

Influence of Training on Employee Commitment in Public Corporations in Kenya

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Abstract: The general objective of this study was to determine the influence of training on employee commitment in public corporations in Kenya. For the research methodology, the study used the descriptive research design. The population of the study was 1,000 employees of KNEC. Stratified random sampling technique was used to determine the sample size for the study. A sample size of 96 employees was obtained from the population. A structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Once collected, the questionnaires were coded, entered and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The data was interpreted using descriptive statistics through frequencies, percentages and correlation analysis. The research findings were presented in form of tables and figures. The majority of the respondents indicated that skills' training plays an important role in commitment. The study also emphasized the significance of conducive work environment to enhance commitment. It pointed out the imperativeness of communication as it boosts employees understanding on the organizational values and also provides updates on the happenings in an organization vital hence a need to invest in communication channels and proper working conditions. The study also pointed out the importance of KNEC to provide a more strategical career development program as well as equitable promotion procedures and to ensure acquisition of new skills through training to improve performance standards.

Keywords: Training, Employee Commitment, Public Corporations.

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations get their objectives accomplished through the employees who perform different tasks. Thus, in order to improve performance in organizations, employee commitment is vital as it enhances the level of individual employee performance. Most organizations embrace the aspect of employee commitment because committed employees are becoming a valued asset in most organizations. A variety of researchers have adopted this topic as a theme in their research and offered the following important insights, (Brown, *et al.*, 2011). These approaches relate to employee conceptualization. John and Elyse (2010), concluded that there is no firm that can achieve its best in the current competitive business environment unless it makes use of its employees. According to Lissy and Ventakash (2014), employee commitment is an attitude and committed employees are unlikely to leave the organization. Thus, enhancing employee commitment is essential as it enhances retention and job motivation as well as improves performance, (Omotayo, 2014). It is no longer proper to have employees who come to work diligently on a daily basis and perform their duties independently, most organizations believe in team work to accomplish their objectives. Therefore, employees now have to think like entrepreneurs' while working in teams and prove their worth. Moreover, they also want to be part of a successful organization which provides a good income and opportunity for development and secure employment, (Elyse, 2010). Over the past decades, organizations globally, could rely on committed employees who spent their entire careers supporting them because it is typically assumed to reduce withdrawal behaviour such as turnover, thus there is no sense of doubt that this value appears to have a vital consequences for overall organizational performance.

In the current global economic scenario, organizational change is a continuous process that requires team work from all employees in the hierarchical structure.

Thus, no organization in the world can perform its best unless each employee is committed to that organization. People are the most important drivers of the company. Organizations are reliant upon human assets to survive, (Mello, 2006). Most institutions have realized that the performance of their employees play an important role in determining the success of the organization, (Zheng, 2010). Wong (2010), says not only people will determine the success of the organization but also technology and the type of material it has. An employee who is committed in the work place is of great value to the organization as they may need little or no supervision to accomplish the tasks assigned to them, (Brow & Taylor, 2011). Factors that are most important to one person in influencing employee commitment may be largely different to another, (Park, 2003). For instance, public organizations in China are structured and run differently from their U.S counterparts in terms of recruitment, promotion and work environment, Hence such public employees in China may have different views towards their job; the cultural backgrounds of these two countries are also different, (Rousseau, 2003). Thus, factors influencing organizational commitment of the employees would be different as well. Lo (2009), concluded that, employees with sense of employee commitment are less likely to engage in withdrawal behaviour and more willing to adopt to change this explains the importance of certain values to the commitment levels of individuals who are an asset to the organization. On the other hand, workers who are less committed to the organization, will ground their commitment on other dimensions. Therefore, it is important to identify the right factors that will enhance employee commitment to ensure that the better employees are retained.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Brown, *et al.*, (2011), factors influencing employee commitment include age and gender, whilst workplace level characteristics of importance include Human Resource (HR) practices. With respect to the effects of employee commitment upon the workplace, higher commitment is associated with enhanced workplace performance. Employers may be able to exert some influence over the commitment of its workforce, which, in turn, may affect workplace performance. Employees demonstrate less satisfaction with salaries, benefits, work conditions, promotion and communication as satisfier factors and more satisfaction with factors such as the nature of the job, co-workers and supervision type factors, (Rad & Yarmohammadian, 2006). Most of the conceptualization of commitment used in most studies reflects more of a managerialist and unitarist outlook. Organizational structure plays a very important role in organizational commitment, (Bin, *et al.*, 2011). For instance, Bureaucratic structures always tend to have a negative effect on organizational commitment, (Hurter, 2008). Padmakumar and Gantasal (2011), suggests that the removal of bureaucratic barriers from the organization and the creation of more flexible structure in the organization are more likely to contribute to the enhancement of employee commitment both in terms of their loyalty and also attachment to the organization. The management can increase the level of commitment of the employees by providing the employees with better and less bureaucratic structures, greater direction and influence, (Gantasala, 2011). Commitment-based service organizations believe that staff's organizational commitment contributes to workforce stability and better customer service hence increases business performance, (Nguyen, 2014).

According to research evidence on employee commitment gathered more than two decades ago, the organizational factors that have been strongly identified include organizational dependability, the effectiveness of the organizations social processes and the organizational climate, (Adenike, 2011). Current changes in employment practices affect organizational commitment which is on the unwritten loyalty contract between employees and employers, (Robinson, 2006). Employment practices such as layoffs, downsizing and mergers are stimulated by the need to be competitive but cause employees to have low levels of commitment, as a result employees may view their organizational commitment differently. Wang (2010), states that it is interesting to note that, of the studies that have reported positive correlations between commitment and performance in organizations, most have used measures of affective commitment. It is possible that an obligation to remain will carry. Owoyemi (2010), Employees who want to belong to the organization (affective commitment) might be more likely than those who need to belong (continuance commitment) or feel obliged to belong (normative commitment) to make an effort on behalf of the organization. Tumwesigye (2010), states that the most widely studied organizational factor that influences performance and organizational commitment has been turnover in the organization. However, this focus on turnover may be short-sighted as there other factors that have emerged strongly such as employee productivity and the famous social corporate responsibility. Although the above studies have focused on the several factors that influence employee commitment, they have not demonstrated how these factors influence employee commitment in public corporations in Kenya neither has even one study shown the level of influence of these factors on the employee commitment. Many have tried to study commitment in other angels and provided recommendations by

trying to use methods that were successful in other areas around the world and have met with failure, simply because employee commitment in this century is unique and depends on the organizations' policy. This therefore has created a knowledge gap that needs to be filled hence the reason for conducting this study which will focus on the influence of training on employee commitment in public corporations in Kenya.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Training is of growing importance to companies seeking to gain advantage among its competitors, (Brum, 2007). The role of training in human resource management practice is mainly to provide an opportunity of growth to the employee which is most likely to result to employees' commitment to the organization in return. Training also improves employees' skills and enhances their personal development as well as their ability to perform duties. Therefore, there is no doubt that training is emerging as a key factor in improving organizational competitiveness and research has shown that skills training improves employees' commitment to the company, (Ajibade & Ayinla, 2014). The role of learning cannot be ignored; it has been linked to retention and can significantly impact the success of an organization, (Mying & Lee, 2010). It is vital therefore to provide adequate training to employees joining the organization to enable them fulfil their duties easily. Curtis and Wright (2001), concluded that attaching a mentor to new employees and providing them with a clear training program will make them feel more enthusiastic about staying. It is also important for existing employees to have their skills and competences enhanced to prepare them for greater responsibilities and undertake a variety of activities. Vance (2006), stated that training is a lever for increasing commitment as it accord employees knowledge and skill acquisition for performing their jobs. Moreover, it also results to a close psychological attachment to the organization and its goals, (McElroy, 2001). Hence, various organizations in Kenya have come up with policies that ensure training is part of the organization's culture for the interest of the employees and the organization at large. The skilled employees are usually offered a higher pay to compensate for their value and discourage turnover, (Vance, 2006). Thus, not investing in training leads to lowered commitment and decreased business results. Yap and Holmes (2010), concluded that, employees who found training effective were more committed to the organization than those who did not. The right employee training, development and education at the right time, provides big payoffs for the organization in increased productivity, knowledge, loyalty and contribution as well as commitment, (Heathfield, 2012). Therefore, training is a very imperative part of the human resource development activity under human resource function. For employees to implement their duties efficiently and to commit to the organization, they must possess the relevant skills, knowledge, values and competencies as well as to understand their organization's culture.

Barret and O'Connell (2001), pointed out that some Human Resource functions such as training may be perceived as a 'gift' from the employers. Brum (2010), stated that 'training as a gift' from the employers gives the employees a sense of belonging into the organization and are most likely to be committed to the company. In line with Brum's argument that the effect of such a gift will make employees to exert more effort and become more productive to the organization. In Kenya, with globalization and intense competition from within and outside the neighbouring countries, the country has led many organizations both in the public and private sector on how to increase the "added value" of their employees. The need to encourage employees to be committed to the organization through factors such as training, promotion, compensation among other factors, this evidently is likely to increase employee productivity in the firm. For instance, employer of the nation media group noted that in order to gain employee commitment, employers have to play a role by being pro-active in supporting initiatives energizing employees to move towards employees' commitment this was borrowed from, (Ahmad & Schroeder). Commitment can also be used to develop psychological connection (Owoyemi, *et al.*, 2011). This implies a wide definition of commitment to organization goals is a problem, according to this definition people can be committed to an organization for a reason rather than commit to its goals. Robinson (2006), stated that commitment illustrates an individual's attitude and high commitment can only be assumed to exist if the actual commitment among a workforce is assessed, Hence the study will focus on the factors influencing employee commitment in public corporations in Kenya which will be conducted at the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), one of the public corporations. KNEC is a state corporation which was established in 1980 under the Kenya National Examination Council (Amendment), Act 29 of 2012 with the following stated functions: develop national examination tests, register candidates for the KNEC examinations, process results, award certificates and diplomas to successful candidates, conduct educational assessment research, carry out equation of certificates and diplomas issued by other credible examining boards and to conduct examinations on behalf of foreign examination boards. KNEC's overall strategy in its strategic plan

is based on its commitment to provide a safe and efficient environment in the assessment of quality education that acts as a contributor to the achievement of Kenya's developmental objectives as articulated in the vision 2030.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The target population consisted of all employees of KNEC at the company's headquarter. The staff structure of the organization is made up of senior managerial level and the lower level employees which will form the population of the study. As at 31st December, 2015, the total number of staff at the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC) stood at 1,000. This staff number was obtained from the KNEC database. A stratified random sample was applied in this study. The study utilized the structured questionnaire for the purpose of data collection. The quantitative method was used for analysing data.

5. FINDINGS

The respondents were asked to rate the degree to which they felt their organization offers training and development opportunities is attractive hence improving their commitment. Majority (60%) 54 of the respondents agreed that the organization offered training and development opportunities, another 11% (10) strongly disagreed. This was followed by those who disagreed at 17% (15), while those who strongly agreed were 10% (9). 2 (2%) respondent was undecided to the question as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Training and Development Opportunities

Statement	Degree	Frequency	Percentage
My organization	Strongly Disagree	10	11
Offers training and	Disagree	15	17
Development	Undecided	2	2
Opportunities	Agree	54	60
	Strongly Agree	9	10
Total		90	100

The respondents were asked to rate the degree to which skills' training impacted to employee commitment. 22% (20) of the respondents agreed that the organization offered opportunities for skill training 22% (20) disagreed with the statement. 5% (5) of the respondents were undecided while 33% (30) strongly agreed. Those who strongly disagreed with the statement represented 17% (15) of the respondents. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Opportunities for Skill Training.

Statement	Degree	Frequency	Percentage
My organization	Strongly Disagree	15	17
offers skills'	Disagree	20	22
training	Undecided	5	6
	Agree	20	22
	Strongly Agree	30	33
Total		90	100

The study findings depicted that 50% (45) of the respondents, when asked whether their organization offers self-development opportunities hence improving their commitment level, agreed with the statement. However, 28% (25) disagreed with the statement. 11% (10) strongly agreed that they were satisfied. The respondents who strongly disagreed with the statement were 11% (10). Table 3 reports the results of the study.

Table 3: Opportunities for Self-Development.

Statement	Degree	Frequency	Percentage
My organization	Strongly Disagree	10	11
offers self-	Disagree	25	28
development	Undecided	0	0
opportunities	Agree	45	50
	Strongly Agree	10	11
Total		90	100

The results revealed that Half 50% (45) of the respondents agreed that there organization offers a well-organized training program to improve their commitment. 27% (24) disagreed with the statement. 1% (1) of the respondent was undecided while 11% (10) strongly agreed. Those who strongly disagreed with the statement represented 11% % (10) of the respondents. The results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Well organized Training Program.

Statement	Degree	Frequency	Percentage
My organization has a well training program	Strongly Disagree	10	11
	Disagree	24	27
	Undecided	1	1
	Agree	45	50
	Strongly Agree	10	11
Total		90	100

The study indicated that training opportunities was granted to the majority of the employees in the company. It also has a strong positive link to commitment and will enable the company to compete in the public relation industry. Owen (2006), found out that training and development will increase employee's commitment, which can further counter the numerous direct and indirect costs associated with employee's turnover. To ensure that the employees remain with the company following training, the company should implement a strategy to training that embraces commitment. The analysis has shown that the more training opportunities offered to employees the stronger employees' commitment to the organization. When an organization provides training opportunities to employees, the chances of better performance is enhanced. The research supports the existing literature that training is likely not only to increase and improve employee's knowledge and skill but also acts a means of achieving higher organizational commitment and performance. Bartlett (2001), states that organizations that are able to create an environment where training is supported and valued by employees will be able to achieve greater commitment outcomes such as low employees 'turnover.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is primarily a justification that training significantly influences employee commitment. Where there is urge by organizations to have a committed workforce for the achievement of organizational goals and objectives, there is need to promote training a factor that influences employee commitment. The study therefore specifically recommends that KNEC should increase employees' opportunities for training as the study established that employee commitment was influenced by existence of training and development opportunities. The organization should also provide training and development opportunities that are aligned to employees' career needs and goals. Organizations should also embrace training as a strategy and focus on interventions that are linked to business goals, acquisition of new skills and for improving employee performance standards. This will in turn make employees more skilled, knowledgeable and ready to take on higher responsibilities and can ultimately lead to higher commitment. Additionally, organizations should provide opportunities career development especially after training in order to increase commitment.

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