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Employee Training and Job Satisfaction in Western Uganda: Empirical Evidence from Mbarara University of Science and Technology

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of employee training on employee job satisfaction in Western Uganda with a focus on Mbarara University of science and technology (MUST).

Methodology: A mixed methods approach and cross-sectional design were used. The study population were composed of academic and non-academic staff members of MUST. Researchers were guided by Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table to come up with a sample size of 230, and selected the sample using Simple random sampling technique. Self-administered Questionnaire and interview guide helped in collection of data; then after collected data were processed and analysed using SPSS version 20.

Findings: Study results show a significant and moderate positive relationship between on-job training, off-job training and job satisfaction ($r=.381, p<.01$) and ($r=.308, p<.01$) respectively for on-job training and off-job training.

Unique contribution to theory, practice and policy: The study makes a unique contribution to human resource training and development literature by providing context-based evidence on the positive relationship that exist between employee training and job satisfaction in public institutions in western Uganda. Practitioners in these institutions are anticipated to gain new insights on the vital role of employee training towards elevating satisfaction levels of staff. The study recommended that public higher learning institutions in western Uganda re-orient their strategic focus to training and development needs of their staff if they are to achieve their set targets. This is justified because this study has found out that such practices help them keep their staff morale boosted which apparently affects the way they render services to their clients.

Keywords: *Employee Training, Job satisfaction, High Learning Institution, Western Uganda.*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There is no one defined measure to ascertain how an organisation attends to its staff's training needs. Different training programs are implemented by different institutions year in, year out which help in showing individual institutional commitment to attending to their staff capacity building needs. Such efforts are measured also by the kind of on-job and off-job training decisions that do not remain in files after approval but, happen to be implemented as planned. Strategic human resource management literature portray magnificent knowledge and skills set that such staff-focused institutions benefits from consequent to increases in individual labour output (Raja & Sal, 2016). Job satisfaction on the other hand refers to the psychological state of mind that enables an employee to happily contribute his or her efforts towards attainment of organisational goals (Chandra, 2013). It is the positive perception that employees have towards assigned tasks, especially originating from the employee's compulsion of individual contribution to the job and the job outcomes in form of benefits. According to Chandan and Harish (2017), job satisfaction exhibits in high labour productivity, low employee turnover and improved organisational performance.

It's a common practice today where institutions earmark certain budget percentages for staff training functions, for purposes of elevating their employee knowledge and skill levels. Quite a number of studies have dedicated their efforts towards establishing the link between the knowledge and skills acquired by employees during trainings and their job satisfaction (Martin, Kolomitro & Lam, 2013). Training programs have been reported by Kanapathipillai and Azami (2020) to generate positive work attitudes characteristic of good job satisfaction since the employees easily execute the work assignments considering the capability acquired through trainings. Mudor and Tooksoon (2011) add to the same voice alleging that once staff have necessary skills, they render a better personalised service experience since they can patiently engage more with clients. The study observes that employee training whether conducted at the work site or away from work site improve the knowledge and skills set of an employee improving his or her productivity (Bakotić, 2016). This shows that despite the differences in the definition of trainings conducted on the job and those conducted off-work, the benefiting employee gains work related knowledge and skills is quite essential for keeping him or her motivated and using appropriate work methods (Vasanthi & Basariya 2019),

Industrial psychology scholars have tended to reveal that certain training methods off-work like classroom training are fit for permitting acquisition of "knowledge" outcomes, yet trainings carried out at work premises are better for "skill" outcomes (Pastore & Pompili, 2019). Other developments in the training debate tend to find trainings conducted off-job largely associated with employee job satisfaction (Culibrk et al., 2018). According to Culibrk et al (2018), complete absence of this function would disrupt employees' productivity mood. The broader assumption is that if employees are not given training, it increases the probability of engaging in negative work behaviour (Maria, Jan de Jonge & Taris, 2013). Even when organizational behaviour scholars still hold some pessimism with regard to determining how off job training practically generate feelings of job satisfaction, Chen & Cooper, (2014), depict that how staff act and react on the job and organizational performance outcomes, are interrelated in a complex relationship acknowledging however that success or enhancement in organizational performance is influenced by a number of factors. Relatedly, Gielen (2018) enlightens readers on a number of

factors that link altogether employee training, employee morale, motivation and general performance behaviour of an individual at work.

Despite the difficulty in quantification of job satisfaction, Culibrk et al., (2018) and Mróz and Kaleta (2016) agree that low output, early departure from office, absenteeism and late coming outward manifestations from an unhappy fellow at work. Indeed, monograph by Adams (1965) on what drives a person in his or her life, alludes to expectations aspect. It is assumed that employees give in their labour and therefore the employer should satisfy all the needs which at times becomes a source of contention. There is always that tendency to compare inputs and outputs on the side of the employee that end up directing his or her behaviour in a certain angle. The hierarchy of needs theory by Maslow (1943) is an attempt to remind institutions to provide for such needs. That means in the needs network perspective, specific needs that largely alter the behaviour of employees need to be attended to in a holistic way including attending to needs for recognition, achievement, advancement, responsibility, and growth anticipated to be key influencers of job satisfaction (Ajayi, 2019; Victor & Hoole, 2017). This is important because failure to attend to job satisfaction-related needs, breed unproductive work behaviour Culibrk et al., (2018); despite disagreement by Fassoulis and Alexopoulos, (2015), who argue that happy workers are no necessarily more productive across time.

Even when there are divergent views on the correlation between job satisfaction and individual employee training (Elif, 2019; Maria et al., 2013). There is a position to believe that there are both internal and external factors that influence the way an employee behaves which human resource practitioners ought to know and this paper partly alludes to same insight. It's the same view emphasised by Timsal, Awais and Shoaib (2016) who push for due consideration of employees as the most valuable company assets and therefore the imperative for attending to their training needs since benefits of the same are enormous to both employees and organisations (Saraf, 2017). The disagreements on the kind of the association between employee training concept and job satisfaction, where some find a positive association yet others bias training in causing desired work behaviour shows inconclusiveness which partly justified this study.

1.1 Problem statement

It is always in the interests of consumers of both, services of public and private institutions to receive better service delivery. However, this is not attainable if the level of public sector employees' job satisfaction is still low (Bwanika, 2011). This has persisted despite the introduction of multiple public sector reforms aimed at improving productivity of all public servants. The study problem draws from empirical observations which consistently reveal low performance of public servants vis-à-vis their private sector counterparts. In a study by Makmot (2012) on employee job satisfaction between private and public sector, 33.9% of employees in public sector were satisfied with their jobs compared to 59.8% in private sector. Why the public sector employees are exorbitantly unsatisfied with their current jobs remain unexplained. Yet, private sector employees in Uganda were found to offer 6.6 man hours per day compared to 4.9 hours by public sector employees revealing low man hours in public sector showing a low job satisfaction among public servants. It has been reported that at MUST, job satisfaction has not been good exemplified by not meeting work targets related to publication, not offering needed man-hour per day, resentment to work beyond normal hours, and funds misappropriation

(MUST, Annual Budget Performance Report, 2017/18; MUST, Three Years Strategic Plan, 2017/18-2019-20).

1.2 Purpose of the study

The study examined the relationship between training of employee and job satisfaction in Western Uganda with a focus on Mbarara University of science and technology.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework

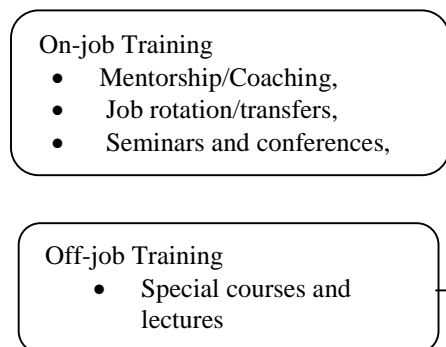
2.1.1 Discrepancy theory

Job satisfaction theories emphasise individual needs and satisfaction factors that cause to act and behave in a certain way. Locke (1969) as quoted in Jiang, Klein and Saunders (2011) developed the discrepancy theory and suggested that a person's job satisfaction comes from what they feel is important rather than the fulfilment or fulfilment of their needs. Discrepancy theory suggests that dissatisfaction will occur when a person receives less than what they want. This theory focuses on factors in the person who reinforce, direct, support, and stop their behaviour. The theory advances that for purposes of working towards minimising such feelings of displeasure among staff, their needs that they regard most important have to be thoroughly attended to (Jiang, Klein & Saunders, 2011). It is anticipated that once training programs designed match well with training needs of staff, certain undesired behaviours like early departures from office, late coming, and absenteeism which are outside manifestations of job dissatisfaction cease (Mróz & Kaleta, 2016).

2.2 Conceptual framework

A conceptual framework showing how employee training influences job satisfaction.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING



JOB SATISFACTION

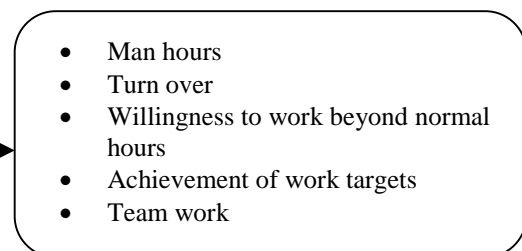


Figure: 1 Conceptual framework

2.3 Empirical review

From the discrepancy theory perspective, and other empirical literature, researchers start to see that a certain relationship exists between employee training and job satisfaction. However, mixed results in the same studies are reported. When Nguyen and Duong (2020) for example investigated job satisfaction and training in Vietnam, positive effects were reported. An attempt to study same concepts in Serbia by Culibrk et al., (2018) also found out a positive and

significant association. Similar studies include one by Farooq and Aslam (2011), Hanif (2013) and Amos and Natamba (2015) who found training conducted off-work affecting positively job satisfaction of employees. They are driven by the notion that way-from-work trainings impact tremendously the skills and knowledge of employees solving their skills deficiency problem. Additionally, Vasanthi et al., (2019) while studying job satisfaction and on-job training in a manufacturing industry in Chennai report positive effects. They find training conducted on-site quite beneficial since they use workplace tools, equipment, machines that are already existing which saves the organisation from incurring extra costs. Similar results are reported by Watson et al., (2018) and Timsal, Awais and Shoaib (2016) found on-job training as an important source of capabilities that influence employee's feelings towards his or her work thus job satisfaction.

On the contrary however, an exploratory study conducted in Pakistan by Ahmad (2010) reported negative effects. Employee training was found not to directly affect an employee's job satisfaction levels. Also, Pastore and Pompili (2019) and Chen and Cooper (2014) express reservation when it comes to linking training off site with knowledge outcomes and job satisfaction. They argue that their relationship if at all exists could be confined to specific localities or even difficult to determine. Other scholars tend to link trainings conducted off-site to mere verbal comprehension which they base to refute their effects on employee's behaviour in short run (Card, Kluwe & Weber, 2010). Besides, Halawi and Haydar (2018) observe no benefits from on-job- training. Different studies as indicated previously have results that are contradictory. This is an indication of the need for continued discussion which this study aimed to achieve by investigating employee training and job satisfaction in a public institution located in Western Uganda.

This study in line with the above literature review hypothesised as follows:

H1: *On-job Employee Training is positively associated with job satisfaction of employees*

H2: *Off-job Employee Training is positively associated with job satisfaction of employees*

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mixed methods approach and cross-sectional design were adopted. The study population was composed of both teaching staff and non-teaching employees at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. Using simple random sampling and purposive, researchers were able to select 230 respondents, a sample size that was determined using Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample determination table. The study used structured questionnaire and interview guide to collect data (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013). Mbarara University of science and technology was selected partly because it is one of the leading public higher learning institutions in western Uganda. Just like other academic institutions offering various degrees, the university has enabled Uganda to join global knowledge community and gaining a ground in other knowledge economies besides becoming a source of competent manpower (Valavanidis & Vlachogianni, 2013).

Prior studies on employee training and job satisfaction guided the operationalization (Culibrk et al., 2018; Watson et al., 2018; Steptoe-Warren, 2013). Efforts were made by researchers to pre-test the questionnaire and interview guide using ten academic and industry experts. On the basis of the fact that a five point likert scale guarantees better data distribution, it was used in this study and were able to measure respondents' perceptions where 5 represented strongly agree, and 1 represented strongly disagree (Leung & Lee, 2011). Confidentiality of respondents was

ensured by using dummy names instead of real names in reporting qualitative voices. The study confirmed the instrument validity and reliability through Cronbach's Alpha values and content validity index as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha values and CVI confirming instrument validity and reliability.

Variable	CVI	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items	No of items deleted	Remainder
On Job Training Methods	.782	.743	31	4	27
Off Job Training Methods	.801	.723	08	1	07
Job Satisfaction	.724	.821	14	3	11

Source: Primary Data (2022)

The study estimated the relationships using Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007).

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographics

Results from table 2 indicate that a big number (80 %) from the 230 studied samples were males whose age ranged from 18 to 27(41.7%) which shows that data used were given by respondents who were not young. Education wise respondents studied had obtained their Master Degrees (50.4%), and again a big majority (60%) were married, and their job tenure were far above five years (47.4), which shows good work experience. Again, the majority (88.3) were senior managers.

Table 2: Respondent Demographics

Variable	%
Respondent age	41.7
28-37	25.7
38-47	18.3
48-57	14.3
Respondents' Gender	
Male	80.0
Female	20.0
Respondent's marital status	
Married	60.0
Single	39.1
Widowed	0.90

Education level of respondents

PhD	10.4
Masters	50.4
Bachelors	39.2

Length of service of respondents

Below 1 year	2.2
1-2 years	10.8
3-5 years	39.6
Over 5 years	47.4

Position held by the respondent

Top Management	11.7
Senior managers	88.3

4.2 Regression results for on job training and job satisfaction

Table 3: Regression model summary for on job training and job satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.381 ^a	.145	.141	.16792

a. Predictors: (Constant), On the job training

Source: Primary Data (2022)

Study results as indicated in table 3 shows that on job training had a positive and significant association with job satisfaction ($r = 0.381$, $p < 0.01$) confirming the study hypothesis H1. It implies that training conducted on-site positively influence employees' mood reminding managers to always allocate a big budget for it annually. This finding is reinforced by one of the qualitative respondents "..... The training received here at work has been instrumental in enabling me to achieve my work targets [.....] above all I feel happier for their training support since me and my supervisors have good relations [.....] I owe all this from knowledge and skills acquired in many workshops and seminars that I attend here at work" (A female non-teaching staff respondent, Case 6).

4.3 Regression analysis for off-job training and job satisfaction

Table 4: Regression model summary for off job training and job satisfaction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.308 ^a	.095	.091	.17276

a. Predictors: (Constant), Off the job training

Source: Primary Data (2022)

As indicated in table 4, study findings show that off job training had a positive and a significant relationship with job satisfaction ($r = 0.308$, $p < 0.01$), which helped in confirming hypothesis H2. This model results imply that a unit change in off-job training program implementation yields positive effect on job satisfaction including individual employee's willingness to stay longer, to work more hours, achieve sets targets and increase team spirit.

4.4 Discussion of findings

It was confirmed in this study that on-job just like off job trainings affect positively job satisfaction of employees. Researchers established that various employee training methods were used including: mentorship, job rotation, seminars and conferences, and transfers for the on job training programs and lecturers and special courses for the off job training programs. Despite this however respondents had varied views when it came to giving their opinions of which training methods impacted on their work mood or job satisfaction. For example; the view of a male respondent case number 1 reflects this, *"I find trainings off-work very much helpful [.....] I am at least a way from work and family stress, it helps me to gain more in terms of new knowledge and skills than when I attend trainings organised at work. I find these trainings making tremendous changes in my ability to deliver thus feel better and happy"*.

The views held by a female non-teaching staff respondent, Case 6; were supportive to on job training: Thus; *"The trainings received here at work have been instrumental in enabling me achieve my work targets [.....] above all I feel happier for their training support since me and my supervisors have good relations[.....]I owe all this from knowledge and skills acquired in many workshops and seminars that I attend here at work"*

From the quantitative and qualitative findings, it is more apparent that on-job and off job training are key for employees to maintain a balance of feeling well while executing their duties. This all is in agreement with various scholarly works, including Sri Dhurgah et al., (2018) who acknowledge such trainings enriches the staff with specific know how, which solves a hitherto performance deficiency and increases his or her confidence at work. Related views are shared by Sajitha, (2015), who associate employee training with gaining right attitudes towards work life. Moreover, African countries are seen develop only if they pay close attention to their various capacity building needs (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018). Considering the volatility that characterise most business environment today, training which raises knowledge and skills levels of staff, prepares the institution to overcome competition challenges, thanks to its capable staff who are innovative. The knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behaviour are such tools for confronting forces of change (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

5.0 CONCLUSION AND MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The study findings lead researchers to conclude that continued expenditure on employee training programs for purposes of elevating job satisfaction levels of staff is justified for public institutions. This feeling was found to positively affect their willingness to stay long, work more hours, achieve set targets and increase among them team spirit. As public higher learning institutions attend to their employees' training needs, they become more knowledgeable, skilled, competent, and are able to face demands of the changing world with ease.

The study findings extract the need for managers to appreciate the vital role that trainings conducted on-site and those conducted off-site have for their employees in terms of raising their

knowledge and skills. Human resource personnel in Western Uganda's public institutions are called upon to have a formal focus on not only short term but also long-term skills acquisition if they are to minimise possibilities for low performance emanating from knowledge and skills deficiency. In depth interviews revealed that supervisors are not formally trained on how to appraise their subordinates. On the basis of this observation, the study challenges top administration to reconsider staff performance appraisal approaches that have direct influence on job satisfaction and performance.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Researchers recommend that public institutions in Western Uganda should consider on-job training's significance towards enabling their employees' acquisition of job-related skills that enable them deliver better. Trainings conducted away from work environment have also been found to positively impact on employee's job satisfaction levels. From this finding, the study recommends also that higher learning institutions orient their employee knowledge and skills management focus to trainings conducted away from work. Lastly, they should allocate sufficient budget to both trainings conducted at work and those conducted away from work setting since they have been found to yield results in terms of enabling employees to attain pertinent work skills which enable them to happily perform assigned tasks.

6.1 LIMITATIONS AND AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study used employee training as the only predictor of job satisfaction using cross-sectional data. Moreover, the study centred on one institution in Mbarara City. Future research may use other predictors of job satisfaction and study on-job and off-job training trends to see whether the effects would be different on job satisfaction in a non-academic institution in a different country

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