relaxation, exercising, managing their time and role, developing and maintaining support groups.

Most organisations have also seen the importance of getting involved in the process of managing stress. This is so because organisations know that they partly create stress and know how ineffective employees become when they experience too much stress. Organisations should use institutional mechanisms such as proper design of jobs, and any

alternative work schedules. Organisational culture that supports presenteeism and non use of leaves should be discouraged. The organization should strive to have a culture that reinforces a healthy mix of work and non work activities and managers should play an important role of minimizing stress in the assignment of work.

It is comprehensively accepted that employees should not be exposed to working conditions which can adversely affect their physical and mental health. Consequently, the results of employer concern, union action, and legislation have promoted favorable working situations through focus on noise, illumination, workspace, accident avoidance as well as the implementation of reasonable work hours and age limits for potential employees (Orpen, 1981). Poor work-related action such as being exposed to unreasonable deadlines, unmanageable workloads or other kinds of behaviour that make the work situation difficult for the victim, and insulting remarks, excessive teasing, gossip and rumours, social isolation and exclusion. This kind of behaviour is common and has been experienced by most people at work from time to time. However there has been spectacular change in worker safety resulted from a combination of forces that include safer production technologies, union demands, improved medical procedures and antibiotics, workmen's compensation laws, and litigation.

In actual fact workplace harassment is an omnibus list of unfair and uncalled for persecution in the workplace that can take many forms in its expression and execution. It is not limited to sexual harassment, per se, though sexual harassment is a major component of the harassment that goes on in offices and other establishments, world wide. It could relate to and be caused because of sex, religion, creed, ethnicity, physical appearance or just plain dislike. It is a form of offensive treatment or behaviour, which to

a reasonable person creates an intimidating, hostile or abusive work environment. It may be sexual, racial, based on gender, national origin, age, disability, religion or a person's sexual orientation. It may also encompass other forms of hostile, intimidating, threatening, humiliating or violent behaviour, which are offensive or intimidatory in nature.

2.3.4 Adequate and fair Compensation

Wages system is of great importance in any organization. Correct amount of wage must be paid to the employees at the right time. If wages are not paid in the right manner, then employees will not work hard and as a result income will fall. Wages should be paid according to terms and conditions of employment of each worker. Wages are computed in different methods. These are time rate, piece rate, flat rate, commission, bonus rates methods (Saleemi, 1991). Waweru (1984) argued that satisfactory compensation schemes will enable the organization to attract and retain capable and competent workers. He generated the following key elements of a sound compensation policy. Levels and adequacy of wage payment generally depend on; the competitive wage rates prevailing in the labour market, wage-rates prevailing in the industry, financial position of the organization and the management policies of the organization.

Quality of work life is basically built around the concept of equitable pay. The employees must be paid their dues share in the progress and prosperity of the firm. Compensation has got twin objectives; firstly it should create a favorable environment whereby the organization utilizes the human resources to the maximum extent. Secondly, the compensation should help the employees to maintain himself and his family with a standard in the society. The organization has to ensure that there is an equitable pay

structure between different categories of employees that will commensurate their nature of jobs performed.

Assessment of efficiency level is accurate on where the output can be measured in quantitative terms. It is, therefore, proposed that improvement in the performance may be duly compensated by the increments granted yearly, while exceptional improvement in performance may be compensated by way of extra increments in the scale. Incentive pay is the extra pay that is provided for extra performance in addition to the regular pay. Incentive schemes are managerial devices aimed at increasing the productivity of employees and overall job satisfaction. Workers have raised their expectation over the years and now feel entitled to benefits that were once considered a part of the bargaining process. They want a share in the profits of the organization in addition to medical, housing and welfare facilities.

Organisations must not only be concerned with internal equity among employees but also inculcate into the compensation system that of external competitiveness. In situations where skilled employees become organizational assets, their retention must be an important issue to the organizations, and a market driven pay policy is necessary (Byars, Byars and Rue, 2010; Armstrong, 2007). Organisational equity, which concerns how profits are divided up within the organization, must be considered seriously (Byars et al., 2010). Since inequity is a matter of perceptions, employers must do their best to minimize inequities in the compensation system by using good human resource practices like job evaluations. The focus of compensation should be the total reward which consists of financial reward (base pay, variable pay, share ownership and benefits) and non-

financial reward (recognition, opportunity to develop skills, career opportunities and quality of work life) (Armstrong, 2007).

2.3.5 Training and Development

Training is the process of increasing the knowledge and skills of an employee for doing particular jobs. As the nature of work has become highly monotonous, today the worker becomes more mechanical towards the machines and lacks controls on them. According to Walton, when sufficient autonomy as well as control are given to workers, who in turn will use their innate skills and abilities for developing the organization and this will lead to improvement of quality of work life in the organization. Nowadays, workers are not only concerned with their pay prospects, but also the scope for improving their technical and academic skills. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the part of the management to provide facilities for improving such skills. The management should always think of utilizing the existing human resources for expansion and development of the organization. It attempts to provide a person with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, it improves the quality of the jobs. This motivates the employees with higher level needs.

The benefits of training according to Saleemi (1997) include: As a result the productivity and performance of the organization increases. Through training the work is standardized as taught to all employees. This helps to improve the quality of performance. Training helps to reduce the time and cost required to reach the acceptable level of performance. The workers will not waste time in learning by trial and error. Training enables the organization to fill manpower needs. It provides a reservoir of competent replacements and prevents managerial obsolescence. Trained employees make better and economical

use of materials and equipment. Wastage on materials and tools is reduced. At the same time industrial accidents and damage to equipment are minimal. Training helps to reduce the need for close and constant supervision of workers. Training helps improve job satisfaction and morale of employees. As their productivity increases there is an improvement in their earnings and career prospects.

Learning opportunities and skill discretion have also proven to have a positive influence on job satisfaction and reduced job stress which will lead to better quality of work life. The opportunity to deploy and the use of skills is associated with learning mechanisms. This utilizes especially when the job requires employees to develop cognitive skills. With respect to learning, greater autonomy on job increases the acquisition and application of knowledge whilst greater participation is held to promote cognitive growth via enhanced knowledge transfer among employees (Scully, Kirkpatrick, and Locke, 1995). Such a job environment expands knowledge base, leads to a better understanding of how the job is related to other organizational practices and a greater ability to solve problems. In such a situation, employees gain the cognitive and behavioral repertoire to predict, control or cope with uncertain demands thus decreasing the likelihood of poor quality of work life (Rethinam and Ismail, 2008).

2.3.6 Opportunity for growth

Every job should offer career development. That is an important factor which decides the quality of work life. Status improvement, more recognition from the Management, appreciations are the motivating factors for anyone to take keen interest in his job. The work atmosphere should be conducive to achieve organizational goal as well as individual development. It is a win-win situation for both the parties; an employee should

be rewarded appropriately for his good work, extra efforts, sincerity and at the same time a lethargic and careless employee should be penalized suitably; this will motivate the former to work with more zeal and deter the latter from being so, and strive for better performance.

Opportunity for growth is important for achievement oriented employees. Career refers to a sequence of positions occupied by an individual during the course of a lifetime. Career paths involve a matching process embracing the elements of individualism, organization and the broader cultural environment. Management may effectively perform this function by taking into account the life cycles of individuals, the needs of the organization and the society, and the norms and values of the broader culture. If the employees are provided opportunities for their advancement and growth and to develop their personality, they will feel highly motivated. Their commitment to the organization will also increase. If an organization does not give chance for growth and personal development it is very difficult to retain the talented personnel and also to find new talent with experience and skill.

Employees performing jobs that are very interesting can have the job impact positively on their attitudes. In this regard, employees' work should not be fragmented, deskilled, and tightly controlled, but must entail qualities, such as autonomy and variety, and also provide employees with opportunities for continued learning and development, career advancement, as well as employment and income security (White & Bednar, 1991). Employee training can be used to maximize the organization's human resources since it entails planned programmes designed to improve performance at the individual, group and or organizational levels (Cascio, 1998)

Some jobs offer opportunities for learning, research, discovery, self-development, enhancement of skills, room for innovation, public recognition, exploration, celebrity-status and loads and loads of fame. Others are monotonous, repetitive, dull, routine, no room for improvement and in every sense boring. Naturally the former ones are interesting and very much rewarding also.

2.3 Theoretical Review

Theories explain why the problem under study exists (Camp, 2001). This study is guided by four main theories namely; Herzberg hygiene factors, Maslow's hierarchy of needs, Porter's competitive strategies and the Resource Based View theories. These theories attempt to provide a plausible or rational explanation of cause-and-effect (causal) relationships among quality of work life and competitiveness

2.3.1 Herzberg hygiene factors

Motivation and hygiene factors as highlighted by Herzberg (1989) indicate two distinct lists of factors; one set of factors causes happy feeling with the workers. These are task related. The other group causes unhappiness or bad attitude and are not directly related to the job itself but to the conditions surrounding the job. The first set of factors he called job factors e.g. recognition, achievement and possibility of growth, advancement, responsibility and work itself. The second set of factors Herzberg (1989) named hygiene factors (extra job factors) for example. salary, interpersonal relations with supervisors, interpersonal relation with peers, supervisors job, company policy and administration, working conditions, factors in personal life, status and job security. Motivators refer to intrinsic factors as factors within the work itself, like the recognition of a task completed.

2.3.2 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs dwells on important human needs that need to be satisfied:-These are: Physiological Needs. These needs related to day to day living process of human beings. A person needs food, clothing, accommodation, sleep, medical treatment. These must be fulfilled for happy and comfortable life. Safety Needs Human beings need to have the safety or security in life. They must have security of job and overall environment must be stable and secure. If there is political disturbance or job insecurity, the human being will have the feeling of insecurity. Social Needs Human beings are social in nature. They cannot remain isolated from other persons. The social structure has great impact. If social set up is favorable, then they feel happy and more secured. self esteem- every person has the desire to have high status in the society.

If a person succeeds to get a better job or to become a leader, he gets more satisfaction. Self actualization means the opportunity to prove one's worth or ability. Every person has the desire that he should get that job where he can show his capabilities or qualities. If the person is not allowed to make certain decisions he will not be happy. Quality of work life can, be categorized into a lower-order and higher-order needs (Sirgy, Efraty, Siegel and Lee, 2001). The lower order aspect of "quality of work life" is comprised of employees' health and safety needs as well as their economic and family needs, while the higher-order "quality of work life" consists of the employees' social, self-esteem, self-actualization, knowledge, and aesthetic needs.

2.3.3 Porter Competitive Strategies

Discussions on sources of firm competitiveness are commonly conducted with reference to the work of Porter (1980) on generic strategies. Porter suggested three ways in which

firms can seek competitive advantage in a particular market as cost leadership (producing at the lowest cost in the industry), differentiation (offering consumers some sort of uniqueness in product or service provision that they value highly and for which they are often prepared to pay a premium price) and focus (choosing a narrow competitive scope within an industry).

2.3.4 Resource Based

According to the Resource Based view competitive advantage is dependent not on traditionally assumed bases such as natural resources, technology, or economies of scale, since these are increasingly easy to imitate, rather on the valuable and hard to imitate resources that reside within an organization. According to Itami, (1987) human capital in real sense is an 'invisible asset'. In terms of rarity: 'If the types and levels of skills are not equally distributed, such that some firms can acquire the talent they need and others cannot, then (ceteris paribus) that form of human capital can be a source of sustained competitive advantage, And in terms of inimitability, there are at least two reasons why human resources may be difficult to imitate 'First, it is difficult to grasp the precise mechanism by which the interplay of human resource practice and policies generates value...second, these HR systems are path dependent. They consist of policies that are developed over time and cannot be simply purchased in the market by competitors. Therefore, the human capital advantage depends on securing exceptional talent, or, in the familiar phrase, 'the best and the brightest (Stiles and Kulvisasachana).

2.4 Competitive Advantage

Quality of work life is an important concept that an organization can use to enhance its employees' productivities in order to gain competitive advantage in the industrial

environments of fast developing economies. The attainment of such competitive advantage could be linked to the attitudinal characteristics of employees influenced by their organizational experiences, which could impact either positively or negatively on organisational productivity, performance and reputation. Positive attitudes of employees can be developed when employers satisfy their various needs continuously. Positive impacts such as high commitment and loyalty may lead to increasing performance through hard work while negative attitudes such as absenteeism, pilfering among others can result in poor performance. The development of positive employees' attitudes can, thus, be achieved by organizations inculcating the quality of work life concept in their work designs.

Projecting from Schermerhorn's (1996) argument that the employees are influenced by the way their works are designed, and also the way they are treated, programmes should be put in place at the workplace that could ensure the positive exchange of values between the individual employee and the organization. The need for such positive exchange is justified by the observation that the presence of competent and helpful employees at the workplace is a key factor towards organisational success. Therefore, instituting quality of work life programmes to motivate employees to perform to their best abilities is very essential to the organization. This observation is qualified by the presumption that the quality of work life is the perceptions to which the organizational environment meets the full range of employees' needs for their wellbeing at work (Sirgy et al, 2001; Cascio, 1998). “

The importance of the human capital pool (the collection of employee capabilities), and how it is managed through HR processes, becomes apparent, then, to the strategic aims of

the organization (Stiles and Kulvisaechana). This emphasis on human capital also chimes with the emphasis in strategy research on ‘core competencies,’ where economic rents are attributed to ‘people-embodied skills’ (Hamel and Prahalad, 1994). The increasing importance of the RBV has done much to promote human resource management in general and human capital management in particular, and to bring about a convergence between the fields of strategy and HRM (Wright, Dunford, and Snell., 2001).

Joshi, Leichne, Melanson, Pruna, Sager, Story and Williams (2002) allude that the argument for work life programs being a source of competitive advantage often hinges on the company’s ability to show significant gain as a result of these programs. They argue that many corporate decisions rely on a positive net present value to be shown for any project to move forward. However, they provide literature showing why most successful companies have attempted to develop a justification for these programmes: Since work-life programs are a part of a company’s compensation and culture, their benefits are most often seen on the human resources front. One of the first ways that firms have shown a benefit is in recruiting. Effective work-life programs are an effective marketing method for attracting employees.

Additionally, oftentimes job seekers are drawn to “Best Place to Work” lists that are published in magazines such as *Fortune* and *Working Mother* (Joshi, et al, (2002). In fact, a study by Vanderbilt University and Hewitt Associates found the companies on the “Best Place to Work” list outperformed similar companies that were not on it, and also did better than the broad market, showing “substantial financial performance advances. Consequently, once potential applicants are recruited, work-life programs are often a deal

maker. They often sway a potential applicant's choice of job offers to the company offering the best programs.

Most importantly, effective work-life programs help forge a symbiotic relationship between an employer and employee that leads to mutual benefits. Employees who are better able to balance the demands on their time are more satisfied and content. This in turn leads to real benefits for the employer in terms of productivity gains, lowered turnover rate, a stronger team spirit, and loyalty to the employer. Operationally, a lower turnover rate leads to reduction in new employee training costs, as well as the more elusive costs associated with informal training that existing employees provide to new team members. While these gains have been sporadically measured, no definitive studies has been able to associate performance gains directly with and thus are related to greater profitability derived from the improved efficiency of the workplace ((Joshi, *et al*, (2002).

2.5 Empirical Review

Empirical evidence also indicates that there is convergence between various facets of quality of work life and competitiveness. Findings of various studies in different Swedish organizations allude to this fact. A cross-sector study undertaken in Sweden to investigate the effects of implementing a flexible work organization on the output variable of economic performance in terms of added value, working conditions (sickness, absence and turnover), and transformation capacity and comparing these with traditional organizations indicated that flexible organizations emerged strongly as being more productive.

With regard to continuous improvement, a research team within the Programme for Learning Organisations undertook studies of continuous improvement at the National Institute for Working Life through questionnaires, case studies and action research following a major campaign by the Swedish Employers Confederation (SAF) to promote the introduction of continuous improvement. It was concluded that systematic improvement of activities are of considerable significance to firms and that technical, economic *and social* results were better than in firms that had eschewed such activities.

Hörte and Lindberg (1994) sought to investigate the performance effects of technological development and human resource management in Swedish firms using Advanced Manufacturing Technology such as computer integrated manufacturing. The research acknowledged that in technological approaches to process development, technology was introduced primarily to minimise the need for personnel, whereas the aim of (soft) HRM approaches was, rather, to use the workforce to gain competitive advantage through its skills and motivation. The latter approach still saw the need for technology, but as a tool at the disposal of workers rather than vice versa. The overall conclusion from the study, however, was that there was considerable support for the proposition that HRM approaches had a positive effect on performance, but there was no strong or consistent support that technological approaches did likewise. These findings would therefore suggest that there is some evidence of convergence between quality of work life and performance enhancement that contributes to competitiveness.

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Although research has clearly shown that improvements in aspects of the quality of working life are compatible with improved performance, there is also evidence of a negative relationship between competitiveness and quality of work life. Research has

shown that productivity has increased markedly in Swedish industry in the 1990s. Growth rates have increased accordingly, and in the latter part of the decade unemployment had started to fall. On the other hand, the level of long-term sickness and industrial injuries has increased. Barklöf (2000) also reports increases in the number of cases of personnel burnout as well as organisational activities severely stretched due to lack of staff. It could thus be stated that the trend to downsizing and leanness has frequently resulted in near organisational demise (Huzzard, 2003).

Westerlund, Ahlborg-Hulten, Alfredsson, Hertting and Theorell (2000), in a summary of a number of studies on the impact of organisational change on employee health in various sectors, have shown that negatively perceived changes such as programmes demanding cutbacks and closures are generally associated with worse working conditions and lower indices of physiological well-being. The most apparent effects are those on blood cholesterol levels that clearly increase the risks of heart disease. On the other hand, the study qualified its overall summary by stating that although moves towards lean organisation involved fewer employees and therefore an increased intensity in the pace and complexity of work for those employees who remained, there may be positive consequences if change programmes are implemented sensitively and attempts at providing greater empowerment, job enlargement and competence development are genuinely proceeded with.

In a subsequent project, Wallenberg (2001) sought to investigate the implications of competition on working life in the health care sector. Two basic hypotheses formed the point of departure: first, that competition had no consequences on working life, and second that competition had consequences and that these could be positive or negative

respectively. The study showed support for the second hypothesis that competition could have positive implications for employees through increased local independence, more creative and adaptive problem solving and potentials for development on-the-job. In contrast to many of the studies reported on here, therefore, Wallenberg has shown that organisational change driven by performance motives may converge with quality of work life improvements. The increased uncertainty and reduced job security of the newly emergent labour market of temporary and scattered work practices have clearly had a negative impact on psychological well-being (Barklöf, 2000; Sverke, Hellgren, Näswall and Braun, 2000; Westerlund, Ahlberg-Hultén, Alfredsson, Hertting, and Theorell, 2000).

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CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter explains the research methodology that was used in the study. Specifically the research design included the selection of the respondents, data gathering and discussion on the analysis methods.

3.2 Research Design

Given the nature of the research problem, the study adopted case study method. According to Yin (2003) a case study design should be considered when; the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions, one cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study, one wants to cover contextual conditions because he or she believes they are relevant to the phenomenon under study and the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. Neale, Thapa and Boyce (2006) say that a case study is about something unique, special, or interesting – stories can be about individuals, organizations, processes, programs, neighbourhood, institutions, and events (Yin, 2003). In this case the story was about whether indeed quality of quality of work life can influence competitiveness at the Ministry of Finance.

3.3 Data Collection

Primary data was collected from the top five senior officials of the Ministry of Finance. However, according to Yin a hallmark of case study research is the use of multiple data sources, a strategy which also enhances data credibility. Other potential data sources therefore included, but were not limited to: documentation, archival records, interviews, physical artifacts, direct observations, and participant-observation. The researcher

designed an interview guide listing all the questions and issues to be explored. After obtaining permission from the University and the Ministry the researcher sought the consent of the respondents themselves for an interview.

3.4 Data Analysis

The researcher used content analysis to analyze the data obtained from the interview guide to determine the influence of quality of work life on competitiveness at the Ministry of Finance, Kenya. Content analysis is a systematic qualitative description of the composition of objects or material or the study. It involves observation and detailed description of items or things that comprise the object of the study (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). The procedural process for the content analysis study is designed to achieve the highest objective analysis possible and involves identifying the body of material to be studied and defining the characteristics or qualities to be examined (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001).

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of study findings on the availability and functionality of quality of work life dimensions like working environment, adequate and fair compensation, training and development and opportunity for growth in the Ministry of Finance from the perspective of employees whose competencies could be used as tools for gaining competitive advantages. This is based on the premise that when quality of work life is available and functional in an organization, it creates positive employee attitude which transforms into enhanced work performance and increased productivity.

4.2 Response Rate

Five (5) respondents drawn from the Ministry were interviewed on the study. These were Director of Administration, Investment Secretary, Director of Budget, Accountant General and Internal Auditor. The officers were found to be appropriate for the study as they are not only the senior most in Ministry but also are in charge of core departments whose functions are strategic in several ways. How these departments deliver on their functions therefore impact on overall competitiveness of the Ministry and the Kenyan economy as a whole.

4.3 Profile of Respondents

All the respondents had university education and others had additional qualification such as Master Degree and postgraduate diplomas. All the respondents had also worked for over five (5) years in the Ministry. This phenomenon may further explain the low turnover rates, as the years of service implies the average length of stay in the Ministry.

However, most respondents conveyed that employees working under them sometimes opt to transfer to other ministries to have a change of environment.

4.4 Competitive Advantage

Majority of the respondents indicated that the quality of life that the Ministry offers its employees is an important requirement for enhancing employee productiveness which contributes significantly to the organizational effectiveness, in terms of gaining competitive advantage over others. In the realization of such organization objective, the quality of life desired in the organization must be seen as visible in the employees' shared values and expectations. Such visibilities in employees' expectations are also influenced and shaped by the prevailing flexibility and characteristics of the employees' work environment.

4.5 Working Environment

Majority of the respondents indicated that employees in the Ministry of Finance are fairly satisfied with their working environment; however, they suggested that there is still need to improve the conditions. They confirmed that employees are at least provided with necessary tools and equipment to do their jobs, however they pointed out that not all employees have all what they need to do their jobs. If the Ministry was to provide every employee with all they need to do their jobs, it will be expensive. To solve this, working equipment and facilities are usually shared. From observation by the researcher the general working environment is fair. The lighting system is good, working rooms are well ventilated as in addition to windows they also have fans. There are no generally health hazards such as sharp items, slippery floor among others.

From observation by the researcher, working space in most offices is squeezed with a lot of files containing documents occupying fairly a lot of working space causing congestion in most offices. There are many redundant office equipment which in most cases are not working but have not been repaired for long but were kept in these offices thereby occupying too much space. When machines break down it takes long for them to be fixed. Prodding the respondents on the subject, they acknowledged that employees have to wait for a long time before these machines can be replaced or the necessary inputs such as ink can be bought. This slows down the work and employees sit idle doing nothing.

From observation and employees health records, most employees are not usually stressed by workload, however respondents pointed out that there was a fair percentage of stress experienced by employees which was not solely contributed by the amount of work, but by factors that cause the work to accumulate and pile up. Such factors included equipment that is in bad condition, such as damaged computers and photocopiers. Accumulation of work was also caused by absence of stores such as printing papers, ink. By the time these problems are finally solved, work would have accumulated such that it causes stress to accomplish it. Respondents also pointed out that work overload in the Ministry are also caused by the fact that some employees are attending classes and at the same time working. This means that they have a lot of responsibilities as compared to the time available for them to tackle these assignments.

From the review of written documents it was established that if a requisition is made to acquire certain items or a voucher is to be signed, it takes a very long period of time than expected. This is because, these documents have to be signed by various signatories who, may at that time be there or not. This causes delays and makes a lot of work to stand still.

In some cases, employees have to personally follow up their requisitions or documents to make sure that they are being attended to and that they do not get lost.

4.6 Adequate and Fair Compensation

Respondents acknowledged that there is some equity in employee compensation. This means that the rewards that employees get are in a way related to their input and grade. However this is not absolute as there are other rewards that are not consistent with the job evaluation. Most employees earn enough to cater for their needs. All respondents stated that they believe that salary levels should be mandated. There should be a uniform or consistent payment guideline for employers to follow for registered social employees.

The respondents pointed out that compensation alone cannot adequately take care of all employee needs. As a result of this, most employees operate other businesses as an additional source of income. It was discovered that senior management have no problem with benefits and allowances such as housing allowance, travelling allowance however, lower level employees get small amounts of these allowances. There exists a very big gap between the different pay level.

4.7 Training and Development

Most employees in the Ministry have taken the challenge to advance their education and are therefore pursuing degrees and master degrees. In addition the Ministry provides employees with competitive opportunities for them to undergo internal and external training which are either fully sponsored or partially sponsored. At times the Ministry gives time off for staff to attend private training and recognizes them when acquired through reimbursement of cost incurred. However it must be recognized that, those

employees who solely rely on the Ministry to be trained and developed may lose because promotions do not come always.

Responses showed that employees in the lower level management have little opportunity to fully utilize their acquired skills and knowledge because they have limited scope of responsibility. Those employees higher in the ladder utilize their skill and knowledge better because they have a lot of responsibilities. They have also held most positions in the past and have developed the skills well. They are therefore more experienced than the lower level management.

4.8 Opportunities for Growth

From the available reports and interview with the respondents, promotion is mostly linked to capabilities of individuals and duration of service in the Ministry. This means that those employees who have served in the Ministry for long are likely to be promoted as opposed to those who have not worked for long. Those individuals with higher academic qualifications are also promoted faster than those with lower academic credentials. However some of the respondents placed the heavy burden of development on the employees themselves rather than on the Ministry and added that the employees should take personal efforts and decide to develop themselves as organizational efforts alone cannot develop them to the fullest.

Most of the respondents acknowledged that the Ministry does not provide employees at lower levels with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, their jobs are routine and boring. This does not motivate the employees with higher level needs. As the nature of work has become highly monotonous, employees have

become more mechanical towards their work and hence lack control over them. Furthermore, survivors of downsizing have to do more with fewer resources, increased work load and uncertainty regarding task performance. However they equally acknowledged that the Ministry needs to provide them with opportunities for growth, however it does not take into account the life cycles and need for performance oriented employees.

4.9 Summary of Analysis

The analysis indicates that the practical functionalities of most quality of work life dimensions in the Ministry are at least available and favourable. These include good working conditions, adequate and fair compensation system, good personal relationships among organizations staff, programmes to enhance employee career advancement and continued employees' training and development among other. These dimensions in essence support the creation of positive organizational values, not only to enhance employees' commitment, job satisfaction and productivity, but also to create good employee-management relationship towards increased organizational performances, thus, impacting on employees' well-being and organizational effectiveness.

4.10 Discussion

Organizations can reap considerable performance advantages through increasing the quality of working life through provision of good working conditions, competitive remuneration packages, provision of opportunities for training and career growth and delegated participation, among others, however Levine, (1997) indicates that there is considerable evidence that some firms are actually eschewing such approaches in

deference to short run pressure for immediate results on the 'bottom-line' of the profit and loss account and rapid.

From the study it can be seen that the availability of safety rules and welfare section within the Human Resource Department is indicative of the Ministry's awareness of the need to compliment the attainment of organizational goals with improvements in employees' working conditions. Therefore, the Ministry is conscious of the need to have a healthy workforce, and which workforce comprises of dedicated employees with the capacity of exercising their skills towards achieving work goals. This is in line with the views of Armstrong (2007) that this awareness is derived from the organizations' realization that the provision of good work environment is both a legal and an ethical obligation of the organization as well as a basis of competitive advantage. Additionally the labour law (employment Act) prescribes the right of employees to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions.

The study has shown that employees encounter minimal job stress at the workplace and that the work environment in organization appears to have at least some job flexibilities that allow for employee work enlargement, rotation and enrichment. This situation does not affect the performance of employees. This is supported by the views of Riggio, (1990) who noted that employees who feel a great deal of work related well-being and little job distress are likely to have a good quality of work life. While Boone and Kurtz, (2009) also observed that job flexibility enhances the employees' skills and self-responsibilities, and also the capacity to use his/her given discretion to enhance self-performance and the organization performance.

The study participants' perception of adequate and fair compensation, that the Ministry is able to fully get their employees committed towards the realization of organizational goals. The employees' perceived availability of "adequate and fair compensation" in the organizations indicates that employees see themselves as justifiably remunerated in return for the knowledge, skills and experiences they input in organizations. The relevance of these findings is underlined by Robbins's (1998) argument for the need to view adequacy and fairness of compensation which allows for the development of positive feeling for addressing the financial needs of employees. This means that organizations must endeavor to identify employees' needs as they arise, and incorporate such needs in the jobs they design for their employees. Lawler (2005) indicates that the way employees are treated in the work environment influences organizational prosperity and survival

From the study findings it was noted that there is a general feeling of satisfaction with provision of training opportunities which is reflected in their willingness to spend extra time at job. It was observed that positive quality of work life acts as a motivation behind willingly working for long hours that was enjoyed by the executives and the Ministry's employees. This is consistent with the views of Cannings and Montmarquette, (1991) who noted that provision of training and career advancement opportunities to the employees and their own ambition or the desire to excel acts as a catalyst for advancement in career.

From the analysis of the study it can be concluded that for employees to become innovative, creative and adaptive to the business environment, they need to be fully developed. As skilled seeks out innovative and cost effective way that finally yields superior performance. Furthermore for employees to be secure in their jobs, they need to be well

developed and beside the Ministry cannot dispense so easily an employee who is strategic in the organization by his outstanding performance or possession of some technical unique skill. This view is also shared by Lawler (2005) in his study on managers and executives have concluded a definite relationship between skills and work performance or achievement.

From the study it can be noted that the Ministry provides employees with opportunities for growth which are competitive and fair. However it does not provide employees with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, their jobs are routine and boring. This does not motivate the employees with higher level needs. On the same subject Rethinam and Ismail, (2008) noted that if the employees are provided with opportunities for their advancement and growth and to develop their personality, they will feel highly motivated. Their commitment to the organization will also increase.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to discuss and draw conclusions and recommendations on the findings of the main objective of the study which was to examine the quality of work life and competitive advantage and answers to interview guide pertaining to working environment, adequate and fair compensation, training and development and opportunity for growth.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The study established that the availability and functionality of dimensions of quality of work life in the Ministry of Finance impacts on employees' wellbeing whose competencies are used as tools for gaining competitive advantages. This is based on the premise that when quality of work life is available and functional in an organization, it creates positive employee attitude which transforms into enhanced work performance and increased productivity. The research study established that there is continued effort by the Ministry to enhance its competitive advantage through improvement of dimensions of quality of work life by consistent review of compensation system, institution of mechanisms to ensure employee trust in the Ministry's leadership, sustenance of good personal relationships among organizations staff, programmes to enhance employee career advancement, improvement in the workplace's health and safety standards, continued employees' training and development, as well as the provision of good leadership by managers.

The research study found out that though the working conditions are good, although, not optimal, hence this affects the productivity of employees and ultimately the efficiency of the organization. Moreover the unutilized capacity of workers due to delays in replacement of damaged equipment can cost the organization a lot. Nonetheless the Ministry of Finance can exploit the organization working conditions in such a way that they yield competitive advantage for it.

The study established that the Ministry's compensation in terms of salaries, allowances and fringe benefits are both adequate and fair in relation to the private sector compensation and the economic situations prevailing in the country presently. Indeed all higher level management are well paid than lower level employees. This is partly because they are more experienced, have many responsibilities or have served longer in the organization; are more qualified, and experienced. However the lower level employees are given adequate opportunities to move to grow in their career so as to earn the equivalent compensation.

The study found out that the Ministry provides competitive opportunities for its staff to undergo internal and external training. However it must be recognized that, those employees who solely rely on the Ministry to be trained and developed may lose because promotions do not come always. Job enrichment and enlargement or even job rotation may not be a good alternative as their applicability is limited in certain circumstances as it may arise from downsizing or from natural human resource attrition. The study also established that employees in the lower level management have little opportunity to fully utilize their newly acquired skills and knowledge because they have limited scope of responsibility. Those employees higher in the ladder utilize their skill and knowledge

better because they have a lot of responsibilities. They have also held most positions in the past and have developed the skills well. They are therefore more experienced than the lower level management.

The study found out that the Ministry provides employees with competitive and equal opportunities for growth through internal promotion or redeployments, which are available for all the staff who meet the necessary qualifications. In most cases the promotions are done through Public Service Commission. The study also established that the Ministry does not provide employees at lower levels with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, their jobs are routine and boring. This does not motivate the employees with higher level needs. As the nature of work has become highly monotonous, employees have become more mechanical towards their work and lack control over them.

5.3 Conclusion

The Ministry enhances its competitive advantage through the institution and regular review of its compensation system, institution of mechanisms to good leadership styles and ethics, sustenance of good personal relationships among organizations staff, programmes to enhance employee career advancement, improvement in the workplace's health and safety standards and continued employees' training and development.

Though the working conditions in the Ministry are good, they are not optimal; and this affects the productivity of employees and hence the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Finance can exploit the organization working conditions in such a way that it yields competitive advantage for it.

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Comparatively the Ministry's compensation is both adequate and fair in relation to the private sector compensation and the economic situations prevailing in the country presently. It's noteworthy that higher level management employees are well paid than subsequent lower level employees; however this is partly because they are more experienced, have many responsibilities or have served longer in the organization; are more qualified, and experienced.

The Ministry provides competitive opportunities for its staff to undergo internal and external training which are either fully sponsored or partially sponsored. At time the Ministry gives time off for staff to attend private training and recognizes them when acquired through reimbursement of cost incurred. The Ministry provides employees with opportunities for growth through internal promotion or redeployments, which are available for all the staff who meet the necessary qualifications. In most cases the promotions are done through Public Service Commission. However it does not provide employees with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, their jobs are routine and boring.

5.4 Recommendations

The Ministry' needs to further enhance its competitive advantage through institution of continuous review of: compensation system, improvement of leadership style and ethos, sustenance of good interpersonal relationships among staff, initiatives to enhance employee career advancement, improvement in the workplace's health and safety standards and continued employees' training and development,

There is need for faulty equipment and facilities to be repaired so as to be put them in use. This will reduce the idle time wasted due to default machines. The machines that cannot be repaired should be disposed off so that they don't occupy space unnecessarily in the offices. This will reduce congestion in the offices.

The Ministry needs to fully embrace the new technology by storing its data electronically as it's easy to keep and occupies small space. Backup storage facilities such as DVDs, CDs, Flash disks and even cloud computing can be utilized to store documents. There is need to address the inconveniences that arise due to delays caused by the organization bureaucracy by decentralizing power and authority. This will reduce the bureaucratic and lengthy procedures that tend to waste time and cause delays. There is also need to use employees' compensation in a way that it yields competitive advantage to the Ministry by attracting capable employees to the Ministry; motivating employees to give superior performance and retain employee services over an extended period of time.

Nowadays, workers are not only concerned with their pay prospects, but also the scope for improving their technical and academic skills. Therefore, it becomes imperative on the part of the management to provide facilities for improving such skills. The management needs to consider utilizing the existing human resources for expansion and development of the employees' skills. In addition the Ministry needs to avail more opportunities to employees to train and utilize the skills acquired as competitive advantage also arises from capabilities of the employees. This will encourage innovation and creativity among the employees hence ensuring that the Ministry gains competitive advantage. The Ministry further needs to enlarge and enrich employees' jobs so as to

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provide them with exciting, interesting stimulating and challenging work. In other words, their jobs are routine and boring. This does not motivate the employees with higher level needs.

Last but not least, this research study focused on only four dimensions of quality of work life and their influence on competitiveness. For comprehensive findings there is need for further research on the remaining aspects of quality of work life, with a bigger sample than is the case in this study. This will enable the findings of the study to be generalized to other organizations.

5.5 Limitations of the Study

There were various limitations while undertaking the study. Notably, the use of the qualitative interview method could have led to interviewer bias. However, this was managed by the interviewer not making her own vested interests known and to stay as focused as possible on the objective of the study. There was also the potential for sample bias, as only five out of the twelve heads of departments were targeted. This was due to the fact that the chosen sample are the main players whose performance or non performance impact heavily on the Ministry.

That notwithstanding, the research is dependent on the respondent's ability to provide adequate insights during the interviews. Hence the interviewee provided all the guidance that the respondents may have required in order to give adequate response. Last but not least, the research focused on key top official of the Ministry of Finance and the results may not be applicable to other ministries not only in Kenya but also in other countries.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

RE- OUALITY OF WORK LIFE AS A TOOL FOR COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE AT THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE, KENYA

I am a student of Nairobi University in the school of Business and Economics. Am currently carrying out a research in partial fulfilment of a Masters Degree course in Business Administration. I kindly request to be provided with the necessary data to make this research a success and assure you that the content collected during this interview will be handled as confidential and will only be used for the purposes of this study.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. How old are you?
2. What is your level of education?
3. what is your job category
4. How long have you been working for this Organization?

SECTIONB: COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE

1. Looking at the performance evaluation report (which is a form of measure of competitiveness among ministries), the Ministry of Finance has continued to perform poorly, how would you explain this scenario in respect of the quality of work life of employees in the Ministry?
2. In your own understanding how do you think the employees working under you perceive their quality of work life and how has this perception impacted on their performance and the overall performance of the Ministry?

SECTION C: Working Environment

1. Explain whether the employees working under you are satisfied with the working conditions provided by the organization.
2. How motivating is this work environment to employees? Can it propel the employees to work more to the extent that the Ministry can improve its current ranking?
3. How do the other departments in the organization cooperate with each other? Is there a sense of belongingness and an urge to work together to achieve the Ministry's goal and overall improvement in the performance
4. Is there freedom to offer comments and suggestions?
5. Explain the relationship with colleagues and supervisors in the organization

SECTION B: Adequate and Fair Compensation

1. Are employees given adequate and fair compensation for the work? According to your understanding, is what they earn on the job equivalent to the efforts they put in?
2. Is what they earn for their job adequate to take care of all their needs?
3. Do you think that what they earn is in a way related to what other employees in other organizations doing similar jobs earn?
4. In your own understanding kindly explain what the employees are currently earning (salary, allowances, overtime and other benefits) is adequate enough to propel them to put in more efforts in the performance of their work?

SECTION C: Training and Development

1. Explain how training programs helps employees to achieve the required skill for performing the job efficiently?
2. After the employees have attended these training, does the organization give them the opportunity to fully utilize the acquired skills and knowledge.
3. How would you rate the contribution of the training programs on the overall performance of the Ministry and its competitiveness in this era of performance contracting?

SECTION D: Opportunity for growth

1. Does the job of your officers require that they keep learning new things?
2. After training are the employees given the opportunity for promotion in order to increase their capacity in any other way?
3. How are the employees coping with the current dynamic information technology world of today? Explain
4. How would you rate the contribution of the opportunity for growth given to employees in relation to their performance and overall competitiveness of the Ministry?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION