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Knowledge Based Training and Employee Performance of Selected County Governments in Nyanza Region, Kenya.

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Abstract

The county governances' success dependent on the performance of employees for better service delivery to the public. However, performance of employee in Nyanza region has been declining despite high investment in training programs. Hence, there is need to examine the effect of knowledge-based training on performance of employees of selected county governments in Nyanza, Kenya. The study was grounded in knowledge-based view theory. A correlation research design was adopted in the study. A sample of 199 from a target population of 389 employees. Stratified sampling method was used to select the sample from the target population. A semi-structured questionnaires was used to collect primary data. An overall Cronbach Alpha coefficient of 0.784 was obtained which was above 0.7 threshold for reliability. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used in analysis of data. The county moderately engaged in conferences, seminars and workshops. However, to optimize on this knowledge-based training the county over emphasized on internal workshop and external workshop as well as internal seminars with few international seminars. Therefore, knowledge-based training had direct significant relationship with employee performance. The study concluded that knowledge-based training had employee performance in selected County Governments in Nyanza Region, Kenya. The study recommended enhancing knowledge-based training programs for employee development and optimizing professional development.

Keywords: Knowledge Based Training, Employee Performance, Correlational Design, County Governments, Nyanza Region, Kenya.

1. Introduction

Globally, training has remained an important aspect in human resource. In Malaysia, Maaly, Abedallah and Mohammed (2015) most of the trainings done in enterprises are related with job needs of the employee. Training plays an important role in enhancing the performance of organization in the region. Training of human resource in Iranian companies were effective on organization performance which was achieved through the introduction of knowledge management (Seyed, Noor, Asghar, and Khaled, 2011) In Africa, employee performance has enabled organization to achieve high organization output which has been associated with training. A study in Ghana by Abugre & Anlesinya (2020) asserted that training participation not only affected performance of employee but also influenced employee intention to leave their firms. Ayana, Alaro, & Gebissa (2020) asserted that orientation assist employees to settle and gain knowledge of process and production procedures in hospital from Ethiopia. Mchete & Shayo (2020) who examined induction in Tanzania pointed out that induction training enables new employees to their new environment.

Workshops and conference are among short knowledge-based training that offers specific skills to larger number of employees at a time. According to Vokshi (2020) seminars are one of the appropriate training practices that allow organization pass financial innovation information to commercial banks as method of ensuring technological advancement to employees. Halawi & Haydar (2018) examined that workshop and conference affected individual satisfaction and quality of work.

Seminar, conferences and workshops training are important training practices in training

institution as well as organizations in Philippines as asserted by Caraig (2017). This assists in exposing, networking and improving training where majority of the training practices utilized website and online based services. Similarly, in Nigeria seminar, workshops and in-service training attended by teachers assisted in improving academic performance of teachers.

Employee performance affects firm productivity resulting to high performance according to Nda & Fard (2013). Lee, Malik, Ill, & Sharma (2020) utilized sales and labour productivity as measure of performance. Citizen satisfaction is an indicator of employee performance that dependent on achieving citizen needs. Majau & Wanjohi (2019) used customer satisfaction in measuring employee performance in county government. County government plays important role in offering public service and development of project which should focus on satisfying the citizen. Similarly, Maitai & Ngari (2019) measured employee performance in terms of citizen satisfaction in county government.

Quality of service is important concept that measure employee performance. Majau & Wanjohi (2019) also pointed that quality of work in terms of professional conduct and timeliness in project improved employee performance. Quality of output was indicated by Halawi & Haydar (2018) to influence employee performance. Quality of service delivery is achieved by motivated employee who have inner satisfaction leading effective and influence on employee performance. Employee productivity was used by Maitai & Ngari (2019) to measure employee performance. Employee productivity provides the output of employee based the task given. In the study employee productivity was achieved through training employees which improved efficiency at work. Ahmad & Manzoor (2017) added that organizations that have achieve high employee productive have ensure training that focus on skill and knowledge improvement. Since the official launch of Kenya's devolved system of government following the general elections in 2013, strikes and go-slows have been reported in the majority of the counties, preventing the provision of essential services to the general public. According to Lubaale (2015), the reason why client complaints are rising across almost all counties is due to subpar service performance. For instance, poor service delivery by county personnel has been mentioned as the primary cause of issues with the quality of services, which include inadequate garbage and solid waste management, pollution, water shortages, and poor roads, among others.

County governments like any other public sector have had a share of their own challenges. Poor service delivery, lack of citizen satisfaction, low work done and low employee productivity. However, the County Governments have provided several trainings programmes that aim at imparting skills as well as improve employee performance; Where employees can join Kenya School of Governance take short courses, mentorship programs, seminars mostly off-job as well as orientation related programs.

The performance in Nyanza region has been declining from InfoTrack report (2021), the performance has reduced from 55.4% to 47.20% from 2015 to 2020. There is need to examined the relationship between knowledge-based training and performance of employees of selected county governments in Nyanza, Kenya.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Review

Penrose (1959) developed Knowledge-Based View (KBV) and later advanced by Wernerfelt (1984), Conner (1991) and Barney (1991). This reveals that knowledge is a resource that can be difficult to imitate, scarce and valuable, therefore can be used as competitive advantage by the organization. These three theories have common denominator that is creating competitive advantage using the existing skills and acquired knowledge for performance of employee as well as the organization.

The limitation of Resource Based View (RBV) theory was that it was not specific on which type of resource that an organization could utilize to create a competitive advantage. The knowledge-based perspective theory acknowledges that knowledge can be employed in businesses as a strategic resource. The theory holds that knowledge exists in two forms, tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge, and is considered to be a person's intellectual property (Hörisch, Johnson, and Schaltegger, 2015). Tacit knowledge is obtained through experience or action and it is considered to be implicit in nature as it operates within an individual's subconscious mind hence making it difficult to share it with others. Explicit knowledge on the other hand is that knowledge that can be documented, articulated and formalized. Such type of knowledge therefore can be shared according to Al-Ansi (2021).

In the organization, tacit knowledge is seen as a key strategic resource. This is due to the fact that it is unique, immovable, and comes from within the organization (Hörisch et al., 2015). According to Hayter (2016), an organization can develop knowledge-based competency by aggregating, integrating, and organizing any specific knowledge that employees accumulate over time. This can result in an improvement in the firm's competitiveness. Knowledge can be acquired and utilized through group problem solving, decision making, routines, sequencing and organizations' directives and policies.

2.2 Knowledge Based Training and performance

Researchers Abrar, Hassan, and Batool (2021) looked at the impact of knowledge-based training and development on creative behavior among employees. This study examines how knowledge-based training and development affect employee innovative behavior, individual absorptive capacity, and human capital. A sample of 149 university professors from Islamabad and Rawalpindi provided the data. The findings demonstrate that knowledge-based training and development strengthen human capital, which promotes individual assimilation capacity and eventually has a favorable impact on employee innovation. The current study focuses on knowledge-based training which entails seminars, conferences and workshops used by organization to boost knowledge and skills.

In Philippines, Caraig (2017) evaluated the design, development, and evaluation of various training, workshops, conferences, and seminars. It aimed to provide copious amounts of knowledge on a wide range of topics and stay up with the most recent industry, societal, and educational trends and concerns. In this regard, it would be more convenient for students and professionals to have access to an online service that allows them to search and view upcoming seminars, conferences, and workshops knowledge-based training. In light of this, the researcher

proposes a website that compiles Philippine organizations and training institutions that host seminars, conferences, and workshops training.

Its ultimate goal is to create a website that can be used to promote and market events. The current study focused on knowledge-based training as training practices of enhancing performance of an organization.

Vokshi (2020) examined training on performance of employee in commercial banks. Financial innovations in commercial banks require human resource training in technological advancement. The study examined training where seminars, presentations, lecturing, demonstration and lectures were considered as training practice on employee performance. The study found that training had positive influence on performance of employee. The current study focused on training practices which focused on knowledge-based training, electronic training, mentorship training and orientation training.

Seminar, workshops and in-service training attended by social study teacher was evaluated Ekpenyong, Okon, & Imo (2016) of academic performance of Junior secondary student in Nigeria. This study examined the teachers' participation in in-service training, seminars, and workshops in relation to student academic achievement in Cross River State, Nigeria. In this study, an ex-post-facto research design was utilized. A sample of five hundred social studies teachers and students was chosen. The data collection instruments consisted of a set of questionnaires to assess social studies instructors' in-service training, seminars, workshops and the Social Studies Achievement Test (SOSPT), to assess students' academic performance. The instruments' reliability estimates were determined using the split-half reliability method and its associated Spearman Brown formula. The hypothesis was evaluated using a Pearson correlation analysis. The analysis found a weak positive statistical relationship between the regularity of instructors' participation in in-service training, workshops, and seminars with students' social studies academic performance. It was suggested that the government should mandate professional training for all elementary and secondary school teachers. In the current study knowledge-based training was examined on employee performance rather than students' performance.

Halawi & Haydar (2018) did examine the influence of training on performance of employee. The study examined a sample of 303 respondents who were given questionnaires based on two companies of Lebanon that is Bonjus company as well as Khatib and Alami company. The results indicated that Lebanon design of training programs used both long-term development and short-term skills development. The training programmes adopted includes workshops, organizing outside workplace seminars and participating in department activities. Training programs assisted the employees to gain skills, developed career, improve quality output, developed employee satisfaction and personal development. The current study was done in Kenya focusing County Governments of Nyanza.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopted correlation research designs were adopted which targeted on selected counties with declining performance which include Kisii, Migori, Siaya, Homabay and Nyamira County Governments. Therefore, a target population of 389 employees comprising of CECs, COs, Directors and assistant Directors from departments from Kisii, Migori, Siaya, Homabay and Nyamira Counties. Using Yamane's formulae, a sample size of 199 was obtained and use stratified random sampling technique was adopted in selecting sample from the five county governments. Data was collected using structured questionnaires. An overall Cronbach alpha of 0.784 was obtained which revealed that the instrument was reliable. Descriptive statistics were utilized using frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation, while charts were also present descriptive statistics which include bar and pie chart. Correlation analysis was used to test the relationship between knowledge-based training and employee performance.

4. Results and Discussions

Knowledge based training was examined in the study using a Likert scale and the results were presented in Table 1 in terms of frequency distribution and mean. It examines effects of knowledge-based training on employee performance in the County Governments.

4.1 Table 1: Knowledge Based Training.

Knowledge Based Training	SA=5	A=4	N=3	D=2	SD=1	Mean
The county government conducts local conferences.	51 27.6%	55 29.7%	14 7.6%	34 18.4%	31 16.8%	3.33
International conferences are participated by the county government.	28 15.1%	49 26.5%	52 28.1%	20 10.8%	36 19.5%	3.07
The county has favorable seminar policies that enhance performance of the county.	47 25.4%	54 29.2%	33 17.8%	24 13.0%	27 14.6%	3.38
Internal workshops are done to improve job performance.	12 6.5%	106 57.3%	13 7.0%	26 14.1%	28 15.1%	3.26
County employees participate in external workshops to enhance cohesion and networking.	50 27.0%	78 42.2%	14 7.6%	9 4.9%	34 18.4%	3.55
Bench-marking is done as part of external workshops to improve the performance of the county.	36 19.5%	75 40.5%	34 18.4%	14 7.6%	26 14.1%	3.44
Seminars are used to enhance performance as well as motivated employment.	52 28.1%	79 42.7%	7 3.8%	15 8.1%	32 17.3%	3.56
The seminars are sponsored by the county government.	38 20.5%	78 42.2%	17 9.2%	7 3.8%	45 24.3%	3.31

Table 4.1 results showed that the county government conducted local conferences as agreed by total of 106

(57.3%) respondents and 65(35.2%) disagreed. A mean of 3.33 revealed that the county government somewhat

participated in local conferences. However, the international conferences participation by the county government were lower than the local conference since 77(41.6%) of the respondent agreed and 56(30.1%) respondents disagreed. The mean was also low as compared with the local conference where a mean of 3.07 showed that there was slight low participation of county government employees in international conferences.

According to the results there were 101(54.6%) of the respondents who agreed as oppose of 51(27.6%) of the respondents who disagreed that the county had favorable seminar policies that enhance performance of the county. A mean of 3.38 implied that majority of the counties had sufficient policies that guided seminars trainings in the County Governments.

The County Governments as shown by 128(62.8%) of the respondents agreed and 54(29.2%) of the respondents disagreed that internal workshops are done to improve job performance. According to the mean of 3.26, the results showed that internal workshops were done the County Government in order to enhance the performance of employees. The external workshops as agreed by 128(69.2%) of the respondents to improve cohesion and networking, however, there were 43(23.3%) of the respondents who disagreed. The mean of 3.55 showed that external workshops assisted County Government

employees to be more cohesive and increase the social networking with other employees.

According to the findings those who agreed to have bench-marking as part of external workshops in improving the performance of the county were 111(60.0%) and 60(21.7%) of the respondent disagreed. The mean results of 3.44 showed that bench-marking were moderately done by County for the purpose of improving the performance of employees through external workshops.

As per the results 129(70.8%) of the respondents agreed and 47(25.4%) of the respondents disagreed that seminars were used to enhance performance as well as motivated employment. The mean of 3.56 implied that the County utilized seminars a tool to improve performance and motivate employees at work place. The results showed that 116(62.7%) of the respondents pointed that the seminars were sponsored by the county government, however, there were 52(28.1%) who were of the contrary opinion. This displayed a mean of 3.31 which implied that the county government mostly sponsored their employees to participate in seminars.

The employee performance’s findings from County Government were extracted to determine how it affect knowledge training practices. The mean and frequency distribution were adopted to explain the employee performance as indicated in Table 2.

Table 4.2: Employee Performance.

Employee Performance	SA=5	A=4	N=3	D=2	SD=1	Mean
Citizens are satisfied with the infrastructural development done by the county employees.	0 0.0%	97 52.4%	28 15.1%	48 25.9%	12 6.5%	3.14
The county employees have focused in providing service that recommended by the citizen.	41 22.2%	57 30.8%	62 33.5%	20 10.8%	5 2.7%	3.59
The county government employees offered quality service delivery to their citizen	26 14.1%	89 48.1%	35 18.9%	24 13.0%	11 5.9%	3.51
The county government employees have done all projects promised by the leaders.	18 9.7%	45 24.3%	52 28.1%	47 25.4%	23 12.4%	2.94
Services are done within the recommended time, scope and quality.	19 10.3%	60 32.4%	48 25.9%	43 23.2%	15 8.1%	3.14
Employees are punctual and effective in-service delivery.	26 14.1%	43 23.2%	77 41.6%	34 18.4%	5 2.7%	3.28
There is efficient service delivery provided be the employees.	12 6.5%	88 47.6%	41 22.2%	37 20.0%	7 3.8%	3.33
Employees are concerned with the need of the citizen and ensure that they are achieved.	11 5.9%	76 41.1%	68 36.8%	23 12.4%	7 3.8%	3.30

Table 4.2 revealed that the 95(52.4%) of the respondents agreed and 60(32.4%) disagreed that citizens were satisfied with the infrastructural development done by the County Government employees. The mean results of 3.14 slightly more County Governments did satisfied citizens in infrastructural development. It was also found that the 98(53.0%) agreed and 25(13.5%) disagreed that the county employees had focused in providing service that recommended by the citizen. A mean of average of 3.59 implied that most county employee provided services that achieved the need of their citizens.

As per the findings, there were 115(62.2%) of the respondents who agreed and 59(31.9%) of disagreed that the County Government employees offered quality service delivery to their citizen. Its means of 3.51 implied that most County Governments employees were above average in offering quality service delivery.

It was disagreed by 70(37.8%) of the respondents and 53(34.0%) that the County Government employees had

done all projects promised by the leaders. The mean from the findings was 2.94 which revealed that the County Government employees had not sufficient done all the project as promised by the leaders. 79(43.7%) of the respondents agreed while 58(31.3%) disagreed that they were done within the recommended time, scope and quality. The mean results of 3.14 further implied that a few projects were done within the recommended time, scope and quality by the County Governments.

According to the respondents, 69(37.3%) agreed and 39(21.1%) disagreed that the employees were punctual and effective in-service delivery. Its mean of 3.28 further revealed that slightly more employees who were punctual and effective in-service delivery as compared than those who were not.

The findings further revealed that 100(56.1%) of the respondents agreed and 44(23.8%) disagreed that there was efficient service delivery provided to the employees. As per the mean results of 3.33, it implies that more County

Government were able to provide efficient service delivery to employees. Finally, the results revealed that there were concerned with the need of the citizen and ensured that they are achieved to some extent since 87(47.0%) agreed and 30(16.2%) disagreed. A mean of 3.30 was achieved which implied that more County Governments' Employees were

concerned about the citizen needs and ensure that they achieve these needs.

Pearson correlation coefficients (R) provided the strength, direction and significant of different variable of knowledge-based training and employee performance. The correlation analysis was presented in Table 3.

Table 4.3: Correlation Analysis.

		Knowledge Based Training	Performance of Employees
Knowledge Based Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.644**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	185	185
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000
	N	185	185
Performance of Employees	Pearson Correlation	.644**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	185	185

Source: Research Data (2023).

According to Table 4.3 results revealed a high positive significant relationship between knowledge-based training and employee performance ($R=0.644$, $P=0.000<0.05$). According to Abrar, Hassan, and Batool's (2021) study in Islamabad and Rawalpindi explored how knowledge-based training and development impact innovative behavior among university professors. The findings emphasized the positive influence of knowledge-based training on human capital, individual absorptive capacity, and ultimately, employee innovation. However, the current study did find that knowledge-based training had significant impact on employee performance rather than the innovative behavior among the university professors.

The current finding did concur with Vokshi's (2020) examination of training in commercial banks emphasized the positive influence of training practices, including seminars, presentations, and lectures, on employee performance. This is similar to Ekpenyong, Okon, & Imo's (2016) study in Nigeria evaluated the impact of in-service training, seminars, and workshops attended by social studies teachers on the academic performance of junior secondary students. Halawi & Haydar's (2018) examination in Lebanon assessed the influence of training programs, including workshops and seminars, on employee performance. The findings indicated positive outcomes in skills development, career advancement, quality output, employee satisfaction, and personal development.

Therefore, knowledge-based training had positive significant influence on performance of employees.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Summary

The analysis of the county government's approach to professional development through knowledge-based training on employee performance. Local conferences seemed moderately embraced, with a notable majority in agreement, hinting at a reasonable level of participation. However, the engagement in international conferences appeared limited, reflecting lower involvement by county government employees. Favorable policies governing seminars and regular implementation of internal workshops for job performance improvement were acknowledged, indicating structured approaches within counties. External workshops garnered substantial support, suggesting their effectiveness in fostering social connections, while

benchmarking as part of these workshops was moderately acknowledged. Seminars were viewed as valuable tools for performance enhancement and motivation, along with the recognition of the county government's sponsorship of such events. The study revealed that knowledge-based training had positive significant relationship with employee performance.

5.2 Conclusions

The study concluded that knowledge-based training had positive significant effect on employee performance in County Government. The results indicate a moderate embrace of local conferences, but, international conference participation appears less pronounced. Favorable seminar policies were recognized while internal workshops for job performance improvement signifying their regular integration into county practices. External workshops, bench-marking as part of external workshops, aimed at performance improvement of County Government employees.

5.3 Recommendations

The findings from the second objective indicate a moderate engagement in various professional development activities, including conferences, seminars, and workshops. To optimize these practices, County Governments should explore ways to increase participation in international conferences, potentially by identifying key global trends and encouraging employees to share and acquire knowledge on an international platform. Emphasizing the role of internal workshops for job performance improvement and external workshops for fostering cohesion and networking is crucial. Bench-marking, as indicated by moderate agreement, can be further promoted to enhance performance through external workshops. Moreover, the positive impact of seminars on motivation and performance suggests a need for sustained investment in these events. Counties should also consider reviewing and updating policies to ensure they align with evolving professional development needs.

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