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**EXAMINING THE ROLE OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT IN ENHANCING
STRATEGIC COMPETITIVENESS IN ZAMBIA'S MANUFACTURING,
MINING, AND AGRICULTURE SECTORS.**

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF POST GRADUATE
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AWARD OF THE MASTER OF ARTS IN HUMAN RESOURCE

BY

CHISHA KAELA CHISHIMBA

MAHRM20221909

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DECLARATION

I, **CHISHA KAELA CHISHIMBA** do hereby declare that the contents of this study are my original work and that to the best of my knowledge have not been previously presented for any award in any other University. All the sources of information used in this piece of work have been duly acknowledged.

Name: Chisha Kaela Chishimba

Student ID: MAHRM20221909

Signature: 

Date:18th January 2025.....

Supervised by: Dr Mary Kamaara

Signature: 

Date:19th January 2025.....

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my children; Chilando, Mutale and Taizya, as a reminder to you to stay curious about every aspect of your lives. Always remember that learning is a lifelong process. “Once you stop learning, you start dying”- Albert Einstein.

I would also like to dedicate this to my late father, Mr. William Kanyanta Chishimba (Senior) who believed that education was the key to success and financial freedom.

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I would like to acknowledge my supervisor for her patience, exceptional guidance and support throughout my dissertation. I pray that God continues to grant her good health so that she may be a blessing to others, as she has been to me. I would also be doing myself a disservice if I did not take time to thank my respondents in the various sectors I researched on, who took time out of their busy schedules to give their input during my data collection.

During the period of my study, the world was hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, and this posed a huge threat to the operations of the university and businesses alike. I thought the pandemic was going to create a huge setback to my studies. I wish to applaud the University of Lusaka for their quick action in ensuring that my studies were not affected by putting in place robust and modern systems through which we were able to learn and interact with our lecturers.

Finally, I would like to thank my spouse, my mother, relatives and friends who encouraged me to stay focused throughout my studies. Without their constant encouragement and belief in me, it would have been difficult to successfully complete my work.

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LIST OF ACROYMNS AND ABBREVIATIONS

- CHCD** - Continuous Human Capital Development
- HRM** - Human Resource Management
- RBV** - Resource-Based View
- SHRM** - Strategic Human Resource Management
- VET** - Vocational Education and Training
- FDI** - Foreign Direct Investment
- SADC** - Southern African Development Community
- SPSS** - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
- VRIN** - Valuable, Rare, Inimitable, and Non-Substitutable

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of Skills Development in enhancing strategic competitiveness Zambia's manufacturing, mining and agriculture sectors, a nation striving for economic diversification amid globalization and technological shifts. Organizations increasingly depend on workforce skills, knowledge, and adaptability to sustain a competitive edge. The study identifies Skills Development as a pivotal driver of innovation, employee engagement, and market responsiveness in this context.

Using a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from 20 companies across mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and services via surveys and interviews. Quantitative results show 72% of surveyed companies conduct training programs regularly, although large firms employ structured, strategic approaches, while SMEs rely on reactive, ad hoc methods. Regression analysis highlights training investment as a critical predictor of strategic competitiveness ($B = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 48% of performance variability. Strong positive correlations were observed between training investment, innovation capability ($r = 0.78$), and employee engagement ($r = 0.70$). Qualitative findings corroborate these insights, emphasizing Continuous Human Capital Developments (CHCD) role in innovation and adaptability.

Despite its benefits, CHCD faces significant barriers, including financial constraints (cited by 65% of respondents), skill mismatches (42%), and inadequate infrastructure. These challenges disproportionately affect SMEs, limiting their ability to leverage CHCD effectively. The study concludes that structured, strategically aligned Skills Development initiatives significantly enhance competitiveness. It recommends public-private partnerships, financial incentives for training, and stronger alignment between educational curricula and market demands to overcome these challenges. These measures are critical for unlocking Zambia's economic potential and achieving sustained organizational competitiveness.

Keywords: *Continuous Human Capital Development, Strategic Competitiveness, Innovation, Employee Engagement, Organizational Performance*

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Skills development has emerged as a critical driver of economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness in the global economy. In an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and shifting market dynamics, the ability of nations to compete effectively hinges on the availability of a skilled workforce capable of adapting to these changes. For Zambia, a country endowed with abundant natural resources and a growing population, the development of human capital through skills training is pivotal to unlocking the potential of its key economic sectors manufacturing, mining, and agriculture. These sectors are the backbone of Zambia's economy, contributing significantly to employment, GDP, and export earnings. However, persistent challenges such as low productivity, technological gaps, and a shortage of skilled labor have hindered their ability to compete strategically in regional and global markets.

Globally, the link between skills development and economic competitiveness is well-documented. Countries that prioritize human capital development through education and vocational training are better positioned to adapt to technological changes and market demands (World Bank, 2019). For instance, nations like Germany and South Korea have leveraged robust skills development programs to enhance their manufacturing and technological capabilities, making them global leaders in innovation and productivity (Schwab, 2016). Similarly, regional examples such as Rwanda and South Africa demonstrate how targeted skills development initiatives can drive economic transformation and industrial growth (UNDP, 2020).

In Zambia, however, the alignment between skills development and industry needs remains weak. The manufacturing sector struggles with low productivity and limited value addition, while the mining sector, which accounts for over 70% of export earnings, faces a shortage of engineers, geologists, and technicians (Bank of Zambia, 2020). The agriculture sector, which employs over 60% of the population, suffers from low adoption

of modern farming techniques due to inadequate training and skills development (Ministry of Agriculture, 2019). These challenges underscore the urgent need for a strategic focus on skills development to enhance the competitiveness of Zambia's key economic sectors.

Training and development are fundamental components of human resource management, playing a crucial role in improving organizational effectiveness and employee performance (Ismael et al., 2021). Training equips employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their tasks efficiently, while development focuses on preparing them for future roles and responsibilities. Together, they contribute to increased productivity, innovation, and overall organizational success (Anwar & Shukur, 2015). In the context of Zambia, where the skills gap is a significant barrier to economic growth, investing in training and development programs is essential for building a competent workforce capable of driving sectoral transformation.

This study seeks to examine the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors. By assessing the current state of skills development, identifying gaps, and exploring the impact of skills training on productivity and innovation, the study aims to provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educational institutions. The findings will contribute to the broader discourse on skills development and economic competitiveness, particularly in resource-dependent economies like Zambia.

1.2 Background of the Study

1.2.1 Global View

Globally, skills development is recognized as a cornerstone of economic growth, innovation, and competitiveness, particularly in an era characterized by rapid technological advancements, globalization, and shifting market demands. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018), countries that have prioritized human capital development have demonstrated remarkable economic transformations. For instance, nations like South Korea and Germany have transitioned from resource-dependent economies to knowledge-based ones by investing

heavily in education, vocational training, and skills development. These countries have leveraged their skilled workforces to drive productivity, innovation, and global competitiveness, enabling them to dominate high-value industries such as automotive manufacturing, electronics, and renewable energy (World Bank, 2020). However, many developing nations, including Zambia, continue to face significant skills gaps, which hinder their ability to compete in global value chains and achieve sustainable economic growth. The global shift towards automation, artificial intelligence, and digitalization has further exacerbated these challenges, as many developing countries lack the skilled labour force needed to adopt and adapt to these technologies (ILO, 2019). This global context underscores the urgent need for countries like Zambia to prioritize skills development as a strategic tool for enhancing competitiveness and achieving long-term economic resilience.

1.2.2 Regional View

Regionally, Africa faces substantial challenges in skills development, with only 20% of the workforce receiving formal training, compared to global averages of over 50% (ILO, 2019). This disparity has limited the continent's ability to add value to its natural resources and compete in sectors like manufacturing and agriculture, where technological adoption and innovation are crucial for economic transformation. According to the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2021), the lack of skilled labour is one of the primary barriers to Africa's industrialisation and integration into global value chains. For example, despite being rich in natural resources, many African countries, including Zambia, remain heavily reliant on raw material exports, with limited processing capabilities due to a lack of skilled labour. This reliance on raw exports has left African economies vulnerable to external shocks, such as fluctuations in global commodity prices, as evidenced by the economic downturns experienced during the 2014-2016 commodity price crash (World Bank, 2020). Furthermore, the region's agricultural sector, which employs the majority of the population, continues to suffer from low productivity due to inadequate access to training, modern farming techniques, and market linkages (FAO, 2020). The regional context highlights the critical need for targeted skills development initiatives to enhance productivity, foster innovation, and drive economic diversification. By addressing the skills

gap, African countries can unlock the full potential of their key sectors, reduce dependency on raw material exports, and achieve sustainable economic growth.

1.2.3 Zambian View

Nationally, Zambia's economy has historically been driven by three key sectors: manufacturing, mining, and agriculture. These sectors have played a central role in shaping the nation's economic development, contributing significantly to GDP, employment, and export earnings. However, despite their importance, these sectors have faced persistent challenges that have hindered their ability to achieve strategic competitiveness both regionally and globally. The mining sector, which has been the backbone of Zambia's economy since the colonial era, accounts for over 70% of the country's export earnings and approximately 10% of GDP (Fraser & Lungu, 2020). However, the sector has experienced significant volatility over the decades due to fluctuating global copper prices, underinvestment in technology, and a lack of skilled labour to drive modernization. For example, during the global copper price crash of the 1970s, Zambia's economy suffered a severe downturn, highlighting its over-reliance on raw mineral exports (World Bank, 2020). Despite being the eighth-largest copper producer in the world, Zambia has struggled to move up the value chain, with over 80% of its copper exported in raw form rather than as processed goods (ZDA, 2021). This historical reliance on raw exports underscores the urgent need for skills development to enable value addition and diversification.

The manufacturing sector, which has the potential to diversify the economy and reduce dependency on imports, has historically underperformed. In the 1980s, manufacturing contributed approximately 15% to GDP, but this figure has steadily declined to around 8% in recent years (MCTI, 2019). This decline is attributed to structural challenges such as low levels of innovation, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled workers capable of operating advanced machinery and adopting modern production techniques. For instance, the lack of skilled labour has deterred foreign investment in the sector, with only 2% of foreign direct investment (FDI) flowing into manufacturing between 2015 and 2020 (ZDA, 2021). This historical underperformance highlights the critical need for skills development to revitalize the sector and enhance its competitiveness.

Agriculture, the largest employer in Zambia, has historically been dominated by subsistence farming. At independence, agriculture contributed approximately 40% to GDP, but this figure has declined to around 20% in recent years due to low productivity and limited adoption of modern farming techniques (FAO, 2020). Despite the sector's potential to drive food security and export growth, productivity levels remain low. For example, maize yields in Zambia average 2.5 tons per hectare, compared to the global average of 5.6 tons per hectare (FAO, 2020). This productivity gap is partly due to inadequate access to training, technology, and market linkages for smallholder farmers, who constitute over 70% of agricultural producers (ILO, 2019). The historical dominance of subsistence farming underscores the need for skills development to transition to commercial agriculture and improve competitiveness.

Theoretical frameworks on human capital development emphasize the critical role of skills in driving economic growth and competitiveness. According to the OECD (2018), skills development is a key determinant of productivity, innovation, and adaptability in a rapidly changing global economy. In the Zambian context, the mismatch between the skills possessed by the workforce and the demands of the manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors has been identified as a major barrier to growth (UNESCO, 2021). For example, a 2019 study by the International Labour Organization (ILO) found that 60% of employers in Zambia's key sectors reported difficulties in finding workers with the necessary technical and managerial skills (ILO, 2019). This skills gap is further exacerbated by inadequate investment in education and vocational training, as well as a lack of alignment between training programs and industry needs.

Practically, the need for skills development in Zambia is underscored by the country's broader economic goals, as outlined in its Vision 2030 and the Seventh National Development Plan (7NDP). These policy frameworks emphasize the importance of human capital development in achieving sustainable economic growth and reducing poverty. However, despite these aspirations, progress has been slow. For instance, only 12% of Zambia's workforce has received formal skills training, compared to the African average of 20% (World Bank, 2020). This gap in policy implementation highlights the

urgency of research that examines how targeted skills development can enhance the competitiveness of Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors.

The historical underperformance of Zambia's key economic sectors, coupled with the theoretical and practical importance of skills development, underscores the significance of this study. By addressing the skills gap, Zambia can unlock the full potential of its manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors, driving economic diversification, job creation, and global competitiveness. This research aims to contribute to existing knowledge by providing evidence-based insights into the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness, thereby informing policy and practice in Zambia and beyond. The study is grounded in the historical, theoretical, and practical context of Zambia's economic challenges, making it a timely and relevant contribution to the discourse on skills development and economic growth.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Skills development is widely recognized as a critical driver of organizational performance and competitiveness. Initiatives such as formal education, on-the-job training, and professional development are essential for fostering innovation, productivity, and adaptability within organizations (OECD, 2018). According to the World Economic Forum (2020), organizations that invest in workforce development are better equipped to navigate technological advancements, globalization, and market volatility, thereby maintaining a competitive edge. However, in Zambia, the implementation of skills development programs remains fragmented and misaligned with sectoral needs, leading to limited returns on investment and reduced competitiveness (Chanda et al., 2021).

A key issue identified by the International Labor Organization (2021) is the lack of strategic alignment between skills development initiatives and organizational goals. In many Zambian companies, training programs are often treated as short-term, reactive measures rather than being integrated into long-term strategies. This approach undermines the potential of skills development to build the critical competencies needed for sustained organizational success. While global studies highlight the positive

correlation between workforce development and organizational performance, the unique socio-economic and industrial context of Zambia remains underexplored, creating a significant knowledge gap (African Development Bank, 2021). This gap limits the ability of policymakers and business leaders to design and implement skills development programs tailored to the specific needs of Zambian industries.

Structural barriers further exacerbate the problem. Financial constraints, inadequate training infrastructure, and a shortage of skilled trainers are pervasive challenges, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Zambia (World Bank, 2020). These barriers prevent organizations from adopting comprehensive skills development strategies, leaving many employees underprepared for the demands of a technology-driven global market. Additionally, the disconnect between the skills produced by educational institutions and the requirements of the labor market has widened the skills gap, further impeding organizational performance and competitiveness (UNESCO, 2021). For example, Zambia's mining sector, which accounts for over 70% of export earnings, remains heavily reliant on raw material exports due to a lack of skilled labor for value addition. Similarly, the manufacturing sector struggles with low productivity and innovation due to inadequate technical expertise (Fraser & Lungu, 2020).

The rapid pace of technological advancements and globalization has heightened the urgency of addressing these challenges. Zambian companies risk falling behind in global and regional markets due to insufficient investment in digital skills development and innovation-driven training. Without strategic skills development initiatives, organizations may struggle to adapt to evolving market demands, maintain growth, and achieve sustainable competitiveness. This problem is particularly critical for Zambia's key economic sectors—manufacturing, mining, and agriculture—which are central to the nation's economic development but face persistent challenges such as low productivity, limited innovation, and an inability to compete effectively in global markets (ZDA, 2021).

Although there has been considerable research on the role of skills development in enhancing organizational performance globally, little research has been conducted on its impact within the Zambian context. This lack of localized research limits the ability of

policymakers and business leaders to design and implement effective skills development programs tailored to the specific needs of Zambian industries. Therefore, to gain a better understanding of the relationship between skills development and strategic competitiveness, a critical assessment of the current state of skills development practices, their impact on organizational performance, and the barriers to effective implementation needs to be conducted in Zambia's key economic sectors.

1.4 Research Objectives

Main Research Objective

The main research objective of this study is:

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To assess the current state of skills development practices in Zambia's key economic sectors, focusing on their alignment with industry needs and workforce requirements.
2. To analyze the relationship between skills development initiatives and organizational performance, including productivity, innovation, and employee retention.
3. To identify and categorize the primary barriers to effective skills development implementation in Zambia, such as financial constraints, infrastructural limitations, and misalignment with sectoral demands.
4. To propose evidence-based strategies for improving skills development programs to enhance competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors.

Specific Research Questions

The specific research questions are outlined as follows:

1. What are the current skills development practices in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors, and how do they align with industry needs?
2. How does skills development influence organizational performance indicators such as productivity, innovation, and employee retention in these sectors?
3. What are the primary barriers to the effective implementation of skills development programs in Zambia's key economic sectors?
4. What strategies can be employed to improve skills development programs to enhance competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is multidimensional, impacting both the corporate sector and the broader economic policy framework in Zambia. At its core, the research aims to bridge the existing gap in understanding the role of continuous human capital development in enhancing the long-term strategic competitiveness of Zambian companies. This understanding is crucial for several reasons, each of which has the potential to inform policy and strategic decisions at multiple levels.

Firstly, from a corporate perspective, the study is expected to provide actionable insights that can drive more effective human capital strategies. By demonstrating the tangible benefits of continuous investment in employee development, the research could encourage more companies to prioritize human capital as a key component of their strategic planning. As companies increasingly face global competition, particularly in industries such as mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and services, the ability to leverage human capital effectively could be a decisive factor in achieving and sustaining a competitive edge (Barney, 1991). The study's findings could thus serve as a compelling case for corporate leaders to allocate more resources toward training and development programs that align with long-term business goals.

Moreover, the research has the potential to influence the broader economic policy framework in Zambia. Policymakers who understand the link between human capital development and national competitiveness are better positioned to create an enabling environment for businesses. This could include crafting policies that incentivize companies to invest in their workforce, such as tax breaks for training programs or subsidies for vocational education (Zambian Ministry of Labour and Social Security, 2018). Additionally, the study could inform the development of national strategies aimed at improving educational outcomes, particularly in areas that are critical to the country's economic growth. By highlighting the strategic importance of continuous learning and development, the research may prompt government and educational institutions to enhance the quality and relevance of vocational training and higher education programs (World Bank, 2018).

The study's significance also extends to its potential impact on the workforce itself. Employees who are continuously developed tend to be more engaged, productive, and loyal to their organizations (Noe, 2017). By fostering a culture of continuous learning, companies can not only improve their competitiveness but also contribute to higher job satisfaction and career growth among their employees. This, in turn, can reduce turnover rates and associated costs, leading to more stable and productive organizations (Garavan, Carbery, and Rock, 2012). For employees, the study underscores the value of ongoing skill development, which is increasingly important in a rapidly changing job market where new technologies and methodologies constantly emerge.

In summary, the significance of this study is rooted in its potential to drive change at multiple levels such as corporate, policy, and individual. By providing empirical evidence on the benefits of continuous human capital development, the research can contribute to more informed decision-making, ultimately leading to enhanced competitiveness for Zambian companies on both national and international stages.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on examining the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's key economic sectors: manufacturing, mining, and agriculture. These sectors were selected due to their significant contributions to the country's GDP, employment, and export earnings, as well as their potential for driving sustainable economic growth.

The study will assess the current state of skills development practices in these sectors, with a particular emphasis on their alignment with industry needs and workforce requirements. It will analyze the relationship between skills development initiatives and organizational performance indicators such as productivity, innovation, and employee retention. Additionally, the study will identify and categorize the primary barriers to effective skills development implementation, including financial constraints, infrastructural limitations, and misalignment with sectoral demands.

Geographically, the study will focus on Zambia, with data collected from organizations and institutions within the manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors. The research will include both qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities associated with skills development in these sectors.

While the study acknowledges the importance of other sectors in Zambia's economy, such as services and construction, it will limit its scope to manufacturing, mining, and agriculture due to their critical role in the nation's economic development and their shared challenges related to skills gaps and competitiveness.

The findings of this study will provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educational institutions to improve skills development programs and enhance the competitiveness of Zambia's key economic sectors. By focusing on these sectors, the study aims to contribute to the broader discourse on skills development and economic transformation in resource-dependent economies.

1.8 Definition of Key Terms and Concepts

Human Capital Development: The process of enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies through a combination of education, training, and continuous learning initiatives. It is a critical component for organizations seeking to improve productivity, innovation, and overall performance (Becker, 1993).

Strategic Competitiveness: The sustained ability of a company to outperform its competitors in the marketplace by maintaining a unique position through superior resources, capabilities, and strategies over the long term (Barney, 1991).

Organizational Performance: A measure of how well a company achieves its objectives, which include financial outcomes, market share, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement. Human capital development is a key driver of organizational performance (Kaplan and Norton, 1996).

Resource-Based View (RBV): A theoretical framework that posits that a firm's resources and capabilities, particularly those that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable, are essential for achieving and sustaining a competitive advantage (Wernerfelt, 1984).

Vocational Education and Training (VET): Education and training programs designed to provide individuals with specific skills and competencies required for a particular job or career, often focused on practical and technical skills (Ryan, 2001).

Employee Engagement: The level of emotional and intellectual commitment that employees have towards their organization and its goals, which is often enhanced through effective human capital development strategies (Kahn, 1990).

Innovation Capability: The ability of an organization to develop new products, services, or processes that provide competitive advantages. Innovation capability is often linked to the continuous development of human capital (Tidd and Bessant, 2018).

Skill Gap: The difference between the skills required by employers and the skills possessed by employees. Addressing skill gaps through targeted human capital development is essential for maintaining competitiveness (CEDEFOP, 2015).

Human Resource Management (HRM): The strategic approach to managing people within an organization, focusing on policies and systems that ensure effective and efficient utilization of human capital to achieve organizational goals (Armstrong, 2006).

1.9 Organization of the Dissertation

The outline of the study research was organized as follows:

Chapter One: Introduction and Background

This chapter introduces the research topic, providing the context and background for the study. It includes the problem statement, research questions, study significance, and scope. The chapter also provides an overview of the Zambian business environment, focusing on the key sectors of manufacturing, mining, and agriculture, and sets the stage for the research by outlining its objectives and relevance.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This chapter reviews existing literature on human capital development and its effects on strategic competitiveness, with a focus on Zambia and similar emerging markets. It explores the relationship between human capital development and organizational performance, the role of continuous learning in sustaining competitive advantage, and the challenges of implementing human capital strategies in emerging economies. The chapter also identifies gaps in the literature and discusses theoretical frameworks to underpin the study's conceptual model.

Chapter Three: Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks guiding the study. It discusses key theories such as Human Capital Theory, and Resource-Based View (RBV). The conceptual model illustrates the proposed relationships between continuous human capital development, innovation capability, employee engagement, and strategic competitiveness.

Chapter Four: Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the research methodology, detailing the mixed-methods approach that integrates quantitative and qualitative techniques. It describes the research design, population, sampling techniques, and data collection methods, including surveys, and interviews. The chapter also discusses data analysis plans and ethical considerations to ensure the integrity of the research process.

Chapter Five: Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings from surveys and interviews. It analyses the data to assess the current state of human capital development practices, evaluate their impact on strategic competitiveness, and identify barriers and strategies for improvement. The chapter discusses the implications of the findings in relation to the research objectives and theoretical frameworks.

Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study and draws conclusions based on the analysis. It provides actionable recommendations for organizations, policymakers, and educational institutions to enhance human capital development and improve strategic competitiveness. The chapter also suggests areas for future research, such as longitudinal studies and comparative analyses with other emerging economies.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter establishes the study's foundation, focusing on the role of skills development in enhancing competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors. It highlights challenges such as skills gaps, low productivity, and misaligned training programs, exacerbated by financial and infrastructural barriers. The research aims to assess current practices, analyse their impact on performance, identify implementation barriers, and propose strategies for improvement. The scope is limited to Zambia's key sectors, using mixed methods for comprehensive insights. By addressing these issues, the study seeks to bridge the knowledge gap and provide actionable recommendations to boost sectoral competitiveness and economic growth in Zambia.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter introduced the research topic, emphasizing the critical role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors. It outlined challenges such as skills gaps, low productivity, and misaligned training programs, exacerbated by financial and infrastructural barriers. The chapter also defined the research objectives, focusing on assessing current practices, analyzing their impact, identifying barriers, and proposing improvement strategies.

This chapter reviews literature on skills development and its impact on competitiveness, with a focus on Zambia and emerging economies. Empirical evidence highlights the positive relationship between skills development and organizational performance, including improved productivity, innovation, and adaptability (International Labor Organization, 2021). The review provides a theoretical and empirical foundation, aligning with the study's objectives and research questions.

2.2 Empirical Review

2.2.1 The Nexus Between Skills Development and Organizational Performance

Skills development is widely recognized as a critical driver of organizational performance. Studies have shown that organizations investing in employee training and development experience significant improvements in productivity, innovation, and operational efficiency (African Development Bank, 2021). In Zambia, Chanda, Bwalya, and Mumba (2021) found that companies with structured skills development programs reported measurable gains in productivity and market responsiveness, particularly in the manufacturing sector. This underscores the importance of aligning skills development initiatives with organizational goals to enhance performance and competitiveness.

Hussain et al. (2023) further emphasizes the role of organizational learning capability (OLC) in mediating the relationship between training and development and organizational performance. Their study highlights that training and development initiatives, when aligned with organizational learning strategies, significantly enhance organizational performance by fostering innovation and adaptability.

2.2.2 Global Perspectives on Skills Development

Globally, skills development is increasingly viewed as a strategic tool for economic growth and competitiveness. According to the International Labor Organization (2021), countries with robust skills development frameworks are better positioned to adapt to technological advancements and shifting market demands. For instance, in emerging economies, skills development has been linked to increased foreign direct investment (FDI) and improved productivity (African Development Bank, 2021). These global trends highlight the need for Zambia to adopt best practices in skills development to remain competitive in the global market.

Hussain et al. (2023) also highlights the importance of continuous learning and multi-skill training in enhancing organizational performance. Their findings suggest that organizations that prioritize long-term-oriented training and collaborative training are better equipped to innovate and respond to dynamic market conditions.

2.2.3 Skills Development in Zambia: An Overview

Current State of Skills Development Initiatives

Zambia has made strides in implementing skills development initiatives, particularly through technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programs. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives remains uneven. According to the World Bank (2020), while some sectors have benefited from targeted training programs, others continue to face significant skills gaps.

Alignment of Skills Development with Sectoral Needs

A critical challenge in Zambia is the misalignment between skills development programs and sectoral needs. For example, the mining and agriculture sectors require specialized skills for sustainability and value addition, yet training programs often fail to address these specific demands (Chanda et al., 2021). This misalignment limits the potential impact of skills development on sectoral growth and economic diversification.

Several challenges hinder the effective implementation of skills development initiatives in Zambia. These include limited funding, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of coordination between educational institutions and industry stakeholders (International Labour Organization, 2021). Additionally, rural areas face unique challenges, such as limited access to training facilities and digital resources, which further exacerbate skills gaps.

2.3 Skills Development and Organizational Performance

2.3.1 Impact of Skills Development on Productivity

Skills development has a direct impact on organizational productivity. Studies have shown that employees with up-to-date skills are more efficient and capable of adapting to modern technologies and processes (Noe et al., 2019). In Zambia, companies that invest in employee training report higher levels of operational efficiency and market responsiveness (Chanda et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Role of Skills Development in Driving Innovation

Skills development also plays a crucial role in fostering innovation. Organizations that prioritize continuous learning are better equipped to develop new products, improve processes, and respond to changing market conditions (Garavan et al., 2020). In Zambia, companies with structured training programs have been shown to introduce innovative solutions, enhancing their competitiveness in both local and global markets (Chanda et al., 2021).

2.4 Barriers to Effective Skills Development in Zambia

Several barriers impede the effective implementation of skills development initiatives in Zambia. Financial constraints are a major challenge, particularly for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which often lack the resources to invest in comprehensive training programs (Chanda et al., 2021). Additionally, the mismatch between the skills supplied by educational institutions and those demanded by the labor market remains a persistent issue (World Bank, 2020). Infrastructural limitations, such as inadequate training facilities and digital infrastructure, further hinder the delivery of high-quality skills development programs, especially in rural areas (International Labor Organization, 2021).

2.5 Sector-Specific Analysis of Skills Development

2.5.1 Manufacturing Sector: Skills for Technological Adoption and Value Addition

The manufacturing sector in Zambia has struggled to achieve global competitiveness due to limited value addition, low technological adoption, and a skills mismatch. Empirical studies highlight the importance of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in addressing these challenges. For instance, a study by Banda (2019) found that Zambian manufacturing firms with a higher proportion of skilled workers were more likely to adopt advanced technologies and improve productivity. However, the sector faces a shortage of skilled labour, particularly in areas such as engineering, quality control, and supply chain management (ZDA, 2020).

The government's efforts to promote skills development through institutions like the Technical Education, Vocational and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) have yielded mixed results. While TEVETA has expanded access to vocational training, critics argue that the curricula are often outdated and fail to align with industry needs (Chanda, 2018). To enhance competitiveness, there is a need for closer collaboration between training institutions and industry stakeholders to ensure that skills development programs are demand-driven and responsive to technological advancements.

2.5.2 Mining Sector: Skills for Sustainability and Global Competitiveness

Zambia's mining sector is a cornerstone of the economy, contributing over 70% of export earnings (Bank of Zambia, 2021). However, the sector's competitiveness is constrained by a reliance on low-skilled labour and limited local value addition. Skills development is critical for addressing these challenges, particularly in areas such as mineral processing, environmental management, and automation. Empirical evidence suggests that investment in skills development can enhance the mining sector's competitiveness by improving operational efficiency and fostering innovation. For example, a study by Mwanza and Mwila (2020) found that mining firms with robust training programs were more likely to adopt sustainable practices and reduce production costs.

However, the sector faces challenges such as brain drain, with skilled workers often migrating to other countries for better opportunities (Simpasa et al., 2017). To address these issues, the Zambian government has partnered with international organizations to develop sector-specific training programs. For instance, the Zambia Mining and Environmental Remediation and Improvement Project (ZMERIP) includes a component focused on skills development for local communities (World Bank, 2019). While these initiatives are commendable, there is a need for greater investment in higher education and research to build a pipeline of skilled professionals capable of driving innovation in the sector.

2.5.3 Agriculture Sector: Skills for Productivity and Value Chain Integration

Agriculture is a key sector for Zambia's economic development, employing over 60% of the labor force (CSO, 2020). However, the sector's productivity remains low due to limited access to modern technologies, inadequate extension services, and a lack of skilled labor. Skills development is essential for addressing these challenges and enhancing the sector's competitiveness.

Empirical studies highlight the positive impact of agricultural education and training on productivity and innovation. For example, a study by Maïga and Kazianga (2016) found that farmers who received training in modern farming techniques were more likely to

adopt improved seeds and fertilizers, leading to higher yields. Similarly, the introduction of ICT-based extension services has been shown to improve knowledge dissemination and adoption of best practices (Hassan, 2015).

Despite these benefits, the agriculture sector faces significant challenges in scaling up skills development. Many training programs are underfunded and lack the resources to reach smallholder farmers, who constitute the majority of the sector's workforce (FAO, 2018). To enhance competitiveness, there is a need for greater investment in agricultural education and training, particularly in areas such as agribusiness, value chain management, and climate-smart agriculture.

2.6 Measuring the Impact of Skills Development on Competitiveness

Measuring the impact of skills development on competitiveness requires a comprehensive approach that considers both quantitative and qualitative indicators. Studies have shown that skills development contributes to improved productivity, innovation, and market adaptability (African Development Bank, 2021). In Zambia, companies with structured training programs report higher levels of competitiveness, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture (Chanda et al., 2021).

2.7 Knowledge gap

Despite the growing body of literature on skills development and its impact on organizational performance, several research gaps remain, particularly in the context of Zambia and other developing economies. These gaps highlight the need for further investigation to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics between skills development, organizational learning, and performance outcomes. Limited Context-Specific Research on Zambia is a significant gap, as most studies, such as those by Mutale and Chileshe (2021) and Kunda and Banda (2023), offer general insights into skills development without delving into industry-specific or region-specific dynamics within Zambia. This gap underscores the need for localized research that considers Zambia's unique socio-economic, cultural, and business environment factors, which are crucial for

tailoring effective skills development strategies. Inadequate Examination of Continuous Learning Impact Pathways is another gap, as little research exists on the specific pathways through which continuous learning impacts strategic competitiveness in Zambia. Studies are needed to provide a detailed analysis of how continuous learning fosters competitive advantages in different industries and organizational structures within the Zambian context.

Lack of Comprehensive Data on Skills Development Strategies is also a critical gap, as the existing literature highlights the benefits of skills development but lacks comprehensive data on the specific strategies employed by Zambian companies to enhance human capital. Studies such as Banda and Mulenga (2022) provide limited insight into the types of training programs, delivery methods, and frequency of training most effective in improving organizational performance and competitiveness. More empirical research is needed to document these strategies and establish a framework for effective skills development in Zambia. Insufficient Attention to Barriers Affecting Implementation is another area requiring further exploration, as challenges such as financial constraints and skills mismatches, highlighted by Mutale et al. (2021) and Banda and Kunda (2023), are widely recognized but lack detailed analysis of how these barriers uniquely impact different sectors, company sizes, and regions within the country. A deeper understanding of these variations is crucial to developing tailored solutions, and minimal discussion exists on the role of policy and government interventions in addressing these obstacles and creating an enabling environment for effective skills development.

Need for Longitudinal Studies on Skills Development Outcomes is another significant gap, as much of the existing research relies on cross-sectional data, providing only a snapshot of skills development's impact at a single point in time. There is a gap in longitudinal studies that track the long-term effects of continuous skills development initiatives on organizational performance and strategic competitiveness in Zambia. Studies such as Mulenga and Mwansa (2022) touch on these outcomes but fail to offer a long-term perspective, which could provide insights into the sustainability and evolving impacts of these initiatives. Underexplored Link Between Skills Development and

Technology Adoption is another area requiring attention, as the literature recognizes the role of skills development in maintaining competitiveness amid technological advancements (Bansal et al., 2023) but lacks sufficient research on the relationship between skills development and technology adoption in Zambian companies. Future studies should explore how skills development initiatives can be designed to support digital transformation and innovation across various sectors in Zambia.

Scarcity of Comparative Studies Across Emerging Markets is another gap, as while some studies provide a regional perspective (e.g., Banda and Kunda, 2023), there is a lack of comparative research positioning Zambia within the broader context of Sub-Saharan Africa or other emerging markets. Comparative studies could identify best practices, common challenges, and unique opportunities for skills development, enriching the understanding of Zambia's position and potential strategies for enhancing competitiveness in the global market. Finally, Moderating Role of Organizational Learning Capability (OLC) is an underexplored area, as Hussain et al. (2023) highlights the need for further research on the moderating role of OLC in the relationship between training and development and organizational performance. Their study suggests that OLC significantly moderates this relationship, emphasizing the importance of fostering a culture of continuous learning within organizations. However, this area remains underexplored, particularly in the context of Zambia, where the interplay between skills development, OLC, and organizational performance could provide valuable insights for policymakers and practitioner.

2.8. THEORETICAL REVIEW

This study is grounded in three key theoretical frameworks that provide a robust foundation for understanding the relationship between human capital development and long-term strategic competitiveness: Competitive Theory, the Resource-Based View (RBV), and the AMO Theory (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity). These theories collectively explain how investments in human capital enhance organizational performance, foster innovation, and sustain competitive advantage, particularly in the context of Zambia and emerging economies.

2.8.1 Competitive Theory

Competitive Theory, rooted in the works of Michael Porter (1985), emphasizes that firms achieve and sustain competitive advantage by strategically positioning themselves within their industry. This theory highlights the importance of differentiation, cost leadership, and focus strategies in creating value and outperforming competitors. In the context of human capital development, Competitive Theory suggests that investing in a skilled and adaptable workforce enables organizations to differentiate themselves through innovation, superior service, or operational efficiency. For Zambia, where industries such as mining, agriculture, and manufacturing face intense competition, developing human capital can help firms adopt cost-effective practices, innovate, and respond to market changes, thereby enhancing their competitive positioning.

2.8.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)

The Resource-Based View (RBV) (Barney, 1991; updated by Priem et al., 2020) emphasizes that resources that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN) are essential for sustaining a firm's competitive advantage. Human capital, when strategically developed, aligns with the variable of **innovation capability**, as a well-trained workforce can foster creativity and drive unique solutions to complex problems. For Zambian companies operating within the Southern African Development Community (SADC), developing human capital as a VRIN resource ensures the creation of unique competencies, such as advanced technical skills or innovative production methods, that are difficult for competitors to replicate.

2.8.3 The AMO Theory (Ability, Motivation, and Opportunity)

The **AMO Theory** was developed to explain how employee performance is influenced by three key factors: **Ability**, **Motivation**, and **Opportunity**. It is a widely recognized framework in human resource management and organizational behavior, emphasizing that for employees to perform effectively, they must possess the necessary skills and knowledge (Ability), be motivated to use those skills (Motivation), and have the opportunity to apply them in their work environment (Opportunity). The theory is often summarized by the equation:

$$\text{Performance} = \text{Ability} \times \text{Motivation} \times \text{Opportunity}$$

According to Appelbaum et al. (2000), the AMO Theory provides a holistic approach to understanding employee performance by integrating individual capabilities, motivational factors, and organizational support systems. The theory suggests that organizations can enhance performance by addressing all three components simultaneously.

“The AMO Theory posits that employees perform best when they have the **Ability** to do their jobs, the **Motivation** to perform well, and the **Opportunity** to apply their skills effectively” (Boselie et al., 2005). This framework has been widely applied in various organizational contexts to improve productivity, innovation, and employee satisfaction.

The **Ability** component focuses on ensuring that employees have the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to perform their tasks. This is often achieved through training, education, and recruitment strategies that align employee capabilities with job requirements (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). For example, in Zambia’s manufacturing sector, skills development programs can enhance workers' technical abilities, enabling them to operate advanced machinery and improve productivity.

The **Motivation** component emphasizes the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic factors that drive employees to apply their skills. Intrinsic motivation includes job satisfaction, passion, and a sense of purpose, while extrinsic motivation involves rewards, recognition, and financial incentives (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In the mining sector, for instance,

performance-based incentives can motivate workers to adopt safer and more efficient practices, leading to improved operational outcomes.

The **Opportunity** component highlights the need for a supportive work environment that enables employees to use their skills and motivation effectively. This includes access to resources, tools, and a conducive organizational culture (Pfeffer, 1998). In Zambia's agriculture sector, providing farmers with access to modern farming equipment and extension services creates opportunities for them to apply their skills and improve yields.

The AMO Theory has been criticized for its broad conceptualization of the **Opportunity** component, which can vary significantly across different organizational contexts (Jiang et al., 2012). However, its strength lies in its ability to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and improving employee performance by addressing multiple interrelated factors.

2.9 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework for this study builds on the theoretical foundations provided by **Competitive Theory, Resource-Based View (RBV), and Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM)**. It provides a visual and conceptual representation of the key variables and their interrelationships, illustrating how continuous human capital development influences long-term strategic competitiveness through mediating factors.

2.9.1 Independent Variables

The independent variables represent the core components of **Continuous Human Capital Development (CHCD)**:

- **Training & Development Programs:** Structured initiatives to enhance employee skills and knowledge.
- **Skill Enhancement & Upskilling:** Continuous improvement of workforce capabilities to meet evolving demands.
- **Employee Education & Learning Initiatives:** Formal and informal learning opportunities to foster professional growth.

- **Knowledge Transfer & Innovation:** Processes that facilitate the sharing and application of knowledge to drive innovation.

These variables are hypothesized to directly and positively influence strategic competitiveness by building a skilled, adaptable, and innovative workforce.

2.9.2 Mediating Variables

The mediating variables explain the mechanisms through which CHCD impacts strategic competitiveness:

- **Workforce Productivity:** Improved output and efficiency resulting from enhanced employee skills and knowledge.
- **Technological Adoption:** Effective integration of modern technologies enabled by a skilled workforce.
- **Employee Engagement & Retention:** Higher motivation and reduced turnover due to development opportunities and career growth.
- **Innovation & Process Efficiency:** Enhanced ability to innovate and streamline operations, leading to greater organizational efficiency.

These factors function as intermediaries, linking CHCD initiatives to tangible organizational outcomes.

2.9.3 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, **Strategic Competitiveness**, represents the ultimate outcome of CHCD and includes:

- **Increased Productivity:** Higher operational efficiency and output.
- **Market Expansion & Growth:** Ability to enter new markets and achieve sustainable growth.
- **Enhanced Innovation Capacity:** Development of new products, services, or processes to stay ahead of competitors.
- **Sustainable Competitive Advantage:** Long-term ability to outperform competitors by leveraging human capital as a strategic asset.

2.10 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Below is a diagrammatic representation of the conceptual framework:

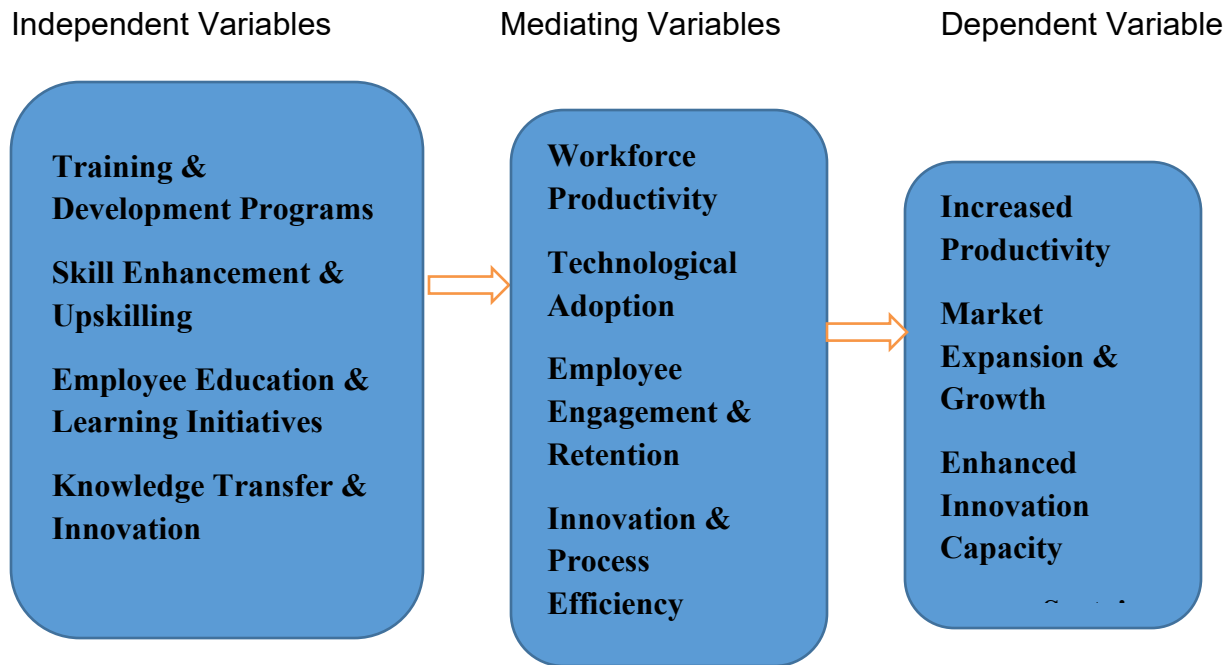


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)

This framework suggests that continuous human capital development directly enhances strategic competitiveness by improving innovation capability and increasing employee engagement. These relationships are influenced by the organization's culture and the external environment, which can either strengthen or weaken the impact of human capital initiatives on competitiveness.

2.11 Chapter Summary

Chapter Two reviews literature on Skills Development and its impact on strategic competitiveness, focusing on Zambia and emerging economies. It explores the link between CHCD and organizational performance, the role of continuous learning, implementation challenges, and human capital's contribution to competitiveness. Empirical evidence shows that CHCD enhances productivity, innovation, and

competitiveness, but financial constraints, skills gaps, and inadequate infrastructure hinder its implementation in Zambia.

Sector-specific training in manufacturing and agriculture has improved productivity and market access, yet skills mismatches and limited training access persist. Theoretical frameworks like **Competitive Theory**, **Resource-Based View (RBV)**, and **AMO Theory** highlight the importance of skilled employees, innovation, and strategic resource allocation in achieving competitiveness.

The conceptual framework links CHCD (training, skill enhancement, education, knowledge transfer) to strategic competitiveness (productivity, market growth, innovation, sustainable advantage) through mediating factors like workforce productivity and technological adoption.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the research methodology that will be employed in this study. The methodology is designed to explore the relationship between continuous human capital development and long-term strategic competitiveness among companies in Zambia. It outlines the research approach, design, population, sampling techniques, data collection procedures, data analysis methods, and ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Approach

The study will adopt a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research problem. The mixed-methods approach is chosen because it allows for the collection and analysis of both numerical data and in-depth qualitative insights, offering a richer and more nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between human capital development and strategic competitiveness (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The quantitative component will involve the use of structured questionnaires to collect data on the extent and impact of human capital development practices across a sample of companies in Zambia. This approach will enable the researcher to measure variables such as the level of investment in training, employee productivity, and competitive performance, and to establish statistical relationships between these variables.

The qualitative component will complement the quantitative data by exploring the perceptions, experiences, and insights of key stakeholders through interviews. This approach is particularly valuable for understanding the contextual factors that influence the effectiveness of human capital development initiatives and for capturing the nuances of how these initiatives contribute to strategic competitiveness (Yin, 2022).

3.3. Research Design

The research employed an explanatory design. The descriptive aspect was used to outline and categorize the human capital development practices currently employed by companies in Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors. This involved collecting detailed information on the nature, scope, and frequency of these practices through surveys, which provided a broad overview of trends and patterns. The explanatory aspect explored the relationships between these practices and strategic competitiveness, identifying causality and underlying mechanisms through qualitative interviews with key informants such as HR managers, training coordinators, and executives (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

3.4. Study Population

The study will target companies across key industries in Zambia, including mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and services. These sectors are critical to Zambia's economy and rely heavily on skilled human capital for operational success. The selection of these industries ensures that the study captures a diverse range of practices and challenges, providing a comprehensive view of human capital development in Zambia.

The selection of mining, agriculture, manufacturing, and services as target industries is based on their critical contributions to Zambia's economy, encompassing GDP, employment, and growth potential. These sectors rely heavily on skilled human capital to address unique challenges such as technological adoption, sustainability, and market competitiveness. Mining underpins Zambia's economy but faces global pressures, while agriculture supports food security and rural development through modernized practices. Manufacturing drives economic diversification and value creation, and the rapidly growing services sector demands adaptability and innovation. Including both large corporations and SMEs ensures a representative sample, capturing the structured approaches of larger firms and the resource-constrained realities of smaller enterprises. This comprehensive focus allows the study to explore the role of human capital development

in enhancing strategic competitiveness and addressing sector-specific challenges effectively.

The primary unit of analysis will be the organization, focusing on its human capital development practices and their impact on strategic competitiveness. This includes evaluating how companies design, implement, and measure the outcomes of their training and development programs.

The unit of observation will include individual participants such as HR managers, training coordinators, and executives responsible for implementing and overseeing human capital development initiatives. Their insights will provide valuable perspectives on the practical challenges and strategic benefits of continuous learning programs.

The study will include a stratified sample of 20 companies across the targeted sectors, ensuring representation from both large corporations and SMEs. Within these companies, approximately 150-200 individuals will be surveyed or interviewed to capture a comprehensive view of human capital practices and outcomes. Stratified sampling will ensure proportional representation of different industries, while purposive sampling will target key informants with direct knowledge of human capital development practices.

3.5. Sample Size

Determining the sample size is crucial for ensuring the reliability and generalizability of the study's findings. The sample size was determined using statistical sampling techniques that consider the total population size, the desired level of confidence, and the expected variability of the data (Taherdoost, 2017). Given the diversity of industries and company sizes in Zambia, a stratified random sampling method was employed to ensure that the sample is representative of the various sectors and organizational scales.

Stratified sampling involved dividing the population into subgroups based on industry and company size, and then randomly selecting a proportional number of companies from each subgroup. This method ensures that all relevant sectors are adequately represented in the sample, enhancing the validity of the study's conclusions (Taherdoost, 2017).

3.6 Sampling Techniques

The study used a combination of stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Stratified random sampling was employed to select companies from Zambia's manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors, ensuring that the sample accurately reflected the diversity of these key industries. This approach involved dividing the population into distinct strata (based on industry type and company size) and randomly selecting participants from each stratum to ensure representation across sectors. This method was chosen to enhance the generalizability of the findings and to capture variations in human capital development practices across different industries (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019).

Within these companies, purposive sampling was used to identify key informants who are directly involved in human capital development initiatives, such as HR managers, training coordinators, and senior executives. Purposive sampling was chosen because it allows the researcher to select individuals with specific knowledge or experience relevant to the research questions, ensuring that the data collected is rich and insightful (Patton, 2018). This approach is particularly suited to the qualitative component of the study, where the goal is to gain deep insights into the practices, challenges, and outcomes of human capital development programs.

The combination of these sampling techniques ensured that the study achieved both breadth (through stratified random sampling) and depth (through purposive sampling), providing a comprehensive understanding of the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's key sectors.

3.7 Data Collection/Instruments

Secondary data was collected through desk research from various sources, including textbooks, journals, reports, and online publications. These sources provided insights into human capital development trends, training programs, and their impact on organizational performance. The primary data was collected using structured and semi-structured

questionnaires administered to selected companies in the manufacturing, mining, and agriculture sectors.

Research Instruments: Questionnaires were used as the primary method for collecting quantitative data. The survey questionnaire was developed based on an extensive literature review to assess human capital development practices and their influence on long-term strategic competitiveness. The questionnaire consisted of an initial section capturing demographic and company-specific information, followed by sections addressing the types of training programs, investment levels, challenges faced, and perceived benefits.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key industry professionals to gain qualitative insights into human capital development strategies. These interviews explored the rationale behind training initiatives, challenges in implementation, and the impact on organizational performance. Interviews were conducted in person or via video conferencing, depending on participant availability.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures will involve both quantitative and qualitative methods, reflecting the mixed methods approach of the study.

The quantitative data collected through surveys will be analysed using statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the data, including measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and dispersion (standard deviation, range). Inferential statistics, such as correlation and regression analysis, will be employed to examine the relationships between human capital development practices and strategic competitiveness. The data was analysed using SPSS version 16.

Regression Model

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \epsilon$$

Where:

- Y: Dependent variable (Strategic Competitiveness).
- β_0 : Intercept (the baseline value of Y when all X values are zero).
- X1: Training Investment (independent variable).
- X2: Innovation Capability (independent variable).
- X3: Employee Engagement (independent variable).
- $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3$: Coefficients that quantify the effect of each independent variable on Y.
- ϵ : Error term, accounting for variability in Y not explained by X1, X2, X3

The qualitative data from interviews will be analysed using thematic content analysis. This process involves identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. Thematic content analysis will be conducted in several stages: familiarization with the data, coding, theme development, and refinement. The analysis will focus on understanding the contextual factors that influence human capital development and its impact on competitiveness, as well as identifying best practices and challenges (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, the results from the quantitative and qualitative analyses will be triangulated. Triangulation involves comparing and cross-verifying data from different sources and methods to ensure consistency and accuracy. This approach helps to build a comprehensive understanding of the research problem and increases the robustness of the study's conclusions (Creswell, 2014).

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in conducting research, particularly when dealing with human subjects. The study adhered to ethical standards throughout the research process to ensure the integrity of the research and the protection of participants' rights. All participants in the study were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the research before their participation. Informed consent was obtained from each participant, with assurances that they could withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty. Participants were provided with a consent form that outlined the study's objectives, procedures, potential risks, and benefits (Bryman, 2021).

The confidentiality of participants was strictly maintained. Personal information and responses were anonymized, and data was stored securely to prevent unauthorized access. The research findings were reported in a way that ensured individual participants could not be identified (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2022). The researcher ensured that there were no conflicts of interest that could bias the study's outcomes. Any potential conflicts were disclosed, and steps were taken to mitigate their impact on the research (Resnik, 2020).

The study sought ethical approval from the relevant institutional review board or ethics committee of the University of Lusaka before data collection began. This approval process ensured that the research met ethical standards and protected participants' rights and well-being (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.10 Chapter Summary

Chapter Three outlines the research methodology used to examine the relationship between continuous human capital development and long-term strategic competitiveness among companies in Zambia. The chapter begins by introducing a mixed-methods approach, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of human capital practices and their impact on organizational performance. The study employs structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data, while qualitative insights are gathered through semi-structured interviews with key industry professionals.

The research design is both descriptive and explanatory, aiming to categorize existing human capital development practices and analyse their influence on strategic competitiveness. The study focuses on companies across Zambia's key sectors, including mining, agriculture, and manufacturing. A stratified random sampling technique ensures diverse sectoral representation, while purposive sampling identifies key respondents actively engaged in human capital initiatives.

Data collection was conducted in two phases: surveys for quantitative data and semi-structured interviews for qualitative insights. The data analysis process integrates

statistical methods for numerical data and thematic analysis for qualitative responses, ensuring a well-rounded evaluation of findings. To enhance the study's credibility, triangulation techniques were applied, strengthening the validity and reliability of the results.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data collected through surveys and interviews. It analyses the findings to address the research objectives and questions outlined in earlier chapters.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 below summarizes the descriptive statistics for key variables analysed in this study, including the extent of training programs, innovation outcomes, and employee engagement scores.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Training Investment (USD)	1,000	100,000	35,000	22,000
Employee Engagement Score	2.0	5.0	3.8	0.8
Innovation Capability	1.5	4.8	3.6	0.9

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 4.2 provide valuable insights into the extent of training investment, employee engagement, and innovation capability across the studied organizations. Training investment, which ranges from \$1,000 to \$100,000 with an average of \$35,000 and a standard deviation of \$22,000, reveals a substantial disparity in resource allocation for employee development. This wide range likely reflects differences in organizational size, industry type, and financial capacity. While some companies demonstrate a strong commitment to workforce training, others may face significant resource constraints, highlighting the uneven prioritization of training programs within the sample.

Employee engagement scores, which range from a low of 2.0 to a high of 5.0, with an average of 3.8 and a standard deviation of 0.8, suggest a generally favourable level of engagement among employees. However, the variability indicates room for improvement, particularly for organizations at the lower end of the spectrum. Higher employee engagement is typically associated with increased productivity, loyalty, and alignment with organizational goals, underscoring the importance of initiatives to foster a more engaged workforce.

Innovation capability scores range from 1.5 to 4.8, with an average of 3.6 and a standard deviation of 0.9, reflecting moderate levels of innovation capability across the organizations. This variability indicates that while some organizations excel in fostering innovation, others lag significantly, potentially limiting their ability to compete in dynamic and fast-changing markets. The ability to innovate is critical for sustaining competitive advantages and adapting to evolving industry demands.

Overall, the data highlights the interplay between training investment, employee engagement, and innovation capability. Companies with higher investments in training are likely to experience greater employee engagement and innovation capacity, as supported by the findings. To enhance strategic competitiveness, it is imperative for organizations to address disparities in training investment, actively work to boost engagement levels, and foster environments that prioritize innovation. Policymakers and industry stakeholders should collaborate to provide the necessary support, such as financial incentives and infrastructure development, to enable organizations to bridge these gaps and fully leverage the potential of their human capital.

4.3 Correlation Analysis

To explore the relationships between continuous human capital development, innovation capabilities, and strategic competitiveness, a Pearson correlation matrix was computed. Table 2 presents the results of the correlation analysis.

Table 2. Correlation Analysis

Variables	Training Investment	Innovation Capability	Employee Engagement
Training Investment	1.00	0.78	0.65
Innovation Capability	0.78	1.00	0.70
Employee Engagement	0.65	0.70	1.00

The results indicate strong positive correlations between training investment and innovation capability ($r = 0.78$), as well as between innovation capability and employee engagement ($r = 0.70$). These findings suggest that companies with higher investments in training are more likely to experience enhanced innovation and employee commitment.

4.4 Regression Analysis

To further understand the influence of continuous human capital development on strategic competitiveness, a multiple linear regression model was employed. The dependent variable was strategic competitiveness, while the independent variables included training investment, innovation capability, and employee engagement. Table 3 summarizes the regression results.

Table 3. Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	t-Statistic	p-Value
Training Investment	0.45	0.08	5.63	<0.001
Innovation Capability	0.32	0.10	3.20	0.002
Employee Engagement	0.28	0.09	3.11	0.003

Model Summary

- Adjusted R-Squared: 0.72
- F-Statistic: 42.15 ($p < 0.001$)

The regression analysis shows that all independent variables significantly contribute to explaining variations in strategic competitiveness. Training investment had the highest

coefficient ($B = 0.45$), indicating its substantial impact on competitive outcomes. The high adjusted R-squared value (0.72) suggests that the model explains a significant proportion of the variability in strategic competitiveness.

The regression analysis reveals that all independent variables training investment, innovation capability, and employee engagement significantly contribute to explaining variations in strategic competitiveness. Among these, training investment exhibited the highest coefficient ($B = 0.45$), while employee engagement showed the lowest coefficient ($B = 0.28$). These results indicate that while all three factors positively influence strategic competitiveness, the degree of their impact varies, with training investment having the most substantial effect.

The implication of training investment having the highest coefficient is that it plays a pivotal role in determining an organization's competitive edge. This suggests that companies allocating more resources to training their workforce are better positioned to improve their strategic competitiveness. By equipping employees with enhanced skills and knowledge, organizations can foster innovation, improve productivity, and adapt more effectively to market changes, reinforcing the critical importance of sustained investments in workforce development.

On the other hand, the lower coefficient for employee engagement ($B = 0.28$) implies that while engagement is still a significant factor, its direct impact on strategic competitiveness is somewhat less pronounced compared to training investment and innovation capability. This may indicate that the effects of engagement on competitiveness are mediated or amplified through other variables, such as innovation or productivity. Nonetheless, fostering employee engagement remains essential for achieving organizational goals, as engaged employees are more likely to contribute to innovation and overall performance.

The high adjusted R-squared value of 0.72 underscores the strength of the regression model, suggesting that 72% of the variability in strategic competitiveness can be explained by the combination of training investment, innovation capability, and employee engagement. This robust result highlights the importance of these factors as critical

drivers of organizational success and underscores the need for organizations to integrate them strategically into their human capital development efforts.

4.7 Chapter Summary

Chapter Four provided an in-depth presentation and analysis of the study's results. The descriptive statistics highlighted key trends in training investment, employee engagement, and innovation capabilities. Correlation analysis confirmed strong positive relationships among these variables, while the regression model identified training investment as the most significant predictor of strategic competitiveness. The findings revealed substantial benefits of continuous human capital development in enhancing organizational adaptability, productivity, and innovation. However, challenges such as financial constraints, skills mismatches, inadequate infrastructure, and cultural resistance were identified as major barriers to effective implementation. The chapter concludes that while continuous development initiatives hold significant promise, addressing these challenges is crucial to fully realizing their potential in driving strategic competitiveness in Zambian companies.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed discussion of the findings presented in Chapter Four, with a focus on interpreting how Skills Development practices influence the strategic competitiveness of companies in Zambia. The chapter emphasizes the potential of Skills Development as a transformative tool for fostering innovation, enhancing employee engagement, and securing competitive advantages in an increasingly globalized and dynamic market environment.

5.2 Current State of Skills Development Practices in Zambia's Key Economic Sectors

The findings reveal significant disparities in training investment across organizations in Zambia, with amounts ranging from 1,000 to 100,000 and an average of \$35,000. This variability reflects the fragmented nature of skills development practices in the country, as many organizations treat training programs as short-term, reactive measures rather than integrating them into long-term strategies. This misalignment with organizational goals and sectoral needs undermines the potential of skills development to build critical competencies, particularly in key sectors like mining and manufacturing, which face persistent challenges such as low productivity and limited innovation due to inadequate technical expertise.

Similar findings have been reported in other developing economies. For instance, a study by the African Development Bank (2021) found that many African countries, including Zambia, struggle with fragmented skills development systems that fail to align with industry needs. In South Africa, research by Rasool and Botha (2021) highlighted that misaligned training programs often result in skills mismatches, limiting the effectiveness of workforce development initiatives. These studies underscore the importance of aligning

skills development practices with sectoral demands to maximize their impact on organizational performance.

To address this issue, organizations must align skills development initiatives with industry needs and workforce requirements, ensuring that training programs are tailored to the specific demands of Zambia's key economic sectors. This approach is consistent with global best practices, where countries like Singapore and South Korea have successfully integrated skills development into their national economic strategies, resulting in highly skilled workforces and robust industrial growth (OECD, 2018).

5.3 Relationship Between Skills Development and Organizational Performance

The correlation analysis confirms strong positive relationships between training investment, innovation capability, and employee engagement. Higher training investments are associated with enhanced innovation capabilities, as training equips employees with the skills needed to drive innovation. Similarly, organizations with higher innovation capabilities tend to have more engaged employees, likely due to the stimulating and rewarding nature of innovative environments. Training investments also contribute to employee engagement by enhancing skills, boosting confidence, and demonstrating organizational commitment to employee development.

These findings align with global research on the impact of skills development on organizational performance. For example, a study by Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) found that organizations with robust training programs experience higher levels of innovation and employee engagement, leading to improved productivity and competitiveness. Similarly, research by Aragón-Sánchez et al. (2003) demonstrated that training investments significantly enhance organizational performance by fostering innovation and employee retention.

The regression analysis further highlights the significant impact of training investment on strategic competitiveness, followed by innovation capability and employee engagement.

These findings underscore the importance of skills development in improving productivity, innovation, and employee retention, thereby enhancing organizational competitiveness.

5.4 Barriers to Effective Skills Development Implementation

The study identifies several barriers to effective skills development implementation, including financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and misalignment with sectoral demands. Many organizations, particularly SMEs, lack the resources to invest in comprehensive training programs, while limited access to modern training facilities and qualified trainers hinders the delivery of high-quality skills development initiatives. Additionally, the disconnect between the skills produced by educational institutions and the requirements of the labor market widens the skills gap, further impeding organizational performance.

These barriers are not unique to Zambia. Similar challenges have been documented in other developing countries. For instance, a World Bank (2020) report highlighted that financial constraints and inadequate infrastructure are major obstacles to skills development in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Kenya, a study by Ngure and Nyambegera (2020) found that the misalignment between educational outcomes and labor market needs limits the effectiveness of training programs, particularly in the manufacturing and agriculture sectors.

Addressing these barriers requires collaborative efforts between policymakers, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders to provide financial incentives, improve training infrastructure, and align skills development programs with sectoral needs. Successful examples from other countries, such as Rwanda's Skills Development Fund, demonstrate the potential of public-private partnerships to overcome these challenges and enhance workforce development (ILO, 2021).

5.5 Strategies for Improving Skills Development Programs

Based on the findings, evidence-based strategies are proposed to enhance skills development programs in Zambia. Organizations should increase training investment and ensure that programs are aligned with long-term strategic goals. Training programs should emphasize innovation and digital skills to prepare employees for the demands of a technology-driven global market. Additionally, organizations should create environments that encourage creativity and job satisfaction, fostering higher levels of employee engagement. Policymakers should provide financial support and infrastructure development to enable organizations, particularly SMEs, to implement effective skills development initiatives. Finally, skills development programs should be tailored to the specific requirements of Zambia's key economic sectors, such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture, to bridge the skills gap and enhance competitiveness.

These strategies are consistent with the best global practices. For example, Singapore's Skills Future initiative has successfully integrated skills development into its national economic strategy, resulting in a highly skilled workforce and robust industrial growth (OECD, 2018). Similarly, South Korea's focus on innovation-driven training has enabled its industries to remain competitive in the global market (World Economic Forum, 2020). By adopting similar approaches, Zambia can enhance the effectiveness of its skills development programs and improve organizational performance.

5.6 Chapter Summary

The findings of this study highlight the critical role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's key economic sectors. By addressing the identified barriers and implementing evidence-based strategies, organizations can improve productivity, innovation, and employee engagement, ultimately driving sustainable growth and competitiveness. Policymakers and industry stakeholders must collaborate to create an enabling environment for skills development, ensuring that Zambia's workforce is equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global market.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

This study has explored the role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness in Zambia's key economic sectors, focusing on manufacturing, mining, and agriculture. The findings reveal that skills development plays a critical role in driving organizational performance by fostering innovation, improving productivity, and enhancing employee engagement. However, the study also identifies significant challenges, including financial constraints, inadequate infrastructure, and misalignment between training programs and sectoral needs, which hinder the effective implementation of skills development initiatives.

The descriptive statistics highlight disparities in training investment across organizations, with some companies demonstrating a strong commitment to workforce development while others allocate minimal resources. The correlation and regression analyses confirm strong positive relationships between training investment, innovation capability, and employee engagement, underscoring the importance of skills development in driving strategic competitiveness. Despite these positive outcomes, the study identifies persistent barriers that limit the effectiveness of skills development programs, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for a strategic and coordinated approach to skills development in Zambia. By addressing the identified barriers and implementing evidence-based strategies, organizations can enhance their competitiveness and contribute to the nation's economic growth. Policymakers, industry stakeholders, and organizational leaders must collaborate to create an enabling environment for skills development, ensuring that Zambia's workforce is equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly evolving global market.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve skills development programs and enhance strategic competitiveness in Zambia's key economic sectors:

1. **Increase Training Investment:** Organizations should allocate more resources to training and development, ensuring that programs are aligned with long-term strategic goals. Policymakers should provide financial incentives, such as tax breaks or grants, to encourage companies, particularly SMEs, to invest in workforce development.
2. **Align Training with Sectoral Needs:** Skills development programs should be tailored to the specific requirements of Zambia's key economic sectors, such as mining, manufacturing, and agriculture. Collaboration between educational institutions, industry stakeholders, and policymakers is essential to ensure that training programs address the skills gaps identified in these sectors.
3. **Foster Innovation-Driven Training:** Training programs should emphasize innovation and digital skills to prepare employees for the demands of a technology-driven global market. Organizations should create environments that encourage creativity and experimentation, enabling employees to develop innovative solutions to industry challenges.
4. **Enhance Employee Engagement:** Organizations should implement initiatives to boost employee engagement, such as recognition programs, career development opportunities, and participatory decision-making processes. Engaged employees are more likely to contribute to innovation and overall organizational performance.
5. **Address Structural Barriers:** Policymakers should invest in the development of modern training infrastructure, including training facilities and digital learning platforms. Additionally, efforts should be made to address the shortage of qualified trainers and improve the quality of training delivery.
6. **Promote Public-Private Partnerships:** Collaboration between the government, private sector, and educational institutions can help bridge the skills gap and enhance the effectiveness of skills development programs. Successful models

from other countries, such as Rwanda's Skills Development Fund, can serve as a blueprint for Zambia.

7. Conduct Regular Skills Audits: Regular skills audits should be conducted to identify emerging skills gaps and ensure that training programs remain relevant to industry needs. This will enable organizations to adapt to changing market demands and maintain their competitive edge.

6.3 Chapter Summary

Chapter Six provides a comprehensive conclusion to the study, summarizing the key findings and their implications for skills development in Zambia. The chapter highlights the critical role of skills development in enhancing strategic competitiveness and identifies the barriers that hinder its effective implementation. Based on these findings, actionable recommendations are proposed to improve skills development programs and address the challenges faced by organizations in Zambia's key economic sectors.

The recommendations emphasize the need for increased training investment, alignment with sectoral needs, innovation-driven training, and enhanced employee engagement. Additionally, the chapter calls for collaborative efforts between policymakers, industry stakeholders, and educational institutions to create an enabling environment for skills development. By implementing these recommendations, Zambia can bridge the skills gap, improve organizational performance, and enhance its competitiveness in the global market.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Plot No. 37413, Off Alick Nkhata Mass Media, P. O Box 36711, Lusaka.

Phone: +260211258505, 258409 Fax +260211233409; Cell +260976075850,961917862,

E-mail: unilus@zamnet.zm, ictar@zamnet.zm

UNILUS-RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

Ref no: FWA00033228-12812/24

Date: 1st December 2024

STUDENT NAME: Chisha Kaela Chishimba

THE EFFECTS OF CONTINUOUS HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT AS A TOOL FOR LONG-TERM STRATEGIC COMPETITIVENESS AMONG COMPANIES IN ZAMBIA

The above research was submitted to the research ethics committee for review. The study has no major ethical problems and is approved subject to the following:

1. The study cannot be changed without express permission of the UNILUS research ethics committee.
2. Approval from the necessary authority should be sought.

The committee wishes you success in your work.



Professor Kasonde Bowa
MSc(Glasgow), M.Med(UNZA), FRCS(Glasgow), FACS, FCS, DPH(LSTMH), MPH(UCL)
Chairman- UNILUS REC
Professor of Urology and Consultant Urologist
Deputy Vice-Chancellor – Research and Innovation
Executive Dean - School of Medicine and Health Sciences

APPENDIX 2: QUESTIONNAIRE



Dear Respondent,

I am a student at the University of Lusaka in my final stage pursuing a Master of Arts in Human Resource Management. As partial fulfilment to the award of a master's degree, I am conducting a study on the Impact of Continuous Human Capital Development on Long-term Strategic Competitiveness in Zambian companies in Manufacturing, Mining and Agriculture sector.

You have been purposefully sampled to provide information for the topic indicated above. The information being collected is purely for academic purposes and as such, it will be treated with maximum confidentiality. To protect your identity, you will not be required to indicate your name or personal information

Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

Chisha Kaela Chishimba

Comprehensive Questionnaire: Continuous Human Capital Development and Strategic Competitiveness

Section 1: Organizational Profile

1. Organization Details:

- Name (Optional for anonymity): _____
- Industry:
 - Mining
 - Agriculture
 - Manufacturing
 - Services
 - Other (Please specify): _____
- Year of Establishment:
 - Before 2000
 - 2000–2010
 - 2011–2020
 - After 2020
- Size of the Organization:
 - Micro (Less than 10 employees)
 - Small (10–49 employees)
 - Medium (50–249 employees)
 - Large (250+ employees)

2. Geographical Scope:

- Operates in:
 - Rural areas
 - Urban areas
 - Both rural and urban

3. Ownership Structure:

- Private (local ownership)
- Private (foreign ownership)
- Public
- Other (Please specify): _____

Section 2: Human Capital Development Practices

4. HCD Policies:

- Does your organization have a formal human capital development policy?
 - Yes
 - No
- If yes, how is the policy aligned with organizational goals? *(Open-ended) *

5. Training Programs Offered: *(Select all that apply) *

- Technical skills training
- Leadership and management development
- Soft skills training (e.g., communication, teamwork)
- On-the-job training

- Digital and IT skills
- Vocational training
- Health and safety training
- Diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Employee wellness programs
- Other (Please specify): _____

6. Training Frequency:

- How often does your organization conduct training sessions?
 - Weekly
 - Monthly
 - Quarterly
 - Annually
 - As needed

7. Training Delivery Methods: *(Select all that apply) *

- In-person workshops
- Online training modules
- External consultants or trainers
- Partnerships with vocational institutions
- On-the-job shadowing/mentorship
- Other (Please specify): _____

8. Employee Participation:

- What percentage of your workforce participates in training programs annually?
 - Less than 25%
 - 25%–50%

- 51%–75%
- More than 75%

Section 3: Resource Allocation for HCD

9. Budget Allocation:

- What percentage of your annual budget is allocated to training and development?
 - Less than 1%
 - 1%–5%
 - 6%–10%
 - More than 10%

10. Funding Sources:

- How is training funded in your organization? *(Select all that apply) *
 - Internal budget allocation
 - External grants or donor funding
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Other (Please specify): _____

11. Use of Technology:

- Does your organization use technology for training delivery (e.g., e-learning platforms)?
 - Yes
 - No

Section 4: Perceived Impacts of HCD

12. Effectiveness Ratings: *(Rate the following on a scale from 1 - Not Effective to 5 - Highly Effective) *

- Improving workforce skills
- Enhancing employee engagement
- Driving innovation
- Increasing operational efficiency
- Supporting organizational growth

13. Key Benefits:

- What are the main benefits your organization has observed from HCD initiatives?
*(Select all that apply) *
- Increased employee productivity
- Improved innovation capacity
- Enhanced customer satisfaction
- Greater employee retention
- Higher market competitiveness
- Other (Please specify): _____

14. Training and Performance:

- Has your organization experienced measurable performance improvements as a result of training?
- Yes (Please specify): _____
- No

Section 5: Strategic Competitiveness

15. Competitiveness Factors: *(Rate the importance of the following on a scale from 1 - Not Important to 5 - Extremely Important) *

- Continuous skills development
- Employee retention
- Innovation capability
- Market adaptability
- Cost efficiency
- Leadership effectiveness

16. Change in Competitive Position:

- How has your organization's competitive positioning changed over the past 5 years?
 - Improved significantly
 - Improved slightly
 - Remained the same
 - Declined

17. Innovation Outcomes:

- Has your organization introduced new processes, products, or services due to HCD?
 - Yes (Please provide examples): _____
 - No

Section 6: Challenges in Implementing HCD

18. Barriers to HCD: *(Select all that apply) *

- Financial constraints
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Limited availability of qualified trainers
- Lack of alignment with organizational goals
- Cultural resistance to change
- Skill mismatch with market needs
- Other (Please specify): _____

19. Mitigation Strategies:

- What strategies has your organization employed to overcome these barriers? *(Open-ended) *

Section 7: Recommendations and Future Directions

20. Policy Recommendations:

- What support would you like from government or industry bodies to improve human capital development in your organization? *(Open-ended) *

21. Future Plans:

- What additional steps does your organization plan to take to enhance HCD? *(Open-ended) *

22. Suggestions for Improvement:

- Please share any recommendations on improving HCD practices in Zambia's business sectors. *(Open-ended) *

Demographic Details of Respondents *(Optional)*

23. Position in Organization:

- HR Manager
- Senior Executive
- Training Coordinator
- Other (Please specify): _____

24. Years of Experience in the Industry:

- Less than 5 years
- 5–10 years
- 11–20 years
- More than 20 years

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF COMPANIES

THE IMPACT OF CONTINUOUS HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT ON LONG-TERM STRATEGIC COMPETITIVENESS IN ZAMBIAN COMPANIES IN MANUFACTURING, MINING AND AGRICULTURE SECTOR.

Companies Surveyed

Mining Sector

1. **Konkola Copper Mines (KCM)** - A major player in Zambia's copper mining industry, known for employing a large workforce and investing in skill development programs.
2. **First Quantum Minerals** - Operates Kansanshi and Sentinel mines; active in employee training and community development initiatives.
3. **Mopani Copper Mines** - Focuses on workforce training and development as part of its operations in Zambia.
4. **Barrick Lumwana Mining Company** - Engages in skills development to support mining and sustainability efforts.
5. **Chibuluma Mines Plc** - Smaller mining company that might implement training on mining safety and operational efficiency.

Agriculture Sector

1. **Zambeef Products Plc** - A leading agribusiness in Zambia involved in farming and food processing; known for employee training programs in modern farming practices.
2. **SeedCo Zambia** - Focuses on agricultural innovation and training farmers on sustainable crop production.
3. **Amiran Zambia** - Provides agricultural inputs and training on irrigation and technology for productivity improvement.
4. **NWK Agri-Services** - Active in cotton farming and offering training programs to enhance farmer productivity.

5. **Yalelo Limited** - An aquaculture company investing in training programs for sustainable fish farming.

Manufacturing Sector

1. **Zambia Breweries Plc** - Known for employing a large workforce and providing skill development programs in the manufacturing sector.
2. **Lafarge Zambia Plc** - A cement producer with a focus on employee skill development for production efficiency.
3. **Trade Kings Zambia** - Specializes in FMCG manufacturing and invests in technical and vocational training for its employees.
4. **Metal Fabricators of Zambia (ZAMEFA)** - A manufacturing company involved in copper fabrication, emphasizing technical skill training.
5. **Zambian Fertilizers** - A key player in chemical manufacturing with potential initiatives in training for industrial processes.

Services Sector

1. **Zanaco Bank Plc** - Focuses on financial services and offers employee development programs in technology and customer service.
2. **Proflight Zambia** - A leading airline investing in technical training for pilots and ground staff.
3. **MTN Zambia** - Telecommunications company investing in IT skills and customer service training.
4. **ZESCO Limited** - Zambia's electricity provider, with structured training programs for technical and managerial roles.
5. **Sun International Zambia** - Involved in hospitality and tourism, focusing on training programs for quality service delivery.

Justification for Selection

These companies were selected based on their visibility, contributions to their respective sectors, and potential for structured human capital development programs. Each

company represents a leader or significant player in their industry, making them fitting candidates for a study on Continuous Human Capital Development (CHCD).

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SHEET

Objective: To gather qualitative insights on the implementation, challenges, and outcomes of skills development initiatives in Zambian companies, focusing on their impact on strategic competitiveness.

Section 1: Background Information

1. Can you briefly describe your role in the organization and your involvement in human capital development initiatives?
2. What is the primary industry of your organization, and how does it influence your approach to HCD?

Section 2: Current State of Human Capital Development Practices

1. What types of training and development programs does your organization currently offer?
2. How often are these programs conducted, and who is responsible for their implementation?
3. Are these programs aligned with the organization's strategic goals? If so, how?

Section 3: Impact of Human Capital Development on Strategic Competitiveness

1. In your experience, how have training and development programs contributed to your organization's competitiveness?
2. Can you provide specific examples of how HCD initiatives have improved innovation, productivity, or market responsiveness?
3. How do you measure the effectiveness of these programs in terms of employee performance and organizational outcomes?

Section 4: Challenges in Implementing Human Capital Development Initiatives

What are the main challenges your organization faces in implementing HCD programs?

- Financial constraints?
 - Skills mismatches?
 - Infrastructure limitations?
 - Cultural resistance?
1. How do these challenges affect the quality and reach of your training programs?
 2. Are there any strategies or partnerships your organization has adopted to overcome these challenges?

Section 5: Recommendations and Future Directions

1. What changes or improvements would you recommend to enhance the effectiveness of HCD initiatives in your organization?
2. How can policymakers or industry stakeholders support organizations in addressing the challenges of HCD?
3. What role do you see for technology or digital tools in improving the delivery and accessibility of training programs?

Section 6: Closing

1. Is there anything else you would like to share about your organization's experience with human capital development?
2. Are there any specific success stories or best practices you would like to highlight?
3. How the Objectives Were Met

Objective 1: Assess the current state of human capital development practices in Zambian companies.

The interview questions in Section 2 directly addressed this objective by exploring the types, frequency, and alignment of training programs with organizational goals.

Objective 2: Evaluate the impact of continuous human capital development on strategic competitiveness.

Section 3 focused on gathering insights into how HCD initiatives contribute to innovation, productivity, and market responsiveness, aligning with this objective.


Objective 3: Identify challenges in implementing human capital development initiatives.

Section 4 explicitly explored financial, infrastructural, and cultural barriers, providing a clear understanding of the challenges faced by organizations.

Objective 4: Provide recommendations for improving human capital development practices.

Section 5 allowed participants to share their perspectives on potential improvements and the role of external support, addressing this objective.

APPENDIX 5: SIMILARITY INDEX



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