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## Influence of Training Programs on Performance of Universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties, Kenya

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of training programs on performance of universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties in Kenya which are four in total. A descriptive research design was adopted. The target population comprised of staff in the administration, human resource, finance and audit, procurement, deans of schools and directorate of quality assurance totaling to 263. Stratified sampling was employed to identify respondents for purposes of this study, using departments as the strata basis. Of the 263 target population, 17% was taken as the sample size translating to 45 respondents. Questionnaire was used as the main data collection tool, complemented with interviews with some of the heads of department. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Inferential analysis techniques included correlation analysis, multiple linear regression analysis and analysis of variance (ANOVA). The study revealed that when you train university employees on all aspects of their job and gives them insight into other positions in the university; develop well-rounded individuals who have a working knowledge of their positions and those of their colleagues. Knowledgeable employees are better able to answer customer questions, handle problems and deliver better quality services. Hence, the study concluded that training programs do influence individual productivity and ultimately the overall performance of the university. The study recommends that universities need to put in place a robust training and development program that ensures employees have a consistent experience and background knowledge.*

**Keywords:** Universities, organizational performance, training programs, training methods

### **1. Introduction**

Training is an undertaking that helps employees to acquire knowledge and skills so that they can do their duties effectively and as a result improve their behavior (Armstrong, 2008). Dessler (2008) says that training is a strategy used in development of skills of employees to gain competency for a job. Training and development is a process that endeavors to provide an employee with information, skills and understanding of the organizations and its objectives. Training and development is aimed at helping a person improve his capabilities and continue making remarkable contribution towards good organizational performance. Dessler (2008) posits that in order to conduct training there must be a reason that informed the training. Training needs analysis is established by identifying the gaps existing in employees' potential and those that are desired (Dessler, 2008). Training and development is a very crucial input of HR that contributes positively towards organizational growth (Dessler, 2008). According to Scribd (2013) training help employees to discover and develop their personal and managerial capabilities so as to achieve the desired organizational objectives.

Mondy (2010) defined training and development as the basic exercise of a systematic effort that an organization adopts to improve employee competency and organization performance. Aswathappa (2008) notes that training and development is a step that an organization undertakes to enrich the skills and knowledge of its employees in the long run. Training is any effort undertaken to improve employee's performance on a current held position. This means intuition of changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes or behavior (Mondy, 2010). Training is a way of equipping new or current employees with skills they need to accomplish their duties. Development is a process of instilling skills that will help an employee achieve a career growth. These opportunities are not limited in improving the performance of an employee on their current job alone (Aguinis & Kraiger, (2009). Development focuses on long term achievements to help employees be prepared for future demands in their work while training is mostly focused on the addressing immediate skills deficit in employees (Aguinis & Kraiger, (2009). Armstrong (2009) defines training and development as a planned effort to assist employees acquire knowledge and skills to enable them perform their duties effectively as a result of improved behavior.

This study set out to investigate the influence of Training programs on performance of universities in Machakos and Kitui counties.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1. Theoretical Review

The theories that informed the study are Human Capital theory and Resource Based Theory.

#### 2.1.1. Human Capital theory

This theory was developed by Becker in 1964. According to Becker any knowledge or characteristics that are possessed by an employee are either acquired or inborn and determines his or her performance. The theory further states that it is costly to undertake training hence it should be termed as an investment because the aim is to instill more skills hence increasing individual performance. Becker (2002) posits that human capital encompasses the human factor in an organization; skills and expertise that portrays the uniqueness of the organization.

Human capital theory was developed when it was realized that physical capital growth was contributing very little in an organizational growth (Tan, 2014). Human capital theory posit that employees training or education advances their performance by instilling the necessary skills (Campbell et al 2012). Human capital is a strategy used in production to increase investment and as a result get improved output (Armstrong and Taylor, 2014). Hence investing in human capital in training and development helps the organization maintain a competent workforce who are satisfied leading to improved performance of the organization (Rothwell, 2010). According to Armstrong (2012), Human capital theory assumes that formal education is highly valued and it is considered fundamental in improving organizational performance. The theory informs that people are the most valuable asset in an organization that are worth investing in and their achievements should be counted as the return on investment of the organization (Johnson et al, 2010).

#### 2.1.2. Resource Based Theory

The resource based theory was developed by Penrose in 1974 and figures out why organizations practicing in the same industry have different performance index in a specific time frame. The resource based theory posits that each institution or organization has unique resources and capabilities that make them different hence the competitive advantage (Wheelen and Humger, 2012). The theory defines why organizations operating in the same industry have different performance parameters. A firm constitutes of capital resources, organization resources, physical resources and human capital resources (Barney, 1991). This theory holds that, organization capabilities and resources differ from one firm to another and this difference in variation can aid a firm to attain stability (Hijzen, Görg & Hine, 2005). The main objective of the theory is that the management should consider and motivate its most valued assets and how these assets can be developed to improve performance. The theory further recognizes human resource competence, financial resources and past experiences as organization critical success (Ireland et al, 2013).

The performance of an organization depends on how resources and capabilities are mixed as well as the manner of deployment. The theory according to Müier and Jugdev (2012) posits that since resources are rare, scarce and limited, organization should employ strategies to exploit resources and capabilities to maximize returns from existing resources. According to Barney (1991) Resource Based Theory states that HRM systems can be applied to create a sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations according to (Barney 1991) can achieve these competitive advantages by utilizing their employees where a firm has a pool that cannot be matched by other organization.

Since Resource Based Theory rotates within a firm and each unit is described as an autonomous organization, they differ in their performance over time due to differing internal capabilities. The theory is therefore relevant to the study because the more qualified/experienced are the staff hired/retained and their skills and competences updated on regular basis to be abreast with the ever changing environment the more the organization is able to achieve its organization goals. Since the theory focuses on the activities within the firm, talents can be established, nurtured to ensure that there is no skills gap if a position falls vacant.

### 2.2. Empirical Review

Training and development is considered to be the most common HR practice (Leaard, 2010). Training is planned to give learners the knowledge and skills they need for their present job because nobody comes to the job having the knowledge and experience that is necessary to perform the jobs assigned to them (Frye, 2004). George and Scott (2010) give in detail how to invest in human capital and productivity associated with it, wages, and agility of workers. Such investment does not only create a competitive advantage for an organization, but also provides innovations and opportunities to learn new technologies and improve employee skills, knowledge and firm performance. In fact, there is an increasing awareness in organizations that the investment in training could improve organizational performance in terms of increased sales and productivity, enhanced quality and market share, reduced turnover, absence and conflict (Armstrong, 2012).

In contrast, training has been criticized as faddish, or too expensive (Kraiger, McLinden & Casper 2004; Khalumba, 2012), and there is an increasing skepticism about the practice and theoretical underpinning of linking training with firm performance (Wright, 1998). Mckel prag et al (2012) argues that organizations spent dearly in training to improve skills of employees and performance. Tan and Narsurdin, (2012); Quash et al. (2010) confirm that HRM practices have a significant effect on performance.

Training assists an organization to integrate the organizational goals and the interests of the employees (Stone R.J, Human Resources Management, 2002). Employee performance depends on several factors but the most important is training which increases effectiveness of both the employee and the organization. Employees who are better experienced perform better since they have the expertise and the knowhow required for the job (Iftikhar Ahd and Siraj-ud-din, 2009). Chris Amisano (2010) says that there is a relationship between performance and training in that performance depends on such factors as knowledge management, conducive working environment, motivation and promotion.

Galagan (2010), an American society for training and development say that gaps in skills is a situation when an organization cannot expand and also maintain its competitive edge because it is not in a position to get the right people with required competencies to fill the key positions. It is clear that skills gap will always be felt in organization if they are not strategic enough to counteract with the ever changing environment, shareholders, employees or clients. Uninterested human resource can hinder organizational performance (Galagan, 2010).

Guest (2007) came up with a theory that shows how HRM policies can affect human resources and organizational performance. The Guest's model emphasis is, it is a logical framework to study the relationship between HRM policies and organizational performance, because it states ways for more careful, clear and ease of empirical testing. He saw commitment as an important outcome, that is concerned with the goals connecting employees with organizational performance as the goal of quality is vital for ensuring production of high quality products and services. Training and development therefore are key HRM and contribute to improved teamwork, commitment of employees, flexibility and quality (Guest, 2007). However, Barrington (2006) posits that applying training programs that do not contribute towards realizing increased employees' productivity negatively affect realization of organization performance goals.

SMEDA (2013) stated that employee training programmes increases quality, productivity, competitiveness in an organization where the human resource department enhances the staff on their skills, knowledge, abilities and capabilities on their professionalism. Nda & Fard (2013) did a study in Malaysia on the influence of employees training on organizational productivity and in their findings found out that staff training and development influences organizational performance.

A study on Employee Performance Management practices among Insurance Companies in Kenya by Nginyo (2010) found out that training and development is an important aspect in managing performance as it enables to transfer the acquired knowledge to their jobs. On the job training is the method used by most insurance companies in Kenya to conduct training for its staff. Organizations also conduct training needs analysis to arrive at staff training decisions. Organizations ought to identify talent from employees and develop them accordingly. The study suggested that in order for insurance companies to remain highly competitive, they should consider integrating performance management practices with the organizational objective. The study recommended that organizations to strongly embrace performance management practices in order to remain focused on their objective (Nginyo, 2010). Gambo (2015) in his study on the impact of training and development on workers' productivity in Nigeria used indirect observation research design and found out that training and development programmes improve employee skills and performance at work place. Odoyo (2014) in his study on organizational learning and performance of insurance firms in Kenya adopted a cross sectional survey research design and found out that the concept of organizational learning in companies had a significant index to organizational performance.

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### *3.1. Research Design*

The research design for this study was descriptive design that determined the data characteristics of the variables and established the predictive power of explanatory variables in the study. The research design involved collecting data in order to answer questions that concerned the current status of the subject of the study (Kothari, 2007). In addition the same Mbweza (2006) and Orodho (2005) affirm that descriptive design is used to describe some aspects or characteristics of human population such as opinions, attitudes, beliefs or even knowledge of certain phenomenon without influencing their behaviour.

#### *3.2. Population and Sampling*

According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2012), a population is a well-defined set of people, services, elements, and events, group of things or households that are being investigated. This study focused on all the 4 universities operating in Machakos and Kitui counties focusing on the following departments: Administration, human resource, finance and audit, procurement, deans of schools and directorate of quality assurance.

The study used the universal scholarly thumb rule of anything between 10% and 30% of the population is acceptable to determine the sample size. The population of the study was 263. The study used 17% of the population which was approximately 45. Since the study sample was heterogeneous in terms of area of specialization, stratified sampling was used to create a stratum for each section then took a purposive random sample from each stratum because the researcher was only interested with the heads of departments.

#### *3.3. Data Collection*

This study utilized a questionnaire and interview schedule which was used to collect data. A questionnaire is a list of questions organized in a definite order (Kothari, 2008). The data collected was both quantitative and qualitative and collected through a questionnaire and an interview schedule.

The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative approaches because they enhance one another. Quantitative gives the hard data while qualitative gives the detailed explanations. Qualitative data was collected by using an interview schedule while quantitative data was collected by administering a questionnaire. Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) emphasize that in both approaches of inquiry, the researcher finds a problem, articulates research questions, establishes population, sample, collects and analyses data, presents the findings and conclusions.

### 3.4. Analysis and Results

The study used descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze data since the researcher was trying to establish relationship between the variables. The descriptive statistical measures were the means, frequencies, percentages and standard deviations. Data from the structured questions and interview schedule was analyzed qualitatively and computed through statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 24. Descriptive analysis was then done by using descriptive statistics then the data presented in form of graphs, charts and tables.

Inferential analysis involving correlation analysis, regression analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were also employed. Pearson moment correlation analysis was done. This analysis assists in establishing the power and course of association of two variables hence allowing for selection of variables to subject for more statistical analysis. The study further utilized multiple linear regression analysis in establishing the relationship between the training programs and organizational performance. Lastly Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was done to determine if the model was appropriate for the data. ANOVA analysis is used to determine if there is a significant difference between two or more samples at a given level of probability.

## 4. Findings and Discussion

### 4.1. Introduction

The study targeted a sample of 45 officers from the departments of Human Resource, Directorate of Quality Assurance, Deans of schools, Administration, Finance & Audit and Procurement in Machakos and Kitui Counties universities. Out of the 45 distributed questionnaires, a response rate of 93.3 % was achieved. This implied that the results were good enough and symbolic of the population and conforms with Mugenda and Mugenda (2012) for generalization purposes a response rate of 50% is sufficient, while that of 60 % is great as well a response rate of 70 % is superb. The response rate of 93.3 % for this study therefore was considered good and acceptable for this study.

### 4.2. Descriptive Analysis Results

#### 4.2.1. Training and Development Policy

The study sought to find out if Training and Development Policy was in place in Universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties. 88.1 % of the respondents indicated that universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties had developed Training and Development Policy. This implies that training and development policy for the employee skills development in the universities was key. Figure 1 below shows this finding.

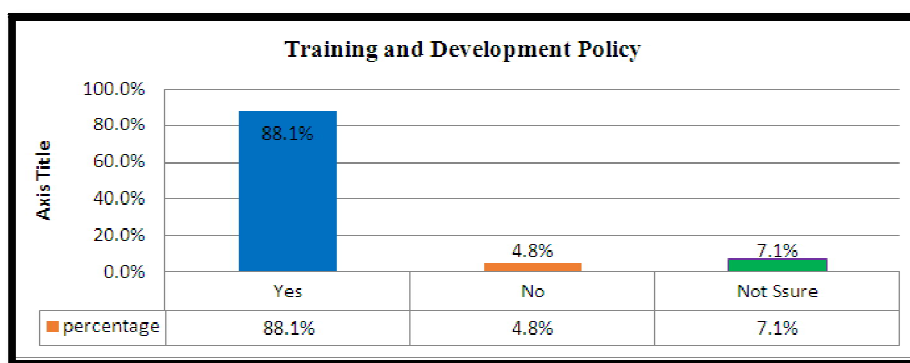


Figure 1: Training and Development Policy

#### 4.2.2. Identification of Present Skills of Employees

Of those who responded, 93% were in agreement that universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties identify present skills of employees working in different department while only 7 % of the respondents didn't concur to identification of present skills of employees in the institution they were working for. This finding is presented in figure 2. This finding implies that the universities were committed to enhancing skills through identification for career development which influence motivation and overall performance.

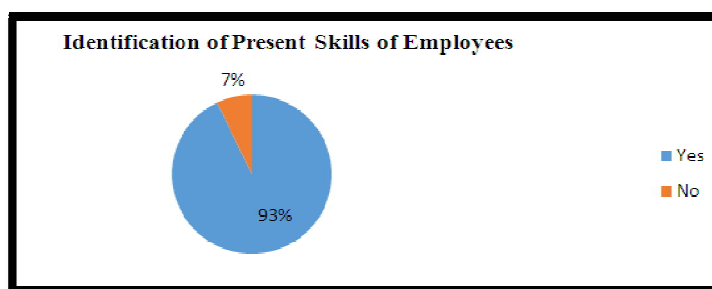


Figure 2: Identification of Present Skills of Employees

#### 4.2.3. Training Methods

Data was analyzed to establish the different Training Methods used by the universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties. 73.81 % of the respondents indicated that the institution they were working for used both the on and off the job training which was adequate for skill diversity. Only 11.90 % of the respondents indicated that their institution used off the job training and on the job training approach only respectively. Only 2.38 % of the respondents indicated other approaches not considered in the study were used. From the study this implies that both on and off job training were the common approach which enabled the universities to outsource for specialized institution for training the employees.

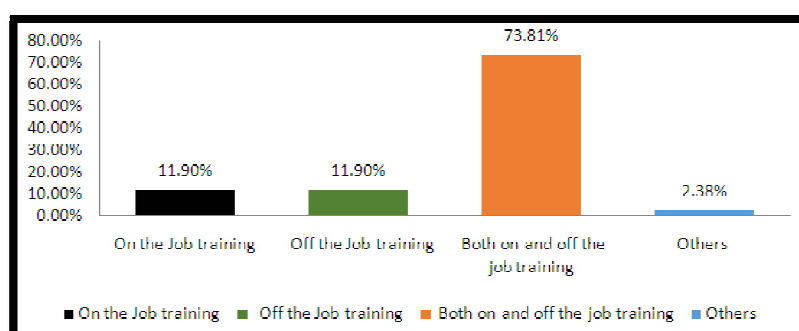


Figure 3: Training Methods

#### 4.2.4. Training Programs and Performance

Respondents indicated that the universities had training and development policy for the university staff was in place which was supported by a mean score of 3.88 and standard deviation of 0.93. The respondents agreed to great extent that the training and development programs provided a remarkable improvement in performance of staff towards organizational goals which had a mean score of 4.07 and standard deviation of 0.91. The study findings revealed that the training and development programs offered were sufficient enough as compared to other universities with a mean score of 4.14 and standard deviation of 0.86. It was further observed that having a development plan helps employees to see beyond their immediate position to longer term opportunities, which ties them to the organization which was supported by a mean score of 4.05 and standard deviation of 0.79. The respondents strongly agreed that Evaluation was done after training to monitor the extent of the training which contributed to employee behavior change which had a mean of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.88. This implied that the training programs impacted on the employee's skills as well filling the felt skills gap on achieving the organizational goals. These findings are in tandem with those of (Farnham,2010) who noted that employees with access to training and development programs have the advantage over employees in other companies who are left to seek out training opportunities on their own.

Statement	Mean	Std
Training and development policy for the university staff is in place	3.88	0.93
The policy is designed to assist in improving the performance of staff	3.98	0.99
There is a tool designed to establish training needs for all the employees	4.05	0.92
The training and development programs provided have recorded a remarkable improvement in performance of staff towards organizational goals	4.07	0.91
The training and development programs offered are sufficient enough as compared to other universities	4.14	0.86
Training programs are updated to match the changing environment	3.90	1.04
Having a development plan helps employees to see beyond their immediate position to longer term opportunities, which ties them to the organization	4.05	0.79
Evaluation is done after training to monitor the extent of the training	4.12	0.88

Table 1: Training Programs

#### 4.4. Inferential Analysis Results

##### 4.4.1. Correlation Analysis Results

The study undertook correlation analysis to examine the influence of training programs on performance of the universities of interest in this study. A Pearson Moment Correlation analysis, which is represented by  $r$  for the study variable, Training Programs was conducted. Table 2 presents the correlation analysis results. The results reveal that Staffing and Training Programs are positively correlated to organizational performance with Pearson correlation value of 0.762 and p-value of 0.00 respectively. This correlation analysis results implies that the independent variable; Training Programs, impacts on the Organization performance of the universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties.

		Organizational Performance
	N	42
Training Programs	Pearson Correlation	.762**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

Table 2: Correlations analysis Results

##### 4.4.2. Regression Analysis

The study conducted a linear regression analysis to determine the relationship between the dependent variable which was organizational performance and the independent variable which was training programs: A Case of universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties. Table 3 shows that the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  is 0.439. This means that the influence of the predictor variables (Training Programs) explains the Organization Performance of Universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.662 <sup>a</sup>	.439	.425	.622

Table 3: Training Programs and Organizational Performance  
a. Predictors: (Constant), Training Programs

##### 4.5. Regression Coefficients

Regression results revealed that Training Programs has significant influence on organizational performance of universities in Machakos and Kitui by  $\beta_2=0.357$ ,  $p=0.003<0.05$ ,  $t=.2840$  the implication is that a unit increase in Training Programs leads to an increase on organizational performance of universities in Machakos and Kitui as indicated by  $\beta_2=0.840$

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients Beta		t	Sig.	
		B	Std. Error			
1	Training Programs	.357	.126	.567	.2840	.003

Table 4: Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

The study results therefore reveals that training programs has considerable influence on staff performance. This finding is in agreement with Schiums and Lerro (2008) assertion that for any organization to perform better there must be a strategic approach and implementation plan that continues to develop organizational competences.

## 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The study objective was "to examine the influence of Training programs on Organization Performance of Universities in Machakos and Kitui Counties." The study revealed that when you train university employees on all aspects of their job and give them insight into other positions in the university, develop well-rounded individuals who have a working knowledge of their positions and those of their colleagues their individual and hence organization performance is enhanced. Knowledgeable employees are better able to answer customer questions, handle problems and deliver better quality services.

The study concluded that an employee who receives the necessary training is better able to perform his/her job. She/he becomes more aware of safety practices and proper procedures for basic tasks. The training also builds the employee's confidence because he/she has a stronger understanding of the industry and the responsibilities of the job. This confidence push him /her to perform even better and think of new ideas that help him/her excel. Continuous training also keeps employees on the cutting edge of industry developments. Employees who are competent and poses relevant and updated skills contributes to the institutions developing and holding strong competitive positions within the industry.

The study recommends that universities need to put in place a robust training and development program that ensures employees have a consistent experience and background knowledge to help employees and the organization keep

abreast with the changing environment and maintain a competitive edge. Relevant training programs should be fairly executed to allow all employees grow in relevant knowledge, skills and competences for higher productivity.

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