

## HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF OIL FIRMS IN PORT HARCOURT, RIVERS STATE

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### Abstract

*The study examined the relationship between human resource training and employee performance of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State. The study was operationalized - human resource training as the predictor variable with dimensions of on-the-job training, off-the-job training and transfer of skill while employee performance as the criterion variable with measures of quality service delivery, innovativeness and cost reduction. The study adopted Cross-sectional survey research design. The population of the study consisted of twenty-six (26) oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The sample size for the study was 280 respondents selected from the twenty-six (26) oil firms under survey in Port Harcourt, this sample size was determine using Taro-Yamen. Structured questionnaire was used for data collection for this study. 280 questionnaire was administered, 240 was retrieved, 40 unretrieved and 235 of the questionnaire was utilized. The inferential statistical tool, the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (Rho), was used in the test of the bivariate hypotheses, while the Partial Correlation Technique was used in the test for the multivariate hypothesis, using SPSS version 24. The study revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery, there is a significant relationship between off the job training and innovativeness, there is a significant positive relationship between transfer of skills and cost reduction. The study concluded that there is a positive relationship between human resource training and employee performance of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State. The study recommended among others that oil firms should invest in robust on-the-job training programs that provide employees with practical skills and knowledge directly relevant to their daily tasks.*

**Keywords:** *Human Resource Training, On-the-job training, Off-the-job training, transfer of skills, Employee Performance, Quality Service Delivery, Innovativeness and Cost Reduction.*

### INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a critical determinant factor of organizational success, especially in the oil and gas industry, where the stakes are high due to the technical nature of the work and the potential risks involved. Employees are major assets of any organization. The active role they play towards a company's success cannot be underestimated. As a result, equipping these unique assets through effective training becomes imperative in order to maximize the job performance. Also position them to take on the challenges of the today's competitive business climate. Employees are blood stream of any business. The accomplishment or disaster of the firm depends on its employee performance. Hence, top management realized the importance of investing in training and development for the sake of improving employee performance. (Oladipo, 2022).

Human resource is a crucial but expensive resource and therefore in order to sustain economic and effective performance of this resource, it is important to optimize their contributions to the achievement of the goals and objectives of the organisation through training of their employees. Training is therefore necessary to ensure an adequate supply of employees that are technically and socially competent for both departmental and management positions (Mullins, 2007). The human resource of any organisation is that which is expected to bring about the competitive difference,

since the success or failure of an organisation is dependent on the quality of this resource as well as its orientation. Training is very important component of every human resource development practice. For employees to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently, they must have the relevant skills, knowledge, attitudes and competencies as well as understand the organisation's culture and values. Most essentially, new employees may not have all the relevant competencies usually required for successful or excellent performance of their jobs. While on the job, employees need to be updated through training and at times development to acquire competencies they did not have at the time of appointment.

Human Resource Training is fundamental in shaping employees' capabilities and enhancing their performance within organizations. Effective training programs equip employees with necessary skills and knowledge, thus addressing skill gaps and improving job performance (Noe, 2017). In the context of the oil industry, which demands high technical skills and adaptability to technological advancements, ongoing training becomes crucial. Armstrong and Taylor (2014) emphasize that well-designed training programs, including on-the-job training and specialized workshops, are essential for maintaining competency and operational efficiency. In Port Harcourt, where oil firms face unique challenges related to safety and compliance, targeted training initiatives are particularly significant (Yukl, 2013). These programs not only support employees in meeting industry standards but also foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Training interventions directly impact employee performance by enhancing their abilities and increasing their confidence in their roles (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). Research indicates that effective training leads to higher job satisfaction and better performance outcomes by aligning employees' skills with job requirements (Baldwin & Ford, 2019). For instance, training programs that incorporate practical, hands-on experiences are more likely to translate into improved job performance (Colquitt *et al.*, 2000). In the oil sector in Port Harcourt, where complex operations and regulatory requirements are prevalent, investing in comprehensive training can significantly enhance operational efficiency and employee effectiveness (Noe, 2017).

Employee Performance is a critical aspect of organizational success and is influenced significantly by the quality and extent of training programs. Performance encompasses various dimensions, quality service delivery, innovativeness, and overall cost reduction (Robinson & Judge, 2013). Effective training programs aim to improve these performance metrics by addressing skill deficiencies and enhancing employees' competencies (Borman & Motowidlo, 2007). In the oil industry, high-performance standards are essential due to the sector's demanding nature and the need for adherence to safety and operational protocols. Consequently, well-structured training programs can lead to significant improvements in employee performance by aligning employees' skills with the company's goals and operational demands (Colquitt *et al.*, 2000).

Studies have demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between training and employee performance, as training initiatives contribute to increased productivity and job satisfaction (Baldwin & Ford, 2018). The implementation of effective training programs leads to better job performance through enhanced skills and knowledge application (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016). In Port Harcourt's oil firms, where operational efficiency and adherence to industry standards are critical, the impact of human resource training on employee performance is particularly pronounced. This relationship highlights the importance of investing in training programs to foster a competent and high-performing workforce (Robinson & Judge, 2013).

According to Ansa (2019), training and development activities ensure that organisations have the knowledgeable, skilled, engaged and committed workforce it needs to compete favourably in order to achieve its goals and objectives. Again, the world is now a global village and thus the speed at which technology changes necessitates a constant honing of employees knowledge, skills, abilities and competencies in order to cope with the new processes and systems. With globalization, jobs that previously required minimal skills are now being replaced by jobs that require technical, interpersonal and problem-solving skills.

Human resource training is crucial in ensuring that employees possess the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their roles effectively. Training programs in the oil industry are designed to enhance technical skills, improve safety practices, and foster a culture of continuous improvement (Ukandu & Ukpere, 2011). Effective training initiatives can lead to increased employee productivity, higher job satisfaction, and reduced turnover rates, thereby contributing to the overall performance and sustainability of oil firms (Armstrong, 2012).

Despite the significant investment in human resource development, there is a persistent gap in the understanding of how these training programs impact employee performance in the oil sector. Previous studies have highlighted the importance of training but have often lacked a specific focus on the oil industry in Port Harcourt (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009). This study aims to fill this gap by examining the relationship between human resource training and employee performance in oil firms operating in this region.

Oil firms in Port Harcourt's face unique challenges, including technological advancements, stringent regulatory requirements, and fluctuating market conditions. These challenges necessitate continuous training and development to ensure that employees are equipped to adapt and respond effectively (Ezigbo, 2012). Moreover, the dynamic nature of the oil industry requires a strategic approach to training, integrating both technical and soft skills to enhance overall performance.

Training methods employed by oil firms vary widely, ranging from on-the-job training and mentoring to formal classroom-based instruction and e-learning platforms. The effectiveness of these methods in improving employee performance depends on several factors, including the relevance of the training content, the delivery methods, and the extent to which the training is aligned with organizational goals (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Understanding these factors is essential for developing training programs that not only meet the immediate needs of employees but also contribute to long-term organizational success.

Human resource training constitutes one of the major strategies aimed at enhancing work performance. Harold (2013) observed that most contemporary organizations are floating like balloons on the sea and like a ship without a rudder because they are yet to imbibe and sustain efficient and effective human resource training practices and policies aimed at improving performance of their workers. This study is therefore aimed at determining the need for organisations, mostly those in the oil industry to imbibe human resource training culture in their employees for effective job performance for the organisation to stand at competitive advantage.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Employee underperformance has become a significant concern for oil firms in Port Harcourt Metropolis, as it directly impacts operational efficiency, customer satisfaction, and overall profitability. In recent years, many organizations in this sector have struggled with issues related to poor customer service, where employees fail to meet client expectations, leading to dissatisfaction and loss of business (Chukwu, 2023). Additionally, there have been numerous instances of tasks not being completed within the required timeframes, resulting in delays that disrupt project timelines and incur substantial financial penalties (Eze, 2022). Furthermore, cost inefficiency has been a recurring problem, where employees misuse resources or fail to optimize processes, thereby increasing operational costs and reducing the competitive edge of these companies (Okoro, 2023). These challenges have raised serious concerns about the effectiveness of the workforce in meeting the demands of a highly competitive and technically demanding industry.

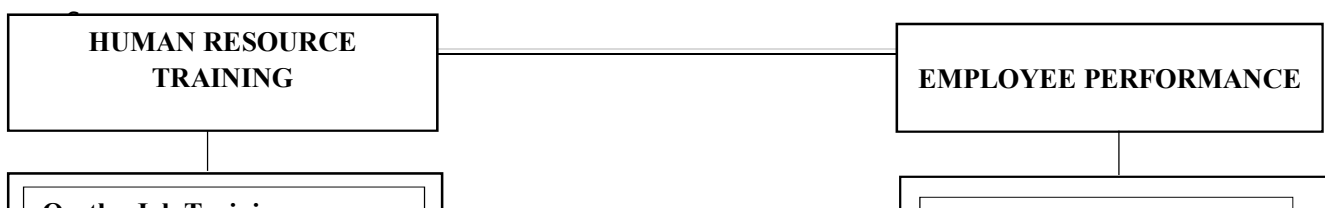
In many modern organizations, including oil firms, employee performance has suffered due to a lack of attention or outright neglect in equipping workers with the necessary skills, competencies, and expertise needed for their daily tasks. Firms that fail to invest in comprehensive training for their employees are at disadvantage compared to those that prioritize staff development. In oil firms, the perceived signs of employee underperformance often include decreased operational efficiency, frequent errors, and a lack of adherence to industry standards, all of which can be mitigated through effective training programs.

Most organisations are yet to understand the importance of effective human resource training in their firms. This has consequently resulted to mediocre and inexperienced workers who have little or nothing to offer for corporate performance and growth of their organizations. This negligence has negative consequences on the organisation itself. Due to this lack of an effective human resource management strategy, employees may feel that such negative situations will not improve. As such, this will likely damage workplace morale and performance (Visgar, 2019). Little or no training of employees may have dangerous effect on the productivity and performance of workers in the organization. Performance and productivity of employees will be reduced.

Consequently, unproductive employees will not be engaged in their specific job responsibilities or duties. Some of the things that lead to an unproductive workplace could however range from lack of change, lack of motivation and poor management strategies. Yvonne (2017) posited that the success of every business depends on so many things, one of which is strategic human resource training. Negligence of training has a long-term and immediate influence on management policies, employee recruitment, corporate profitability and organizational functioning. Employees may not have the best interest of the organisation at heart in absence of good human resource department that will spearhead the training process. This again, can result to poor decision making processes and costly mistakes on the part of the worker. If this problem is not tackled head on, organisations will have a bunch of unskilled, untalented manpower.

The gap we aim to address focuses on how oil firms can implement and sustain effective human resource training practices to enhance employee performance at all organizational levels. This is crucial given that many employees in the Nigerian oil sector may be underperforming due to inadequate training and development procedures within their workplaces. This gap in the literature underscores the need for more targeted research that examines how effective human resource training practices can enhance employee performance at all organizational levels in the oil and gas sector. This is the knowledge gap which this study seeks to fill.

### Conceptual Framework



**Figure.1.1:** Conceptual framework showing the relationship between human resource training and employee performance.

**Source:** Researcher’s Conceptualization (2024); Dimensions of human resource training adapted from Cole (2002) and Campbell, (2012), Measures of employee performance adapted from Rabindra and Lalatendu (2016).The moderating variable is organizational culture from Noe (2016) and Dessler (2013)

### **Aim and Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study was to examine the relationship between human resource training and employee performance in Oil Firms in Port Harcourt. Specifically, the objectives of the study include the following:

1. To ascertain the relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State.
2. To investigate the relationship between off-the-job training and innovativeness of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State.
3. To examine the relationship between transfer of skills and cost reduction of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

### **Research Hypotheses**

Based on the research questions posed above, the following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between off-the-job training and innovativeness of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between transfer of skills and cost reduction of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Conceptual Review**

#### **Concept of Human Resource Training**

Human resource training refers to the organized activity aimed at imparting information or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help them attain a required level of knowledge or skill. It is an essential function within human resource management, designed to enhance the capabilities of employees and ensure that they can effectively contribute to the organization's goals (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

Training involves a systematic approach to learning and development to improve individual, team, and organizational performance. It typically includes activities designed to develop skills, increase competencies, and foster personal growth (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). The primary purpose of training is to bridge the gap between the current performance levels and the desired performance levels of employees. Human resource training is the major pillar of performance, productivity and efficiency of employees. Premeaux *et al.* (2019) defines training itself as a planned, continuous effort by management to improve employee competency levels and corporate performance of organisations. Training is designed to provide learners with the knowledge and skills needed for their present jobs. Showing a worker how to operate a lathe or a supervisor how to schedule daily production are examples of training. Training also refers to activities designed to help individual gain knowledge and specific skills in order to help them perform some designated tasks and functions, or to help them update the skills and knowledge already acquired (Nwaeke & Obiekwe, 2017). It represents and includes all activities undertaken to expose an employee to perform additional duties and assume positions of importance in an organizational hierarchy (Nwachukwu, 2006).

Lock (2018) opined in this line that the best way for organizations to develop their employees in order to enhance their motivation, commitment and job involvement on the job is to provide them with effective training program like job rotation, seminars, conferences etc. Beatty *et al.*, (2017) contend that this is an excellent way to develop employees, managers and executives by organizations. Generally, the acquisition of the skills, knowledge and competencies required to perform a task, but means of teachings received.

Training allows employees to acquire new skills, sharpen existing ones, perform better, increase productivity and be better leaders. Since a company is the sum total of what employees achieve individually, organizations should do everything in their power to ensure that employees perform at their peak.

#### **Dimensions of Human Resource Training**

Cole (2002) and Campbell (2017) dissected human resource training into the following dimensions, which may not be exhaustive: On-the-job training, off-the-job training and skill transfer.

##### **1) On-the-job training**

On-the-job training refers to a structured or non-structured system of training that occurs in the workplace (Rothwell & Kazanaz, 2014). It may also be called job instruction training. On the other hand, on the job learning is a knowledge learned on the job without assistance; what the learner does on his/her own to gain information and skills on the job. This is not structured and usually happens without a trainer or organizational control. Unstructured on-the-job training is a more informal system of job shadowing where the trainee follows the trainer around and either observes the work or performs the work. Training and development is important for the maintenance of the human resource base of the organization and must be viewed as an integral part of the core organizational strategy, rather than an ad hoc operation issue" (Rowley, 2015). A lack of training results in a lack of skill to use the knowledge existing in a person, which causes ineffective services, a lack of self-satisfaction, customer dissatisfaction and ensuing lower productivity. ``The provision

of training will foster an increase in professionalism and further exploitation of management methods, whereas a lack of training can cause frustration and lack of job satisfaction" (Pugh, 2014). Well-trained individuals know the scope, expectations and depth of their jobs and will be able to add building blocks to their professionalism as they progress through their careers.

On-the-job training focuses on providing employees with hands-on experience and practical knowledge relevant to their job roles (Jacobs & Washington, 2003). It involves learning by doing, where employees engage directly in tasks and activities under the guidance of experienced mentors or supervisors. This practical application of skills allows employees to develop competency and confidence in performing their duties effectively.

One of the key features of on-the-job training is the immediate feedback and coaching provided to employees as they perform tasks (Landy & Conte, 2016). Supervisors or mentors observe employee performance in real-time, offering guidance, corrections, and encouragement where necessary. This continuous feedback loop facilitates skill development, corrects errors promptly, and reinforces desired behaviors. On-the-job training can be customized to meet the specific needs and learning styles of individual employees (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Since training occurs within the context of the employee's actual job responsibilities, the content and pace of learning can be adjusted to align with the employee's capabilities and development goals. This tailored learning experience enhances engagement and motivation, leading to more effective skill acquisition.

### **Indicators of off-the-job training**

We can vividly conceptualize on-the-job training by taking into consideration the indicators or components that correlate with it in line with human capital development and organizational effectiveness. These indicators are the relevant ingredients that facilitate this training process. These include, but not limited to the following: Coaching, mentoring

### **Coaching**

Coaching is a training or development process through which an individual is supported while achieving a specific personal or professional competence result or goal (Wikipedia, 2021). The individual receiving coaching may be referred to as 'coachee'. Occasionally, the term coaching may be applied to an informal relationship between two individuals where one has greater experience and expertise than the other and offers advice and guidance as the other goes through a learning process, but coaching differs from mentoring by focusing upon competence specifics, as opposed to general overall development. Some coaches use a style in which they ask questions and offer opportunities that will challenge the coachee to find answers from within him/her. This facilitates the learner to discover answers and new ways of carrying out the assigned task based on their values, preferences and unique perspectives. Coaching within the framework of on-the-job training involves one-on-one interaction between a coach (mentor or supervisor) and an employee (Landy & Conte, 2016). The coach provides personalized guidance tailored to the specific needs, strengths, and areas for improvement of the individual employee. This personalized approach ensures that the training experience is relevant and meaningful to the employee's professional development.

Coaches often serve as role models for employees, demonstrating desired behaviors, techniques, and approaches to job tasks (Landy & Conte, 2016). Through observation and emulation, employees learn not only the technical aspects of their job but also the attitudes, values, and professional standards expected in the workplace. This role modeling aspect of coaching helps to instill a culture of excellence and continuous improvement within the organization. Effective coaching in OJT goes beyond mere instruction; it involves motivating and empowering employees to take ownership of their learning and development (Noe, 2013). Coaches inspire employees to set ambitious goals, take on new challenges, and strive for excellence in their performance. By providing encouragement, recognition, and support, coaches foster a positive learning environment where employees feel empowered to succeed.

## **Mentoring**

Mentoring refers to a relationship between a young person and an adult in which the adult provides the young person with support as he faces difficult periods faces new challenges or correct earlier problems. Emecheta (2007). Mentors teach, guide, help, assist, counsel and inspire their protégé. The activities of a mentor revolve around counseling, teaching on the job, protecting, challenging, and helping the protégés, and endorsement of activities, friendship and demonstration of trust. Mentoring activities speeds up socialization in the workplace, encourage mentees social interactions and provide opportunities for quality interpersonal interactions, as well as improve employee's commitment to their organizations. Mentoring as an on-the-job training process is most suitable in the banking industry where newly employed recruits are placed on corporate mentoring and supervision to ensure they are in line with the culture and tradition of effective and efficient service delivery of the banking industry. Few banks selected for this study confirmed that mentoring their new young employees has gone a long way to ensuring their goals and objectives of total quality management is achieved.

Mentoring facilitates the transfer of tacit knowledge from experienced mentors to less experienced mentees (Garavan *et al.*, 2012). Tacit knowledge encompasses practical insights, judgment, and expertise that are difficult to codify or teach through formal training programs. Mentors share their experiences, perspectives, and best practices with mentees, helping them gain a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

One of the primary objectives of mentoring in OJT is to support the professional development and career advancement of mentees (Kram, 2015). Mentors provide guidance on career goals, skill development opportunities, and strategies for success within the organization. They offer advice on navigating organizational politics, building professional networks, and seizing growth opportunities, thereby empowering mentees to progress in their careers. Mentoring involves personalized coaching and feedback tailored to the individual needs and aspirations of mentees (Ragins & Kram, 2007). Mentors observe mentees' performance, identify areas for improvement, and provide constructive feedback to help them develop their skills and competencies. This one-on-one interaction fosters a supportive learning environment where mentees feel valued, encouraged, and empowered to reach their full potential.

Mentors serve as role models for mentees, exemplifying the attitudes, behaviors, and values expected in the workplace (Ragins & Verbos, 2007). Through observation and emulation, mentees learn not only technical skills but also professional etiquette, communication styles, and ethical standards. Mentoring facilitates the socialization of mentees into the organizational culture, helping them adapt to their roles and become productive members of the team. Mentoring relationships often extend beyond formal training sessions, fostering ongoing networking and relationship building between mentors and mentees (Allen & Eby, 2003). Mentors provide access to professional networks, introductions to key stakeholders, and opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. These connections enhance mentees' visibility, credibility, and career prospects within the organization. The aim of corporate mentoring relationship is to help in fulfillment of specific set of organizational functions and goals. It also develops part of organizations planned effort to bring together successful senior employees with less experienced ones, and in grooming experienced incumbent for advancement in the organization (Emecheta, 2007).

## **2) Off-the-Job Training**

Off-the-job training can be described as learning which is undertaken outside of day-to-day work duties and leads towards the achievement of the apprenticeship. This training takes place within the apprentice's normal (contracted) working hours. The off-the-job training must be directly relevant to the apprenticeship. It refers to an education method where employees learn more about their job or the latest advancements in their field at a location away from their workplace. This type of training essentially helps employees perform their job more efficiently. Unlike on-the-job training, off-the-job training can take place near the workplace or somewhere further away, such as at a

resort or at a training center. When employers hold training away from the workplace, it helps minimize distractions which ensure employees can fully focus on the material they're learning. Off-the-job training provides a structured learning environment outside the distractions of the workplace (Noe, 2013). Training sessions are typically conducted in classrooms, seminar rooms, or training centers, where participants can focus solely on acquiring new knowledge and skills without the interruptions of daily work tasks. This structured environment enhances the concentration and engagement of participants, facilitating effective learning.

However, off-the-job training often involves specialized instruction delivered by subject matter experts or professional trainers (Salas *et al.*, 2012). Trainers possess in-depth knowledge and expertise in their respective fields, allowing them to deliver high-quality training content and facilitate meaningful learning experiences. Participants benefit from exposure to diverse perspectives, best practices, and industry insights shared by expert trainers. Incorporates interactive learning activities such as group discussions, case studies, role-playing exercises, and simulations (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). These activities encourage active participation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among participants. Interactive learning fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and application of theoretical concepts to real-world scenarios, enhancing the effectiveness of training.

Off-the-job training provides opportunities for participants to learn about new technologies, tools, and methodologies relevant to their roles (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Training sessions may include demonstrations, hands-on exercises, or use of specialized equipment and software. Participants gain exposure to cutting-edge technologies and best practices in their field, enabling them to stay abreast of industry trends and developments. Facilitates networking and peer learning among participants from different organizations or departments (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). Participants interact with peers from diverse backgrounds, sharing experiences, challenges, and insights. Networking opportunities enable participants to build professional relationships, expand their professional networks, and gain valuable perspectives from their peers. During this type of training, employees express their views and opinions and explore new ideas to bring to the workplace. Before the conclusion of the training, employees typically receive some form of evaluation. For example, they may receive an evaluation that tests their understanding of the knowledge the instructor taught them during the off-the-job training. The evaluation measures the performance and participation of each trainee.

### **Indicators of Off-the-Job Training**

Indicators or components of off-the-job training we need to consider here include, but not exhaustive to the following: Workshop, conferences.

### **Workshops**

Workshops are a popular form of off-the-job training that offer intensive, interactive learning experiences outside the regular work environment. They are designed to provide employees with specific skills and knowledge in a concentrated format, often facilitated by experts or experienced trainers. Workshops provide an intensive learning environment where participants can immerse themselves in the subject matter without the distractions of their daily work responsibilities (Salas *et al.*, 2012). This focused setting allows for a deeper understanding of the material and encourages participants to engage fully in the learning process.

Typically facilitated by experts or experienced trainers who bring a wealth of knowledge and practical experience to the training (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). These facilitators use their expertise to guide discussions, answer questions, and provide insights that are not readily available through other forms of training. The presence of an expert helps ensure that the training is accurate, relevant, and up-to-date. Workshops are highly interactive and often include hands-on activities such as group exercises, role-playing, simulations, and case studies (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). These activities encourage active participation, collaboration, and the application of theoretical concepts to practical

scenarios. Interactive elements of workshops help reinforce learning by allowing participants to practice new skills in a controlled environment. Provide opportunities for peer learning and networking, as participants typically come from different departments or organizations (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). The collaborative nature of workshops allows participants to share experiences, discuss challenges, and learn from each other's insights. Networking opportunities during workshops can lead to valuable professional connections and the exchange of best practices.

### **Conferences**

Conferences are a significant form of off-the-job training that provides employees with opportunities to learn from industry leaders, network with peers, and stay updated on the latest trends and developments in their field. Conferences typically involve a series of presentations, workshops, and discussions over one or more days, often organized around a specific theme or industry sector. It provides participants with access to industry leaders, experts, and influential figures who share their knowledge, experiences, and insights through keynote speeches, panel discussions, and presentations (Noe, 2013). This exposure helps employees gain a broader perspective on industry trends, challenges, and innovations, and learn from the experiences of established professionals.

One of the key benefits of conferences is the opportunity for networking (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014). Participants can connect with peers from different organizations, exchange ideas, discuss common challenges, and build professional relationships. These interactions can lead to future collaborations, partnerships, and professional support networks, which are valuable for career development and organizational growth. Conferences often focus on the latest trends, technologies, and innovations within a specific industry or field (Blanchard & Thacker, 2013). Sessions typically cover cutting-edge research, emerging technologies, and new methodologies, providing participants with up-to-date information that can be applied to their work. This helps organizations stay competitive and employees remain current in their knowledge and skills.

Many conferences include interactive sessions and workshops where participants can engage in hands-on activities, group discussions, and problem-solving exercises (Salas *et al.*, 2012). These interactive components allow participants to apply what they have learned in practical scenarios, receive feedback from facilitators and peers, and deepen their understanding of the topics covered. Conferences contribute to professional development by offering sessions focused on skill enhancement and career advancement (Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

### **3) Skill Transfer**

Skills transfer is the effect of practicing ability on the learning and performance of a skill. For example, there is likely to be some positive transfer when a gymnast who has developed the abilities of balance, coordination, and flexibility engages in the skill of dancing. Transfer of skills is also related to transfer of training or transfer of knowledge or development. This is because when skill is transferred from the teacher to the learner, training is implicitly taking place and knowledge is acquired for improved performance and development.

Skill transfer is a critical dimension of human resource training, focusing on the ability of employees to apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired during training to their job roles and tasks. Effective skill transfer ensures that training investments translate into improved job performance and organizational success.

The design of training programs significantly influences the transfer of skills to the workplace (Noe, 2013). Training content must be relevant to the employees' job roles and align with organizational goals. Programs should incorporate real-world scenarios, practical exercises, and job-specific tasks that mirror the challenges employees face in their daily work. Relevance ensures that employees perceive the training as valuable and applicable, increasing their motivation to transfer skills.

A supportive work environment is vital for facilitating skill transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Managers and supervisors play a key role in encouraging employees to apply new skills on the job. Providing resources, opportunities, and time for employees to practice and use their new

competencies is essential. Continuous learning initiatives, such as refresher courses, advanced training, and mentorship programs, help employees maintain and expand their skills over time. Employees' motivation and self-efficacy significantly impact skill transfer (Bandura, 2017). Training programs should be designed to boost employees' confidence in their ability to apply new skills. Incorporating elements that enhance intrinsic motivation, such as goal setting, self-assessment, and recognition of achievements, can improve employees' commitment to using their new skills effectively. On the other hand, transfer in human resource management is a process of placing employees in positions where they are likely to be more effective or where they are yet to get more job satisfaction. In this case there is no change in the responsibility, designation, status or salary of the employee. It is a process of employees' adjustment with the work, time and place. Transfer may also be made as a disciplinary action on staff.

Edwin (2019), urged that a transfer is a change in job where new job is substantially equal to the old in terms of pay, status and responsibilities. Change in organization structure, technology and also change in knowledge, skills, aptitude and values of employees need movement of employees from one job to another and from one place to another. Generally, transfer leads to the development of the employee because, through this, he acquires new skills and responsibilities.

### **Indicators of Skills Transfer**

#### **i) Neutral Transfer**

Skill transfer, the process by which employees apply the skills learned during training to their actual job tasks, can be influenced by various factors that either facilitate or impede this transfer. Neutral factors are those that neither significantly aid nor hinder the transfer of skills but can still play a role depending on the context and other variables. The environment in which training takes place can be considered a neutral factor in skill transfer if it is adequately equipped and conducive to learning but not exceptionally distinctive from the work environment (Salas *et al.*, 2012). While a comfortable and well-resourced training setting is necessary, its neutrality means it does not strongly influence the transfer unless there are significant discrepancies between the training and work environments. Organizational policies that are neutral do not directly impact skill transfer positively or negatively but can create a baseline for training effectiveness (Noe, 2013). For instance, standard training policies that ensure all employees receive a minimum level of training are essential but do not specifically enhance or obstruct the transfer of skills. The neutrality here implies consistency and fairness without exceptional motivational impact. A workplace culture that is neutral toward training may neither strongly support nor oppose skill development (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). In such environments, employees may not feel significantly encouraged or discouraged to apply new skills. Neutral workplace culture maintains a status quo where skill transfer depends more on individual initiative and less on cultural reinforcement. Peer support that is neutral means colleagues are neither particularly supportive nor obstructive of each other's efforts to apply new skills (Blume *et al.*, 2010). While a highly supportive peer group can significantly enhance skill transfer, neutral peer support implies a workplace where collaboration and assistance are present but not exceptionally influential on skill transfer outcomes. Technological resources that are neutral are adequate for job tasks but not advanced enough to significantly enhance skill transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Employees can perform their duties with existing technology, and while it does not hinder their ability to use new skills, it also does not provide significant additional support or efficiency gains.

#### **Positive Transfer of Skills**

Positive transfer of skills occurs when employees successfully apply the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired during training to their job roles, resulting in enhanced job performance and organizational outcomes. This process is crucial for maximizing the return on investment in training programs. For positive skill transfer to occur, the training content must be closely aligned with the actual job requirements (Blume *et al.*, 2010). Training programs should be designed to address the specific skills and knowledge needed in the workplace, ensuring that employees can see the direct

relevance and applicability of what they learn. This alignment increases the likelihood that employees will transfer the skills effectively. Opportunities for practice and reinforcement during and after training are critical for positive skill transfer (Salas *et al.*, 2012). Employees need to practice new skills in a controlled environment before applying them on the job. Continuous reinforcement through follow-up sessions, refresher courses, and on-the-job practice helps solidify these skills and ensures their retention over time.

A supportive work environment significantly enhances positive skill transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Managers and supervisors play a crucial role by encouraging and facilitating the application of new skills. Providing resources, time, and opportunities for employees to use their new skills, as well as recognizing and rewarding successful application, can create a conducive environment for skill transfer. Regular feedback and coaching from supervisors and peers can greatly aid in positive skill transfer (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Constructive feedback helps employees understand how well they are applying their new skills and identify areas for improvement. Coaching provides ongoing support and guidance, helping employees refine their skills and increase their confidence in using them effectively. Employees' motivation and self-efficacy are critical factors in positive skill transfer (Bandura, 2017). Training programs that boost employees' confidence in their ability to apply new skills and increase their intrinsic motivation can lead to better transfer outcomes. Setting clear goals, providing positive reinforcement, and creating a culture of continuous learning can enhance employees' motivation to use their new skills.

### **Concepts of Employee Performance**

Employee performance refers to the efficiency and effectiveness with which employees carry out their job responsibilities and contribute to organizational goals. Performance encompasses various dimensions, including the quality of work, productivity, initiative, and adherence to organizational values and standards. It is a critical determinant of organizational success, as high-performing employees drive innovation, customer satisfaction, and overall profitability (Piana, 2011).

Employees are the most important assets in organizations, which without, the goals and objectives may not be attained. More so, one of the key issues that most organizations face nowadays is the need to improve employee performance. Employee performance is an assessment of the efficiency of a worker or group of workers. In actual terms, performance is a component which directly affects the company's profits (Gummesson, 2018; Sels, *et al.*, 2006). Performance may be evaluated in terms of the output of an employee in a specific period of time. It can also be assessed according to the number of units of a product or service that an employee handles in a defined time frame (Piana, 2011). As the success of an organization relies mainly on the performance of its employees, therefore, employee performance has become an important objective for businesses (Cato & Gordon, 2009; Gummesson, 2018; Sharma & Sharma, 2014).

According to Neely (2015), the word "performance" is often used among the human resources personnel, and industrial psychology and the management. Then, without taking into account the importance and the popularity, it is difficult and rarely to clearly defined. Besides, job performance can be defined as a concept of multidimensional that shows the way of a person complete the task, which focused on efficiency, the use of skills, initiatives and the resources used (Rothmann & Coetzer, 2013). Furthermore, the actions that involve the process and product (final output) also refer as the performance of the job. However, the individual process can affect by the overall performances of the organization. This is because the performance of individual not only determined by actions but also others factor such as external factor. The example of external factor is the organizational culture and economic, the availability of the resources, the social and political factors. Thus, employee performance could operationally be defined as the extent to which a worker executes assigned duties and achieve better result. Dharma (2017) stated the employee performance is something that is done or the products or services produced or provided by a person or group of people. Then, the researcher continues stated the job performance is a result that can

be achieved by a person in doing the work of her duties. Then, all the results were evaluated by the company or supervisor. This is feedback by the company or supervisor towards employees about their job performance. It's different with Bernardin and Russel (2016) who stated that the employee performance is a result or consequence of an activity for a period of time. Job performance is a record of the results obtained from the function of a specific job or activity during specific time period. Employee performance as the result of work that can be achieved by a person or group of people in a company suitable with the authority and responsibility in their respective efforts to achieve company goals legally and not violate the law and not contrary to morals or ethics. However, according to Nayyar (2014), job performance refers to the level of an individual carrying out its role by referring to the specific standards that established by the organization. This work measures employee performance through quality service delivery, innovativeness and cost reduction.

## **Measures of Employee Performance**

### **1) Quality Service Delivery**

Gilbert (2014) defines quality as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs. This definition can be summarized as consistent conformance to customers' expectations, as opposed to fitness for purpose. In this, therefore, Deming (2018) define quality service delivery as the fulfillment of customers' expectations in a way that it stands the test of time. Deming draws the same distinction by considering quality as "delighting the customer"; establishing a direct link to personal experience, as opposed to conformance to specification. Even though governments impose some services on people for the common good and ration others, the challenge of delighting the customer should lead to better treatment and possibly better outcomes than simply conforming to specification. If the users then are actively involved in developing specifications, the service is even more likely to at least meet expectations, if not actually to bring delight (Deming, 2018). The concept of service climate plays an important role in understanding how to deliver quality service to consumers/customers, as it captures what employees experience in terms of organizational practices regarding service delivery. It also influences employee motivation regarding service behavior. If employees experience quality service with the organization, they are more likely to be motivated to deliver excellent quality on the outside of the organization. Today, findings shows that training, empowerment and rewards are the three most significant factors, which determine the level of performance and, in turn, lead to delivery of service strategy and excellent service quality (Juhl, *et al.*, 2017).

Quality service is one of the most important competitive factors in today's business industry. A fundamental question is how to make it of quality such that customers/consumers can really appreciate. However, quality service is not a one-way street. It depends on how the customer gives the feedback to that particular service. That being said, one fact is without question; if the service quality is not sufficiently high, the service provider is likely to disappoint the customers regardless of their expectations (Penny in Juhl *et al.*, 2017). The low and middle-income countries, as opposed to the upper middle-income economies (currently referred to as developed countries) need to focus much attention on quality services. While the upper middle-income economies are far ahead of the low and middle-income countries in terms of service delivery due to tremendous penetration of technology in every aspects of life, the latter must embark profoundly on continued or improved quality service to keep up and as well increase their chain of customers.

Delivering services of high quality is an important pursuit for service providers that seek to create and provide value to their customers (Grönroos & Ravalid in Zack, 2014). Through the provision of high levels of service quality, companies can achieve increased customer satisfaction, loyalty and therefore long-term profitability (Zeithaml & Bitner in Zack, 2014). In order to provide high levels of service quality and therefore create value for their customers, organizations need to plan the delivery of their services and to ensure the successful implementation of the actual plan (Parasuraman *et al.* in Zack, 2014). Therefore, good planning and effective implementation of the developed delivery plans are key factors for the service delivery system (SDS) in an organization. Furthermore,

continuous improvement of service procedures contributes to the optimization of SDS and enhances the organization's standards of service.

To this end, quality service delivery as a measure of employee performance in this work is the extent to which an employee of a road construction company is able to run and maintain a smooth working environment through attainment of task that is characterized by less customer/clients' complaints and prompt attendance to customers enquiries. Every organization has it at the peak of its heart to provide quality high class services to customers in order to successfully thrive and achieve their mission. Customer's satisfaction in terms of service and product delivery, overtime, is considered the most value an organization will ever create (Grönroos & Ravalad in Zack, 2014). The success of businesses largely depends on getting, keeping and growing customers. It is therefore very pertinent for an organization to render quality and timely service delivery in order to get, keep and grow their customer base, thereby enhancing the performance of the organization. Quality service delivery in this study is indicated in terms of task accomplishment and less complaints.

**Task Accomplishment:** Task completion is an observable and measurable end result having one or more objectives to be achieved within a more or less fixed time frame. Task accomplishment is the desired result or possible outcome that a person or a *system* envisions, plans and commits to achieve at the end: a personal or organizational desired end-point in some sort of assumed development (Somer, 2011). Daniel (2013) posited that timely task completion helps many people or organizations endeavor to reach goals within a finite time by setting *deadlines*. It is roughly similar to *purpose* or aim, the anticipated result which guides reaction, or an *end*, which is an *object*, either a *physical object* or an *abstract object*, that has *intrinsic value*.

**Less Complaints:** Less complaint refer to a situation where an organization experiences minimal criticism and grievance over services and goods delivered to their customers (Mike, 2019). The customer's complaint arises due to the attitudinal aspects in dealing with customers and inadequacy of the functions/arrangements made available to the customers or gaps in standards of services expected and actual services rendered. Customer complaints are part of the business life of any corporate entity. As a product or service delivery organization, customer service and customer satisfaction are the prime concern. Firm believe that excellence in customer service is its prime motto; providing prompt and efficient service should get paramount importance in its business policies.

### **Innovativeness**

Innovativeness is a characteristic of the word 'innovate' which originated dates back in mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. To innovate came from Latin 'innovare' for renew, whose root is novus or new (<https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary>). It can be used for either the act of introducing something new, as by an individual craves for high performance through creativity and innovation, or something that is newly introduced. It was once used politically in the sense of revolution, but now you're most likely to hear it in relation to technology, or new ways of doing something (Wolfe, 2014). Amabile (2016) holistically gives an intensive meaning of innovativeness. To him, innovativeness technically means to introduce a new idea, or to take an existing idea and make it work better. Innovative employee tends to refer to the process of introducing something new. What many employees do not know is that innovation at the workplace is the most important ability. It makes employees stand out among the colleagues and helps them grow. Without it, they (employee) have less chance of high performance. Innovativeness can be described as the willingness to place strong emphasis on research and development, new products, new services, improved product lines and global technological improvement in the industry. It can be considered as capacity, competence and readiness of the employee to develop virtue or introduce the novelties or inventions in the daily activities and behavior. Is a personality trait possessed, to a greater or lesser degree, by all members of a society as one's ability to create inventions and change them to

innovations as beneficial novelties for users. Innovations connected to the implementation or adoption of novel ideas can in turn be categorized as either technological (changes in products, services, production processes) or administrative (changes in activities, social processes, structures), and as either radical or incremental, depending on the extent of their influence for existing products or processes (Hollington 2015).

Employee innovativeness as adopted from Amabile (2016) refers to employees' propensity to innovate which can be conceived as complex behaviour consisting of idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization with the aim of enhancing task accomplishment and meeting set goals in novel ways. Individuals, alone or in groups, undertake innovative activities from the intention to derive anticipated benefits from innovative change. Creativity is central to innovativeness, but the concepts are not synonymous. Innovation can be seen as a successful and intentional implementation of creativity, which is more subjective and context specific by its nature (Miron *et al.*, 2014). Creativity as such may be limited to idea generation alone but by definition innovation produces benefits for the people involved in the innovative process (Anderson *et al.*, 2013). Therefore, employee innovativeness requires creativity, but creativity does not always lead to an innovation. Employee innovativeness requires that the individual is both able and willing to be innovative. With respect to abilities, above average general intellect, certain cognitive capabilities, general skills and task and context-specific knowledge, for example, facilitate innovativeness (Barron & Harrington, 2019; Taggar, 2016). Beyond knowledge and skills, innovativeness requires intrinsic motivation and a certain level of internal force that pushes the individual to persevere in the face of challenges inherent in the creative work. Moreover, the internal force keeps the employee going even when the challenges are successfully overcome: it is about a positive tension and desire to excel. Consequently, employees' initiative, flexibility, perseverance and willingness to go beyond their actual goal accomplishment in order to come up with novel and organizationally beneficial ideas characterize innovativeness. Often it is impossible to set goals for innovativeness, as it is so context and problem specific. Innovativeness is therefore largely about discretionary extra role behaviours that go beyond the formal job requirements in complex and ambiguous conditions, and organizations are increasingly dependent on their employees' willingness to go the extra mile (Wolfe, 2014; Ramamoorthy *et al.*, 2015).

Employee innovativeness is a function of constant creativity. Creativity is the process through which new ideas that make innovation possible are developed. Current views on creativity appear to focus largely on outcomes of work done. A creative work done has been defined as one that is both novel and original and potentially useful or appropriate to the organization (Amabile, 2016; Mumford & Gustafson, 2018). Additionally, at least for companies, creative ideas must have utility. They must constitute an appropriate response to fill a gap in the production, marketing, or the administrative processes of the organization. Organizational creativity is the creation of a valuable, useful new product, service, idea, procedure, or a process by individuals working together in a complex social system. Therefore, creativity could be seen as an important capability (Amabile, 2016), a possible source of employee effectiveness (Woodman, *et al.*, 2013), and a source of comparative advantage (Leonard & Sensiper, 2018). Nevertheless, new suggestions and problem solving are used here as indicators of employee innovativeness

**New Suggestions:** Innovative employee is one who can make meaningful suggestion in relation to pursuance of organizational goals and set objectives. These suggestions made by employees as a result of idea generation, goes a long way in enhancing performance of such employee and the organizational at large. This is because an idea is essentially a creation. Whether an idea is creative is judged on the basis of its novelty and usefulness (Amabile & Pratt, 2016).

**Problem Solving:** Problem-solving is a calculated and deliberate mental process that involves discovering, analyzing and solving organizational problems (Bill, 2020). The ultimate goal of problem-solving is to overcome obstacles and finding solutions to problems, especially by using a

scientific or analytical approach. It is a vital everyday skill needed for personal and professional life (Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, 2020). A good problem-solving skill is a pivotal employment prerequisite that shows employee's competencies like logic, creativity, resilience, imagination, lateral thinking, diligence and determination. It is an essential skill for all employees serving in any capacity, those with good problem-solving skills are a valuable and trusted asset in their team, they are the people who think of new ideas, better ways of doing things, make it easier for people to understand things or help save customers time and money. They are proactive thinkers who like to get things done and can help you progress more quickly and boost career opportunities. When employers talk about problem-solving skills, they are often referring to the ability to handle difficult or unexpected situations in the workplace as well as complex business challenges.

### **Cost Reduction**

Before exploring the cost reduction, cost is referred to as the amount incurred for the production goods and services. Resources must be sacrificed for any organization to achieve its objectives. To an accountant, cost is defined as a resource forgone to achieve a specific goal. This can be expressed as the monetary amount which must be paid to acquire goods and services. ACCA (2012) defines cost as the amount of expenditure incurred on, or attribute to a specific thing or activity cost of anything ordinarily is money spent to acquire those things. Thus, cost reduction in this study refers to as the possible ways in which employees of a firm efficiently work to curtail the expenses of its organization. This is one of the fundamental instruments in maximizing productivity. Cost reduction aims at reducing the actual to the targets, cost reduction aims at reducing the targets themselves. In other words, the aim of cost reduction is to see whether there is any possibility in bringing about a saving in cost incurred material, labour, overheads, etc. According to the Terminology of Cost Accountancy of the Institute of Cost and Management Accountants London, Cost reduction is to be understood as the success of real and unchanging reduction in the unit costs of goods manufactured without impairing their suitability for the use intended. Thus, the term cost reduction denotes real or genuine saving in production, administration, selling and sharing costs resulting to the elimination of wasteful and inessential elements from the design of the product and from the techniques and practices carried out in connection therewith. The necessity for cost reduction arises when the profit margin has to be increased without (ACCA, 2012).

Cost reduction is a planned positive approach to reduce expenditure. It is a corrective function by continuous process of analysis of costs, functions, etc. for further economy in application of factors of production. An increase in the sales turnover i.e. for the same volume of sales, the cost should be reduced. According to Business Dictionary "The process of looking for, finding and removing unwarranted expenses from a business to increase profits without having a negative impact on product quality. Many business managers will engage in periodic cost reduction drives in order to make their company's operation more efficient and to boost profits. Asmond (2016) averred that cost reduction increased competitive strength to the industry stimulates more exports. Thus, profit is increased by reducing the costs, it can be utilised for expansion of the organization which will create more employment and overall industrial prosperity. Cost reduction is essential of a product has to withstand its global market. Brand loyalty is fading away fast. Nowadays consumers have become price and quality conscious. Hence cost reduction is the key for global competitiveness (Aroosiya in Asmond, 2016). It also provides a basis for more dividends to the shareholders, more bonus to the staff and more retention of profit for expansion of the business which will create more employment and overall industrial prospects. More so, cost reduction will provide more money for labour welfare schemes and thus improve men- management relationship.

According to Cletus in Asmond (2016), cost reduction is to be understood as the achievement of real and permanent reduction in the unit cost of goods manufactured or services rendered without impairing their suitability for the use intended or diminution in the quality of the product. He further asserted that cost reduction brings to light that (a) the reduction must be a real one in the course of manufacture or services rendered. Real cost reduction comes through greater productivity.

However, greater productivity may be through obtaining a large quantity of production from the same facilities; using materials of lower price and of different quality without, however, sacrificing the quality of the finished product, i.e., reducing cost through the process of substitution; simplifying the process of manufacture without sacrificing the quality of the finished product and changing features of the product suitably without sacrificing the quality of the product etc. (b) The reduction must be a permanent one. It is short-lived if it comes through reduction in the prices of inputs, such as materials, labour etc. The reduction should be through improvements in methods of production from research work. (c) The reduction should not be at the cost of essential characteristics, such as quality of the products or services rendered.

Harneed and Ahmed in Asmond (2016) cost reduction causes a definite increase in margins. The saving in cost may also be passed to consumers in the form of lower prices or more quantity in the same price. This will create more demand for the products, economies of large-scale production, more employment through industrialization and all-round improvement in the standard of living. Government may also stand to gain by way of higher tax revenues. Cost reduction will help in making goods available to the consumers at cheaper rates. It is equally helpful in meeting competition effectively. Cost reduction lays emphasis on a continuous search for improvement which will improve the image of the firm for long-term benefits (Mike, 2019). This study indicates cost reduction through resource maximization and less work error.

**Resource Maximization:** Resource maximization is the process of making the most of the resources available in order to achieve the objectives of that is set to be achieved. This is with respect to an organization where a project needs to be executed and then resources, both human and nonhuman are allocated onto the project depending on skills and availability (Ebi, 2011). Maximizing resources are the backbone of businesses and organization. The utilization of the resources is also very much important to get the desired results. Many of the firms can fail as they cannot properly utilize the resources and ultimately face solvency issues due to the loss in resources. Resources maximization is termed as the resources management in the organization such as the company financial resources funds, human resources, managing organization tangible as well as non-tangible resources utilization. Proper maximization of resources can increase the productivity, market share, sales, and turnover on the investments.

**Less Work Error:** Every firm seeks for employees who could afford efficient service delivery which is free from error. This is because having these employees will equally help the organization to curtail their expenses this process could be called operational efficiency. Operational efficiency is more concerned about producing at the same level with fewer resources. This act makes employees very careful in producing noting the fact that they are limited by resources. However, they are meticulous in executing them and they ensure that their work is free from errors or have less error. If an organization can maintain high levels of employees' less work error and operation efficiency, then it should be able to generate greater profit per project with the same resources (Enekwe *et al.*, 2013).

## Theoretical Review

### Social Learning Theory

Bandura (1977) propounded this theory by applying principles of social learning theory to work place training which encourages trainers to include demonstration, videos or play-acting exercises to reinforce concepts of appropriate and inappropriate work place behavior. Social learning theory supports the continuous learning process within teams, groups and organizations and when used effectively it has a huge impact on employees knowledge, acquisition and career development. By this way, social learning doesn't just help learners retain the learning but also helps apply that learning on the job. (Bersin, 2009). In most organizations, social learning theory is being applied extensively other than formal learning, where the education is based on a rigid

curriculum (e.g. learning methods, online learning, coaching mentorships and social learning. Thus, it is highly cost-effective because of its organic nature which means it can happen anywhere and at any time, group of people with shared expertise who work together (Werger, 1998). The implication of this theory to this study is that management should ensure that employees are provided with adequate training programs that will enhance their performance and productivity.

### **Human Capital Theory**

Human capital theory, initially formulated by Becker (1962) and Rosen (1976), argues that individual workers have a set of skills or abilities which they can improve or accumulate through training and education. This theory posits that human beings can increase their productive capacity through greater education and skills training. Critics of the theory however argue that it is flawed, overly simplistic, and confounds labor with capital.

Applied in the context of organizations, human capital theory suggests that individuals who invest in education and training will increase their skill level and be more productive than those less skilled, and so can justify higher earnings as a result of their investment in human capital. As Becker (1993) suggests, 'schooling raises earnings and productivity mainly by providing knowledge, skills and a way of analyzing problems'.

### **METHODOLOGY**

Cross-sectional research method was adopted in this study. The population of this study consists of twenty-six (26) oil firms and nine hundred and forty respondents (940) of the twenty-six (26) oil firms in Port Harcourt. The sample size for the study was 280 respondents selected from these oil firms under survey in Port Harcourt. The Taro-Yamen sampling formula was employed to determine the size of the sample. The primary data was collected through structured self-administered questionnaire titled "Human Resource Training and Employee Performance Index (HRTEPI). The questionnaire contained questions relating to the variables under study. The questionnaire design was prepared in four (4) point rating scale format of Likert with the following response options strongly Agree (SA)= 4 , Agree (A)=3, Disagree (D)=2, Strongly Disagree (SD)=1. Participants responded to each item with these scores.

The research instruments were validated by the dissertation supervisor and other experts in the field of employment relations and human resource management in order to ensure coherent clarity and internal consistency in line with best practices. The researcher used Cronbach alpha co-efficient method in measuring the reliability of the research instrument for the study which is a principal technique of testing reliability. The degree of reliability of the questionnaire was based on adoption of test-retest method. The data obtained were subjected to reliability test which arrived at 0.70 as benchmark for judging the level of reliability of the instrument. The inferential statistical tool, the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (Rho), was used in the test of the bivariate hypotheses, using Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS version 24. The researcher used Pearson Product Moment Correlation to analyze the bivariate analysis as to indicate whether or not there is significant relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery, off-the-job training and innovativeness and transfer of skills and cost reduction in oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

### **Bivariate analysis**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery of oil firms in Port Harcourt Rivers State.

**Table 4.1: Correlation Analysis Showing the Relationship between On-the-Job Training and Quality Service Delivery of Oil Firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State**

### **Correlations**

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**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between transfer of skills and cost reduction of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Table 4.3: Correlation Analysis between transfer of skills and Cost Reduction of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.**

		Correlations		
			Transfer of Skills	Cost Reduction
Spearman's rho	Transfer of Skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.498**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	235	235
	Cost Reduction	Correlation Coefficient	.498**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	235	235

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Survey Data, 2024.

**Interpretation:**

**Table 4:3** above reveals that, there is a significant positive relationship between the transfer of skills from training programs and cost reduction ( $\rho = .498, p = 0.000$ ). Based on the decision rule of  $p < 0.05$  for null hypothesis rejection, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis: there is a significant relationship between the transfer of skills and cost reduction. Since  $r = 0.498$ , the relationship is **moderate** in strength. It means that, there is a **moderate positive and statistically significant relationship** between the transfer of skills from training programs and cost reduction in oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**Discussion of Findings**

**On-the-Job Training and Quality service delivery**

The results for Hypotheses H<sub>01</sub>, reveals significant relationships between on-the-job training and quality service delivery of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. Specifically, the findings show a strong positive relationship between on-the-job training and quality service delivery ( $\rho = .645, p = 0.000$ ), indicating that effective on-the-job training enhances employees' ability to perform beyond their immediate job roles, such as demonstrating initiative and teamwork.

These findings align with Salas (2012), who revealed that well-structured training programs significantly enhance employees' job performance by improving their skills and competencies. Becker's (1964) human capital theory further supports these results, emphasizing the importance of firm-specific training, which provides a direct return on investment by enhancing productivity and reducing turnover. The current study demonstrates that on-the-job training of oil firms contributes to both direct job performance and the broader work environment.

**Off-the-Job Training and Innovativeness**

For Hypotheses H<sub>02</sub>, the findings indicate significant relationships between off-the-job training and innovativeness. The results show a positive relationship between off-the-job training and innovativeness ( $\rho = .492, p = 0.000$ ), suggesting that training conducted outside the job setting can also enhance employees' effectiveness in their roles.

These outcomes corroborate Schein (2010), who argues that organizational culture influences the effectiveness of training programs, particularly when aligned with the organization's values and norms. Off-the-job training programs, when well-structured, can enhance both task-specific skills and general work attitudes, supporting the broader organizational culture.

### **Transfer of Skills and Cost Reduction**

For Hypotheses H0<sub>3</sub>, revealed significant positive relationships between the transfer of skills and cost reduction. A strong positive relationship is observed between the transfer of skills and cost reduction ( $\rho = .498$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). These results suggest that employees who effectively transfer skills gained from training to their job roles tend to perform better in both specific tasks and broader job contexts. These findings align with Kirkpatrick (2006), who emphasizes that effective evaluation of training programs ensures that training investments lead to measurable improvements in employee behavior and organizational success. Swart et al. (2005) also underscore the importance of bridging performance gaps through targeted training interventions, which help employees develop specific skills and capabilities to enhance overall performance.

### **CONCLUSION**

The study concluded that there are significant relationships between human resource training and employee performance of oil firms in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. The findings indicate that both on-the-job and off-the-job training significantly impact employee performance, including contextual performance, task performance, and counterproductive work behavior. The results from the analysis also show that the transfer of skills from training programs has a significant effect on all aspects of employee performance, thus reinforcing the importance of effective training programs for employee development.

### **Recommendations for the Study**

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Management of oil firms should invest in robust on-the-job training programs that provide employees with practical skills and knowledge directly relevant to their daily tasks. This could include mentorship, coaching, and hands-on training initiatives.
- ii. Management should also support off-the-job training opportunities such as workshops, seminars, and external courses that allow employees to gain new insights and skills that can be brought back to the workplace.
- iii. Management should encourage transfer of skills from training programs that improves employee performance across all dimensions, highlighting the importance of reinforcing learning and application in the workplace.

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