



**INFLUENCE OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING ON ORGANIZATION LEARNING IN PRIVATE CHARTERED UNIVERSITIES  
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**ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of Employee training on organizational learning in private chartered universities in Kenya. The study reviewed the theories of organizational learning concentrating mainly on the human capital theory, Kanter's theory, contingency theory, institution theory as well the empirical literature relevant to the study. The study adopted cross-sectional descriptive research design using both quantitative and qualitative approaches because it allows the researcher to compare many different variables at the same time and it is relatively quick and easy to conduct. This study design also ensures complete description of the situation making sure that there is minimum bias in the collection of data. The study obtained its target population from 18 private chartered Universities authorized to offer higher education in Kenya through stratified sampling technique. The sample population was made up of a total of 180 respondents, consisting of participants in the rank of administrative staff grade 13-15. Data was collected through questionnaires and interview schedules which was analyzed with the aid of descriptive and inferential statistics. A regression model was fitted. The study revealed that in private chartered universities in Kenya, employee training is a significant predictor of organizational learning.*

**Keywords:** Employee Empowerment, Employee Training, Organizational Learning, Private Universities, Stratified Sampling

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## INTRODUCTION

Kenyan Private Universities have gradually become more competitive and like other organizations in the world, they have found it essential to improve performance in order to survive in today's competitive environment [1, 2]. To cope up with the changing organizational expectations, organizations integrate different human resource management practices to improve their efficiency and success [3, 4, and 5]. However competition serves as the driving force for a number of strategic change policies, this competitive pressure has inspired many of Kenyan Private Universities to evaluate their human resource management practices to become innovative, adopt modern practices and improve performance [6]. A number of human resource management practices, termed as best practices, which could improve organizational performance are; selective hiring, extensive training, employment security, diffusion of information, team working, reduction of status differences, performance related and incentive pay.

The core tasks of human resource management practices are to monitor, measure and intervene in assembly, embodiment, dissemination and use of knowledge by employees [3]. Related studies have identified the daily task of human resource development in building of a learning organization as: assisting employees in generating and using knowledge; establishing suitable networks; and engaging in double-loop learning [4].

Organizational learning is postulated as the ability to make sense of the environment and develop new understandings which eventually manifest in improved organizational performance through internal and external actions of the firm [7]. A learning organization is one that is dedicated to collective learning and within which people, work practices, and policies develop in accord with its changing environment. Creative thinking is nurtured, collective aspiration is encouraged, and collective learning occurs [8]. Because organizational learning is basically based on the

behavioral and cognitive perspectives it is expected that an organization chooses to acclimate the beliefs and behaviors that offer the best competitive advantage [9]. Learning is the supremacy of business growth. Organizational learning is about increasing skills, firm's training, work experience and formal education [10]. Learning organization should inspire all employees to conduct in the learning process, experimentation, dialogue and learning from each other. Organizational learning is a common used alternate with the term to learning organization. Learning organizations are a dynamic element of knowledge management [11]. Organizational learning is the generation of organizational members' involvement in the interaction and dissemination of knowledge and experiences. Organizational learning is the way to cultivate new and innovative ideas [12].

In order to survive and obtain advantages in the learning environment, it is essential for the institutions to be able to innovate and integrate new knowledge, which allows them to take a different approach. Learning and creativity become essential in order to warranty the sustainability of competitive advantage. Being aware of this, many institutions form technical infrastructures that allow the repossession and dissemination of knowledge while at the same time the firm focuses on aspects such as strategy, quality control and stock control. Nevertheless, the reason why many institutions fail is due to extreme focus on technical problems at the expense of human resources [13].

One aspect of organization learning is uninterrupted learning and it occurs outside the dominion of conventional training and development. Continuous learning is significant for the development of human capital resources. The main aspects of continuous learning are: workplace learning, deliberate practice, informal learning, incidental learning and personal self-development [14]. Nearly, informal learning takes up to 75% of learning within organizations [15]. It forms both cognitive activities and behaviors, fluctuating from learning from oneself, by self-

reflection; learning from other people like peers, leaders at work places, and role models; and learning from non-interpersonal sources, like reading materials online and on print [17]. Informal learning permits persons to get knowledge and skills on the job, giving likely for more valuable learning experiences than from formal trainings and development [18].

The development of human resource capital requires taking into account ways on how to cataract expertise and skills from the experts and more knowledgeable staff to new ones and trainees who need it [19]. One guaranteed way of doing this is through sharing of knowledge. Sharing of knowledge can happen directly through person-to-person or through interactions aided by technology with professionals. It can also happen indirectly through recording, organizing, and apprehending knowledge for future use by other people [20]. Sharing of knowledge among employees and across teams permits organizations to use prevailing knowledge-based resources [21]. Sharing of knowledge can impact an organization's competitive advantage in many ways, through lessening cost, fast completion of products development, improvement of innovation capabilities, increased sales growth and revenue gain from new products and services [22].

Current literature on organizational learning is leaning towards continuous improvement [23]. Organizational learning centers on continuous processes rather than a single product [24]. Organizational learning occurs when people continuously expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire; when new and expansive patterns of thinking are cultivated; when collective aspiration is set free and where people constantly learn how to learn together [25].

Today, Organization learning (OL) is dire because of the current accelerated technological changes, explosion of available market data and significance of anticipatory action [26]. In essence, a firm's capacity to learn, acquire and use of learning resources is difficult to replicate due to the

complexity, cost and time required [27]. OL also enables behavioral change that leads to improved performance and long-term competitive advantage arising from internal resources and competencies that cannot easily be replicated [28].

### **Problem statement**

Kenyan Private Universities have faced difficulties in the recent years such as reduction of employment rate of university graduates, shortfall in terms of quality staff, inadequate research, labor turnover followed by increasing competition and market-orientation deeds among others [29]. Effectively, Kenyan Private Universities must formulate strategies to entice larger student enrolments; work in partnership with the private sector and development partners so as to be self-reliant [30]. Therefore there is need to explore ways of retreating and addressing the above difficulties through sound responses, to meet the best HRM practices for private universities to remain competitive [31]. The objective of this study was therefore to examine the influence of employee training on organization learning in Private Chartered Universities in Kenya.

In studying the influences of human resource management practices on organizational learning in private chartered universities in Kenya, Human Capital theory was considered appropriate as it provides the theoretical background for this study [32]. The theory enunciates that the knowledge and skill an employee has yields some stock of productive capital. This approach also looks at employees as asset capable of not just adding value to their firms but also in many cases assuring its very survival in a competitive environment and not as an expense item on their financial statements [33]. People produce, retain and apply knowledge and skill that generate intellectual resource [34]. The person's knowledge and skill is then improved through interactions between them, that is, social resource capital which creates institutionalized knowledge that firms have. This theory therefore, looks at employee as assets and that firms which invest in

employee enhance their performance that eventually produces positive results to the firm. The present world of work values the importance of human resource capital and centers organizational environment on it to uphold the intellectual capital. Therefore firms have to shift from human resources to the concept of human capital. The upgrading of human capital needs taking into account ways on how to cataract expertise and skills from the experts and more knowledgeable staff to new ones and learners who need it [35]. Human capital is considered to be the human factor in the firms, the combination of intelligence, skills and expertise that gives the firm its noticeable character [36]. The human aspects of the firm are the ones capable of learning, changing, innovating and providing the creative force that when properly motivated ensures long term survival of the firm. Human capital creates the intellectual capital (which are the special and particular knowledge and skills that people have), social capital (which is the social linkages among people that enable organizations connect, embed and leverage its diverse knowledge) and the organizational capital (which is the cultured knowledge developed by an organization and kept in manuals and databases).

A significant amount of organizations value is possessed by its employees [37]. It is indeed the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that create value, which is why the focus has to be on means of attracting, retaining, developing and maintaining the human capital they represent. Human capital theory predicts that if employees are invested on in terms of training and development, recognition, reward, contribution and allowing employee to participate as a form of good employee relation, quality performance appraisal, the disposition to work and the organization will grow and thereby improve productivity and enhance employee obligation and encourage organizational learning. Nevertheless, this theory has been criticized because of the problems associated in “measuring key concepts, including future income and central idea of human capital

itself”.

For any organization to increase competitive advantage, it requires devoted and engaged employees with the essential knowledge, skills, abilities and capabilities. Linking Human capital theory to the organizational learning in Private Chartered Universities in Kenya, the study affirms that investment in training of staff in obtaining and improving knowledge, skills and abilities are needed to improve organizational learning.

Related research have noted that the work environment structures and purported staff access to power and opportunity structures is linked to workers’ attitudes and behaviors in an organization [38,39]. Kanter believed that staff shows attitudes relative to purported availability of power and opportunities. According to Kanter, there are four work empowerment configurations: access to information, opportunity, resources and support. Access to information refers to possessing formal and informal knowledge that is essential to be effective in the workplace. Access to resources refers to one's ability to obtain the financial means, materials, time, and supplies required to do the work. Access to opportunity is the availability of a chance for growth and movement within the organization as well as the chance to improve knowledge and skills. Access to support involves getting feedback and direction from subordinates, peers, and superiors. Defining power as “the ability of individuals to get things done”, Kanter confirmed that power in organizations was derived from structural conditions in the work environment, not from an individual’s personal characteristics or socialization effects. Consequently she highlights that the obligation of management should be creating conditions for work effectiveness by guaranteeing employees have access to the information, support, and resources necessary to undertake work and that they are provided with ongoing opportunities for development. Employees who believe their work environment offers access to these factors are empowered [40].The emphasis of Kanter's theory is on the employees' perception

of the actual conditions in the work environment, and not on how they comprehend this information psychologically. This 'structural' empowerment has been found to predict job satisfaction and organizational commitment [41, 42]. Access to opportunities to learn and grow in the job is particularly important for job satisfaction [43]. In a study of empowerment effect on nurses it was observed that the more nurses perceive they have access to workplace empowerment structures, the more contented they are with their work, and report higher performance [44]. Hence, holding all other variables constant, structural empowerment is the power to create and endure a work environment by providing the ability to access and mobilize opportunities, information, support, and resources from one's position in the organization [45].

Based on this evidence fronted by the Kater's theory on structural training and organization commitment, the study suggests that when employees are able to access the constructs of structural development within their organizations: access to opportunity, support, resources and information they will be committed to their roles within their organizations. Kanter alleged that if employees within an organization perceive opportunities for success is present, the employees' attitude, job satisfaction, and overall organizational commitment will be improved, which will eventually enhance organization learning. In order for an employee to perceive that opportunity exists, the employee must be in a position that permits access to information, resources and support [46].

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted positivism also known empiricism as the research philosophy to achieve its objectives. The choice was based on the fact that in order to empirically establish the relationships between the variables, hypotheses would be formulated and tested and findings generalized. This philosophy has been used by other researchers [46]. This allowed use of survey approach whose benefits are easier administration of research instruments to

a large and geographically spread population and greater coverage of the population which may provide greater validity through a larger and more representative sample.

Positivism hypothesizes that the researcher is autonomous of what is being observed. As such the choice of the study and how it was handled was determined by objective measures related with quantitative data. The researcher formulated assumptions and operational definition about the characteristics of phenomena being observed based on existing theory, testing hypotheses based on statistical methods leading to approval or rejection of hypotheses [48]. Phenomenology research encompasses gathering large amounts of rich information based on belief in the value of understanding the experiences and situations of a comparatively small number of subjects [49]. The strength of phenomenology research is that it allows researchers to gain a depth of understanding of the cases and situation studied [49].

A pilot test was carried out with eighteen suitably selected respondents from two private universities that did not form part of the sample, nine from each private university. Of the nine respondents two senior officers were also taken through interview to test the interview schedule. The senior officers were requested to examine the interview schedule and suggest any amendments in the constructing of the questions. The private universities that were used were, the Management University of Africa and Zetech University.

The researcher used eighteen respondents for pilot testing which meets the threshold of 10% of the sample size as commended [16].

Pilot testing was therefore carried out to evaluate the face and content validity and reliability of the research instruments (questionnaire and interview schedule) being used in the study. The pilot testing also helped to determine the average time taken by the respondents to complete the questionnaires. Several other issues with regard to instruments were addressed such as whether; the instruments sufficiently generated the required information, the

instruments contained proper wording of questions the items were rationally arranged to facilitate the necessary response, whether there were any redundancies and repetitions that called for exclusion of some questions; the data collected was quantifiable, analyzable and useful for further analysis. A regression model was then used to test the hypothesis of the study.

## RESULTS

The results in Table 1, showed that on the question of whether management conducted comprehensive induction for new employees 39.1 percent of the respondents disagreed as indicated by a mean of 2.36 and the standard deviation was 1.270. A total of 42.3 percent of the respondents were in agreement that management has mentorship programs as indicated by a mean of 3.97 and the standard deviation was 1.037. Accordingly a total of 48.7% of the respondents agreed that Management highly emphasizes development of human resource and encourages team learning as indicated by a mean of 3.92 and the standard deviation was 1.101. On the statement that the institution offers study leave with pay for

the 45.5% of the respondents strongly agreed. The mean was 4.15 and the standard deviation was 1.108; it was also observed that 44.2% of the respondents were in agreement on the statement that conferences and seminars were organized regularly by the institution to enhance job delivery as indicated by a mean of 3.92 and a standard deviation of 1.1113.

A total of 67.3 percent of the respondents agreed on the statement that management encourages on the job trainings for continuous learning, with a mean of 3.90 and standard deviation of 0.965. From the study findings a total of 42.3% of the respondents agreed that their supervisors delegated some of their responsibilities to them at times as indicated by a mean of 3.95 and standard deviation of 1.228. On the statement that I have training opportunities to learn and develop on my job, 38.5 percent of the respondents were in agreement with a mean of 3.97 and the standard deviation was 1.083. Overall from the measurements below in Table 4.6, we can conclude that indicators used to operationalize the variables had an approximate mean of 3.98875. This meant that most respondents agreed.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for influence of Employee Training on Organizational Learning**

Statement	SD(%)	D(%)	N(%)	A(%)	SA(%)	Mean	SD
Management conducts comprehensive induction for new employees	48(30.8)	55(35.3)	10(6.4)	35(22.4)	8(5.1)	2.36	1.270
Management have mentorship programs	4(2.6)	15(9.6)	17(10.9)	66(42.3)	54(34.6)	3.97	1.037
Management highly emphasizes development human resource and encourages team learning	8(5.1)	15(9.6)	8(5.1)	76(48.7)	49(31.4)	3.92	1.101
The institution offers study leave with pay for the employees	12(7.7)	2(1.3)	7(4.5)	64(41.0)	71(45.5)	4.15	1.108
Conferences and Seminars are organized regularly by my institution to enhance job delivery	8(5.1)	14(9.0)	13(8.3)	69(44.2)	52(33.3)	3.92	1.113
Management encourages on the job trainings for continuous learning	7(4.5)	13(8.3)	0(0)	105(67.3)	31(19.9)	3.90	0.965
My supervisors delegate some of their responsibilities to me at times	15(9.6)	8(5.1)	7(4.5)	66(42.3)	60(38.5)	3.95	1.228
I have training opportunities to learn and develop on my job	4(2.6)	17(10.9)	18(11.5)	57(36.5)	60(38.5)	3.97	1.083
<b>Overall</b>						<b>3.768</b>	<b>0.098</b>

The study sought to establish the magnitude and direction of the effect of employee training using

the model  $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 ET + \epsilon$ . The regression results were as shown in Table 2.

**Table 2: Regression Results of employee training on Organizational learning**

Model Summary						
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.869 <sup>a</sup>	.754	.748	.29974		

  

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	41.655	4	10.414	115.911	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	13.566	151	.090		
	Total	55.222	155			

  

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.258	.161		1.610	.010
	Employee training	.119	.049	.137	2.429	.016

The regression results in Table 2 showed that the effect of employee training on organizational learning was significant ( $F(4,151) = 115.911, p=0.000 < 0.05$ ). With  $R = 0.869$  and  $R^2 = 0.754$ , the model implied that about 86.9% of organizational learning were contributed by employee training while a variation of 75.4% in organizational learning were brought about by employee training.

The F test was significant with a p value = 0.000 which was less than the standard p value of 0.05 and this meant that the model was significant. From ANOVA, since p value = 0.000 and was lower than  $p = 0.05$  ( $p \text{ value} = 0.00 < 0.05$ ), then the contribution of employee training on organizational learning was significant. The equation that was fitted for the model was

$$OLN = 0.258 + 0.119 ET$$

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study affirmed that training policies, recognitions, rewards, employee participation and involvement were apparent as means of staff development private chartered universities in Kenya. The study established that employees training enhances job commitment. It was also

established that employees are keen on sharing knowledge when they get empowered. However, the respondents disagreed that when employee empowerment takes place, it leads employees in becoming adaptive to present situations and more prepared towards innovative behavior. It was recognized that staff training and development gives employees the chance to apply their understanding and skills effectively thus stimulating organization learning. The respondents were of the view that when staff development takes place, employees are stimulated to learn new skills that eventually increases job efficiency and performance. According to the study staff development gives employees assurance about their job and sharing of ideas is heightened which leads to organizational learning.

Work environment branded by trust was eminent to be very significant by majority of the respondents. Most of the respondents in the qualitative interviews showed the importance of being responsible and with autonomy on their duties and roles and noted it to be vital in enhancing creativity. Lack of responsibility for the



staff was noted to be a threat for limiting creativity and innovations. According to responses in the qualitative interviews in human resource, professionals opine that awareness of the need for staff to be responsible is important. Due to these findings, the principle of delegation of

responsibilities rather than work tasks was noted to be a key issue in leadership development programmes. Consequently, the study found out that there is positive and significant relationship between employee training and organization learning in private chartered universities in Kenya.

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