



## Challenges of Implementing Manpower Training on the Performance of Nigerian Private Universities: Insights from Joseph Ayo Babalola University

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### Abstract

This study investigates the challenges of implementing manpower training and its effects especially on the performance of Nigerian private university system, using Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU) as a case study. Guided by Human Capital Theory, the study employed a descriptive case study design and stratified random sampling to select 233 respondents from academic, administrative, technical, and junior staff categories. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed with descriptive statistics and regression models. Findings revealed that financial constraints, weak institutional policies, limited HR expertise, and inequitable access constitute major barriers to manpower training. However, these structural challenges did not significantly predict training effectiveness. Employee attitudes emerged as a more decisive factor influencing training outcomes. Additionally, effective training showed a strong positive effect on institutional performance by enhancing staff commitment and innovative behaviour. The study concludes that both structural reforms and positive staff perceptions are essential for maximizing training outcomes in private universities. It recommends protected funding mechanisms, professionalization of HRD units, transparent training policies, and improved staff engagement to strengthen human capital development.

**Keywords:** Manpower training, private universities, training effectiveness, institutional performance, Nigeria

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### 1. Introduction

Human resource development remains a strategic driver of organizational effectiveness, particularly in higher education where staff competence determines instructional quality, research productivity, and institutional reputation. Nigeria's private universities have expanded rapidly in the last two decades, helping to absorb rising demand for tertiary education (Okebukola, 2015; Obasi & Obasi, 2020). Yet, questions persist regarding their capacity to invest in sustained manpower training, an essential input for institutional growth and competitiveness.

Although private universities are often perceived as more flexible and innovative, existing studies show that many face challenges such as limited funding, weak policy frameworks, and inadequate human resource development structures (Ogunode, 2021; Kinyanjui, 2019). These constraints raise concerns about whether training initiatives are effective and whether they translate into improved institutional performance. Globally, evidence shows that systematic and inclusive staff development enhances teaching effectiveness, research engagement, and organizational adaptability (OECD, 2019; Cotta et al., 2024).



However, empirical research focusing specifically on manpower training in Nigerian private Universities is limited. This study addresses this gap by examining the challenges encountered in implementing manpower training in Joseph Ayo Babalola University (JABU) and assessing how these challenges influence training effectiveness and institutional performance. Anchored on Human Capital Theory, the study provides evidence on the structural and perceptual factors shaping training outcomes and offers actionable recommendations to strengthen human capital development in private universities.

## 2. Literature Review

### Concept Manpower Training

Manpower training refers to the systematic process through which employees acquire the knowledge, skills, competencies, and behavioural attributes required to perform their current roles effectively and to prepare for future responsibilities (Omole, 2004; Ohakwe, 2007). In higher education institutions, manpower training encompasses teaching skills, research competence, curriculum design, administrative efficiency, and digital literacy. It is therefore a strategic investment that directly influences teaching quality, research productivity, and institutional reputation (Fernandes, 2023; Cotta et al., 2024).

Training effectiveness denotes the extent to which training programmes achieve intended learning and performance outcomes. It is reflected in improved job competence, teaching quality, staff innovation, and work commitment (Oribabor, 2000). Factors influencing training effectiveness include relevance of training, availability of resources, trainer competence, staff motivation, and the fairness of training opportunities (Nishii & Wright, 2007).

Institutional performance in universities refers to the achievement of objectives related to teaching quality, research output, staff commitment, administrative efficiency, innovation, accreditation outcomes, and student satisfaction (Knight & Yorke, 2015). Human Capital Theory posits that investments in training improve employee competence and subsequently improve institutional performance (Becker, 1994; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018).

### Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Human Capital (Manpower) Theory, initially proposed by Schultz (1961) and later developed by Becker (1994). The theory posits that investment in education and training raises productivity and lifetime earnings. By analogy, organizations that invest in manpower development can achieve superior performance outcomes. In the university context, this implies that faculty and staff training are directly linked to institutional success and competitiveness.

Human Capital Theory has been widely applied in explaining the role of education and skills in economic growth and institutional development. Schultz (1961) argued that expenditure on



education and training should be seen as an investment in human beings, comparable to investment in physical capital. Becker (1994) further expanded this argument by emphasizing that both general training (transferable skills) and firm-specific training (skills unique to an institution) contribute to higher productivity. Within higher education, this suggests that investments in staff training, whether in pedagogy, research skills, or administrative competencies, yield returns in the form of enhanced teaching quality, improved research output, and stronger institutional performance (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; Tan, 2014).

Contemporary research continues to validate the relevance of Human Capital Theory. For example, Heckman (2019) highlights that sustained investments in human capital significantly improve organizational outcomes and national development. In the higher education sector, Knight and Yorke (2015) argue that training and development programs strengthen employability and institutional competitiveness, while Marginson (2019) stresses that human capital remains central to global knowledge economies. Applied to Nigerian private universities, the theory implies that consistent investment in manpower training is not merely desirable but essential for long-term sustainability, reputation, and effectiveness (Olaniyan & Okemakinde, 2008).

In summary, the Human Capital Theory provides a useful lens through which to examine manpower training in Nigerian private universities, reinforcing the assumption that staff development directly enhances institutional capacity, competitiveness, and contribution to societal development.

### **Review of Empirical Studies**

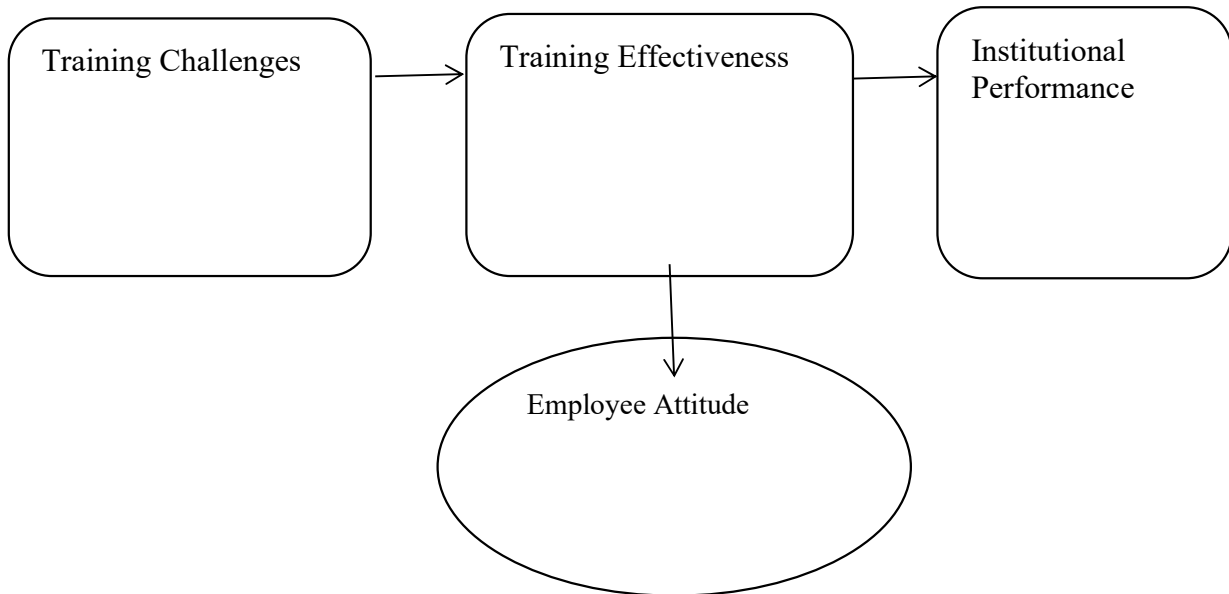
Empirical studies show that manpower training enhances employee productivity and institutional performance. Iqbal (2024) found that staff training significantly improves university productivity, while Cotta et al. (2024) demonstrated that faculty development enhances teaching quality and student learning. Shiri et al. (2023) established that continuous professional development promotes staff retention and commitment.

However, empirical studies also reveal that training implementation in African universities is constrained by financial limitations, inadequate HR capacity, and policy inconsistencies (Debrah & Ofori, 2006; Teferra, 2016). In Nigeria, Ezeani and Oladele (2013) found that training boosts productivity, but needs assessments are often neglected. Fapohunda (2014) noted that private universities face management resistance, limited financing, and insufficient organizational structures for professional development.

Despite these findings, limited research examines how training challenges influence training effectiveness and institutional performance in Nigerian private universities. This study fills this gap using evidence from JABU.

### Conceptual Model

The conceptual framework is based on the assumption that: **Training challenges (Independent Variable)**, **Training effectiveness (Mediator)** which in turn affects, and **Institutional performance (dependent Vvariable)**. Employee attitudes may strengthen or weaken these relationships.



### 3. Methodology

A descriptive case study design was adopted to allow for an in-depth examination of manpower training processes within a real institutional context. JABU was selected because it reflects typical HR structures of Nigerian private universities.

The study population comprised 765 staff members across academic, administrative, technical, and junior staff categories. Using Yamane's formula, a sample size of 263 was determined. Stratified random sampling ensured adequate representation. A total of 233 valid responses were returned (88.6% response rate).

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire containing sections on demographic characteristics, perceptions of manpower training, and training challenges. Responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale. Expert review ensured validity while reliability was confirmed with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.82.

Descriptive statistics summarized demographic data and training challenges. Multiple regression analyses examined: the effect of training challenges on training effectiveness, the effect of



employee attitudes on training effectiveness, and the effect of training effectiveness on institutional performance.

A case study design was adopted because it allows for an in-depth examination of complex organizational processes within a real-life context, particularly where boundaries between the phenomenon and the setting are not clearly defined. Although JABU represents a single private university, its staffing structure, governance practices, and training challenges are broadly similar to those of many Nigerian private universities (Fapohunda, 2014; Ogunode, 2021). Thus, findings from the case offer transferable insights applicable to comparable institutions. Stratified random sampling ensured representation across staff categories, enhancing the internal validity of the study.

#### 4. Results and Discussion

##### Demographic Characteristics

Respondents included 97 academic staff (41.6%), 44 administrative staff (18.9%), 21 technical staff (9.0%), and 71 junior staff (30.5%). Most respondents were aged 31- 40 years (32.6%), and 43.8% held postgraduate qualifications.

##### Regression Results

##### 1. Effect of Training Challenges on Training Effectiveness (Independent Variable - Mediator)

**Regression Model 1** examined whether structural constraints such as financial limitations, weak policies, and limited HR capacity significantly predict training effectiveness.

**Table 1: Regression of Training Effectiveness on Training Challenges**

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	141.000	5.500	–	25.64	0.000
Challenges	–0.179	3.635	–0.012	–0.049	0.986

##### Interpretation:

The relationship between training challenges and training effectiveness was negative but statistically insignificant ( $p = 0.986$ ). **This means that although challenges exist in the institution, they do not directly determine how effective training outcomes are.** The finding suggests that training outcomes may be influenced more strongly by perceptual or behavioural factors than by structural barriers.

##### 2. Effect of Employee Attitudes on Training Effectiveness (Attitude - Mediator)

**Regression Model 2** assessed whether employee attitudes significantly influence the effectiveness of manpower training.



**Table 2: Regression of Training Effectiveness on Employee Attitudes**

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	138.333	6.780	–	20.41	0.000
Attitudes	12.800	3.990	0.573	3.209	0.003

**Interpretation:**

Employee attitudes were found to be a significant, positive predictor of training effectiveness ( $p = 0.003$ ). This indicates that **staff who view training as relevant, fair, and beneficial are more likely to gain from it**, even when structural constraints are present. This supports the psychological perspective within HRM literature that employee perceptions mediate the effectiveness of HR practices.

**3. Effect of Training Effectiveness on Institutional Performance (Mediator - Dependent Variable)**

**Regression Model 3** tested whether training effectiveness significantly influences institutional performance at JABU.

**Table 3: Regression of Institutional Performance on Training Effectiveness**

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	p
Constant	167.400	4.900	–	34.16	0.000
Training Effectiveness	12.000	2.200	0.678	5.455	0.000

**Interpretation:**

Training effectiveness had a strong, significant positive effect on institutional performance ( $p < 0.001$ ). This means that **when manpower training is effective, institutional outcomes such as staff commitment, innovation, and productivity improve substantially**. This finding is consistent with Human Capital Theory, which asserts that investment in staff development enhances organizational performance.

**Discussion**

Findings show that although structural challenges, including limited funding, weak policies, and inadequate HR capacity affect manpower training, these challenges do not significantly determine training effectiveness at JABU. This suggests that training outcomes are influenced by factors beyond structural barriers.

The significant role of employee attitudes indicates that behavioural and perceptual factors may override structural challenges. This aligns with Nishii and Wright's (2007) assertion that employee perceptions of fairness and inclusion shape their engagement with HR practices.



The strong positive link between training effectiveness and institutional performance supports Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1994; Schultz, 1961), confirming that investments in human resources enhance institutional outcomes such as teaching quality, innovation, and staff commitment.

These findings suggest that private universities must simultaneously address structural constraints and organizational culture to maximize the benefits of manpower training.

### **5. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined manpower training challenges in a Nigerian private university and assessed their influence on training effectiveness and institutional performance. While structural challenges were present, they did not significantly determine training effectiveness. Instead, employee attitudes emerged as a key predictor. Furthermore, effective training significantly improved institutional performance.

#### **The study recommends as follows:**

- i. The University should strengthen its human resource capacity by recruiting qualified HRD professionals and conducting regular training needs assessments to ensure that development programmes remain relevant and effective.
- ii. Funding and policy frameworks should be improved by establishing protected budgets dedicated to staff training and implementing transparent, inclusive policies that govern training selection and participation.
- iii. Staff motivation and perceptions should be enhanced by ensuring equitable access to training opportunities for all categories of employees and by clearly communicating the objectives, expectations, and benefits of training programmes.

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