

Training Measures Used to Improve Employees' Ability to Cope with Challenges Posed by New Advances in Technologies in North Rift Region Kenya

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Abstract

Telkom Kenya is a communications industry that has experienced great challenges due to unprecedented advancement of technology that include the emergence of cellular and wireless telephones that has not only posed great challenges to its traditional cable technology has also made it to suffer huge losses and impending privatization. The study therefore sought to investigate the relationship between the measures used by Telkom Kenya, North Rift Region to improve its employees' job performance and their ability to embrace and/or cope with new technologies during periods of change. The following Null hypotheses were tested for significance at 0.05 level: (i) there are no measures adopted by Telkom Kenya to improve the employees' ability to cope with the demands of new technologies, and (ii) there is no significant relationship between the measures used to improve the employees' ability to cope with the demands of new technologies and adequate human resources adopted to meet Telkom's expansion into new programmes. Data collected from respondents using Telkom Kenya Employees Questionnaire (TKEQ) were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of the computer package Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and presented in percentages and Chi-square (X^2). The findings of the study showed that several training measures were used by Telkom Kenya to improve the employees' performance and ability to cope with new technologies. The study concludes that the employees felt that the forms of training seemed relevant in improving their performance of current duties but failed to prepare them to cope with the new technological changes. In view of these findings, the study recommended that organizations such as Telkom Kenya should prioritize employee training programmes tailored to prepare employees cope with new technological changes and put modern resources to benefit both the organization and its employees.

Keywords: Training, new information technology, communications industry, technological changes, performance

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Introduction

Over the past few decades, the communications industry has experienced unprecedented advancement of new technologies that include the cellular and wireless telephones which have posed great challenges and rendered traditional cable technology almost obsolete. Unfortunately, Telkom Kenya which had long enjoyed monopoly has borne the brunt of these changes because it had not envisaged the advent of mobile phones and the wireless technologies which cannot compete with traditional cable technology. Due to the huge losses it made losses, it was faced with an impending privatization that could have been avoided had it engaged the relevant measures to prepare and equip its personnel with adequate training and development to stand up to the new technological challenges (Author, 2014).

Training and development programs are necessary for organizations to improve the quality of work of employees' performance at all levels. This is particularly true in a world of fast changing technology, changing values, globalization, and competitive operating environment. Moreover, training and development of employees is not an option but it is both an intrinsic part of the practice of Human Resource Management and an investment in people (Keep, 1992). According to Armstrong (2003) training is the formal and systematic modification of behaviour through learning, which occurs as a result of education, instruction, and development and planned experience. Therefore training of employees is critical because it is a planned process to modify attitudes, knowledge or skills, and behaviour through learning experience to achieve their effective performance in a range of activities necessary to develop manpower needs of the organization.

The Problem

When training programs are properly implemented, they tend to assist the organization employees to render better services to their stakeholders thus reducing or eliminating waste especially on scarce resources.

Moreover, in the world of fast changing technology, values and globalization, training programs are necessary to safeguard staff from obsolescence. However, this would require high investment in this vital resource to develop in them a positive attitude towards training programs by fostering and cultivating a learning culture among the work force (Schein, 1992).

Although training and development may not be a panacea of all organization's problems, training programs play a critical role to ensure a multi-skilled, highly motivated workforce that is greatly empowered and productive. This is even truer in the case of the current changing economic set-up of fierce competition where companies must rely on the strategy of beating their rivals with new products, new designs and new methods of selling; teamwork and streamlined production techniques by employees. The need to understand the measures engaged by organizations to improve their employees' performance cannot be underestimated because companies that choose to compete on the strength of their innovation will have to train their employees on creativity and lateral thinking (Pattanayak, 2003). The central feature of measures used by Telkom Kenya North Rift region to address job complexities caused by ever-changing market with stiff competitiveness due to new products and new and/or more advanced technologies for telecommunication services in Kenya is worth investigating. Cole (1996) asserts that complex jobs will make demands not only in terms of specialist knowledge but also on a real understanding of the basic principles and the underlying concepts of the job performance or the work involved.

Perhaps the loss of business could have been avoided had Telkom Kenya not relied only on its monopoly of voice and data communications at the expense of making or adapting to the change wave in telecommunications business. Normally change management focuses on people and is about ensuring that it is thoroughly, smoothly and lastingly implemented in an organization. While it is important to know what that means exactly in a situation by digging down further into the specific change management objectives, adapting and coping with the new changes that emerge as a result of new technologies requires a well trained human resource capable to cope with the demands of the emergent changes. The question that arises is: What measures were taken by Telkom Kenya North Rift region take to prepare their employees to cope with the demands of change and the competitiveness in the market? It is against this backdrop that the present study was carried out.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the measures used by Telkom Kenya North Rift Region to improve its employees' job performance and their ability to cope and embrace change in the face of technological changes and market competition.

Objectives of the Study

1. To establish the measures adopted by Telkom Kenya North Rift region to improve employees' performance and ability to cope with challenges posed by new advances in technologies.
2. To find out whether there is any relationship between the measures used by Telkom Kenya North Rift region to improve employees' performance and their ability to cope with challenges posed by new advances in technologies.

Theoretical Framework

The study reported in this paper investigated the role of employee training in enhancing job performance during the periods of technological and organizational change. The study was based on the Human Resource Management theory as outlined by Decenzo and Robins (1989). As stipulated by Decenzo and Robins, this theory states that the development of skills, attitudes and knowledge of employees in an organization through training and development results in increased performance and achievement of other objectives of the organization. This therefore is a strong argument for forward looking organizations to train their employees not only to improve performance but to also build their capacities so that the organization can meet most, if not all, its future skill requirements.

According to Force Field theory and Human Resource Management theory, the changes that have faced Telkom Kenya are unavoidable and to enhance performance of employees, the mechanism to tackle the said changes is usually through training of employees. For it is through training of employees that an organization will be able to maintain or achieve higher levels of performance and advancement. Regular and continuous training gives employees opportunity for growth and productivity within the organization.

While this is the situation, little is known whether Telkom Kenya engages training to improve employees' performance and especially the kind of training that would help them cope with emergent technological changes. The organization was forced to retire a large portion of its employees because of the stiff competition that made it to incur great losses because of the change of customer base. Most customers abandoned the use of landline telephone for mobile phones rendering Telkom Kenya despite enjoying the monopoly to lose not only customer base but lots of money due to such an exodus.

It could be true that Telkom Kenya gave training to their employees but there is no data to indicate the impact of such training to enhance the performance of the employees nor did it help them to cope with such technological changes. Nevertheless, this study is therefore an effort to fill the knowledge gap.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey research design to collect data from employees of Telkom Kenya, North Rift Region. The study sought answers on the challenges brought about by new technological changes in their operating environment. The researcher chose this design because of its unique features befitting this study. For instance Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) asserts that apart from just describing, descriptive survey design can be used for explaining or exploring the existing status of two or more variables under scrutiny. In this way this study was able to explore the implications of technological and organizational change (independent variable) and role of employee training on their performance (dependent variable) in Telkom Kenya. This research design was deemed relevant to the study because according to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a survey research is probably the best method available to social scientists and other educators who are interested in collecting original data for the purpose of describing a population that is too large to observe directly.

Population

The target population for the study was all the 1,800 Telkom Kenya Employees working in North Rift region. The study population included those working in Customer Care, Marketing, Accounts, and Technical Departments.

Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 335 respondents was selected from four Telkom Kenya North Rift region departments using the stratified random sampling procedure. To ensure the inclusion of all employees in respective departments, respondents were selected according to their job titles. This criterion for stratification was used to select the Marketing officers, Accountants, Sales representatives, and Customer care representatives.

While 40 respondents were initially selected from each department giving a total number of 360 participants that were administered the questionnaire, only 335 participants returned the questionnaires duly filled and hence represented the final sample of the study. The total number of respondents that participated in the study is represented by the matrix below.

Table 1: Strata Sampling Matrix

| Department | Number(N) |
|-------------------|------------------|
| Sales | 86 |
| Marketing | 81 |
| Accountant | 84 |
| Customer | 84 |
| Total | 335 |

This matrix data selected 86 respondents from the sales stratum, 81 from the marketing stratum which included 8 regional marketing officers, 41 marketing officers and 32 assistant marketing officers, 84 accountants in the accounting department stratum, and finally 84 from customer care department stratum.

Data Collection

The data collection instrument used was a questionnaire administered to 360 employees working in Sales, Marketing, Accounting, and Customer care departments. The questionnaire was used because of the relative ease and cost effectiveness (in terms of time and money) with which it was constructed and administered. A questionnaire would also allow respondents enough time to think about answers for questions which require a lot of reflection.

The validity and reliability of the instrument was determined prior to its administration. The instrument was given to a group of five experts from the School of Human Resources to vet on the suitability of the items to give the necessary data. It was then administered to a group of 20 employees who did not participate in the actual study. The data collected for instrument validation was analysed using the Cronbach alpha formula yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.77 which is considered acceptable for research purposes (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

Data Analysis Procedure

The data gathered from the questionnaire instrument were validated, and coded. Data analysis was performed using Chi-square, modes, and percentages with the help of SPSS computer package. The Chi-square formula was used to determine whether there was any statistically significant relationship among the variables. Percentages were used to explain the standard proportions while the Modes were used to determine the items which attracted the most responses. Descriptive data was presented using tables and pie charts accompanied by their relevant description and explanation. The inferential statistics were presented in form of Chi-square (X^2) values which were determined at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

This section presents results of data collected from 335 respondents who are employees of Telkom Kenya North Rift Region. The study had targeted a sample population of 360 but only 335 questionnaires were returned duly filled. This represents a response rate of 93%, which is a strong signification that most of the respondents who received the questionnaire were highly cooperative. The data collected was coded and analysed using the SPSS and the results are presented in form of tables, bar graphs and pie chart. The frequencies, descriptive and chi-square(X^2) statistics test was used to evaluate the variables under the study. The X^2 a non-parametric inferential statistic was used to determine whether or not the sample proportion matched the theoretical values. A significant X^2 test indicates that the data varied from the expected values, whereas a test that is not significant indicates that the data are consistent with the expected values. In this study, a significance compliance level of 0.05 was used to test the hypotheses posed.

Organizational Measures Used by Telkom Kenya to Improve Employees' job Performance in the North Rift Region

While training and development cannot be seen as a panacea to all organization's problems, its role is nonetheless critical in ensuring the growth of employees within the organization. One of the main objectives of this study was to determine the role training plays in enhancing growth in the organization and meeting its future HR needs.

Decenzo and Robins (1989) states that developing the skills, attitudes and knowledge of employees of an organization through training and development results in increased performance and achievement of other objectives of the organization. This argument calls for a look at the measures that an organization takes to train their employees not only to improve their performance but to also build their capacities of organization growth to meet most, if not all, its future skill requirements.

To understand the measures the organization take to ensure growth of its employees within the organization, a Null hypothesis was put forth to test if there is any significant relationship between training and growth in organization. Data collected using a questionnaire designed was analyzed and is presented in the sections that follow.

The Forms of job Training Given to Employees

There is a correlation between training programs given by Telkom Kenya North Rift Region to its employees and the organization's effort in building the growth of employees and their future manpower requirements. This is because training programs when properly implemented do assist the organization to offer better services to their customers and thereby reduce or eliminate waste especially on scarce resources. As such, it is important to understand if the forms of job training offered to help employees grow within the organization and to meet their future HR needs and work demands.

The findings of the study drawn from the data gathered indicate that the forms of training attended by the employees were mostly on job training as summarized in Table 2 and Figure 1.

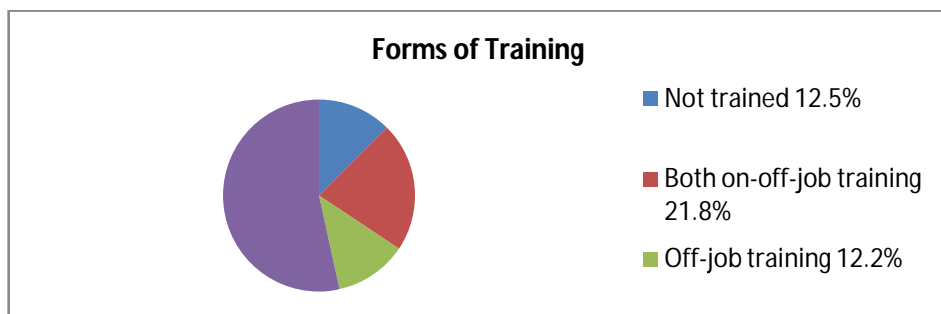


Figure 1: Form of Training Given by Organization

It is clear from the findings that those who attended on the job training comprised of 53.4% while those who attended both on the job and off the job training consisted of 21.8%. Incidentally, a similar number of those who have not been trained and those undertaking off job training comprising of 12% each. The data in Table 2 gives further confirmation of the preferred mode of training adopted by Telkom Kenya.

**Table 2 Form of Training Given to Employees to Enhance Performance
(Percentages in Brackets)**

| Form of training | Frequency | Cum. Percent | X ² value | df | Asymp. Sig |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|----|------------|
| On-the-job training | 179(53.4) | 53.4 | 152.3 | | 0.000 |
| Off-the-job training | 41(12.2) | 65.7 | | | |
| Both on-and-off job | 73(21.8) | 87.5 | | | |
| Not trained | 42(12.5) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

The findings above indicate that Telkom Kenya preferred the on-the-job training method which gave their employees an opportunity to learn by doing while working as well over the off-the-job one which requires classroom activities. This confirms the finding observed earlier that most employees in Telkom Kenya are holders of certificates which may have been acquired in secondary education or through on-the-job trainings.

It seems the organisation employed more workers with low qualifications and trained them through on-the-job training as most diploma and degree programmes can only be done through off-the-job training method which requires classroom activities.

The chi-square statistics calculated (152.3) shows that the forms of training attended by respondents were statistically significantly different because the Chi-square value ($X^2=152.3$, $p = 0.000$) is far below the 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis suggesting that training of Telkom Kenya North Rift region employees is not a part of the measures adopted to improve their performance and ability to cope with the demands of new technologies is rejected because there is sufficient evidence of several forms of training attended by Telkom Kenya employees.

Attendance of job Trainings Offered by the Organisation

Generally, attendance to forms of training is an indication of some of the measures that an organisation may take in its effort to boost growth of employees within the organization. The respondents were asked to indicate if they have attended any form of training (e.g. seminars, workshops, conferences or formal training) sponsored by their organization. The data summarized in Table 3 below showed that most of the employees working with Telkom Kenya North Rift Region said they have undergone job training in form of seminars, workshops, conferences or formal trainings. However, we must realise that mere attendance at workshops, seminars, etc. alone without indication of specifics may not provide direction towards productivity and growth in an organisation.

Table 3 Attendance to Job Training (Percentages in Brackets)

| Response | Frequency | Cum. Percent | χ^2 value | df | Asymp. Sig |
|----------|-----------|--------------|----------------|----|------------|
| Yes | 293(87.5) | 87.5 | 188.1 | | 0.000 |
| No | 42(12.5) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

A perusal of the results (Table 3) indicate that a very high number (87.5%) of the employees said they have received job training compared to a very low number (12.5%) of those saying they have not received any form of job training.

This finding is supported by a Chi-square statistic performed to determine if the job training attendance was statistically significant.

The data indicates that for the attendance of training by respondents a statistically significant difference was found between those who have attended forms of job training and those who have not had any form of training. In other words the calculated Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 188.1$, $p = 0.000$) found is lower than the 0.05 significance level. Hence, the hypothesis proposing that job training of Telkom Kenya North Rift region employees is not a part of the measures adopted to improve their performance and ability to cope with the demands of new technologies is rejected because there enough evidence showing that an overwhelming number of employees at Telkom Kenya North Rift region have indeed attended job trainings.

Sponsorship of the Job Trainings given to Respondents

In understanding the measures the organization take as part of their effort to strengthen employees' growth in the organization, assistance given to employees to attend the training is necessary.



Figure 2: Training Sponsored by the Organization

The results in Figure 2 showed that the job trainings attended by Telkom Kenya North Rift Region employees were mainly sponsored by the organization. The findings in Table 4 portrayed that 88% of the trainings given were sponsored by the organization as compared to a very low number (12%) not sponsored by the organization.

Table 4 Form of Training Sponsored by the Organization (Percentages in Brackets)

| Response | Frequency | Cum. Percent | X ² value | df | Asymp. Sig |
|----------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|----|------------|
| Yes | 295(88.1) | 88.1 | 194.1 | | 0.000 |
| No | 40(11.9) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

When the Chi-square statistic test was calculated for the sponsorship of the attendance to training by respondents a statistically significant difference was found in favour of the organisation sponsoring the training of almost all their employees ($X^2 = 188.1$, $p = 0.000$). This is a strong implication that training is indeed part of Telkom Kenya simply because the organisation sponsors almost all the trainings that their employees have attended.

It is clear that training is an integral part of the measures adopted to improve their performance and ability to cope with the demands of new technologies because of its commitment to sponsor the job trainings attended by their employees.

Reasons for not being given the job Training to Some Respondents

Another finding discovered in this study was that there are some employees who were not been given any job trainings because their duties did not require it but were very few. For instance, 3.9% said the duties they perform did not require any training, 5.1% said in as much as they felt they needed training, they were not selected for training. But a very negligent number (2.7%) indicated that there was lack of funds. This is a strong indication that Telkom Kenya invest well in the training of their employees. But whether job training as a form of training was sufficient to enable Telkom Kenya employees to compete in the voice telephone market is another matter worth investigating in the future.

Table 5 Reasons for not given job Training (Percentages in Brackets)

| Reason | Frequency | Cum. Percent | X ² value | df | Asymp. Sig |
|----------------------|-----------|--------------|----------------------|----|------------|
| Duties don't require | 13(3.9) | 3.9 | 980.21 | 4 | 0.000 |
| Lack of funds | 6(1.8) | 5.7 | | | |
| Not selected | 17(5.1) | 10.7 | | | |
| Other | 3(0.9) | 11.6 | | | |
| None | 296(88.4) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

The Chi-square statistics test performed (980.21) on the reasons why employees were not trained and none response was significantly different since the hypothesized value found ($X^2 = 980.21$, $p = 0.000$) is lower at the 0.05 significance level. From the foregoing, there is a clear indication that Telkom Kenya North Rift Region lays great emphasis on the training of their employees. There is a clear indication that a majority of its employees had no reasons as compared to those who gave reasons to show that training is part of the measures that Telkom Kenya uses to improve their human resource. This is in line with Keep (1992) who has pointed out that the role that training plays in the development of employees is not just an option but it should be both an intrinsic part of the practice of HRM and a measure of investment in its people.

The respondents also concurred that the job trainings offered were both relevant to their current duties and adequate to enable them perform their jobs well.

Training Programs to Enhance Employee's Job Performance and Ability to Embrace and Cope with Emergent New Technology Changes

There is a wide agreement that an organization must remain competitive and relevant to their customers' needs by valuing their human asset. To succeed in doing this, an organization should be willing to invest highly in this vital resource by developing a positive attitude towards training programs, fostering and cultivating a learning culture among the work force.

Looking at the findings from Telkom Kenya North Rift region, the organization has laid great emphasis on the availability job training programs to help enhance employees' ability to embrace and cope with change posed by emergent new and/or advanced technology. From the foregoing, there is no indication of specific courses or trainings that would give Telkom a competitive edge. A mere statement that some training were given is necessary but not sufficient in this regard.

Job Training Priority areas given During Training

According to Pattanayak (2003), the current changing economic set-up and fierce competition has made companies to rely on the strategy of beating their rivals with new products, new designs, and new methods of selling etc. This would require companies to train their workers to develop a mindset culture for quality without which the whole effort will fail. But companies must prioritize areas in which to train their employees to enable the embrace and understand organizational change and cope with emerging new technologies.

A look at the findings from respondents who participated in this study summarized in Table 6 below show different but interesting revelations. For instance, 56.5% of the respondents agreed that the trainings were to increase professionalism as compared to 46.9 of those who responded no. Similarly, 46.9% of the respondents said the trainings were to increase their customer care service (47%) as compared to 53.1% who said no.

Ironically, only 3.9% admitted that the trainings were to help them cope with organizational change as compared to a high number (96.1%) who denied. A small number (8.7%) concurred that the trainings were on cost reduction with regards to departmental law and technological change as compared to 91.3% saying the contrary.

The data further revealed that a meager 15.2% agreed that the training prepared them to deal with organizational plans and goals compared to 84.8% who did not think so and responded no. Also, a smaller number (5.4%) of respondents concurred that the trainings were to help them deal with issues of competition for market share while 94.6% indicated the opposite case.

A similarly smaller number (4.5%) of employees who participated in the study agreed that the trainings had customer preference as one of the priority areas as compared to 95.5% who disagreed and said no.

Only 10.1% of the respondents said yes to the fact that the trainings prioritized change in technology as compared to 89.9% of them who felt they did not. Interestingly, a significantly low number (2.4%) of the respondents agreed that the trainings prepared them on issues about product and service obsolescence as compared to 97.6% of them who said the contrary.

Table 6: Areas Prioritized During Job Training Programs (Percentages in Brackets)

| Area of priority in training | Frequency | | X ² | df | Asymp. sig |
|---------------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|----|------------|
| | Yes | No | | | |
| Customer care | 157(46.9) | 178(53.1) | 1.316 | 1 | 0.251 |
| Organization change | 12(3.9) | 322(96.1) | 285.02 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Cost reduction | 29(8.7) | 306(91.3) | 229.04 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Organizational plans and goals | 51(15.2) | 284(84.8) | 162.06 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Competition for market share | 18(5.4) | 317(94.6) | 266.87 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Consumer preference | 15(4.5) | 320(95.5) | 277.69 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Increase professionalism | 176(52.5) | 159(47.5) | 0.863 | 1 | 0.353 |
| Change in technology | 34(10.1) | 301(89.9) | 212.8 | 1 | 0.000 |
| Product or service obsolescence | 8(2.4) | 327(97.6) | 303.76 | 1 | 0.000 |

Chi-square statistics tests were performed to determine if the respondents' levels of agreement and disagreements regarding the prioritized areas covered by the trainings were statistically significant. The results indicate strong evidence that the areas of organizational change, cost reduction, organizational plans and goals, competition for market share, consumer preference, change in technology and product and service obsolescence were not given or considered as areas of priority.

This is ironic considering that these areas are critical if the employees are to deal and cope with the issues of competition and market changes as well as new and advanced technology. Moreover, there were no statistically significant differences when it came to whether such areas prioritized by trainings did help them improve their work in customer care service and their professionalism. This means that most of the areas that the organization's trainings lean more on developing professionalism on the part of the employee and on how to deliver services and care to the customer.

Areas Improved by Job Trainings Offered to Employees

Another critical aim of the study was determine if the employees felt that the areas prioritized during the trainings improved their job performance. The data showed varied views as summarized in Table 7. The findings revealed that only 12.2% of the respondents said the program helped them improve on reduction of organizational costs while 67.2% said the areas assisted them to improved job performance. However, an extremely low number (1.2%) concurred that the areas of priority did help them improve on their working in the organization.

Table 7: Areas Improved by the Job Trainings (Percentage in Brackets)

| Areas Improved | Frequency | Cum Percent | X² value | df | Asymp Sig |
|------------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-----------|------------------|
| Cost reduction | 41(12.2) | 12.2 | 478.716 | | 0.000 |
| Better performance | 225(67.2) | 79.4 | | | |
| Accepts new technology | 26(7.8) | 87.2 | | | |
| All the above improved | 4(1.2) | 88.4 | | | |
| Not trained | 39(11.6) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335 | | | | |

The Chi-square statistics test calculated (478.72) showed that the areas improved by the training was statistically significantly different from one employee to another because the hypothesized value found ($X^2 = 478.72$, $p = 0.000$) is far below the 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that Telkom Kenya may have concentrated more on training for better performance. This is not healthy because neglecting training on new technology and cost reduction may work against good competition. Customers tend to prefer cheaper services and modern delivery services.

Job Performance Ratings Prior to Job Training Programs

Normally, forms of trainings are undertaken by various organizations in order to help their employees not only to improve on their skills but to enhance their job performance and/or cope with new changes in technology and the volatile market. The North Rift Telkom Kenya employees were asked to rate their performance before training. The findings were different as summarized in Table 8 and Figure 3.

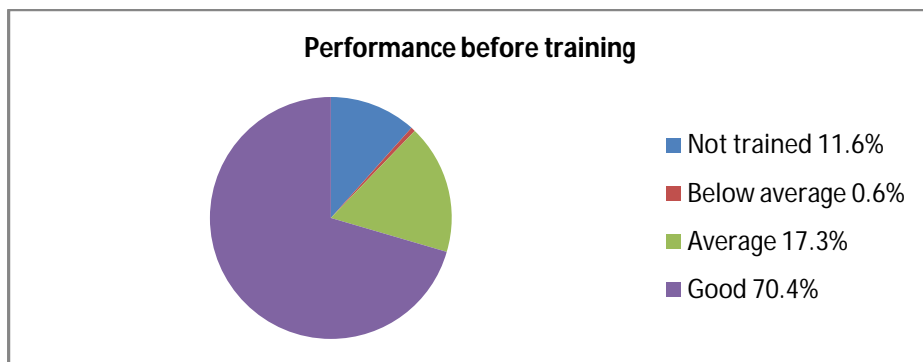


Figure 3: Current Performance Rating before Training

The data in Figure 3 portray that those who rated the current job performance before training were higher (70.4%) compared to 17.3% of those rating their job performance average before training. The Chi-Square test performed presented in Table 8 below is a further testimony to this fact.

Table 8: Current Performance Rating before Training (Percentages in Brackets)

| Rating | Frequency | Cum Percent | X ² value | df | Asymp. sig |
|---------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------|----|------------|
| Good | 236(70.4) | 70.4 | 388.4 | | .000 |
| Average | 58(17.3) | 87.8 | | | |
| Below average | 2(0.6) | 88.4 | | | |
| Not trained | 39(11.6) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

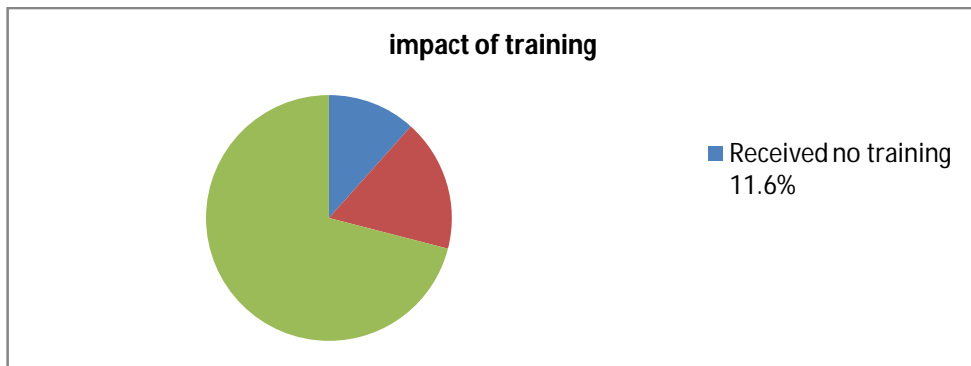
The Chi-square statistics test calculated (388.4) shows that the rating of performance before training was significantly different from one employee to another, because the hypothesized value found ($X^2=388.4$, $p = 0.000$) is lower at 0.05 significance level. Hence, the hypothesis saying that there is no significant relationship between training of Telkom Kenya North Rift region employees and their ability to embrace and cope with change posed by the introduction of new information and communication technology was rejected. This is because the finding seems to imply that the form of training received did not really improve the performance of Telkom Kenya North Rift region employees.

Job Performance Ratings after Job Training Programs

Telkom Kenya North Rift region employees also rated their performance after training and the findings are summarized in Table 9 and Figure 4 below. The results here are also higher (71.0%) on how they rated the current performance to have improved greatly after training. A smaller number (i.e., only 17.3%) said their performance slightly improved after the training and only 11.6% of the employees have not been trained. The chi-square statistics test performed (216.01) to understand the respondents deviation if their rating of performance after training was significantly different from one employee to another as the hypothesized value observed ($X^2=216.01$, $p = 0.000$) is way below the 0.05 level of significance to ignore the differences. A perusal of the findings seems to suggest that mostly employees rate their job performance higher irrespective of whether they attended training or not. This is a strong implication that the training offered did not really play any significant role on the performance of the employees.

Table 9: Current Performance Rating after Training (Percentages in Brackets)

| Rating | Frequency | Cum Percent | X ² value | df | Asymp. sig |
|-------------------|-----------|-------------|----------------------|----|------------|
| Greatly improved | 238(71.0) | 71.0 | 216.01 | 2 | .000 |
| Slightly improved | 58(17.3) | 88.4 | | | |
| Not trained | 39(11.6) | 100.0 | | | |
| Total | 335(100) | | | | |

**Figure 4: Current Performance Rating after Training**

The data shown above were further subjected to hypothesis test stating that there was no significant relationship between the training that employees received and their ability to embrace and cope with changes posed by the introduction of new information technology. The Chi-square statistics test calculated (64.5) revealed a statistically significant relationship between the training of employees and growth of organization at 95% confidence interval. Specifically, the hypothesized value ($X^2 = 64.5$, $p = 0.000$) shows that we reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative stating that there is significant relationship between training of employees and their ability to embrace and cope with the changes posed by the introduction of new technology.

Discussions and Conclusions

The findings of the study (Table 1) showed that Telkom Kenya preferred the use of on-the-job forms of training which gave the employees more opportunity to learn by doing while working. While this may have served well given the kind of equipment commonly used at Telkom Kenya, the new telecommunication data services equipment (mobile phones etc) were different and Telkom Kenya employees may not have adapted to their operation.

Data also indicates that attendance to various forms of training is part of the measures that Telkom Kenya has used in its effort to boost the growth of employees within the organization. This has become clear because the respondents overwhelmingly agreed that they have attended various forms of training sponsored by their organization (Table 2). This is a clear indication that Telkom Kenya North Rift Region lays great emphasis on the training of their employees. It is further supported by a majority of employees who had no reason for not attending training this shows that training is part of the measures that Telkom Kenya uses to improve their human resource. This is in line with what other contributing authors have pointed out with regard to the role that training plays in the development of employees (Armstrong, 2003; Keep, 1992; Pattanayak, 2003).

Moreover, training should not just be construed as an option but it should be considered both as an intrinsic part of the practice of HRM and a measure of investment in its people. The respondents in this study found (Tables 3-4) the job trainings offered to be both relevant to their current duties and adequate to enable them perform their jobs well.

This is critical if an organisation is to survive in a world like the one of today with fast changing technology, changing values and globalization. Failure to which there is no safeguard of staff from obsolescence (Cole, 1996).

Normally for an organization to remain competitive and relevant to customers' need, it should be willing to invest highly in developing a positive attitude towards training programmes that fosters and cultivates a learning culture among the work force. However, Telkom Kenya's training programmes failed to focus on areas that would help enhance its employees' ability to embrace and cope with change posed by emergent new and/or advanced technology. Hence, the inevitable has happened in that the company has not only been beaten by their competitors such as Safaricom, Airtel and Yu which are new comers into the market of telecommunication services, but it failed to safeguard their employees and as such, their employees were prematurely retrenched (Export Processing Zone Authority [EPZA], 2005). This finding is important because it has unearthed the types of training offered in order to gauge the suitability and capacity of employees to cope with the changing times and technology.

The results of the study revealed that part of the failure is on the prioritized areas covered by the types of trainings offered. It is clear from the data (Table 5) that such critical areas of organizational change, cost reduction, organizational plans and goals, competition for market share, consumer preference, changes in technology and product and service obsolescence were not considered as areas of priority. The study established that most of the areas of priority leaned more on the development of professionalism on the part of the employee - how to deliver services and care to the customer but less on preparing them to meet the technological change challenges. The fact that most employees rated their job performance higher irrespective of whether they attended training or not is a strong indication that the training offered though it plays some significant role on improving the performance of current duties, it did not equip them with the ability to cope with new challenges in technology and the volatile market. Instead, Telkom Kenya concentrated more on equipping their employees with skills just for better performance with little consideration for the emerging new technologies.

Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that the forms of trainings undertaken by various organizations usually succeed in helping employees to improve on their skills and to enhance their job performance to enable them cope with new changes in the market.

The HRD process should always aim at maximizing the use of human resource by optimizing the competence of available human resource and improving the competence for future challenges. This is because the role of training will depend on the HRD needs of the organisation, HRD mechanism being used, and the facilities and/or opportunities provided in line with the ground realities (Pattanayak, 2003). Had Telkom Kenya applied this mechanism, the probability of it competing well in telecommunication service market would have been easier because of the competitive edge it had due to its long monopoly (EPZA, 2005).

The results of the study (Tables 7-8) seem to suggest the employees said the type of trainings offered were good and that they improved the performance of their current duties. But given the scenario of what bedeviled Telkom Kenya employees, the role of training did not have any impact in preparing them to cope with the emergent technological changes in the market place.

What the organisation did was to give their employees enough training to enable them perform current duties rather than offering training programmes that could prepare them not only to perform duties but also equip them with the necessary skills that a competitive market would require (Pattanayak, 2003).

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