

Exploring Employee Competencies for Organizational Performance: A Comprehensive Analysis

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Abstract: *This article delves into the critical topic of employee competencies and their impact on organizational performance. With a focus on human resource capabilities, the study examines the role of competencies in providing sustainable competitive advantages for organizations. By drawing on theories such as the Resource - Based View and the Human Capital theory, the article investigates the relationship between employees knowledge, skills, abilities, and organizational success. The study employs both theoretical and empirical literature reviews to uncover the multifaceted nature of competencies, ranging from analytical thinking and goal setting to self - confidence and problem - solving skills. The research also considers factors influencing employee competencies, including education, training, and experience. Through an analysis of employee knowledge, skills, and experience, the article highlights the vital connection between competencies and organizational effectiveness. The findings underscore the importance of nurturing employee innovation and the need for organizations to adapt and learn from their workforce.*

Keywords: Employee competencies, organizational performance, Comprehensive Analysis

1. Introduction

Employees' competencies are among the major concern in many organisations in recent years. The concern and thirst for Human resources competencies are more increasing because they provide a sustainable competitive advantage for organisations to ensure performance (Blackbank, 2016). The performance is essentially rooted in human resource capital (Schultz, 1961), resourced based (Barney, 2001), and expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Organisation's employees comprise a very important aspect of organisations to achieve a high rank in business competition (Hassan and Mahmood, 2016). Iftikhar (2015) argued that, organisations will ensure high performance through improving employees' performance. Moreover, Phanwattan and U - on (2017) argued that Human resources competencies are precursor towards organisation's performance.

Employees' competencies entail the ability of employees to possess necessary experience in work performance through teamwork, problem solving, planning and organising (O'riordan, 2017). Working knowledge such as critical thinking towards several tasks, understanding well of the requirements of the job and how to achieve them, self motivation, determination and persistence. Working skills including both technical skills relating to occupation, and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, professionalism, self management, critical and creative thinking. Employee competence encompasses both individual's technical and interpersonal skills necessary to organisational.

Employee competencies are a list of skills and behaviours that are specific and well defined and are used to lay out an organisation's performance for a job or the organisation culture as a whole. Employee competencies therefore, is the combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to

enhanced employee performance and ultimately result in organisational performance. To understand competencies, it is important to define the various components of competencies.

Employees need to possess the ability to influence others. Influencing others refers to the ability to sway the opinions and actions of other people, gain support for programs and builds strong relationships. Those who score high in this competency identify issues and propose solutions thus building the trust of others. When necessary, issues are escalated but in a manner seeking solutions rather than just venting about problems.

Analytical thinkers' employees are able to look at a problem or a system, and break it down into logical and systematic components, tackling things in a methodical way. This person makes a "pros and cons" list when making a decision. He might also create a map of an existing sales process to identify where gaps or stalls occur. Employers need analytical thinkers who can prioritize daily activities and identify causes to common problems in the workplace.

Goal setting as a competency is more than just saying what a person hopes to accomplish in a specific period of time. An employee who scores high in goal setting drives the team effectiveness forward by assisting in small and large goals for the team and organization. Action plans are developed and progress is constantly maintained to see if goals are on track. If adjustments are deemed necessary, the goal setter makes adjustments to redirect actions to meet desired goals.

Self - confidence as a competency is measured as the ability for an employee to accomplish a task. Employers need to realize that an employee might not have high personal self - confidence but might exhibit exceptional self - confidence when it comes to completing specific job duties. For example, a younger employee might not feel confident presenting a report to a large group but might have the

Volume 12 Issue 8, August 2023

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confidence to prepare all the data necessary for the report. Those with high levels of self - confidence are better able to handle more difficult tasks or problems as they arise.

Competent employees are normally exhibit a high level of integrity by doing the right thing regardless of personal ramifications. Organisations should seek high - level integrity in all employees. This competency is demonstrated in everything from staying late to help a client when a co - worker is late; also making sure all confidential information is maintained in a secure way. Employees are a reflection of the organisation; therefore, a team that demonstrates integrity in all aspects of business and customer service reflects well on management.

Organisations want employees who are able to solve problems competently. This does not necessarily refer to a scientist solving complex equations; often, it refers to the ability to evaluate a negative situation and find a positive resolution to it. An employee who takes a disgruntled customer service call and ends the call with a happy customer that ends up buying more is a good problem solver.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Literature review

The Resource based view (RBV) is one of the works of Penrose (1959) in her theory of the Growth of the Firm. The major concern of the RBV is on how to capture the organisation's important resources that rely on human resources (Barney, 2001). The Resource - Based view assumes that HR deliver significant values that may seem difficult to be adopted by other competitors. (Liu *et al.*, 2010).

The Resource based view emphasizes on internal capabilities within organisations. Abilities of Human resources that are very difficult to be imitated by the competitors (Resource based view, 2018). This theory provides that employees' innovation has influence on the organisation performance. The RBV therefore helps the study to include innovation among the important constructs of employees' competencies. Employees are often judged on how well they perform based on individual innovation competence (Hero, Lindfors, & Taatila, 2017).

Empirical studies of organisation performance using Resource Based View theory have found differences not only between organisations in the same business (Hansan & Wemerfelt, 1989), but also within narrower confines of groups within business (Cool & Schendel, 1988). This suggests that, the effects of individual, firm - specific resources on performance can be significant (Mahoney & Pandian, 2001). Wade and Hulland (2004) defined resources as assets and capabilities that are available and useful in detecting and responding to market opportunities or threats. Assets and capabilities therefore, define the set of resources available to the organisation. Assets can be anything tangible or intangible the organisation uses in increasing performance, whereas capabilities are repeatable patterns of actions in the use of assets to increase performance.

The Resource -Based view theory reflects on the actual environment of Tanzania public schools. This is the case due to the fact that, the theory has become influential in the management fields such as strategic setting towards organisational performance. The theory provides valuable way public schools in Tanzania to think about how assets and capabilities inherent in employees relate to organisational strategy and performance. The theory therefore, provides a cogent framework to evaluate the strategic value of public schools. However, the theory is not ideally suited to studying school working environment, instead it forms part of a complex chain of assets and capabilities that may lead to the performance of Tanzania public schools.

2.1.1 The Human Capital theory

The Human Capital theory can trace its roots to Schultz (1961) who argued that Human capital is the stock of competencies, knowledge, experience, social and personal attributes including creativity and innovation, embodied in the ability to perform work so as to produce economic value (Shultz, 1961). Additionally, Thomas *et al.*, (2013) defined Human Capital as the people, their performance and their potential in the organisation. The inclusion of the term potential is important as it indicates that employees can develop their skill and abilities over time (Mc Cracken *et al.*, 2017).

Human capital theory therefore, emphasizes the contributions of employees' knowledge, skills, experiences towards bringing organisational performance. Working knowledge such as critical thinking towards several tasks, understanding well of the requirements of the job and how to achieve them, self motivation, determination and persistence. Working skills including both technical skills relating to occupation, and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, professionalism, self management, critical and creative thinking. A major strength of Human capital theory is that, it helps the study assess the relationship between employees' competencies. Competencies that include all the related knowledge, skills, abilities, experiences, and innovation that make employees to become more productive and lead into public school performance.

Human Capital is the possession of knowledge, applied experience, organisational technology, customer relationships and professional skills that provides organisations with a competitive advantage (Edvinsson, 1997). Sydler, Haefliger, and Pruksa (2014) argue that, there are different interpretation of Intellectual capital which is formed from a combination of Human, Social, and Structural capital. There are intellectual materials that have been formalised, captured, and leveraged to produce higher valued assets. On the other hand, Intellectual capital are knowledge flows through resource and development. Taken together, intellectual capital refers to the ability of the organisation to leverage the knowledge resources embedded within the organisation human, social, and structural capital in order to give the organisation a knowledge advantage.

Human Capital plays a big role in the creation of knowledge capital of the organisation. Working knowledge such as

critical thinking towards several tasks, understanding well of the requirements of the the job and how to achieve them, self motivation, determination and persistence. Working skills including both technical skills relating to occupation, and soft skills such as communication, collaboration, professionalism, self management, critical and creative thinking. Human capital can also interact with structural capital. However, when human capital, social capital and structural capital combine to form Intellectual capital, there can be strategic differences in how the various forms of capital are developed. In this case, it is imperative that management can measure the various interaction between the different capitals. Human capital builds up a theoretical base for employees training and development.

Emperical Literature Review

The contribution of education and profession certification is higher to job performance. (Livingstone, 2018). Employees are happy and satisfied on how the graduates are performing in areas of general and specialized skills and the personal qualities they demonstrate in the work place. There exists a significant differences on the performance of the graduates based on positions and length of service. (Plantilla, 2017)

A study by Friolina *et al* (2017) sought to know whether competence affect the performance of civil servants. From the reults, competence was found to have positive and significant effect on the performance of civil servants. Modern schools require educators to participate in continuous growth professionally to keep up with various social changes, and this has put them under immense pressure.

Abosede and Adesanya (2017) did a study to investigate the contributions of self - efficacy and problem - solving skills on secretaries' job performance in Ogun State Public Service, Nigeria. The result obtained indicated that the predicator variables which are self - efficacy and problem - solving skills accounted for the job performance of Secretaries in the public service of Ogun State.

Livingstone (2018) did a study on the Education – Jobs Gap: Underemployment or Economic Democracy? The study inquired the contributions of education and professional certification to job performance among financial accounting staff of university of Nigeria. The study results showed that, bursary staff holding professional qualifications reported higher job performance that those with who do not hold professional qualifications.

Plantilla (2017) did a study on graduate' performance in the work place. The study found that employers were happy and satisfied on how the graduate were performing in the areas of comprehension and job knowledge, understanding of general and specialized skills and the personal qualities they demonstrated in their work place. The findings implies that, there is a significance positive relationship between academic qualifications and employees' performance. There is a significant positive relationship between the profession competencies of teachers' performance and their educational level.

Abosede and Adesanya (2017) did a study to investigate the contributions of self - efficacy and problem solving skills on the question covered a variety of aspects of the process, including expenditure on recruitment and crucially whether respondents perceive that the LGAs achieve their goal of recruiting potential candidates for LGAs works. The whole process organisations do in fitting employees to the job and fitting job and tasks to the employees. HR managers who are the main players in the implementation of the recruitment and selection in LGAs councils testify the existence of skills, knowledge and competencies of Council employees. They relate that:

Guidelines are given on how to get the best employees in LGAs, there is a professional code of practice and they measure employees' commitments from their outputs. Employees are well equipped in terms of knowledge, but they go on improving them through induction training and in house training.

Box 4. 1: Respondent

Moreover, other respondents who are among the main players in the implementation of the recruitment and selection in LGAs councils stated that:

Recruitment and Selection of Council employees are divided into two categories: Those recruited by the central government. In this category, there is no recruitment test done. On another hand, the low cadres are recruited by Councils. It is in this category where two tests are administered. The written interview is carried out to measure aptitude abilities of recruits, and after passing the written test, recruits are given oral interview to capture their professional efficiency

Box 4.2: Respondent

LGAs therefore, are carefully following all procedures of acquiring new recruits who will best suit the demands of respective councils. Human resources officer asserted that:

Local government authorities (LGAs) are keen in making sure that they get qualified and competence practitioners whereas first the gaps are identified by the departments concerned and taken to the human resources where verification is done by the personnel. Thereafter, criteria are set for each and every position that seeks to be filled and forwarded to the public service commission for recruitment and selection to take place and be supplied with competent candidate (s) to fill the position. With that, LGAs assures competence is achieved among the personnel through recruitment process to get qualified and skilled individuals.

Box 4.3: Respondent

Field study found that, both categories of employees in LGAs are competent in carrying out their daily duties. LGAs survival mainly rests in their employees' compentecies. This is evidenced by respondet who is responsible with the council's quality assurance when he adds:

Council's employees are competent because they posses necessary skills and knowledge regarding to their respective duties. And in every six months employees are measured

against their objectives. And the objectives are coming from the Council's Strategic plan. Employees who do not meet their performance targets are identified for further on job training.

Box 4.4: Respondent

It was further found that, new recruits are made familiar with the organisation. Each and every Council and the environment it operates consists of unique features and attributes which needs to be familiar to each and every employee including the new recruits to enable the total commencement of the activities. This is mostly done by fellow employees to the new recruits to make sure that they all comply with the needs and wants of the Councils for competence purposes. In that case, the statement is well acknowledged by respondent that;

On new recruits the employees already in service usually takes initiatives to assist the new ones in exposing them to familiarity of the organization and the practices which needs to be undertaken in fostering the attainment of the organization goals and objectives for that matter. This is well embedded in most local government authorities (LGAs) for the purpose of assuring that every new recruited employee gets to be familiar with the organisation for performance outcomes

Box 4.5: Respondents

Table 4.2: Number of employees attended training for the period of 4 years

Financial year	Employee attended training in Mbozi		Employee attended training in Kinondoni		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
2016/2017	116	2.9	201	3.1	317	3
2017/2018	132	3.2	249	4.2	379	3.7
2018/2019	153	3.9	270	4.8	422	4.3
2019/2020	161	4.1	287	5.2	448	4.7
Total	544	14.1	1011	17.3	1556	16

Source: Suta, D. D (2020)

Table 4.3: Experience in number of years of employees in work with LGA

Years	Mbozi District Council		Kinondoni Municipal Council	
	Frequencies	Percentage	Frequencies	Percentage
1 - 5	1037	26.36	1197	20.22
6 - 10	1312	33.42	1820	30.59
11 - 15	739	18.81	1715	28.83
16 - 20	296	7.54	1038	17.45
21 and above	538	13.77	173	2.90
Total	3922	100	5948	100

Source: Suta, D. D. (2023)

The study found that employee training and development take several approaches such as: Formal training, workshops, conference, seminars, in - house or on job training. Such trainings are important in providing various knowledge and skills which are necessary for employees to possess in their job occupations.

This is well acknowledged by the respondents that;

Training among employees is the practice which is highly embedded among practitioners in LGAs because among teachers for instance they are many in schools such that they

Field study found that competencies of employees are determined by knowledge level, particularly the education level of employees. Whereas skills are seen on professional key functions of LGAs. Experience on the other hand is determined in terms of number of years employees have been working with LGAs. The findings of employees knowledge, skills and experience are summarized in Tables 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 respectively.

Table 4.1: Education level of of LGAs Employees

Education	Mbozi District Council		Kinondoni Municipal Council	
	Frequencies	Percentage	Frequencies	Percentage
Primary Educ.	157	3.98	78	1.31
Secondary Educ.	918	23.25	1487	25.00
Certificate	1642	41.58	1352	22.73
Diploma	637	16.13	936	15.73
Adv. Dip	13	0.51	23	0.38
Undergraduate degree	549	14.41	2021	33.97
Master's degree	6	0.15	51	0.85
PhD	0	0.00	0	0.00
Total	3922	100	5948	100

Source: Suta, D. D. (2020)

cannot all leave at once for training whenever they arise such that few usually go to represent others whereas they return from training they train their fellow employees to enhance their skills for competence. Despite that, sometimes among employees in the practices skills are different whereas some tend to possess extra ordinary skills whereas they learn and train among themselves to improve skills for competence purposes.

Box 4.6: Respondents

However, there is little innovation on the part of employees. The major factor that limits innovation is the limited resources. Both Managers and employees relate that:

Councils have limited resources like computers, vehicles and funds which reduce the capacity of employees to delivery services effectively and efficiently. With enough resources, Councils employees may immediately visit the community they serve for providing professional assistance on projects which are undertaken in community level. With soft technology like computers, and other resources such as desks and enough classrooms, teachers may provide good services in education sectors to all schools in villages

Box 4.7: HR Respondents

The study found that employee experience is eroding or declining because of the following reasons: The most important reason is the top down approach. LGAs in Tanzania are embracing the employee experience in a top down model and much focused on the needs of the government by trying how to connect new employees to the organisation, what should the new employees learn, how do LGAs make their employees productive as soon as possible. LGAs are doing all these and leaving aside a key question of what LGAs as an entity can learn from the new employees. This is well acknowledged by the respondents that;

The Council is very rigid to learn from its new employees, it assumes that the Council has already in possession of all worlds' knowledge.

Box 4.8: Respondents

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