

Relationship between on the Job Training and Employee's Performance in Courier Companies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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Abstract

This research was conducted with an intention of finding out the relationship between on_the_job training and employee performance in DHL and FedEx courier companies that operate in Dar es Salaam Tanzania. The objectives which were of the research were to examine the existing on_the_job training programs in the courier companies in Dar es Salaam and to assess employee's performance in courier companies in Dar es Salaam.

Correlation survey methodology was used and questionnaires were used as research instrument. The sample population of 150 employees was taken and the respondents were randomly chosen and samples from each courier organization were proportionately taken. 50% of the total number of employees in each company was taken. Field findings showed that different programs of on_the_job training are conducted in DHL and FedEx. Those training programs are mainly conducted according to the general need of the company or due to the normal changes that do take place in the company. The level of performance is measured against well set standards and generally the Key Performance Indicators are used. At the same time it was found out that performance to a big extent depends on the training employees received. It may be, with certainty, stated that there is a big relationship between on_the_job training and employee performance in DHL and FedEx. On_the_job training programs really positively influence on employee performance. It is recommended that governments should invest more in practical education through Vocational Educational Training Authority schools (VETA). Students who complete their studies in those schools will not need to spend much resource on further training the moment they join the companies. Employers should also try the best way possible to train their employees so that they perform.

Introduction

According to Neo (2000) in East Africa, specifically in Kenya the East African Breweries Limited (EABL) conducts personal performance management assessments during the year, resulting in agreed career development plans for each manager.

For many, this involves training courses held within the group companies to develop particular skills. During the year, EABL delivers over 6,500 days of training – representing an investment by the group of around Kenyan Shillings 24 million the equivalent of USD 300,000. Strong attention is given to providing opportunities for their people to develop their careers within the group. During the year around 90% of all vacancies in EABL companies were filled by internal applicants.

One significant function of Human Resource Management to the effective use of human resources is training and development. Almost everyone now recognizes the significance of training on the success and growth of organizations. Employees are however a very crucial and expensive resource to every organization. There are significant changes today in terms of the value of the employee. Along with these changing values trends at the workplace that have significant impact on employees' knowledge and skills. Training is therefore necessary to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitude of employees. It will also make it easier for employees to acquire further knowledge based on the foundation gained from the training and further effect changes in other co-workers.

A significant relationship was found between the employees training and their resultant performance in accomplishing different tasks. It was found that those employees who have taken trainings were more capable in performing different task & vice versa. Training has direct relationship with the employees' performance. Basically training is a formal & systematic modification of behavior through learning which occurs as result of education, instruction, development and planned experience (Michael Armstrong, 2000). Because of the practical implications of training, it is important to have training that is effective. Studies have proven that more costly but effective training can save money that is wasted on cheap but inefficient training (Ginsberg, 1997). Therefore, training has acquired a strategic value for hotels since service quality depends on employee customer care effectiveness Connie Zheng (2009).

Thomas (1997) argues that employee training involves teaching employees skills that can help them become more efficient and productive workers. Most careers include some type of on-the-job training, and a trained work force has benefits for employees and employers. Training is often conducted to familiarize new employees with the roles and responsibilities of their positions as well as company policies. Many companies offer continuing training opportunities for employees, focusing on skills that can improve efficiency. Employees who are well-trained often have higher motivation and morale because they feel that the company has invested in their ability and development. This also results in lower turnover rates.

Armstrong (2000) contends that trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of the expectations and can achieve them together smoothly. Trained employees are also more confident in their performance and decision-making skills. In addition, employees who receive regular training are more likely to accept change and come up with new ideas. Employees who learn new skills through training make good candidates for promotions because they have shown their ability to learn, retain and use information. Reliable, skilled employees can also be empowered to train other employees, the fact that reduces pressure for the management team.

Review of Related Literature

When evaluating the performance of employees, it is very important to have a check list that will be used consistently. The technique for measuring the performance of employees may differ from every company. The information thus far reveals a seeming consensus in the belief that there is a positive relationship between training and employee performance. Thus training impacts positively on employee's performance by generating benefits to both the employees and the organization they work for through the development of skills, knowledge, abilities, competencies and behavior (Evans, 1999).

On the job training plays a significant role in the development of organizations, enhancing performance as well as increasing productivity, and ultimately putting companies in the best position to face competition and stay at the top. This means that, there is a significant relationship between organizations that train their employees and organizations that do not (Evans, 1999). Every organization that is committed to generating profits for its owners (shareholders) and providing quality service for its customers and beneficiaries must invest in the on the job training for its employees.

According to Robert Simpson Managing director of Legna Construction Limited, a construction company located in the central region of Ghana which contributes substantially to the development of the country through its roads construction and employment of the country's human resource, training of the company's human resource contributed to the company gaining substantial increase in revenue from 2005 – 2009. (40% increase from 2001 – 2004). He attributed this to the skills and knowledge the employees gained through the training that helped them be more efficient thus reduced cost on the job thereby gaining more revenue. Evans and Lindsay (1999) also stated that, Motorola & Texas Instruments provide at least 40 hours of training to every employee quarterly and this has significantly impacted on the employee performance.

Methodology

Research Population

The study was conducted in Dar es Salaam City in DHL and FedEx. Therefore, the target population of the study involved employees of these two courier companies whose total number of employees is 300. These companies deliver courier services in a very stiff competition at a national and global level.

Table 1 Population of the study

Company	Number of employees	Percentage %
DHL	174	58
FedEx	126	42
Total	300	100

Source: from the courier companies, 2011

Sample Size

In this research the two courier companies were chosen as the sample. DHL (T) LTD and FedEx International were chosen for this study as they are among the biggest and best companies in the world and for the case of Dar es Salaam they are the courier companies that have the biggest market share. It was hoped that the findings would give a general picture of what is happening in courier companies in Dar es Salaam. Kothari (1990) defines sampling as the process of selecting or drawing a sample of individuals from the total population to be studied; while a sample is that part of the universe population which is selected for the purpose of investigating and making generalization about the population characteristics.

Table 2 population of the study

Company	Number of employees	Percentage	Sample
DHL	174	50	87
FedEx	126	50	63
Total	300	100	150

Source: from the courier companies 2011

Sampling Procedure

For the sake of this research two main methods of sampling techniques will be employed. These are proportionate random and simple random sampling. This is done in order to get relatively equal representation from the selected companies.

Proportionate sample of 50% of employees from each organization was taken. This was meant to give relative equal chances to employees of both companies so that final findings could reflect to real situation prevailing in the two companies in Dar es Salaam.

This random sampling refers to choosing the 50% from each company. This is a subset of individuals (a sample) which was chosen from a larger set a population.

Each individual was chosen randomly and entirely by chance, such that each individual had the same probability of being chosen at any stage during the sampling process. Therefore in this case each company and each employee in those companies had equal chances or probability of being chosen.

Data Analysis

Data analysis is a process that involves editing, coding, classifying and tabulating the collected data. In this study the researcher used both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques. Qualitative data, particularly responses from interviews, and questionnaire were analyzed following the phenomenographic approach. This approach essentially involves a thorough and repeated reading of all the written responses of each respondent, underlining the main ideas and then extracting the core meaning.

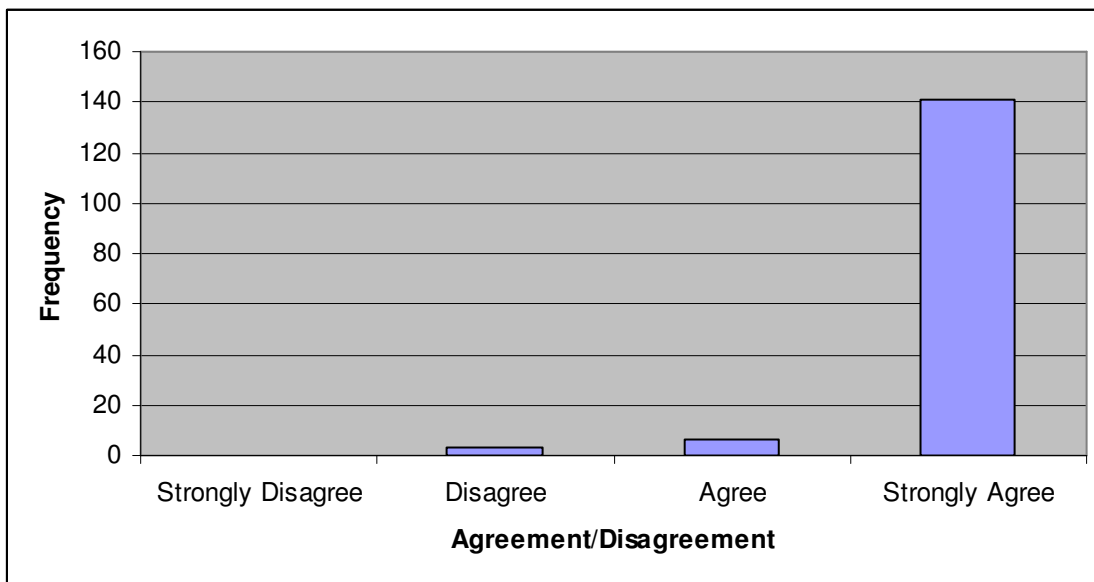
The data collected was coded, entered in the computer and cleaned. The data was then processed, analyzed and presented using frequency tables and pie charts. Microsoft Excel was used to draw graphs, tables, cross-tabulation and charts. The qualitative information was then analyzed and interpreted.

Findings

At this stage researcher wanted to find out from respondents whether they see any relationship between the types of on the job training and their eventual good or improved performance. A few questions were posed for that purpose and the answers given helped in judging whether one really leads to another.

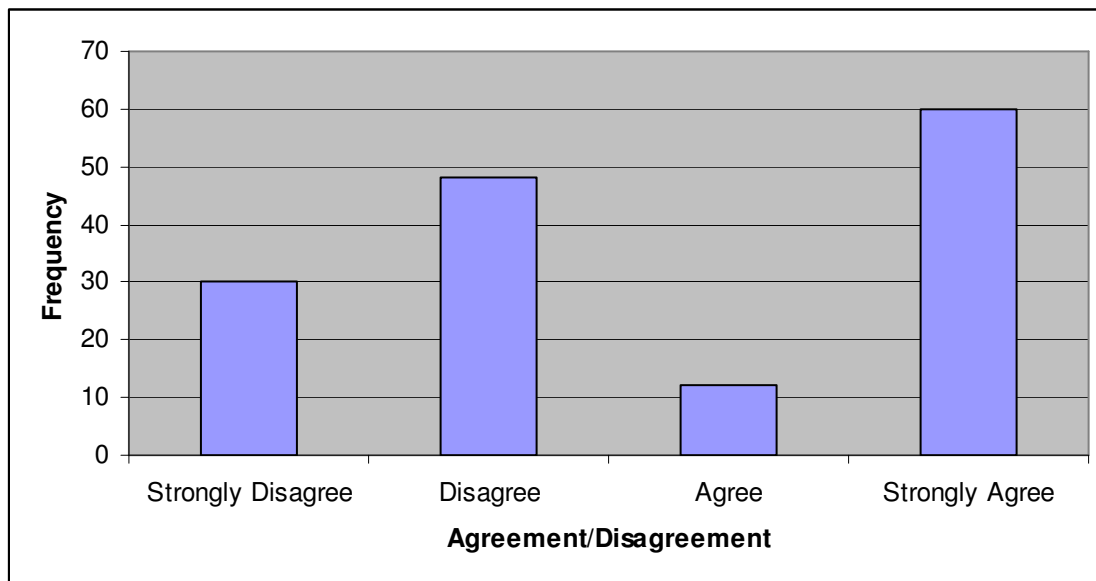
To the question whether there is a strong relationship between on the job training employees received and their consequential good performance it was clearly shown that workers consider the types of training they received to have lead to good performance at their jobs. A convincing 94% or a total of 141 respondents who filled questionnaire strongly agreed while 6 of them making 4% partially agreed and only 3 representing 2% partially disagreed while no one at all strongly disagreed.

Figure: 1 Influence of on the job Training on Employee Performance at DHL and FedEx in Dar es Salaam



Source: Field findings 2011.

Although the prior question already showed how much on the job training had helped in improving employee’s performance, researcher still wanted to find out whether employees considered On the job Training to be the only reason for their improved performance. Only 40% considered on the job training to be the only reason for their improved performance 8% partially agreed while the majority disagreed. Therefore, altogether 52% disagreed and out of those 32% partially disagreed and 20% strongly disagreed.

Figures: 2 Possibility of on the job Training being the only reason for performance

Source: Field findings 2011.

From the literature review much of the literature showed that a good and well planned On the Job Training leads to a good performance. Evans (1999) states that in companies that train their employees there is a significant improvement in their performance. Black (1996) in his study in America on the impact of human capital investment such as On the Job Training returns and productivity of employees increased at least by 16%. Most respondents strongly agreed that On the job Training has helped them improve their performance. The same has been indicated by respondents. Field findings show that many respondents as shown above strongly agree that On the Job Training leads to a good performance. They, however, clearly indicated that it is not the only factor that leads to a good employee performance. Those other factors that lead to performance are explained below.

Other factors leading to improved performance

As seen above it was less than 50% of the respondents that considered on the job training to be the only reason for an ameliorated employee performance. They were further asked whether there are other factors that lead to improved employee performance and 96% indicated that they strongly agreed that there are other factors and the remaining 4% indicated a partial agreement. No one disagreed.

Some factors were then suggested and given to employees to get their opinion. The given factors included working environment, employee skills and knowledge, motivation and rewards, communication flow and organizational culture.

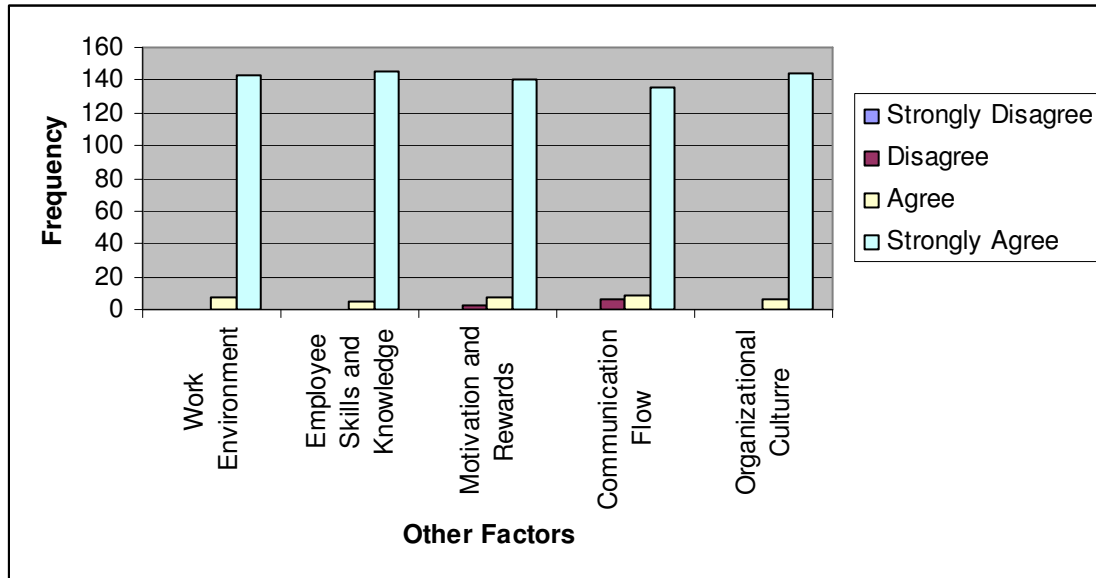
Working environment also contributes to employee performance. This has been proved by respondent employees themselves who altogether by 100% agreed that work environment is a factor, other than on the job training, contributes to performance. 143 respondents equivalent to 95.33% strongly agreed and 4.66% partially agreed.

Employee skills and knowledge to a big extent is also a factor that leads to employee performance. While answering this question it was observed that 145 people, accounting for 96.66% strongly agreed while 5 of them accounting for 3.33% partially agreed. Closely linked to the above mentioned is the factor of motivation and rewards to which 94% of respondents agreed, 4.66% partially agreed and only 1.33% partially disagreed while no one strongly disagreed to the suggested factor.

Communication flow from management down to operation level is important in any organization and researcher wanted to find out the opinion of the respondents on this. It was found out that on the question whether communication flow, apart from on the job training, also contributes to performance 136 people equaling 90.66% strongly agreed, 8 persons summing up to 5.33% partially agreed and only 2 respondents or 1.33% partially disagreed while 0% strongly disagreed.

Every organization has its own culture and employees of that particular organization struggle to work in accordance with the culture of their organization. 96% of respondents strongly agreed that organizational culture also contributes to their performance and 4% partially agreed while no one or 0% of the respondents expressed any contradiction.

Figure 4 Other Factors leading to good Performance



Source: Field findings 2011.

Given the above reaction and statistics from respondents it is observed that performance is brought up by a lot of factors among which on the job training can be included.

This data may be related with the data from the question asked to respondents whether they consider on the job training to be the only reason for their improved performance the total of 60 of them strongly agreed, 12 partially agreed while on the other hand 48 partially disagreed and 30 strongly disagreed. This shows that training is not the only factor that leads to employee’s improved performance but rather it contributes a lot to employee’s performance. It has been found that training is set according to objectives and it is conducted in such a way that those objectives are achieved and that change in terms of performance is seen in those who received training. It is through training that employees get different tactics on how to finish their work in time and meet deadlines, manage time well. It is through training that employees get different tactics on how to finish their work in time and meet deadlines, manage time well and acquire more skills that will enable them do their work better. Once an individual attains this they are also considered to be performing well.

All in all going through this research gives a clear picture of the influence of on the job training on one’s performance. To a big extent, a good on the job training leads to good performance. DHL and FedEx do conduct such training and no wonder they are among the best service industries in the country that do their jobs very professionally. Job satisfaction and good relationship among workers always serve as a tool for a good performance as well. It may be added that the findings affirm the theory of social learning for the employees through training and are able to pay attention to what is being taught, they retain it so as not to forget and finally they perform by reproducing it.

Conclusions

It may conclusively be stated that on the job training to a big extent leads to an improved employee’s performance but still it is not the sole factor that leads to good performance rather it is a combination of factors and the rest of the factors are those that were suggested. So the link, influence or effect of on the job training on employee performance is very big.

However, there are other factors that lead to performance which, among others, include working environment, employee skills and knowledge, motivation and rewards, communication flow and organizational management. All these factors may directly or indirectly contribute to performance; however, the importance of on the job training on performance should not be neglected. It is hard to attain a high level of performance without training.

Recommendations

Receiving on the job training is closely related to improved performance of the trained employees but it is important to know that employee's performance is affected by many other factors such as mental or psychological condition, organizational culture of the particular place of work, interaction among employees and so forth. It is recommended that these organizations hire counselors or psychologists to assist workers who have other difficulties in life to remain focused in their jobs despite the challenges they are facing out of the office. Having psychologists at the place of work would also be a catalyst for improved performance because workers who have social problems be it at the place of work or out of it have a chance to talk about them and receive appropriate assistance.

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