The effect of implementing training and development programs on employee performance at King Saud University

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Abstract. This study aims to explore the relationship between employee training and employees' job performance. The constantly changing business environment demands organizations to embrace and accept change based on changing trends, technologies and consumer tastes and preferences. The human element is among the most significant aspects in ensuring that firms achieve their goals. Therefore, the potential and capability of human resources in improving and maximizing the performance of an organization. This paper assesses the impact of training, which is among the most significant human resource functions, on employee performance. Data was collected from King Saud University's staff using survey questionnaires and the results were such that there is a substantial positive correlation between training and employees' performance.

Keywords: Employee, Training, Job performance, human element, human resources

1 INTRODUCTION

The business world is constantly evolving, especially due to technological advancement and globalization. This constant change necessitates business management teams to be more innovative, creative and proactive to survive and remain relevant in the highly competitive business world (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Besides, this change calls for businesses to exceed their routine practices and processes of mass production to gain profit from the economies of scale. Instead, they need to understand that trends and consumer tastes and preferences vary with time and seasons. Therefore, customers constantly demand new product features and product differentiation. These changes demand better leadership and management of people and resources to ensure that consumer needs are met effectively.

The rationale for survival and success is accepting, embracing and undergoing constant change based on changing trends, technologies and consumer tastes and preferences. According to Hanaysha (2016), the human element is the key determiner of a company's success in today's competitive business environment. Therefore, the potential and capability of human resources are among the crucial aspects of improving and maximizing the performance of an organization. This assertion is confirmed by Iqbal, Baluch & Abdullah (2017) by claiming that an organization can only achieve its objectives with the help of the efforts put in by effective and efficient human resources. However, most organizations demand high job performance by employees without reviewing the factors that influence employee performance. Iqbal, Baluch & Abdullah (2017) then maintain that companies should consider essential factors in supporting and sustaining employee performance such as training and motivation to ensure continuity.

Training affects employee job performance directly or indirectly. According to Alanazi & Ismail (2018), the current growth and development of the global economy coupled with continuous technological advancement requires organizations in every business sector to enhance employee performance to maximize on their productivity constantly. According to them, the direct impact of employee training is enhancing their skills and capacity to perform their responsibilities more effectively and produce better results. Therefore, organizations that invest in employee training as a change management strategy acquire result in investment through increased productivity and more proficient and capable employees (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). Consequently, the indirect impact of employee training is that it motivates employees to be more committed to the organization, which gives them the self-drives to handle current and future issues in the organization (Alanazi & Ismail, 2018).

Furthermore, training increases employee engagement in helping the company succeed by investing their emotional, cognitive and physical efforts into their job performance. Employee engagement drives them to work harder and go beyond the job requirement and expectation to reach their personal goals as well as organizational goals (Iqbal, Baluch & Abdullah, 2017). Therefore, training and work motivation are essential needs for enterprises to

develop their skills and capabilities and in turn, improve their job performance. In this regard, this paper aims at analyzing the impact of training on employee performance at King Saud University.

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between employee training and employees' job performance within the educational sector in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The sub goals are as follows:

a) What are the employee perceptions on the impact of staff training on employee performance?
b) What is training and development activities and programs have been implemented within the education sector in KSA?
c) What is the impact of training on employee performance?
d) What method is used to asses training employee training needs?

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Different scholars have revealed that the demands of globalization and international business have put pressure on organizations to invest in employee training and development to enhance their performance and consequently enhance organizational productivity. Besides, constant technological advancement is pushing businesses to empower their employees by letting them gain command over these technological elements to gain a competitive edge in the market and evade performance lapse (Allui & Sahni, 2016). Business reports and empirical researches have confirmed that there is a strong relationship between employee training and development and increased performance; hence businesses are investing billions of dollars in it to effect change management.

2.1 Definition of employee training

According to Hanaysha (2016), training refers to a planned activity aimed at imparting skills on employees to improve their job performance. Furthermore, Hanaysha (2016) claims that training is the process of modifying behaviour through the transfer of knowledge and skills and experience from those who have them to those who lack them. Similarly, Iqbal, Baluch & Abdullah (2017) argues that training is a human resource investment that yields both short term and long term returns as it offers an opportunity for employees to enhance their knowledge and skills for effective growth and development. Moreover, Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin & Bakare, (2017) defines training as a program aimed at equipping employees with new skills and knowledge, providing them with relevant information and enhancing their opportunities for career growth and development. According to them, the basic principles of training stress on providing employees with substantial input based on applicable theories. These principles also take into account the features of efficiency and effectiveness, employee diversity, and sustainable development. Furthermore, training equips employees with the necessary knowledge and skills to work alone as well as with others towards the achievement of organizational goals and objectives. In this light, Hanaysha (2016) suggest that companies should leverage various training programs to equip them with skills to help them develop their careers, improve performance and enhance organizational outcomes.

2.2 Employee training, motivation, and empowerment

According to Salama, Isaac, Habtoor & Ameen (2020), skills, capabilities and competencies are essential in ensuring that employees perform their duties effectively and efficiently. Therefore, organizations should empower and challenge their human resource planners to include educational training programs in their strategic models. Employee educational training motivates them to improve their skills and competencies, which in turn improves their performance. Research by Allui & Sahni (2016) on the impact of employee performance on work performance supports this view because the findings were such that training leads to employee empowerment, which is an essential aspect of achievement, increased productivity and business growth and development. In this view, training leads to employee empowerment, which is a motivational practice aimed at increasing the opportunities for employees to participate and be involved in the decision-making process and ultimately increase performance. Salama, Isaac, Habtoor & Ameen (2020) contend that training employees and empowering them are concerned with earning their trust, motivating them, involving them in the company's decision making and eliminating the gap between the top management and employees. Furthermore, empowerment through employee training acts as a mechanism to give the employees the power to contribute to decision making by giving their ideas. Besides, training imparts useful skills and competencies on employees, which empowers them to take up more challenging responsibilities from their managers.

Similarly, Mira & Odeh (2019) defined empowerment as the provision of employees with the power and authority to handle issues related to their daily work activities more effectively and efficiently. They then reported various advantages of employee empowerment through training, including stirring determination and motivation to help them apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired when dealing with customer needs. Therefore, Mira & Odeh (2019) argue that training programs aim at equipping employees with the right skills and knowledge that empower them to share more challenging responsibilities with their managers, which helps them gain more recognition and status. As a result, employees develop positive thinking, which helps them work harder and perform well at their job.

2.3 Employee training and job satisfaction

Hanaysha (2016) conducted a research on the link between training and job satisfaction by issuing a survey questionnaire to PDAM of Buleleng Regency employees. The results demonstrated that training empowers and motivates employees to be committed to their jobs and perform exceptionally, increases job satisfaction and enhances employee loyalty to the organization and reduces employee turnover intentions. The survey conducted on this research indicated that employees who participated in training programs were more delighted to perform their duties than those who had not taken part in any training programs. Hanaysha (2016) argued that employee training reduces the concerns and frustrations caused by work requirements and demands that are unfamiliar to employees. Similarly, Allui & Sahni (2016) surveyed to identify the link between job satisfaction and employee training in technical and customer service departments in ten international businesses headquartered in the United States. The results indicated that employee training enhances job satisfaction. In line with this result, Allui & Sahni (2016) claimed that job satisfaction affects the decision of an employee to stay or leave an organization. Therefore, they proposed that organizations should implement training programs in their strategic models to facilitate job satisfaction because satisfied employees are highly motivated and committed to performing their work effectively. Besides, satisfied employees are more loyal to their companies. Hence, they work harder, stay in the organization for more years, arrive at work early and engage in behaviors that help the company achieve its objectives. Similarly, Mira & Odeh (2019) claim that employees who believe that their organizations are not exploiting their potential fully and meeting their needs are dissatisfied with their job, which drives them to seek better opportunities in more competitive and mindful workplaces. Therefore, employees should establish training programs to facilitate job satisfaction, which in turn leads to a high level of commitment and loyalty.

2.4 Training and development to improve employee performance in KSA

Unfortunately, The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia faces challenges in implementing training and development to enhance business performance. According to KPMG reports in 2019, Saudi Arabian organizations face significant Human Resource challenges due to unstable external environmental factors ranging from technological to demographical to economic factors (Allui & Sahni, 2016). According to Gorondutse et al. (2018), Saudi Arabia organizations face the challenges of lack of trained professionals and a high dependence on foreign experts. These challenges have led the KSA government to take the necessary steps to develop and enhance their human resources and increase the level of literacy in the country to ensure that Saudi Arabian companies remain competitive in the global market. The government has allocated a total of $50.73 billion in the 2020 budget towards human resource development and education (Gorondutse et al. 2018). This allocation is aimed at increasing training and development among Saudi Arabian organizations to ensure that they contribute to the positive growth of their country's economic growth. Othayman et al. (2020) assert that a company's human resource is essential in shaping its intellectual property to give the firm a competitive edge in the market. Furthermore, they acknowledge that training and development build and improves employee' competence in dealing with international challenges.

2.5 Training and development to facilitate employee performance in KSA's educational sector

According to Mira & Odeh (2019), organizations must maintain high job performances by their employees through equipping them with the relevant knowledge and skills, and the educational sector is not an exception. Othayman et al. (2020) reveal that some of the key challenges confronting most Saudi Arabia educational institutions such as King Saud University include academic staff performance, modern curriculum development and employee performance standards. As a result of low-quality teaching and performance standards, most Saudi Arabian universities including King Saud University have not attained the required standards and status to compete among other international universities. According to Othayman et al. (2020), KSA's higher education institutions face numerous challenges that deter them from meeting international education standards. These challenges include a lack of leadership and management development to bridge the gap that exists in the quality of employees' outcomes and the lack of sufficient

staff training. Furthermore, Mira & Odeh (2019) add that Saudi Universities' staff lack the required skills. Thus, there is the need to introduce various training programs to impro their skills, capabilities and competence, which will, in turn, raise their performance to global levels.

Similarly, research by Gorondutse et al. (2018) indicates that lecturers in Saudi Arabian universities lack awareness about their key roles and responsibilities, which leads to less productivity, low job satisfaction, lack of commitment and increased absenteeism. In this regard, universities and other learning institutions in the KSA face numerous challenges, including lower-ranking on a global scale due to the underperformance of the academic staff and inadequate leadership and management. Gorondutse et al. (2018) recommend increasing the level of training and development in KSA's educational sector to reverse the negative effects of role ambiguity by the academic staff. Employee training in KSA universities will improve staff commitment, job satisfaction, increase productivity and reduce absenteeism, hence improving employee performance. Improved employee performance will ultimately improve the education standards in KSA educational institutions and enhance their competition internationally.

3 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The investigation in this paper aimed at investigating the relationship between employee training and employee performance. A questionnaire was issued to King Saud University's staff to assess their perceptions on the impact of staff training on employee performance using dependent variables such as motivation, commitment, employee empowerment, job satisfaction and their relationship with employees' job performance. From the research, training and development activities and practice in the King Saud University were found to have a mean score of 40%. These findings indicate that the level of the implementation of training and development programs in the university is minimal. The findings also showed that only 20% of the academic staff receive training and 50% of the participants indicated that the university's management does not assess the staff's training needs regularly. When asked about the role of training in increasing staff's job performance, 80% of the respondents maintained that university's administration does not practice appropriate training needs assessment to ensure they improve the employees' knowledge and skills. However, respondents who had received training confirmed that there was a substantial positive impact of training on employees' job performance at King Saud University. The contribution of training, employee empowerment and motivation were 85%, while the effect of training and other factors such as job satisfaction and commitment were 15%. Therefore, training leads to increased employees' job performance in various ways, including job satisfaction, increased commitment, employee empowerment, or motivation.

4 DISCUSSION

Researchers in this study have affirmed that the human factor is an essential element in determining a company's success in today's competitive business world. Therefore, a company's human resources' capacity and competence are necessary to improve and maximize organizational performance. Employee performance, which refers to the employee behavior and level variable in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities in the organization, is among the critical Human Resource functions. Therefore, organizations must review factors that support and sustain employee performance, such as training and development, to achieve self and organizational continuity.

The findings in this research indicated that training and development significantly impact employee job performance. Substantial support was reported by various scholars who found that employee training and development leads empower and motivates employees to participate in their companies' decision-making, which leads to increased performance and productivity (Salama, Isaac, Habtoor & Ameen, 2020; Allui & Sahni, 2016). Furthermore, Mira & Odeh (2019) also confirms that training employees not only empowers them, but it also motivates them, engages them in decision making, and earns their trust, hence bridging the gap between them and top management. Also, Hanaysha (2016) confirms that training equips employees with useful skills, knowledge, and competencies that empower and encourage them to take up more challenging tasks and responsibilities in the organization, which boosts overall productivity. Therefore, they concluded that supportive and nurturing environments that consider perceptions of empowerment through training would positively impact employees and eventually enhance organizational productivity and effectiveness. Therefore, assessing employee training needs and encouraging them to engage in various training activities and programs should be considered part of an organization's culture.

This study's findings also revealed that training has a positive impact on job satisfaction, and it aligns with previous results by (Hanaysha, 2016; Allui & Sahni, 2016). According to them, training motivates employees to work harder and be more committed to their jobs, thus yielding exceptional performance. Training and development also increase job satisfaction, which is depicted by their loyalty and commitment to their organizations. This study found out that employees who participated in various training programs were delighted to work and perform their duties. These findings are in line with Hanaysha's (2016), who confirmed that employee training minimizes their concerns and frustrations caused by their job's needs and demands. In this regard, organizations should administer training programs in their strategic plans to ensure job satisfaction because satisfied employees are happy, more hardworking, and committed to their jobs. This leads to high employee performance, which ultimately leads to increased organizational productivity and success.

5 CONCLUSION

The business is constantly changing due to technological advancement and globalization. This change necessitates business management teams to adopt more creative and proactive survival techniques to remain competitive in the turbulent business world. The paper identified the human aspect as the key determiner of an organization's positive outcomes and success. As a result, implementing employees' training programs in the organization was identified as a significant change management technique in facilitating employees' job performance. Training empowers employees and motivates them to work harder and attain organizational goals. Training also increases employee commitment and loyalty, and it improves job satisfaction, all of which facilitate job performance.

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