

Influence of Training and Development Practices on Organizational Commitment: A Case of Mumias Sugar Company Limited

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Abstract: Influence of human resource management practices on organizational commitment has been a widely researched area for years. Unfortunately, most of the studies in Human Resource Management practices and organizational commitment have been conducted in the West, with a smaller number of studies carried out in developing countries like Kenya specifically on context of Mumias Sugar Company Limited. As a result this study sought to determine the influence of training and development practices on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya: A case of Mumias Sugar Company Limited. The specific objectives were; to determine the influence of training need assessment on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya and to determine the influence of formal systems of induction on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The target population of the study was 169 respondents and consisted of two strata namely; 19 top level management and 150 unionisable employees. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the sample population and the sample size was 118 respondents. Questionnaires were the main data collection tool. Data analysis was done using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The study found out that training and development practices are positively correlated with affective commitment. The study concluded that training need assessment helps increase affective commitment among employees and that formal systems of induction provided to new employees help them adapt to new environment quickly and make them comfortable which increase their commitment. The researcher recommends to managers to consider training and development practices as influencers of organizational affective commitment.

Keywords: Training and Development Practices, Organizational Commitment, Training Needs Assessment Formal System of Induction.

I. INTRODUCTION

The business world is changing at an ever-increasing pace due to globalization of markets, the revolution in information and communication technologies, increasing importance of financial markets which have intensified competition in today's business environment (Kuruvilla and Ranganathan, 2010). As a result, the ability of organizations to compete in the global marketplace is more tied to the quality of their human resources. Many organizations rely on the expertise of their employees to gain competitive advantage in global economies (Reiche, 2007). Their survival is, therefore, dependent upon a loyal and committed workforce. Research by Becker *et al.* (2001) argue that, because organizations consider human capital one of the most salient organizational assets in establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage, many are investing considerable resources to support employee and organizational development activities such as training and development practices among other activities.

Human Resource Development has played a significant role in the economic development worldwide. Globally it has been acknowledged that education and training are major tools of empowering and transforming employees to become useful members of the organization. A recent study of small to mid-sized manufacturing firms found a significant positive

relationship between company performance, as measured by profitability and quality management training (Ryan et al., 2009). In France Labour productivity and educational level rose to become among the highest in the world in 1960's and 1970's. This expansion led to an upsurge of interest in the management training and development which itself has been encouraged by a law that requires companies to devote 1.5% of the value of their payroll to training or forfeit the money to the government. In Spain, the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science pays subsidies to any firm that provides accredited training to their workers under the age of 20. The ministry also finances a variety of special training programmes for unemployed workers (Cole 2002). These studies focused on developed economy which prompted the researcher to determine the influence of training and development practices on organizational commitment of sugar firms in Kenya a developing economy.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

High- involvement HRM practices significantly enhance organizational commitment (Kehoe and Wright, 2010). Similarly, if these HRM practices are poor, they lead to counterproductive behaviours such as employee demotivation or poor performance, affecting organizational efficiency (Lacity *et al.*, 2008). Mumias Sugar Company Limited of late has experienced employee performance related issues among them, decreased levels of employee satisfaction and lack of employee commitment which on overall analysis have reduced the company's profitability due to poor performance, (MSC, 2014). Therefore, this study sought to find out if there was any influence of training and development practices on organizational commitment context of Mumias Sugar Company Limited, Kakamega County, Kenya.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study was to determine the influence of training and development practices on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya, a case of Mumias Sugar Company Limited.

A. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- i. To determine the influence of Training Need Assessment on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya.
- ii. To determine the influence of Formal Systems of Induction on organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya.

B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

- i. How does Training Need Assessment influence organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya?
- ii. How does Formal Systems of Induction influence organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya?

IV. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

This study hopes to generate new knowledge that will widen horizons of existing knowledge concerning the strategic importance of HRM practices for superior and sustainable organizational commitment in sugar firms in Kenya. Particularly the study findings will go a long way in assisting Mumias Sugar Company Limited Management in making rational decisions that are related to training and development practices. It is envisaged that the findings of the study will spur other researchers to conduct further research in human resource management practice.

V. LITERATURE REVIEW

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES:

Training is defined as the organized activity aimed at imparting information or instructions to get better the staff performance or attain a required level of skill or knowledge to help him or her (Peteraf, 1993). Development is defined as those activities that lead to the attainment of fresh skills or knowledge for the sole aim of personal growth (Peteraf, 1993). Aswathappa (2008) defines training and development as an effort to improve current of future employee's skills, abilities and knowledge. Study by Papalexandris, *et al.* (2011) suggested that there is a significant impact of training and development on organizational performance. Subramaniam *et al.* (2011) mentioned that training and development could influence organizational performance because employees' skills, knowledge and abilities can be enhanced and up to date. In addition, Dimba (2010) and Al-Qudah *et al.* (2014) found that, there are influences and relationship between training and development on organizational performance.

Training and development is considered to be the most common Human Resource practice (Tzafirir, 2006). Thang and Buyens (2008) postulated that, training and development leads to superior knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, and behaviour of employees that eventually enhance organizational performance. According to Storey and Sisson (1993), training is deemed to be representative of an employer's commitment to their workforce and not simply a means of arming employees with the skills they need to perform their jobs. It may also be perceived to reflect an overall organizational strategy that involves adding increased value, as opposed to reducing costs. Bassi and Buren (1999) postulate that many of the world's most successful companies are aware that the provisions they make for training and development activities lie at the heart of their ability to attract and retain the best employees for their organization. It is therefore imperative that employers provide an opportunity for their workforce to learn (Van Gennip, 2010). Proactive development schemes will not only improve the capabilities of their team but will also motivate staff and subsequently engender a more loyal and committed employee.

TRAINING NEED ASSESSMENT:

Training and needs assessment helps an organization to identify the gap existing between present performance and the desired performance (Clark, 1998). Indicators of gaps include lack of knowledge, bad attitude which can be filled through training, counselling, mentoring, coaching and re-deployment. These involve organizational, tasks and individual analysis where gaps in performance or anticipated gap due to changing environmental conditions are identified. Organizational analysis looks at a given organization and its objectives and the kind of problems that the organization may experience or is experiencing so as to plan for remedial action. Among the areas looked at include the strategic objectives of the organization, resource utilization within the organization, scanning of the organization environment to identify threats and opportunities and analyze organization climate to identify whether the behavior, feelings, opinions, belief and attitudes of employees are positive or negative (Salemi, 1997). Task analysis looks at the duties and responsibilities of a job together with the skills, knowledge, abilities and expected behavior to give a given standard of performance. It looks at tasks to be performed, contents of those tasks, knowledge, skills and attitude required standards of performance and methods of performing tasks. Individual analysis looks at how well employees are performing a given job by identifying their current level of knowledge, skills and attitudes in relation to their jobs and the organization's strategic plan. It looks at the duties and responsibilities performed by each employee, efficiency, skills to be developed or knowledge to be acquired by the employee (Salemi 1997).

FORMAL SYSTEMS OF INDUCTION:

Induction is the process of receiving and welcoming employees when they first join an organization and giving them the basic information they need to settle down quickly and happily and start work. Induction aims to smooth the preliminary stages when everything is likely to be strange and unfamiliar to the starter, to establish quickly a favourable attitude to the organization in the mind of the new employee so that he or she is more likely to stay, to obtain effective output from the new employee in the shortest possible time and to reduce the likelihood of the employee leaving quickly (Fowler, 1996). Induction reduces the cost and inconveniences of early leavers, increases commitment, accelerate progress up the learning curve, increases socialization and clarify the psychological contract (Fowler, 1996).

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE REVIEW:

Investment in training measures and the implementation of development schemes are becoming increasingly acknowledged as vital elements of HRM (Oakland and Oakland, 2001). Studies across a wide range of industries and sectors have all found a positive correlation between investment in training and employee commitment (Bassi and Buren, 1999). For example, a study completed by Marchington and Wilkinson (2008) focus on employee commitment among hospital administrators, nurses, service workers, and clerical employees, as well as on scientists and engineers from a research laboratory; both confirm that employees were more committed to their jobs and the achievement of the objectives of the organization when they felt that the company cared about their training and development needs. In summary, appropriate training contributes positively to employee retention because it makes employees feel recognized for their strengths, and it creates possibilities to develop their qualities (Kyndt, *et al.*, 2009).

VI. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey design. The survey design helped in ensuring relevant data was obtained from sampled population which could later be used to make generalizations on the target population. The target population

was, 1689 as per the 2014 annual report and financial statement (MSC, 2014). Sample size was 169 employees drawn from two different cohorts of 19 top management and 150 Unionisable employees.

Sample size formula was calculated according to Krejcie and Morgan, (1970) formula indicated below.

$$S = \frac{X^2 NP (1-P)}{d^2 (N-1) + X^2 P (1-P)}$$

Where

S = Required sample size

X² = The table value of Chi-Square for 1 degree of freedom at the desired confidence level = .05 = 3.8416

N= The population size

P= The population proportion (assumed to be 0.50 since this would provide the maximum sample size)

d= The degree of accuracy expressed as a portion (.05) = 1.96

$$\begin{aligned} S &= \frac{(1.96)^2 * 169 * 0.5 (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2 * (169-1) + (1.96)^2 * 0.5 (1-0.5)} \\ &= \frac{3.8416 * 169 * 0.5 * 0.5}{0.0025 * 168 + 3.8416 * 0.5 * 0.5} \\ &= \frac{162.3076}{0.42 + 0.9604} \\ &= 117.58 \\ &= 118 \end{aligned}$$

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND INSTRUMENTS:

The study used both stratified and simple random sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was adopted since the target population involved individuals of different cohorts of top management and unionisable employees in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Questionnaires were the main data collection instruments. Both structured and unstructured questionnaires were used to get uniform responses from respondents.

PILOT TEST:

Cooper and Schindler (2008) assert that a researcher should do a pilot test of data gathering tools before proceeding with the research. The reliability of the instruments was established using the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient tests. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficients for the questionnaires of employees was ($\alpha = 0.839$; $df = 9$), indicating high level of reliability. The researcher also sought voluntary information on improvement of the research instruments from colleagues and the two supervisors at JKUAT to determine validity of the instruments.

DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS:

Data analysis is an examination of what has been collected and making deduction and inferences (Kothari, 2009). Before processing the responses, the completed questionnaires were edited for completeness and consistency. Data analysis was done by grouping data from questionnaires into various categories before being coded and analyzed. The researcher collected both quantitative and qualitative data. The descriptive statistical tools helped the researcher to describe the data and determine the extent to be used. The coded data was then fed into the IBM Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (IBM SPSS) Version 20 which generated the values of the coefficients in frequencies and percentages. Pearson Correlation Coefficient Analysis was done to determine the relationship between the variables.

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study targeted 118 respondents but only 110 questionnaires were filled and returned hence the response rate stood at 93.22% which was considered as excellent to judge the study as having been successful (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003). Demographic results showed that there were more male 76 (69.1%) than female 34 (30.9%) and that more male were

educated than female. In addition education level determines the position of the respondents in the company in that those with high level education were in management positions.

INFLUENCE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES ON ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT:

In order to meet this objective, the practices were categorized into two perspectives of training need assessment and formal systems of induction practiced by Mumias Sugar Company. In each perspective the respondents were asked to indicate how they felt and the results are shown in TABLE I.

TABLE I: TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

STATEMENTS	SD f(%)	D f(%)	NS f(%)	A f(%)	SA f(%)
Satisfied with policies put in place	3(2.73)	13(11.82)	31(28.18)	38(34.55)	25(22.73)
Policies and procedures are clear and easily understood	9(8.18)	15(13.64)	25(22.73)	29(26.36)	32(29.09)
Training needs are identified through a Performance Appraisal System	16(14.54)	20(18.18)	27(24.55)	26(23.64)	21(19.09)
Opportunities are provided for employees to discuss T & D needs with their employer	35(31.82)	22(20)	27(24.55)	19(17.27)	7(6.36)
Fair and just selection criteria to attend training	30(27.27)	27(24.55)	24(21.82)	13(11.82)	16(14.55)
Formal systems of induction for new employees provided	9(8.18)	16(14.55)	16(14.55)	33(30)	36(32.73)
Training opportunities are provided to improve skills and abilities	8(7.27)	17(15.45)	21(19.09)	28(25.45)	36(32.73)

N=110; Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Not Sure (NS=3), Agree (A=4), Strongly Agreed (SA=5)

The findings show that majority of the respondents 38(34.55%) agreed that they are satisfied with policies put in on training and development practices with only 3(2.73%) strongly disagreeing. In addition, 32(29.09%) strongly agreed that these policies are clear and easily understood with 9(8.18%) strongly disagreeing on the same. Majority of the respondents 27(24.55%) were not aware whether training needs are identified through a performance appraisal system. Majority of respondents strongly disagreed 35(31.82%) that opportunities are provided for them to discuss training and development needs with their employer. This implies that respondents were selected for seminars workshops and training without carrying out needs assessment for individual employees to ascertain their weaknesses and strengths. Majority of the respondents strongly disagreed 30(27.27) that selection criteria to attend training is fair and just. Majority of the respondents answered in affirmative 36(32.73%) that formal systems of induction for new employees is provided and that training opportunities are provided to help them improve on skills and abilities.

TABLE II: PEARSON CORRELATION ANALYSIS BETWEEN TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

	Training & Development Practices	Affective Commitment
Training & Development Practices	1	.250(**)
Pearson Correlation	.	.009
Sig. (2-tailed)	.250(**)	1
Affective Commitment	.009	.
Pearson Correlation	.	.
Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Similarly, there was a significant positive correlation between the training and development practices on employees affective commitment in the Company ($r=0.25$; $df=1$; $p=0.009$) as shown in TABLE II. This implies

that if human resource identifies the training needs of the employees through performance appraisal system, it motivates employees and makes them committed to the Company without looking for a job elsewhere.

AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT:

The study further sought to understand the affective dimensions of organizational commitment of the respondents in Mumias Sugar Company. It was measured using a revised version of the six items by Meyer *et al.* (1993) and the respondent’s opinion differed on the extent to which they were committed as shown in TABLE III.

TABLE III: AFFECTIVE COMMITMENT

STATEMENTS	SD f(%)	D f(%)	NS f(%)	A f(%)	SA f(%)
Not feeling like part of the family at the Company	47(42.73)	24(21.82)	16(14.55)	9(8.18)	14(12.73)
Not feeling emotionally attached to the Company	45(40.91)	28(25.45)	20(18.18)	13(11.82)	4(3.64)
Not feeling strong sense of belonging to the Company	32(29.09)	37(33.64)	23(20.19)	13(11.82)	5(4.55)
Willing to spend the rest of the career with the Company	8(7.27)	25(22.73)	25(22.73)	27(24.55)	25(22.73)
Discussing the Company with people outside it	16(14.55)	28(25.45)	15(13.64)	37(33.64)	14(12.73)
Feeling part of the Companies problems	7(6.36)	10(9.09)	25(22.73)	40(36.36)	28(25.45)

N=110; Strongly Disagree (SD=1), Disagree (D=2), Not Sure (NS=3), Agree (A=4), Strongly Agreed (SA=5)

The findings reveal that majority of respondents answered in affirmative 47(42.73%), 45(40.91%) and 32(29.09%) that they feel like part of the family, emotionally attached and a sense of belonging to the Company respectively. Majority also agreed 27(24.55%) that they are willing to spend the rest of the career with the Company and 37(33.64%) agreed that they enjoy discussing the Company with people outside it. Moreover, majority 40(36.36%) of them agreed that they feel part of the Companies problems. From the findings it implies that majority of the respondents feel affectively committed to the Company since all the measures were answered in affirmative.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH FINDINGS:

The findings indicated that there are formal systems of induction provided for the new employees. The respondents are satisfied with the policies put in place and they understand them. Training opportunities to extend the range of skills and abilities are provided to the respondents which are identified through a performance appraisal system. However, the findings reveals that the respondents are not offered an opportunity to discuss training and development needs and as a result, they felt that they were selected for trainings, seminars and workshops without carrying out training needs assessment for individual employees to ascertain their weaknesses and strengths. Similarly, the findings indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between training and development practices on affective commitment of employees at the Company ($r=0.25$; $df=1$; $p<0.009$) as shown in TABLE II.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that training and development has a significant impact on affective commitment. This is seen where the formal systems of induction provided to new employees help them adapt to new environment quickly and make them comfortable which increase their commitment. In addition, training need assessment helps respondents to ascertain their weaknesses and strengths which will lead to respondents being selected for trainings, seminars and workshops in the areas they require training. Correlation analysis conducted in this study showed a strong positive relationship between training and development practices on employees’ affective commitment ($r=0.25$; $df=1$; $p<0.009$). This concludes that if employees

are regularly provided with the opportunity to attend training and development workshops, they will recognize the company's commitment to improve their skills and will be more likely to remain in the environment where they have a continual opportunity to learn. These findings are both well supported in the related literature (Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008) Therefore, training and development practices persuaded by the organization help to increase the affective commitment among employees.

IX. RECOMMENDATION

The management should give employees an opportunity to discuss their training and development needs with their employer through performance appraisal system. This will help ascertain the specific areas that employees require training which motivates employees and make them committed to the Company without looking for a job elsewhere. In addition, Equity and parity in gender representation should be encouraged when selecting employees for training and development at the Company.

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