SELF-LEARNING BEHAVIOR AND EMPLOYEE COMPETENCY IN WORKPLACE

BY

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Abstract

The paper critical evaluates self-learning behaviour and employee competency in a workplace. The study is positioned from the explorative and qualitative approach of research which considered the key concepts of self-leaning behavior and employee competence in a work organization. The study made use of secondary sources by evaluating articles, journals, textbooks, and conference papers as well as other publications for data collecting. Based on research and academic findings, it was determined that self-learning behavior among employees in the workplace can lead to the behavioral growth of competency. In order to achieve employee competency, company goals, and compliance with 21st-century skills requirements, organizations need to promote a self-learning behavior culture that results in employee competency. This can be done when employees, as individuals, are aware of their own capacity to practice independent learning and become self-directed learners, when the organizations prioritize learning, particularly concerning crucial skills needed in the workplace.

Keywords: Self-Learning Behaviour, Competency

INTRODUCTION

Businesses must emphasize the establishment of unique information delivery systems that assure skill proficiency. In addition, the importance of lifetime learning and continual learning was stressed for both students and enterprises operating on the worldwide market. Indeed, it is known that workplace learning refers to expanding one's knowledge, whether formal or informal and occurs at work and in other aspects of one's life as one moves from formal schooling into daily life. Recently, there has been a major increase in the use of informal learning as a tool for employee growth in the workplace. However, there is no one approach to explain how to successfully impart information and talents to employees in businesses due to cultural variances and the variable seriousness with which enterprises treat employee development. The acquisition of information and skills in the workplace, whether formal or informal, is another approach to characterize workplace learning. It virtually has a relation to adult education.

By adopting policies that increase living quality via education, learning, and training, the competence approach may be leveraged as a tool to promote the national plan's human capital component. Since a lack of such competences is the biggest impediment for fresh graduates to enter the profession, improving individual competency in Asian nations is crucial to enhancing individuals' possibilities to work abroad with competencies that meet employers' expectations. It's vital to address the gap between graduates' professional abilities and what's needed in the industry. In the end, employability depends on possessing 21st-century talents, which means that personal competences must match to these capabilities (McGunagle & Zizka, 2020).

First, it needs to be made clear that although being related, the terms "competencies" and "abilities" genuinely have independent meanings. According to Sanghi (2007), the term "ability" has been viewed from the aspect of learning and development as either having the capacity to execute something or having a specific aptitude for accomplishing a job. On the other hand, competences define a person's life knowledge and experience that they have obtained during their learning process (Brockmann et al., 2009). As a result, how well tasks are done and goals are accomplished may be used to characterize talents as they relate to learning, specifically self-learning (Mannayong & Haerul, 2020). People may and must thus develop their skills by experience, education, and training.

The variations, similarities, and applications of the terms "competency" and "competence" have been explored from a range of views. In a word, skills—which are things that can be learnt and developed—are the cornerstone of competence. Competency, on the other hand, characterizes a person's qualities and personality and pertains to abilities that are behavior-based (Brockmann et al., 2009). This study's exclusive focus is on competency in the context of employees.

To enhance their competency, people must make the effort on their own. According to Lindeman (1926), who highlighted this idea starting in the 1920s, the phrase "self-directedness" was first used to represent adults' natural predisposition to work in a self-directed manner. Later, self-directed learning (self-learning behavior) was widely developed for adult learning from both an educational and a practical aspect. This essay's claim is that workers who have the newest skills can be more effective if they engage in self-learning activities. Employees are people who contribute to a nation's manufacturing, services, and agriculture industries (Anderson, 2006). To develop their talents, individuals in those three industries must pick up a range of skills.

Problem Statement

There are little study in the literature that related the ideas of self-learning behaviour and employee competency. Existing studies have established the significance of employee competency through training and development programmes supplied by employers for organisational success, specifically in the service industry (Anderson, 2006). Most study have, in fact, proved that training and development by organizations improves employee competency (Pereira et al., 2020). This shows that organizational management and policies impact employees' competency but has overlooked the role of employees' self-development through self-learning behaviour. On this basis, our present study will critically look at self-learning behaviour and employee competency in a corporation.

Objectives

The main focus of the study evaluates self-learning behaviour and employee competency in a workplace. Specifically,

1. To explore the concepts of self-learning behaviour and employee competency.
2. To determine the factors that influences self-learning behaviour among employees of work organization.
3. To develop recommendations and suggestion that will support self-learning behaviour and employee competency in an organization.

Self-learning behavior

Workplace learning has grown since the early 1990s, and contemporary research in this area is both extensive and broad. This expanding reason is due to the connection between learning and working, which is how quickly society and the workplace are changing. Learning and working are also increasingly used to foster the growth of future leaders and enhance their influence on an organization's effectiveness

and competitiveness. Additionally, it is now essential for both individuals working in the learning society and businesses to continuously learn in order to prosper in the global economy. Workplace learning is currently the most important topic of discussion, along with corporate concerns around employee competency.

A fact that contributes to the learning of both the individual employee and the company as a whole is that there are numerous definitions of workplace learning, including building employee capacity and enhancing labor knowledge [Doornbos, Simons & Denessen, 2008]. Additionally, it was shown that 80% of learning that is relevant to the workplace may take place informally through networking, coaching, and mentorship [Yeo, 2008]. Employees may benefit from this type of learning since it goes beyond traditional training; as a result, learner behavior as well as the context and other participants in the learning must be analyzed. Because it is informal in character and frequently incorporated with daily activities and workplace social interactions, workplace learning can also entail a process of formal aspects of learning, even if it predominates [Cacciattolo, 2015].

Factors Influencing Self-Learning in the Workplace

The factors impacting learning behavior in the workplace often include both direct and indirect causes as well as a variety of variables that may have an impact on learning behavior. The scope focuses on certain elements or the unit's overall culture, including involvement, feedback and communication, labor relations, job design, continuity, and training. Due to the elements of confidence, challenge, and support [Eraut, 2000] that were largely emphasized in this context, the overall outcome from previous research on mid-career development was exciting. The context of learning while working and happening by doing something with the urge to look for new learning possibilities that demand a person's confidence allowed for the link between all those aspects to be formed.

Additionally, the confidence level grew as a result of one person's achievement in overcoming obstacles while at work. Additionally, if a company offers the right learning support, a person will feel confidence in their ability to handle challenges in the future. In conclusion, the confidence level would collapse and create a desire for conditions for learning in the workplace if there was neither a challenge nor suitable aid to encourage learners to seek out or cope with obstacles.

Competency

The Latin word "competentia," which may be translated as "being authorised to judge, respectively, a person who has the right to speak," serves as the foundation for the English word "competency" (Skorkova, 2016). In a society where people are free to express their opinions, this meaning links to human rights (Skorkova, 2016). Later, the term "competence" was redefined to have a stronger connection to job performance. Competency is also defined as a group of related knowledge, skills, and attitudes that reflect a significant portion of a

person's job (a role or responsibility), correlate with performance on the job, can be assessed using generally accepted benchmarks, and can be strengthened through training and development.

According to Kunzmann (2006), competences are defined as the coordinated use of knowledge, skills, values, experiences, contacts, outside knowledge resources, and instruments to carry out an activity or solve a problem. The features of skills, knowledge, and abilities that can be observed and evaluated are referred to as competences, according to Potnuru and Sahoo (2016). Additionally, most recently, Mannayong and Haerul (2020) connected employee competency with workers' aptitude, expertise, perception, and attitude used as a benchmark for performing job duties..

Self-directed learning and employee competency

This topic explores the practical components of self-learning behavior that enhance employee proficiency in 21st-century skills required for workplace productivity. In order to plan, carry out, and reflect on their own learning experiences, self-learning behavior is defined as a "process in which individuals take the initiative, without the help of others" (Knowles, 1975). Theoretically, self-learning behavior is a mostly informal process that takes place outside of the classroom in addition to formal and non-formal education. Education also incorporates self-learning activities to meet learning objectives. Since the student is ultimately responsible for deciding on the learning's strategies, resources, and evaluation, it is evident that the learning is "self-directed" in this sense.

Few studies have examined the connections between employee competency and self-learning behavior or the distinctive strategies used in businesses to promote self-learning behavior for the growth of certain employees (Cho & Kwon, 2005). HRD and executives are responsible for making efforts to create learning infrastructures that effectively use both formal and informal learning in order for workers to stay educated (Ellinger, 2004). To permit the comprehensive growth of employees' knowledge and skill, however, has become increasingly difficult for businesses due to the demand for global economic competitiveness (Raveendran et al., 2021).

It is not surprising that the idea of self-learning behavior has emerged as a crucial element of adult learning in the workplace. Self-learning behavior techniques have expanded as organizational efficiency responds to the complex demands of the changing nature of work (Waitoller & Artiles, 2013). Employees may effectively increase their skills and effectiveness through cost-effective means by embracing self-learning behavior. As a result, self-learning behavior is now acknowledged as a key component of workplace learning research and practice, particularly in settings where learning aims to increase individuals' capacities. Self-learning behavior is only a presumption that employees may upgrade their competencies on a daily basis.

In fact, informal self-directed behavior is how learning typically occurs in the workplace (Yeo, 2008). Ellinger (2004) argued that because employees take on the responsibility of both individuals and groups when speaking about their learning, learning from common workplace activities (such as mistakes, interactions, self-managed observation, and training others) constitutes self-learning behavior. Therefore, it appears that sustaining both ongoing competence improvement and creativity requires individual self-directed engagement (Boyer et al., 2013).

However, local firms must boost productivity via staff competency in order to meet the needs of the global competitive market. In this regard, employee competency is mostly driven by self-learning behavior. Workplace learning is the process employees go through to fulfill their duties. It possesses the mindset, skills, and information required for their job. To foster student autonomy, the learning attitude should be chosen rather than imposed. Employees study because they understand the value of information and the relevance of developing 21st-century skills, in other words. Instead than waiting for organizational training sessions, they start a self-learning behavioral attitude that teaches them to evaluate and improve themselves.

Methodology

The study is positioned from the explorative and qualitative approach of research which considered the key concepts of self-leaning behavior and employee competence in a work organization. The study capitalized on secondary sources for data collection through reviewing of publications such as articles, journals, textbooks, conferences papers.

Conclusion

Based on research and academic findings, it was determined that self-learning behavior among employees in the workplace can lead to the behavioral growth of competency. In order to achieve employee competency, company goals, and comply with 21st-century skills requirements, organizations need to promote a self-learning behavior culture that results in employee competency. This can be accomplished when employees, as individuals, are aware of their own capacity to practice independent learning and become self-directed learners.

Recommendations

based on the main analysis of the research's findings and aspects regarding the context of self-learning behavior and competency. The following

1. In order for supervisors to be aware of their staff members' skill and knowledge levels, the human resources department and supervisors must jointly assess each employee's competency.
2. In order to ensure communication among staff members at all levels, HRD should create a cohesive vision. Having effective communication supports learning, especially self-learning.
3. HRD and executives must encourage lifelong learning, make knowledge accessible to employees,

and encourage them to become independent learners.

4. The development of an organizational culture that values collaboration, communication, and teamwork at the organizational level will encourage individuals to learn from one another on a personal level.

5. Each employee should receive personalized coaching and guidance from management to develop the skills they need to meet both their individual goals and the company's expectations.

6. Since self-learning behavior is learner-centered, leaders, employees, and the human resources department must all be involved in the competency program's creation.

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