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# The Effects of Employees' Education for a More Efficient Competition in Businesses

**ABSTRACT**

The changes which globalization created on the basis of information and communication have transformed economic and social structure all over the world. Depending on this transformation, the importance of human resources for businesses has increased. Reshaping of competition on the basis of information and technology along with globalization, employees have become a strategic factor for businesses. In this process, the importance of employees who are equipped with information and communication technologies has increased and this has become the most important activity for businesses in the new era.

Education is a process which aims to change human behaviour in the direction of some specific purposes in a conscious way. Hence, education is the most important means to strengthen available human resources in different businesses. If the fact that educated and equipped employees are the most important and strategic competitive factor for businesses in today's world is taken into consideration, being interested in the education of employees can make a great contribution to their performance in all ways. This sort of educational activities helps the employees to feel themselves more valuable and confident. This self-confidence makes their motivation and performance higher and higher in time. Besides, those employees become more committed to their work since they think that their businesses invests in them.

In this work, factors that affect competitiveness and also the importance of educative investments to the employees in increasing the power of competition have been analyzed.

**Key words:** *competitiveness, education of employees, human resource.*

**Introduction**

Information is the most important notion of today's world. Information that is based on knowing and perceiving forms the resource of innovations and also competition for businesses. The most important fulcrum of being able to sustain the competition in changeable economic terms is to have competencies and to develop them. But it is impossible to attain those competencies without information technology (Iraz, 2005: 243). Widespread use of the Internet and facilities of sharing information have both developed human resources and facilitated obtaining them. Besides, rebuilding a variety of functions on online database systems has provided an environment of better results. As in the example of Microsoft, business assessments which lasted held on at least six months in the past can be come up with a lower cost and in a much shorter period of time today. (Eroğlu, 2001). This case obviously shows that computing technology is very important for realizing activities of businesses.

Today's business has always been under globalization and changes that affect the businesses negatively are going on. Especially the fast developments in information and communication technologies are making the accommodation process of businesses to new economic conditions. The only way for their keeping pace with the fast changing process is to have the best human resources and also going on educating those qualified staff. The fact that the businesses should educate its staff consciously both provides them with qualifications to enhance production and prevents employees from alienating towards meaning and results of production. In this context education of staff increases the productivity and it is also one of the most important means of competition under today's conditions (Aydınlı ve Halis, 2004: 12).

Along with the fact that information technology intensively came into the society's life, industrial society has changed into information society and labour-intensive work has left its position to information-intensive work and production (Erdoğan, 1999: 2). Changes in information technology and, accordingly, arising of new working technics and production means, without doubting, caused constructional changes in business sectors. Thus, the processes of work change, on one hand, and some new kinds of employments emerges and technically insufficient staff, on the other hand, have lost importance because since 1980s, when computer and computer-based technologies entered the business life, importance of information and technology has increased unceasingly for going ahead of the competition and accordingly functional cooperation has been a more and more widespread in almost all business sectors. At the present day the businesses that produce the vital information in a short period of time and use them efficiently have a great competitive advantage against others (Düşükcan ve Kaya, 2003: 35-36).

Everybody knows that individuals have some inborn competencies and that those competencies may provide some bigger advantages. In spite of the fact that those competencies are fixed, human talents and behaviours can be developed. To develop those competencies is a very hard process. But education is exactly intended for it.

There are two basic methods to develop the human beings' competencies. The first of them is education and the second one is application. The development of those competencies can be realized through processes based on information and this is also a point where the notion of education comes forward. While the development of competencies is increasing the employees' sense of responsibility, it helps the business to gain the greatest form convenient to its vision (Biçer ve Düztepe, 2003: 17).

No matter working in private or a public sector, the employees have to develop themselves so as to keep up with the environmental conditions because available working conditions and economic facilities will go away if the staff's personal competencies stay still in a dynamic market. Especially in-service training is of a great importance in this matter. Today it must make the staff more educated and skilled through

these kinds of periodical in-service training for all businesses. In this way, companies can maximize the production and also enable their staff to promote in their fields. In addition to those, some parts of responsibility on the shoulders of managers can be transferred to some other qualified and educated staff in this process (Selimoğlu ve Yılmaz, 2009: 2).

### 1. Power of Competition and Factors That Affect It

In the process of globalization the competitive conditions of business sectors have been getting harder and harder in internal and external markets (Doğan vd., 2003: 114). Since the first thing that changed through globalization is dimensions of competitiveness. In other words, competitiveness has become universal. In the same process many elements of traditional competition have lost their importance and technological development is seen as the key factor anymore (Erdinç, 1999: 117). From this perspective it can be said that globalization of economies caused globalization of competition as nowadays well-known goods are produced in many different countries. While graphic design of ice hockey is made in Sweden, its financing requirements are satisfied in Canada, its mounting is made in Denmark, its patent rights are acquired in the U.S.A. and its mass production is realized in Japan. Marketing and advertising of any product also include building commercial relationships with various companies in many foreign countries. As it is apparently seen, production has gone out of traditional dimensional form. Naturally, competition has also gained a universal dimension under these circumstances (Çiftçi, 2006: 38-39).

The concept of “competition” which basically states a kind of race is expressed as the process that brings much more financial income and more capacity of employment. According to Michael Porter who made lots of academic researches in this regard, competition is a dynamic process which can easily be affected by a variety of factors such as education, quality of public sectors, technological development and macro-economic environment. According to Porter, competition is a reality that the company creates and never transfers to any other one (Özdevecioğlu vd., 2014: 3). As it should be understood from the definitions above, competition is a dynamic process that includes the concept of “change”. Being non-transferable it implies changing nature in time. The changeable character of competition demonstrates that companies have to advance different strategies in different countries and times.

“Industrial competition” that implies a race among different industrial businesses states the capability of having a research, development and innovation work in order to produce much more goods and services more than other competitors in the same market. “Competition at the level of the company” states its supremacy over its local and global rivals with regard to producing goods and services at a lower cost, quality and charm of products and also being better at invention and innovation (Çiftçi, 2006: 27). Porter handles the factors that affect the competition in a model that he himself called “five forces”. According to this model, those factors are “terms of competition in the market”, “threat of substitution products”, “suppliers’ bargaining power”, “customers’ bargaining power” and “probability of new suppliers’ entering the market” (Çiftçi, 2006: 29; Özdevecioğlu vd., 2014: 4-5).

The factors which affect the competitiveness of companies in internal and external markets may be specified as “cost”, “capital”, “order”, “order delivery speed”, “production capacity”, “quality and standards compliance”, “reliability”, “technology owned”, “research and development” (R&D), “company image”, “market share”, “after sale services”, “inventory management applications”, “production time” and “qualified workforce” (Doğan vd., 2003: 115-121). Under today’s market conditions in which goods and capital are freely flowing, the things that can be done for Turkey to empower its competitive capacity may be summarized as follows (Çiftçi, 2006: 52-53):

- To develop relationships aimed to increase reliability and competition between main and sub-industries.
- To activate R&D supports and consulting services lively in sub-industries.
- To provide necessary support to small and medium sized businesses for to make them to be managed in accordance with the contemporary principles.
- To increase means to support the small and medium sized businesses financially.
- To shape the main and sub-industries regarding production and delivery just on time and also to increase financial support in that direction.
- Turning the companies of main-industry to the sub-industry companies for providing new systems.
- Working of industrial associations on increasing cooperation among different sectors, taking input and output links of sectors into consideration.
- To make analysis with regard to setup accounts, economic indicators and human resources for to help the industries to foresee their future.

### 2. Effects of Employees’ Education for More Efficient Competition in Businesses

#### 2.1. İşletmelerde İnsan Kaynağının Önemi

The competitive conditions that has been made harder than ever by globalization enforce all business sectors to look for some innovations. But it is very clear that these days businesses have not only to keep up with others through innovations and developing their technologies, but also to have educated and qualified workforce to manage and control them. So, having a well educated staff in this sense is as important as having those technologies as a business organization (Selimoğlu ve Yılmaz, 2009: 10). In recent years, joining, group and human-centered styles of management came forward in business because, due to globalization, it was obvious that human being is as important as capital for business. Accordingly, the management styles that value human factor began to be more and more important. The more the relationship between being superior in competition and human resources gains strength, the more evaluation and development of human resources productively gains importance (Ünal, 2002: ?).

Human resources and management of human resources are getting more and more important for business. As such factors as globalization, increasing competition, developments in information technology, importance for human beings to enter new markets and keeping its share in available market are making the human resources more crucial, they make the departments of human resources management more functional. The other significant developments increasing human resources are changes in customers’ needs and demands depending on consumers’ increasing conscious on goods and services, relatively increasing importance of total quality management which is a customer-oriented approach and also getting forward of new business structures based on employees’ joining the management (Eroğlu, 2001: ?). As it should easily be seen from the above, while the market conditions are changing continuously, the customers’ needs and demands are also changing. So, it definitely affects the structures of businesses. The key role in this change belongs to human beings, in other words, to human resources.

The demand of goods and services depends on the benefit that they provide and this demand also keeps the demand towards workforce. As long as the customers’ demand for goods and services is decreasing, the demand for workforce is decreasing or vice versa. Availability of workforce meeting the convenient level of needs of the market depends on the educated resources of workforce (Sünbül ve Yılmaz, 2012: 1).

The main function of education is to make employees to correct their mistakes. But the feature of the work that the employees do, environment of work, employees' mission and vision, along with investment itself, naturally, will be changed from time to time. When the employee's trust in his or her company increase, his or her dependence on it will also increase. The motivation of someone who has got a high level of trust and confidence is to work more voluntarily and productively. On the other hand, thanks to in-service education provided for employees may, for the reason, it could be expected to prevent production defaults and work accidents to a large extent (Selimoğlu ve Yılmaz, 2009: 7).

It may be said that especially international companies have serious difficulties in attaining performance that they want because of lack of qualified workforce. The most important part of that qualified workforce in those companies which operate and compete internationally is probably to have personnel speaking at least one foreign language. In other words, the business that doesn't have sufficient qualified human resources has lots of difficulties particularly in foreign markets. Hence, possessing the necessary qualified workforce in this regard should be considered as the most important advantage in competition in the global market (Doğan vd., 2003: 119-120).

The information which mankind has produced as yet is accepted at the same time as the main source or foundation of all technological developments and it also has become the most important factor to be able to sustain the active competition in local and global markets. In today's economy where new relationships are current in the production process, it is obvious that the information itself is the most important source and means in competitiveness (Iraz, 2005: 256).

### 2.2. Role of Educated Staff in Enhancing Economic Competition

The success of businesses today requires upgrading the employees' qualifications. Therefore, those qualifications have to be improved through education and training. They will not only be more equipped, but also motivated this way. They can really be improved in their vocation and oriented to move in direction of business purposes through those planned educational activities and in-service trainings. To sum up, investing in human resources has really become a vital factor in global markets for efficient competition (Selimoğlu ve Yılmaz, 2009: 3).

Education, as a conversion component all by itself, is not only about business workers but the whole society. The steel industry in Pittsburg, USA, is an important example of reverse – process role of education. The recession in steel industry in this city was stopped by an intense reconstruction education and prevented the sector from being fallen down. Today in many European cities the learning city concept has been improved. This means raising awareness all peoples in a city as in a learning society. In a learning society, the education and awareness of groups with key roles and generally whole community as well as key individuals (Çiftçi, 2006: 41).

Education, as a process getting society and individuals ready for the future, is a creation of behavioral changes in bio-cultural human being fit for the purpose (Balay, 2004: 78; Demirel, 2012:6). Qualified labor force in every country also composes sufficient labour force pool which minimizes compliance problem that society may face (Aykaç , 2002 : 47). Recent years the most important process that countries encounter most is the change that information society conveys and when this fact is taken into consideration the importance to provide individuals and societies with abilities to overcome potential problems comes in sight (Yurdabakan, 2002: 63).

In globalisation process the key factor of production process is information and communication technology. The businesses which own information and communication technology properly increase productivity and their employment structure changes because information and communication technology in a new production structure reduce standard employment request and features production based on high qualified workers. On the other hand, with technological improvements the best part of current workforce has changed into unqualified and uneducable workers. And this requires workforce, which is different from new workforce needs, to change and improve itself necessarily (Erdoğan 1999:116-117)

Getting from industrial society to information society has brought many uncertainties for businesses with increasing competition. In this uncertain situation only reliable source of competition for business is knowledge. In these changing conditions the business which owns knowledge and knows how to use it will survive, whereas the others have to leave their market to another ones. This clearly displays that the business which can create and manage knowledge have important advantage about keeping up with the competition (Iraz, 2005: 247).

The engaging of globalisation and information age has caused the creativity, knowledge, experience and abilities of people to be mainstay for competition between the businesses. Depending upon the importance of human factor for competition has increased; importance of human sources for businesses has also increased; and works to enhance performance and productivity of workers has become important (Biçer and Düztepe, 2003: 13).

In businesses, new models are being developed about information management.

Among these models the one, developed by Carneiro (2006), is the most remarkable one. In this model, investment for developing knowledge is one of the most important subject of the information management.

Thanks to such investment, it is aimed to increase motivation and information level of brain workers. Improving quality and qualifications of brain workers allows business to have more competitive structure in production period based on innovation. By improving knowledge level of workers, even if a new thing is not invented within the business, with updating information about the rivals the competition can be carried on (Iraz, 2005:256).

The education to improve knowledge and abilities of workers has great importance because this kind of education makes workers improve themselves constantly, their happiness and satisfaction is increased and loyalty for business is also improved. And, on the other hand, workers keep up with a new technology and it makes way for application new methods and techniques in production by qualified workers. The fact that Japanese production techniques are worldwide famous, depends on lifelong education of employers and the success gained by those techniques in the global competition beyond disputes clearly displaying the importance of training of workers. Besides, total quality management, which is one of the instruments to get ahead in competition, depends on continuing training and development and this shows the importance of training the employers (Ünal, 2002: ?).

Training the employers regularly in the businesses is beneficial not only for companies but also for workers. With training and education qualities and self confidence of employers are also improving. When the self confidence of employers improves, the quality of the work also gets better because the employers without self confidence are not sure whether their work is correct or not and when they are indecisive about this they are more likely to make mistakes. However, for the workers whose self confidence gets better with this training, these mistakes are out of the question.

In a business with confident employers, the working atmosphere is more peaceful and this peaceful atmosphere increases the quality and production.

This kind of investment for the workers by the businesses refresh the feeling of value among the workers and their moral and motivation get better, their loyalty for the business get strong. By the way, a team work feeling among employees is increasing and their coordination gets stronger. This also makes the workers to focus on work and success and attempts that may result in losses reduction. And totally the business earns more (Selimoğlu and Yılmaz, 2009:6).

There are many factors that necessitate human sources to be trained in businesses. Some of these are related to the factors within business and the others are about needs emerged due to some environmental factors out of the business. Generally, it is possible to consider such factors that cause training needs as economic factors, democratic factors, innovations and complexness. Economic factors are related to the fact that economic and business development depend on human factor. The investment made for the people naturally cause both development of business and economic growth. Democratic factors are related to intra-organizational participation and they base on codetermination of well-trained staff. Environmental factor affects business structurally in every respect and it must have a dynamic pattern for business to keep up with environmental change. To be able to achieve this, human sources are essential to be developed by means of training and so on. Another factor that makes training compulsory is complexness factor. Complexness factor is mainly related to uncertainty of future depending upon change of technologic structure and also related to the period to keep up with new and complex situations for business. For this reason, workforce with current technology has great importance for business to cope with this period and employer training makes it possible for business to keep up with recent changes (Aydınlı and Halis, 2004:5-7).

In order to be a successful business, human source planning has to be made, suitable workers for the business has to be employed and they should be trained within business culture, and their performances must be evaluated, and after that they must be worked and priced according to their overall performances. It is especially a great problem for businesses to provide themselves with necessary workforce. This workforce is often an expensive method although it is found in external environment. However, this source can be provided internally by training internal sources and making the quality of human sources raised. Getting the quality of internal sources raised by means of education increases the participation of the workers, their satisfaction and self-confidence. And this enhances productivity by increasing performance and loyalty of employees who work with feedback. This enhanced productivity has great importance for success and for to be able to compete with other businesses (Ünal, 2002).

Businesses have also a lifetime and this life expectancy and whether and to what extent they will be successful or not depend on their ability to keep up with external and internal environmental conditions. The main duty and function of business administrations at this point is to check internal relations in favour of the business by coordinating internal units in chain of commands and to make the business cope with the changes in external environment conditions. At this point quality and ability of human sources have a great importance to keep up with changes in environment conditions out of the business. Having true human sources to cope with changing conditions is possible only if there is a well-trained administration. By the way, current human sources must have necessary qualifications and enough education to fulfil the objectives of the business. (Aydınlı and Halis, 2004:7-8).

The research done by Doğan (Doğan, 2003:130) demonstrates that business must have qualified workforce to be able to take place especially in international competition. According to the research managers think that qualified workforce enables an important competitive advantage for them. According to the research done by Özdevecioğlu (Özdevecioğlu, 2014:297) in manufacturing metal sector, training of technical and administrative staff affects the competitive capacity of the business positively. At this point, another thing that shows the relationship between competition and education is about development of technology in businesses. According to the findings made in the same research, development of technology used in the businesses contributes increasing of competitive power. However, new technology means new knowledge and for domination of this new knowledge we need to expert manpower in technology. Making the technology in the businesses really functional is possible only with good information technology equipment. Training the staff makes the new technology entegrated in business and makes use of it properly and easily as well as increasing the productivity of the employers.

Despite the fact that importance of staff training is so obvious, the training conducted without any good plan and programme may result in unnecessary expenses to businesses and this staff training may not be successful. For this reason, staff training must be done with a good plan and programme. When in-service training is carried out under a good plan it will be much more suitable. Generally, it is possible to specify the following advantages of staff training to businesses (Selimoğlu and Yılmaz, 2009:5-6).

1. Quality of produced goods and service will be higher; productivity will get better and defective manufacturing will be less.
2. Staff training and renew and adaptation of business will be easier and it will be easier for employers to keep up with innovations.
3. It will be easier for the staff to grasp and accept innovations and follow the changes.
4. It will be easier to improve work techniques and analysis.
5. Business expenses will be less.
6. Image and social respect of the company will be stronger.
7. In-house communication and constructive relations will be higher, complaint of workers for each other will decrease.
8. Work load of the staff will be less and decrease of defective manufacturing will reduce control expenses.
9. It will be easier for superiors to inspect subordinates.
10. Due to in-service trainings administrative decisions will be made correctly and in time.

### 3. Result and Discussion

Rivalry is a competition between the businesses. In the past, basically there were factor, such as quality, between business competition but today rivalry conditions are changed and it has become harder than in the past. Especially, as a result of information society, similar to increasing the level of knowledge and consciousness, consumers' expectations for quality also rised. Instead of quality concept formed according to some standards and more specifically in the past, today there are more subjective quality concepts which demonstrate personal factors forming customers' satisfaction. As well the difficulties to create the quality human sources' qualifications based on knowledge and ability, which are the main fund of business, have changed greatly as depending on conditions of information age it is easier to obtain information and there are differences between cognisant and incognisant. Especially the importance of employees who knows a lot about technological innovations and are able to cope with these changes.

Depending on the quality expectation and perception, there is a new administrative mentality which highlights the quality in business. Total quality management which is focusing on consumers has become prominent as the most important example of this kind of manner of rule. Total quality management is a processual management and is a type of administration based on constant development. At this approach the main target is to improve quality all the time and to offer to customers the high quality as soon as possible. In this kind of administrative mentality which wants to demonstrate quality, it inevitably became important to have workforce capacity which can produce the highest quality. By the way, the fact that total quality management puts forward team work and lays the quality responsibility on whole business requires all staff to be involved in the process. And as a result this causes the need for qualified work force.

Uprising of both technology and quality perception, has made production focused on qualified staff. And this has enhanced value of qualified workers in work force market and caused concentrated activities about improvement of workforce. We see that training of workforce according to the needs is more economical and practical solution as providing work force out of business is harder. Reserches show that training for to rise qualifications of workers increases productivity and performance of the staff.

It seems that educated individuals have a leading role in many parts of society. In business we see that educated workers have a similar role, too. Meanwhile, providing the employers with necessary information suitable for the needs of the business increases creativity and ability of the staff and contributes to the rise of overall performance of business. In business when you invest in workers in terms of knowledge that business has an information capacity to compete with its rivals although the workers haven't invented anything new. This is one of the essential requirement to be able to keep on a competition. On the other hand, qualifications of the staff are increased by training, horizontal and vertical movement also increased in the organisation and business gets opportunitie to use its workers' administrative ability. Ultimately, it is not so easy to find managers in business and providing this source within organisation is an important acquisition for the business.

The training given to the workers makes the workers feel they are appreciated and when they feel they are valuable, their loyalty for business is increasing. In this way, their morality and motivation are also increasing, their stress level is decreasing and they are less likely to make any mistakes, faultless manufacturing gets higher. Meanwhile, rising motivation increases productivity and performance of workers and enables business to make advantage over rivals for competitions by decreasing efforts cost per product. One of the most important functions of staff training is that technology in business becomes functional because no matter how high the technologic equipment of business is, it is not possible for business to use this equipment if they don't have staff to make use of these advantages. For this reason, training the staff also makes ways to use the technology properly in business.

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