

The Influence of African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) Training Programs on Public Service Delivery in Kenya

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Abstract: The improvement of public service delivery involves capacity building in public servants. Training programmes are one of the most popular capacity building approaches. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of these human capacity development programmes on public service delivery. The objectives of the study were to find out how training influence performance improvement in the public service. The research used descriptive research design with stratified random sampling to select the samples. The samples were picked through simple random sampling thus enabling all members of the target population to be represented. The target population comprised of 300 active members of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM) and 20% of the target population formed the sample size. Questionnaires were used for data collection. The study found that training has a moderate positive influence on service delivery and this is attributed to effective training content and training methods. The study recommends adoption of proactive human capacity development strategies and incorporation of technology to enhance their positive influence on service delivery and mitigate on the negative influence to ensure efficient services are offered to the citizens.

Keywords: Public service, public service delivery, training.

INTRODUCTION

Currently everybody agrees that capacity development works towards human development. Human development requires a good environment for implementation but it has been faced with challenges of economic, social, technological and political nature. For good capacity development, there should be empowerment of employees to enable them exploit their full potential. This means that the empowerment should be sustainable and long term to ensure its full exploitation [1]. This led to the introduction of the Africa public service reforms whereby programmes were designed to ensure training and retraining of the work force to help restore necessary capacity to the public service and nurture the right capacities and competencies to perform in a dynamic public sector environment [2].

Capacity involves the ability to accomplish while development is concerned with gradual growth. Therefore, capacity development is the ability to accomplish and develop good and functioning activities that are able to bring change to the public service. According to Wignaraja [1] capacity development involves transformation of individuals, leaders and organizations with the aim of achieving its own objectives. This transformation should be able to obtain,

strengthen and maintain the development capabilities of the target. Human Capacity Development ensures that employees are empowered through training, research, consultancy, conferences and publications and innovations [1]. This ensures improvement in performance which benefits the organizations positively as it registers improved organizational performance and increased productivity.

Capacity development involves productivity as an end result. According to Kayemuddin [3] productivity depends upon technological development, capital, equipment, organization and management, working and living conditions. It is therefore noted that a combination of all these factors is necessary for any development to occur. These are the same factors that are faced as part of the challenges in capacity development. Through the public service reforms, governments increased their budgets to cater for capacity development in the public sector. Better measures towards improvement of financial and personnel management systems were also introduced [2].

Capacity development which is part of career development is the life long series of activities like training, innovations and consulting that contributes to

the person's career exploration, establishment, success and fulfilment [4]. It involves identifying the abilities of employees by mentoring, exploring their potential and developing them for the good of the organization. It also combines the efforts of the employees and the human resource management organization to properly develop the desired employee's careers.

It is important to note that the need to help employees develop in their careers cannot be underestimated if the overall performance of the organization is to be achieved. This should be done by identifying the employee's career development needs and developing programmes that would properly improve their performance. Training is known to be one of the programmes which employees undertake and which leads to better performance and improved service delivery. It is one of the earliest programmes that were introduced in the public sector with the goals of ensuring that employees attain the skills required to perform efficiently.

Any organization that does not assist employees in their career growth works at a disadvantage and is not able to bring the best out of their staff. This is because even though career development ensures that there is better public service delivery, it motivates the employees and provokes them to work harder in ensuring the overall performance of the institution is raised to acceptable levels. Motivation is an integral part of direction which helps employees to release the immense untapped reservoir of physical and mental capabilities to satisfy employee needs. It also helps in attracting qualified personnel and simplifies the recruitment and selection process of the staff in the institutions and facilitates change [5] Organizations benefit from good capacity development of their employees which results in gains for both the employees and the organization. It is therefore crucial for organizations to consider good ways of developing the employees to ensure there is better performance which leads to improved public service delivery. This could be achieved by good human resource policies which put in place employee development as an important factor. According to Baker [6], a good human resource policy should consider the overall development of employees especially in developing their abilities and personal growth. It is therefore important for organizations to ensure that policies adapted are able to help the staff grow and be better than when they first joined the organization.

In order to achieve better performance in the public service, African governments established the Management Development Institutes (MDI) as well to work on human capacity development in the public sector to improve staff performance. In a meeting held in Botswana in 1970, Permanent Secretaries who coordinated public service delivery in different

ministries of public service in Africa agreed to start the Inter-African Public Administration Seminar to assist in problems facing public service delivery in Africa. The Inter-African Public Administration Seminar was later in 1971 renamed as the African Association for Public Administration and Management [7]. AAPAM has been in the fore-front in promotion of good public service delivery in Africa. Together with the MDI, all the programmes that are provided by AAPAM are geared towards better public service delivery. Nevertheless, it is noted that despite several public reforms, public service delivery has not met the expectations of the users [8].

This research study therefore analyzed the influence of training on public service delivery with a case study of the African Association for Public Administration and Management (AAPAM).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was based on the human capital theory. According to human capital theory [9, 10], education and training bring benefits of higher productivity and higher wages. This theory indicates that although there are costs that are involved in training, the benefits that are accrued after training cannot be underrated. The skills and competencies from training enhance better performance by the workers which in turn enables better service delivery. The human capital theory thus indicates that investments by employers in enhancing skills through training usually impacts positively in the economic performance of organizations and can have external effects in innovation.

Accordingly, training has been proven as one of the best ways of improving the employees' skills as well as an asset in human capital development. Human capital refers to processes that relate to training, education and other professional initiatives in-order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values and social assets performance [11]. In the global market today, all organizations are encountered with competition and therefore needs a competitive advantage to leverage as a weapon for competition.

Strengthening the workforce is a strategy that organizations use to improve on productivity and therefore has become a major focus for organizations. This requires investment of resources to ensure that employees acquire the required knowledge, skills and competencies to work effectively and compete with the changing environment. Organizations have also embraced the idea of human capital development as an instrument through which satisfaction of the employees is achieved [12].

Human capital focuses on individuals and organizations and their contribution to performance.

This is founded on four attributes which include flexibility and adaptability, enhancement of individual competencies, the development of organizational competencies and individual employability. These values improve on both individual and organizational outcomes. According to research findings [13], development of good human capital leads to higher performance and a sustainable competitive advantage. This shows that the human capital theory fits very well in this research project.

EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

Armstrong [14] defines training as the use of systematic and planned instruction activities to promote learning. The approach can be summarized in the phrase 'learner-based training'. It is one of several responses an organization can undertake to promote learning. Training may also refer to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence as a result of teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relates to specific useful skills. These skills are necessary for the effective running of the organizations 'activities and especially in important organizations like the public service which are enlisted with ensuring better public service delivery to all citizens in a country.

According to Pigors and Myers [15] training is an enhancement of knowledge which acts as a motivator to an employee as well as an opportunity for a better job with more responsibilities, authority and good empowerment. Man Power Services Commission (1981) defined training as a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge and skills through learning experiences to achieve effective performance in any activity or a range of activities. The training purpose in an organization is to develop employees and satisfy their current as well as their future needs in the organization. Notably, technology is changing day after day and therefore it is important to keep on training in order to ensure that employees attain high level skills to improve on their performance and meet the organizations' objectives as set out in the organization mission and vision.

Training requires the good programming of courses as well as good planning of the content and delivery. The objective of learning is to ensure that problems that exist are tackled in ways that makes the trainee face the reality in the working life. This is because training helps the trainees to tackle work related problems and to better understand ways of solving problems they encounter in the course of their work. Work requires skills that are best developed by formal instructions which must be quickly developed to meet new demands [14].

Armstrong [5] defines human resource development as provision of training, development and training opportunities in order to improve individual,

team and organizational performance. This improves the current performance and ensures attainment of organizational goals. This also requires equipping the staff with the right skills to assist them perform their duties in the organization. Through this, the organization is able to achieve its mission since having capable employees is an important factor in the achievement of the organization objectives.

According to Beach [16], training in organization is a fundamental tool that improves the work performance productivity of the organization. It requires being systematic and well planned to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and effectively. It improves the operational flexibility through extension of the skills that the employees possess. Trained employees are more flexible and they are also able to take different responsibilities. Organizations offering training to their employees are reputable and able to recruit high quality employees because they always offer them the training required. This training enables them to grow in their careers and allows them to get more challenging opportunities. Through this, they become more competent which gives them more job satisfaction which ensures progress and higher rewards [15].

According to Julia [17] an organization that provides adequate facilities and training of the workforce, demonstrates that it is conscious about its responsibility to protect both the staff and the customers. It is therefore important to have planned and systematic training programmes which ensures that the standards are both understood and observed. Such programmes in organizations should work towards attaining high levels of performance as well as effectiveness in the organization. This also contributes to high levels of staff engagement and development.

Training is used as a measurement of standards. This can be achieved through creating and sustaining dialogue and relationship which increases the levels of understanding about what an employee is expected to do. Training can be used as a tool of identifying staff members who would require further support and assistance to ensure that they deliver. It provides opportunities for feedback which are helpful to the organizations in designing the best approach to the training process.

According to Olaopa [2], most governments in African countries have realized the importance of training and recently reforms have been introduced to ensure that performance management takes centre stage as a priority for better service delivery. This has called for elaborate training and capacity building which ensures that the public servants are well equipped to enable them improve the performance. It is well noted that funding the training programmes was constrained

due to inadequate budget allocations but governments are currently mobilizing resources for the implementation of training and capacity building programmes. Need analysis are conducted in different ministries with the training needs of all staff noted and arrangements for training made. This shows that training programmes are important to ensure better public service delivery. Training is therefore an important variable in the human capacity theory as it is through training that new knowledge is acquired.

However, there is evidence from studies conducted by Kiragu and Mukandala [18] that there exists a huge need in the public and private sectors of developing countries for well-trained managers. Mostly non-performing organizations in the public sector is attributed to lack of well-trained managers with skills required for the job. This has resulted in big amounts of money being invested in training and development programmes but yielding very poor return.

According to Kobia [8] although training is focused on trying to change behaviour or teach new skills and competencies to the individual trainees to realize their performance goals, the extent to which participants transfer skills and competencies has been below expectations. This has led to the training being not effective as the effectiveness of any training programme depends on the capability of the trainees to transfer what is learnt to improving their work.

Broad [19] argues that while training is the most used method for improving workplace performance, research observations of training professionals indicate that training efforts do not result in significant transfer of new skills to the job. The Human Resource Development has been struggling with getting the facts behind this low transfer of knowledge from training to the working environment. Baldwin and Ford [20] attribute this failure of transfer of new skills on the job to unsupportive environment, lack of opportunity to apply the new skills on the job and poor needs assessments.

According to Wachira [21], lack of leadership and management capability has been seen as hindering continued successful improvement in service delivery. This can be attributed to the public sector organizations being headed by people who do not have leadership qualities and their management capabilities being unsatisfactory. African governments have been training

people of skills development as a way of capacity building but there are no follow-ups on effective use of the skills attained in performance improvement. Strategies should be introduced in the public service to ensure that all the skills attained are put into practice for the improvement of the public service delivery [21].

Training is very important to employees to enable them improve their performance. Notably technology is changing very fast and therefore retraining the employees to be well equipped with the right skills cannot be understated. This ensures that services offered are done in a professional way and hence improving public service delivery. Good analysis of the training needs and well developed training programmes ensures that the objective of training as stipulated in the training manuals is achieved. Measuring the effectiveness of training required a survey on customers' satisfaction which was done through the questionnaire. This tested employee who had received training and the quality of services they deliver to the customers to ensure satisfaction after the training. A test was carried out on the relationship between the training and state of public service delivery.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design as it fitted well and fulfilled the objectives of the study. The study drew its respondents from three hundred (300) AAPAM members in Kenya. Thirty respondents who included senior government officials, directors of management development institutes, human resource management directors and students were administered with questionnaires through email. The data were analyzed through qualitative and Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics and presented through tables and graphs. Correlation and multiple regression was used in hypothesis testing and showing nature of relationship between independent variables and the dependent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

State of Public Service Delivery

The dependent variable in this study was service delivery in the public sector. A question was posed to get an indication of the state of public services offered to the citizens of Kenya. The respondents were asked whether public services are effectively offered to the citizens. The responses obtained are presented in Table-1.

Table-1: Public services are effectively offered to the citizens

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	5	10.0
Agree	4	8.0
Not Sure	6	12.0
Disagree	19	38.0
Strongly Disagree	16	32.0
Total	50	100.0

The results in Table 1 show that 70% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that public sector services are effectively offered to citizens. On the other hand, 12% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of the effectiveness of public services while 18% either strongly agreed or agreed that the public services are effectively offered to the citizens.

Training Programmes and Public Service Delivery

The objective of the study was to find out the influence of training programmes on public service delivery. To achieve this objective five questions were posed to the respondents. The first question sought to know whether training needs analysis carried out by AAPAM contributes to the effectiveness of the programmes. Table 2 shows the responses.

Table-2: Training needs analysis and effectiveness of the programmes

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	1	2.0
Not Sure	10	20.0
Disagree	29	58.0
Strongly Disagree	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

The results in Table 2 show that 78% of the respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that the training needs analysis affects effectiveness of training programmes. On the other hand 20% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of the role of needs assessment on effectiveness of training programmes while 2% strongly

agreed that the needs assessment plays a role in effectiveness of the trainings.

The study also sought to understand the effects of training costs on the efficiency of the programmes. The responses obtained are presented in Table 3.

Table-3: Training costs and efficiency of the programmes

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	1	2.0
Agree	1	2.0
Not Sure	8	16.0
Disagree	31	62.0
Strongly Disagree	9	18.0
Total	50	100.0

The results in Table 3 show that 80% of the respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed that the training costs affect training programmes efficiency. On the other hand, 16% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of effects of training costs on efficiency while 4% either strongly agreed or agreed that the costs affect efficiency of the trainings.

The study then sought views on whether theoretical and practical content included in AAPAM training programmes contribute to improved performance in the public service with the responses being presented in Table 4.

Table-4: Theoretical and practical content and improved performance

Rating	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	22	44.0
Agree	25	50.0
Not Sure	2	4.0
Strongly Disagree	1	2.0
Total	50	100.0

The results in Table 4 show that 94% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement that the theoretical and practical content included in AAPAM training programmes contribute to

improvements in performance in public service delivery. On the other hand, four percent of the respondents indicated that they were not sure of the contribution of theoretical and practical content to

public service delivery, while 2% strongly disagreed that the content contributes to improvements in service delivery.

The study further sought views on whether training methods contribute to improved performance in the public service delivery with the responses being presented in Figure-1.

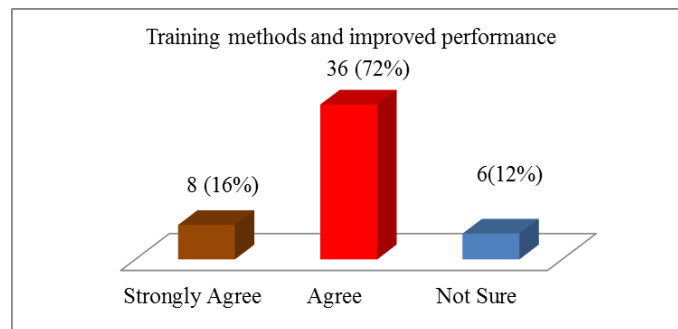


Fig-1: Training methods and improved performance

The results in Figure 1 show that 88% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the choice of training methods is important in determining whether training contributes towards improved performance in public service delivery. On the other hand, 12% of the respondents indicated that they were

not sure whether the training methods are effective towards improved performance in public service delivery. The study sought overall views on whether training programmes help in improvement of public service. Figure-2 shows the responses.

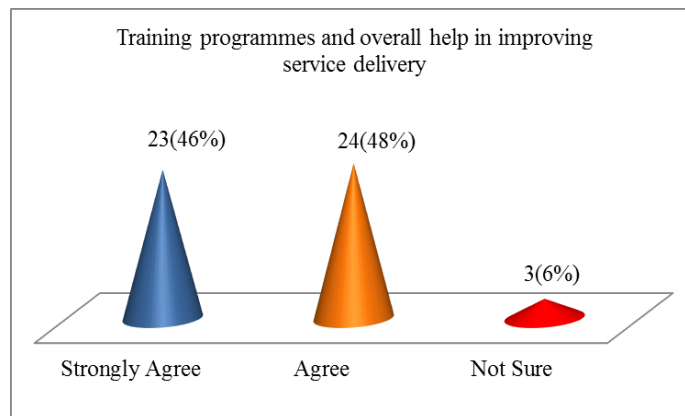


Fig-2: Training programmes and overall help in improving service delivery

The results in Figure 2 show that 94% of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the training programmes overall help improve performance in public service delivery. On the other hand 6% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure whether the training programmes on overall help improve performance in public service delivery.

The relationship between the training and service delivery using correlation coefficients for all the variables were sought. The correlation matrix is indicated in Table-5 below.

Table-5: Correlation Matrix

		Training	Service Delivery
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	0.369**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.008
	N	50	50
Service Delivery	Pearson Correlation	0.369**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.008	
	N	50	50

The correlation matrix (Table 5) indicates that training programmes and public service delivery had a positive relationship ($r = 0.369$). This indicates that as training programmes components such as content and methods increase, they enhance efficiency of public service delivery.

Multiple regression analysis was performed with the independent variables being Training (T) and the dependent variable was Service Delivery (SD). Results are presented in Table-6.

Table-6: Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.411	0.169	0.115	1.990
a. Predictors: (Constant), T, R & P			

The r-squared for the regression model was 0.169 (Table 6). The model therefore is explaining 16.9% of the change in service delivery in the public

sector. Analysis of variance in the regression model is presented in Table-7.

Table-7: Analysis of Variances in the Regression Model

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	13.457	1	4.486	3.918	0.035
Residual	66.163	46	1.438		
Total	79.620	50			
a. Dependent Variable: SD					
b. Predictors: (Constant), T					

The F-value was 3.918, which was deemed significant at 5% level of significance indicating that the regression model provided some explanatory power and the overall model was significant in explaining relationship between human capacity development programmes and service delivery in the public sector. This implies that training in addition to research

findings disseminations are important factors that can predict efficiency of the public sector service delivery.

The test of the statistical significance of the independent variables in the model was done using t-tests to check the significance of individual regression coefficients. Results are presented in Table 8.

Table-8: Test of significance of independent variables

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.793	0.758		2.364	0.022
T	0.439	0.199	0.311	2.203	0.031
a. Dependent Variable: SD					

Results on test of significance indicates that training had a significant positive effect on public service delivery ($\beta = .439$; $p < 0.05$). This indicates that public service dockets with many training programmes are expected to have more efficient public service delivery. The alternate hypothesis which stated that training programmes have influence on public service delivery was thus accepted. This finding is attributed to a number of reasons including the effectiveness of theoretical and practical content as well as training methods.

The findings could be attributed to theoretical and practical content being well aligned to the specific needs of particular public sector agencies, institutions or departments in certain local and national contexts. The findings are in agreement with Armstrong [14] and Olaopa [2] who emphasized the benefits of training programmes to the public service. This finding, tallies

with the position of the Human Capital Theory which holds that trainings bring benefits of higher motivation and improved productivity.

CONCLUSIONS

The study was based on the perspectives of public servants benefit from human capacity building programmes offered by AAPAM. It emerges that the inefficient service delivery existing across the African continent can benefit greatly from varied capacity development strategies. It has emerged that training has a positive influence on public service delivery. This could be attributed to theoretical and practical content being well aligned to the specific needs of particular public sector agency, institution or departments in certain local and national contexts. The findings are in agreement to Armstrong [14] and Olaopa [2] who emphasized the benefits of training programmes to the public service.

Based on the findings and the conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations. The human capacity development programmes like training, research and innovation need be well targeted and have to be cost effective for them to have the intended objectives of improving the service delivery. This could entail aligning the needs of the contemporary public service requirements and the need of the citizens which would involve developing training programmes that have both theoretical and practical content that meets the requirements of the citizens.

There is need by public agencies, institutions and departments as well institutions such AAPAM to do a training needs analysis to ensure that training programmes are well designed to focus on the jobs. This will involve identifying the skills that employees need to do their jobs, identifying gaps between where they are and what they need and focus training on resolving the gaps. Through a good training needs analysis, employees will be empowered as they will only be taking training to improve weak areas and hence improve their performance.

The training should also be designed taking into consideration the objectives and specifications that would ensure transfer of tangible outcomes back to the job. This means the setting of SMART objectives. The smart objectives would ensure that the organizations make follow-ups on the training to ensure the outcome meet the objectives. This would also ensure that employees going through training are also not disappointed by the training sessions as they would also have their expectations of the training met. Follow-ups should also be coordinated by the training managers to find out the experiences of the employees on the trainings and challenges that may be encountered in transferring skills and knowledge from the training to performance.

Before employees attend the training, the managers should ensure that employees understand the link between the training and their job. This would enhance the impact of the training as the employees would be certain that the training is geared towards positive contribution to the organization and ensure the achievement of the organizational goals. Managers should also be available to coach the employees in case of any difficulties in applying the new knowledge.

There is need to adopt innovative training delivery methods and presentation styles to deliver the training content to public officials, for instance through use of the internet, video conferencing, emails, and other such delivery tools. This could be achieved through placement of robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms on innovation and ensuring that these innovations are adopted to improve service delivery.

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