



An evaluation of the effect of skills training on employee commitment and retention at the Zambia revenue authority

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to establish the role of skills training on employee commitment and retention at ZRA. The core business of Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) is to collect taxes. Tax is very important to the development of the country and as such, ZRA needs to have committed employees that meet set objectives. This investigation was underpinned by three theories namely Adult Learning Theory, Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Signalling theory. This study used a survey design in which a questionnaire with statements rated using the Likert scale. A total of 220 questionnaires were distributed to members of staff at ZRA of which 206 successfully responded representing a 94 % response rate. The researcher used regression analysis to test the study hypotheses. The findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between skills training and employee commitment ($r = 0.325$, $p < 0.01$) as well as a positive relationship between skills training and retention ($r = 0.066$, $p < 0.01$). The research concluded that management at ZRA should prioritize training as it is a critical ingredient to enhance employee commitment retention. Additionally, management must take a proactive role by allocating adequate resources towards continuous training activities and ensure that the training meets the needs of the employees. Skills training programs are essential in increasing employee retention and overall profitability of the organization since the employees will be committed to meeting set objectives. The findings of this study are valuable to ZRA as they may help highlight the ways in which human resource training can be beneficial not only to the organization but also to the career development of its employees. It provides an explanation with empirical evidence by demonstrating that training extends direct positive effect on retention. The study also demonstrates that, at ZRA, employee commitment helps to partially transmit the effect of training on retention. The study suggests that questions focused on employee training engagement, resource allocation, training delivery formats, workplace flexibility, work life balance and training applicability to respondents' jobs can provide in-depth knowledge on this subject. Management must also ensure that employees who need training have access to it yields improved results in their abilities to carry out required tasks effectively.

Keywords: Commitment, employee, retention, training, Zambia revenue authority (ZRA)

Introduction

Due to changes in the business environment, increased competition and demand for quality service, most organisations are forced to look for employees that are can be easily trained and committed (Hanashya, 2016). Building employee commitment and retention is vital for organisational effectiveness and performance. Achievement of organisational goals is usually a result of trained and committed employees. Skills training which is a systematic and continuous process provided by an organisation to improve and maintain the quality of its workforce. Skills training is continuous and can be done either on or off the job., enhances their job competencies, and improves the overall performance of the organisation.

The training at ZRA consumes a lot of resources to be conducted in form of labour cost, food and stationery and that is why it is a concern if the intended results are not being yielded. Although ZRA HR claims that the training targets retention and employee retention, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the effect of skills training on employee retention and employee commitment at ZRA. Training staff is the generally accepted principle of all organizations that it is important to prepare them to meet current challenges and to prepare them to achieve the organization's desired goals with the help of relevant skills, experience and knowledge. Training and development are

very important and crucial factors to keep employees within the organization in the long run (Oulu, 2013).

Employees are significant assets of any organisation and play an active role in the company's success which cannot be underestimated.

Organizations have realized that competitive advantage can be achieved through a skilled workforce. Some organizations focus on specialized training rather than general training to keep employees out of competition, while other organizations see employee skills and training as an investment that generates returns in form of employee retention and engagement (Sani 2012) ^[35].

Due to improved intelligence and human capital, successful organizations are increasingly able to provide excellent services and operating organizations; therefore, employee commitment to the organization must be properly managed and prioritized (Moradi *et al.* 2018) ^[27].

Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) is a quasi-autonomous organisation that was established in 1994 by the act of parliament to collect revenue on behalf of the government. The organisation is under the supervision of the Ministry of finance. In the last decade, ZRA has been implementing changes especially in the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) (ZRA, 2015). It is because of these changes that the employees of the organisation need more training so that they can become more competent. In 2012, the organisation trained 1355 employees, in 2013, the organisation trained 1450

employees and in 2014 the company trained 1450 employees (ZRA, 2015, p.5). In addition, ZRA (2014, p.50) pointed out that not less than 50 employees leave the organisation every year in search of better opportunities and more interesting jobs.

The commission is committed to ensuring that employees are empowered to carry out their current jobs and are also developed to perform future roles effectively and efficiently. The commission undertakes to create an enabling, equitable, supportive, and stimulating working environment which values and empowers its employees at all levels. Therefore, the Corporation is committed to developing integrated human resources approaches aimed at nurturing staff learning and development across the commission to achieve its strategic objectives.

Statement of the Problem

ZRA HR claims that the training targets retention and employee retention, there is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis. Therefore, the need to conduct this study by investigating the effect of skills training on employee retention. There has been many studies that have been conducted on training and commitment (Kaźmierczyk *et al.* 2020; Andrzejczak, 2015; Czyżewski & Polcyn, 2016; Jaźwiński, 2017) ^[21,3,10] yet the studies were not conducted in Zambia. Thus, creating a knowledge gap that needs to be investigated.

Moreover, the Republic of Zambia Report of committee on parastatal Bodies 2017 revealed that some companies, such as Tanzania-Zambia Railways Authority (TAZARA), lack trained manpower, which impedes their ability to achieve their business goals. This study thus, investigated effect of skills training on different types of commitment individually and assessed the aspects of employee retention.

Objectives of the research

Research Objectives

1. To assess the skills training programs offered to employees at ZRA
2. To determine the effect of skills training on retention at ZRA.
3. To examine the effect of skills training on employee commitment at ZRA

Research questions

1. What is the status of skills training at ZRA?
2. What is the effect of skills training on employee commitment at ZRA?
3. Is there a relationship between skills training and employee retention at ZRA?

Significance of the study

Tax is very important to the development of the country and as such, ZRA needs to have committed employees that will produce set retention objectives. The study is important to the workers because they may benefit from the results which may in turn show human resources of the policies that need to be put in place to improve employee commitment and may help highlight the ways in which human resource training can be beneficial not only to the organizations but also to the career development of its employees. Lastly, other researchers can use the study as a basis for other studies on the topic.

Literature Review

This Section Presents Both The theoretical and empirical literature pertaining to the study. Employee training serves a variety of purposes, including leadership development, the acquisition of new job skills, socialization involving the orientation of new employees to the culture of the organization, understanding jobs and educating employees about business ethics (Mugizi *et al.* 2015).

Theoretical literature

This study was anchored on the following theories: Human Capital theory, Social Learning theory and expectancy theory.

Adult Learning Theory

Knowles (2005) ^[24] published the most widely known and referenced theory of adult learning. It is a learning model that arose from a comparison of traditional child learning models. The theory outlines six fundamental characteristics of adult learning, including the fact that people want to know why they need to learn ahead of time, which encourages them to conduct study on the prospective benefits of the planned training. They are also able to predict the repercussions of not engaging in the learning. The argument emphasizes that people dislike having things imposed on them and prefer to determine how they learn. Adults add a lot of expertise to the instruction, according to the paradigm

This theory is appropriate for the study because employees are adult learners who should be involved in the selection of training content and media to be used in the training in order to achieve the training's goals and improve their overall retention in the organization.

Social Exchange Theory

This theory is important to this study as it explains the relationship between continuous training and learning in society. The Social Exchange Theory (SET) was developed by scholars such as Homans (1958) and Blau (1964) to explain what influenced social behaviour. Organizations generally initiate this social exchange by signaling their readiness to care for employee interests (Gould-Williams, 2007), and the workforce responds with positive attitudinal and behavioral responses that are beneficial to the organization. Observational learning is governed by processes of attention, retention, and reproduction, according to Bandura (1977).

According to the SET theory, employees like companies with the hope of future favor. As a result, organizations maintain a mutual social exchange connection. The partnership is built on mutual respect. Organizations who provide staff training would receive preferential consideration in exchange for employee loyalty.

(Mitlacher, 2008). In the words of (Tyler, 1999) employees "remain loyal when they feel that their organizations value and appreciate them". Therefore, if the trainee feels that the work he is doing is highly important to him and the organization, and that he has significant control over the work results, he is more likely to learn to reward himself for good job retention.

Signalling theory

Signalling theory relates to the description of the two behaviours, that is, individual and organization. It elaborates

that one party acts as a sender of the signal (information) and simultaneously strives how to send signal while the other acts as a receiver and strives how to interpret the signal (Connelly, Certo, Ireland, & Reutzel, 2010)^[8]. This theory is used as supporting in the sense that if the organization signals the human resources practices (Skills training and mediation role of employee commitment) in the way that employees interpret them as fair, just, right and according to their needs in response they interpret the signal of the organization and exhibit satisfaction, gratification and maximum job retention. This theory has suggested that the impact of HR practices such as Skills training and mediation role of employee commitment on the employees' behaviours are acting as 'signals' carrying the organizational motive for the employees and in return the employees will try to respond it through efficient and high job retention.

Empirical literature

This section provided empirical studies done from other countries as well as from Zambia on the effect of training on employee performance. The literature will look at studies on the effect of training on employee performance conducted in other countries and the challenges they encounter. In the literature, it will be shown areas of continuous training strategies, improving training programs and effect of training policy on employee performance.

Global studies

Hanashya (2016) conducted a study in Malaysia on the effects of employee training, empowerment and teamwork on organizational commitment. The study was conducted in the education sector and used a sample of 242 employees. The study used structural equation modelling for analysis and data was collected using an online questionnaire. The findings showed that both teamwork and training were positively related to employee commitment. Moradi *et al.* (2018)^[27] conducted a similar study in Malaysia which aimed at assessing the effect of training on the commitment of employees in the IT sector. The study concluded that the training of employees improves commitment. Besides, Anitha and Kumar (2016)^[4] conducted a study in India on the effect of training on employee commitment in the insurance sector. The study used a sample size of 100 respondents and a questionnaire was used for the collection of data. The study used regression analysis to test the hypothesis. The study concluded that training improves commitment which in turn improves employee retention in the insurance sector. These findings were also supported by Alexander *et al.* (2011), who conducted a study in China on the effect of training on organizational commitment and retention. The study used a sample of 437 employees. The study results showed that training is important in improving employee commitment. Jehanseb *et al.* (2013) conducted a study on the impact of training on organizational commitment in Saudi Arabia. The study used a self-administered questionnaire and a sample of 251. The study was conducted in the private sector. The study results showed that employee training was positively correlated to commitment. Furthermore, Muzaffar *et al.* (2012) conducted a study in Pakistan to examine the effect of training on employee retention. The study targeted the IT industry of the country.

African studies

Kamau (2015), conducted a study on the factors affecting employee commitment in Kenya. The study focused on the Kenyan airport authority. The study targeted a population of 168 and a sample of 92 was used. The study collected data using a questionnaire and SPSS computer package was used for analysis. The study results showed that training and teamwork were among the factors that affected commitment in the organization. On the other hand, Phina *et al.* (2018) conducted a study in Nigeria that focused on the SMEs in the country. They used a questionnaire to collect data. The study results showed that teamwork improved retention by improving employee satisfaction and commitment. Daniel (2018) analysed the effect of training on organisational retention. A sample of 304 was used for the study while applying a quantitative approach. The results revealed for successful training, there is a need for the right attitude, skills and knowledge. The three factors are important because training is tailored to different jobs and will require a certain level of knowledge. For example, it would not be helpful to provide training to people who are not in management tailored for management individuals.

Literature Gap

In most studies reviewed, commitment has been examined as a single construct even though to date, the three-model component of Meyer and Allen (1991) has been considered the primary model because it links three aspects of previous research. This model was created to argue that commitment has three different psychological states. However, a collection of studies since then have continued to study it as a single construct. On the other hand, other studies have shown that the model is inconsistent with empirical results. Inconsistent in the sense that while other studies show that training influences all the psychological needs, other studies argue that point. Therefore, this model and other theories are not universally applicable in different contexts and cultures. In particular, Meyer and Allen (1991) created this model for two reasons: first, to "aid the interpretation of existing research", second, to "serve as a framework for future research". His studies were based on previous studies by other academics. Hence the need for this study as several scholars and researchers have not fully explained the concept of commitment especially in the Zambian context given that the studies reviewed were from countries other than Zambia.

Conceptual framework

The study aimed to examine the effect of training on employee commitment and retention. In this study, the independent variable was skills training motivation for training support for training and access to training. The dependent variables were commitment and retention. Employee commitment was broken down into its three components which are affective, normative and continuance commitment. While employee retention was broken down as motivation, workplace flexibility and work life balance. Based on the theoretical and literature review, the following conceptual model figure 1 was formulated.

Adult learning theory is appropriate for the study because employees are adult learners who should be involved in the selection of training content and media to be used in the training in order to achieve the training's goals and improve their overall retention in the organization. On the other

hand, social exchange theory suggests that individuals learn by observing and imitating the behaviour of others. Therefore, training opportunities not only have the potential to increase employee retention but also include the socio-emotional components of the organization's relationship with its employees which makes them committed. Employees will respond positively to this signal by demonstrating greater affective attachment to their organization.

Signalling theory relates to the description of the two behaviours, that is, individual and organization. This theory

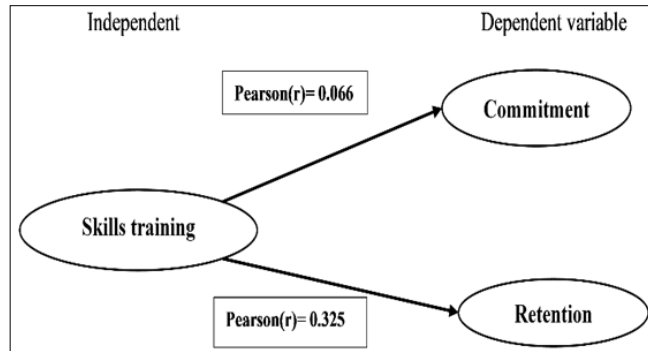


Fig 1: Conceptual framework

has suggested that the impact of HR practices such as Skills training and mediation role of employee commitment on the employees' behaviours are acting as 'signals' carrying the organizational motive for the employees and in return the employees will try to respond it through efficient and high job retention.

More than that, organization growth is dependent on several factors, training of employee influences the overall organization performance (Anasazi, 2013). Continuous training has advantages of increasing employee morale and job satisfaction which in return increase performance; furthermore, a good trained employee is more acquainted with job hence less supervision (Ouyang & fanlike, 2014). In addition, training bridges the gap of knowledge of deficiencies brought by about change in technology and working conditions (Gidey, 2016).

Research Method

The mixed method approached and inductive research design was used to ascertain a relationship between skills training activities, employee commitment and retention as a specific case to formulate a claim. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data which was obtained. The use of both qualitative and quantitative method complemented each other in order to validate the method that was used to realize the objectives of the study. The study targeted ZRA employees in Lusaka. According to ZRA records, the agency has a total of 500 employees. According to Kothari & Garg (2014), the sampling frame is a list of sampling units. It contains the name of all items of a universe. Saunders (2009) adds that a sampling frame is a complete list of all the cases in the population from which a sample was drawn.

The sampling population for this study was the ZRA members of staff that were present at the time of the study according to Kothari & Garg, (2014), sample size is the number of items to be selected from the universe to

constitute a sample. Using the formulae below sample size of 220 employees was computed.

Purposive sampling was used for employees at ZRA and served with a self-administered questionnaire A total of 220 questionnaires were distributed to members of staff at ZRA of which 206 successfully responded representing a 94 % response rate.

The qualitative method involved conducting semi-structured interviews with employees to gather in-depth information about their experiences with skills training, employee commitment and retention. Meanwhile, the quantitative method involved distributing a questionnaire to a sample of employees to measure their perceived effects of skills training by rating a series of statements on a Likert scale of 1 to 5 (1= strongly disagree; 2 = disagree; 3= not sure; 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree) because a five Likert scale has been recommended to reduce frustration, increase response rate and quality (Buttle, 1996).

Overall, the research design of this study aimed to gather both objective and subjective data to generate a comprehensive understanding of the effect skills training on employee commitment and retention. The researcher used primary data directly from the respondents who are employees at ZRA in Lusaka and secondary data was used for data collection for a research project.

The researcher used interviews and questionnaires as primary data collection instruments Self-administered questionnaires will be distributed to respondents. This provided respondents with a chance to fill the questionnaire at their own convenient time (Kothari, 2009).

Data analysis is the processing the observed data and transforming it to a form most suitable for decision making. The following steps (processes) was taken when analysing the data, daily editing was done after collecting data to maintain accuracy and completeness (Agarwal, 2009). Skills training served as the research's independent variables, and the variables employee commitment and retention served as the study's dependent variable. The data analysis for a descriptive study design was qualitative and quantitative approach, and the results are presented using graphs, frequencies, and percentages as well as hypothesis testing using regression and correlation with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Kothari (2009) provides a definition of reliability as the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. In order to ensure that the results are reliable, the same sets of questions will be asked. Therefore, since all informants will be interviewed separately, subject bias will be controlled to a large extent. Cronbach's alpha was used to measure reliability. For testing reliability, Cronbach alpha was used. A 0.83 Cronbach alpha value implies that the data collection instrument is reliable and capable of collecting quality data.

Ethical consideration

While carrying out research, important ethical considerations or concerns to keep in mind are anonymity, informed consent and confidentiality. The possibility of encroaching on the freedom of participants may be kept at a minimum by all possible means. Reynolds P (1972) contended that the protection of human subjects is what is morally and ethically appropriate in study. Permission from the Commissioner Generals office was requested before starting the research. Each response was verbally asked for

their consent. A guarantee of privacy and confidentiality has been upheld when gathering data. Subjects' names and identities were not listed on the questionnaire.

Results and Discussion

The results are an effort to offer valued understandings and application of the existing Skills Training and Mediation role of Employee Commitment at ZRA.

Demographic analysis

The participant's gender, marital status, age group, the greatest degree of education, and kind of work are all included in the demographic data. The demographic data is shown in table 1 below based on frequency distributions and percentages.

The research revealed that 56 % of the respondents were female and 44 % were male. The data was also analysed for age and it was revealed that 41.3 % of the respondents were 26 - 30 years old, followed by those that are 36 – 40 years at 26.2 %. Those that are between 31 and 35 years were 17 % and those that are above 40 years old represented 15.7 % of the respondents.

The study found that 35.4 % have been at ZRA for 6 - 10 years, 32.5 % said they had been working at ZRA for less than years, 20.4 % indicated that they have been at ZRA for over 15 years and the remaining 11.7 % said they have been working at the institution for 11 - 15 years.

The study found that 47.6 % rated the extent to which ZRA implements skills training programs to a moderate extent. while 40.3 % of the respondents indicated that skills training is utilised to a high extent. And lastly 12.1 % said they the implementation of the skills training is only to a low extent

Skills training at ZRA

The study revealed the statements that the organization ZRA hires enough trainers for each training session had the second highest value (mean=3.83). This was followed by the statement that the organization pays the trainers accordingly (mean = 3.64).

The other statement on skills training was that the training organizers are allocated adequate resources to acquire all the training materials had the mean (mean=3.61). The statement regarding the time allocated for the training sessions is adequate (mean= 3.38). this is Career and financial benefits are provided within the organization (mean=3.36). Lastly the statement that the organization allocates adequate financial resources for employee training for success at ZRA vision has the least value (mean= 2.77).

Employee Commitment at ZRA

Composite means 3.47, 3.37 and 3.01 were obtained on the statement regarding Affective, Normative and Continuance commitment by employees at ZRA. The statement on Feedback helps improve customer communication and customer relations at ZRA (mean = 4.31). This mean was followed by the statement that training increases individual productivity of employees (mean=4.26). The statement that skills training and mediation role of employee commitment improves efficient time management at ZRA (mean = 3.56). The mean value 3.55 was obtained on the statement ZRA operational goals are always realized. The respondents rated the statement that there's effective feedback mechanisms in the organization with mean 3.03. lastly, the least mean 2.97

was obtained on the statement ZRA achieves its targets on the scheduled time.

Employee Retention at ZRA

Feedback helps improve customer communication and customer relations at ZRA (mean = 4.31). This mean was followed by the statement that training increases individual productivity of employees (mean=4.26). The statement that skills training and mediation role of employee commitment improves efficient time management at ZR (mean = 3.56). The mean value 3.55 was obtained on the statement ZRA operational goals are always realized. The respondents rated the statement that there is effective feedback mechanisms in the organization with mean 3.03. lastly, the least mean 2.97 was obtained on the statement ZRA achieves its targets on the scheduled time. The overall mean 3.61 was obtained on the statement regarding normative commitment by employees at ZRA.

Pearson correlation Analysis

Skills training and employee commitment

The Pearson (r) value was 0.325 ($r=0.325, p < .05$). as shown on the table 7.4 below on the correlation between skills training and retention at ZRA. The value (0.325) indicates that there is a positive correlation between the two skills training and employee commitment at ZRA).

Table 1: Correlation between skills training employee commitment

	Employee Commitment	Skills training
Skills training	0.325	1
Employee Commitment	1	0.325
n	206	206

Source: Author, 2023

Correlation between Skills training and Employee Retention

Correlation coefficients (r) below in the table 2 shows that predictors (skills training) had a positive influence on retention at ZRA ($r = 0.066, p < 0.05$), this implies that there is positive correlation between the study variables namely; skills training and retention at ZRA.

Table 2: Correlation between skills training employee Retetion

	ZRA retention	Skills training
Skills training	0.066	1
ZRA retention	1	0.066
n	206	206

Source: Author, 2023

Discussion

The discussion primarily offers the meaning to the findings and provide interpretation relative to the research objectives and questions. In order to assess the status of skills training at ZRA the respondents were asked to rate the extent to

which ZRA ensures Skills training to enhance commitment and retention. The study found that ZRA implements skills training programs to a moderate extent (47.6 %). Mugizi *et al.* (2015) argued that employee training serves a variety of purposes, including leadership development, the acquisition of new job skills, socialization involving the orientation of new employees to the culture of the organization, understanding jobs and educating employees about business ethics. The study further interrogated the aspects of skills training variable using a series of statements in table 7.3 such as competence and number of trainers, allocation of resources and time to training. The study revealed that ZRA hires competent trainers for employee training programmes. This entails that ZRA engages trained facilitators for the training programs at the institution. This is very important as it ensures that the trainees are handled by competent trainers who will improve the ability of the employees to deliver. The findings are further supported by Alemu (2015) who pointed out many challenges that have hindered organisations from providing training. These include poor training planning in terms of contents and delivery methods; sending inappropriate persons to the training programs and lack of on-the-job training therefore it is critical for ZRA to continue upholding the standard of engaging competent trainers.

The study findings further show that ZRA hires enough trainers for each training session and it pays the trainers accordingly. Besides catering well for trainers ZRA also allocates adequate time for the training sessions.

Lastly the responses from the respondents indicate that ZRA allocate adequate financial resources for success of employee training at ZRA. The availability of resources entails quality venues and trainers are sourced. The findings are also echoed by Newman *et al.* (2011) ^[30] who pointed out that employees are motivated to take part in training if the training environment is suitable and to find a suitable environment there are financial costs associated with the undertaking. However, Dardar *et al.* (2012) feel that higher costs involved in organizing training are a major reason why employees might not be able to access training. This is because certain organisations might not be able to provide training due to the need to cover costs such as refreshment, transport and facilities.

The study further, investigated the degree to which the skills training affects employee commitment at ZRA using a series of statements.

The Pearson r value obtained from the regression analysis was 0.325 as shown on the table 4.5 above in the preceding chapter on the correlation between skills training and retention at ZRA. The r value (0.325) indicates that there is a positive correlation between the independent variable skills training and dependent variable employee commitment at ZRA.

The findings are also echoed by Sitienei *et al.* (2015) and Muma (2014) who investigated the effect of training on commitment in the children's services department, in both studies the scholars divulged that training is important in achieving commitment in any organisation. Ocen *et al.* (2020) conducted a study in Uganda which found that training increased commitment among employees.

Ghazanfar *et al.* (2012) conducted a study and concluded that there is a strong link between commitment and training. When organizations spend on an organization, they will

emotionally attract employees, which increases their level of commitment (Jeet and Sayeed 2014).

Training sends a message to employees that the organisation values them as an important resource for its success and growth. Thereby making employees more committed to the organisation (Gropanzano and Mitchel, 2003). Social Exchange Theory contends that firms achieve higher retention by investing in certain types practices that help employees achieve intrinsic work values and thus influence their ability to commit.

According to current research, staff training is critical in enhancing retention and increasing productivity in the. As a result, firms are better positioned to face competition and remain at the top. This implies that there is a considerable difference between firms who train their personnel and those that do not.

The Pearson r value obtained from the regression analysis was 0.066 as shown on the table 4.5 above in the preceding chapter on the correlation between skills training and retention at ZRA. The value (0.066) is close to 0 this indicates that there is a positive correlation (though weak) between the independent variable skills training and dependent variable Retention at ZRA.

Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015) asserted that people desire to be able to experience fulfilling careers, a high-quality work life, training, and hobbies. The study revealed that employees at ZRA are able to make choices to arrange core aspects their professional life. Additionally, the study revealed that at ZRA employees have good quality of life, an enjoyable work life and career progression. Work happiness and organisational commitment are significantly and positively correlated (Huang and Hsiao, 2007). Employee commitment to the company will be high when they are happy with their jobs, managers and pay. The findings are further supported by Jacob *et al* (2008) who argued that the fundamental premise is that employees are entire people with basic needs outside of the workplace. The people are expected to be more engaged, driven, and loyal when they believe they can better meet their requirements by being flexible at the organisation.

The study findings also show that the employees at ZRA maintain a balance between life and work activities. According to Dhas and Karthikeyan (2015), workers at organisations require the opportunity to successfully balance a variety of obligations at home, at work, and in the community without feeling guilty or regretting it, they should be able to work in ways that make earning a living and juggling other commitments and family easier, and the opportunity to be a part of a positive, encouraging work environment that values and trusts its employees is every employee's desire.

The findings suggest that the identified there is significant relationship between independent variable (skills training) with the dependent variables (commitment and retention at ZRA) as summarised in the hypothesis testing below. The results also demonstrate that if employees are provided with trainings, they look at it as a form of communication to them that the employer has their interest at heart, that the employer minds about their wellbeing and in reciprocation, the employees feel as if they owe the organization for what it did to them and hence, they make effort to remain committed and devoted to the organisation.

Conclusion and Recommendation

With respect to these findings, the results provide a strong basis to argue that employee commitment mediates the effect or relationship of skills training and retention in any organisation ZRA included. This study revealed that if employees are trained, it equips and updates them with the skills, knowledge and behavioral competencies that create a feeling of emotional attachment and loyalty to the organization.

This study endeavoured to examine the extent to which skills training and mediation role of employee commitment influences retention at ZRA. The summary of the findings at ZRA. The methodology of the study followed a combination of qualitative and quantitative survey technique in which the questionnaires were used as data collection instrument. The study sample size was 220 out of target population of 500, the research had 94% response rate comprising of members of staff from Direct tax, Indirect tax and operational staff.

1. H1 Intended to establish the status of skills training programs at ZRA. The results of the descriptive statistics established that ZRA has skills training programs in place (overall mean = 3.49). H1 was supported.

The research concluded that there are skills training programs that are conducted by competent and enough trainers, who are allocated adequate time for the training sessions and paid trainers accordingly. Furthermore, the employees who participated in the study supported the assertion that skills training at ZRA provide career and financial benefits.

2. The results established that a positive relationship between training and employee commitment at ZRA exists; H2 was accepted

The Pearson correlation r value (0.325) indicates that there is a positive relationship (correlation) between the independent (Skills training) and dependent variable (employee commitment at ZRA). Ghazanfar *et al.* (2012) conducted a study and concluded that there is a strong link between commitment and training. When organizations spend on an organization, they will emotionally attract employees, which increases their level of commitment. Furthermore, Ahmad *et al* (2013) conducted studies that made them conclude that training and employee commitment are highly positively correlated.

3. There is a positive relationship between skills training and employee commitment is present; H3 was supported.

The Pearson value (0.066) indicates that there is a positive relationship (correlation) between the independent variable (Skills training) and dependent variable (Retention at ZRA). In regard to the foregoing, Wright and Geroy (2001) state that effective training programs change staff competencies. The result of this study also provides strong empirical support for our hypothesis that skills training has a positive relationship with both employee commitment and retention. The assertion is also supported by Nassazi (2013), who argued that the essence of training is to improve the retention of employees by raising the levels of commitment.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations were made to ZRA;

1. To augment the understanding of effect of skills training on employee commitment and retention at ZRA staff, the management should commence relevant skills training programs as this would improve the commitment of the employees to the core values, thereby enhancing retention.
2. The study also points out that there is need to encourage members of staff at ZRA to use the lessons learnt from review meetings and workshops and use them for future references by others as this will lead to retention at ZRA.
3. The management should as a matter of urgency enhance the skills training programs by allocating adequate resources so that facilitation is seamless.

Implications and future research

There are a number of implications of this study ranging from theoretical and management implications. Although the results provide a better picture of a robust relationship between the variables examined in this study, ZRA being a quasi-government institution, possibly the issues of employee commitment mediating skills training and retention may be different in other public institutions.

Theoretical and Management Implications

The finding therefore lays emphasis on and enriches employee commitment studies by confirming that training is a key antecedent of commitment. It further provides credence to the reciprocity theory, which suggests that employees give in return if a practice such as training is provided by employers.

The management at ZRA should always consider training as a very fundamental tool that can be used for building a committed workforce. This is so because this study demonstrates that if employees get the required trainings, it results into an obligation on the side of employees to return the goodwill by performing beneficial behaviors toward the organization and its members. This study further demonstrates that creating changes in employee commitment through training boosts retention. This is because training improves employees' commitment as demonstrated from this study, which in turn results into retention.

Future research

1. The study was carried out to assess the influence of and mediation role of employee commitment on the relationship between skills training and retention at ZRA only as time and financial resources were limited. therefore, other researchers who have interest in this topic should extend the research to cover a wider sample size and area by involving more public organisations.
2. Future researchers should also re-examine the variables in this study, association between the concepts discussed in this study but in different sectors.
3. Further studies to establish the influence of management aspect as a main determining factor to the adoption of skills training and mediation role of employee commitment would be ideal.
4. From a methodological standpoint, future employee commitment studies could use the same hypotheses but implement the study in terms of longitudinal rather than cross-sectional design. Although the constructs used for measuring training, job satisfaction and employee

commitment have been defined as precisely as possible by drawing relevant literature and validated by practitioners, the measurements used may not have perfectly represented all the dimensions of each variable; therefore, future research could introduce other constructs to measure the same.

5. Lastly, future research may contemplate using the same variables in a different setting for instance a private sector organisation or mainstream civil service

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