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Staff Training and Organisational Performance in Nigeria's National Assembly, 2019–2023

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how staff training influenced organisational performance in Nigeria's National Assembly between 2019 and 2023. It assesses the effect of training and capacity-building programmes on employee productivity, operational efficiency and institutional outcomes in the legislative environment. Human Capital Theory, which frames training as an investment in personnel development, serves as the analytical benchmark, complemented by institutional theory and the transfer-of-training perspective. The study adopts a descriptive survey design combining quantitative and qualitative data: structured questionnaires administered to a randomly selected sample of 364 staff and legislators, of which 290 were returned and analysed (a response rate of 79.67%), and in-depth interviews with management and staff. The findings show that staff training had only a limited and conditional influence on organisational performance. Only 21.4% of respondents had undergone any training since appointment, 79.7% reported that training had not positively affected staff performance, and only about one in four of those who had been trained found the training relevant to their duties. Interview evidence shows that the minority who received relevant training, particularly in legislative drafting, research and ICT, reported better competence, fewer errors and faster document handling. The study also finds unequal access to training (92.1%), selection based mainly on position (53.1%) and years of service (26.9%), perceptions of favouritism, politics and corruption (60.0%), no link between training and promotion (76.6%) and weak post-training evaluation. The article concludes that training is essential for improving performance in the National Assembly, but that its potential is largely unrealised because of low coverage, poor job relevance, non-merit selection and weak follow-up. It recommends transparent, competency-based selection, closer alignment of training with the legislature's constitutional functions, institutionalised post-training evaluation, and the linking of training outcomes to career progression.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Human resources remain a crucial element that cannot be overlooked if an organisation is to survive and thrive. Onasanya (2019) asserts that the efficient development of human resources is one of the most important factors in an organisation's long-term growth, development and survival. The human resource is the most unpredictably variable resource an organisation needs in order to function: because people are social creatures whose future actions are difficult to foresee, an organisation's performance may suffer from human and social variables rather than from physical, technological or financial limitations. Encouraging motivation through training is therefore a necessary condition for securing the loyalty and dedication of the organisation's human resource to its responsibilities. Aighewi (2004) similarly shows that, although there are many factors of production in any organisation, human resource is asserted in management literature and by practitioners to be the most important and versatile, and the only active agent of production capable of thinking, planning, executing and achieving results.

The legislature is regarded as the pivot, pillar or engine of democracy, because it is the institutional mechanism for the sustenance of democracy worldwide. Its core mandate includes law-making, oversight, representation and constituency-related matters. No legislature can, however, deliver on these mandates unless it has the requisite staff to support its members. The career staff of the legislature are permanent and pensionable public servants whose appointment and career are governed by civil service rules and regulations, and whose tenure is not affected by changes in political administration. Alongside them are legislative aides, who are the personal staff of legislators and whose appointment is at the instance, and at the pleasure, of their principals (Habu, 2016). Section 51 of the 1999 Constitution provides that there shall be a Clerk to the National Assembly and such other staff as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly.

Whatever the perception of the National Assembly bureaucracy, it is at the core of modern legislatures, and there is yet to be an alternative to it. Legislators may have numerous talents, but in most cases they do not have extensive expert knowledge of the laws and oversight activities for which they are responsible, and the legislative bureaucracy has traditionally supplied that support. In spite of this centrality, the legislative bureaucracy is bedevilled by many challenges, especially in the legislatures of emerging democracies such as Nigeria. Part of the challenge is the nature of the training that bureaucratic and political aides receive and how it has affected their capacity to perform their functions. This article therefore examines the impact of staff training on the performance of Nigeria's National Assembly from 2019 to 2023.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An organisation is made up of people who carry out its day-to-day activities using tools and machines. Employees must therefore receive the training required to operate the organisational machinery, carry out administrative duties and perform the tasks in their job descriptions. The National Assembly often arranges development programmes for members of staff, yet the institution has struggled with low performance and ineffective and inefficient service delivery, which hamper the overall performance of this important organ of democratic government. There are also questions about the impact of these programmes and about the criteria the National Assembly management uses in selecting employees, whether as parliamentary staff or as legislative aides (see Peter, Ayogu & Egbara, 2025, on organisational politics in the Eighth and Ninth Assemblies).

Recruitment and training have consistently played vital roles in the effectiveness of public organisations such as the National Assembly, because staff quality directly influences institutional culture. Although the Assembly invests significantly in training senior staff, internal observations suggest that training initiatives are often administered without first assessing the gap between current performance and the desired level of competence. As a result, some employees participate in programmes that are not directly relevant to their job responsibilities, and administrative aides sometimes struggle to provide high-quality support to legislators, as highlighted by McTams (2023).

Many studies have examined the impact of training on employee performance in other organisations, but research that provides empirical support for investigating the impact of training on organisational performance in Nigeria's highest law-making institution has been scanty. The problem addressed in this article is that training is widely seen as a veritable instrument for improving organisational performance, yet it is unclear whether, and under what conditions, it has done so for the administrative staff of the National Assembly between 2019 and 2023.

3.0 OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND PROPOSITIONS

The aim of the article is to assess the impact of staff training on organisational performance in Nigeria's National Assembly from 2019 to 2023. The specific objectives are:

1. To analyse the nexus between staff training and organisational performance in the National Assembly.
2. To determine whether National Assembly staff are trained in areas related to their core official duties so as to enhance their performance.
3. To identify the challenges of staff training in the National Assembly.

The study is guided by three research questions: how has staff training influenced staff and organisational performance in the National Assembly between 2019 and 2023; to what extent are training programmes provided to staff aligned with their core official duties; and what are the challenges of training staff of the National Assembly. Corresponding to these, the study tests three propositions: that there is a significant nexus between staff training and organisational performance; that National Assembly staff are trained in areas related to their core duties; and that there are identifiable challenges of staff training that affect its effectiveness and continuity.

4.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Conceptual Clarifications

4.1.1 Training and Staff Development

Training has been described in many ways, but generally it refers to the organised process through which organisations develop the capabilities of new and existing staff and equip them with relevant skills for improved performance. Khawaja and Nadeem (2013)

characterise it as a structured approach to learning and development that benefits individuals, groups and organisations alike. Elnaga and Imran (2013) describe training as programmes that give staff new information, skills or opportunities for professional development, whether inside or outside the organisation and on or off the job. Jones, George and Hill (2000) add that training primarily helps employees perform their current jobs more effectively while also preparing them for future roles, and Tsaur and Lin (2014) warn that the need and objectives of a programme must be identified before implementation because poorly designed training wastes resources.

Staff development is the broader umbrella. Nwachukwu (2016) explains that it involves preparing individuals to take on new responsibilities and move into higher roles in the organisational hierarchy, while Schultz (2013) treats it as a crucial factor in strengthening an organisation's workforce to raise productivity. In this study, staff development is operationalised as training, professional exposure, mentoring and performance-linked career advancement, and is measured by the extent to which training leads to promotion, recognition and retention of institutional memory.

The objectives and importance of training are well documented. Nwachukwu (2010) identifies skill development, attitude change, education and development as the main goals of training, and benefits such as higher morale, a sense of belonging and the knowledge needed for success. Cole (2000) adds reduced production costs, effective management of organisational change and better opportunities for pay and promotion, while Mondy, Noe and Premeaux (2012) stress that the fundamental goal of training is to prepare people for change and help them adapt to it.

4.1.2 Methods and Determinants of Training

Training methods fall broadly into on-the-job and off-the-job categories. On-the-job training, such as induction, coaching, mentoring and job rotation, takes place while employees perform their actual duties and so reduces the gap between learning and application. Off-the-job training takes place outside the regular work setting through conferences, lectures, workshops, seminars and computer-based training, and it allows standardised content and measurable outcomes, although it can be costly and suffer from weak follow-up. Combining both methods balances their respective strengths and weaknesses.

Several factors affect the success of training. Mondy et al. (2012) note that employees may resist training if they believe the change will affect them negatively, that lack of management support can undermine a programme, and that training is wasted if its focus is not correctly selected and accepted by learners. Nwachukwu (2016), Kleiman (2013) and Perry (2017) add poorly designed programmes, failure to match training with organisational requirements, and the lack of post-training evaluation, which leaves learners unable to gauge their progress.

4.1.3 Organisational Performance

Organisational performance refers to the actual results or outputs an organisation achieves when compared with its intended goals and objectives. It is a variegated concept, and most scholars relate it to the assessment of efficiency and effectiveness in attaining organisational goals (Stannack, 1996, as cited in the source thesis). Rolstadas (1998) contends that it encompasses effectiveness, efficiency, quality, productivity, quality of work, innovation and profitability. In this study it is measured through three indicators: administrative efficiency, such as faster document processing and committee document turnaround; committee research outputs, such as the quality of research memos and briefing materials; and overall legislative support functions, covering law-making, oversight and representation.

4.1.4 The Legislature and the National Assembly

The legislature is an arm of government made up of elected representatives or a constituted assembly of people whose duty is to make laws, control the activities of the executive and safeguard the interests of the people (Awotokun, 1998). Edosa and Azelama (1995) observe that bicameralism is common in federal states because one house is needed to protect the interests of minority groups. Nigeria's National Assembly is bicameral, comprising a Senate of 109 seats and a House of Representatives of 360 members. Its functions and powers, set out in Chapter V of the 1999 Constitution, include law-making, oversight, representation, the financial function of authorising expenditure, and the committee function, which Heywood (2007, as cited in the source thesis) describes as the power house of the legislature.

The legislative bureaucracy supports every one of these functions. It assists in drafting bills, motions and resolutions, organising public hearings, gathering background information and keeping records of proceedings, and it supplies committees with the information that oversight depends on. Because elections periodically replace experienced legislators with new ones, the permanent bureaucracy gains influence, as fresh legislators must learn the art of legislation and depend on the guidance of staff. Staff who provide independent information also reduce the legislature's reliance on the executive and on interest groups. For this reason, Aighewi (2004) argues that a professional parliamentary staff should be impartial, non-political and technically expert, and that deployment to committees should rest on qualifications and experience rather than primordial considerations.

4.1.5 Parliamentary Staff and Legislative Aides

The National Assembly workforce has two categories. Parliamentary staff are permanent, pensionable career public servants recruited and governed by the National Assembly Service Commission (NASC) under public service rules, and their progress rests on merit. Legislative aides are non-career appointees whose letters of appointment state that the appointment is at the pleasure of the legislator and subject to the conditions applicable in the public service (Habu, 2016). Despite the differences in their conditions

of service, both categories provide the support legislators need to deliver on their mandates. Relations between them may be cooperative, promoting team spirit, or antagonistic where differences in background, training and values breed conflict. The 1999 Vienna Report on parliamentary management, cited by Aighewi (2004), identified inadequate staff in quantity and quality, poor job descriptions, assignment based on whom one knows rather than competence, poor remuneration and weak work ethics as the typical features of parliamentary administration in developing countries.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The study adopts Human Capital Theory (HCT), advanced by Schultz and expanded by Becker (1964), which argues that the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through education and training constitute a form of capital that raises productivity and yields institutional benefits. The theory views training as an investment rather than an expense. For the National Assembly, which depends on the competence of clerks, legislative aides, researchers and administrative officers to perform its constitutional roles, HCT predicts that structured training in legislative drafting, budget analysis, ICT and policy research will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of legislative processes.

The study does not, however, assume that this relationship operates automatically. HCT is used as an analytical benchmark, and the study tests whether the conditions on which its predictions depend are present in the institution: that training reaches a sufficient proportion of staff, is selected on the basis of skill gaps, is relevant to the trainee's duties, is applied on return to the workplace, and is rewarded through promotion or greater responsibility (Becker, 1964). Where they are absent, the theory itself leads one to expect weak returns.

The theory has recognised limitations. It assumes a linear relationship between training and performance, overlooks motivation, job satisfaction and organisational culture, treats employees mainly as economic assets, and assumes trained staff will remain long enough for the organisation to benefit. The analysis therefore draws on two complementary perspectives. Institutional theory (March & Olsen, 1984) explains how informal rules such as patronage and seniority can override formal training policy, so that training is allocated on grounds other than merit. The transfer-of-training perspective (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) explains why learning may not translate into performance unless the trainee, the training design and the work environment support its application.

4.3 Empirical Review and Gap in the Literature

Most empirical studies reviewed report positive effects of training. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) found that effectively managed training raises employee productivity in Nigeria's insurance industry. Akinribido (2015) found that training significantly improved the competence of most employees at the National Petroleum Investment Management Services (NAPIMS). Solomon, Oravee and Akindele (2018) reported that both off-the-job and on-the-job training significantly affected productivity in the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture, although public organisations such as the National Assembly were outside their scope. Falola, Osibanjo and Ojo (2014) found that training and development significantly enhance employee performance and organisational competitiveness in the Nigerian banking industry. Other studies show that results depend on implementation: Ekundayo (2015) found that some firms identify training needs systematically while others do so ad hoc, and Dialoke and Ikoro (2016) found that although most respondents believed training improved efficiency, the specific effect on productivity was not determined.

Despite this body of work, there is a paucity of empirical studies that explicitly examine the role of staff training programmes and their impact on organisational performance in the National Assembly (Peter, Ayogu & Egbara, 2025). None of the studies reviewed examined the effect of training on the different categories of staff in Nigeria's National Assembly between 2019 and 2023. This article addresses that gap.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey design, which is concerned with describing conditions, opinions, processes and effects as they appear, without manipulation (Nworgu, 2006). The area of study is the National Assembly of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, with specific focus on staff training practices and their influence on organisational performance between 2019 and 2023. Both primary and secondary data were used. Primary data came from structured and semi-structured questionnaires and in-depth interviews; secondary data came from textbooks, journals, newspapers, reports and materials from the Constitution, the National Institute for Legislative and Democratic Studies (NILDS), the National Assembly library and the NASC.

The study population consisted of 3,595 parliamentary staff and 469 legislators (109 Senators and 360 members of the House of Representatives), a total of 4,064. Using Taro Yamane's (1967) formula, $n = N / [1 + N(e)^2]$, with a 5% margin of error, the sample size was 364. The questionnaires were allocated by quota to four categories of personnel (parliamentary staff, legislative aides, members of the House of Representatives and Senators) and administered through the nine directorates and units of the bureaucracy, with at least 28 questionnaires issued to each directorate or unit using simple random selection. A second stage involved purposively selected interviews with 20 members of the management team and staff drawn from the Senate, House of Representatives, Administration, Finance and Budget, Establishment, Development Control, Protocol, Transport, Security and Maintenance units.

Of the 364 questionnaires administered, 290 were returned and analysed, a response rate of 79.67%. The questionnaire addressed respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, the effect of training on organisational performance, and the effect of the staff

development programmes organised by management. Data were analysed with simple percentage tables for the questionnaire items, an explanation-building technique for the interview responses, and descriptive analysis of documents. For Likert-scale items, "strongly disagree" and "disagree" were combined, as were "strongly agree" and "agree". Content and face validity were ensured through alignment with the study objectives and expert review, reliability was supported by standardised items, uniform administration procedures and triangulation of questionnaire and interview data, and participation was voluntary, with informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity maintained.

Table 1: Questionnaire response rate

Category of respondents	Administered	Returned	Response rate (%)
Administrative and support staff	211	190	90.05
Top management staff	44	16	36.36
Legislators	109	84	77.06
Total	364	290	79.67

Source: Field Survey, May 2025.

Two limitations should be borne in mind. First, legislators formed 28.97% of respondents, so some results, such as those on personal exposure to training, reflect a combined pool of staff and legislators rather than staff alone; the composition of the pool is reported explicitly so that findings can be read accordingly. Second, response from top management staff was low (36.36%), which is why the interviews were used to deepen the management perspective.

6.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

6.1 Profile of Respondents

Of the 290 respondents, 64% were male and 36% female. The largest age group was 36–45 years (43.1%), followed by 26–35 years (32.4%), while 17.6% were aged 46 and above, which indicates a relatively youthful and flexible workforce. By designation, 65.5% were administrative and support staff, 5.5% were management staff and 29.0% were legislators. In terms of education, 85.9% held a bachelor's degree, 13.4% a master's degree and 0.7% a diploma. The respondents were therefore sufficiently educated to understand the questions and to give informed answers.

6.2 Coverage and Relevance of Training

Training coverage was low. Only 62 respondents (21.4%) had undergone any form of training since their appointment, while 228 (78.6%) had never been trained. Most staff of the National Assembly were therefore working without any training designed to improve their productivity or effectiveness on the job.

Among those who had been trained, relevance was poor. Only 16 respondents (5.5% of the total, or about one in four of those trained) said the training was relevant to their jobs, 47 (16.2%) said it was not, and 227 (78.3%) reported no training at all. The effect on job understanding followed the same pattern: 16 respondents reported a better understanding of their jobs and 47 reported no effect at all. Participant 11, a head of department, recalled that the first training he attended as an Administrative Officer I was for Official Reporters, which had nothing to do with his schedule. Participant 17, a legislative aide, said a workshop on committee procedures was irrelevant because she had never been assigned to a committee.

The interviews show that the topics offered, which included legislative drafting, committee procedures, public finance oversight, research methodology, ICT and records management and constituency engagement, map onto core legislative functions in principle. The weakness lies in alignment with individual duties and in depth. Many programmes were broad introductory seminars rather than competency-based interventions, committee-specific modules produced stronger improvements than generic ones but were not available to all committees in all years, and newer competencies such as data analytics, open-parliament practices and advanced regulatory drafting were only emphasised in the later part of the period.

6.3 Selection and Access

The criteria used to select staff for training are largely administrative rather than competency-driven. Table 2 shows that position of staff (53.1%) and years of service (26.9%) were the main criteria, while only 4.1% of respondents said selection was based on the employee's qualification and 15.9% did not know the criteria.

Table 2: Criteria used in selecting employees for training

Selection criterion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Position of staff	154	53.1

Selection criterion	Frequency	Percent (%)
Years of service	78	26.9
Don't know	46	15.9
Employee's qualification	12	4.1
Total	290	100.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2025.

Access was also unequal. A total of 267 respondents (92.1%) said that opportunities were not shared fairly among all categories of workers, and only 23 (7.9%) said they were. Interview evidence confirms this. Participant 8 acknowledged that the Commission has a policy encouraging equal training for all cadres, but that in practice senior and management staff are nominated more often for international and high-profile programmes while junior staff attend basic local workshops. Participants 7, 9 and 10 noted that the same group of staff are nominated repeatedly while others are left out, creating resentment. Contractual legislative aides and lower-graded staff are least likely to be nominated, partly because nomination is tied to established grade bands and partly because principals prioritise senior or connected staff.

A few informants described a more transparent process. Participant 6 said he was selected for an advanced management course on the strength of his performance record, and Participant 10 said a 2021 NILDS programme listed clear criteria in its notice. These accounts, together with a rotation system that exists in policy, show that merit-based selection is possible but, according to Participants 7, 9 and 10, is inconsistently applied.

6.4 Management Attitude and Training Policy

Respondents were critical of management's attitude to training: 248 (85.5%) described it as not serious and 42 (14.5%) had no idea. In addition, 239 respondents (82.4%) described the National Assembly's training policy as not encouraging when compared with that of other organisations. At the same time, 191 respondents (65.9%) believed that the progress of the National Assembly is directly related to the quality of its training policy.

The interviews qualify the questionnaire result. Participant 9 said top management takes training very seriously and emphasises capacity building in departmental meetings, Participant 6 described management as generally supportive but constrained by budgets and selective in nominations, and Participant 10 described the attitude as inconsistent, with opportunities concentrated among certain individuals and training treated as a privilege rather than a right. The literature also records that the National Assembly has institutionalised capacity building through NILDS, which signals structural management commitment (NILDS, n.d.). The divergence suggests that the closed-question result captured general frustration among staff who are left out, and that unequal distribution, rather than outright indifference, is the root of the perception.

6.5 Training, Promotion and Technology

Training did not lead to career progression. Some 222 respondents (76.6%) said the National Assembly does not upgrade or promote staff after training, and the remaining 68 (23.4%) did not respond; none said that promotion followed. When employees perceive that training does not lead to promotion, salary progression or greater responsibility, they have less reason to apply what they have learned, which weakens transfer of training to the workplace. Participant 13 observed that colleagues who had undergone several trainings still had to wait their turn in the promotion cycle, with promotion influenced by connections and political considerations, while Participants 8, 11 and 12 reported that their training made them eligible for more responsibilities.

On technology, 143 respondents (49.3%) said technological innovation does not affect the content and training needs of the organisation, 71 (24.5%) said "not always", 34 (11.7%) said it does, and 42 (14.5%) did not respond. Interview participants disagreed with the majority view. Participant 10 stressed that technology has changed almost everything about the work, so that staff who handled manual records now need retraining in database management and e-archiving, and warned that the Assembly risks being left behind in global parliamentary practice if training does not keep pace. The gap indicates an awareness deficit among front-line and junior staff about the link between ICT change and training needs. The period 2019 to 2023 also included COVID-19, which forced remote and hybrid work and made ICT-related training strategically important.

6.6 Perceived Effect of Training on Performance

Respondents believe in the value of training in principle: 259 (89.3%) agreed that good training is responsible for efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace. In practice, however, 231 respondents (79.7%) said training had not positively affected the performance of staff in the National Assembly, and only 59 (20.3%) said it had. Table 3 shows the responses to six performance statements, and between 55% and 98% of respondents disagreed with each of them.

Table 3: Responses on employee performance after training

Statement	Agreed (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagreed (%)
I complete my work within the time allocated after training	35	10	55
Virtual training has improved my capacity and productivity	24	12	64
Training has affected how I carry out my duties and tasks	19	17	64
Training has affected my overall performance	8	2	90
Virtual work training has helped sustain my job delivery	2	0	98
My bosses are satisfied with my work after training	7	4	89

Source: Field Survey, May 2025. Agreed combines strongly agree and agree; disagreed combines strongly disagree and disagree.

These results must be read together with the coverage and relevance findings. Since 78.6% of respondents had never been trained, and since about three in four of the minority who had been trained found the training irrelevant, most respondents were not in a position to report performance gains from training they had not received or that did not match their jobs. The quantitative evidence therefore does not show a positive relationship between training and performance in the National Assembly as a whole. The study did not directly measure supervisor ratings, turnaround times or error rates, and no claim is made about them.

The positive evidence is qualitative and confined to a minority. Participant 8, a committee clerk in legislative research, reported that a 2021 NILDS drafting workshop improved how he structured memos, so that the committee he supports passed a motion with fewer corrections and he gained confidence to brief the Member directly. Participant 11, an ICT officer, reported that virtual training on e-document management during COVID-19 cut his filing time by half and enabled him to support remote committee work. Participants 8, 11 and 12 described greater confidence, fewer drafting errors and faster document handling. These accounts describe individual experience and cannot be generalised to the institution, but they are consistent with the 20.3% who reported a positive effect.

Interview participants described three mechanisms through which relevant training raised performance. Training in legislative drafting, policy analysis and report writing improved the clarity and technical accuracy of committee briefs and draft bills, reducing time spent on revisions. Better-structured research memos facilitated more focused committee deliberations. Capacity development in office management, records management and ICT improved document retrieval, scheduling and internal communication. Even so, these gains were evident mainly in technical and administrative outputs, and the evidence shows only modest and conditional effects on macro indicators such as the substantive quality of bills, systemic oversight outcomes or the executive's implementation of laws, which political factors and resource constraints also shape.

6.7 Challenges of Training in the National Assembly

Table 4: Problems associated with training in the National Assembly

Problem identified	Frequency	Percent (%)
Corruption, favouritism, tribalism and politics	174	60.0
Improper selection of trainees	56	19.3
Other problems, including those above	30	10.3
Lack of training programmes	20	6.9
Inadequate funding	10	3.4
Total	290	100.0

Source: Field Survey, May 2025.

Corruption, favouritism and politics were named as the main problem by 60.0% of respondents, and improper selection of trainees by a further 19.3%. When training opportunities are allocated through personal relationships, ethnicity, political affiliation or other non-merit factors, deserving staff are excluded and the credibility of the programme is undermined. Funding was the least cited problem (3.4%), which suggests that the difficulty is how training is allocated and managed more than how much is available.

Interview participants confirmed all five categories and added further problems: irregular programming that is not based on needs, inequitable distribution of slots, budget constraints and delayed funds, the absence of post-training monitoring and evaluation,

content that does not reflect technological change, weak linkage to promotion and political or nepotistic nominations. Needs assessments are not always systematic or updated, and selection sometimes relies on managers' experience or legacy lists instead of competency inventories. Post-training follow-up is weak, which reduces accountability for selection decisions.

6.8 Triangulation of Questionnaire and Interview Evidence

Comparing the two data sources shows strong convergence on most themes. Both confirm that access to training is unequal and concentrated among senior staff, that rank dominates selection, that favouritism and politics are the most serious problem, and that the absence of a training-to-promotion pathway weakens motivation. They diverge on three points. On management attitude, the questionnaire is almost uniformly negative (85.5%) while the interviews are more graduated. On the effect of training on performance, the questionnaire is overwhelmingly negative while interviewees who attended relevant training report real gains; the difference is explained by unequal access, because the 20.3% who reported a positive effect align with the trained minority. On technology, nearly half of respondents deny any link with training needs while interviewees see it as transformative, which points to an awareness gap.

6.9 Discussion in Relation to Earlier Studies

The findings do not, in general, agree with Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) or Akinribido (2015), who report positive training effects: only 20.3% of respondents here reported a positive effect on performance. They agree with these studies only in a narrower, conditional sense, since the positive accounts of the trained minority and the 89.3% who believe good training improves efficiency are consistent with the view that relevant and properly managed training raises competence. The difference appears to lie in coverage, relevance and management rather than in training as such.

The findings also differ from Solomon, Oravee and Akindele (2018), who found strong productivity gains in the Benue State Ministry of Agriculture. That study covered a small ministry of 58 employees, all of whom were surveyed, whereas the National Assembly is larger, more fragmented and more exposed to patronage, and 78.6% of respondents here were untrained. That study also did not examine the relevance of training to job duties, whereas this one found only 5.5% relevance. Likewise, the study agrees with Falola, Osibanjo and Ojo (2014) that training contributes to efficiency (89.3% agreement) but disagrees that it translates into overall organisational performance, because low coverage and the absence of any link to promotion limit the effect. The unique features of the National Assembly, namely its dual staff structure, patronage and weak incentives, are less severe in commercial banks or smaller ministries.

6.10 Status of the Research Propositions

Proposition (i), that there is a significant nexus between staff training and organisational performance, is not supported as a general finding. Only 21.4% of respondents had been trained, 79.7% reported no positive effect on performance, and between 55% and 98% disagreed with each performance statement. The nexus is supported only conditionally, for the minority who received relevant training.

Proposition (ii), that staff are trained in areas related to their core official duties, is not supported. Only 5.5% of respondents, or about one in four of those trained, said the training was relevant, 16.2% said it was not, and 78.3% had received none. Although the topics offered map onto core legislative functions in principle, this is not reflected in the experience of most staff.

Proposition (iii), that there are identifiable challenges of staff training that affect its effectiveness and continuity, is supported. The main challenges are corruption, favouritism and politics in selection (60.0%), improper selection (19.3%), lack of programmes (6.9%) and inadequate funding (3.4%), together with unequal access (92.1%), no link between training and promotion (76.6%), management attitudes described as not serious (85.5%) and weak post-training evaluation.

6.11 Implications for Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory predicts that investment in training raises productivity. The evidence here shows that this return is largely not realised, and the reason lies in the conditions under which the theory's mechanism operates. Human capital raises performance only when it is acquired (78.6% of respondents had no training), relevant to the job (5.5% found it relevant), allocated according to skill needs rather than patronage (60.0% cited favouritism, politics or corruption, and 92.1% reported unequal access) and rewarded, so that acquiring skills makes career sense (76.6% reported no promotion after training). Where training is decoupled from merit and career progression, the theory's linear assumption cannot be expected to hold. The findings support the criticism that HCT overlooks institutional and motivational context, and indicate that it should be complemented by institutional theory and the transfer-of-training perspective when applied to public bureaucracies such as the National Assembly.

7.0 CRITICAL ASSESSMENT: WHY TRAINING HAS NOT DELIVERED

Assessed against the conditions that Human Capital Theory requires, training in the National Assembly between 2019 and 2023 fails at each stage of the chain from investment to return. Coverage is too thin for training to affect institutional performance, because four in five respondents had never been trained. Relevance is too weak for what is delivered to be applied, because most trained staff found it unrelated to their duties. Selection is driven by rank, seniority and patronage rather than documented competency gaps,

so scarce slots do not reach the staff who need them most. And reward is absent, because training does not lead to promotion, which removes the incentive to apply new skills.

A second, structural weakness is the lack of a feedback loop. Needs assessments are not systematic, post-training evaluation is weak, and there is no routine mechanism for confirming that skills are applied after training. Without these, management cannot distinguish programmes that work from those that do not, and the Assembly cannot demonstrate the return on its investment. A third weakness is the dual staff structure. Legislative aides, who serve at the pleasure of their principals, and junior career staff are the most likely to be excluded, even though they perform crucial support functions.

The assessment must nevertheless be balanced. Respondents overwhelmingly believe in the value of training (89.3%), the minority who received relevant training describe real gains, and the Assembly has institutionalised capacity building through NILDS and engaged development partners. The problem lies not in training as such but in the way it is provided and managed, which means it is correctable through reform of selection, relevance and follow-up.

8.0 LESSONS FOR STAFF TRAINING IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- Coverage comes before impact. Training cannot raise institutional performance while most staff remain untrained. A minimum training threshold for each staff category, set within a medium-term plan, is a precondition for any measurable organisational effect.
- Relevance determines whether training is used. Training detached from specific legislative, administrative or technical roles weakens skill application. Programmes should be modular, task-specific and committee-focused, and tied to real work such as supervised bill drafting and committee research.
- Merit-based selection protects both fairness and returns. Where selection follows position, years of service or patronage, scarce slots are misallocated and staff lose confidence in the system. Transparent criteria grounded in documented competency gaps are the strongest remedy.
- Training must be rewarded to be applied. The absence of a link between training and promotion removes the incentive to use new skills. Training outcomes should be built into appraisal and career progression.
- What is not evaluated cannot be improved. Post-training reports, supervisor attestations and routine monitoring are needed to close the loop between selection and demonstrable performance gains.
- Perception matters as much as intent. Management may value training in principle, but unequal distribution makes it feel like indifference to staff who are excluded. Visible, published decision-making narrows this perception gap.
- Training must keep pace with technology. The Assembly's ICT-driven work, accelerated by COVID-19, requires continuing training in digital skills, and staff awareness of the link between technological change and training needs must be raised.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are organised around the three research questions.

On the influence of training on performance (Research Question One), the National Assembly should institutionalise a competency-based training framework that links staff training to clearly defined role profiles and performance indicators. Programmes should be designed around the competencies required for legislative drafting, committee research, administrative management and ICT support instead of generic capacity-building workshops. This will strengthen the positive effects already observed in targeted areas.

On alignment with core duties (Research Question Two), training should be more closely aligned with the constitutional functions of law-making, oversight and representation. This requires a shift from broad introductory seminars to modular, task-specific and job-embedded training, with priority given to committee-specific and sector-focused programmes for high-impact committees such as Appropriations, Public Accounts, Petroleum Resources and Health. Trained staff should share skills through peer mentoring, communities of practice and internal knowledge-sharing forums to address uneven capacity across committees.

On the challenges of training (Research Question Three), the NASC, in collaboration with NILDS, should publish and enforce transparent selection criteria based on documented competency gaps, job relevance and equity of access. Regular training needs assessments should be conducted at directorate, department and unit levels and used as the primary basis for nominations. Opportunities, especially externally funded ones, should be openly advertised within the service with clear justification for selections. Post-training accountability should be institutionalised through mandatory post-training reports, action-learning projects and supervisor attestations.

The study also makes the following specific recommendations:

4. Integrate training outcomes into promotion and appraisal systems through continuing professional development credits and certification schemes (NASC).
5. Expand eligibility to include contractual legislative aides and junior staff who perform core legislative support roles (NASC and National Assembly Management).
6. Establish mandatory minimum training thresholds for each staff category within a medium-term training plan (National Assembly Management and NASC).

7. Update curricula to include digital-legislature competencies such as data analytics, digital engagement and advanced regulatory drafting (NILDS and development partners).
8. Ring-fence training budgets and embed staff development indicators in the performance evaluation of management (National Assembly leadership and the Budget and Finance units).

   Because 85.5% of respondents described top management's attitude to training as not serious and 60.0% identified favouritism, politics or corruption as the main problem, enforcement should not depend on goodwill alone. First, the selection criteria, the training needs assessment requirement and the post-training reporting rules should be issued as binding NASC regulations or guidelines, so that they bind management and heads of department and can be cited in appeals. Second, transparency should be the main control: calls for nomination should be advertised and an annual training register showing who was nominated, for which programme and on what criteria should be published to all staff. Third, NASC and NILDS should monitor compliance and report annually to the relevant oversight committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Fourth, compliance with training rules and the use of trainees' skills should be included in the appraisal of directors and heads of department, and training budget lines should be ring-fenced so they can be audited. Fifth, a confidential complaints channel should be provided for staff who allege unfair nomination, with administrative sanctions for breaches, and nominations to externally funded programmes should follow the same published criteria. Finally, implementation should be phased, beginning with a pilot in selected directorates and a review after one to two years.

10.0 CONCLUSION

This article set out to ascertain the effect of training on the performance of the staff of the National Assembly between 2019 and 2023. It concludes that staff training made only a limited and conditional contribution to organisational performance. Most staff have never been trained, the training given is often not relevant to their duties, and access to it is unequal. Even so, staff understand that good training is responsible for efficiency and effectiveness in the workplace, and those who received relevant training in legislative drafting, research and ICT report better competence, fewer errors and faster document handling. Training can therefore improve performance where it is relevant and well targeted, but these gains have been confined to a minority.

Training for its own sake is not enough to guarantee effective performance. If trainees do not understand the purpose of training, perceive selection as unfair, or cannot see the benefits of earlier programmes, future programmes are unlikely to succeed. The progress of the National Assembly is directly related to the quality of its training policy, and if the reforms recommended here are put in place, staff productivity and the performance of the Assembly should improve substantially.

The study contributes empirical evidence on the relationship between staff training and organisational performance in Nigeria's National Assembly, a subject that has received limited scholarly attention. It links human resource development with legislative effectiveness, and it adds nuance to Human Capital Theory by showing that the returns it predicts are conditional on coverage, job relevance, merit-based selection and the reward of skills through career progression. Future research could compare the effect of staff training in other arms of government and in other countries' legislatures, examine non-training factors such as recruitment procedures, organisational culture, leadership style, political interference and technological capacity, disaggregate analysis by respondent category, and develop mechanisms for evaluating post-training outcomes.

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