

ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF DIGITALIZATION ON RE-CONCEPTUALIZING EMPLOYEE COMPETENCIES AND APPLICABLE SKILLS IN THE HYPERCHECK GROUP IN KWAZULU NATAL

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ABSTRACT

Organizations are searching for ways to reinvent themselves in order to stay relevant in the face of digital disruptions and the expansion of e-commerce. Because of employee apathy, the shortening usefulness of some abilities, and poor performance; reskilling and upskilling have become more prevalent. This paper examines digitalization's role in re-conceptualizing employees' competencies and relevant skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. It focuses on the need to evaluate the existing training strategy of employees in order to maintain competitiveness. A causal-comparative research design linking independent to dependent variables was applied in this study. The study revealed that although employee development and training were important to independent retailers, the programs' breadth and applicability were only minimal. There was no emphasis on e-commerce. Training on digitization was restricted to inventory control. Thus, i worker inclusion, customer engagement, and training activities should be tailored to organizational needs and suit those needs.

Keywords: Digitalization, E-Commerce, Digital Marketing, Employees' Reconceptualization, Skills Training Programs, and Customer Engagement.

INTRODUCTION

Skills development, according to Salah (2016), is about preparation for adjustment and change in the form of new occupations, new responsibilities, or new task completion. According to Kim (2016), employee development is based on a long-term vision of both the evolution of the individual and the organization. Upgrading one's current skills and knowledge is a cooperative effort between the company and the employee. Development entails more than just technical expertise; it also includes the attitudes and abilities required to handle long-term duties that can be quite helpful in one's profession. Employers prioritize developing their workforce so they may become dependable resources and help the company. The focus of employee education depends on the positions that a person might hold in the future. Employee education, which encompasses observation, experiences, experimentation, practice, and the synthesis of various types of information, is a far larger concept than training. This is supported by reinforcement directing the acquisition of new knowledge, modification of what learners already know, behavior reflection making modifications, and acquiring a variety of skills and values (Kim, 2016).

Therefore, the impact of digitalization on rethinking staff competencies and applicable abilities in the KwaZulu Natal hypercheck group is examined in this article. Building capability, acquiring new skill sets, and increasing one's body of knowledge in the workplace enhance and improve an organization's existing practices, help it to be future-focused, and support it to surpass client expectations. Employee skills development includes

personal growth and enrichment to help organizations reach their goals. According to Abogsesa and Kaushik (2017), individuals that routinely receive training are more likely to embrace change, have flexible thinking, and are able to freely engage with new ideas. Training programs expose workers to different ways of thinking and can open doors to cutting-edge technology, helping to keep both workers and organizations competitive and bridging the gap between organizational objectives and individual worker interests.

However, participating in a training initiative does not guarantee that the employee will immediately become more competent and skilled until the learned information is used. Thus, it is necessary for the knowledge to be put into practice, showing how the instruction has altered one's behavior. This can be encouraged if the training experience is meaningful and pertinent to the training recipient, there is alignment between the training content learned and the workplace experience, the trainee has a positive attitude toward the training, is motivated, and the work environment provides a good environment for the application.

Background of Employee Competencies and Applicable Skills Development in the Hypercheck Group in Kwazulu Natal

The management team at the Hypercheck Group observed that both general employees and managerial personnel lacked managerial discipline when it came to following corporate policies and procedures. Additionally, there was a general lack of employee engagement, poor job quality, and market share loss at Hypercheck outlets. Given this, the paper aims to analyze the impact of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. The Hypercheck Group, a retail supermarket company, trades fast-moving consumer items. In KwaZulu-Natal, the Group has a significant regional presence. Four trade divisions of the corporation exist, which comprise Checkme, Checksave, Checkrite, and Checkstar. Urban and rural residents, elite shoppers, and patrons of its iconic Checkstar brand are just a few of the businesses' diverse clientele. With its several model stores, The Hypercheck Group has made a name for itself as a brand that competes in marketplaces and with a variety of consumer profiles. As a quick fix to stay current and competitive, the corporation has over the years engaged in on-the-job internal training or hired supervisors and store managers from corporate rivals at premium salary rates. In essence, it was an investment to bring in retail intellectual capital, but the company quickly realized that there was a cultural gap between Hypercheck's organizational culture and the culture introduced by newly hired personnel. Additionally, the unstructured on-the-job training programs did not produce the desired outcomes. As a result, they reviewed their approach and replaced it with one that focused on developing their own talent internally. The organization then started giving planned training and development intervention programs to its employees as part of its training and development initiatives. The organization provided internal training in "*store sales*" and "*store administration*," which was delivered by seasoned staff. The rules, practices, and standard operating procedures (SOPs) of the organization are reflected in the internal development of training manuals. Thus, despite the fact that Hypercheck had put training efforts in place, management had noticed that staff lacked consistency in following corporate policies and procedures, lacked fundamental capabilities, and were generally disengaged. Stores were losing market share and provided poor customer service.

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Methods

The study's methodology took into account interactions between causes and effects, where the causes are constant and unchanging. It utilized what is already present and took into account the past to provide light on why (Kabir, 2016). This descriptive research study used evidence to make sense of the circumstances by expressing thoughts, experiences, and views (Kumar, 2019). Data collection, measurement, and analysis were guided by the research design (Siedlecki, 2020). The research design offers responses to the who, what, when, where, and how questions concerning a particular study problem (Siedlecki, 2020). However, many research designs may be used in a research project; including exploratory research, descriptive research, case study research, causal research, and action research, which are among the most prevalent forms of research design (Kabir, 2016). Accordingly, in this study, a causal-comparative research design was used to establish the causal relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The causal study technique was applied to explain the phenomenon in terms of specific circumstances aligned to training and development, which were the independent factors, and employee job performance was the dependent variable. This study evaluated the impact of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. In order to guarantee internal validity, the participants were carefully and methodically chosen, resulting in a study design that is pertinent and suited to addressing the research questions and producing generalizations. All members of the Hypercheck Group workforce who had taken part in official education and growth initiatives and who were aware of the organization's training and development programs were invited to participate in the focus group for this study. Seventy full-time employees made up the focus group for this investigation. Respondents could access the poll by clicking on a link to a Google form. A custom survey or quiz was created using the online tool Google Forms to collect data from users. The information was then collated and automatically connected to a spreadsheet. Microsoft Excel was used to import data from Google Forms, which made it easier to examine. Easy comprehension was achieved as a result of the statistical processes' ability to exhibit information using a variety of visual tools, including spreadsheets, matrices, graphs, and diagrams.

Materials

Foundational Theories Guiding the Study

The Transformative Learning Theory, Action Theory, and Human Capital Theory, all contributed to the theoretical framework supporting this study. The theoretical framework places training and development's important contribution to employee performance and organizational development in its proper context (Valamis: 2021, Serrat, 2017, Wuttaphan, 2017). Therefore, Table 1 provides and describes the understanding of these theories.

Table 1 FOUNDATIONAL THEORIES GUIDING THE STUDY	
Foundational Theories Guiding the Study	Description of Theories Guiding the Study
Transformative Learning Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A person undergoes transformative learning when their ingrained frames of reference are altered. These frames of reference must be established through experiences, values, and conditioned responses. Individuals develop an inward-looking perspective as a result of these shaping and controlling expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings. As people's thoughts and perspectives are trained, it affects how they learn, so they reject everything outside, finding it irrelevant because it does not match their expectations. - New knowledge has an impact on transformative learning through critical reflection and task-oriented problem solving is influenced by evaluating preexisting assumptions and corroborating challenged views through conversation. A paradigm shift and a shift in viewpoint caused by new information lead to a personal transformation of the learners, who then take action that is more assertive. -Employee relevance will be established by the transformational learning theory since it challenges preconceived notions. - Employees become stronger problem solvers as a result of transformation learning, which encourages critical reflection, job and workplace adaptability, and perspective-altering. As a result, there are improvements in decision-making, employee autonomy, work satisfaction, employee engagement, and increased agility and innovation. - Transformative learning can promote learning in the workplace through job shadowing, scenario-based learning, cultural adaptation at work, and collaboration with different departments to develop a wider perspective by interacting with experiences and scenarios, which can have a significant impact on an individual changing their perspectives.
Action Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - According to the action learning idea, employees can grow their skills by resolving actual, difficult organizational problems. The approach is predicated on the idea that people learn best while tackling difficulties encountered in their work contexts, where they acquire new skills as they go. The theory is linked to specific work environments that display a structured method of operation. This interaction with the setting relates to the discipline needed to learn from what is really done in order to enhance practice and control output. - Learners who are actively participating feel more at ease in their learning environments and are more likely to try out new information. The theory's recognition of teamwork in learning situations where team members share insights into one another's workplace challenges and reflect collectively with like-minded team members as they develop communication and decision-making skills and solve actual work-related problems is one of its key features. - In order to maximize learning efficacy, the theory also emphasizes work challenges. During the action-learning interaction, individuals develop their expertise in subject knowledge and problem-solving techniques. The development of problem-solving abilities helps in determining client expectations and demands, assuring the delivery of best practices. It acts as a catalyst for fostering self-assurance, advancing leadership skills, and fostering flexibility and creativity. Additionally, it helps to develop a company culture that is open to learning and change.
Human Capital Theory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The Human Capital Theory has become quite popular in education since it is believed to be the theoretical foundation for education policy around the world and to have a significant impact on a nation's economic development. - Human Capital Theory emphasizes overall performance as determined by the business impact, output, cost-benefit analysis, and performance effectiveness. Formal education, according to human capital theorists, is a crucial and necessary instrument for increasing productivity and efficiency at work. Better productivity will result from increased staff knowledge, hence it is crucial to invest in and benefit from people's development. -The phrase "<i>Human Capital</i>" itself serves as a fundamental definition of the idea because it implies that human capital is equal to or even superior to physical capital in

	terms of value. People are seen as active participants in and facilitators of capital formation and societal advancement.
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Source: Valamis (2021), Serrat (2017), and Wuttaphan (2017)

Table 1 illustrates the theoretical framework underpinning this study, which was influenced by a number of foundational theories, including the Transformative Learning Theory, Action Theory, and Human Capital Theory. It indicates that transformative learning can encourage learning in the workplace through job shadowing, scenario-based learning, cultural adaptation at work, and collaboration with different departments. These strategies can help employees develop a wider perspective by interacting with experiences and scenarios, which can significantly affect how they change their perspectives (Valamis: 2021). In addition, according to Serrat (2017), the development of problem-solving abilities helps in determining client expectations and demands, assuring the delivery of best practices (action learning). Table 1 also demonstrates that the Human Capital Theory has become quite popular in education since it is believed to be the theoretical foundation for education policy around the world and to have a significant impact on a nation's economic development (Wuttaphan, 2017).

Digitalisation, Innovation, and training needs

Organizations are being compelled to rethink employee capabilities and the necessary skill sets as a result of the phenomena of digitalization, innovation, and growing rivalry among them (Ellingrud, Gupta, and Salgueroa, 2020). Organizations must effectively adapt to both the shifting demands on their human resources and their operating environment. This has increased the identification of learning and development as a crucial element and a tool for adapting to changing conditions in organizational and business growth. A stagnant staff can make a company irrelevant and sterile to any competition, putting the company at risk. In a time of digitization and innovation brought on by the Fourth Industrial Revolution gaining traction, the need for training has been clearly stated. Online shopping and data analytics gained traction in the retail sector as a result of the emergence of disruptive technologies like robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence, and virtual reality. New jobs, modified operations and processes, and new consumer lifestyles have all been facilitated by innovative technologies (Pillay, 2019). The acceleration of automation and digitization, according to Ellingrud, Gupta, and Salgueroa (2020), will cause a serious skills gap in the workforce in many organizations. A significant portion of today's workforce will need to gain new skills to get ready for the future of work, which has emerged as the defining business challenge of our time. Virtually every profession may undergo a fundamental transformation. According to the authors, 39% to 58% of all work tasks performed globally in operationally intensive industries might be automated, and the manufacturing industry is already rethinking its supply chains and production processes. Service organizations are adjusting to prioritize contactless operations and client journeys that start online. In order to accept obligations pushed by new technology, McDonald (2021), citing the WEF, estimates that by 2025, half of all employees must upskill and reskill globally. Ellingrud, Gupta, and Salgueroa (2020) warned that it might take decades for today's workers to be prepared for the future of work if the current rate of workforce upskilling continues to be sluggish in light of the WEF findings.

According to the Price Waterhouse and Cooper (PwC) report "*Talent Trends 2019: Upskilling for a Digital World*," which is part of PwC's 22nd Annual Global CEO Survey trends series, 79% of the 3200 CEOs around the world were concerned that their staff lacked crucial skills. Future organizational growth was being threatened by a lack of critical capabilities. The lack of skills was a problem for 63% of CEOs in 2014. The rise in this

statistic over time may be attributable to the development of technologies over the previous five years. CEOs in Japan (95%) and Central and Eastern Europe (89%) expressed the greatest concern regarding a skills gap. CEOs claimed that their companies' inability to develop effectively was caused by a shortage of skills and that this was pushing up their labor expenses more quickly than they had anticipated. To fill potential skill and talent gaps, 46% of CEOs were retraining or upskilling their workforce. Jobs are changing and growing more dependent on each other, requiring strong interpersonal and problem-solving abilities that can be learned through training. As a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and the speeded-up digital transformation across all industries, it has become widely acknowledged that organizations' ability to meet present and future challenges depends on their ability to recruit, retain, and manage their talent (Minahan, 2021). This realization has caused organizations to completely rethink their recruitment, retention, and management strategies.

Skilling, Reskilling and Upskilling

The future of work will need upskilling and reskilling across the workforce, thus an organization's training program must reflect this need. Upskilling is a process whereby people acquire new skills to support their present roles, according to Ellingrud et al. (2020). According to McDonald (2021), upskilling is the process of broadening a worker's skill set so they can pick up new skills, increase their competency in areas relevant to their employment, and become more productive members of the team. An employee's capacity to advance in their career and take on new tasks depends on this crucial and ongoing factor. According to Ellingrud et al. (2020), reskilling is the process of preparing people with new knowledge and abilities for a completely different role or position inside the organization so that they can be involved in new responsibilities as opposed to their existing occupations. Organizations should intensify staff training and development programs and concentrate on capacity-building activities, according to Ellingrud et al. (2020). By identifying proactive steps being taken by international organizations to upskill and reskill their personnel in response to quick innovation and technological breakthroughs in their respective sectors, the authors have strengthened their already convincing argument.

Walmart, a renowned international retailer, set aside \$4 billion over four years to invest in its frontline and back office staff so they could move to new customer-centered jobs and improve customer experiences. Amazon, a major online retailer, promised to invest \$700 million in technological training by 2025 to help employees transition to higher-skill employment. To upskill 130 000 people over the following five years, professional services firm The Manpower Group teamed up with Pearson, an educational organization, and other service providers. In order to teach and certify hundreds of engineers in the use of novel analytical approaches to manufacturing-process optimization, the Dutch city of Ijmuiden, home to the Tata Steel factory, established an advanced analytics academy. The new methods resulted in a 15% increase in the plant's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization. The need for employees to diversify their skill sets is growing as technological breakthroughs become more complicated, and individuals who specialize in a single skill set may soon be a thing of the past. According to Rajamani and Kularni (2018), organizations are making sure employees acquire skills related to their primary duties in the age of changing skill requirements, and phrases like "*skills adjacency*" and "*fungible skills*" are becoming more popular. Employees that are proficient in their main responsibilities build a wide range of expertise as an addition to the organizational capabilities, which requires less time and money than learning a completely new skill set. Because both stock replenishment and stock shrinkage are related to stock management in the retail industry, a stock counter whose

primary responsibility is related to stock shrinkage can learn about both. According to the India Employer Forum (2019), agile organizations are now seeking workers with fungible abilities (a metric of skill similarity) rather than specific ones to plan their workforce requirements.

When employing interns, corporations like Amazon India look for a specific complement of skills. By using their re-skilling and up-skilling programs to improve their employees' performance, they converted 60% of interns into regular employees. Since businesses need competent personnel to run their operations, a strong emphasis on skills development is changing how corporations see training and development. In 2021, upskilling and reskilling programs were prioritized by their organizations, according to 59% of learning and development professionals, according to McDonald (2021), citing LinkedIn Learning research. This was a 15% rise from June 2020. According to the Hiregoudar and Patil's (2019), the use of peer-to-peer learning, in-house training, virtual mentorship platforms, and e-learning might all deliver reskilling and upskilling. Financial assistance must be made accessible to fund additional pertinent outside learning. By redefining themselves in the workplace to be relevant to an increasingly digital work environment, training, and development will save these groups from losing more jobs. This supports the claim that training is a continuous and repeated activity that improves individuals by imparting information and understanding. They are so better equipped to solve problems, interact with others, and make decisions in the workplace. Investment in employees' learning must be in line with the changes because the business environment is constantly changing and evolving. Employee morale must be raised, productivity must be improved, employee passion must be fostered, staff turnover must be stopped, and profitability must rise. This helps to create a culture inside the organization that is conducive to improving employee performance (McDonald, 2021).

Developing a Culture of Training and Learning

According to Diamantidis and Chatzoglou (2018), an organization's climate affects employees' attitudes, behaviours, performance levels, and propensity for the initiative. A learning environment will facilitate a culture of training in a business. This culture will help employees traverse new problems they face at work every day and enhance their performance. A training culture fosters job autonomy while developing the skills and agility needed for the position. An organization's staff must be hired, trained for the industry, and able to respond to market changes. If we use the retail industry as an example, better employee performance and opportunities for advancement in a retail store will necessitate competence and knowledge in inventory management, shrinkage control, marketing and sales, customer service, human relations skills, and management capabilities. This emphasizes how crucial training is to integrating and integrating newcomers into the industry.

Types and Implementation of Training Initiatives

The type and tactics used can have a significant impact on how effective training initiatives are. The nature and anticipated results of the training can also have an impact on the type of training, which might differ from organization to organization. On-the-job training, off-the-job training, and virtual or digital training are some of the training categories (Heathfield, 2021). To get the most out of the learning process, the training style and mode must be coordinated. The main location of on-the-job training is the workplace, where the trainee is exposed to the actual working environment. Line managers mentor and guide the trainees under their care. When practicing on the job, the trainee adheres to instructions and

adopts the necessary technique. The instruction is experiential and useful (Sahay, n.d.). This kind of instruction is more adaptable and imparts information about performance standards and workplace culture. Additionally, it offers genuine value and is far less expensive. When a manager has high expectations for their staff, it tends to increase employee commitment and job happiness (Heathfield, 2021). Among the modalities of on-the-job training, include job shadowing, job rotation, coaching or job teaching, working as an assistant, learning from more experienced employees, as well as refresher and orientation training. Training that is provided to employees outside of their usual work duties to supplement the abilities they will need to complete their job duties is known as off-the-job training. The goal of these training techniques is to help employees comprehend the nature of their professions, their roles, and duties, as well as how they can assess themselves and improve their performance in a variety of areas.

Trainer-led classroom instruction, workshops, seminars, group case studies, group discussions, tutorials, lectures, roleplays, simulations, and Sector Education and Training Authority learnership and skills programmes are some examples of the training methods that can help students develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the workplace (Heathfield, 2021). With virtual classrooms that enable employees to get training at any time, on any device, and from any location, technology-driven learning has gained popularity. This makes training more affordable because there are no logistical or training facility expenditures. Through a variety of digital platforms (such as audio and video capabilities and mobile applications) that can be accessed from a distance, e-learning offers flexible employee training (World Bank, 2020). Interactive and interesting learning is combined with a digital or virtual experience in blended learning (also known as mixed learning). In order to activate and hone employee skill sets and increase organizational effectiveness, the aforementioned training types and methodologies combine "learning by doing" with structured programs. Choosing the right delivery method can foster great work performance.

Benefits of Training Initiatives in a Learning Organisation

The benefits of training initiatives in a learning organization could be various. Table 2 illuminates some of these benefits.

Table 2 BENEFITS OF TRAINING INITIATIVES IN A LEARNING ORGANISATION	
Benefits of Training Initiatives in a Learning Organisation	Description of Training Benefits in a Learning organization
Employee Retention	-According to Biro (2018), who cites the 2018 Workforce Learning Report, 93% of employees would stay with a company if the company invested in their professional development. The article continues by saying that this shows employers cherish their employees and that employee growth is no longer a purely discretionary perk for a select group of privileged individuals in particular roles. According to Siriwardena and Morais (2019), training is a successful means of offering educational possibilities to workers, creating a sense of dedication, and guiding career advancement. - Because the development of knowledge and skills will add value and improve employees' effectiveness at work, employers who support training efforts will make employees feel valued. 94% of workers would stay at their current employer if it invested in their career, and 87% of millennials think having development chances available is crucial in a job, according to the 2018 LinkedIn Workplace poll, as reported by Biro (2018). -Organizations that invest in training and development are better able to draw in and keep top talent, which could lead to higher work satisfaction for employees and

	increased organizational growth. Table 2 represents the benefits of training initiatives in a learning organisation
Employee Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employees who are engaged are devoted, energetic, have a positive outlook, and enjoy their jobs, according to Hanaysha (2016). This exhibits a dedication to and interest in their work, both of which improve organizational performance. Training and development increase workplace engagement and lessen unproductive behaviours, enabling organizations to continuously assess worker competencies, skill sets, and organizational procedures. - Employees will be able to use their new skill sets and information in useful and positive ways, making them feel that their work is valued and that they are making a difference. The level of staff involvement, quality output, continual progress, and performance all have an impact on and shape a business venture's consistent profitability. -In addition to resolving skills deficiencies, learning and development also helps close the skills gap while maximizing efficiency and maintaining employees' engagement in their work performance (Wilson, 2019). The organization's strengths are the high caliber of its staff and the training programs it has put in place. In order to keep workers motivated and engaged to succeed, this must be in line with their training needs (Nnanna, 2020).
Development of Future Leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Possible leaders can be developed into a cohort of organizational leaders for organizational succession planning by giving them the information and abilities they need. In a lot less period, managers can develop into leaders and gain the ability to enhance their professions (Wilson, 2019). - The organization can take into account internal succession planning techniques that will promote employee career chances and internal growth. From the standpoint of organizational talent management, cultivating 'home-grown' talent can inspire more commitment from staff members who demand prospects for upward mobility and personal development.
Empowering Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employee influence and trust can be gained through training and development, which can also be empowering. In their participation, these workers will experience stronger feelings of worth, self-assurance, job satisfaction, and autonomy (Folkman, 2017). - Employees' competitive advantage may increase as a result of these training opportunities, empowering trainees to impart their newly acquired information and abilities to other workers. Due to the empowerment and potential development that mandatory training for employees offers, it makes sense for businesses to increase productivity and profitability (Alkhanaizi and EL Hajjar, 2018)
Nurturing Workplace Collaboration	-Collaboration and teamwork can be strengthened by providing employees with the chance to collectively explore new topics via intervention programs. The collaboration will prevent organizations from operating in silos and prevent the duplication of personnel and other resources.
Rewards and Recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rewards programs are implemented by organizations to encourage and strengthen employee loyalty as well as to improve working conditions. Work performance is affected by a variety of elements, including learning and development, in-house training, performance management, and career development. -Systems of rewards are based on the evaluation of work performance. Employee involvement in training and development programs can assist them in achieving the requirements necessary for reward and recognition incentives. - According to Dodge (2020), recognizing employee success and providing frequent acknowledgment in the workplace can be extremely effective sources of motivation for employees to perform at the top of their game since they believe their efforts are recognized and have an impact on work performance.

Source: Self-generated by the researcher, based on literature review

Table 2 shows the benefits of training initiatives in a learning organisation, which include employee retention, employee engagement, development of future leaders, empowerment of employees, nurturing workplace collaboration, and rewards and recognition. An additional benefit of Training Initiatives in a Learning Organisation consists of working

autonomously (Miller, 2017). This suggests that, as a result of higher levels of competency and better work output, employers are able to function autonomously in terms of having control over their everyday work experiences. Businesses are expressing their confidence in employees' abilities by supporting greater employee autonomy. It might also increase employee commitment, involvement, and satisfaction at work. Employee capacities are impacted by knowledge expansion and the resulting improvement in work performance. Furthermore, cross-training enables employees to switch roles and develop several skills, whereas focused training helps employees reach a certain degree of experience in specific tasks. Upskilling and reskilling are crucial because they provide businesses the confidence to allow independent working (Miller, 2017:1). Increased duties, potential for advancement, and most significantly, satisfaction at work, will follow from the trust gained. The process of developing and acquiring talent inside a corporation is covered in the following section.

Building vs Buying Talent

In this era of digitalization, businesses are undergoing a paradigm shift in how they view employee value and are beginning to understand the importance of promoting employee growth in terms of opportunities and skills. Bersin (2019) asserts that high-performing firms distinguish themselves by implementing a "*build vs buy*" strategy for crucial talent management and realizing that "*build*" talent frequently outperforms "*buy*" talent. Implementing training and development activities makes business sense because the "*shape up or ship out*" management tenet is no longer applicable. Continuous terminations and recruiting are typically costly and challenging because new hires must be located, welcomed, and trained in the organization's standard operating procedures. Furthermore, it frequently takes time for new hires to properly adapt to the organizational culture. Nowadays, smart businesses view the benefits of raising employee skill levels as an investment rather than a cost center. By keeping top employees on staff, the investment increases the company's competitiveness and improves its ability to deal with problems brought on by the global business environment (Senna, 2016). Thus, the part that follows presents the findings of the impact of digitalization on re-conceiving employee competencies and applicable abilities in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal.

FINDINGS, DISCUSSIONS, AND INTERPRETATION

This section elucidates findings, discussions, and interpretation of respondents' views and opinions based on the impact of digitalization from skilling, reskilling, upskilling, and re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. According to Ellingrud et al. (2020), reskilling is the process of getting employees ready to learn new skills and knowledge for a new role or expanded role within their present tasks. Training and development initiatives impacts at the Hypercheck Group are presented following the figures representations and analysis below.

Training and development initiatives at the Hypercheck Group

The Hypercheck Group's activities for employee training and development on digitisation and inventory management are shown and described in Figure 1.

Digitisation and Inventory Management at the Hypercheck Group

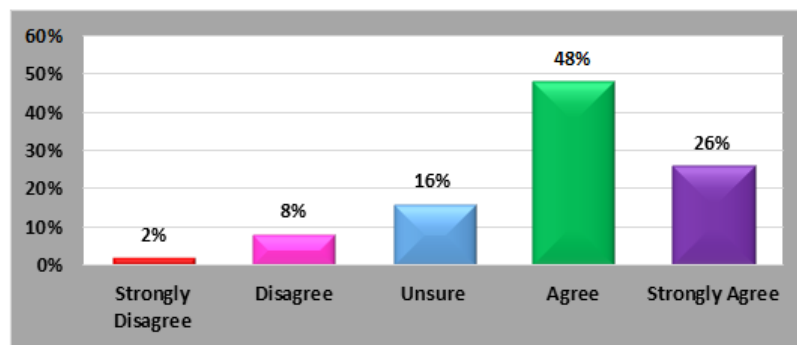


FIGURE 1
DIGITISATION AND INVENTORY MANAGEMENT: DIGITAL STOCK MANAGEMENT

As seen in Figure 1, out of the 50 respondents, 74% (26%) strongly agreed and 48% agreed that staff members had received training in digital stock replenishment. The amount of affirmative feedback indicating that there had been a digital stock replenishment demonstrates the significance that this element held for the organization. From a stock management and investment standpoint, this is important. Abogsesa and Kaushik (2017) strongly stressed that by improving the competencies and skill sets necessary to deal with employees, training programs aid workforce members in becoming accustomed to cutting-edge technology. This has positive effects by boosting employee capabilities and providing the foundation for organizational growth and progress.

Training initiatives via accredited programmes at the Hypercheck Group

Figure 2 shows the training activities implemented through accrediting programs for staff members participating in W & R SETA programs.

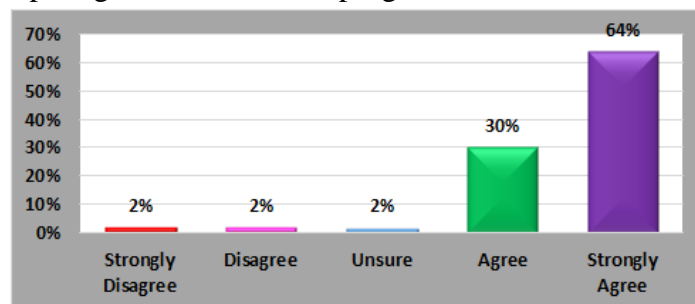


FIGURE 2
EMPLOYEES ENROLLED FOR W & R SETA PROGRAMMES

Figure 2 convincingly demonstrates that a majority of respondents—94% (30% strongly agreed and 64% agreed)—indicated that the organization has enrolled staff in level 4 supervision and level 5 generic management programs for the Wholesale and Retail SETA. As defined in section 1 of the South African Qualifications Authority Act (Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998), the SETAs also offer short, occupationally-based skills programs that, when successfully completed, can count toward a qualification registered under the National Qualifications Framework. Businesses from a variety of industries use funds from the SETAs as financing to accredit learnerships and skills programs that they use to train, retrain, and upskill their workforce and jobless youngsters. The analysis supports the Hypercheck Group's decision to use the W & R SETA programs as a viable means of

involving and developing its workforce. The organization could have used the W & R SETA funding, which is another contributing element, to fund its people growth strategy.

Training on administration procedures at the Hypercheck Group

Figure 3 depicts training on administrative procedures at the Hypercheck Group.

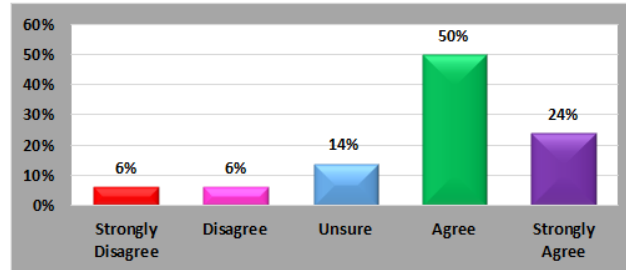


FIGURE 3
TRAINING ON ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

Adherence to organizational principles, practices, norms, and regulations, which are essential for seamless efficiency—is at the heart of administrative procedures. Figure 3 shows that, overall, 74% of respondents (24 % strongly agreed and 50 % agreed) acknowledged that staff had received training in administrative procedures, while 6% strongly disagreed and 6% disagreed and 14% were undecided. The study's findings show that a sizable proportion of respondents said they had received administrative training. Trashlieva and Radeva (2018), who explain that management pays close attention to the control and accomplishment of tasks that are governed by deadlines, high-quality output, and general organizational conformance when performing administrative functions, support the rationale behind the emphasis on administrative training. Therefore, businesses invest in administrative procedure training for their staff to ensure improved adherence to organizational policies and the instillation of discipline in daily operations.

Training job expansion and upskilling at the Hypercheck Group

Initiatives for training, job expansion, and skill upgrading at the Hypercheck Group are shown in Figure 4.

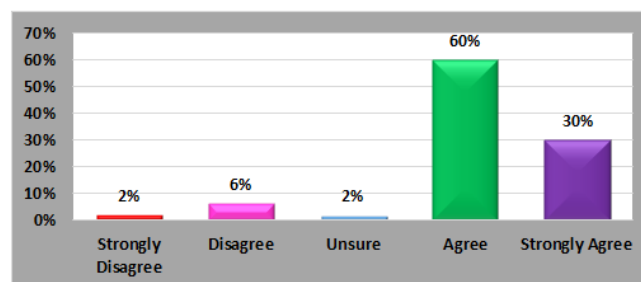


FIGURE 4
JOB EXPANSION INITIATIVES

Figure 4 shows that a significant majority of respondents—90% (30% strongly agreed and 60% agreed)—said that training programs at their place of employment had to do with job expansion and learning tasks outside of their present and core tasks. The study's findings resoundingly demonstrate that the organization is judiciously and effectively utilizing its

human resources by enhancing staff skill sets. Rajamani and Kularni's (2018) claimed that individuals who specialize in a single skill set might soon become a thing of the past due to technological advancement and that there is a growing requirement for people to diversify their skill sets. The routine of jobs and the practice of having staff work on just one task at a time are becoming less common among employers. In order to fulfill customer expectations and the demands of business expansion, employees are being retrained and upskilled. According to Rajamani and Kularni (2018), organizations are making sure their workers acquire skills related to their primary duties as the need for skill sets changes, and words like "*skills adjacency*" and "*fungible skills*" are becoming more popular. Thus, according to Ellingrud et al. (2020), reskilling is the process of getting employees ready to learn new skills and knowledge for a new role or expanded role within their present tasks.

Training in new Marketing strategies at the Hypercheck Group

Figure 5 shows how the Hypercheck Group trains its employees in cutting-edge marketing techniques.

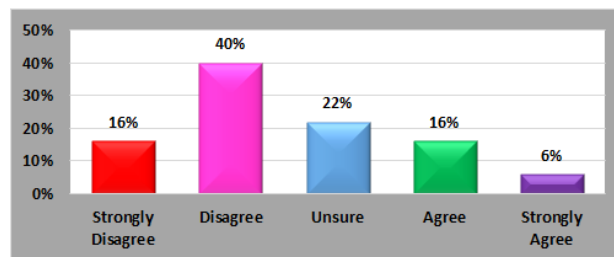
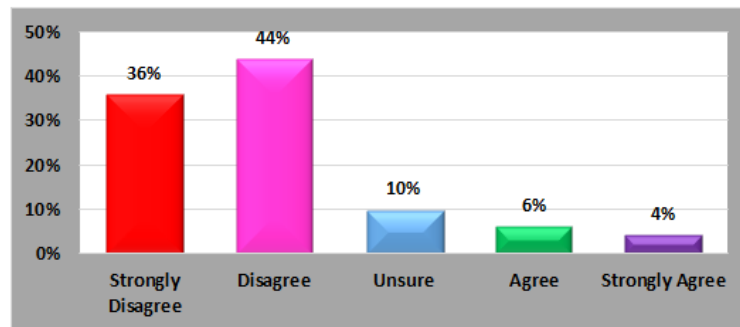


FIGURE 5
TRAINING IN NEW MARKETING STRATEGIES: DIGITAL MARKETING

Figure 5 show that more than half of the employees (16% and 40% disagreed) did not obtain digital marketing training. A total of 22% of respondents were dubious as to whether the training had occurred, while a further 22% were in agreement. According to Moorehead (2021), marketing's goal is to increase sales for a company or brand. This is achieved by marketing professionals through energizing customer traffic, customer leads, and sales creation through the adoption of smart non-digital and digital actions. The practice of using media and digital technology, like as websites, mobile applications, social media pages, and search engines, to further marketing goals is known as "*digital marketing*" (Chaffey, 2021). Moorehead (2021) claims that marketing's objective is to boost sales for a business or brand. Professionals in marketing achieve this through boosting customer traffic, customer leads, and sales generation using clever non-digital and digital actions. The term "*digital marketing*" refers to the activity of utilizing media and digital technologies, such as websites, mobile applications, social media pages, and search engines, to advance marketing objectives (Chaffey, 2021). Digital marketing training may be restricted to the marketing department given that the organization has a number of departments, including operations, human resources, finance, and information technology. Another factor can be that the organization's target market is low-end consumers, which may not be appropriate for a digital marketing approach.

Influence of Training in digital marketing: Market trends

Figure 6 demonstrates the impact of digital marketing training while taking into account e-commerce and online buying.



**FIGURE 6
E-COMMERCE AND ONLINE SHOPPING**

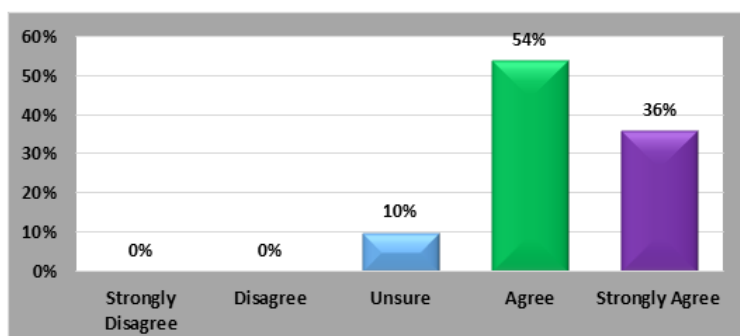
Figure 6 makes it very evident that a sizable majority of respondents—80% (36% strongly disagreed and 44% disagreed)—noted that employees lacked e-commerce and online purchasing training. According to Pillay (2019), who maintains the view that disruptive technologies like robotics, artificial intelligence, and virtual reality have quickly infused themselves in the retail sector with e-commerce, online shopping, and data analytics gaining traction in the industry, the study results are at odds with market trends. The organization may not yet have adapted to the latest e-commerce trends in retail if there is a lack of attention on employee development in this area. This explains why the acquisition of these skills took so long. However, organizational inertia and a lack of innovative skills can cause a company to lose its relevance and ability to compete.

The impact of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal

This section discusses findings aligned to the impact of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. These impacts include aspects like growth in sales and profitability, change management, and increased employee motivation.

Impact in Sales growth and profitability

Figure 7 highlights the effect of digitalization on reconsidering staff competences and useful skills in sales growth and profitability.



**FIGURE 7
GROWTH IN SALES AND PROFITABILITY**

Figure 7 clearly shows that there is a link between training and development, rising sales, and increasing profitability. 36% of respondents strongly agreed, and 54 percent agreed that training activities had enhanced sales and profitability. According to Rigoni and Asplund (2016), training and development did more than just increase employee engagement; more crucially, it was simply a smart business decision to train people. The research findings support this assertion. The research study showed that following training interventions, 90% of the workgroups had improved performance, sales had increased by 10%–19%, profits had increased by 14%–29%, customer engagement had increased by 3%–7%, and employee engagement had increased by 9%–15%. Additionally, Jain and Sharma (2019) offer a compelling argument that by utilizing their training-gained skills and being resourceful and effective, employees can help to open up new sales opportunities through innovative marketing tactics, improved promotional efforts, and improved customer experiences. Improved revenue, profitability, and business expansion are the results of this. Training interventions and work performance seem to operate well together, as shown by the expansion of the organization.

Impact in change management

This section talks about how staff competences and useful abilities for change management are being rethought in light of digitalization.

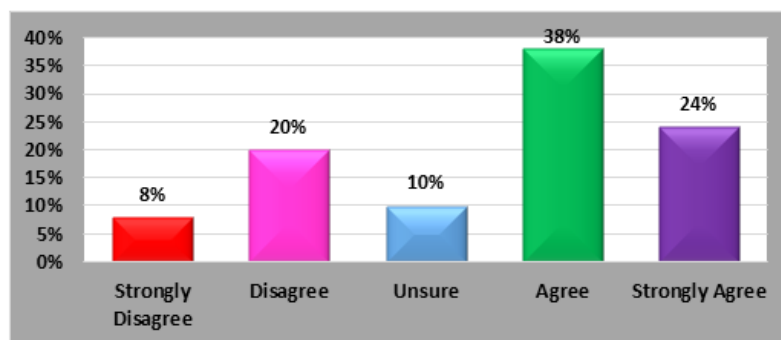
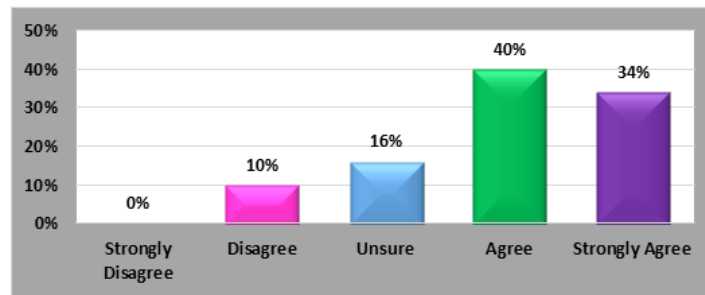


FIGURE 8
CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Figure 8 shows that a total of 64% of respondents—24% strongly agreed and 38% agreed—said the organization has organized training efforts in change management. The remaining 20%, 8% strongly disagreed, and 10% were unclear. The study's findings are crucial because they show that the organization wants to train its staff in change management. Nnanna (2020) supports the need of training by pointing out that organizations have undergone substantial change as a result of innovations, knowledge evolution, business globalization, and an increase in e-commerce. In light of shifting market trends, shifting client expectations, and digitalization, change management is consequently becoming increasingly important. In order to foster the skill development of their employees and improve performance, organizations must identify the right tactics. Employees must accept change, be adaptable, and change with the times in order to be successful.

Impact in increased employee motivation

The effect of digitalization on redefining staff capabilities and applicable skills in order to boost employee motivation is depicted in Figure 9.

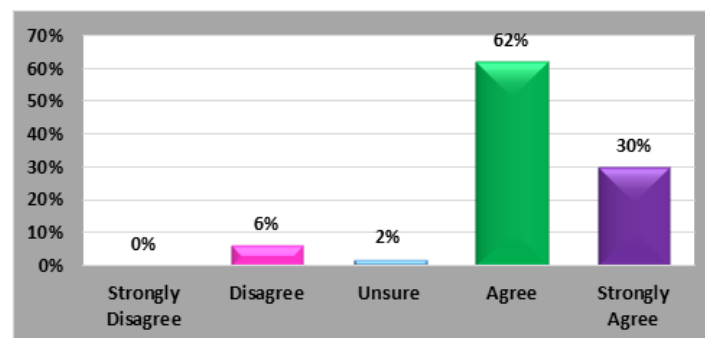


**FIGURE 9
INCREASING EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION**

Figure 9 demonstrates that 74% of respondents—40% agreed and 34% strongly agreed—agree that the organization had implemented training interventions to improve employee motivation and morale. While 16% were undecided and 10% disagreed, staff incentive initiatives were present. According to Varma (2017), motivated employees promote a successful organization and that commitment is the result of job satisfaction and motivation, the study's findings are consistent with this idea. By fostering continual motivation, organizational management must maximize its human capital.

The impact of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in organisational policies and procedures in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal

This section presents the views and opinions of the respondents on how the hypercheck group in Kwazulu-Natal has reinterpreted employee abilities and employable skills in organizational policies and procedures as a result of digitalization. Impact on organizational policies and practices is seen in Figure 10.



**FIGURE 10
IMPACT ON ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

The results of the subset-question on whether employees had gone to seminars for corporate policies and procedures are shown in Figure 10. The graph clearly shows that 96% of respondents agree that their organization has implemented training programs, while 3% disagree and 1% is undecided. The information shows that the organization made an attempt to educate its staff about the policies and procedures that must be followed. The outcome is consistent with Snook's assertion from 2021 that organizational policies and practices

demonstrate the organization's stability and professionalism, demonstrating efficiency, which leads to improved business partnerships and a positive public image. Compliance with relevant regulations is also ensured by following policies and procedures.

Results aligned to employee implementation of organisational policies and procedures in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal

Figure 11 below shows the outcomes related to employee adoption of organizational policies and practices.

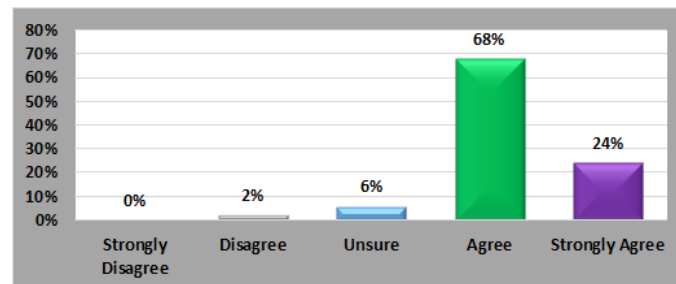


FIGURE 11
EMPLOYEE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

As shown in Figure 11, of the 50 respondents, a resounding 92% (68% agreed and 24% strongly agreed) said that they were able to put organizational policies and procedures into practice as a result of the training and development initiatives put in place. The study's findings are consistent with Kapur's (2020) assertion that work management regulations are seen as a requirement for employees to obey organizational directives. The application of rules and procedures helps staff members complete their assignments and achieve the desired organizational goals and objectives. Gaining understanding of work management policies and how to implement them would improve productivity and efficiency at work. Thus, in light of the above research findings, it can be indicated that in general, there are profitable impacts of digitalization on re-conceptualizing employee competencies and applicable skills in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal. Figures display an encouraging effects of Training in digitisation and inventory management; employees enrolled for W & R SETA programmes; administrative procedures; Job expansion initiatives; etc.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how the KwaZulu Natal-based hypercheck company was reevaluating personnel competencies and useful skills in light of the current digitalization environment. The company chose to train its employees on digital stock replenishment. The study positively concluded that training activities in the hypercheck group in KwaZulu Natal increased sales and profitability, encouraged better customer service, enabled better inventory management, increased leadership skills, and had a profitable impact on staff commitment, job satisfaction, and morale. It is also revealed that the Hypercheck Group's training and development programs helped with change management, boosted employee motivation, and ensured that organizational policies and procedures were well-practiced as a result of the training and development programs put in place. As the AI or 4IR continue to immerse enterprises in an unpredictable environment, it is crucial that initiatives for training and development that are in line with the usage of digital technologies be continuously provided. Thus, utilizing digital technologies should go beyond simple inventory management and restocking. It is advised that Hypercheck train its staff in digital marketing and online buying

given the abundance of digital technologies currently on the market and market trends, as customers from all socio-economic backgrounds own digital devices and are knowledgeable about them.

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