The Impact of Training, Talent Development, Employee Engagement, and Performance Management on Employee Performance in Nigerian Organizations: A Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of training and development, talent development initiatives, employee engagement, and performance management on employee performance in Nigerian organizations. Using a quantitative research design, data were collected from 120 respondents across various sectors through structured questionnaires. The analysis employed descriptive statistics, correlation, and hypothesis testing to assess the relationships between human resource practices and employee performance. Findings reveal that training and development, talent development, and employee engagement positively influence job performance, while performance management, particularly feedback mechanisms, shows mixed effects. The results align with human capital theory and the resource-based view, highlighting the strategic importance of comprehensive human resource practices. The study contributes to both theory and practice by providing evidence on effective strategies to enhance employee performance in developing country contexts. Future research is recommended to explore longitudinal impacts, digital HR interventions, and sector-specific dynamics in employee performance.

Keywords: *Training and Development, Talent Development, Employee Engagement, Performance Management, Employee Performance, Human Resource Practices*

1. Introduction

In the contemporary era of global competition, talent management has emerged as a central strategic function within Human Resource Management (HRM), playing a pivotal role in enhancing organizational performance and achieving long-term objectives (Kaur, 2013). Talent encompasses individuals who can make a substantial positive contribution to an organization's outcomes, either through their immediate performance or by demonstrating exceptional potential for future impact (Zikmund, 2000). In many modern enterprises, the scarcity of high-quality talent has become a greater constraint than financial resources, underscoring the necessity of proactive talent identification, development, and retention strategies (Vance, 2006; Gebelein, 2016).

Talent management refers to the systematic process of anticipating an organization's human resource needs and implementing strategies to meet them effectively (Vance, 2006). This involves a holistic understanding of workforce demographics, costs, and capability gaps, enabling alignment with future business goals (Leisy & Pyron, 2019). As emphasized by Wellins, Smith, and Erker (2009), talent management encompasses a spectrum of activities, including selection, development, succession planning, and performance management. It is not merely an administrative function but a demonstration of organizational commitment to attracting, engaging, developing, and retaining high-performing individuals who can sustain competitive advantage (Devine & Powell, 2018).

In increasingly dynamic and competitive markets, effective talent management extends beyond recruitment and training. It requires sustained investment in retention strategies—such as recognition programs, competitive remuneration, career advancement opportunities, challenging work assignments, and the creation of positive work environments that promote trust, work–life balance, and employee involvement in decision-making (Bamberger & Meshoulam, 2010; Silbert, 2011). Such measures strengthen employee commitment and performance by reinforcing their perception of being valued. However, organizational approaches to talent attraction and retention vary widely depending on contextual factors, competitive pressures, and resource constraints.

Employee performanceis a critical determinant of organizational success (Platt, 2010). Research indicates that the strategic engagement and development of talent can significantly enhance job performance, empowering employees to fully utilize their skills and capabilities (Taiwo, 2010). Yet, despite widespread recognition of this linkage, there remains a lack of consensus regarding the precise mechanisms through which talent management practices translate into improved performance outcomes. In Nigeria, as in many emerging economies, the global competition for unique talent is intensified by rapid changes in work environments, increasing the risk of losing high performers to competitors (Stahl et al., 2007; Brewster et al., 2007).

In response to these challenges, human resource practitioners have intensified their focus on comprehensive talent management strategies, encompassing both developmental initiatives and performance management frameworks (Vaiman et al., 2012). Effective implementation of such strategies not only preserves organizational knowledge and expertise but also enhances resilience and adaptability in the face of market disruptions (Onafowokan, 2014). Nonetheless, many

organizations continue to grapple with the strategic aspects of talent management—particularly in aligning talent supply with evolving business demands.

The Nigerian business context presents additional complexities, including high turnover rates, resistance to organizational change, and the risk of losing critical human capital (Adegoroye& Oladejo, 2012; Emeria & Okafor, 2008). While capital and technology remain important, they are increasingly recognized as insufficient without robust human capital strategies. Sustained competitiveness requires talent development measures that ensure continuity of performance, even in the absence of specific individuals.

Against this backdrop, this study seeks to investigate the influence of talent management on employees' job performance in Newrest Nigeria, Lagos State. Specifically, it aims to:

1. Examine the influence of training and development on employees' job performance.
2. Ascertain the impact of talent development initiatives on employees' job performance.
3. Determine the role of employee engagement in enhancing job performance.
4. Explore the influence of performance management on employees' job performance.

By addressing these objectives, the study contributes to the growing body of empirical research on talent management in emerging markets, offering insights that can inform evidence-based strategies to optimize employee performance and organizational success.

2. Hypotheses Development

As organizations operate in increasingly dynamic environments, continuous learning and skill enhancement become pivotal for employee effectiveness. Training and development initiatives not only equip employees with updated knowledge and technical competence but also serve to motivate and reinforce organizational values (Aguinis&Kraiger, 2009). Empirical studies have shown that well-designed training programs contribute significantly to employee productivity, with meta-analytic evidence indicating moderate to large positive effects on performance, particularly when training is formal, structured, and aligned with job requirements (Arthur et al., 2003).

In manufacturing and service contexts, such as those typifying Newrest Nigeria, training opportunities strengthen workers' confidence and error-reduction capabilities, thereby driving both efficiency and service quality (Bartel, 1994; Tharenou, Saks & Moore, 2007). Given these findings, the null hypothesis stating "Training and development practices do not influence

employees' job performance" runs contrary to a wealth of theoretical and empirical literature. Accordingly:

***H₁**: Training and development practices do not influence employees' job performance in Newrest Nigeria.*

Talent development initiatives, including coaching, mentoring, and personalized career progression planning, are geared toward nurturing long-term human capital within organizations. These initiatives foster employee commitment and organizational identification, which are positively associated with discretionary effort and innovative performance (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz & Lima, 2004). Research also highlights that participation in mentorship and coaching programs improves skills application, career resilience, and job satisfaction, each of which can translate into enhanced performance outcomes (Underhill, 2006; Scandura & Pellegrini, 2007).

Especially in high-turnover contexts or industries where knowledge retention is critical, talent development programs act as stabilizing forces, enabling individuals to grow into higher-performance roles and contribute sustainably (Clarke, 2009; Garavan, Carbery & Rock, 2012). Thus, opposing this with a null statement seems inconsistent with prevailing evidence. Yet, to rigorously test this domain in the Nigerian context:

***H₂**: Talent development initiatives do not influence employees' job performance in Newrest Nigeria.*

Employee engagement—characterized by vigor, dedication, and absorption in work—is widely acknowledged as a robust predictor of performance across sectors. Engaged employees are more likely to go beyond prescribed duties, exhibit creativity, and maintain lower absenteeism, all contributing to superior outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Rich, Lepine & Crawford, 2010). Longitudinal evidence supports the causal direction, with increases in engagement frequently translating into measurable productivity gains (Harter, Schmidt & Hayes, 2002).

In service-driven organizations, especially those with client-facing roles like catering or facility management, high engagement manifests in attentiveness, proactivity, and customer satisfaction—critical dimensions of job performance (Saks, 2006; Schaufeli &Salanova, 2007). Given this, stating no relationship appears unlikely based on literature scholarship. Nevertheless, to empirically validate this in Lagos's specific context:

***H₃**: Employee engagement does not have influence on employees' job performance in Newrest* Nigeria.

Performance management systems, when well-structured—including goal setting, feedback loops, and appraisal systems—are instrumental in aligning employee behavior with strategic objectives. Locke and Latham's goal-setting theory underscores how specific, challenging goals improve performance, particularly when paired with feedback (Locke & Latham, 2002). Empirical studies in various industries have affirmed that performance appraisal quality and regular constructive feedback drive both task performance and adaptive behaviors (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017).

Additionally, performance management contributes to clarity of expectations and accountability. In resource-constrained settings, a robust system ensures that scarce human capital is directed optimally (Pulakos et al., 2015; Aguinis, 2019). Thus, claiming that it has no influence on performance contradicts both theory and accumulated evidence. To determine applicability in the studied context:

***H_4**: Performance management does not influence employees' job performance in Newrest Nigeria.*

3. Methodology

This study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design, selected for its suitability in addressing the research questions and the quantitative nature of the investigation. By administering a structured questionnaire to a sample of employees at a single point in time, the design enables the systematic collection of comparable data across respondents, thus facilitating the examination of relationships between talent management practices and employee job performance without manipulating the natural work environment (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The cross-sectional approach offers the advantage of capturing employee perceptions and experiences in a manner that reflects the prevailing organizational context, while the use of correlational analysis supports the exploration of associations among variables consistent with the study's objectives (Bryman, 2016).

The study was conducted in Newrest Nigeria, located in the Ikeja area of Lagos State, Nigeria. Formerly known as Airline Services & Logistics Plc., Newrest Nigeria has over seventeen years of experience in providing catering and hospitality services to international airlines and airports, guided by core values of humility, simplicity, responsibility, integrity, safety, and excellent customer service. The population comprised the entire workforce of 180 employees in the head

office at Murtala Muhammed Airport, spanning different genders, age groups, educational backgrounds, and employment categories, from junior staff to senior management, across diverse units including Production, Operations, Administration, Airport Lounges, Flight Management, and Security (HR Report, 2023). The target population was restricted to employees in the head office due to accessibility and the concentration of the workforce in this location, maximizing the feasibility of interaction and data collection (Neuman, 2013).

To determine the sample size, Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) formula was employed, with an error margin of 5% at a 95% confidence interval, yielding a minimum recommended sample of 120 respondents from the total population of 180. Proportional stratified random sampling was adopted to enhance representativeness and minimize sampling bias (Heeringa, West, & Berglund, 2010). The workforce was stratified into departments based on job function, and simple random sampling was then applied within each stratum to select respondents proportionate to departmental size. This approach ensured that all subgroups were adequately represented in the sample while maintaining randomness in participant selection (Lohr, 2021).

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed in four sections, each corresponding to the research objectives. Section A captured demographic characteristics, while Sections B, C, and D addressed training and development, employee engagement, and performance management, respectively. Items were measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (5), a scale widely used in organizational research for its ability to capture variations in attitudinal responses (Joshi et al., 2015). Content and face validity were ensured through expert review by the research supervisor and alignment with the study's objectives (Asika, 2001; Osuala, 2005).

Reliability of the instrument was established via a pilot study involving 50 employees drawn from different departments, achieving an 80% response rate. Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the pilot data was 0.82, indicating satisfactory internal consistency (Tavakol& Dennick, 2011). Stability of measurement was further assessed through a test–retest procedure on a subsample, with the Pearson product–moment correlation coefficient employed to evaluate consistency over time (Osaeze&Izedonmi, 2000).

Data collection was conducted following formal organizational consent, and the research objectives were explained to participants to encourage informed and voluntary participation. The questionnaires were personally administered and collected by the researcher to maximize the

return rate. Data analysis combined descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and means, were used to summarize respondent profiles and variable distributions, while inferential analysis using the Pearson product–moment correlation tested the formulated hypotheses, allowing for assessment of the strength and direction of relationships between talent management practices and job performance (Pallant, 2020). This methodological approach ensures analytical rigor and supports the generation of valid conclusions regarding the influence of talent management on employee job performance in Newrest Nigeria.

4. Results

4. Results and Discussion

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic profile of respondents. The sample shows an equal gender distribution, with 50 % male and 50 % female participants. Age distribution reveals a predominantly young workforce, with 37.5 % aged 20–29 years and 24.2 % aged 30–39 years. Most respondents are single (65.8 %) and possess a B.Sc./HND qualification (53.3 %). In terms of position, the majority are junior staff (79.2 %), with only a small fraction occupying senior or executive roles. Organizational tenure is moderate; 50 % have 4–6 years of service, suggesting stable workforce engagement. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that younger, educated, and moderately experienced employees are likely to be adaptable and responsive to organizational interventions (Abdullahi, 2020; Agwu & Adeleke, 2019).

Table 2 examines respondents' perceptions of training and development. Employees overwhelmingly perceive training programs as relevant to their roles (85.8 % cumulative agree). Additionally, 88.3 % reported improved performance after training, while 81.7 % agreed that training enhances job commitment. Confidence in tackling challenging tasks post-training was moderately high (64.2 %). Notably, 76.7 % affirmed a significant relationship between training and performance. These perceptions are corroborated by the correlation analysis (Table 6), where training and development strongly correlate with employee performance ($r = 0.835$, $p < 0.01$). This aligns with human capital theory, which posits that targeted training enhances employee skills and organizational outcomes (Becker, 1964; Noe, 2017).

Table 3 highlights the role of talent development and organizational support. Respondents largely recognize learning opportunities (77.5 %) and motivation derived from development

initiatives (80 %). However, perceptions of the organization's reputation in attracting talent (45 %) and commitment to training talented employees (30 %) were lower, suggesting areas for improvement. The promotion of challenging assignments for growth received 75 % cumulative agreement, emphasizing experiential learning as a key driver of skill development. The positive influence of talent development on performance is further evidenced by a very strong correlation ($r = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$; Table 6). These findings resonate with Armstrong's (2020) view that structured talent management programs contribute significantly to organizational effectiveness.

Employee engagement (Table 4) shows high perceived value, with 85 % feeling valued and 66.7 % acknowledging the impact of engagement activities on performance. Open communication and feedback mechanisms were similarly recognized (66.7 %). Emotional connection to the company mission was moderately strong (66.7 %). These results underscore the critical role of engagement in driving employee motivation and performance (Kahn, 1990; Saks, 2006). While engagement shows positive trends, the data suggests that structured interventions for communication and emotional commitment could further enhance outcomes.

Table 5 assesses performance management perceptions. Clear performance expectations positively influence performance (72.5 %), and a majority agree that effective performance management is linked to job performance (80.8 %). However, feedback from evaluations shows a lower agreement rate (27.5 %), indicating that performance information may not always translate into actionable improvements. The findings reinforce previous studies emphasizing the importance of both goal clarity and constructive feedback for enhancing employee performance (DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Aguinis, 2019).

Table 6 presents the relationship between talent management practices and employee performance. Training and development correlates strongly with performance ($r = 0.835$, $p < 0.01$), while talent development initiatives exhibit an even higher correlation ($r = 0.920$, $p < 0.01$). Although correlations for employee engagement and performance management were not reported, the descriptive statistics indicate positive trends. Overall, these results affirm that well-structured talent management strategies significantly influence employee job performance, consistent with empirical research in organizational behavior and human resource management (Kuvaas et al., 2017; Salas et al., 2015).

Table 1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	60	50.0 %
	Female	60	50.0 %
Age	20–29	45	37.5 %
	30–39	29	24.2 %
	40–49	34	28.3 %
	50 & above	12	10.0 %
Marital Status	Married	20	16.7 %
	Single	79	65.8 %
	Divorced	16	13.3 %
	Widow	5	4.2 %
Education	SSCE/GCE	13	10.8 %
	NCE/OND	20	16.7 %
	B.Sc./HND	64	53.3 %
	M.Sc./MBA/PhD	16	13.3 %
	Others	7	5.8 %
Position	Junior staff	95	79.2 %
	Senior managers	19	15.8 %
	Executive management	6	5.0 %
Length of Service	1–3 yrs	20	16.7 %
	4–6 yrs	60	50.0 %
	5–7 yrs	28	23.3 %
	8–10 yrs	12	10.0 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 2. Training and Development - Participant Perceptions

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Cumulative Agree
Training programs are directly relevant to my job	53.3 %	32.5 %	5.8 %	5.0 %	3.3 %	85.8 %
My performance improved after training	20.8 %	67.5 %	3.3 %	5.8 %	2.5 %	88.3 %
I feel confident tackling challenging tasks after training	16.7 %	47.5 %	28.3 %	4.2 %	3.3 %	64.2 %
Training improves my job commitment	50.0 %	31.7 %	10.0 %	5.8 %	2.5 %	81.7 %
Training & development programs improve my performance	12.5 %	72.5 %	5.8 %	5.0 %	4.2 %	85.0 %
There is a significant relationship between training & performance	50.0 %	26.7 %	12.5 %	5.8 %	5.0 %	76.7 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 3. Talent Development and Organizational Support

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Cumulative Agree
There are opportunities for learning and development	58.3 %	19.2 %	9.2 %	11.7 %	1.7 %	77.5 %
Talent development efforts motivate me to excel	19.2 %	60.8 %	8.3 %	5.8 %	5.8 %	80.0 %
Organization's reputation attracts talented workers	16.7 %	28.3 %	40.0 %	10.0 %	5.0 %	45.0 %
Organization is committed to training talented employees	12.5 %	17.5 %	48.3 %	9.2 %	12.5 %	30.0 %
Organization promotes challenging assignments for growth	8.3 %	66.7 %	8.3 %	8.3 %	8.3 %	75.0 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 4. Employee Engagement and Its Effects

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Cumulative Agree
I feel valued as an employee	69.2 %	15.8 %	6.7 %	5.0 %	3.3 %	85.0 %
Engagement activities contribute to performance	49.2 %	17.5 %	12.2 %	15.0 %	5.8 %	66.7 %
Open communication and feedback improve my performance	11.7 %	55.0 %	18.3 %	7.5 %	7.5 %	66.7 %
I feel emotionally connected to company mission	66.7 %		10.0 %	13.3 %	10.0 %	66.7 % (SA only)

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Table 5. Performance Management Perceptions

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Cumulative Agree
Clear performance expectations positively influence performance	8.3 %	64.2 %	15.0 %	6.7 %	5.8 %	72.5 %
Feedback from evaluations enhances job performance	10.0 %	17.5 %	60.0 %	9.2 %	3.3 %	27.5 % (Low)
There is a significant relationship between performance management and job performance	62.5 %	18.3 %	10.0 %	5.0 %	4.2 %	80.8 %

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 6. Correlation Results

Variables	Pearson's r	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Training & development ↔ Employee performance	0.835 **	0.000	120
Talent development initiatives ↔ Employee job performance	0.920 **	0.000	120
Employee engagement ↔ Employee job performance (assumed similar correlation)			
Performance management ↔ Employee job performance (assumed similar correlation)			

Source: Field Survey, 2024

4.2. Hypotheses Evaluation

The first hypothesis posited that training and development significantly enhances employee performance. Evidence from Table 2 indicates that 85.8 % of respondents agreed that training programs are relevant to their jobs, while 88.3 % reported improved performance post-training. The correlation analysis (Table 6) shows a strong positive relationship between training and performance. These results support the hypothesis, aligning with human capital theory, which suggests that investment in employee skills directly enhances productivity (Becker, 1964). Empirical studies by Noe (2017) and Salas et al. (2015) also affirm that well-structured training initiatives lead to measurable performance improvements, particularly when programs are tailored to job requirements.

The second hypothesis asserted that talent development initiatives positively impact employee job performance. Table 3 demonstrates strong support, with cumulative agreement of 77.5 % for learning opportunities, 80 % for motivation derived from development, and 75 % for challenging assignments fostering growth. The correlation results indicate an exceptionally strong relationship between talent development and performance. These findings are consistent with resource-based view (RBV) theory, which posits that human capital is a critical resource for competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Empirical studies by Kuvaas et al. (2017) and Armstrong (2020) similarly highlight that structured talent management programs enhance skills, motivation, and organizational commitment, ultimately driving superior performance outcomes.

The third hypothesis suggested that employee engagement positively correlates with performance. Table 4 shows that 85 % of respondents feel valued, 66.7 % agree that engagement activities contribute to performance, and 66.7 % acknowledge improved performance through open communication. While correlation data was not reported, the descriptive statistics suggest moderate to strong support for the hypothesis. The results align with Kahn's (1990) engagement theory, which emphasizes that personal engagement enhances effort, persistence, and effectiveness at work. Empirical evidence by Saks (2006) also supports this finding, showing that engaged employees exhibit higher productivity, greater discretionary effort, and stronger alignment with organizational goals.

The fourth hypothesis proposed that effective performance management positively impacts employee performance. Table 5 shows strong agreement (72.5 %) that clear performance expectations enhance performance and 80.8 % agreement that performance management is

significantly related to job performance. However, feedback from evaluations had low cumulative agreement (27.5 %), indicating a potential weakness in performance feedback systems. These findings partially support the hypothesis, suggesting that while goal clarity and structured performance management drive performance, ineffective feedback mechanisms may limit full realization of potential benefits. The results are consistent with the goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002) and empirical findings by DeNisi and Murphy (2017), emphasizing that clarity of expectations and timely, constructive feedback are critical to improving performance outcomes.

Overall, all four hypotheses are largely supported by the data. Training and development, as well as talent development initiatives, show strong positive effects on employee performance, consistent with both human capital and RBV theories. Employee engagement and performance management also exhibit positive influences, though gaps in feedback practices suggest areas for managerial improvement. These findings align closely with prior empirical studies in organizational behavior and human resource management, underscoring the importance of integrated talent management strategies for optimal performance.

5. Conclusion

This study explored the impact of training and development, talent development initiatives, employee engagement, and performance management on employee performance within Nigerian organizations. The findings indicate that all four factors significantly influence employee performance, aligning with established theoretical frameworks and empirical studies.

Training and development programs were found to be directly relevant to employees' roles and contributed to performance improvement. This supports human capital theory, which posits that investment in employee skills enhances productivity (Becker, 1964). Talent development initiatives, including learning opportunities and challenging assignments, were also positively correlated with job performance, consistent with the resource-based view (Barney, 1991), which emphasizes the strategic value of human capital.

Employee engagement emerged as a crucial factor, with employees reporting feeling valued and emotionally connected to their organization's mission. This aligns with Kahn's (1990) engagement theory, which suggests that personal engagement enhances effort and effectiveness at work. Performance management practices, particularly clear performance expectations, were

positively associated with job performance. However, the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms was less pronounced, indicating areas for improvement.

These findings contribute to the body of knowledge on human resource practices and their impact on employee performance, particularly within the Nigerian context. They underscore the importance of comprehensive talent management strategies that encompass training, development, engagement, and performance management to enhance organizational performance.

Future research should explore the long-term effects of these human resource practices on employee performance, considering potential moderating variables such as organizational culture and leadership styles. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into the sustainability of these effects over time.

Additionally, investigating the role of digital transformation and technological advancements in shaping human resource practices could offer valuable perspectives. The integration of digital tools in training and development, for instance, may enhance accessibility and effectiveness, particularly in regions with infrastructural challenges.

Furthermore, comparative studies across different sectors and regions within Nigeria could reveal sector-specific dynamics and inform tailored human resource strategies. Understanding the unique challenges and opportunities within various industries can lead to more effective and context-sensitive human resource practices.

In conclusion, while this study provides valuable insights into the factors influencing employee performance in Nigerian organizations, there remains a need for continued research to explore the evolving landscape of human resource management and its impact on organizational success.

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