
THE EFFECT OF EMPLOYEE NEEDS IDENTIFICATION ON EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN SELECTED TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES IN SOUTH-WESTERN NIGERIA

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Received: September 15, 2021

Accepted: November 13, 2021

Published Online: November 19, 2021

Abstract: A significant challenge in the Nigerian work environment is the challenge of productivity. This challenge has been attributed to a long-held emphasis on training which is concerned with the immediate benefit of the organisation. This study examined the effect of employee needs identification on employee productivity measured how far the Nigerian corporate world has adjusted to this trend. The scope of the survey cut across the Nigerian telecommunication companies. Specifically, the objective of the study was to determine how employee needs identification impacts employee productivity variables (employee problem-solving skills, employee effectiveness, employee efficiency, and employee innovation and creativity). The population of the study consists of all employees who are engaged in the operations of the three main mobile service providers in Lagos state, Nigeria which was a total of 359. The sample size of 359 was arrived at using a census approach because the population of all the three firms' customer service centres and total number of employees of their customer service centres are within the Lagos geographical location. The study adopted the survey research design to generate findings from quantitative data. Results were analysed with structural equation modelling with Path coefficients, and T-statistics used to measure the variables. From the study's findings, variables measured had a high effect on each other, with employee needs identification directly and significantly influencing employee productivity. It was recommended that management must assess the learning requirements of individual employees and cater for their learning needs in order to have a more productive workforce

Keywords: Employee needs identification; Learning and Development; Employee Productivity

1. INTRODUCTION

Many scholars agree that learning and development is an important source for setting an organisation apart from its competitors. According to Naim and Lenka (2017), learning and development is the most effective strategy for stimulating positive results from employees, despite the fact that supervisory assistance, task recognition, performance management, and corporate justice all have an influence on employee productivity. Research in management explores how individuals learn or create themselves individually or as a group to acquire new ideas and abilities that help them work or grow in their current or prospective jobs.

However, in today's work environment, human resource managers and administrations alike concern themselves with training solely (Kolb, 2015; Sasidaran, 2018). The sole emphasis on training is deemed very limited since it focuses largely on mere job skills. When it comes to training; the focus is on what's valuable to companies rather than what is beneficial to people. Why? Because in terms of organisational training, learning and development are more important to workers and thus have a bigger impact on the organisation in which employees work (Lievens, 2020; van Vulpen, 2021). However, what benefits employees in terms of their individual advancement is also useful for organisational productivity, quality, customer loyalty, viable administration and control (Lievens, 2020). Organisations which approach employee learning and development beyond mere training (just transferring skill sets

in the conventional way) definitely cultivate employees who would be productive enough and progress the organisation consequently (Andrianova & Antonacopoulou, 2020). To be around for such a long period means that they will work really hard to become the best at what they do and to help others do the same. Routine training does not necessarily include learning and growth for the person. (Antonacopoulou, 2019). Being practical, organisational behaviour and anticipations regarding training aims to equip employees 'overnight' which is restrictive to only work abilities, study halls and graphic presentations (Vinesh, 2014). However, learning and development aims at the progressive strategy to refine employees as individuals beyond the conventional skills-only perspective in human resources development (Van Vulpen, 2021). The objective of learning and development has consistently been to leverage with an organisation in the inculcation of values in their employees as an obligation (Lievens, 2020). Numerous studies have also shown that distinct learning and development procedures have solid correlations with varied proportions of staff productivity and, as a result, good organisational success. (Lievens, 2020; Van Vulpen, 2021).

With the laid background and aforesaid issues, the main objective of this study was to analyse the role of employee needs identification on employee productivity in telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

Learning and Development

The concept of learning and development can be traced to psychologists Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's body of researches. Vygotsky in particular is notable, especially with his 1978 publication on the interaction between learning and development (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2011). Vygotsky assessed a plethora of issues such as art's psychology, thought and language as well as learning and development which encompassed its attention on the education of special needs students. Vygotsky emphasised on social interactions in which he posited that in a given activity, learners rely on each other to increase knowledge from one another's experience (Rubtsov, 2020). Vygotsky posited that with time, individuals take responsibility for their individual participation in activities that increase knowledge (Wertsch & Sohmer, 1995).

The distinction between learning and development has a respected custom in development psychology (Strauss, 1993). It is at the centre of theoretical underpinnings, like those of Piaget and Vygotsky. In fact, examinations between the two scholastic submissions regularly turn on how each has managed this issue (Vygotsky, 1978; Crowley, 1991; Moll, 1994; Geary, 1995). It is uncommon that anything of genuine significance can be decreased to either a situation of difference, either good or not beneficial at all regardless. In the current case, the polarity between learning and development appears to be in excess of a couple of simple restrictions. For instance, something contrary to learning would appear to be no learning, or an inability to learn, while something contrary to development may be stagnation or an inability to create. The pressure within learning and development domains, accordingly, should be of an unexpected sort in comparison to straightforward resistance (Rubtsov, 2020). Both learning and development (ordinarily) address positive changes in conduct. Maybe the difference is only this; learning is any long-lasting change in conduct, versatile or rigid, while development is consistently versatile, in any event on a basic level (Fowler, 2017; Hebe, 2017). Then again, the difference is better communicated as far as the size of the change, with 'learning' changes being moderately little, while 'development' changes are relative.

Employee Needs Identification and Employee Effectiveness

In her conceptual work, Brown (2002) investigated the evaluation of training requirements. In the end, her arguments led to the conclusion that identifying training requirements is a need for creating an efficient training and development plan. Training needs assessment is a continuous process of gathering data to identify what training requirements exist and how to design training to assist the organisation achieve its goals, according to her. Developing and implementing training without first completing a requirement's analysis is common in organisations. These organisations, according to her, run the danger of either conducting too much or too little training, or of entirely missing the objective.

While this is the case, the justification for creating a training programme is highly reliant on pinpointing training requirements and demonstrating the programme's value to the organisation. Furthermore, she stated that training efforts are at best ineffective if they are not guided by a clear knowledge of the requirements of the participants. You will succeed as a trainer if you thoroughly analyse your students' requirements and create customised training programs that address those demands. With this information in hand, it is possible to develop a training program that is focused on performance improvement and provide superior outcomes.

Also, Obisi (2011) carried conducted a similar study in Nigerian organisations, looking at staff training and development. A training program's primary objective is to create value, and if it fails to do so, it should be revised or scrapped entirely, according to his findings. He argued that without training, acquiring skills would be impossible, and without skills, organisations would fail to meet their goals via their employees. He admitted that some organizations view training as a costly undertaking and may impose an embargo on training and use the funds for other initiatives in the organisation. He accepted this. As a result, organisations must promote learning organisations by taking training and development seriously. Obisi (2011) defines a leadership organization as one that continually improves the abilities of all of its employees. Organisations should demonstrate their commitment to training in both words and deeds by developing a training philosophy, recognising training requirements, setting training objectives, and overseeing training administration. By failing to adequately prepare and equip their learners before, during, and after a training programme, organisations demonstrate a bad approach toward training administration. More significantly, he advised that research efforts be given to empirical study of the relevance of identifying precise and suitable requirements before embarking on training and the cause for training failures to empirical investigation.

To find out if training needs analysis improves employee productivity, Ludwikowska (2018) conducted research. According to the findings, training methods and stages have a significant role in improving staff productivity in Poland's social service sector. Primary data were gathered using five-point Likert scale self-evaluation questionnaires. The self-perception of the acquired level of qualifications before and after training was used to assess employee efficiency. Respondents were also screened to see if training-related activities were carried out within the company. In order to discover the link between different phases of training and the effectiveness of the employees, the correlation coefficient was utilised. There was a strong link between factors including training requirements analysis, employee efficiency, and transfer of training according to the findings of the study. A training needs analysis phase was conducted as part of the research. A prerogative to create training programmes based on employee requirements as part of continuous professional development is demonstrated by the data, and this leads to employee performance and, ultimately, organisational advantages.

The following null hypothesis was adopted for this study:

H₀: Employee Needs Identification has no significant impact on employee productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity) in telecommunication companies in Nigeria.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

To obtain conclusions from quantitative data, the survey research design was used in this study. This often entails the use of quantitative data collecting and analytic methodologies (Nargundkar, 2008). Quantitative studies are inherently deductive, and their research aims are met by testing hypotheses and establishing connections between variables. Because the population for the study has already been formed, theories have not been further investigated or decided, and the research study simply seeks to explain the correlations among the variables studied, this quantitative study is descriptive in nature and justified by this (Jong & van der Voordt, 2002). The number of employees working in the Customer Service Centers (CSC) of the three firms namely MTN, Glo, and Airtel Nigeria

across Lagos State is three hundred and fifty-nine (359) in total. All of these employees are included as the population for this research study.

3. RESULTS

Test of Hypothesis

Employee Needs Identification has no significant impact on employee productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity)

The research variables were measured using a structured questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale. The employee needs identification, which is the latent variable, was measured with three (3) items, while employees' productivity was measured with eleven (11) items as shown in Table 1. The items adapted for measuring employee needs identification, include Job specification, research and development, staff development. The factor loading depicted in Table 1 for all items of employee needs identification was above the minimum threshold of 0.60 as suggested by (Rubtsov, 2020).

Table 1: Factor loading for Employee Needs Identification on employee productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity)

	Factor Loading	Error Variance	Composite Reliability	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	No. of Indicators
Indicators	>0.6	<0.5	≥ 0.8	≥ 0.5	≥ 0.7	
Employee Needs Identification			0.735	0.583	0.796	3
B1	0.809	0.191				
B2	0.895	0.105				
B3	0.700	0.003				
Employee Problem Solving Skills			0.813	0.594	0.757	3
E1	0.859	0.141				
E2	0.566	0.434				
E4	0.820	0.018				
Employee Effectiveness			0.869	0.628	0.837	4
F1	0.914	0.086				
F 2	0.774	0.226				
F 3	0.631	0.369				
F 4	0.809	0.191				
Employee Efficiency			0.865	0.683	0.778	3
G1	0.873	0.127				

G2	0.682	0.318				
G3	0.885	0.115				
Employees Innovation and Creativity			1.000	1.000	1.000	1
H1	1.000	0				

According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), the threshold for all scales and measuring items should be above 0.60 to be reliable. The factor loading must be greater than the 0.70 minimum threshold number. Second, the composite dependability must be 0.80 or above. thirdly, the construct average variance extracted estimate (AVE) must be more than 0.50. finally, the Cronbach’s Alpha is adjudged to be reliable when the value is equal or above 0.70.

Table 1 depicts the internal consistency and Cronbach’s alpha reliability of each element of assessment. The values in each column are more than 0.80 and 0.70, meaning they are all composite measures. Specific measurements of construct have a range of between 0.655 and 0.898 in the factor loadings. The instrument was deemed to be both trustworthy and accurate since the major criteria for accuracy was satisfied. Figure 2 shows the findings of the inner structural model.

Path Co-efficient and P-values for Employee Needs Identification on employee productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity)

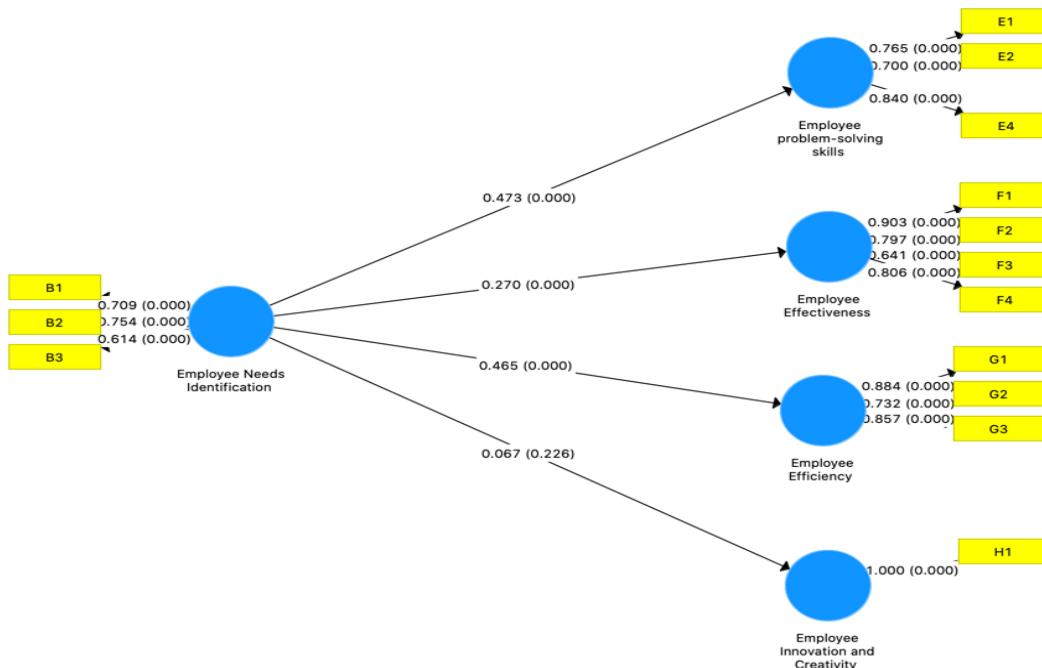


Figure 1

Figure 1 provides a standardized bootstrapping analysis to evaluate employee needs identification and employee productivity. The Path Coefficients (β) and T- statistics Estimation were determined in the Partial Least Square (PLS).

The significance of the hypothesis was tested through the β value. The higher the β value, the greater the substantial effect on the endogenous latent constructs. Figure 2 depicted that all the P values of employee productivity proxies are less than 0.05. This suggests that employee needs identification has a significant impact on the indicators of employees' productivity except for employees' innovation and creativity.

The relationship between and among the variables are presented in Table 2

Table 2: Path coefficients for Employee Needs Identification on employee productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity)

Variables and Cross Leading				Path coefficient (O)	Std. Dev (STDEV)	T-statistics (O/STDEV)	P-values
employee identification	needs	→	Problem solving skills	0.473	0.052	9.040	0.000
employee identification	needs	→	Employee Effectiveness	0.270	0.052	5.210	0.000
employee identification	needs	→	Employees' Efficiency	0.465	0.038	12.096	0.000
employee identification	needs	→	Employees' innovation and creativity	0.067	0.055	1.212	0.226
				R-Square (R²)		R-Square (R²) Adjusted	
employee identification	needs	→	Problem solving skills	0.224		0.221	
employee identification	needs	→	Employee Effectiveness	0.073		0.070	
employee identification	needs	→	Employees' Efficiency	0.216		0.214	
employee identification	needs	→	Employees' innovation and creativity	0.004		0.001	

The path coefficient indicates that employee needs identification on employees' productivity in the analysis at above 0.05. To break it down, it is observed that there is a direct significant impact of employee needs identification on problem solving skills (i.e., $b = 0.473$, $f2 = 0.052$, $p < 0.05$), employee needs identification on employee effectiveness (i.e., $b = 0.270$, $f2 = 0.052$, $p < 0.05$), employee needs identification on employee efficiency (i.e., $b = 0.465$, $f2 = 0.038$, $p < 0.05$), and employee needs identification on employee innovation and creativity (i.e., $b = 0.067$, $f2 = 0.055$, $p > 0.05$).

Overall, the relationship between employee needs identification on employees' productivity (problem solving skills, employee effectiveness, employees' efficiency, employees' innovation and creativity) is confirmed to be directly significant with the reference to the beta value of constructs above, which also depicts a strong degree of association especially on problem solving skills. All the path coefficients were of practical importance since the significance level

is below .05 except employees' innovation and creativity, which was above 0.05. The result suggested that since the significant level of the model is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis should be rejected. This implies that employee needs identification is a predictor of employee problem-solving skill, employee effectiveness, employee efficiency, employee innovation and creativity.

4. DISCUSSION

The findings depict that employee needs identification has a 22.4% effect on employee problem-solving skill, 7.3% effect on employee's effectiveness, 21.6% effect on employee efficiency and 0.4% effect on employee innovation and creativity. However, organisations under the telecommunication sector should improve their strategies on employee needs identification to enhance employee's productivity (Employee problem-solving skill, Employee effectiveness, Employee efficiency, Employee innovation and creativity) since both variables have average effect on each other. The path coefficient indicates that employee needs identification directly and significantly influences employee's productivity in the analysis at $P < 0.05$, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected.

The findings agreed with the research of Brown (2002) who explored training needs assessment. The results of her arguments were that the identification of training needs is imperative for developing an effective training and development programme. She posited that training needs assessment is an ongoing process of gathering data to determine what training needs exist so that training can be developed to help the organisation accomplish its objectives. Our findings affirm the effect of employee needs identification on employee effectiveness. It is important to note that the primary objective of any training is to create value, which will eventually impact positively on staff performance (Obisi, 2011). For any effective training programme, the needs of the employees are paramount in order to acquire the right skills to help the institution to achieve its goals.

5. CONCLUSION

Every organisation's long-term viability depends on its employees' capacity to learn. Increasing the ability of employees to adapt to a changing and demanding corporate environment and technology is also critical for effective employee performance, as is increasing employee knowledge in order to build creative and problem-solving skills in response to this changing and demanding corporate environment and technology. In the meanwhile, the study model's stated linkages between variables were examined, and empirical analysis employing descriptive statistics revealed that correlations did exist between the variables. This suggests that efforts should be made to make sure that employees' skills and knowledge are properly used through suitable and timely learning design and execution.

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