

Effects of Training Policies on Employee Performance in the Postal Corporation of Kenya Bungoma County

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Abstract: Training policies are expressions of the training philosophy of the organization. Training policy shows the proportion of turn over that should be allocated to training. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effects of training policies on employee performance in the Postal Corporation of Kenya. The study adopted a survey research design. The whole population of 50 employees was taken as respondents. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the respondents. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which gave frequencies and percentages. Correlation was used to generate results. The study found out that training policy greatly improved employee performance. Achievement of individual targets and overall low employee turnover can be attributed to the presence of an effective training policy. The study concluded that appropriate training policies had been established. The study recommended that the organization should formulate clear staff training policies and ensure that the policies are well communicated.

Keywords: Employee performance, Training Policies, Training philosophy.

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Armstrong (2006) training policies are expressions of the training philosophy of the organization. He further stated that training policy shows the proportion of turn over that should be allocated to training. He again advocated that a training philosophy is imperative to indicate the degree of importance the organization attaches to training. Armstrong and Stephen (2005) contend that policies are formulated to provide guides to action and set limits to decision making; what should be done in certain circumstances and how particular requirements and issues must be dealt with.

April (2010) states that in the development of organizations, training plays a vital role, improving performance as well as increasing productivity and eventually putting companies in the best position to face competition and stay at the top. This means that there is significant difference between the organizations that train their employees and organizations that do not. Cook (2000) defines training as the manner of growing person's performance.

According to Ivancevich (2010), training is a process that attempts to provide employees with information, skills and understanding of the organization and its goals. He further adds that training aids an employee to continue to make the necessary positive contribution to the success of employing organization in terms of his/her good performance on the job. To start this whole process is orientation and socialization of employees into the organization.

Evans and Lindsay (1999) assert that Organizations which are dedicated to generating profits for its owners (shareholders), providing quality service to its customers and beneficiaries invest in the training of its employees. They continue to say that human resources are a crucial but expensive resource and therefore in order to sustain economic and effective performance of this resource, it is important to optimize their contribution to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the organization through training. Mullins (2007) opines that training is necessary to ensure an adequate supply of employees that are technically and socially competent for both departmental and management positions

Ivanchevic (2010) states that probably the most widely used method of training is on the job training. He points out that it is estimated more than 60% of the training occurs on the job. He states that the employee is placed into the real work situation and shown the job and the tricks of the trade by an experienced employee or the supervisor. He continues to say that although this program is apparently simple and relatively less costly, if it is not handled properly, the costs can be high- damaged machinery, unsatisfied customers, misfiled forms and poorly taught workers. He contends that to prevent these problems, trainers must be carefully selected and trained; the trainee should be placed with a trainer who is similar in background and personality. He further adds that the trainer should be motivated for training and rewarded for doing it well and the trainer should use effective techniques in instructing the trainees.

Dessler (2008) contends that there are many off-the-job techniques for training. Behavior modeling is such one technique which he describes as showing trainees the right way of doing something. He contends that behavior modeling training is one of the most widely used, well researched and highly regarded psychologically based training interventions. Another off-the-job training method according to Dessler (2008) is the case study method which he says presents a trainee with a written description of an organizational problem. The person then analyzes the case, diagnoses the problems and presents his or her findings and solutions in a discussion with other trainees.

Cooke (2000) describes performance as the accomplishment of a commitment in such a manner that releases performance from all liabilities laid down under the employment contract. He adds that efficiency and effectiveness are ingredients of performance apart from competitiveness and productivity and that training is a way of increasing individual's performance. Asare (2008) defines performance as employee effort. He continues to say that performance is measured in terms of input-output relationship and that it is the measure of the efficiency with which inputs or resources are utilized to create outputs.

Statement of the Research Problem:

Firms that focus on shareholders and customer satisfaction realize the importance of investing in training and thus recognize the worth of employee training (Evans and Lindsay, 1999). Mullins (2007) views training as being necessary to ensure an adequate supply of employees that are technically and socially competent for both departmental and management positions. He noted that many organizations however never make the connection between their strategic objectives and their training programs. As a result, much of an organization's investment can be wasted through training programs that are often misdirected, poorly designed and inadequately evaluated. He continues to say that these problems directly affect organizational performance. Despite the increasing effects of training on organizational employees, there is still increasing concerns from organizational customers towards low quality services (Debrah and Ofori, 2006).

Management records of 2011- 2012 held in the Human Resource office of the Postal Corporation of Kenya Nairobi Head office showed that the employees of the Postal Corporation went on strike as from 16/12/2011-2/1/2012. The strike was as a result of employee dissatisfaction over a number of issues ranging from inadequate training, lack of clear criteria for nomination for training, lack of career advancement and lack of clear criteria for promotions. Such dissatisfaction from the employees was affecting their performance and was negatively affecting the Corporation profits. This study therefore sought to establish the effects of job training on employee performance in Postal Corporation of Kenya.

Objective of the study:

The main objective of the study was to evaluate the effects of training policies on employee performance in the Postal Corporation of Kenya Bungoma County

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Armstrong (2006) training policies are expressions of the training philosophy of the organization. He further stated that training policy shows the proportion of turn over that should be allocated to training. He again advocated that a training philosophy is imperative to indicate the degree of importance the organization attaches to training. Armstrong and Stephen (2005) contend that policies are formulated to provide guides to action and set limits to decision making; what should be done in certain circumstances and how particular requirements and issues must be dealt with.

Armstrong and Stephen (2005) say that policies are set up in such areas as marketing, finance operations as well as human resource. In human resource, there could be policies on training and development, recruitment and selection and salary administration and compensation; just to mention a few. Such organizational policies (human resource policies) are either formally expressed in manuals or informally as have grown from customs and traditional practices over the years.

However, to avoid ambiguity, he further says that it is important that all major policy statements are formally expressed in manuals. This makes it possible and easier for managers, supervisors, unions/association executives to familiarize themselves with relevant policies and how they should be interpreted.

Asare, (2008) asserts that training policy in an organization would indicate to employees the management's commitment to training and development as it expresses rules and procedures which govern and influence the scope of training and development. He continues to say that training policies of organizations further highlight the following to its members: The organization's approach to the training functions and provides guidance for the design and execution of training. It would further provide information to employees on training and development, the identification of priority areas in training and prioritize according to real felt needs since resources are scarce and it would communicate the organization's intentions with respect to members' career development and give members the opportunity to enhance their career prospects through training.

According to Armstrong and Stephen (2005) there is need for senior management to communicate policies if they have not been written. They state that the attend time taken that could be used on more pressing issues and the confusion that comes with oral traditions could be avoided with a formally expressed policies in a manual. They continue to say that it is the position of the researchers that since employees come and go, while management and leadership of unions/associations also changes, there would be the strong need for policies to be more formally expressed in manuals to avoid misinterpretation and to encourage consistency and fairness. A policy document usually starts with a statement of broad objectives of management and its philosophy for the establishment of a mutuality of interest with its employees for great co-operation (Armstrong and Stephen, 2005)

Mullins (2007) lists the following as the essential components of a training and development policy: The view that continuous training (and retraining of employees) is the norm, the assumption that training will be a lifelong process (may as long as employee remains in the employment of the organization), recognition of the need to update existing skills, replace redundant skills and train for new skills and the need for multi-skilling to cope with changes (in today's work labor market, multi-skilling is the new paradigm shift for would be employees). This is because with the increase in the cost of doing business while profits are declining, management of business are working to cut cost in the numbers of hired employees.

Monappa and Saiyadain (2008), define policy in three contexts: Those policies are the basic rules to govern the functioning of a department or unit so that in the implementation of the policy the desired objectives are met. This they say, means the policy is a guide to a decision making e.g. what to do when certain situations arise. They contend that policies are used as control mechanisms in order to restrain managers from undesirable actions or from mishandling situation and policy guidelines can be used to rationalize decision making whenever standard decisions are involved i.e. those decisions that are repeated given the same situation. They also state that while policy formulation is an exercise meant for the attainment of organization goals, it also serves concurrently as a statement of the organizations corporate philosophy.

It could be inferred from the above that policy statements serve as guidelines to action and the establishment of equality or parity among employees of an organization (Monappa and Saiyadain, 2008). This notion is also expressed by Asare (2008) when he defined policy as a guide to actions and decisions of organization members. He talks of policies as directives that emanate from top management of the organization and so provide for the basis for the general organization members. They tell employees how they should act in certain specific situations or circumstances. For these reasons he asserts that every organization would as a necessity need a policy on its human resource management. This would enable supervisors to know what to do in circumstances of the non-performance of their team members whether to recommend them for training or otherwise. He further adds that this system when it is practiced throughout the organization will lead to the accruing of the benefit of management by policies such as: Control, consistency, Uniformity and fairness.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive research design. Since the target population was small, the whole population of 50 employees comprising Management, Technical and Support who had either undertaken training or benefited from it was involved in the study. Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments. The research instruments were piloted in Kakamega branch of the Postal Corporation of Kenya in Kakamega County. To test reliability, the test-retest method was used whereby the questionnaires were administered to the same respondents twice. The questionnaires received from the

field were scrutinized to confirm whether or not all the questions were answered. The data was then edited, coded and fed into the computer using the statistical package for social scientist (SPSS). Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Mean, frequencies and percentages were obtained for analysis. Correlation technique was used to analyze the degree of relationship between independent and dependent variables. The presentation of data was done using tables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 50 questionnaires were taken to the field for data collection. Out of 50 questionnaires 44 were returned successfully which represented 88% of the total questionnaires. The study captured the respondents' demographic characteristics as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Demographic/ Back Ground Information

		F	%
Sex of respondent	male	18	41
	female	26	59
Age of respondent	18-25	11	25
	26-35	13	30
	36-45	8	18
	46-55	10	23
	55+	2	5
Dept of respondent	mails	44	100
Designation of respondent	manager	1	2
	supervisor	5	11
	postal officer	26	59
	postal assistant	9	21
	messenger	3	7
Years of service of respondents	1-4yrs	10	23
	5- 9 yrs	10	23
	10- 14 yrs	7	16
	15 - 20 yrs	6	14
	over 20 yrs	11	25
Highest academic qualification of respondent	KCPE/CPE	2	5
	KCSE/KCE	41	93
	A-level-KACE-EACE	1	2
	Total	44	100
Highest professional qualification of respondent	Certificate	31	71
	Diploma	13	30
	Total	44	100

On the gender of the respondents, the study found that 59.1 % of the respondents were female while males formed 40.9%. This showed that majority of the employees in the organization were female. From the findings which sought to know

age brackets of the respondents, 25% of the respondents were aged between the ages of 18-25 years, 29.5% were aged between 26-35 years, those aged between the age of 36-45 years comprised 18.2%, 22.7% were aged between 46-55 years whereas 4.5% were above 55 years. Majority of the respondents were therefore between 26-45 years. Data regarding the respondent's department showed all the respondents (100%) worked in the mails department. Concerning designation, managers comprised 2.3%, 11.4% of the respondents were supervisors, 59.1% were postal officers, 20.5% were postal assistants while 6.8% were messengers. This indicates that a majority of the respondents were postal officers. On the number of years worked, the findings indicate that 22.7% of the respondents had worked in the organization for between 1-4 years, 22.7% had worked in the organization for between 5-9 years, 15.9% had between 10-14 years working experience in the organization, 13.6% had worked in the organization for a period of between 15-20 years while a majority of the respondents comprising 25% had worked in the organization for over 20 years. The researcher sought to know the professional qualifications of the respondents and the findings indicated that 70.5% of the respondents had professional qualifications of certificate level while 29.5% of the respondents hold diplomas. Most of the respondents were therefore holders of certificates.

The study sought the opinion of respondents on various constructs of training policies and how they affected employee performance. The respondents were asked to comment on the extent to which they agreed with statements on the issue on a likert scale ranging from 1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree as shown in Table 4.3

Table 4.2 Results on training policy

Statement	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Training Policy Exists	28	64	7	16	3	7	3	7	3	7
Training Policy Improves Profits	5	11	10	28	21	48	4	9	4	9
Training Policy Leads To Attainment Of Targets	18	41	9	21	7	16	5	11	5	11
Training Policy Leads To Acquisition Of New Customers	12	27	8	18	9	21	3	7	12	28
Training Policy Leads To Low Employee Turnover	17	39	6	14	4	9	11	25	6	14
Training Policy Affects Performance	22	50	9	21	6	14	1	2	6	13
Total	102	232	49	118	50	115	27	61	36	82
Average	17	38.7	8	20	8	19.2	5	10.2	6	13.7

The respondents were given six statements to evaluate the organization's programs on training policies. On the statement as to whether the organization had a training policy, 13.6% disagreed, 6.8% were not sure and 79.5% agreed. On the statement as to whether the training policy improved profits, 18.2% disagreed, 47.7% were not sure and 34.1% agreed. On the third statement as to whether the training policy led to the attainment of set targets 22.8% disagreed, 15.9% were not sure and 61.4% agreed. On the fourth statement as to whether the training policy led to the acquisition of new customers to the organization, 34.1% disagreed, 20.5% were not sure and 61.4% agreed. On the fifth statement as to whether the training policy led to low employee turnover, 38.6% disagreed, 9.1% were not sure and 52.2% agreed. On the last statement as to whether the training policy greatly affects performance, 15.9% disagreed, 13.6% were not sure and 70.5% agreed. On average 23.8% disagreed that training policies affect performance, 18.9% were not sure and 57.2% agreed that training policies affected performance. The findings indicated that most of the respondents agreed that there was a policy on training.

The study findings revealed that training policy greatly affected performance. Achievement of individual targets, low employee turnover and overall acquisition of new customers could be attributed to the presence of an effective training policy.

Correlation analysis was done and the results showed that the variable had a positive relationship with the dependent variable $r = 0.553^{**}$, $p = 0.000$. Therefore $p < 0.005$

Table 4.3 Results on Employee Performance

Statement	SA		A		NS		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Training policies Made Employees Meet Deadlines	15	34	6	14	3	7	5	11	15	34
Training policies led to work Quality Improvement	16	36	6	14	7	16	3	7	12	27
Training policies helped in target attainment	20	46	10	23	5	11	4	9	5	11
Training policies have led to employee Job Commitment	14	32	20	46	4	9	3	7	3	7
Training policies Improved Organization Performance	11	25	10	23	5	11	6	14	12	27
Training policies Have Improved employee output	21	48	6	14	9	21	2	5	6	14
Training policies have Improved employee team work	6	14	15	34	13	30	6	14	4	9
Training policies have improved employee motivation	21	48	8	18	7	16	5	11	3	7
Training policies have improved employee customer relations	18	41	8	18	6	17	1	2	11	25
Total	142	320	89	204	59	139	35	78	71	161
Average	16	35.6	10	22.7	7	15.1	34	8.7	8	17.9

The respondents were given nine statements to evaluate the performance of employees who have undergone training as a result of the training programme in place. On the statement as to whether training policies made employees meet deadlines, 45% disagreed, 7% were not sure and 48% agreed. On the statement as to whether training policies led to quality improvement, 34% disagreed, 16% were not sure and 50% agreed. On the 3rd statement as to whether training policies helped in the attainment of targets, 20% disagreed, 21% were not sure and 69% agreed. On the 4th statement as to whether training policies have led to employee job commitment, 14% disagreed, 8% were not sure and 78% agreed. On to whether the training policies improved organization performance, 19% disagreed, 19% were not sure 62% agreed. On the statement as to whether training policies improved employee output, 27% disagreed, 14% were not sure and 59% agreed. On the statement whether training policies improved team work, 27% disagreed, 17% were not sure and 59% agreed. On to whether training policies improved employee motivation 18% disagreed, 16% were not sure and 66% agreed. On the last statement as to whether training policies helped to improve employee customer relation, 27% disagreed, 17% were not sure and 59% agreed.

On average 26.6% disagreed that training policies helped to improve employee performance, 15% were not sure and 58.3% agreed that training policies positively helped to improve employee performance.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Appropriate training policies had been established however the policy was not well communicated to the employees therefore employees lacked awareness on major provisions of the policy such as when training opportunities were available.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The organization should formulate clear staff training policies and ensure that the policies are well communicated.

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