

ABSTRACT

The objective of this study was to find out the factors that affect employee performance in Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JKUAT). This research was prompted by the fact that the university did not feature anywhere during the ranking of universities around the world in 2005. The introduction of performance contracts in the public universities by the Kenyan government made it necessary to take keen interest in performance. Increased competition of the universities around the world required institutions to be performers in order to survive. The study was also intended to enhance the university's vision of being a "world class institution of excellence for development".

The study targeted 1268 employees and a sample of 106 employees was drawn from the population. Stratified random sampling and simple sampling was used to select the sample. Questionnaires were used as the main method of data collection. Data was coded into thematic patterns and cluster and operationalized and SPSS was used to analyze data. Results were presented in form of tables, pie charts, and bar charts.

The study revealed staff perceptions on the five factors which affect performance. Job design: The study found that job design helps employees understand their roles clearly. Role clarity has both a significant and positive impact on such key organizational variables as job satisfaction, absenteeism, turnover and effectiveness. It was therefore encouraging to realize that majority of the respondents (86.6%) understood their roles very well.

The study also made the conclusion that working environment is an important variable in performance. The management therefore has a responsibility to modify outdated equipment, maintain facilities, provide enough working space and safety and prepare for disasters.

Training: This is an important variable in performance which emphasizes on enhancing the skills of employees to improve organizational efficiency. The study found out that only 27% of the respondents had not attended any training. However, training needs assessment was poorly done at the university. Majority of the respondents over 95% however believed that the training was relevant to the job description.

Motivation: Only a paltry 7.92% indicated that the motivation policies were good.. A total of 65% of the respondents indicated that the university did not match rewards to contribution. Lack of motivation policies can be counter-productive.

The staff evaluation ratings suggested that the employees were not clear on evaluation leaving doubt where there was any formal evaluation at the university. The respondents appeared not to be conversant with staff appraisals.. Feedback is important because it enables organizations judge employees' performance.

The study came out with several recommendations which included the following. There was need for the university to design/redesign jobs and issue job descriptions to employees.

The university should take more care of the working environment because this touched on health and safety of employees which is an important variable in performance.

There was need to introduce an orientation programme of new staff and also introduce more motivation strategies. It was also found necessary to introduce a formal evaluation of staff which appeared to be non-existent.