

THE ROLE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON INNOVATION DEVELOPMENT IN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES OF KENYA

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a review of the training and development literature. The review of literature is focusing on the benefits of training and development in public universities in Kenya. The study adopted a multidisciplinary and national perspective to examine how training and development activities in work organizations can produce important benefits for each stakeholder. The study adopted a survey design and questionnaires were used to collect data. The data collected was analyzed using Excel package and the results presented in tables.

Key Words: *training benefits, training development, innovation development, performance, enterprise development, human capital*

Introduction

Every organization strives to compete in the global economy, differentiation on the basis of the skills, knowledge, and motivation of their human capital takes and as such, training has become an increasing importance. "Training" refers to a systematic approach to learning and development to improve individual, team, and organizational effectiveness, (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Alternatively, development refers to activities leading to the acquisition of new knowledge or skills for purposes of personal growth. However, it is often difficult to ascertain whether a specific research study addresses training, development, or both.

Benefits of training for individuals and teams

There is documented evidence that training activities have a positive impact on the performance of individuals and teams. Training activities can also be beneficial regarding other outcomes at both the individual and team level (e.g., attitudes, motivation, creativity, innovativeness and empowerment), (Nzuve, 2007).

Benefits Related to Job Performance

Training-related changes should result in improved job performance and other positive changes (e.g., acquisition of new skills; Hill & Lent 2006, Satterfield & Hughes 2007) that serve as antecedents of job performance, (Kraiger, 2002). Behavior-modeling training has a rich history of success. For instance, Decker and Nathan, (1985), as well as Robertson, (1990), found that training was found to affect changes in worker skills through a change in trainees' knowledge structures or mental models. This is also echoed by Marks et al. (2002). In addition, Taylor et al. (2005) conducted a meta-analysis including 117 behavior-modeling training studies. He ascertained that the largest effects were for declarative and procedural knowledge.

Benefits of training to organizations

Fewer than 5% of all training programs are assessed in terms of their financial benefits to the organization, (Swanson, 2001). The picture changes among companies recognized for their commitment to training. Specifically, the majority of organizations recognized by ASTD for innovative training programs measure training impact at some level of organizational effectiveness, (Paradise, 2007, Rivera & Paradise, 2006).

Statement of the Problem

Several studies conducted in European countries have documented the impact of training on organizational performance. Aragón-Sánchez et al. (2003) investigated the relationship between training and organizational performance. Organizational performance was operationalized as effectiveness (i.e., employee involvement, human resource indicators, and quality), and profitability (i.e., sales volume, benefits before interest and taxes, and a ratio of benefit before taxes/sales Guerrero & Barraud, (2009). The nature of an organization's reputation influences how customers (and potential customers), competitors, and even employees interact with the organization. Thus, an organization's reputation can have important financial consequences. Clardy, (2005), noted that an organization's reputation can be affected by its training practices. In recent years, the discussion whether academia can encompass a third mission of enterprise development in addition to research and teaching, has received greater attention, (Mansfield, 1995, Branscomb et al, 1999 and Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 2000). One of such way of achieving this enterprise development agenda is through innovation capacities of the universities. According to Lester, (2005), these institutions are a primary source of the most valuable assets in the knowledge economy and thus regarded as an engine of innovation. Universities are widely cited as a critical institutional actor in national innovation systems, (Nelson, 1993) and hence are expected to live up to those expectations.

In Kenya, the economic, social and political pillars of *Kenya Vision 2030* are anchored on among other things, science, technology and innovation, (Bailey, Cloete & Pillay, 2012.). This is an indication on the developing countries continued recognition of innovation in economic development. However, while the significance of universities through their innovation capacities is increasingly becoming a central tenet in various developments, the situation in Kenya is far from being realized. Various empirical studies, (Nyangoti-Chacha, 2004, Larsen & Salter, 2006,

Dahlander & Gann, 2010), show that Universities are deficient in terms of research and development. This echoes further the findings by Oketch, (2004), that many universities have the capacity to carry out research and development but on the practical side, this has not been happening. This translates to marginal performance of universities in achieving its bottom line objectives. Studies by Wang, (2001), Saint, (2009); Taylor and Braddock, (2007), show that the performance of any university is a function of the amount of research and development programmes it is either involved in, or has carried out singly or with partners. A significant, growing portfolio of social science research documents the impact of university research on industrial innovation and performance. For instance, Mansfield's work estimated that 10% of new industrial processes are attributable to recent academic research, resulting in a social rate of return of 28%, (Kathy, 2001). More recent studies by Association of University Technology Managers, (2000), confirms that there is a relationship between academic research and industrial performance. This therefore implies that the poor performance of these institutions will jeopardize the Industry research partnerships. In an era when knowledge is rapidly changing, and innovating is critical to business' success and sustainability, the human capital of the organizations is an issue of increasing importance. Over two decades ago, Kozlowski, (1987), called for Human Resource Management (HRM) to be more distinctly embedded in organizational strategy in order to facilitate innovation. Although the importance of effective people management to successful innovation capability has been recognized for some time, (Hull & Azumi, 1984, Bontis, 1998, Scarbrough, 2003), there still remains many questions regarding the relationship between HRM and innovation, (Frenkel et al., 1999; Newell et al., 2001). Nonetheless, the few empirical contributions so far mentioned are highly limited to the developed economies and thus, there exists a gap of the status in developing countries. This study therefore, investigates the role of Human Resource Management in innovation development among the public universities in Kenya.

General Objective

The overall objective of the study is to examine the impact of training and development on innovation development in the public universities in Kenya.

Specific Objectives

1. To establish if training and development impacts on innovation at public universities of in Kenya
2. To investigate if the universities put emphasis on recognition after training
3. To find out if the universities are involved in the funding of training that support innovation plans.
4. To determine if universities organize workshops/seminars which are relevant to innovation plans

Research Hypotheses

1. Training and development do not impact on innovation at the public universities in Kenya
2. The universities do not put emphasis on recognition after the training
3. The universities are not involved in the funding of training that supports innovation plans
4. The universities do not organize workshops/seminars which are relevant to its innovation plans

Theoretical Framework

Training is a key part of a broader field of human resource development and theories on learning have emphasized the need for strategic leadership that communicates the organization vision and mission clearly to enable employees understand the organization objectives for optimum performance, (Cole, 2002). Berlin, Walter and Gruyler, (2004), allude that evolution of innovation theories can be explained by the increasing importance of social ingredients which was originally based solely on tangible capital. This can be illustrated by the following, which have been deemed important by innovation specialists, (Kipping & Engwwa, 2003). Innovation derived from science, (technology push), innovation derived from market needs, (market pull), Innovation derived from linkages between actors in the market, Innovation derived from technological networks and innovation derived from social networks.

Empirical Review

Training employees shows a strong commitment that an employer has with employees and demonstrate the value that an employer has on the employees. Schmidt, (2004) in his, ' study on the relationship between workplace training and overall job performance' which found out that components of job training and time spent in training determined a significant relationship to employee performance on the job.

The quality of training has maximum impact on performance since work output of an employee would be dependent on the experience level that employee would have acquired, (Sahu, 2000). The training impacts on performance in that it determines whether one will keep the job at hand or lose it altogether if not well done. A common cause of job dissatisfaction is that the staff does not have the basic skills required for their jobs. The struggle to finish or accomplish an assigned work is seen and as a result the gap between their skill level and the expected performance keeps them away from job satisfaction. Armstrong, (2006), points out that a needs analysis that is fully involving and inclusive of all employees must be carried out before any training is done. In particular, Mullins (2007), notes that employees need to be trained inclusively to avoid talent

loss that affect performance of other employees and the whole organization when trained staff leave an organization for failure to utilize the skills an organization.

Research Methodology

The study adopted survey research design. A research design is a detailed plan for how research will be collected, Borg, Meredith and Gall, (2003), state that it is the pillars of research. The design was appropriate because it includes descriptive elements and goes beyond to identify and explore the causes lying behind the effects and the nature of relationships between the independent and dependent variables. Explanatory research attempts to investigate the causes of particular phenomena other than describing them. The target population was the lecturers working in public universities in Kenya. The study employed survey design because the population of interest was drawn from different public universities. The study collected primary data by use of self administered questionnaire. According to Kothari (2004) and Sakaran, (2003) , use of questionnaire is recommended because the point of interest is behavior, views, opinions, perceptions and feelings. The questionnaires were dropped at the respondents by the research assistant and picked at a later date. The data collected was analyzed using Excel package and the results presented using tables and charts. The researcher pre-tested the research instrument using 15 respondents. The purpose of the pilot study was to validate the constructs in the questionnaire and to supplement the literature review. Cronbach's coefficient alpha was used to check the internal consistency and evaluate the reliability of the measures. An alpha of 0.84 was obtained therefore acceptable, (Cronback, 1951). As a result, the questionnaire was amended and the literature review enriched (Cooper and Schindler, 1998).

Results Discussion and Findings

The respondents agreed at 59.9% agreed, 32.3% were neutral, 5.9% strongly agreed, while 1.5% disagreed and only 0.4% strongly disagreed. These findings imply that the majority of the employees felt that training encouraged by the universities enhance innovation plans. Findings indicated that the majority at 59.9% of the respondents who responded to this question were of the opinion that the universities organize workshops or seminars which support innovation plans, 31% were neutral, 7.1% strongly agreed, 1.5% disagreed while nobody strongly disagreed.

The researcher wanted to check if the universities put emphasis on recognition of employees after they undergo training. The respondents agreed at 55.8%, 34.6% were neutral, 7.1% strongly agreed, while 1.5% disagreed, and only a small minority of 1.1% strongly disagreed. These finds show that the majority of the employees felt the universities recognize training after they have undergone it thus impacting on innovation development.

The study intended to confirm if the universities provide financial support for relevant trainings and form the graph. Findings indicated that 51.7% of the respondents agreed, a slightly lower percentage, at 40.5% was neutral while 4.8% of them strongly agreed and no one strongly disagreed. These findings imply that a relatively higher majority of the respondents had the view

that the universities provide financial resources to support relevant training which in turn impact on innovation plans.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The objectives of the study was to establish the role that training and development play towards innovation development in public universities. From the study, the researcher was able to deduce that the universities support innovation development by not only funding training but also organizing it through seminars and workshops. In addition, the universities recognize those individuals who have undertaken relevant training towards innovation.

In conclusion, the researcher inferred that though this is happening, there should be commitment by both parties. Both short term and long term measures must be embraced. Right policies and strategies must be developed and communicated to the human capital. Innovation development and financial planning must be put as a priority.

The researcher recommended that the issue of innovation development must be key. There should be conscious and deliberate policies by the universities as well as creating an enabling environment for innovation to thrive. Friendly policies should be formulated such that every employee who demonstrates innovative ideas is trained to bring out the best in him/her.

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