

# Determining Satisfaction of the Workplace Environment of Diplomats and Consular Staff of the Kenyan Embassy in the United States of America

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**Abstract:** This Article focused on the challenges of workplace conflict affecting performance of diplomats and consular staff at the Kenyan Embassy in the United States of America. Statement of the problem is the under-performance of the diplomats and consular staff at the Kenyan Embassy in the United States of America. The general objective revolved around challenges of workplace conflict affecting performance of Kenyan diplomats and consular staff in the United States of America. An evaluation of the extent to which the diplomats are satisfied with their work related aspects, workplace issues are of great interest since most people spend a third of their adult lives at work. Work defines people in the most basic way, which is one reason retirement is so difficult for many people. Regarding the scope, the study covered the Embassy in Washington D.C. in the United States of America. In order to enhance the performance of diplomats and consular staff in the USA, their work place has to be re-looked at and be improved.

**Keywords:** performance of diplomats and consular staff, Workplace Environment.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

An environmental assessment is an opportunity to tour and observe the workplace to understand more about the setting employees work in and the physical factors at and nearby the worksite that support or hinder employee health and evaluate physical and organizational work environment for health hazards and risks. An assessment of the physical work environment can identify a number of opportunities for employers to create access and opportunity for employees to practice healthy behaviours, such as physical activity or discourage unhealthy behaviours, such as creating a tobacco free work environment. Also conflict will result where there is competition for resources.

## 2. THE WORK PLACE ENVIRONMENT

A workplace environment plays a crucial role in employee motivation and employee productivity (Adams, 1962).[1]. Employee work environment also addresses issues of supervision and employee attitude towards his or her work place environment.

The above objective was to determine whether the diplomats and consular staff are satisfied with their work related aspects, and answering the question: Are the civil servants satisfied with work related aspects?

The answer to the above question is found in the following table

Table 1. Work Related Aspects

Nature of Work	Strongly Agree %	Agree %	Neutral %	Disagree %	Strongly Disagree %
My work is repetitive	15%	40%	20%	20%	5%
I am usually overworked	34%	30%	10%	15%	11%
My job lacks aspects of advancement	36%	33%	5%	20%	6%
My performance is never rewarded	20%	30%	4%	26%	20%

Source: Field Data (2012) from the three stations.

Regarding the work related aspects, the study established that performance was affected as follows:

In the segment of strongly agree, we find 15 per cent; 40 per cent, 20 per cent, 20 per cent and 5 per cent, agreed, were neutral, disagreed and strongly disagreed regarding their work being repetitive whilst those overworked ranged as follows: 34 per cent strongly agreed, 30 per cent agreed, 15 and 11 per cent disagreed and strongly disagreed.

### Work Schedule Options

Are you happy with your working hours -To what extent do you agree/ disagree

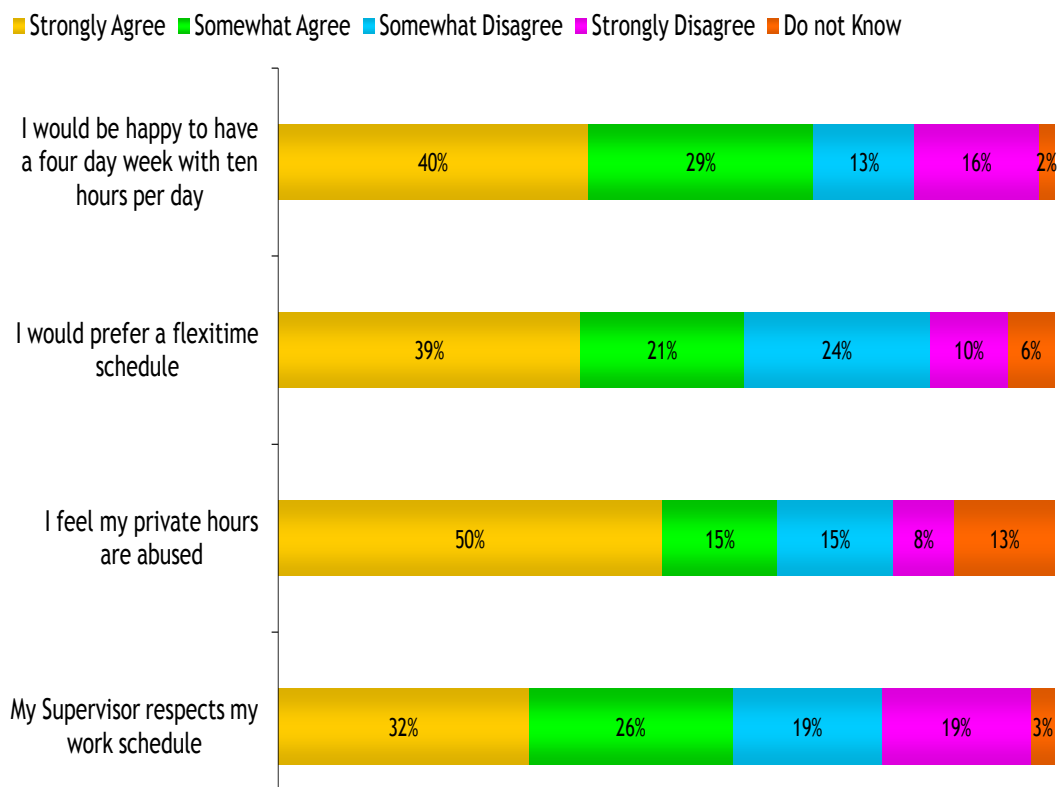


Figure 1 Respondents Nature Related Aspects. Source: Field Data (2012).

Regarding work schedule options, from the percentages shown, it is evident from the study that a majority of the employees would like to be given schedules that are flexible.

## On starting work at the Embassy

When you started working with the Embassy did you find your work interesting?

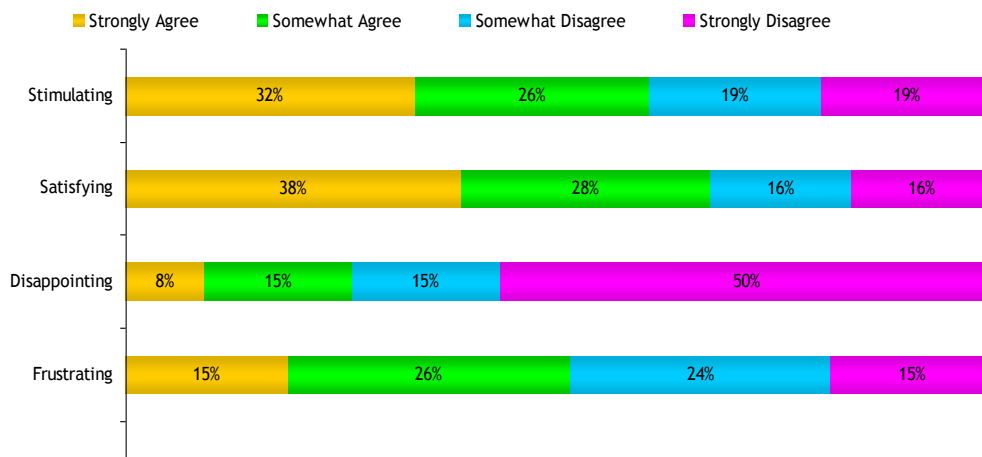


Figure 2. Respondents Nature Related Aspects. Source: Field Data (2012).

When asked about how they found their work situation on joining the Embassy, 32 per cent said they felt strongly stimulated, 26 per cent said they were somewhat stimulated and 19 per cent disagreed and said they were not stimulated at the time they started work.

### Present Experience at the Embassy:

Do you consider your work now to be .....

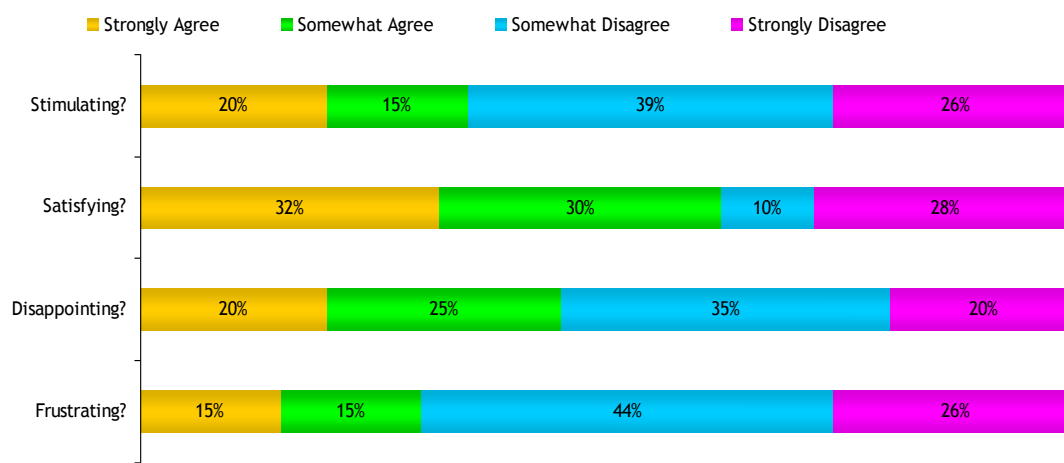


Figure .3 Respondents Nature Related Aspects. Source: Field Data (2012).

Regarding their current experience, 20 per cent strongly felt that they were stimulated, 15 per cent, 39 per cent, and 26 per cent somewhat agreed, disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively, while those who were in the frustrated bracket ranged as follows: 15 per cent felt strongly about being frustrated, 15 per cent somewhat agreed that they were frustrated, 44 per cent disagreed that they were frustrated and 26 per cent strongly disagreed that they were frustrated.

### 3. WORKPLACE FACTORS AFFECTING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

#### Goal-setting:

Only some employees of the MFA get involved in setting meaningful goals and performance measures for their work. This is done informally between the employee and their immediate supervisors or as part of the MFA's formal performance management process. The key here is that each employee should be actively engaged in the goal-setting process and take ownership of the final agreed goals and measures. Once employees know their roles through goal-setting, performance will improve (Locke, 1997).[2]

#### Performance feedback:

Information on how the employee is performing is rarely fed back regularly to employees. This should consist of both positive feedback on what the employee is doing right as well as feedback on what requires improvement. The feedback is objective and delivered with the appropriate interpersonal and conflict resolution skills and should be a mix of both informal and formal feedback delivered as part of a formal performance management cycle (Finnet *al* 1996).[3]

#### Role congruity:

The role that the employee is required to perform at the Ministry's offices in the USA should be consistent with their expectations on joining the Foreign Service. The MFA's role and expectations should be typically reflected in formal documents, such as Job Descriptions and Role Specifications. These expectations should be consistent with tasks allocated by the employee's immediate supervisor (Hertzberg et al, 1959).[4]

#### Workplace incentives:

The MFA should determine what motivates its employees and sets up formal and informal structures for rewarding employees that behave in the way required. Rewards should consist of a mix of internal rewards, such as challenging assignments, and external rewards such as peer recognition. This will motivate an employee to perform better (Robbins 1994). [5]

#### Supervisor support:

Immediate supervisors should act as advocates for employees, gathering and distributing the resources needed by employees in order for them to be able to do a good job and provide positive encouragement for a job well done. Supervisors should display the interpersonal skills required to engage employees and enhance their self-confidence (Swanepoel, 2001). [6]

#### Mentoring/coaching:

Skilled and respected people should be available to employees to help them perform better in their current roles and to assist them develop further into a future role (Finnet *al* 1996). [3] Mentors and coaches should be internal to the MFA. They should possess the necessary facilitation skills to assist employees develop and apply new skills.

### 4. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

#### A safe, non-hostile work place:

A Supervisor in each unit should be responsible for setting and maintaining a working environment that is both productive and professional. This includes making sure the work place is safe and free from any type of harassment and discrimination (Vroom, 1994). [7].

#### Compliance:

All employees are expected to comply with NEMA policies regarding environment management. Supervisors should ensure this information is disseminated.

#### Pollution Prevention:

Eliminating pollution before it enters the environment is preferable to managing the pollution after it enters the environment. Often, pollution prevention activities reduce operating costs, minimize liabilities, and reduce regulatory

requirements. Employees should be sensitized to explore and implement ways in which pollutants and waste from their activities can be reduced or eliminated.

### **Recycling is one way of reducing surplus materials**

Unwanted materials from one department may be needed materials in another department. The exchange of these materials will reduce the need to purchase new materials and dispose old ones. Employees should also be sensitized on this. Using computers in sending emails will reduce use of paper, hence reducing solid waste. Employees should adopt the use of emails (Duffee 1974).[8]

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