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**An Analysis of Strategic Importance of Executive Education: Its connection to
Organizational Success**

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Strategy

An Analysis of Strategic Importance of Executive Education: Its connection to Organizational Success

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Abstract

Purpose: This article analyses the strategic importance of executive education towards the success of organizations.

Methodology: This study used a qualitative research design and looked at correlational aspects of different variables. This provided an in-depth understanding of the variables, experiences, drivers, and behaviours. The data collected was analyzed via an explanatory discussion. A secondary type of data collection was applied from sources such as books, published journal articles, online publications etc.

Findings: The study found that there was a positive connection between the Executive Education and employee performance, which trickles down to organizational performance. It was concluded that there was a significant Strategic Importance of Executive Education to Organizational Success.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: The study was based on two major theories, i.e. Human Capital Theory (HCT), Becker, G. S. (1993), and Equity Theory (ET), Adams, J. S., & Freedman, S. (1976). Based on these two theories, the study explored the interaction between executive education, training and Development, employee empowerment, strategic leadership and continuous organizational learning culture and the connection therein with organizational success.

Keywords: *Continuous Organizational Learning Culture, Employee Empowerment, Executive Education, Strategic Leadership Development, Training and Development, Organizational Success*

JEL Codes: *M12, L25*

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INTRODUCTION

Executive Education can be defined as the training or impartation of skills, knowledge and practical experiences to managers and executives within organizations through specially designed learning programs. James, G. C. (1997) in his scholarly article, he defines Executive, or management education, as programs that broadly include any educational activity that features working-class people as participants. In this sense, he says, it is more accurate to say executive education is “continuing education.” According to fastcompany.com, “Executive Education, also known as exec-ed and ExEd, refers to programs and courses designed for business professionals at the managerial or executive level or individuals who strive for those positions”.

Organizational Performance is significantly impacted by the strategic leadership of the organization. Executive education, on the other hand, significantly shapes the strategic leadership, strategy implementation leadership and operational leadership by imparting the executives and leaders with the skills, knowledge and the right mindset required to effectively and courageously guide and manage their organizations towards performance and success. According to Garcia, M. V. J., Matias, R. F., & Hurtado, T. N. (2008) in their study, they say that Organizational performance greatly benefited from transformational leadership, which introduces the aspect of innovation, hence a great turnaround in organizational performance. According to Konstantin, K., Manfred, F. R., Kets, D. V. (2007) for those leaders and executives who are motivated by positive opportunities and ideas, an executive program is good and crucial to shape their skills to perform and feel fulfilled, as well as drive success and performance in their departments and organizations. This can be interpreted to mean that executive education plays a very important strategic role by equipping executives with reinforcement, assurance, motivation, knowledge, skills, and perspectives needed to challenge the ever-growing complex business needs and drive organizational success. It is also inferred that executive education helps organizations perform better through equipping the executives, who in turn are able to innovate tangible organizational solutions and are adaptable to the evolving market changes and competition therein, while improving the overall performance of the organization. Many centres of executive education and business schools have created executive education with the aim of enhancing leadership and management capabilities of executives in organizations to help them foster a culture of continuous learning and embellish success and performance.

Howell, J. L., Bullington, K. E., Gregory, D. E., Williams, M. R., & Nuckols, W. L. (2022) Studied Transformational leadership in higher education programs and found out that there existed a relationship between transformational leadership and education for executives in the institutions of higher learning.

Professor Anne, V. C. (2023), in her article titled the Role of Executive Education in organizations outlines the evolution and the importance of executive education to the performance and success of organization. She gives an example of an executive program she ran for a family-owned business in the Middle East, which brought a cultural transformation and turnaround towards the success of the business. Through the executive education, the business, which stood at \$5 billion, had a transformation due to better leadership and management attained from the executive program that she ran for the organization. She says that the evidence of the Impact was seen through higher rates of employee satisfaction scores

in the organization, higher rates of employee retention and reduced bureaucracy while enhancing success.

Ngugi, M. N. N. (2014) carried out research titled Perceived Relationship between training and development and employee performance in Geothermal Development Company (GDC). Her research specifically investigated the relationship between the training and development of managers and employee performance in GDC. She states that the study's objective was to find out the relationship between training and development and employee performance in the Geothermal Development Company.

She used stratified random sampling and selected 80 respondents from the organization. In her research, she combined both primary and secondary data to actualize her study and the key findings and outcome of the study were that the employees in Geothermal Development Company were aware of the existence of a training and development policy in the organization and they agreed that by completing their training they gain better skills which they share with other employees in the organization.

Statement of the Problem

Several researchers agree that the organizational learning strategy has a significant impact on the overall organizational performance (Gatakaa, G. 2018 etal). Nda, and Fard (2013), on the other hand, concluded that training and development of employees has a positive and significant impact on employee productivity. While the consensus among several researchers regarding the relationship between training & development and organizational performance is positive, many organizations globally keep struggling with inefficiencies (José, G. C. R. 2023). Whereas some research has been done on areas of strategic initiatives affecting organizational performance, (Tolici, D. 2021), there is little research on the strategic Importance of Executive Education and its connection to organizational performance and success. The few studies done in the area of Executive Education have not pointed out its role in organizational performance and success. This literature review therefore, covers the executive education, its meaning and the strategies such as continuous organizational learning culture, employee empowerment, training & development and the strategic leadership development and how the interplay is connected to the organizational success and performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

This theory by Becker, G. S. (1993) emphasizes that factor like investing in training increases employee skills and productivity. The theory asserts that training is an investment that provides benefits in terms of increased employee productivity and efficiency. The theory also argues that employees with higher levels of skills and knowledge, acquired through training and development, are more productive and valuable to the organization. This theory speaks with Executive Education in the sense that executive education provides the platform for training investment, hence increasing the employee skills and productivity, just as the theory intimates. It is therefore inferred that Training and Development programs which are found in executive education are a means of enhancing the human capital of an organization, leading to greater organizational productivity.

Equity Theory

The theory, which was brought forth by Adams, J.S., & Freedman, S. (1976), suggests that the sense of fairness in the workplace motivated the individuals and boosted their morale, leading to commitment, dedication and productivity. This is what we are calling employee empowerment in the study. The theory argues that there is a huge importance of making employees have a sense of fairness in the workplace, and this draws attention to the importance of executive education in terms of training and development, fair compensation, rewards, and opportunities for free expression.

Employee Empowerment can be seen as the aspect of giving employees more sense of autonomy, more responsibility, and the power of decision-making in their workplace. This will be achieved whenever the employee is equipped with the right skills and knowledge, which is provided through executive education. One of the benefits of executive education is that it will equip the employee with the right skills and knowledge, hence placing them at the point where they are able to make informed decisions in the workplace, hence facilitating the empowerment feeling.

Conceptual Framework



Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author

Empirical Review

Continuous Organizational Learning Culture

The phrase “continuous organizational learning culture” can be defined as an environment in the workplace where the value of continuous learning is recognized and incorporated as part of the normal operations of the organization, encouraging organizational long-term learning. According to Elisabeta, et al 2023, when the learning culture becomes the responsibility of all members of the organisation, the organisation can focus on its development and on the things that really matter: addressing pain points, tackling and solving problems, dealing with business partners, and focusing on achieving performance through learning. Looking at what executive education is all about and relating it to the personal and professional development of employees, as Elisabeta, et al 2023 intimates, we can see that executive education plays a role

in ensuring that a continuous learning culture is achieved hence leading to performance through learning. When employees perform well, it translates to organizational performance.

Josh Bersin in his recent research done recently and accessed on 17th April 2025, states that those people who keep learning in organizations are more confident, happy, assured of productivity & success and are readier to take up extra responsibilities and positions.

Culture of continuous learning, according to Xie, Lei 2019, enhances organizational leadership, upskilling their mindset and sharpening their leadership capabilities, enhancing innovative ideas and fostering strategic alignment, hence organizational performance.

Based on the literature above and the findings therein, it is clear that the variable, continuous organizational learning culture, which is a dependent variable of Executive education, has positive relationship with organizational success. It is therefore correct to say that executive education has a strategic importance towards organizational success.

Employee Empowerment

Many times we have used or have heard industry jargon words in the workplace, like employee-centeredness, ownership culture, or employee empowerment, thrown around. We dive into the meaning of employee empowerment as a strategy for organizational performance.

Studies have found out that just having the feeling of empowerment by employees, they become enthusiastic and committed to meaningful, impactful work, leading to the performance of the organizations they work for. Employee empowerment leads to several organizational benefits, including motivation, dedication, commitment, satisfaction, productivity and in turn higher organizational performance and success. (John, M. M. 2023)

John, M. M. (2023) in his research, found that Initiatives for employee empowerment based on Industrial democracy and participatory management principles show a strong correlation between employee engagement and job happiness, motivation and performance, personal commitment and organizational success.

Hong, J. (1995) in his book looks into the strategies and habits that motivate employees in organizations. Among several norms and strategies that he states is that recognizing employees in organization helps enhance their commitment and productivity.

Based on the literature, when employees are made to feel that they are important part and piece of the strategic plan and mission of the organization, they get engaged, motivated, and ready to contribute their best.

Employee empowerment is interconnected to executive education in the sense that executive education has the potential to elevate and heighten the skills and knowledge which is required to efficaciously empower employees, translating to improved performance and success of organization. On the other hand, employee empowerment can bring out the aspect of motivation and engagement of employees, positively impacting the effectiveness of executive education programs. The table below shows the benefits of employee motivation as derived from executive education, hence affecting organizational success.

Table: 1: Benefits of Employee Empowerment

Benefits of Employee Empowerment			
Motivated employee- Greater Employee Engagement	Greater Trust in Leadership	Improved Creativity- Innovation	A stronger bottom line- Increased company success

Source: Authors

Training and Development

According to (Azizur, R., and Alvy R. M. 2021), “Training and development are one of the most important parts of an organization. It accelerates organizational operability, enhances employees ‘morale and abilities, and ensures maximum utilization of resources, most importantly, human resources.”

Gatakaa, G. (2018) in his study concluded that on-the-job training, the so-called executive education, and the design of training had a major relationship with the performance of employees in the organization. The study recommended that organizations, and specifically human resources management, should develop a culture of training and development that incorporates executive education in the organization to improve employee performance. He insisted that the programs meant for executive education should be designed in such a way that they address all the needs and challenges of the employees to enhance their productivity, hence organizational performance.

A study done by Nda, and Fard (2013) concluded that training and development on employees has a positive and significant impact on employee productivity. The training and development on employees in organization through programs that are well designed to answer questions regarding challenges to the employees is what we are referring to executive education. When solutions are offered by executive education to the employees, productivity is boosted leading to high organizational performance.

“Training has been invaluable in increasing productivity of organizations. It does not only enhance employees resourcefully, but also provides them with an opportunity to virtually learn their jobs and perform more competently hence, increasing not only employee’s productivity but also organizations’ productivity” (Maimuna, M., Nda, & Dr. Rashad, Y. F. 2013).

Rohan & Madhumita's (2012) study looks into the relationship between training and employee productivity. The research suggests that investing in employee training, particularly in areas like decision-making, teamwork, and problem-solving, can positively impact organizational growth and employee motivation. Furthermore, the study highlights how training and development can reduce absenteeism, increase employee commitment, and improve job satisfaction.

Study done by Kiambati, G.J., Ngui, T., & Mathenge, P. (2018) titled “Employees Empowerment and Organizational Performance” showed that for an organization to benefit from employees, the organization should ensure that the employees are well skilled to manage different operations of the organization efficiently. According to their research results, bigger percentage of the respondents stated that they would manage tasks better when given more skills through training.

Summarily, training and development impacting on employee productivity has not only improved the wellbeing of organizations, but also aid the prosperity of most countries that have put into consideration the design and delivery of training and development of workforce at national level (Maimuna, M., Nda & Dr. Rashad, Y. F. 2013).

Strategic Leadership Development

Strategic Leadership Development is training developed or designed to enhance the leadership capability and skills of individuals or executives, particularly those at the strategic planning level of leadership positions, focusing on strategic thinking, decision-making, and organizational structure impact. Prior Empirical studies have concluded that strategic leadership is a very crucial and an important factor determining organizational performance (Witts, 2016; Lord, et al., 2016).

Another study shows that Strategic leadership is significantly a major factor in role of determining performance in organizations by enabling the organizations cope with the external environment (Jansen, et al., 2009). These studies all point to the direction that strategic leadership has a major role as a determinant to organizational performance.

The key learning here as per the review is that well trained leaders will execute the mandate very well and therefore coming to the narrative that Strategic leadership development is key factor for organizational performance since it equips leaders with the skills to better envision, motivate and assure teams, and adapt to dynamic and changing environments, ultimately leading and driving performance and success hence achieving goals and maintaining a competitive edge. Consequently, Executive education programs designed for executives at this level, are very crucial for better organizational performance because they enable and equip the leaders with the best cutting-edge skills to strategically visualize and come up with visionary organizational development initiatives and drive long-term success of the organization.

Research Gaps

Mihnea, M., Das N. (2017) in their research found that there is disequilibrium in executive education. Whereas the executives don't need information but skills and knowledge, most executive education programs were designed to offer information which was not really answering their questions and need about skills to help achieve organizational success. They argue that "Organizations today urgently require new managerial and executive capabilities to cope with an array of challenges, from coping with narrowing profitability gaps to enabling continual innovation; increasing customer responsiveness to meeting regulatory requirements; contending with demand-side volatility and uncertainty to managing increasingly complex new services and value chains". This study, therefore, aims to bring equilibrium by linking the executive education variables that are strategic and crucial towards organizational optimal performance and success.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses qualitative research design and looks at correlational aspects of different variables in collecting and analyzing its data. This will provide an in-depth understanding of the variables, experiences, drivers, and behaviors. Data collected is analyzed via explanatory discussion. Secondary type of data collection is applied from sources such as books, published journal articles, online publications, any other important literature etc.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

After the review of the literature, the study found that there indeed existed a significant relationship among the 5 variables studied. Executive Education was found to have a significant impact on the leadership of the organization, hence leading to organizational success. Executive Education enhances the leadership skills, leadership knowledge, and capabilities of leaders within an organization to lead it to the path of success and performance. Joseph, M., & Gladies, K. (2025) carried out research on strategic human resource practices and found that training and development played a significant role in motivating employees to perform. It was also concluded that strategic variables, including training and development, continuous organizational learning culture and employee empowerment, when done in the right way, will lead to organizational success. Finally, the conclusion was that when individuals in the organization are well equipped with knowledge and skills, well empowered and given a sense of organizational belonging, they will be more productive, which collectively leads to organizational success.

Recommendations

Based on the review of the literature, the researchers recommend that more research on the benefits of executive education needs to be conducted and clearly bring out its impact towards organizational performance.

Researchers also recommend that more and more business schools should dive into this area and develop executive education programs based on organizational knowledge needs and offer solutions for organizational success and performance.

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