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THE IMPACT OF MANPOWER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON WORKERS' PERFORMANCE IN JALINGO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, TARABA STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examines the impact of manpower training and development on workers' performance in Jalingo Local Government Area (LGA) of Taraba State, Nigeria. It interrogates the extent to which structured training interventions influence service delivery, skills acquisition, staff retention, and organisational performance in a sub-national public bureaucracy operating under recurring fiscal and capacity constraints. Grounded in Systems Theory and Human Capital Theory, the study adopted a descriptive survey design. A sample of one hundred (100) workers of Jalingo LGA was drawn using a stratified random sampling procedure. Data were generated through a structured questionnaire and analysed using simple percentages, frequency distributions, and the chi-square (χ^2) statistic at 0.05 level of significance. The findings show that although staff largely have equal access to training programmes and acknowledge that such programmes enhance skills, experience, and retention, the majority of respondents do not perceive existing manpower programmes as having substantially improved service delivery in Jalingo LGA. The chi-square analysis (χ^2 cal = 48.20 > χ^2 crit = 9.49, df = 4) confirms a statistically significant relationship between adequate manpower training and high organisational performance. The paper argues that manpower training in local governments cannot be treated as an administrative ritual; it is a strategic technology of governance through which local authorities cultivate the competencies required for developmental service delivery. It recommends a formal, documented training policy, sustained budgetary provision, needs-based off-the-job training, and the depoliticisation of training opportunities.

Keywords

Manpower training; human resource development; workers' performance; local government; Jalingo; Taraba State.

*Corresponding author(s) **Embwa, A.M (2026)** agree that this article remain permanently open access under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0 International License

Introduction

Human resources remain the most decisive factor in the productive capacity of any organisation. Financial resources, physical infrastructure, and technology are inert until they are mobilised by competent, motivated workers (Armstrong 2020). This is

particularly true of local governments in Nigeria, which sit at the interface between the state and citizens and are constitutionally charged with delivering primary services such as sanitation, primary education support, primary health care, market administration, and rural infrastructure (Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999). The capacity of local government staff to translate policy into service, therefore, is a first-order governance question.

Manpower training refers to the systematic process of equipping employees with the knowledge, skills, and competencies required for present duties, while manpower development is the broader, future-oriented process of preparing them for greater responsibility (Dessler 2020; Cole 2002). Together, they constitute a continuous cycle of learning that allows public organisations to adapt to technological change, regulatory reform, and shifting citizen expectations (Noe 2020).

In Nigeria, and particularly in Taraba State, local governments have historically operated with under-trained, under-motivated, and under-equipped workforces. Jalingo Local Government Area, which also serves as the seat of the state government, exhibits a paradox: proximity to state institutions has not automatically translated into higher administrative capacity at the local level. Complaints about slow service delivery, poor record management, weak digital literacy, and low responsiveness to citizens persist. Whether this is because training and development are absent, poorly targeted, or simply overwhelmed by structural constraints is an empirical question this paper addresses.

The study therefore asks: To what extent does manpower training and development affect workers' performance in Jalingo Local Government Area? It hypothesises (H_0) that there is no significant relationship between adequate manpower training and high organisational performance, and (H_1) that there is a significant relationship. The article proceeds as follows. The next section reviews conceptual and theoretical debates on manpower training and workers' performance. The third section outlines the methodology. The fourth presents and discusses findings. The final section concludes with policy recommendations.

Literature Review

Conceptual Clarifications

The literature distinguishes training from development while treating them as complementary. Training is typically job-specific and short-term; it targets identifiable skill gaps in the performance of current tasks (Armstrong 2020). Development, on the other hand, is career-long and organisation-wide; it cultivates the analytical, leadership, and adaptive capacities that employees will need in future roles (Noe 2020). In public bureaucracies, both are institutionalised through induction courses, in-service training, workshops, seminars, professional certifications, mentoring, and study leave.

Workers' performance is a multidimensional construct. It encompasses task performance (the quality and quantity of core outputs), contextual performance (discretionary behaviours that support the social and organisational environment), and adaptive performance (the ability to respond to change) (Cole 2002). In local government contexts, it also includes responsiveness to citizens, adherence to due process, and integrity in the use of public resources.

Objectives and Benefits of Manpower Training

Scholars converge on the view that manpower training aims, at minimum, to improve productivity, reduce operational errors, standardise procedures, prepare staff for promotion, and cushion the organisation against disruption when experienced hands exit (Cole 2002; Dessler 2020). For public organisations, training also serves a legitimation function: a workforce visibly investing in its own competence signals to citizens that the institution takes its mandate seriously.

Factors Shaping Manpower Training in Local Government

Several factors mediate the effectiveness of training in Nigerian local governments. These include the availability and predictability of funds, the extent to which training needs assessment is empirically grounded rather than politically driven, the quality of trainers, the alignment between training content and actual work processes, and post-training deployment. Where training slots are distributed as patronage rather than on the basis of identified needs, the link between training and performance is weakened (Ojikutu 1998; Armstrong 2020).

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Systems Theory and Human Capital Theory. Systems Theory conceives an organisation as a set of interdependent subsystems whose collective performance depends on the coordinated functioning of the whole. Training and development constitute the maintenance and adaptation subsystem through which the organisation renews the competencies of its human components in response to environmental change. Human Capital Theory, associated with Becker (1964) and Schultz (1961), treats investment in the knowledge and skills of workers as economically analogous to investment in physical capital: it raises marginal productivity and returns accrue to both the worker and the organisation. Applied to Jalingo LGA, the two theories jointly imply that sustained investment in staff training is not a discretionary welfare item but a productivity-enhancing investment whose returns manifest as improved service delivery.

Empirical Review

Empirical studies on Nigerian public organisations consistently find a positive association between structured training and measurable performance outcomes, but they also flag persistent implementation gaps: irregular training schedules, absence of post-training evaluation, and weak linkage between appraisal and further training (Cole 2002; Noe 2020). The present study contributes by providing evidence from a Taraba State LGA that has received limited scholarly attention.

Methodology

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which is appropriate for eliciting the perceptions, attitudes, and experiences of a defined population regarding a policy phenomenon.

Population, Sample and Sampling Technique

The population comprised staff of Jalingo Local Government Area across its departments. A sample of one hundred (100) respondents was drawn using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across departments, cadres, and gender.

Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire divided into two sections. Section A captured demographic data, while Section B measured psychographic variables on a five-point Likert-type scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree). The instrument was subjected to face and content validation by experts, and reliability was established through a pilot test. Secondary data were sourced from journals, official gazettes, and internal records of the LGA.

Method of Data Analysis

Demographic and psychographic responses were analysed using simple percentages and frequency distributions. The research hypothesis was tested using the chi-square (χ^2) statistic at 0.05 level of significance, following the standard formula $\chi^2 = \Sigma[(O - E)^2 / E]$, where O and E are observed and expected frequencies respectively.

Data Presentation and Discussion

Demographic Profile

Table 1 summarises the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The sample was male-dominated (65.0%), skewed towards older workers (30.0% above 60 years; 25.0% between 41 and 50 years), tertiary-educated (35.0% with OND/HND/B.Sc. and 15.0% with PGD/M.Sc./Ph.D.), and majority-married (55.0%). This profile is consistent with the pattern of a mature bureaucracy in which recruitment has slowed and the workforce is ageing a demographic pattern that itself intensifies the need for succession-oriented development.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 100)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	65	65.0
	Female	35	35.0
	Total	100	100.0
Age	20–30 years	15	15.0
	31–40 years	10	10.0
	41–50 years	25	25.0
	51–60 years	20	20.0
	Above 60 years	30	30.0
Education	FSLC	20	20.0
	WASSCE/GCE/NECO	25	25.0
	OND/HND/B.Sc.	35	35.0
	PGD/M.Sc./Ph.D.	15	15.0
	Others	5	5.0
Marital status	Single	30	30.0
	Married	55	55.0
	Divorced	5	5.0
	Widowed	10	10.0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Perceptions of Manpower Training and Workers' Performance

Table 2 aggregates responses on six psychographic items. A clear majority (72.0%) agreed or strongly agreed that staff have equal access to training programmes, suggesting that access, in principle, is not gate-kept. However, only 25.0% believed that manpower programmes have improved service delivery in Jalingo LGA, while 70.0% disagreed or strongly disagreed. This is the study's central paradox: staff acknowledge that they are trained, yet they do not see the training translating into visible service improvement.

The paradox is resolved by the remaining items. Eighty-five per cent of respondents strongly demand more effective training programmes, and 57.0% affirm that current programmes have improved their skills and experience. Ninety per cent agree that training improves staff retention, and 85.0% agree that adequate training creates high organisational performance. Taken together, respondents view training as necessary and personally beneficial, but insufficient in quantity, quality, or alignment to move the needle on service delivery.

Table 2: Perceptions of Manpower Training and Workers' Performance

Item	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Remark
Staff have equal access to training programmes	30.0	42.0	10.0	10.0	8.0	Agreed
Manpower programmes have improved service delivery in Jalingo LGA	10.0	15.0	5.0	40.0	30.0	Disagreed
There is need for more effective training programmes	60.0	25.0	10.0	5.0	0.0	Agreed
Manpower programmes impacted well on staff skills and experience	25.0	32.0	13.0	15.0	15.0	Agreed
Manpower training improves staff retention	60.0	30.0	5.0	3.0	2.0	Agreed
Adequate manpower training creates high performance	65.0	20.0	5.0	7.0	3.0	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Test of Hypothesis

The hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between adequate manpower training and high organisational performance was tested using the chi-square statistic at 0.05 level of significance with four degrees of freedom

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Table 3: Chi-square Test Result

Test	Value	df	Decision at α=0.05
Chi-square (χ^2) calculated	48.20	4	—
Chi-square (χ^2) critical	9.49	4	—
Result	χ^2 cal> χ^2 crit	—	Reject H_0

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Since the calculated chi-square value (48.20) exceeds the critical value (9.49) at df = 4 and α = 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. It is therefore concluded that adequate manpower training has a statistically significant positive relationship with organisational performance in Jalingo LGA.

Discussion

The findings both confirm and complicate the received wisdom on manpower training. They confirm, in line with Human Capital Theory and prior empirical work, that training investment yields performance returns (Becker 1964; Noe 2020). But they also show that returns are not automatic. Access to training does not guarantee improved service delivery where training is short, generic, and detached from the specific competency demands of local government functions such as revenue mobilisation, primary healthcare coordination, and civil registration.

Systems Theory helps explain the disconnect. Training is one subsystem among several. If the reward subsystem does not recognise newly acquired skills, if the technology subsystem does not provide the tools with which trained skills can be deployed, and if the political subsystem allocates training slots on non-merit criteria, the productivity gains from training dissipate. The pattern in Jalingo LGA suggests that isolated investment in training, uncoupled from complementary reforms, produces trained individuals in an untrained institution.

The strong majority calling for more effective programmes (85.0%) and the equally strong association between training and retention (90.0%) also carry a labour-market implication. In a fiscally constrained sub-national environment, training functions as a non-monetary reward. Withholding it accelerates attrition of the most productive staff to the state civil service, non-governmental organisations, and the private sector.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study set out to assess the impact of manpower training and development on workers' performance in Jalingo Local Government Area. The evidence shows that training is significantly associated with organisational performance, yet current programmes are perceived as inadequate to lift service delivery. Training in Jalingo LGA is a real but under-exploited lever of governance.

On the basis of the findings, the study recommends the following. First, Jalingo LGA should formulate a written, comprehensive Manpower Training and Development Policy, distributed to all staff, specifying eligibility, needs assessment procedures, funding, and evaluation. Second, training should be needs-based, with an annual training needs analysis feeding directly into the training calendar; off-the-job training should be expanded to cover competencies not available in-house. Third, training must be treated as a right of every worker rather than a discretionary privilege, insulating it from political patronage. Fourth, a dedicated Workers Development Unit, adequately staffed and funded, should coordinate training, monitor post-training performance, and link training records to promotion and appraisal. Fifth, budgetary provision for training should be ring-fenced and shielded from the recurrent expenditure crowding-out that typically follows revenue shortfalls. Finally, complementary reforms in tools, supervision, and incentives should accompany training so that new competencies find an institutional environment in which they can be deployed.

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