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## TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE OF AUTO PARTS MANUFACTURING SMEs IN NNEWI, ANAMBRA STATE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study examined the relationship between training and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Anambra State, Nigeria. State, Nigeria. Cross sectional research design was adopted for this study. The population of the study is the total number of employees in the sixteen (16) auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi Anambra State by National Automotive Council of Nigeria. A purposive sampling was adopted and eleven (11) auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi Anambra State were selected namely Akebono Ind. Company Nigeria Limited, Cutix Plc, Godwin Kris Industries Limited, Iju Industries Limited, Greatland Industries Limited, Haroside Nigeria Limited, Isaho Industries Limited, John White Industries Limited, Louis Carter Group Limited, OCE Filter Manufacturing Company Limited, Union Autoparts Manufacturing Company Limited. the rationale for choosing the aforementioned SMEs is that they have been in the manufacturing industry for more than 10years and had above 30 employees as the target population of the study. Our respondents were employees in these organizations (a total number of five hundred and nine employees) constituting the accessible population of the study. From the field survey, we retrieved and analyzed two hundred and one (201) copies of questionnaire. Spearman's ( $\rho$ ) rank order correlation coefficient statistical tool was used to determine the relationship existing between the variables while the  $p$ -value obtained was used to test hypotheses developed for the study. Findings revealed the existence of significant relationship between the dimensions of training namely; training needs assessment, training content & delivery approaches and training evaluation and employee performance. It was then concluded that effective training will ultimately enhance the performance of employees in these organizations. This gave rise to our recommendations for the SMEs (auto parts manufacturers) and other business organizations operating in this era of stiff competition; that owners of auto parts SMEs should reinforce and apply training as part of organizational agenda in achieving organizational goals to increase the skill, knowledge and abilities of employees, training evaluation should measure performance against the standard to ensure that organizational goals are met as well as the employees', employees should show willingness and positive attitude towards training and apply the knowledge and skills gained to their jobs.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Training, Training needs assessment, Training content & delivery approach, Training evaluation, Employee performance, Effectiveness and Efficiency.*

## INTRODUCTION

The global economy and business environment are currently characterized by huge competition. The increased trends in new technology, continuous drive for quality, containment in cost, diversity in the workforce, and quest for change in business delivery has contributed to challenges being faced by auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi. The only way to sustenance and having a competitive edge is by differentiating business offering through creating enhanced human capital (Mckinsey, 2006). Thus more improved and effective training programme are required by all auto parts SMEs in order to survive in the global market. Most firms, invest in building the skills of their workforce to enable them cope with uncertain conditions that they may face in the future, thus, improving their performance. Huang & Jao (2016) explained that organizations design training programs to prepare their employees to perform their jobs correctly and according to laid down standards. Khan & Baloch (2017) opined that majority of organizations prefer to invest in different programs that create new skills through long-term planning. This is to enable them adapt to any current and future uncertainties. Therefore, they ensure that they improve the performance of their employees through superior levels of commitment and motivation. Employees are valuable asset of every company as they can make or break a company's reputation and can adversely affect profitability. Employees are responsible for the great bulk of necessary work to be done as well as customer satisfaction and quality of products. Therefore, having an adequately trained workforce is vital to ensure that the workforce has the right employees that have been professionally trained and qualified to do their tasks properly (Halawi & Haydar, 2018). Organizations are compelled to implement updated employee training strategies with an intention to increase the performance of their employees. Acton and Golden (2002) affirmed that training facilitates the updating of skills and leads to increased commitment, well-being and sense of belonging, thus directly strengthening the organization's competitiveness. Vanormelingen (2009) showed that training is a fundamental and effectual instrument in successful accomplishment of the firm's goals and objectives, resulting in higher performance and productivity of the organization. Armstrong (2000) contends that trained employees often work better as teams because everyone is aware of the expectation and can achieve them together smoothly. In addition, employees who receive regular training are more likely to accept change and come up with new ideas. Training has been identified as an example of a practice of human resource management that contributes to a competitive edge and its importance assumes a leading role and organizations are using it to compete with their direct competitors (Jehanzeb, Rasheed & Rasheed, 2013).

Ashar, et al. (2013) argued that training can be used an example of human resource practices that serve to achieve an advantage over competitors and organizations try to enhance the performance of its employees, ensuring the opportunity of employees are directly involved in training activities which will increase the sense of commitment to the organization (Bulut & Culha, 2010). Training is vital for organizations since it has a vital role in developing human resources skills to keep them up to date in order to follow best practices and existing techniques in the market (Dias & Silva, 2016). Mainly organizations go for training programs to improve productivity and quality, to increase organizational and employee morale, to motivate employees, to achieve financial gains, for prevention from industrial accidents, to provide wider awareness to employees that leads them to enhance their personal growth, to reduce employees' turnover intentions, for enhancement of company's image through conducting ethics training and for updating employees skills to align them with company's goals and objectives (McDougall & Beattie, 1998). Jaoude (2015) asserted that organizations providing high-level training have been able to realize three times increasing profits compared to competitors. However, to have such high impact programs is not simple, it requires a mixture of alignment and planning and involves developing and designing training in a manner that meets the organization's top goals. Collier *et al.* (2002) have found that increasing investment in training reduces the chance of firm closure. Booth and Zoega (2000) suggested that training fosters a common firm culture and helps attract good quality workers; Green and Felstead *et al.* (2000) found that training had a downward impact on employee turnover. Training gives basis to personal development by helping employees to develop leadership talent and communication skills, it decreases their fear in attempting new tasks and enables them to handle stress, frustration and conflicts. Nowadays markets are very competitive and there is cut throat competition. For auto part manufacturing SMEs, it is difficult to start, survive, stabilize and excel in the business the contribution of employees is very important for development and excellence in business. The performance of employees on different jobs in close coordination is needed for success of the unit. Afshan et al. (2012) define performance as the achievement of specific tasks measured against predetermined or identified standard of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. Employee performance according to Njoku (2015) is how employees are able to effectively administer their task and assignments and also how they present their assignment to reflect the quality and good service desired by their organization. employee performance is everything about the performance of employees in an organization. It involves all aspects which directly or indirectly affect and relate to the work of the

employees". Employee performance has attracted research interest from scholars focusing on differing contexts, sectors, cultures, countries adopting various explanatory variables; work life balance and employee performance were evaluated and a positive and significant relationship was found to exist between the variables (Mendis & Weerakkody, 2014). The association between perceived organizational support and employee performance was examined by Rocha and Chelladurai (2008) and the results showed a significant association between perceived organizational support and employee performance. Within manufacturing firms, lower skills levels in the UK were found to have a negative effect directly on labour productivity and on the types of machinery chosen (Keep, Mayhew and Corney, 2002). Dearden and Van Reenen (2000) analyzed the impact of training on performance for a variety of measures including value added output, profits and wages for a group of British industries between 1983 and 1996. They found connections between more training and higher labour productivity across a number of sectors. From the studies conducted above, it would interest us to know that training as presented possesses the tendency of enhancing employee performance, yet a number of extant researches haven't remarkably examined the interactions of these variables. Also evidenced is the fact that none of the highlighted works was carried out on auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State, Nigeria hence the identified gap in literature. It is in attempt to bridge this gap that this study is embarked upon to ascertain what relationship is existent between training and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.

### **AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study is to ascertain the influence of training on employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SME's in Anambra state. Specifically, the study sought to address the following objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of training needs assessment on employee performance in auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.
- ii. To determine the influence of training contents and delivery approaches on employee performance in auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.
- iii. To determine the influence of training evaluation on employee performance in auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Devanna, Formbrun and Tichy (1984) proposed the Michigan School model also known as the 'soft'

Human Resource Management (HRM). This model's emphasis is on treating employees as a means to achieving the organization's strategy. Its assumption is that 'what is good for the organization is equally good for the employee'. According to Devanna, Formbrun, and Tichy (1984), training and other HRM activities aim to increase employee performance. Although the Michigan School model acknowledges the importance of motivating and rewarding people, it concentrates most on managing human assets to achieve strategic goals (Pinnington and Edwards, 2000).

A second 'soft' HRM theoretical model to show how Human Resource Management (HRM) policies can affect employees and organizational outcomes was developed by Guest. The central hypothesis of Guest's model is that if an integrated set of HRM practices is applied with a view to achieving the established goals, employees' performance will improve. The strength of Guest's model is that it is a useful analytical framework for studying the relationship between HRM policies and organizational performance. This is because it expresses pathways for more careful, clear and ease of empirical testing. Guest also saw the goals of linking employees with organizational performance as important to ensure the high quality of products and services. He thus opines that training policy play an important role in HRM and contributes to improved strategic integration, employee commitment, flexibility and quality. He further asserts that HRM outcomes can lead to high job performance, high problem solving activity, high cost effectiveness, and low turnover, reduced absences and fewer grievances.

Kozlowski and Klein (2000) model focuses on training transfer. There are two types of training transfer namely horizontal and vertical transfer. Horizontal transfer concentrates on traditional models of training effectiveness, while the vertical transfer examines the link between individual training outcomes and organizational outcomes. The vertical transfer processes are composition and compilation. Composition concentrates on individual contribution at the same content, while compilation focuses on individual contribution at the different or diverse content.

### **Bramley's Individual Model of Training**

This model focuses more on individual knowledge, skills and abilities that organization should recognize that its employees are not effective and motivated and the change is required in their knowledge, skills and abilities. After need analysis, suitable training is conducted by following the traditional steps of designing, implementing and evaluating the training program to fulfill specific needs, enhance employee willingness to participate and meet their expectations. This training then enhances the individual performance by improving their knowledge, skills and abilities. As a result, this improved performance then leads towards improvement of overall organizational performance.

## Learning Theories

Armstrong (1996) emphasizes that training should be developed and operated within an organization by appreciating learning theories and approaches if the training is to be well understood. The success of a training program depends more on the organization's ability to identify training needs. Training experts believe that if trainees do not learn, it is probably because some important learning principle had been overlooked. Sherman et al (1996) argues that the success or failure of a training program is frequently related to the recognition and application of basic psychological principles of learning. This assertion is not necessarily right. If the trainees do not learn anything, then of what benefit will program. According to him, this could happen if a wrong candidate has been selected for the training program. McGhee et al (1996) posit that learning is a term used to describe the process by which behavioral changes result from experience. They assert further that the fact that learning has occurred could only be inferred from a comparison of an individual's behavior prior to the experiences of specific kinds of task. However, if there is no explicit behavioral change, it could then be argued that learning principles have not been followed. Training therefore can be explained as a planned and systematic effort by management aimed at altering behaviour of employees, in a direction that will achieve organizational goals. A formal training program is an effort by the employer to provide opportunities for the employee to acquire job-related skills, attitudes and knowledge (McGhee et al 1996)

## THE CONCEPT OF TRAINING

Training is a systematic modification of behavior through learning; which occurs as a result of education, instruction, development and planned experience. Training plays a vital role in building and maintaining capabilities, both on individual and organizational level, and thus participates in the process of organizational change (Valle et al., 2000). Moreover, it enhances the retention capacity of talented workforce, hence decreasing the unintentional job rotation of the workers (Jones & Wright, 1992; Shaw et al., 1998). Furthermore, Training indicates firm's long-term commitment towards its workers and increases the employee's motivational level (Pfeffer, 1994). Training provides employees with the needed skills, abilities and knowledge to perform the jobs according to the firm's procedures. Consequently, this ends up enhancing confidence among employees regarding their abilities and satisfaction while performing their jobs (Zhao et al.2014). (Zahra et al.2014) affirms that training develops required talents and capabilities in employees which ensure that each and every employee can give contribution towards organization's strategic objectives. Andrew (2003) posits that training needs exist where there is a gap between the present performance of

employees or group of employees and desired performance. Poh (2001) asserted that training is an essential element for sustainable competitive advantage and survival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it is the process of providing employees with specific skills or helping them to correct deficiencies in their performance. Chiaburu & Tekleab (2005) affirmed that training is a planned intervention aimed at enhancing the elements of individual job performance. According to David (2006) training not only develops capabilities of the employees but sharpen their thinking and creativity in order to take better decision in time and in more productive manner. Olaniyan & Ojo (2008) posited that training is important because it increase productiveness, improves the good quality of work; increases skills, knowledge, develop the attitude; enhance using tools, reduces waste, mishaps, turnover, lateness, absenteeism and also other overhead costs, eradicates obsolesce in knowledge, technologies, methods, items, capital management and so forth. Holton (1996) added that the image of a company rises to peak when an employee becomes able to implement the skills successfully in his practical work which he has acquired from training. Training enhances the capabilities of panel of employees in very effective way by motivating them and transforming them in to well organize and well-mannered, that ultimately affects the performance of organization (Saleem & Shahid, 2011). Training is the link that connects the employees with the firm, create new value for the firm as well as increase firm's performance in the market. A meta-analysis conducted by Burke & Day (1986) to examine the effectiveness of management training across six content areas( general management, self-awareness, problem solving/decision making, training and motivation/values), seven training methods ( lecture, group decision, leader match, sensitivity training, behavior modelling, group discussion with role playing or practice and multiple methods) and four outcome criteria ( subjective learning, objective learning, subjective behavior and objective results) reported a positive effort for training among nearly all combinations of content, method and outcome. Smith (2010) opined that training motivates employee and make them more productive and innovative. Smith further asserts that the reasons why training makes sense include, well trained employees are more capable and willing to assume more control over their jobs; they need less supervision, with free management for other tasks; employees are more capable to answer questions from customers which enhances customer loyalty. Furthermore, employees who understand their job, complain less, are more satisfied and more motivated and thus improve management-employee relationships. Barlett (2001) argued that organizations that created an environment where training was supported and valued by employees achieved greater commitment outcomes such as low turnover (Chew, 2004), reduced absenteeism, increased productivity and increased

competitiveness. Owens (2006) opined that Employees through training programs usually report higher levels of commitment to their job and are less likely to have turnover intentions. McNamara (2008) confirmed the various positions of most training literature by outlining the benefits organization's and employees' gained from adopting a systematic approach to human resource learning and development. He observed that training led to increased job satisfaction and morale among employees, increased employee motivation, increased efficiencies in processes, resulting in financial gain, increased capacity to adopt new technologies and methods, increased innovation in strategies and products, reduced employee turnover, enhanced company image and risk management. Zahra et al. (2014) examined Employee Training and Its Effect on Employees' Job Motivation and Commitment. They concluded that employee training is the most suitable method to modify and manage workforce skills according to organization's objectives and to improve the overall organizations' performance.

### **DIMENSIONS OF TRAINING**

Dimensions of training are adopted from the study conducted by Otuko, Chege & Douglas (2013) to include training needs assessment, training contents & delivery approaches and training evaluation; these concepts are further discussed;

#### **Training Needs Assessment**

Needs assessment offers a database support or justify resource allocation for other human resource functions (Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Armstrong (2012) defined training need as an on-going management process for generating and analyzing information about performance in an organization to make better and informed decisions about where and when to use training". Training needs assessment is the foundation of the entire instructional training process. It establishes the content of subsequent training. If needs assessment is not done accurately the job-relatedness, effectiveness and validity of any training programme is threatened (Lakra, 2017). Training needs can be identified through analysis of whole organization (current status of company and future targets), specific job characteristics and the needs of individual employee (whether they have abilities to perform required tasks or not). Training need analysis is necessary to know that what kind and how much of training is required for a particular job need. It can be done through various methods like surveys, questionnaires, observations and also internal audit gives help to point out areas that need training. TNA involves an analysis of three human resource areas: the organization, the person and the task itself (Thayer and McGhee, 1961). Organization level analysis involves a sound review of all resources available, Top management's support and strategic and operational plans. Person analysis looks at an individual employee

and the job they do to identify level of skills and knowledge by looking at such factors as commitment, productivity, absenteeism, tardiness and potential and can be done through performance reviews, questions and interviews (Warshner, 1998). Task analysis looks at the knowledge and skill requirements for each specific job and compares these requirements to employees' actual knowledge and skills. Any gap(s) reveal a training need. An effective task analysis identifies "tasks" that have to be performed, now, often and when performed, the quality and quantity of performance required" (Brown, 2002). Cole (2002) asserts that organizations adopting a systematic approach to training and development will usually set about defining their need for training in accordance with a well-organized procedure. He adds that such a procedure will entail looking at training needs from a number of different perspectives. Goldstein and Ford (2002) argued that the first step in managing training is to determine training needs and set objectives for these needs. Dessler (2008) opined that it is futile spending time training an employee whose work is deficient because of insufficient motivation. Barbazette (2006), suggested training needs assessment provided answers to the "who", "what" and "why" of training. Belcourt (1999) noted that management should stay alert to the kinds of training that are needed, where they are needed, who needs them and which methods will best deliver needed knowledge, skills and abilities. Wright et al. (2003) added that it is important to determine what prospective trainees can and cannot do so that the training program can be designed to emphasize the areas in which they are deficient. Muma (2014) examined the effect of training needs assessment on employee commitment among employees of the Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology. This study adopted a descriptive survey case study design employing both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The target population was 1731 staff members of JKUAT and a sample size of 10%. Stratified random sampling technique was used to sample the 173 respondents. A questionnaire was used to gather data from respondents and the data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The findings from the inferential statistics indicated that training had an effect on employee commitment. The study established that training needs assessment in JKUAT and other Public Universities was not being done effectively and thus led to lack of commitment by employees to their jobs. The study concluded that the most significant factor in regard to employee commitment is focusing on Training Needs Assessment **H01:** There is no significant relationship between training needs assessment and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.

## Training Content & Delivery Approach

Effective training design considers learning concepts, legal issues, and different approaches to training (Mathis and Jackson, 2000). The content of the training should be according to the needs of the employees (Khan, Khan & Khan, 2011) An outcome of the Training Needs Assessment is the specification of the training objectives that, in turn, identifies or specifies the skills and tasks to be trained. skills and tasks can be categorized into two broad categories: people or technical skills (Poon & Othman, 2000). People skill has to do with how people relate to each other: communicating, listening, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, cooperating as team member, solving problems and resolving conflicts (Coates, 2004) Many organizations fail because their employees are not trained well enough in necessary skills they need for effective functioning. people skills are assessed prior to the training programmes by executives to encourage, reinforce and ensuring frequent feedback from their subordinates, people skills training provides a platform to showcase technical skills, brings out the leadership qualities through personal growth and provides the desired motivation and accountability (Menguin, 2007). Similarly, technical skills training is designed and offered by organizations in order to update existing skills and acquire new technologies that will suit the organization's technical training needs, goals and budgets. Technical skills training helps employee acquire new skills and improves their performance and output (Remmen et al., 2001). Delivery content/delivery style means so much in the training because it is what goes into making the change expected in the trainee (Armstrong, 2000). Thus, if someone is not delivering the training in an impressive style and not capturing the attention of the audience, it means the trainer is wasting the time (Mark and Andrew, 2000). Therefore, it becomes imperative for a trainer to engage its audience during the training session (Phillip and Eves, 2005). Different approaches are used by organizations for delivering training objectives and developing their employees. Team training is one of delivery approach by which people learn how to work effectively as a team through brainstorming, direct observation and feedback (Forbush & Morgan, 2004). Mentoring is another delivery approach which involves training that is done to support career advancement and professional development in order to maximize learning and development (Miller et al., 2008). mentoring helps to build an organization with a strong culture and give them a competitive edge in the battle for talent (Hartenian, 2003).

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between training needs assessment and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.

## Training Evaluation

Training evaluation is the systematic collection of data in order to answer the questions of whether learning objectives were achieved, and the overall impact of training on the employee performance in terms of results achieved (Lakra, 2017). Evaluation is a systematic process of determining the significance or worth of subject, using criteria governed by a set of standards. It can assist an organization to ascertain the degree of achievement or value in regards to the aim and objectives of an undertaken project The main objective of training evaluation is to prove that the training has actually taught what was intended, improve the course contents for future use and modify or discontinue trainings that does not work (Sarah del Tufo, 2002). Kirkpatrick's model has developed a very popular evaluation model which helps in achieving the pre-requisite goals in training (Ahmed & Din, 2009). The model recommends measuring in sequence, trainee's reaction (how well trainee linked the training), learning (principle, facts or skill learned), behavior (resulting changes in behavior on the job) and result (tangible outcomes of training such as more profit or fewer errors) (Kirkpatrick,1994). The basic aim of evaluating training is to assess the effectiveness of the training towards actualizing the firm's goals. Warr et al. (1976) came up with training acronym known as CIRO which is similar to Kirkpatrick model; CIRO stands for Context Evaluation, Input, Reaction and the Outcome. CIRO deals more on factors such as; (1) Context Evaluation: Identification of training needs, setting of goals based on organizational culture and environment. (2) Inputs deals on evaluation based on design and delivery activities. (3) Reaction evaluation focuses on attaining and using information about the quality experiences of the trainees. (4) Outcome evaluation deals with what was achieved from the training activities and which is assessed in three stages; Immediate, Intermediate and ultimate levels. The immediate level evaluation attempts to measure changes in knowledge, skills or attitude before the participant goes back to the job. The intermediate evaluation focuses on the impact of training on the job performance and how knowledge is transferred back to the organisation and lastly, the ultimate evaluation refers to the overall impact of training on the organizational performance in terms of results achieved (Warr et al. 1976). It is the responsibility of the manager to consistently evaluate and measure the performance of workers this will help the organization to monitor and improve their staff and keep them abreast of the nature of training techniques to be implemented (Ugoji & Mordi, 2014). Omer et. al. (2009) states that, training process commences with the skills and knowledge assessment required to achieve organizational objectives, and putting into consideration if training is the most suitable solution to meeting the skills and knowledge needed. If training is deemed appropriate, the next step will be to select appropriate participants for the training and the most

appropriate way to evaluate the outcome of training. Evaluating the impact of investments in people (such as training) helps to justify the costs incurred, validate the intervention as a business tool, and aid the design and selection of future investment methods (Page, Jagger, Tamkin & Henwood, 2006).

Ugoji & Mordi (2014) in their work investigated the evaluation of training and development within the service industries in Nigeria. Also, the study evaluated the perceptions of training evaluation from the perspective of the major three stakeholders responsible for training that is; the management, trainers and more importantly the participants of the training (workers). The researcher distributed via mail questionnaire to seven different reputable service firms in Nigeria, of which four of them were banks, the rest are telecommunication and travel firms and hotels and collected 86 (49 females and 37males) questionnaires. The study showed the commitment of firms in the training evaluation implementation towards organization strategic performance attainment and individual career improvement. It also showed that the majority of the service industry in Nigeria offers more of full time employment (72%), this explains the reason why firms are expected to devote more time to training evaluation because this group of employees with the nature of their employment have a longer time to be with the organization and still a lot to give back to the organization only if organizations will ensure a continues training and development. For organization to achieve the best from training and development initiatives, it is the responsibility of the organization to constantly evaluates the training programs and techniques implemented so as to establish how effective and efficient it is for both the organization and the individual. From the employee's perspective, the study also revealed that some firms in the service industry in Nigeria are still behind when it comes to integrating the principles of good practice through training evaluations especially with respect to implementing training needs assessment before selecting individual for training. The study recommended that training evaluation needs to be strengthened in order to ensure future effectiveness of training activities in this industry.

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between training evaluation and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State.

### **The Concept of Employee Performance**

According to Krietner (1995) employee performance is how employees are able to effectively administer their task and assignments and also how they present their assignment to reflect the quality and good service desired by their companies. good employee performance mirrors the ability to contribute through their works leading to the behavioural achievement that is in accordance with the goals of the company. Kenney

et al. (1992) stated that employee's performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization while performance may be used to define what an organization has accomplished with respect to the process, results, relevance and success. In the studies by Kinicki & Kreitner (2007) on the specific determinants of work motivation, competence, organizational climate, job satisfaction and individual performance. The study was conducted among lecturers in Indonesia and analysed empirically the effect of work motivation, competence, organizational climate on job satisfaction and individual performance and found that employee performance is higher in happy and satisfied workers and the management find it easy to motivate high performers to attain firm targets. Aslam et al. (2015) examined the relationship between compensation and reward system on the performance of employees in the banking sector of Pakistan. The study showed that reward and compensation is significantly related to employee performance and concludes that reward and compensation boosts up the efficiency of employees.

### **Training and Employee Performance**

Various researches have been conducted as it relates to training and employee performance; Al-Awawdeh (2011) conducted a study which aimed mainly to analyze the relationship between training and staff performance statistically. The study revealed that there is a need to have scientific methods to determine the training needs of workers in Al-Bayt University, as well as building training programs that focus on impediments and work to resolve them. The study by Utoko et al. (2013) assesses the effect of training dimensions on employee performance, a case of Mumias Sugar Manufacturing Company, Kenya. The study shows that there was a positive and significant effect between training needs assessment, training contents, training evaluation and employee performance in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Dearden and Van Reenen (2000) analyzed the impact of training on performance for a variety of measures including value added output, profits and wages for a group of British industries between 1983 and 1996. They found connections between more training and higher labour productivity across a number of sectors. Hadawi & Haydar (2018) investigated the effects of training on performance of employees from two Lebanese companies-Bonjus Company and Khatib & Alami Company, the study concluded that training influence the conduct of employees and their working abilities resulting in improved performance and further productive change that serve to build the performance of the employee. Zahid (2013) examined the impact of training on employee performance of a retail banking sector in India. The study concluded that by the help of training employees became proficient in their jobs are able to give better result. Sendawula et al. (2018) investigated the contribution of training and employee engagement on employee performance using evidence

from Uganda's health sector and concluded that when organization takes care of employees through training, employees show more engaged behavior to their work, leading to better performance outcomes in the workplace especially in the hospitals.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a cross sectional survey research design in studying auto parts manufacturing SMEs in Nnewi, Anambra State Nigeria namely Akebono Ind. Company Nigeria Limited, Cutix Plc, Godwin Kris Industries Limited, Iju Industries Limited, Greatland Industries Limited, Haroside Nigeria Limited, Isaho Industries Limited, John White Industries Limited, Louis Carter Group Limited, OCE Filter Manufacturing Company Limited, Union Autoparts Manufacturing Company Limited, out of sixteen (16) registered with National Automotive Council Nigeria which forms our accessible population (NAC Survey, 2015), however our study units include the individual employees of the manufacturing firms having that our unit of analysis is at the employee level. The researcher used a descriptive survey design. Primary data was collected through questionnaires while secondary data was collected from books, journals and internet sourcing. The questionnaire was self-administered. The sampling method adopted in this study is the stratified random sampling method. Stratified random sampling, which involves a process of segregation, followed by random selection of subjects from each stratum was used. It was the most efficient among all probability designs since it ensured that all

groups are adequately sampled. The employee categories formed the strata. The Taro Yamane's formula by Baridam (2001) was used to arrive at a sample size of Two hundred and twenty-four (224) respondents from the total population of five hundred and nine (509). From the field survey, we retrieved and analyzed two hundred and one (201) copies of questionnaire using Spearman's rank order coefficient of correlation statistical tool.

### **OPERATIONAL MEASURES OF VARIABLES**

Training; this was measured using three items adapted from the work of Otuko, Chege & Douglas (2013) to include Training needs assessment, Training contents & delivery approaches and Training evaluation); Training needs assessment has 7 items (e.g. There is commitment by management to carry out training needs assessment frequently) as adapted from the work of Muma et al. 2014; Training contents & delivery approaches has 7 items (e.g. Good training content ensures that identified employee skill gaps are properly captured); Training evaluation has 5 items as adapted from Otuko *et al.* (2013) (e.g. The training program offered by my company is very helpful); Employee performance was adopted from the work of Mang (2016) and was explained using 11 items (My contribution towards achieving the organizational goals has increased)

**RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSES**

**Correlations**

Correlations			Training Needs Assessment	Training Contents and Delivery Approaches	Training Evaluation	Employee Performance
Spearman's rho	Training Needs Assessment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000			
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.			
		N	201			
	Training Contents and Delivery Approaches	Correlation Coefficient	.759**	1.000		
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.		
		N	201	201		
	Training Evaluation	Correlation Coefficient	.702**	.699**	1.000	
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	
		N	201	201	201	
	Employee Performance	Correlation Coefficient	.657**	.669**	.926**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	201	201	201	201

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

Source: SPSS Output-Version 20 (field survey)

The Spearman' rank correlation table above measures the strength of association between the variables as follows;

The result reported a positive correlation between training needs assessment and employee performance (rho = .657, n = 201, p < 0.01), also a positive

correlation value was reported between training contents and delivery approaches and employee performance (rho = .669, n = 201, p < 0.01), the correlation between training evaluation and employee performance of the corporation showed a strong and positive value (rho = .926, n = 201, p < 0.01).

**Table 2: Model Summary of the Variables**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.905 <sup>a</sup>	.819	.816	3.114

**a. Predictors: (Constant), Training Evaluation, Training Contents and Delivery Approaches, Training Needs Assessment**

Source: SPSS Output Version 20

The model summary reports a correlation coefficient value of .905<sup>a</sup> for all the dimensions of training indicating that there exists a positive association between them and employee performance of

corporations studied; the R square value of .819 (81.9%) represents the coefficient of determination which is the explained variation in employee performance as accounted for by the dimensions of training.

**Table 3: Regression Output used to test the stated null Hypotheses**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error			
1	<b>(Constant)</b>	20.492	1.083		18.916	.000
	<b>Training Needs Assessment</b>	.363	.062	<b>.306</b>	5.879	<b>.021</b>
	<b>Training Contents and Delivery Approaches</b>	.422	.348	<b>.419</b>	.461	<b>.005</b>
	<b>Training Evaluation</b>	.722	.056	<b>.634</b>	12.911	<b>.001</b>
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance</b>						

Source: SPSS Output Version 20

**Decision Rule:** Accept the null hypothesis (H0) if the tabulated value is greater than the critical value (P-value) at 0.05 which is the tolerable error of 5%; otherwise accept the alternate hypothesis (Gujarati, 2004).

**H0<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between training needs assessment and employee performance. The results from the regression analysis indicated that training needs assessment reported a positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = .306, 0.01$ ) thus yielding a calculated value of .021 which is less than the P-value set at 0.05 ( $r = .021 < .05$ ) resulting to non-acceptance of the stated null hypothesis (**H0<sub>1</sub>**) implying that there exists significant relationship between training needs assessment and employee performance.

**H0<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between training contents and delivery approaches and employee performance.

The results from the regression analysis indicated that training contents and delivery approaches as a dimension of training reported a positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = .419, 0.05$ ) thus yielding a calculated value of .005 which is less than the P-value set at 0.05 ( $r = .005 < .05$ ) resulting to non-acceptance of the stated null hypothesis (**H0<sub>2</sub>**) implying that there exists significant relationship between training contents and delivery approaches and employee performance of auto parts manufacturing SMEs.

**H0<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between training evaluation and employee performance.

The results from the regression analysis indicated that training evaluation as a dimension of training reported a positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = .634, 0.05$ ) thus yielding a calculated value of .001 which is less than the P-value set at 0.05 ( $r = .001 < .05$ ) resulting to non-acceptance of the stated null hypothesis (**H0<sub>3</sub>**) implying that there exists significant relationship between training evaluation and employee performance.

**DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

The result on the tested H01 ( $\rho = .657^{**}, n = 201, p = .02 < 0.05$ ) between training needs assessment and employee performance suggests there exist a significant relationship; This finding is supported by Wright et al. (2003) who posited that it is important to determine what prospective trainees can and cannot do so that the training program can be designed to emphasize the areas in which they are deficient. they emphasized that in today’s highly competitive business environment, firms that undertake a systematic approach to addressing bonafide needs positively influences their employee performance. This agrees with the opinion of Goldstein & Ford (2002) that conducting a systematic Training Needs Assessment is a crucial initial step to designing a training program and can substantially influence the overall effectiveness of training programmes, which also affected the performance of employees (Wagonhurst, 2002).

The tested H02 ( $\rho = .669^{**}, n = 201, p = .005 < 0.05$ ) revealed the existence of significant relationship between training content and delivery approaches and employee performance; this is in support with the work of Armstrong (2000) which asserts that delivery content/delivery style means so much in the training because it is what goes into making the change expected in the trainee. Thus, if someone is not delivering the training in an impressive style and not capturing the attention of the audience, it means the trainer is wasting the time (Mark and Andrew, 2000). Otuko, Chege & Douglas (2013) posit that employees who learnt specific skills from a comprehensive training programmes performed specific job task effectively.

Accordingly, the tested H03 ( $\rho = .926^{**}, n = 201, p = .001 < 0.05$ ) manifested the existence of significant association between training evaluation and employee performance; This agrees with the work of Ugoji & Mordi (2014) majority of the service industry in Nigeria offers more of full time employment (72%),

this explains the reason why firms are expected to devote more time to training evaluation because this group of employees with the nature of their employment have a longer time to be with the organization and still a lot to give back to the organization only if organizations will ensure a continues training and development.

## CONCLUSION

Empirical findings from data analyzed predicate the following conclusions relative to the scope of our study; Training needs assessment is significantly related to employee performance; Through needs assessment, the organization creates and improves the nature of the present workers by influencing the conduct of employees and their working abilities resulting in improved performance and further productive changes that serve to build the performance of the employee. Employees who felt challenged and appreciated through training opportunities felt more satisfied with their job and motivated them to become more innovative and thus improved their performance.

Again, training content and delivery approach is significantly related to employee performance; Training content and delivery approach built the worker's confidence and make them have a more grounded comprehension of the business and the duties of the activity. This confidence brought about outstanding performances and new ideas that helped to them exceed expectations. The delivery approach instilled in the employees the important skills required to perform different tasks in the organization which had a noteworthy part on their performance. The delivery approach expands efficiency as well as inspire and motivate employees and gives them all the data they need to make their output better.

Also, significant relationship was reported between training evaluation and employee performance; Continuous evaluation kept the employees on the cutting edge of industry improvements and further guaranteed that employees had a dependable experience and background knowledge thus expanding their productivity and overall performance.

## RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following recommendations come about as a result of prior findings and conclusions reached relative to the variables studied, thus;

- Auto-parts manufacturing SMEs should formulate HR policy on training function which sets guidelines and framework on how to successfully conduct and implement the findings/surveys on Training Needs Assessment to effectively tackle training deficiencies and to ensure staff are clear on their career growth.

- Training programs should be planned carefully by aligning the objectives of training with organizational objectives.
- Training programme must be developed to fulfill the specific needs of the employees, and they also, should show willingness and positive attitude towards training and apply the knowledge and skills gained to their jobs.
- Management should design and develop all training activities, materials and methods timely and accurately in order to avoid any problem in implementation and evaluation stages.
- Evaluation of training should be conducted at the spot right after closing the training program by taking feedback from both trainer and trainees along with the evaluation conducted at workplaces.
- Auto parts manufacturing SMEs should develop a transparent database of their employee's competencies/skills deficits openly with all stakeholders so that various managements can review and give priority to critical training areas that benefits the employees and the organization in a given period.
- Owners of auto parts manufacturing SMEs should reinforce and apply training as part of organizational agendas in achieving organizational goals through seminars, workshops etc. to increase employee's knowledge, skills and abilities.

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