

**TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE BENUE STATE  
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study examined the effect of training on employee productivity in the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture. The study was guided by two objectives. Two research questions were answered by the study while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested. The study adopts survey research design. The population of the study consists of all 58 employees of the organization. The entire population constituted the sample for the study, hence there was no sampling. The instrument of data collection was a structured questionnaire. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. Cronbach alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the questionnaire items which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean (real limits of numbers) and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that off- the- job training to a high extent, affect employee productivity; on- the- job training to a very high extent, affect employee productivity in the organization. It was recommended that, management should stimulate training that workers require to improve their performance and capabilities, which consequently increase organizational productivity as well. The training should be designed on the basis of organizational specific needs and objectives. Management of the organization should encourage on- the- job training in order to impact knowledge and skills that enhance employee productivity and the organization in general.*

**KEYWORDS:** Training, Employee, Productivity, Skills, Benue, State

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Employees are major assets of any organization and the active role they play towards achieving organizational objectives cannot be underestimated. As a result, equipping these unique assets through effective training becomes imperative in order to maximize their productivity. Manpower training is the systematic process of developing attitudes and skills required by an individual in order to perform adequately a given task in an organization (Certo, 2006). It is also defined as the modification of behaviour through learning which occurs as a result of education instruction development and experiences (Rohan & Madhumita, 2012). Training is designed to change the behaviour of the employee in the work place in order to stimulate efficiency and higher performance standards (Oliseh, 2005). It is thus an organized procedure by which people learn new knowledge and skill for a definite purpose.

The purpose of training is basically to bridge the gap between job requirements and present competence of employee in an organization (Oliseh, 2005). It aimed at improving the behaviour

and performance of a person and also it is a never ending or continuous process. Today, public organizations in Nigerian, have realized the importance of training as a tool to achieve their strategic goals. It is not viewed by the organization as a longer, but as an investment on one of its most dynamic assets, namely, employees. Many organizations consider training as strategic employee retention tool because it helps organization to create a smarter force capable of meeting any situation and challenges. The main object of every organization is to improve its performance, but it can never be possible without the efficient performance of employees. For the organization, training leads to improve effective and efficient service delivery while cultivating more positive attitudes toward profit orientation.

For the employees, training improves job knowledge while also helps in identifying with the goals of the organization. Thus training has an important role to play and it is expected to inculcate positive changes in knowledge, skills and attitudes. It tries to improve skills so that employee is better equipped to do his present job or to prepare for a higher position with increased responsibilities. Organizations should provide opportunities for continuous development of employees not only in their present jobs but also to develop the capabilities for other jobs also. Training programmes are necessary in any organization for improving the quality of work of the employees at all levels particularly in a world of fast changing technology and environment.

Benue State Ministry of Agriculture (BSMA) is one of the public organization in the State saddled with the responsibility of coordinating the affairs of Agriculture between Government and Farmers in the State. Just like other organizations in the state, BSMA employee also partake in training exercises. The extent to which training activities affect employee productivity at the organization is the focus of the study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Training is the process of enhancing the attitudes, skills and abilities of an employee to perform a given job in an organization. It is also regarded as an important way of developing a persons' technical competence or skills in a specific task or job. However, observation has shows that employees of the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture had being receiving training, but still exhibit low levels of job performance. The study therefore, examined the effect of training on employee productivity in the organization.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The main objective of the study is to examine the effect of training on employee productivity in the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture. However, the specific objectives are to:

- i. examine the effect of off- the- job training on employee productivity; and
- ii. ascertain the effect of on- the- job training on employee productivity.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised and answered by the study;

- i. To what extent has off- the- job training affect employee productivity?
- ii. To what extent has on- the- job training affect employee productivity?

## **Statement of Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested by the study.

- i. Off- the- job training has no significant effect on employee productivity; and
- ii. On- the- job training has no significant effect on employee productivity.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This part of the study examines views and opinions of authors, scholars and practitioners on the concept of Training and Employee productivity. The views dwell on: meaning of training, types of training, benefits of training, employee productivity, measure of employee productivity, and relationship between training and employee productivity

### **Meaning of Training:**

According to Armstrong (2001) training is a systematic development of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required by an individual to perform adequately a given task or job. Training may also be defined as an organized, coordinated, development of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by an individual to master a given situation or perform a certain task within an organizational setting (Oliseh, 2005). It is the act of increasing knowledge and skills of an employee for doing a particular job. It is also the process of developing employees' skills and learning new concepts, rules or attitudes in order to increase effectiveness on a particular job.

### **Types of Training:**

Different practices are followed in different industries and in different organizations too. So, the need for training is depending on the requirements of the job profile. The types of training are as follow

*On- the -Job Training:* The purpose of the on-the-job training session is to provide employee with task-specific knowledge and skills in work area. The knowledge and skills presented during on-the-job are directly related to job requirements. Job Instructions, Apprenticeship and Coaching, Job Rotation, Committee Assignment and Internship Training e.t.c.

*Off- the- Job Training:* Training which takes place in environment other than actual workplace is called off-the-job training. Off-the-job training is usually designed to meet the shared learning needs of a group rather than a particular individual's need. Class Room Lectures & Simulation Exercises, Business Games, Case Study Method, Conference/ Discussion Method, Workshop / Seminar e.t.c.

### **Benefits of Training:**

*Economy in Operations:* Trained personnel will be able to make better and economical use of materials and equipment's. Wastage will be low. In addition, the rate of accidents and damage to machinery and equipment will be kept to the minimum by the well- trained employees. These will lead to less cost of production per unit.

*Greater Productivity:* A well trained employee usually shows greater productivity and higher quality of work-output than an untrained employee. Training increases the skills of the

employees in the performance of a particular job. An increase in the skills usually helps to increase both quantity and quality of output.

*Less Supervisions:* If the employees are given proper training, the responsibility of supervision is lessened. Training does not eliminate the need for supervision, but it reduces the need for detailed and constant supervision.

*Systematic Imparting of Skills:* A systematic training programme helps to reduce the learning time to reach the acceptable level of performance. The employees need not learn by trial and error or by observing others and waste time if the formal training programme exists in the organization.

*Creation of Inventory of Skills:* When totally new skills are required by an organization, it has to face great difficulties in employment. Training can be used in spotting out promising men and in removing defects in the selection process. It is better to select and train employees from within the organization rather than seek the skilled employees from outside sources.

*Higher Morale:* The morale of employees is increase if they are given proper training. A good training programme will mould employees' attitude to achieve support for organisational activities and to obtain greater cooperation and loyalty. With the help of training, dissatisfaction, complaints, absenteeism and turnover can be reduced among the employees.

## **Employee Productivity**

In the organizational context, employee productivity is usually defined as the extent to which an organizational member contributes to achieving the goals of the organization (Greenberg, 1996). Mathias and John (2003) defined employee productivity as a measure of the quantity and quality of work done, considering the cost of the resources used. McNamara (2003) further states that, results are usually the final and specific outputs desired from the employee. Results are often expressed as products or services for an internal or external customer. They may be in terms of financial accomplishments, impact on a community; and so whose results are expressed in terms of cost, quality, quantity or time.

Employee productivity could include: quantity of output, quality of output, timelines of output, presence at work and cooperativeness (Bernardin, 2007). Employee productivity could be simply understood as the related activities expected of a worker and how well those activities were executed.

## **Measures of Employee Productivity:**

According to Bond and Fox (2007) measures of employee productivity includes: Quantity of work, timeliness of work, quality of work i.e. the quality of work produced in terms of standards, use of resources/efficiency, customer (External & Internal) Impact/Value Add, self-reliance, productive work habits, alignment & compliance.

Kuvaas (2006) opined that employee productivity also encompasses the quality of the accomplishments, the compliance with the desired standards, the costs involved and the time taken in achieving the results.

## **Relationship between training and employee productivity**

Training has been invaluable in increasing productivity of an organization. It does not only enhance employees resourcefully, but also provides them with an opportunity to virtually learn their jobs and perform more competently. Hence, increasing not only employees productivity but also organizations' productivity. Various researches indicate the positive impact of training on employees' productivity. Training as a process is one of the most pervasive methods to enhance the productivity of individuals and communicating organizational goals to personnel (Ekaterini & Constantinos-Vasilios, 2009).

Rohan and Madhumita (2012) also supported that training employees to acquired new knowledge and skills has beneficial impact on the organizations' level of growth, as well as impacting on employees' performance. Training affects employees' behaviour and their working skills which results into employees enhanced performance as well as constructive changes (Satterfield & Hughes, 2007). It is the most effective way of motivating and retaining high quality in human resources within an organization.

Lowry, Simon and Kimberley (2002), states that training is a way of enhancing employee commitment and maximizing potential that enhances their level of productivity in an organization. According to Konings and Vanormelingen (2009), training is an instrument that fundamentally affects the successful accomplishment of organizations' goals and objectives. However, the optimum goal of every organization is to generate high revenue and maximize profit and a vital tool to realize this is an efficient and effective workforce. Thus, a workforce is only efficient and effective if the appropriate training is provided for such and therefore leading to productivity.

Armstrong (2001) argued that training increases employees' performance which in turn improve organizations productivity positively, and will further check and arrest the several human and financial costs involved with employees' turnover. He further argued that, training enable employees in organisation to enhance the potential contribution to the performance of organisation.

According to Certo (2006) training shows employees how to do the basic of their jobs and help them improve their skills. It also helps employees adapt to changes in the workplace. Training serves as an acts of intervention to improve organization's goods and services quality in stiff the competition by improvements in technical skills of employees (Manju & Suresh, 2011).

According to Wright and Geroy (2001) employees competencies changes through effective training programs. It not only improves the overall performance of the employees to effectively perform the current job but also enhance the knowledge, skills an attitude of the workers necessary for the future job, thus contributing to superior organizational performance. Through training the employees competencies are developed that can enable them to implement the job related work efficiently, and achieve an organizational objectives in a competitive manner.

Training has been proved to generate performance improvement related benefits for the employee as well as for the organization by positively influencing employee productivity through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behaviour (Harrison 2000; Guest 1997).

## **Theoretical framework**

The paper adopts Human Capital Theory developed by Smith (1779) and re-invigorated by Schultz (1961) to explain the effect of training on employee productivity in the organization.

Human capital theory states that training and education are form of investment in human beings. The underlying belief then is that training creates assets in the form of knowledge and skills, which in turn increases the productivity of the worker. Schultz (1961) argued that skilled human resource has been able to acquire these skills as a result of training and development programs or investment in the existing human resource through appropriate training both within and outside the organization for example seminars, workshops and conferences. According to Flamholtz and Lacey (1981) human capital theory proposes that people's skills, experience, and knowledge are form of capital and that returns are earned from investments made by the employer or employee to develop these attributes. The Human capital theory holds that employees should invest in specific training and further initiation of more promotion opportunities to enhance employees' career path prospects. Thus, the human capital perspective at the level of the organizations, due to its emphasis on skills and performance, appears to offer more support for generalized investments in the human resources. When the organization invests in improving the knowledge and skills of its employees, the investment is returned in the form of more productive and effective employees.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted survey research design. The population of the study was 58 staff. This consists of 26 junior employees and 32 senior employees of the organization. The entire population constituted the sample for the study, hence there was no sampling because the population is small and was effectively managed by the researcher. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled: Effect of Training on Employee Productivity Questionnaire (ETEPQ) developed by the researcher from the literature reviewed. The response for each item in the questionnaire were based on a 4-point rating scale of very high extent, high extent, low extent and very low extent with a corresponding nominal value of 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively. The instrument was subjected to face and content validity by 3 validates. Cronbach Alpha method was used to establish the internal consistency of the ETEPQ items which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.80 indicating that the instrument is highly internally consistence hence reliable for the study. The instrument was administered by the researcher to the respondents with the help of two research assistants who were given orientation on how to administer and retrieve the questionnaire from the respondents. A total of fifty eight questionnaire were administered and were all retrieved from the respondents and used for data analysis. Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics of mean (real limits of numbers) and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions while chi-square statistics was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

In answering the research questions, the real limits of numbers was used for decision making as follows; 3.50 – 4.00 = very high extent; 2.50 – 3.49 = high extent; 1.50 – 2.49 = low extent; 1.00 - 1.49 = very low extent

The decision rule for rejection of hypotheses was based on the Chi-square calculated value ( $\chi^2_{\alpha}$ ) and the critical value. A hypothesis of no significant effect was rejected for any cluster

of items whose  $\chi^2_{\alpha}$  is greater than the critical value at 0.05 and with the specified degree of freedom while it was not rejected for any cluster of items whose  $\chi^2_{\alpha}$  is less than the critical value at 0.05 and with the specified degree of freedom.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**Table 1: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Extent to which off- the- Job Training Affect Employee Productivity (N=58:n<sub>1</sub>= 26 junior employees; n<sub>2</sub> =32 senior employees)**

S/N	Effect of Off- the- Job Training on Productivity	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	Class room lecture	109	3.01	.75	High Extent
2	Business game	109	3.30	.95	High Extent
3	Case study	109	3.13	.91	High Extent
4	Conference/discussion	109	3.02	.65	High Extent
5	Workshop/seminar	109	2.84	.62	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>109</b>	<b>3.06</b>	<b>.77</b>	

N= number of respondents,  $\bar{X}$ = mean of respondents, SD = standard deviation of respondents.

**Source:** Field survey data, 2017

Data presented in Table 1 revealed that all the 5 items had their mean values ranged from 2.84 to 3.30 which were real limits of mean 2.50 to 3.49. This shows that off- the- job training to a high extent, affect employee productivity in the organization. The table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from .62 to .95, indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another in their responses on extent to which off- the- job training affects employee productivity.

**Table 2: Mean Ratings and Standard Deviation of Respondents on the Extent to which on- the- Job Training Affect Employee Productivity (N=58:n<sub>1</sub>= 26 junior employees; n<sub>2</sub> =32 senior employees)**

S/N	Effect of On- the- Job Training on Productivity	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	Remark
1	Job rotation	109	3.62	.78	Very High Extent
2	Apprenticeship and coaching	109	3.80	.85	Very High Extent
3	Committee assignment	109	3.58	.88	Very High Extent

4	Job instruction	109	3.74	1.02	Very High Extent
5	Internship training	109	3.55	.88	Very High Extent
<b>Grand Mean and Standard Deviation</b>		<b>109</b>	<b>3.65</b>	<b>.88</b>	

**N= number of respondents,  $\bar{X}$ = mean of respondents, SD = standard deviation of respondents.**

**Source:** Field survey data, 2017

Data presented in Table 2 revealed that all the 5 items had their mean values ranged from 3.55 to 3.80 which were real limits of mean 3.50 to 4.00. This shows that on- the- job training to a very high extent, affect employee productivity in the organization. The Table further showed that the standard deviation of the items ranged from .78 to .1.02, indicating that the respondents were not too far from the mean and from the opinion of one another in their responses on extent to which on- the- job training affects employee productivity.

**Table 3: Chi-Square Test on Effect of Off- the- Job Training on Employee Productivity**

	<b>Df</b>	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2_{\alpha}$	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Alpha Level</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Pearson Chi-square	12	21.02	126.397	.000	.05	S, R
Number of Valid Cases		109				

Df = degree of freedom,  $\chi^2$ = critical value,  $\chi^2_{\alpha}$  = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S= Significant, R= rejected

Table 3 shows a chi-square calculated value of 126.397 which is greater than the critical value of 21.02 at .05 level of significance and with 12 degree of freedom (i.e.  $\chi^2_{\alpha} = 126.397 > 21.02$ ). This indicates that off- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that off- the- job training has no significant effect on employee productivity was rejected.

**Table 4: Chi-Square Test on Effect of On- the- Job Training on Employee Productivity**

	<b>Df</b>	$\chi^2$	$\chi^2_{\alpha}$	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Alpha Level</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Pearson Chi-square	12	21.02	79.980	.000	.05	S, R
Number of Valid Cases		109				

Df = degree of freedom,  $\chi^2$ = critical value,  $\chi^2_{\alpha}$  = chi-square calculated, Sig. = P-value; P < .05, S= Significant, R= rejected

Table 4 shows a chi-square calculated value of 79.980 which is greater than the critical value of 21.02 at .05 level of significance and with 12 degree of freedom (i.e.  $\chi^2_{\alpha} = 79.980 > 21.02$ ). This indicates that on- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity. Therefore, the hypothesis which states that on- the- job training has no significant effect on employee productivity was rejected.



## **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The findings of the study were discussed as follows:

The findings from research question 1 in Table 1 revealed that 5 variables of off- the- job training affect employee productivity in the organization. These variables were: Class room lecture, Business game, Case study, Conference/discussion and Workshop/seminar. The findings from research question 1 in Table 1 were further supported by findings from hypothesis 1 in Table 3 which revealed that off- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity.

The findings from research question 2 in Table 2 revealed that 5 variables of on- the- job training affect employee productivity in the organization to a very high extent. These variables were: Job rotation, Apprenticeship and coaching, Committee assignment, Job instruction and Internship training. The findings from research question 2 in Table 2 were further supported by findings from hypothesis 2 in Table 4 which revealed that on- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity. The findings of the above study was in conformity with Obisi (2001) who found that training is a systematic process of enhancing the knowledge, skills and attitude, hence leads to satisfactory performance by the employees at job.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that;

- i. Off- the- job training affect employee productivity in the organization to a high extent.
- ii. On- the- job training affect employee productivity in the organization to a very high extent.
- iii. Off- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity.
- iv. On- the- job training has significant effect on employee productivity.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been proffered.

- i. Management should stimulate training that workers require to improve their performance and capabilities, which consequently increase organizational productivity as well. The training should be designed on the basis of organization specific needs and objectives.
- ii. Management should encourage on- the- job training in order to impact knowledge and skills that will enhance employee productivity and the organization in general;

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