

Training Strategy and Employee's Performance: Lessons from Kenya Power

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Abstract

The study sought to examine the relationship between training strategy and employees' performance at Kenya Power. The study was motivated by concerns on employee performance in the organization despite the consistent training practices that the organization undertakes to enhance employee performance. Descriptive research design followed by a quantitative approach was used. The target population was 300 employees drawn from energy transmission division of Kenya power. Using stratified sampling, the researcher selected 100 respondents who formed the study's sample size. Primary data was collected through self-administered questionnaires' while secondary data was obtained from KP's official reports, journals and empirical studies linking training strategy and employee performance. A pilot study was undertaken to determine the validity and reliability of the research instruments. Data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The study findings indicated that there is a general acceptance that choosing an appropriate training strategy based on set performance standards of an organization has an overall influence on the performance of employees. The study recommended a need for organization to either re-examine the deficits in the training strategies in order to establish why maximum employee performance is not realized through training alone.

Keywords: Training, strategy, employee, performance, motivation, morale, self-satisfaction, relationship.

Introduction

Researchers have used wide range of tools and techniques for understanding the relationship between employees training and resultant employee performance. The most common techniques includes the analysis of employees' training profiles for getting data regarding the nature, type, tenure and other details of training which has been gained by the employees.

Training is formal as well as an informal process, which is carried out for improving the performance of employees, Bartle (2000). The fundamental aim of training is helping an organization to achieve its goal by adding value to its key resources that is its employees, (Armstrong, 2000). This means that training is like investing in people to enable them to perform better.

One of the most important aspects in the contemporary state run organizations is employees' acquaintance with new methods and techniques through training. Therefore, an enhanced training strategy would be handy for every organization in building a consistent and progressive learning environment.

Background of the Study

In the modern economy, an often-repeated statement usually made by Directors and/or Chairmen of corporate organizations in their annual reports is that "Our main asset is our people" Meyer (2005). Considering this assertion, one is put on enquiry on what is the value of this main asset? And what is the value of the investment put in to this asset? And what is the relationship between investing in this asset and the returns generated.

It can also make the upcoming challenges like a hot cake for more trained people Walker & Miller, (2009). Different level of training is required for the people with high qualification and those with low qualification. Extensive training and high motivation is required for those with low qualification and that is truly necessary to make them able to work with other highly qualified people Becci, (2006).

The aim behind training employees is "achieving cost effective high performance" and good performance brings quality, as according to Deming,(2012), higher quality implies lower costs and increased productivity, which in turn provides the firm with a greater market share and enhanced competitiveness levels. This idea supports the conclusion reached in a number of empirical studies dedicated to manufacturing and service organizations Flynn et al., (1995); Kaynak, (2003); Heras, (2006). Thus training proved that impacts on performance and hence are related to each other.

Objective

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between training strategy and employees' performance at Kenya Power.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis testing begins with an assumption, called hypothesis that we make about a population parameter. Then we collect sample data, produce sample statistics, and use this information to decide how likely it is that our hypothesized population parameter is correct Levin & Rubin (2008).

Hypothesis H₀: there is a positive relationship between training strategy and employee performance outcomes in Kenya power.

Hypothesis H₁: there is no positive relationship between training strategy and employee performance outcomes in Kenya Power.

Literature Review

In today's society, individuals base their self-worth on their work and increasingly find that their identity and satisfaction come from their profession (Mott, 2000). According to Mott, education is becoming an increasingly important factor in people's lives, especially in the workplace. Professional employee educational participation was described by Grotelueschen (1985) as the involvement in formal education activities that are typically short-term, part-time, or both. Educational institutions, professional associations and societies, professional service agencies, the government, and other organizations provide continuing professional activities.

Additionally, Grotelueschen made the distinction between continuing education in general and continuing professional education. The distinctions between the two types of education are the characteristics of the referent population, the nature of the participation, and the benefits received from the educational experience. Continuing education is described as learning experiences that prepare employees for future positions (Spears & Parker, 2002).

Spears and Parker also defined training as the preparation an employee receives to improve performance on his or her present job. Training expense is necessary in order for the organization to become more effective and to increase productivity. Mott (2000) expanded the definition of continuing professional education as "improving professional competence and practice" (p. 23). However, it is defined; continuing professional education and training for many professions is growing in size, coherence, and stature (Cervero, 2000).

Training programs helps in making acquaintance of employees with more advance technology and attaining robust competencies and skills in order to handle the functions and basics of newly introduced technical equipment. More rarely it happens that employees are not fully trained regarding new working and technical techniques and they are unable to deliver to their assignments according to the desire of the organization. Effective training can bring down these flaws, Ritu & Corey (2006).

Employee Performance

Performance measures are a valuable addition to the assessment of training because they serve as agency "barometers" of how employees perceive training opportunities. They also

act as benchmarks for evaluating efforts to improve training. Although performance measures are more subjective than data from the training inventory survey, they are still critical if we wish to understand differences in training among agencies and identify recommendations for improvement.

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design methodology to establish the existence of associative or causal relationships between the variables (training strategy and employee Performance. The study targeted 300 respondents in Energy Transmission Division central office in Nairobi. Stratified random sampling was used to select a 30% sample of the total population which was 90 respondents.

Data collection instruments were the questionnaires. A secondary data collection method was used to establish how employee training strategy is structured and facilitated in the Kenya Power to supplement the primary data. This was conducted by referring to existing official reports and documents, journals, other empirical researches in the area and any other documents from libraries and internet.

To test on validity and reliability of data collection instruments, a pre-test was done on 10 employees selected randomly and who did not participate in the main study. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS v 21) was used to analyze data.

Data Interpretation and Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis and Objective Testing

Objectives	Hypothesis	Type of analysis	Interpretation of results
To find out the strength of relationship between staff development and their performance	hypothesis H0- There is significant relationship between staff development and employee performance	Will be tested by computing Pearson-product moment correlation	Range from +1 to -1. Degree of correlation from 0.01-no correlation to 0.99- almost perfect
To determine the contribution of training and development to employee performance	Hypothesis 1- there is no contribution by training and development to employee performance	Multiple regression analysis. Linear regression model to be used $(y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x)$ Where y: independent variable x: dependent variable β_0 : intersection with y axis β_1 : the slope	The results will either be positive relationship, negative, no relationship or relationship not linear

Source: Author, (2015)

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Some respondents were hesitant to give some information to the researcher, which they regarded as confidential in nature. To overcome this limitation, the researcher assured them that the information would strictly be used for the study. Further, they were not mandated to write their names on the questionnaires. The study was limited to Kenya Power Company, hence, the limitations to generalize the findings. The researcher recommended further researches from different organizations to enhance generalization.

Analysis and Results

Response rate - the study targeted 100 respondents out of which 83 responded while 17 did not respond. The response rate was 83%.

Gender/age of respondents - majority of the respondents (66.3%) at Kenya Power were male, within 25-35 age bracket.

Respondents' highest level of education – a very small percentage (3.6%) of the respondents had primary level education, 15.7% had secondary level education, 30.1% had certificates, 38.6% had diplomas, and 12% had bachelors, while none had masters.

Respondents' work experience - the work experience for respondents ranged from 1 to over 15 years, with 30.1% having 1-5 years' experience, 27.7% having 6-10 years' experience, 16.9% having 11-15 years' experience while 25.3% had above 15 years of experience.

Respondents present designation - a very small percentage (2.4%) of the respondents were in senior management, 19.3% were in middle level management, 30.1% were on permanent basis while 48.2% were on contract.

Training strategy and Employee performance - training strategy ensures that all procedures and tasks are clear and in a concise manner .45% majority of the respondents agreed with the assertion, 7.5% strongly agreed, 32.5% were neutral , 11.2% disagreed, while 3.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Post evaluation of training programmes in relation to employee performance - training agenda clearly sets the expectations of training programmes “19.3% strongly agreed with the assertion, 47% agreed with the assertion, neutral 24.1%, 7.2% disagreed with the assertion, 7.2% disagreed with the assertion. 2.4 % strongly agreed with the assertion. On the assertion that training objectives are clearly set and achievable, 12% strongly with agreed with the assertion, 56.6% agreed with the assertion, 19.3% were neutral on the assertion, 8.4% agreed with the assertion, 3.6% strongly agreed with the assertion.

Identification of training gaps in relation to employee performance - on the assertion that training strategy was tailored to meet daily work demands ,the findings indicated that 13.3% of the respondents strongly agreed with the assertion, 59% agreed with the assertion, 21.7% were neutral , 4.8% disagreed while 1.2 % strong disagreed. From the majority response, it can be noted that consideration of training gaps is one of the consideration undertaken by the organization in employee training.

Extent to which training strategies affect employee performance - from the findings, it can be noted that identification of training programmes based on organizations performance standards affected employee performance to a great extent as indicated by 41.1% of the majority response. Post evaluation of employee training programmes yielded small differences as indicated by 30.1% great extent rating and 21.9% moderate rating.

Contribution of training strategy to employee performance

The contribution of training strategy towards employee performance was undertaken using a linear regression analysis.

Regression Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.301	.090	.019	1.049
a. Predictors: (Constant), Evaluation of training programs, Choosing an appropriate type of training, Performance standards set by the company, Identification of training needs , Training planning				

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	7.003	5	1.401	1.273	.287
	Residual	70.440	64	1.101		
	Total	77.443	69			
a. Dependent Variable: Performance of employees						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Evaluation of training programs, Choosing an appropriate type of training, Performance standards set by the company, Identification of training needs , Training planning						

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.529	.398		6.356	.000
	Identification of training needs	.200	.154	.210	1.299	.199
	Choosing an appropriate type of training	.262	.197	.271	1.325	.190
	Training planning	-.209	.204	-.205	-1.024	.310
	Performance standards set by the company	-.090	.151	-.090	-.595	.554
	Evaluation of training programs	-.078	.115	-.097	-.678	.500
a. Dependent Variable: Employee performance						

The overall correlation value is $0.30 = 30\%$ from the R value in the model summary, thus the hypothesis that there is no significant contribution of training strategy to employee performance holds. It can further be noted from the Beta coefficient that identification of training gaps and choosing appropriate training strategy type had the highest level of impact on employee performance.

Discussions

The study finding on the effect of training programmes in enhancing employee performance standards sought to establish the extent to which Kenya Power considered performance standards, precision in delivery of training strategy, minimum performance criterion required in the company, achievement of an all-round performance as a results of training strategy, management support towards performance standards, and guidelines expressing performance standards.

Conclusion

The study was basically undertaken to establish the relationship between training strategy and employee performance at Kenya Power. Training strategy being the study's independent variable was measured from the premise that training was programmed based on company's performance standards, post evaluation of training programmes and identification of training gaps would have an ultimate effect on employee performance.

Both literature and primary findings link training strategy under the aforementioned strategies on employee performance. There is a general acceptance that choosing an appropriate training strategy based on set performance standards of an organization has an overall influence on the performance of employees. Organizations with training programmes tailored towards achieving set organizational performance standards are there likely to elicit high level of employee performance compared to those programmes that are not tailored towards predetermined performance standards.

In identifying training gaps in a training strategy, organizations seek to find out the knowledge deficits to be addressed in order to enhance employee performance. Based on the moderate relationship between identification of training strategy and employee performance established in this study, it might not be conclusive to judge the performance of employees based on the gaps identified. It can therefore, be possible for employees to underperform when the company has identified various gaps within the training strategy. Generally training strategy is a factor indicating a relative contribution towards employee performance. However, several factors seem to have interactive effects towards determining the performance of employees and thus the relationship between training strategy and employee performance is averagely ranked.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, it can be noted that training programmes based on organizational performance standards, post evaluation of training programmes and identification of training gaps have relative contribution towards employee performance. These factors, however, cannot act alone and therefore there is a need for the organization to either re-examine the deficits in the strategies in order to establish why maximum employee performance is not realized through training alone. Some of the deficits may be linked to employee job security, given that majority of employee are working under contractual terms. Employees may, therefore, be concerned more about their job security which may negatively interfere with their performance.

The fact that training strategy realizes average employee performance is an indicator that the organization may not be measuring individual employee performances and tailoring them to an appropriate training strategy. It is there important that the organization develop a mechanism for measuring each employee's performance at all levels.

To improve on the effectiveness of a training strategy, it is important for training managers to incorporate all dynamic of work performance. These include; economic, technological and social political dynamics with which employees are operating. Training managers should provide equal training opportunities to all employees in order to ensure that they are in tandem with organizational performance standards.

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