

STAFF TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT IN INSURANCE COMPANIES IN RIVERS STATE

Lawrence, S.

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
cicerolaw2014@gmail.com

and

Asawo, S. P.

Department of Business Administration, Faculty of Administration and Management, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Port Harcourt, Nigeria
soye.asawo@ust.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

The main focus of this study was to examine the relationship between staff training employee engagement in insurance companies in Rivers State. Measures of employee engagement are vigor, dedication and absorption. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design while the population of the study was one hundred and fifty (150) employees of selected insurance companies in Rivers State. The sample size of one hundred and nine (109) was determined using Taro Yamen formula. Primary source of data collection was adopted through structured questionnaire. Validity of the research instrument was achieved through expert vetting. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with a threshold of 0.7. Hypotheses were examined using the spearman rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science. The study found a positive and substantial significant relationship between staff training and employee engagement of listed insurance companies in Rivers State. The study recommended that organizations need to develop policies on training and the training needs analysis to guide the organization in identifying the areas of training and the human resources to train. This will help in discerning the training needs of individuals within the organization, how their needs fit the overall objectives of the organization and its contribution to employee engagement.

Keywords: Training, employee engagement, vigor, dedication, absorption

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-evolving business environment, driven by technological progress and changing market trends, the significance of Training and Development has become increasingly pronounced (Sundstrom et al., 2016; and Saleh, 2025). Training and development initiatives serve as pivotal mechanisms for enhancing employee engagement, positioning employees as invaluable assets within any organization Kuknor and Kumar, (2024). The necessity to address the knowledge and skills gaps created by evolving work environments compels organizations to prioritize effective training programs that empower their workforce and align with overarching organizational objective (Hassan, 2022). Madu, Oparanma and Gabriel (2019) examined the nexus between workplace aesthetics and workers' engagement in government tertiary institutions in Rivers State. The results revealed a significant relationship between

study variables. However, despite the potential gains of improved engagement levels, Gallup found that more than 80 percent of workers in organisations are not truly committed to their work and a quarter of these are dissatisfied and 'actively disengaged', putting no passion into their work (Flade, 2003). Gallup (2006) proposed that employees could be divided into three types with regard to their level of engagement, the engaged, not-engaged and the actively disengaged, with the latter being of most concern to the employer brand as a result of sharing their discontent with their co-workers and the wider world. One way of addressing this challenge is to put in place supportive approach from management, where care and concern is shown to employees to achieve career success and this is achieved through training and development.

Scholars over the years have investigated various ways to enhance the engagement of employees in organizations. For example, Opaleye (2016) investigated the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement in public secondary schools in Ile-Ife. Madu, Asawo and Gabriel (2017) examined the relationship between physical Workplace environment and employee engagement.

The primary purpose of this research was to critically evaluate the influence of staff training on employee engagement within insurance companies in Rivers State. To achieve this aim, this study had the specific objectives as follows:

- i. To examine the relationship between staff training and vigor among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State.
- ii. To examine the relationship between staff training and dedication among employee in insurance companies in Rivers State.
- iii. To examine the relationship between staff training and absorption among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework

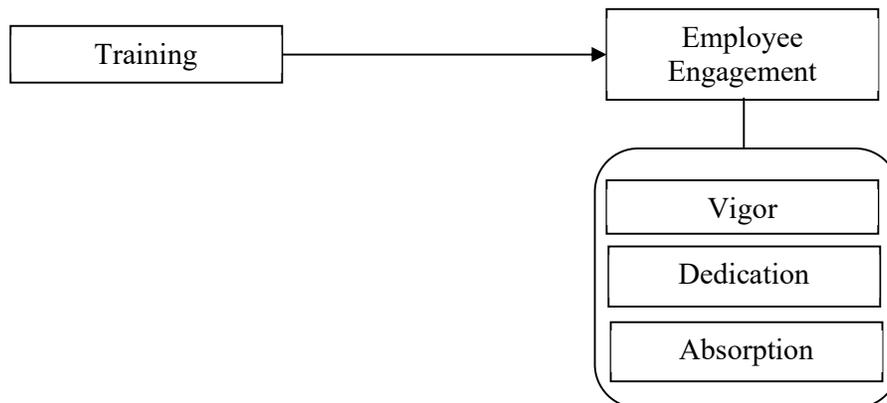


Figure 1: Training and Employee Engagement

Source: Desk Research (2025)

Research questions

The following research questions are put forward in this study;

- i. What is the relationship between staff training and vigor among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between staff training and dedication among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State?
- iii. What is the relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State?

Statement of Hypotheses

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between staff training and vigor in insurance companies in Rivers State

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between staff training and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical foundation

Organisational Support Theory (OST)

Organizational theory refers to a series of interrelated concepts that involve the sociological study of the structures and operations of formal social organization and seeks to explain how interrelated units of organization either connect or do not connect with each other. It also concerns in understanding how groups of individuals behave, which may differ from the behavior of an individual. The behavior organizational theory often focuses on is goal-directed. Organizational theory covers both intra-organizational and inter-organizational fields of study. These scholars defined it as perceived organisational support (POS) and are seen as a worker's perception that the organisation values his or her contribution and cares about the worker's well-being. The roots of organisation support theory belong to Blau's social exchange theory of 1964 (Ahmed, 2017).

It is believed that perceived organisational support (POS) is vital in understanding the role of workers in an organisation. This is derived from organisational support theory. In the view of OST, if an organisation values the level of involvement of workers, then belief of perceived organisational support is built which is of help to the organisation and enhances employee engagement Shah and Asad, (2018). It has also been asserted that high perceived organisational support reduces absenteeism and improves the engagement of workers. To this extent organisational support theory is relevant in the research on employee engagement.

Human Relations Theory (HRT)

The human relations theory is the ideology that emphasizes the need to prioritize satisfaction among workers. It posits that the informal organization of the workplace structures and boosting employee morale may increase employees' overall productivity. The Human Relations Theory of organization came in to existence in 1930s as a reaction to the classical approach to organizational analysis. Human relations are the interactions that take place within a business setting. The human relations concept also revolves around the study of

people's issues arising from organizational and interpersonal relations. These human relationships encompass any form of interactions between the clients, suppliers, workers, and management, all of which are geared toward achieving the organization's goals, and objectives. The proponents of the human relations theory posit that the theory emphasizes personalized needs along with the resultant habits of teams and persons. This is done by focusing on an interpersonal approach rooted in controlling human beings. This is because the classical theorists neglected the human factor in the organization.

The human resource manager, gathers opinions and interacts with the employees freely, which allows him to get different views on matters of importance to the workers. Occasionally, the management plans for interaction forums between seniors and their subordinates. This offers an opportunity for effective engagement and interactions between them, helping forge a positive bond. The Classical theorists took a mechanical view of organization and under emphasized the socio-psychological aspects of individual's behavior in organizations. It is this critical failure of the classical theory that gave birth to the human relations approach (Bruce & Nylan, 2011). Elton Mayo founded the Human Relations Movement. Experiments undertaken by Mayo took place at the Hawthorne plant in the USA during the 1930s. His work illustrated that if the company or managers took an interest in employees and cared for them, it had a positive effect on their motivation.

Addison and Belfield (2010) and Kaufman (2012) in their studies established that if workers are denied autonomy on the job, or are reduced to acting as mere extensions of the machinery they operate, or are given work that inhabits their capacity to create and think, it is argued that they will invariably find ways to subvert the methods of control that enforce these conditions (Freeman, 1976). This theory is relevant in the study and explains training and development variable in organizations and sees organizations as a cooperative enterprise wherein worker morale is a primary contributor to productivity. It seeks to improve productivity by modifying the work environment to increase morale and develop a more skilled and capable worker which in turn informs and influences employee's engagement in organization (Purcell and Hall, 2012).

Conceptual Review

Staff Training

Training and development practices involve both the organization and the individual responsibility. Thus, individuals have to identify their aspirations and abilities, derived through assessment and counselling to understand their needs of training and development; in terms of the technical skills and educational advancement needed (Antoniou, 2013). Training and development is a deliberate process through which an organisation or individual identifies their skills and concentrates their efforts on reaching certain career goals (Kelley, 2012). Meanwhile, Antoniu (2010) stated that the objective is to find a person's career and to engage in workforce development programs to support it.

Training can help employees improve their job performance by acquiring new skills and knowledge, advance in their careers by preparing them for new roles and responsibilities, feel more satisfied with their jobs. It provides them with opportunities for growth and development, improve organization performance by enhancing the skills and knowledge of their employees.

Employee Engagement

According to Chandani, Mehta, Mall and Khokhar (2016) employee engagement is defined as an active behavior, positive psychological conditions related to work then operationalized by the intensity and direction of cognitive, emotional, and behavioural. Cognitive engagement is defined as the intensity of mental energy expressing positive values to the organization. Emotional engagement is defined as the intensity and willingness of employees to instil positive emotions in the organization. Behavioural engagement is defined as a psychological state with a willingness to behave positively that affects engagement (Agyemang & Ofei, 2013; Agbionu, Anyalor & Nwali, 2018). Employee Engagement is about passion, commitment and the willingness to invest oneself and expend one's discretionary effort to help the employer succeed. Engagement is defined by scholars as high level of commitment and involvement an employee has towards the organization Saks (2006), emotional and intellectual commitment to the organization.

Truss, Soane, Edwards, Wisdom, Croll and Burnett, (2006), employee engagement is discretionary effort exhibited by employees on their job. Frank, Finnegan and Taylor (2004), positive attitude held by the employee towards the organization and its values. Robinson, Perryman and Hayday, (2004), positive fulfilling-work related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption, Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma and Bakker, (2002). We are inclined in this study to view employee engagement as a state of passionate disposition employees attach to their work roles and organization beyond the employment contractual agreement in an unrestricted effort to help the organization achieve its goals. Literature reveals that employee engagement has different meaning and have been conceptualized, operationalized and measured in many different ways too (Kular, Gatenby, Ressa, Soane and Truss, (2008 and Truss et al., (2006).

Therefore, the need to promote employee engagement in the workplace, it is a must and a key to organizational success nowadays. Employee engagement is in several factors, such as communication within a company, leadership style, company reputation, and corporate culture (Yadnyawati, 2012). Given the fact that employee engagement has been described as employees' physical, emotional, and cognitive connection with their work and represented by a dedicated, energetic and high-performing employee (Bakker and Leiter, 2010) Saks (2011) developed a model of WPS and employee engagement. Furthermore, this study attempted to examine professional commitment as a mediator in the relationship between WPS and employee engagement. According to Setiawan and Prawirasuyasa (2016), the professional commitment of lecturers in the organizational culture, it was discovered to their learning attitude. It was supported by Harini (2019) who stated that an increase in organizational commitment along with WLB practices had an impact on improving lecturers' performance.

In this paper we argue that, in order to deliver its purported benefits, engagement needs to be explicitly embedded within an integrated system of HRM policies, practices and procedures (Guest, 2014). We present, as a high level model to help explain how a strategic focus on engagement can lead to competitive advantage. In so doing, we aim to provide integration across the human resource management and engagement literatures that, until now, have largely run in parallel.

Measures of Employee Engagement

Vigor

Macey and Schneider, (2008), Schaufeli, (2002) described vigor as employee work situations that are characterized by high levels of physical, mental energies and resilience exerted on the

job. Vigor is the willingness to invest effort in one's work and persistence when faced with difficulties at work. It is a positive state of mind exhibited by employees to selflessly take on more work, exert extra energy when confronted by challenges or work pressure in order to get work done. Employee vigor reflects a strong drive demonstrated through the exertion of energy, time spent and concentration on the job or activities related to the organization. Employees who exhibit vigor at work are self driven, result focus, and determined to complete given tasks within the specified time frame.

Dedication

Dedication refers to as being strongly involved in one's work and experiencing a sense of significance, enthusiasm, inspiration and pride (Boikanyo and Heyns, 2019). Bakar (2014) see dedication as the second element of employee engagement. According to Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) and Schaufeli et al., (2002), employee dedication reflects employees' sense of significance, passion, motivation and pride. Employees feel dedicated when they are inspired by challenges on the job. Dedication is about employees' persistence, consistency and continuity on the job aimed towards organizational goals. It is an expression of employees' commitment to work-related goals which spurs him/her on the job. Employees' who display high levels of dedication are believed to be highly involved on their job roles and are seen to exert positive feelings towards the job and the organization.

Absorption

Absorption means concentration and being engrossed in people's work, whereby passing time will be intangible and being detached from the job has some difficulties for them (Shekari, 2014). Andrianto and Alsada (2019) opined that absorption is characterised by full concentration and happily doing the work. Baskin (2007) refers to the state in which is happily concentrated and happily engrossed in work so that he/she feels time passes quickly and it is difficult to detach from work. The study reveal that engaged teachers feel strong and vigorous at work, enthusiastic and optimistic about the work they do are very often immersed in that work. Gabriel and Gabriel (2019) described absorption as concentration and being engrossed in people's work whereby passing time will be intangible and being detach from the job has some difficulties. Rayton and Yalabik (2014) point to the fact that absorption is a sense of detachment from one's surroundings, associated with a high degree of concentration on the job, and a general lack of conscious awareness of the amount of time spent on the job. Absorption is a component of employee engagement is seen as cognitive, while vigour is regarded as physical-energetic and dedication as emotional in nature (Schaufeli 2013).

Empirical Review

Studies have shown that training frequency, quality, and development opportunities influence employee retention rates in listed insurance companies in Nigeria. A study on corporate culture and employee engagement by Emmanuel Aziegbe et all (2021) in insurance firms in Rivers State found a notable nexus between the two, suggesting that a positive corporate culture can boost employee engagement. Research has also demonstrated that training and development programs can increase employee performance. A study found that a 72.6% increase in employee performance corresponds to increased training and development. This highlights the importance of investing in employee growth and development for organizational success. The Effects of Training on Employee Performance in an Organization" shows a 72.6% increase in employee performance due to training and development. The study concluded that training and development promotes organizational performance, which means that dedication improves the efficiency and effectiveness of businesses also absorption enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of companies. The study recommended that insurance companies should encourage

their employees by developing their career through training and development to update their knowledge in order to be competitive.

Ilyasa, Madhakomala, and Ramly (2018) investigated the impact of culture, information exchange and employee engagement on employee work innovation. This study's findings show that culture has a direct positive influence on work employee creativity and engagement has a direct influence on workers' ability to innovate at work. Adnan, Bhatti, and Baykal (2022) looked into the connection between moral leadership and employee engagement in the workplace from a multicultural standpoint. The study's objective was to investigate the perspectives of service industry executives about the impact of moral leadership on workers' job satisfaction in Malaysia, Pakistan, and Turkey. In order to gather information on ethical leadership, employee engagement, and meetings with leaders in the service sector, the study employed the purposeful sampling methodology to pick 28 executives in the industry and conduct semi-structured interviews with them. The results of the study showed that the respondents identified eight major ethical leadership themes, including trust, integrity, honesty, religiosity, and role modeling. They also showed that the degree of employee engagement in the service companies under study is influenced by the application of different ethical leadership strategies.

The link between coworkers and supervisors and employee engagement in legal businesses in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, was studied by Quadri (2022). The study's objective was to investigate the link between employee engagement at legal companies in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, and the relationships between supervisors and coworkers. Forty employees from certain legal firms were the population of the study, which employed a survey research design. Data was gathered through the use of a questionnaire, and the Spearman Rank order Correlation Coefficient was utilized to analyze the data. The study discovered a strong and favorable correlation between employee involvement in legal businesses and the support of peers and supervisors.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design while the population of the study was one hundred and fifty (150) employees of selected insurance companies in Rivers State. The sample size of one hundred and nine (109) was determined using Taro Yamen formula. Primary source of data collection was adopted through structured questionnaire. Validity of the research instrument was achieved through expert vetting. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through the Cronbach Alpha coefficient with a threshold of 0.7. Hypotheses were examined using the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Staff Training and Employee Engagement in Insurance Companies in Rivers State

Table 1:. Correlation Analysis showing the relationship between variables

		Correlations				
			Staff Training	Vigor	Dedication	Absorption
Spearman's rho	Staff Training	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.937**	.821**	.936**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	109	109	109	109
	Vigor	Correlation Coefficient	.937**	1.000	.826**	.945**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000
		N	109	109	109	109
	Dedication	Correlation Coefficient	.821**	.826**	1.000	.853**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	109	109	109	109
	Absorption	Correlation Coefficient	.936**	.945**	.853**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	109	109	109	109

Source: SPSS version 27.0 output 2025

Table above shows the result of correlation for training and development and employee engagement in insurance companies in Rivers State. Also displayed in the table statistical test of significance (P-value) which makes us able to answer our research question and generalize our findings to the study population.

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between staff training and vigor among employee of insurance companies in Rivers State?

Table 1 showed the Spearman rank order correlation coefficient (r) between staff training and vigor in insurance company in Rivers State. From the analysis, the result showed the correlation coefficient of rho=0.937 which show the direction and strength of this relationship. This value implies a strong relationship between staff training and vigor in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between staff training and vigor in insurance companies in Rivers State.

From the result obtained, the tests of significance show that the relationship between training/development and vigor in insurance in Rivers State is significant (P=0.000 < 0.05).

Therefore, based on observed findings, the null hypothesis earlier stated is hereby rejected and alternate upheld that there is a significant relationship between staff training and vigor in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between staff training and dedication among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State?

Table 1 showed the correlation coefficient between training/development and dedication in insurance company in Rivers State using Spearman rank order correlation (r) techniques. From the analysis, the result showed the correlation coefficient of $\rho=0.821$ which show the direction and strength of this relationship. This value implies a strong relationship between staff training and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Ho2 There is no significant relationship between staff training and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State.

From the result obtain, the tests of significance show that the relationship between training/development and dedication in insurance in Rivers State is significant ($P=0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, there is a strong and positive relationship between staff training and dedication in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State?

Table above showed the correlation coefficient between training/development and absorption in insurance company in Rivers State using Spearman rank order correlation (r) techniques. From the analysis, the result showed the correlation coefficient of $\rho=0.935$ which show the direction and strength of this relationship. This value implies a strong relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Ho3 There is no significant relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State.

From the result obtain, the tests of significance show that the relationship between training/development and absorption in insurance in Rivers State is significant ($P=0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, there is a strong and positive relationship between staff training and absorption in insurance companies in Rivers State.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings summarized above was elaborately discussed to give a more factual and holistic backing to the study.

Staff Training and Vigor of Employees in Insurance Companies in Rivers State

Hypothesis one of this study stated that there is no significant relationship between staff training and vigor among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was rejected because there is a significant relationship between training and development and vigor among employees in insurance companies in Rivers State, which was shown from the result of the analysis above, indicating a moderate relationship between the variables in the study. This is in line with the works of Kalli et al., (2023), who argued that training and development programs in human resource management are crucial for enhancing employee

skills and performance. This aligned with the study of Soegiarto, Sihite and Usmany (2024), that employees who perceive training programs as beneficial and relevant are more likely to experience higher levels of vigor. This emphasized the need for organizations to invest in continuous training and skill development opportunities to not only improve employee performance but also foster a sense of fulfillment and engagement.

Staff Training and Dedication of Employees in insurance companies in Rivers State

Hypothesis two of this study stated that there is no significant relationship between staff training and dedication among employee in insurance companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was rejected because there is a significant relationship between training and development and dedication among employee in insurance companies in Rivers State, which was shown from the result of the analysis above, indicating a strong relationship between the variables in the study. This is in agreement with the works of Sharma and Singh (2024), who maintained that training programs offer employees the opportunity to acquire new skills or refine existing ones, equipping them with the capabilities required to perform their roles effectively. Targeted training interventions contribute to competency development and dedication. This collaborates with the work of Singh and Ansari, (2024), that effective training and development initiatives have a profound impact on employee engagement, yielding several tangible benefits for both individuals and organizations such as increased engagement, enhanced dedication, improved performance, retention and talent development.

Staff Training and Development and Absorption of Employees in insurance companies in Rivers State

Hypothesis seven of this study stated that there is no significant relationship between training and development and absorption among employee in insurance companies in Rivers State. The hypothesis was rejected because there is a significant relationship between training and development and absorption among employee in insurance companies in Rivers State, which was shown from the result of the analysis above, indicating a strong relationship between the variables in the study. This is in agreement with the works of Singh (2024), who maintained that training programs offer employees the opportunity to acquire new skills or refine existing ones, equipping them with the capabilities required to perform their roles effectively. Targeted training interventions contribute to competency development and it enable the workers to be absorbed in their job.. This collaborates with the work of Singh and Ansari, (2024), that effective training and development initiatives have a profound impact on employee engagement, yielding several tangible benefits for both individuals and organizations such as increased engagement, enhanced workers vigor, dedication and absorption in the organization.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that staff training has a significant impact on employee engagement in insurance companies in Rivers State. This enhance employees' skills, knowledge and confidence leading to increased job satisfaction, productivity and engagement, employees who exhibit high levels of vigor, dedication and absorption are more likely to be motivated, committed and productive, driving business success.

1. Based on the findings the study, recommends that organizations need to develop policies on training and the training needs analysis to guide the organization in identifying the areas of training and the human resources to train. This will help in discerning the training needs of individuals within the organization, how their needs fit the overall objectives of the organization and its contribution to employee engagement.

2. Managers need to know how employees in the organization feel about their reward, since understanding their employees' perspectives and attitudes can help them improve in their work and management skills, and make sure employees are effectively rewarded as it affects employees' engagement. Policy makers in organizations should establish human resource management practices and the degree to which they contribute directly to the accomplishment of organization's strategic goals and objectives.

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