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ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the effect of Peer to peer training on employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya. Despite the importance of peer to peer training to organizations, little systematic studies exist on how it is enabled in firms to improve employee performance. A sample of 126 State Corporations were randomly picked from the target population of 187. The 126 State Corporations formed the unit of analysis. The unit of observation was 126 Human Resource experts or their equivalents drawn from the 126 State Corporations. From 126 respondents, 92 filled the questionnaires and returned translating to a response rate of 73%. The study applied mixed methods research with cross-sectional survey design. To obtain opinions from the respondents, a five-point Likert scale and open ended questions was used. Multiple regression analysis was adopted being a technique of multivariate analysis. The data was analyzed using SPSS (Version 23) and presented by way of means, percentages, standard deviation, tables and figures. Peer to peer training explained 31.4% of the variance in employee performance with 68.6% being explained by other factors not related to peer to peer training. The study recommended that State Corporations should allocate resources to promote peer to peer training activities in order to improve individual employee performance. The general conclusion drawn from the findings was that peer to peer training significantly improves employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya and therefore should be enhanced. The study found that Information Communication Technology does not significantly moderate the relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance.

Key words: Peer to Peer Training, State Corporations, Employee Performance, Firms

Introduction

Employees are unique resources possessing unique knowledge capabilities which are not imitable. The knowledge is transferred within the organization by individuals who possess it in order to improve organizational performance. The knowledge transfer process involves the transmission of knowledge from the initial location to where it is needed and is applied. Paulin and Suneso (2012) alluded that knowledge transfer is an exchange of knowledge between two persons where one gives knowledge and the other absorbs it. Peer to peer training enhances knowledge transfer from one individual to another thus improving their individual performance.

Employee performance is critical determinant of an organization's capacity to confer sustainable competitive advantage and is directly associated with organizational performance (Shafloot, 2012). High performance results from appropriate behaviour, especially discretionary behaviour and effective use of the required knowledge, skills and competencies (Pham, 2008). Employee performance cannot be discussed without mentioning the concept of peer to peer training which plays a critical role in improving employees' performance as a whole and this naturally translates to improved organizational performance. For effective transfer of knowledge, the knowledge transfer processes are supported by information communication technology (Blume, 2010). ICT is recognized as an important enabler for knowledge transfer processes (Alavi & Leidner, 2007). It is an important tool for transferring explicit knowledge between people in the organization as it supports communication and enables collaborative learning (Pham, 2008; Song 2010). Information communication aiding technologies help to accelerate the speed of knowledge transfer within firms (Kim & Trimmi, 2007).

Statement of the Problem

Employee performance is important in determining a firm's capacity to confer sustainable competitive advantage and high performing employees are those who improve firm's performance (Shafloot, 2012). Peer to peer training is critical to employee performance. Chiaburu and Tekleab, (2005) found that peer support is more important for training transfer and maintenance than both support from the organization and supervisor. Peer training enables individuals to improve their performance through knowledge exchange and this enhances their quality of life (Seyler et al., 1998)). Despite the value attributed to peer training on the overall firm performance, there is an increased decline of individual employee performance in public sector globally (CCGA, 2013; RSA, 2013).

Despite the Republic of Kenya investing significantly on State Corporations, they have continued to record poor performance (OECD, 2005; RoK, 2011). The State Corporations employ about 119,689 workers with an annual wage bill of over 131.2 billion but only 51% of them are self-sustaining (RoK, 2013). This declined performance is of great concern to the Government, people of Kenya and International Community as State Corporations play a fundamental role in enabling social and economic transformation. At local, regional and global levels, there are inadequate studies which have examined how the problem of employee performance can be solved through peer to peer training (Ogendo, 2014). This study, therefore, sought to fill the identified gap by examining the effect of knowledge transfer processes on employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya. ICT is an important tool in aiding and supporting knowledge transfer processes and therefore was considered in this study as a moderator of the relationship between

peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

Objective of study

The purpose of this study was to assess the effect of peer to peer training on employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

The following research hypothesis was formulated:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

Theoretical Review

The study was anchored on the theory of resource based view of the firm. The review of the theory provided a clear link between peer to peer training and employee performance in the State Corporations in Kenya.

Resource-Based View Theory

Resource-based view theory (RBV) developed by Barney (1991) has become one of the most influential and cited theories in knowledge management. It aspires to explain the internal sources of a firm's sustained competitive advantage (Anitha, 2014). Wernerfelt (1984) took on a resource perspective to analyze antecedents of products and ultimately organizational performance and believed that "resources and products are two sides of the same coin" and firms diversify based on available resources and continue to accumulate through acquisition behaviors.

The theory is based on the concept of a firm being a collection of capabilities. The firm specific resources and capabilities largely differentiate successful firms from failing ones (Prietula, 2006). However, not all firms' resources and capabilities have the potential to be the basis for competitive advantage (Seedee,

2012). The potential is realized when resources and capabilities are valuable, rare, costly to imitate, and not substitutable (Barney, 2001; Khamseh & Jolly, 2008). Firms' resources and capabilities are viewed as bundles of tangible and intangible assets. Tangible are those which can be quantified and are broadly categorized as financial, organizational, physical and technological. Intangible asset are those resources and capabilities which are qualitative and are deeply rooted in the firm's history and have accumulated with time (Ogendo, 2014). These assets are human resources, organizational reputation, innovation and creativity. Human assets are the most unique resource of any firm as they possess knowledge which belongs to them (Guyo, 2012). This knowledge becomes a source of competitive advantage to the firm as it leads to innovation and creativity. An organization which is creative and unique in doing its business always has a competitive edge and its reputation is high. Based on the resource based view, knowledge transfer processes are considered as the capabilities of the firms that are used as the basis for competitive advantage which can lead firms to superior performance. The knowledge transfer processes such as mentoring, coaching, talent development and peer to peer learning are critical in developing of new knowledge among employees. The resource based theoretical perspective highlights for a fit between the external environment in which a firm operates and its internal capabilities. In contrast to the traditional input – output model (I/O Model), resources based theory is grounded in the understanding that a firm's internal environment, in terms of resources and capabilities, is more critical to the determination of strategic action to be taken than is the external environment (Seedee, 2012). The resource based view suggests that a firm's unique resources and capabilities provide the basis for strategies to be employed to ensure competitiveness.

The strategy chosen should allow the firms to best exploit its core competencies internally relative to opportunities in the external environment. Therefore, the resource based theory is seen to be suitable to explain the research frame work in the knowledge transfer processes and the employee performance. It is the human resources who possess the tacit knowledge required for the firm to survive and this knowledge should be transferred within the firm for continuous improvement of the employees and organization as whole. Peer to peer training is anchored in this theory as it involves transfer of both explicit and tacit knowledge within organizations.

Empirical Review

Employee Performance

Employees' performance is the ability of the employees to achieve both their own goals and that of the organization (Blume, 2010). Employee performance is considered a critical determinant of an organization's capacity to confer sustainable competitive advantage and is directly associated with organizational performance. Performance is the accomplishment, execution, carrying out, working out of anything ordered or undertaken (Armstrong, 2006; Robbin, 2006). Employee performance is considered a critical determinant of an organization's capacity to confer sustainable competitive advantage (Shafloot, 2012).

Peer to Peer Training

Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) argued that support from the organization; supervisor and coworkers are considered essential for training transfer and skills maintenance. In addition, Chiaburu and Tekleab, (2005) found that the peer support is more important for training transfer and maintenance than both support from the organization and supervisor. Therefore, environmental factors are important component for effective training.

Chiaburu, Van and Hutchins (2010) argued that trainees who believe that they will not have support from either peers or supervisors for using their new skills when they return to the job may not be motivated to learn during training because they recognize that the training will not be useful for them because it will not transfer to the job. According to Kirwan and Birchall (2006) peer support on the motivation to transfer is an important relationship, as this relationship was tested on Holton's model (Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000). Peer support was found to be related to skills transfer, but not related to pre-training motivation (Facteau et al., 1995). Further, it was found that peer support predicted motivation and effective transfer of knowledge (Ruona, Leimbach, Holton & Bates; 2002). Holton (2000) found that environmental factors variables did not influence transfer and these findings are in consistence with Marcel and Streumer (2002).

However, Tracey, Tannenbaum, and Kavanagh (1995) found that supervisors' and coworkers' encouragement of learning and use of trained skills on the job may be crucial elements in the transfer environment. Thus, the results of past studies are mixed, indicating a need to further investigate the effects of peer support on transfer, pre-training motivation and transfer motivation.

Pidd (2004) measured peer support in terms of expectations and behavior and proposed the moderating role of peers support between trainees identified with workplace groups and training transfer. In addition, Seyler et al. (1998) measured peer support as "peers' appreciation for using new skills", "peers' encouragement for using new skills", "peers' expectations" and "peers' behavior" against training transfer and found that peer support influence transfer motivation and training transfer.

Clark (1993) argued that trainees who believe that they will not have support from either peers or supervisors for using their new skills when they return to the job may not be motivated to learn during training because they recognize that the training will not be useful for them because it will not transfer to the job. For the effectiveness of training, work environment or environmental factors (performance feedback, peer support, supervisor support) play an important role (Khamseh & Jolly, 2008).

Study Methodology

This study was anchored on positivism research philosophy approach. Positivism is characterized by a belief in theory before research and statistical justification of conclusions from empirically testable hypothesis, the core tenets of social science (Cooper & Schindler, 2011).

The target population for this study was 187 State Corporations (SCs) in Kenya. The unit of analysis was State Corporations while the unit of observation was HR managers or their equivalents. The respondents were selected from each of the 126 sampled State Corporations. A total of 126 HR managers or their equivalents were respondents in this study. The purpose of this research was to draw conclusions and make predictions affecting the population as a whole and therefore probability sampling was the most appropriate. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2015), a sample is a subgroup or subset of a population and by studying the sample the researcher should be able to draw conclusions that are generalizable to the whole population. Mugenda (2011) suggested the following formula for estimating sample size;

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2} \dots\dots\dots\text{equation 1}$$

Where,

n_0 is the desired sample size when target population is large, mostly a population of more than 10,000;

$Z^2 \dots$ is the standard normal deviation at the required confidence level (= 1.96) for a confidence level of 95%;

$p \dots$ is the proportion in the target population estimated to have the characteristics being measured when not sure where the middle ground is taken (=0.5).

Statistically, $q = 1-p$ (0.5)

$d \dots$ is the level of statistical significance (=0.05)

Therefore,

$$n_0 = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times 0.5}{0.05^2} = 384$$

This gave a sample size of 384 which can be adjusted when the population is less than 10,000 as indicated below;

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + n_0 / N} \dots\dots\dots\text{equation 2}$$

Where,

n is the desired sample size for a small population

n_0 is the desired population for a large population

N is the sample size

$$n = \frac{384}{1 + 384 / 187} = 126$$

Therefore, from the target population of 187 SCs, the sample size for the study was 126 and this formed the unit of analysis. The proportionate sample size of each of the categories of the SCs was as indicated below:

Purely commercial = $34/187 \times 126 = 23$

Corporations with Strategic function = $21/187 \times 126 = 14$

Executive Agencies (State Agencies) = $62/187 \times 126 = 42$

Independent Regulatory Agencies = $25/187 \times 126 = 17$

Research Institutions = $45/187 \times 126 = 30$

Table 1: Sample Size

State Corporation	Target Population	Sample size (study population)	Sample size of the Units of observation (respondents)
Purely Commercial	34	23	23
Corporations with Strategic function	21	14	14
Executive Agencies (State Agencies)	62	42	42
Independent Regulatory Agencies	25	17	17
Research Institutions (public universities, tertiary education and training institutions)	45	30	30
Total		126	126

To determine the 126 SCs to be selected from the total target population of 187 SCs, the researcher applied stratified random sampling. Using this method, the SCs were stratified according to the five (5) categories in terms of their respective functions/mandate namely; pure purely commercial, SCs with strategic functions, executive agencies, independent regulatory agencies and research institutions such as public universities, tertiary education and training institutions (RoK, 2013). From each category of SC, a sample size corresponding with the total target population was calculated as indicated and selected through simple random sampling. Simple random sampling ensured that every member of the population in a given category had an equal chance of being selected into the sample (Rukwaru, 2007). To ensure true randomness, the method of selection was through the use of random numbers. The members of the population in each category was numbered from '1' to 'N' and 'n' numbers selected in the most convenient and systematic way. The numbers selected became the sample and therefore study population.

Findings

The study sought to assess the effect of peer to peer training on employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya. To obtain opinions from the respondents, a five-point Likert scale and open ended questions was used. On the statement *Top management in my organization value peer to peer training as*, 17% of the respondents indicated very important, 60% indicated important, 16% slightly important, 6 % least important and 2% not important at all. The overall scale mean was (M=3.83) which depicted *important*. For statement *Peer to peer training in your organization is considered*, 26% of the respondents indicated very important, 51% indicated important, 14% slightly important, 7% least important and 3% not important at all. The overall scale mean on the statement was (M= 3.89) depicting *important*. The results were consistent with that of Abiodun (2009) who averred that peer to peer training systematically develops knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job.

To address the sub-construct of peer to peer training, the study sought to know the duration of peer to peer training in state corporations in Kenya. A number of the respondents (30%) indicated that

peer to peer training programs had been in place for a period of 1-5years, 28% for a period of 0-1 years, 20% for a period of 5 to 10 years and 22% for over 10 years. The findings indicated that peer to peer training programs were young concepts in the State Corporations in Kenya.

Majority of the respondents 61% agreed that the organization had a policy in place on peer to peer training, 9% were undecided and 30% disagreed with the opinion. The overall scale mean for item was 3.4 (M=3.4) depicting moderate agreement. 50% of the respondents agreed that all the employees were taken through the policy document and were aware of its contents, 15% were undecided and 35% were in disagreement. The overall scale mean on this item was 3.23 (M=3.23) indicating a moderate agreement. 62% of the respondents agreed that the policy gave motivational guidelines for peer to peer training, 8% were undecided and 30% disagreed. The mean on this item was 3.41 (M=3.41) depicting a moderate agreement. 59% were in agreement that the policy outlines a continuous peer to peer training, 11% were undecided and 30% were in disagreement. The overall scale mean on the item was 3.44 (M=3.44) indicating a moderate agreement. Generally, the items under documented procedures had an overall scale mean of 3.37 (M=3.37) depicting an overall moderate agreement.

The respondents were asked of their opinion on whether the organization had relevant competences to promote peer to peer training, 79% who constituted the majority were in agreement 7% undecided and 14% disagreed. The scale mean for the item was 3.8 (M=3.8) depicting agreement. Majority of the respondents (79%) agreed that peers were enthusiastic and willing to exchange knowledge with each other, 11% were undecided and 10% disagreed. The scale mean was 3.86 (M=3.86) indicating agreement on the item.

On whether Peer to peer training improved individual employee performance, 90% were in agreement with the opinion, 2% undecided and 8% in disagreement. The mean score on this item was 4.24 (M=4.24) depicting a strong agreement. 75% of the respondents agreed that the organization promoted and encouraged peer to peer training, 9% undecided and 16% disagreed with a scale mean of 3.79 (M=3.79) which depicts agreement. On the statement whether the organization had elaborate mechanisms in place of creating awareness of peer to peer training, 60% were in agreement, 13% undecided and 27% disagreed with a scale mean of 3.46 (M=3.46) depicting a moderate agreement.

On whether the organization had a formalized peer to peer training, 60 % were in agreement, 10% undecided and 30% disagreed with a mean score of 3.4 (M=3.4) depicting a moderate agreement with the item. The results of the findings concurred with that of Adeniyi (2005) who posited that peer training and development is a work activity that can make a very significant contribution to the overall effectiveness and profitability of an organization.

Results of Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis of the study variable was carried out to investigate the degree of relationship between them. A Pearson correlation coefficient (r) analysis was performed on independent and dependent variable. Peer to peer training was positively correlated ($r=.556$) to employee performance and the relationship was statistically significant ($p=.000<0.01$).

Regression Analysis Results

The regression results in Table 2 showed the relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya was significant [$F(1,80)=36.606$, p -value= $0.000<0.05$] with multiple $R^2 =0.314$. This implied that 31.4% of the variance in employee performance was explained by the model while

68.6% was explained by other factors. As indicated in the model, the F value of 36.606 was statistically significant ($p=0.000<0.05$) and therefore unlikely that an association of this strength could have occurred in the sample if there was no association in the overall population.

The Multiple R in the model indicated the strength of the relationship between the outcome variable and the value predicted by the model and showed

how well the model fitted the data. The value of multiple R (.560) means that the model adequately fitted the data. The path coefficient was positive and statistically significant ($\beta=.816$, $t=6.050$, $p=0.000<0.05$) as shown in Table 2. This indicated that, for one unit increase in peer to peer training, employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya increased by .816 units.

Table 2: Model Summary for regression of peer to peer training on performance

Model Summary ^b					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
1	.560 ^a	.314	.305	.73066	

a. Predictors: (Constant), Peer

b. Dependent Variable: Performance

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	19.543	1	19.543	36.606	.000 ^b
	Residual	42.709	80	.534		
	Total	62.252	81			

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Peer

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.855	.313		2.730	.008
	Peer	.816	.135	.560	6.050	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Performance

Hypothesis Testing

The specific objective of the study was to assess the effect of peer to peer training on employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

The hypothesis to test this specific objective was:

H₁: There is a significant positive relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

The model equation for the relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya is therefore

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon \dots\dots\dots \text{Equation 1}$$

Where Y is employee performance, β_0 is the Y intercept, β_3 is the gradient of the regression line X_3 is peer to peer training and ϵ is the error term
When substituted, equation 3 became;

$$Y=0.855+0.816X_3$$

The path coefficient was positive and statistically significant ($\beta=.816$, $t=6.050$, $p=0.000<0.05$) as shown in Table 2. This indicated that, for one unit increase in peer to peer training, employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya increased by .816 units. The t-test and 'sig'. value in the coefficient table showed that the variable was making statistically significant contribution to the predictive power of the model and therefore peer to peer training was making a significant contribution since the t-statistic is statistically significant ($p<.000$). The study therefore accepted H_1 and concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya.

The finding was in agreement with that of Abiodun (2009) in a study on peer training and performance which concluded that peer to peer training systematically develops knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employees to perform adequately on a given task or job. Adeniyi (2005) in a similar study on peer retention observed that peer training and development is a work activity that can make a very significant contribution to the overall effectiveness and profitability of an organization.

Discussion

The study sought to assess the effect of peer to peer training on employee performance in SCs in Kenya. Peer to peer training was found to have a positive significant relationship with employee performance. The alternative hypothesis "*there is a significant positive relationship between peer to peer training and employee performance in State Corporations in Kenya*" was accepted as it was well

supported by the results of the statistical tests. Peer to peer training had a statistically significant effect on employee performance. Peer training explained the variance in employee performance adequately. Out of the various factors considered under the construct and specifically the statement "*peer to peer training improves individual employee performance*", there was a strong agreement on the importance attached to peer to peer training. The other factors had a mean score of above average. The objective was well supported through the hypothesis testing which yielded positive significant results.

The results were inconsistent with other findings from other relevant studies. Peer to peer exchange of knowledge was found to be related to skills transfer (Facteau, 1995). Peer support was found to predict motivation to transfer of knowledge (Ruona, Leimbach, Holton & Bates, 2002). Adeniyi (2005) observed that peer to peer training improves performance. This was further collaborated by Abiodun (2009) who averred that peer to peer training develops knowledge, skills and attitudes required by employee to perform adequately in a given task.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, it was concluded that peer to peer training had a positive significant effect on employee performance. It was concluded that peer to peer training explained to a certain extent the variation in employee performance meaning that it was an important tool in improving employee performance. This was in consistent with Adeniyi (2005) who concluded that peer training considerably improved performance. However, peer to peer training was found to be a young concept in SCs which may not be well embraced despite the role it plays in improving employee performance.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings and conclusions of the study:

The study established that peer training was an important in employee performance and therefore SCs should direct resources into it to enhance individual employee performance

Since the result showed that the relationship between peer training played a critical role in employee performance in SCs in Kenya, creating an enabling organizational work environment for good employee relations would go to a great extent in improving performance. HR managers of the State Corporations and other employee relations firms need to foster the formation of an intensive social network among employees on the need for adaptability of peer training peer to peer training. It is critical for the government and even the private sector organizations to invest extensively in employee peer to peer training.

Areas for further research

Future research could test it in other settings and for instance could employ the same model to address the problem of employee performance in

the private sector organizations as they also heavily contribute to the economy of Kenya.

Other studies indicated that environment (external and internal) in which an entity operates in significantly affects knowledge transfer process (Ogendo, 2014). Each entity has its own specific operating environment which affects its general operations and this does not exclude SCs in Kenya. Kenya differs from the developed countries being a transition economy with different culture and technological challenges. Thus, this research lacks comparative data to examine whether business/industry environment affects knowledge transfer. Future research can address this gap by comparing how knowledge transfer processes occur within entities operating in different environment and their overall effect on individual performance.

Lastly, the study adopted mixed methods research guided by cross-sectional survey. The methods produced positive significant results. Other techniques can be used to test the same research such as structural equation modelling among others. The results obtained from the application of other techniques could be analysed and compared.

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