

Article

Training and Development on Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Rivers State, Nigeria

Agwanihu Nkolika Eluemouno¹

1. University of Port Harcourt Business School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

* Correspondence: agwanihunkoli@gmail.com

Abstract: This research investigated the impact of training and development on employees performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria, focusing particularly on job knowledge and job skills as essential components of training and development, and psychological empowerment as the moderating variable. Based on Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, the research asserts that employees' knowledge and skills represent strategic organisational resources that may improve performance and maintain competitive advantage. The study utilised a cross-sectional survey research approach, focussing on a population of 1,248 employees from selected industrial enterprises in Rivers State. The Taro Yamane sampling method was used to get a sample size of 302 workers. We used a structured questionnaire to collect primary data and the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient to assess the hypotheses we made at a 0.05 level of significance. The results showed a strong link between job knowledge and employee performance, as well as a strong link between job skills and employee performance in manufacturing companies in Rivers State. The study finds that training and development programs that work well may greatly boost employee performance by helping them learn more about their jobs and how to do them better. As a result, it suggests that manufacturing companies in Rivers State should offer regular, structured, and job-specific training programs to help workers learn more about their jobs and develop practical skills through workshops, mentoring, and on-the-job training. This will boost productivity, efficiency, and overall performance of the organisation.

Keywords: Training and Development, Job Knowledge, Job Skills, Employee Performance, Manufacturing Firms, Rivers State

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1. Introduction

Manufacturing companies form a very important element in the economic setup of Rivers State, Nigeria, as they play important role in boosting the industrialization sector, creation of jobs, value addition and the development of the region. Being an industrial center in the Niger Delta area, Rivers State is home to varied production processes covering food and beverages, chemicals, cement, plastics, and related products, which provide supply chains to other economies outside the state [1]. The performance of the workforce is the key factor of sustainability and competitiveness of these firms because employees are the major drivers of the efficiency of production, the quality of products and the effectiveness of operations. Therefore, there has been a surge of employee performance as an important issue of concern in manufacturing companies that aim to survive the rapidly evolving competitive and technological business world.

Employee performance describes the level at which the workers complete their working tasks efficiently and effectively in accordance with the organizational objectives and productivity norms as well as quality expectations. High employee performance in manufacturing contexts is manifested through fewer errors in production, maximum machine use, compliance with safety measures, timely tasks of the manufacturing process, and flexibility to changing production technologies [2]. Nevertheless, manufacturing

companies in Rivers State have increasingly been struggling with the issue of reduced productivity, low quality of products, low operational efficiency and performance of employees, even though the firms have made heavy investments in machinery and technology. All these challenges indicate that technology development is not enough to ensure the improvement of performance unless the investment into the development of human capital is made.

The issue of training and development has been globally identified to be a strategic human resource practice that upgrades competencies, attitudes, and work-related behaviours of employees, and as such, the performance outcomes are improved. Training works on preparing the employees in terms of their job-related knowledge and skills that are necessary in performing their tasks efficiently, whereas development is based on long term capability building that would help them prepare to satisfy the demands of the organization of tomorrow [3]. Training and development are especially important in manufacturing companies because production processes are too technical, the technologies keep on changing, and the result must be accurate and consistent. With proper job knowledge and job skills, employees can be well placed to use the current machines, adhere to the production quality, address the work issues, and make a difference in the performance of the organization [4]. The dimension of training and development, which is job knowledge, concerns the knowledge of the employees on working procedures, production processes, equipment operation, safety legislation, and organizational policies that are applicable to the employees. Proper job knowledge facilitates employees to make wise decisions, minimize errors, and do tasks correctly in manufacturing settings [5]. Job skills, in their turn, are practical and technical skills that employees learn during the training process and can use knowledge in practice through real work situations, i.e., how to use machines, how to troubleshoot, quality control, and process optimization. Empirical research has always demonstrated that the employees who have well-established job skills are more productive, their working quality is better, and they are more adaptable to operational changes [6].

A number of researchers have studied the correlation between training and development and employee performance with most of them finding a positive and significant relationship. As an example, Elnaga and Imran and Falola et al. discovered that well-designed training programmes contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the employees significantly. Correspondingly, recently conducted research in developing economies indicates that specific training interventions can be effective to improve the competence and performance of employees in manufacturing and industrial companies [7]. Although these efforts have been made, the manufacturing companies in Rivers State have shown evidences that training programmes are often sporadic, not well designed and not aligned to the job needs of employees hence employees are not well versed with the jobs and lack job skills. Even though, some studies have been conducted on training and development as related to the performance of an organization or employees, there are few studies which narrow down the context and examine the influence of job knowledge and job skills as aspects of training and development on employee performance in manufacturing firms in Rivers State, which have become the contextual and empirical gap of the current study.

Statement of the Problem

Over the past few years, manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, have been struggling with the major problem of poor employee performance, inefficiencies, low productivity, and product quality despite technological expenditure. According to most companies, mistakes, slow production, and inability to adjust to new processes are frequent and negatively affect competitiveness and profitability [8]. Apparently, there is evidence that one of the most significant factors that have contributed to these problems is the insufficient focus on employee training and development, especially where job knowledge and practical job skills are concerned [9].

Training and development is a strategic human resource practice that has been identified to increase the competence of employees; however, it is also missing in many manufacturing companies in Rivers State because most offer irregular, ill-formed, or generic training programs that are not aligned to particular job requirements [10]. The employees therefore tend to lack the technical knowledge and practical expertise to use the current equipments, minimize errors in operations and to meet production quality. This is not only a matter of personal performance but also prevents organizational efficiency, innovation and sustainability.

Although a lot of research has been conducted on training and development in general, the number of studies dedicated to job knowledge and job skills as the measures of training and development and their direct effect on employee work in manufacturing firms in Rivers State is low [11]. Such a lack of localized evidence leaves managers and policymakers uncertain about the level of investment in training to employee performance being measurable. Hence, the study aims at addressing this knowledge gap by examining the association between training and development, in its aspects of job knowledge and job skills, and employee performance in the manufacturing industry in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The objective of this research work is to examine the effect of training and development on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. Specifically, this research work sought to;

- i. Examine job knowledge and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- ii. Investigate job skills and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.
- iii. To examine the moderating effect of psychological empowerment on the relationship between training and development and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between job knowledge and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?
- ii. What is the relationship between job skills and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?
- iii. To what extent does psychological empowerment moderate the relationship between training and development and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State?

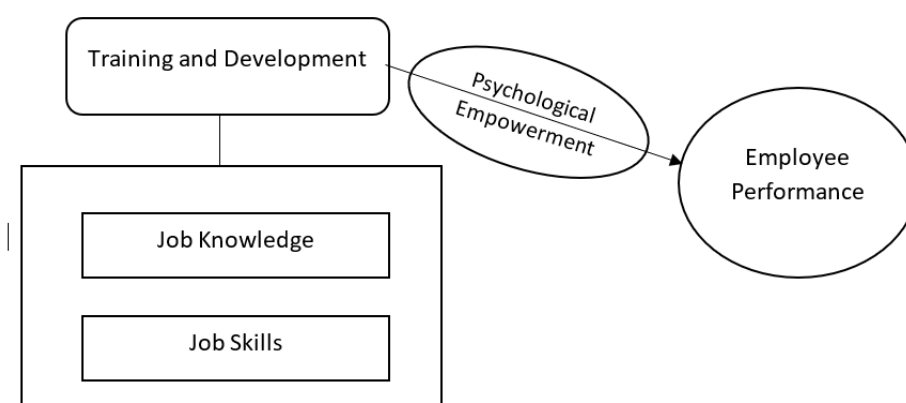
Research Hypotheses

H0₁: There is no significant relationship between job knowledge and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H0₂: There is no significant relationship between job skills and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

H0₃: Psychological empowerment does not significantly moderate the relationship between training and development and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State.

Conceptual Framework



Training and Development

In the human resource management domain, the training and development (T&D) phase holds a vital position. Studies in recent years have brought forth the fact that effective training and development activities such as on-the-job training programs, off-the-job seminars, and job rotation help the employees in the acquisition of knowledge, instigate confidence in the employees, and align the employee and organizational goals to increase productivity and reduce employee turnover rates [12]. In the educational domain, training and development activities have portrayed considerable predictive value in the job satisfaction and loyalty levels of the employees by accounting for as high as 22% variance in job satisfaction scenarios. This has more validity with theories such as the Social Exchange Theory and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory [13]. In the backdrop of the increasing trends in the organizational environment such as the incorporation of automation and globalization, the major focus in the training and development phase is to provide digital literacy skills to the employees with the incorporation of skills such as critical thinking and cultural knowledge.

Job Knowledge

One of the main factors and intermediate in organizational psychology and human resource management is job knowledge as an individual awareness of the procedures, principles, and facts that are important to perform their job successfully [14]. Meta-analytic data show that job knowledge assessments have a high level of criterion-related validity and are often among the strongest predictors of overall job performance in addition to cognitive ability [15]. Job knowledge completes or partly mediates the connection among general cognitive ability and job performance because greater cognitive ability makes knowledge of the job easier to learn and apply [16]. Recent changes are questioning the exaggerations of the primacy of cognitive ability, and job knowledge tests are presented as a sound alternative or supplement in the workforce selection process [17]. Job knowledge helps to provide proficiency and overall effectiveness to a task in performance management, but its influence may depend on the complexity of a job and the level of experience [18]. On the whole, job knowledge is a very important, empirically validated construct in the prediction and improvement of employee performance.

Job Skills

The recent literature on job skills has focused on a swift change due to the technological changes, specifically AI, automation, and the green transition. Employers believe that by 2030, 39 percent of core labor market skills will be outdated as they expect that increasing skills in technology and human-oriented skills are demanded [19]. The major new skills will be AI and big data, networks and cybersecurity, technological literacy, leadership, and social influence, and such cognitive skills as analytical thinking, creative thinking, resilience, flexibility, and agility will be basic [20]. The importance of

soft skills like emotional quotient capabilities, communications skills, collaborative behaviors, or critical thinking capabilities is becoming more prominent when it comes to negotiating AI-enabled working space agreements and ensuring greater employability [21]. The move towards skill-based hiring strategies and preference for job competence as opposed to education is another area that emphasizes AI & sustainability jobs as implied by Burning Glass Institute & OECD. In general, reskilling and lifelong learning will be important in order to overcome the skill gap and be ready to work in a dynamic labor market [22].

Employee Performance

According to Maryadi et al., employees' performance is measured by how well they accomplish job-related goals by being proficient in their tasks, adaptable, and making meaningful contributions in their work setting. Modern understandings highlight its multi-faceted character, impacted by personal variables like drive and confidence, organisational components like management style and company ethos, and external determinants like working circumstances [23]. Authentic and transformational leaders improve employee engagement and satisfaction with their work-life balance, which in turn boosts performance [24]. Skills and productivity are enhanced through training and development, while agility and real-time improvement are promoted through continuous feedback systems, which replace traditional annual evaluations [25]. Workforce agility allows for adaptability in changing environments, and motivation influences correlations between aspects like salary and performance [26]. Digital leadership's importance in promoting self-efficacy and motivation is highlighted in recent models that incorporate HR data for predicting insights [27]. Emerging trends favour continuous, AI-supported approaches for sustainable high performance, as employee performance emerges from an interplay of intrinsic drivers, supportive structures, and adaptive practices.

Psychological Empowerment

Psychological empowerment is a motivating concept that shows up in people's internal task orientation and is made up of purpose, competence, self-determination, and influence [28]. It shows that people feel in charge of their job position. Meaning is the connection between one's work roles and personal values, competence is the belief that one can do their job well, self-determination is the freedom to start and control actions, and impact is the belief that one's efforts make a difference in the outcomes of the organization [29]. Employees that feel psychologically empowered are more likely to be motivated, put in more effort, be better able to handle obstacles, and do better at their jobs [30]. Studies in organisational contexts have shown that psychologically empowered individuals exhibit greater job satisfaction, organisational engagement, and proactive work behaviours [31]. Psychological empowerment also affects how human resources are used. For example, training and development are more likely to lead to better performance when employees feel empowered, because empowerment makes it easier to use the knowledge and skills they have learned [32]. In manufacturing and technical settings, empowerment allows employees to exercise discretion in resolving production issues, adapt to technological advancements, and make decisions that enhance efficiency and quality, thereby reinforcing the connection between training inputs and performance outputs [33]. Psychological empowerment serves as a contextual variable elucidating the disparate performance outcomes of analogous training programs among individuals and firms, as empowered employees are more likely to implement their acquired knowledge in alignment with organisational objectives [34].

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Human Capital Theory and the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory.

Human Capital Theory

The Human Capital Theory views the knowledge, skills, experience, and health of the employees as a form of capital which results in economic value to both the employees and

the organizations. The theory was founded based on the work of Schultz and Becker and educates, on-the-job training and other developmental activities are as strategic investments that make people more productive and, subsequently, organizational performance higher [35]. In the case of manufacturing companies, the aspect of human capital can be seen in the technical knowledge of the employees, procedural knowledge, safety consciousness and skill to solve problems, which are all directly influenced by the intervention of the training and development. Nonetheless, this extent of transferred job knowledge and job skills into better performance depends on the psychological conditions of the employees. The psychological empowerment which is a cluster of meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact enhances the efficiency of human capital investments because it encourages the employees to take the initiative of implementing the acquired knowledge and skills into practice within the workplace [36]. Empirical and theoretical viewpoints stress the fact that training facilities improve the stock of human capital, through the creation of lasting knowledge and skills, as well as its flow, through the process of ongoing upskilling due to technological change [37]. With empowered employees, they tend to internalize a training content, make discretion and be able to apply their competencies, making them more efficient in operations, less defective and eliminate resistance to quality and safety requirements. In this manner, the Human Capital Theory with the addition of the psychological empowerment presents a microeconomic explanation as to why training and development should be considered as strategic investments and that their returns on staff performance are enhanced in high-empowerment conditions.

Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory

Resource-Based View (RBV) states that the sustainable competitive advantage is based on certain firm-specific resources and capabilities which are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable [38]. In that sense, human resources are not generic inputs or resources, but strategic ones because the joint competencies, the tacit knowledge and the firm-specific skills of employees are hard to imitate by the competitors. It is through training and development therefore that organizations can develop and maintain unique human capital capabilities as strategic processes. The moderating part of psychological empowerment is significant and facilitates the conversion of acquired skills and information into distinctive organizational habits and performance improving behaviours by employees. Employees tend to innovatively implement training, find applications to problem solving, and help in process improvement that builds organizational strengths as they begin to feel a sense of autonomy, competence, and meaningfulness in their jobs. RBV also identifies variability in the returns on the investment in training implying that firms enjoy better returns when training is incorporated within conducive environments that enable employees and make learning part of their daily work procedures [39]. Empowerment in the context of manufacturing industries boosts acquisition of firm specific skills including customised operations in machines and localised quality control practices, which are hard to replicate and play a role in long term performance benefits. The RBV makeovers the Human Capital Theory, therefore, because it focuses on the reality that strategic usefulness of training and development is optimized whereby, through psychological empowerment, the operationalization and internalization of the firm to the human capital is realized.

Empirical Review

Studying the relationship between job design and employee performance in manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria, Tantua and Nwimana (2020) surveyed 192 principle officers from 32 different manufacturing enterprises in Port Harcourt, Rivers State. A significant positive relationship was established between job design elements, such as job knowledge acquisition through skill variety and task identity, and employee performance measures like creativity, as demonstrated by the Pearson Product Moment Correlation ($r = .882^{**}$, $p < 0.001$). This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis. The results

highlight the correlation between increased cognitive capacity and decreased job unhappiness brought about by well-designed products, which in turn increases production in industrial settings.

In his study titled "Managerial Skills Development and Organisational Profitability of Manufacturing Firms," Okwurume looked at the effects of training on employees' technical, human, and conceptual abilities in the manufacturing sector in Nigeria, specifically in the setting of Rivers State. Significant positive links ($p < 0.05$) were found when survey data was analysed via correlation, rejecting similar null hypotheses (e.g., no relationship between technical skills training and profitability/efficiency). This occurred when training programs improved employees' competencies, which in turn led to higher productivity and firm profitability. It is in line with training's function to fill up skill deficiencies in order to maintain performance in highly competitive industries.

This study by Lakshmi and Hymavathi used a convenience sample of 307 healthcare workers who filled out surveys and were analysed with SPSS for correlations, regressions, and Hayes' PROCESS macro for mediation to determine the effect of training and development (T&D) programs on employee performance. Specifically, they hoped to determine whether empowerment mediated the relationship between T&D, psychological empowerment, and performance. The results demonstrated good direct effects that were statistically significant (T&D $\rightarrow$ empowerment $\beta=0.539$, $p<0.001$) and somewhat mediated (indirect effect=0.172, 95% CI [0.096, 0.252]), which accounted for 24.5-29.1% of the total variation. They discovered that psychological empowerment plays a role in mediating the influence of training and development on performance, leading to better outcomes as a result of enhanced abilities and attitudes. They suggested that T&D be continued in order to empower individuals.

2. Materials and Methods

The selected research philosophy and approach for this study were based on the cross-sectional survey research design, as this facilitates data collection for respondents at a given time to investigate and determine the relationship between employees and their training and development and their corresponding performances. The target population for this study covered 1,248 employees drawn from some selected manufacturing companies operating within Rivers State, Nigeria. Through the help of Taro Yamane and by utilizing a formula for calculating a particular sampling size for this study, this data was established at 302. The simple random sampling method was adopted as an approach for this data collection as each individual had an approximate and comparative value and an equal event of being selected. The data collection method for this research is primary and was conducted by administering a well-structured and scientific questionnaire for respondents with a validation measure developed upon a seven- and five-point Likert Scale. Descriptive statistics were adopted for data analysis, as well as Spearman Correlation for testing the hypothesis with a significance score of 0.05.

Table 1. Population Distribution Across Firms

Firm	No. of Respondents
Berger Paints Nigeria Plc	21
Demcok Paints Limited	21
Hidoz Group Limited	21
Hopeup Integrated Industries Nigeria Ltd	21
First Aluminium Nigeria Plc	21
Kabelmetal Nigeria Plc	21
Energy Works Technology Ltd	21
EIT Power Systems Limited	21

Firm	No. of Respondents
Proforce Limited	21
Emmppek Autos Limited	21
Brightway Glove Nigeria Ltd	20
Sam & Sara Nigeria Ltd	20
SC Industrial Gas Manufacturers Ltd	16
Lucky Fibres Plc	14
Regal Cosmetics Ltd	14
Total	302

3. Result

Research on the relationship between training and development programs and the productivity of workers in Rivers State's manufacturing companies is detailed here, along with an analysis of the findings. Preliminary and secondary analyses were conducted on the collected data. At the 0.05 level of significance, the hypotheses were evaluated using Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient.

Questionnaire Administration and Retrieval

A total of 302 surveys were sent out to workers at chosen factories in Rivers State. A sufficient number of 289 (95.7%) questionnaires were returned with the proper answers, allowing for data analysis.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 2. Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	174	60.2%
Female	115	39.8%
Total	289	100%

Table 2: The distribution of the respondents by gender shows that the majority of the participants, i.e., males, accounted for the respondents who totaled to be 174 i.e., 60.2%. Contrary to males, the female population constituted a smaller portion of the population, i.e., 115, which accounted for 39.8%. This implies that the population was largely male-oriented, which befit the scenario in the manufacturing companies' workforce, who mainly comprised males in key technical roles. However, the large representation of female participants implies that the population was quite inclusive in its outlook despite the dominance of the male population.

Table 3. Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
SSCE	48	16.6%
ND/NCE	89	30.8%
HND/B.Sc.	112	38.8%
M.Sc. and above	40	13.8%
Total	289	100%

Table 3 herein below depicts the educational qualifications of the respondents. From the results, it can be observed that a larger percentage of the respondents, i.e., 38.8%, hold

HND/B.Sc. qualifications, which clearly implies a larger percentage of employees within these manufacturing concerns hold tertiary educational qualifications. Moreover, another larger percentage of 30.8% of the respondents hold educational diplomas in the form of ND/NCE. At the same time, 16.6% of the total number of respondents hold educational qualifications in the form of SSCE. Further, 13.8% of the total number of respondents hold M.Sc. and above, which clearly implies a substantial percentage of employees within these manufacturing concerns hold these educational qualifications. What this clearly implies is the workforce is highly educational, which is a good starting point in carrying out a training and development process.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

Table 4. Job Knowledge

Statement Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Training programmes improve my understanding of my job responsibilities.	10	18	36	140	85	3.94	0.91
I have adequate knowledge of the production processes used in my organization.	12	22	44	128	83	3.86	0.96
Training enhances my knowledge of safety and operational standards.	8	20	34	146	81	3.95	0.88
I understand how to operate the equipment assigned to me due to training received.	14	26	40	132	77	3.80	0.99
Training keeps me informed about changes in work procedures and policies.	16	28	46	124	75	3.74	1.01

The respondents' perception on job knowledge as a dimension of training and development can be viewed in Table 4, where the mean values of all items are ranging from 3.74 to 3.95, and this reveals that employees are perceiving training programs to be significant contributors to a better understanding of job functions, manufacturing processes, safety regulations, how to use the equipment, etc., since the low values of standard deviation indicate a similarity of responses by most employees. The findings indicate a positive impact by training programs on job knowledge by the manufacturing companies' employees.

Table 5. Job Skills

Statement Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Training improves my ability to perform my job tasks efficiently.	9	19	35	142	84	3.94	0.90
I have acquired practical skills needed to operate modern equipment.	11	23	41	130	84	3.87	0.95

Statement Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
Training has improved my problem-solving skills at work.	14	26	48	121	80	3.79	0.99
Skills acquired from training help me reduce work errors.	10	20	39	139	81	3.92	0.91
Training enables me to adapt quickly to new production methods.	15	29	44	125	76	3.76	1.02

Table 5: Respondents' perceptions about job skills acquired through training and development. The mean values fall between 3.76 and 3.94, indicating the positive perception that training enhances efficiency in performing tasks, handling equipment, solving problems, reducing errors, and adapting to new methods of production. Standard deviations are small, which means there is little dispersion around the mean, implying similar perceptions among the respondents. The results thus suggest that training and development programmes have been effective in enhancing employees' job-specific practical and technical competencies.

Table 6. Employee Performance

Statement Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
I consistently meet my assigned production targets.	12	22	38	137	80	3.89	0.95
My work output meets the quality standards of the organization.	10	18	34	146	81	3.94	0.89
I complete assigned tasks within the specified time.	14	24	42	131	78	3.82	0.98
I make minimal errors while performing my job duties.	16	28	45	123	77	3.76	1.01
I adapt effectively to changes in job demands and procedures.	15	26	40	134	74	3.81	0.99

Table 6 shows how respondents perceived their level of performance concerning their colleagues' performance as employees in an organization. The mean for the five items ranges from 3.76 to 3.94. The mean values indicate respondents' agreement with their ability to fulfill their targets, their performance in maintaining the desired level of quality in the products produced in the organizations they work in, their ability to complete their work within set deadlines, their ability to reduce errors in their work, and their ability to be flexible when handling tasks at their workplaces. The low values for the SD items validate this conclusion. The study concludes that there exists a moderately high level of performance by the employees in the manufacturing organizations they work in.

Table 7. Psychological Empowerment

Statement Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Std. Dev.
I feel confident in my ability to perform my job effectively.	8	18	36	144	83	3.95	0.89
My job activities are meaningful and important to me.	10	20	40	138	81	3.90	0.92
I have the freedom to decide how to carry out my work tasks.	14	26	44	131	74	3.78	1.01
I can influence decisions that affect my work and job outcomes.	16	28	48	124	73	3.73	1.03
I feel empowered to apply my skills and knowledge to improve work processes.	12	24	42	136	75	3.82	0.98

The results in Table 7 indicate that employees generally feel psychologically empowered in their organizations. Most respondents agreed that they are confident in their abilities, find their work meaningful, and feel free to decide how to carry out their tasks. Employees also reported having some influence over work-related decisions and being empowered to apply their knowledge and skills to improve work processes. The mean scores, which are all above the average threshold, suggest a positive perception of empowerment among employees. Overall, the findings imply that psychological empowerment is present at a moderate to high level and is likely to support the effective use of training and skills in improving employee performance.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 8. Job Knowledge and Employee Performance

Correlations				
			Job Knowledge	Employee Performance
Spearman's rho	Job Knowledge	Correlation	1.000	.721**
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	Employee Performance	N	289	289
		Correlation	.721**	1.000
		Coefficient		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	289	289

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 8 herein shows Spearman's rho correlation between job knowledge and employee performance. The result shows a strong positive correlation between job knowledge and employee performance ($\rho = 0.721$, $p < 0.05$). This means that an increase in employees' knowledge enhances their corresponding levels of performance. The low p-value of 0.000 signifies that the result is not due to any kind of chance. This shows that any training and development activities that enhance employees' knowledge help to boost their performance levels. Thus, employees play a significant role by improving their knowledge as well as their overall performance for the effective running of their organizations.

Table 9. Job Skills and Employee Performance

Correlations			Job Skills	Employee Performance
Spearman's rho	Job Skills	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.768**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	289	289
	Employee Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.768**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	289	289

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 9: Spearman's rho correlation between job skills and employee performance. The result indicates a strong and positive correlation between job skills and employee performance, $\rho = 0.768$, $p < 0.05$. This implies that employees with higher levels of practical and technical skills tend to perform well in their jobs. The p-value (.000) is significant. Thus, the findings demonstrate that training and development programmes which enhance employees' job skills are a vital factor in improving employee performance in the studied manufacturing firms.

Table 10. Psychological Empowerment moderates the Relationship between Training and Development and Employee Performance.

Correlations			Training and Development	Employee Performance
Control Variables	Training and Development	Correlation	1.000	.716**
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	289
	Employee Performance	Correlation	.716**	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.006	.
		Df	288	0
Psychological Empowerment	Training and Development	Correlation	1.000	.604**
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	288

Correlations			
Control Variables		Training and Development	Employee Performance
	Correlation	.604**	1.000
Employee Performance	Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
	Df	288	0

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.

From Table 10, it is clear that there is a strong and positive relationship between training and development and employee performance. When psychological empowerment is not taken into account, there is a strong and statistically significant relationship between training and development and employee performance. However, once psychological empowerment is taken into account as a controlling variable, the strength of the relationship is reduced but remains significant. This implies that psychological empowerment plays an important role in moderating the relationship between training and development and employee performance. This implies that employees who are psychologically empowered are more likely to use the knowledge and skills acquired from training and development for better employee performance.

4. Discussion

Job Knowledge and Employee Performance

The first result of the study indicated a significant relationship between job knowledge and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Rivers State, Nigeria. This finding necessitated the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0₁) which stated that there is no significant relationship between job knowledge and employee performance. The observed correlation was strong and positive, indicating that workers who have adequate knowledge of their role, production process, safety procedure, and operational standard tend to perform better in terms of productivity, quality of output, and efficiency in the execution of tasks. Empirically, the finding tallies with the study conducted by Tantua and Nwimana that the job knowledge acquisition from job design elements, including skill variety and task identity, and employee performance in manufacturing firms in Rivers State are significantly and positively related. From the results, the authors showed that enhanced job knowledge strengthened the employees' cognitive abilities, reduced job dissatisfaction, and spurred creativity and productivity. The present study reinforces this evidence by showing that formal training and development programs that enhance job knowledge also lead to improved employee performance in the manufacturing industry.

Job Skills and Employee Performance

The second discovery made by this inquiry also identified a significant association with job skills and employees' performance activities of manufacturing organizations operating within Rivers State. Consequently, this discovery informed the dismissal of the null hypothesis labeled H0₂. The very significant and positive association revealed by this discovery established that employees with better-developed job skills are able to execute tasks better compared to others. The discovery is a clear indication of employees' performances by manufacturing organizations operating within Nigeria, as revealed by Okwurume when he discovered significant and positive associations relating to job skills development and employees' performance activities of manufacturing organizations operating within Nigeria. The discovery made by Okwurume revealed that job skill training could be very useful and subsequently employed as a factor to improve employees' competency and subsequently profitability of organizations. By this discovery, it is also clear that job skill training could be useful in improving employees' performance activities of manufacturing organizations, particularly when they are operating within a state characterized by a lot of competitions, such as River State.

The study's results disproved the null hypothesis (H03), which held that training and development had no effect on employee performance in manufacturing enterprises in Rivers State. Instead, they showed that psychological empowerment considerably moderated the connection. This finding suggests that the degree to which training and development initiatives empower workers psychologically has a significant impact on the efficacy of such initiatives in raising productivity in the workplace. The likelihood that employees will apply what they have learned in training to their jobs increases when they have a sense of purpose, competence, autonomy, and impact in their work. This finding lends credence to the empirical evidence gathered by Lakshmi and Hymavathi, who discovered that psychological empowerment played a substantial role in shaping the correlation between TDI and productivity in the workplace. Training boosts empowerment, which boosts skills and attitudes at work, which in turn boosts performance, according to their findings. This study builds on previous research that found empowerment to be a mediating variable in healthcare settings by showing how psychological empowerment acts as a moderator in the manufacturing setting of Rivers State.

5. Conclusion

This paper has explored the association between training and development and the employee performance of the manufacturing companies in Rivers State, Nigeria with the specific usage of job knowledge and job skills as the training and development dimensions. The findings offer empirical data to the fact that training and development practice is an effective improvement of performance of employees in the manufacturing sector. In particular, job knowledge was observed to have a positive and significant correlation with the employee performance, which means that employees with adequate knowledge of job descriptions, production processes and safety measures are more efficient, commit a lower number of errors and give high quality outputs. On the same note job skills, it was revealed that job skills have a significant influence on worker performance as their ability to show more efficiency, adjustability to new production techniques and their capacity to handle job related problems positively reflected their job skills. Notably, the research has found the relationship between training and development on one hand and employee performance on the other hand is moderated by psychological empowerment. When employees are empowered by work that has a meaning and is well structured like autonomy, competence and impact, employees tend to make better use of knowledge and skills acquired during training, thus enhancing the training and performance effect. This stresses the importance of the fact that training programs are not enough, and the usefulness of training is up to maximum in case when psychologically empowered employees are able to take initiative, to make choices and have impact in the working context. Summing up, the research finds that training and development along with psychological empowerment are the key strategic resources that can be used to increase employee performance. The well-organized training programs will help manufacturing firms in Rivers State not only to increase the workforce competence and working efficiency, but also improve the overall organizational performance, as well as create the empowering work environment. This type of integrated practices is crucial to maintaining competitiveness, enhancing productivity and also long-term expansion of manufacturing organizations based in the area.

In light of the study's findings and the particular outcomes, the following suggestions are put forth:

The manufacturing firms operating in Rivers State should provide regular, structured, and job-specific training to their employees for improving their job knowledge. The regular training for improving job knowledge will include production process details, usage of machinery during production, safety standards during production activities, etc., to ensure that employees are well aware of their respective roles. The management should

ensure that the provided training to the employees is relevant to meeting their needs on a day-to-day basis, which will improve their performance.

Manufacturing companies in Rivers State should focus on hands-on training programs to promote the development and training of key practical technical and operational staff's skills through on-the-job training, workshops, and mentorship programs, to ensure machine handling competence and adaptability to new ways of operation. The development and training of staff would increase and improve employee performance and productivity through continuous development and training programs to ensure maximum employee efficacy and minimization of errors in operations.

Manufacturing companies in Rivers State embark on programs that not only train employees but also ensure the psychological empowerment of employees. This can be achieved by giving employees more autonomy at work, allowing them to participate in decision-making, recognizing their efforts, and providing them with opportunities to impact the outcomes of their work. By doing this, companies can ensure that employees are able to apply what they have learned, thereby improving their performance.

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