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Influence of Training on Employee Performance in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya

Nicholas Kadaga Mwandishi

Ph.D. Candidate, Jomo Kenyatta university of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Miki Iravo Amuhaya

Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya

Dr. Maurice Sakwa

Lecturer, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, Nairobi, Kenya

Abstract:

*The demands of the ever-changing business environment world over require a lifelong employee training as a strategy for attaining competitive advantage in the industry. Although a number of studies covering performance of employees have tended to focus upon established business entities, new structures like devolved governments have attracted limited attention. In Kenya, the new constitution of 2010 devolved management of resources to counties, and mandated them to ensure that services are appropriately delivered to the people. However, reports from the national audit indicate that performance of most counties is below expectation, except in some counties like in Kakamega County's Shinyalu Sub County (or Kakamega East Sub County). Owing to the fact that organizations can only attain set goals through employees, little is known regarding the influence of training approaches on employee performance in the county governments. The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of training on employee performance in Shinyalu Sub County, Kenya. Specific objectives of the study were to: establish the indicators of employee performance; assess employee training approaches used for influencing performance; and to establish the relationship between training approaches and employee performance during 2014/2015 financial year in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya. The target population was 19 heads of sections in the sub county. Census method was used to select the heads of sections for the study. Questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data from the study respondents. Descriptive statistics, Pearson Correlations, and Regressions were used for data analysis. The study found that mean employee performance was 3.282 (SD=0.51608) while the mean for training was 2.87 (SD=0.94618). Training was however found to correlate highly (.803** p=0.03, 2 tailed) with employee performance, with a beta of 0.803 and R^2 of 0.645. This suggests that the more favourable training approaches are, the higher employee performance would be in the county government on one hand, and that employee training accounts for 64.5% of employee performance in the county government under study. For the enhancement of performance, the study recommends that adequate training approaches should be put in place by the county governments. Moreover, given that 35.5% of employee performance in Kenyan devolved units, is not explained by employee training, it is recommended that further studies be done on the influence of other human resource practices on employee performance in this area.*

Keywords: Employee Performance, Training: County Government, Kakamega East

1. Introduction

The ever-changing nature of business environment demands for a lifelong training as a coping strategy on one hand, and as a strategy of gaining competitive edge in the industry. The time to time changes in business environment thus calls for continuous upgrading of employee skills and capabilities to improve on their job performance, growth and the ability to adapt to the rapidly changing economic environments for the organization to remain competitive (Amin et al., 2013). Human capital accumulation after entry into the labour market is considered key to economic performance at both the micro and the macro level (Pfeifer, Janssen, Yang and Backes-Gellner, 2011). Effective training programs may also have positive effect on employee motivation and commitment when the employee develops the desired skills, knowledge and abilities (Elnaga & Imra, 2013). Moreover, training has a big influence on performance with attitude, job satisfaction and service delivery as key performance indicators emanating from trained employees. However, it is important to note that limited information is available with regard to how training influences employee performance of public servants in devolved systems or counties.

Training has been defined by Shaheen, Naqvi and Khan (2013) as a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and behaviour required by employees to do adequately on confirmed task or job. According to Amin, et al (2013), training refers to learning that is provided in order to improve performance on the present job (Amin et al., 2013). Conversely Elnaga and Imra (2013) defined employee training as programs that provide workers with information, new skills, or professional development opportunities, and which can take place in numerous ways: on the job or off the job; in the organization or outside organization. Besides these definitions, Githinji (2014) asserts that the term training draws elements of acquiring new knowledge to help manage both current and future situations. It is thus important to analyse training approaches employed by emerging dispositions like devolved governments, owing that limited focus has been made in this area.

Employee performance is defined as the outcome or contribution of employees to make them attain goals (Nassazi, 2013) while performance may be used to define what an organization has accomplished with respect to the process, results, relevance and success. Afshan, Sobia, Kamran and Nasir (2012) define performance as the achievement of specific tasks measured against pre-determined or identified standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. Employee performance can be manifested in improvement in production, easiness in using the new technology, highly motivated workers. Gavrea, et al (2011) view performance as set of financial and non-financial indicators which offer information on the degree of achievement of organizational objectives and results. Therefore, performance is dynamic, requiring judgment and interpretation. Yet interpretation of the influence of training on the level of employee performance among public servants working in devolved units in Kenya has not been focused upon by many researchers.

The public service is the administrative government regulated body which occupies an essential position in the political system of nations (Nyameh & Nuhu, 2013). Throughout the world, the contributions of public Service in promoting sustainable and equitable economic growth are receiving increasing attention. Efficient and effective management of the public Service are critical to sustainable socio-economic development of a nation. Employees of the public service are arguably the most important resource of the government because of their vast contribution is responsible to the success of service delivery to the public (Anazodo, Okoye & Chukwuemek, 2012). Since independence, Civil Service in Kenya has been entirely under the management of Public Service Commission (GoK, 2010) till the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010. The dawn of the new constitution has witnessed the devolution of the management of most government departments to the county government, including employees working in the affected departments.

Different county governments in Kenya have registered varying performances as far as the attainment of service delivery targets are concerned, since taking up the management of regional offices under the new constitutional dispensation. According to the Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA, 2015), majority of the 47 county governments in the country only spent an average of 40% of the funds disbursed to them for development projects, and most projects either remain uncompleted or are yet to be started owing to procurement difficulties and poor planning. Although performance aimed at achieving targets at the county governments is only achievable through committed workforce, there is no available evidence of a study on influence of employee training on public servant's performance in the county governments in Kenya, and how such practices influence performance of these devolved units.

The Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA, 2014) assessed all the 47 Counties to establish whether target goals are being met in regard to budgets for which allocation of funds were made. Sectors upon which the County Governments were assessed included education sector, infrastructure, health, water, environment, tourism, agriculture, industrialization, transport, and trade. Performance of 75% of the 47 counties was found to be poor in all the sectors, and most development projects remained incomplete. However, Kakamega East (Shinyalu) Sub County, Kakamega County was found to have completed 80% of projects planned and initiated in 2014/2015 financial year. Thus, there is likelihood that HR practices like training in the sub county are aligned to its business strategies, as espoused by Armstrong (2010): business objectives are accomplished when human resource practices, procedures and systems are developed and implemented based on organizational needs, that is, when a strategic perspective to human resource management is adopted. However, no study has been done to establish strategic human resource management practices like employee training adopted by the sub county which might have contributed to better performance as compared to other sub counties in Kakamega County. This study therefore selected Kakamega East Sub County in Kakamega County to assess the influence of training on employee performance.

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Allocation and management of resources are universally accepted to be brought closer to people through devolution. Such allocations thus enable implementation of projects that suits specific needs of the local people. Despite of this noble intent, most county governments and their sub counties are unable to achieve set goals and targets with the employees that they have within the context of devolved units. This situation calls for an analysis of strategic human resource management practices which are put in place by these county governments to achieve organizational goals meant to enhance service delivery in the new administrative units, since scholars are yet to draw any clear link between strategic HR practices and performance in situations where administrative authority in public sector is devolved. Approximately 40 out of 47 counties in Kenya have failed to complete their planned projects, and around 38 to 40 out of the 47 counties spent less than 40% of funds allocated to them in 2014 /2015 financial year, for various development projects budgeted for (CRA, 2014). Human resource management scholars (Armstrong, 2010; Gavrea, et al., 2011; Sani, 2012; Waiganjo & Awino, 2012; and Dermol & Rakowska, 2014) have largely linked organizational performance to strategic human resource management practices like training, although this link is yet to be established in the new devolved systems owing to labour law requirements regulating recruitment and selection, training amongst others. Despite of this reality, county governments are still expected to develop strategic HR practices capable of attaining better performance to satisfy the needs of the local population. Although several studies have linked practices like employee training with employee performance, there has been no study to establish

this relationship in any county and their sub county governments in Kenya. This study was therefore set to determine the influence of training on performance of public servants from the year 2014 to 2015 in Kakamega East Sub County, Kenya.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of training on employee performance in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Establish the indicators of employee performance during 2014/2015 financial year in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya.
- ii. Assess employee training approaches used for influencing performance during 2014/2015 financial year in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya.
- iii. Establish the relationship between training approaches and employee performance during 2014/ 2015 financial year in Kakamega East Sub County of Kakamega County, Kenya.

1.3. Scope of the Study

This study focused on training approaches and how they influence employee performance (public servants) in Kakamega East Sub County. It targeted heads of sections, since the onus of achieving organization strategies lies on departmental heads or the line managers. Data was collected using questionnaires in November 2016.

2. Literature Review

Employee training has been tested by several scholars and proved by practical data to have positive influence on performance. Zaim, Yaşar, and Ünal (2013) analysed the effects of individual competencies on performance by conducting a field study in service industries in Turkey. Among the all factors, core competencies were found as most important criterion. It is followed by task competencies (0, 26) with the value of its standardized regression weight being 0.38 ($p < 0.01$). Managerial competencies have less effect (0, 20) on individual performance in comparison with other two factors. However, all factors have positive linear correlation with individual performance. For the organizational performance, managerial competencies have the most significant impact (0.40) on organizational performance, followed by core competencies (0.18) and task competencies (0.14).

Khan, Khan and Khan (2011) used a sample of 100 employees of different organizations of Islamabad to examine the impacts of training and development on organizational performance. Questionnaire consisting of 15 questions were used to collect data. Results revealed that training and development, on-the-job training, training design and delivery style all have significant effect on employee performance and all can positively affect the organizational performance. Nonetheless, this study drew its sample size from different organizations in the entire Islamabad. Homogeneity of population is often important for the purpose of obtaining opinions from respondents who have experienced same treatment. This is what this study (Khan, et al., 2011) lacked.

Tshikovhi (2012) sought to determine the impact of a training and development (T&D) programme on the perceived performance of human resource assistants at a platinum mine in South Africa, and found through a one sample t-test, the hypothesis was accepted, given that the significance level for each section had an average score that was significantly different to a score of 3. The p-value for all 4 cases was $p < .0005$. This indicates that each section had experienced more than just some positive change.

Similarly, Malaolu and Ogbuabor (2013) investigated the effects of training and manpower development on employees' productivity and organizational performance in Nigeria, using First Bank of Nigeria Plc as a case study. The study applied structured questionnaires to a sample size of 75 respondents drawn by simple random sampling. The data generated was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings of the study showed that majority of the respondents agreed that training and manpower development has enhanced their efficiency and job productivity. Secondly, the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that training and manpower development enhanced organizational performance. But whether the same could be true among civil servants in county governments remains unknown.

Another study by Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2014) investigated the impact of training and development on organizational effectiveness in public sector in Nigeria. Sixty-six (66) copies of the questionnaire were administered. The study concluded that effective training is an investment in the human resources of an organization, with both immediate and long – range returns. However mere investment is not enough; organizations need to manage training programs more effectively so that they can get the highest returns from their investment.

Equally, Anlesinya, Bukari, and Eshun (2015) sought to investigate the effect of employee development on organizational performance in Ghana's public sector. Sixty-five employees were selected for inclusion in the study using convenience sampling method. The researchers used Pearson's correlation and simple linear regression as analytical tools to analyse the data. The research hypothesis tried to determine if employee development would have significant and positive effect on organizational performance. The result indicated that employee development has a significant negative effect on organizational performance.

In Kenya, Otuko, Chege and Musiega (2013) investigated the effect of training dimensions on employee's work performance in Mumias Sugar Company, and found there was a positive and significant effect between training needs assessment and employee performance in Mumias Sugar Company Limited ($b = 0.369$, $t = 3.62$, $p < 0.05$); training contents has a positive and significant ($p < 0.05$) effect on the employee performance in Mumias Sugar Company Limited ($b = 1.18$, t -value = 4.93, p -value < 0.05); and training evaluation and employee performance were positively and significantly associated ($b = 0.315$, t -value = 4.54, $p < 0.05$). However, similar studies need to be done among county governments to establish the influence of training on public servant performance.

3. Research Design, Instruments and Analysis

The study was conducted in Kakamega East Sub County in Kakamega County, Kenya. This is one of the six (6) sub counties in Kakamega County. Each section in the sub county is headed by staff members who oversee activities geared towards achievement of goals and targets of the sub county. The study sampled 19 heads of section that serve as the line managers. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the 19 heads of sections that were purposively sampled since they are directly responsible for implementation of the organizational strategies. Eleven (11) respondents returned their questionnaires; this was 57.9% return rate. Equally, one member of the public service board was also selected for interview. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse indicators of employee performance as well as training approaches used by the sub county. Correlations and regressions were used to establish the relationship between training and employee performance.

4. Research Findings

Table 1 presents a summary of demographic profile of the sampled heads of sections;

Profile	Measurement	Frequency	Percentage
Age (in Years)	31 - 35	3	27.3
	36 - 40	3	27.3
	41 - 45	2	18.2
	46 - 50	2	18.2
	51 and above	1	9.1
	Total	11	100
Education level	Masters	3	27.3
	Bachelors	3	27.3
	Diploma	5	45.5
	Total	11	100
Job Designation	Planning	1	9.1
	Youth and Gender	1	9.1
	Revenue	1	9.1
	SCMOH	2	18.2
	Public Health	1	9.1
	Others	5	45.5
	Total	11	100
	Gender	Male	8
Female		3	27.3
Total		113	100
Years in public service	Less than 3 years	4	36.4
	7 – 9 years	2	18.2
	More than 10 years	5	45.5
	Total	11	100

Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents

The profile illustrates that majority (51.33%) of the sampled section heads aged between 31 and 40 years; 36.4% of them were of 41 to 50 years of age; while 9.1% of them were 51 years old and above. This finding suggest that the population of section heads working in the sub county is not an aging population, but of middle age one that could be considered to be strong and with ample opportunity for skill improvement. With regard to education level of the respondents, majority (45.5%) of them had diploma level of education; 27.3% had degree level of education; while another 27.3% of them had obtained master level of education. This suggests that heads of section in this sub county seem to have had moderate but basic level of education, with technical skills. They were therefore considered to be in a position to better understand training approaches that are appropriate for their sub ordinates.

Table 1 also illustrates that majority (72.7%) of the sampled section heads were of male gender, while 27.3% were females. Gender imbalance is thus glaringly appearing among the line managers. On the other hand, most (45.5%) of the line managers have worked in the public service for more than 10 years, while 36.4% of them had been in the public service for less than 3 years. The remaining (18.2%) of the line managers have been in the public service for between 7 and 9 years.

4.1. Employee Performance

The first objective assessed the indicators of public servants' performance influenced by training. Descriptive statistics obtained from the analysed data is presented in Table 2

Indicators	N	Mean	Std Dev
Financial growth	11	2.91	1.136
Increased revenue collection	11	3.18	1.250
Timely completion of projects	11	3.09	.701
Quality of completed projects	11	3.36	.674
Tasks are efficiently accomplished	11	3.10	.738
Contextual performance	11	3.40	.699
Productive work behavior	11	3.56	.527
Counter productive work behavior	11	3.20	1.033
Improved work environment	11	3.27	1.009
Satisfied customers	11	3.91	.701

Table 2: Distribution of indicators of employee performance

Table 2 illustrates that financial growth, increased revenue collection, tasks efficiently accomplished, and counterproductive work behavior are some of the performance indicators affected by training to a small extent ($M=2.91$: $SD=1.136$; $M=3.18$: $SD=1.250$; $M=3.10$: $SD=.738$; $M=3.20$: $SD=1.033$) respectively. On the other hand, satisfied customer ($M=3.91$: $SD=.701$) and productive work behaviour ($M=3.56$: $SD=.527$). Nonetheless, other than customer satisfaction ($M=3.91$: $SD=.701$), the sampled sectional heads tended to suggest that all the other variables influence performance indicators presented to neither small nor large extent. This finding suggests that training approaches that employees undergo affect or result into customer satisfaction. Dissatisfaction among customers could therefore be attributed to lack of training among key employees within county governments.\

4.2. Employee Training and Performance

The next objective assessed employee training approaches that have influence on performance. Table 3 presents distribution by training approaches and employee performance.

Items	N	Mean	Std Dev
Training policy of the employer	11	2.70	1.059
Appropriateness of training methods	11	3.00	1.095
Appropriateness of the design of training programs	11	2.91	1.221
Appropriateness delivery of training programs	11	2.91	1.136
Appropriate on-job training	11	3.09	1.375
Induction based training	11	3.00	1.414
Time to time coaching by assigned supervisor	11	2.90	1.197
Use of mentorship programs	11	2.30	1.252
Special workshop or seminars for acquisition of specialized skills	11	3.45	1.036
Secondment to particular sections for acquisition of special skills	11	2.45	1.368

Table 3: Distribution by training approaches and employee performance

Table 3 illustrates that the sampled sectional heads suggest that training approaches influence employee performance to a small extent on one hand and to neither small nor large extent on the other hand. This is because training policy ($M=2.70$: $SD=1.059$); appropriateness of the design of training programs ($M=2.91$: $SD=1.221$); appropriateness of delivery of training programs ($M=2.91$: $SD=1.136$); time to time coaching by assigned supervisor ($M=2.90$: $SD=1.197$); use of mentorship programs ($M=2.30$: $SD=1.252$); and secondment to particular sections for acquisition of special skills ($M=2.45$: $SD=1.368$) all denotes to a small extent. Equally, appropriateness of training methods ($M=3.00$: $SD=1.095$); appropriate on-job training ($M=3.09$: $SD=1.375$); induction based training ($M=3.00$: $SD=1.414$), and special workshops or seminars for acquisition of specialized skills ($M=3.45$: $SD=1.036$) denote neither small nor large extent. The large standard deviations reported in Table 3 also point out to the fact that data points are spread over a large range of values. This in essence intimates that employee performance is attributable to many factors other than training approaches provided by the county government. The study therefore proceeded to measure the relationship between the variables.

4.3. Relationship between Training and Employee Performance

Through Pearson Correlations, the relationship between training and employee performance was also measured by the researcher. Table 4 presents the Pearson Correlations at 0.01 significant level (2-tailed).

		Employee Performance	Training
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.803**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.003
	N	11	11
Training	Pearson Correlation	.803**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	

Table 4: Pearson Correlations

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows the relationship between the dependent (employee performance) and the independent (training) variables to be positively correlated. Significant and strong relationship is found with employee training (.813**, $p < 0.01$; 2-tailed). This is suggestive of the fact that the more favourable training approaches are, the higher employee performance would be in the County Government of Kakamega in Kakamega East Sub County.

Further, regression analysis was also run. Table 5 illustrates the findings of linear regressions.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.023	.326		6.204	.000
	Training	.438	.108	.803	4.047	.003

Table 5: Model summary

Table 5 illustrates that there is a positive relationship between the coefficients of training and employee performance. The coefficient for training is 0.803. This implies that for every unit improvement in training, we expect 0.803-unit increase in employee performance in the County Government.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics		
					R Square Change	F Change	df1
1	.803 ^a	.645	.606	.32397	.645	16.377	1

Table 6: Regression Model

With $R^2 = 0.645$ in the model summary (Table 6), the coefficient of determination (predictor indicator) reveals that 1 unit change in training under this study results in 64.5% change in employee performance. Thus, employee training accounts for 64.5% of employee performance in the county government. The stability of this result is reflected by the minimum adjustment in the adjusted R^2 value of 0.606; only showing a decrease of 0.039. Hence, training only explain 64.5% of employee performance, with a significant model fitting ($F=16.377$; $p < 0.000$). This implies that 35.5% of employee performance is attributed to other factors outside this study.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.719	1	1.719	16.377	.003 ^b
	Residual	.945	9	.105		
	Total	2.663	10			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance						
b. Predictors: (Constant) Training						

Table 7: ANOVA

Table 7 illustrates that model used in the study was capable of predicting the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable ($F=16.377 > P=.003$).

5. Discussions

Results obtained in the study show that employee performance is explained by training level (64.5%) of the workforce or employees. This illustrates that training alone might not explain employee performance in an organization. Perhaps a study by Obi-Anike and Ekwe (2014) summed this succinctly: that effective training is an investment in the human resources of an organization, with both immediate and long – range returns. However mere investment is not enough; organizations need to manage training programs more effectively so that they can get the highest returns from their investment. Moreover, Zaim, et al (2013), in analysing the effects of individual competencies on performance, established that managerial competencies have the most significant impact. Interestingly, Anlesinya, et al (2015), while investigating the effect of employee development on organizational performance in Ghana's public sector, found that employee development has a significant negative effect on organizational performance. This seems to contrast findings in the present study. Perhaps this is due to the context in which public servants are required to work in different countries.

6. Conclusions

Based upon the study findings, it is concluded that training has positive and significant relationship with employee performance. However, training does not explain 100% of employee performance in the public service, but around 64% of the same. It is therefore important to investigate the influence of other human resource practices on employee performance in the devolved public service.

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