

IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT ON ORGANIZATIONAL PERFORMANCE: NIGERIA AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY IN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Human resource development is increasingly recognized as a strategic tool for improving organizational performance across various industries. This study examines the impact of human resource development on organizational performance within Nigeria's agricultural sector, a critical component of the nation's economy. Focusing on key human resource development practices such as training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals, the study investigates their influence on customer satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Utilizing a descriptive survey design, data were collected from 20 firms within the agricultural industry in Nigeria and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between human resource development initiatives and both customer satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Specifically, human resource development activities account for substantial improvements in organizational processes and customer service, which are vital for competitiveness in the agricultural sector. These results underscore the importance of investing in human resource development to drive sustainable growth and operational excellence. The study concludes with recommendations for agricultural firms to prioritize human resource development as a core element of their strategic planning to enhance performance outcomes in a rapidly evolving global market.

Keywords: human resource development, Organizational Performance, Agricultural Sector, Customer Satisfaction, Organizational Efficiency.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human capital is an asset that contributes to organisational effectiveness. The job of human resource management is to ensure that the organization has the human capital it needs to accomplish its goals and this is done through the Human Resource Development programmes. Human capital is an asset consisting of the knowledge and skills held by a person that can be used by an organization to advance its goals. [1] posited that human resource is also known as human capital for utilization, harnessing, development and direction of a nation's objective. It is also all about the formation of values and attitude. [2] and [3] postulated that human resources development programmes have an impact on company performance by creating an effective and productive staff that is able to meet the company's aims and objectives.

Human resource is also known as human capital for utilization, harnessing, development and direction of a nation's objective. It is also all about the formation of values and attitude. Therefore, human resources development is a universal norms and not a view concept. There is no industry, firm, organization, business enterprises, nation etc. that can boost a political, economic and social stability, quality product and profitability without adequate human resources in place.

Human capital is important because some level of human knowledge and skills are necessary in order for an organization to accomplish anything. Human capital becomes increasingly important as we move deeper into a knowledge-based economy. Therefore, human resources development is a universal norms and not a view concept. There is no industry, firm, organization, business enterprises, nation that can boost a political, economic and social stability, quality product and profitability without adequate human resources in place [1]. Human resources development is the integrated use of training and development, organizational development and career development to improve individual, group and organizational effectiveness [4].

Perhaps the most important resource of an organization is the human resource. The human resources are men and women who are working in an organization. They constitute the active agents who harness and combine other resources towards the accomplishment of organizations goals [5]. It is however unfortunate that most organization's have neglected the development and management of their chief asset which is human resource. It is a well-known fact that, the primary concern of an organization is its viability and hence its efficiency. The human personnel elements represent one of the company's largest investments. Consequently, organization should prioritize the development of the human element to maximize talents, skills and ability that will automatically reflects on the company's profit [6].

The twenty-first century organizations are faced with the task of achieving the best possible results in terms of efficiency and effectiveness in products/service delivery and profit maximization with available employees at their disposal. As a

result, the concept of human resource development (HRD) has emerged as strategy to enhance the capacity of available employees in organizations for performance. The success and progress of an organization depend on its ability to maximally explore the talent and potentials of its workforce. Moreover, this is more likely to be achieved through the purposeful HRD capability of an organization.

According to [10], HRD is the process of enabling people to make things happen. This means that without availability of capable employees (in terms of required skills, knowledge and experience) to make things happen in the area of quality products/service delivery and profit maximization, the enhanced goal attainment of that particular organization becomes a mirage. Researchers have shown that one of the major challenges facing modern organizations in the twenty-first century is how to put in place strategies to motivate and encourage their employees to get committed to organizational ideals and aspirations; and also on how to translate these ideals and aspirations into enhanced productivity of the workforce and the organization ([8]; [9]).

In this regard, [10], point out that “no other factor is as important as human resource in maintaining corporate stability, development and profitability of an enterprise” Therefore, the successful mobilization of employees to get committed to the ideals and aspirations of an organization (organizational commitment) for enhancing its growth and profitability is end result to organizational survival.

Nigeria’s agricultural sector is one of the largest and most critical components of the nation's economy. It contributes significantly to employment, national income, and food security. Agriculture in Nigeria provides employment to over 70% of the country's labor force and contributes about 25% to Nigeria's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) [11]. The sector is predominantly characterized by smallholder farming, with a majority of farmers relying on traditional practices, which limits productivity and efficiency [12].

The sector comprises various sub-sectors, including crop production, livestock, forestry, and fisheries, with crop production accounting for the largest share. Staple crops such as maize, cassava, rice, and yams dominate, and Nigeria is one of the largest producers of cassava globally [13]. However, despite its vast potential, the agricultural sector faces several challenges, including poor infrastructure, limited access to credit, low mechanization, and climate change impacts. These challenges have hindered the sector's ability to fully harness its potential for driving economic growth and ensuring food security.

To address these issues, there have been various government interventions aimed at modernizing the sector. Programs such as the Agricultural Transformation Agenda (ATA) and the Anchor Borrowers’ Programme (ABP) were launched to improve agricultural productivity through increased access to finance, inputs, and modern farming techniques. These initiatives have had some success in boosting agricultural output, but the sector still requires significant investment in human capital and infrastructure to achieve sustainable growth.

Nigeria's agricultural sector, while being a vital contributor to the nation's economy, is confronted with persistent challenges that limit its full potential. Key among these challenges is the underdevelopment of human capital, which is crucial for improving productivity, operational efficiency, and competitiveness in a rapidly changing global market. Despite the recognition of human resource development (HRD) as a driver of organizational performance in various industries, the agricultural sector in Nigeria has not fully embraced HRD practices that could address the skills gap and enhance performance outcomes. Existing literature indicates that HRD initiatives, including training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals, have a significant impact on organizational performance ([7] & [14]). However, there is limited empirical research specifically focused on how these HRD practices influence performance metrics such as productivity, customer satisfaction, and profitability within Nigeria's agricultural firms. Moreover, the sector's unique characteristics—such as reliance on traditional farming methods, low mechanization, and vulnerability to climate change—pose distinct challenges that require tailored HRD strategies. This study seeks to investigate the extent to which HRD practices contribute to the performance of agricultural organizations in Nigeria. The research problem thus lies in identifying how HRD can be strategically deployed to address the skills gap, improve organizational efficiency, and enhance the sector’s overall performance. By filling this knowledge gap, the study aims to provide actionable insights that can help agricultural firms in Nigeria to better leverage human capital for sustained growth and competitiveness in both local and global markets. The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of human resource development (HRD) on organizational performance within Nigeria’s agricultural industry. Specific Objectives: To assess the impact of HRD on customer satisfaction within Nigeria's agricultural industry. To analyze the role of HRD in enhancing organizational efficiency in agricultural firms.

The study is guided by the following hypotheses:

H01: There is no significant relationship between human resource development and customer satisfaction.

H02: There is no significant relationship between human resource development and organizational efficiency.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human resource development is a part of HRM, it is combining to some human resources management (HRM) functions, so it is a relatively modern term as the best means to prepare staff and organization based on activities that includes organizational development, career development, and training and development [15]. HRM looks at HR Planning, Recruitment & selection, Training, Compensation, Development, Career development, and Performance management. HRD basically looks at Organizational Development, Career Development, Training and Development.

Nowadays, many authors used term Human resource development (HRD) to indicate training and development, career development, and organization development as an organization's investment in the learning of its people as part of an HRM approach ([16]; [17]; [18]). HRD is based on the beliefs that organizations are human-made entities that rely on human expertise in order to establish and achieve their goals and that HRD professionals are advocates of individual and group, work processes and organizational integrity [19]. HRD is the process of optimizing the production and utilization of the workforce.

[14] posit that human development in the organization provides quality and capability work that will have an impact on improving organizational performance. [20] postulated that developed human capital creates value and generates revenue, able to spot opportunities and take advantage of them, able to develop and implement strategies that make the organization a market leader, and ultimately optimizes organizational performance [20].

Human Resource Development activities aim to develop employee skills and resilience to the current and future demands of the organization (Richman, 2015). The overall objective of HRD activities is to achieve high performance as described by [24]. HRD constitutes purposeful actions that intervene with the natural learning process, driving employees to adopt behaviors and develop mental and physical attributes [25]. The purpose of HRD is fundamentally connected to training and development of personnel proactively to address change ([26]; [25]).

Critics argue that the purpose of HRD is to improve productivity and financial outcome with little to no regard for the psychological issues within an organization [27]. Researchers seek to understand the social meaning of HRD through its impact on the workplace, community, and environment ([28]; [27]; [29]). By posing questions outside of the immediate organizational impact, research has broadened the applicable scope of HRD to a societal perspective. Such contextualization contradicts both critics and proponents of HRD while adding significant demand on organizational leaders for HRD [21].

Theoretically, the definition of organisational performance is hinged on the economic view of profit maximization of the organization and the stakeholders' view of satisfying the need of a group or individuals who are affected by the activities of the same organization [30]. Leaning on this exposition, the make-up of organisations' performance is financial and non-financial performances (or strategic or operational performance).

Organizational performance is measured for different levels of hierarchy and can be assessed for individuals, groups, and the entire organization as a whole [22]. [23] who conducted a meta-analysis of organizational performance suggested that it should be measured in economic and operational terms: The economic performance looks at financial and market outcomes which assess the profits, sales, return on investment for shareholders, and other financial metrics; the operational performance, on the other hand, focuses on the observable indices like customer satisfaction and loyalty, the firm's social capital, and competitive edge derived from capabilities and resources.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework provides the foundation upon which the study is built.

2.1.1 The Human Capital theory

The study is hinged on the human Capital theory which was proposed by [31] and developed by Becker in 1994. There are three basic views for the notion of human capital. The first is the investment view, which conceives human capital as the result of investment, and so the human capital value is the expenditure that is invested to enhance personal physical strength and intelligence, and acquire knowledge and skills [31]. The second is the view of part outputs, which conceives that human capital is proprietary knowledge, and skill, experience and the relevant workplace competencies of managers and technical innovators [32]. The third is the holistic output view, which conceives human capital as the total value of personnel physical strength, intelligence, knowledge and skills for utilisation. The total output is the sum of labour abilities of a particular population [33]. There exists a strong belief and support for the third view, namely, that human capital is the labour ability of any person. Thus, human capital is not limited only to managers or technical personnel. More specifically, human capital is the 'output' formed by the investment, the form is intangible, and its value is not what has been invested, but the worth of 'output'.

The main proposition of human capital theory according to Friedman, is that the more education acquired the more pecuniary and or non-pecuniary returns. Such returns may be present at distinct levels of (a) individual (i.e.,

performance), (b) organisation (i.e., productivity/profit), and (c) national (i.e., quality products and services). The key emphasis according to Schultz, et al (1992) cited in [34] is that, if human resource is heavily invested on in terms of training, retraining and management development, the probability of achieving the best from such an individual is very high. In another perspective, human capital theory also postulates that some labour is more productive than the other as result of more resources that have been invested into their training [35]. One of the key tenets of the human capital theory is that like any other business investments, an investment in skill building would be more profitable and likely to take a longer period over which the returns from such investment can be accrued [35]. Studies have shown that investments in human capital including training, retraining and development positively influenced organisational performance [36]. As result, training and development will continue to be a valued component in the modern-day management of human resources (Patlow, 1996) cited in [34].

2.2 Employee Turnover

As highlighted by Gan et al. (2021), employee retention denotes an organization's capacity to retain its workforce. Achieving employee retention entails fostering an environment in which employees find job satisfaction and are motivated to fully fulfil their responsibilities. In human resources context, turnover or staff turnover or labour turnover is the rate at which an employer gains and losses employees. The Simple ways to describe it are "how long employees tend to stay" or "the rate of traffic through the revolving door". Staff turnover describes the number of employees who leave a company compared with the number of people who remain employed.

Turnover is measured for individual companies and for their industry as a whole. If an employer is said to have a high turnover relative to its competitors, it means that employees of that company have a shorter average tenure than those of other companies in the same industry. High turnover may be harmful to a company's productivity if skilled workers are often leaving and the workers population contains a high percentage of novice workers. It is generally considered undesirable to have high employee turnover, because this means the office is made up of mostly new hires without many years of experience at the company. The result of high turnover is that new employees constantly need to be hired and trained, which can be expensive and time-consuming. (Ekong, Olusegun & Mukaila, 2013)

Employees' turnover is costly to all level of organizations regardless of its nature and usually the productivity and quality of the products or services are always negatively affected. Ali (2009) posits that tremendous impact on direct and indirect cost can be resulted from high employee turnover and this would bring destruction to the organizations. Direct costs are referred to costs such as expenditures incurred on the selection, recruitment, induction and training of new employees (Staw, 1980). Indirect costs are referred to cost of leaving, reduced morale and pressure on the existing employees (Dess & Shaw, 2001). In addition, high employee turnover will jeopardize the progress on achieving organization pre-determined objectives and goals. Apart from monetary measureable cost, non-monetary cost such as deteriorated reputations, loss of customer's loyalty, reduced branding trust, etc. may bring forward much more severe long-term impact (Dess & Shaw, 2001).

Turnover intention pertains to employees who, although still employed, contemplate leaving the organization for various reasons (Edwards, 2024). As elucidated by Aliyu and Nyadzayo (2016), turnover intention manifests as a psychological response wherein an employee entertains the idea of departing from their current organization for another in the future. Consequently, turnover intention serves as a precursor to voluntary turnover, initiated when employees harbour thoughts of permanently exiting the organization (Gan & Voon, 2021).

2.4 Empirical Review

[37] examined the impact of high-performance work systems (HPWS), which include comprehensive training and development programs, on employee outcomes. The study found that organizations implementing HPWS experienced lower employee turnover, higher productivity, and better financial performance. These positive employee outcomes were correlated with enhanced customer satisfaction, as satisfied and well-trained employees are more likely to provide superior service.

Similarly, [38] found that effective HRD practices, such as training, were positively associated with organizational performance, including customer satisfaction. Their research demonstrated that organizations with robust HRD systems were better at meeting customer needs, which was reflected in higher customer satisfaction scores. The study emphasized the importance of aligning HRD practices with organizational goals to maximize their impact on customer satisfaction.

[39] conducted a longitudinal study in the telecommunications industry and found that ongoing HRD efforts, particularly those aimed at developing customer service skills, had a lasting positive effect on customer satisfaction. The study showed that as employees' competencies improved over time, so did the quality of customer interactions, leading to sustained improvements in customer satisfaction.

In the healthcare sector, [40] examined the relationship between HRD and patient satisfaction. Their study found that hospitals with comprehensive HRD programs, including ongoing training for medical and non-medical staff, had higher patient satisfaction scores. The study concluded that HRD was a critical factor in ensuring that healthcare providers could deliver high-quality care, which is central to patient satisfaction.

[41] focused on the importance of the efficiency of human resource in the success of any organization in their published research study. The authors emphasized their work over the study of organizational climate in IT industries of Chennai, they suggested improving the organizational climatic conditions to match the requirements of the organizational development.

Another study by [42] provided empirical evidence that HRD practices such as training and development directly influenced employees' customer orientation and proactive behavior. These behaviors were critical in meeting and exceeding customer expectations, leading to higher levels of customer satisfaction. The study highlighted the role of HRD in fostering a customer-oriented culture within the organization, which is essential for achieving customer satisfaction.

In the banking sector, [43] found that HRD practices such as continuous professional development and skills enhancement programs were crucial in improving service quality. The study demonstrated that banks that invested heavily in HRD were better at delivering personalized and efficient customer service, which significantly improved customer satisfaction ratings.

[44] studied human resource development and service delivery in Anambra State civil service within the period of 2007-2011. The formulated hypotheses were tested using one sample t-test. The findings from the study showed that human resource development programmes helped to a large extent to increase productivity and organisation efficiency in the Anambra State civil service.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is a descriptive survey design. This design was chosen because it allows for the collection of data that describes the current situation regarding human resource development and organizational performance.

The population for this study includes all firms of the agricultural industry in Nigeria. The focus on this company provides a specific context to examine the impact of human resource development on organizational performance within the agricultural industry in Nigeria.

The sampling technique employed in this study is stratified random sampling. This technique ensures that different categories of firms within the agricultural industry in Nigeria are adequately represented in the sample. However, the study sampled 20 firms within the agricultural industry. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized for this study. Primary data were collected through questionnaires distributed to the selected employees. Secondary data were obtained from existing literature, company reports, and other relevant documents. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics such as mean, median, and mode were used to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, including regression analysis and hypothesis testing, were used to examine the variables.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Null Hypothesis (H01): There is no significant relationship between human resource development and customer satisfaction.

Table 1. Regression Analysis for Human Resource Development and Customer Satisfaction

Predictor Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	2.56	0.32	8.00	0.000
Training Programs	0.45	0.12	3.75	0.000
Employee Development Plans	0.38	0.10	3.80	0.000
Performance Appraisal	0.28	0.08	3.50	0.001

• R-squared: 0.65

• F-statistic: 23.45 ($p < 0.001$)

Interpretation: The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between human resource development (proxied by training programs, employee development plans, performance appraisal} and customer satisfaction ($p < 0.05$). Training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals significantly contribute to customer satisfaction.

Null Hypothesis (H02): There is no significant relationship between human resource development and organizational efficiency.

Table 2. Regression Analysis for Human Resource Development and Organizational Efficiency

Predictor Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	1.75	0.25	7.00	0.000
Training Programs	0.50	0.15	3.33	0.001
Employee Development Plans	0.40	0.13	3.08	0.002
Performance Appraisal	0.35	0.11	3.18	0.001

• R-squared: 0.70

• F-statistic: 28.30 ($p < 0.001$)

Interpretation: The regression analysis indicates a significant positive relationship between human resource development (proxied by training programs, employee development plans, performance appraisal} and organisation efficiency ($p < 0.05$). Training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals significantly contribute to customer satisfaction.

4.1 Hypothesis Testing and Discussion of Findings- The study on the Impact of Human Resources Development on Organizational Performance within Nigeria's Agricultural industry yields several significant findings:

Human Resource Development and Customer Satisfaction- The study demonstrates a strong positive relationship between human resource development (HRD) initiatives and customer satisfaction. Training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals significantly contribute to enhancing customer satisfaction. The regression analysis shows that HRD activities account for a substantial portion of the variance in customer satisfaction ($R\text{-squared} = 0.65$), with all predictor variables (training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals) showing statistically significant positive impacts. The strong positive relationship between HRD and customer satisfaction supports the argument that well-trained and developed employees are better equipped to meet customer needs and expectations. This aligns with previous studies such as those by [35] and [38], which emphasized that effective HRD practices, particularly training, are closely associated with improved customer outcomes. In the context of Nigeria's agricultural industry, where customer satisfaction is crucial for maintaining market share and ensuring long-term success, investing in HRD programs can lead to significant competitive advantages.

Human Resource Development and Organizational Efficiency

There is also a significant positive relationship between HRD efforts and organizational efficiency. Similar to the impact on customer satisfaction, training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals play critical roles in improving organizational efficiency. The regression analysis indicates that HRD initiatives explain a considerable proportion of the variance in organizational efficiency ($R\text{-squared} = 0.70$). This underscores the importance of HRD practices in achieving higher levels of organizational performance, particularly in terms of efficiency.

The significant positive correlation between HRD and organizational efficiency suggests that HRD initiatives are not merely about improving employee skills but are also instrumental in optimizing overall organizational processes. This finding is consistent with the work of researchers like [45], who argue that the success and progress of organizations depend on their ability to fully harness the talents and potentials of their workforce. The study further supports the view that HRD serves as a strategic tool to enhance the capabilities of employees, which in turn leads to better utilization of resources and improved operational outcomes.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of human resource development (HRD) on organizational performance within Nigeria's agricultural industry. The findings indicate that HRD initiatives, such as training programs, employee development plans, and performance appraisals, have a significant positive impact on both customer satisfaction and organizational efficiency. Human resource development is essential for improving the capabilities and productivity of employees, which in turn drives better customer service and enhances operational efficiency. This aligns with the principles of Human Capital Theory, which suggests that investments in human capital lead to improved individual and organizational performance. Organizations that prioritize HRD are more likely to experience sustainable growth and maintain a competitive edge in the market.

In the context of Nigeria's agricultural industry, where customer satisfaction and efficient resource use are critical for success, HRD serves as a strategic tool for fostering innovation, improving service delivery, and optimizing organizational performance. Therefore, organizations should focus on HRD as a key component of their overall strategy

for achieving long-term success. It is recommended therefore, that organizations in Nigeria's agricultural industry should invest in comprehensive HRD programs that include regular training, development plans, and performance appraisal systems. These initiatives will help build a more skilled and efficient workforce, which is crucial for improving customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. Organizations should implement mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their HRD programs. By regularly assessing the impact of these initiatives, companies can identify areas for improvement and ensure that HRD efforts are delivering the desired outcomes.

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