

# Influence of Training Strategies on Employee Performance in Public University Campuses in Kericho County, Kenya

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## ABSTRACT

*The focus of this study was to investigate the influence of training strategies on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya. The study was motivated by concerns on employee performance in public university campuses despite the various training strategies adopted by the public institutions to enhance employee performance. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. A sample of 106 employees, representing 26% of the target population, was selected from four public university campuses namely; University of Kabianga (UK), Moi University (MU), Kenyatta University (KU), and Kisii University (KSU). Stratified random sampling was utilized in selecting the respondents for the study. Data was collected through a questionnaire and analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. A pilot study was conducted on the data collection instrument to pre-test its validity before the main survey, while data reliability was measured using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used to aid in coding, entry and analysis of quantitative data. Finally, there is a conclusion and recommendation based on the findings. The study found out that the relationship between training strategies and employee performance was significantly positive. The conclusion from the findings of this study is that motivated employees are the main drivers of the public institutes' performance. Given the findings, the study recommends that public universities improve training strategies to improve the level of employee performance.*

**Keywords:** Employee, performance, training, strategy.

## 1.0 Introduction

The training strategy is a critical element in nurturing and developing quality manpower. The aspects of training young employees are not the same as those before them. The training strategy that motivates younger employees, who have great untapped potentials, is not the same from that of the older generation who most have peaked in their career. As such, employee training is moderated by such individual aspects like age, experience and skills. Al Janabi (2010) points out that training of employees should be consciously managed. Management should respond to the training needs of individual employees and endeavour to design an environment that motivates workers to offer their best services without being coerced. Armstrong (2010) argues that training strategy is how training elements affect employees and is also concerned with the ultimate direction and strength of the resultant behaviour. He suggested that training and ability have been highlighted by several authors as the two factors influencing productivity levels of workers, leading to study efforts to obtain data on both the capacity to work and the will to work. Armstrong further agreed that training strategy leads to an increase in productivity but only to a certain level, where further increase in training leads to a decrease in productivity. This means that while studying the strategies to train employees, managers need to be very precise to avoid 'over- training' which would result in reduced work output by workers.

Kochachathu (2010) posits that employee performance is a crucial determinant in the progress of an organisation and it is a key indicator of an organization's health. To assess employee performance, organizations needs to assess the elements of importance to each of the employee cadres. Inadequate training of employees is usually expressed through poor and unpredictable performance. Ukandu and Ukpere (2011) confirm the importance of training employees. They explain that the level of employee performance increases with an increase in training due to their resultant output at the workplace. Ukandu and Ukpere opine that coaching and feedback approach is the best form of training as a way of imparting and developing skills in employees. The study on employee performance also confirms that training is the driving force for efficiency in organizations (Ogbogu, 2017). Ogbogu reiterates the need for organizations to diversify training strategies adopted for their employees. Busienei (2013) opines that the way an organization trains its employees will greatly affect performance. Most critically, Busienei argues that HRM practices like employee participation and empowerment enhance the performance of employees in an organization.

Research (Kipkebut, 2010) calls for focusing on aspects affecting employee performance in organizations. Kipkebut noted that private enterprises had more superior training strategies than public institutions. According to Munjuri (2011), who studied on training strategies and their influence on employee performance, there is a need for close assessment of training approaches in different organizations. However, the bulk of these research works are focusing on private enterprises. According to the County Government of Kericho, (2019), Kericho County is the home of several public university campuses of Kenya. The public university campuses in Kericho County include; University of Kabianga (UK), Moi University (MU), Kenyatta University (KU), and Kisii University (KSU). Based on the human resource records of respective universities for the year 2019, these university campuses have a combined number of over four hundred employees across all cadres including both teaching and non-teaching staff. In the recent past, there has been the marked observation of reduced employee

performance due to poor training strategies in most public universities in Kenya, and particularly those in Kericho County.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Public universities in Kenya had greatly contributed to educational development since the pre-independence period. However, with the ever dynamic developments in technology and globalization, they were constantly required to develop a versatile workforce that supported individual capabilities and the institution's expectations. Obwogi (2011) notes that little is known on educational institutions in Kenya. Training approaches used to enhance employee performance in other sectors may not apply to employees in the education sector. Past studies opine that training strategies influence employee performance, but there is no consensus on the extent that these training strategies contribute to performance in employees. Based on the past studies, limited systematic research had been done to examine the influence of motivation approaches on the performance of university staff and that there was a need to fill that gap. The level of employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County had become a big concern despite the various training strategies adopted by the public institutions to enhance employee performance. It was, therefore, of great importance for public university campuses in Kericho County to understand how training strategies affected their employee performance. This study, therefore, sought to identify the influence of training strategies on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County in Kenya.

### **1.2 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of training strategies on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish the influence of technical skills training on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya.
- ii. To examine the influence of problem-solving training on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya.
- iii. To investigate the influence of interpersonal skills training on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya.

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

First, the study findings will provide insight to the leadership of institutions of higher learning in Kenya on the effect of various training strategies on employee performance, hence enabling them to take the necessary approach to improve overall institutional performance. Second, the study may help the government of Kenya, more specifically the Ministry of Education, to develop and implement human resource management policies that are tailor-made to enhance employee performance. Third, the findings of this research will also provide data for future researches especially in the field of human resource management.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Theoretical Literature**

This study was guided by the following theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory, Fredrick Herzberg's Two-Factor theory, Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory, Adam's Equity Theory, among others.

#### **2.2.1 Two-Factor Theory of Frederick Herzberg**

Herzberg (1987) identifies two categories of motivation, namely: motivators and hygiene factors. Herzberg theory explains that the two factors are independent and does not affect the other. The effect of "hygiene" needs is temporary. The absence of "hygiene" needs makes an individual unhappy. But in the presence of the same

needs, the effect is not being held. This means that “hygiene” needs are only felt when in times of scarcity and no effect in times of plenty. “Hygiene” needs include good working conditions, the right skill and good leadership at work. On the other hand, the “job satisfiers” i.e. motivators are intrinsic aspects that motivate individuals. Motivators range from recognition by superiors and peers, personal advancement and achievement. It also includes the employee training, growth and development in the profession.

### **2.2.2 Maslow Hierarchy of Needs Theory**

Maslow (1970), while studying human motivation, comes up with a hierarchy of needs that groups human needs into hierarchies. Maslow theory arranges human needs in groups then put them in hierarchical levels based on priority to satisfy them. Maslow theory is centred on eight levels of human needs. The levels are Physiological, Safety, Social, Esteem, Cognitive, Aesthetic, Self-actualization and Transcendence. The desire to satisfy a higher level need does not arise before all the lower-level needs are satisfied. For example, a person’s desire for the second level of needs does not arise before the first level needs are satisfied. Consequently, there is no desire for third level needs until and after second-level needs are met.

### **2.2.3 Adams’ Equity Theory**

According to equity theory, the perception of fair or unfair resource distribution in an organisation and amongst individual employees and departments is the cornerstone of relational satisfaction and interpersonal relationship. Adam’s Equity theory explains that equity in the organisation and employee motivation, are directly related. Any kind of perceived unfairness and injustices perpetuated by the management and leadership will manifest itself in a demotivated workforce, (Guerrero et al., 2007). An increase in understanding and appreciation of fairness and equity results in an increased level of motivation, and vice versa. The individual employee compares his contribution to the organisation with the respective compensation he gets in return. Therefore, Equity theory assesses the ratios of costs to benefits for individual employees in the organisation.

### **2.2.4 Expectancy Theory**

According to Vroom (1964), human beings are motivated towards some way based on the resultant expectations that follow that behaviour. He opines that a person feels satisfied based on the perceived fairness of accompanying rewards. In organizations, individual employee behaviour is shaped by the respective expected outcome. The expected outcome determines the quantum of effort to be applied and consequently influences the employee motivation to perform. If the amount of effort by the employee is more than the expected outcome, he feels demotivated to perform the task. Inversely, when the effort required by the employee is less than the expected outcome, he feels motivated to perform the task. A desirable outcome will motivate an employee to perform as opposed to the undesirable one.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature**

A study by Kipkebut (2010) concludes that a lack of training and career progression are the leading factors for inadequate employee performance in most educational institutions. Busienei (2013) reveals that staff training has a direct influence on work output in organizations. Busienei explains that this relationship is demonstrated by the studies carried out in developed countries. However, there are limited studies that have been carried out in Kenya covering the same areas. Training is the formal way of imparting skills to others to enable them to carry out their duties better while employee performance is a measure of employees works output for a given time. To enhance performance, organisations should endeavour to maintain employee skills and knowledge consistently high. This will ensure that they remain very loyal and highly productive. This, therefore, calls for concerted efforts to identify the best training strategies which best suit specific organizations.

## **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

This shows the relationship between independent and dependent variables. It is an illustration of variables and study objectives, Mugenda and Mugenda, (2013). The study considered personal characteristics as moderators, as illustrated in Figure 1.

**Independent Variables:**

**Dependent Variable:**

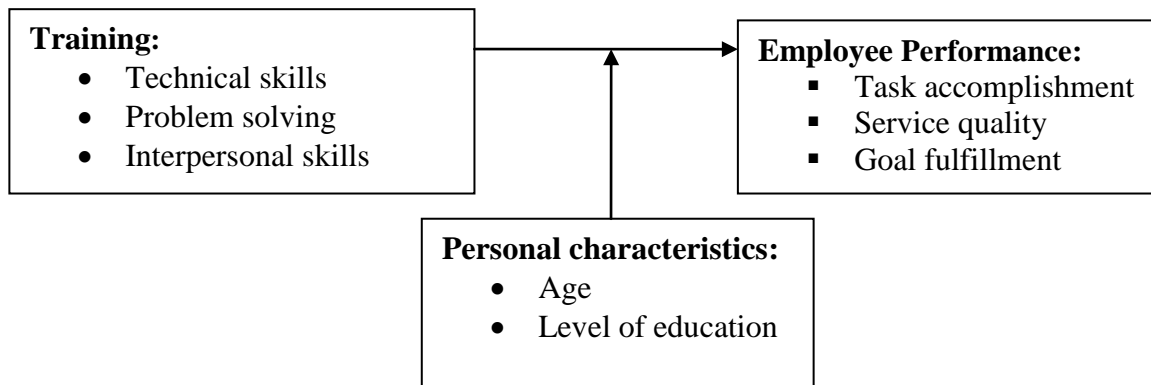


Figure 1. Conceptual framework  
Source: Researcher, 2019

### 3.0 Research Methodology

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design. Cross-sectional survey design gives a clear ‘snapshot’ of the outcome and further establishes specific relationships, at a specific point in time. Cross-sectional survey design also focuses on enabling the researcher to draw inferences from the inter-relationship of motivational strategies adopted with employee performance.

The target population comprised of 412 employees in public university campuses in Kericho County. The study focused on teaching and executive staff. The distribution of the target population of the study is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

<u>University Campus</u>	<u>Low Level Staff Grade (I – IV)</u>	<u>Middle Level Grade (A – F)</u>	<u>Top Level Grade (11 -15)</u>	<u>Total</u>
University of Kabianga	48	100	90	238
Moi University	30	46	14	90
Kenyatta University	18	22	8	48
Kisii University	8	20	8	36
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>412</b>

Source: HR Statistics UK, MU, KSU and KU 2020

### 3.1 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The study respondents were sampled from a target population. Kothari (2011) roots for about 30% of the total population as providing reliable findings. Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) root for a sample of between 10% and 30% of the total population, especially where the target population is defined. Based on the random sampling formula, the study selected a sample size of 106 which is equivalent to 26% of the target population. The breakdown is given in Table 2.

Table 2: Sample Size

<u>University Campus</u>	<u>Low Level Grade (I – IV)</u>	<u>Middle Level Grade (A – F)</u>	<u>Top Level Grade (11 -15)</u>	<u>Total</u>
University of Kabianga	12	26	23	61
Moi University	8	12	3	23
Kenyatta University	4	6	2	12
Kisii University	2	6	2	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>106</b>

Source: Researcher, 2020

### **3.2 Research Instruments and Piloting**

The research instrument used was a questionnaire. The primary data was both qualitative and quantitative.

A pilot-test for the study was done by conducting mock research on 10% of the sample population to establish the suitability of the research instruments. The researcher conducted piloting with ten employees of Moi University, Bomet Campus. The university campus selected for piloting did not form part of the final study. The researcher further sought advice from Human Resource departments on the instrument's items suitability for data collection.

### **3.3 Testing for Validity and Reliability**

Validity is the measure of the relationship of results with the actual phenomenon being studied (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2008). Validity reveals how the analyzed depicts the variables under investigation. The study sought the opinion of content experts as to the relevance and effectiveness of the questionnaire. The study also built on the theoretical frameworks already existing from past studies.

Reliability is the degree of consistency of data under investigation. The study used Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure correlation and consistency of analyzed data. The coefficient Cronbach's alpha ranges between 0 and 1. In this model, 1 is the highest and 0 being the lowest in terms of internal reliability and consistency. The study accepted Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.70.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

A questionnaire was used in collecting primary data for the study. It was structured to capture the study objectives and variables. The questionnaire gives data that is easy to analyze for presentation. The study coded the questionnaires to enhance confidentiality. The study used published literature as a source of secondary data.

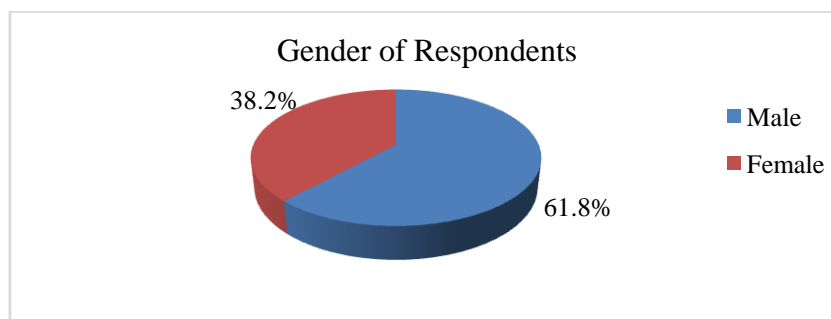
### **3.5 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures**

Once data was collected from the respondents through the questionnaires, it was double-checked for consistency and completeness. Data coding was then done for grouping to facilitate data entry. The study presented information obtained using graphs, charts and tables. For easy analysis of scores distribution, the study used both descriptive and inferential statistics.

## **4.0 Research Findings and Discussions**

The researcher began the questionnaire by seeking personal information from the respondents to reveal their suitability in providing relevant information for the study. The following areas were covered under basic information;

### **Gender**



*Figure 2. Gender of Respondents*

Figure 2 shows that 61.8% of respondents were male compared to 38.2% female. The finding indicates that male gender forms the majority of the workforce in public university campuses in Kericho County.

**Level of Education**

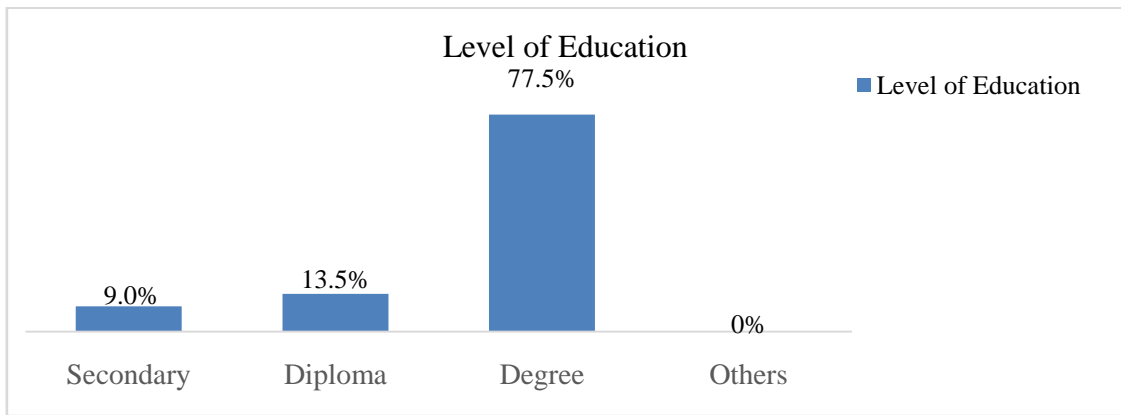


Figure 3. Highest level of education

The findings indicate that most (77.5%) of the respondents had attained degrees, 13.5% had attained a diploma level of education while 9.0% had attained only secondary school level of education. None of the employees had their formal education below the secondary school. This shows that most staff at public university campuses in Kericho County were sufficiently educated since 91.0% had acquired at least a diploma certificate. The findings further reveal that none of the employees working at public university campuses in Kericho County had their formal education below the secondary school level.

**Distribution of Respondents by Age Bracket**

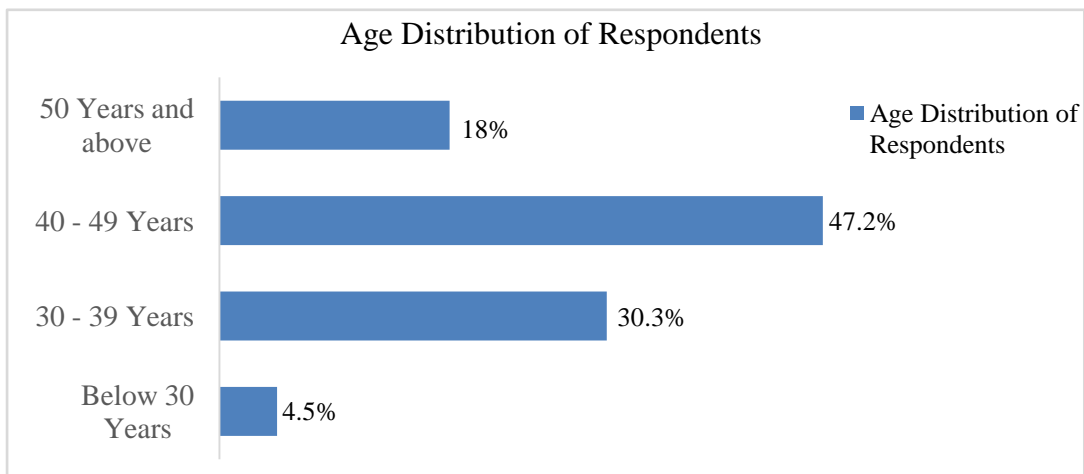


Figure 4. Age distribution

From the findings, 47.2% of the respondents gave their age being forty to forty-nine years, 30.3% were in the bracket of 30-39 years old while 18.0% were over 50 years of age. Only 4.5% of the sampled employees were aged 30 years and below. From the results, the majority of the workforce in public university campuses in Kericho County were aged between 40-49 years. This indicates that most of the workforce in public university campuses were middle-aged who are experienced and energetic to perform their work well when adequately rewarded.



**The Respondents' Years of Service**

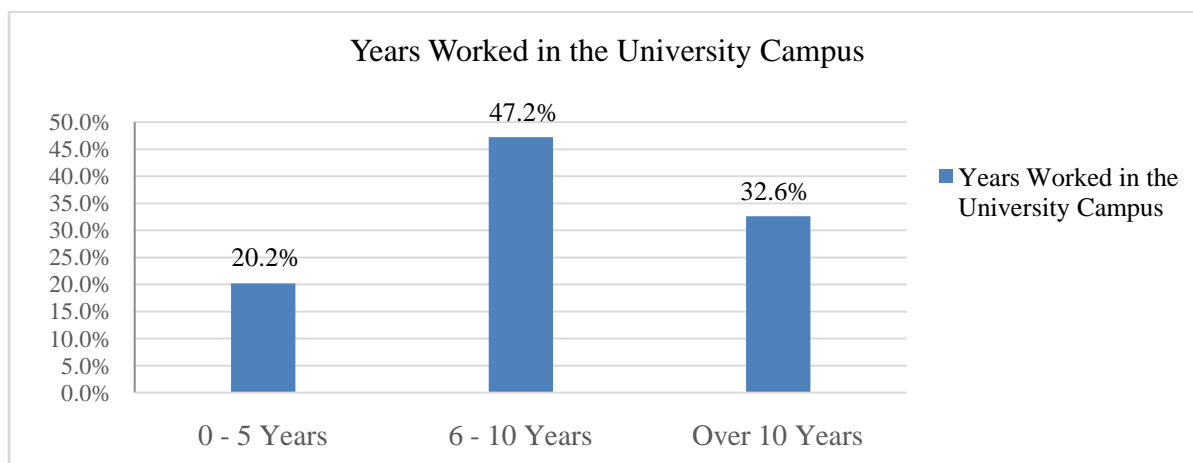


Figure 5. Years served on the university campus

From Figure 5 above, the majority (47.2%) of the sampled population had served in their university campuses for 6-10 years, 32.6% of the respondents had served for over ten years, however, 20.2% of the sampled population had served in their university campuses for between 0-5 years. The results indicate that most (79.8%) of them had served for over five years in the university campuses, therefore adequately provided required information on reward strategies and performance.

**4.1 Influence of Technical Skills Training on Employee Performance**

The study respondents were required to rate the influence of technical skills training as a training strategy on employee performance in their institutions. The results are as indicated in Figure 6.

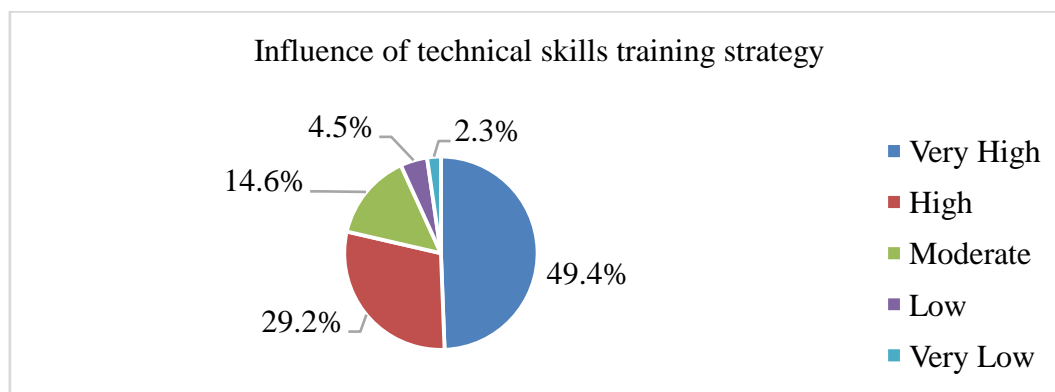


Figure 6. Rating the influence of technical skills training strategy

Most respondents (representing 49.4%) rated the influence of technical skills training strategy in their university campuses as very high, 29.2% as high while 14.6% rated the influence of technical skills training strategy as moderate. Only 2.3% of the respondents rated the influence of employee pay rise strategy at university campuses as very low while 4.5% indicated low. The results reveal the importance of the staff technical skills training approach.

**4.2 Influence of Problem Solving Skills Training on Employee Performance**

The study respondents were required to rate the influence of problem-solving skills training as a training strategy on employee performance in their institutions. The results are as indicated in Figure 7.



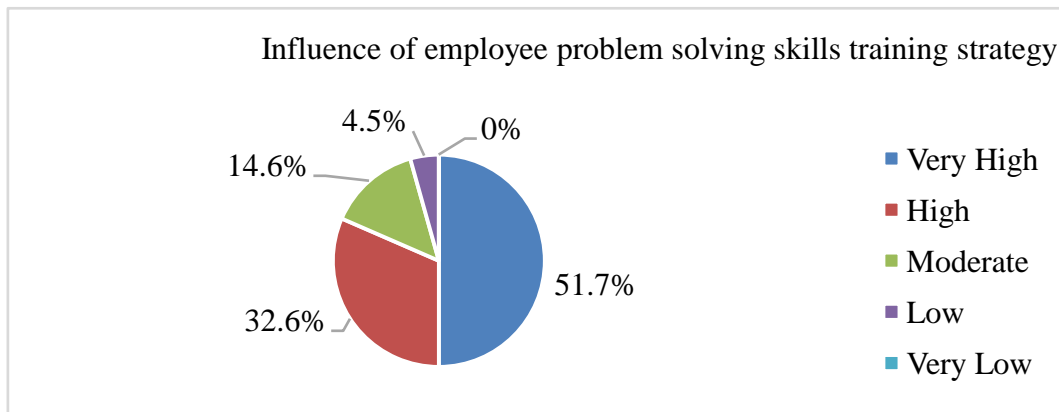


Figure 7. Rating the influence of benefits strategy

Most respondents (representing 51.7%) rated the influence of problem-solving skills training strategy in their university campuses as very high, 32.6% as high while 14.6% rated the influence of problem-solving skills training strategy as moderate. None of the respondents rated the influence of employee problem-solving skills training strategy at university campuses as very low while only 4.5% indicated low. The results reveal the importance of the employee problem-solving skills training approach.

#### 4.3 Influence of Interpersonal Skills Training on Employee Performance

The study respondents were required to rate the influence of interpersonal skills training as a training strategy on employee performance in their institutions. The results are as indicated in Figure 8.

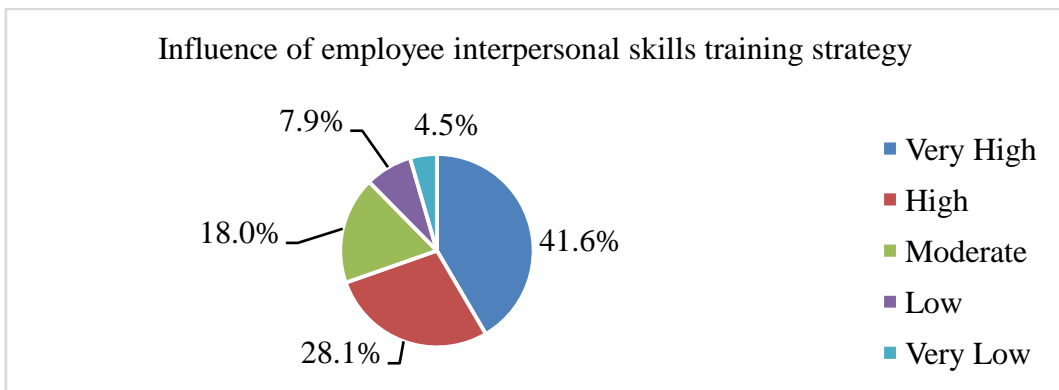


Figure 8. Rating the influence of employee interpersonal skills training strategy

Majority of respondents (representing 41.6%) rated the influence of interpersonal skills training strategy in their university campuses as very high, 28.1% as high while 18.0% rated the influence of interpersonal skills training strategy as moderate. However, 7.9% of the respondents rated the influence of employee interpersonal skills training strategy at university campuses as low while 4.5% rated very low. The results reveal the importance of the interpersonal skills training rise approach.

The findings reveal that training strategy was an important motivational approach adopted by public university campuses in Kericho County to enhance staff performance.

### 5.0 Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Summary

This primary objective of this study was to investigate the influence of training strategy on employee performance in public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya. Based on the results of this study, the training strategy positively influences employee performance. The findings indicated that public university campuses in Kericho County used technical skills training, problem-solving training, inter-personal skills

training, among others as a training strategy to motivate their staff. This indicates that training strategy was a critical tool adopted by public university campuses in Kericho County to enhance employee performance.

## 5.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that training strategies employed by public university campuses in Kericho County were instrumental in influencing employee performance. However, a portion of the staff indicated that some training strategies were not yielding the desired end state.

## 5.3 Recommendations

The study recommends that the leadership of public university campuses in Kericho County, Kenya should continuously and progressively train their staff on various skills and knowledge. Continuous and progressive training will enable employees to become competent in discharging their duties hence improving overall performance. Further, the leadership should regularly evaluate and review the training policies of their institutions. The leadership should involve employees in identifying and addressing challenges regarding training. This will help them to adequately address the gaps and hence develop a robust training structure for better employee performance.

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