

# Effect of Training and Inspirational Leadership on Employee Performance in the Local Government in South East Nigeria

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**Abstract:** *The research work investigated the effect of training and inspirational leadership on the performance of employees in the local government in South East Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were to find out the effect of inspirational leadership on attendance to duty and ascertain the effect of training on proper execution of tasks by the local government employees in South East Nigeria. In conducting the research, survey research design was used. Data collected were analysed and the research hypotheses were tested using Chi-squared test (x2 test) statistical tool. The major results of the research were that inspirational leadership led to regular attendance to duty, and training resulted to proper execution of tasks by the local government employees in the South East Nigeria. In line with the findings, the study concluded that training and inspirational leadership enhance employee performance and based on the findings and conclusion, the study recommended greater effort at training and inspirational leadership by the local government management or leadership in the South East Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Training, Inspiration, Leadership, Employees, Performance, Local government, South East Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Every organisation uses two major resources to perform its functions and achieve its objectives. These two major resources are human and material resources. The human resources consists of the employees (men and women) who work in the organisation, while the material resources are the financial and physical resources of the organisation. Over the years, studies on organisations generally and human resource management particularly have established that employees are the most important of the resources. This is cardinal because it is the employees that organize, coordinate and harness the material resources and carryout other essential tasks necessary for the successful functioning and achievement of organisational objectives (Abonyi, 2021, Ohaeri, 2017).

Specifically, employees refer to the staff in organisation that execute required tasks in exchange for wages, salaries or other forms of compensation. Indeed, every organisation has set objectives and has to execute specified tasks in order to achieve the objectives and it is the employees that execute the necessary tasks for some forms of compensation (Ohaeri, 2017).

Two prominent issues that usually come up in discussions or studies on organisational employees or human resource management generally are training and inspirational leadership. Basically, inspirational leadership entails leading in such ways that inspires action and passion for work and ignites creativity among the employees (Malcam & Tamatey, 2017). Basically, training entails educating employees on new skills or providing updates on existing skills to enhance performance (Abonyi, 2021, Ohaeri, 2017).

Usually, closely associated with the issues of training and inspirational leadership in organisation is employee performance. This appears understandable given that training and inspirational leadership are concepts that are essentially about the level of expertise and dedication that employees bring to the performance of their jobs. Employee performance refers to how an employee carries out required tasks or fulfils the duties of his roles (Adekoya et al., 2018). Key specific indices of employee performance have been identified to include attendance to duty, timely completion of tasks, exercise of initiative in the course of executing tasks, proper execution of tasks among others (Adekoya et al., 2018, Ellis, 2017). Basically, attendance to duty entails regular and punctual presence in the workplace and continued presence of the employee during the required work hours. Timely completion of tasks entails an employee completing assigned tasks on or before the date, time required or given deadline. Exercise of initiative entails assessing a work situation independently and taking necessary actions to enhance better task performance while proper execution of tasks refers to bringing in accuracy and thoroughness in carrying out given tasks (Adekoya et al., 2018, Ellis, 2017).

Indeed, given that an organisation is established to achieve given objectives and that achieving the objectives requires executing given tasks, the issues of training and inspirational leadership and employee performance are critical issues in organisational and human resources management particularly. These issues of training and inspirational leadership and employee performance are no less critical in the specific case of local government administration in Nigeria.

Local government is the third tier or level of government in the Nigerian Federal System of Government. It is the closest level of government to the people and it is instituted primarily for the provision of basic services effectively and efficiently to the people at the grass roots (Ugwuanyi, 2016). Presently in Nigeria generally, there are 774 local government areas and 95 local governments in

the South East Nigeria, made up of Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, Anambra and Abia states. The specific number of local governments in these states are 17, 13, 27, 21 and 17 respectively.

### **Statement of Problem**

The need for improvement in the performance of employees in public organisations in Nigeria has over the years been increasing. This is more particularly so for the local governments where employee performance has not been impressive (Ugwu, 2017). Further, employee performance appears to have always been associated with training and inspirational leadership and so both have become of critical concerns in local government administration and to public administrators. It is in the context of these concerns for better employee performance for enhanced service delivery by the local government that the study is set out to find out the effect of training and inspirational leadership on employee performance in the specific case of selected local governments in South East, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the Study**

Generally, the purpose of the study was to find out the effect of training and inspirational leadership on the performance of employees in the Local government in South East Nigeria. Specifically, the purpose of the study were to:

- i) find out the effect of inspirational leadership on attendance to duty by the employees in the local government in South East Nigeria.
- ii) ascertain the effect of training on proper execution of jobs by the employees of the local government in South East Nigeria.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

- i) Inspirational leadership leads to regular attendance to duty by the employees of the local government in South East, Nigeria.
- ii) Training leads to proper execution of tasks by the employees of the local government in South East, Nigeria.

### **Brief Literature Review**

#### **Employee**

An employee is an individual who is hired by an employer to do or perform a specific job in an organisation. An employee is hired by the employer usually after an application and interview process results in his or her selection as an employee (Ugwu & Imaga, 2017).

An employee in an organisation has a specific job to perform that is often defined by a job description. An employee usually has the expectation that he or she will receive reasonable professional treatment from the management of the organisation for the assigned tasks that he or she performs (Ohaeri, 2017, Abonyi, 2021).

#### **Employee Performance**

Performance basically, is the work achieved by a person both in quantitative and qualitative terms in carrying out tasks assigned to him or her. Indeed, performance is a real work achieved by an employee in carrying out the tasks assigned to him or her in an organisation (Tahmeen & Sadia, 2018). Put simply, employee performance is how an employee fulfils the duties of his role, completes required tasks, properly executes tasks and attends to duty et cetera (Adekoya et al., 2019).

#### **Local Government**

In 1976, Nigeria developed a Guideline for local government reforms. The guideline identified the relevant attributes of Local government in its conception of local government as government at the local level exercised through representative council, established by law to exercise powers within defined geographical areas. These powers give the council substantial control over local affairs and institutional and financial authority to initiate and direct the provision of service and to determine and implement projects so as to compliment the activities of the state and federal government in their areas and ensure, through devolution of these functions to these councils and through the active participation of the people and their traditional institutions, that local initiative and response to local needs and conditions are maximized (FGN, 1976).

#### **Inspirational Leadership**

Leadership basically is the action of leading a group of people or an organisation. It is also conceived as a process of societal influence which maximizes the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal. Leadership in terms of style could be autocratic, democratic or laizze fair. Leadership could as well be seen as inspirational (Lor & Hassan, 2017). In this case, it entails leadership effort or ability to positively influence people and motivate them towards taking necessary action to achieve the goals of a group or organisation. Indeed, inspiration leadership significantly raises individual or team performance as it ignites interest, creativity and innovations in the employees (Melyani and Patra, 2019).

#### **Training**

Training is the achievement of relevant skills or provision of necessary knowledge for employees to perform specific tasks better to achieve an organisational goal (Abonyi, 2021). Indeed, training yields positive outcomes which include improved staff competency, capacity for performance and ability to properly execute tasks (Ohaeri, 2017). Training allows employees to gain knowledge on the best way to utilize emerging and new technologies (Nkemakolam, 2020). It also provides insight on ways to function effectively in

new work designs and environments (Abonyi, 2021). The benefits of training, in summary, are that it, improves the morale of employees, results to fewer accidents and increases employee performance and productivity in terms of quality and quantity.

#### **Timely Completion of Tasks**

Task completion essentially refers to accomplishing or execution of task as may be assigned. Specifically, timely completion of tasks entails finishing a task on or before the date required or given deadline. Measures to ensure timely completion of tasks include effectively keeping clear communication, monitoring progress daily, effective feedback et cetera (VIP Quality Software, 2022).

#### **Attendance to Duty**

Attendance entails people, individually or as a group, appearing at a location for a scheduled duty. Specifically, workplace attendance entails an employee coming to work at the appointed hour and time (East Central Education Board, 2021).

An employer monitors workplace attendance, to see whether the employees are showing up on time and staying for their full shift on their scheduled workdays. In order to protect against excessive absences, employers commonly institute workplace attendance policies. Attendance policies clearly define the expectations around attendance. For example, an attendance policy may specify that an employee must be present and on time for work for each scheduled shift, unless they have requested and received, in writing, approval for time off.

#### **Proper Execution of Tasks**

Generally, task execution is a consistent process of carrying out planned tasks and producing expected results by an employee or a group of employees, in compliance with preset requirements and expectations. Every task has a range of preset parameters or attributes that define execution sequence and implementation time. For example, priority and due date are attributes preset prior to implementation to determine in what sequence tasks are supposed to be executed and within what time limits. Specifically, proper execution of tasks means executing a task as suited or acceptable to the purpose or circumstance or following established standards of behaviour in the course of performing a task (Active Rec, 2020).

#### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of analysis for the study is the Social Exchange Theory. The theory is one of the prominent theories for understanding and explaining workplace or organisational behaviour. The major proponents of the Social Exchange Theory include George Homan, Richard M. Emerson, John Tribaut, Herold Kelly and Peter Michael Baln. George Homans is, however, regarded as the father of the Social Exchange Theory. In the main, Social Exchange Theory is a sociological and psychological theory that studies social behaviour in the interaction of two parties in a social, economic, professional or work relationship. Social Exchange in this context is seen as the exchange of activity or rewards that could be tangible or intangible between at least two persons or parties (Blau, 1964; Homans, 1958).

Even though each of the major proponents of the Social Exchange Theory has slightly different proposition and emphasis, an articulation and synthesis of their respective discourse on the theory yields the following as the key tenets of the social exchange theory:

- 1) Individuals are inclined to do things because of expectation of positive reciprocal action or behaviour.
- 2) Individuals are motivated to behave in a particular way in reciprocity of positive actions on them.
- 3) Exhibition of necessary or required actions is based on the trust that the other party will reciprocate.
- 4) Individuals choose to behave in such ways that maximizes their likelihood of meeting self-interest in given situations.
- 5) Social behaviour is rooted in exchange process.

From the above tenets, the Social Exchange Theory was considered an appropriate framework of analysis for the study on training and inspirational leadership and employee performance particularly for its focus on social behaviour as exchange for some forms of rewards of benefits.

In applying the Social Exchange Theory to the study, the study examined the reciprocal relationship between management practices of training employees and adopting inspirational leadership and employee performance in the selected local governments in South East, Nigeria.

#### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design:** The design used for the research was the survey methodology and for the fact that, among other reasons, it enhanced the reliability of the data or information gathered.

**Area of Study:** The area of this study is South East Nigeria. South East Nigeria is made up of five states that include Enugu, Ebonyi, Imo, Anambra and Abia. From the states, 15 local governments on the basis of one LGA in each of the three senatorial zones that make up a state were sampled.

**Population of the Study:** The population of the study is the local government employees. However, the sample subjects in each of the selected LGAs were purposively chosen as in Table 1 on the basis that they were considered to have significant responsibilities, experience and knowledge to give candid, realistic and reliable responses to the issues in the study.

**Table 1. Composition of sample subjects in each LGA**

S/N	Staff Category	No of Sample Subjects
1	Management Staff (LGA Chairman & Vice Chairman)	2
2	Senior Staff (The Heads of the 6 major Departments in the LGA – Heads of Finance, Works, Health, Education, Personnel & Agriculture)	6
3	Junior Staff (Clerical officers)	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>18</b>

Source: Researchers, 2022

**Sample Size:** The sample size is 270 employees made of the 18 sampled subjects in each of the 15 selected LGAs (i.e 18x15 = 270).

**Sampling Techniques:** Beyond the known management staff and the heads of the departments that were purposively selected, the 10 clerical officers were selected through probability method of sampling and by the specific method of simple random sampling.

**Method of Data Collection:** Data in the research was gathered through both primary and secondary sources. The specific method of data gathering in the primary source was questionnaires while the specific methods in the secondary sources were through reading of published works like journals and textbooks and internet materials.

**Method of Data Analysis:** In the study, Chi-Squared test ( $\chi^2$ ) statistical tool of analysis was used in testing the hypotheses.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Two hundred and seventy (270) questionnaires were distributed, but only two hundred and forty-seven (247) of them were properly filled and returned. This meant 91 percent return rate and data as presented and analyzed in the study is on the basis of the 247 questionnaires properly filled and returned.

**Test of Hypotheses:** The hypotheses in the study were tested based on the response data in relation to the respectively related closed ended questions.

**Table 2: Response Data in Relation to Hypothesis 1** (Inspirational leadership leads to regular attendance to duty by the employees of the local government in South East, Nigeria)

S/N	Response	No of Responses	Responses (%)
1	Yes	215	87
2	No	25	10
3	Do not know	7	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Work, 2022

**Table 3: Data analysis in respect of hypothesis 1**

S/N	Response	No of Responses	Responses (%)	Total
1.	Yes	215(214.96)	87(87.3)	302
2.	No	25(84.9)	10(10.09)	35
3.	Do not know	7(7.18)	3(28.18)	10
<b>Total</b>		<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>347</b>

**Significance level**

Taking  $\alpha$  to be 5% = 0.05

**Critical region**

$$\chi^2(r-1)(c-1)$$

**Test statistic**

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

**Decision Rule**

If  $\chi^2_{cal} < \chi^2_{tab}$ , accept the hypothesis

**Analysis of data**

$$Exp. = \frac{n_i \times j}{N}$$

$$E_{11} = \frac{247 \times 302}{347} = 214.96$$

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$$E_{12} = \frac{100 \times 302}{347} = 87.03$$

$$E_{21} = \frac{247 \times 35}{347} = 24.91$$

$$E_{22} = \frac{100 \times 35}{347} = 10.09$$

$$E_{31} = \frac{247 \times 10}{347} = 7.18$$

$$E_{32} = \frac{100 \times 10}{347} = 28.82$$

To find chi-square

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = \frac{(215 - 214.96)^2}{214.96} + \frac{(87 - 87.03)^2}{87.03}$$

$$= \frac{(25 - 214.96)^2}{24.91} + \frac{(10 - 10.09)^2}{87.03}$$

$$= \frac{(7 - 7.18)^2}{7.18} + \frac{(3 - 28.82)^2}{28.82}$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = 0.0000346 + 0.0000001188 + 0.0000001305 + 0.00007956$$

$$= 0.000628 + 0.8026 = 0.8027 = 0.80$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = 0.80$$

$$x^2(r-1)(c-1)0.05$$

$$r = 3 \text{ and } c = 2$$

$$x^2(3-1)(2-1)0.05 = x^2_{2x} 0.05 = x^2 0.05 = 5.99$$

**Decision**

Since  $x^2 \text{ cal}$  is (0.80) <  $x^2 \text{ tab}$  (5.99), the hypothesis that inspirational leadership leads to regular attendance to duty by the employees of the local government in South East Nigeria is accepted.

**Table 4: Response data in relation to hypothesis 2** (Training leads to proper execution of tasks by the employees of the local government in South East, Nigeria)

S/N	Response	No of Responses	Responses (%)
1.	Yes	211	85
2.	No	24	10
3.	Do not know	12	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field work, 2022

**Table 5: Data analysis in respect of hypothesis 2**

S/N	Response	No of Responses	Responses (%)	Total
4.	Yes	211(210.70)	85(85.30)	296
5.	No	24(24.20)	10(1.70)	34
6.	Do not know	12(12.10)	5(4.90)	17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>347</b>

**Significance level**

Taking  $\alpha$  to be 5% = 0.05

**Critical region**

$$x^2(r-1)(c-1)$$

Test statistic

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

**Decision Rule**

If  $x^2 \text{ cal} < x^2 \text{ tab}$ , accept the hypothesis

**Analysis of data**

$$\text{Exp.} = \frac{n_i \times n_j}{N}$$

$$E_{11} = \frac{247 \times 296}{347} = 210.70$$

$$E_{12} = \frac{100 \times 296}{347} = 85.30$$

$$E_{21} = \frac{247 \times 34}{347} = 24.20$$

$$E_{22} = \frac{100 \times 34}{347} = 1.70$$

$$E_{31} = \frac{247 \times 17}{347} = 12.10$$

$$E_{32} = \frac{100 \times 17}{347} = 4.90$$

To find chi-square

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = \frac{(211 - 210.70)^2}{210.70} + \frac{(85 - 85.30)^2}{85.30} + \frac{(24 - 24.20)^2}{24.20} + \frac{(10 - 9.70)^2}{9.70} + \frac{(12 - 12.10)^2}{12.10} + \frac{(5 - 4.90)^2}{4.90}$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = 0.000002027 + 0.00001237 + 0.00006830 + 0.0009565 + 0.00006830 + 0.02041$$

$$= 0.02$$

$$x^2 \text{ cal} = 0.02$$

$$x^2(r-1)(c-1)0.05$$

$r = 3$  and  $c = 2$

$$x^2(3-1)(2-1)0.05 = x_{2x}^2 0.05 = x^2 0.05 = 5.99$$

### Decision

Since  $x^2_{cal}$  is  $(0.02) < x^2_{tab}$  (5.99), the hypothesis that training leads to proper execution of tasks by the employees of the local government in South East Nigeria is accepted.

### Summary of Findings of the Study

The study in summary made the following findings:

- 1) Inspirational leadership led to regular attendance to duty by the local government employees in South East Nigeria. The findings is against the background of the result of the Chi Squared test of hypothesis 1 of  $x^2_{cal}$  (0.80)  $<$   $x^2_{tab}$  (5.99) and for which the hypothesis was accepted.
- 2) Training led to proper execution of tasks by the local government employees in the South East Nigeria. The finding is against the background of the result of the Chi Squared test of hypothesis 3 of  $x^2_{cal}$  (0.02)  $<$   $x^2_{tab}$  (5.99) and for which the hypothesis was accepted.

### Conclusion

Following the findings of the study, it is concluded that inspirational leadership, and training of employees positively effect the performance of local government employees in the South East Nigeria in terms of regular attendance to duty and proper execution of tasks

### Recommendations

In the context of the findings and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The management of local governments should adopt and keep to inspirational leadership style creates and sustains the zeal and commitment of the employees in attending to duty regularly.
2. Training of the employees of the local government should be embarked upon regularly as it enables them learn new skills and acquire more competencies for proper execution of tasks.

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