

## Employee Training as a Strategic Choice to Enhance Competitive Advantage in the Context of Empowerment Strategy

تدريب العاملين كخيار استراتيجي لتعزيز الميزة التنافسية في ظل استراتيجية التمكين

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**Abstract:** This study, titled "Employee Training as a Strategic Choice to Enhance Competitive Advantage in the Context of Empowerment Strategy," aims to highlight the importance of employee training in enhancing competitive advantages for organizations within the framework of an empowerment strategy. The study focuses on developing and nurturing employees' capabilities and skills through effective training programs to address competitive challenges. This is crucial for ensuring the organization's survival and continuity in the market.

The study reveals that employee training is considered one of the most important sources for enhancing competitive advantage, ultimately leading to the creation of innovation, excellence, and quality. This generates added value for organizations, enabling them to achieve their primary goal of survival and continuity.

**Keywords:** Empowerment; Employee Training; Training Programs; Competitive Advantage; Innovation.

**Résumé:** Cette étude, intitulée « La formation des employés comme choix stratégique pour améliorer l'avantage concurrentiel dans le contexte d'une stratégie d'autonomisation », vise à souligner l'importance de la formation des employés pour améliorer les avantages concurrentiels des organisations dans le cadre d'une stratégie d'autonomisation. L'étude se concentre sur le développement et le développement des capacités et des compétences des employés grâce à des programmes de formation efficaces pour relever les défis concurrentiels. Ceci est crucial pour assurer la survie et la continuité de l'organisation sur le marché.

L'étude révèle que la formation des employés est considérée comme l'une des sources les plus importantes pour améliorer l'avantage concurrentiel, conduisant finalement à la création d'innovation, d'excellence et de qualité. Cela génère de la valeur ajoutée pour les organisations, leur permettant d'atteindre leur objectif premier de survie et de continuité.

**Mots-clés :** Autonomisation; Entraînement d'employé; Des programmes de formation; Avantage compétitif; Innovation.

**ملخص:** تهدف هذه الدراسة الموضوعية تحت عنوان: "تدريب العاملين كخيار استراتيجي لتعزيز الميزة التنافسية في ظل استراتيجية التمكين" الى ابراز أهمية تدريب العاملين في تعزيز المزايا التنافسية للمؤسسات في ظل استراتيجية التمكين، والعمل على تطوير وتنمية قدراتهم و مهاراتهم من خلال برامج تدريبية فعالة وهذا لمواجهة تحديات المنافسة و لكي تضمن المؤسسات بقاءها واستمراريتها في السوق، حيث كشفت الدراسة في الأخير عن اعتبار ان تدريب العاملين من

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اهم مصادر تعزيز الميزة التنافسية و الذي يؤدي فيما بعد الى خلق الابداع و التميز و الجودة مما يولد قيمة مضافة للمؤسسات و يجعلها تحقق غايتها الأساسية و المتمثلة في البقاء والاستمرارية .

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** تمكين ؛ تدريب العاملين ؛ برامج تدريبية ؛ ميزة تنافسية ؛ ابداع .

## **I- Introduction**

Given the tremendous current global developments across various fields and levels, along with market globalization and intensified competition, organizations are facing significant challenges to establish their position and dominance in the global arena amid these difficult conditions. It has become imperative for them to adopt new approaches and strategies as a choice to enhance their competitive advantage. This involves unleashing the latent human potential by fostering creativity and excellence. Achieving this can only be realized through the development and enhancement of their capabilities, accomplished by formulating training programs that align with competition requirements. This is crucial for obtaining an advanced and highly competent workforce capable of finding solutions to the challenges at hand.

### **I.1 Study problem:**

The problem of this study can be formulated in the following main question:

**What are the repercussions of employee training as a strategic choice to enhance competitive advantage in the context of the empowerment strategy?**

The following sub-questions fall under this problem:

- What is meant by employee training?
- What are the fundamentals of competitive advantage?
- How does employee training impact the enhancement of competitive advantage?

### **I.2 Study importance:**

This study derives its significance from the prominent role played by training in elevating, nurturing, and developing the workforce, unleashing its latent potentials, and producing a

workforce characterized by quality, creativity, and excellence across various dimensions. Ultimately, this workforce becomes an added value for its organizations by achieving competitive advantages.

### **I.3 Study objectives:**

The study aims to:

- Understand the nature of training in the context of the empowerment strategy.
- Address some fundamentals regarding competitive advantage.
- Highlight the implications of employee training on enhancing competitive advantage.

### **I.4 Study Approach:**

In order to address the problematic aspects and answer the study questions, a descriptive methodology was adopted. This methodology is employed to describe and outline the general framework of employee training, as well as to delve into various aspects related to competitive

advantage. Additionally, it emphasizes the impact of employee training on enhancing competitive advantage.

### **I.5 Study Structure:**

To present different aspects of the topic, our study is divided into:

- Introduction to employee training.
- Fundamentals of competitive advantage.
- Implications of employee training on enhancing competitive advantage.

## **II- Introduction to Employee Training**

### **II.1 Training as an Element of the Empowerment Strategy:**

Training refers to the development of the working individual and encompasses learning environments, formal training, and informal learning opportunities. The clarity of goals and the increased training of employees are essential for success. It is noteworthy that the empowerment process may take several years to become clear and evident. In the same context, many organizations may rush to form effective work teams and overlook the foundations required for team effectiveness.

An example of this contrasting approach is adopted by the United States' space agency, NASA, which relies on the principle that training is fundamental to team effectiveness. Before sending astronauts on space missions, they are sent to live in communities that heavily rely on teamwork. NASA has individuals working together every day for a year or two before they become a cohesive team. They share tasks, spend unlimited hours together in training, and NASA recognizes that team training involves helping team members get to know each other, building mutual trust, and developing confidence among team members.

Japanese organizations have exceeded expectations in their level of interest in training because they obtain individuals with skills and commitment that lead to achieving competitive advantages for their organizations. Training levels in Japanese organizations have surpassed those in American organizations by four times. Despite being aware that training programs are costly, they understand that they ultimately lead to individuals with high-level skills and positive commitment to the organization. Therefore, training represents one of the fundamental components of employee empowerment efforts, and organizational efforts should include providing training programs on various empowerment-related issues such as problem-solving, communication, conflict management, motivation, and working with teams, to enhance the skill and technical levels of the working individuals (Jalab, kazim , & El Husseini, Empowerment and Integration Management , 2013).

Empowerment includes a detailed training program that encourages employees to understand and embody the role of empathy towards customer struggles. The objective is to add value to the service provided by the organization and to initiate initiatives in meeting customer service requirements. An important component of this approach is to delve into training in the field of customer service requirements. Sophisticated service organizations lead employees with the knowledge and determination to meet service needs. This approach assumes the presence of individuals with the authority and responsibility to address customer issues objectively on the front line.

Some organizations have implemented a training program lasting 40-60 hours per employee. The program aims to develop the ability to empathize with customer struggles and to consider matters from the guest's perspective. Additionally, the program aims to enhance role-playing techniques (Al-Douri & Ali Saleh, 2009).

## **II.2 Definition of Training:**

Training is a set of activities and efforts aimed at equipping skilled and semi-skilled workers with the knowledge and attitudes necessary to perform their tasks, whether for their preparation or to elevate their proficiency (Jdi & Belghaith, 2021). It is an effective activity that contributes to enhancing the skills of human resources in carrying out their work to implement production plans and current and future work programs. This is done on scientific foundations with the aim of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the organization (Al-Aqbi, Bouyali, & Ben Rahmoun, 2009).

It is a planned process aimed at improving the skills and capabilities of the individual, refining them, and expanding their knowledge through learning, to raise both the individual's competence and the efficiency of the organization in which they work (Barkati & Sharhabil, 2017).

## **II.3 Types of Training:**

There are several types of training, as follows:

### **II.3.1 Training by Job Type:**

- a. Vocational and Technical Training:** The management focuses on training individuals working in jobs that require manual and mechanical skills, especially craftsmanship. This often relies on the apprenticeship method, one of the oldest methods used in learning crafts and tasks that generally require manual and motor skills.
- b. Administrative Training:** General administrative training programs cover the necessary managerial and supervisory knowledge and skills required for various administrative positions. They generally include activities related to planning, directing, organizing, and controlling, as well as coordination and communication.
- c. Supervisory Training:** In this type of training program, the focus is on decision-making methods and how to enhance the efficiency of the decision-making process in behavioral aspects and human relations. Individuals entering such programs are expected to hold leadership positions that require knowledge of these aspects.
- d. Specialized Training:** This training encompasses the experiences and specialized skills needed for a specific profession or specialized work, such as the roles of doctors and engineers. The aim of this training is to develop specialized skills to address various work-related challenges.

### **II.3.2 Training According to Time :**

This type of training depends on the required duration as the basis for determining the type of training, which includes:

- a. Short-Term Training:** Typically, this type of training takes one to six weeks. In this training model, courses are often held intensively or in a concentrated format. The trainer usually provides a general and comprehensive overview of the training program.
- b. Long-Term Training:** This type of training extends over six weeks or more. One of the advantages of this training model is that the trainee receives thorough and sufficient information

about the training material, making the benefit significantly greater compared to short-term training.

### **II.3.3 Training in Terms of Location :**

This type includes the following:

- a. On-the-Job Training:** This term is commonly used to encompass any type of training that does not take place in a school or training center. In this type of training, both the trainer and the trainee work in the regular work environment. The trainer traditionally explains the process to the trainee, who observes, understands, and describes the tasks, then executes them under the supervision and guidance of the trainer.
- b. Training in Specialized Training Centers:** This may be within the facility, such as in classrooms or labs. These are equipped and dedicated to training, employing appropriate training techniques. They are characterized by the presence of specialized elements, sufficient time, and training aids (Ali, 2021).

### **II.4 Designing and Implementing the Training Program:**

To design and implement a training program, the following steps must be followed:

#### **II.4.1 Identifying Training Needs:**

A successful training program must have a clear objective arising from the need for training. Proper evaluation of the needs ensures that the training is relevant and timely. The program should be cost-effective, and the benefits derived from it should justify the cost. Identifying needs also reduces the risks associated with funding an unproductive program.

#### **II.4.2 Designing the Training Program:**

The process of designing training programs includes the following points:

##### **a. Identifying the Objectives of the Training Programs:**

Objectives are the foundation upon which the rest of the training program preparation steps are built. Two types of objectives are distinguished:

- General Objectives: Focus on the main goals that the program aims to achieve, allowing organizational decision-makers to ensure the program's effectiveness.
- Detailed Objectives: Involve tasks, working conditions, and performance standards that need to be achieved.

##### **b. Identifying the Topics of the Training Program:**

Logical sequencing and interconnection of topics must be considered, aligning with the logical sequence of knowledge to be imparted to the trainees.

##### **c. Selecting Trainers:**

The trainer is the person who guides trainees, provides them with relevant information, and trains them in the principles of practicing the profession within a specific program and style.

##### **d. Preparing the Budget for the Training Program:**

The budget of the program includes:

- Fixed Costs: Such as building consumption, furniture, and communication tools.
- Variable Costs: Such as the cost of prints, lecturer remuneration, training aids and

- equipment, salaries of administrative and assistant staff, and the costs of field visits.
- Miscellaneous Expenses: Such as the cost of beverages, accommodation, transportation, and others.

#### **II.4.3 Management and Implementation of the Training Program:**

There are several considerations to be taken into account when implementing the program, including:

- Determining the duration of the program, informing participants, receiving them, and preparing their accommodation.
- Ensuring the trainers are ready at the specified time and place, and familiarizing yourself with the trainers' experiences.
- Preparing the training room and providing audio-visual aids and other training materials.
- Developing the program and explaining its objectives at the specified time.
- Understanding the expectations and impressions of the participants regarding the progress of the program.

#### **II.4.4 Components of the Success of Training Program Implementation:**

To ensure the success of the training program implementation, certain components must be in place, summarized as follows:

- Training does not create an intelligent and conscious individual; rather, it hones and enhances their skills and capabilities.
- Any change should start by preparing the minds of the employees, psychologically preparing them, providing them with necessary and accurate information, and involving them in the change.
- The training program should be flexible and capable of succeeding in cultural values, dimensions, knowledge, and skills unless accompanied by appropriate changes in conditions, incentive systems, information systems, interaction models, and acquisition methods.

#### **II.4.5 Evaluation of the Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Training Activity:**

Evaluation is a process aimed at determining the extent to which the training achieves its objectives through:

- Assessing the effectiveness of the training process steps: ensuring the training process progresses through its various stages according to the established plan.
- Evaluating the achievement of practical training objectives: during the evaluation process, confirming the transfer of the training impact (skills, knowledge, behavior) to the real field of work (Barkati & Sharhabil, 2017).

### **III - Fundamentals of Competitive Advantage**

The concept of competitive advantage represents a strategic element that provides a fundamental opportunity for an organization to achieve sustained profitability compared to its competitors (Issaoui, 2012-2013).

#### **III.1 The Concept of Competitive Advantage:**

Competitive advantage is the organization's performance of its activities more efficiently and effectively in a way that makes it unique and distinctive in generating value that other competitors cannot achieve in their performance of activities. It can be maintained over a long period (Karim & Majid Hameed, 2017).

It is what the enterprise specializes in, giving added value to customers in a way that exceeds or differs from what competitors offer in the market. The enterprise can provide a set of benefits greater than competitors or offer the same benefit at a lower price through the formulation and application of strategies that position it better than other enterprises operating in the same sector.

It is the ability of the enterprise to formulate and implement strategies that position it better than other enterprises operating in the same sector (Issaoui F. Z., 2012-2013). This is achieved through the optimal utilization of technical, material, and organizational capabilities and resources, in addition to the capacities, competencies, knowledge, and other factors that the enterprise possesses. This enables it to design and implement its competitive strategy (Hamayzia, 2007).

### **III.2 Characteristics of Competitive Advantage:**

Competitive advantage is characterized by several features, with the most prominent being:

- It is relative and achieved through comparison, not absolute. This means that advantages are relative compared to competitors or compared over different time periods.
- It must have an impact on customers and influence their perception of superiority (Karim & Majid Hameed, The Impact of human resources training on achieving competitive advantage , 2017).
- It should be significant enough for the organization to gain considerable benefits.
- It needs to be sustainable and relatively continuous, meaning that it cannot be easily imitated by competing organizations (Issaoui F. Z., 2012-2013).

### **III.3 Dimensions of Competitive Advantage:**

Achieving competitive advantage for the organization requires a focus on two fundamental dimensions:

#### **III.3.1 Perceived Value by the Customer:**

The organization can contribute to building competitive advantage by improving the perceived value of goods or services for the customer. This involves utilizing its various capabilities to enhance this value, extending beyond merely comparing price to product quality. The concept of perceived value encompasses the customer's conviction in the product or service provided.

#### **III.3.2 Organization's Ability to Achieve Distinction:**

The organization can also attain competitive advantage through distinction in goods or services, making it challenging for competitors to easily imitate or replicate. Key resources aiding in achieving distinction include financial resources, physical resources, human resources, and organizational capabilities.

- a. **Financial Resources:** The organization can achieve distinction by financing its needs under specific conditions, allowing it to produce goods or provide services at lower prices than others.
- b. **Physical Resources:** By effectively utilizing physical resources, the organization can achieve competitive advantage by offering products or services in a distinctive way.
- c. **Human Resources:** Human skills and capabilities are crucial for an organization's success and distinction. The organization's ability to excel is often linked to the skills and capabilities of its workforce.
- d. **Organizational Capabilities:** Achieving distinction through organizational capabilities involves the organization's ability to manage its systems and individuals effectively. This includes fulfilling customer needs and providing them with value that is challenging for

competitors to replicate (Sunia, 2016).

### **III.4 Competitive Advantage Strategies:**

Organizations resort to several competitive strategies to achieve excellence, including:

#### **III.4.1 Cost Leadership Strategy:**

The organization pursues this strategy to outperform competitors by producing goods or services at a lower cost than competitors. Following this strategy entails two main benefits:

- a. Cost Reduction:** Due to the lower associated costs, a cost-leading organization can impose prices lower than competitors while maintaining the same profit level. If other organizations in the same field move towards offering similar prices for their products, the cost-leading organization will continue to achieve higher profits due to its low-cost advantages.
- b. Increased Price Competition:** In cases where price competition intensifies, cost-leading organizations are better equipped to withstand competition due to their lower costs. Therefore, it is likely that a cost-leading organization will achieve profits above the prevailing average.

#### **III.4.2 Differentiation Strategy:**

Under this strategy, the organization focuses on offering distinctive products compared to competitors. It implements a high-return marketing program, maintains an effective system for research, quality control, and customer care.

#### **III.4.3 Focus Strategy:**

This competitive strategy is directed towards a specific market segment or a particular group of customers, rather than dealing with the market as a whole. Organizations following this strategy seek to leverage a competitive advantage in the targeted market segment by providing products at a lower cost than competitors through cost reduction or offering superior products in terms of quality, specifications, or customer service. This strategy emphasizes the following dimensions:

**a. Customer Focus:**

- Relying on existing customers.
- Attracting customers from competitors.
- Attracting new customers who have not used the product or service.

**b. Product Focus:**

- Variance and differentiation of products.
- Distinguishing services from those of competitors.
- Developing new uses for the product or service.
- Improving the services provided with the product.

**c. Technology Focus:**

- Developing machinery and equipment to enhance efficiency.
- Improving the quality of services and products.
- Developing new uses and benefits for the product or service (Qaizah, 2020).

### **IV- Implications of Employee Training on Enhancing Competitive Advantage**

#### **IV.1 Human Resources as a Source of Competitive Advantage:**

Many business strategy experts believe that an organization's competitive advantage is achieved through its workforce. The key difference between good and poor performance lies in the quality of the organization's workforce, their motivation, and commitment to making an effective contribution to the organization's success. The importance of human resources in organizations lies in being the

real source to form and enhance competitive capability. Human resources can contribute to creating a competitive advantage through:

#### **IV.1.1 Emerging Strategies:**

It is important to distinguish between what is known as intended strategies and strategies emerging when discussing human resources in creating a competitive advantage. Intended strategies are seen as a set of decisions based on rationality and initiative aiming to achieve specific goals. These strategies are the result of a rational decision-making process by top management in an attempt to formulate a strategic plan. Most organizations adopt these strategies. On the other hand, emerging strategies are those that grow from within the organization and reflect what the organization is actually doing, not what it intends or plans to do.

#### **IV.1.2 Enhancing Competitive Capability:**

Another way human resources can support the competitive capability of the organization is by developing a base of human capital that can provide the organization with distinctive capabilities to adapt to complex, ever-changing environmental variables. The role of human resource management in achieving a competitive advantage must remain in constant development due to the rapid changes surrounding the current business environment. It has become clear that, despite improving quality, success in global competition requires the development of production systems characterized by flexibility and adaptability. This ensures the ability to respond to rapid changes in customer needs and competitive strategies. Some researchers believe that an organization with a strategic vision can achieve a competitive advantage over other organizations lacking such a vision (Saham & Ait Qasi Azzou , 2017).

#### **IV.2 Innovation as a Source of Competitive Advantage:**

Acquiring a competitive advantage in an organization, especially in the face of environmental threats such as intense competition and the specter of imitation by others, is not enough. The search for the sustainability of competitive advantage has become mandatory. This can only be achieved through research and development, which are fundamental sources of innovation in the organization. It is noteworthy that modern and progressive organizations strive to be market leaders and excel in all aspects of management and human resource development by motivating and equipping them to face emerging challenges. Innovation serves as a weapon to maintain the leading position of the organization in the market. It is also the fundamental support to shield the organization from imitation and competitors, making it characterized by economic intelligence and competitive vigilance (Yassin & et al).

#### **IV.3 Development and Training of Human Resources as a Source of Competitive Advantage:**

One of the reasons organizations turn to training is to achieve a competitive advantage. Organizations often need to employ new and advanced technology to reduce costs, increase quality, achieve efficiency, and outstanding performance. Training is a fundamental topic of particular importance due to its direct connection to enhancing the performance of individuals within organizations, reflecting on the success of these organizations.

Training is not limited to providing trainees with the necessary information to develop their roles; rather, it is an attempt to give them new experiences and skills, reshape their behavioral patterns, and bridge the gap between actual performance and the desired level of performance. It empowers them to acquire the ability to use modern methods and techniques through practical application.

Training holds a prominent significance among the activities of human resource management because it is linked to the human element, which is crucial in the production process. Therefore, it

receives significant attention in modern organizations due to the realization of its importance in achieving the organization's goals. Training is thus considered a vital source in preparing human resources, developing their competencies, enhancing work performance, and increasing production and productivity (Karim & Majid Hameed, 2017).

## **V- Conclusion**

From the foregoing, we can conclude that training represents one of the fundamental components in the efforts to empower employees, which subsequently leads to the creation of creativity, excellence, and quality in human resources, thereby generating competitive advantages. The study has resulted in a set of conclusions, including:

- 1) During the preparation of training programs, it is essential to accurately identify the training needs of human resources. This involves formulating them in a manner that aligns with the requirements of competition to avoid the failure of the training program, which would entail additional costs for the organization.
- 2) With the intensification of competition on the international stage, it has become imperative for organizations to adapt their strategies according to systematic frameworks and methods to maintain their positions and ensure their continuity.
- 3) Effective training leads to the creation of skilled and competent human resources with bright minds capable of creating value for their owners.
- 4) The training process directly aims to enhance competitive advantage. Training leads individuals to unleash their creativity, excellence, and quality, and undoubtedly, all these dimensions create competitive advantages for the organization.
- 5) For organizations to ensure their survival and continuity in the competitive landscape, they must work on the development and growth of their human resources to make it difficult for others to imitate them in the future.

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