

Empowerment and Employee Efficiency: Evidence from Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

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This study utilizes the image contents, one of social interaction activities, in role play. The results of the one-semester class were used for analysis to prepare teaching-learning plans for the department of aviation services. This study helped students in the Department of Aviation Services to understand the airline cabin organization and examined whether it would help them to communicate with customers. In role-play classes, learners or groups of learners use role-playing dialogues to create role-plays and create communication situations that are similar to the real world. It is significant that active learning can be achieved. Efficiency among employees is a crucial factors that ensuring organizational effectiveness. Hence, empowerment approach will lead to worker's competency. This study assessed the impact of empowerment on employee efficiency in the North East of Nigeria. Adopting a survey design, the research made used of primary data, collected mainly through administering a set of questionnaire to 204 management staffs of the selected manufacturing firms from Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe states respectively. The findings revealed that: empowering employee play significant roles in quality of products that will enable the organisations to compete with other players and become dominant in the global market. The study concluded that empowerment and related workers workshops are crucial to employees' efficiency, organisational growth and national advancement. Besides, employee training is pertinent in any organisation that aims at create and sustain values. The work recommended that management need to integrate teamwork mechanism that will create and sustain an environment that facilitates knowledge and information exchange where they are necessary to increased task autonomy and high level of job satisfaction. Also challenging task should be constantly assigned to employees to assess their competency, particularly in the areas of creativity and innovation that enhance organization global competitiveness.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In today's highly global competitive talent business arena, organisation that aimed to attract, retain and improve top talent must be skilled in enhancing employees' capacity. However, as the rate of change in the global marketplace accelerate; organisations are constantly trying to empower employees to adopt the critical new behaviour necessary to keep pace. Over the past three decades, Empowerment Institution had developed a highly effective methodology which it calls the empowering organisation to enable talent development, cultural transformation and behavioural change needed to embrace change. The major concerns of most organizations include improved employee tenure, low degree of turnover, low cost of training, job satisfaction, attainment of organizational objectives, and optimum

product and services quality (Mowday, Porter and Steers, 1982).

It is obvious that a number of researchers studied employee efficiency and found that it can be affected by different factors such as employee empowerment, training and teamwork. Employee empowerment is mostly understood by exchanging knowledge, improving intellectual capability, and autonomy during decision making (Karim and Rehman, 2012). (Wellins, Byham, and Wilson, 1991) established that an organization which provides higher levels of empowerment to its employees would have better strengths to ensure its long term survival and ability to face challenges. Similarly, (Rochon, 2014) regarded teamwork as a key success factor for employee efficiency and described it as a team of employees who work together in order to

achieve a common objective. In other words, teamwork is a collaborative and shared activity that is directed towards accomplishing set goals. Previous literature also indicated that employee efficiency can be influenced by employee training. Training was defined as systematic process that aims to assist employees improve their knowledge and skills, and develop positive behaviour through workshop and learning experience that is expected to help workers achieve greater performance (Buckley and Caple, 2009). According to (Jun, Cai and Shin, 2006), training initiates several benefits to employees in terms of enhancing their knowledge, skills, and abilities, becoming more efficient team members, and improving career development respectively.

Organisations today realise that in the knowledge driven economy, speed in taking decision, efficient methods of functioning and innovative ideas help them to gain an edge over competitors. These are fundamental elements that determine employee's level of efficiency, organisation productivity and effectiveness. The inputs from employees are keys to the accomplishment of organisational overall strategic goals.

Preliminary investigations reveal that this aspect of empowering workers is not fully integrated in the system of operation in Nigeria manufacturing firms, which responsible for job dissatisfaction, inefficiency and low quality products. The challenges are that management presume the risks of increasing cost of production and unable to exhibit the expected goals. Therefore, workplace empowerment plays important roles in improving employee's performance if being in place.

Consequently, these myriad of problems if left unchecked could constitute negative impact on employee's efficiency and perhaps prevent organisations from playing their determined roles in global market. Organizations that fail to adopt empowerment scheme in their operation process, are bound not to stand the test of time in the global market to compete.

Also, in an organisation where the level of motivation is low or non-existing, employees tend to experience job dissatisfaction that will automatically lead to low performance.

In addition, evidence has shown that organisations that discourage effective organisational structure, employee's involvement and participation in decision making, teamwork and collaborative effort among workers will experience decline in performance. Thus, this study focuses on impact of empowerment on employee efficiency in selected Manufacturing Firms in North East, Nigeria.

It is against this platform that the study seeks to examine the impact of empowerment on employee efficiency in manufacturing firms Nigeria. It is believed that the findings will generate strategic ideas that will enhance employees' effectiveness in their respective responsibilities. However, the study aimed to establish the following objectives:

- i. To determine how training affect employees creativity and innovation.
- ii. To ascertain the extent of relationship between empowerment and quality products.

The following researcher questions are raised

- i. How does training affect employees' creativity and innovation?
- ii. What is the extent of relationship between empowerment and quality products?

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Concept of Empowerment and Efficiency

Empowerment is a fundamental and important aspect for successful achievement, productivity, and growth in any business (Yesufu, 2000). Employee empowerment is regarded as a motivational practice that aims to improve efficiency by increasing the opportunities of participation and involvement in decision making. It is specifically concerned with developing trust, motivation, participating in decision-making, and removing any boundaries between an employee and top management (Meyerson & Dewettinck, 2012).

Empowerment is the mechanism of giving an employee the power to make decision and is often allied with the distribution of responsibility from managers to other employees (Saif and Saleh, 2013). Empowerment was defined earlier as providing an organization's employees with the authority to deal with matters related to their daily task and activities (Huxtable, 1994).

The advantages of employee empowerment were reported in the literature. For instance, (Jacquiline, 2014) stated that empowered employees are likely to develop feelings of motivation that will enhance them to gain the authority and control and apply the fundamental knowledge and skills for dealing with customer needs. As the empowerment programme focuses on giving power and authority to employees through managers to share the responsibility with them, this will certainly assist empowered employees in improving their recognitions and status. Such employees would exhibit positive thinking and tend to do their best to perform well at the workplace (Wadhwa and Verghese, 2015).

Moreover, (Ripley and Ripley, 1992) demonstrated that empowerment can complement the motivation of employees in doing the routine work, improves their job satisfaction, enhances their loyalty and productivity, and reduces the turnover intentions among workers.

Employee empowerment has widely been recognized as an essential contributor to organizational success and many authors observed its direct effect on employee performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Meyerson and Dewettinck, 2012). Past studied found that empowerment had a positive effect on job satisfaction (Raza, Mahmood, Owais and Raza, 2015) and

organizational commitment (Gholami, Soltanahmadi, Pashavi and Nekouei, 2013). (Laschinger, Finegan, and Shamian, 2002) also demonstrated that developing an environment that improves and encourages the applications of empowerment at workplace will have positive impact on employees' commitment, and this ultimately leads to better organizational effectiveness.

Employee empowerment is a process which has to be administered; because employee empowerment is not only the improvement of institutional capabilities and internal entrepreneurship of employees, but also through employee empowering factors, it enabling the perception of self-empowerment applications; thus the empowerment has to be integrated (Spreitzer, 1995). In order to established pre-determined organizational goals.

Efficiency is measures of productivity that concerned with output relative to input. This would be the classic view of productivity and most relate to the economist and accountant approaches. (Insan, Astuti, Raharjo and Hamid, 2013) as efficiency measures only incorporate quantifiable inputs and outputs, this allows assessing productivity to be relatively straightforward and easily interpretable. In addition, when inputs and outputs are defined in monetary terms, productivity becomes directly reconcilable with profitability- making it a more attractive approach for management and stakeholders. At the same time, efficiency measures have some obvious disadvantages. Principally, that they tend to take no account of output quality, customer satisfaction, training or resources used factors which are pertinent to an organisations functioning and therefore productivity (Lawrence, 2012). Furthermore, efficiency mechanisms take no account of the demand for a product or service. An organisation may produce masses of product and therefore appear productive, meanwhile use their skill, experience, developmental and intentional qualities of ascertain organisational objectives (Adeoye, 2018). However, if there is no market demand for these products then the organisation will suffer. Ultimately, efficiency measures as indicators of productivity may provide useful, relevant information on the proficiency with which an organisation is operating, but they do not appear comprehensive enough to provide a true picture of either individual-level or organisational-level productivity (Gosselin, 2013).

Employee Efficiency

The efficiency of employee is the state or quality of being competent, in other words a person is to say capable to do a specific work. Scientifically, efficiency is the ratio of useful work done to the total energy expended or heat taken in.

Organizations today are forced to function in globalize market, full of change and under various complications, as it is more important than ever to have the correct employees at the relate job with the right qualification and experiences in order to survive the surroundings competition. The

successful, prosperous future and growth of an organization is dependent on its skilled, knowledgeable and well experienced workforce. That is why training is fundamental and effectual approach in successful accomplishments of the firm's goals and objective. Training is not only improves them resourcefully, but also gives them a chance to learn their job virtually and perform it more competently hence increasing institution productivity. An employee is induced when he or she is accorded an opportunity to acquire skills. A motivated worker is satisfied and will be willing to stay with the organisation or institution (Ezenwakwelu 2017)

Training has been an important predictor in increasing organizational efficiency. Most researches including Singh and (Mohanty, 2012), showed that training is fundamental and effectual instrumental in successful accomplishment of the firm's goals and objectives, resulting in higher productivity. Training design refers to the degree to which the training has been designed and delivered in such way that provides trainees the skills to transfer the learning back to the job (Truitt, 2000). He argues that part of transfer design is the degree to which training instructions job requirements. It is observed that investigations directed at building contingency model of transfer- oriented training intervention design would provide information crucial for developing training environments more conducive to positive transfer in terms of efficiency. Identification of training needs, design and implementation of training programs, transfer of training and evaluation of programme benefits are key activities (Seif and Saleh, 2013) in addition to studying general training variables such as types of training, selection of trainees, selection criteria and evaluation instruments. The success of training depends on the proper implementation of all steps of the process: previous analysis of training needs, development and implementation of an adequate training plan and evaluation (Pineda, 1995). Therefore, training together with other activities positively affects result and is associated with the employee efficiency increase.

Importance of Employee Empowerment in Organizations

Organizations understand that in a knowledge-driven global business environment, rapid in taking decisions, efficient methods of functioning, quality products and creative ideas help them gain an edge over competitors. It is with this background that organizations are integrating a strategy of employee empowerment. The essential factors that drive organizations towards employee empowerment and capacity building are to:

1. **Promote creativity and innovation:** By empowering employees, organizations value their inputs. This is driving forces that motivate employees to work towards achieving organizational goals. They develop creative and innovative ideas that might enhance organization systems and processes. Employee initiation and

creativity helps organizations to respond quickly to changes in business environment and improve their processes.

2. **Align employee’s interest with those of the organization:** Empowerment provides workers a clearer view of organizational policies, goals and strategies. They understand their job responsibility and value the autonomy. Employees are content and demonstrate enthusiasm towards their tasks and align their obligations with organizational objectives.

3. **Enhance productivity:** Well-equipped employees are more productive as they are free to make decisions, respond quickly without wasting time and work as a part of self-managed groups. Actually, a team of empowered workers working collaboration are more successful in improving the productivity of the organization and achieving specific goals.

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Employee empowerment and efficiency

1. Employee empowerment and job satisfaction

The central tenet is that workers respond more creatively when given broad assignments, encouraged to contribute, and helped to derive satisfaction from their responsibility (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Naismith and Soetanto 2007). Job satisfaction has been defined as “a pleasurable of positive emotional state, emanating from the appraisal of one’s job experience” (Scott, Seth and Randolph, 2004).

Incongruence between empowerment as a management practice and cultural values may attenuate the positive impact of discretion and autonomy on job satisfaction in high power- distance nations where subordinates are accustomed to taking orders from their supervisor (Robert, 2000).

2. Employee empowerment and self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the belief that one is competent and can adequately or successfully perform an assigned duty. It is described as the development of a "can-do" attitude (Fulford and Enz, 1995). When people have sense of efficacy, they became empowered. Empower people not only feel the sense of competence, but they are sure that to be capable enough to do their required assignments (Tohidi and Jabbari, 2011)

3. Employee training and efficiency

The current dynamic business scenario appears to be characterized by high competitiveness among organizations, market globalization and technological advancement. To survive in such challenging situations, organizations have to look for the possible ways to create sustainable competitive strategies. In this context, the knowledge and skills of employees in an organization's have increasingly become very paramount to its performance, global competitiveness, and continuous development (Elnaga and Imran, 2013). One way to develop and improve the quality of employees is to provide them with beneficial training and development programs that are relevant to employee efficiency. This is because the capabilities, knowledge and skills of the talented employees were proved to be the key determinants competitive advantage in global marketplaces (Becker, Bose, and Freeman, 2006). To effectively develop such knowledge, skills and capabilities of employees in order to perform well on the job, training programs are very essential in supporting all organizational members (Meyer and Allen, 1997). (Hafeez and Akbar, 2015) reported that that the more the employees receive training, the more efficient their level of efficiency would be.

Previous researches considered training as an essential activity for effective human resource management in any organization and institution. The key principles of training emphasize on providing meaningful inputs for employees based on relevant theories, and to take into consideration the features of effectiveness and efficiency, differences among employees, and continuous improvement (Diab and Ajlouni, 2015). Employee training refers to programs that aim to provide employees with required information, new skills to enhance the opportunities of professional development (Elnaga and Imran, 2013). Training is associated with the skills that an employee should adopt to help him by working with others in an attempt to achieve organizational goals and objectives (Truitt, 2011). (Sabir, Akhtar, Bukhari, Nasir, and Ahmed, 2014) thought about training as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and abilities by professional development. Similarly, (Singh and Mohanty, 2012) revealed that the investments in employee training result in beneficial organizational outcomes. However, training is crucial to employee efficacy in any organization.

Theoretical Framework

(i) Frederick Taylor’s Scientific Management Theory

Its main objective is improving economic efficiency, especially performance, monitor worker performance, and initiate instructions and supervision to ensure that they’re using the most efficient ways of working. Management can be defined as the process of designing and maintaining an environment in which employees, working together in groups, efficiently accomplish selected aims (Chandrasekhar, 2011). In this study management is seen as a prelude to environments which in due process affect the manner in which employees execute responsibilities.

(ii) Path Goal Theory

The path-goal theory, also called the path-goal theory of leader effectiveness or the path-goal model, is a leadership theory initiated by (Robert House, 1996). The theory states that a leader's behaviour is contingent to the motivation, satisfaction and competency of her or his subordinates. The revised version also argues that the leader engages in behaviours that support subordinate's abilities and compensate for deficiencies. The path-goal model can be classified as a transaction leadership theory. According to the first of all theory, the manager's job is viewed as guiding workers to choose the best ways to reach their goals, as well as the organizational objectives. The theory argues that leaders will have to engage in different types of leadership behaviour depending on the nature and the demands of a particular situation. It is the leader's job to assist followers in attaining goals and to provide the direction and support needed to ensure that their goals are compatible with the organisation's objectives (Crook, Todd, Combs, Woehr, and Ketchen, 2011).

Path-goal theory assumes that leaders are flexible and that they can change their rules, as situations require. The theory proposes two contingency variables, such as environment and follower characteristics, that moderate the leader

behaviour-outcome relationship. Environment is outside the control of the follower-task structure, authority system, and teamwork. This theory support the variable on leadership styles (Crook, et al., 2011). This theory of leadership was tested against the variable on democratic leadership style and its effect on labour relations and organisational effectiveness.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research adopts survey method and design. The area of this research consists of Adamawa, Bauchi and Gombe states, Nigeria. The states were selected because they are yet to be exploited in this aspect of study in Nigeria. The population of the study consists of the staff of selected three manufacturing firms which were selected purposively. The populations of this staff were 429. The researcher determined the size of the sample, a total of 204 samples were derived from the study population with the use of Trek formula (Trek, 1994). Data for the work were collected mainly from primary source through questionnaire that were self-administered. The answer options for the questionnaire were developed using five-point Likert scale with SA – Strongly Agree, A – Agree, U – Uncertain, D – Disagree and SD – Strongly Disagree.

Table 1: The population studies are the staff of the three key selected manufacturing sectors. The populations of this staff are:

No	Manufacturing firms	Population	Sample
1.	Atiku Plastic Manufacturing Factory, Yola, Adamawa State	134	63.72
2.	Landee Cable Co, Ltd, Bauchi, Bauchi State.	150	71.33
3.	Manto Processing Company, Gombe, Gombe State.	145	68.95
	Total	429	204

Source: Managers, Human Resources Departments of the selected firms, (2019)

IV. ANALYSIS, RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Out of the two hundred and five (204) questionnaires administered, only one hundred and ninety-seven (195) representing 95.6% were returned and found good for the data analysis.

The biographical information of the respondents from the analysis revealed that many of the respondents of the selected three manufacturing firms were male (71.8%). Also, majority of the respondents in the organizations were of middle and low level managerial positions (90.8%) which definitely give the work more meaningful responses since the issues relating to employees empowerment affect these management cadres most. Furthermore, most of the respondents (72.3%) were unskilled employees. This is a pointer that the findings would give reliable results since the works majorly emanate from the concern for the unskilled workers. Finally, our respondents come mostly from

marketing (38%) and operation (28.7%) departments. These give us a true representation to justify the fundamental roles of empowerment on employee's efficiency.

Testing of Hypotheses

Three hypotheses were formulated and are tested as follow using ANOVA, z-test and chi-square. Hypothesis one was tested with One-way ANOVA, two tested with ztest and hypothesis three was tested with chi-square test. SPSS was used to analyze the various tests.

Hypothesis one:

HO: training has no effect on employees' creativity and innovation.

HA: training positively affects employees' creativity and innovation.

Table 2: Correlations

Training and employees’ creativity

		Workers skill	Productive ability
Skills	Pearson Correlation	1	.212
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.121
	N	194	184
Productive Ability	Pearson Correlation	.212	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.121	
	N	194	194

Source: SPSS analysis of field data 2018

Hypothesis two:

HO: there is no significant relationship between empowerment and quality products

HA: there is significant positive relationship between empowerment and quality products.

Table 3: Chi-Square; Test Statistics

Environment and quality products

The chi-square is computed at 0.05 level of significant

	Financial Strength	Effective competition
Chi-Square	26.77	3.39 ^b
Df	194	4
Asymp. Sig.	3.39	1.000

Source: SPSS analysis of field data 2018

The effect of training on employee creativity and innovation

Data for the test of this hypothesis were obtained from responses through questionnaire. The one-way ANOVA was used to test the validity of how regular training and participating in seminars by employees will have significant impact on their productivity in their respective section or department. **The table 2** reveals that while the f-distribution result shows the existence of significant result on the variables ($r = 0.212$ at $p < 0.121$). The significant level is 0.05, and due to this we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate one which states that *regular training and participating in seminars by employees will have significant impact on their productivity in their respective section or department.*

The relationship between empowerment and quality products

Having analysed the second hypothesis on **table 3** above with chi-square (χ^2), we found out that the calculated figure is greater than the tabulated figure ($\chi^2_{Calc} = 26.77 > \chi^2_{Tab} = 3.39$), we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternate which shows that *empowering employee play*

significant roles in quality of products that will enable the organisations to compete with other players in the same industry and grown or become dominant in the global market.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This work examines the determinant of employees’ efficiency of manufacturing firms by reviewing their employees’ empowerment and finding how the independent variables affect the dependent variables. Although previous research works shows multifaceted results on workers efficiency in the area of employee empowerment, this work established that empowerment and related workers workshops are crucial to employees’ efficiency, organisational growth and national advancement. Actually, empowerment is the proactive ways of improving subordinates skill to ensure their creativity and innovation that will motivate them to take responsibilities, with respect to field of specialisation and professionalism. Specifically, empowerment generates ideas that will make employee to accept challenges and adapt rapidly to change since business environment is complex. This established the fact that the

empowerment is a determinant that is of important significance to employee's effectiveness.

Besides, employee training is pertinent in any organisation that aims at create and sustain values. Therefore, organising related employee workshop will advance and enable them to be abreast with current happening in international market with regards to workplace. Managements expect employee to exhibit certain level of creativity in their performances, however, organisations should ensure they add values to their employees and consequently in return to realise it specific objectives.

In line with the actual study findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were proffered:

1. Employees should be empowered because it is through improved capacity an organisation will develop a strong culture which reflects worker efficiency in order to survive, grow and compete favourably in the global market.
2. Management need to integrate teamwork mechanism that will create and sustain an environment that facilitates knowledge and information exchange where they are necessary to increased task autonomy and high level of job satisfaction. Actually, when an employee is satisfied, both emotionally and physically with his or her job, the levels of efficiency toward quality products and organizational productivity will improve.
3. Challenging task should be constantly assigned to employees to assess their competency, particularly in the areas of creativity and innovation that enhance organization global competitiveness.
4. Organizations must encourage employees to initiate new methods and experiment with new ideas that lead to increase in employee's productivity and organizational effectiveness.
5. These results creates practical solutions for the decision makers in manufacturing firms, to focus on regular training programs for their employees to ensure that they have adequate skills, knowledge and experience to execute their responsibility efficiently.

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