

The impact of lifelong learning and investments in employee development on employee productivity and performance



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Abstract This abstract highlights the significant positive influence of lifelong learning on both individual employee performance and broader organizational effectiveness. In today's dynamic and ever-evolving work environment, the concept of lifelong learning stands as a cornerstone for individual and organizational growth. This study investigates the profound impact of lifelong learning initiatives on employee performance within various professional settings. The findings underscore the pivotal role of lifelong learning in fostering a culture of adaptability, skill enrichment, and heightened problem-solving capabilities among employees. As employees engage in continuous education, upskilling, and professional development, a direct and positive effect on individual performance is observed. The acquisition of new competencies and knowledge positively influences productivity, innovation, and overall job proficiency. Moreover, the study revealed that a commitment to lifelong learning not only contributes to improved individual performance but also impacts organizational outcomes. Organizations that encourage a culture of continuous learning see higher levels of employee engagement, lower turnover rates, and greater levels of innovation and flexibility. A learning-centric workplace such as this leads to improved organizational performance and a competitive advantage in the marketplace. The abstract closes by arguing for the incorporation of lifelong learning initiatives into organizational strategy, emphasizing their role in improving employee performance and cultivating a resilient and adaptive workforce capable of managing the changing needs of the modern workplace.

Keywords: life-long learning, training, employee, productivity, performance

1. Introduction

Employee quality is unquestionably important to the success of any firm, and investing in people is an investment in the company's success. Educational qualifications can have a substantial impact on the quality and breadth of products or services that a company can provide (Truss et al., 2012). While education is a significant aspect in establishing an employee's talent and potential, it is vital to highlight that the value an employee brings is not exclusively based on their formal education. Experience, practical knowledge, and on-the-job skills are also important elements in determining product quality and the range of an organization's services (Baumol & Blinder, 2010). The most effective and capable workforce is typically produced by a combination of education, experience, and continual development activities (Colombo & Stanca, 2013).

Motivating employees is critical for maintaining good performance, promoting engagement, and assuring general satisfaction inside a firm, and it is a critical aspect in enhancing employee productivity. Enterprises may build a motivating atmosphere that fosters employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity by integrating multiple (Chandler & Richardson, 2008) tactics and adjusting them to meet the organization's culture and the individual demands of its workforce (Ram, 2008). Implementing effective incentive tactics in the workplace has a substantial impact on staff productivity. According to Pettinger (2022), motivation is a fundamental driver of employee productivity, and by concentrating on motivation, firms may encourage their people to accomplish their best, leading to higher productivity and overall success (Pettinger, 2002). Slowly introducing changes within an enterprise can be beneficial for various reasons, including reducing resistance and allowing for smoother transitions. A gradual approach to implementing changes in an enterprise can often lead to better acceptance, understanding, and successful integration of new practices or systems. It allows for a more manageable and less disruptive process, ultimately contributing to the success of the change initiative (Chandler & Richardson, 2008).

Employee productivity can increase dramatically when employees are given new skills. Here's how learning new talents can help you be more productive. Investing in staff development by providing new skills is an effective technique for increasing productivity, efficiency, and overall contributions to the firm. This is a win-win situation for both the individual and the organization (Becker, 1962).



It is critical to have a defined strategy and method when instructing or proposing changes in a company to ensure successful implementation and adoption. Effectively guiding changes within an organization necessitates a planned and thoughtful strategy centered on communication, involvement, support, and flexibility. It is essential to create an environment where employees feel supported and informed throughout the change process, fostering a successful transition (Becker, 1962).

This process must be accompanied by clear and thorough instructions from corporate management regarding the measures to be taken. When changes are not embraced in businesses, they can create a slew of issues and roadblocks to the successful implementation of new projects. Addressing these difficulties necessitates a complete plan that involves open communication, employee participation, proper support and training, and ensuring that the changes are consistent with the company's culture and mission (Ichniowski et al, 1997). Overcoming resistance to change entails identifying and addressing the underlying causes of resistance, as well as creating a climate that promotes open communication and collaboration (Bowles & Cooper, 2009). An organization's work process must be monitored by management. However, it is critical to strike a balance between monitoring and delegating authority to employees. Over monitoring or micromanaging is seen to reduce staff morale and stifle creativity (Torginton, 2016). The goal is to efficiently monitor processes to improve them without restricting employee initiative and innovation. The ability to address poor performance is an important part of monitoring the work process. Management can discover areas or instances of poor performance and take appropriate actions to remedy these issues when they actively monitor work processes. Management can help employees improve their performance and contribute to the general success of the firm by successfully addressing poor performance through monitoring (Torginton, 2016). A lack of a comprehensive performance appraisal system for employees can result in several issues and missed opportunities inside a company. Implementing a structured performance appraisal system aids in the provision of clear expectations, regular feedback, opportunities for advancement, and a fair and consistent evaluation procedure for employees. It is critical for fostering a positive and engaging work environment that promotes individual and organizational performance (Berger & Fisher, 2013).

Increasing salaries can have an impact on employee productivity, but the relationship between increased compensation and enhanced productivity is not always straightforward and can depend on various factors (Samnani, A and Singh, P, 2013). While salary is a key component, it should be considered part of a broader approach to enhancing employee productivity. However, it is important to note that while salaries are a crucial factor, they are not the sole determinant of employee satisfaction; it is essential to understand that other factors also significantly contribute to overall job satisfaction. These factors include opportunities for career growth, a positive work environment, recognition of achievements, work-life balance, job security, effective communication, and the alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives. A comprehensive approach to employee satisfaction involves addressing these various aspects to create a workplace that promotes contentment, engagement, and overall well-being, alongside competitive and fair compensation (Samnani & Singh, 2013). Many modern enterprises link salary changes to various factors, aiming to establish a fair and transparent compensation structure. Linking salary changes to these factors helps companies create a transparent and equitable compensation structure and helps in retaining talent, promoting a fair workplace, and boosting employee motivation and engagement. Many modern enterprises utilize performance and productivity as key factors when determining salary changes or increases. This approach is commonly known as performance-based pay or pay-for-performance (Pynes, 2009). Moreover, balancing these systems with other forms of recognition and support is crucial to ensure a holistic approach to employee development and satisfaction (Samnani & Singh, 2013).

2. Investments in Employee Development

The goal of human resource development (HRD) is to improve the expertise and skills of an organization's human resources. HRD comprises a variety of tactics and procedures aimed at improving employees' knowledge, skills, talents, and total competencies (Herling, 2001). In essence, human resource development focuses on developing the potential and capacities of individuals inside an organization, resulting in a workforce that is skilled, engaged, adaptive, and capable of actively contributing to the firm's success. A robust human resource development (HRD) strategy can provide a significant competitive advantage for an organization. In essence, a strong HRD strategy not only enhances employee capabilities but also positively impacts the overall performance and success of the organization. This can create a competitive advantage by fostering innovation, improving productivity, and attracting and retaining top talent, allowing the company to outperform its rivals in the industry. There has been a significant shift in the approach to learning within organizations. While formal learning—such as traditional classroom training, workshops, and structured educational programs—has been a cornerstone of employee development, there has been an evolution in learning methods.

The shift in the learning process toward more diversified, flexible, and individualized approaches recognizes changing employee demands as well as the growing work and technology landscape. This movement aims to make learning more accessible, interesting, and relevant to individuals, hence improving skill development and knowledge acquisition. Enterprises can have a substantial impact on their employees' performance and personal improvement. Enterprises contribute considerably to their employees' personal and professional development by creating an atmosphere that encourages

learning, skill development, career growth, and an emphasis on individual well-being (Armstrong, 2001). This, in turn, leads to enhanced performance, increased job satisfaction, and higher levels of staff involvement (Grant, 1996).

Training courses and workshops are effective means through which enterprises facilitate the learning and development of their employees, contributing to both performance improvement and personal growth (Becker & Huselid, 1992). Overall, training courses and workshops play an important role in promoting employee growth and development, directly influencing employee performance, job satisfaction, and promotion within the firm. This investment in learning is critical for both the individual's personal growth and the enterprise's success. Education classes, as well as on-the-job coaching and training, are critical in supporting employee learning, growth, and development inside an organization. Employees benefit from both theoretical knowledge and practical application when education classes and on-the-job coaching are combined, resulting in a well-rounded and versatile skill set (Becker & Huselid, 1992).

3. On-the-job training

The two approaches complement each other, offering a more holistic learning experience. Education courses provide a broader understanding, while on-the-job coaching and instruction provide focused, job-specific skills. By integrating both formal education courses and on-the-job coaching, employees benefit from a well-rounded and comprehensive learning experience that enhances their capabilities, knowledge, and performance within the organization. On-the-job training involves a practical, hands-on approach to learning within the actual work environment (Blundell et al., 1999). It is not just about knowledge replication but rather about the transmission and application of knowledge and skills within the context of the job. Successful on-the-job training includes feedback and reflection. Employees learn through mistakes, feedback, and reflection on their actions, which contributes to learning and improving knowledge and skills. On-the-job training is more than mere knowledge replication; it is about actively applying, adapting, and evolving learned knowledge and skills within the real work context. It involves not only replicating what others do but also understanding, adapting, and applying knowledge in a way that is most effective within the specific job role and work environment (Pettinger, 2002).

4. Coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are highly valuable methods for employee development and growth within an organization (Moone & Moles, 2011). They play pivotal roles in fostering skills, enhancing knowledge, and supporting the professional development of individuals. Both coaching and mentoring offer valuable support and feedback, helping employees improve their skills, build confidence, and progress in their careers. Both coaching and mentoring methods contribute significantly to the professional and personal development of employees by providing tailored guidance, support, and knowledge sharing, resulting in enhanced skills and overall growth.

The primary focus of employee coaching is to improve performance, enhance skills, foster professional development, and facilitate personal growth, ultimately contributing to the success of the individual and the organization as a whole (Vries et al, 2009). The mentoring of employees focuses on various key areas that revolve around guidance, support, and overall professional and personal development. Mentoring is a relationship-based approach that focuses on holistic professional and personal development. It leverages the experience, expertise, and guidance of the mentor to nurture the potential and growth of the mentee, aiming for comprehensive development and successful career progression (Vries et al., 2009).

5. Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning and training involve planned instruction, but they encompass broader concepts that go beyond traditional structured instruction. Although planned instruction, such as formal training, is an essential part of lifelong learning, the latter extends beyond structured programs, embracing a continuous, self-directed, and varied approach to learning that encompasses personal growth, development, and knowledge acquisition throughout one's life.

Lifelong learning, according to de Wiele (2010), should boost workers' career development, increase flexibility, and strengthen the firm's competitive position (Wiele, 2010).

Planned education, which falls under the umbrella of lifelong learning, is frequently structured, targeted, and aimed at certain learning outcomes (Armstrong, 2006). Lifelong learning and training, particularly when focusing on a single skill or practice, entail deliberate and ongoing efforts to improve and master a certain area of expertise. The combination of lifelong learning and specific skill-based training provides a comprehensive approach to mastering a particular skill or practice. While training offers structured and goal-oriented learning within a specified framework, lifelong learning extends the process beyond formal instruction, encompassing continuous, self-directed, and varied methods to achieve proficiency in the chosen skill or practice. In summary, lifelong learning and skill-based training together create a holistic approach toward developing and mastering a particular skill or practice, combining structured learning, self-directed study, and continuous improvement to achieve expertise in a specific area (Armstrong, 2006).

Indeed, when lifetime learning and skill-based training are properly integrated into the workplace, they frequently result in enhanced performance through changing behavior. The combination of skill development, lifelong learning, and

changing habits leads to a more proficient, adaptive, and innovative workforce. Individuals become more productive in their roles as a result of these improvements, contributing to the organization's overall success and growth. This, in turn, encourages a culture of continuous improvement and adaptability in the workplace. Employee development is a comprehensive concept that encompasses far more than just training. While training is an essential part of employee development, the latter involves a broader and more holistic approach that includes various aspects: training, skills enhancement, etc. (Armstrong M. , 2006). Indeed, when lifetime learning and skill-based training are properly integrated into the workplace, they frequently lead to enhanced performance through changing behavior. The combination of skill development, lifelong learning, and behavioral changes leads to a more capable, adaptive, and innovative workforce. Individuals become more productive in their roles as a result of these improvements, contributing to the overall success and growth of the business. This, in turn, generates a workplace culture of continuous improvement and adaptation.

6. Employee Development

Employee development is a comprehensive concept that encompasses far more than just training. While training is an essential part of employee development, the latter involves a broader and more holistic approach that includes various aspects: training, skills enhancement, etc. Employee development takes a more holistic approach, considering not only job-specific skills but also individual growth, career progression, and alignment with organizational goals. It is about creating an environment that supports and encourages ongoing learning, skill enhancement, and personal and professional growth at all levels within the organization (Lemieux et al., 2017).

Employee development takes a more holistic approach, considering not only job-specific skills but also individual growth, career progression, and alignment with organizational goals. It is about creating an environment that supports and encourages ongoing learning, skill enhancement, and personal and professional growth at all levels within the organization. In essence, while training is a crucial component of employee development, the broader concept includes a wide array of initiatives and strategies designed to support and nurture employees, enabling their long-term growth, success, and fulfillment within the organization (Armstrong, 2006).

Employee development is primarily concerned with the enhancement of an individual's capabilities, skills, knowledge, and personal growth within the context of their role and career.

HRD, through its focus on change, learning, and improved performance, ultimately contributes to enhancing the overall effectiveness of the organization, ensuring that its workforce is agile, skilled, and aligned with the company's goals. By integrating these elements into its strategies and initiatives, HRD plays a crucial role in nurturing a dynamic, learning-oriented, and performance-driven culture, which is vital for an organization's growth and success (Grant, 1996).

Employee development recognizes the value of investing in individuals, acknowledging that the growth and enhancement of employees contribute not only to their success but also to the overall success and growth of the organization (Singh, 2015). It is a strategic approach that benefits both the individual and the company, fostering a more skilled, motivated, and adaptable workforce. Employee development is deeply concerned with the personal portfolio of competencies that an individual possesses or aims to acquire and improve over time. These competencies, which encompass a broad range of skills, knowledge, and abilities, are vital for an individual's success within his or her role and career growth (Bartel, 2000). Employee development strategies aim to identify, nurture, and enhance these competencies within individuals. They are designed to empower employees to build a well-rounded portfolio of skills, knowledge, and abilities that not only support their current role but also prepare them for future challenges and career progression (Swanson, 2001).

The constant development and refinement of an individual's competence portfolio contributes not only to their own achievement but also to the overall success of the business, as it develops a talented, adaptive, and inventive workforce. (Armstrong, 2006). Employee development goes beyond formal training programs and structured learning. It also includes the recognition and utilization of informal learning, which can be beneficial to an individual's advancement in the workplace. The most effective staff development programs combine formal and informal learning, with the latter frequently supplementing and enriching the structured training received (Chisholm, 2005). This combination results in a more holistic and robust development of an individual's abilities and knowledge in the workplace.

Employee development strategies that recognize and apply informal learning significantly contribute to an organization's growth and performance, allowing for a more comprehensive and dynamic approach to skill and knowledge progression (Swanson, 2001).

In the workplace, new knowledge or skills can be quite beneficial and correspond with corporate objectives. Companies regularly analyze market trends, technological advancements, and industry changes to ensure that newly acquired skills and knowledge are aligned with the organization's evolving objectives and goals (Dagar, 2017). The successful incorporation of developing skills and knowledge into an organization's structure enhances goal achievement by ensuring that the workforce remains adaptive, competitive, and aligned with changing market and company needs (Beckhard, 1969).

Informal learning is critical in assisting employees in dealing with day-to-day challenges and problems at work (Grant, 1996) As a result of frequent exposure to issues and the drive to overcome them, employees develop critical thinking, creativity, and agility skills. In summary, informal learning provides employees with the adaptability and tools they require to

deal with the difficulties they face daily. It fosters a culture of continual learning and adaptable problem solving, preparing employees to face a variety of issues in a fast-paced work environment.' (Grant, 1996). According to this idea, human resource development (HRD) should focus not only on expanding human knowledge but also on unleashing the full potential of individuals within the business framework (UNESCO., 2012). The idea is that HRD should encompass organizational development to enable and maximize the capabilities of the workforce. (Swanson, 2001).

Human capital development is widely recognized as a critical aspect of boosting firm competitiveness and economic success. As a result, firms currently frequently engage continuously in staff training and professional development for a variety of reasons, including responding to change, skill relevance, increased productivity, and quality (Wieringen, F and Attwell, 1999). Investing in human resource development (HRD) on a global scale necessitates a strategic strategy that considers the different demands, cultures, and problems of a global workforce (BANK, 2017). Global HRD investment necessitates a comprehensive approach that takes into account the variety of the global workforce and markets. It entails a commitment to offering continuous learning opportunities, recognizing cultural subtleties, and developing uniform yet adaptive programs to promote the development and success of employees worldwide (Weforum, 2016).

HR development is very important, and because of that, the professional development of employees is a significant criterion by which enterprises are often assessed. The commitment of an organization to the professional development of its employees reflects positively on the company's culture, performance, and overall image. It is a critical factor that influences the efficiency, innovation, and success of an organization in a competitive business landscape (Enz, 2010)

All employees are vital, but highly skilled personnel are critical to an organization's success and growth. Highly talented personnel have a significant impact on an organization's performance, innovation, culture, and competitive advantage. Their skills and talents are frequently a cornerstone for an organization's long-term success and growth. As a result, businesses should invest in improving their workforce's abilities for a variety of reasons, including quality work, efficiency, and adaptability to change. Investing in employee skill development yields multiple benefits for the organization, including enhanced performance, market competitiveness, and employee happiness, all of which contribute to the company's long-term success and growth.

Employee skill development increases productivity and fits with the development of the company organization. Improving employee skills is an investment that not only benefits individuals but also plays an important role in the development and success of a business. It is a strategic step that helps the firm secure a more competitive market position while also ensuring long-term growth and sustainability (Marty, 2012). Employee incentives can be an effective technique for motivating, engaging, and retaining personnel. Incentives occur in a variety of shapes and sizes, and they play an important role in recognizing and rewarding people for their efforts (Acemoglu & Pischke, 1999).

Incentives serve as powerful motivators, recognizing and rewarding employees for their hard work, dedication, and achievements. They can enhance employee satisfaction, retention, and overall performance, contributing to a positive and engaging work environment. The right mix of incentives can vary depending on an organization's culture, objectives, and workforce preferences (Wolf, 2009).

In many cases, particularly in developing or economically challenged countries, providing extensive monetary incentives or large-scale benefits might not be feasible due to budgetary constraints. These nonmonetary incentives and strategies can still create a positive work environment, enhance job satisfaction, and motivate employees without placing a heavy burden on the organization's budget. It is about creating a culture that values and supports its employees despite financial limitations (Wolf, 2009).

In business organizations, where the employer is not very keen to invest in the professional development of employees, employees often take charge of their own development and growth when employers do not provide extensive opportunities. Employees who take the initiative for their own growth showcased self-motivation, commitment to improvement, and adaptability. It also benefits the organization, as motivated and skilled employees bring new ideas and competencies back to the workplace. This self-driven approach often complements an employer's investments in employee development, leading to a more skilled and engaged workforce (Kyndt et al., 2009).

Employee development is crucial in assisting firms in responding to difficulties and changes caused by political, social, and economic contexts (SEECCEL, 2016). Organizations provide their workforce with the skills and knowledge required to manage the complex and ever-changing landscape driven by political, social, and economic issues by investing in employee development, focusing on these settings. This not only benefits individual employees but also allows the firm to respond to challenges and changes more quickly (Ohidy, 2008).

Talent acquisition and retention are crucial focal points for firms due to their critical impact on organizational success (Halvorson, 2015) Given the clear link between talent attraction, retention, and organizational performance, organizations invest extensively in programs to strengthen their ability to recruit, retain, and support competent staff. The goal is to establish a culture in which employees feel valued, engaged, and inspired to contribute to the organization's goals and growth (Truss et al., 2012). Entrepreneurs should not be concerned about the viability of a return on investment in employee development. Investments in employee development often yield positive returns, contributing to an enterprise's success,

growth, and competitive advantage. Therefore, entrepreneurs should focus on the long-term benefits and value generated from such investments rather than doubting their feasibility (Acemoglu & Pischke 1999).

Despite a clear rationale for investing in human resource development, enterprises seem to be limited. There are several reasons why enterprises might face limitations or challenges in regard to investing in human resource development, despite the clear rationale for such investments in terms of financial constraints, lack of understanding of awareness, business allocation dilemmas, and resistance to change (Kleis et al., 1974) (addressing these limitations might involve emphasizing the long-term benefits of investing in human resource development, creating a culture that values ongoing learning, and demonstrating the correlation between employee development and organizational success). It is essential to balance short-term needs with long-term investments to achieve sustainable growth and success. and success (Pettinger, 2002).

While employee development and education initiatives might involve costs, management should recognize the importance of investing in employee growth and ensure that employees are included in educational activities (Gephart & Marsick, 2016). By emphasizing the importance of education and development, supporting employees through various initiatives, and integrating educational goals with organizational objectives, management can create a culture where investing in employee growth is seen as a strategic and valuable long-term investment. This not only benefits employees individually but also contributes to a company's success and growth. By integrating ongoing learning and development into the fabric of the organization, it becomes an inherent part of the culture, reinforcing the value of continuous improvement, adaptability, and growth for both individual employees and the institution as a whole (Guttman, et al, 2010).

Unfortunately, among small and medium-sized enterprises, professional development for employees is sometimes perceived as an expenditure rather than an investment due to several misconceptions or short-term perspectives. Changing this perception involves highlighting long-term gains and shifting the focus from short-term expenses to long-term strategic investments. Communicating the benefits, aligning development initiatives with business goals, and effectively measuring and showcasing the returns can help demonstrate the value of employee development as a strategic investment in the future success of the organization (Mariachiara & Magnoler, 2016).

7. Final Considerations

An entrepreneur's decision to invest in HR professional development is indeed influenced by prevailing market conditions and broader trends. Entrepreneurs weigh these market conditions and trends to make informed decisions about investing in HR professional development. These decisions are crucial for ensuring that HR teams possess the skills and competencies necessary to navigate and leverage the evolving market landscape (Becker, 2009).

Lifelong learning and skill-based training together create a holistic approach toward developing and mastering a particular skill or practice, combining structured learning, self-directed study, and continuous improvement to achieve expertise in a specific area.

By providing education and training, both parties benefit mutually, creating a win-win situation. Employees become more skilled and engaged, contributing positively to the company's success, while the company gains a competitive edge through a skilled and loyal workforce (Wieringen & Attwell, 1999) Access to finance can indeed pose a challenge for enterprises looking to invest in human resource development (HRD). Addressing these challenges might involve seeking cost-effective training solutions, emphasizing the long-term benefits of HRD, and exploring alternative sources of funding or collaboration for training and development initiatives (SEECEL., 2016). A strategic approach that aligns HRD with business objectives and provides measurable results can help secure the necessary funding for development programs (Wolf, 2009).

Many managers find it difficult to evaluate the benefits of human resource development (HRD). Adopting a strategic approach to HRD, ensuring explicit alignment with organizational objectives, investing in rigorous measuring methods, and offering training and assistance for managers to better understand, measure, and appreciate the advantages of HRD efforts are all part of addressing these problems. Furthermore, fostering a culture that values and fosters continual learning and growth might aid in better assessing and recognizing the benefits of such programs (Manuti, A and Palma, P, 2014).

Effective human resource development (HRD) efforts require the backing of firm owners and top management. The backing of the owners provides a strong endorsement and the foundation for effective HRD. It not only ensures financial and resource backing but also helps establish a culture that values continuous learning, making HRD a central element in the company's growth and success (Sanders, 2008).

Unfortunately, some enterprises may perceive human resource development (HRD) as a waste of time and investment. Addressing these concerns involves aligning HRD programs with clear business objectives, highlighting tangible benefits, and implementing robust measurement systems to demonstrate the positive impact of HRD initiatives.

Investing in human resource development (HRD) may certainly produce various benefits, favorably improving both employee dedication and performance. Companies gain a variety of benefits by cultivating a culture of continuous learning and development. Employees become more committed, perform better, and contribute to the organization's overall success and productivity (Truss et al., 2012).

Ethical considerations

Not applicable

Conflict of Interest

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