

Career Mentoring and Employee Performance in Multinational Companies in Mombasa County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study was to examine the influence of career mentoring on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study's theoretical review was grounded on a theory that is applied in human resource management namely social exchange theory. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design. The first level target population was twenty multinational companies with offices domiciled in Mombasa County, Kenya as at end of year 2024. The accessible population was made up of four hundred and seventy three (473) staff from these companies including management, supervisory and clerical staff cadres and these constituted the unit of observation for the study. Nasiruma (2000) formulae was used to derive a sample of 110 and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26 was used to facilitate data analysis. Pilot study results showed the items were reliable based on the Cronbach alpha scores returned which were above .70 which is regarded as the lower limit. Validity subsets of face and content were tested using human resource management experts who gave the instrument a general clean bill of health and KMO and Bartlett tests returned appropriate scores to indicate construct validity in the data. The study established that career mentoring had a significant influence on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya ($r = .719$, $p\text{-value} = .000$) The study recommends that in multinational companies staff ought to be encouraged to have development plans in readiness for opportunities to realize growth since they are the drivers of their own progression and must take control of the same. Additionally, mentors in multinational companies need to facilitate the development and learning process by assigning stretching assignments to mentees, which is meant to stretch their reasoning capacity and proactiveness in all dealings.

Key words: Employee Performance in Multinational Companies, Career Development Strategies, Career Mentoring

INTRODUCTION

Career development involves a lifetime of investment of resources in career pathing in order to achieve long-term professional objectives, and is an ongoing process that enables individuals to adjust to the shifting needs of the fast-paced market (McDonald & Hite, 2023). It entails organizing a worker's advancement toward a professional objective and then implementing those plans, with the employee, their manager, human resources personnel.

Because of the rapid advancement of technology and the way organizations have adapted it, career development is more alive and well today than it was decades ago, but it must be carried out more frequently than previously to guarantee that staff members have the necessary skills and can adjust to any shifting company objectives (Britton *et al.*, 2021). Goal setting and career pathing are instituted to facilitate the process and organizations support of employees' career aspirations is advantageous to both sides, even though it is possible that the worker may not spend their whole career with that company.

Employee performance is denoted by how successfully an employee carries out duties and responsibilities and many organizations evaluate the performance of their employees on an annual or quarterly basis in order to identify specific areas that require development and to promote continued success in areas where performance

is on par with or better than expectations (Arif, 2021). Performance is essential to the success of an organization because it raises staff morale, profitability, and overall productivity.

Statement of the Problem

Employee performance is of concern to most organizations and rightly so since employees are essential to an organization's productivity, profitability, and ultimate success. Managing employee performance allows organizations to optimize their processes and improve efficiency and productivity in the workplace (Selviyanti *et al.*, 2023). Performance management is a system that uses a set of goals and rewards to encourage team members to dedicate themselves to their work.

Multinational corporation (MNCs) often employ a diverse and geographically dispersed workforce resulting in 30% of staff falling off the tracking radar of employee performance hence negating career development (Wilson & Luombe, 2023). Review of prior studies has shown that talent management in MNCs is complex since these companies optimize the distribution of roles with flat structures, thus making 25% of employees serving in the same roles for long spells above 10 years (Wamwara *et al.*, 2023).

Palmer *et al.*, (2023) examined employability, career management and postdoctoral outcomes in business and management. Yildiz *et al.*, (2023) analyzed how organizational career management activities influenced employees' career outcomes. Gwadoya and Otsyulah (2023) reviewed the influence of career development strategy on employee performance of level five hospitals in Kenya. Idua *et al.*, (2023) studied effect of on-the-job training techniques on performance of SMEs in Mombasa County. Some of the studies were done in advanced locations hence occasioning a contextual gap. Other studies also dealt with subtly different aspects from career development strategies causing conceptual gaps hence the this study sought to examine the influence of career mentoring on employee performance.

Research Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the influence of career mentoring on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya.

Scope of the Study

This study focused on twenty multinational companies operating in Mombasa County, Kenya which formed the unit of analysis, with the unit of observation being staff from the appropriate cadres within the companies including management staff, supervisory staff and clerical staff. The multinational companies have been chosen because of their strategic nature in terms of their structure. There being no available and ready funding options, the researcher personally funded the study from personal savings and conducted the study in the first quarter of 2025.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review – Social Exchange Theory

Social exchange theory was propounded by Homans (1958), proposing that workers based their degree of commitment at work on how supportive and connected they felt from their employer. Numerous indicators of employee performance such as productivity, profit, relationships with co-workers and customers' perceived quality of service, which are predicted by work engagement.

The social exchange theory helps in setting up an environment and company culture that encourages friendliness and building relationships (Meira & Hancer, 2021). To help employees feel more personally connected to the company, managers can use social exchange theory to help in structuring an environment and company culture that encourages friendliness and collegiate relationship-building. Senior workers can help their subordinates to navigate their expectations and comparisons in search of safe, healthy and happy relationships. The theory therefore explained career mentoring as the independent variable of the study.

Empirical Review

Kao *et al.*, (2022) reviewed career mentoring and job content plateaus with the roles of perceived organizational support and emotional exhaustion. The study proposed that perceived organizational support could be an organizational resource for protégés, strengthening the effects of career mentoring in addressing the problem of job content plateaus and ensuing emotional exhaustion. Study results showed that career mentoring was negatively related to emotional exhaustion through job content plateaus.

Yin (2024) reviewed the role of mentors' paradox mindset on career mentoring with the application of attachment theory. Paradox mindset had a significant indirect effect on career mentoring through self-efficacy and work engagement, self-efficacy had a significant indirect effect on career mentoring through work engagement, and paradox mindset had a significant indirect effect on career mentoring through self-efficacy and work engagement, thus provided a fresh insight into the relationship between individual differences and mentoring relationships.

Buberwa *et al.*, (2024) reviewed the effect of employee mentoring on performance of Universities in Tanzania and the study's findings indicated that employee mentoring had a statistically significant positive effect on the performance of Universities. Mumo *et al.*, (2024) reviewed opportunities and challenges in developing the 21st century teacher: case of Kenyatta University Mentorship Programme in Matungulu Sub-County, Machakos County-Kenya.

Critique Of Literature Review

There is a scarcity of studies on career mentoring principally on multinational companies, since most of the literature and research on career development strategies and employee performance have been undertaken in the first world. Moreover, a significant number of studies in the reviewed literature generally examined career development and its influence on employee performance; however, the application of the specific concepts of career mentoring is chiefly implicit and a little more subjective. Plentiful research activities aim to establish a correlation between career development strategies, employee performance and organizational performance (Aggarwal *et al.*, 2022).

A handful of the reviewed studies were conducted on career development in diverse sectors including manufacturing, fuel and energy, information technology, healthcare and engineering among others. While the fundamental philosophy of career development might be similar when reviewing employee performance, the manner of application and implementation might not be applied reliably across the board, especially when it comes to careers of employees in multinational companies (Ayodo, 2022).

There is a general lack of research references measuring the combined influence of various critical elements of career development strategies on the employee performance in multinational companies, and the reviewed studies took a non-specific approach to examining the influence of career development strategies on employee performance across organizations (Mutiganda *et al.*, 2022). It is worth noting that human resource matters have continued to grow exponentially in both complexity and overall technological advancement.

Research Gaps

Career mentoring has become a major component of human resource management as a core area in countries around the world. It has long been held that promoting social justice and sustainable development requires incorporating all employees in career management (Gomes & Santos, 2025). However, sufficient research has not been done to ascertain the extent to which career mentoring influences employee performance in multinational companies.

Based on a review of the literature, career development strategies are becoming more and more crucial for advancing sustainable employee and organizational development. Researchers have emphasized the advantages of involving all employees in decision making process on career matters, especially with regard to the ways in which it fosters shared ownership, transparency, and responsibility (Wahedi, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design is the overall plan for carrying out a study to evaluate particular testable research questions and also denotes a framework and process for carrying out research that entails hypotheses ranging from generalizations to specific techniques for gathering and analyzing data (Goldschmidt & Matthews, 2022). It is the inclusive strategy and analytical approach that is chosen in order to integrate, in a coherent and logical way, the different components of the study. This study adopted cross-sectional survey research design, which is better suited for explaining phenomena for the independent variables and the dependent variable as they pertain to a specific time period.

Target population describes the entire group of people, events, or objects, real or imagined among which a researcher may extrapolate study findings, and it is the entire set of units for which the study data are to be used to make inferences (Griffin *et al.*, 2023). On the other hand, an accessible population comprises all the individuals or elements that can realistically be included in the sample (Pandey, 2025). The first level target population was twenty (20) multinational companies operating in Mombasa County, Kenya, and these formed the unit of analysis. The accessible population was made up of four hundred and seventy three (473) staff from these companies including management, supervisory and clerical staff cadres and these constituted the unit of observation for the study.

A sample is a portion of the population that has been carefully chosen to participate in a research; in essence, a sample is a subset of the population that is of interest (Wilkinson & Dokter, 2023). In statistical testing, samples are used when the population size is too large for the test to include all possible participants or observations. This study adopted Nasiruma (2000) formulae to derive the sample size as shown;

$$n = (Ncv^2) / (cv^2 + (N-1) e^2)$$

where;

n = Sample size

N = Population

cv = Coefficient of variation (take 0.6)

e = Tolerance at desired level of confidence (take 0.05 at 95% confidence level).

The substituted values in determining the sample size from the target population are;

$$n = 473 * 0.6^2 / (0.6^2 + (473 - 1) 0.05^2)$$

$$n = 170 / 1.54$$

$$n = 110$$

Data collection is the process of obtaining and examining precise data from multiple sources in order to assess potential results, trends, and problems related to research, and in order to gather primary data and conduct a thorough analysis that either confirms or disproves the research hypotheses (Wang & Doty, 2022). Data collection instruments are tools used by researchers to actually collect data in the research process. This study employed questionnaires and as a tool, makes it relatively seamless for researchers to collect data and code it for easy analysis, which is why, questionnaires are frequently used in research projects.

This study fully complied with ethical principles and guidelines for research by seeking for permission from Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology administration, who issued an approval letter requesting participating organizations to voluntarily participate in the research process by specifically filling out questionnaires. Additionally, the researcher supplemented the efforts by writing to participating institutions requesting them to take part in the exercise of filling out the questionnaire to gather data that was examined to extract pertinent information.

In order for the research process to progress better, the respondents were requested to complete the questionnaires in a reasonable amount of time. Guidance and clarification was given as needed when the questionnaires were given to the respondents. The researcher administered the questionnaires using the drop-and-pick up method to ensure that they were delivered and completed accurately.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Response Rate

A total of one hundred and ten (110) questionnaires were given out to respondents for this study and out of those, ninety six (96) questionnaires were fully completed and collected indicating a return rate of 87.3%. A response rate of 50% is deemed as average, between 60% and 70% is taken to be adequate, and a response rate above 70% is taken to be excellent (Meyer & Mayrhofer, 2022). It therefore follows that the attained rate of 87.3% was suitable for carrying out analyses, drawing conclusions and deriving inferences about the study sample.

General Information

Derived statistics on the level of respondents who participated in this study in their respective companies indicated that 42.7% of the respondents were in the clerical staff category, 29.2% were supervisors and lastly 28.1% were in the management cadre respectively. Results showed that thirty nine respondents were bachelor’s degree holders, thirty two were Master’s degree holders while twenty five respondents were diploma holders respectively.

Employee Performance in Multinational Companies

Respondents gave their views on the statements under employee performance in multinational companies and results are shown in Table 1;

Table 1: Employee Performance

Statements	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our company checks the level of customer satisfaction with services provided by employees.	96	3.74	.849
In our company, the quality of work of different staff is appraised.	96	3.89	.806
Our company checks the attendance and punctuality record of employees.	96	3.86	.776
The efficiency and productivity of employees are always tracked in our company.	96	4.02	.781
In our company, time management by employees is always on the radar.	96	3.99	.624
Our organization places premium importance on how well employees work with others.	96	3.95	.826
Our organization sets financial targets for all employees.	96	3.55	1.113
Valid N (listwise)	96		

n = 96 (SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neither Agree nor Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly

Agree) *Mean = (Strongly Disagree = 0 – 1.8; Disagree = 1.9 – 2.6; Neither Agree nor Disagree = 2.7– 3.4; Agree = 3.5 - 4.2; Strongly Agree = 4.3 – 5.0).

Table 1 shows standard deviation values for all the items under employee performance in multinational companies were less than two (<2) demonstrating convergence in opinion by respondents and most concentration in opinion was around the item on efficiency and productivity of employees being always tracked in most companies and had a mean score of (M=4.02, SD=.781).

Career Mentoring and Employee Performance in Multinational Companies

Respondents gave their opinions on the item career mentoring and its influence on employee performance in multinational companies and the results are shown in Table 2:

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for Career Mentoring

Statements	n	Mean	Std. Deviation
In our company, mentors help mentees to understand the nature of desired career path.	96	4.00	.725
Mentors in our company help mentees to develop their skills requisite to desired career path	96	4.04	.679
Mentors actively advocate for their mentees in our company.	96	3.81	.886
In our company, mentors provide opportunities for mentees to demonstrate acquired skills.	96	3.84	.812
Our company ensures that mentors offer guidance and constructive feedback to help mentees.	96	3.86	.854
In our company, mentors facilitate the development and learning process by assigning stretching assignments to mentees.	96	3.54	1.004
In our company, most mentors assist mentees to secure assignments that accelerate their career trajectory.	96	3.90	.761
Valid N (listwise)	96		

n = 96 (SD = Strongly Disagree; D = Disagree; N = Neither Agree nor Disagree; A = Agree; SA = Strongly

Agree) *Mean = (Strongly Disagree = 0 – 1.8; Disagree = 1.9 – 2.6; Neither Agree nor Disagree = 2.7– 3.4; Agree = 3.5 - 4.2; Strongly Agree = 4.3 – 5.0).

Results in Table 2 indicate that all items had appropriate mean scores pointing towards confirmatory views on the study questions and recorded standard deviation values below two (<2) indicating that there was convergence in opinion on the item about mentors in most companies helping mentees to develop their skills requisite to desired career path scoring the highest mean (M=4.04, SD=.679).

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis is a set of statistical methods for estimating the relationships between a dependent variable and one or more independent variables. These techniques can be used to assess the strength of current relationships as well as model potential future relationships between variables. The linear regression model that was applied in this study is shown;

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

Where;

Y = Employee Performance in Multinational Companies

β_0 = Constant term

β_1 = Beta Coefficient

X_1 = Career Mentoring

ε = Error term

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.719 ^a	.517	.485	.40542
a. Predictor: (Constant), Career Mentoring				
b. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance in Multinational Companies				

According to Table 3, the correlation coefficient, represented as R was .719, indicating a strong and positive relationship between career mentoring and employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The model explained 51.7% variation in employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. This was supported by R square value of .517, which measured the proportion of variance in employee performance in multinational companies was explained by career mentoring in the regression model. The score showed a fair fit, indicating how well the model predicted the outcome. The standard error of .40542 designated the deviation from the line of best fit.

Table 4: ANOVA Results

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	10.424	1	10.424	117.123	.000 ^b
	Residual	8.413	94	.089		
	Total	20.163	95			
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance in Multinational Companies						
b. Predictor: (Constant), Career Mentoring						

ANOVA Table 4 shows that the p-value = .000 < 0.05 thus indicating that the model was statistically significant in establishing the influence of career mentoring on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The regression model of the independent variable and the dependent variable was significant (F (1, 94) = 117.123, p-value = .000).

Table 5: Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.162	.316		3.677	.000

	Career Mentoring	.528	.170	.514		3.106	.002
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance in Multinational Companies							

The regression equation was represented as;

$$Y = 1.162 + .528X_1$$

Where;

Y – Employee Performance

X₁ - Career Mentoring

Results in Table 5 present the beta coefficients of the independent variable operationalized by career mentoring and its influence on the dependent variable which was employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general objective of this study was to examine the influence of career mentoring on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study established that career mentoring had a significant influence on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study found that mentors in multinational companies helped mentees to develop their skills requisite to desired career path, for purposes of ensuring that there was personal growth as well as aligning to the desired future prospects.

This study concluded that career mentoring had a positive and significant influence on employee performance in multinational companies in Mombasa County, Kenya. The study concluded that mentors in multinational companies helped mentees to develop their skills requisite to desired career path, for purposes of ensuring that there was personal growth as well as aligning to the desired future prospects. The study also concluded that in most multinational companies, mentors helped mentees to understand the nature of desired career paths so that they were not taken aback when they realized the actual vicissitudes of their careers.

The study recommends that in multinational companies staff ought to be encouraged to have development plans in readiness for opportunities to realize growth since they are the drivers of their own progression and must take control of the same. This study also recommends that mentors in multinational companies need to facilitate the development and learning process by assigning stretching assignments to mentees, which is meant to stretch their reasoning capacity and proactiveness in all dealings.

This research used cross-sectional survey design, which collects case data all at once and it may not be appropriate to make definitive inferences regarding the causality directions of the model in such a scenario. This results in a lack of universal model interpretation, especially in the case of multiple regression, as it may be necessary to interpret the relationships between the study variables more carefully. Therefore, to examine the influence of career development strategies on employee performance in multinational companies, future research would benefit from using a longitudinal research design, in which data is periodically collected over time to allow for a reassessment of the direction of causality among study variables.

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