



The Effectiveness of Training and Development on Employee Performance to Enhance Competitive Advantage: A Case Study of Social Enterprise Development Sierra Leone (Send-SI)

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Received: 20-09-2022 | Revision: 06-10-2022 | Accepted: 09-10-2022

To cite this document:

Kamara AM., et al, (2022) “The Effectiveness of Training and Development On Employee Performance to Enhance Competitive Advantage: A Case Study of Social Enterprise Development Sierra Leone (Send-SI)”, *Manajemen Bisnis*, Vol. 12, No. 02, pp. 102-121, [https://doi.org/ 10.22219/mb.v12i02.23109](https://doi.org/10.22219/mb.v12i02.23109)

ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the effect of Human Resources development and training on performance. Data were collected using questionnaires from 71 workers who were selected at random. The collected data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which employed Smart-PLS3. The analysis results show that on-the-job training measured by (Job-rotation, Job-instruction, orientation and workshop) had no significant direct effect on Employee Performance but a significant direct effect on Employee Competitive Advantage.

While Off-the-job training measured by (exchange learning, short courses, self-development, and simulation) had a significant direct impact on employee performance but had no significant immediate effect on employee competitive advantage. Also, employee performance was found to have a significant direct impact on employee competitive advantage. The result further revealed that through the mediation of employee performance, on-the-job training had no significant indirect effect on employee competitive advantage, while off-the-job training had a substantial indirect impact on employee competitive advantage.

Keywords: *Training and Development; Employee Performance; Competitive Advantage; SEND-SL.*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid situational changes in today's business environment due to customer demands, external environment factors (Elona Cera, 2020), digital trends, and business competitors around the globe lead organizations and or individuals to the contest for competitive Advantage (Stonehouse & Konina, 2020). As organizations grow nowadays, people need to be as flexible

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as possible to adjust and fit into new market requirements (Habib, S. et al., 2015). Therefore, it is evident that every organization should have personnel capable of quickly adjusting to a continuously changing business environment (Elona Cera, 2020) because the accomplishment of any corporate sector is very dependent on its personnel (Gashi, R. 2013). Furthermore, significant organizational changes occur due to business globalization, rapid Development of knowledge, new technologies and the Development of E-commerce (Naveed, 2014). Thus, organizations have to think of taking a step to fascinate, inspire, motivate and maintain their workforce (McKenna & Supyk 2007 and Petrova & Kondo 2020). Indeed, organizations can predict success based on their resources, and among these resources, human resource is vital and strategic (Rashid, Hafez & Wahid, 2020). Therefore, they required meaningful training & development to boost their skills (Nguyen, Arifani & Susanti, 2020). Indeed, the organization's backbone is its employees; (Obisi, 2011); they are the main factor that transforms other factors of production into economic output.

Globally, companies experienced a few issues affecting the organizational workforce, making training an ingredient key for employee and organizational success (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). However, previous studies on training & development have outlined some concerns that should match the type of job and the main objective of an organization (Chepkosgey et al., 2019). Training is not a privileged opportunity given to employees; instead, it is necessary to build personnel competency and increase their performance (Chris-Madu, A. 2020). Some researchers also remind us that lack of employee development injures any organization (Armstrong M 2010). Many employees pursue their career with other companies that give them due attention to capacity building (Abba, 2018). The organization's success is essentially matched to the quality of its human resource; therefore, every organization must try to improve its workforce quality (Habib, 2015). One way of attaining this is through training and development programs (Al Karim, R. 2019). Hence, training is not a luxury but a necessary tool for organizations who want to partake in the global electronic marketplace by offering high-quality products and services (Stonehouse et al., 2020).

According to Tahir & Hashim (2014), training is present-day learning that focuses on one's current jobs, exact skills, and abilities to do their jobs directly. At the same time, development improves behaviors and attitudes and increases individual performance (Nguyen et al., 2020). T&D is an organized process of preparing employees' behavior to achieve the organizational goal (Habib, 2015). That is a tool of opportunities that creates job-related skills, strengthening employee staff intelligence, attitude, and communication skills (Elona Cera, 2020). For Armstrong (2006), T&D is a strategic organizational learning experience to acquire understanding, know-how, techniques, and practices that make employees perform existing and future tasks more effectively. These logical intangibles can be translated into an organizational resource through the persons who obtain, infer, and apply such to the organization's objectives (Noe & Kodwani, 2018). The essential aim of T&D is to add to the overall organization's goal; that is why Sims (2002) stresses that training centers on current jobs while development makes employees for potential future tasks. The training aims to enable employees to improve on the essential knowledge and skills required to carry out their functions and correctly advance their abilities in their respective work fields (Armstrong, M 2010). Thus, the trained employee should improve on skills and performance in their work for the organization to succeed (Famodun, 2020).

Talking of Performance here reminds us that, according to Nguyen et al. (2020) are measured results of success achieved by workers in their place of work either by quantity or quality. Although individual performance plays a vital role in any organization (Rashid et al., 2020) it builds or destroys an organization's reputation. Companies are considered a success when there is positive performance, contrary to failure when there is negative performance.

Therefore, the staff performance can be triggered in so many ways, of which Training & Development is not an exception (Nguyen et al., 2020).

In addition, competitive Advantage makes better value for an employee, their organization, and its shareholders because of certain qualities or conditions of services like customer service offering, quality product offering, and good networking and communication skills (Sumah, 2019). For this study, employee competitiveness makes personnel more competent and necessarily recognized amongst others to either customer and the organization.

However, it is a loud measurable fact that, worldwide, individuals seek to become more competitive to outcompete others (Gashi, R. 2013). This caused private and public researchers of recent studies to draw more attention to training and development as it contributes to effective employee performance and competitiveness (Famodun, 2020). Indeed, recently, academic attention has been attracted to how training and development can motivate employees to reduce turnover and maintain a skilled workforce (Elona Cera, 2020, Stone-house et al., 2020; Al Karim R., 2019). Their studies concluded that organizations' training and development programs give personnel the required skills for individuals to execute their job smoothly and effectively. Besides, Ghalawat, Kiran, & Kumari (2020) said that training aids employees in increasing performance in their existing roles, while employee development extensively emphasizes employee growth and individual performance (Ahmad et al., 2013). This could have been why, over the years, employees are perceived as the principal force controlling the organization's capital.

Furthermore, Chepkosgey et al. (2019) supported that T&D is one of the directories of human resource management practice that helps realize workers' competency and commitment and retain a proficient workforce for competitiveness. Therefore, managers need to design and implement training programs to expand employees' capability and increase their performance and gain more competitive Advantage (Ghalawat, Kiran, & Kumari, 2020). Consequently, replacing a skilled workforce in the workplace is an expensive cost to carry for managers (Chris-Madu, A. 2020). Therefore, human resource managers must constantly train and develop the skills and knowledge of their personnel for effective performance to accomplish organizational goals. Equally supported by Rashid et al. (2020) that both organization and employees enjoyed many benefits from training programs such as improving the competence of employees, decreased turnover, supporting new staff in understanding the organizational culture, building healthier labor management, and improved employee relationships. Comprehensively, with successful training and development, there is a win-win situation. Active training and development is an investment in personnel with either instant or future returns (Chand et al., 2020). Therefore, Obisi (2011) emphasized that meaningful training boosts employee skills relating to a specific job while development has a space stretched across the growing and extraordinary progress of the employees (Armstrong, M 2010).

Training & development as a marketable topic interesting to be discussed by many others; however, several previous studies have addressed the mode and conduct of training and development programs in different conceptual approaches, for instance, T&D on Job satisfaction & Job Performance (Nguyen & Duong 2020) Operational factors, quality & quantity of work, (Kuruppu, Kavirathne & Karunarathna 2021) its benefits to employee and organization, (Jha, V. 2016), soft skills, training methodology and employee performance, (Ibrahim, Boerhannoeddin & Bakare 2017) on employee outcomes and firm innovative performance, (Sung & Choi 2018) respectively. Although considering the above, it is prudent that the perspective concepts or approaches the previous researchers used are applicable. To better explain the understanding and worth of training & development programs for employees in any company of work (Kuruppu et al., 2021), there is still room for further studies. Moreover, the programming of training & development consumes enormous resources (time, energy,

ideas, and money); thus, it requires a systematic approach and a structured way to measure its outcomes (Chris- Madu, 2020). Significantly, this study opts to investigate how practical training and development are effective on the performance of employees to enhance their competitiveness.

With critical observations, we learned that many previous studies on T&D focused on banking institutions, especially in developed countries; less attention was given to other institutions, particularly in developing countries. However, this study is interested in filling that knowledge gap by using a Non-Government Organization (NGO) as a case study. Therefore, Social Enterprise Development in Sierra Leone (SEND-SL) is a service- delivery-oriented organization whose objective is to offer a good service delivery in the area of (health, education, and social protection). In addition, it provides capacity support to governance activities, like (women in governance, food production and small business development, policy advocacy, microfinance, and credit union) respectively, for citizens in Sierra Leone. Significantly, the findings of this study will be helpful to SEND-SL to know employee views on the training programs and the most contributing training approach. Besides, it also helps to bring to the organizations' knowledge on the effective contribution of T&D on employee performance and identify practical training desires to increase individual competitiveness.

For an easy understanding and compelling reading, this study is structured in sections, starting with section one (1), which brings an introduction that explains the study background with various previous scholars' definitions, study focus, and significance. The following section reviews training and Development (T&D), employee performance, theoretical framework, and study hypothesis. Another area is the Research Method, and the next section presents the results and discussion, conclusion, limitations, and recommendations for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training and Development (T&D)

Indeed, most of today's companies are spending vast amounts of money on training and developing their employees to stay successful and remain competitive assets to the organization. For instance, Jehanzeb and Bashir (2013) said, the worth of employee training and development is fast-growing, and organizations are using it as a competing tool against their competitors in the marketplace. Moreover, considering the takeover of the newest technologies and the need for innovative strategies in the workplace, highly skilled people in all organizations are required.

Various scholars have coined different definitions of training to ascertain its worth as a needed tool for employee capacity building. However, according to Noe & Kodwani (2018), training & development is a strategic educational element that contains an excellent method for learning organizational culture, which changes from job skills to the understanding of the work skill, innovative thinking, developing leadership, and resolving the problem. Naveed (2014) agreed that a systematic approach to training improves the learning and quality development of individuals in the organization. From Naidu (2016), T&D is a chain of activities staged by an organization for talent and know-how to empower employee growth and contributions to an organization's human capital output. In the words of Naveed (2014), he repeated that training functions as an intervention to improve quality productivity (goods and services) by improving employee technical skills. However, organizations have understood that they must develop distinct dynamic characteristics in granting their competitive advantages to sustain in this ever-changing business environment (Al Karim, R. 2019). Thus, training & development are essential and tactical instruments for active employees' performance (Armstrong, M. 2006).

Gashi R. (2013) cited that the main objective of T&D is to empower employees to implement the firm's strategic task to achieve organizational and individual goals. Besides,

Chris-Madu, (2020) stands on the fact that any organization that provides due attention to training is considered an institution that recognizes the importance of its workforce. It is because all employees want and deserve vital training opportunities to improve their marketability on the labor market (Habib, 2015). It was affirmed by Armstrong (2012) that many people find pleasure in learning, and that means training and development grants effective education and perceived growth opportunity as a motivator for the workforce to perform (Omoikhudu, 2017). Therefore, a force acquainted with regular training becomes more committed compared to others deprived of short opportunities (Chepkosgey, Namusonge, & Makokha, 2019). The study by Alnawfleh (2020) concludes that practical and meaningful training improves employee skills to work differently with a shared sense of purpose and clear objectives. Therefore, as an essential tool for employee performance and individual competitive edge, T&D increases employees' efficiencies, innovation, and capacity to accept new technical techniques to ease jobs and meet customers' demands to harvest bumper performance (Chand, M. G., & Srivastava, A. K. 2020).

Mode of Employee Training and Development

1) On-the-job training (ONJT):

This is considered the oldest and most traditional type of training and can make an employee gain job understanding due to adjustment to the job behaviors (Olaniyan et al., 2008). This drives to Chris-Madu, A. (2020) statement that ONJT is a direct instruction training type where a person that understands the job leads the job implementation in the work environment to transfer their expertise to others. On-the-job training includes Job instructions, orientations, apprenticeships, internships, and job assistance by coaching/mentoring. According to Butler (2008), on-the-job training is appropriate for inspiring challenging skills because it includes comprehensive coaching to have the capability and apply such skills in different work situations. This type of training comprises different categories as follows:

a. Induction and orientation:

Induction is a short-term event commonly done on a new employee's first day, while orientation is the procedure to familiarize new employees with organizations' policies and guidelines. It is more about obedience and getting new employees up to speed on processes like paperwork and the general administrative structure. For example, orientation might include an introduction to the payroll and expense process of the organization, branding and style guides, details processing of company policy documentation, and a review of digital devices (computers, phones, etc.) for new employees' use (Ghalawat, Kiran, & Kumari, 2020). In most companies, it lasts for three days to one week. After that, it depends on the organization's policy (Abba, M. T. 2018).

b. Job Rotation:

Is it a strategy where an employee rotates amongst jobs within an organization employee takes on new tasks at a different job location for a specific duration (Olaniyan et al., 2008)? This is significant for individual capacity building; as Omoikhudu J. (2017) emphasized, the workforce needs to change from one work schedule to another for learning experience in all spheres of work. With a proper job-rotation scheme, the force can increase their skills by taking on new tasks.

2) Off-the-job training (OFJT):

A type of training usually provided by specialists in their professions; Here, more subcontracting training agencies or outsourcing to workers outside the stable job environment can be involved, and a prototype of material resources to be used in the central workplace is employed in practical (Chad & Srivastava 2020). It happens when workforces are taken away from their place of work for training. Commonly it includes day release (when an employee

takes off- the time from work to attend an institution or training Centre), distance-learning or evening classes, self-study/computer-based training, and sandwich courses (six months programs). According to Habib, S et al. (2015), this is significant because a variety of skills can be gained as employees can be exposed to and learn from outside specialists or experts who can make them more confident when starting a job.

a. Simulations:

It is a developing strategy that gives the creator a true-to-life learning environment that mirrors real-life work and scenarios (Ghalawat et al., 2020). Employees can set fundamental knowledge and skills into practice not only by reading books on theory or by listening to lectures but through a hands-on physical activity that is so effective.

b. Self-development/self-assessment:

Individuals have a unique insight into the requirements of their role, and when they direct their development with support from line managers, those needs are likely to be addressed (Noe et al., 2018). However, Elona Cera (2020) defined self-assessment as individual identification of strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges and an attempt to improve and build on current efforts for practical, satisfying corporate association. This serves as an opportunity for the workforce to consider their strengths and weaknesses and critique their work and behavior. Thus, they gain self-insight to improve themselves (Nguyen et al., 2020).

2.2. Employee Performance (EP):

There are numerous filaments benefits of training and development for organization sustainability; amongst them, employee performance is only one as a focus on this study to measure its effectiveness. Scholars from various perspectives have shared thoughts to expand our understanding of employee performance; for instance, Nassazi (2013) believes employee performance is confirmed in the progress of production, an effortless way of using new technologies, or an individual is highly motivated. Another definition by Arinanye (2015) said employee performance is a measure of success that focuses on efficiency, effectiveness, productivity, and work quality. When the workforce performs their tasks to the necessary standard, they are considered good performers, and T&D's purpose is mostly on employee performance (Asim, 2013). Thus, it is the total achievement of a specific task against pre-selected values of speed, cost, accuracy, or strategic approach to improving work to enhance effectiveness and competency. The leadership of any organization wishes to attain a high level of individual performance. Therefore they should establish performance standards (Bangun W. 2012). This draws the attention of Suwanto (2014) by affirming that any job is attached to a specific requirement, i.e., the standard of work, and performance is a systematic process of measuring the outcome. It is evaluative (to know if it helps or obstructs an organization's goal) and Multidimensional (because it takes much behavior to describe employee performance). Employee performance is considered positive when; "the achievement of a particular target measured to expected level or present values of accuracy and completeness" (Sultana et al., 2012). However, employee performance is a practical task that can be achieved with related abilities like teamwork, time management, empowering others, communicating with others, and addressing conflict (Sila, 2014). Training and development programs enhance these performance qualities (Colquit & Jonson, 2012).

2.2.1 Performance Dimensions:

1) Timeliness:

It signifies the suitability or ability to effectively react to the dynamics of the organization's environment in the shortest possible time (Nguyen et al., 2020). Reliable and well-organized exchange of information within an organization can improve and reduce lead-time for customers (Chris-Madu, A. 2020); this significantly helps organizations to knowledge

workers who complete their tasks on time and meet deadlines.

2) Effectiveness:

From the Oxford dictionary meaning; effectiveness is the point to which, to some degree, a task is successful in producing an anticipated result of success. Effectiveness means "doing the right thing" (Omoikhudu 2017). For instance, employee quality-work: Quality of work here is by standard products, completing tasks with few or no errors, managing waste, and producing output that meets customers' desires. A quality performance is a reliable uniform of goods and services with standards.

3) Efficiency:

This is the performance production of actual products as expected in utilizing the same resources, like (time, labor, money, machine, and other resources). Simply put, it is the aptitude to do something successfully well (Kuruppu et al., 2021). Commonly, efficiency is frequently confused with effectiveness; however, efficiency is considered quantitatively determined (measurable output to the total input) while the effectiveness concept can achieve the required qualitative result (Longman, 2018). For instance, the quantity of product for a specific task is efficient in performance. Quantity here is the total countable performance produced by an employee (Kuruppu et al., 2021). This portrays more significance to employees by recognizing the hard-working workforce in an organization.

2.3. Competitive Advantage (CA)

Few of the various previous definitions on competitive Advantage is the ability to provide products or services more competently than rivals, which leads to superior profit margins and maintains a secured position against competitors. In addition, employee competitiveness is the quality to create or produce better products or services than others for the organization to gain superior margins. Hence, Sumah (2019) supported that competitive Advantage makes better value to individuals, organizations, and their shareholders because of certain qualities or conditions of services like quality communication, customer service offering, and quality product with a good distribution network.

The more viable and productive an individual competency is, the more difficult for rivals to defuse their Advantage. The degree of difference advantage is when an individual's output is unique in higher quality than the thinking of others. Indeed, this could be facilitated through the workforce competence skills and advanced know-how to meet job objectives and goals.

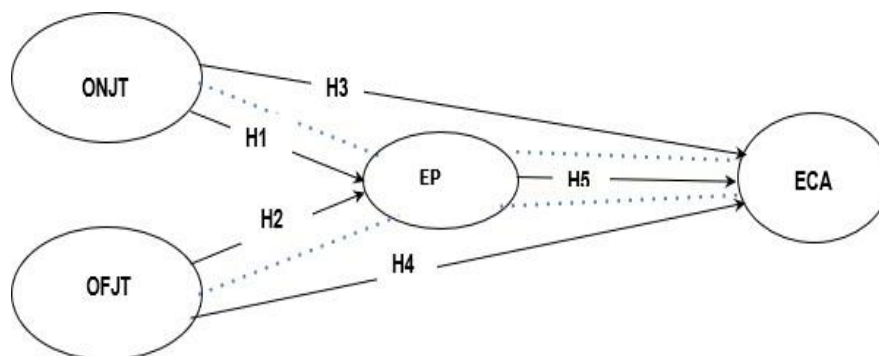


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

The target respondents in this study were employees of Social Enterprise Development in Sierra Leone (SEND-SL). The organization's total population is **117**, the target sample was 100 employees, and the final number of respondents was **71** (**71%** of respondent rate). A

structured questionnaire was used for primary data collection, and the distributed questionnaire was designed on five Likert scales (Strongly Disagree, Disagree Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree. Data analyzed using a quantitative method uses Smart Partial-Least Square (PLS). Partial-Least Square (PLS) method was used and also suggested to be used by several studies (Hair et al., 2017) because of its robustness (Penga and Lai, 2012). However, this study suggests using PLS analysis for the following reasons: **a**). The study has a mediating variable (Employee Performance) between training & development and employee competitiveness as an incremental character in the study (Richter et al., 2016), and also, **b**). The study's main target is predicting the dependent variable, 'Employee competitive advantage' (Roldán and Sánchez-Franco, 2012).

The study analysis starts with testing the validity & reliability (measurement model) to know the consistency and accuracy of the research instrument. Then, further conducting a Structural model test to (examine the causal relationship between variables), the bootstrapping technique was employed to estimate the statistical significance of the hypothesized model (Hair et al., 2017).

As emphasized by Avkiran (2017), in testing the validity, a general thumb rule says the external loadings with a value of 0.70 or higher are considered more valid. Even though items with an outer loading value of 0.6 might also be considered accurate (Chin et al., 1997). Also, variables are deemed constructively reliable if their composite reliability value is higher than 0.70 (Chin 1998). Constructively, our study observed all these systems in section four in the descriptive analysis tables.

3.2. Definition of variables and Indicators

Table 1 below describes latent variables and indicators in our study discuss relating to the previous literature section. For instance, Training & Development (Petrova & Kondo, 2020), Employee performance (Abba, 2018), and employee competitiveness (Obisi, 2011; Habib, 2015), with indicators attached to each variable as a measure and focused area of questions asked to respondents.

Table 1. Definitions of Variables and Indicators

Variables	Indicators
<p>1. On-the-job training: is a hands-on method using existing work tools, documents, machines, and the same workplace to prepare the employee on how to do their jobs efficiently. For this study, On-the-job training includes orientation, job instruction, job rotation, apprenticeship, coaching, & internship.</p>	<p>a. Orientation: An introduction activity to guide people in adjusting to new employment surroundings that give an ability to locate new regulations reference to people, place, and time.</p> <p>b. Job-rotation: When an employee rotates amongst jobs within an organization to take new tasks at a different job location for a specific duration (Olaniyan et al., 2008)</p> <p>c. Workshops: A brief and intensive teaching program that focuses on techniques and skills of creative learning for an employee to become active and develop.</p> <p>d. Job instruction: This type of manual skills training is a step-by-step technique used to train staff on the job. The train is a co-worker, might be a supervisor or any position holder.</p>

2. Off-the-job training: consists of extra exercises like online learning, mentoring, works shadowing, self-study work assignment completion, and manufacturing exercise. Here we think of simulations, self-development skills, induction, exchange-learning & workshops.

a. Self-development: This occurs when the workforce reflects and considers their strengths and weaknesses by critiquing their work and behavior and gains self-insight by deciding to improve themselves (Nguyen et al., 2020).

b. Simulation: Is a developing strategy that gives the creator of a true-to-life learning environment that mirrors real-life work and scenarios (Ghalawat et al., (2020)

c. Short courses: When an employee takes off-the time from work to attend an institution or training Centre) distance learning or evening classes, self-study/computer-based training.

d. Exchange learning: It happens when workforces are taken away from their place of work for training with other staff from different work environments; this might include group work presentations, panel discussions, questions, answers, etc.

Employee Performance: Performance is the achieved outcome of tasks per the job requirement (Ghalawat et al., 2020). Employee performance is a measurable outcome of work behaviors and is about generating practical behavior actions to meet set targets (Sila, 2014). It is the progress of production and, in a real sense, is when the workforce reaches their tasks up to the necessary standard, thus, considered well-performed (Naudi, 2016).

Usually, good employee performance is influenced by teaching and learning techniques which training and development stand for in an organization.

a. Timeliness: this talk about employees' ability to react to issues in the shortest possible time, sharing effective and reliable communication in responding to customers.

b. Quality of Work means producing work with good standard, slight or no error and rework, and managed waste. Thus, it helps recognize employees who do work that meets standards and work with few mistakes or errors as competent staff who can outperform others.

c. Quantity of Work here is a measurable or countable amount; therefore, the work quantity is the total sum of work produced or volume of work completed by employees in an organization. Again, this recognizes the hard-working employees in an organization.

Employee Competitive Advantage: Simply is the talent for an individual or organization to out-think and outperform rivals by innovative tactics of meeting customers' wants and attracting more customers' good services (Sumah, 2019). In the world of business competition, competitive superiority is attained by enforcement that is acquiring the maximum needed skill training and development to discover new ideas.

a. Flexibility: Indicate the organizations ability to respond well to society's dynamic with collaborative networking

b. Quality: The standard of doing things against others typically is a characteristic of an individual or an organization.

c. Effective delivery: Consists of competency or ability to offer a bulk of service quickly. (Five response Likert Scale)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics:

The respondents here are employees of SEND-SL who have received various types of training based on their operational and management strategic design. The final respondents are 71, making 71% represent rate, which was excellent enough to describe the target population; that 70% and the above response rate is a perfect representation. Among the 71 respondents, there are various characteristics, including age, gender, education, year of service, and position level.

See table 2 as follow below:

Table 2. Respondents Demography

Category	Frequency	Percentage
<u>Gender:</u>		
Male	42	59.2
Female	29	40.8
<u>Age:</u>		
18-25	3	4.2
26-30	19	26.8
31-37	33	46.5
38-45	11	15.5
Other	5	7.0
<u>Education:</u>		
Diploma	9	12.7
Bachelor's Degree	46	64.8
Master's Degree	11	15.5
Other	5	7.0
<u>Year of service:</u>		
1-5 years	51	71.8
Six years and above	20	28.2
<u>Position level:</u>		
Senior Managers	9	12.7
Middle/Project Manager	15	21.1
Junior/Project Officer	40	56.3
Other	7	9.9

Source: Employees of SEND-SL 2022

Table 2 above shows that males dominated the gender category (59.2%). Respondents between the age of 31-37 years overlook 33 people (46.5%). The organization has more youthful personnel, with a Bachelor's Degree qualification of 46 people (64.8%). The year of service is dominated by those whose service period is 1-5years with 51 (71.8%). Respondents have enough experience from different types of training, especially most among them are employees who are junior managers/project officer positions with 40 (56.3%). It indicates that the junior managers or project officers are in the majority among other jobs in the organization.

4.1. Construct Validity and Reliability Test:

Smart PLS analysis tool involves tests of validity and reliability of constructs, as a Test of Goodness of Fit on outer models. Therefore, three validity measurements were used; they are (1) convergent validity, (2) discriminant validity, and (3) composite reliability.

4.2.1. Convergent Validity (CV) measures "the context that correlates alternative variables or indicators of the same construct" (Hair et al., 2017, p, 112). CV measure checks the item's outer loading. A general thumb rule emphasizes that outer loadings with a value of 0.70 or higher are considered more valid (Avkiran, 2017) because the higher the value, the stronger the relationship. Items with an outer loading value of 0.6 might also be considered good (Chin et al., 1997). Find the CV test result in (table 3) below:

Table 3. Convergent Validity Test Result

Variables	Indicators	Outer Loading	Description
On-the-Job Training	ONJT1	0.93	Valid
	ONJT2	0.93	Valid
	ONJT3	0.96	Valid
	ONJT4	0.89	Valid
Off-the-Job Training	OFJT1	0.84	Valid
	OFJT2	0.89	Valid
	OFJT3	0.91	Valid
	OFJT4	0.80	Valid
Employee Performance	EP1	0.72	Valid
	EP2	0.92	Valid
	EP3	0.73	Valid
	EP4	0.84	Valid
	EP5	0.80	Valid
	EP6	0.82	Valid
Employee Competitive Advantage	ECA1	0.84	Valid
	ECA2	0.90	Valid
	ECA3	0.88	Valid
	ECA4	0.90	Valid
	ECA5	0.89	Valid
	ECA6	0.71	Valid

Source: Primary Data Processed by Smart PLS

According to Avkiran (2017), the higher the outer loading value, the stronger the validity of items; an outer loading value of 0.70 and higher is considered more valid. For this study, based on the table above, all things have outer loadings higher than 0.70; thus, all (**indicators**) as construct measures of the research variables are valid.

4.2.2. Discriminant Validity:

Another construct validity test is discriminant validity. We learned from Hair et al. (2017) that discriminant validity is the context in which constructs differ from others. This is a test to show exactly the only measure the construct had measured, rather than another construct measure (Prasetyo, 2019). We used two methods to assess DV in this study; first, the Fornell Larcker(1981) criterion was used. Here, we compared the correlation between constructs and the square root of AVE for the construct to assess DV. To achieve DV, we have to know that the square root of AVE for each latent should exceed the value correlation of the construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Second, we also used the HTMT criteria. Significantly, HTMT is deemed more consistent than Fornell- Larcker gauges (Henseler et al., 2015 & Khan et al., 2021).

The following tables below explain the result of DV for this study on both methods:

Table 4. Discriminant Validity Testing Result Based on Fornell-Larcker Criteria

Variable	ONJT	OFJT	EP	ECA	Description
ONJT	0.934				Valid
OFJT	0.692	0.865			Valid
EP	0.538	0.615	0.811		Valid
ECA	0.713	0.484	0.651	0.862	Valid

Source: Primary data processed by Smart PLS

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Testing Results Based on HTMT Criteria

Variables	HTMT SCORE		
	T&D	EP	ECA
ONJT			
OFJT	0.754		
EP	0.582	0.686	
ECA	0.743	0.524	0.695

Source: Primary data processed by Smart PLS

Based on **table 4** above, the result shows adequate DV in the variables, with the AVE square root values higher than the correlation value between the latent variables (Fornell and Larcker, 1981), and our study did not violate the assumptions of DV, because all HTMT values are lower than 0.85 (Hair et al., 2017) as displayed in **table 5**.

4.2.3. Composite Reliability (CR)

This is one of the main measurements of construct reliability. Basically, Variables are considered constructively reliable if the composite reliability value is higher than 0.70 (Chin 1998). The results see **table 6** as follows below:

Table 6. Results of Composite Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
ONJT	0.95	0.96	0.87
OFJT	0.88	0.92	0.74
EP	0.89	0.92	0.65
ECA	0.93	0.94	0.74

Source: Primary data processed by Smart PLS

Based on **Table 6** above, there was an adequate score of composite reliability as all variables rating exceeds 0.70 and also an average variance extracted for all variables higher than 0.05 (Hair- et al., 2017).

4.2. The Goodness of Model Fit:

In PLS, the goodness of fit model can be seen from predictive-relevance (Q^2) values, which are calculated based on the R^2 values of each endogenous variable, as explained below: Measurement of endogenous variables of Employee Performance obtained R^2 of 0.402 or 40.2%. This shows that 40.2% of Employee Performance is affected by On Job Training and Off-The Job Training, respectively. Measurement of endogenous variables of Employee Competitive advantage obtained R^2 of 0.632 or 63.2%. This shows that 63.2% of Employee competitive advantage is affected by Employee Performance, on-the- job training, and off-the-job training, respectively. Therefore, to obtain the predictive relevance (Q^2) we use the calculation formula as follows:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R_1^2) (1 - R_2^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0.402) (1 - 0.632)$$

$$Q^2 = 0.779.$$

However, the result shows predictive-relevant values of 0.779 or 77.9%, which is adequate to conclude that the model has a relevant predictive value. Also, the result predictive relevance value of 77.9% indicates that the diversity of data explained by the built PLS model is 77.9% or the information/data to be described or analyzed by the model contained 77.9%. The remaining 22.1% is described in other variables (not included in the model yet).

4.3. Result of Inner Model Test:

A structural or inner model is essential to determine the relationships between variables, as in **table 7**.

Table 7. Direct and Indirect Effect

Direct effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (Std)	T-statistics	P-value	Description
X1 -> Y1	0.21	0.21	0.16	1.29	0.19	Not-sign
X2 -> Y1	0.46	0.48	0.16	2.89	0.00	Sign
X1 -> Y2	0.62	0.62	0.11	5.33	0.00	Sign
X2 -> Y2	0.23	-0.25	0.12	1.85	0.06	Not-sign
Y1-> Y2	0.45	0.48	0.11	3.87	0.00	Sign
Indirect effect	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (Std)	T-Statistics	P-value	Description
X1 -> Y2	0.09	0.10	0.08	1.16	0.24	Not-sign
X2 -> Y2	0.21	0.23	0.10	2.08	0.03	Sign

Source: Smart PLS output

The table 7 shows the result of direct and indirect effect between variables. Based on the table result of direct effect between five set of variables, shows the total effect of three set of variables i.e. (X2-> Y1= H2: $\beta = 0.46$, $t= 2.89$, $p < 0.00$) (X1-> Y2 = H3: $\beta = 0.62$, $t= 5.33$, $p = 0.00$) and (Y1-> Y2 = H5: $\beta = 0.45$, $t= 3.87$, $p = 0.00$) have positive direct effect, because their t-statistics value was higher than 1.96 and P-value was lower than 0.05.

While two set of variables i.e. ($X1 \rightarrow Y1 = H1: \beta = 0.216, t = 1.290, p = 0.198$) and ($X2 \rightarrow Y2 = H4: \beta = 0.23, t = 1.85, p = 0.064$) have direct effect, because their t-statistic value was lower than <1.96 and p-value was higher than 0.05 as indicated in the table above. Besides, an indirect effect through the mediation of employee performance, shows a total effect on one set of variable i.e. ($X2 \rightarrow Y2 = H6: \beta = 0.09, t = 1.16, p = 0.24$) had a significant indirect effect because the t-statistics value was lower than 1.96 and p-value was higher than 0.05 . While one set of variable i.e. ($X1 \rightarrow Y2 = H7: \beta = 0.21, t = 2.08, p < 0.03$) had a indirect effect, because the t-statistics value was higher than 1.96 and p-value was lower than 0.05 .

4.4. Hypothesis Test Result:

H1: On-the-job training has a significant effect on employee performance, was not accepted because the test result shows ($H1: \beta = 0.21, t = 1.29, p = 0.19$) had a path coefficient value of 0.21 and a T-Statistic value of 1.29 lower than 1.96 and a p-value of 0.18 higher than 0.05 ; thus, this indicates that ONJT does not affect EP.

H2: Off-the-job training has a significant effect on employee performance, was accepted because the test result shows ($H2: \beta = 0.465, t = 2.89, p = 0.00$) had a path coefficient value of 0.46 and a T-Statistic value of 2.89 higher than 1.96 and p-value of 0.00 lower than 0.05 ; thus this indicates that OFJT affects EP.

H3: On-the-job training can effectively influence employee competitive advantage was accepted because the test result shows ($H3: \beta = 0.62, t = 5.33, p = 0.00$) had a path coefficient value of 0.62 T-statistics 5.33 higher than 1.96 and a P-value of 0.00 lower than 0.05 ; thus, this indicates that ONJT has a direct effect on ECA.

H4: Off the Job training can effectively influence employee competitive advantage was not accepted because the result shows ($H4: \beta = -0.23, t = 1.85, p = 0.06$) had a path coefficient value of -0.23 with a T-statistics 1.85 lower than 1.96 and a P-value of 0.06 higher than 0.05 ; thus, this indicates that OFJT has no direct effect on ECA.

H5: Employee's quality performance has a significant effect on their competitive Advantage, was accepted because the test result shows ($H5: \beta = 0.456, t = 3.873, p = 0.00$) had a path coefficient value of 0.45 and a T-Statistic value of 3.87 higher than 1.96 , and a p-value of 0.00 lower than 0.05 , thus this indicates that EP affects ECA.

H6: Employee performance can mediate the effect of on-the-job training on employee competitiveness, was not accepted because the result shows ($H6: \beta = 0.098, t = 1.16, p = 0.24$) had a t-statistic of 1.16 lower than 1.96 and P-value of 0.24 higher than 0.05 and this indicates the insignificant indirect effect of ONJT on ECA through EP.

H7: Employee performance can mediate the effect of off-the-job training on employee competitiveness, was accepted as the result shows ($H7: \beta = 0.212, t = 2.08, p = 0.03$) had a t-statistics 2.08 higher than 1.96 and P-value of 0.03 , lower than 0.05 and this indicate a significant indirect effect of OFJT on ECA through EP.

DISCUSSION

From the test results, it shows that:

- a) On-the-job training had no effect on employee performance amongst employees of SEND-SL. However, considering the findings by Nguyen & Duong (2020) that, when on-the-job training is practical, it can lead to behavior change, multiple skills transfers, and boost individual performance. Therefore the HR management of SEND-SL needs to emphasize and improve on providing practical on-the-job training for its employees to improve their performance.
- b) Off-the-job training had a significant effect on employee performance amongst employees

of SEND-SL. The result contradicts the statement by Famodun (2020) that the link between off-the-job activity and the standard version of individuals is questionable and problematic, particularly in measuring. Besides, the result is in line with Rashid, Hafeez, Maenuddin, & Wahid (2020) that the cognitive or Off-the-job (games and simulations, computer-based training, and lectures tend to influence employees' performance. Significantly, the result shows that the leadership and management of SEND-SL provide adequate opportunities to improve its employees' learning skills to improve their performance.

- c) On-the-job training had a positive effect on employee competitiveness amongst employees of SEND-SL. The result is in line with findings of Elona Cera, A.K. (2020) that on-the-job training improves individual competitive behavior and also Al Karim, R. (2019) that direct or practical learning impacts career development and staff technicality and boosts flexibility. Therefore, the result shows that if the leadership and management of SEND-SL improve employee training opportunities, it will increase their performance and competitiveness.
- d) Off-the-job training harmed employee competitiveness amongst employees of SEND-SL. The result is opposite to the statement by Petrova & Kondo (2020) that staff interactive learning outside their organization grants them new and mixed skills to be more competent and committed. Not the same case in SEND-SL, according to information from test results. Therefore, the result indicated that the leadership and management of SEND-SL should increase off-the-job training opportunities amongst employees to impact their competitiveness.
- e) Employee performance had a positive effect on employee competitive advantage amongst employees of SEND-SL. The result is in place with the findings by Kuruppu et al. (2021) that timeliness of work, quality, and quantity of work interpret individual competitiveness. Also, Ghalawat et al. (2020) that satisfied personnel can work creatively to add their career competencies. The result indicates that in SEND-SL, competitive superiority is attained by enforcing maximum output against others. As Sumah emphasized, B. (2019) states that for individuals to Achieve Competitive Advantage, they have to out-think and outperform rivals by creating innovative tactics to meet customers' needs (performance).
- f) The mediating role of employee performance was found to have no significant mediation on the effects of on-the-job training on employee competitive advantage amongst employees of SEND-SL. Thus, it is interpreted as; employee performance cannot mediate the impact of on-the-job on employee competitive advantage. This result is contrary to Famodun (2020) that training increases employee performance to their competitive strength. However, the result indicates that in SEND-SL, on-the-job training cannot influence performance to boost employee competitiveness.
- g) The mediating role of employee performance found having positive meditation on the effects of off-the-job training on employee competitive advantage amongst employees of SEND-SL. Off-the-job activity in SEND-SL impacts employee performance to enhance competitiveness. This finding is in line with Choiriyah & Riyanto (2021) and Jain & Sharma (2019) that off-the-job training is crucial to individuals, and without pre-training (mentoring, orientation, simulation, etc.), workers find it hard to do well.

CONCLUSION

Off-the-job training measured by (exchange learning, short courses, self- development, and simulation) significantly affected employee performance among SEND-SL employees. This indicates that off-the Job training can improve employees' quantity & quality productions and timely delivery. In addition, participating in such training (off-the Job training) can build employee career and allows them to know and understand cultural diversity, increasing their internal & external social networking to identify pathways in achieving organizational

objectives. In contrast, on-the-job training measured by Job-rotation, Job-instruction, orientation, and workshops did not significantly affect employee performance among SEND-SL employees.

The study further said that on-the-job training, measured by ((Job-rotation, Job-instruction, orientation, and workshops) was having a significant direct effect on employee competitive advantage. Still, indirectly through the mediation of EP, ONJT cannot influence employee competitive advantage at SEND-SL. Therefore, ONJT contributes directly to boosting employee flexibility, quality, and delivery.

Besides, off-the-job training measured by (exchange learning, short courses, self-development, and simulation) cannot directly affect employee competitive advantage. Still, indirectly through the mediation of employee performance, OFJT significantly affects employee competitiveness at SEND-SL. Thus, we conclude that OFJT can boost employee timeliness, quality, and quantity of work to improve their flexibility and delivery.

Practical Implication

Critically, the study's finding has significant implications from the result of this finding is the training among SEND-SL staff. A complex organization like SEND-SL, on service delivery, might not emphasize on-the job training to determine the development of its employees, particularly for their effectiveness and performance improvement. Most service delivery companies focus more on soft skills learning (Paille 2013). Since SEND-SL is service delivery, its employee exhibits a high level of off-the-job training and may see it as more related to their work since most of their work is based on field implementation at the community, chiefdom, and district level. Importantly, this might explain why on-the-job training does not affect employee performance among employees of SEND-SL.

However, it is essentially emphasized here that practical orientation, proper job rotation, constructive workshop programs, and job instructions can improve employees' skills & knowledge. Employee performance in the organization because will improve employees' ability to meet the demand of their job and perform better. Also, on-the-job training not only improves employees' skills & knowledge but also changes their behavior, advances quality-based teamwork, exhibits help and respect to senior colleagues, and leads them to go the extra mile. Furthermore, it improves their morale by learning new skills within their field of work promptly and at a low cost, helps employees engage in actual good service delivery process, and improves company culture. Therefore, it is a significant concern for SEND-SL management to improve the job training strategy. Particularly on orientation to give employees a background understanding of organizational culture and policy on functional areas and for intensive internal learning to be more effective in their specialized areas of work.

Besides, the results of this study focus on the need for proper monitoring of individuals' skill development as it can increase their performance but not their competitiveness, meaning through off-the-job training, employees of SEND-SL can improve on performance at a slow pace. Therefore, the HRM management of SEND-SL should plan appropriate training strategies to meet their employees' needed skills to boost their competitiveness. Furthermore, as host employees of SEND-SL often work in the field, mainly to implement projects, their flexibility and effectiveness are counted on so highly; therefore, exchange learning and simulation as mentoring strategies could be a practical approach to improve their competence.

Limitation and Recommendations:

- a. Contrary to past research (Al-Karim, R. 2019, Rashid et al., 2020), which uses multiple regression tools to analyze impacts of training on employees' output to realize competitiveness, our study, however, employed the Smart PLS analysis tool for more

- meaningful results (Richter et al., 2016). Therefore, I recommend future researchers use the PLS-SEM method because it is robust and accurate.
- b. Considering the difference in work settings, like working environments, job characteristics, and others, led us to limit the finding context of our study to employees in SEND-SL only. Therefore, future studies may validate the same study model in various business industries and regions contexts.
 - c. The result of the study presents unexpected outcomes for on-the-job training on employee performance. The off-the-job training on employee competitiveness; therefore, we suggest to the management of SEND-SL to give more attention to on- the-job training programs and improve and monitor employee development opportunities to ensure that it reflects on their competencies.
 - d. Besides, the study focus was limited to examining the direct and mediating relationships between variables, and no control variable was involved. Maybe this is a cause for the negative/unexpected outcome between a few connections of variables above. Therefore, future researchers on the same or similar topic should use control variables to strengthen the relationship among constructs.

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