

Employee Training and the Performance of Plastic Products Manufacturing Firms In Nigeria

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Abstract: The study examined the relationship between employee training and the performance of selected plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study was to: determine the extent to which programmed instruction relate to increase in sales volume and determine the extent to which computer/simulated games training relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Descriptive research approach was adopted. Data was collected and analyzed with the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) and the results tested with t-statistics. The findings indicate that programmed instruction relates significantly to increase in sales volume and that computer/simulated games relate significantly to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study concludes that training relates significantly to the performance of plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study therefore recommended that every organisation in Nigeria should train her employees using programmed instruction and computer/simulated games techniques as intervention strategies for organizational performance. Finally, to achieve optimal result from training exercise and ensuring the sustenance of competitive advantage, management should lay emphasis on appropriate training programmes relevant to the organisation, job specific and embarked on such when and where the need arises.

Keywords: Employee Training Organizational Performance Nigeria

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I. Introduction

The records of ancient Egypt, Greece and Roman contain references to the passing on of skills from one generation to the others thus, indicating training. As early as 2100 B.C, the Babylonian code of Hammurabi had made explicit provisions for artisans to teach youths through some form of apprenticeship. Usman (2014) state that the oldest form of training in industry is the apprenticeship system which was developed in the middle ages by the trade guilds. In Nigeria, a variety of organizations have increasingly recognized the potential of employee's training as a source of gaining competitive advantage. Mckinsey (2006) stated that training exercise improves capabilities, knowledge and skills of an organization's workforce as a major source of competitive advantage in a global market. In order to prepare workers to do the job as required, organization's management some times provide for employee training in areas of needs so as to optimize worker's potentials and ensure the survival of the organisation.

Most firms in Nigeria adopt and apply long term planning, investing in building new skills of the workforce, enabling them to cope with the vague conditions that they may face in the future. Training as organizational initiated strategy is aimed at developing the employees' effectiveness, cognitive and psychomotor skills, that propel them to adopt a crucial method of developing the employee towards enhancing his productivity (Ezeani and Oladele, 2013).

Observation shows that without proper training, employees both new and old would not receive the necessary knowledge to develop the necessary skills required to accomplishing organisational tasks at their maximum level especially in the midst of rapid technological advancement. Training is a critical process which seeks to improve performance of workers in the organisation (Kum, Cowden, and Karodia, 2014). In other words, employee training involves the process of upgrading knowledge, developing skills, bringing about attitude and behavioural changes and improving the ability of the employee to improve organizational performance.

Organizational performance in this context connotes to how effective and efficient managers use organizational resources to satisfy customers, achieve organizational objectives and improves performance. Richard (2009) states that organizational performance encompasses specific areas of firm's outcome namely: Financial performance (profit, return on asset (ROA) and return on investment (ROI); product market

performance (Sales and market shares), and shareholders return (total shareholder return and economic value added). Others include increase in sales volume, sustenance of competitive advantage and managerial performance which is more embrasive. Organisational performance comprises the actual output or result of an organization as measured against its intended output. Ideally, the more employees are trained and are satisfied with their work cum favourable environmental condition, the more they can contribute to the organizational performance. Sustenance of organizational performance is occasioned by training employees (Delery and Doty 1996; and Becker and Huselid, 1998). Therefore, creating value and building capabilities to sustain organizational performance is the basis for every training programme which is one of the assumptions of the resource-based theory (Penrose, 1959, Barney, 1991).

In organisation management, many techniques to employee training by way of conventional methods involving on-the-job and off-the-job training are usually adopted. The new methods involve the application of new technologies and adapting to innovative training techniques such as programmed instruction (PI), computer and simulated games, role playing and audio-visual tools among others. These contemporary techniques seem to be more effective and currently being used in training curriculums. To improve training methods, these modern approaches are combined with the traditional methods such as mentoring, coaching, conferences, lectures, case studies in some cases as effective means of training in organizations Accordingly, which ever training method(s) organization adopts, they still have an impact on performance but the one pertinent question one may ask is to what extent? especially in Nigerian plastic products manufacturing firms.

These plastic products manufacturing firms specifically in South East Nigeria include: Ezenwa Plastic, Onitsha in Anambra State; C. C. Star Plastic Manufacturing Firm Onitsha; Adaobi Plastic Industry Aba; Inammel Plastic Industry, Onitsha; Double Diamond plastics industry, Aba in Abia State; Gincol Plastic industry, Owerri; Innoson Technical and Industrial Company, Ltd, Emene Enugu; Syndivel Plastic Industry, Nkpor; Elplastic Industry, Aba and Rakp Plastic Container Ltd., Onitsha. These firms produces plastic wares such as polythene bags, plastic buckets, bottles carrier, chairs, PVC angle pipes and brackets and others.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, some plastic products manufacturing firms adopt programmed instruction (PI), computer and simulated games (CSG), role playing and audio-visual (RPAV) methods cum the conventional methods of training their employees. The prime motive was to enhance employee's expertise that may result in achieving increase in sales volume, high return on investment, gaining and sustaining competitive advantage among others. Of a great concern is that most of the employees slated for training in Nigeria always places more priority on the monetary benefit accruing from such training exercise. Consequently, the purported trained employees pragmatically fail to demonstrate to a large extent what they have been trained for; with the result that the expected positive outcome of the training exercise are not achieved and this in many occasion results in the total collapse of the firm. This singular attitude of trainee cum the subsequent collapse of many organisations seems to undermine the credibility of the training programmes occasionally organised by Nigerian firms. The inability of the trainees to achieve the high expected results cast doubts on the efficacy of the programmes using modern techniques, hence the need to verify the veracity or otherwise of the training exercise in Nigerian using ten (10) plastic products manufacturing firms.

Objective of the Study

The main objective is to determine the extent to which employee training relate to organisational performance in Nigeria. The specific objectives are:

- (i) To determine the degree to which programmed instruction relate to increase in sales volume in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria.
- (ii) To determine the extent to which computer/simulated games training relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Research Questions

Two research questions were formulated based on the objectives to assist in the development of the hypotheses.

- (i) To what degree does programmed instruction significantly relate to increase in sales volume in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria?
- (ii) To what extent does computer/stimulated games training significantly relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses:

The following research hypotheses stated in null format were formulated to serve as a guide to the investigation.

H₀₁: Programmed instruction on employees does not significantly relate to increase in sales volume in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria

H0₂: Computer/stimulated games training does not significantly relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Concept of Employee Training

Employee training is considered as a strategy to upgrading the knowledge, developing skills, bringing about attitude and behavioural change, and improving the ability of the trainee to perform tasks effectively and efficiently in organizations (Robert, and John, 2004). Training is defined as the practice of equipping employees with the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities, with the aim of building organizational capabilities and increase organizational performance (Armstrong 2010). The term 'training' not only develops the capabilities of the employee but also sharpen their thinking acumen and creative ability to making better decision in more proactive and productive manner. Massod (2010) and Khanfar (2011) argued that training is an active means to enabling individual to make use of his potential capability. Obisi (2001) agree that training is a process through which the skills, talent and knowledge of an employee is enhanced

Armstrong (2009), expressing his understanding of training, emphasizes that training should be organized within an organization by appreciating learning theories and approaches if the training is to impact on performance.

Obisi (2001) in his own view argues that training should take place only when the needs and objectives for such training have been identified. Training is the planned attempt by an organization to facilitate employee learning of job-related knowledge, skills and behaviours (Dennis and Griffin, 2005). In other words, training is a learning activity directed towards the modification of behaviour by way of learning events and programmes which results in the applicants attaining the needed levels of knowledge, skills, competences and ability to carryout their work effectively. It brings incumbent to the level of effectiveness and must be based on the needs of the firm and tailored towards the survival of the organization and enhancing productivity. Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) argue that training increase productivity, improves quality of work, increase skills, knowledge, develop the attitude; enhance using tools, reduce waste, mishaps, turnover, lateness and also other overhead costs, and eradicate obsolesces.

Organizational Performance

The term performance has been variously defined by writers and scholars arising from their perception of "organisational performance". According to Cook and Hunsaker (2001), performance refers to those behaviours that have been evaluated or measured as to contributing to organizational goals. Achieving organisational goal is an evidence of effective and efficient training which modifies employee's behaviour. In the same vein, organizational performance involves the recurring activities to establish organizational goals, monitor progress towards the goals and make adjustment where necessary to achieve those goals more effectively and efficiently (Zheng, Yang and Mclean, 2010).

Organizational performance is connected to the ideas of effectiveness and efficiency. Jones (2005) suggests that the two overriding issues of efficiency and effectiveness are employed in the measurement of performance in every organization. Effectiveness measures the degree to which business organizations achieve its goals or the way outputs interact with the economic and social environments. More often than not, effectiveness determines the policy objective of the organization or the degree to which an organization realizes its goals (Zheng, Yang and Mclean, 2010). Efficiency measures the relationship between inputs and outputs or how successfully the inputs have been transformed into outputs (Low, 2000). The fewer the inputs used to generate outputs, the greater the efficiency. Aswathappa (2008) indicates that performance is essentially the result of tasks performed and added that employee performance includes: quality of output, quantity of output, timeliness of quality and cooperativeness which could result in organizational performance. Others may include increase in sales volume, high return on investment, and increase in profit.

Atogiyire and Turkson (1997) posit that the quality of business resources may have an effect on its performance and further suggested that the nature of the prevailing economic factors surrounding an organization, might to a large extent affect the performance of that organization in terms of productivity, investment, marketing, profitability and innovation. But the threat of these economic factors can be moderated by highly trained workforce to sustain performance.

Employee Training and Organizational Performance

A sizeable body of researches has examined the effect of employee training on organizational performance (Black and Lynch, 1995 and Tharenou, Saks and Moore, 2007). The need for renewed attention to employee training is due to its ability to cut cost and reduce performance shortfalls in organizations (Huselid, 1995). On several occasions, it has been proved that, there is a strong link between various training and organizational performance (Delery and Doty, 1996; Becker and Huselid, 1998), and that it is a tool for cost cutting and value creation in organizations (Cascio, 2000). Similarly, training facilitates the achievement of

corporate strategy and improves organizational performance especially for learning organizations (Delery and Doty 1996). So training should be aligned to organizational strategy in order to achieve high performance in those organizations.

Barzegar and Shahroz (2011) state that the most important impact of training on employees and organization performance is to improve employee expertise, the quality and quantity of organization's output, increase in the organization's profitability, safeguarding the organization stability, minimizing the risk among others. Trained employee achieved the long term goals which are valuable for the organization success. To improve training methods, the contemporary approaches are combined with the traditional methods such as mentoring, coaching, conferences, lectures; case studies are effective means of training in organizations (Armstrong, 2010).

Rothwell (1994) argue that training increases employees' propensity to perform and subsequently contributes to the firms' performance. Organizational performance is measured through financial and non-financial variables such as sale, profit, and market share and non-financial factors measured are efficiency, quality of service, productivity of organization, satisfaction of employee and commitment (Aldamoe, Yazam and Almed 2012). Organizations that integrate training practices into their business planning enhance their own performance (Tzafirir, 2006). Collins, Buhelis and Peters (2003) citing Evans and Lindsay (1999) added that, those organizations that train employees' reduce employees' turnover rate. Employer that provides training raises productivity and performance measured by almost 16% (Black and Lynch 1996 citing Bishop 1994). Moreover, the above empirical findings suggest that organizations that train their employees consistently have better outcomes than those that do not train. Huang (2001) agreeing to the finding of Bishop (1994) indicates that training can be a powerful driving force for firm's expansion as well as building capabilities, and subsequently firms' productivity and profitability.

Empirical Evidences on the Effect of Employee Training on Organizational Performance

Organisational performance is a function of training as established by many writers. For instance, Raza (2014) in his study on "training and development on organizational performance, empirical evidence from oil and gas sector in Pakistan" sought to determine the relationship between training and development and its impact on organizational performance. Primary data were gathered. Analysis of data revealed that organizational performance has been enhanced by the strategic training and development alignment, manager's active participation as well as effective design, implementation and evaluation of training and development programs.

Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan and Hashim (2014) conducted a study on the impact of training on employee's performance and productivity in United Bank Limited, Peshawar City KPK Pakistan. Data collected through primary source was analyzed. The major finding was that there was a significant relationship between training and employee performance and productivity, and recommended that banks should invest in staff training.

Nganga, Weru, Iravo and Sakwa (2013) made an analytical study on the relationship between training and development on performance of state owned corporation in Kenya. The study adopted an explanatory research design. A sample of 145 respondents was selected for the study. The data collected were analyzed using correlation coefficient. The findings established a positive correlation between training and development and organizational performance. Guru, Oni, Tsado and Ajayi (2013) conducted a study titled "The empirical study of training and development as a tool for organizational performance using some selected banks in Nigeria". Primary data was generated through the use of questionnaire. A sample of 395 respondents from the population of 3386 was drawn from the five banks. Data collected were analyzed with multiples regression. Findings revealed that there is a positive correlation between training and development of employee and organizational performance.

Shaheed, Naqvi and Khan (2013) conducted a study titled "Employee training and organizational performance: Mediation by employee performance". 220 employees were surveyed. Data collected were analyzed with correlation analysis technique using SPSS 20 version software. The result revealed significant and positive relationship exist between training and organizational performance.

One divergent view comes from Westead and Storey (1996) who found that the relationship between employee training and organizational performance is not significant. They argued that the reasons for the absence of positive impact might be the poor quality of the training provided. Wynarczyk, Watson, Storey, Shbort and Keasey (1993) in their study were unable to find a link between organizational performance and the provision of training. Marshall, Aldermann, Wrong and Thwaiters (1995), Tan (1996) and Kitching (1998) also found that there is a weak direct relationship between training and firm's performance. However, whether there is a strong or weak link between these two concepts requires critical investigation.

Theoretical Framework

This work is based on the human capital theory proposed by Schultz in 1961 and developed by Becker in 1964. Human capital theory suggests that education and training raises the productivity of workers by

impacting useful knowledge and skills, hence raising workers' future income by increasing their life earning. The implication of this theory is that trained employees perform better than untrained employees and as such very relevant to this study.

II. Methodology

This study adopted correlational research design that provided the investigation with necessary procedures used to arrive at various conclusions. The population of the study was 170 consisting of management of the firms under investigation. This number was equally adopted as the sample size. Questionnaire was structured using Likert five point scales coded 'Strong agree' (SA=5), 'Agree' (A=4), 'Disagree' (D=3), 'Strongly disagree' (SD=2) and 'Indifference' (I=1) and administered on the respondents. Out of 170 distributed questionnaires, 129 were retrieved and used for analyses. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) was applied to determine the relationship existing between the operationalized variables and further tested the hypotheses with the t-statistics (tr).

Questions used to Generate Data for Testing of Hypothesis 1:

Q 8: Programmed instruction is designed to improve employee expertise so as to increase the sales volume in your plastic products manufacturing firms.

Q 9: Increase in sales volume in your firm was as a result of programmed instruction adopted by the firm to train the employee.

Table 1: Summary of Responses to Questions 8 and 9 Relating to Hypothesis 1

Number	Responses to Question 8 (X)	Responses to Question 9 (Y)
129	509	517

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 1 shows the scaled and summarized responses to questions 8, programmed instruction (independent variable, X) and 9, increase in sales volume (dependent variable, Y) relating to hypothesis one generated from the survey of ten (10) plastic firms under investigation.

Questions Used to Generate of Data for Testing of Hypothesis 2

Q 12: Computer/simulated games training is meant to boast the employee's proficiency that give rise to high return on investment in your firm

Q 13: High return on investment in your firm was as a result of computer/simulated games training adopted by your firm

Table 2: Summary of Responses to Questions 12 and 16 Relating to Hypothesis 2

Number	Responses to Question 12 (X)	Responses to Question 13 (Y)
129	522	534

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 shows the scaled and the summarized responses to questions 12 on computer/simulated games training (independent variable, X) and 13, return on investment (dependent variable, Y) relating to hypothesis two generated from the survey of plastic firms under investigation.

Hypotheses Testing:

Correlation coefficient (r), coefficient of determination (r^2), and t-statistic at the critical values of t on 0.05 levels of significance were determined in testing hypothesis 1

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis (H_0) if the computed t_r is greater than the t critical value of 1.96 (table value) at 5% level of significance and degree of freedom, df, equal to n-2, otherwise, accept the alternate (research) hypothesis (H_A).

Statement of Hypotheses 1

H_{01} : Programmed instruction on employees does not relate significantly to increase in sales volume in your plastic products manufacturing firm.

H_{A1} : Programmed instruction on employees relates significantly to increase in sales volume in your plastic products manufacturing firm.

Data and Computation of: r, r^2 and t_r

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis 1 (Summary of Data Derived from Table 1)

No	X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
n=129	Σx=506	Σy=517	Σxy=2141	Σx ² =2142	Σy ² =2231

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 3 presents a summarized data of independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y) computed to test hypothesis 1 as derived from Table 1. The number of respondents is equal to n= 129, Σx =506, Σy= 517, Σxy=2141, Σx²=2142, and Σy²=2231
 Computation of Correlation Coefficient:

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{n \sum (xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n (\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2] [n (\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{129(2141) - (506)(517)}{\sqrt{[129 (2142) - (506)^2] [129 (2231) - (517)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{14587}{\sqrt{(276189 - 256036)(287799 - 267289)}} \\
 &= \frac{14587}{\sqrt{(20153)(20501)}} \\
 &= \frac{14587}{20326} = 0.7177
 \end{aligned}$$

Coefficient of determination $r^2 = (0.72)^2 = 0.5184$

Computation of t_r value: $= \frac{r \sqrt{N - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - r^2}}$

Substituting r and N with 0.72 and 127 values, we have:

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_r &= \frac{0.72 \sqrt{129 - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - (0.72)^2}} \\
 &= \frac{0.72 \sqrt{(127)} \sqrt{(1 - 0.5184)}}{\sqrt{1 - (0.72)^2}} \\
 &= \frac{0.72 \sqrt{(127)} \sqrt{0.4816}}{\sqrt{1 - (0.72)^2}} = 11.69
 \end{aligned}$$

For Hypothesis 1, r = 0.72, r² = .5184 and $t_r = 11.69$

Decision Rule:

At 0.05% level of significance and 2 degree of freedom (df), H₀₁ ought to be rejected if the calculated t_r value is greater than the critical value of 1.96 (table value).

Decision:

For fact that the alpha value (0.05) of 0.72 and computed t_r value of 11.69 is greater than 1.96, the study reject the null hypothesis (H₀₁), which states that programmed instruction on employees does not significantly relates to increase in sales volume in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria and accept the alternate hypothesis.

Test of Hypothesis 2

Statement of the Hypothesis:

H₀₂: Computers/simulated games training does not relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria

HA₂: Computers/simulated games training relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Data and computation of: r, r² and t_r

Table 4: Test of Hypothesis 2 (Summary of Data Derived from Table 2)

No	X	Y	XY	X ²	Y ²
n=129	∑x=522	∑y=534	∑xy=2233	∑x ² =2232	∑y ² =2313

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4 presents the summarized data of independent variable (X) and dependent variable (Y) computed to test hypothesis 2. The number of respondents is equal to n= 129, ∑x =, ∑y= 522, ∑xy=534, ∑x² =2233, and ∑y²=2232 , then the Computation of Correlation Coefficient (r):

$$\begin{aligned}
 r &= \frac{n\sum(xy) - (\sum x)(\sum y)}{\sqrt{[n(\sum x^2) - (\sum x)^2][n(\sum y^2) - (\sum y)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{129(2233) - (522)(534)}{\sqrt{[129(2232) - (522)^2][129(2313) - (534)^2]}} \\
 &= \frac{9309}{\sqrt{(15444)(13221)}} \\
 &= \frac{9309}{14289} = 0.6515
 \end{aligned}$$

Coefficient of determination $r^2 = (0.65)^2 = 0.4225$

Computation of t_r value:

$$t_r = \frac{r \sqrt{N - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - r^2}}$$

Substituting r and N with 0.65 and 129 values, we have:

$$\begin{aligned}
 t_r &= \frac{0.65\sqrt{129 - 2}}{\sqrt{1 - (0.65)^2}} \\
 &= \frac{0.65\sqrt{127}}{\sqrt{1 - 0.4225}} \\
 &= \frac{0.65\sqrt{127}}{0.5775} = 9.64
 \end{aligned}$$

For Hypothesis two, r = .65, r² = 0.4775 and t_r = 9.64

Decision Rule:

On the basis of 0.05% level of significance and 2 degree of freedom, H₀₂, ought to be rejected if the computed t_r critical value is greater than the critical value of 1.96 (table value).

Since the alpha value (0.05) of 0.65 and computed t_r value of 9.64 is greater than 1.96, the study reject the null hypothesis (H₀₂) which states that computers/simulated games training does not relate to high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria and accept the alternate hypothesis.

Finding

Based on the data analyzed, the study established the fact that programmed instruction on employees significantly relate to increase in sales volume in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria and that computers/simulated games training relates to high return on investment.

III. Conclusion

The study concludes that training by way of programmed instruction on employee increases sales volume and that computer/simulated games method of training improves high return on investment in plastic products manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study concludes that there is a significant relationship between the application of new techniques of employee training and organisational performance in Nigeria.

IV. Recommendation

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. That the every organisation in Nigeria should adopt and train her employees using computer programmed instruction since this new method result in higher increase in sales volume
- ii. Again, that Nigerian organisation should as well adopted computer/simulated games method in training of their employees since this technique increases high return on investment in Nigeria organisations.
- iii. The study further recommends that training by way of using modern techniques should be made the orgaanisational culture as a strategy for retaining relevant expertise and to surmount the turbulences in the competitive business environment.
- iv. That the employees who are slated for training in any form should be more committed to the training exercise rather than attaching more value to monetary benefit accruing from the training programme.

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