
Effect of Political Skill on Employee Performance: Does Commitment Matter: A Reflection from Kenyan Universities

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main objective of this study was to determine the mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between political skill and employee performance in Kenyan Universities. The study was informed by Social influence theory and complimented by Organizational Support theory.

Material/methods: The study used explanatory research design and targeted 6147 academic and non-academic staff from the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Strathmore University and the United States International University. The study used a stratified sampling technique and systematic sampling to select a sample size of 567 academic and non-academic staff. This study used questionnaires to collect data relevant to the study. Hayes PROCESS macro model four (4) was used. To ascertain the significance of the mediating effect, the study used bootstrapping.

Findings: The study findings showed that employee political skill had a significant and positive effect on employee commitment and employee performance. Results on bootstrapping for Hayes model four, (4) showed that employee commitment partially moderates the relationship between employee political skill and employee performance in Kenyan Universities.

Conclusion: It can therefore be strongly concluded that politically skilled employees are an asset to the organization. The study recommends boldly that, to improve on their productivity, Kenyan universities should consider encouraging and promoting all employee political skills by majorly enhancing commitment in them.

Value: The study has a novelty by providing empirical evidence for the partial mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between political skills and employee performance in institutions of higher learning.

Keywords: Commitment, Political Skills, Employee Performance, Universities

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1. Introductions

An institution is a social entity with objectives as well as a framework. It is responsible for particular duties as it has an informed structure as well as known boundaries. Notably, there need to develop both the skills and (behaviour) commitment of employees besides adequate remuneration. Human Labour is critical for any institution to achieve its objectives. The role falls on human labour to ensure achievement of institutional tasks, and the success of personnel is seen in the firm's success (Vandenberghe, Bentein, and Panaccio, 2017).

Thus, to remain in a competitive market environment, there is a high need for firms to consider enhancing employee's performance which is also an essential tool for firm performance (Herrmann and Datta, 2005). Above all, firms are discovering that people are the most critical assets hence the need to make them participate in issues related to their welfare (Partha and David, 1994). Kuvaas and Buch, (2018) asserts that native organizations maintain unparalleled traditional methods by managing employees as a clerical function generating significant distinctions on HRM practices causing a variance in employees' performance.

Considering this and putting in mind the emerging issue of employees' performance, it is paramount that managers adopt several strategies in order to attain notable employees' performance (Mutai, 2017). While the American practitioners and scholars are adopting the significant concepts of human resource that are geared in promoting employees performance practices in their organizations, the political skills are being given major emphasizes.

Political skill is a modern improved social skill which is influential in determining job performance (Ferris *et al.* 2005; Semadar, Robins, and Ferris, 2006). They also provided evidence that employee performance is significantly affected by political skills by improving individual traits. Further, Ferris *et al.* (2005) shows that higher job outcome is related to high political skills in their study using two samples. The political skill has greatly improved the manager's work outcome as proven by (Semadar *et al.* 2006) rather than self-evaluation, self-understanding and personal confidence. According to empirical findings by Blickle *et al.* (2011) and Hochwarter *et al.* (2007), political skills had a positive effect on job outcome. A study done by Ferris *et al.* (2005) further shows that politically skilled people have personal traits that are more self-assured and exact, which is viewed as reassuring. In addition, they do not see the social relationship as a bad thing other than a great way to grow career-wise (Perrewé *et al.* 2005). Besides, according to Ferris, Zinko, Brouer, Buckley, and Harvey (2007), political skill includes the ability to grow in numbers and influence social wealth. A good personality among social interaction brings visible results as proven by Markman and Baron (2003). For instance, a politically skilled person can gain network centrality, allowing them to gain essential data Jawahar, Meurs, Ferris, and Hochwarter (2008). Moreover, the assurance and hope put in politically skilled people helps in teamwork (Ferris *et al.* 2005).

However, several scholars have identified mediators of the link between employee performance and political expertise has been highlighted, demonstrating that this linkage is a positive linear one, specific to certain settings. For instance, According to Memari, Mahdih and Marnani (2013), employee commitment is a type of connection

between his/her company which also relies on various factors. These findings also discovered that employee commitment is relative to other aspects. A character of a member of staff deeply affects the bond within the organization. Committed staff reduces the odds of non-attendance and replacement. As stated by Hsu (2015), a devoted staff member is someone who is cooperative and dedicated to his/her work. Administrative devotion is essential to conduct for evaluating the purpose of the employee to go and his/her influence in the corporation. Hence, the outcome is dependent on how the staff uses their ability in various conditions as per (Yeh and Hong, 2012). Employee ability to deliver is a common insight, capability and determination to work. Organizational goals can be met by doing a good job. However, limited evidence is obtained on the influence of commitment on the relationship between political skills and employee performance among the staff of universities. However, a lot of political skill among employees may go overboard hence the need for mediating it with employee commitment to enhance performance and deter bad politics among employees.

In addition, employee performance is a concern issue for all organizations; most Kenyan universities have faced challenges in the performance of employees (Ovadje, 2009; Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). One of the biggest challenges in Kenya is that the performance of employees in universities is always below expected level. In Kenya, government employees are less performing compared to private sectors as detailed in the MSPS (2017 survey). It is impervious to the fact that they are offered a more profound comprehension of a complete and updated job description, work ethics, along with work commitment requisites. Ordinarily, there is poor performance since personnel are indifferent, which cripples their ingenuity and fecundity. Also, Beach, Brereton, and Cliff (2003) assert that a dearth in diligence puts the firm's perpetual life at risk. Over and above that, Choundry, stressed on the need to be more focused on enhancing employee performance. Acknowledging that other researchers have been carried out by Thiphaphongphakaphun and Piraphong Foosiri (2012), Yılmaz, Özer, and Günlük (2014) and Saxena and Puri (2015) regarding the link between institutional commitment and political skills, there's barely enough knowledge on the affinitive role of employee commitment on the relationship between employee performance and political skill, especially among personnel within tertiary education establishments, Kenya.

2. Theoretical Review and Hypothesis Development (Review of Literature)

The main focus of social influence theory as posited by Kelman (1958) implies that significant others determine a person's perception, norms and actions thereof in three procedures; compliance, internalization and identification. Further, according to Kelman (1958), social influence causes adjustments in perception and behaviour, and these adjustments may take place at different stages.

Social influence theory furthered by Levy and Collins (1998) suggests that persons with proficiency in taking part in impression regulatory practices are more apt to thrive in their impression management attempts as compared to those with little expertise. Social influence theory implies that the personal attributes of the influencer may bear a crucial impact on the effectiveness of impression management techniques. Social influence theory is crucial to this study in that it implies that political skill may take up the role

of several impression management techniques and job results to the point of acting as a method of identifying the genuine (superior political skills) from those who appear, deceitful inferior,(political skills); (Levy and Collins, 1998). The philosophy will be employed in elaborating how political skill is another crucial personal variable that portrays a substantial effect on the efficacy of impression management tactics and may lead to enhanced team performance

The organizational support theory also compliments this research by Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, and Sowa (1986) which appears to shed light on employee fervent attachment to their institutions. Studies on Perceived Organizational Support are founded on the reciprocity custom of administrators expressing regard for staff commitment to the company and the staff being centred on the institution's commitment to them. A systematic review of studies by Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) discovered three essential criteria of auspicious treatment that staff gets (job conditions, supervisors support and fairness of treatment). While these have a definitive link to Political Skill, which is also related to results encouraged by employees, for example; enhanced job commitment, favorable moods and less pressure. Also, the company (for instance, heightened Employee Commitment and performance and low turnover)

As attested by Ferris, Treadway, Ferris, Duke, Adams, and Thatcher (2007) employee, political skill has been described as the capacity to successfully comprehend the rest at the workplace, as well as putting the know-how usefulness in impacting the rest to behave in ways that can improve individual as well as firm rationales.

Political skills can assist in counteracting responses to job stressors (Perrewé *et al.* 2004:Perrewé *et al.* 2005) . Whereas Treadway *et al.* (2007) asserts that persons with elevated political skills portray a subtle self-belief due to feelings of control in addition to their sense of safety which allows them to keep up balance and outlook. Ferris *et al.* (2005) further implies that individuals with superior political proficiency are less likely to find surrounding pressures as terrifying. Indeed Treadway *et al.* (2007) realized that managers who perceived staff with superior political skill employing persuasive techniques and found it to be a sincere attempt while those who have low political skill using persuasive techniques as an outright attempt to coerce for self-serving intentions and thus have fewer odds at attaining their objectives.

Notably, Blickle, Oerder, and Summers (2010) analyzed the political skill of German work ambassadors as well as its probability of their culmination in career. This analysis estimated the works of ambassadors political skill and established that it essentially played a role in the eminence of their careers (for instance; a case of analyzing career based on triumph in elections), when age, sex and fraternity affiliation are regulated. The concept of career eminence has in several instances been widely studied for an extended period and discovered to be influenced by conventional elements such as job linked skills and individual performance record, in addition to political techniques, proficiencies in social skills and networking capacities (Ng, Eby, Sorensen, and Feldman, 2005).

It seemed fitting then, that other researchers analyzed the part played by political skill in career eminence and commitment. When viewed from the outlook of institutional politics, careers can be referred to as political campaigns, (Inkson, 2004), entailing searching for contacts, expanding networks, Treadway, Breland, Adams, Duke, and Williams (2010), impression management (Bolino and Turnley, 2003) self-promotion Higgins, Judge, and Ferris (2003) and use of influence techniques. As such career

eminence is essentially dependent on personal skills like political skill (Blickle *et al.* 2010) that allow for the successful sustenance of good impressions across different work setups, more so for pictures that contribute to the examination of performance and career prospects. In addition, given that politically apt persons are more likely to attain the career objectives they wish effectively, they are more probable to achieve satiety with their careers. Thus, this study hypothesized that;

H₁: Employee political skill positively affects employee Commitment in Kenyan Universities

Employee Political skills can be conceived as a personal resource (Higgins, Judge, and Ferris, 2003) letting employees attain objectives by proficiently banking on individual and communal assets; it is a unique resource that ensures the safety of public resources. When met with stressors, politically skilled individuals do not feel the impact as strongly as the less politically skilled staff (Blickle, Oerder, and Summers, 2010), hypothetically, as a result of the former's feeling of being security and mastery over the social setting (Bolino and Turnley, 2003). Social astuteness Yılmaz, Özer, and Günlük, (2014), those with high political skills are more apt to as compared to the less politically skilled employees to understand the social implications of resource expenditures, discern the present and potential value of social resources, and understand how they fit into others' functioning in the social environment. Employees' capacity to appear genuine, can also prevent the feeling of strife from generating in the minds of others, thus reducing the odds of causing defensive behaviour in other people who may observe a victimizing work setting. The part played by political skills in the social impact process is reassessed and explored in a recent publication (Ferris *et al.* 2005)

According to Perrewé *et al.* (2004), social astuteness, a component of political skills, failed to predict employee career accomplishments significantly. It is in line with initial discoveries by Pfeffer. He coined this attribute as sensitivity to others, he also argued, it has the attribute of relating with the rest that is in essence, crucial in attaining objectives for oneself. It seems that in cases where sensitivity to others is optimum, a person's political tendencies become hard to practice in colossal ways, which potentially hinders employee performance

Judging from current scientific and theoretical work, Memari, Mahdih, and Marnani (2013) contended that political skills improve employee performance. The social astuteness and interactive capacity of politically skilled workers help them become more socially embedded, which leads to more opportunities to influence co-workers towards performance and other organizational benefits. Based on this argument, this study hypothesized that:

H₂: Employee political skill positively affects employee Performance in Kenyan Universities

Committed employees are critical aspects that managers utilize to attain the company's objectives (Memari *et al.* 2013). Thus, employee commitment could be an antecedent for organizational performance. As brought forward by Akintayo (2010), one of the explanations to why commitment has drawn the interests of scholars is that the company relies on committed employees to attain enhanced performance. They are several findings that imply that various companies enhance their employee's commitment to

minimize expenses, boost employee productivity and as such, achieve superior performance (Hunjra *et al.* 2010). In line with this school of thought, an employee's commitment is an administrative ideal that can result from increasing firm performance and financial success. Hence, an employee's commitment is considered as a competitive strategy (Ruokolainen, 2011).

One of the most widely used theories in organizational commitment is (Allen and Meyer, 1990) three-component structure (García-Cabrera and García-Soto, 2012; Markovits, Boer, and van Dick, 2014). It is deemed the best perspective in understanding organizational commitment for more than two decades (Cohen, 1992). Herrbach (2006) affirms that of late, it has grown popularity and has been adopted extensively as a concept of organizational commitment. It views commitment as having three unique forms; a sense of obligation to stay ("normative commitment"), affection for your job ("affective commitment") and fear of loss ("continuance commitment")

Employee commitment is essential because high levels of commitment lead to several favorable institutional results. It demonstrated the degree to which employees relate with the company and are dedicated to its goals. According to (Hervas-Oliver, Enache, Sallán, Simo, and Fernandez, 2013) the commitment of employees is a critical topic since it may be employed to determine the productivity, absenteeism as well as other tendencies. In previous studies, it has been deliberated that employee commitment will result in tendency outcomes; reduced turnover and superior performance. Highly dedicated employees should have a weak intention to quit. Studies by Lee and Lin (2014) revealed a negative relationship between turnover intentions and employee commitment.

According to Ghasemi and Keshavarzi (2014) there is a positive relationship between employee commitment and institutional performance. Employees that are dedicated to their companies are more inclined to stay in addition to exercising diligence at work in place of the company to steer it to success and in so doing showing outstanding performance than the uncommitted employees.

The committed employees are more creative; they are less likely to leave an organization than the uncommitted ones. Based on Paino, Smith, and Ismail (2012) maintained that growth in effectiveness is contingent upon the establishment of human resource; the expertise, the know-how, proficiencies and employee perception of the establishment as well as its social capital; communication, trust and confidence, cooperative working dynamics and networking, teamwork, partnership, common principles among the employees. Some analysis assesses the linkage between commitment and several variables. Thus it is a requirement to proceed to investigate the determinants of employee commitment, such as employee political skills. Hence, we hypothesized that:

H₃: Employee political skill positively affects employee performance via employee commitment in Kenyan Universities

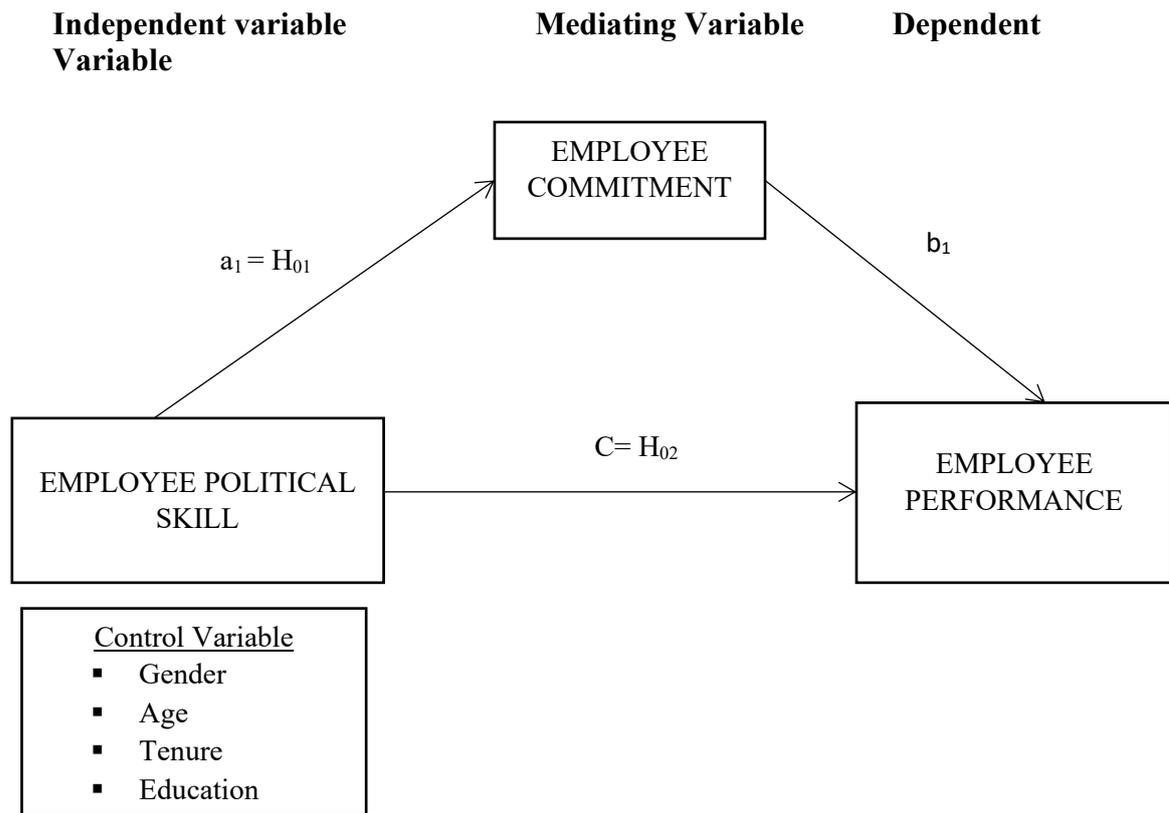


Figure 1: Proposed model for mediating effect of employee commitment on the relationship between political skills and job performance

3. Material and methods

The study adopted explanatory research design in positivism approach. The study targeted 6147 academic and non-academic staff from two top public universities (University of Nairobi and Kenyatta University) and two Private (Strathmore university and United States International University), (University HR records, 2018;www.4icu.org/ke). Yamane (1967) sample size formula cited in (Israel, 1992) was used to select a sample size of 567 academic and non-academic staff. This study used a stratified sampling technique and systematic sampling to select the employees where respondents were picked from. Systematic sampling was used to select employees in each university to constitute the sample. This was done by selecting each K^{th} value which equals N/n . For example, in the University of Nairobi, the K^{th} value was $1981/121 = 16$ thus, every 16th staff was selected. Questionnaires were used in this study to collect data relevant to the study because they are efficient data collection apparatus which provide the researcher to know precisely what is necessary and how to measure the variables of interest (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013).

3.1. Variable Measurement

Dependent variable

The questionnaire was applied to know the performance of employees in universities. It was validated and developed by (Pradhan, Jena, and Singh, 2017). Responses were recorded on 5-likert scale, 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree. It had 23 items in all types employee performance they included (Task performance-6 items), (Adaptive performance-7 items) and (Contextual performance-10 items) the high score showed high employee performance and low score showed low employee performance

Mediating variable

The study measured employee commitment using 8-item scale developed by (Meyer and Allen, 1997), hence a total of 24 items were used. The study measured employee commitment using 8-item scale for each type of employee commitment (Affective commitment, Continuous commitment and Normative commitment) developed by (Meyer and Allen, 1997), hence a total of 24 items were used. Previous studies indicated a cronbach Alpha value .77 to .88 (Hackett, Bycio, and Hausdorf, 1994; Meyer and Allen, 1997).

Independent Variables

The study adopted items for the political scale dimensions from Political Skill Inventory (PSI) Ferris, (Treadway *et al.* 2007) which were; proactive personality (nine items), social astuteness (eight items), interpersonal influence (eight items), networking ability (eight items), and self- monitoring (eight items). The PSI consisted of forty-one items which participants answered by indicating to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each statement about themselves in the workplace on a one (strongly disagree) to five (strongly agree) Likert scale.

3.2. Validity and reliability of variable measurement

The explanatory factor analysis results for employee performance, employee commitment and political skills are presented in Table 1. The principal component analysis with Varimax rotation was performed to identify the underlying factors. The results depicted that the high factor loading scores showed that all were all above the minimum recommended value of .50 (Hair Jr, Hult, Ringle, and Sarstedt, 2016). The EFA extracted 1 factor with an Eigen value of above the accepted value of 1 (Yong and Pearce, 2013) and cumulative extracted variance above 50 %. Thus the items were appropriate to explain the variable. Moreover, from the Table 1 below, Bartlett's Test of Sphericity produced a significant Chi-Square (χ^2 , $p < .05$) and Kaiser – Meyer - Olkin measure of sampling adequacy above the acceptable value of .50 (Field, 2005), showing that it was appropriate to subject data for factor analysis on this variable of employee performance (Leech *et al.* 2013). From the results generated, the Cronbach alpha for each variable based on the average of inter-item correlation was above .70, therefore regarded as a reliable measure for the construct under consideration.

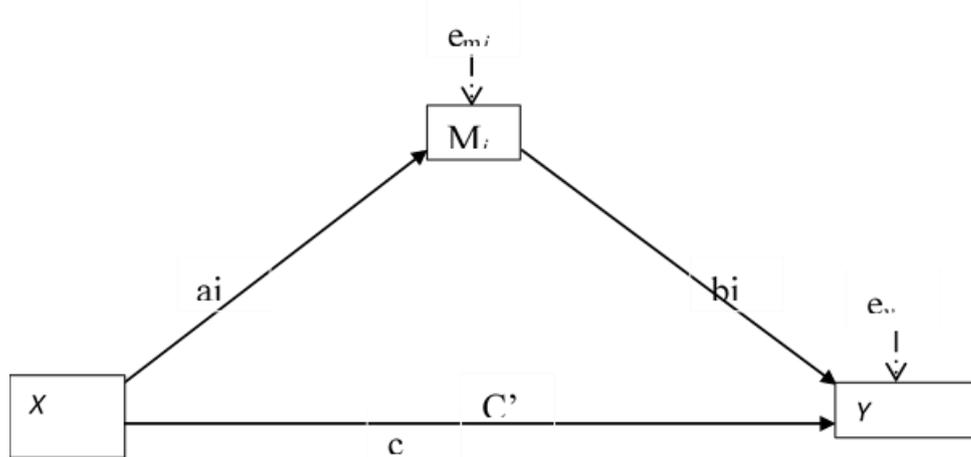
Table 1: Validity and reliability of variable measurement

	Loadings	Mean	KMO (Bartlett's Test)	CV
Employee Performance ($\alpha=0.89$)			0.84($\chi^2=26.06^{**}$)	50.471
EP1	0.51	4.30		
EP2	0.51	4.20		
EP3	0.71	4.20		
EP4	0.57	4.31		
EP5	0.65	4.27		
EP6	0.70	4.37		
EP7	0.71	4.36		
EP8	0.50	4.12		
EP9	0.57	4.17		
EP10	0.64	4.26		
EP11	0.61	4.33		
EP12	0.69	4.20		
EP13	0.79	4.20		
EP14	0.71	4.15		
EP15	0.76	4.35		
Employee Commitment ($\alpha=0.91$)			0.86($\chi^2=46.36^{**}$)	49.11
EC1	0.74	4.34		
EC2	0.68	4.32		
EC3	0.68	4.38		
EC4	0.67	4.15		
EC5	0.67	4.30		
EC6	0.64	4.28		
EC7	0.64	4.13		
EC8	0.63	3.86		
EC9	0.61	4.11		
EC10	0.59	4.26		
EC11	0.57	3.96		
EC12	0.57	4.09		
EC13	0.52	3.85		
EC14	0.85	4.00		
EC15	0.78	4.15		
EC16	0.73	4.18		
EC17	0.61	4.20		
EC18	0.81	4.25		
EC19	0.80	4.26		
EC20	0.70	4.21		
Political Skills($\alpha=0.931$)			0.86($\chi^2=18830.35^{**}$)	61.84
PS-PP1	0.532	4.22		
PS-PP2	0.53	4.19		
PS-PP3	0.56	4.39		
PS-PP4	0.52	4.40		
PS-PP5	0.75	4.42		
PS-PP6	0.54	4.32		
PS-PP7	0.69	4.47		
PP-SA1	0.80	4.37		

PP-SA2	0.81	4.00
PP-SA3	0.70	3.55
PP-SA4	0.63	3.78
PP-SA5	0.72	3.86
PP-SA6	0.76	3.15
PP-SA7	0.73	3.57
PP-NA1	0.60	3.06
PP-NA2	0.52	2.96
PP-NA3	0.76	3.02
PP-NA4	0.67	3.27
PP-NA5	0.88	2.92
PP-NA6	0.84	3.26
PP-NA7	0.66	3.61
PP-NA8	0.75	3.71
PP-SM1	0.72	3.88
PP-SM2	0.66	4.33
PP-SM3	0.59	4.30
PP-SM4	0.64	4.16
PP-SM5	0.80	4.07
PP-II1	0.88	3.78
PP-II2	0.55	3.62
PP-II3	0.57	3.79
PP-II4	0.69	4.09
PP-II5	0.64	3.82
PP-II6	0.76	3.87
PP-II7	0.68	3.66
PP-II8	0.70	3.52

3.3. Analysis model

Mediation effect of employee commitment was tested using Bootstrapping with the aid of SPSS as demonstrated by Hayes (2017), under PROCESS macro model 4. PROCESS macro is a model formulated to make room for simple to complex statistics employing the recent methods. For mediation models, macro offers several estimates of the impact magnitude of implicit effects, in addition to rebooting confidence intervals for the inferences of the impact magnitude (Hayes, 2017). A strong mechanism is brought forward by Hayes that can test the relevance of implicit impacts and averting Type II error in mediation analyses likely to occur in (Baron and Kenny, 1986) method (Preacher and Hayes, 2004).



Source: (Hayes, 2017)

Figure: 2 Mediation Model

Where x is the independent variable, M is the mediating variable, y is the dependent variable. The paths (coefficients) are denoted by a , b , and c' .

Indirect effect of X on Y through $M = a_i b_i$

Direct effect of X on $Y = c'$.

Figure 2 depicts a simple mediation model and shows how variable X 's causal effect is apportioned into its indirect effect on Y through M and its direct effect on Y (path c'). Path (a) represents the effect of X on the proposed mediator, whereas path (b) is the effect of M on Y partially out the effect of X . All of these paths were typically quantified with un-standardized regression coefficients. The indirect effect of X on Y through M can then be quantified as the product of a , and b (i.e., ab). The total effect of X on Y is quantified with the regression weight c . The *total effect* of X on Y is expressed as the sum of the direct and indirect effects:

$$c = c' + ab.$$

Equivalently, c' is the difference between the total effect of X on Y and the indirect effect of X on Y through M —that is,

$$c' = c - ab.$$

4. Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the research findings for quantitative.

4.1. Univariate analysis

In order to measure relationships between employee political skills and employee commitment on employee performance in Kenyan universities, a Pearson correlation coefficient was computed. According to Nunnally (1978) Pearson correlation is an estimate of the correlation (linear dependence) between variables X and Y , presenting a value between +1 and -1 inclusive. (Nikolić, Mureşan, Feng, and Singer, 2012)

opines that the Pearson's correlation coefficient investigates the level to which quantitative components are linked linearly in a sample. The larger the absolute value of the correlation coefficient, the greater the association. Pearson correlation test was employed. In this test, the null hypothesis is a zero-correlation coefficient (no linkage). Where the degree of a significance test is below .05, the null hypothesis will be refuted.). This study was employed to establish the relationship between employee political skill and employee commitment to employee performance of personnel in Kenyan universities. Based on Katz and Sharpe (2006), In the consequent debate, the successive correlations were highlighted by the prefix 'r' where a value of the coefficient demonstrated the level of correlation. Based on the outcomes in table 2, there is a definitive and strong correlation v =between the independent variables and the performance of employees. Specifically, the correlation outcomes demonstrated that employee commitment and employee performance have a positive and significant correlation ($r = .722, \rho < .01$). Political skills are positively linked with employee performance ($r = .807, \rho < .01$). In addition, for control variable only age ($r = -.108, \rho > .01$) expressed a significant negative relationship. In accordance to the above outcomes, there is an indication of the linear correlation between all speculators on employee performance within Kenyan universities; therefore, this calls for the execution of a more advanced framework for instance multiple regression models to demonstrate a cause-effect linkage.

Table 2: Correlation Analysis

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	1						
2	-.108*	1					
3	0.051	.131**	1				
4	-0.069	-0.049	.241**	1			
5	-0.017	.162**	-0.026	-.164**	1		
6	.722**	-.160**	.168**	0.029	-0.082	1	
7	.807**	-.136**	0.04	-0.043	-0.047	.642**	1

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

- 1 = Performance,
 2 = age
 3 = job tenure
 4 = highest Educational Level
 5 = gender
 6 = commitment
 7 = political skills

4.2. Hypotheses Testing

The regression analysis was performed to test the model fit and to establish the predictive power of the models in the response variable. Field (2009) claims that there exists a huge count of regression techniques for instance, stepwise, forced entry or hierarchical method, the current research employed the multiple regression and Hayes model 4 (four) to assess direct and mediation implications (hypotheses 1– 3) as it clearly highlights what happens to the regression model as various predictor variables are

brought in. Therefore, the analyst was able to deliberately take into account the role played by every independent variable in illustrating the speculative power of the model.

This part demonstrates the outcomes for the chief implications and gradually, the relationship implications of the variables in the inquiry. The outcomes of Hayes model 4 (four) are illustrated in table 3.

Results from model 1 in table 3 show that employee political skills had a significant effect on employee commitment ($\beta=.812$, $p=.000$) (a). Thus, hypothesis one (H_1) was accepted. Further, the result presented by table 3, model 2 shows that there was a significant effect of employee political skill on employee performance in Kenyan Universities ($\beta=.467$, $p=.000$). Thus, Hypothesis two (H_2) was accepted. The findings agree with Blickle, Oerder, and Summers, (2010) who found that strongly politically skilled individuals perform better than less politically skilled staff as a result of the former's feeling of being security and mastery over the social setting. Similarly, Yılmaz, Özer, and Günlük (2014), those with high political skills are more apt to as compared to the less politically skilled employees to improve their performance. However, Perrewé *et al.* (2004) component of political skills, failed to predict employee performance significantly.

Results from model 2 after the mediation of employee commitment, showed that effect of employee political skill and employee performance in Kenyan Universities reduced and remained significant at ($\beta=.47$, $p=.000$) showing a significant partial mediation, thus the hypothesis three (H_3) was rejected. The mediation effect was also confirmed by bootstrapping upper and lower level of confidence with no zero in between (BootLLCI=.27, BootULCI=.48). Employee commitment based on (Schweitzer, Chianello, and Kothari, 2013) is defined as a resolution by an employee to stick to an institution notwithstanding the institutional setting or the shifts therein. Employee Political skill refers to the capacity to comprehend others at work successfully, and to the employee such understanding to encourage the rest to behave in ways that improve individual as well as institutional goals. Employee performance can be described as the completion of duties on to the standards defined by the firm or superintendent; it is also checked on recommended acceptable codes while successfully and competently employing current resources in a shifting setting.

The study, therefore, revealed that employee commitment significantly mediates employees' performance positively. It is backed up by Ghasemi and Keshavarzi (2014) and Hsiao and Chang (2011) who found out that there lies a positive correlation between employee performance and employee commitment, additionally, a positive correlation between political skills and Employee Commitment gives credit to the idea that EC has a positive correlation with Employee Performance as well as political skills. Employees who demonstrate due diligence to their institutions are more inclined not only to stay in the institution but also to put in more work on behalf of the firm and strive towards attaining its optimum performance and are thus are likely to show improved performance in comparison to employees lacking commitment. A similar school of thought is highlighted by quoting (Akintayo, 2010) that one of the reasons behind commitment attracting the attention of analysts is that institutions rely on committed employees to attain optimum performance. Furthermore, Paino *et al.* (2012) suggested that the committed personnel have been discovered to have more ingenuity; they are least likely to exit a firm than those who are not committed stayed.

Enhancement in performance is reliant on the human force: employee proficiencies, knowledge, skills and outlooks that exist within a single employee of the organization as well as its social capital trust and confidence, shared values, communication, teamwork, partnership, cooperative working dynamics and interaction among these persons. Therefore, employee commitment does improve the influence employee political skill significantly has on employee performance.

Table 3: Results for Direct effects and Mediation (Hayes Model 4)

	model 1 (EC)			model 2 (EP)		
	B	t	P	B	t	p
Constant	.676	3.122	.002	.292	1.746	.082
EPS	$a_1=.812$	19.770	.000	$C'=.467$	1.710	.000
EC				$b_1=.466$	12.490	.000
Age	-.103	-4.171	.000	-.019	-.972	.332
job tenure	.149	5.915	.000	.028	1.402	.162
education	.068	2.470	.014	.016	.021	.464
Gender	.013	.303	.762	.094	2.946	.003
R-sq	.510			.685		
F	87.580			152.130		
F prob	.000			.000		
Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:						
	Effect	BootSE	BootLLCI	BootULCI		
Mediation						
(a1×b1)	.3781	.0535	.2718	.4791		

Note: Sign. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, EPS=Employee political skills, EC= Employee commitment, EP= Employee Performance

5. Conclusion

Conclusively and in a nutshell, this study investigated the effect of employee political skills, employee commitment on employee performance. All hypotheses were supported, which means that there is a significant relationship between employee political skills, employee commitment on employee performance in Kenyan universities.

Employee political skill positively impacts employee performance. Accordingly, it can be declared that politically skilled personnel are valuable to the institution because they are more adept to master the social consequences of resource spending, assess the current and future value of social assets, in addition to comprehending how they can be applied into the operation of the rest for optimum performance as compared to the less proficient staff. Furthermore, they are successful in highlighting prospects within the work setting and commitment until there is significant improvement within the establishment.

The study also implies that there is a strong empirical relationship between an employee's personal characteristics and their performance in Kenyan universities. It is clear that in a case where employees are well trained, highly motivated, proficiently skilled, have advanced career development, positive disposition, the degree of their productivity is more likely to be more significant as compared to firms with unskilled

staff. This suggests that through employee commitment, the level of employees' performance is hugely influenced by political skill. There is a need, therefore, for institutions to foster personal traits among employees, particularly fundamentals of employee political skill especially proactive personality, social astuteness, networking ability, self-monitoring and interpersonal influence. Furthermore, there is a need to blend the mentioned skills with other factors used in this study; employee commitment in order to achieve the organizational goals with proper enhancement and control of the aspect of employee politics.

6. Managerial implication

The study recommends that to improve on their productivity, Kenyan universities should consider encouraging and promoting all employee political skills. Political skill is a major predictor of employee commitment and performance. Employees who are politically skilled leverage their networks by ensuring that they are connected to influence others. Those with political skills are more adept in comparison to less skilled employees

The politically skilled also are more likely to comprehend the social consequences of resource spending, assess the current and future value of social assets, in addition to comprehending how they can be applied into the operation of the rest for optimum performance as compared to the less proficient staff. Further, failure to socialize on the part of an employee may result in the later leaving the institution consequently bears negative implications on both the institution and the employee. As an implication, firms must have employees bearing advanced political skill because they are best suited to capitalize on prospects that bear merit to the institution.

7. Theoretical Implication

This research has several important implications for employee political skill literature. Since the works of various scholars were mainly used as the conceptual underpinning for employee political skill construct in this study, the findings of this research confirmed and extended knowledge of employee political skill conceptualizations. Given the relative newness of employee political skill analyses (e.g. explanatory analyses of the employee political skill measure across several universities, and an explanatory design with a large sample in the field study); support for the conceptualizations was significant for the expansion of knowledge within the field.

Notably, since this study was conducted solely in Kenya, one should be aware of the findings in term of generalizability to other cultural contexts. Despite the argument that the effect of political skill and employee performance in universities should be generally stable over time and integral to the individual.

8. Limitation and further studies

Due to limited scope of this study on only local universities employees, further research is suggested focusing on all employees in both public and private universities, colleges and all education and training sector as a whole and with a global view. Also, due to limited research on employee performance in Kenya, recommendations for further research on this field focusing on various sectors is encouraged. Deeper, there is a need

to further research on this problem basing other statistical methods and model, for example, SEM and others.

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