The Perceptions of Workers toward their Employer in Terms of Work Relationships for Enhancing Organizational Performance: A Study of Compassion International (CI), Karen, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study was about the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance in Compassion International Karen, Ngong road, Kenya. The purpose of the study was to explore how the employees perceived their employer in terms of work relationships: How the employer relates with her employees; Lastly, how the relationships between the employees and employer can enhance organizational performance in Compassion International organization. Qualitative method of research was used to enable the researcher comprehend the relevance of relationship of workers and employers towards their performances in the organization. The basic research questions were two: RQ1: What are the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? RQ2: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer for improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? Data was collected from 15 respondents who were workers in CI in three departments. Technique used was face-to-face interview and the tools are interview guide and field notes. Based on the findings of the study, the relationship of workers with their employer was generally positive. Thus one of the predicaments was workers are living far away from work place, that becomes an impediment towards their relationship with the employer and performances. The researcher used purposive sampling means, because it is best for this study. The design of the study was grounded theory. The analysis and interpretation was done qualitatively in order to determine themes that can explain the perceptions of workers. The researcher chose Maslow’s theory of motivation because the study was about the perception of workers and the theory was concern about the physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization of people. The findings of the study revealed that the perceptions of workers toward their employer were generally positive. One of the weaknesses was about the policy of giving assistance to one child per needy family, sometimes; parents feel that taking one child out of many children to sponsor is as if nothing is done. Recommendations: Employer should consider workers that are living far away from work place by providing accommodation or flexible work hours. The researcher concluded that a cordial working relationship with employers will greatly improve productivity and ultimately brings growth to the organization. It’s easier to achieve goals of any organization if both employer and employee have one objective. The compassion International is a good example of this as she demonstrated caring, loving, dedicated and committed employer to her employees.

Keywords: Perceptions of workers, employer, work relationships, enhancing organizational Performance
INTRODUCTION

Most organizations are finding it difficult to be at its peak in their performances and attainment of their objectives due to a number of reasons. One of such reason is ineffective work relationships among employers and employees. The researcher has seen that in most cases, when two or more individuals come together for the purpose of carrying out jointly agreed objectives in a systematized manner in an organization, they have to agree on what they will do to bring progress to the organization itself. “There are various contending views as to what strategy should be adopted most for proper organizing and better results. The arguments have always been on whether emphasis should be on the improvement of the organizational structure, raw materials and better tools for higher productivity.” (Julson 2010, 1).

For workers, the organization serves as an important source of socio-emotional resources, such as respect, cordial relationships, and receiving care by the organization helps to meet employees’ needs for approval, esteem and connection. Maslow in his theory of motivation stressed out that in organization physiological and social needs are important because people look for love, friendship, acceptance, affection, and the opportunity to interact with others. Also individual focuses on status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments, and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige, merit pay raises, recognition, challenging tasks, participation in decision making and the chance for advancement. (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).

Based on the researcher experienced in her place of work and the descending voices of what other workers are saying concerning their employer, that employers are just using workers for their own profits but do not care about cordial relationships and needs of the workers. Thus, one begin to wonder whether relationships really matters when it comes to performing duties or if the employers really care about their workers or it is just about using them to get profit? It is against this backdrop that the study explored on the Perceptions of Workers toward their Employer in Terms of Work Relationships for Enhancing Organizational Performance to see if relationships can enhance organizational performance.
Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework is the researchers’ understanding of how the particular variables in the study connect with each other; the conceptual framework identifies the variables and maps out the actions required in the course of the study. Mcgaghie et al. (2001) stressed out that “the conceptual framework sets the stage for the presentation of the particular research question that drives the investigation being reported based on the problem statement.
Rationale

The study was focused on Compassion International (CI), Karen Ngong road Kenya. The researcher chose CI because it’s a well-established organization, an international organization which is interested in helping the less privileged in the society. The goals and objectives of CI are similar to the researcher’s desire to help the less privileged, which has led to the establishment of two Nursery/Primary and Secondary schools in the remote villages, NdingLoh and Fan Loh, in Jos Plateau State Nigeria. Hence, a study of CI would add value to the researcher’s ministry interests as well as contribute to knowledge in an area that has not been well studied.

The background of the study is about the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance in Compassion International Karen Ngong road. The study is expected to reveal the perceptions of workers toward their employer and the gaps that need to be filled to ensure that cordial relationships exist between the workers and their employer for enhancing organizational performance. Data collection was done qualitatively in three departments: Communication Department, Finance Department, and Programme Department in CI, Karen Ngong road. Ten workers were interviewed.

Most of the problems we face today in our work places is centered on poor work relationships. The study will benefit workers, employer in Compassion International Ngong road Karen and other similar organizations in Kenya and outside Kenya who will come across the study. The purpose of the study is to understand the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationship for enhancing organizational performance. The positive work relationship between the employer and employees is very important both in private and public sectors. The study will be conducted in three departments in CI which are: Communication Department, Finance Department, and Programme Department.

Been a worker with the government for about twenty seven years the researcher has seen that the relationships between employer and employees are not always cordial and encouraging because the workers needs are not always met sometimes until they go on strike action before they are heard. So based on this experience the researcher saw that as a gap and that prompted the researcher to research on the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationship.

To understand the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationship for enhancing organizational performance, the following research question guided the study:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance?

RQ2: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer for improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance?
Objectives of the Study

1. The objective of this study is to understand the perceptions of workers towards their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance. It is expected that at the end of the study, data will shed light on how the relationships of the workers and their employer will improve the organizational performance.

2. The study will be helpful in identifying factors that affects work relationship and will provide suggestions and recommendations that will help other similar organizations.

The study is significant to the academic community because its findings will contribute to contemporary knowledge on the connection between organizational relationships and work performance. It will also help administrators and managers of similar organizations to treat their workers well at work. The workers of Compassion International, Karen Ngong road will also find the research findings beneficial since it will contribute to their knowledge of how to relate with one another in the organization with a view to enhance work performance. Additionally, the study will serve as a reference tool for future researchers who will wish to do studies in a related field. Finally, it will encourage CI leaders to take precaution in ensuring that there are cordial relationships between the employer and the employees.

Theory of the study

This study adopted human theory of motivation by Abraham H. Maslow because a theory in research will help provide the idea to name what was observed. The researcher saw the theory as relevant to this research because the study is about the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationship for enhancing organizational performance. Maslow’s studies into human motivation led him to propose a theory of needs based on a hierarchical model with basic needs at the bottom and higher need at the top. He stressed out that people tend to satisfy their needs systematically, starting with the basic physiological needs and then moving up the hierarchy. (Cole & Kelly, 2011, p. 50).

It is important for employer to know and understand workers’ needs and try hard to meet them so as to improve productivity, whenever the needs of employees are been met cordial work relationships will definitely exist between employer and employees. Maslow’s theory of motivation is:

**Physiological needs:** These are people’s primary needs; they include air, food, shelter, sex, and relief, or avoidance of pain, adequate salary, breaks, and working conditions.

**Safety Needs:** The individual is concerned with safety and security, safe working conditions, salary increases to meet inflation, job security, and fringe benefits that protect the physiological needs.

**Social Needs:** People look for love, friendship, and acceptance, affection, opportunity to interact with others, be accepted, and have friends.

**Esteem Needs:** Individual focuses on ego, status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments, and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige.

**Self-Actualization:** The highest level of need is to develop one’s full potential. To do so, one seeks growth, achievement, and advancement, the development of one’s skills; the chance to be creative; achievement and promotions; and the ability to have complete control over one’s job. (Lussier, 2010, p. 315-316)
Limitations

Charles and Merther (2002, 382) indicate that, “limitations are natural conditions that limit the ground of study and may affect the results.” If time factor was favorable for the researcher, the study would have been extended to include workers from other similar organizations here in Kenya, but because of limited time frame it was impossible for the researcher. The study focused the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance. The study was limited only on workers of Compassion International Karen Ngong road Kenya.

Delimitation

Charles and Merther (2002, 71) state that, “delimitations are boundaries purposely put on the study, usually to narrow it for specific research.” In this study, the workers that are involved in this study are ten workers from three departments in Compassion International, Karen Ngong road. The researcher collected information from Communication department, Finance department, and Programme department.

Definition of Words

Staffs’ Work Relationships

In this study, work relationship of staff refers to relationships of workers in their place of work with their employer.

Work Performance

Work performance, in this study, refers to the way employees do their work in an organization. “Job performance has been defined as the overall expected value from employees’ behaviors carried out over the course of a set period of time.” (Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmidt 1997, 98).

Theory

A theory is a set of ideas or statement that helps us to explain how some aspect of human behavior or performance is organized and allows us to explain what we see and to figure out how to bring about change.

Perceptions

According Merriam-Webster perception is the way you think about or understand someone or something.
Interpersonal Work Relationship and Workers’ Safety

To be humane in relationships in the work place is to be considerate, not to manhandle human beings in the organization who are the greatest human resource factors in the organization. Employees’ safety and security is very pertinent in any organization because without which the workers will not be free as they do their work. Maslow’ stressed out that “once the physiological needs are met, the individual is concerned with safety and security. In the organizational setting, these needs include safe working conditions, salary increases to meet inflation, job security, and fringe benefits that protect the physiological needs.” (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).

These relationships are usually manifested in the behaviors and attitudes of the employees amongst themselves on one hand, and the management of workers on the other hand. “Managers have been reminded that the human body cannot stay healthy without the cooperation of its members; therefore, the removal of diseases from its boundaries that will hinder the growth of the institution, organization or even the church to make the organization effective is necessary.” (Swindoll, 1991, p. 5).

Causes of Poor Work Relationships between Employees and Employer

Sometimes lack of self-recognition, motivation, monitoring of the employees, and poor supervision can cause poor work relationship between the employer and the workers. The researcher saw that esteem needs in Maslow’s motivational theory is close to this point because, “the individual focuses on ego, status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments, and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige. In organizational setting, these needs include titles, the satisfaction of completing the job itself, merit pay raises, recognition, challenging tasks, participation in decision making and the chance for advancement. (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).

These are certain basic needs that people need and expect in their lives as human beings. In fact wisdom and motivation are vital ingredients in the life of workers; hence as workers they need to be motivated so that they will put their best in enhancing the organization. “Exercising wisdom includes accurately assessing where others are emotionally, socially in distress then words are carefully chosen to encourage them where necessary” (James 1984, 34).

Developing Good Lines of Communication/Consensus

To encourage the workers’ perceptions toward their employer, communication should be done well following the right channels of communication by the employer because communication is pertinent in improving relationships and organizational performance. Since communication is the means of transferring information from one entity to other and involves a sender and a receiver, employers should communicate well with their employees. “The cycle of communication is said to be completed only when the receiver has understood the sender’s message.” (Durham 1986, 30).

When you communicate well, people generally respond to you in a positive way, even if they are not totally happy with your message. But poor communication can provoke a negative response that is self-perpetuating, in that it leads to even poorer communication. This happens when the other party becomes resistant, defensive, deceptive, or hostile.” (Saks & Johns, 2011, p. 346).
Factors which Enhance Work Relationships in Organization

For employer to enhance good human relationships between their employees is for them to know that workers are the back bone of the organization. In fact Maslow’s theory of motivation is very crucial in this research as explained above. “The fundamental idea behind the human relations approach to management is that people’s needs are the decisive factor in achieving organizational effective, and again motivating the good behavior is important because motivation is about activating the driving force within individuals by which they attempt to achieve some organizational goal.” (Kelly and Cole, 2011, p. 8).

The growth of any organization will depend on the strong relationships and the perceptions of the employees in the organization. If we are to know how to move ourselves and others toward life as it is meant to be lived, “we need to develop a model for understanding people’s problems, and solutions that are broad enough to apply to situations generally and practical enough.” (Larry, 1987, p.77). Another important thing to enhance the relationship is to share responsibilities to workers in order to improve the progress of the organization. Everyone in an organization has the right and duty to learn consciously and continuously from their work. It is the role of directors or managers to ensure that they encourage their employees to create a positive working climate throughout the organization so that all staff may contribute and be rewarded for so doing.

Importance of Work Relationship in Organizational Performance

It is very important for directors and managers of organizations, companies, or institutions to note that if there is cordiality in the work place there will be peace and tranquility between the employees and employer. “Maslow’s theory of motivation on social needs stressed out that “people look for love, friendship, acceptance, and affection, in organizational setting, these needs include the opportunity to interact with others, be accepted, and have friends” (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).

Employer - employees should work as a team to enhance commitment and loyalty to the organization. In any organization, if the perceptions of employees are positive toward the employer, then they will work hard in order to see the growth of the organization. “Teams will be the primary building blocks of company performance in the organization of the future. They will set performance aspirations, intensify focus and commitment, energize work forces, build core skills, and spread knowledge to those who need it the most to perform” (Jon and Douglas 1994, 173). The view of employees toward their employers in terms of human relationships in any organization depends on good management.
METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Procedure

“In designing a study, a researcher must develop a sound plan for selecting a sample, collection and analyzing data. If the plan is flawed the result of the study will be difficult or impossible to interpret” (Gall, Gall, and Borg 1996, 165).

For that reason, the researcher carefully chose a method that was best for the research which is qualitative design and in particular the grounded theory. The intention of the researcher was to find out how workers perceived their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance in CI. Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on a distinct methodological approach to inquiry that explores a social or human problem. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture; analyzes words; reports detailed views of participants; and conducts the study in a natural setting. (Creswell, 2013; 1998, 15). The design was important it’s enabled the researcher to assess the perceptions of the employer-employee relationships in CI and is nonnumeric in nature. Again the intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory.

Research Design

Qualitative approach enabled the researcher to gather “details about the individuals or a place and to be highly involved in actual experience of the participants” (Sakaran 2003, 181). The researcher carried out a qualitative study applying the grounded theory perceptive “an approach to theory development that involves deriving constructs and laws directly from the immediate data that the researcher has collected rather than drawing on an existing theory” (Gall, Borg and Gall 1996, 760).

The researcher chose Maslow’s theory of motivation because it is best for the study since the topic of the research is about the ‘perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance’ to develop a theory from specific data so as to come up with a new theory that is related to that data, that is, a theory that emerged from the informants. In exploring the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance, the researcher used face-to-face interview as the major source of collecting data in grounded theory, though, there are other methods of data collection which include: observations, documents analysis, and analyzing audiovisual material. (Creswell, 2013, p. 90)

The researcher conducted the study in three departments in CI: Finance department with three members, Programme department as Ministry Support with four members, and Communication department with three staff members. The populations of the study were the workers. Interviewing process was used to ask relevant questions to workers in CI. The purpose of the interview was to understand the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance in CI.
Description of the Population

In qualitative research having the population of the study in mind is very important because the population is the people the researcher intends or wants to use to collect the data of the research, so without the population there will be no research “A population refers to an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic.” (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 42). The target population under study comprised of ten workers from three departments, three from communication department, three from finance department, and four from programme department.

Sampling Procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling because it is best for this study; the method of sampling is when the researcher selects the participants who are best able to give the required information through the help of the Human Resource Manager. (Mugenda 2008, 196). Because of the shortest of time the target population was small, only ten workers, so no sampling was done. All the ten (10) workers from three departments were participants in this study.

Research Instrument

The researcher used memos, annual report, and interview questions during this study.

Memos

The researcher used memos during the study. Memos are notes that the researcher took during the research process which helped note some quick ideas that clarified the data and the coding categories (Creswell 2014, 466). The notes help the researcher in the process of data collection since there was no tape recording.

Interview Guide

The researcher interviewed ten workers of CI chosen for this study; three each from two departments while four from onedepartment were interviewed. The Researcher constructed an interview guide in relation to the Research Questions to use it for data collection. This interview guide was tentative because in qualitative research, unstructured interviewing can work well. The unstructured interviewing is when the researcher goes to the field with a tentative tool which is adjusted as the research progresses depending on the interactions between the researcher and the respondents. Through this process, the researcher would not only be collecting data, but would also generate data (Birks and Mills 2011, 73).

Data Collection

The researcher interviewed the workers in a week’s period. The researcher gave clear instructions and allocated good time for the respondents to comprehend and answer adequately to the questions asked during the interview. During the interview, the researcher used reflective notes for further probing in the process of data collection. The researcher used an interview guide and memos as the instrument to collect the data. The researcher, in the process of data collection, sought to gather data from three departments in CI, involving ten workers from the departments.
Data Analysis

In qualitative studies, the researcher obtained detailed information about the phenomena being studied trying to discern patterns, trends and relationships from the data (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 117). Creswell posits that “data analysis is an ongoing process that involves continual reflection about the data, asking analytical questions and writing memos throughout the study” (Creswell 2003, 191). In essence, the researcher began analyzing the data collected after every interview since data collection and analysis in grounded theory take place concurrently. The researcher interviewed ten (10) workers using the unstructured questions.

The researcher developed a coding system based on the data collected since the researcher used grounded theory. The data was generated into categories of information using open coding where she developed themes, which made the major topic or sub topics that came up for discussions (Tromp and Kombo 2006, 119).

The answers to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the interview guide is related to research question 1 which states: What are the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? Here, the researcher wanted to find out how the workers and the employer related and interacted with each other in the work place. The researcher also intended to find out how work relationships were seen to enhance the organization’s performance.

Finally, RQ2 which stated: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer toward improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? was dealt with using questions 6, 7, and 8. The researcher sought to examine the suggestions of workers to their employer on how to improve work relationships toward enhancing organizational performance. The two research questions formed the major topics for discussions. Creswell state that systematic design “emphasizes the use of data analysis steps of open, axial and selective coding, and the development of a logic paradigm or a visual picture of the theory generated” (Creswell 2014, 452). Therefore, the researcher consciously worked hard during this research to stay as open as possible in order to capture only emerging themes when coding.

Plan for Data Analysis

Data analysis aimed at “bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of information collected” (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999, 203). The data is examined, compared, conceptualized, categorized and summarized. This researcher pursued the following steps of data analysis as recommended by Creswell (2002, 266-267) and Strauss (1989, 101):

Step 1: Organize and prepare data for analysis. This involved transcribing the interviews and typing the field notes.
Step 2: Reading through the entire data. This helped in obtaining a general sense of the information as a whole.
Step 3: Coding would involve identifying recurring themes and ideas in the materials gathered through interviews, observation, and participation.
Step 4: After gathering the information, the researcher cluster together similar codes and look for redundant codes and see which one to be eliminated, combined, or subdivided, as the researcher identifies repeated ideas and larger underlying themes that connect with one another.
Step 5: This will be the final step in data analysis and will involve the interpretation of the data. The data collected through interviews was analyzed based on the responses using the five steps.

**Ethical Considerations**

The identity of the respondents in this research was kept confidential for the dignity of the individual and the protection of the workers in CI. Though the recommendations will be used to enhance educational standard of the organization, participant names and other details of identity were not revealed. The researcher made observations of the ethical and personal issues that emerged from the informants during the field study and maintained confidentiality. Additionally, the researcher was able to “determine the values, biases, personal interests brought into this study” and made effort to minimize bias in the process of data analysis (Creswell 2003, 65).

**Trustworthiness**

The instrument that is used in any research depends on the type of research; therefore the key thing was its trustworthiness. Without rigor, research is worthless, becomes fiction, and loses its utility. (Morse et al., 2002). In research trustworthiness is crucial; it shows how the researcher interprets the data without any bias."How can an inquirer persuade his or her audiences that the research findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to?" (Lincoln and Guba 1985, p. 290).

**FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION**

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of workers at Compassion International (CI) about their employer and assess how work relationships were influencing organizational performance. The information revealed that the overall perceptions of workers about their employer in terms of work relationships were positive because the workers indicated their employer related well with them. The theory used for this study is the theory of motivation by Abraham Maslow, the researcher adopted this theory because Maslow emphases more about the human needs which are physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization which is very key to the study. (Lussier, 2010, p. 316).

The basic research questions were:

RQ1: What are the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationship for enhancing organizational performance?

RQ2: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer for improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? A total of 10 workers at CI were interviewed from communication, finance, and programme departments respectively.
Findings and Discussion of the Study

In order to conceal the names of the respondents, the researcher coded by using the first letters of the workers’ departments. For example: Fd-Finance department, Cd-Communication department, Pd-Programme department. Based on their responses the researcher discovered that the perceptions of workers in CI are favorable as they work in CI in terms of employer-employees relationships. Respondents indicated that employer-employee relationships have really influenced organizational performance in terms of what CI is doing in the lives of the less privileged children. These work relationships have impacted the lives of so many children as the researcher has explained in the analysis below.

Data collected indicated the following themes:

The Greatest Strengths of Compassion International

Organizational Purpose and Integrity

Workers perceptions of their employer were mainly positive. The purpose of Compassion International is to fight against poverty and vulnerability in the lives of the world’s poorest children, many of who live in the remote areas. CI considers work relationships as vital to its vision and mission, which is enacting the gospel message of showing love to children in the local churches in needy communities. In this case Maslow’s theory of motivation of physiological needs is important because the theory states “people’s primary or basic needs like air, food, shelter, sex, and relief or avoidance of pain should be met.” (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).

Pd1 responded that CI’s “reputation is good in terms of stewardship; their set up standards and objectives are clearly defined for every role and function in every country, which is Christ-centeredness.”

Performance through Mission, Vision and Core Values

Pd2 disclosed that “because of the favorable relationships the organizational purpose has been achieved through sponsoring a lot of children.” The respondents described CI as a Christian organization in which corporate actions were done in the fear of God. Pd3 responded that “the employer is reliable because there it clarity of the mission and vision, and core values, level of integrity is high because things are done in a professional way; the reputation is good in terms of stewardship set on the Lordship of Christ and besides, standards, objectives, roles and functions have been defined for each worker with clarity” Pd4 added that employer is “keen on inculcating the mission, vision, and core values of CI to workers; the mission and core values of the organization have been well articulated.”

Cd1, respondent that CI is “committed of the Lordship of Christ” and everything is based on Christ and so, whatever the workers do, they do it well because CI want to excel in reaching out to the less privileged children for Christ and that “work relationship in CI is friendly, warm and good compared to where he was working before coming to CI.”
Performance through Training Local Churches

Cd2 indicated that, CI has also helped in work relationships for organization performance through “educating churches about their programmes.” CI works mostly with local evangelical churches to holistically address the spiritual, physical, economic, educational and social emotional needs of children, as such, it makes sure churches are aware of what the organization is doing. Maslow’s stressed out that “people’s primary needs include air, food, shelter, sex, and relief, or avoidance of pain, adequate salary, breaks, and working conditions.” (Lussier, 2010, p. 316).

Performance through Child Discipleship

According to the respondents, the impact of Compassion International is tremendous as seen through Child Survival Development Programme. Cd3 responded that CI is involved in “rescuing, nurturing and disciplining little ones at their young age. The programme also focuses on children under four (4) years, allowing them to survive in their early years when they are most vulnerable to preventable diseases, malnutrition, and other perils.”

In relation to its programmatic goals, Fd1 responded that the greatest strength of CI is the “strategic planning” they do for improving the lives of the less privileged children. Every Compassion registered child and youth has numerous opportunities to hear the gospel and is encouraged to develop a lifestyle of faith and commitment to God. CI directly engages each child and youth as a complete person. Again that CI believes and realizes that “releasing a child from poverty benefits not only the child but also their community.”

Caring and Empowering Employees

The respondents responded that the employer has a caring and empowering attitude toward her employees. This is seen through the provision of required tools and resources and also the Welfare of Employees which is explained below: Fd2 responded that CI has “a common purpose, faith, and passion because people are willing to partner with CI, because people are well skilled, equipped for the ministry and hard working.” and CI ensures it employs “qualified workers acquired through interviewing and screening before being given employment, CI does orientation for new workers before taking up their responsibilities to ensure they have the mission of children in their heart.

At Compassion International, Christian identity is demonstrated in the manner in which the organization treats the needs of its employees. CI cares about the welfare of employees and understands the workers’ needs, for example in primary issues such as health needs and emergency situations. For example, Fd3 said that CI has “also been giving the workers scholarships for further studies, have developed a good working environment, and have loved their workers.” Pd1, 2 added that “one of the greatest strengths of CI is the paying of 80% of the medical bills while the workers’ pay 20% also paying of salaries on time and helping the less privileged children.”

This is very encouraging that is why Maslow’s theory of motivation talks about safety needs because individual people are so concerned about their safety and security in life which include safe working conditions, salary increases to meet inflation, job security, and fringe benefits that protect the physiological needs.” (Lussier, 2010, p. 315).
Christian Fellowship

At CI, the employee’s Christian fellowship is imperative. Fellowship takes the form of studying the word of God and praying together, both of which tend to inspire employee’s growth spiritually, strengthen their relationships, and enhance organizational performance. Fd3, 4 responded that communication is “okay because they have good facilities; have common faith, having Bible studies together, and prayers, and always have devotions and prayers every morning on Mondays and Bible studies on Thursdays for all workers.”

Generally, respondents said that, these things signify that the employer is doing what is important in the lives of her workers and that has enhanced work relationships. In summary, the greatest strengths of CI are seen in the table below.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>STRENGTHS OF Compassion International Kenya</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mission, vision, and core values</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training Local Churches</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Fellowship</td>
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<td>Organizational Purpose and integrity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Caring and Empowering Employees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Discipleship</td>
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Table 1 above shows the Greatest Strengths of CI

Work Relations and Organizational Performance

Furthermore the respondents indicated good work relationships with their employer resulted to great motivation and morale, innovation in programme development, productive use of appraisal results, and appreciation of management support, team building, and building of a collaborative organizational culture.

Motivation and Morale

Motivation is pertinent in any organization because motivation encourages workers to put more effort for enhancing organizational performance Maslow’s theory of motivation stressed out that “estees needs focuses on ego, status, self-respect, recognition for accomplishments, and a feeling of self-confidence and prestige, satisfaction of completing the job itself, merit pay raises, recognition, challenging tasks, participation in decision making, and the chance for advancements.” (Lussier, 2010, p. 315). Furthermore, Maslow
suggested that humans are motivated by efforts to satisfy a hierarchy of needs, ranging from basic needs to those for self-actualization.” (DuBrin, 2009, p. 25).

The appraisal of workers is done quarterly by the employer to appreciate her workers’ performance for the organization. Cd 1 responded that “employer’s motivation to us has encouraged me a lot. CI is a good place to work; that is why I have spent about fifteen years without thinking of changing work to other organizations” CI also facilitates its workers in celebrating birthdays together as one family. Cd2, 3 responded that, motivation is done through “celebrating workers’ anniversaries; also if a worker is five years old in the organization they celebrate it together and give the worker a cheque worth 5% of workers’ salaries.” That is another great motivation from the side of the employer to encourage workers to perceive their employer positively.

Innovative Programmes

The researcher discovered that the employer-employee relationships have a great impact on organizational vitality and performance and has yielded favorable relationships to the extent that workers become innovative. For example, CI is sponsoring a Leadership Development Program (LDP) in which students are identified and provided with university level education as well as leadership training opportunities. Fd1, 2 responded that the programme “nurture and enhances the leadership skills of these outstanding youth through a rigorous extra-curricular program assigned to expose them to various knowledge and skills development opportunities as they go through their university studies, also this is seen through the Child Sponsorship Development Programme (CSDP).”

Employee Assessment and Productivity

In regard to work relations and organizational performance. Fd3 responded that “continued appraisal of the workers and quarterly reviews of performance of the workers is helpful; if there are things that workers are struggling with, the supervisors give their helping hands immediately.”

Management Support

Pd1, 2 asserted that if workers need more laptops, or there is need for intervention out in the field, or a worker is sick, the employer gives them support to solve such problems, has supported many families through sponsoring their children and has also supported workers who are in need or those who want to further their studies.” Pd3, 4 said that “the employer is a good listener and so workers give their support and ideas without fear. That helps the workers to ensure that they put on their best effort in whatever they do because the workers have been given the opportunity to grow and develop their careers.”

Fd1 said that employer-employee relationships have also motivated him in finance department to be more faithful committed and dedicated to his work. Fd2 responded that "staff relationships can influence work performance positively because relationships are key to the organization and so the employer has defined an organizational structure which is operational, clarifies the roles, features, and the purpose of addressing the needs of the organization.” Fd3 said that the greatest strengths of CI are the “meetings the employer always have together with workers once in a while to encourage workers to work very hard and to know their welfare and also the employer encouraged working in teams of small groups like four to five to encourage one another.”
Team Building

It is important for both employer and employees to relate well in work placeso as to enhance organizational performance by team building. Cd1, 2 responded that what C1 have done to enhance team performance is through “having fellowship with one another, doing Bible studies, prayer meetings, retreats, indoor and outdoor games for workers, just to encourage the workers, this has enhanced work relationship.”

Cd3 said the employer enhances work relationship informally by “visiting families who have lost their loved ones or if there is a new born baby in the family, they all visit the family.” Pd1 responded that “the employer has enhanced work relationships by encouraging team work, setting meetings with other departments to know their colleagues better, and training to those workers the organization has employed newly before starting the work.”

Pd 2, 3 responded that “relationships between employer and employee are important because it makes the workers and employer feels happy and to work together toward achieving the goals and objectives of the organization and to have a sense of belonging to the organization that has also helped them to be more committed and faithful as stewards.” Pd4 opined that “staff relationships can influence work performance because the workers can sacrifice for one another through standing in for each other if the person is not around or if the person needs any assistance, employees are encouraged to visit their colleagues in their homes.”
Collaborative Organizational Culture

CI has a strong concern about work relationships between employer and employees, Fd1 responded that CI has “a philosophy purely based on relationships,” they provide structures which allow them to sit down and discuss issues concerning staff and the organization then advice and give help where necessary. There is a culture of openness and honesty. Table 2 below shows the broad and sub-themes

Table 2: Work relationships and organizational performance

Research question 2 stated: **RQ2**: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer for improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance? This answered interview question guide 6,7,8 in part 2.

**Suggested Improvements on Work Relationships**

First, respondents identified areas of weakness that need to be strengthened at CI. These include:

**Weaknesses of Compassion International**

**Internal Transfers**

Fd2, 3 responded that their relationships in CI have been “quiet engaging, encouraging, professionally demanding, fulfilling, but sometimes frustrations comes in, in terms of changes from the employer to other departments without prior notice. It is frustrating in the sense that the worker may not have stayed for long in that department may be trying to adjust and then change will just come.” Cd1 lamented: “some changes are just announced without proper consultation; an employee who is trying to adjust in one department will find himself or herself forced to move elsewhere.”
Exclusion of Field Workers

Respondents indicated the bonding that occurs in the office does not appear to be true for workers in the field. Cd2 responded that the greatest weakness of CI is that workers who are “working outside in the field hardly meet as often to interact with each other.” Some of these workers work in remote, isolated, or hard-to-reach areas because of the demands of work. Cd3 said another weakness is that “workers who are far away from the workplace find it hard getting to the office on time. Some employees working in the field want to be close to their families and to their work place.” Pd1 responded that sometimes “communication is difficult because of network problems and for them to communicate to other people in the field is not easy.

Freedom and Workers’ Laxity

Pd2 responded that “because of too much freedom some workers are relaxed and not wanting to perform the assigned work.” Pd3 said the employer tends to “take time before correction is done.” Employer sometimes over relies on the faith of employees as Christians and tends to treat workers as brothers and sisters in the Lord. Some are however, taking that for granted, an attitude that has made them not to do things at the right time.

Unfair Policies

Respondents indicated unfair policies can bring problems between the employer and the employees which can hamper organizational growth and dampen employee productivity. Pd4 responded that what they can consider to be the greatest weakness of CI is the policy of giving assistance or support to one child per needy family. Sometimes, parents feel that “taking one child out of many children in a family to sponsor is as if nothing is done.” Fd1 added that what they will consider as a great weakness is that CI “only partners with local churches not with schools.” They felt it is also important to partner with schools because there are vulnerable and poor children in schools. Table 3 below shows the sub-themes and the main theme in the centre.

Secondly the informants gave suggestions that will improve work relationship including clarity of roles, inclusive bonding, collective involvement, meeting regularly with workers in the field.
Ways of improving work relationship among staff

Clarity on Roles

Fd2 responded that, one of the things that the employer can do to enhance work relationships for work performance is to “define the roles and responsibilities very clearly for each department and individuals to know.” Well defined roles or structures will encourage the worker to know their schedules of duties, how to do them and when to do them.

Inclusive Bonding

Fd3 recommended that work relationships can be improved through “functional teams of 4 or 6, which can encourage workers to always work together as a team.” Cd1 added that workplace fellowships and teams should include those in the “field.” Innovative approaches are needed so that these workers in the field can know each other by interacting together and learning from each other. Table 4 below: Similarly presented employees suggestions on to improve work relationships for enhancing organizational performance.
Summary of the Findings

In conclusion of the analysis of the research questions, the researcher found out that the perceptions of workers toward their employers and the work relationships enhances organizational performance positively. The participants perceived their employer as being good, receptive, committed, and responsible to her mission. Therefore, the workers were favorable and did the same. The role of the employer was to ensure that workers are treated well, building trust among her workers, exhibiting fairness, respect, motivating her workers, providing the necessary equipment for work, supporting her workers to go for further studies and helping them to work as one body. In the quest the researcher came out with the following subthemes:

- Organizational Purpose and Integrity
- Favorable Perceptions of employees about CI
- Dedication to Executing its Mission
- Caring and Understanding
- Christian Fellowship

Respondents pointed out some areas of weaknesses that CI need to consider. These are:

- Giving assistance or support to one child from a family
- Only partner with local churches not with schools
- Hardly meet with those working in the field
- Living far from work place
- Transferring of workers to other departments without prior notice

Suggestions of workers to their employer toward improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance:

- Inclusive bonding
- Appraisal of workers achievement either quarterly or yearly
- Define lines of communication and ensure safety environment for work
- Recognize staff effort and appreciate them, respect worker’s views

These themes are evident that certain things can affect the progress of CI and can also affect the relationships of employer and employees which can hamper organizational growth and dampen employer’s productivity. It will be important for the employer to note these weaknesses and work on them.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to understand the perceptions of workers towards their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance. It involved workers of Compassion International (CI), Karen-Ngong road. Again the researcher adopted Maslow theory of motivation which is concern about the physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization needs of the individuals which is very crucial for improving work relationships among workers and their employer. The finding has shown that the Maslow theory of motivation which is concerned about the human needs has a close relationship with the research topic “The Perception of Workers Toward their Employer in Terms of Work Relationships for Enhancing Organizational Performance.” Fifteen respondents were interviewed to determine how the workers in CI perceived their employer’s roles in terms of work relationships.
Research Problem

Workers’ perception toward their employer is vital in organizational performance because it can affect an organization either positively or negatively. The researcher sees work relationships as the life wire of an organization and if those relationships are negative, the performance of the organization will be backward because the employees may not give their best. This research found out that CI workers perceive their employer’s role in terms of work relationships, for enhancing organizational performance as favorable.

Objectives of the Study

1. The objective of this study was to find out how workers perceive their employer’s role in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance. The study achieved this objective through interviewing fifteen workers in three departments in CI
2. The study was helpful because it has identified factors that affects work relationship and has provided suggestions and information in enhancing work relationships for organizational performance.

The major research questions that guided the researcher in collecting data for this study were:
RQ1: What are the perceptions of workers toward their employer in terms of work relationships for enhancing organizational performance?
RQ2: What are the suggestions of workers to the employer for improving work relationships for enhancing organizational performance?

Significance of the Study

The study is significant to the academic community because its findings will contribute to the contemporary knowledge of the organizational relationships and performance. It will also help administrators and managers of similar organizations to garner ideas of how to treat their workers well as they work together. The workers of CI will also find the research findings beneficial since it will contribute to their further reflections of how to relate with one another in the organization. Additionally, the study will serve as a reference tool for future researchers who wish to do studies in a related field. Finally, it will encourage CI leaders to take precaution in ensuring that there are cordial relationships between the employer and the employees.

Conclusions

In conclusion, based on the analysis of the data collected in relation to the research questions for this study, the following emerged: Workers of CI have a positive view toward their employer because the employer has defined the mission, vision and core values of the organization. The mission, vision, and core values are seen as related to what the employer is doing out there in the field. Performance is achieved in releasing children from poverty and also giving the children opportunity to hear the gospel and grow in relationship with Jesus Christ, through formal and informal vocational training.

The research data established that the employer has empowered many by helping in difference ways. The analysis has also revealed that motivation is paramount and this is seen through visitation, team building, treating workers equally. Based on the findings the researcher established that there are some weaknesses
which include giving assistance or support to one child from a family, partnering with only local churches not with schools, hardly meet with those working in the field, living far from work place, and transferring of workers to other departments without prior notice.

**Recommendations**

The researcher recommended some improvements that can be implemented by the workers and the employers at CI, Nairobi:

1. Partnering with churches, CI can partner with schools within and around the world.
2. The employer could provide accommodation for the workers who stay far away from the office and enable them to live with their families.
3. The employer should consider the social needs of its field workers for fellowship and bonding. Measures could include planning to meet them two or three times a year and creating opportunities for them to visit other branches so that they will form friendships and bond with their colleagues.
4. The employer needs to improve the way workers are disciplined or corrected. It is important for the employer to recognize discipline cases and be ready to deal with them promptly and fairly.
5. What CI has done and is still doing is worthy of praise by sponsoring the less privileged children. Even so, there is merit in liberalizing its policy of sponsorship to accommodate more than one child per family.
6. However, the weaknesses of the organization should be addressed by the employer as mentioned by the employees.
7. The issue of transferring workers without adequate notice or too frequently should be considered unless there is an emergency.
8. CI could consider requiring parents to take children to less expensive schools to deal with the issue of cost so that CI can sponsor more than one child from a family. This step sounds a better approach instead of just sponsoring one child in a family with many children.

**Recommendations for Further Research**

The research was limited to three (3) departments in Compassion International Kenya in Karen. It is recommended that the research be done in other areas to ascertain the prevalence of the views identified in this research in other areas that is:

1. This study shows a connection between informal and formal interactions for enhancing work relationships. Since this study shows an indirect link between work relationships and work performance, a study investigating the relationship between employee relationships and work performance is needed.
REFERENCES


