

STAFF TRAINING AND BUSINESS PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED BANKS IN AFIKPO, EBONYI STATE

Oka, Ogonnia Agbii

Department of Business Administration and Management,
Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo, Nigeria.
collinsagbiioka@gmail.com

and

Egbule, Clarence N. C.

Department of Business Administration and Management,
Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic, Unwana, Afikpo, Nigeria.
clarenceegbule@gmail.com

Abstract

The study was undertaken to examine the effect of staff training on business performance in Nigeria. First Bank of Nigeria Plc. and Zenith Bank Plc. Afikpo, were chosen for the study. The study sought to examine the effects of staff training on business performance in Nigeria and key challenges of staff training to business organizations. The study applied the Field Survey Research Design and the Human Capital Theory. The researchers studied the entire staff (population) of the banks which is seventy-three (73). This figure served also as the sample size since it could be managed. Researchers used interview guides and questionnaires to collect data. 69 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire, indicating a response rate of 95%. Data were analysed using Chi-Square Test at 5% level of significance. Findings revealed among others that staff training contributes significantly to employee performance, organizational efficiency and improved productivity with statistical values of 113.08, 89.20 and 104.5 respectively while high cost indicated a major barrier to staff training with statistical test value of 122.6. The study concluded that staff training improves employees' competence and productivity, ensuring organizational success. The study recommended among others that organizations should establish dedicated budget for training programmes, making fund available for staff training at all times; organizations/banks should recruit, develop and deploy more training professionals to effectively transmit skills and knowledge to the trainees and for their overall management.

Keywords: Staff Training, Productivity, Profitability, Efficiency, Business Performance

Introduction

Extant literatures on human resources management emphasize the importance of human element/capital in our organizations. Evidence from literature shows that staff training and development is critical to improving organizational efficiency and effectiveness; businesses prioritize such initiatives to enhance performance and maintain a competitive edge (Fegade & Sharma, 2023). Milhem *et al.* (2014) state that human capital theory argues that the human resource is the most important type of resources in organizations which can be improved through training activities. Research indicates that organizations that invest in staff training experience higher profitability and better employee retention rates, underscoring the role of training in reducing

turnover and maximizing talent investment (Asteris *et al.*, 2022). Mehner *et al.* (2024) note that a study on training transfer showed that well-executed training activities contribute to greater job satisfaction, increased productivity and stronger organizational outcomes. A training manager always advocates that his function's activities should be viewed as an investment and not an overhead. Although the general climate and attitudes have changed overtime, in particular following the advent of the Industrial Training Act in 1964 and the Training Boards, there still exists a body of thought that views training as an expense and/or luxury. Engagedly (2024) affirms that staff training and development enhances employee performance, fosters innovation and enables organizations achieve objectives: it increases employee engagement, lowers absenteeism and promotes greater productivity and profitability. Statistics from the Association for Talent Development (ATD) reveals that organizations with higher staff training expenses reported 218% more income per staff; such organizations also witnessed 24% higher profit margins (<https://www.td.org>).

One of the most important national issues is the development of trained manpower for effective and relatively rapid economic development. Human resources are one of the basic elements of any enterprise. No organization can survive today without the effective management and control of human resources. In order to survive in the present-day competitive economy, an organization must recruit, select, train and develop its managers with the utmost care. After the employees have been recruited, selected and inducted, they must next be trained and developed to better fit the job and the organization in general. Staff training is a tool for successful organization. Staff training is vital issue of career progression of every employee in any organization. To provide quality services to customers, staff must commit themselves to continuous training and retraining activities. It is therefore, important that organizations engage their staff in the training activities on regular basis to help them acquire knowledge and skills that will enhance their performance on the job. Training enables an organization to be more effective and efficient, and its employees to develop, be satisfied and be self-actualized. Aliu Fatai Oguntade *et al.* (2025) opine that organizations that seek to achieve steady growth and continuous employee productivity should ensure that their employees are adequately trained to compete favourably with their peers in the global environment. Anwar and Abdullah (2021) note that on-the-job training is an essential method of effective and focused training in areas like finance, management and practical decision-making which helps staff learn and apply these lessons in their daily tasks. Retorio (2025) maintains that on-the-job training has proven effective in enhancing both productivity and operational efficiency. Organizational employees acknowledge the advantages of this approach, with 59% reporting improved job performance and 68% emphasizing the importance of training for job satisfaction. No matter how well trained an organization's staff are, changes in technology, tasks and environment create the need for further training and development. Since no one is a perfect fit at the time of hiring, some training must be organized to fill the gap. Friday *et al.* (2022) assert thus "training results in performance improvement related to benefits for the staff and influences staff performance through the development of knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behavior". More so, there is need to train and retain those staff whose jobs may diminish or made redundant as a result of new technology or computerizations.

Staff training plays a critical role in the effectiveness and efficiency of business organizations. Staff training impacts the productivity, personal development and staff performance. Every organization should maintain well-trained and experienced employees to perform their duties efficiently. However, despite the training policies of most organizations, there performance remains poor. Organizations may have employees of great ability and determination with

appropriate equipment and management support, yet productivity falls below expected standards. The missing factor in most cases is the lack of adequate skills and knowledge which are acquired through training. Ismael *et al.* (2021) contend that staff training activities help prepare employees physically and mentally for the organization and provide an effective means of cultivating a highly skilled workforce. Engagedly (2024) also asserts that investing in staff training and development offers significant advantages for organizations. It is based on this background that the researchers sought to examine the contribution of staff training on organizational performance. To do this, the study is set to:

- Examine the effects of staff training on business performance in Nigeria
- Examine key challenges of staff training to business organizations in Nigeria

The study will test the following hypotheses:

H₀: staff training has no effect on business performance in Nigeria

H₀: there are no key challenges of staff training to business organizations in Nigeria

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual clarifications

Concepts as staff training, employee performance, profitability, organizational efficiency, etc. are clarified as follows:

Training Programs/Staff Training/Training

Training programs, Staff training or training has been variously explained. For the purpose of this study, training programs, staff training and training would be used interchangeably. Some of such explanations are:

William Fitzgerald in Shafiq and Hamza (2017) define training as an achievement of the understanding and skill needed to perform tasks. Ile (2014) defines training as the formal procedure used to facilitate employees' learning so that their resultant behaviour contributes to the attainment of the company's goals. Njoku and Nwosu (2010) define training as the process of investing in people to enable them perform better and empower them to make the best use of their natural abilities. Training refers to as the teaching and/or developing in oneself or other people, skills, knowledge or fitness which are related to specific useful competencies; training has the benefits of impacting people's capacity, capability, productivity and performance as well (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/training>).

From all indications, training could be seen as the systematic process designed to instill in individuals the skills, knowledge and attitudes necessary to perform their duties.

Organizational Performance

According to Ibhagui and Olokoyo (2018), organizational performance involves the measurement of business success and how the functional units have achieved their established goals and/or objectives over time. Smith and Brian (2015) describe organizational performance as financial and non-financial indicators that show the degree of achievement of organizational objectives; organizational performance may be understood and interpreted differently depending on the people involved. Sam *et al.* (2020) state that employee performance is critical to any business organization

and encourage every organization to make and implement policies that enhance employee performance. Mbah *et al.* (2021); Mbah *et al.* (2018) describe performance as the degree of achievement of the goal as well as the range of measurements of efficiency in workplace. Sam *et al.* (2020); Ugwu, and Enudu, (2022) view employees as one of the organizations' most valuable resources and it is important that they perform optimally; it translates into good service delivery and interaction which affect every area of the firm.

Performance could be seen as one's ability to carry out their duties. Performance could high or low. It is high when one carries out their duties well above expected standard(s) and vice versa. Thus, there is low and/or improved performance.

Profitability

Profitability is an important term in business and accounting that one can use to determine and describe a business's long-term success. Achieving profitability is essential to all businesses, as it allows them to grow. Nocolaas and Shawn (2023); Mbah *et al.*, (2018) opine that a business is said to be profitable when such produces goods and consistently sells them at a profit According to Indeed Career Guide (2023), profitability is a relative term that describes a situation of a company that generates profit. Romain (2023) describes profitability as the measure of a company's ability to generate profit - the amount of money left over after all expenses have been paid; it is a crucial metric for all business organizations as it indicates their financial health and ability to sustain growth. Profitability could be seen as the ability of organization to make returns in excess of their expenses.

Organizational Efficiency

Ohadinma (2019) describes organizational efficiency as the use of minimal resources to achieve organizational goals. Efficiency in the context of organizations is the ability to accomplish objectives/results with minimum resources.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study involves three dependent variables including employee performance, organizational efficiency and organizational productivity, while the independent variable is staff training.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory views employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities as valuable assets to an organization. The theory posits that investing in training and development is seen as a way to increase this human capital, leading to improved organizational performance.

Key proponents of human capital theory are Adam Smith, who conceptualized the idea and laid the groundwork for the theory in the 18th century by including "acquired and useful abilities" as a form of capital (ResearchGate); Theodore Schultz, who formally developed the theory in the 1960s, highlighting that investment in education, training, and health is crucial for economic development; Gary Becker was arguably the biggest pioneer of the theory, coining the idea of investing in people to enhance their talents and performance. His work provided an economic framework for understanding how human capital increases wages and productivity (Study.com.)

The Human Capital Theory has witnessed a rapid development following the foundation laid by the proponents. The theory takes for granted that organizational employees are productive resources and attempts to establish if highly trained staff are more productive than other personnel (Simon, 2008). Human Capital Theory assumes that human capital is the most important form of capital in business organizations which could be improved through training. The theory argues that investment in capital based on the human elements like human capital, social capital and psychological capital contributes more to organizational efficiency and success than investment in other capital such as physical and financial capital (Milhem *et al.*, 2014; Noe, 2017). It states that investment in human resources leads to efficient organizational performance. The theory proposes that employee training contributes to elusive assets (Maune, 2014), the fundamental sources of competitiveness such as human, customer, social and intellectual capital.

Relevance of the Theory to the Study

The theory of Human Capital should be adopted by organizations to improve the overall growth of organizations. This will enhance productivity, resulting from diverse workforce. This claim is supported by evidence from Babalola (2003) that the acquisition of training and knowledge boosts a nation's ability to develop economically by enhancing the productivity of its current workforce. Thus, staff training should be prioritized if organizational workforce would improve their performance and accomplish organizational goals.

Empirical Review

Aliu Fatai Oguntade *et al.* (2025) embarked on Importance of Training on Organizational Performance: A Review of Literature to ascertain the link between employee training and organizational performance. Their study concluded that there is a positive link between employee training and organizational performance. Said *et al.* (2025) studied The Impact of Training and Development on Organizational Performance to investigate the relationship between training and development and its correlation with organizational performance. Their study was a conceptual review. The study revealed a strong relationship between training and development (on-the-job training, off-the-job training and job rotation) and organizational performance.

Friday *et al.* (2022) studied Employee Training and Organizational Performance: A Case Study of African College of Commerce and Technology in Kabale District, South Western Uganda. They aimed to establish the impact of employee training programmes and the levels of organizational performance. The study adopted a case study design which incorporated both qualitative and quantitative design approaches. The findings established that training is used to fill identified gaps in competence and helps to improve the competency of the beneficiary, improving his or her performance on the job among others. Adeyemi *et al.* (2021) embarked on Impacts of Employees Training and Development on Organizational Productivity in Federal Polytechnic Ede. Their study sought to investigate the impacts of training and development on organizational productivity in Federal Polytechnic Ede, Osun State.

Despite the efforts of Aliu Fatai Oguntade *et al.*, Nur Shafini Mohd Said *et al.*, Friday *et al.*, Adeyemi *et al.* and other authorities on the topic or related ones, none or just few works have substantively assessed how training programs accelerate business performance in the Nigerian Banking Sector.

Methodology

The First Bank of Nigeria Plc. and Zenith Bank Plc. Afikpo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria were chosen for the study. The researchers adopted the field survey method which involves a systematic collection of data in standardized form from identified population. The instrument was validated by a team of experts who closely examine the questionnaire to ensure conformity with the study. Researchers interviewed people and administered questionnaire to respondents repeatedly and obtained similar results. Therefore, the instrument was found to be reliable. The researchers used interview guides and questionnaires to collect data. Data were analysed using Chi-Square Test at 5% level of significance. The population of the study reflects the entire population of both banks. First Bank Nigeria Plc. has a total of 44 workers while Zenith Bank Plc. has a staff strength of 29 covering all staff categories. The study population is 73 workers. This figure also served as the sample size since it could be managed. 69 out of the 73 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire, indicating a response rate of 95%.

Ethical Statement

Prior to data collection, the participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, research methodology, data analyses and the choice to withdraw at any time without consequences. Their full consent was obtained and only those that obliged were allowed to proceed with this study. This ensured that all the participants understood their involvement and agreed to participate voluntarily.

Results

Table 1: Chi-Square Test on the Effects of Staff Training on Business Performance

Statement	Response	F _o	F _e	Critical Value (X ²)	Statistical Value
Staff training enhances employee performance	Strongly Agree	54	17.25		
	Agree	15	17.25		
	Disagree	-	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	∑	69	69	7.81	113.08
Staff training enhances organizational efficiency	Strongly Agree	49	17.25		
	Agree	18	17.25		
	Disagree	2	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	∑	69	69	7.81	89.20
Staff training improves productivity	Strongly Agree	52	17.25		
	Agree	17	17.25		
	Disagree	-	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	∑	69	69	7.81	104.5

Source: Field Survey, 2025

CHI-SQAURE (X²) TEST

Chi-square (X²) test was used to test the hypotheses. The formula is given thus: $X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$; Where X² = chi-square (X²) test; ∑ = summation; f_o = observed frequency or actual number; and f_e = expected frequency or expected number.

Note:

The statistical test is $X^2 = \sum \frac{(F_o - F_e)^2}{F_e}$

The level of significance used is 5% i.e $\alpha = 0.05$. The degree of freedom is given by $(k - 1)$. That is, $d.f = (k - 1)$, where $k =$ number of options or responses.

Each of the statistical tests/calculated values of chi-square (113.08, 89.20 and 104.4) is greater than the critical value of chi-square (X^2) of 7.81 at degree of freedom of 3 under error margin of 5% (0.05). The null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that staff training indicating that staff training results to improved staff performance, improved organizational efficiency and enhanced productivity. With calculated value at 113.08, staff training impacts positively on employee performance. This supports the views of Rohan and Madhumitan (2012) that investing in training employees on decision making, teamwork, problem-solving and interpersonal relations has beneficial impact on the organizational growth while also impacting on employees' performance. The result also aligns with the opinions of Uzoamaka and Innocent (2017) that for employees to perform their duties and make meaningful contributions to the success of the organizational goals, they need to acquire the relevant skills and knowledge.

Staff training programs contribute significantly to organizational productivity and success. The statistical test value at 89.2 indicates that staff training promotes improved organizational efficiency. Offering continuous training opportunities boosts employee engagement, reduces absenteeism, and leads to higher productivity and profit. This point corroborates the views of Wowledge (2023) that there exists a strong positive connection between training and improvements in employee performance, skill development and productivity; organizations that implement job rotation/training will most likely experience higher performance levels. Statistics from the Association for Talent Development (ATD) affirm that organizations with higher staff training expenses reported 218% more income per staff. Such organizations also witnessed 24% higher profit margins (<http://www.td.org>). Adeyemi *et al.* (2021) assert that constant training for all categories of staff will lead to a positive change in output of an organization; staff training impacts positively on organizational profitability, this shows that as training programmes increase, organizational profitability increases proportionately.

Table 2: Chi-Square Test on the key Challenges of Staff Training to Business Organizations

Statement	Response	F _o	F _e	Critical Value (X ²)	Statistical Value
High cost is a major barrier to staff training	Strongly Agree	56	17.25		
	Agree	13	17.25		
	Disagree	-	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	Σ	69	69	7.81	122.6
Dearth of training professionals affects staff training	Strongly Agree	52	17.25		
	Agree	15	17.25		
	Disagree	2	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	Σ	69	69	7.81	101.02
Inadequate training facilities inhibits effective training	Strongly Agree	47	17.25		
	Agree	20	17.25		
	Disagree	2	17.25		
	Strongly Disagree	-	17.25		
	Σ	69	69	7.81	82.48

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Each of the statistical tests/calculated values (122.6, 101.02 and 82.48) is greater than the critical value (X^2) of 7.81 The null hypothesis was again rejected, suggesting that high cost of training, dearth of training professionals and inadequate training facilities are some key challenges to staff training in Nigerian organizations. Ogbonnaya and Chukwuanukwu (2008) affirm that in Nigeria for instance, only the big organizations that can afford training engage in the training of their staff. Many organizations are unwilling to release the necessary funds to support the Industrial Training Fund (ITF). The result supports the views of Aliu Fatai Oguntade *et al.* (2025) that business organizations should have dedicated budgets for staff training with adequate steps taken to ensure proper utilization of the funds allocated to training programmes. Ogbonnaya and Chukwuanukwu (2008) assert that there is few training staff in many professional areas in Nigeria while the few available resource persons cannot meet the increasing need for occupational training. They maintain that the problem of engineering infrastructure and spare parts has limited training programmes as spare parts may not be very easy to obtain for replacement of damaged parts during training.

Conclusion

Businesses that offer continuous training opportunities experience improved employee engagement, reduced absenteeism, and higher productivity and profit. Thus, staff training programmes contribute significantly to organizational productivity and success. The study concludes that staff training programmes has impacted employee performance, productivity and the overall efficiency of the banks and investing on such programmes is worthwhile.

The findings of this study are a critical guide for managers and other policymakers to design relevant policies and strategies that are required to enhance organizational performance through staff training programmes. This study has contributed to the body of knowledge by establishing a positive relationship between staff training and business performance in the banking sector. The study addresses existing gaps in the literature in Nigerian business contexts. It provides management with valuable insights into staff training practices and their effect on organizational performance. The study focused on the effect of staff training on business performance in the banking sector, ignoring the same concept in other sectors of the economy that require staff training. Therefore, future research studies should focus on the relationship between staff training and business performance in other sectors in Nigeria. The scope of the study was First and Zenith Banks in Afikpo using a small sample size and few dependent variables. Future research studies should enlarge the scope and objectives of study to ensure generality of research findings.

Based on the conclusion, the researchers recommend as follows:

1. Organizations/stake holders should establish dedicated budget for training programmes, making fund available for staff training at all times.
2. Organizations/banks should recruit, develop and deploy more training professionals to effectively transmit skills and knowledge to the trainees and for their overall management.
3. Stakeholders should carry out a continuous review of both the company and individual training needs to identify training gaps.
4. Courses that are relevant to the training needs should be developed and delivered to meet the training gaps identified in the organizations

5. Government should revitalize and reposition her training institutions like CMD, ASCON, ITF, etc. to provide well-mapped out training activities that would improve managerial performance
6. The Information and Communication Technology Department of the banks should be strengthened to impart on the staff the needed skills to meet the challenges of the new decades. This will strengthen the banks' capacity to offer on-line real-time services to their treasured customers.

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