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# The Impact of Core Competencies Building in Improving Company Performance - Case Study of Al- Beskriah Cement Company-

أثر بناء الكفاءات المحورية في تحسين أداء المؤسسة دراسة حالة – المؤسسة البسكرية للإسمنت – Mohamed Ramzi DJOUDI\*, BISKRA University, Algeria.
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#### Abstract:

ملخص:

The purpose of this study is to identify the impact of core competencies building in improving Al-Beskriah Cement company performance.

In the end, the study concluded a range of recommendations; the most important there is a statistical significant impact of core competencies building in the level of improving Al-Beskriah Cement company performance.

**Key words:** core competencies building, improving the performance, Al-Beskriah Cement company.

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى التعرف على أثر بناء الكفاءات المحورية في تحسين أداء مؤسسة البسكرية للإسمنت.

وتوصلت الدراسة في الأخير إلى جملة من النتائج أهمها وجود أثر ذو دلالة إحصائية لبناء الكفاءات المحورية في تحسين أداء مؤسسة البسكرية للإسمنت.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بناء الكفاءات المحورية، تحسين أداء المؤسسة، المؤسسة البسكرية للإسمنت

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## **Introduction:**

The changes in the competitive business environment are becoming unavoidable. Among the most important of these changes, the companies at the present time face a change in the customers' tastes, their needs' multiplicity, and the competition intensity. Therefore, the success of any company dependent on its ability to face the continuous changes in the environment in which it operates, which leads it to search for new ways and methods to improve its performance and thus improve its outputs. These improvements can be achieved through the acquisition of skills, knowledge, experience, and experiments of human resources that are, rare, and difficult to imitate by competitors. Moreover, forming core competencies that could consolidate its plans and assets to enhance the companies' capabilities to enter multiple markets, and respond to the customers' needs to through the differentiation of their products from competitors' products.

Hence the importance of building core competencies by combining the personal skills of its workers and organizational practices, as it is one of the influences that play an important role in achieving continuous development and improvement ensuring that the company achieves high levels of performance through its ability to create value for the customer.

Therefore, the company must exploit the best and the maximum of their core competencies to reach stability first, and then compete and overcome others. Therefore, we are trying through this study to know the impact of core competencies building in improving company performance of the companies.

By dividing the study into three axes, as follows:

- **The First Axis**: The General Framework of the Study and Its Procedures;
- **The Second Axis**: Theoretical Framework And Literature Review;
- **The Third Axis**: The Relationship Between Core Competencies Building And Improving Company Performance;
- The Fourth Axis: Analysis and Discussion.

## 1. The General Framework of the Study and Its Procedures

#### 1.1 Study Problematic:

In light of this reality, which is experienced by industrial companies in general and Algerian industrial companies in particular from constant changes, and as systems that impact and it's affected by their environment, and given the importance of industrial companies, they have faced significant challenges to improve their performance, which led her to put a vision for the future that will enable them to build and develop core competencies as one of the most important skills to must built to achieve innovation and develop strategies in line with those changes.

This study tries to answer the following main question: What is the impact of core competencies building in the level of improving Albeskria Cement company performance?

And seek to answer the following sub- questions:

- -What is the level of core competencies building in Albeskria Cement Company?
- What is the level of improving Albeskria Cement company performance?
- What is the impact of core competencies building in their different dimensions in the level of improving the performance in Albeskria Cement Company?

## 1.2 The importance of the study:

The importance of study comes in the theoretical and practical aspects:

- In the theoretical aspect, the study will provide a summary of the most important ideas of researchers about study variables (core competencies building, improving company performance).
- From a practical aspect this study can contribute to raising awareness of important the core competencies the officials of Algerian industrial company's, especially Albeskria Cement company, and the need to build and develop them, as it is considered one of the entry points with important impacts on the performance of the companies.

# 1.3 The objectives of the study:

This study aim to achieve a set of goals, as follows:

- to know of core competencies as one of the vital fields and studying them from a strategic point of view to achieve the best investment of knowledge;
- To know the level of practicing the dimension of core competencies building in Albeskria Cement company;
- To know the level of improving the performance in Albeskria Cement company.

# 1.4 Study Hypothesis:

This study is based on the following main hypothesis and sub-hypothesis:

- **1.4.1. Main Hypothesis** (H<sub>0</sub>): there is no statistical significant impact of core competencies building in their different dimensions in the level of improving company performance at the significance level of 5%.
- **1.4.2.** The first sub-hypothesis ( $H_{01}$ ): there is no statistical significant impact of Shared vision in the level of improving company performance.
- **1.4.3**. The second sub-hypothesis (H<sub>02</sub>): there is no statistical significant impact of Cooperation in the level of improving company performance.
- **1.4.4.** The third sub-hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ): there is no statistical significant impact of Empowerment in the level of improving company performance.

#### 1.5 Study sample:

Research community consists of all executives Albeskria Cement Company (166 executives) according to statistics 2017, Because of the difficulty of studying the entire research community, we have selected a random sample of 50 executives where we distributed the questionnaires, then all the questionnaires were collected, and 41 of them were valid for analysis.

## 1.6 Study tool:

Survey method is used to collect data for this research using questionnaires, which divide into three sections, the first section covers the demographic information of the respondents, the second section measures core competencies building using (23 items), and the third section measures improving company performance using (10 items).respondents were asked to indicate their agreement or disagreement with several statements on a five point likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Before applying statistical tools, testing reliability of the scale Cronbach's alpha is the most widely used method.

According to the using of these scales for this study and checked its reliability test using the SPSS version 17. The under table shows the detail of reliability tests results, in which use the Cronbach's coefficient for assessing the reliability of these multi scales. All shows the adequate range of the reliability; which is from 0.892 to 0.913, while the Cronbach's coefficient for these total variables is 0.937. This is significant and acceptable for the purpose of the study.

Table 1: Reliability test results

Variables	Number of questions	Alpha Cronbach	
measures core competencies building	23	0.913	
improving company performance	10	0.892	
Total variables	33	0.937	

Sources: Output of SPSS Program V17.

## 2. Theoretical framework and literature review:

## 2.1: Definition of Core competencies and their characteristics:

The concept of core competence, as fundamental to organizational renewal and as a driving force behind strategic change, interests both managers and scholars. It is a complex and challenging concept; it is difficult to specify theoretically, to identify empirically as a phenomenon, and to apply in practice. Scholars have recently recognized these problems in general conceptual discussions (SI.Nimsith & and al, 2016, p. 66).

Since then this term began to spread and has been dealt with from different and various angles, which led to a multiplicity of its definitions, among which we find the following:

Hamel & Prahalad defined core competencies as:" a collective learning in the organization, especially how to coordinate diverse production skills and integrate a wide range of current technology " (Hamel & Prahalad, 1990, p. 81). It was also defined as: "a bundle of skills and technologies that enable a company to provide a particular benefit to customers. Core competencies are not product specific; they contribute to the competitiveness of a range of products or services (SI.Nimsith & and al, 2014, p. 13).

Sabah Agha & al, defined core competence: "are communication, involvement, and a deep commitment to working across organizational boundaries" (Agha & al, 2012, p. 194). Since the concept is not conceived easily, Hamel & Prahalad suggest three criteria that distinguishes a core competence from a competence: (Gokkaya & Gonul Ozbag, 2015, p. 92)

- A core competence must contribute significantly to customer benefit from a product;
- A core competence should be competitively unique, must be difficult for competitors to imitate;
- A core competence should provide potential access to a wide variety of markets.

#### 2-1-1 The dimensions of Core competencies:

Most of authors have focused on three dimensions of core competencies, they are Shared vision, Cooperation, Empowerment (Sanchez 2004), (Hafeez &Essmail 2007), (Agha, &al, 2012), and therefore this study focuses on these three dimensions of building core competencies as following:

**Shared vision**: is defined as a firm's interest in sharing the organization's view of goals, objectives, policies, priorities, and expectations. It is essential to guarantee learning to occur in the same direction and to motivate that it really takes places. Firms with greater shared vision likely enhance to business excellence and success. Then, firms seem to utilize the shared vision to build innovative products and services and fulfill customer and market requirements.

**Cooperation (teamwork)**: Cooperation as a core competence knows when and how to attract, reword, and utilize teams to optimize results (Agha & al, 2012, p. 196).

Across many different organizations and industries teamwork is focused to increase the performance of employees' their unity and also create work culture. Companies those regularly develop new ideas or products using a project – based approach and assemble teams in order to focus responsibilities to achieve the object. Researchers have given dissimilar meanings of teams. Dyer W.G. said that: teams are groups of people who trust in cooperation, if members are expert the success of goal is more possible. Team members contribute their thoughts together to make exclusive plans for dealing with problems and this unity enhance the result due to interaction, trust and teamwork (Mangi & al, 2015, p. 90).

## **Empowerment**:

The definitions of empowerment itself vary widely across scholars. The concept of empowerment has received increasing attention by academics and practitioners interested in the question of human resources.

Employee empowerment is creating working environment where an employee is allowed to make his own decisions in specific work- related situations. The decisions can be big or small, and the size and effect of the decision is up to the employer.

The logic behind employee empowerment is to increase the employee's responsibility, to build employee morale and to improve the quality of your employee's work life. Ideally, when an employee feels vested in an organization, he well be more productive, loyal and more confident. (Elnaga & Amen Imran, 2014, pp. 15-16)

# 2.2 Improving company performance:

Many researchers agreed that the company performance is determined mainly by its ability to optimize the use of various resources in general, and from its human resources in particular as the concern for human resources achieves excellence for the company.

## **2.2.1** Definition of the performance :

Performance defined the outcome of a company's ability to use its resources and direct it towards achieving the desired goals (A Ali & A Djelil, 2015, p. 294).

Performance is also defined: as a reflection of the company's ability to achieve efficiency, effectiveness and dealing when using its human and material resources available to achieve its goals (Kahwje & Lama Badr, 2014, p. 193). The company's high performance is achieved through the interaction of five main components: engage employee, self – directed teams, total quality management, organizational learning, and integrated production technology. It is the mix of resources and distinctive capabilities of the company that determines the efficiency and effectiveness of the company in its performance (kaebi & SAED El Anzi, 2013, p. 142).

## 2.2.2 Definition of improving the performance:

The process of improving performance is considered the basis for achieving the best results, whether it is related to providing the best products or services in order to face environmental changes.

Improve the performance: the use of all available resources to improve outputs and process productivity, and to achieve integration between the right technology that uses the capital in the optimal way. The requirements for improving performance are: (FAWZI & HASNAWI, 2015, p. 382)

- That there be support and motivation of the company's senior management;

- define the goals of the companies accurately, so that they are consistent with the strategic plan of the companies and implementable;
- Determine the targeted category (the individual, function,...) for the improvement process.

# 3. The relationship between core competencies building and improving company performance

In the current highly competitive marketplace, characterized by high velocity change, accelerating product life cycles, narrowing customer niches, mass customization and technological discontinuities, today's product market can appear and disappear quickly, and traditional product- centered strategies provide little long-term advantage. As a result, firms are under increasing pressure to develop, strengthen and renew competencies that enable them to adapt, integrate, and reconfigure their skills, knowledge and dynamic capabilities in order to adapt to a changing business environment and deliver superior customer value in a timely, responsive and continuous manner. In fact, many related studies, especially those in the resource based field, witness that superior performance is always derived from the possession of unique and difficult-to- imitate skills, knowledge, resources, assets or competencies (Wang, 2004, p. 4).

Studies on the core competencies offer a wide array of explanations about of core competencies building and their impact in improving the performance of the company; this can be illustrated by the following:

## 3-1: The impact of a shared vision in improving the performance

Researcher Diab confirms, Shared vision is necessary for the superiority of organizations, as successful companies are the ones that can gather workers about a common identity and common sense of the company's directions and future aspirations. Where the presence of a shared vision is an indication for increased employees' satisfaction and loyalty to the company which lead to their willingness to meet the needs of the work by making clear efforts (Diab, 2014, pp. 32-33).

In order to increase the motivation of the knowledge and skillful employees to create ideas stored in them which represents a large field of internal and strategic resources, and forming the primary motivation for individual learning, which leads to core competencies building (Faiza, 2005, p. 61).

The study of Shemri also mentioned that the latter has the ability to employ those skills and knowledge in their field of work and their specialization what makes them do business and provide ideas and products characterized by creativity and excellence which leads to improve their performance and thus will be reflected in the improving company performance (Shemri, 2015, p. 82).

# 3-2 : The impact of the cooperation in improving the performance

According to Researcher ALYEN, cooperation or performing work collectively is essential to the success and support of innovative capabilities in companies , where competition among individuals working together helps to increase seriousness and enthusiasm and focus in improving performance through the exchange of information and opinions, as this exchange and sharing leads to generate new ideas and they interact However, considering that the different individuals' experiences, specializations and education give more opportunity for innovation, diversity and methods of implementation (ALYEN, 2014, p. 66), which leads to achieving learning and that to its creative role in absorbing ideas, skills and experiences and transforming them creatively into core competencies , that have the ability to employ those skills, knowledge and ideas to improve quality and excellence in parallel with the learning curve. (Eljenabi, 2012, pp. 128-129)

According to HARZ ELLAH, cooperation also leads to the integration and fusion of resources, which creates additional value (power, creativity, effectiveness, improvement) in addition to the real value, from these competencies, generated by the organization special skills achieved qualitative values and competitive advantages, which in the end leads to achieving improving and then superiority in performance (HARZ ELLAH, 2016, pp. 333-334).

## 3. 3The effect of the empowerment in improving the performance:

Researcher ASED said that today's companies face a great challenge of competition and change in the tastes of customers, so they need to be a flexible company by empowering its employees' to help them identify their strengths to strengthen them and their weaknesses to overcome them through education and training (ASED, 2011, p. 232). This reinforces the trend towards attention of expertise and skills to develop the capabilities of employees' on the one hand and enhance the competencies of the company on the other (Yessri & AHMED, 2015, pp. 380-381).

The researcher Safa Mohamed also confirmed that it leads to the development of strong human energies, this is why companies invest human energies by extracting its potential which results in intellectual creativities, whether in the work assigned to them or the contributions that are coming from them, as well as the internal stability they feel, resulting in initiatives to develop working methods lead to increase the productivity and efficiency of the company and achieve differentiation by pleasing external customers and earn their loyalty permanently (Mohamed, 2012, p. 162).

## 4. Analyse and discussion:

#### 4.1 Demographic characteristics:

Table 2 shows the demographic characteristics of respondents.

Table 2: Demographic characteristics

Variable	Value Label	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	41	100%
	Female	-	-
	Total	41	100%
AGE	Less than 30	20	48.5%
	30-40	17	41.5%
	40-50	3	7.3%
	More than 50	1	2.4%
	Total	41	100%
<b>Education level</b>	Senior technician	14	34.1 %
	Engineer	22	53.7%
	Bachelor	5	12.2%
	Total	41	100%
Current job area	Technical works	25	61%
	Supervising administrative works	13	31.7%
	administrative works	2	7.3%
Experience	Less than 5	30	73.2%
	(5-10)	7	17.1%
	(10-15)	2	4.9 %
	More than 15	2	4.9%
	Total	41	100%

Sources: Output of SPSS Program V17.

The demographic characteristics of the respondents are given in Table 2, it shows that all respondents were mal representing 100%; this is due to the nature of the work, which requires great efforts.

According to the Table 2, the distributions of results indicated greater part of the respondents age live less than 30 years old representing 48.8%, followed by (30-40) years old representing 41.5%, and between (40-50) years old representing 7.3%, and least is 50 years old or above representing 2.4%.

Table 2 demonstrates the education of the respondents out of 41 individuals. Distributions of results indicated greater part of the respondents have Engineer representing 53.7%, followed by senior technician representing 34.1%, and least is Bachelor in representing 12.2%.

Table 2 demonstrates the Current job area of the respondents, Distributions of results indicated greater part of the respondents have Works of Technical works (61%), followed by Supervising administrative works representing 31.7%. and least is No-Supervising administrative works representing 7.3%.

Table 2 demonstrates 41 employees experience in current company. Distributions of results indicated greater part of the respondents having experience 5 years representing 73.2 %, this followed by (5-10) years' experience representing 17.1 %, then (10-15) years' and more than 15 years' experience representing 4.9%.

## **4.2 Descriptive analysis:**

Table 3 shows the descriptive measures for the dimensions of core competencies building, the means ranged between (3.615-3.724) with standards deviations ranging from 0.480 to 0.651, while the mean of core competencies building is 3.669 with standard deviation 0.482. This results indicate that the level of core competencies building and its dimensions in the study sample is high acceptable. It shows that managers in Albeskria Cement Company are committed to core competencies building.

Also Shared vision the first rank in terms of the relative importance given to it by the respondents, and Cooperation the second rank in terms of the relative importance given to it by the respondents, finally Empowerment the third rank in terms of the relative importance given to it by the respondents.

The mean of improving company performance of is 3.751 with standard deviation 0.652, which has a high acceptance level.

**Table 3**: Means and Standard Deviations of core competencies building and improving the performance

Variables	Mean	Std deviation	Rank	Acceptance Level
core competencies building	3.669	0.482	-	High
Shared vision	3.724	0.651	1	High
Cooperation	3.682	0.593	2	High
Empowerment	3.615	0.480	3	Medium
improving company performance	3.751	0.652	-	High

Sources: Output of SPSS Program V17.

## 4.3 Test of hypotheses

**Hypothesis** ( $H_0$ ): There is no statistical significant impact of core competencies building in their different dimensions in the level of improving company performance at the significance level of 5%.

The results Analysis of Variance is used to ensure that the model was valid to test this hypothesis. The results show in the following table:

Table 4: The results Analysis of Variance						
Source of	Total	Degrees	Average	F	Sig	
variance	squares	of	squares		8	
		freedom	1			
		(df)				
Regression	8.637	3	2.879	12.703	0.000	
The Error	8.386	37	0.227			
Total	17.022	40		•		

Sources: Output of SPSS Program V17.

 $R^2 = 0.507$ :  $(\alpha = 0.05)$  ; R = 0.712.

The results of this Table 4 show the consistency of the model's validity to test the main hypothesis, the value of the calculated F (12.703), at the level of significance (0.000) which is less than the level of significance adopted (0.05). Based on the viability of the model, we can test the main hypothesis. The results show in the following table 5.

Table 5: The results Multiple Regression

The	В	Beta	Calculated	Sig	R	$\mathbb{R}^2$
Independent			T			
variables						
Shared vision	0.441	0.440	3.064	0.004	0.440	0.194
Cooperation	0.655	0.596	4.638	0.000	0.596	0.355
Empowerment	0.931	0.686	5.881	0.000	0.686	0.740
core	0.908	0.672	5.661	0.000	0.712	0.507
competencies						
building						

Sources: Output of SPSS Program V17.

The results of the Table 5 show that the value of the correlation coefficient **R** between core competencies building (Shared vision, Cooperation, Empowerment) and improving the performance is (0.712), which is a positive relationship. (50.7%) of the variance in the level of improving the performance depends on core competencies building. Therefore, we reject the zero hypotheses and accept the alternative hypothesis which states that:

There is a statistical significant impact of core competencies building in their different dimensions in the level of improving company performance at the significance level of ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

We can explain the sub- hypotheses as the following:

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that there is a statistical significant impact of Shared vision in the level of improving company performance. The results of the table 5 show that the value of the calculated T is (3.064) at the level of significance (0.004) which is less than the level of significance adopted ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ). In addition the relationship between Shared vision and improving the performance is (19.4%). And thus we reject the first zero sub- hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Therefore can be explained by the fact that the company involves workers in shaping the vision for the future which leads to motivating workers to do their work effectively this will be reflected in improving the performance of the company.

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that there is a statistical significant impact of Cooperation in the level of improving company performance. The results of the table 5 show that the value of the calculated T is (4.638) at the level of significance (0.000) which is less than the level of significance adopted ( $\alpha$  =0.05). In addition the relationship between Cooperation and improving the performance is (59.6%). And thus we reject the second zero sub- hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

Therefore can be explained that the company is promoting cooperation between workers through forming teams, which will lead to sharing and integration of knowledge and skills among employees, which leads to the development of their skills which will reflect on improving the productivity the employees and then an improvement in the performance of the company.

The results of the statistical analysis indicate that there is a statistical significant impact of Empowerment in the level of improving company performance. The results of the table 5 show that the value of the calculated **T** is (5.881) at the level of significance (0.000) which is less than the level of significance adopted ( $\alpha$  =0.05). in addition the relationship between Empowerment and improving the performance is (68.6%). And thus we reject the third zero sub- hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis.

This result can be explained that the company Empowerment of employees leads to increased employee satisfaction and loyalty for the company which drives them to improve their skills and experience in a way that makes them ready to deal with all working conditions which leads to an improvement in their performance it will therefore be reflected in improving the performance of the company.

#### Conclusion:

Finally, we reached a set of results and recommendations. The Most important results as follows:

- There is statistical significant impact of core competencies building (as a group) in the level of improving company performance at the significance level of 5%. The variable core competencies building was explained (50.7%) of the variance in the level of improving Albeskria Cement company performance;
- There is statistical significant impact for each dimension of the dimensions core competencies building in the level of improving Albeskria Cement company performance at the significance level of 5%.
   And the most important recommendations as follows:
- requires from companies to focus on core competencies building and adopting modern programs to develop employees' and administrative staff;
- emphasizing the consolidation of a culture of cooperation through teamwork because it is one of the most important dimensions of core competencies building by forming teams and establishing a system for doing so and rewarding collective achievements;
- Adopt a flexible company structure where the tasks are specific and clear and allows to validity decision-making and stay away from the procedures routines and encourage communication and broad participation.

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