

The Impact of Job Training on Employee's Satisfaction: A Study in Public Institutions in Western Uganda

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between on-job and off-job training on employee job satisfaction at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST) in Western Uganda. To be able to realise the study objectives, a cross-sectional survey design, quantitative in nature was adopted. The targeted population comprised the employees of MUST where a sample of 230 respondents was chosen guided by Krejcie and Morgan sample determination table. Primary data was collected using structured questionnaires through telephone interview in order to adhere to Corona Virus pandemic guidelines related to social distancing. Simple random sampling technique was adopted during sample selection. Data collected was analysed using the analysis function of the Statistical package for the social sciences (SPSS version 20). The study findings indicate a moderate positive and significant relationship between on-job training/off-job training and job satisfaction. On-job training predicted job satisfaction to the tune of 14% compared to 9% variation in job satisfaction caused by off-job training. On the basis of observation that the case institution does not organize trainings for supervisors on how to conduct appraisals, the study recommends that human resource (HR) practitioners and policy makers inculcate trainings for supervisors on how to conduct performance appraisals in order to equip supervisors with sufficient performance appraisal skills to be able to appropriately identify employee training needs. Future research may carry out a longitudinal study to test how on-job and off-job training predict job satisfaction in a private higher learning institution setting in another country.

Keywords: Training and Development, Job Training, Job Satisfaction, Employee Satisfaction, Public Institutions, High Learning Institution, Uganda.

1. Introduction

The extent to which an organisation implements planned training programme, indicates the extent to which it is committed to capacity building needs of its staff. It is measured by the extent to which both on-job and off-job training function decisions go beyond approval and filing to implementation within an institution. Such efforts can result in acquisition of new knowledge and skills to employees, beneficial for the organisational growth as it may increase individual labour productivity (Raja & Sal, 2016). On the other hand, job satisfaction refers to level of happiness of employees in fulfilling their desires and needs at the work i.e., the pleasurable feeling that result from an employee perception of

achieving the desire level of needs. Job satisfaction is an outcome variable which explains attitude of employees toward their job. Institutions expend numerous resources on training and development, to elevate the knowledge and skills of their staff as part of building positive feelings or job satisfaction, and recently, research effort has been dedicated to enhancing the link between employee training and job satisfaction (Martin et al., 2013). This relationship has garnered unceasing attention from an array of stakeholders. For example, researchers, policymakers, and investors, considering the low productivity, poor performance and job turnover visible in public institutions (Ravaghi et al, 2017; Patanakul, 2014). To this effect, its observed that at Mbarara University of Science and Technology (MUST), job satisfaction has remained low exemplified by failure to meet their work targets, low levels of research output, offering less man hours per day and unwillingness to work beyond normal hours.

Despite the above unpleasant scenario, however, there has been a growing agreement to the effect that institutions with an effective employee training program tend to exhibit higher levels of job satisfaction (Kanapathipillai & Ferdous Azami, 2020; Gambo, 2015; He et al, 2014). Moreover, highly skilled workers provide better customer service experiences and engage more clients for longer periods (Mudor & Tooksoon, 2011). It is an undisputed fact that employee training serves as a key role in the day-to-day work life and practice of an organisation because it improves the knowledge and skills of employees leading to increase in per capita labour productivity (Bakotić, 2016). Whereas, on-job training takes place at a person's workplace to develop work related knowledge and skills, that are required for employees to perform a specific job within the work environment, off-job training is one form of training, that takes place outside the work place and as proved by Vasanthi and Basariya (2019), that effectively helps in enhancing motivation, job satisfaction and the performance of the employees through and by improving their general knowledge.

Even though a number of scholars have studied employee training and job satisfaction, there are still inconclusive results as per varied context. Past empirical studies were conducted in different settings and used different methods, making their results hard to generalise to public institutions in Western Uganda. This study therefore is premised on the quest to unearth the empirical scrutiny about the impact of employee training on employees' job satisfaction in public institutions in Western Uganda. Stakeholders of public institutions have always expressed their concern on the quality-of-service delivery in such institutions. The outcomes of this study are in several aspects a benefit to many such stakeholders. First, public institutions will gain insights into the context of how employee training relates with job satisfaction and related organisational performance. Secondly, seen from management and policy formulation point of view, management at MUST will review and enact appropriate policies that have a long bearing on performance behaviour, or evaluate their training effectiveness to finally guard against any negative behaviour of employees. In what follows, the paper presents literature review with details on empirical gaps, methodology, results, discussion, conclusions, implications, and recommendations.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

Even when a significant relationship has been found to exist between employee training and job satisfaction, as suggested by discrepancy theory perspective, some empirical facts exist in industrial organisation literature showing results that tend to disagree. For instance, Nguyen and Duong (2020) studied training and job satisfaction in Vietnam, using a quantitative approach and found positive effects. Culibrk et al (2018) carried out a similar study on same concepts in Serbia in South-eastern Europe and reported significant positive association. Relatedly, Farooq and Khan (2011) report a positive link between off-job training and job satisfaction. Farooq and Khan's findings agree with Amos and Natamba (2015) and Hanif (2013) who conducted similar studies in different contexts and confirms the same results. Their studies support the view that training away from the workplace, improve employees' knowledge and skills and reduce possibilities for job and skill mismatches. In addition, Vasanthi and Basariya (2019) observes a positive association between on-job training and job satisfaction in the manufacturing industry in Chennai. The authors express their support on on-the-job training for it uses regular or existing workplace tools, machines, documents, equipment, knowledge, and skills necessary for an employee to learn to effectively perform his or her job. Furthermore, Timsal et al. (2016) and Watson et al. (2018) find positive association between on-the-job-training and job satisfaction for it a source of skills, knowledge and capabilities which impact on their job satisfaction. Altogether, they anonymously agree that on-job training is central to an employee's well-being, noting that it has a big role influencing an individual's attitude towards work.

However, Ahmed (2010) in exploratory study in Pakistan, based on primary data from non-academic staff of University of the Punjab, failed to get sufficient evidence to support the relationship between training as a motivational factor and job satisfaction. Besides, Pastore and Pompili (2019) states that certain off-job training methods, do not lead well to certain "knowledge" outcomes, yet other studies like Chen and Cooper (2014) find difficulty in exactly determining how off-job training contributes to job satisfaction. This view is shared by Card et al. (2010), who find Some off-job training methods only suitable for verbal comprehension ability, or only for general reasoning ability and therefore, have negative

or insignificant results in the short run. Moreover, according to Halawi and Haydar (2018), on-job training also does not always result in favourable benefits all the time.

Apparently, and as literature portrays, some scholars find a positive connection, while others failed to get sufficient evidence to confirm their hypothesis. However, on-job and off-job-training, apparently influence an individual's knowledge levels and lead to consequent motivation effects i.e., job satisfaction. Again, literature shows that happiness of employees helps in fulfilling their desires and needs at the work, which increases their labour productivity. Even though most industrial psychology researchers agree that a systematic firm-level training process will lead to employee motivation and related job satisfaction, some scholars have found a positive connection, while others failed to get sufficient evidence to confirm their hypothesis, showing inconclusiveness. This has been the basis for the researchers to infer that the discussion on employee training and its impact on employees' job satisfaction is still ongoing especially when seen in the public institution context in Western Uganda. Consequently, we hypothesised as follows:

H1: *on-job Training has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction*

H2: *off-job Training has a significant effect on employee job satisfaction*

Figure (1) demonstrates the conceptual and theoretical linkages in the studied variables.

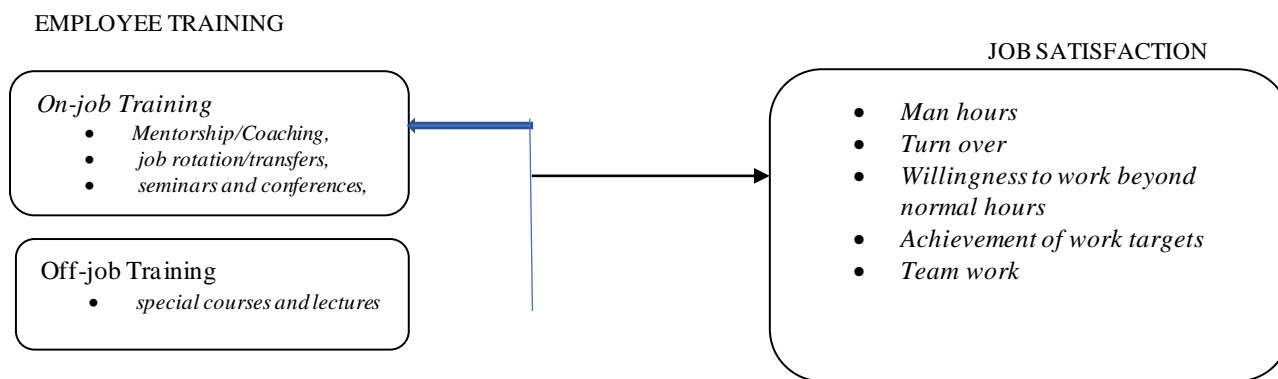


Figure 1. The conceptual and theoretical linkages in the studied variables (Pastore & Pompili, 2019; Gielen, 2018; Watson et al.2018; Mróz & Kaleta, 2016; Farooq & Khan, 2011).

3. Materials and Methods

Since the study was conducted to investigate the relationship between employee training and job satisfaction, a quantitative survey design, cross-sectional in nature was adopted i.e., we captured the research information at a point in time (Bell et al., 2018). The study population was 324 and comprised of teaching staff and non-teaching staff at MUST. Even when the planned strategy of data collection was face-to-face questionnaire delivery, Corona virus pandemic prevention guidelines related to social distancing could not allow that to happen. We therefore used telephone-based approach to collect data using structured questionnaire (Szolnoki & Hoffmann, 2013) in the month of September 2020, and achieved 100% response rate with no missing values. This was possible after securing respondent phone contacts from directorate of Human Resources. A sample size of 230 was determined according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table. The perceptions of these employee were used to estimate the relationship between variables under investigation.

Various reasons could have accounted for the choice of this case institution. Apparently, higher learning institutions in Africa countries play critical roles in not only building up academic systems that enable those countries to join global knowledge society and be able to effectively compete in knowledge economies elsewhere, but also a source of innovations and competent manpower (Valavanidis & Vlachogianni, 2013). Our study operationalisation and scale and questionnaire development were guided by previous studies on employee training and job satisfaction (Watson et al., 2018; Culibrk et al., 2018; Steptoe-Warren, 2013; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). After questionnaire pre-test on a sample of ten academic and industry experts, we developed scales for three variables in our model: (1) on-job training, (2) off-job training, and (3) job satisfaction. We used a 5-point Likert scale to measure perception of respondents where 5 stood for strongly agree, and 1 stood for strongly disagree (Leung & Lee, 2011) because it helps in producing better data distribution.

The study was concerned with instrument validity and reliability and therefore conducted validity and reliability checks. Table (1) present details of validity and reliability of the study scales and apparently content validity and Cronbach's Alpha values were within acceptable ranges (Field, 2009) proving the internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Table 1. Validity and reliability tests through CVI and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for the variables.

Variable	CVI	Cronbach's Alpha	No of items	No of items deleted	Remainder
On-job Training Methods	0.782	0.743	31	4	27
Off-job Training Methods	0.801	0.723	08	1	07
Job Satisfaction	0.724	0.821	14	3	11

The data analysis, testing hypotheses and doing estimations between the study variables were done using Pearson Correlation and Linear Regression (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2006).

4. Results and Discussion

This section contains details on results and discussion of the results.

4.1. Results

Table (2) demonstrates profile of respondents surveyed. The majority (80%) from the 230 surveyed were males with the leading ages range between 18 and 27 (41.7%) an indication of rich data obtained from young adults. In terms of education levels, on average the respondents surveyed had master's degree (50.4%), and also majority respondents were married (60%). The study also found out that a big number of employees had worked for the institution studied for more than 5 years (47.4%), which is an indication that the sample had a good work experience. Finally, the study observed that a big majority of surveyed respondents were senior managers (88.3%).

Table 2. Demographic profile of respondents surveyed (Primary data collected in September 2020).

Respondent age		%
	18-27	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

As can be portrayed in Table (3), the study results suggest that on-job training had a significant positive association with job satisfaction at MUST ($r=0.381$, $p<0.01$). Since on-job training influences the mood of employees towards liking what they do, managers should locate a big budget for it. For the fact that the correlation is moderate, the university needs to attend to other causes of variations in job satisfaction since on-job training only accounts for 14%. This means that other factors not specified in the model explain up to 86% of changes in job satisfaction. Human behaviour ostensibly according to Abraham Maslow is complex presupposing a state of insatiability but effort can be made in terms of policy to reduce any existing state of displeasure (Maslow, 1943).

Table 3. Regression model summary for on-job training (Primary data collected in September 2020).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.381 ^a	0.145	0.141	0.16792

^a Predictors: (Constant), On-job training.

The study results (Table 4) suggest that off-job training had a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction at MUST ($r=0.308$, $p<0.01$). The implication of the model results is that a unit change in designing and implementing these off-job training methods has a resultant positive effect on-job satisfaction (willingness to work more hours, stay longer with the institution, achieve targets and increase team spirit). The model predicts job satisfaction by only 9% relatively smaller than the model for on-job training. When comparing the predictive power of on-job training (Table 3) on-job satisfaction and off-job training predictive power on-job satisfaction, it is evident that employees at MUST prefer trainings that are carried out at their places of work.

Table 4. Regression model summary for off-job training (Primary data collected in September 2020).

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.308 ^a	0.095	0.091	0.17276

^a Predictors: (Constant), Off-job training.

4.2. Discussion

The study outcomes suggest that both on-job and off-job training affect job satisfaction of employees (Vasanthi & Basariya, 2019; Watson et al., 2018; Culibrk et al., 2018; Steptoe-Warren, 2013; Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). It is therefore justified to say that this study narrows the gap in literature, that on-job and off-job training play a critical role in influencing the state of feeling of an employee at work. Perhaps, owing from the newly acquired knowledge and skills from the training that enriches him or her with job-specific know-how, which closes the hitherto skills deficiency gap (Swart et al., 2005). We can refer to (Goball et al., 2018) for more enlighten on how training enables one to gain not only right attitudes towards the job, but also confidence. Indeed, lack of knowledge capacity has been cited by Bashir (2015) as one of the major factors hindering the growth of African economies and organizations. The biggest take home from this study is that for institutional growth to be realised, capacity building needs must be given sufficient attention. This argument rises the training and development curtain as a critical capacity development intervention across the globe for organisations to succeed (DeCorby-Watson et al., 2018) The pronounced significance of this whole debate on employee training and job satisfaction owes from the highly competitive nature of business environment and the tight labour markets with evolving competition where skills potential is a major determinant of competitive advantage (Lall, 1999). High productivity leads to placing organizations in the better position to face competition and stay at the top. Ostensibly, qualified staffs are key ingredient for effective running of institutions, since they are prepared for challenges facing the rapid changing business world (Khan et al, 2011). The study agrees with other scholars who acknowledge that employee training plays a vital role in improving job satisfaction of employees as well as increasing their productivity at work (Watson et al., 2018; Culibrk et al., 2018). One would imagine an existence of a significant difference between the organizations that train their employees and organizations that do not. Moreover, empirical literature brings evidence in terms of training benefits for the employee in form of knowledge, skills, ability, competencies, and behaviour (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2013).

5. Conclusion and Managerial Implications

This study was premised on the quest to unearth the empirical scrutiny on the impact of employee training on employees' job satisfaction in public institutions in Western Uganda. It is concluded that the study objectives have been met. It has been found out that MUST have various number of employee training methods such as: mentorship/coaching/orientation, seminars and conferences, job rotation and transfers (on-job training methods) and special courses and lecturers (off-job training methods). These were found to positively affect employee job satisfaction. The study observed and concluded that 14% of changes in job satisfaction are attributed to on-job training methods MUST uses, whereas 9% of changes in job satisfaction were caused by off-job training methods MUST uses. The study concludes that any unit increase in these training methods implementations has a resultant positive effect on-job satisfaction (willingness to work more hours, stay longer with the institution, achieve targets and increase team spirit). The study makes a contribution to the growing body of job satisfaction knowledge and a debate in regard to improving the way trainings are conceived. The study works on the only one riding assumption that employee training is the only

influencer of job satisfaction, which is a source of one of its limitations. Moreover, telephone survey as a means of data collection could also have affected results in one way or the other. MUST however, is hereby challenged to always review its training policies and planning in order to achieve good results as a consequence of good mood of employees.

The managerial implication is to have an enlightened view on the significance of both on-job and off-job training for knowledge and skills acquisition purposes. HR practitioners in particular and institutional administration in public institutions in Western Uganda general should have a formal focus on both on-job and off-job training programs for both short term and long terms skill acquisition in order to minimise any possibility for any skill-deficiency-based cause of low performance among employees. They however need to also, think about and include in their strategic plans, other factors besides training that may hinder employee productivity and work towards improving them policy wise. Besides, the study uncovers that the case study institution does not organize trainings for supervisors on how to conduct performance appraisals and failure to structure job rotations. Consequent to this, the study recommends that they inculcate trainings for supervisors on how to conduct appraisals in their HR and administration manuals in order to equip supervisors with sufficient performance appraisal skills to be able to appropriately identify employee training needs. Secondly, considering the fact that transfers and job rotations are intended to widen skills set of employees which enhances performance, they should embrace the significance of job rotations in overall employee performance policy framework. In this regard researchers acknowledge that structured and formal job rotations positively influence the mood of employees.

6. Limitations and Areas for Future Research

The way the concepts have been conceptualised and operationalised considering the mixed perspectives on on-job training and off-job training scope, could have affected the study. We did not also do a combined effect analysis. Besides, this the study conceptualised employee training as only predictors of job satisfaction, used telephone as means to capture self-report questionnaire-based data and restricted the investigation to employees of one public institution operating in Mbarara district. All these limitations mean that the present study findings should be treated with caution. Last but not least, the study is cross-sectional, yet it is possible that opinions held by people may change over time. Future research may wish to carry out a long-tudinal study to test how on-job and off-job training predict job satisfaction in a private higher learning institution setting in another country.

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