

TRAINING AND WORK HUMANIZATION IN FEDERAL TEACHING HOSPITALS IN SOUTH-SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the relationship between training and work humanization in federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria. This was informed by the need to contribute to mitigating the myriads of human resource challenges affecting the sector leading to an upsurge outbound migration skilled workforce in the sector. The domain of training (on-the-job and off-the-job) were operationalized against employee empowerment, empathy and flexible work options as measures of work humanization. Based on the cross-sectional survey design, a sample of 387 units was determined and purposely drawn from the study's population of 12,295 senior staffers from the four facilities domiciled in the delineated study area. The data obtained via a purposely crafted research instrument was subjected to descriptive statistical analyses and the Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool was deployed for the testing of the espoused hypotheses. The findings revealed the existence of a significant relationship between training and work humanization. Following, the study concluded that training significantly influences work humanization within the context of the study. Therefore, it is recommended that management of teaching hospitals should scaleup their staff training activities towards having more empowered workforce, should craft specific and empathy targeted content in their training programmes towards creating a humanistic ambience in their work environment.

Keywords: Training, work humanization, employee empowerment, empathy, flexible work options

INTRODUCTION

Human capital is pivotal to the economic growth and development of any business or society. Obviously, the strength and progress of any organization depends heavily on its human capital. Davis (2023) views training as a key element in boosting a firm's human capital capabilities and organisational knowledge, which in turn strengthens its competitive advantage. Training according to Dostie (2018), is a powerful

agent of change that shapes the growth of organizations, and facilitates development of organizational capabilities, while improving its productivity (Halawi & Haydar, 2018). This means that training may cause modifications in behaviour through increasing job knowledge, innovative practices, specific skills, and the use of new and superior technologies, that can in turn, enhance productivity at the firm level and contribute to its economic performance (Johnson & Lee, 2024). As stated by Boon *et al.* (2018), training is an important part of organisational practices that engender worker productivity, greater innovation and superior organisational performance. Through training in the workplace, employees can benefit by acquiring higher skills and knowledge, receive better pay, have more career prospects and higher job satisfaction leading to workplace humanization (Delery & Roumpi, 2017). Due to its significance in driving success within organizations, both academics and policy makers often show interest in issues around employee training and its impact on employees, labour markets, national economies and society at large (Felício *et al.*, 2014).

The healthcare sector is characterized by its emphasis on service quality and patient satisfaction, which directly hinge on the performance and well-being of employees. However, the public health sector in Nigeria is characterized by relatively high rates of disenchanted workers and conflicts which has manifested in high labour turnover and periodic labour shortage (Chan, Clarke & Dainty, 2010). Workers' disharmony, poor funding, corruption, instability and other forms of industrial conflicts has led to massive outbound migration of employees. Apparently, most of these problems were encountered as a result of poor involvement in decision making process, incessant industrial disputes, brain-drain, under-funding or poor financing of quality education, cultism, corrupt practices and abuse of trust ((Enyi, 2001; Mukoro, 2013). Further highlighting of the status of public health service delivery gap is demonstrated in the conclusion deposed to by Omoleke & Taleat (2018), that "the Nigerian Health Sector is replete with inadequacies, shortcomings, and weaknesses in the areas of capital, materials and human resources which hinder effective healthcare delivery services."

Training and workplace humanization are integral to achieving these goals, as they foster a supportive work environment that enhances employee skills and morale. Despite of its role to the organization and society at large, research outputs on the provision of training programmes has remained patchy in most federal teaching hospitals in Nigeria in line with the views of ((Felício *et al.*, 2014; Miller & Brown, 2023). Although, studies evidence that training has positive association with firm performance (see, for example, Garavan *et al.*, 2020), the estimates of training programmes in the actualization of work humanization in federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria is yet to be empirically explored. The reason for this lacuna may not be unconnected with the paucity of enough empirical studies that depict the relationship between training and work humanization in federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria. For example, Esteban-Lloret *et al.* (2018) explored determinants of employee training: impact on organizational legitimacy and organizational performance; Garavan *et al.* (2020) explored the connect between “Training and organisational performance. From a meta-analytical perspective. A prior study by Ju and Li (2019) explored the impact of training, job tenure, and education-job and skills-job matches on employee turnover intention. There is scarcity in existing studies that systematize how training can be used to achieve work humanization within federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria. This study therefore seeks to fill the identified gap, as it explored the empirical relationship between training and work humanization in federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria.

Conceptual Framework

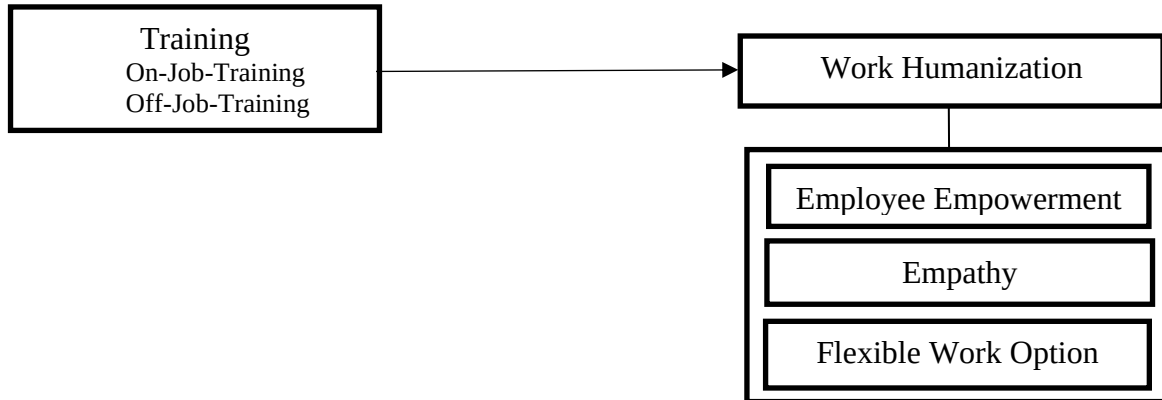


Figure 1: Training and work humanization in federal teaching hospitals

Source: Ju, B. & Li, J. (2019). Exploring the impact of training, job tenure, and education-job and skills-job matches on employee turnover intention. *European Journal of Training and Development*, 43(3/4), 214–231.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Review

Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory connects staff training and job performance. The theory is traceable to the beginning of the macroeconomic development theory. According to Park *et al.* (2016), the human capital theory was propounded by Schultz in 1961. The theory views human capital as a set of skills, attributes and characteristics that increase workers' productivity. Subsequent human capital theorists such as Becker (1963, 1964), Barney (1991), Bratton and Gold (1999) and Baruch (2004) suggest in their various works that education or training raise the productivity of workers by imparting useful knowledge and skills which translates to overall performance and fosters organizational innovativeness (cited in Park *et al.*, 2016). HC 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 HC. The theory fuels the idea that employees' knowledge and skills can be developed through investment in education or training (Rana *et al.*, 2016). One of Becker's most important contributions to employee development theory relates to training. Felício *et al.* (2014) argued that on the whole, investments in staff

training will improve productivity. The application of this theory to our study context is that trained staff are usually motivated and equipped with necessary skills and attitude for their job roles and this leads to work humanization and overall performance.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Training

Training has for long been recognized as one of the major functions within human resource management that has attracted great research attention by academic writers and practitioners (Miller & Brown, 2023). This attention has generated a variety of definitions of training. For example, Morely *et al.* (2016) defines training as the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning events, activities and programs which result in the participants achieving the levels of knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities to carry out their work effectively. According to the Oxford Dictionary, training implies the process of learning the skills that an individual need to do a particular job. It is one of the parameters for enhancing the ability of workforce of an organization. Training is the process of enhancing an individual's skills, knowledge, and competencies to improve their performance in a specific role or task (Smith, 2024). It involves structured activities designed to impart new abilities or improve existing ones, ultimately aimed at achieving organizational or personal objectives. In an organizational setting, training refers to systematic programs and interventions aimed at developing employees' skills and knowledge to enhance their job performance, align with organizational goals, and adapt to changes in the work environment.

Huang and Jao (2016) identified on-the-job and off-the-job training as two main types of training. Off-the-job training is teaching supervisors and workers how to use what they have learned in a setting other than the actual workplace (Huang & Jao, 2016). Trainees are to put their jobs on hold and focus only on training as part of the plan. On-the-job training takes place when the trainee is on the job and responsible for various tasks. An experienced manager or employee might take the role of teacher in this kind of training. When young or inexperienced workers learn by watching more seasoned coworkers or supervisors do their jobs, this is known as "on-the-job training" (Noe, 2005). Apprenticeships and other kinds of self-directed learning

are examples of on-the-job training. Off the job training refers to training that takes place in a non-work setting. For the purpose of training, the actual workplace is imitated (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Training enhances work humanization and this leads to the fulfillment of organizational goals.

Work Humanization

In order to make work more enjoyable for adults, it is necessary to give work organisations a human face. This process is known as work humanization. The concept of work as a social and economic construct is central to work humanization (Inyang, 2008). According to Roe and Waller (2023), work humanization refers to practices and policies designed to enhance the well-being, dignity, and engagement of employees by creating a supportive and respectful work environment that values their contributions and addresses their needs. Garcia *et al.* (2024) view work humanization as that which involves implementing strategies that foster a sense of belonging, purpose, and recognition among employees, thereby enhancing their motivation, satisfaction, and overall engagement with their work. Creating a comfortable physical workplace is one of the main tenets of work humanization. Some physical features that induce stress in the workplace include a lack of natural light, tight, unpleasant seating that invades personal space, and monochromatic colour schemes. Workers who experience stress are more prone to react badly to future tasks, making more errors or getting irritated in instances where they normally would not be able to control their emotions. This study adopts employee empowerment, empathy and flexible work option as measures of work humanization.

Measures of Work Humanization

Employee Empowerment

Giving workers more say in how they do their jobs is an example of employee empowerment (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012). This fosters an environment where workers feel trusted, motivated, and included in decision-making. What this really implies is that authority is shifting from the boss to the worker. employee empowerment according to Zimmerman (2023), refers to the process of enabling individuals or groups to gain control over their own lives, make informed decisions, and access the resources necessary for

achieving their personal or collective goals. It involves increasing their capacity and confidence to act autonomously and effectively. In an organizational context, employee empowerment involves giving employees the authority, resources, and support needed to make decisions and take actions that influence their work and the organization's outcomes (Thomas & Velthouse, 2024).

Empathy

The ability to put oneself in another person's shoes and experience what they are going through is known as empathy. Decety and Jackson (2024) define empathy as the ability to understand and share the feelings of another person by putting oneself in their position. It involves both cognitive processes (understanding another's perspective) and emotional responses (feeling what others feel). According to Batson (2023), empathy is defined as the capacity to recognize and vicariously experience the emotions and experiences of another individual. It involves both the affective (emotional) and cognitive (thought-based) dimensions of understanding others. Being empathetic, or emotionally perceptive, enables one to see behind a person's outward behaviour and into their inner world by trying to imagine what it's like to be in their position and really caring about their problems.

Flexible Work-Option

A flexible work-option is an alternate work arrangement to the conventional, traditional way of working. Put best, flexible working alternatives are typical strategies used by organisations worldwide, to address the myriads of issues related to work and family life. Flexible work options refer to employment arrangements that allow employees to vary their work schedules, locations, or patterns to better accommodate their personal needs and preferences while still fulfilling their job responsibilities (Hill *et al.*, 2024). Flexible work options include practices such as telecommuting, flexible hours, job sharing, and compressed workweeks, aimed at improving employee satisfaction, productivity, and retention by offering more control over how and where work is performed (Smith & Fernandez, 2023). The goal is to make

organisations more flexible, help workers have a better work-life balance, and boost productivity (Klindzic & Maric, 2019).

Empirical Review

Nkemakolam (2020) investigated how training impacts worker productivity. In this study, the researcher was able to effectively gather insight on the issue by using the survey research approach utilising a questionnaire. Employees are a company's most valuable asset, and this research shows that developing training programmes and making sure they get constant training is the key to seeing performance increases. Training and development's effect on business outcomes is the subject of Prasadi and Morais's (2019) research on managerial-level workers in the apparel sector. The participants in this research were the managers and executives of a major Sri Lankan clothing firm. There was a favourable association between training and performance, according to Pearson's Correlation Coefficient study. There is a robust correlation between training and performance, according to the research.

In their 2018 study, "A Case Study of Bonjus and Khatib & Alami Companies," Halawi and Haydar examine how training impacts employee performance. Primary data was gathered from 303 participants in the research. From their desks, the researcher visited a subset of responders to hand out surveys. But the results demonstrated that the two Lebanon-based businesses create distinct educational initiatives. Training programmes for both short-term skills and long-term ability development are designed by the two firms. Participating in departmental events, attending seminars, planning events outside of work, and observing others are all part of the programmes. As a result, training programmes were beneficial for both the firms and their personnel. Workers reported feeling more fulfilled on a personal level, learning how to produce high-quality work, receiving constructive criticism, and advancing their careers outside the classroom. Halawi and Haydar (2018) investigate the effects of training on employee performance: A Case Study of Bonjus and Khatib & Alami Companies. The study collected primary data from a sample of 303 respondents. The researcher visited a sample of respondents from their workstations to administer questionnaires. The findings, however, showed that the two companies from Lebanon design different

training programs. The two companies design training programs that focuses on short-term skills and development programs for long-term abilities. Some of the programs include organizing programs outside the workplace, attending workshops, participating in department activities, and watching others. Consequently, training programs benefited employees as well as the two companies. Employees cited that they were able to develop inner satisfaction, received positive evaluation feedback, understood how to achieve a quality output, and developed career beyond class work.

Similarly, the study by Kamal *et al.* (2016) examined how e-training affected the productivity of workers at the Bahraini Ministry of Education. In order to determine how e-training affected workers' productivity, this study used a questionnaire and an analytical descriptive methodology. Nine hundred and forty-four people employed by the Ministry of Education make up the sample. The study found a favourable and statistically significant association between e-training and employee performance ($r=0.358$). An additional finding from the simple regression coefficient was a 25.3% impact of e-training efficiency on work performance. Demographic factors, including (qualification, and employment experience), also show statistical variances in the outcomes. Onyango and Wanyoike (2014) study the effects of training on organizations in health workers in Siaya County, Kenya. The general objective of this study was to assess the effect of training on the performance of staff in the public health institutions in Kenya. The target population is the doctors, clinical officers, nurses and subordinate staff serving in public health facilities within Siaya County. From our study it shows there is a strong positive relationship between training of employees and performance.

In Siaya County, Kenya, researchers Onyango and Wanyoike (2014) looked at how health workers' organisations changed after receiving training. This research set out to do one overarching thing: determine how public health institution employees in Kenya fared after receiving training. Personnel working in Siaya County's public health institutions, including physicians, clinical officers, nurses, and lower-level personnel, are the intended recipients. Employee training significantly correlates positively with performance, according to our research. Shaheen (2013) conducted an empirical study on employees

training and organizational performance. The intention of this specific study was to determine the impact of training on employee performance as well as on organizational performance and employee performance mediating role between employee training and organization performance. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative methods were used; questionnaire used for data collection involving 220 questionnaires that were dispersed amongst school teachers, out of those 197 received with 90 percent turnover. SPSS was used for data analysis and policy based on results presented for ensuring training effectiveness and enhancing employee's performance. With support of SPSS, correlation and regression ended up being conducted to generate results. Overall results revealed significant and positive association between training and organization performance. The mediating role of employee performance also gave positive result. Therefore, the following research hypothesis is stated base on the empirical literature review.

Thus, the empirical literature analysis provides the groundwork for the following study hypotheses:

Ho₁ There is no significant link between training and employee empowerment in federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria.

Ho₂ There is no significant link between training and empathy in federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria

Ho₃ There is no significant link between training and flexible work-option in federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The cross-sectional survey design was employed in this study. The study population consisted of all senior level employees of federal teaching hospitals in the delineated study area (South-South) consisting of such institutions in Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Rivers states. From the available statistics, there are four (4) of such facilities domiciled in the proposed study domain. Hence, the population of the study was 12,295. The sample for this study comprised 387 senior staff of federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria, drawn from the 12,295 population. The sample was generated with the use of the Taro Yamene mathematical formula. The states with federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria include Akwa

Ibom, Cross River, Edo and Rivers States. Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficients with a 95% confidence interval in mind was used in testing the hypotheses. Each test was conducted at a 0.01 level of analysis with the help of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0.

Table 1: Reliability Test - Cronbach's Alpha Analysis

S/N	Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients
1	Training	4	0.940
2	Employee Empowerment	4	0.893
3	Empathy	4	0.862
4	Flexible Work Option	4	0.863

Source: SPSS Output from Field Data

From results of the Cronbach alpha analysis in Table 1, it was revealed that all the variables in the study produced high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients indicating that, there is inter-item consistency among the variables in the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Bivariate Analysis

The secondary data analysis is carried out through the use of Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool at a 95% confidence level. The tests cover hypotheses H_{01} to H_{03} with reliance on the Spearman Rank Order Correlation tool thus the probability criterion of 0.05 significance level is adopted for accepting the null hypotheses at ($P > 0.05$) or rejecting the hypotheses at ($P < 0.05$).

Training and the Measures of Work Humanization

Table 2 displays the correlation matrix results obtained for training and the metrics of job humanization. The table also presents the statistical test of significance (p-value), which allows us to address our research issue and extend our findings to the study population.

Table 2: Correlation for Training and The Measures of Work Humanization

			Training	employee empowerment	Empathy	Flexible Work-option
Spearman's rho	Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.967**	.986**	.974**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	308	308	308	308
	employee empowerment	Correlation Coefficient	.967**	1.000	.963**	.971**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	308	308	308	308
	Empathy	Correlation Coefficient	.986**	.963**	1.000	.976**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	308	308	308	308
	Flexible Work-option	Correlation Coefficient	.974**	.971**	.976**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	308	308	308	308

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

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Question 1: How does training affect work humanization in federal teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria?

To determine the kind and direction of the link between the study variables, researchers employed the correlation coefficient (rho) result from table 2 to answer research question 1. Training and employee empowerment have a strong link, as shown by a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (rho) of 0.967. This metric demonstrates the robust connection between training and agency in the workplace. A rise in employee empowerment may have been the outcome of investments in human capital, such as training, as the relationship's direction is positive. employee empowerment and training have a very good correlation at federal university teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria, Nigeria.

Secondly, in order to address research question 1, the type and direction of the link between the study variables were shown by the correlation coefficient (rho) result in table 2. Training and empathy are positively correlated with one another, according to the results (rho = 0.986). There is a robust correlation between training and empathy, as seen by this value. Investing in human capital via training led to a rise in

employee empathy, as the direction of the connection suggests a positive link. Consequently, at the South-South Nigerian federal university teaching hospitals, training and empathy are highly correlated.

Thirdly, to address research question 1, the direction and type of the link between the study variables were shown by the correlation coefficient (ρ) result in table 2. The training-flexibility work-option link is shown to have a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) of 0.974. This number demonstrates the robust connection between training and the ability to choose one's own work schedule. Investment in human capital, in the form of training, seems to have led to an increase in employees' flexibility in their work schedules, as the direction of the connection is positive. Consequently, at federal university teaching hospitals in South-South Nigeria, Nigeria, there is a very favourable correlation between training and flexible work-options.

Therefore, from the statistics reflected in table 2 above, leaning on the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient (ρ) outputs for **HO₁**, **HO₂** and **HO₃**, it is statistically evident that all proposed hypotheses of the study signified in the null form were rejected. This implies the existent of a significant and positive relationship between the predicator and the criterion variable. Training therefore influences work humanization using data from the teaching hospitals under investigation.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The implication of this result is that the concept and application of humanizing the workplace is general applicable. Its relevance is not subject to industrial or sectoral segregation. Furthermore, training as already established in the body of literature is a prime bedrock for employee development and empowerment. From the implication of the result, it is obvious that work humanization is dependent on a whole gamut of activities. For instance, an employee who is skills deficient may be facing alienation and frustration from his assigned task. Failure to address this might create tension and dissatisfaction. Therefore, giving adequate training on the required skills would not only empower the employee to do his work, but have a sense of confidence and high self-esteem.

Also, in this era of remote working amidst tech-driven work disruptions, a well-trained employee with current skill sets would find it easier to undertake flexible work. Medical technology is strongly emerging as a major plank for modern healthcare delivery; thus, training not only empowers employees but would enable employees to participate in remote and syndicated medical processes undertaken from diverse locations. Soft and interpersonal skill sets have become a prime attribute required of employees. As evidenced by the result of the study, training can be used as a tool for developing the empathy content of employees. The importance of this stems from the fact that by virtue of the nature of service delivered, empathy creates a sense of ease and ability to understand the pains patients go through. Furthermore, the absence of empathy can make medical work frustrating both emotionally and mentally. This justifies the need for targeted training that would create the mindset and mental frame required for optimal healthcare service delivery. The place of empathy trait is sacrosanct to both healthcare workers as well as patients. This training is akin to the training given to military personal or special forces that equips them with both the required skills set, and the emotional and mental frame required to succeed in their carrier.

The study findings are validated by the empirical findings of Nkemakolam (2020) which investigated how training impacts worker productivity, and revealed that training significantly impacts worker productivity. The study findings align with Prasadi and Morais's (2019) research on managerial-level workers in the apparel sector. The result of this study also aligns the conclusion of Bonjus, Khatib and Alami (2018). Furthermore, the findings reached in this study is properly collocated with the conclusions reached by Shaheen (2013), Kamal *et al.* (2016), Onyango and Wanyoike (2014) Finally, the study findings are in consonance with the body of prior related empirical studies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study investigated the correlation between training and indicators of work humanization focused on federal university teaching hospitals in the South-South, Nigeria. From the analysis results, it is evidential that training has a positive correlation with work humanization decomposed by employee empowerment,

empathy and flexible work-option. Therefore, training relates significantly with work humanization in the healthcare sector using federal teaching hospitals in South-South, Nigeria as a baseline.

Based on the conclusion drawn from findings of the study, it is advocated that management of teaching hospitals should scaleup their staff training activities towards having more empowered workforce, and craft specific and empathy targeted content in their training programmes. The scaling up of training and regularity would also keep employees on the frontline of the evolving tech-driven skills for optimal healthcare delivery. These actions will inadvertently create a human centric work setting with implications for higher performance.

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