

EFFECT OF STAFF TRAINING ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN COUNCIL FOR THE REGULATION OF ENGINEERING IN NIGERIA FCT.

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of training and development initiatives on staff performance in Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) FCT. Given its crucial role in driving socio-economic progress in the engineering sector, the agency's efficacy rests heavily on its workforce's competence. To explore the correlation between training, development, and staff performance; this research employed a survey-based approach to ascertain the relationship; a questionnaire was distributed among staff and management personnel of COREN to gather primary data. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistical methods. The underpinning theoretical framework was the Human Capital Theory. The findings revealed that training and development exert a positive influence on performance of COREN staff. Furthermore, it was found that training and development initiatives enhanced comprehension of job responsibilities, roles, and pertinent policies in COREN. As a recommendation, the study suggested that COREN should continue and expand its investment in training and development programmes tailored to its employees' specific needs. Given its significant positive impact on work quality and role comprehension, a more focused approach to individualized training modules will further enhance employees' competencies and performance.

Keywords: Employee, job responsibility, COREN, performance, training and development

Introduction

The concept of training and development has evolved into a universally acknowledged and embraced phenomenon within the realm of organizational dynamics. This recognition is rooted in its intrinsic attributes, such as objectivity, strategic positioning, and the direct and tangible contributions it makes towards the attainment of organisational goals and objectives. Training and development encompass the systematic process of equipping individuals with the essential triad of knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA) required to proficiently undertake specific tasks or activities, thereby resulting in a measurable enhancement of overall performance levels. As such, the multifaceted advantages stemming from training and development reverberate positively for both employers and employees alike.

The performance of employees is a critical factor in the success of any organization. The Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), responsible for the regulation and control of engineering practice in Nigeria, underscores the importance of effective staff performance. One of the pivotal ways to enhance employee performance is through comprehensive training and development program. Training and development programs are essential in equipping employees with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform their duties effectively. According to Noe et al. (2017), training involves a systematic approach to learning and development to improve individual, team, and organisational effectiveness. Development, on the other hand, is broader in scope, focusing on the long-term growth and career progression of employees. Armstrong (2014) designs these programmes to bridge the gap between employees' current capabilities and the skills needed to meet organisational objectives. Researchers have extensively studied the relationship between training, development, and employee performance. Empirical evidence suggests that training leads to improved job performance, higher job satisfaction, and increased employee retention (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2019). Training programmes enhance the skills and competencies of employees, leading to greater efficiency and productivity (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2019). Furthermore, development programmes help prepare employees for higher responsibilities, ensuring a continuous supply of qualified personnel for key positions within the organisation (Garavan, 2017).

In Nigeria, the need for effective training and development is particularly critical due to the dynamic nature of the work environment and the increasing complexity of tasks. COREN regulates the Nigerian engineering sector, requiring professionals to continuously update their technical knowledge and skills to meet international standards and comply with regulatory requirements. The Federal Capital Territory (FCT), as a hub of engineering activities, emphasizes the importance of such programs to maintain high performance and adherence to quality standards. COREN has recognised the importance of continuous professional development for engineers and has instituted various training programmes aimed at enhancing the skills of its members. These initiatives include workshops, seminars, and professional courses designed to keep engineers up to date on the latest developments in their fields and ensure compliance with national and international engineering standards. In its strategic plan, COREN emphasises the need for training and development as a tool for improving regulatory practices and enhancing the overall quality of engineering services in Nigeria (COREN, 2020). By investing in training and development, COREN aims to build a competent and professional workforce capable of meeting the demands of the engineering sector and contributing to national development.

Despite the acknowledged importance of training and development, COREN faces several significant challenges in effectively implementing these programs. Inadequate funding remains a primary concern, as limited financial resources can restrict the scope and quality of training initiatives. This constraint often leads to a reliance on outdated materials or insufficient training sessions, which can undermine the overall effectiveness of the programs. Additionally, resistance to change among employees poses another significant challenge. Employees may be hesitant to adopt new skills or approaches due to comfort with existing practices, fear of increased workload, or skepticism about the benefits of training. This resistance can hinder the successful implementation of new practices and reduce the potential impact of training programs. Logistical issues further complicate the organization of training sessions. Coordinating schedules, securing appropriate venues, and ensuring the availability of qualified trainers can be time-consuming and cumbersome. These challenges can result in delays or cancellations, negatively affecting the consistency and continuity of training efforts. Moreover, measuring the impact of training programs on employee performance adds another layer of complexity. Effective evaluation requires robust mechanisms to assess not only the immediate outcomes but also the long-term effects on employee skills, performance, and overall organizational goals. Without accurate and comprehensive evaluation methods, it can be difficult to determine whether training investments are yielding the desired improvements in employee performance and organizational efficiency. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic approach, including securing adequate funding, fostering a culture of continuous learning, improving logistical planning, and developing effective evaluation frameworks. By overcoming these obstacles,

COREN can enhance the effectiveness of its training and development programs, leading to improved employee performance and organizational success.

Understanding the impact of staff training and development on employees' performance in COREN is crucial for understanding how these programmes contribute to the organisation's effectiveness. By analysing the impact of training and development initiatives, COREN can refine its strategies to enhance employee performance, ultimately leading to improved regulatory practices and the advancement of the engineering profession in Nigeria. Effects of Staff training on employees' performance at the Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN), FCT revolves around the critical examination of how training and development initiatives impact employee performance within this specific regulatory body. Despite the general recognition of the importance of staff development in enhancing skills and productivity, there is a need for empirical evidence to understand its direct effects on performance metrics at COREN. In the context of a regulatory organisation like COREN, which plays a pivotal role in maintaining engineering standards and practices in Nigeria, the effectiveness of its workforce is paramount. Prior studies have indicated that training and development can significantly improve employee competencies, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2019; Khan, Khan, & Khan, 2019). However, there is a paucity of research focusing on professional regulatory bodies, particularly within the Nigerian context. To address this gap, this study aims to evaluate COREN's specific training programs and their effectiveness in improving employee performance. This investigation will provide insights into whether the current training practices meet the needs of the staff and contribute to the overall goals of the organisation, thereby facilitating informed decisions on future training investments (Armstrong, 2014).

The objective is to determine the effect of training and development on the quality of work by the employees of COREN and evaluate the effect of training and development on job knowledge of employees in the COREN.

The research also answers the following question;

To which has training and development influenced performance of the employees' in COREN; and how training and development facilitates increases in employees' understanding of job roles, responsibilities and relevant policies in COREN?

The null hypotheses were tested which includes,

H₀₁: Training and development do not influence higher performance of employees of COREN;

H₀₂: Training and development do not facilitate increases in employees' understanding of the job roles, responsibilities and relevant policies in COREN.

Literature Review

Training and Development

Training and development are complementary concepts, each serving distinct but interconnected purposes. Training focuses on enhancing employees' current job capabilities, skills, and dexterity, while development aims to shape attitudes and behaviors for effective task performance (Nwali & Adekunle, 2021). Both are essential for acquiring knowledge and abilities necessary for workplace tasks (Iyayi, 2007).

These processes involve gaining knowledge, understanding techniques, and fostering proactivity. They are crucial for improving performance at individual, team, and organizational levels, with training and development serving as indicators of efficiency and productivity (Tahir et al., 2014). Effective training should facilitate organizational growth and enhance profitability (Cosh et al., 1998).

Training and development address performance gaps and are integral to Human Resources management (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Nassazi (2013) defines training as a structured activity aimed at improving performance or attaining necessary skills. It involves planned activities designed to boost skills, knowledge, and competency. While training addresses current job performance, development prepares employees for future roles. Both are vital for organizational performance and effectiveness, and without them, achieving strategic goals and mission effectiveness is challenging (Karim et al., 2019).

Employee Performance

Pawar (2019) identifies the main indicator of an employee's performance as the output they produce, focusing on both quality and quantity. Aima et al. (2017) define work performance as the quality and quantity of work achieved by individuals or groups within an organization. To enhance performance, management must systematically align actual performance with expected outcomes. Waiyaki (2017) adds that work performance encompasses employee behaviors that impact organizational success, whether positively or negatively. Thus, employee performance is judged by the quality, quantity, and behavior of work, aligning with organizational goals. Employee performance significantly affects organizational growth and success. In the public sector, Alfandi (2020) emphasizes its critical role in influencing the success of ministries. Managers must monitor performance to ensure it meets the desired output for achieving organizational goals. High performance not only benefits the organization but also provides employees with opportunities for higher incentives and improved welfare (Simamora et al., 2019).

Zuheir (2018) emphasizes that employee performance is a direct reflection of the results achieved through their actions, which are rooted in their expertise and skills. This perspective underscores the importance of aligning employee capabilities with organizational expectations to achieve desired outcomes. Essentially, performance is not just about the completion of tasks but also about the effectiveness with which employees leverage their knowledge and skills to meet or exceed objectives. Building on this, Aborampah (2015) argues that enhancing performance goes beyond merely addressing job-specific tasks. It involves a comprehensive approach to improving employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities. This holistic enhancement is crucial for achieving organizational goals, as it ensures that employees are well-equipped to handle their responsibilities and contribute meaningfully to the organization's success. To achieve optimal performance, organizations must implement systematic measures to track and assess employee performance. This includes establishing clear performance metrics, regularly reviewing progress, and providing feedback. Effective performance tracking helps identify areas for improvement, recognize achievements, and ensure that employees are aligned with organizational goals. By integrating these measures, organizations can better manage and enhance employee performance, leading to increased productivity and overall success.

Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria

In Nigerian engineering, the Council for the Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) serves as the key regulatory body, ensuring competence, professionalism, and ethical conduct among engineers. COREN was established under the Engineers (Registration, etc.) Act No. 55 of 1970, with its official inception on November 9, 1971 (COREN). This act formalized COREN's role in quality control and standardization within Nigerian engineering.

COREN's responsibilities span all engineering branches, including civil, mechanical, electrical, and chemical. It collaborates with professional institutions like the Nigerian Society of Engineers (NSE) to promote professionalism and enhance engineering standards (COREN). Its functions include registering engineers and firms, maintaining professional standards, accrediting engineering programs, and enforcing compliance through investigations and disciplinary actions.

COREN's influence extends internationally through affiliations with organizations such as the African Engineering Organizations (AFEO) and the World Federation of Engineering Organizations (WFEO), which support knowledge sharing and global recognition (COREN). The correlation between fringe benefits and employee performance, as noted in COREN's 2021 review, underscores the impact of additional remuneration on job satisfaction and performance. Employee training is pivotal for performance improvement and organizational competitiveness. Wright and Geroy (2021) highlight that effective training enhances job performance and develops future competencies, while Swart et al. (2015) confirm that ongoing training bridges performance gaps and adapts employees to evolving job requirements.

Effect of Training and development on employee performance

Abdullahi, Gwadabe, and Ibrahim (2018) explore the impact of training and development on employee productivity among academic staff at Kano State Polytechnic, Nigeria. Using a quantitative approach with a causal research design, they surveyed 233 randomly selected respondents from a total population of 590 academic staff. Data were collected via a closed-ended questionnaire with Likert Scale options and analyzed using multiple regression through SPSS software version 21. The study hypothesized a positive effect of training and development on productivity. Findings confirmed that training methods, design, and delivery styles significantly enhance employee productivity. The study suggests that management should continually invest in training to foster employee development and retention, and that the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) should improve its training policies to keep pace with technological advancements.

Khuselwa, Baphiwe, Melanie, and Tatenda (2022) investigate the potential of coaching and mentoring to address skills deficiencies among municipal employees. Utilizing a cross-sectional research design, they surveyed 115 employees from a target population of 265. With a high Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.8, their analysis revealed that training and development significantly improve performance and service delivery. The study found that the municipality lacked adequate training resources, recommending increased investment in coaching and mentoring to enhance employee skills and service quality.

Mahadevan and Yap (2019) examine the effects of on-the-job and off-the-job training on employee performance. Employing a positivist philosophy and quantitative methods, they distributed surveys to all 162 employees in their study population, with 124 valid responses. Their analysis using SPSS showed that both training types positively impact performance, with standardized coefficients of 0.370 for on-the-job and 0.546 for off-the-job training, both significant at 0.000.

Mohammed, Danjuma, and John (2022) review literature on training and development's impact on productivity. Their conceptual review of articles from 2000 to 2020 highlights that trained employees are generally more skilled and proficient. Training programs improve both individual and organizational productivity by offering continuous learning opportunities. They conclude that effective training enhances productivity and provides a competitive advantage. Future research should consider variables such as age, teamwork, lifestyle, and education level.

Theoretical Framework

The study is guided by Human Capital Theory, initially proposed by Smith (1776) and expanded by Schultz (1961). This theory posits that education and training are investments in human capital, enhancing employees' productivity through increased knowledge and skills. Schultz (1961) emphasized that skills are acquired through development programs, including on-the-job training, seminars, workshops, and a supportive work environment with promotion opportunities.

Just as individuals invest in their skills through education, organizations can invest in training to improve employees' competencies. By providing relevant training, employees gain new skills and knowledge,

boosting their effectiveness. According to Human Capital Theory, trained employees become more productive, which is particularly relevant for COREN. Employees participating in role-specific training (e.g., project management or policy analysis) are expected to perform their duties more efficiently. Additionally, the theory suggests that employees who perceive organizational investment in their development are more likely to remain loyal and engaged. For COREN, implementing a robust training and development strategy can foster a culture of continuous learning, enhancing employee satisfaction and reducing turnover. Applying Human Capital Theory to COREN's approach highlights how investing in employees' skills and knowledge can lead to better performance, improved organizational outcomes, and positive societal impacts, ultimately contributing to the sustainable development of the organization.

Methodology

The study adopted survey research design as a tool for solving the research problem. The population for this study is 409 workers of COREN, according to a report in 2022. A convenience random sampling technique was adopted to select who completed the questionnaire. In determining the sample size, a formula that uses the normal approximation with a 95% confidence level and 5% error was adopted. This is Yamane (1967) sampling formula defined as

$$n = N/1 + N (e)^2$$

Where

N= population size (409 in this study)

e= error term or critical level of significance (specified in this study as 0.02)

1= constant

n = sample chosen (computed by the author in this study as 203)

In data collection, only primary data were generated. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered to the entire sample - employees. It is designed on a five (5) point Likert type scale.

Rank correlation analysis was employed to ascertain the strength of the relationship between training and development and staff performance in COREN the statistical tool used is useful where a correlation is assumed to exist between the variables. Correlation is statically measured by the coefficient of product moment

Correlation (r) defined as

$$R = \Sigma xy / \sqrt{(\Sigma x^2)(\Sigma y^2)}$$

Where x = X - X̄ and y = Y - Ȳ

The value of r lies from 0 to 1 strength of the relationship (correlation) increase as the value of r progress from 0 towards 1

Data Analysis and Discussion

To what extent has training and development influence higher quality of work by staff of Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) FCT?

Table 1: Responses on whether training and development influence higher quality of work by staff of COREN

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	37	18.2
Agree	79	39
Strongly Disagree	29	14.3
Disagree	47	23.1
Undecided	11	5.4
Total	203	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

Responses on whether training and development influence higher quality of work by the staff of COREN revealed 37(18.2) of the respondents strongly agreed, 79 (39%) indicate agreed while 29(14.3%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 47 (23.1%) indicates disagreed also 11(5.4%) of the respondents were undecided as regard training and development influence higher quality of work by staff of COREN.

Table 2: Responses on whether training and development initiatives' impact on employees' ability to meet COREN performance standards

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	33	16.3
Agree	81	40
Strongly Disagree	32	15.7
Disagree	45	22.2
Undecided	12	6
Total	203	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The respondents were asked to state whether training and development initiatives' impact on staff's ability to meet COREN performance standards, the data obtained revealed 33 (16.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 81 (40%) of the respondents agreed while 32 (15.7%) of the respondents indicates strongly disagree and 45 (22.2%) indicates disagreed also 12 (6%) of the respondents were undecided as regard whether training and development initiatives' impact on employees' ability to meet COREN performance standards

How has training and development facilitated increases in staff's understanding of job roles, responsibilities and relevant policies in COREN?

Table 3: Responses on whether training sessions conducted by COREN effectively cover relevant policies and procedures that apply to staff's role

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	45	22.2
Agree	76	37.4
Strongly Disagree	32	15.7
Disagree	37	18.2
Undecided	13	6.4
Total	203	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

The responses on whether training sessions conducted by COREN effectively cover relevant policies and procedures that apply to employees' role revealed 45(22.3%) of the respondents indicates strongly agreed, 76 (37.4%) of the respondents agreed while 32 (15.7%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and 37 (18.2%) indicates disagreed 13(6.4%) of the respondents indicates undecided on whether training sessions conducted by COREN effectively cover relevant policies and procedures that apply to staff's role

Table 4: Responses on whether COREN's training and development initiatives have positively influenced employees' understanding of the interconnectedness between different departments within the agency.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree	39	19.2
Agree	78	38.4
Strongly Disagree	28	13.8
Disagree	43	21.1
Undecided	15	7.4
Total	203	100

Sources: Field survey, 2024

Responses on whether COREN's training and development initiatives have positively influenced staff's understanding of the interconnectedness between different departments within the agency revealed 39(19.2%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 78(38.4%) of the respondents agreed while 28(13.8%) of the respondents indicates strongly disagree and 43(21.1%) indicates disagreed also, 15 (7.4%) were undecided on COREN's training and development initiatives have positively influenced staff's understanding of the interconnectedness between different departments within the agency.

Test of Hypothesis

H0₁: Training and development does not influence higher quality of work by staff of COREN

Using the chi-square (x²) statistical model in testing the hypothesis

Chi-square is given below

$$\sum \frac{(O_i - E_i)^2}{E_i}$$

$$1 = 1 E_i$$

Where O_i = The Observed Frequency

E_i = The Expected Frequency

Responses	O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Strongly Agreed	37	40.6	-3.6	-12.96	-0.3
Agreed	79	40.6	38.4	1474.56	36.3
Strongly Disagreed	29	40.6	-11.6	- 134.56	-3.3
Disagreed	47	40.6	6.4	40.96	1.0
Undecided	11	40.6	-29.6	-876.16	-21.6
Total	203	203			12.1

To determine the tabulated chi-square (X²) tab. Using the degree of freedom DF= n-1 and level of significance of 0.05.

Where n = number of different values observed in row

X² Tabulated = 5.991

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if x² Cal < x² tab. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if x² call > x² tab.

Decision Rule

From the computation above it is seen that x² Cal is greater than x² tab (12.1 > 5.991) the null Hypothesis (H0) is therefore rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Hi) is accepted which state that training and development influence higher quality of work by employees of COREN.

Hypothesis II

H0₂: Training and development does not facilitates increases in staff^e understanding of job roles, responsibilities and relevant policies in COREN

Responses	O	E	O – E	(O – E) ²	(O – E) ² /E
Strongly Agreed	45	40.6	4.4	19.36	0.48
Agreed	76	40.6	35.4	1253.16	30.8
Strongly Disagreed	32	40.6	-8.6	- 73.96	-1.82
Disagreed	37	40.6	-3.6	-12.96	-0.32
Undecided	13	40.6	-27.6	-761.76	-18.7
Total	203	203			10.44

Decision Rule: Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if $\chi^2 \text{ cal} < \chi^2 \text{ tab}$. Reject the null hypothesis (H0) if $\chi^2 \text{ Cal} > \chi^2 \text{ tab}$.

Decision Rule

From the computation above it is seen that $\chi^2 \text{ Cal}$. is greater than $\chi^2 \text{ Tab}$ ($10.44 > 5.991$) the null Hypothesis (H0) is therefore rejected and alternative Hypothesis (Hi) is accepted which state that training and development facilitates increases in staff^e understanding of job roles, responsibilities and relevant policies in COREN

The findings from the computations reveal that the training and development programmes at the Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) have a significant positive impact on employee performance. Specifically, the chi-square test results indicate that the calculated chi-square values ($\chi^2 \text{ Cal}$) are greater than the tabulated chi-square values ($\chi^2 \text{ Tab}$) in both hypotheses tested.

For the first hypothesis, the calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 \text{ Cal} = 12.1$) exceeds the tabulated value ($\chi^2 \text{ Tab} = 5.991$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0). Therefore, we accept the alternative hypothesis (H1), which confirms that COREN employees' work quality significantly improves with training and development. This suggests that employees who undergo training are better able to deliver higher-quality outputs, reflecting the effectiveness of training programs in improving work performance. Similarly, for the second hypothesis, the calculated chi-square value ($\chi^2 \text{ Cal} = 10.44$) surpasses the tabulated value ($\chi^2 \text{ Tab} = 5.991$), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H1). This outcome indicates that training and development initiatives at COREN substantially increase staff understanding of their job roles, responsibilities, and relevant policies. The enhanced comprehension of job roles and organisational policies underscores the critical role of structured training programmes in fostering a well-informed and competent workforce.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The findings indicate that training and development programmes at the Council for Regulation of Engineering in Nigeria (COREN) significantly enhance employee performance. The results of the chi-square test confirm the support for both tested hypotheses, indicating that these programmes enhance work quality and boost staff comprehension of their roles and responsibilities. Specifically, training leads to higher-quality outputs and better comprehension of job roles and policies.

These findings have far-reaching implications for COREN's strategic planning. Investing in continuous staff training and development is essential for maintaining high standards of performance and organisational effectiveness. Fostering a well-informed and skilled workforce enables COREN to execute its regulatory functions efficiently and to a high standard, thereby contributing to the advancement of engineering practices in Nigeria. This underscores the value of structured training programmes as a critical component of organisational success.

Based on the findings, the following two recommendations are made:

- i. COREN should continue and expand its investment in training and development programmes tailored to its employees' specific needs. Given its significant positive impact on work quality and role comprehension, a more focused approach to individualized training modules will further enhance

employees' competencies and performance. This includes advanced technical training, leadership development programmes, and workshops on updated regulatory policies.

- ii. To sustain and improve the benefits of training and development, COREN should establish continuous assessment and feedback mechanisms. Regular evaluations of training effectiveness and employee performance should be conducted to identify areas for improvement. Incorporating feedback from employees can help refine training programmes to ensure they remain relevant and effective in addressing the evolving needs of both the workforce and the organisation.

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