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Employees' Training and Development Contribution to the Company Performance and Competitiveness

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Abstract:

The main objective of this paper was to explore the contribution of employee training and development in relation to company's performance and competitiveness. As a result, this study reviewed documents and literature materials from online publications, academic domains, and books from the library to reach the goals. The obtained information was reviewed with the intention of understanding the contribution of employees' training and development to company performance and competitiveness. The findings indicate that, employees' training and development, equip the workforce with the new skills, including techniques to help them: (1) improve the quality of products and services, (2) correct weaknesses in operations, (3) reduces supervision costs, (4) increase the company's profitability and competitive advantages, (5) and ultimately, increase employees' retention. The findings also show that the quality of both machines and materials to use during the process of production remains another factor contributing to company's performance and competitiveness. The study recommends employees' training and development to be included in the organizational budget. Meanwhile, organizations conduct continuous assessment to identify the extent to which a company needs employees' training and development. Finally, the study suggests that companies employ quality machines/tools and materials for production to ensure improved performance and competitive advantage.

Keywords: Employee training and development, company performance and competitiveness

1. Introduction

Several studies have argued compellingly that for an organization to succeed, and function properly, training and development of employees remain one of the essential components to facilitate employees' learning on the job related competencies (Noe, 2010; Cohen, 2017; Obeidat, Hashem, Alansari, Tarhini, & Al-Salti, 2016 & Sanghi, 2016). Such competencies include knowledge, skills, and behaviors required for a successful job performance. In addition, if a company needs to improve the pace of their work practice and win the competitive advantage, it needs to train and develop employees' skills, for example, how to share information with other employees through the use technology (Noe, 2010; Obeidat, et al, 2016) in order to enrich their work related proficiencies.

The IBM, companies' survey conducted in 2013, indicates 84% of employees from best performing organizations in the United States, underwent training compared to 16% in the worst performing companies who did not. The facts indicate how organizations make a commitment to train employees purposely to improve work performance and deliver the best services to the customers. On the other hand, although training is important for improved organizational performance, nevertheless, not all organizations, or companies implement training and development for their employees (Rometty, 2013; IBM, 2013 p. 5).

Most of profit-oriented business organizations, achieves the anticipated profit by minimizing costs, while boosting productivity. Despite the fact, studies indicate that companies need to invest in training and development in order to improve its performance and competitive advantage (Sanyal, & Hisa, 2018; Al Karim, 2019). Certainly, it may be wrong to consider employees' training and development as a waste of time and resources in the organization that focus in making profit, minimize costs at the same time increase productivity.

The study of Karia, Omari, Mwanaongoro & Kimori (2016), on the other hand, discussing the importance of employee training and development on performance of public water utilities in Tanzania, revealed that employee' training and development policy in public water utilities is implemented by 45.4%.The evidence shows that the majority of employees from the Water Utility indicate a low level of satisfaction on training and development process. The consequences lead to a deprived performance. However, one may wonder, what would be the contribution of employee training and development to company's performance and competitiveness? This key question provides the direction of this study to explore the contribution of employees' training and development to company's performance and competitiveness.

Therefore, no doubt that in order to succeed, a company has to train and develop its employees so as to enhance high performance and superior competitiveness in the market (Cohen, 2017; Marin-Diaz, Llinas-Audet, Chiaramonte-Cipolla, & Escardibul, 2014). Although, employees' training and development has been studied, still employees' training and development contribution to company's performance and competitiveness has not received much attention in the literature (Noe 2010; Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan, & Hashim, 2014; Hameed & Waheed 2011). This study intends to fill this gap with specific attention given to employees' training and development contribution to company's performance and competitiveness

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Training and Development

Employees' training is a process that focuses on providing specific skills to employees to help them improve their operations and correct deficiencies during work performance. On the other hand, employee's development focuses on providing the employees with the abilities that the organization will need in order to succeed in the future (Mejia, Balkin, & Cardy, 2007; Falola, Osibanjo, & Ojo, 2014) for a successful operation.

Other studies also support this similar thought, that training and development remains significant for companies intending to prosper in business. They have contended that training and development empower workers with the capability of decision-making knowledge, creativity and human resource management. Hence, this expertise helps the employees to evaluate their own weaknesses make corrections, then again improve productivity, the quality of service and self-management of their own works (Niazi, 2011; Venesh, 2014)

A fundamental objective of employees training and development is to solve the work-related problems and improvement of work performance. However, not all work performance problems call for training and development. Mejia et al., (2007) stated that shortfalls in work performance may be due to several reasons many of which can be beyond employees' control and would, therefore has to do nothing with training and development. Based on a similar study, poor quality of machines and materials employed in production cannot be improved through training and development of the employees. In addition, Tidd & Bessant (2018) have also argued compellingly that company's performance and competitiveness do not depend only on a single factor. Other factors such as quality of machines, materials, and technology used, innovation, introduction of new product, design, quality customer services as well as economic and political situations, contribute to the company's performance. Based on our own experience, we would also contend that the quality working environment plays a special role in performance and competitiveness of a company. Despite all the facts, this work still admits that employee training and development continue to be an important element that an organization needs to embark in order to provide the employees with new skills to improve performance and company's competitive advantage.

In any business environment, specifically in the contemporary era, in order to win the competitive advantage, training of employees becomes mandatory. The outcome of training and development benefits both the company and the trained personnel. Actually, it enhances the employees' ability for creativity, innovation, and to solve the emerging problems at the workplace while utilizing the available technology for the superior performance in the organization. Moreover, Training and development of employees help the organization to live and achieve its mission and vision goals in an effective manner (Falola, Osibanjo & Ojo, 2014).

Constructing on the similar idea, Sanyal and Hisam (2018), noted that training of employees is one of the useful tools for empowering employees improve performance and eventually maximize profit. Certainly, it remains true that employees without proper training cannot be expected the highest level of performance, similar to the well-trained employees. Obviously, organizations with the inclination of training employees tend to outperform organizations that do not train employees and these organizations portray a commendable image in the market.

2.2. Training and Development as a Process

Training and development are regarded as a process that takes place inside or outside the organizations and Mbijjiwe & Venkataiah (2013) pointed out four phases of training and development in the organization as listed below:

2.2.1. Training and Development Need Assessment

In this phase, the organization evaluates and identifies whether it requires training and development, so engages to what is required for narrowing the gap through evaluation. Certainly, after a review, the organization may realize the prevailing differences in performance or other barriers within the organization that requires urgent actions for improving the business performance, hence lead to the need of training (Mbijjiwe & Venkataiah, 2013, p. 81).

2.2.2. Design Phase of Training

In this phase an organization elaborates clearly regarding the intended action plan for the business, including the setting of a detailed objectives for the training, preparing of the lesson plan, and required suitable resources for training, specifying the responsible person, to deliver the content of the program, selecting the appropriate methods and finally scheduling the program" (Mbijjiwe & Venkataiah, 2013, p. 81), and the method of delivering it

2.2.3. Training Implementation Phase

This phase is where a company implement the action plan involving varied resource utilization. The implementation challenges at this phase may include limited time, resources, failure of operating machines, and other

hurdles. Conversely, the organization is responsible for addressing such challenges to ensure the program implementation proceeds as planned (Mbijiwe & Venkataiah, 2013, p.81)

2.2.4. Training Evaluation Phase

This stage demands a constant monitoring of the training and the progress of the programs to ensure the effectiveness and organizational goals fulfillment. During this phase the feedback from participants for measuring the strength and weakness of the training continues to be crucial (Mbijiwe & Venkataiah, 2013, p. 81), and later the program can be reviewed again.

2.3. Company's Performance and Competitiveness

Based on Investopedia website a company can be defined as: a legal entity formed by a group of individuals to engage in and operate a business—commercial or industrial—enterprise. A company may be organized in various ways for tax and financial liability purposes depending on the corporate law of its jurisdiction. (investopedia, 2019, para # 1) In Tanzania the Company Act (2002) defines a company as an entity created and registered under the company's act of 2002, or an existing company (URT Companies Act, 2002, p. 24). An existing company denotes a company existed prior the introduction of the Company Act of 2002. Performance on the other hand, according to Tahir, et al., (2014) is the successful implementation of a planned action or achieving it to the highest level (Tahir et al., 2014). When one implements the goals of the entity the entity and the implementer both benefit from the training and implementation. Consequently, the organization, training and development leads to gained profitability while through "training and development" employees increase job knowledge for identifying and working on the goals of the organization. Eventually "training and development is defined as the planned learning experiences that teach employees the knowledge of how to perform current and future jobs (p. 87)

Different scholars have defined company competitiveness differently. Schwab (2015) defined it as the set of institutions, policies, and factors that determine the level of productivity of an economy, which in turn sets the level of prosperity that the country can earn. However, Noe (2010), on the other hand, explains the competitiveness as the capability of a company to capture and sustain the market share at the "industry" (p. 5). Similarly, studies have indicated that for a company to be effective, innovation, continue to be one of the important engines for improving competitive advantage and performance (Michael Porter, 1985; Montes, Moreno, & Morales, 2005; Minoja, Zollo, & Coda, 2010; Niazi, (2011). Certainly, based on these scholars, innovation enhances competition and organizational performance. However, companies need an innovation strategy in order to capture the competitive advantage and hence improve profitability. The success or failure of a company to win the competitive advantage will depend on the ability of a company encourage employees' individual learning, as well as the company's ability to train its employees within the organization.

2.4. Importance of Employees' Training and Development

In the study of Hameed & Waheed (2011); Kum, Cowden & Karodia (2014) one of their contentious discussion is whether employees training and development have the role to play in the performance of an organization. They actually agree that, employees training improve the quality of goods and services offered to customers, for the fact that employees improved knowledge reduce mistakes. Accordingly, well-trained employees improve productivity, become successful, effective, and deliver an improved customer service of their respective companies. No doubt companies across the globe continue to experience transformation as a result of improved technologies, knowledge increase, globalized market, and e-commerce expansion. All these changes, force companies to automatically take actions to attract, retain, and motivate their work forces. Therefore, training is not a matter of luxury; instead, it is a requirement if companies need to be full participants in a global market offering products and services of excellent quality. Thus, training equips employees with technology knowledge, the ability to function in a new virtual work environment with unfamiliar work colleagues, to work in collaboration and communicate with peers or customers' diverse cultural backgrounds (Noe, 2010; Chesbrough, 2011).

The overall goal of the organizational training and development processes intends to benefit both the organization itself and the employees without whom the business organization would not have been existed. In the organization, training and development leads to improvement of profitability while enhancing positive attitudes toward profit inclination within the organization. Seemingly, for the trained individual, training and development, improve job personal knowledge while also helping the person to focus on the mission and goal of the organization (Tahir et al., 2014). That is to say investment in training and development are connected to the bottom line of the business. Increasingly, high performing organizations adopt training and development as a tool for improving practices and enhance competitive advantage (Venesh (2014)). The study of Nassazi (2013) indicates several studies acknowledge that employees training play a major part in performance development and achieving a high level of performance in the market leading to the company's strength in the competitive marketplace.

Noe, (2010) on the other hand, argues that companies invest specifically on intangible assets and human capital as a technique for gaining competitive advantage. That is due to the fact that conventionally, believed historical confidence that physical assets in a business are the only means for economic success, actually, is contrary to the expectation since it composed of moderately trivial portion ability to boost income in the majority of companies. Conversely the improved production or economy, depend mostly on employees' capabilities, the knowledge in possessions and labor distribution. The employee's knowledge and ability are what termed as intangible asset within the organization is also known as intellectual capital of the business

Certainly, according to Noe, (2010) the worthiness of a company comprises three types of assets for effective goods and services delivered to customers. The commonly known assets include asset cash, financial securities, property, plant, equipment, as well as intangible assets, such as: human capital, customer capital, and intellectual capital. Human capital includes life experiences, knowledge, creativity, energy, and the determination that employees invest in their work. Intellectual capital includes the codified knowledge that exists in a company while social capital refers to positive relationships in the company. Customer capital refers to the value of relationships with persons or other organizations outside the company for accomplishing the goals of the company (e.g., relationships with suppliers, customers, vendors, government agencies).

Despite the facts, Bibi, Ahmad and Majid (2018) insist the value of employees' training as a tool for enhancing retention of the employees in the organization. Obviously, when the employees leave the company for other employment opportunity with another company that particular company loses the employees as well as the valuable skills. Even more, the company is likely to lose clients who were previously loyal to the organization because of the service provided by those particular employees. This is to say, employees' training and development increase the degree of employee's retention in the organization which consequently increase customers based on the valuable services and trust on the products offered by employees through respective companies in the market. The trust of customers on the products and services offered by the company through its employees, increases the company's competitive advantage in the market arena

Additionally, in their book Denis & Griffin (2009) insist the value or training as an ingredient for controlling work related accidents. This is because, employees learn safe work procedures and follow them, including to report unsafe conditions to their respective managers (Denis & Griffin, 2009). Although, this paper concedes that the employees need training regarding secure working procedures, our own views are that employees themselves also need personal initiatives to ensure safety and favorable working environment. Training would be useless if employees hardly respond to the call for training. As a result, employees' recklessness actions, they lead to personal injury, damage, destruction of the operating systems, or even a loss in the organization, that again lead to financial loss in the business.

3. Materials and Method Used

3.1. Searching Criteria

The paper was constructed on the secondary data sources review and analysis. Based on Kothari (2009), the content data analysis is derived from: books, publications, newspapers and the content of all other verbal materials which can be either spoken or printed. In this study content analysis was used to establish the contribution of employees' training and development on company performance and competitiveness. Therefore, the study reviewed journal papers, reports, Acts and books obtained from the library and internet. Definitely various researchers apply this secondary data analysis incorporation research study (Assey, 2015; Mutani & Semtawa, 2015).

The criteria used for searching in this study include: Studies that have addressed employees' training and development, company performance and competitiveness were selected. The review emphasis was on the relevance of the materials; geography and the age of the materials. Other publications used include Tanzania Company Act of 2002. To identify the publications used in this paper, the following databases were also utilized: Google, Google scholar and Education Resources Information Centre (ERIC).

3.2. Terms Used in the Search

Terms used in the search comprise: Employees training and development, Company performance, Company competitiveness, Employees performance, Company productivity, Training and development need assessment, Training and development process, and Competition forces.

3.3. Screened Publications

The total number of screened publications was thirty-four (34). Among the identified publications, twenty-three (23) reported on employees' training and development, company performance and competitiveness, seven (7) books reported on training and Development, marketing and competition, three (3) reports on Employee training and one (1) Act reported on the company and its formation.

3.4. Findings and Discussion

This paper intended to investigate the contribution of employees' training and development to company's performance and competitiveness, which continue to be vital in business companies' progress. It provides the employees with the skills and knowledge to be effective, correct their shortfalls, improve work performance, and bring consistency during work performance. Training and development bring tremendous satisfaction on workers, while boosting productivity, the quality of service and products improve, finally decrease the cost of production supervision (Venesh, 2014). Training and development provide the platform for employees to acquire new skills which they did not have before. As a result, they improve production efficiency as well as quality service delivery

In reality, companies that are not interested in the development of their employees encounter difficulties in understanding their own operational weaknesses, and therefore, they are likely to repeat similar production mistakes, leading to low quality of goods and services delivered. Eventually, companies with low quality goods and services delivered can hardly manage competition in the market since customers always seek quality products and services. In

addition, training helps the employees to know what to be done, when doing it and how to do it without supervisory instructions because already they have the skills and knowledge for the job.

Therefore, a company that inclines in training its employees is likely to have a greater competitive advantage in the market than companies which do not train. One might object that training and development is not the key factor that contributes to company's performance and competitiveness, but we certainly still maintain that training and development increase productivity, quality services to customers, reduction in costs of production and supervision. Hanaysha (2016) established that Training stands to be a useful technique that organizations apply to enhance employees' skills and knowledge. This is because, well trained employees become more efficient in their jobs than non-trained ones.

Training also prepares employees to use new technologies, function in new work systems such as virtual teams, communicate and cooperate with peers or customers who may be from different cultural backgrounds. Any companies that trains and develops employees are likely to win competition in the market (Noe, 2010; Blythe & Martin, 2019). In addition, Nassazi (2013) shows that employees training plays a vital role in developing performance and achieving high level of output. It actually, increases the company's strength and competition in the marketplace. Employees' training and development also increase the employees' retention in the organization which in turn makes the organization to be more competitive due to customers and clients trust on the products and services provided to them by the competent and skilled employees (Bibi et al., 2018). Apart from that training and development create relationship within the organizations, awareness of professional ethics compliance, job satisfaction among employees, motivation and creativity, tech literate and hence lead to financial gain for the company as well as well as the employees

Trained and developed employees become more competitive in the market and better in performance as they get an opportunity to correct their daily weaknesses in production. This is due to the fact that through training the employees can be aware about customer care, team working, marketing networks and consumer behaviours which are the key issues in the modern businesses. However, apart from training and development, companies need to ensure the quality machines and materials in use for producing the products. Low quality of machines and materials lead to the production of poor-quality products and services which fail to compete in the market. Therefore, the quality of both machines and materials for production makes the company to have good performance and competitive advantages.

Polka, Brodny and Stecula (2017) noted that the abrupt pace of new technology deployment means that employees have problems in handling and utilizing the full functionality of the advanced solutions. Several employees fail to keep up with the pace of understanding how the modern equipment works and what follows if they do not know how to operate them. This predicament leads to a situation in which the machines are underutilized, and companies fail to achieve its business goals. Therefore, the companies need to train their employees in order to equip them with the skills and knowledge that will expose them to the use of latest innovative machines and equipment. Failure to that are the underutilization of the machines and the loss of competitive advantage in the market.

Employee training and development benefit both an organization and the Individual employees. For the organization, training and development lead to improvement of profitability while cultivating more positive attitudes toward profit orientation. For the individuals, training and development help in improving work skills and the identification of the organizational goals of the organization (Tahir is et al., 2014).

With these views, through training and development the employees gain skills on how to improve their job performance while the organization improves their profitability level by reducing the supervision costs, abnormal product damages by unskilled employees and customer care which in the long run increase customers loyalty to the company and increase sales volumes. Therefore, a profitable and competitive company or organization is the one which manages the market changes by training and developing their employees continuously. This is also supported by Sanyal and Hisam (2018) that employees' training and development tend to boost the organizational performance, productivity and provide the shining corporate image for the company.

Over and above, training and development can help a company's competitiveness by directly increasing the company's value through contributing to intangible assets. A company's value includes three types of assets that are critical for the company to provide goods and services: financial assets (cash and securities), physical assets (property, plant, equipment), and intangible assets, which consist of human capital, customer capital, social capital, and intellectual capital (Noe, 2010; Munoko & Were, 2018). For the assets to function well the need for quality and competent employees in the organization is inevitable. The organizations need the employees who are well trained in their areas of specialization to handle fixed and current assets and social capital of the organization. For example, companies have machines which are used to produce goods or services and cash for daily operations. These machines and cash are operated and controlled by the employees.

Apart from that employees need to be trained on how to deal with the liabilities of the business because failure to pay the business obligations the company can face bankruptcy. Therefore, for the employees' to be able to control both assets and liabilities and to keep themselves safe from injuries they must be trained and developed. This has also been supported by Denis & Griffin (2009) who argued that, training is an important ingredient which attempts to control accidents at work and good operation of machines.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

The literature review revealed that employees' training and development appear as a key factor to a company's performance and competitiveness. Through Training and development, employees improve skills, knowledge for performance, and how to deal with customers for increasing their loyalty to the company, quality improvements and

reduction in supervision costs. In addition, employees' training and development assist the company to maintain its level of profitability and hold competitive advantages in the market. Findings have also revealed that company's performance and competitiveness is also contributed by the quality of materials and machines used to produce the products that the company sells in the market. All these tend to increase the company's level of performance and its degree of competition in the market. The findings also show that employees' training and development prevent underutilization of the innovative machines and equipment and failure to match with the new changes in science and technology.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings, this study recommends measures can be taken for companies to improve performance and increase competitiveness or even save company's resources.

- The management to allocate the training and development budget for employees' to help them cope with the rapid technology changing world where new business skills, technology, and techniques continue to emerge each day and no company can survive without the emerging technologies.
- The management to ensure the quality of machines, tools and materials used in production are of the best quality, since low quality of machines, tools or materials can lead to production output, thus, lowering the company's competitive advantage in the market.
- Encourage employees' willingness for training and development as a measure for acquiring new skills and techniques for improved performance and correct their weaknesses.
- The management should maintain continuous assessment in its operation in order to identify the gaps which may need training and development for their employees in the organization.

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