



<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17971210>

Human Capital Development through Training and Development: Implications for Effective Public Service Delivery in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Staff training and development is a critical factor in enhancing organisational performance, productivity, and overall national development. In Nigeria, however, efforts to implement effective training programs face significant challenges, including limited financial resources, poor infrastructure, low employee motivation, cultural resistance, language barriers, and inadequate access to modern technologies. These challenges undermine the capacity of organisations to develop a skilled workforce capable of driving innovation and economic growth. This study examines the key challenges of staff training and development in Nigeria and proposes strategic recommendations to address these obstacles. Recommendations include implementing comprehensive training programs, investing in e-learning platforms, leveraging local resources, fostering collaboration and networking, establishing mentorship initiatives, and aligning training with career progression and organisational objectives. The study concludes that targeted investment in human capital through effective training and development initiatives can enhance employee performance, promote gender equality, improve job opportunities, and strengthen organisational competitiveness. By prioritising training and development, Nigerian organisations can build a competent, adaptable, and innovative workforce that contributes to sustainable economic and social development.

Keywords: Staff training, Staff development, Human capital, Workforce skills, Organisational performance, Mentorship, Employee motivation, Capacity building

INTRODUCTION

Human capital development through training and development is widely regarded as a critical strategic investment for improving the capacity of employees to perform effectively and efficiently in organizational roles. Human capital development entails enhancing the knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences of individuals, making them more productive and better equipped to contribute to organizational goals. Fundamentally, it embraces the idea that people are the most valuable assets an organization possesses, and that investing in their growth yields both individual and institutional benefits (Workhuman, 2025).

Training programmes can be created independently or with a learning administration system, with the goal of employee long-term development. Common training practices include orientations, classroom lectures, case studies, role playing, simulations and computer-based training, including e-learning (International Business Machines Corporation, n.d.). Sometimes referred to as Human Resource Development (HRD), most employee training and development efforts are driven by an organization's HRD function. Training and development is an essential process used to improve employee performance and knowledge. It encompasses activities such as education, instruction, and workshops that help employees gain new skills and knowledge. It also includes activities such as job rotation, job enlargement, and job enrichment that can help employees develop their existing skills and capabilities. Training and

development is an important part of any organization's success, as it helps individuals reach their full potential and maximize their contributions to the organization (Breaugh and Starke, 2000). Kohn (2017) stressed that training and development is the process of enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees within an organization by providing them with educational, experiential, and technological activities. It is a key component of organizational development and is seen as a way to increase employee motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational productivity. Training and development can take place at all levels of an organization, including new hires, current employees, managers, and executives. There are a variety of approaches to training and development, such as classroom instruction, e-learning, on-the-job training, and mentoring. Training and development can be conducted internally, through an organization's own resources, or externally, through an outside consultant or educational institution.

In the context of public administration, training and development serve as essential mechanisms for strengthening public service delivery by equipping civil servants with the expertise needed to respond to complex governance challenges. A well-trained public workforce is more likely to perform duties competently, innovate solutions, and deliver quality services to citizens. Training enhances employees' motivation, job satisfaction, commitment, and adaptability, attributes that are crucial for effective public service delivery (Wikipedia, n.d.). In Nigeria, human capital development remains especially critical due to persistent challenges in public service delivery. Research indicates that deficiencies in training and skill development among public sector workers contribute significantly to inefficiency, poor service quality, and institutional underperformance across key sectors such as healthcare, education, and administrative services (Ekeyi, 2024). Furthermore, studies show that effective training and development interventions can enhance employee competencies, leading to improved public sector productivity and better organizational outcomes (Adeyori & Fajebi, 2019).

Despite its recognized importance, human capital development in Nigeria faces significant obstacles such as inadequate planning, insufficient funding, limited training infrastructure, and weak strategic alignment with organizational goals. Consequently, many public institutions struggle to institutionalize continuous professional development that aligns with the evolving demands of governance and service delivery (Azuh, 2021). Therefore, understanding the role of training and development within the broader framework of human capital development provides vital insights into how human resources can be optimized to improve public service delivery. This understanding underscores the need for strategic, well-structured training frameworks that not only address current skill gaps but also prepare public servants for emerging roles in an increasingly complex administrative environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopted a scoping review methodology to explore the breadth and depth of existing literature on human capital development through training and development and its implications for effective public service delivery in Nigeria. A scoping review is a systematic approach to identifying, mapping, and synthesizing research evidence about a topic area, particularly when the subject is broad, emerging, or has not been comprehensively reviewed before. Unlike systematic reviews that focus on specific questions and critically appraise study quality, scoping reviews aim to provide an overview of key concepts, types of evidence, and gaps in the literature without emphasizing formal quality assessment. The scoping review method is particularly suitable for this study's broad objective of understanding how training and development contribute to human capital within the public service sector. By systematically mapping what has been published on this topic, the study identifies major themes, conceptual frameworks, research trends, and knowledge gaps, which can inform policy, practice, and future research in public administration and personnel management.

Differences between Training and Development

1. Training is a process of imparting specific skills, knowledge, and attitudes that employees need to perform their job duties. It is a short-term process that focuses on providing specific skills and knowledge required to do a certain job.

Development, on the other hand, is a long-term process that focuses on providing employees with the skills that will help them advance in their careers. It focuses on improving the employee's overall skills and abilities, rather than just providing specific knowledge or skills for a particular job.

2. Training is a program that teaches employees new skills or reinforces existing skills to improve performance in a specific job. Training may be provided by on-the-job instruction, apprenticeships, or formal classroom instruction.

Development, on the other hand, is an educational process that focuses on helping employees improve their overall knowledge, skills, and abilities in order to take on new roles and responsibilities, or to increase their effectiveness in their current roles. Development often involves activities such as seminars, workshops, and online learning. It may also include mentoring, coaching, and other experiences.

OBJECTIVES TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

- i. To improve employee productivity and performance.
- ii. To develop and maintain a motivated and skilled workforce.
- iii. To ensure that employees are aware of the latest trends, regulations and industry practices.
- iv. To provide opportunities for employees to acquire new skills and knowledge to advance their careers.
- v. To create a corporate culture of continuous learning and improvement.
- vi. To improve communication and collaboration among team members.
- vii. To increase employee engagement and job satisfaction.
- viii. To help employees develop their leadership skills.
- ix. To increase employee retention.
- x. To improve customer service and customer satisfaction.

TYPES OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

1. **On-the-Job Training:** On-the-job training is a type of training that takes place in the workplace and is related to the specific job an employee performs. It can involve instruction from a supervisor, self-directed learning, or job shadowing.

2. **Off-the-Job Training:** Off-the-job training is a type of training that takes place away from the workplace. It can include activities such as lectures, workshops, role-playing, simulations, and computer-based training.

3. **E-Learning:** eLearning is a type of training that is delivered electronically over the internet or on a computer. It can include activities such as webinars, online courses, and virtual classrooms.

4. **Coaching and Mentoring:** Coaching and mentoring involve providing one-on-one guidance and support to help employees develop specific skills.

5. **Apprenticeships:** Apprenticeships are a type of on-the-job training program that combines classroom instruction with supervised work experience.

6. **Leadership Development:** Leadership development is a type of training that focuses on developing the skills and knowledge necessary to become an effective leader.

7. **Cross-Training:** Cross-training is a type of training that helps employees learn different job roles or tasks. It can help employees become more versatile and provide greater value to their organization.

8. **Soft Skills Training:** Soft skills training focuses on developing interpersonal skills, communication skills, problem-solving skills, and other skills related to working with people.

9. **Technical Training:** Technical training is a type of training that focuses on developing the skills and knowledge necessary to use specific tools, systems, or technology.

10. **Compliance Training:** Compliance training is a type of training that focuses on teaching employees about laws, regulations, and policies related to their job duties.

IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT TO ORGANISATIONS

Training and development is an important process for any company that wants to ensure its employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their job roles effectively and efficiently. Through training and development, employees can enhance their performance, increase their efficiency, and develop new skills that can contribute to the growth of the organization.

According to Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick (2016), training and development can lead to improved customer service, increased productivity and profitability, and a more positive work environment. It also, helps to increase the motivation of employees and reduce turnover by fostering a sense of connection and loyalty to the organization. Additionally, it helps to create a culture of learning and growth, and can help organizations stay ahead of the competition by keeping employees up to date on the latest industry trends and technologies.

Kapoor (2020) maintained that training and development is essential for an organization to remain competitive and effective in today's rapidly changing business environment. It helps to ensure that employees are up-to-date with the latest industry trends and equipped to handle tasks and responsibilities efficiently. Training and development also helps to increase job satisfaction, morale and employee loyalty. Additionally, it helps to foster a learning culture and encourages creativity and innovation.

Successful businesses understand that it's more beneficial and cost-effective to develop their existing employees instead of seeking out new talent. The top ten benefits of employee training and development programs include:

1. **Increased productivity:** When employees stay current with new procedures and technologies, they can increase their overall output.
2. **Reduced micromanagement:** If workers feel empowered to perform a task, they typically require less oversight and work more independently.
3. **Train future leaders:** Organizations must have a solid pipeline of well-trained and innovative potential leaders to grow and adapt over time.
4. **Increased job satisfaction and retention:** Well-trained employees gain confidence in their abilities, leading to greater job satisfaction, a reduction in absenteeism and overall employee retention.
5. **Attract highly skilled employees:** Top recruits are attracted to firms with an identifiable career path based on consistent training and development.
6. **Increased consistency:** Well-organized training ensures tasks are performed uniformly, resulting in tight quality control that end users can trust.
7. **Increased camaraderie:** Training and development helps create a sense of teamwork and collaboration.
8. **Bolstered safety:** Continuous training and development helps ensure employees have the knowledge and skills to perform a task safely.
9. **Ability to cross-train:** Providing consistent training creates a knowledgeable team overall where employees can help train or assist each other as needed.

10. **Added innovation:** Consistently trained employees can help develop new strategies and products, contributing to the company's bottom line and continued success.

Challenges of Staff Training and Development in Nigeria

Staff training and development in Nigeria is a critical aspect of organisational growth and human capital enhancement, yet it faces a myriad of context-specific and structural challenges that undermine its effectiveness and sustainability. These challenges emerge from economic, institutional, cultural, and infrastructural constraints present in both public and private sector organisations. Addressing these challenges requires a thorough understanding of the unique socio-economic and organisational dynamics in Nigeria, as well as the interplay between employee expectations and organisational capabilities.

1. Low Employee Turnover and Unemployment Context

One significant challenge affecting staff training and development in Nigeria is the low employee turnover rate in many sectors. Okonkwo (2020) observes that organisations often hesitate to invest heavily in training employees when they perceive that employees may not stay long enough to provide a return on the investment. This hesitancy is compounded by the country's broader labour market challenges, particularly high unemployment and underemployment, which shape employee behaviour and priorities. As noted by Omoju (2023), employees in a high-unemployment context may prioritize job security over career development, choosing to focus on retaining their positions rather than participating actively in training programs. This scenario creates a paradoxical situation: organisations are reluctant to invest in capacity-building initiatives due to uncertain long-term benefits, while employees feel little incentive to develop skills if the opportunities for promotion or professional advancement remain limited. Consequently, the growth of human capital is slowed, and the potential benefits of training and development are not fully realised. Furthermore, in sectors where labour is abundant but formal training is scarce, organisations may prefer hiring already skilled personnel instead of investing in upskilling existing staff, thereby perpetuating the cycle of low investment in employee development.

2. Lack of Resources and Inadequate Funding

Financial limitations remain a central obstacle to effective staff training and development in Nigeria. Both Okonkwo (2020) and Omoloye (2015) highlight that many organisations, especially in the public sector, operate with constrained budgets that make it difficult to allocate sufficient resources for comprehensive training initiatives. Menuba, Aliегда, and Amehojo (2024) further emphasize that inadequate funding leads to the adoption of superficial or one-off training sessions rather than sustained capacity-building programs. The scarcity of resources impacts various aspects of training, including the procurement of relevant materials, access to modern learning technologies, engagement of qualified trainers, and development of up-to-date curricula. In many cases, organisations rely on outdated training manuals, obsolete equipment, or instructors with limited pedagogical skills. As a result, employees may receive training that is irrelevant, poorly structured, or incapable of equipping them with competencies needed to address contemporary workplace challenges. The lack of funding also limits the ability to conduct needs assessments, evaluate training outcomes, and implement follow-up programs, which are essential for sustaining long-term skill development.

3. Poor Infrastructure and Technological Barriers

Infrastructural inadequacies represent another major challenge to staff training and development in Nigeria. Reliable electricity supply, stable internet connectivity, and access to modern training facilities remain inconsistent across many organisations (Professions Nigeria, 2025). These limitations are particularly pronounced in remote or rural locations, where access to advanced digital platforms for e-learning is often non-existent. The absence of robust infrastructure restricts organisations from adopting innovative learning approaches, such as online courses, virtual simulations, and blended learning models, which can reach larger employee populations efficiently. Without technological support, training is often confined to traditional lecture-based formats that may not effectively engage participants or facilitate experiential learning. Additionally, poor infrastructure can hinder the timely updating of training materials, access to global best practices, and participation in online knowledge-sharing communities, leaving employees at a competitive disadvantage in an increasingly digital workplace.

4. Cultural and Organisational Resistance

Cultural and organisational factors also impede effective training implementation in Nigeria. Okonkwo (2020) identifies hierarchical work cultures and rigid authority structures as barriers to the adoption of new training methods. In many organisations, questioning established practices or engaging in innovative learning activities may be discouraged, which stifles creativity, critical thinking, and knowledge application. Employees may also resist training due to concerns about increased workload, uncertainty regarding the relevance of the training to their current roles, or fear of exposure to new performance expectations. Resistance to change is often reinforced by management attitudes, where senior staff may perceive training as unnecessary or view newly acquired skills by junior employees as a potential threat to existing authority. Consequently, training programs may face low participation rates or limited engagement, reducing the overall effectiveness of capacity-building initiatives.

5. Language Barriers and Diversity Challenges

Language and cultural diversity pose unique challenges for staff training in Nigeria. While English is the official language, varying levels of proficiency among employees can hinder comprehension and effective participation in training programs. This issue is particularly significant in regions with high linguistic diversity, where employees may struggle with technical terms or complex instructional materials. Beyond language, Nigeria's socio-cultural diversity—with over 250 ethnic groups—affects learning dynamics and expectations (NotchHR, 2023). Differences in cultural norms, communication styles, and learning preferences may influence trainees' comfort levels, engagement, and willingness to participate in interactive training methods. Training programs that fail to consider cultural sensitivity risk alienating participants, fostering misunderstandings, or reducing overall effectiveness. Inclusive and contextually aware training designs are therefore essential to address these diversity-related challenges and to create equitable learning opportunities for all employees.

6. Poor Working Conditions

Substandard working conditions present an additional barrier to effective staff development in Nigeria. Omoloye (2015) emphasizes that inadequate facilities, insufficient tools, and unsupportive organisational climates limit employees' ability to focus on skill acquisition or apply new competencies effectively. For instance, employees trained on modern software may struggle to implement their skills if their organisations lack the necessary hardware or software resources. Poor working conditions also contribute to employee dissatisfaction, fatigue, and burnout, which further reduce engagement in professional development initiatives. When staff perceive their work environment as unsupportive or discouraging, they are less likely to prioritize training participation or internalize lessons learned. Consequently, organisations that fail to address foundational workplace challenges risk undermining the potential impact of staff development programs.

7. Low Motivation Levels

Employee motivation plays a central role in the success of training initiatives. Omoloye (2015) and Aromolaran (2021) note that when employees perceive little tangible benefit from training—such as promotion opportunities, recognition, or improved work conditions—their interest in participating or applying acquired skills diminishes. Low motivation is often exacerbated by organisational practices that fail to link training outcomes to career progression, rewards, or incentives. Additionally, the absence of regular feedback, performance appraisals, or mentorship programs can leave employees disengaged, further reducing the return on investment in training. Motivational barriers are therefore intertwined with organisational policies, and addressing them requires deliberate alignment of training programs with clear career pathways and recognition systems.

8. Lack of Cohesion and Team Spirit

Finally, a lack of organisational cohesion and team spirit can negatively affect staff training outcomes. Strong interpersonal relationships and a collaborative culture facilitate knowledge sharing, peer learning, and mutual support during training programs. Conversely, environments characterized by competition, siloed departments, or weak communication networks limit opportunities for collaborative

learning. When employees feel disconnected from their teams or lack a shared sense of purpose, informal learning diminishes, mentoring relationships are weakened, and the overall organisational capacity to absorb and apply new knowledge is compromised. Creating a cohesive workplace culture that encourages collective problem-solving, open dialogue, and mutual support is therefore essential for maximizing the effectiveness of training and development initiatives.

The way forward to the Challenges Facing Training and Development in Nigeria

Effective staff training and development is critical for improving organisational performance and ensuring sustainable growth. To address the challenges identified in the Nigerian context, organisations can adopt the following strategies:

1. **Implement a Comprehensive Staff Training and Development Program:** Organisations should design and implement a holistic training and development program that targets both current job requirements and future career growth. Such programs should integrate on-the-job training, which allows employees to gain practical skills while performing their roles, and off-site training, including workshops, seminars, and short courses. A structured program ensures employees acquire the necessary competencies to excel in their roles, while also providing pathways for career advancement and personal development. Regular evaluation and updates of the program will help ensure that it remains relevant to evolving organisational and industry needs.

2. **Invest in E-Learning and Digital Training Platforms:** Given the technological advancements and the need for flexible learning opportunities, organisations should invest in e-learning platforms. Digital training allows employees to learn at their own pace, access training materials remotely, and revisit modules as needed. E-learning also facilitates scalability, enabling organisations to train large groups of employees simultaneously and reach staff in remote or underserved locations. Incorporating interactive tools such as webinars, simulations, and quizzes can enhance engagement and knowledge retention.

3. **Leverage Local Resources for Professional Development:** Organisations should take advantage of the training resources available within their local context. Local universities, professional associations, and training institutions often provide workshops, seminars, and certification programs tailored to the Nigerian workforce. Engaging with these resources not only reduces training costs but also strengthens networks with local experts and practitioners. Furthermore, local training initiatives can be tailored to address region-specific challenges, ensuring that employees acquire practical skills relevant to their immediate work environment.

4. **Promote Collaboration and Networking Opportunities:** A culture of collaboration and networking enhances the effectiveness of training programs by enabling knowledge sharing and peer learning. Organisations should create structured opportunities for employees to interact, exchange ideas, and collaborate on projects. Participation in professional networks, industry events, and conferences exposes employees to best practices and expert insights, broadening their perspectives and stimulating innovation. Encouraging team-based projects and cross-departmental collaboration can also strengthen cohesion and improve organisational performance.

5. **Establish Mentorship Programs:** Mentorship programs provide structured guidance and support, helping employees navigate their professional development journeys. By pairing less experienced employees with senior staff or industry experts, organisations can facilitate knowledge transfer, skill development, and career planning. Mentorship also helps in building confidence, improving problem-solving capabilities, and fostering a culture of continuous learning. Formal mentorship programs, with clearly defined roles and expectations, ensure that employees receive consistent and meaningful support.

6. **Set Clear Goals and Performance Objectives:** Organisations should clearly define and communicate performance goals and expectations to all staff members. Clear objectives provide employees with direction and a sense of purpose, enabling them to focus their efforts on achieving measurable outcomes.

Performance targets should be specific, achievable, and aligned with organisational strategies. By linking training initiatives to these objectives, employees can better understand the relevance of their development activities, which in turn enhances motivation and engagement. Regular feedback and performance reviews further reinforce accountability and encourage continuous improvement.

7. Foster a Culture of Collaboration and Open Communication: A supportive organisational culture is essential for effective training and development. Organisations should promote a collaborative environment where open communication, trust, and mutual respect are encouraged (Oduor, 2020). When employees feel valued and supported, they are more likely to engage fully in training programs and apply acquired skills in the workplace. Initiatives such as team-building exercises, cross-functional workshops, and collaborative problem-solving sessions can strengthen interpersonal relationships and enhance collective learning.

8. Invest in Technology to Enhance Training and Efficiency: Organisations should adopt modern technologies that streamline operations and support training initiatives (Oduor, 2020). For instance, software for learning management systems (LMS) can track employee progress, deliver digital content, and provide performance analytics. Automation of routine tasks frees employees to focus on higher-value activities, creating more time for learning and skill application. Additionally, technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and interactive simulations can create immersive training experiences, enhancing practical skill acquisition and knowledge retention.

9. Monitor and Evaluate Training Outcomes: To ensure training initiatives achieve desired results, organisations should implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Feedback from participants, performance assessments, and training impact studies help organisations identify gaps, improve program content, and align training with evolving organisational needs. Continuous evaluation fosters accountability and ensures that resources invested in training yield tangible improvements in employee performance and productivity.

10. Align Training with Career Progression and Incentives: Training programs should be integrated with clear career pathways and reward structures. Employees are more likely to engage in development activities when they see direct benefits, such as promotions, salary increments, or recognition for skill acquisition. Linking training outcomes with tangible incentives enhances motivation, encourages active participation, and fosters a culture of lifelong learning within the organisation.

CONCLUSION

Training and development in Nigeria is a critical driver of national advancement, economic growth, and organisational effectiveness. In a country facing persistent challenges related to infrastructure, education, and economic development, investing in human capital through targeted training and development initiatives is a strategic imperative. By equipping employees with relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies, organisations can foster a workforce capable of addressing contemporary challenges, driving innovation, and contributing to sustainable economic progress. Effective training and development programs not only enhance the technical and professional capabilities of employees but also strengthen soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork, which are essential for productive and resilient organisations. Furthermore, these initiatives can promote inclusivity and gender equality by creating equitable opportunities for skill acquisition, career advancement, and leadership development. In this way, training and development can serve as a catalyst for social transformation, empowering all segments of the workforce to participate meaningfully in Nigeria's economic growth. For training programs to be successful, they must be tailored to the specific needs of the Nigerian workforce and aligned with organisational objectives. Employers should adopt comprehensive approaches that combine on-the-job training, off-site workshops, e-learning, mentorship, and performance-driven programs. When training is relevant, accessible, and supported by robust infrastructure and technology, employees are more likely to engage actively, apply newly acquired skills, and demonstrate higher productivity. Investing in training and development also offers strategic advantages for organisations. It can enhance employee motivation, improve job satisfaction, foster team cohesion, and reduce turnover by creating clear pathways for career

growth. Moreover, a skilled and well-trained workforce strengthens organisational competitiveness, enhances service delivery, and positions organisations to respond effectively to evolving industry demands.

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