

The Effect of Career Development on Employee Performance of Selected Firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria

Sandra Moses OGBUMA

Department of Petroleum Marketing and Business Studies,
Petroleum Training Institute, Effurun,
Delta State, Nigeria

Email:esomiors@gmail.com

DOI: 10.56201/ijssmr.vol.11no4.2025.pg419.449

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of career development on employee performance of selected firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The specific objectives were to; examine the extent to which mentoring, advancement, training and counseling are related to employee performance. Descriptive research survey design was utilized in the study. The study population comprised of all managers and staff in selected manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria (Vintex Aluminum Asaba, Life Flour Mill Sapele, Differential Aluminum, Benin City and Nelux Paint Benin) with estimated population of 413 employees. A sample of 203 was obtained from the total population of 413. Out of the 203 copies of questionnaire that were administered to employees, 199 were retrieved and fully completed. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive, Pearson Correlation and simple linear regression analysis. The study found that mentoring ($T=26.168$, $p<0.05$), advancement ($T=34.025$, $p<0.05$), training ($T=13.876$, $p<0.05$) and counseling ($T=23.376$, $p<0.05$) have a significant and positive effect of employee performance. The study concluded that career development practices especially through mentoring, advancement, training as well as counseling is a strategic tool for enhancing employee performance in the organization. On the basis of the findings, it was recommended that Organization should put in place mentoring programmes through which employees can be mentored, educated and guided on their career related issues in order to skillfully carryout operations and other activities of the organization. Also, Employees should be given more opportunities to explore and increase their capabilities, intellectuals and skill both within and outside the organization. Furthermore, Management should provide training programmes for both old and new employees to develop their careers. This will equip new employees with skills needed for the job and reinvigorate old employees thereby revamping their old skills for the current work situation. Finally, Management should endeavor to put in place counseling intervention programmes in which the psychological and career related issues of the employees are resolved. This will go a long way to relieve mentally stressed and depressed employees and put them on track again.

Keyword: Career Development, Mentoring, Advancement, Training, Counseling, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Management and employees mutually benefit from individual and organisational goals due to career development and this makes organisations to be more adaptable. Career development involve continuing education, enrollment in training programmes, improved job performance,

increased duties, responsibilities and participation in professional organisations. Hargreaves and O'Connor (2018) defined career development as progression of short-term steps taken to achieve long-term professional goals that involves the building of role-specific skill sets, and can include taking night classes, networking, seeking out a mentor and taking on new responsibilities at workplace. Alison (2020) argued that career development is all about gathering skills and experiences to help employees do their job better - career development as the act of helping employees and organizations to realize their full potential is human-centered approach to promote, evaluate and improve employee performance. It enables organisation creates trusted environment in which employees feel empowered to take control of their own development. Career development foster coaching and expert support, content focus, feedback and reflection among others (Mensah, Agyapong, Nuerterey & Nisar, 2017; Gabby, 2023). Lombardi and Shipley (2021) opined that career development builds professional skills and competencies of self.

Mentoring is among the few tools use for preparing tomorrows' skilled employees and are also used to strengthen organizational capabilities, intelligence, build organisation knowledge, and sustain the organization competitive advantage. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2019) argued that Mentorship covers the activities often designed and encouraged by management to develop its personnel and ensure that they improve and maintain the organisation's competitive advantage. Nyamori (2020) revealed that mentoring of employees is an inevitable criteria that positively impact firms in the near future as proper preparation of their subordinate to improve performance is critical for all organisations. Mentoring programme is a series of conversations that focuses on individual employee's growth and development (Akeem, 2020).

Counseling is a process by which individual can learn more about him/herself, but also acquires new skills. Tuvulla and Byaruhanga (2021) revealed that counseling involves learning about a particular condition such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders by which the person is affected, so that he/she can better understand treatment options. According to Alisara, Yuttachai, Sunthorn, Somnuk and Jaturon (2022) working toward career advancement often involves continued learning—both about yourself and your profession. When one entered a phase of his/her career, he/she may have had one particular goal in mind. This maybe to secure a certain position, work at a specific company, or get experience in a new field or industry. Regardless of the goal, at some point, all that is needed is career advancement. Chandra (2023) revealed that advancement enhanced job title, increased responsibilities, expanded skill sets, and a greater salary, improve job satisfaction, open new opportunities, and illuminate continued learning pathways.

Training can help employees understand how to fit into company's structure, mission, goals and achievement. Ogbu and Osanaiye (2017) is of the view that employees can become more motivated and excited about their work as they understand how and what of what they do; get things on track to improve work quality and outcomes. Training that is grounded in specific content to helped employees become more deeply immersed in subject matter or specific task which help them to be professional in a particular field (Alisara et al., 2022).

The ability of individual employee to carryout business activities in order to achieve organisational vision, mission, and goals, is known as employee performance (Igbomor & Ogbuma, 2024; Igbomor & Olisemenogor, 2023a). It is defined by how well employees can do their task. One of the major tasks of managers is to know how well their employees are performing in order to know how to formulate strategies that will best suit the progress and development of both employees and organisation (Mensah, et al., 2017). Employee performance is maximized when organization manage employees well. Employees who do not get adequate attention and

development from the organization can trigger a decline in employee performance and organizational overall performance (Ogbu & Osanaiye, 2017; Aguke & Igbomor, 2024).

Continuous professional skills is a great way for a well-rounded and effective employee, to advance career and feel fulfilled at workplace - learning about different areas of task responsibility is a good starting point for identifying professional strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for improvement. Tsegaye (2018) reported that there are opportunities for professional development which include chances to build skills, qualities, characteristics, or attributes that benefit professional life - when organisations focus on developing professional skills, it helps productivity, more effective team member, and increase satisfaction with work efforts. According to Parsns (2022) managers and leaders who prioritize professional or career development of their team members consequentially create an organisational culture that values self-improvement and supports employees in reaching their goals for career growth. It is on this background that this study assesses the relationship between Career Development and Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Threats that undermine organization's adaptability and competitiveness, like gaping skills or competency gaps, are quickly identified, diagnosed and dealt with when career development is of a high priority in an organisation. This enable managers to nurture a high performance culture; employee are more engaged; employees know their objectives and managers get an accurate picture of performance; moving up the career ladder and earning promotions is easier said than done, however, it often requires careful planning and taking intentional steps. For employee to potentially development their career, they need of mentoring, advancement, training and counseling.

Organisations without mentorship culture limit interactions between management and employees, cripple morale by adding to the anxiety triggered by an upcoming performance review, but it also limits the opportunities to adjust behavior, correct course on certain projects and genuinely check in on employees' wellbeing and how they perform. Career advancement takes time and effort to progress, therefore, there is need to overcome obstacles along the way which need additional sources of motivation.

There are hidden costs of employee stress, overload, decreased productivity, interpersonal conflict, sick leave and even long-term disability. Addressing stress issues before they become debilitating is a sound investment; thus the need for counseling. Counseling help employees to develop and implement work-life strategies that will meet their needs as well as the corporate goals; employees' training and development are one of the key factors that can encourage, increase engagement and employee satisfaction. Although, many studies have been carried out on career development and employee performance yet, little research has studied the linkage between career development and employee performance in the manufacturing sector in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. Based on the aforementioned, this study examined the effect of Career Development and Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria.

Hypotheses of the Study

To determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables, the following null hypotheses were formulated and tested.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between mentorship and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

- H02:** There is no significant relationship between advancement and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.
- H03:** There is no significant relationship between training and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.
- H04:** There is no significant relationship between counseling and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Conceptual Review

Career Development

Career development is one of the best habits a firm can adopt. In fact, the continuous learning and endless curiosity with organisational development can help employee to thrive in career, to increase organisational performance. This enhance employee to develop new skills to be more valuable. It keep employee current in his/her career. Perry (2022) argued that organisational development is the act of doing any activity to get better at doing a job, outside of normal day-to-day tasks - it's similar to continuing education, but not exactly the same. For example, taking classes or reading the latest research can be career development.

Career development provides benefits for both employers and employees which include: (i) it promotes higher retention rates, (ii) it signals competency on behalf of the employer, (iii) increase earning potential and hire ability, (iv) provide networking and opportunities, (v) Keeps employees current on industry trends, and (vi) open doors to future career changes (Salleh & Sulaiman, 2019). Career development is an ongoing process of pinpointing and growing the skills needed to progress in any given career - some jobs actually require professional development for the benefit of both employees and organisation - employees are required to know about the latest advancements in their field - that way, they stay up-to-date in their careers (Akeem, 2020). This development makes employees more versatile and adds high-quality tools to toolbox so that employees will be able to solve problem with ease. Through career learning programmes, employees can learn new approaches that make them excited and interested to come to work each day - when committed to professional development, employee comes into contact with other people who are on a similar career. This expands their networks, accelerates their professional growth, and encourages the cross-pollination of ideas (Alisara, et al., 2022; Arubayi & Igbomor, 2024).

Dimensions of career development

Career development is comprised of several dimensions. However, for the purpose of this study, the following dimensions were considered.

Mentoring

Mentorship is one of the most vital tools that contribute greatly to employees performance and development via offering guidance, supports and knowledge-sharing; hence, mentoring play an imperative role in aiding employees attain their full potential. As observed by Gary (2023), it refers to an imperative tool required to enhance performance by aiding employee knowledge-transfer, personalized guidance, self-confidence motivation, network as well as continuous learning. Nyamori (2020) supports this view by saying that mentorship is a symbiotic, one-on-one relationship that enables people to learn and grow -the many benefits of mentoring make them a

staple in most workplaces, besides enabling newbie employees to learn from their more experienced seniors, mentorship also boost their career prospects.

There are numerous impacts of mentoring on employee development and performance. As noted by Nyamori (2020), mentoring aids knowledge-transfer as well as employee skill development. One of the vital ways via which mentoring enhances employee performance is by means of knowledge-transfer. Typically mentors are more experienced and knowledgeable hence can share their expertise and insight to mentees (when this occurs, it is called sharing of knowledge or knowledge-sharing). Knowledge-sharing allows mentees to obtain novel skills, learn best practices and gain useable industry-specific knowledge.

Personalized-guidance and support as a form of mentoring offers employee (mentees) with personalized-guidance and support targeted towards specific needs/goals while enhanced self-confidence and motivation, which is another benefit of mentoring boosts employees self-confidence and motivation. In addition, expanded networks and opportunities as another form of mentoring usually opens doors to novel opportunities and professional networks, with extensive experience and links that can be valuable contacts, potential collaborators, offer job opportunities to employees. Finally, continuous learning/growth as a type of mentoring enhances continuous learning/growth culture, which is vital for enhancing performance of employees.

Advancement

Career advancement according to Muhammad, Nadeem and Huzaifah (2022) is generally characterized by upward movement toward your career goals, and it can take many forms. Gibson (2023) argued that career advancement is a progression to the next level of one's career - this type of progress may come with an enhanced job title, increased responsibilities, expanded skill sets, and a greater salary. Career advancement can improve job satisfaction, open new opportunities, and illuminate continued learning pathways (Muhammad et al., 2022; Igbomor, 2024a). Impacts of career advancement include getting a promotion, moving into a new department or field and expanding your job responsibilities. This takes forms such as: promotions or raises, lateral moves and new skills or training (Muhammad et al., 2022; Ofobruku, 2019).

Training

Training is a systematic development of attitude and skill behavior pattern required by an individual to perform a given task effectively. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2023) are of the view that training is a systematic modification of behaviors through learning which occurs as a result of education instruction development and planned experiences. Training is designed to change the behaviors of the employee in the workplace in order to stimulate efficiency and higher performance standards. Mohammed, Mohammed and Gana (2022) opined that employee's training is a programme implemented by a manager or person of authority to provide specific staff members with the necessary skills and knowledge for their current role. It is often compulsory for some level of training to be offered to new members of staff to prepare them for their role - it is worthwhile to provide training to existing members of staff to aid individual employee's development.

Employee training is essential to aid success of businesses worldwide - not only for staff to improve their skills, but also to enhance productivity and improve company culture – it also can reduce employee turnover (Otuko, Chege & Douglass 2018). Employees who are eager to learn and develop are sure sign a company hired well - employees who are engaged in their jobs and careers want to know more about their company and industry and to learn skills that will improve

their performance. Organization that want to harness the full value of their employees and foster loyalty and retention will find training as a winning prospect for all involved (Ofobruku, 2022; Rohan & Madhumita, 2022).

Counseling

Counseling relieves distress, build resilience, improve self-esteem, and ultimately improve lives. The more successful this process is, the easier it is to prove misconceptions wrong and see and accept therapy and counseling in their true light (Igbomor & Olisemenogor, 2023b). Oputa (2021) argued that counseling is a process between a client and therapist to explore difficulties, learn to see things clearly, and facilitate positive change. Counseling at the workplace intended to help employees to manage situation in a better way. Tuvulla1 & Byaruhanga (2021)opined that the objective of employee counseling is to assist both the employments parties tackle problems at hand through an active problem-solving approach.

The objectives of counseling among others are, to explore and find the key sources of difficulty and reviewing the current strategies of the individual employee - these include managing difficulties as well as instituting strategies of addressing the issue at hand, consequently alleviating the issue and evaluate the effectiveness of chosen strategies. The application of counseling has been widened to include performance management and designing the most appropriate intervention for such declines - employees can be helped by counselors to maintain work that uses their skills, talents, and attributes in order to support career engagement and advancement. Counseling offer people with a problem and requires professional guidance to enable them overcome such problems (Melissa, 2020).

Employee Performance

This term can be defined as the well-being of persons who executes their duties and responsibilities. According to Ronny (2020) employee performance refers to the degree to which an activity, program, or policy is carried out in a way that advances the organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives as outlined in its strategic planning. Employee performance is the ability to complete duties effectively and efficiently in a dynamic work environment while adhering to the criteria set by the organization or supervisor and being validated against established, acceptable benchmarks (Hafiz, 2017; Igbomor, 2023). One way to assess employee performance can be via the use of key-performance indicators (KPI). The KPI includes but not limited to sales revenue, customer satisfaction, quality of work, attendance and punctuality, efficiency and productivity, time management, teamwork and collaboration.

Improvement in employee performance cannot occur unless there is some way of getting performance feedback. Feedback is having the outcomes of work communicated to the employee - performance measures for individual employee, “create link between employee’s behavior and the organization's goals. It has been said that before one can improve something, one must be able to measure it, which implies that what you want to improve can somehow be quantified (Örtenblad, 2018). Several factors can affect the performance of employees in the organization. these factors includes but not limited to leadership, stress, job satisfaction, level of commitment and compensation (Igbomor, 2024b). This demands that organizations should provide good leadership, attractive compensation and job autonomy to ensure optimum performance.

Mentoring and Employee Performance

Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) assessed how employee performance in Nigeria's service industry was affected by mentoring. In the study, a descriptive survey research design was employed. The population consisted of 460 guest service staff members from Park Inn by Radisson and Green Legacy Resort (Supervisors, Front Desk Officers, Porters, Waiters, and House Keepers), based on the information gathered from the hotels' HR departments in 2019. The sample size was selected from this group. Using the Taro Yamane sample determination formula, the study's sample size was 250. The research instrument was distributed using the quota sampling technique, which takes into account the presence of various groups within the population. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel were used to code and input the primary data for the study, which was sourced and collected from a well-structured questionnaire. The researcher used regression model, correlation, and descriptive statistics in the analysis of data. It was found that publicity, counseling, and role modeling—all components of mentoring—co-predict employee performance.

The goal of Odunayo (2022) was to determine how mentorship affected the productivity of a category of small and medium-sized businesses in Lagos State, Nigeria. The bedrock of the investigation was equity theory. A survey research design was used in the study. Owners and managers of SMEs in Lagos State with registrations served as the analysis's unit. About 8,396 SMEs in Lagos State that were registered were the target population. Using basic random selection, 370 owners/managers (respondents) were chosen as a sample. To gather primary data, a modified, structured questionnaire was employed. To make sure the data collection tool is trustworthy, a pilot study was carried out. Using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 26.0, inferential statistics (correlation and regression analysis) were used to analyze the data that was collected. The study discovered that employees' performance can be enhanced by apprenticeship training. The study also discovered a strong correlation between employee commitment and coaching. The study also discovered that employees might enhance their organizational citizenship through employee orientation. The study concluded that employee performance is improved by mentoring, which includes coaching, orientation, and apprenticeship.

The moderating effect of organizational culture on the link between employee performance and talent development mentorship practices was investigated by Kosgei (2018) in Kenya. In this study, a cross-sectional survey design was employed. To gather data, questionnaires were employed. Employee performance was shown to be the dependent variable, and mentoring methods to be the independent variable. Organizational culture served as the moderating factor. SPSS was used for the data analysis. The correlations between the research variables were concluded using both descriptive and inferential statistics (multiple regression and correlation analysis). The results of the study showed a strong correlation between employee performance and talent development mentoring. It was also shown that the relationship between performance and talent development mentorship is moderated by organizational culture. The study's findings will help promote mentorship techniques that will improve business management. The study suggests that talent development mentorship programs be taken into account as a component of an organization's plan to raise employee performance.

In Kabul, Afghanistan, Zarghoni and Rasool (2021) investigated the effect of mentoring on worker performance. The targeted population consisted of all Community World Service Asia (CWSA) Afghanistan employees working in the various departments of the organization, including program, operations, HR, advocacy, and M&E, across three provinces (Kabul,

Nangarhar, and Laghman). The 700 higher-level middle staff members of Community World Service Asia (CWSA) Afghanistan's office staff in Kabul, Nangarhar, and Laghman were the study's population. These individuals were appropriate for the study since they had board experience within the organization. While 259 employees were used in the study. Multiple regression analysis and bivariate correlation were used to analyze the data obtained from the respondents. findings demonstrated that mentoring significantly affects worker performance. The survey also came to the conclusion that coaching programs are effectively utilized to promote career growth, impart knowledge, and enhance abilities, all of which increase employee performance through better mentoring.

Using the National Cereals and Produce Board as a reference, Kakui and Gachunga (2016) aimed to ascertain the impact of career development on the performance of employee in the public sector. A descriptive survey was used in the investigation. The participants in this research were the staff members of the National Cereals & Produce Board headquarters located in Nairobi with 200 employees in total. To choose the sample size of 100 respondents, stratified random sampling was used. Utilizing structured questionnaires, data was gathered. Using SPSS version 20 software, the data was tabulated and subjected to regression and correlation analysis. According to the result, on-the-job training improves an employee's performance by broadening their knowledge base, improving their job specifications, inspiring them, lowering their level of intimidation, and giving them the opportunity to network. According to the study, career mentoring has an impact on worker performance because it: offers guidance and support; encourages learners to come up with their own ideas; and helps them solve difficulties on their own.

Buberwa, Nzulwa, and Kamaara (2024) evaluated how employee mentorship affect Tanzanian universities' academic performance. 28 fully developed universities in Tanzania, including those on the mainland and the island of Zanzibar, were included in the cross-sectional design study. To choose the required responders from the colleges, a simple random sampling method yielded a sample size of 379. Evaluations of documents were used to obtain secondary data, while a survey with a structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data that was gathered. Furthermore, regression analysis and correlation analysis were used to conduct inferential analysis. The results of the study indicated that staff mentorship improved Tanzanian universities' performance in a statistically significant way. Additionally, it was found that 76.6% of the variation in university performance can be explained by employee mentorship.

Advancement and Employee Performance

Arema, Olanipekun and Onabanjo (2023) studied the connection between workers' performance in several EAT N GO locations in Lagos State, Nigeria, and their career progression (advancement). The Social Cognitive Career Theory and the Theory of Work Adjustment served as the study's guiding theories. The chosen study design was a descriptive survey. The non-probabilistic sampling strategy was utilized in selecting 150 employees who made up the target population for this investigation. In order to assess the proposed hypotheses, the quantitative data in this study were analyzed using frequency distribution, basic percentage analysis, and correlation analysis. The study's conclusions showed that employees' performance and their career progression (advancement) had a substantial correlation. Also the study demonstrated that there is a relationship between employee performance and career mentoring. According to the study's findings, EAT N GO management should frequently conduct career development programs in an

impartial and open manner for all staff members, and they should show more concern by having supervisors actively involved in their professional growth.

In their study, Dialoke and Paschal (2017) investigated how career advancement (growth)—affects employees' performance, specifically looking at the non-academic staff of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike in Abia State, Nigeria. Utilizing a combination of primary and secondary sources of data, the researcher employed a survey study design. Based on Taro Yamane's formula, the sample size of the study was determined to be 346, with a normal confidence level of 95% and an error tolerance of 5%. The population of the study consisted of all non-academic staff employees of the university, numbering 2,630. The respondent was sampled using basic random sampling procedures. Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 was used to examine the objectives using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis. The principal findings showed that career growth (advancement) and the performance of the university's non-academic staff are favorably and significantly associated, and that career advancement and the motivation of the non-academic staff are strongly correlated as well.

A study on career development and human resource advancement and how they affect the performance qualities of local government administration in Kosovo was carried out by Ismajli, Krasniqi, and Qosja (2015). While secondary data were gathered from a variety of sources, including books, textbooks, internet publications, journal papers, and other sources, primary data were obtained via questionnaires. In this study, respondents' feelings about motivation from their performance reviews in the local government were gathered through the use of structured questionnaires. Participants were chosen at random for the study from among the municipalities in Kosovo using a survey. 53 structured questions were included in the questionnaires that were given to 320 employees of the local government entities out of which 292 from the total were completed and returned. Factorial analysis was used to analyze the data using Microsoft Excel spreadsheet software and SPSS. The study came to the conclusion that one of the most important factors in encouraging workers to improve performance at the local governance level in Kosovo is career development and advancement.

Using work satisfaction as an influencing factor, Katharina and Dewi (2020) sought to explain how development in career affects employee performance in Indonesia. A total of 61 personnel were included in the study, which was carried out at the Inna Sindhu Beach Hotel & Resort, and they were all taken for the survey. A questionnaire was used as a research tool in the data collection process. Multiple tests and path analysis were the data analysis approaches that were employed. The outcomes demonstrated that career development has a positive and significant impact on job satisfaction. Career development also has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Finally, job satisfaction acts as a mediator between career development and employee performance. The Inna Sindhu Beach Hotel & Resort's management is expected to oversee the company's career development program more effectively in order to ensure that workers are happy with their careers. Additionally, the business must pay workers according to their workload and responsibilities and expand training and development opportunities in order to improve worker performance.

Iyke-Ofoedu, Okafor, and Ogbuagu (2023) investigated how career development strategies affect employee performance in Nigerian deposit money institutions. A descriptive survey research approach was used in this investigation. The study's population, which includes 548 workers from Wema Bank Plc, Sterling Bank Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Plc, and Access Bank Plc in Enugu State. a sample of 231 respondents were chosen from the total population. The mean

and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Single regression analysis was utilized to examine the study hypotheses. The result demonstrates that employee quality of service delivery is positively and significantly impacted by induction training. Once more, the study found that employee timeliness is positively and significantly impacted by work rotation. the result further unveiled that formal education has a favorable and significant impact on employee transparency. According to the study, management of deposit money banks in Nigeria ought to spend more on induction trainings since they give both new hires and seasoned workers the chance to become familiar with their new duties and responsibilities, which improves the quality of services provided.

Training and Employee Performance

Yimam (2022) looked into how training affects employee performance in a technology-focused university. Data from a cross-sectional survey of administrative staff members at Bahir Dar University in Ethiopia who underwent training in 2019 were gathered for the study using a quantitative methodology and were selected by simple random selection. For the study, 316 questionnaires were issued and gathered. Both descriptive and inferential statistics (multiple regression analysis and Pearson's correlation coefficient) were used to analyze the data. Results indicated that employees' performance is significantly improved by training (training design, training needs assessment, training delivery style, and training evaluation)..

Nzimakwe and Utete (2024) conducted a research on how employee performance in South Africa's transportation industry is affected by staff training. The study used a qualitative research methodology and an exploratory research design. Interviews were conducted with a sample of fifteen (15) skill development representatives from Durban-based transport industry organizations using the purposive sampling technique. The respondents were interviewed in an unstructured manner in order to gather data. The main conclusions showed that employee performance in the transportation industry is positively impacted by staff training. The study is essential to the advancement of knowledge in the areas of employee performance and staff training.

Das and Buba (2019) looked at how training affected worker productivity and the effectiveness of Indian organizations. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used in the investigation. To achieve the study's goal, a descriptive study design was employed, in which basic random sampling was utilized to gather data from a sample population. For the purpose of gathering data, 234 questionnaires total—of which 223 were completed and returned—were sent out. Questionnaires and interviews were the primary data collection methods; they were supplemented by various organizational literatures. A simple percentage was used to examine the respondents' data. The findings indicate that employee performance is impacted by training and delivery methods, and that training design has a favorable impact on overall organizational performance.

The goal of Setyawati, Woelandari, and Rianto (2022) was to ascertain whether employee performance in Indonesia is impacted by career development, motivation, and promotion. The PLS-SEM approach was applied in analyzing the data gotten from the respondents. Employee performance is significantly impacted by the latent variables of career development, motivation, and promotion, according to the findings of the study.

The impact of professional (career) development programs on employee performance at the National Hospital Insurance Fund in Nairobi, Kenya, was studied by Mark and Nzulwa (2018). It was a case study design. A sample of 120 respondents (30% of the target population), was

selected from the 402 employees of the National Hospital Insurance Fund in Nairobi who were the focus of the study. Stratified sampling was the method used to choose the sample. The researcher used a questionnaire to gather primary data. Using Cronbach Alpha, a pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted to determine the study instrument's reliability. To represent and evaluate the data, the study used both descriptive and inferential statistics (regression analysis and correlation). The regression results revealed that 34.9% of employee performance was attributed to career development programs. The results of the study also showed a statistically significant positive correlation between employee performance and career advancement, career counseling, employee mentorship, and employee training. Thus, the study came to the conclusion that career development programs have an impact on employee performance and suggested that National Hospital Insurance Fund should concentrate more on these programs in order to improve employee performance.

The effects of career development strategies on employee performance at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute in Muguga, Kenya were examined by Ratemo, Makhamara and Bula (2021). Descriptive research design and positivist philosophy were employed in the study. 178 employees of the Kenya Forestry Research Institute in Muguga were the target population. 121 responders were chosen as a sample using stratified random sampling. To gather primary data, a semi-structured questionnaire was employed. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the qualitative data. The frequency distribution, standard deviation, percentages and mean were the primary components of descriptive statistics. Multivariate regression analysis and the Pearson correlation coefficient were the inferential statistics utilized in the research via SPSS Version 25. The study discovered that career development procedures have a major impact on workers' performance at the Kenya Forestry Research Institute. It also discovered that career development allows workers to advance their skill sets.

Efenji (2023) researched on how career development impacts the productivity of employees at the University of Cross River State in Nigeria. The population of the University of Cross River State, which consisted of 499 academic and non-academic staff members, was the subject of this study using a survey research design. To ascertain how the independent variables affect the dependent variables, the multiple linear regression technique was applied. The predicted beta coefficient for career advancement (CA) is -0.025, while for career training (CT), it is 0.946. The findings indicate that career training considerably boosts employee productivity at University of Cross River State, while advancement in career insignificantly lessens worker productivity.

Counseling and Employee Performance

The goal of Ng'eno, Bula, and Minja's (2020) investigation was to ascertain how much employee counseling programs impacted workers' performance at Kenya's commercial banks. The study employed a descriptive research design with a focus on 30,903 employees across 43 banks, and was informed by positivist philosophy. 395 respondents were selected using a combination of purposive sampling and proportionate stratification. Expert opinion and Cronbach alpha (α) were used to test the instrument's validity and reliability, respectively. Primary data were collected via structured surveys; secondary data came from previous research, libraries, the internet, and reports from organizations. While content analysis was used for analyzing qualitative data, descriptive statistics and regression models were employed to analyze quantitative data. The employee counseling programs were proven to have a positive impact on employee performance.

In Murang'a, Kenya, Kathukya Mwangi and Machogu (2022) aimed to determine the impact of career counseling procedures on worker performance at Murang'a Water and Sanitation Company Limited (MUWASCO). The study's specific goal was to determine how much career coaching, career advice, and career counseling programs had affected workers' output. The investigation was guided by traits and factor theory. The study utilized a descriptive survey research methodology. The researcher used a census sampling technique with 150 employees as the target group. Questionnaires that were self-administered were used to collect data. In the descriptive analysis, absolute values of the mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used. The study employed regression analysis to determine the correlation between the independent and dependent variables. Based on the analysis, it was found that career counseling improves worker performance. In other words, it was shown that there was a significant and positive association between the variables being studied.

Muhammad, Nadeem, and Huzaifah (2022) looked at how employee performance in Pakistan's banking industry was affected by technological advancement. This study examined the effect of technology advancement on worker performance using primary data. A total of 140 questionnaires were sent to various banks; 100 of them were filled out and returned. In order to examine employee responses a statistical techniques, SPSS 16 software was utilized. The impact of technological innovation on employee performance was examined using regression analysis.

The results of an extensive examination of the data showed that staff training and motivation are significantly impacted by technological advancement. The performance of employees is significantly impacted by motivation, but not significantly by training. Furthermore, there is a strong correlation between employee performance and technological advancement.

A study on Professional Skills Development influencing Organizational Learning and organizational Performance in Thailand was carried out by Alisara, Yuttachai, Sunthorn, Somnuk, and Jaturon (2022). The study used a quantitative methodology. The Phuket Personnel Management Club provided the researchers with the study population, which included 2,862 hotels in total. Respondents were directors or personnel managers of the human resource departments of five-star hotels in Phuket, and samplings were strategically chosen. Three phases were engaged in the data analysis. First, the compatibility of structural equation modeling (SEM) with data from empirical studies was investigated using a confirmatory factor analysis. Then, the link between each element and factor was then examined using Pearson's product-moment coefficient. SPSS statistical tool was utilized by the researchers to examine the data. Ultimately, the researchers used analytical testing of the SEM to verify the consistency of the model they had created using data gathered from 392 survey questionnaires using the LISREL tool. The results indicated a strong correlation between corporate performance, organizational learning, and professional skills development.

In Nigeria's telecommunications sector, Oputa (2021) explored how workplace counseling affected call center workers' job commitment, productivity, and retention as well as the mediating impacts of gender, qualification, course of study, age, and organizational tenure. In order to gather baseline data, the study used a descriptive survey in the initial stage. To evaluate the impact of the training programs on the participants, a quasi-experimental pre-test post-test control group design was employed in the second phase. Stratified sampling was used to originally select 361 respondents from three telecom firms in order to get baseline data for the research. However, the final sample, which was drawn proportionately, included 101 call center workers who had been recognized as experiencing difficulties with retention, productivity, and commitment. Analysis

of covariance and multiple regression were used to examine the data collected. The results showed that workplace counseling had a favorable effect on call center workers' commitment, productivity, and retention.

Tuvulla and Byaruhanga (2021) carried out a research to ascertain the degree to which employee performance is enhanced by workplace counseling; and the suitability of workplace counseling initiatives in Kenya. The descriptive research design was used in the study. 246 Mumias Sugar Company personnel in three different staff categories—top, middle, and lower management level—made up the study population. There were 74 responders in the sample. Questionnaires and interview schedules administered by researchers were used to gather the data. For data analysis, descriptive and inferential statistics (Chi-square) were employed. It was demonstrated that workplace counseling greatly improved the performance of workers who were struggling both at work and at home. Programs for workplace counseling were appropriate because over two thirds of employees knew about their existence within the organization in question.

The impact of professional and organizational development on human resource development practitioners in Malaysian organizations by Salleh and Sulaiman (2019). Organizational and professional development-related structure, procedure, and outcome variables were investigated using a non-experimental, descriptive, cross-sectional, web-based survey approach. Qualtrics, an online survey platform, was used to conduct a pilot sample of thirty pilot participants. Participants included members of FMM as well as a few selected persons from the FMM Malaysia organization. The study employed many statistical methods, including Minimum Average Partial Analysis, Confirmatory Factor Analysis, Exploratory Factor Analysis, and Bartlett's test of sphericity with significance level below 0.05 threshold levels. The results demonstrated how human resource development practitioners viewed professional and organizational development as crucial to employees' development and the effectiveness of the organization..

Tsegaye (2018) studied how employee performance is impacted by training and development in the context of ASKU plc in Ethiopia. The study utilized a correlational and descriptive study design. In this study, data from primary and secondary sources were utilized. 140 of the 148 questionnaires that were sent were successfully gathered and analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis (mean and standard deviation), correlation, and regression analysis using SPSS 23.version in order to accomplish the objectives of the research. The main findings revealed a substantial and positive association between employee performance and training and development. Employee performance and on-the-job training have a positive link, according to the correlation matrix. The findings also showed a good correlation between employee performance and on-the-job training. In a similar vein, employee performance and off-the-job training have a positive correlation. The training plan obtained the highest Beta coefficient (0.065) according to the regression analysis. The result indicated the training design had the greatest influence on worker performance.

Muthumbi and Kamau (2021) examined the effect of career advancement on employees' performance at Kenya's Deloitte Limited. By utilizing quantitative research techniques, the study used a descriptive survey research design. 500 employees of Deloitte Limited in Kenya made up the study's target population. Using a stratified random sampling procedure, 116 respondents were chosen to form the sample size. Structured questionnaires were used in the data collection process. With the use of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, the data was examined using both descriptive and inferential statistics (SPSS). Tables and figures were used to display percentages,

averages, and standard deviations in descriptive statistics. Regression analysis and correlation were the two inferential statistics used to assess the relationship between the research variables. The study found that employee performance was positively and significantly impacted by career development. Numerous facets of career development were found to be crucial, including mobility initiatives, career counseling and mentoring, and training programs.

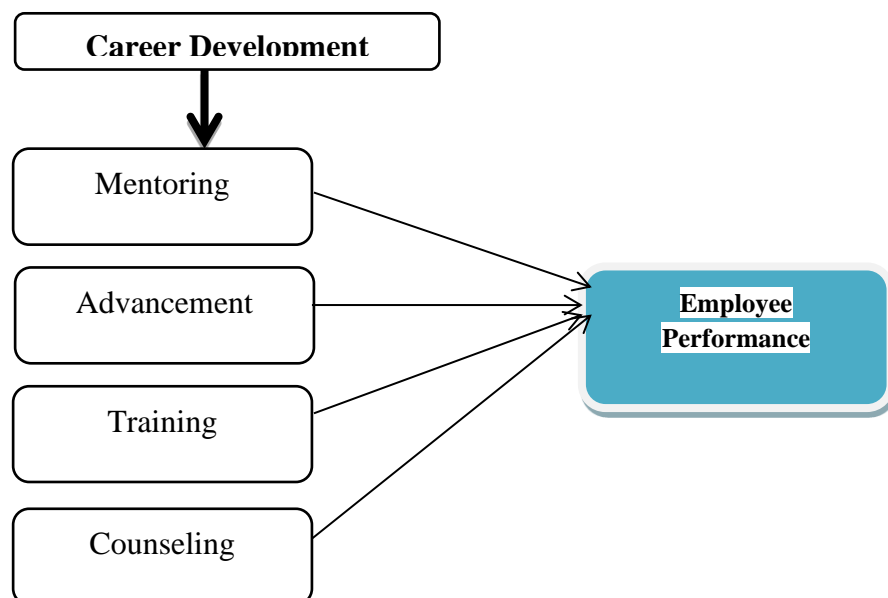


Fig. 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's Conceptualization, (2025)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey design because the researcher considered it as the best design to obtain data from the respondents on the subject matter. The targeted population comprised of all managers and staff in selected manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria. The study particularly targeted employees of two selected firms from Delta State namely: Vintex Aluminum Asaba (96), and Life Flour Mill Sapele (104) and two firms in Edo State namely: Differential Aluminum, Benin City (98) and Nelux Paint Benin (115) with estimated population of 413 employees. A sample size of 203 was derived from the population of 413 using Taro Yamane (1967) Formula. The study employed Bowley's proportion technique to select the study respondents. The respondents were selected from four firms located in Delta and Edo States, to make up the sample size of 203.

The instrument that was used for data collection is a structured questionnaire. Questionnaire is used because it is cost saving, reach people quickly, flexible for respondents over where and when to complete their questionnaire, scalability and respondent anonymity. The questionnaire was designed and divided into two (2) parts- A and B. Part A was designed to collect data on respondents' bio-data while part B was designed to collect information from respondents based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was constructed based on the modified Likert 4-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The data that was collected from the administration of questionnaire was analyzed using

descriptive and inferential statistics - descriptive statistic: means and simple percentage was used to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using correlation and simple linear regressions analysis via SPSS 23 at a significant level of 0.05”.

Model specification

The research model of the study is presented as follow:

$$EP = f(MT)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MT + E \dots\dots(1)$$

$$EP = f(AD)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 AD + E \dots\dots(2)$$

$$EP = f(TN)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TN + E \dots\dots(3)$$

$$EP = f(CS)$$

$$EP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CS + E \dots\dots(4)$$

Where:

EP = Employee Performance

MT = Mentoring

AD = Advancement

TN = Training

CS = Counseling

β_0, β_1 = the estimated regression coefficients.

E = Error terms

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reliability of Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established by using the Cronbach alpha test analysis. The results of the Cronbach alpha analysis is presented below in Table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Test

VARIABLES	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Mentoring	0.693	4
Advancement	0.877	4
Training	0.507	4
Counseling	0.626	4
Employees performance	0.673	4

Source: Fieldwork, 2025.

Result of Biodata of Respondents

Table 2 shows the analysis of the respondents' in regards to gender. Table 2 showed that 72% of the respondents are males, while 28% are females. This indicates that there are more males than female employees in the selected manufacturing industries.

Table 2: Gender Distribution

SEX	Response	Rate in %
Male	143	72
Female	56	28
Total	199	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 shows that 6% of the respondents are between 20-30years of age, 46% are between the age bracket of 31-40years, 36% are between the age of 41-50years, and 12% are between 51-60years. The result indicates that a very great percentage (94%) of the employees are above 20-30years, also that most of the employees of the sampled manufacturing industries are within the ages of 31-40years

Table 3: Age of Respondents

Age bracket in years	Response	Rate in %
20-30	12	6
31-40	91	46
41-50	72	36
51-60	24	12
Total	199	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

From Table 4, 16% of the employees have below 5years of working experience (0-4years), 41% have within 6-10years working experience, 32% have between 11-15years of working experience, and 11% above 15years working experience. This indicates that majority of the employees of the selected manufacturing firms have work experience above 4years.

Table 4: Work Experience

Work Experience in Years	Response	Rate in %
<5	31	16
6-10	81	41
11-15	65	32
>15	22	11
Total	199	100

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Results from Data Relating to Research Questions

The descriptive mean method was adopted in this section in order to ascertain the response rate to the statements relating to the research questions. As a rule for decision, a benchmark of 2.50 was used. Where the mean for each statement is lower than the benchmark of 2.50 such statement or item is deemed accepted by few responded, but if higher than the benchmark it is deemed as accepted by majority of the respondents and judged to be the respondents' opinion.

$$\text{Mean} = \frac{4+3+2+1}{4} = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

Research Question One: What are the impact of mentoring on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States?

Table 5 showed the analyzed data relating to the impact of mentoring on employee performance of manufacturing firms. 180 accounting for 90% of the respondents agreed that mentorship allow new practitioners to set and achieve goals for their job role (accepted with mean of $3.20 > 2.50$). 194 accounting for 97% response rate agreed that mentorship increase employee proficiency and job effectiveness (accepted with mean of $3.44 > 2.50$). 195 accounting for 98% of the respondents agreed with a mean of $3.52 > 2.50$ that mentoring accelerated their process of learning, elevating higher education beyond technical expertise and 133 accounting for 67% said mentoring increased their productivity and decrease the time needed to produce quality work with a mean of $3.01 > 2.50$.

Table 5 shows that, mentorship and employee performance in the manufacturing organizations are related.

Table 5: Reporting Data on Impact of Mentoring on Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Mentorships allow new practitioners to set and achieve goals for their job role	Count	70	110	11	8	199	3.20	0.7	1	4
	%	35%	55%	6%	4%					
Mentorship aims to increase employee proficiency on employees' job effectiveness	Count	91	103	3	2	199	3.44	0.6	1	4
	%	46%	52%	2%	1%					
Mentoring accelerates the process of learning, elevating higher education beyond technical expertise	Count	104	91	2	2	199	3.52	0.6	1	4
	%	52%	46%	1%	1%					
Mentoring increase employee productivity and decrease the time needed to produce quality work.	Count	93	40	35	31	199	3.01	1.1	1	4
	%	47%	20%	18%	16%					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Research Question Two: What are the influence of advancement on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo State?

Table 6 showed the responses of the respondents on the ways advancement and employee performance are related. It was discovered that advancement has a relationship with employees performance as 177 accounting 89% of the respondents said advancement enhanced their job title, increased responsibilities, expanded skill sets, and a greater salary. 197 accounting for 98% accepted that advancement improves their job satisfaction, open new opportunities, and illuminate continued learning pathways. 192 accounting for 96% agreed that advancement leads to promotion of employees in the organization. 123 accounting for 62% of the respondents accepted that

advancement motivates movement into a new department or field and expanding job responsibilities.

More so, from Table 6 the mean scores of all the items were greater than 2.50 (3.41, 3.42, 3.60, 2.8 respectively > 2.50). This explained to a great extent that advancement and employee performance of the manufacturing firms are related.

Table 6: Reporting Data on Impact of Advancement on Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Advancement enhanced job title, increased responsibilities, expanded skill sets, and a greater salary	Count	108	69	14	8	199	3.41	0.8	1	4
	%	54%	35%	7%	4%					
Advancement improve job satisfaction, open new opportunities, and illuminate continued learning pathways	Count	87	110	1	1	199	3.42	0.5	1	4
	%	44%	54%	1%	1%					
Advancement leads to promotion	Count	127	65	3	4	199	3.60	0.6	1	4
	%	64%	32%	2%	2%					
Advancement motivate movement into a new department or field and expanding job responsibilities	Count	80	43	40	36	199	2.8	1.1	1	4
	%	40%	22%	20%	18%					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Research Question Three: Does training have an effect on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States?

In Table 7, 199 accounting for 100% of the respondents accepted with mean rating of 3.52 that training helps them as employees to realize their goals by giving them the education needed to function on the job. 195 accounting for about 98% of the participants accepted with a mean of 3.62 that training creates attachment, loyalty and enthusiasm among staff of the firm. 197 accounting for 99% of the respondents agreed with a mean of 3.60 that training inspires new employees, reinvigorates old skills and gives employees new skills while 198 accounting for 99% of the respondents accepted with a mean of 3.71 that training raises confidence levels, supports a performance-based culture and boosts employee satisfaction.

As observed from Table 7, the mean score in each of the items are greater than 2.50. This indicates that training has a relationship with the performance of employees in the organization as it helps employees to realize their goals, creates attachment, loyalty and enthusiasm, inspires new employees, reinvigorates old skills as well as raising employees confidence levels.

Table 7: Analyzed Data on Ways Training Affect Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Training helps employees realize their goals by giving them the education.	Cou nt	106	93	0	0	199	3.52	0.5	3	4
	%	53%	47%	0%	0%					
Training creates attachment, loyalty and enthusiasm among staff	Cou nt	127	68	3	1	199	3.62	0.5	1	4
	%	63%	34%	2%	1%					
Training inspires new employees, reinvigorates old skills and gives employees new skills.	Cou nt	122	75	2	0	199	3.60	0.5	2	4
	%	61%	38%	1%	0%					
Training raises confidence levels, supports a performance-based culture and boosts employee satisfaction	Cou nt	133	65	1	0	199	3.71	0.5	1	4
	%	66%	33%	1%	0%					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Research Question Four: What are the imprint of counseling on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States?

Items in Table 8 were used to obtain data from the respondents on the impact counseling has on employee performance. From the response in Table 8, 189 representing 94% of the respondents agreed that counseling improved their communication and interpersonal skills; greater self-acceptance and self-esteem. 195 representing more than 96% of the respondents agreed that counseling gives employees better expression and management of emotions, including anger as well as relief from depression. 197 accounting for more than 96% of the respondents accepted that counseling reduces anxiety or other mental health conditions in employees. And finally, 194 accounting for 97% of the respondents accepted that counseling increased confidence and decision-making skills; ability to manage stress effectively; improved problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities.

Also, from Table 8, it is seen that the mean for all the items are greater than 2.50 i.e 3.63, 3.61, 3.60, 3.71 > 2.50 respectively. This suggests that counseling influences employees performance.

Table 8: Analyzed Data on Imprint of Counseling on Employee Performance of Manufacturing Firms

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Counseling improve communication and interpersonal skills; greater self-acceptance and self-esteem.	Cou nt	132	57	5	5	199	3.63	0.7	1	4
	%	65 %	29%	3%	3%					
It gives better expression and management of emotions, including anger; relief from depression	Cou nt	133	62	3	1	199	3.61	0.5	1	4
	%	67 %	30%	2%	1%					
It reduces anxiety or other mental health conditions	Cou nt	118	79	1	1	199	3.60	0.5	1	4
	%	58 %	40%	1%	1%					
It increased confidence and decision-making skills; ability to manage stress effectively; improved problem-solving and conflict resolution abilities; greater sense of self and purpose and recognition of distorted thinking	Cou nt	138	56	4	1	199	3.71	0.5	1	4
	%	69 %	28%	2%	1%					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Items in Table 9 were used to examine the performance of employees in the selected manufacturing firms. From Table 9, 192 accounting for 96% of the respondents said they have increase in their productivity, 189 accounting for 94% said they experience high quality production, 196 accounting for 98% said they are motivated to provide customers satisfaction, and 198 accounting for 99% said they always achieve organisational goal.

All the items were accepted based on mean scores of 3.50, 3.52, 3.80, 3.71 respectively which are greater than 2.50. This insinuates that the employees are performing well which could have been influenced by factors like career development in form of; training, counseling, advancement and mentoring.

Table 9: Analyzed Data on Employee Performance of the Manufacturing Firms

		SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean	S.D	Min	Max
Increase productivity	Count	112	80	3	4	199	3.50	0.6	1	4
	%	56%	40%	2%	2%					
Enhance quality production	Count	121	68	3	7	199	3.52	0.7	1	4
	%	61%	33%	2%	4%					
Improve customers satisfaction and motivate employees	Count	155	41	3	0	199	3.80	0.5	1	4
	%	78%	20%	2%	0%					
Achieve organisational goal	Count	132	66	1	0	199	3.71	0.5	2	1
	%	66%	33%	1%	0%					

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, 2025

Testing of Hypotheses

Inferential statistics of Pearson correlation and simple linear regression statistics were employed to examine the level or the degree of relationship as well as the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable.

Decision rule correlation and simple linear regression analysis: If the Sig. (p-value) is less than 0.05 (p-value<0.05), we reject the null hypothesis, and accept the alternate hypothesis i.e there is significant effect of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Correlation Matrix

Table 10 gave a correlation coefficient of 0.881 between employee performance and mentoring, a coefficient of 0.924 between employee performance and advancement, a coefficient of 0.857 between employee performance and counseling, and a coefficient of 0.703 between employee performance and training. All coefficients are very close to +1. This indicates a positive significant relationship between the independent variables (mentoring, advancement, training counseling,) and the dependent variable (employee performance). Also, from Table 10 a significant value of $0.000 < 0.05$ were shown in all, indicating that the relationship is significant.

Table 10: Correlation Matrix

		Mentorin g (MT)	Advancem ent (AD)	Training (TN)	Counsel ing (CS)	Employee Performa nce (EP)
Employee Performance (EP)	Pearson Correlation	0.881**	0.924**	0.703**	0.857**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
	N	199	199	199	199	199

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

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

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2025

Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was also employed to test for the level of influence between the independent and the dependent variable

Hypothesis one: (H₀₁): There is no significant relationship between mentorship and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

From the regression statistics in Table 11, a regression coefficient of 0.881 was obtained which indicates a strong positive association between the variables (mentorship and employee performance). The t-value is the calculated difference represented in units of standard error. The greater the magnitude of t-value, the greater the evidence against the null hypothesis. This means there is greater evidence that there is a significant difference. The closer t-value is to 0, the more likely there isn't a significant difference. From Table 11, a t-value of 26.168 with a sig. (*p-value*) of 0.000 which is less than 0.05 was obtained. This indicates a significant positive influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R-square) tells us how much of the variance in the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable (that is, how much of the total variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable). The coefficient of determination (R square) as shown in Table 11 is 0.777, which suggests that 77.7% variation in employee performance can be explained by the independent variable (mentorship). Basically, the f-value compares the model with zero predictor variables, and decides whether the added coefficients improved the model. If a significant result is obtained, then whatever coefficients included in the model improved the model's fit. In other words, the f-value indicates whether independent variables reliably predict the dependent variable. Thus, the model fit i.e. F- calculated (1, 197) = 684.751 which shows that mentoring significantly predict employee performance.

Based on the above, it shows that a significant positive relationship exists between the dependent and independent variables. Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, the study shows that there is a significantly positive effect of mentorship on employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

Table 11: Regression Model Summary

Model	coefficient	R Square	Adjusted R Square	T	F. Cal	df1	df2	Sig. Change	confidence level or Alpha level
1	0.881 ^a	0.777	0.775	26.168	684.751	1	197	0.000	95% / 0.05

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentoring (MT)

Hypothesis Two (Ho₂): There is no significant relationship between advancement and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

In Table 12, a regression coefficient of 0.924 was obtained indicating a strong positive relationship between advancement and employee performance. The computed difference expressed in standard error units is called the t-value. The evidence against the null hypothesis is stronger with increasing the t-value. This indicates that there is more proof that a notable difference exists. It is more likely that there is no significant change if the t-value is closer to 0. In other words it indicates if the relationship between the variables is significant. A t-value of 34.025 and a significant p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, were found in Table 12. This suggests that the independent variable has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable. The dependent variable's variance can be explained by the independent variable to the extent that it accounts for a portion of the dependent variable's total variation, as indicated by the coefficient of determination (R-square). As shown in Table 12, the coefficient of determination (R square) is 0.855 which indicates that the independent variable (advancement) accounts for 85.5% of the variation in employee performance. The f-value determines whether the additional coefficients improved the model or not by comparing it to the model with zero predictor variables. If a significant outcome is found, the model's fit was enhanced by the coefficients that were added. In other words, the f-value serves as a reliable indicator of how well independent variables predict the dependent variable. As a result, the model fit, that is, F-calculated (1, 197) = 1157.692, demonstrates that employee performance is significantly predicted by advancement.

Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it can be said that advancement has a significantly positive effect on employee performance of the manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States

Table 12: Regression Model Summary

Model	coefficient	R Square	Adjusted R Square	T	F. Cal	df1	df2	Sig. Change	confidence level or Alpha level
1	0.924 ^a	0.855	0.854	34.025	1157.692	1	197	0.000	95% / 0.05

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Advancement(AD)

Hypothesis Three (Ho3): There is no significant relationship between training and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

From the regression statistical result in Table 13, a regression coefficient of 0.703 was obtained. This means that there is a strong positive relationship between training and employee performance. The t-value indicates if the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is significant. As shown in Table 13, a t-value of 13.876 and a significant p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05, were found. This suggests that the independent variable has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable. The R-square value which shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable is 0.494 suggesting that some proportion of the dependent variable is explained by the independent variable. In other words, about 49.4% variation in employee performance is explained by training. The f-value serves as a reliable indicator of how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable. The f-value of 192.537 (1, 197 degree of freedom) indicates that training (independent variable) significantly and positively predict employee performance (dependent variable).

Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted because employees' performance can be influenced by training received by the employees. Thus, there is a significantly positive relationship between training and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States

Table 13: Regression Model Summary

Model	coefficient	R Square	Adjusted R Square	T	F. Cal	df1	df2	Sig. /p-value	confidence level or Alpha level
1	0.703 ^a	0.494	0.492	13.876	192.537	1	197	0.000	95% / 0.05

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Training (TN)

Hypothesis Four (Ho4): There is no significant relationship between counseling and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States.

As shown in Table 14, a regression coefficient of 0.857 was obtained which connotes that there is a strong positive relationship between counseling and employee performance. The t-value which indicates if the relationship between the independent and dependent variable is positively significant is 23.376 with a significant p-value of 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This suggests that the independent variable has a significant positive impact on the dependent variable. Also, the R-square value which shows how much of the total variation in the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable is 0.735 suggesting that about 73.5% variation in employee performance is explained by counseling. The f-value serves as a reliable indicator of how well the independent variables predict the dependent variable. The f-value of 546.419 (1, 197 degree of freedom) indicates that counseling (independent variable) significantly and positively predict employee performance (dependent variable).

Thus the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternate hypothesis is accepted because employees' performance can be influenced by counseling. Thus, there is a significantly positive

relationship between counseling and employee performance of manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States

Table 14: Regression Model Summary

Model	Coefficient	R Square	Adjusted R Square	T	F. Cal	df1	df2	Sig. /p-value	confidence level or Alpha level
1	0.857 ^a	0.735	0.734	23.376	546.419	1	197	0.000	95% / 0.05

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (EP)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Counselling (CS)

Discussion of Findings

This section highlights the findings in the study in relation to the research questions as well as findings of previous empirical studies reviewed in the course of this study.

First, it was discovered from the study that employees' performance in the manufacturing firms are linked to career development in various dimensions like; mentorship, training, advancement opportunity and counseling offered to employees by the firms.

Mentorship as a component of career development is significantly and positively related to employee performance of manufacturing firms. This insinuates that mentorship have substantial positive impact on performance of employees as it increases employee proficiency on the job for effectiveness as well as aiding new practitioners to set and achieve goals for their job role. The implication is that, the more mentorship is given to employees, the more the employees' performance tends to improve in the job. This finding is in alignment with Nyamori (2020) who revealed that mentorships allow new practitioners to set and achieve goals for their job role. The finding is also supported by the finding of Nyamori (2020) who found that mentorship aims to increase employee proficiency on employees' job. This result is also consistent with the finding of Oladimeji and Sowemimo (2020) who revealed that mentoring positively influence employee performance. Odunayo (2022) also found that mentoring through apprenticeship, coaching causes a significant improvement on employee performance. Finally, Zarghoni and Rasool (2021) also reported that mentoring has a significant influence on employee performance.

There is a significantly and positive relationship between advancement and employee performance of the manufacturing firms. Thus, employees' performance can greatly be influenced by advancement opportunity in the organization, as advancement motivate movement into a new department or field and expanding job responsibilities. Advancement expand skill sets, as well as open new opportunities, and illuminate continuous learning pathways. By implication, increase in advancement opportunities in organizations will possibly lead to increase in employees' performance to a great extent. This finding is similar to the finding of Aremo et al (2023) who found that career advancement/progression is strongly associated with employees' performance. Also the finding of the study is in line with the finding of Dialoke and Paschal (2017) who revealed that career growth/advancement is positively and significantly correlated with the performance of employees.

There is a significantly positive relationship between training and employee performance of the manufacturing firms. This relationship indicates that employees performance can be

impacted significantly by training in several ways which include; training help employees realize their goals by giving them the education needed to function on the job, training reinvigorates old skills and gives employees new skills to cope in the dynamic business environment. Thus, improved training of employees will possibly result in improved performance of employees in the firms. This findings is supported by the finding of Yimam (2022) who found that training in various dimensions have significant positive effect on employees' performance. The finding is also in line with the finding of Nzimakwe and Utete (2024) who found that staff training has a positive influence on employee performance. Furthermore, the finding is consistent with the finding of Das and Buba (2019) who found that training and delivery style have effect on employees performance and also training design have positively affect the overall organizational performance.

Counseling as aspect of career development is associated with employee performance in the manufacturing firms. Counseling gives employees better idea in managing their careers, emotions, anger as well as relief from depression, counseling reduces anxiety or other mental health conditions in employees. This result is in line with the findings of Tuvulla and Byaruhanga (2021) who found that workplace counseling significantly improves the performance of employees affected by problems at work and at home. Oputa (2021) also found that workplace counseling has positive impact on the commitment, productivity and retention of call centre employees. Furthermore, Kathukya et al (2022) found that career counseling positively contribute to employee performance.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Having reviewed related literatures, collected and analyzed data in the course of the study, it can be concluded that firms' provision of training, counseling, mentorship as well as advancement opportunities for employees is a clear pathway to improving performance of the firm because equipping employees with current skills through training and advancement opportunities increases employees performance, also provide counseling and mentorship to employees contributes to their emotional, mental and spiritual wellbeing thereby contributing to their performance.

Also, it can be concluded that career development practices especially through training, counseling, mentorship as well as advancement opportunities is a strategic way of breeding talented and skillful workforce in stock for the organization. Career development practices can also be concluded as the ship on which the firms can float and sail in turbulent dynamic business environment mostly as it gets to do with scarcity of talented and skillful personnel.

The relationship between career development and employee performance is one that should not be underestimated. It has been shown that employees who are provided with opportunities for growth and advancement in their careers are more motivated, engaged, and productive in their roles. When organizations invest in the development of their employees by offering training, mentorship, and career advancement opportunities, they can expect to see a direct impact on the performance and success of their workforce.

Furthermore, the benefits of career development extend beyond just individual performance and can also positively impact overall organizational performance. By fostering a culture of continuous learning and development, companies can improve employee retention, attract top talent, and ultimately drive greater success and growth. As such, organizations that prioritize career development as a key component of their talent management strategy are likely

to see improved employee performance and satisfaction, leading to a more productive and successful workforce.

Based on the outcome of the study, it is recommended that management should foster a culture where mentoring relationships are encouraged and structured. This involves pairing employees with mentors who possess relevant experience and skills, setting clear goals for the mentoring relationship, and regularly evaluating its impact on employee performance. Mentoring should be seen as a strategic investment in developing talent, as it helps employees acquire new skills, increase job satisfaction, and align their personal goals with organizational objectives. By prioritizing mentoring, management can drive performance improvements and build a more engaged and capable workforce.

Management should also recognize the intrinsic link between career advancement and employee performance by creating a transparent and merit-based promotion system. Employees are more likely to perform at their best when they see clear pathways for career growth aligned with their efforts and achievements. To foster this relationship, management should provide regular performance feedback, set attainable goals, and offer development opportunities that align with employees' career aspirations. Additionally, acknowledging and rewarding high performers with career advancement opportunities can motivate others, enhance job satisfaction, and ultimately drive overall organizational success. This approach ensures that employees remain engaged and committed while advancing their careers.

Furthermore, Management should emphasize the critical role of training in enhancing employee performance by aligning training programs with both organizational goals and individual job requirements. To maximize the impact, training should be tailored to address specific skill gaps and developmental needs identified through performance assessments. Regularly updating and adapting training content ensures it remains relevant and effective.

Lastly, Management should integrate counseling as a key component of employee performance management by providing support for both personal and professional challenges that may affect job performance. Implementing a proactive counseling approach involves creating a safe and confidential environment where employees can discuss their concerns and receive guidance. This support should be tailored to individual needs, addressing issues such as stress, work-life balance, and career development.

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