

INFLUENCE OF TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN COMMERCIAL BANKS IN NAKURU CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT, KENYA

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Abstract

This study evaluated the influence of total quality management practices on employee engagement in commercial banks in Nakuru CBD, Kenya. For this, descriptive research design was used. Stratified random sampling was adopted to select a sample of 72 participants. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential data analyses were conducted using SPSS 23. The results show the organizations have training programs for all employees (Mean=3.74), employee abilities were greatly improved by continuous training (Mean =3.99). The results also show that the organizations encouraged employees to express their view and suggestions at work place (Mean =4.19), employees were neutral whether all their work related views were acted upon (Mean =3.24). The study concludes that training programs are not regular or geared towards bridging the employee skill gaps and that employees are encouraged to air their views at work. The study recommends that employees should receive timely information needed to effectively perform their jobs and training should be emphasized upon because it improves employee decision making abilities.

Keywords: Engagement; Quality; Employee; Banks; Participation; Training; Commitment; Management

INTRODUCTION

According to Perrin's Global Workforce Study (2003), employee engagement is the willingness and ability of the employees to help their company succeed, largely by providing discretionary effort on a sustainable basis. Robinson et al. (2004) define employee engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its value. In addition, total quality management is a business philosophy that aims at continuous improvement and satisfaction of the customers, engagement and involvement of the employees (Nashwan & Noman, 2012). In order to gain maximum benefit, companies should adopt different TQM management practices to gain competitive edge (FaihanAlotaibi, 2013).

According to Katller and Armstrong (2004), total quality management has become an accepted technique to ensure performance and survival of organizations. According to Deming (1995), the success of quality management efforts depend upon the effective integration of various management subsystems. Success of TQM generates improved products and services, reduced costs, more satisfied customers, engaged employees and improved financial performance (Hendricks & Singhal, 2001). Thus, banks should deliver better quality products and customer satisfaction than the competition to survive.

The United States and Japanese gurus have focused on the use of TQM in the manufacturing sector to ensure continuous improvement of their products and services (Sit et al., 2009). On the same note, other service sectors such as telecommunication, hospitals, banks, educational institutes and hotel organizations have adopted the TQM philosophy. An empirical study within Australian organizations reported that TQM practices and quality performance have a strong positive relationship (Prajo & Brown, 2004). Further, Talib et al (2010) posited that implementation of TQM improves the performance of a company. If TQM practices are implemented effectively, more quality benefits will be achieved (Sajjad & Amjad, 2012).

A study conducted by Rategan (2012) indicated that a 90% improvement rate in employee relations, operating procedures, customer satisfaction, and financial performance is achieved due to TQM implementation. According to Longenecker and Scazzero (2013), achieving high product quality and pursuing successful TQM implementation are highly dependent on top management support. However, Mahmoud, and Rice (2014) reported that there is no association between top management support for quality and the level of product quality achieved. Thus, conflicting research findings have been reported surrounding the effects of TQM implementation on overall business performance. Thus, it requires that quality be built into all the processes so as to be efficient in the overall operation (Andrle, 2014). According to

Sila (2014), TQM can minimize the total cost of production by limiting the number of suppliers used by the firm and providing them with necessary training and technology.

According to Moballeghi and Moghaddam (2011), there is a growing awareness that a well-designed and well executed TQM process is one of the most effective routes to increase productivity and profitability. According to Chikodili (2010), one of the fundamental challenges of the Nigerian manufacturing and banking industry is the implementation of a holistic total quality management system that improves competitiveness in the global economy. Employees are a key group of any organization: their knowledge of the brand and organization determines the performance of the organization (Drake, Gulman & Roberts, 2005).

Moreover, it is important that employees are aware of the strategies of an organization to implement them (Quirke, 2000). According to Slatten and Mehmetoglu (2011) in their research in the hospitality industry, employee engagement has a positive relationship with the Innovative Behavior of employees in roles dealing directly with customers. According to Abraham (2012); Echols (2005) and Right Management (2009), employee engagement results in innovation, along with better customer service, productivity, low staff turnover, dedicated workforce, great sense of work commitment, willingness to put extra time in the job, and pride in their work.

Participatory decision making is considered as the process of involving all the employees of an organization in decision making irrespective of the ranks they hold in the organization. By enhancing junior employee participation in decision making, effective communication in which the manager embraces two-way communication with his employees is a vital tool. The manager should be an active listener who gives an opportunity to the employees to present their views and suggestions and act on them. It is therefore evident that the manager's encouragement of junior employees' voice can lift their well-being and productivity (McWen, 2011). The involvement of employees in the organization's decision making, which is through employee voice, is directly linked to high performance. It is also arguable that encouraging employees to present their views is positively associated with increasing employee well-being (Gilley & McMillan, 2012). When employees have the feeling that they are appreciated at their workplace, they have the idea that they have influence over what they do. Even though they have to work under set deadlines and targets, they are not under the pressure of the management who designs what needs to be done (Salvendy, 2012). The junior employees are at liberty to work through teams and meet the demanding targets.

Summers and Hyman (2014) argue that there are several levels and types of employee voices encouraged in the workplace. The main ones are formal like committees and informal such as open door policies. According to Vazirani (2007), engaged Employees are builders, they want to know the desired expectation for their role so that they can meet and exceed them.

They perform at consistently high levels, they want to use their talent and strengths at work every day, they work with passion and they drive innovation and move their organization forward.

However, the findings within current stream of HRM research have so far also been largely inconclusive (Alfes, et al., 2013) but evidence has accumulated on the basis of quantitative studies to suggest that high levels of engagement are associated with high levels of performance, citizenship behavior and individual wellbeing (Christian et al., 2011). In Kenya, the banking sector is the largest sector in the service industry that serves the needs of different categories of customers. Whereas banks in Kenya lay a lot of emphasis on provision of quality service to customers, the challenge is to create motivated and engaged employees who can facilitate that endeavor for TQM implementation. Employees are very critical to the achievement of organizational goals. In order to create an environment for employee satisfaction and engagement, it is vitally important to know which factors most affect employee engagement (Heartfield, 2012).

According to Mokaya and Kipyegon (2014) while studying employee engagement in Cooperative bank of Kenya established that majority of the employees were not involved in setting work targets against which their performance was measured. Therefore, TQM is the new method to reinforce competitive advantages and organizational performance; it is the core of a bank's success (Ooi et al., 2011). Engaged employees will always offer better performance and therefore training them in new skills and knowledge will lead to a more efficient and effective workplace (Cervená, 2011; Vargas & Tian, 2013). At the heart of the survival of any bank, satisfaction of the clients is most important. The clients/customers are only satisfied when their demands are being met at the right cost and to the right quality. These are the challenges banks in Kenya face in their day to day operations.

Banking Industry in Kenya

There are 44 commercial banks in Kenya out of which 31 are locally owned, while 13 are foreign owned. Three of the locally owned banks are publicly owned by shareholders while twenty eight are private. Nine of the foreign owned banks are locally incorporated. In addition to the forty four financial institutions, there are seven representative offices of foreign banks (CBK, 2014). In terms of asset holding, foreign banks account for about 35% of the banking assets as of 2011. The Kenya financial sector is dominated by commercial banks. Therefore, any failure in this sector has a massive implication on the economic growth of the country. This is due to the fact that any bankruptcy that could happen in the sector has a contagion effect that can lead to bank

runs and serious economic ramifications. Despite the good overall financial performance of banks in Kenya, there are a couple of banks declaring losses (Oloo, 2011).

Statement of the Problem

The relationship between successful TQM implementation and financial performance by banks is very important. The main incentive for TQM in banks is continuous improvement in quality and service delivery. TQM further improves customer satisfaction and responses to changes in the competitive business environment. Consequently, the banks are in a rush to implement TQM to enhance their performance and woo customers into their portfolios. However, in the process, quality and customer satisfaction are often major obstacles. Moreover, employee retention, compensation, performance and top management commitment have also become major challenges facing banks in Kenya. A study by Shao (2013) established that training opportunities (15%), recognition from top management (7.5%) and good working facilities (12.5%) influences employee retention and productivity. Poor quality service delivery erodes goodwill, which could be very costly for any bank. Quality is vital for organizational success. It has become inevitable for banks to work on enhancing quality within their functions, product and services and the way they manage and engage employees. Accordingly, it is more difficult for customers to measure quality for bank services. Further, banks face a lot of problems when they have a high employee turnover rate for reasons such as job dissatisfaction, poor working conditions, and indecent compensation packages and if there are no advancements in their careers. 70% of the public sector employees are dissatisfied with the policies regarding time off/family arrangement while in the private sector and banks it is 58% (Negi& Singh, 2012). High turnover rates leads to low performance in the banks. Some banks also lack the commitment of top management in the implementation of TQM. Some top managers do not involve employees in the implementation and design stages of TQM in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders, customers and raise the levels of quality and satisfaction. Lack of commitment by top managers' falls short of developing employee's skills and capacities which are critical in TQM implementation. This greatly affects the performance of the banking industry. It is for that reason that this study assessed the influences of total quality management practices on employee engagement in Commercial Banks in Nakuru Central Business District.

General Objective of the Study

The study assessed the influences of total quality management practices on employee engagement in commercial banks in Nakuru Central Business District.

Specific objectives of the Study

- i. To establish how continuous training practices influences employee engagement in commercial banks in Nakuru Central Business District.
- ii. To assess how employee voice influences employee engagement in commercial banks in Nakuru Central Business District.

Limitations of the Study

The study encountered some limitations because some senior managers were not readily available to fill in the questionnaire on time. Time constraints were also another limitation since the researcher had to frequently follow up with the participants for the administration of the questionnaire.

THEORETICAL LITERATURE

Theories, as Silvermann (2000) underlines, provide the impetus for research. Theories also help arrange a set of concepts to define and explain some phenomenon. Concepts are essential to define a research problem. This study was guided by both the continuous improvement concept and total quality management theory.

Agency Theory

This theory was proposed by Eisenhardt in 1989 and according to this theory; the principal-agent problem treats the difficulties that arise under conditions of incomplete and asymmetric information when a principal hires an agent. Various mechanisms may be used to try to align the interests of the agent with those of the principal, such as piece rates/commissions, profit sharing, efficiency wages, the agent posting a bond, or fear of firing. The principal-agent problem is found in most employer/employee relationships, for example, when stockholders hire top executives of corporations (Baker, 2002). This affects employee engagement and relations either positively or negatively.

In this study, Agency theory is directed at the ubiquitous agency relationship, in which one party (the principal) delegates work to another (the agent), who performs that work. Agency theory is concerned with resolving two problems that can occur in agency relationships. The first is the agency problem that arises when the desires or goals of the principal and agent conflict and it is difficult or expensive for the principal to verify what the agent is actually doing. The problem here is that the principal cannot verify that the agent or employee has behaved appropriately. The second is the problem of risk sharing that arises when the principal and agent have different attitudes towards risk (Data et al., 2001). The problem here is that the

principal and the agent may prefer different actions because of the different risk preferences. Managers and agents have different interests in maximizing their own profit, for that reason, the principal and agent are in conflict. This will help explain the relationship between the employee, their engagement and commitment to the organizations. When the principal and agent act differently towards risk, they take different actions.

Therefore, this theory is very relevant to this study in that it elaborates on how total quality management practices influences employee engagement based on the principal and agent model relationship. Employees have their goals and the organization under the chief executive officers or directors are under pressure to deliver quality services. In the process, conflicts occur and solutions have to be found to ensure the employees and the organizations are both achieving their goals (Datar et al, 2001). Nevertheless, the organization more often than not prefers to achieve or gain more from its employees and based on the agency theory, this directly affects employee productivity, relations and therefore their engagement and commitment to work and the organization.

Continuous Improvement Concept

Continuous improvement concept is widely used in many organizations worldwide. According to Bessant et al. (2001) CI is an organization-wide process of focused and sustained incremental innovation. Gertsen (2001) describes CI as an improvement process that is systematically applied, carried out in small steps, and to a large extent relies on employee participation. Similarly, Boer (2002) defines CI as planned, organized and systematic incremental changes that influence organizational performance. CI is like an umbrella for a wide domain of tools and techniques to improve an organization's performance, such as Lean, Six Sigma, problem solving methodology, statistical process control (SPC), control charts and cause and effect diagrams (Ehie&Sheu, 2005). It's mostly applied to any management approach to improve the quality of the outcomes.

According to Davison and Hyland (2006), CI is the ongoing interaction between operations, innovation, learning that aims to achieving organizational cost and administrative effectiveness, efficiency and flexibility. In addition, the employees' creativity and knowledge are the basis for continuous improvement (Liker & Hoseus, 2010). TQM is mainly concerned with continuous improvement in all work processes, from high level strategic planning and decision-making to detailed execution of work elements by the employees in the banking industry. The defects can be prevented, as it leads to continuously improving results of people, processes, and technology (Ijaz et al., 2012). The continuous improvement is a dynamic process, focus on improvement programs, services, materials and their relationship with the organization's

customers, suppliers, competitors and capital markets (Jagdeep& Singh, 2013). This concept links directly to the study in hand on the influence of employee engagement on total quality management of tier two banks in Nakuru town. Therefore, utilizing the concept of continuous improvement, the roles of employee performance, compensation, retention and commitment of the top management in banks will be elaborated and their influence on total quality management of tier two banks in Nakuru town.

Conceptual Review

This section reviews the relevant literature on the variables under study to establish the research gaps and therefore provide a guideline along which this study was conducted.

Continuous Training Practices and Employee Engagement

Training and development is defined as specific efforts made to develop the skills to their employees by the employers so that new knowledge and skills can be utilized their potentials in performing their jobs (Ologbo&Sofian, 2013). According to Elnaga and Imra (2013), employee training is a program that provides workers with information, new skills, or professional development opportunities. It can take place in numerous ways, on the job or off the job; in the organization or outside organization. Regardless of the view, the term training draws elements of acquiring new knowledge to help manage both current and future situations. An ever rapidly changing business environment therefore demands for a lifelong learning as an essential coping strategy to remain competitive (Amin et al., 2013).

Despite these positive outcomes of training, some scholars have argued differently. Brum (2007) while acknowledging that training has been used extensively by organizations as a competitive strategy, notes that there is significant varying debates among professionals and scholars as to the effect that training has on both employee and organizational goals. He posits that one school of thought argues that training leads to an increase in turnover while the other states that training is a tool that can lead to higher levels of employee retention. The UN Handbook on Competencies (2009) posits that in 'Building the Future', the organization's greatest strength-and the key to success is the quality of staff and managers. Hence to capitalize on this strength, the organizations need to create an organizational culture achievable through employee training and environment that enables staff to contribute to their maximum potential. This has seen a creation of training programs to stimulate increased employee productivity and performance (UN, 2010).

The effect of training on employee and organizational performance may be both direct and indirect. According to Sahinidis and Bouris (2008), the role of training programs is seen as a

measure of improving employee and organizational capabilities i.e. when the organization invests in improving the knowledge and skills of its employees, the investment is returned in the form of more productive and effective employees. Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim (2014) examined the relationship between training and development and employee's performance and productivity which leads to engagement of the employees. The outcomes showed that there was significant relationship between training and development and employees' performance and productivity.

In Kenya, Wachira (2013) linked employee training and development activities to business growth in Barclays Bank. Further she posits that training and development activities have been used by the bank to ensure that it had well-grounded staff to support the growth agenda. As a result, many of her employees got opportunities to take on higher responsibilities as well as being able to in achieving the best in all areas of their professional and personal lives. This was supported by a study by Otuko, Chege and Douglas (2013) looking at the effect of training dimensions on employee's work performance with a focus on Mumias Sugar Company.

Employee Voice and Employee Engagement

From the words of Boxall and Purcell (2003), employee voice is the term increasingly used to cover a whole variety of processes and structures which enable and sometimes empower employees, directly and indirectly contribute to decision making in the firm. This definition actually supports the views of Millward et al (2000) who sees employee voice as the ability of employees to influence the actions of the employer. It has been noted that productivity in many organizations has gone down considerably because employees are not allowed to air their views on issues concerning the organization. This has greatly affected the performance and productivity of such organizations. Employees are at risk of losing their jobs when they air their views at the workplace so they will rather be silent to the detriment of their companies. Employees may as a result, withhold information that might be useful to the organization which can lead to dissatisfaction among employees which manifests itself in absenteeism and turnover and perhaps other undesired behaviors.

According to Van Dyne et al. (2003), the management literature contains two major conceptualizations. The first approach describes speaking up behavior such as when employees proactively make suggestions for change. The second uses the term to describe procedures that enhance justice judgments and facilitate employee participation in decision making. This implies both informal and formal mechanisms are required. Thus employee voices are the intentional expression of work-related ideas, information, and opinions".According to Morrison et al. (2011), voice is the discretionary verbal communication of ideas, suggestions or

opinions with the intent to improve organizational or unit functioning, a view consistent with several other recent studies (Tangirala & Ramanujam 2012).

Voice is also about employees making innovative suggestions for change and recommending modifications to standard procedures even when others disagree. Batt, Colvin and Keefe (2002), found that the more effective employees perceived voice mechanisms to be, the more likely they were to advance their own opinions and ideas. Research also suggests that where employees believe they are able to influence decisions, and perceive they have opportunities for voice; this has the potential to result in increased levels of organizational commitment (Kelliher & Hope-Hailey, 2011). In another study, Purcell et al. (2003) found a number of factors to be strongly associated with high engagement; they were all related to an employee's involvement in a work-related practice. Work by the Institute of Employment Studies also points to a 'sense of feeling valued and involved' as a major driver of engagement (Robinson et al. 2004).

As Farndale et al. (2011) explain, exchange relationships at work take various forms, and employees will distinguish between exchanges with senior managers, with their line managers and with other members of the organization. Employees can thus form social exchange relationships at multiple levels. Following Farndale et al. (2011), voice allows employees the opportunity to communicate their opinions, and engenders the belief that their contributions are valued. It creates a level of respect towards the leaders of the organization, and there is thus a direct connection between employee voice and the development of employee trust in senior management (Farndale et al., 2011). Moreover, where employers deliver on their commitments, this reinforces employees' sense of fairness and engenders greater trust in the organization.

A second key exchange relationship that employees experience is with their line manager. It is well established that opportunities for voice can encourage more positive employee attitudes towards management (Dietz, Wilkinson & Redman 2009), and that line managers who enable employee participation affect employee attitudes in positive ways because employees feel recognized and listened to. These voice mechanisms enhance the perceived quality and strength of the employee-line manager relationship. Conversely, as Farndale et al. (2011) explain, if employees do not feel that they have opportunities to advance their views, or think the views they offer have little influence, this is likely to negatively affect their attitudes towards, and relationship with, their line managers. Research suggests that managerial processes are a significant influence on how engaged people feel (Macey & Schneider, 2008).

According to Purcell (2010), the root of employee disengagement is poor management, where employees are denied the opportunity to communicate with or receive information from their line managers. It is also argued that engaged employees outperform others by showing heightened interest in their work and being prepared to 'go the extra mile' for their organization (Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010). The claim has also been made that engaged employees see their work as more meaningful and fulfilling, and appear to experience increased job satisfaction (Balain & Sparrow, 2009). Organizational practices send overt and implicit signals to employees about the extent to which they are valued and trusted, giving rise to feelings of obligation on the part of employees, who then reciprocate through demonstrating positive behaviors (Gould-Williams, 2007).

Employee Engagement

According to Chalofsky (2010), interest in the study and application of employee engagement is experiencing unprecedented popularity in the human resource development (HRD) field. Engagement is as a positive work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption (Bakker & Demerouti, 2009). It is winning over the minds (rational commitment) and the hearts (emotional commitment) of employees in ways that lead to extraordinary effort. Employee engagement is a global construct and is studied in the relationship of employee commitment, performance and association with organization (Ferguson, 2009).

A detailed study of literature on engagement reveals that there are different dimensions of engagement construct such as cognitive (Shuck & Herd, 2012) or psychological (Ghafooret al., 2011) engagement which involves meaningfulness, safety and availability as predictors (Saks, 2006); emotional engagement which involves belief, willingness and investment (Shuck & Herd, 2012) and behavioral engagement (Ram & Prabhakar, 2011) which involves discretionary effort (Shuck & Herd, 2012). Engaged employees exhibit emotional job attachment, unreserved commitment, increased productivity, high job passion, and in most cases they go extra miles (Abraham, 2012). However, from a general view, employee engagement is defined as a distinct and unique construct that consists of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral components that are associated with individual role performance (Shuck, Rocco & Albornoz, 2011).

According to Rashid, Asad and Ashraf (2011), in their study on the factors influencing employee engagement and relation of employee engagement to organizational and personal performance in the banking sector of Pakistan. The result shows insignificant relationship between employee engagement and training and career development. According to Ryynanen,

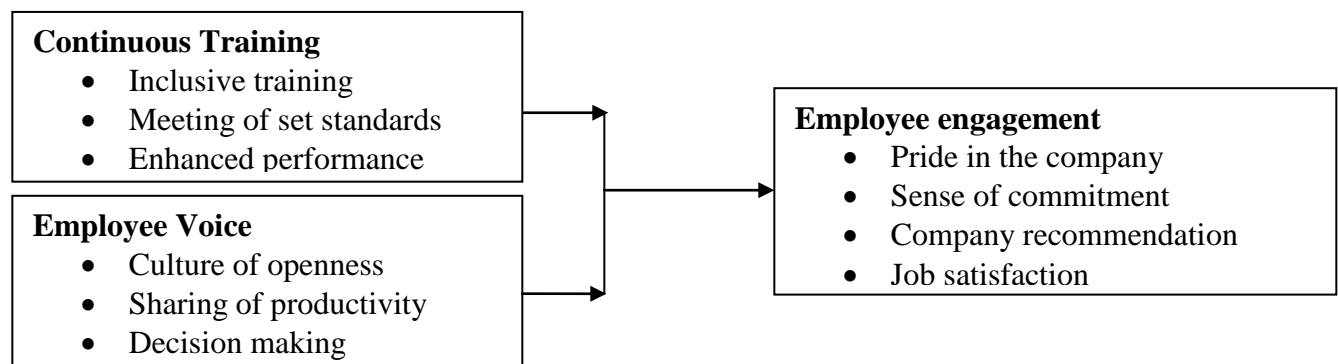
Pekkarinen and Salminen (2012) define internal communication and engagement as an internal organizational process that provide and share information to create a sense of community and trust among employees. It is important for the management and employees to build a culture of transparency and thus can engage employees in the priorities of the organization (Mishra et al., 2014). This then implies that internal communication and employee engagement are important processes that can be applied to create synergy in the organization.

According to Sarangi and Srivastava (2012) while conducting a study on the benefits and factor of the organizational and communication on facilitating employee engagement in the Indian private banks; established that there is a significant impact between organization communication and employee engagement. In a research conducted by Karanges, Johnston, Beatson and Lings (2015), the authors examined the importance of the relationship between internal communication and employee engagement using online survey method with the target respondent of Australian organization employing over 50 staffs. The result showed a significant and positive relationship between internal communication and employee engagement. A research conducted by Lee and Ok (2015) aimed to provide theory-based empirical evidence on whether employee core self-evaluations and the psychological climate affect employee engagement. They targeted hotel line-employees and managers in the USA as their target respondents using online survey. The result shows that there is a positive relationship between psychological Climate (internal communication) and employee engagement.

Conceptual Framework

From the conceptual framework, employee engagement is the dependent variable and effective communication, continuous training, innovative practices and employee voice are the independent variables.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



Research Gaps

Employee involvement is one approach to improving quality productivity. Its use is credited for contributing to the success enjoyed by Japanese in the world marketplace (Idris, 2011). Employee involvement is not a replacement for management nor is it the final word in quality improvement. It is therefore a means to better meet the organizations goals for quality and productivity at all levels of the organization (Hashim, 2005). The relationship between successful TQM implementation and financial performance by banks is very important. The main incentive for TQM in banks is continuous improvement in quality and service delivery. TQM further improves customer satisfaction and responses to changes in the competitive business environment. However, in the process, quality and customer satisfaction are often major obstacles (Shilpa, 2013). Moreover, employee retention, compensation, performance and top management commitment have also become major challenges facing banks in Kenya. Poor quality service delivery erodes goodwill, which could be very costly for any bank. Quality is vital for organizational success. It has become inevitable for banks to work on enhancing quality within their functions, product and services and the way they manage and engage employees. Accordingly, it is more difficult for customers to measure quality for bank services. Some banks also lack the commitment of top management in the implementation of TQM (Abraham, 2012). Some top managers do not involve employees in the implementation and design stages of TQM in order to meet the expectations of stakeholders, customers and raise the levels of quality and satisfaction.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

According to Kombo et al. (2002), research design is the scheme; outline or plan that is used to generate answers to research problems. Therefore, this study adopted a descriptive research design. This design was used to facilitate the collection of a considerable amount of data quickly, efficiently and accurately (Oso & Onen, 2005). The data collected by this design was used to suggest reasons for particular relationships between variables (Saunders & Thornhill, 2007). Quantitative research was also used to test the research hypotheses because of its ability to measure data using statistics. This was advantageous because it allowed for objective analysis of the study findings.

Target Population

Population according to Kothari, (2013) is the universe of interest. It is the total number of subjects or the total environment of interest to the researcher. According to Castillo (2009), a

research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. This study will target 260 employees from commercial banks in Nakuru CBD.

Sampling Frame

According to Silverman (2005), the sampling frame should be large to allow the researcher to make inferences of the entire population. The sample frame for this study comprised of 260 respondents from commercial banks in Nakuru Central Business District.

Table 1. Sample Frame

Participant	Target population	Percentage (%)
Senior Managers	20	7.7
Middle Level Managers	63	24.2
Junior Bank Staff	177	68.1
Total	260	100.0

Sample Size

The sample was calculated using the mathematical approach developed by Taro Yamene (1964).

$$n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$$

Where, n is the Sample size, N is the population (260), e is the error estimate/significance level, given as 0.05 and 1 is the Constant.

$$n = 260 / [1 + 260(0.05)^2]$$

$$n = 72$$

Table 2. Sample Distribution

Participant	Target population	Sample Size
Senior Managers	20	6
Middle Level Managers	63	17
Junior Bank Staff	177	49
Total	260	72

Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was applied to select 72 respondents from commercial banks in Nakuru CBD. Additionally, stratified sampling is a good approach and method when there is a

good statistical database available. It gives flexibility to the researcher to make a decision on identification and allocation of the units for the strata.

Data Collection Instrument

The study used a structured questionnaire to collect data from the respondents. Questionnaires are research instruments used to collect information geared towards addressing specific objectives (Kombo et al., 2002). The questionnaire items comprised of questions scaled on a five point likert scale. The close-ended Likert rating scaled the items on (5, 4, 3, 2 and 1) where 5-strongly agree, 4-agree, 3-undecided/neutral 2-disagrees and 1-strongly disagree.

Pilot Testing

Prior to conducting the main research, a pilot study was conducted in Naivasha town among commercial banks to test the reliability and validity of the research instrument by pre-testing the questionnaire. Mugenda and Mugenda, (2003) recommends a 10% of the sample size to be considered as a sample size in a pilot study. In this study, a sample size of 7 respondents was selected to participate in the pilot study and the results of the pilot study will not be included in the final data analysis. Validity is the degree to which an instrument measures what is supposed to measure (Kothari, 2004). The validity of the research instrument was established through consultation with the research supervisor. Furthermore, the questionnaires were subjected to pre-test to detect any deficiencies in it. Comments and suggestions made by the pre-test participants were incorporated in the questionnaire.

Reliability refers to the extent to which results are consistent overtime (Kombo& Tromp, 2006). Cronbach alpha was used to test the internal consistency estimate of reliability of the test scores with a threshold of 0.7 ($\alpha > 0.7$). The higher the score, the more reliable the alpha scores for acceptability of reliability coefficients (Creswell, 2002). All the variables gave Cronbach Alpha values greater than 0.7. According to Creswell (2002), the higher the score, the more reliable the alpha scores for acceptability of the reliability coefficients. The results of the pilot test were not included in the final data analysis and presentation of the study findings.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	N	Cronbach's Alpha Value
Continuous Training Practices	6	.767
Employee Voice	6	.769
Employee Engagement	6	.774

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection as defined by Kombo and Tromp (2006) is the process of gathering specific information aimed at proving or refuting some facts. The primary data was collected through a self-administered structured questionnaire on a drop and pick later basis to allow respondents enough time to fill the questionnaires.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Data analysis consists of examining categorizing; tabulating or otherwise recombining the evidence to address the initial prepositions of the study (Savenye, Robinson, 2004). The data collected was edited, collated to eliminate errors and coded for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) tool.

Descriptive analysis (mean, standard deviation and percentages) were generated. Further, inferential analysis (correlation and regression) were also conducted to the test the statistical significance of the results. The regression model used is illustrated below.

$$Y_i = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

Where,

Y_1 = Employee engagement

X_1 = Continuous training

X_2 = Employee voice

ε = representing the error term

β_1, β_2 , are the net changes in Y

Y is the function of X_i ($i=1, 2,$) that is $Y = f(X_i)$.

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

Response Rate

The study targeted a sample size of 72 participants out of which 64 responded giving a response rate of 88.9%. This response was considered adequate and representative of the target population and conformed to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) stipulation that a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting but a response rate of 70% and above is excellent. Cooper and Schindler (2003) argued that a response rate exceeding 30% of the total sample size provides enough data that can be used to generalize the characteristics of a study problem.

Participant's Demographic Characteristics

This section describes the demographic characteristic of the study population based on the data collected and analyzed. There was a fair balance of gender participation in the study. From the findings, the male participants made the majority of the respondents at 54.7% and the females at 45.3%. This gender distribution accommodated and benefitted from relatively balanced opinions and views from both sides of the gender divide. Further, 39.1% of the participants were aged between 20-25years, 34.4% were aged 26-30 years, and 21.9% were aged between 31 to 35 years while 4.6% were aged above 35 years. The findings indicate that the participants were relatively young and probably well versed with the current information on factors influencing employee engagement in the banking industry. Therefore the study benefitted from the most current views regarding employee engagement. Further, the relatively young age of the participants imply that there is a likelihood of difficulty in engaging the employees.

Findings on the positions held in the banking industry, 6.3% were senior managers, 23.4% were middle level managers while 70.3% were lower cadre staff. Further, the findings imply that the participants were well distributed in various positions as well as their observations in regard to the study questions. Findings on education levels of the participants established that the majority 76.5% had attained degree level of education, 14.1% had attained master's degree and above while 9.4% attained diploma level of education respectively. The findings imply that the participants were sufficiently educated and informed to comprehend the study questions and answer them adequately. The education profile of the respondents makes this a good sample as well- educated respondents have the ability to furnish the study with better information which added value.

On working experience, the findings indicate that the majority (35.9%) of the participants had worked for less than 1 year followed by those who had worked for between 1 and 5 years (29.7%). Those who had worked for between 6 and 10 years were 26.6% while 7.8% had worked for 10 years and above.

The results imply that majority of the participants had satisfactory working experience to appropriately furnish the researcher with the information sought by the study. Additionally, the study established that 35.9% of the participants had worked for less than 1 year in their current roles while 32.8% had worked for 1 to 5 years, 25% had worked for 6 to 10 years and 6.3% had worked in the same role for over 10 years respectively. The findings imply that majority of the participants had a relatively significant experience in their jobs to appropriately provide the required information in this study.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis focuses on describing the basic features of data in a given study (Cooper & Schindler, 2013). This section presents the descriptive analysis findings for continuous training practices and employee voice.

Influence of Continuous Training Practices on Employee Engagement

The first objective of the study sought to determine the influence of continuous training practices on employee engagement in banks in Nakuru central business district, Kenya. The first statement sought to establish whether the organization has a training program that includes all the employees. From the descriptive analysis results in Table 4, majority of the participants (43.8%) were in agreement in their responses to the statements that the organization has training programs which includes all the employees (Mean=3.74, SD=.963).

Table 4. Influence of Continuous Training Practices on Employee Engagement

Statements on Continuous Training	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
i. The organization has a training program that includes all the employees.	64	15.6%	43.8%	18.7%	14.1%	7.8%	3.74	.963
ii. Employee training programs are regular and are geared towards bridging skill gaps of the employees.	64	14.1%	29.7%	31.3%	18.7%	6.2%	3.40	1.018
iii. My decision making abilities are greatly improved by continuous training in the organization	64	12.6%	42.2%	10.9%	18.7%	15.6%	3.99	1.004
iv. Continuous training boosts my confidence which enhances my performance.	64	18.7%	40.7%	10.9%	15.6%	14.1%	4.22	.984
v. Continuous training enables me to regularly meet my set targets	64	10.9%	51.6%	15.6%	7.8%	14.1%	4.31	.997
vi. The organization continuous training reflects on the value the organization places on me as an employee	64	14.1%	50.0%	18.7%	12.6%	4.6%	4.19	.979

Further, the researcher sought to find out if the employee training programs were regular and geared towards bridging skill gaps of the employees. Majority of the participants (31.3%) were impartial in their responses to the statement (Mean=3.40, SD=1.018). Moreover, majority of the participants (42.2%) agreed that their decision making abilities were greatly improved by

continuous training in the organization (Mean= 3.99, SD=1.004). Majority of the participants (40.7%) also agreed that continuous training boosts their confidence which enhances their performance (Mean=4.22, SD=.984). Additionally, majority of the participants (50%) agreed that continuous training enabled them to regularly meet their set targets (Mean =4.31, SD=.997).

This finding is congruent to that of the Handbook on Competencies (2009) which posited that in 'Building the Future', the organization's greatest strength-and the key to success is the quality of staff and managers. The participants further agreed that the organization's continuous training reflects on the value the organization places on them as employees (Mean =4.19, SD=.979).

Influence of Employee Voice on Employee Engagement

The second objective of the study sought to determine the influence of employee voice on employee engagement in commercial banks in Nakuru Central Business District, Kenya.

Table 5. Influence of Employee Voice on Employee Engagement

Statements on Employee Voice	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
i. I am encouraged to express my views and suggestions at work	64	15.6%	48.4%	18.7%	14.1%	3.2%	4.19	.993
ii. There is a culture of openness in the organization	64	18.7%	14.1%	34.4%	29.7%	3.1%	3.35	.998
iii. All views relevant to my work area are acted upon	64	12.6%	10.9%	42.2%	18.7%	15.6%	3.24	1.015
iv. Information is routinely shared with me about the organization performance	64	18.7%	40.7%	29.7%	10.9%	0.0%	4.26	.966
v. I am involved in decision making about operational issues	64	10.9%	7.8%	48.4%	29.7%	3.2%	2.97	1.236
vi. My superiors seek out the views of the team	64	14.1%	26.4%	32.8%	14.1%	12.6%	3.08	1.014

From the descriptive analysis results in Table 5, majority of the participants (48.4%) agreed that they were encouraged to express their views and suggestions at work (Mean=4.19, SD=.993). In the second statement, the findings indicate that majority of the participants (34.4%) were impartial on whether there was a culture of openness in the organization (Mean=3.35, SD=.998). Similarly, majority of the participants (42.2%) were neutral in their responses that all views relevant to their work area were acted upon (Mean=3.24, SD=1.015). On whether information is routinely shared with the employees about the organization's performance,

majority of the participants (40.7%) were in agreement in their responses to the statement (Mean =4.26, SD=.966). In the fifth statement on whether the employees were involved in decision making about operational issues, majority (48.4%) were impartial in their responses to the statement (Mean =2.97, SD=1.236). Furthermore, majority of the participants (32.8%) were indifferent on whether their superiors sought out the views of their teams. (Mean =3.08, SD=1.014). This finding contradicts that of Millward et Al., (2000) who posited that employee voice has the ability to influence the actions of the employer. That is why productivity in many organizations has gone down considerably because employees are not allowed to air their views on issues concerning the organization hence greatly affecting the performance and productivity of such organizations.

Employee Engagement

The study further conducted a descriptive analysis on employee engagement. The findings illustrated in Table 6 indicate that majority of the participants (48.4%) were in agreement as to whether they felt proud to tell people where they work (Mean=3.49, SD=1.014). Also, majority of the participants (42.2%) felt a sense of commitment to the organization (Mean=3.87, SD=.996). Moreover, majority of the participants (40.7%) indicated that they had an active interest in what was happening in the organization (Mean=3.69, SD=.995). The findings support those of Mishra *et al.*, (2014) that it is important for the management and employees to build a culture of transparency that can engage employees in the priorities of the organization. Nevertheless, majority of the participants (42.2%) were indifferent on whether the work environment in the organization felt like family (Mean =3.36, SD=1.102). Additionally, majority of the participants (45.3%) were indifferent as to whether they would recommend the company to their families and friends as a great place to work at (Mean =3.43, SD=.979). Correspondingly, majority of the participants (39.1%) were neutral as to whether they will be working at the company in three years' time (Mean =3.32, SD=1.013).

Table 6. Employee Engagement

Statements on Employee Engagement	N	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	SD
i. I feel proud to tell people where I work	64	15.6%	18.7%	48.4%	14.1%	3.2%	3.49	1.014
ii. I feel a sense of commitment to this organization	64	18.7%	42.2%	29.7%	3.2%	6.2%	3.87	.996
iii. I have an active interest in what is happening in the organization	64	12.6%	40.7%	14.1%	18.7%	13.9%	3.69	.995
iv. The work environment in the	64	18.7%	10.9%	42.2%	10.9%	17.3%	3.36	1.102

Table 6...

organization feels like family									
v. I would recommend this company to family and friends as a great place to work at	64	10.9%	7.8%	45.3%	18.7%	17.3%	3.43	.979	
vi. I see myself working at this company in three years' time	64	14.1%	26.4%	39.1%	14.1%	6.3%	3.32	1.013	

Inferential Analysis

In this section, the study sought to investigate the relationship between the independent variables (continuous training practices and employee voice) and the dependent variable (Employee Voice).

Correlation between Continuous Training Practices and Employee Engagement

The study also sought to determine the strength of the relationship between continuous training practices and employee engagement.

Table 7. Relationship between Continuous Training Practices and Employee Engagement

		Continuous training practices
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.765*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.021
	N	64

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

From the findings of the correlation analysis presented in Table 7, the Pearson correlation coefficient ($r = .765$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.021$) indicates there is a strong positive and significant relationship between continuous training practices and employee engagement. The $p\text{-value}$ of 0.021 is less than the conventional 0.05 implying that the relationship is positive and significant. The findings support those of the United Nations (2010) that creation of training programs stimulates increased employee productivity and performance. Also, Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim (2014) examined the relationship between training and development and employee's performance and productivity and concluded that it leads to engagement of the employees.

Correlation between Employee Voice and Employee Engagement

The study further sought to determine the strength of the relationship between employee voice and employee engagement.

Table 8. Relationship between Employee Voice and Employee Engagement

		Employee Voice
Employee Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.766*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019
	N	64

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

From the findings of the correlation analysis presented in Table 8, the researcher established that there was a strong, positive and significant relationship ($r = .766$ and $p\text{-value} = 0.019$) between employee voice and employee engagement. The $p\text{-value}$ of 0.019 is less than the conventional 0.05 implying that the relationship is between employee voice and engagement is positive and significant. The findings support those of Farndale et al. (2011) who explained that if employees do not feel that they have opportunities to advance their views, or think the views they offer have little influence, this is likely to negatively affect their attitudes towards and relationship with their line managers.

Regression Analysis

The study further conducted a regression analysis and the two independent variables that were studied explain only 68.7% of the factors influencing employee engagement as represented by the R^2 value in Table 9.

Table 9. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.829 ^a	0.687	0.683	0.019

a. Predictors: (Constant), Continuous training practices and Employee Voice

This therefore means that other factors which were not studied in this research contribute to 31.3% of the factors influencing employee engagement. Therefore, further research should be conducted to establish the other factors (31.3%) influencing employee engagement. The researcher further conducted ANOVA test to determine the significance of the relationship between employee engagement and the four independent variables. The findings illustrated in Table 10 indicates that the significance value is .000 which is less than 0.05 meaning the model is statistically significant in predicting continuous training practices and employee voice. The F

critical at 5% level of significance was 0.12. Since F calculated (value = 39.32), is greater than the F critical, this shows that the overall model was significant.

Table 10. ANOVA for Model 1

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Squares	F	Sig.
1	Regression	62.144	3	20.715	39.32	0.000 ^b
	Residual	32.145	61	0.5269		
	Total	94.289	64			

a. Dependent variable: Employee Engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Continuous training practices and Employee Voice.

Multiple Regressions Analysis

The researcher conducted a multiple regression analysis so as to determine the relationship between the factors influencing employee engagement and the four variables. According to the results presented in Table 11 the equation ($Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2$) becomes:

$$Y = 1.375 + 0.676X_2 + 0.679X_4$$

Where: Y = Employee engagement; X_1 = Continuous training practices and X_2 = Employee Voice

Table 11. Regression Coefficients

Model	Un-standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.375	1.320		1.4221	.0238
Continuous Training	0.676	0.119	0.318	3.922	.0347
Employee Voice	0.679	0.281	0.392	3.353	.0243

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Engagement

According to the multiple regression analysis results, taking all factors into account or constant at zero, factors influencing employee engagement will be 1.375. This also means that taking all other independent variables at zero, a unit increase in Continuous training practices variable will lead to a 0.676 increase in factors influencing employee engagement, and a unit increase in employee voice will lead to a 0.679 increase in factors influencing employee engagement. The findings on regression analysis support those of Abraham (2012) that engaged employees

exhibit emotional job attachment, unreserved commitment, increased productivity, high job passion, and in most cases they go extra miles.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

Influence of Continuous Training Practices on Employee Engagement

The first objective of the study sought to determine the influence of continuous training practices on employee engagement in banks in Nakuru CBD, Kenya. In response to the first statement, the participants agreed that the organization had training programs which includes all the employees. Further, the study established that the participants were neutral on whether the employee training programs were regular and geared towards bridging their skill gaps. Moreover, the participants agreed that their decision making abilities were greatly improved by continuous training in the organization. The participants also agreed that continuous training boosts their confidence which enhances their performance. As well, the participants agreed that they readily shared important information that is critical to their success. Additionally, the participants agreed that continuous training enabled them to regularly meet their set targets. The participants further agreed that the organization's continuous training reflects on the value the organization places on them as employees. The study also established that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between continuous training practices and employee engagement. Thus, continuous training stimulates employee productivity and performance.

Influence of Employee Voice on Employee Engagement

The second objective of the study sought to determine the influence of employee voice on employee engagement. The findings indicate that the participants agreed that they were encouraged to express their views and suggestions at work. Further, the participants were impartial on whether there was a culture of openness in the organization. Similarly, the participants were neutral in their responses that all views relevant to their work area were acted upon. The participants were in agreement that information is routinely shared with the employees about the organization's performance. The findings also indicate that the employees were impartial on whether they were involved in decision making about operational issues. On the same note, the participants were indifferent on whether their superiors sought out the views of their teams. This greatly affects the productivity and performance an organization. The study further sought to determine the strength of the relationship between employee voice and employee engagement. The findings established that there is a strong, positive and significant relationship between employee voice and employee engagement.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Continuous Training Practices on Employee Engagement

In regard to the first objective, the study concludes that the commercial banks in Nakuru CBD had training programs which included all the employees. However, the employee training programs were not regular or geared towards bridging the employee skill gaps. Moreover, the employee decision making abilities were greatly improved by continuous training in the organization. The study also concludes that continuous training boosts their confidence enhances their performance. As well, the employees readily shared important information that was critical to their success. Additionally, continuous training enables the employees to regularly meet their set targets. Also, the commercial bank's continuous training reflects on the value the organization places on their employees. The study also concludes that there is a strong positive and significant relationship between continuous training practices and employee engagement. Thus, continuous training stimulates employee productivity and performance.

Employee Voice on Employee Engagement

For the second objective on the influence of employee voice on employee engagement, the study concludes that the employees were encouraged to express their views and suggestions at work. Nevertheless, there was no culture of openness in the organization. Moreover, not all the employee views relevant to their work area were acted upon.

The study further concludes that information was routinely shared with the employees about the organization's performance. The study also determined that the employees were not involved in decision making about operational issues. The superiors did not seek out the views of employees and their teams. Inadequate consideration of the employees' views greatly affects their productivity and performance. The study further concludes that there is a strong, positive and significant relationship between employee voice and employee engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

Recommendations on Continuous Training Practices

The study recommends that the commercial banks should enhance their training programs and include all the employees. The employee training programs should be made regular and be geared towards bridging the employee skill gaps. Training should be emphasized upon because it improves employee decision making abilities. Continuous training should be integrated to boost employee confidence to enhance their performance. As well, the employees should readily share important information that is critical to their success. Additionally, continuous training should build the capacity and skill sets of the employees to regularly meet their set

targets. Also, continuous training should reflect on the values the organization places on their employees. Thus, continuous training should often be geared towards stimulating employee productivity and performance.

Recommendations on Employee Voice

On the second objective on employee voice and employee engagement, the study recommends that the employees should be encouraged to express their views and suggestions at work. The commercial banks should create a culture of openness and act on all the employee views relevant to their work area. The study further recommends that information should be routinely shared with the employees about the banks' performance. The study also recommends that the employees should be not involved in decision making about operational issues. The superiors should endeavor to seek out the views of employees and their teams as it greatly affects their productivity and performance. The relationship between employee voice and employee engagement should be emphasized upon at all levels in the organization.

Recommendations for Further Studies

The study suggests that further study should be carried out to assess the influence of employee voice on employee engagement in the Micro-finance industry in Kenya.

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