



## SUPERVISOR SUPPORT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN REGISTERED PRIVATE SECURITY FIRMS IN KENYA

Martina Wato YATTANI<sup>1</sup>, Prof. Wario GUYO, (PhD)<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Kepha OMBUI, (PhD)<sup>3</sup>, Dr. Samson Nyang'au PAUL, (PhD)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>PhD Scholar, Human Resource Management, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Kenya

### ABSTRACT

Employee performance in private security firms in Kenya is facing numerous challenges frequently emanation from workplace environment. Therefore this study sought to assess the effect of supervisor support on workplace ergonomics on employee performance in private security firms in Kenya. The study was anchored on the Two-Factor Theory of Motivation. The study utilized positivism research approach. The study used descriptive and correlation research designs. The study population was 13,484 drawn from the Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA) and Protective Security Industry Association (PSIA). The sample size was 180 respondents established by use of Slovin sample size determination formulae. Questionnaires were used as instruments for obtaining the data required. Validity and reliability of the questionnaire were enhanced by carrying out a pilot study prior to data collection. The study adopted regression analysis to establish the effect of supervisor support on employee performance in private security firms in Kenya. The study findings indicated that supervisor support had a positive and significant relationship with employee performance in private security firms in Kenya. Therefore, the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance is crucial as it can have far-reaching implications for both employees and private security firms. The positive and significant relationship between supervisor support and employee performance suggests that private security firms should consider investing in ergonomic improvements to create a healthier, more productive, and engaged workforce. It can have a cascading effect on various aspects of organizational success. Therefore, supervisor support has multifaceted implications on employee performance, influencing various aspects of job satisfaction, engagement, motivation, and overall organizational success. A supportive supervisory relationship is a key driver of a healthy and productive work environment. This, in turn, can contribute to the overall success and employee performance of private security firms in Kenya

**Keywords:** Supervisor Support, Security Firm, Employee Performance

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Globally, employees in many organizations are encountering with problems at workplace related to workplace environmental and physical factors (ILO, 2017). It has been argued by Pech and

Slade (2016), that employee disengagement is increasing and it has become important to make workplaces that positively influence workforce due to workplace environmental factors in the USA (Collins, 2018). Employees' comfort on the job, determined by work environment, has been recognized as an important factor for measuring their productivity in UK firms (Leblebici, 2012). In today's dynamic and competitive business world, supervisors who offer support can help manage and reduce workplace stress. When employees feel that their supervisors are approachable and understanding, it contributes to a healthier work environment, minimizing the risk of burnout and its negative effects on performance (Heath, 2016; Wu & Hung, 2018).

In Kenya, the employees in many private security firms are encountering with working problems related to supervisor support is increasing and has become important to make workplaces. Honorable supervisors create desire for achievement of goals and encourage employees to aim higher, hence motivate them to continue serving. The relationship between supervisor support and employee performance is a critical aspect of organizational dynamics. A supportive supervisor can have a significant impact on various dimensions of employee performance (Krat, 2012). Employees who perceive support from their supervisors tend to experience higher levels of job satisfaction. A satisfied employee is more likely to be motivated and committed to their work, contributing positively to their overall performance (Onchonga, 2019).

Supervisor support can boost employee motivation by providing encouragement, recognition, and positive reinforcement. A motivated workforce is more likely to set and achieve performance goals, leading to improved overall performance (Kiona & Hega, 2019). Supportive supervisors foster open and effective communication with their team members. Clear communication helps in understanding expectations, addressing concerns, and providing constructive feedback—all of which are crucial for optimal performance (Jula & Kewa, 2019). Heath (2016) states, the biggest goal of all the private security firms are to increase their performance, thus making high profits. Supportive supervisors play a key role in facilitating employee development. They encourage skill-building, provide opportunities for training, and guide employees in acquiring new competencies, which can enhance performance in their roles (Otieno & Wanja, 2019).

### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Successful organizations are increasingly realizing that supervisor support is clearly the most critical element in ensuring employee performance (Murray, 2018). Private security firms are spending huge amount of resources to get a committed workforce and to retain them. Empirical evidences show that employee performance of security sector is a function of their supervisor support. According to (El-Zeiny, 2013), improved supervisor support accounts for 40% of the employee performance. Likewise, a study by Shikdar and Shawaqed; (2018) shows that majority of the private security firms with satisfactory employee performance attributes their result to supervisor support.

It is therefore a general knowledge that private security firms have not performed optimally and is seldom attained (Onditi et al. 2020). This is indicative that performance is poor in majority of private security firms especially in economically developing regions of the world. However, Ojiambo, Francis and Joseph (2020) contend that in Kenya there has been a rise in complaints by the public, professionals and other stakeholders about the employee performance in the private security firms (Kavila., Mwambia, & Baimwera, 2017). In the pursuit of improved employee

performance of private security firms have turned towards supervisor support (Chinwokwu, 2018). However, the link between supervisor support and its effect on the employee performance of private security firms is yet to be established. It is on this premise the current study sought to examine the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya.

### **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya.

### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS**

The study hypothesized **H<sub>0</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya.

### **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

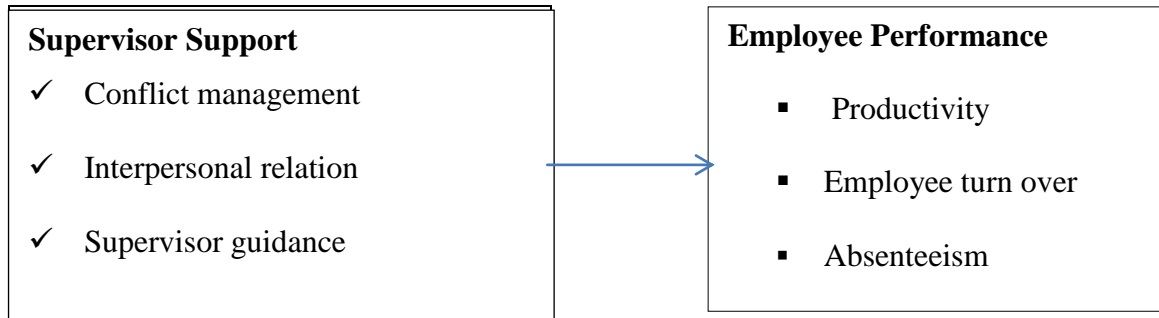
The expectancy theory originally developed by Vroom (1964) attempts to explain the process people use to arrive at decisions when presented with various alternatives. According to this theory, behavior is a product of conscious choice from alternatives whose purpose it is to optimize gratification and to minimize discomfort. The theory has three key elements: Expectancy which refers to the perception that an effort gives rise to an acceptable performance; Instrumentality which refers to the perception that the performance will be recompensed and Valence which is the belief that the rewards will be valuable. Basically, the theory argues that the inclination to behave in a certain way depends on the value attached to the reward. That the attractiveness of an outcome to the individual will determine how he will act (Robbins, 1993).

Expectancy theory is founded on four premises. First that people join organizations bringing certain expectations which influence how they will react to the organization; Secondly, that a person's behavior such as the intention to stay is a deliberate choice; Thirdly, that individuals have varied expectations from an organization e.g. good pay, job security, career growth and challenging work and lastly that from the alternatives presented, people will select outcomes that are personally beneficial to them (Lunenburg, 2011). The thought behind this theory is that people are stimulated to behave in a certain way thinking that their actions will lead to a desired consequence (Tuwei & Tarus, 2017). Expectancy Theory suggests that individuals are motivated to act in a certain way based on their expectations of the outcomes of their actions. Supportive supervisors can positively influence employee performance by creating an environment where employees believe that their efforts will lead to desirable outcomes and rewards. Thus, the Expectancy theory was adopted to expound the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya.

### **CONCEPTUAL MODEL AND HYPOTHESIS**

A conceptual framework is a concise description of the phenomenon under study accompanied by a graphical or visual description of the major variables of the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2008). Michelle (2017) states that a conceptual framework is a diagrammatic representation that shows the relationship between the dependent variable and independent variables. This study's conceptual framework sought to demonstrate the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. The conceptual framework is

illustrated in Figure 1.



**Independent Variable**

**Dependent Variable**

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

### **EMPIRICAL REVIEW**

Madede, et al., (2017) study focused on the impact of a supportive supervision intervention on health workers in Niassa, Mozambique: a cluster-controlled trial. The Support, Train and Empower Managers (STEM) study designed and implemented a supportive supervision intervention and measured its' impact on health workers using a controlled trial design with a three-arm pre- and post-study in Niassa Province in Mozambique. Post-intervention interviews with a small sample of health workers were also conducted. The study established that health workers perceived an improvement in their performance and attributed this to the supportive supervision they had received from their supervisors following the intervention. Reports of increased motivation were also common. An unexpected, yet important consequence of the intervention, which participants directly attributed to the supervision intervention, was the increase in participation and voice amongst health workers in intervention facilities.

Ibrahim, Suan and Karatepe (2019) in their study investigated work engagement as a mediator of the impacts of supervisor support and self-efficacy on quitting intentions, and examined self-efficacy as a mediator between supervisor support and work engagement. The data was collected from 177 call center employees in Malaysia. The aforesaid linkages were tested through structural equation modeling. As hypothesized, self-efficacy mediates the relationship between supervisor support and work engagement, while work engagement mediates the impacts of supervisor support and self-efficacy on quitting intentions.

Vann (2017) study focused on the low profit margins threatens the sustainability of quick service restaurants (QSRs). In the United States, low levels of employee job satisfaction and low employee perceptions of supervisor support decrease organizational profitability. The findings may be of value to QSR business professionals developing initiatives to improve organizational profitability. Improving employees' perceptions of supervisor support to generate high levels of employee job satisfaction could affect behavioral social change to enhance the health and wellbeing of employees and the wealth and sustainability of QSR franchise location.

Karakas (2019) aim of the study was to reveal the relations between the perceived supervisor support of the employees working in hotel business and the aspects of organizational silence. With this purpose in mind, a questionnaire was conducted on 229 employees, who were selected by

means of random sampling, working in five-star hotels in Antalya province, Turkey. The data obtained as a result of the research was analyzed using a T test, ANOVA, correlation analysis, regression analysis and factor analysis. As a result of the research, it was determined that perceived supervisor support has an impact on quiescence and acquiescent silences and that one of the reasons leading employees to remain silent is the lack of trust towards their supervisors.

Mwendwa, *et al.*, (2017) study focused on the impact of supportive supervision on the implementation of HRM processes; a mixed-methods study in Tanzania This study used a mixed-methods design, utilizing data from health facilities to assess changes in practice and employing focus group discussions to explore perceptions of supervisors 12 months following implementation of STEM in three regions of Tanzania. The study focused on the perceptions of supervisors on the implementation of supportive HRM processes and how these influenced the supervision practice. The study established that the most notable behavioral change attributed to STEM was the introduction of systemic record keeping systems, including staff files and job descriptions. The systems led to an improved work environment and improved communication between health providers and supervisors. In-turn this eased the supervision process and saved on time spent supervising staff.

Karuga, *et al.*, (2019) study focused on the supportive supervision of close-to-community providers of health care. The study aimed to demonstrate the effects of a training intervention on the approach to and frequency of supervision of CTC providers of health care. The study conducted a context analysis in 2013 in two Kenyan counties to assess factors that influenced delivery of community health services. Supervision was identified a priority factor that needed to be addressed to improve community health services. The study was designed a six-day training intervention and trained 48 purposively selected CTC supervisors on the educative, administrative and supportive components of supportive supervision, problem solving and advocacy and provided them with checklists to guide supervision sessions. The study established six months after the intervention; they observed that supervisors had shifted the supervision approach from being controlling and administrative to coaching, mentorship and problem solving. Supervisors and CHVs reported the intervention was helpful and it responded to capacity gaps in supervision of CHVs.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The current study adopted a descriptive design, which took into consideration of the analysis of the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. A descriptive research design was useful in capturing unbiased representation of perceptions and experiences research design enables the researcher to fully describe how supervisor support influences employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. The study was based on the positivism philosophy. The target population was members of Kenya Security Industry Association (KSIA) and Protective Security Industry Association (PSIA), since they had representation in Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSRA) board in Kenya. The Private Security Regulatory Authority (PSRA) is the one which regulates private security firms in Kenya. The target population therefore was employees from the two institutions.

**Table 1: Target Population**

Category	No. of Employees(N)	Percentage (%)
PSIA	8654	64.3%
KSIA	4830	35.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13484</b>	<b>100%</b>

*Source: Kenya Private Security Regulatory Authority (2023)*

Fishers formula was adopted to determine sample size for the study. The study assumes 95% desired level of confidence, which is equivalent to standardized normal deviate value of 1.96, and an acceptable margin of error of 5% (standard value of 0.05). The formula for calculating sample size for a large population is as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where n=required sample size

p and q=Population proportions which are set at 0.5 each

Z=Level of confidence

Typically, the level of confidence for surveys is 95% in which case Z is set to 1.96.

e= Sets the margin of error of the sample proportion. This will be set at 5% or 0.05.

The study has a population of over 1,000 but less than 10,000

This being a large (binomial) population, the sample will, therefore be worked out as follows:

$$n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2} = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 509$$

Therefore, the study used a sample of 224 respondents. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each stratum as suggested by Fink (2019) and Portney (2020). Other prior studies that have successfully used stratified random sampling to select a sample with satisfactory results include studies by Repko and Szoztak (2020) and Callanan (2020). Therefore, the sample size of the study was calculated from the Slovin's formula given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size,

N = Total population and

e = Error tolerance (confidence level).

Since the population N = 509,

Error tolerance = 0.05,

The sample size is determined as:

$$n = \frac{509}{1 + 509(0.05)^2} = 224$$

The sample size therefore was 224.

**Table 1: Sample Size Distribution**

Category	No. of Employees (N)	Sample (n)
PSIA	8654	159
KSIA	4830	65
Total	13484	224

### RESEARCH FINDINGS

Regression analysis was conducted to determine the proportion of employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya (dependent variable) which could be predicted by supervisor support (independent variable). Therefore, to test this hypothesis, the model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$  was fitted. Where Y is Employee Performance and  $X_1$  is Supervisor Support. The R-Squared tends to depict the variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variables: the greater the value of R-squared the greater the effect of independent variable. The R Squared can range from 0.000 to 1.000, with 1.000 showing a perfect fit that indicates that each point is on the line.

**Table 3: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.499	0.249	0.237	0.13241

As indicated in Table 3, the R-squared for the relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya was 0.249; this is an indication that at 95% confidence interval, 24.90% variation in employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya can be attributed to changes in supervisor support. This means that the remaining 75.10% are other factors associated with employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya which were not explained by the model. The correlation coefficient of 0.499 indicates supervisor support had a positive association with employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. Therefore supervisor support was an important factor that could be considered to improve employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya.

**Table 4: Analysis of Variance**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	5.945	1	5.945	61.289	0.000
Residual	17.931	185	0.097		
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.876</b>	<b>186</b>			

The ANOVA results in Table 4 shows that ( $F(1,185) = 61.289, p < 0.05$ ). This shows that the overall model is significant. The findings imply that supervisor support was statistically

significant in explaining employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. Therefore, at  $p < 0.05$  level of significance, null hypothesis “*There is no significant relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya*” is not supported thus rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_{a1}$ ) which states that “*There is significant relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya*” is accepted implying that supervisor support played a significant role in employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya.

**Table 5: Beta Coefficients**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	8.654	0.231		37.463	0.000
Supervisor Support	0.578	0.156	0.499	3.705	0.000

The coefficients or beta weights for each variable allows the researcher to compare the relative importance of each independent variable. In this study the unstandardized coefficients and standardized coefficients were given for the multiple regression equations. The regression equation revealed that holding supervisor support to a constant zero, employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya would be at a constant value of 8.654. Therefore, the regression of coefficients results in Table 5 shows that there is a significant and positive relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya as supported by a  $p < 0.05$  and a beta coefficient of 0.578. This implies that a unit increase in supervisor support would improve employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya by 0.578 units. This was supported by the t values where  $\text{byt cal} = 3.705 > t \text{ critical} = 1.96$  at a 95 percent confidence level which depicts that we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate hypothesis. Further, this confirms that there is a positive effect of supervisor support on employee performance in registered private security firms in Kenya. The fitted equation is as shown below:  $Y = 8.654 + 0.578X_1$ , that is, Employee Performance = 8.654 + 0.578 Supervisor Support.

## DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The impact of supervisor support on employee performance is multifaceted, influencing motivation, job satisfaction, skill development, and overall well-being. Private security firms that prioritize and invest in building strong, supportive supervisor-employee relationships are likely to experience higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, and success.. Actual findings in the Kenyan context find a positive correlation between supervisor support and employee performance in private security firms. According to Tuwei and Tarus (2017), organizations that prioritize and invest in building strong, supportive supervisor-employee relationships are likely to experience higher levels of employee engagement, productivity, and success. Mwendwa (2022) supervisor support is foundational to building trust and rapport within a team. When employees feel that their supervisors genuinely care about their well-being and success, it fosters a positive and trusting work environment. This trust is a key factor in employee engagement and commitment. Aziz (2018) states that supportive supervisors play a pivotal role in motivating employees. Recognition, encouragement, and positive reinforcement from supervisors can boost morale and create a sense of purpose, driving employees to excel in their roles. Supervisor support



is closely linked to job satisfaction. When employees feel supported, valued, and respected by their supervisors, they are more likely to derive satisfaction from their work. Satisfied employees are generally more committed and productive. Supportive supervisors contribute to stress reduction in the workplace. By offering assistance, understanding individual needs, and promoting a healthy work-life balance, supervisors can create an environment that minimizes stressors and supports employee well-being.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the study concludes that there exists a positive and significant relationship between supervisor support and employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya. The results reveal that supervisor support is statistically significant in explaining employee performance in the registered private security firms in Kenya. The study recommends that there is need to review the supervisor support policy in the registered private security firms to enhance performance of employees. Therefore, enhancing supervisor support for improved employee performance involves a combination of organizational policies, leadership strategies, and individual actions. These include; leadership training clear expectations, regular feedback, recognition and rewards, professional development opportunities, flexible work arrangements. By implementing these recommendations, organizations can create a supportive environment that enhances supervisor-employee relationships, promotes employee well-being, and contributes to improved overall performance.

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