

Influence of Mentorship Practices on Employee Performance in Small Manufacturing Firms in Garissa County, Kenya

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Abstract

Mentorship is a semi-structured approach where a person or groups of people share their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their own lives and careers. This practice motivates employees and empowers others so as to identify their own strength and achieve organizational targets and goals. Mentorship enables the mentee to tap into the best of a mentor as a source of energy to foster intrapersonal and interpersonal understanding. These practices were identified as the independent variables, while employee performance was the dependent variable. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of mentorship practices on employees' performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County. The specific objectives conceptualized from the study include; to establish how leadership mentorship affect employee performance; to assess how innovative mentorship influence employee performance; to determine how knowledge-transfer mentorship influence employee performance; and to examine how talent development mentorship affect employee performance in small manufacturing in Garissa county. A cross-sectional survey design was used in the study whereby the respondents were all the employees were included in the study. Questionnaires were administered to collect data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to arrive at conclusions on the relationships between study variables. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the set hypotheses and construct the model of interest. The study established a significant relationship between leadership mentorship, innovative mentorship, knowledge transfer mentorship, talent development mentorship and the performance of the employees. The results of the study will contribute tremendously to better the management of firms through mentorship adoption practices. The study recommends that mentorship practices be considered as part of the organizations strategy to improve on the performance of the employees.

Keywords: Competitive advantage, Knowledge assets, Knowledge management, Knowledge transfer mentorship

Introduction

In a traditional sense, mentorship involves a process that brings together the inexperienced and experienced individuals in an attempt to enable the former to gain knowledge, self-confidence, skills as the other benefits from the later as they transit through the process (Colby and Young, 2006). (Allen 2007) says mentorship is a system of semi-structured guidance where one person or a group of people share their knowledge, skills and experience to assist others to progress in their own lives and careers. Over time, the definition of mentorship has evolved, with some theorists suggesting that mentorship must be voluntary relationship of equality, openness, and trust between the mentor and mentee (Coppola et al, 2010). Mentorship further involves motivating and empowering the other person to identify their own issues and goals, and helping them to find ways of resolving or reaching them. It is not by doing it for them, or expecting them to 'do it the way I did it', but by understanding and respecting different ways of working Bozionelos,(2006).

A mentor is a person who commands a certain degree of respect, either by virtue of holding a higher-level position, or because of age, expertise or experience doing the job (Noe et al, 2002). It also refers to someone who takes a special interest in a person, and in teaching that person skills and attitudes to help that person succeed. (Garten2007) states that a shift has occurred that mentorship is now viewed as a knowledge management

technique that supports the creation of knowledge or innovation. (Mathewman et al 2012) established that mentorship has a large number of outcomes for the mentor, the protégé and the organization. Protégé outcomes include career advancement, success and satisfaction whilst mentors can benefit from increased promotion rates, rejuvenation and the acquisition of useful information. Furthermore, organizational outcomes include increased employee motivation, better job performance and increased competitive advantage. (Clutterbuck et al 2012) found out that mentorship has the net effect of enhancing the competence of mentee; provide psychological support, motivation and job satisfaction which enhances performance not only for the employee but the organization as a whole which may translate into a competitive advantage position to the organization.

Olsen et al (1999) established that in knowledge economy, where the business environment is characterized by turbulence and complexity, knowledge is the main source of creating both innovation and sustainable competitive advantage. It is therefore necessary to appreciate the link between mentorship and knowledge identification, creation, transfer and application of knowledge in order to enhance employee competence and capability through acquisition of relevant skills, knowledge and decision making strategies. (Rousseau 2008) emphasizes that instructional and transfer strategies are ways in which new concepts and skills are communicated and transferred from a seasoned individual to a less experienced person to reach a specific goal. For instance, with the 4p model developed by Toyota Company to ensure its continuous success, (Meier et al 2005) states that Toyota leaders have learned through mentorship and experience that when they follow the right process they get the right results. Toyota Company also disclosed that when someone in the Toyota company learns an important lesson, he/she is expected to share it with others facing similar problems so that the company can learn from such sharing. Coppola et al (2010) explains that mature and experienced organizations will see mentorship as another method to help the entity achieve its mission, objectives and goals as mentorship ensures that organizational skills, knowledge and best practices are transferred from the mentor to the mentee. As a result of this knowledge transfer mentorship, the organization benefits through the development of more highly trained and competent employees who are loyal, with enhanced efficiency; and, competence in their jobs. In this case mentorship is viewed as a method of developing strategic leaders (Zachary et al, 2012).

Mentorship has immense benefits to an organization besides being the key to improving project capability. While there is a reliance on personal knowledge, explicit knowledge and collaboration within the project external networks play a crucial role in terms of knowledge creation. These networks tend to be the informal networks of project team members when external knowledge or expertise is required (Jennex, 2007). The process of mentorship can be used to instruct organization culture, pass on technical expertise, develop creative problem solving, foster critical thinking, and build interpersonal skills, which are requisites to successful performance of an organization (Coppola et al, 2010). There is a need to establish how leadership mentorship, innovative mentorship, and knowledge transfer mentorship affect employee performance in small manufacturing firms. Furthermore, leadership and innovative competencies can be developed by an employee through mentorship. This study therefore endeavors to find out how leadership mentorship, innovative mentorship, Knowledge transfer mentorship and Talent development mentorship influence employee performance in small firms in Garissa County.

Literature review

This study is based on Albert Bandura's (2005) Social Cognitive Theory. The theory proposes that individuals do not simply respond to environmental influences - thus observing and modelling the behaviour, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others - but rather they actively seek and interpret information (Nevid, 2009) and in this case individuals function as contributors to their own motivation, behaviour, and development within a network of interacting influences. (Schooley 2010) states that mentorship involves a formal or informal training partnership where employees receive information, advice, and guidance from an experienced professional, usually within the organization, who has expertise and a motivation to help others grow in their jobs. In a traditional sense, mentorship involves a process that brings together the inexperienced and the experienced in an attempt where the former will gain knowledge, self-confidence, skills and competencies from the later as they transit through the process (Colky and Young, 2006). (Murrell et al 2012) has differentiated these two relationships – informal and formal mentorship - along three dimensions: initiation, structure, and process. Where formal mentorship relationship is externally provided, informal one is initiated when two people are drawn towards one another because of needs, interest or perceived similarity. Formal mentorship relationships are generally provided for a specific amount of time and pre-designed with predetermined frequency and locations for meeting between the mentor and the mentee. Understanding the mentorship approaches requires significant upfront planning before you decide the type of mentorship that best matches your organization. For mentorship program to succeed, executive-level support must be secured, the program planned well,

communicate to all employee on mentorship; provide upfront training for mentor and mentee and designed in a way such that employees are simply encouraged to participate, but no one is forced (Schooley, 2010). (McQuerrey 2015) articulates that in staff performance appraisal, the Key performance indicators are several. Firstly, employee's meeting of goals. This involves measuring whether an employee has met pre-established goals during the assessment period. Secondly, it involves an assessment of employee's participation in teamwork. In this case, an employee is rated on his/her involvement in participation of teamwork. Thirdly, employee's skill acquired is assessed. In this case, an assessment on the employee's job skill is done to establish whether he/she has the necessary skills to perform any assigned tasks or not.

Leadership mentorship should focus on building the mentee's cognitive/functional, personal and social competencies (milanet et.al 2008). Innovative mentorship practice will be implemented by the mentee being able to search for and test new technologies, create new paths for company goals and use new work methods (Thediech et.al 2015). Knowledge transfer mentorship practice will be implemented in firms by ensuring mentor /mentee transfer of tacit and explicit knowledge in which knowledge is preserved and socialized in employees (Blake-Beard 2012). Talent development mentorship practice can be implemented using effective relevant programs that enhance employee engagement and career advancement in firms (Duncan 2012.)

Objectives of the study

- i. To establish how leadership mentorship affect employee performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County.
- ii. To assess how innovative mentorship influence employee performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County.
- iii. To determine how knowledge-transfer mentorship influence employee performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County.
- iv. To examine how talent development mentorship affect employee performance in small manufacturing firms in Garissa County.

Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between leadership mentorship and employee performance.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between innovative mentorship and employee performance.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer mentorship and employee performance.

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between talent development mentorship and employee performance.

Methodology

This study was carried out in manufacturing firms located in Garissa County and adopted a cross-sectional survey design. According to Gay (1992), cross-sectional survey determines and reports the way things are in their natural environment. The design attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) states that a cross-sectional survey design attempts to describe such things as possible behaviour, attitudes, values, and characteristics, while Orodho (2004) observes that a cross-sectional survey design are used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers to gather information, summarize, present and interpret them for the purpose of clarification. The design was therefore appropriate for the study.

Results and discussions

Correlation analysis was done to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables in the study. Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used. This test was done as a precursor to regression analysis so as to first determine whether the variables were related in a linear manner. The results of the correlation analysis are presented in table 4.9

Table 4.9: Correlation Results

	Gender	Age	Edu	EC	LM	EP	IM	KTM	TD
Gender	1								
Age Bracket	.092	1							
Education	.029	-.102	1						
Employment Category	.031	-.048	-.009	1					
Leadership Mentorship	.070	-.023	.167	-.011	1				
Employee Performance	.055	.025	.006	-.053	.827**	1			
Innovative Mentorship	.031	-.170	.036	.056	.788**	.623**	1		
Knowledge transfer mentorship	.003	-.190	.074	-.159	.813**	.779**	.724**	1	
Talent development mentorship	.085	-.052	.144	-.002	.918**	.825**	.727**	.772**	1

Source: survey data 2015

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results as presented in table 4.9 show a significant strong positive correlation between employee performance and leadership mentorship ($r = .827$, $p=0.000$), innovative mentorship($r = .623$, $p=0.000$), knowledge transfer mentorship ($r = .779$, $p=0.000$), and talent development mentorship ($r = .825$, $p=0.000$). The results showed linear relationships between the variables of interest that were to be used in regression analysis to construct the regression models of interest.

Test of Hypotheses

The study was based on the premise that mentorship practices influence employee performance but this influence is moderated by organizational culture. Four hypotheses had been set to guide the study as highlighted earlier in the study. In order to establish the statistical significance of the respective hypotheses, multiple linear regression was used to test direct relationships. Analysis was conducted as appropriate at 95 percent confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$).

Relationship between Mentorship Practices and Employee Performance

To assess the influence of mentorship practices on employee performance, the study had set the following null hypotheses:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between leadership mentorship and employee performance

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between innovative mentorship and employee performance

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer mentorship and employee performance

Ho4: There is no significant relationship between talent development mentorship and employee performance

Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the hypotheses. Multiple regression analysis is applied to analyze the relationship between a single dependent variable and several independent variables (Hair et al., 2005). Multiple regression analysis was therefore selected as it is viewed as an appropriate method for this study. The summary of results analysis is shown below;

Multiple Regression Results

Model Summary								
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson			
1	.864a	.747	.733	.63197	2.256			
a. Predictors: (Constant), Talent Development, Innovative Mentorship, Knowledge-Transfer Mentorship, Leadership Mentorship								
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance								
ANOVA ^b								
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.		
1	Regression	82.546	4	20.637	51.671	.000 ^a		
	Residual	27.957	70	.399				
	Total	110.503	74					
a. Predictors: (Constant), Talent Development, Innovative Mentorship, Knowledge Transfer Mentorship, Leadership Mentorship								
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance								
Coefficients ^a								
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.012	.274		.045	.964		
	LM	.374	.191	.348	2.959	.040	.115	8.712
	IM	.198	.132	-.150	-7.499	.038	.359	2.789
	KTM	.372	.123	.323	3.022	.004	.316	3.162
	TD	.448	.187	.366	2.395	.019	.155	6.451

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

Notes: Overall model F= 51.671; p < 0.05; R= 0.864; R²= 0.747; Adjusted R²= 0.733

The F-statistics produced (F =51.671) was significant at 5 per cent level (Sig. F < 0.05), thus confirming the fitness for the model. Therefore, there is a statistically significant relationship between the mentorship practices and employee performance. The coefficient of determination R² was .747. Thus, mentorship practices can significantly account for 74.7% of employee performance.

The results also shows all the mentorship practices (leadership mentorship, innovative mentorship, knowledge-transfer mentorship, and talent-development mentorship) significantly affect employee performance (p < 0.05). Based on table 4.10, it indicated that the most important mentorship practice that affect employee performance is talent-development mentorship (β= 0.448, p < 0.05), followed by leadership mentorship (β= .374, p < 0.05) then

knowledge-transfer mentorship ($\beta = .372, p < 0.05$) and lastly, innovative mentorship ($\beta = .198, p < 0.05$). Hence, hypotheses H01, H02, H03, and H04 are rejected since none of the $\beta_i \neq 0$ and their p-values is less than 0.05.

Thus the estimated model depicting the relationship between employee performance and the mentorship practices took the form:

$$EP = 0.012 + .374LM + .198IM + .372KTM + .448TD$$

Where:

- LM: Leadership Mentorship
- IM: Innovative Mentorship
- KTM: Knowledge transfer mentorship
- TD: Talent development mentorship
- EP: Employee performance

Summary of the Hypotheses Tests Results

Hypothesis Statement	Results/Verdict
Ho ₁ : There is no significant relationship between leadership mentorship and employee performance	Rejected Ho
Ho ₂ : There is no significant relationship between innovative mentorship and employee performance	Rejected Ho
Ho ₃ : There is no significant relationship between knowledge transfer mentorship and employee performance	Rejected Ho
Ho ₄ : There is no significant relationship between talent development mentorship and employee performance	Rejected Ho

Conclusion

The first objective sought to establish whether leadership mentorship had any effect on employee performance. Results showed that leadership mentorship had a significant effect on employee performance. It was therefore concluded that when leadership mentorship is used in an organization, the employees was more likely to perform better.

The second objective sought to establish whether innovative mentorship had any effect on employee performance. Results showed that innovative mentorship had a significant effect on employee performance. It was therefore concluded that when innovative mentorship was used in the firms under study the employees were more productive.

The third objective sought to establish whether knowledge transfer mentorship had any effect on employee performance. Hypothesis testing results showed that knowledge-transfer mentorship had a significant effect on employee performance. It was therefore concluded that knowledge-transfer mentorship does have a positive effect on employee performance.

The fourth objective sought to establish whether talent management mentorship affected employee performance. It was therefore concluded that talent development mentorship does have a positive effect on employee performance.

Recommendations

The study used cross-sectional design to obtain data. It is recommended that future studies be done using longitudinal design that was able to make follow-up activities on the respondents for a specified period of time as they undergo mentorship programs. This will give a better conclusion on the casual effect of mentorship practices on employee performance.

The two firms chosen for this study are from the small manufacturing firms' category. It is therefore recommended that further study be extended to other sectors like the service industry so as to further validate the findings of this study.

The small manufacturing firms should be able to embrace leadership mentorship; innovative mentorship; knowledge transfer mentorship; and talent development mentorship since it improves the employee performance and productivity.

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