



The Impact of Training and Development on Employee Commitment: A Case of Department of Children's Services, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

By around 21st century in public sector in Kenya, the commitment of employees in management of public services had declined drastically. One of the contributing factors was lack of proper training and capacity building among the public servants. The Kenya government responded by formulating Human Resource Development Training Policy that aimed at improving efficiency and effectiveness among the employees. The purpose of the study arose from the fact that training and development, is to develop capabilities of an individual to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization. The objective of the study was to determine the effect of training and development in the department of children services. The main purpose of this study was to establish the impact of training and development on employee commitment in the Department of Children Services where the study used correlation research design. Questionnaire was used to collect data from 186 employees. Data was analyzed using frequencies, percentages and Pearson's Moment correlation coefficient test. The study concluded that training and development had an effect on employee commitment in the department of children's services. The study recommends that the government should emphasize frequent training of employees to enhance skill development. In the public service training ensures continued and adequate supply of relevant knowledge and skill to the service. The training provided to the employees should be designed in such a way that it makes Public Service better equipped to meet the increasing challenges for higher standards of service delivery and also commitment to cope with the competitive technological challenges that are taking place today.

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Introduction

Increased global competition caused by the liberalization of the market has created greater demands among the organizations to become flexible, responsive to change and efficient through training and development to cope with competitive market. As a result of this, organizations now are concerned with training needs that enhance employee commitment. One of the key ingredients to an organization's strength is having the right people at the right place at the right time Nzuve, (2007). In any organization its success is normally dependent on the training of its human resource. Beardwell and Holden (1994) indicate that the emphasis on training in recent years has led to many organizations investing substantial resources in employee training and development. The need for training has been precipitated by technological developments and organizational change and the realization that success relies on the skills and abilities of the employees. This has also been underscored by the rise in human resource management with its emphasis on the importance of people and the skills they possess in enhancing employee commitment.

Beardwell and Holden add that such human resource concepts as "commitment to the company" and the growth in "quality movements" has led senior management teams to realize the increased importance of training employees and developing a system of lifelong learning. Employee commitment is of great importance especially in a time of economic crisis and

when a firm has employees who are committed this leads to higher performance. This is because a person who is committed is more motivated to work and adapts more easily to any change that the organization is going through.

At around 1980s in the Government, the public demand of public service was higher than the supply capacity owing to increased population and resource constraints and hence there was a decline in the quality of services delivered as the public sector attempted to satisfy the overwhelming demand. The public became more enlightened and started questioning the quality of services provided by the public service. At around 1990s, the government was pressured to intensify transparency and accountability and it responded by embracing reforms aimed at improving effectiveness and productivity. One of the reforms was on Training policy among others then Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Development (MGC&SD strategic plan 2008).

According to the DPM (2002), the government of Kenya has not had a comprehensive policy to guide staff development. Training in the public service has been guided by discrete policy guidelines contained in various government documents, which included administrative circulars, personnel and general letters, reports and other publications issued to the service from time to time. Training needs assessment and evaluation has not been undertaken with the resultant effect of minimal impact of training on work performance and commitment of employees.

However, the government developed a comprehensive policy to act as a guide to training in the public service. The government also did not have a policy to manage career advancement programmes for employees in the public service. Instead senior public servants have continued to be retained past retirement age. This situation has caused much disenchantment among the young people who want to advance their careers in the service (Kisero, 2003).

The absence of one comprehensive policy document to guide public service training and development resulted in various policies and strategies and their application in different institutions. The effect of these weaknesses was poor training impact and service delivery.

To address training and capacity building adequately and systematically, the Government therefore, formulated a Human Resource Development Training Policy. The policy is meant to assist in proper planning of Training Programmes to ensure continued and adequate supply of relevant knowledge and skills to the service.

Statement of the problem

There is no doubt that training and development and employee commitment go hand in hand. Employees view an effective training experience as an indication that the organization is willing to invest in them and cares about them, thus training may enhance their commitment to the organization.

Training and development with commitment are aspects of every organization. The Department of Children Services is a department in the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services. The department provides care and protections for children under the Children's Act 2001. To provide this; the department should have well trained and committed employees. It is noted that the work performance of public sector employees has been a major concern to the Kenyan government, civil society, development partners and the people of Kenya. The prevailing situation at work place has been low work performance and poor service delivery. The poor work performance led to the decline of the economy from an average GDP growth from 2.3% in the 1990s to 1.1% in 2003 (World Bank report 2003). It is important to note that public service provide the enabling environment under which the players in the economy are able to operate effectively and efficiently. The poor service delivery to the public has been blamed on lack of proper training and capacity building among the public servants Aseka (2002).

To address the training function and capacity building adequately and systematically, the government formulated a Human Resource Development Training Policy. The policy gives the government to continuously upgrade public servants on core competences, knowledge, skills and attitude including their ability to assimilate technology, to enable them create and set opportunities for social advancement, economic development, growth and individual fulfillment. Despite the presence of Human Resource Development Policy, the public still complain of poor public service delivery and labour turn over still exists.

Previous studies in this area have focused on the effect of training and development on employee commitment among the employees of Pakistan in the University, Buck and Watson (2002) and Service Sector employees (Imran 2012) and also New Zealand business firms (Guthrie 2001). Most of these studies have focused on private sector employees and their findings might not be applicable in Kenyan scenario public sector especially Department of children services where such a

study have not been carried. This study will address the gap on the impact of training and development on employee commitment in the department of children's services, Kenya.

Study objective

To determine the effect of training and development on employee commitment in the department of children services.

Study hypothesis (null hypothesis)

Training and development has no effect on employee commitment

Literature Review

Training and development represents an area within HR practices that can have a significant impact on employee commitment to the organization. The practices employed by organizations helps to enhance employee skills and performance hence increases employee commitment Sacks (2001).

Training and development is one of the modern management approaches in HRM. Emerging literatures have shown that the investment in human capital such as training is positively related to organizational performance. That is, training is expected to reduce turnover, and increase employee's commitment, which will result in longer employment duration. Keep *et al.*, (2002) argue that investing in training constitutes a powerful signaling device to reassure employees that they are valued by their employers, which in turn enhances their commitments to the organization. Training has been a subject of debate with various functions and definitions given to it. To some training is the ability of an organization to develop skills and knowledge to do present and future job (Guest 1997) and to others it is an important employee motivator (Barret & O'Connell 2001). Different literatures have suggested that the development of a firm's human capital can provide a sustainable source of competitive advantage for the firm (Olson and Schwab, 2004).

Investment by the organization in employee training is intended to send a commitment message to its employees that individual development is a valued goal of the organization (McElroy, 2001). Training is used to enhance specific skills and correct performance issues to empower employees with the skills needed for the current and future job requirement (Gold, 2001). The levels of training and development activities among the employees influence employee commitment (Ivancevich 2010), in the sense that the employees are provided with skills and knowledge on performance of their jobs. In a study done by Buck and Watson (2002) on commitment of HR practices like decentralization, compensation, participation, training and development, employment security, social interaction, management styles, communication and performance appraisal among the Higher Education staff in Pakistan and the results revealed that training and development increases employee commitment. This finding is similar to the findings by Imran (2012) who did a study on Human resource management practices on organization support, communication, training /development, compensation, organizational climate, work life policies, career development opportunities and empowerment on employee commitment among the service sector employees in Pakistan. The findings indicated that training and development were significantly related to employee commitment.

According to Kamoche *et al.* (2004b), training in organizations in Kenya is mainly treated as a cost and with the volatile economic situation in Kenya, managers are finding it difficult to view training as an investment because of its uncertain value.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	N=186	Frequency	%
Gender	Male	74	36.78
	Female	112	60.21
Age	Below 30 years	14	7.52
	31-40 years	79	42.47
	41-50 years	68	39.55
	Above 50 years	25	13.44
Highest Academic Qualification	Secondary	6	3.22
	Certificate	10	5.37
	Diploma	36	19.35
	Bachelors' Degree	120	64.51
	Masters Degree	10	5.37
	PhD	00	00
Working experience	Below 5 years	61	32.79
	6-10 years	82	44.08
	11-15 years	26	13.97
	Above 16 years	17	9.13

Source: Survey Study, 2015

Table 2. Employees responses on the effect of training and development on employee commitment
Training and development

Descriptive Statistics		5	4	3	2	1		
		SA	A	FA	D	SD	Mean	S.D
Statement		F (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)		
I have attended job related training in the last one year.		0(0)	96(51.6)	50(26.9)	15(8.1)	25(13.4)	1.2957	0.80114
I have training skills on my current job.		0(0)	101(54.3)	59(31.7)	1(0.5)	25(13.4)	1.1935	0.66182
My supervisor assists me to develop in my job and willing to promote me.		0(0)	89(47.8)	71(38.2)	1(0.5)	25(13.4)	3.2581	0.68817
I have never been promoted since I joined the department.		0(0)	12(6.5)	13(7.0)	111(59.7)	50(26.9)	2.6559	0.70511
Valid N (listwise)								

Table 3. Simple regression results of training and development on employee commitment.
Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.662 ^a	.438	.435	1.478 1

a. Predictors: (Constant), Training and development

ANOVA^a

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	313.688	1	313.688	143.421	.000 ^b
Residual	402.441	184	2.187		
Total	716.129	185			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training and development
Coefficients

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	12.259	.523		23.438	.000
1 T	1.859	.155	.662	11.976	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee commitment

Source: Research data. 2015

Where training exists, it is usually limited to equipping the employees with narrowly-defined, firm-specific skills that facilitate the attainment of short-term objectives. Tessema and Soeters (2006) also state that public sector employees in most developing countries who have received training paid for by their governments have been unable to utilize their expertise due to unattractive compensation and therefore opt to move to the private sector or overseas. Therefore, in order for organizations to develop and raise the level of productivity, there is a need to transform the way they develop people by nurturing cultures that value contribution from their employees, undertake cost-effective training activities that are geared to enhancing labour productivity and product quality.

Training according to (Brum 2010) and (Owen 2006) explains that training makes employees exert more effort, become more productive and have a greater sense of debt to the organization. Brum further argues that the training is a gift from employers and has the potential to make employees feel as insiders into the organization and is more likely to be more committed and devoted to the organization.

In another study carried by Guthrie (2001) among 164 New Zealand business firms on effect of HR practices like pay and training and development and his findings revealed that both were found to increase commitment of employees.

Research Methodology

The study used correlation research design to collect data from a sample of 196 employees from Department of Children's Services who were selected to participate in the study. Stratified random sampling method was used. Questionnaires were used to collect data. It contained closed ended items that sought information on training and development on commitment of employees. The items of the questionnaires were subjected to Cronbach Alpha coefficient test which yielded an r-value of 0.822. This indicated a high reliability value of the questionnaire. The data that was collected from the respondents and was then descriptively and inferentially analyzed using frequencies, percentages and Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient test.

Results and Discussions.

The study targeted 196 employees to be respondents but only 186 of them filled and returned the study questionnaire, representing a 94.9% response rate. The study captured the respondents' demographic characteristics as shown in Table 1.

The demographic results on table 1 show that the majority of the respondents were female, 112(60.21%) and many employees were aged between 31 and 50 years. People in this age bracket are usually settled in their careers and desire to be more committed to their jobs. Most of the respondents had degrees, 120 (64.51%) and followed by Diploma holders, 36(19.35%) and 10(5.37%) as their highest academic qualification. This is despite the fact that it is mandatory that children officers in the department must be degree holders. The study further revealed that most of the respondents had worked between 6 to 10 years 82 (44.08%) and below 5 years, 61(32.79%). This is an indicator that there is high employee retention and commitment in the department.

Effect of training and development on employee commitment

The study sought the opinions of respondents on various constructs on the effect of training and development on employee commitment. The respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements

on the issue were put on a Likert scale ranging from **1-Strongly Disagree** to **5-Strongly Agree** as shown on Table 2.

Note: 1-Strongly Disagree (SD), 2-Disagree (D) 3-Fairly Agree (FA) 4-Agree (A) 5-Strongly Agree (SA) Source: Research data 2015

The findings on table 2, revealed that employees have taken job related training in the last one year as confirmed by 96(51.6%) who agreed with the statement (mean=1.3; Standard Deviation =0.8).

The employees have training skills on their current jobs as was confirmed by a majority of respondents who agreed by 101(54.3%), Mean= (1.2; Standard Deviation 0.7). On the issue on whether the employees had never been promoted since they joined the department was confirmed by 111(59.7%) and 50(26.9%) who disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively with the statement that employees have never been promoted since they joined the department (mean=2.7; Standard Deviation=0.7).

The study found out that the respondents were in agreement that training and development contribute to employee commitment in the department of children's services, Kenya.

Hypothesis test

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Test was used to test the study hypothesis.

The results of the tests are presented in Table 3.

The regression results in table 3 show that training and development had a positive linear effect on the employee commitment. The results show that 43.8% of the employee commitment in the department of children's services can be explained by training and development ($r^2 = 0.438$) and the relationship was tested using a simple regression model of the nature $EC = \alpha + \beta_1 T + e$ where EC is the employee commitment, α is the constant intercept of which in our case is 12.259 and $\beta_4 = 0.662$.

In order to establish the strength and direction of the effect, the training and development index was then correlated with employee commitment index at 0.05% level of significance using Simple Regression and the results were obtained as shown on table 3. The results on table 3 indicate a positive effect between training and development on employee commitment ($r=0.662$; $p=0.000$). The null hypothesis was therefore rejected and the study concluded that training and development had an effect on employee commitment in the department of children's services, Kenya.

These study findings are in agreement with other studies done in different places that held that training and development had an effect on employee commitment (Buck and Watson (2002; Guthrie 2001; Inram 2012). These findings differs with (Kamoche *et al.* (2004b) where he states that, training in organizations in Kenya is mainly treated as a cost and with the volatile economic situation in Kenya, managers are finding it difficult to view training as an investment because of its uncertain value.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The study concluded that training and development had an effect on employee commitment in the department of children's services. The effect of skill development attained through training and duties and responsibilities performed by employees allowed them to be effective and contributed to their commitment.

The study recommends that the government should emphasize frequent training of employees to enhance skill

development, since training and development had a positive effect on employee commitment. In the public service training ensures continued and adequate supply of relevant knowledge and skill to the service. The training provided to the employees should be designed in such a way that it makes Public Service better equipped to meet the increasing challenges for higher standards of service delivery and also cope with the competitive technological challenges that are taking place today.

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