

# EMPLOYEE VOICE AND JOB SATISFACTION AMONG SECURITY GUARDS

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## Abstract

*Job performance in any organization is affected by several variables at work including how employees perceive their job. Employee job satisfaction is affected by their work environment and it is believed to affect employee performance. Employee participation in issues that affect them at work is believed to contribute to their job satisfaction hence performance. Insecurity is a major challenge in Kenya and private security firms have come up to complement government security services that are overwhelmed with insecurity incidences. Despite the increase in number of security firms in Kenya from 400 in 1990 to around 2,000 in 2013, investigations have shown that there is involvement by security guards in acts of insecurity. While such acts point to lack of job satisfaction, their participation in issues affecting work is yet to be investigated. The link between their voice and job satisfaction has not been investigated thus limiting managers in achieving job satisfaction. The current study investigated the link between employee voice and job satisfaction among private security guards in Western Kenya a region with high unexplained insecurity incidences. A total of 385 private security guards selected randomly from 40 security firms participated in the study. Findings showed that employee voice significantly affect job satisfaction ( $R^2=.258$ ,  $P=.000$ ) meaning that voice explains 25.8% variance in job satisfaction. The study recommends that management of security firms should create effective employee voice structures in order to achieve job satisfaction. Private security guard's performance can be improved through job satisfaction. Further research can be done on determinants of job satisfaction.*

**Key words: Employee Voice, Job Satisfaction, Work Environment, Performance**

## **1. Background to the study**

Insecurity is a major challenge to the Kenyan government and her citizens. Three regions leading in insecurity are, North Eastern Province, Nairobi and Western Kenya. (Kenya National Bureau Statistics, 2012). Insecurity in the country is largely attributed to terrorism threat by Alshabab warlords from neighbouring Somalia particularly in the north Eastern Province. Western Kenya is largely unaffected by the terrorists activities however, the insecurity statistics are relatively high. The region's insecurity statistics increased from 16164 in the year 2011 to 17381 in 2012. Private security firms are a major player in the provision of security as they complement state security services according to Mkutu and Sabala (2007). The private security sector has not been effective as there is widespread involvement in crime by private security guards (Kimosop, 2007; Mkutu and Sabala, 2007; Kaguru and Ombui, 2014). Investigations on employee voice and job satisfaction have not been done in private security firms. This can limit managers in achieving job satisfaction among security guards.

The work environment and facilities can inspire or demotivate employees. Employee job satisfaction is the perception that employees have about their job as viewed by Bender and Sloane (1998). Employee job satisfaction is individualistic and circumstantial in nature (Mullins, 2010). Employee performance at work can be affected by several work elements including job satisfaction and voice (Dwomoh, 2001; Bennet, 2007; Hames, 2012; Aziri, 2012). Employee voice refers to structures that enable employees participate in the process of decision making in their organizations (Boxall and Purcell, 2003). Employee voice has a broad scope (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2004). Voice is participation by employees in the management of an organization and it depends on the organization's system. Employee voice can be through direct communication between management and employees, suggestion schemes, union representation, direct contributions through meetings, problem or grievance solving procedures, joint consultation and attitude surveys (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2004; Dundon *et al.*, 2004; Dwomoh, 2001).

Employee voice mechanisms vary in organizations (Dundon *et al.*, 2004; Holland *et al.*, 2011; Spencer, 1986). The extent of voice also varies in different organizations, which may imply employee voice effectiveness also varies in organizations. Satisfaction with the job results from employees' perception, which can be good or bad depending on the job relevance. According to Mitchell and Lasan (1987), job satisfaction is necessary for performance of work. Two factor job satisfaction theory proposes that workplace elements can be job satisfiers or dissatisfiers ( Herzberg *et al.*, 1957). Based on the theory, work elements such as voice can be considered to cause job satisfaction. For any organization, job satisfaction's link to employee voice can only be known if investigated. This implies that findings of previous studies linking the two are inadequate for managers to achieve job satisfaction.

## **2 Theoretical Foundations**

Job satisfaction is about improving employee productivity in any organization (Cellik, 2011). All theories of motivation can be used to study job satisfaction ( Saif *et al.*, 2012), however this might not be possible for a single study. Several theories have been used to justify or explain causes of job satisfaction as it is a matter of concern to all managers to create an environment that can enhance employee job satisfaction. Herzberg *et al.* (1957) developed two factor theory of job satisfaction. The two factor theory proposes that work environment comprises satisfiers and dissatisfiers. Satisfiers are those factors responsible for job satisfaction while dissatisfiers /hygiene factors are essential and their existence do not satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham (1976) job characteristics theory is also relevant to the study. The five characteristics of a job that is responsible

satisfaction are; skill variety, autonomy, significance, task identity and feedback. Autonomy and feedback are considered most important in determining job satisfaction. The job characteristics model focus on job characteristics only which makes its suitable for designing jobs only but not overall job satisfaction. Job characteristics model is already captured by two factor theory as meaningfulness of work which is one of the satisfiers. The main weakness of Herzberg's model is that some factors can fall in both groups as satisfiers and dissatisfiers at the same time and then generalization about factors cannot be done for all organizations. Herzberg *et al.* (1957) had a superior model of job satisfaction.

## **2. Literature Review**

The link between employee voice and job performance has not been established (Wilkinson *et al.*, 2004) however link between job satisfaction and certain aspects of employee voice has been investigated though with conflicting results. The link between job satisfaction and employee voice particularly union membership is complex. This makes it impossible for managers in organizations to achieve job satisfaction through this employee voice.

Studies linking job satisfaction and aspects of voice have also revealed varied results. A descriptive survey (Muindi, 2010) at the University of Nairobi, Kenya revealed that involvement of employees in decision making was correlated to their satisfaction with the job. ( $r = 0.888, p = .05$ ). Findings also revealed a strong positive correlation between participation in decision making and job satisfaction in relation to general working conditions ( $r = 0.64, p = .05$ ); pay and promotion ( $r = 0.703, p = .01$ ); use of skills and abilities ( $r = 0.895, p = .01$ ) and job design ( $r = 0.75, p = .01$ ) and job feedback ( $r = 0.632, p = .01$ ). In a study at Electricity Company of Ghana on employee voice's link to performance of the organization using descriptive survey, it was found that participation by workers in decision affects organizational performance (Dwomoh, 2001). Workers participated through meetings organized by management for employees to give out views and grievances known as *Durbars*. Performance of employees was determined through amount of revenue that company generated over different years. Employee participation contributed about 95.2% of the total performance of the company while remaining percentage may be attributed to other factors such as high wages and salaries or customer service.

A study (Hames, 2012) on employees' voice climate perceptions and perceived importance of voice behavior is of relevance. The study done in Australia using a survey of 119 employees from different companies was interested in: the scope of voice structures a multi-dimensional construct affecting work-related outcomes namely affective organizational commitment, work engagement, neglect, exit; and, perceived importance of voice behaviour. Results indicated that voice climate correlated to perceived importance of voice ( $r = .35, p < .01$ ), commitment ( $r = .48, p < .01$ ), engagement ( $r = .44, p < .01$ ), neglect ( $r = -.26, p < .01$ ) and exit ( $r = -.29, p < .01$ ). Employees' perceived importance of voice behaviour was not found to moderate the relationships between employee voice and the work-related outcomes. The study however, did not focus on investigating how voice climate affects job satisfaction which is related to work outcome.

Voice's link to turnover was also investigated in USA (Spencer, 1986). Employee voice encompassed: formal grievance procedure, suggestion schemes, management employee meetings, counseling services, ombudsman, non-management task forces, question and answer programmes and survey feedback. A cross sectional survey study of presidents along with executive directors of 111 hospitals showed that employee voice is directly related to retention. The combined employee voice correlated negatively with turnover ( $r =$

-.24,  $p < .05$ ). Another study on the impact of exchange variables on exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect (EVLN) is of relevance (Rusbult *et al.*, 1988). The study involved two experiments and a survey conducted between 1984 and 1985 in the UK. The findings of the study offer a theory that predicts the effects of three exchange variables namely job satisfaction, investment size, and quality of alternatives, on four general responses to reducing job satisfaction-exit, voice, loyalty, and neglect. High job satisfaction and investment encouraged voice and loyalty and discouraged exit and neglect. Satisfaction and investment interacted, with variations in investment most strongly promoting voice given high satisfaction, a situation which was mostly seen with men. Better alternatives encouraged exit and voice but discouraged loyalty. The study also revealed that when employees experienced reduced satisfaction, they showed increased intentions to engage in exit, voice, and neglect and demonstrated reduced loyalty. This was mostly seen with women employees. However, there was no link between alternatives and neglect. This means that employees that had job alternatives to replace existing one, had a voice; implying voice is a reaction to reducing job satisfaction. This further indicates that only employees experiencing reduction in job satisfaction and have better alternatives will have voice as a reaction mechanism. The summary of findings is that voice can be elicited by increase in satisfaction as well as reduction in the same. This implies that voice is a multi-dimensional construct whose effect depends on several things at work. The shortcoming of the study conducted by Rusbult *et al.* (1988) was that the two experiments were controlled, and when human beings are controlled, the reactions might not reflect true feelings given that one of the experiments involved the use of incentives. From the study, the effect of voice on job satisfaction was not determined but rather a model of interaction between exit, voice, loyalty and neglect. The study showed that voice entails both reactions to dissatisfaction and satisfaction and that, in dissatisfaction, voice seen as an effort to modify the situation which could be conflicting.

A study which operationalized voice as aggressive and considerate where considerate voice is tackling concerns of both employees and those of the organization while aggressive voice is tackling concerns to benefit workers alone (Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999). Using 233 teachers and maternity nurses as respondents, the study investigated correlation between aggressive and considerate voice, responses to job satisfaction and aspects of job satisfaction. The findings showed that job satisfaction encouraged considerate voice and patience, suppressed aggressive voice, exit and neglect. Correlation of considerate voice with various aspects of job satisfaction gave the following: work satisfaction ( $r = .170, p < .01$ ), satisfaction with supervision ( $r = .430, p < .0001$ ), satisfaction with pay ( $r = .12, p < .005$ ), satisfaction with promotion ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ) and satisfaction with co-workers ( $r = .11, p > .005$ ). Correlation of aggressive voice with work satisfaction was ( $r = -.30, p < .001$ ), with supervision ( $r = -.42, p < .001$ ), with pay ( $r = -.04, p > .05$ ), with promotion ( $r = -.21, p < .01 = .000$ ) and with co-workers ( $r = -.39, p < .001$ ). This meant that voice is used by the satisfied and less satisfied employees in different forms. However, the study did not give a clear distinction between aggressive voice and a considerate voice as forms of voice complement each other. They simply looked at the association between considerate and aggressive voice and aspects of satisfaction namely with pay, supervision, promotion and satisfaction with co-workers but did not establish their effect on job satisfaction.

A study to establish significance of employee voice mechanisms in the work place (Bennet, 2007) using a survey of 140 human resource managers from different organizations in Yorkshire and Humberside, noted that unions play a significant role in airing aspirations of workers. He compared various mechanisms of employee voice by classifying voice as direct and indirect. The findings showed that direct voice was used at

around 30% and indirect voice through trade unions constituted about 70 percent. He says that voice help to achieve employee aspirations. The study, however, failed to show the link between employee voice and their aspirations.

Research by Batt *et al.* (2001) on employee voice, human resource practices and quit rates in USA revealed that union representation significantly predicted lower quit rates after controlling for compensation and a wide range of other human resource practices that may be affected by collective bargaining. Using stratified random sampling of 302 managers, direct participation via offline problem-solving groups and self-directed teams was found to be significantly negatively related to quit rates, but nonunion dispute resolution procedures were not. While turnover is a function of job satisfaction or dissatisfaction, the research revealed that voice mechanism, whether direct or indirect, are deterrents to most job quits in USA.

A study by Bender and Sloane (1998) which investigated trade unions, voice and satisfaction, in Britain has revealed different findings. Using a survey carried out between 1986 and 1987 of 1,000 respondents drawn from different parts of Britain, the study, which was controlled for very good industrial relations and good industrial relations and analyzed according to gender revealed the following: females in union had significant effect on overall job satisfaction of ( $\beta = -.449, SE = .191$ ) while men in manual labour and in union had effect on overall job satisfaction of ( $\beta = -.362, SE = .212$ ) in a context where union is seen to be fighting with the management. Through probit regressions, Bender and Sloane (1998) revealed that where there was very good industrial relations at work, the union effect on was less negative. The study looked at one aspect of voice which is union membership in different working conditions, bad and good industrial relations. They conclude that job satisfaction is a complex variable that is affected by employee voice among other factors. They however failed to take care of complementarity of voice by failing to study effect of suggestion schemes and surveys on job satisfaction.

Holland *et al.* (2011) studied the link between voice structures and satisfaction using Australian Workplace Representation Survey of 2007. Voice was conceptualized as direct and indirect. Direct voice was considered to be present in the areas of regular meetings, formal employee involvement programmes and semi-autonomous working groups while union voice involved union representation. Holland *et al.* (2011) found that direct voice index was statistically significant and positive ( $\beta = 0.29, p < 0.05$ ), voice was positively associated with job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.52, p < 0.05$ ) while coefficient for union voice was not statistically significant ( $\beta = 0.01, p > 0.05$ ). The results for direct voice aspects were; regular meetings between management and staff ( $\beta = 0.35, p < 0.05$ ) and semi-autonomous workgroups ( $\beta = 0.47, p < 0.05$ ) were associated with higher job satisfaction. There was insignificant relationship between the presence of a formal employee involvement program and job satisfaction ( $\beta = 0.10, p > 0.05$ ).  $R^2$  for direct voice was 0.25, while union voice 0.24. Holland *et al.* (2011) ignored other aspects of voice such as surveys.

Existing literature reveals benefits/outcome of voice in organizations (Hames, 2012; Batt *et al.*, 2001; Bennet, 2007; Dwomoh, 2001; Spencer, 1986). The benefits of employee voice include employee retention, improved performance and meeting aspirations of both workers and management, however, the link between voice and job satisfaction is not revealed. Dwomoh (2001) emphasized the link between employee participation and performance, Spencer (1986) looked at voice and retention, Bennet (2007) focused on voice and goals of an organization and Hames (2012) investigated voice and work related outcomes, none investigated the link between voice and job satisfaction.

Few studies have investigated the link between voice and job satisfaction (Muindi, 2010; Holland *et al.*, 2011; Bender and Sloane, 1998; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999) though not conclusive. While the association between participation in decision making and job satisfaction has been investigated (Muindi, 2010), other aspects of voice such as joint consultation and attitude surveys were left. Holland *et al.* (2011) studied the relationship between direct voice, indirect voice and job satisfaction excluding other aspects like suggestion schemes. Rusbult *et al.* (1988) investigated responses to declining job satisfaction and found that voice is elicited by both reduced job satisfaction and increased job satisfaction. Conceptualization of voice was taken as employee participation, other aspects of voice were not considered. A study by Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999) operationalized voice as constructive and destructive without making a clear distinction between the two. Further, voice was considered as a reaction to problematic situation. Hagedoorn *et al.* (1999) failed to capture the real voice constructs in his study. Bender and Sloane (1998) only looked at one aspect of voice, unions and ignored others like surveys and suggestion schemes.

The effect of voice on job satisfaction was not established (Hagedoorn *et al.* 1999 and Muindi, 2010) but only association between few aspects of voice and job satisfaction. The two studies did not establish the effect of joint consultation, suggestion schemes and attitude surveys on job satisfaction. Therefore, application of their findings is limited in achieving job satisfaction. Even though studies (Holland *et al.*, 2011; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Bender and Sloane, 1998) established effect of voice on job satisfaction, they used few aspects of voice and never considered complementarity effect of voice on job satisfaction. Moreover no prior study has linked voice and job satisfaction in private security industry. Consequently the connection between aspects of voice; consultation, attitude surveys and suggestion schemes to job satisfaction is not known.

### **3. Methodology**

The study sought to establish the link between voice on job satisfaction of security guards in Western Kenya. Employee voice was indicated by joint consultation, attitude surveys and suggestion schemes. The study conceptualized joint consultation to include union membership, representation, and change in work conditions when unions consult while surveys was conceptualized by views being sought at work, whether employees were victimized for views given and also giving recommendations to management while suggestion schemes captured processes and procedures for addressing concerns and problems like existence of grievance procedure and fairness in addressing concerns by employees. Job satisfaction of security guards was indicated by safety at work, security, advancement opportunity, job independence/autonomy and pay.

The questionnaire used for data collection was developed to ensure that it captured the constructs of main study variables namely; employee voice and job satisfaction. The items in the questionnaire captured the theoretical constructs from the literature review. Job satisfaction questionnaire was scored on a scale ranging from (1) for very satisfied to (5) for very dissatisfied. For employee voice, the scale ranged between (1) and (5) where (1) represented strongly agree and (5), strongly disagree. This was to ensure high statistical variability among the survey responses. Instrument's reliability was established at Cronbach's alpha  $\alpha = 0.973$ . Content validity was achieved through literature analysis, face validity through expert review and discriminant validity was achieved through correlation between constructs of same variable and all had  $r$  of less than 0.5 proving the same. Cross sectional data was collected among the 385 security guards operating in

Kisumu County, Kenya. Basis for stratification was different security firms and then proportionate random sampling used to identify respondents from each security firm. The study took place in February 2015.

Due to complementarity nature of employee voice constructs (Holland *et al.*, 2011 and Bryson, 2004), the effect of voice is best determined through multiple regressions. This is due to the interaction of all voice constructs in creating effect on work variables. The mean value of the three constructs of voice namely joint consultation, attitude surveys and suggestion schemes were used for regression against the mean values of job satisfaction for all the respondents.

## **4 Results and discussion**

### **Model for Determining Effect of Employee Voice on Job satisfaction**

The study established the linear relationship between employee voice and job satisfaction which is shown on Table 1.

The regression model shows that employee voice which is indicated by joint consultation, attitude surveys and suggestion schemes all explain 25.8% variance in job satisfaction. The regression coefficients of voice mechanisms are; consultation ( $B = 0.375, p = .000$ ), surveys ( $B = -0.01, p = 0.983$ ) and suggestion schemes ( $B = .068, p = 0.0240$ ).  $R = 0.508$  and is significant at  $p = .000$ , while  $R^2 = 0.258$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.252$ . The difference between R-square and adjusted R-square is 0.006, a negligible value showing model stability. The results show that consultation is the most significant determinant of job satisfaction followed by suggestion schemes while attitude surveys are insignificant to job satisfaction.

The findings suggest that when joint consultations reduce, that is, if there is reduction in union membership, representations and consultations, the lesser the level of satisfaction of security guards. Joint consultation is the most significant determinant of job satisfaction in private security firms. This can be due to the fact that unions are significantly recognized in labour relation matters in Kenya. Unions negotiate for better salaries and improved work conditions (Bernadian, 2008). Unions also protect, support, advise their members, and offer legal and financial services (Armstrong, 2009; Freeman and Medoff, 1984). Security guards have unions where they have representatives that can address issues that affect them which can result in job satisfaction.

The current study findings reveal that suggestion schemes are significant determinants of job satisfaction but with a relatively smaller magnitude ( $B = .068, p = .024$ ) coefficient. This further suggests that if grievances, problem procedures and communication channels have reduced functioning or if their effectiveness reduces, job satisfaction also reduces. Attitude surveys are insignificant determinants of job satisfaction but with a negative ( $B = -.001, p = .983$ ) among security guards suggesting that attitude surveys do not have any effect at all on job satisfaction.

The value of  $R^2$  in the model is relatively small. All voice constructs account for only 25.8% variance in job satisfaction. This may be attributed to low voice extent that is experienced in private security firms. The findings confirm that the effect of voice on other work variables depends on the extent to which it is used in the organization. Low voice extent will have a reduced effect on job satisfaction and vice versa (Holland *et al.* 2011; Tyler 1991 and Spencer 1986). The findings also support Herzberg *et al.* (1957) theory that recognition

of employees, of which voice is part, affects job satisfaction. Hackman and Oldham theory (1976) that job characteristics such as independence /autonomy affect job satisfaction is also supported by the findings.

Previous studies linking voice and job satisfaction (Muindi, 2010; Bender and Sloane 1998; Holland *et al.*, 2011; Rusbult *et al.*, 1988; Hagedoorn *et al.*, 1999) only looked at single aspects of employee voice, union membership and direct voice and their effect on job satisfaction. Previous studies have not investigated the effect of joint consultation, attitude surveys and suggestion schemes on job satisfaction. Current study has found that attitude survey insignificantly determines job satisfaction while suggestion schemes and joint consultation significantly determines job satisfaction and they account for 25.8 % variance in job satisfaction.

A managerial implication is that private security firms should have structures to ensure that employee voice is properly embedded in order to increase job satisfaction. Structures within an organization should allow for joint consultation and suggestion schemes to increase job satisfaction. Attitude surveys should be seldom used because it does not affect job satisfaction

## **5 Conclusions and Recommendations**

Since study has established that employee voice accounts for only 25.8% variance in job satisfaction. Further research can be done to establish other determinants of job satisfaction.

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**Table 1 Linear Effect of Employee Voice on Job satisfaction**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error			
(Constant)	2.339	.202		11.587	.000
Joint Consultation	.375	.037	.472	10.281	.000
Attitude Surveys	-.001	.048	-.001	-.022	.983
Suggestion Schemes	.068	.030	.109	2.262	.024
R = .508					
R Square = .258					
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> = 0.252					

**Source: Survey Data (2015)**