

Impediments Of Employee Training As A Facilitator For The Sustainability Of Selected Firms In Nigeria

Dr. Sunny B. Beredugo¹, Dr. Jane C. Akujor², Dr. Emmanuel E. Okon³, Bassey Okon Ekpo⁴, Dr. Charles O. Njoku⁵, Dr. Uzoamaka G. Chris-Ejiogu⁶, Dr. Duru E. Ejike⁷, Dr. Chilaka E. Nwaimo⁸, Dr. Ugwu K. Enyinna⁹

¹Department of Accounting and Finance, Margaret Lawrence University, Delta State-Nigeria. beredugosunny@gmail.com. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5676-6799>.

²Department of Finance and Innovation Technology, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. janeakujor1@gmail.com <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6540-8830>.

³Department of Business Management, University of Calabar- Calabar, Cross River State. Okonemmanuel2018@gmail.com. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4876-0557>

⁴Department of Accounting, University of Cross River State, Calabar. ekpobas@gmail.com

⁵Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. nj4charlie@gmail.com. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8661-506X>

⁶Department of Fintech, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. Uzoamaka.chris-ejiogu@futo.edu.ng <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-5095-7331>

⁷Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State. erasmus.duru@futo.edu.ng. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4628-1760>

⁸Department of Finance and Innovation Technology, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Nigeria. Chilaka. nwaimo@futo.edu.ng. <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1168-7633>

⁹Department of Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Federal University of Technology Owerri, Imo State.. kelechi.ugwu@futo.edu.ng. <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-7588-4723>

Abstract

Critical job skills are often inadequately addressed in formal education, making employee training essential. Many companies misalign training with organizational goals, leading to wasted resources and decreased performance. Moreover, some professionals doubt the value of training when employees frequently leave. This study employs a quantitative approach to assess the impact of employee training strategies on firm sustainability and to explore perceptions in the banking and IT sectors regarding cost recovery for training amid high turnover. Involving 263 respondents, the study utilized ordinary least squares and independent t-tests to analyze the data. Findings reveal that effective training strategies are vital for sustainability. There is no significant difference between the banking and IT sectors regarding recovery agreements for training costs when employees leave shortly after upskilling. However, there is a notable difference in their views on repayment systems for recouping training expenses. To improve retention, firms must invest in adequate training and value their employees, significantly reducing turnover.

Keywords: Employee training; Sustainability; Investment; Transferable skills; High staff turnover

1. INTRODUCTION

The success of any business relies heavily on the proficiency of its staff and their ability to enhance operations. Many banks and IT firms in Nigeria have failed due to a lack of these essential skills. Investing in staff training is crucial for developing future leaders who can drive sustainability and address emerging challenges. Such investment fosters a culture of continuous learning and significantly boosts job satisfaction, which is vital for sustainable success. Research by Fada and Sabo (2017) shows that well-trained employees directly enhance organizational performance and long-term viability. Conversely, inadequate training leads to poor performance, decreased productivity, and increased costs due to errors and turnover (Nzimakwe & Utete, 2024). Organizations that fail to provide effective training hinder their ability to meet expectations and widen

knowledge gaps among employees (Basavaraj, 2018). Ultimately, neglecting human capital planning will result in a struggle to deliver excellent service and retain key personnel (Abubakar, Oluwade & Ibrahim, 2022).

It is concerning that many companies hesitate to invest in transferable skills training, despite its essential role in corporate sustainability. They often cite high costs, but this raises a critical question: why tolerate untrained employees who could make costly mistakes that lead to operational waste? Additionally, training programmes, especially outdoor ones, frequently lack alignment with organizational objectives. This misalignment often results in ineffective training outcomes, largely due to ignoring diverse learning preferences among employees. Furthermore, some staff misinterpret training as an opportunity for leisure rather than professional development. This mentality can further disconnect training from organizational goals, leading to wasted resources and subpar performance. It has also been averred that formal education often fails to provide the specific job skills needed in the workplace (Mandal, 2025). This gap, coupled with the fast-paced changes in products, services, and IT systems, can significantly impact overall organizational performance. Investing in targeted training is not just beneficial; it is expected to cultivate an agile and capable workforce in today's dynamic business.

Finally, high turnover rates in the financial and IT sectors pose significant challenges for firms. Many organizations are reluctant to invest in transferable skill training, as employees often leave for better opportunities shortly after completing such programmes. This raises concerns about recouping training investments amid rapid turnover. To address these critical issues, we must explore two key questions:

1. What strategies can align employee training with the sustainability goals of firms?
2. How do perceptions vary between banking and IT companies regarding the recovery of costs associated with transferable skill training? Tackling these questions will enhance our understanding and support more effective training initiatives in these dynamic industries.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The physical and digital economies are in a state of constant evolution, influencing where, when, and how we work (Galanti, Guidetti, Mazzei, Zappalà, & Toscano, 2021). Essential to enhancing organizational productivity are physical, social, intellectual, and mental trainings, which support employee development regardless of the extent of machine or technology integration within the organization. Training is therefore vital for accessing opportunities for growth and maintaining a competitive advantage (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

Employee training serves as a cornerstone for organizational success by providing employees with the necessary skills and knowledge while promoting professional development within the company (Riesner, Altnau, Berner, Skraba, Ajiri & Kopac, 2025). It is a valuable strategy for navigating the changes brought about by technological innovation, market competition, and organizational restructuring. Most importantly, it plays a significant role in enhancing employee performance (Karim, Choudhury, & Latif, 2019). Organizations that prioritize training and professional development foster a more engaged workforce and cultivate a culture of continuous learning and innovation (Hastwell, 2023). However, a critical issue remains: increased training often leads to higher staff remuneration, raising questions about who bears the responsibility for preparing 'industry-ready' workers—the employee or the organization?

This study is anchored in Becker's (1964) human capital theory, which asserts that investing in employee training is comparable to investing in capital goods, as it enhances productivity and earning potential in the labour market. The theory distinguishes between "general human capital," which includes transferable skills, and "specific human capital," which consists of skills valuable only within a particular company. Notably, it emphasizes that greater human capital should yield economic returns on investment (Zidan, 2023). Firms are advised to be cautious with investments in generic skills, as they benefit multiple employers. In contrast, investing in technical and non-transferable skills is strategic, as these investments can be recouped during the employee's tenure while boosting productivity (Syafri & Hidayati, 2023). To retain top talent amid high turnover rates, employers are increasingly reimbursing employees for professional training and certifications,

recognizing this as an effective strategy for attracting and keeping skilled individuals (Bidnur, Priyadarshani & Mumbai, 2024; Clark, 2021).

According to a report by Half (2019), an overwhelming 94% of CFOs acknowledge that their companies invest in covering some or all costs for employees to obtain and maintain valuable industry certifications, based on insights gathered from a survey of 1,100 CFOs. Notably, 17% of smaller organizations with 20 to 49 employees admit that they do not provide any financial assistance for employee training related to certifications. DiDomenico (2019) emphasizes that larger firms are significantly more likely to support certification and professional training costs, while smaller firms often fall short in investing in essential employee development.

Research by Malik and Rowley (2015) indicates that companies that allocate substantial resources to training and development often operate in the more lucrative segments of the IT industry. Although it is evident that high-end product markets typically demand greater training investments, the trend is not exclusive to them; even less complex or low-end product and service markets have been known to make significant training investments, particularly in dynamic industries experiencing rapid growth and high employee turnover (Yi, 2023). Training is crucial for these organizations, serving a strategic role in ensuring steady workflow and, in the long run, positioning firms to achieve lower unit training costs. This ultimately enhances the firm's profitability (Olusegun, 2024). Malik (2022) highlights that interviews with employees reveal a proactive attitude towards external training and development. These individuals have not only identified gaps in their skills but also embraced the reality that future success demands adaptability and continuous learning. Their commitment to broadening their knowledge not only prepares them for current roles but also enhances their employability in the evolving job market.

2.1 STRATEGIES FOR THE ALIGNMENT OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING WITH THE SUSTAINABILITY OF FIRMS

Identifying the right learning opportunities for employees is essential for organizations aiming to secure a competitive advantage in today's dynamic global market (Arulsamy, Singh, Kumar, Panchal, & Bajaj, 2023). When tackling issues related to human capability and development, HR developers must prioritize employees' personal growth and career ambitions. This consideration is especially critical for key roles, as top talent is increasingly scarce. Striking a balance between individual career aspirations and organizational performance is a complex but necessary challenge in effective talent management (Lussier & Hendon, 2021). Moreover, lacking clear performance metrics for training goals and expectations can render staff development efforts fruitless. As noted by Devi, Kumar, Pathamuthu, and Devadharshini (2024), effectively bridging the performance gap requires the implementation of targeted training interventions designed to cultivate specific skills and enhance employee performance. Furthermore, Massey (2025) underscores the importance of leveraging modern learning technologies to drive measurable business outcomes, positioning organizations for success in an ever-evolving marketplace.

Some stakeholders in HR have further established that some of the basic approach that is associated with aligning company's training strategy with corporate business goals to drive organizational success include: deeply understanding business objectives (Massey, 2025), conducting thorough assessments (Singh, Devi, Rashmi, Tripathi & Bajpai, 2024), setting clear goals, designing impactful training programmes and embracing modern learning technologies, organizations can create a training strategy that delivers measurable business outcomes. A focus on continuous improvement, cultural alignment and a commitment to building a learning organization will further ensure that training initiatives remain relevant, effective and capable of supporting long-term business success (Olusegun, 2024).

In a similar vein, the concise strategies for the alignment of employee training with a firm's sustainability goals include: 1. Training Needs Assessment: Identify gaps in employee knowledge on sustainability practices through surveys and assessments, ensuring training supports the firm's ESG targets (Hajkovský, 2024). 2. Clear Objectives: Set SMART goals for training and customize content by department to clarify each employee's role in sustainability (Mazhisham, Khalid, Nazli, Manap & Hussain, 2019). 3. Integrate Sustainability in Training: Embed sustainability into onboarding and ongoing training, utilizing diverse methods like e-learning and workshops to engage employees (Yi, 2023). 4. Foster Organizational Culture: Involve leadership in modeling sustainable practices and

create recognition programmes for employees committed to sustainability (Yi, 2023). 5. Practical Engagement: Promote hands-on initiatives and gather feedback through assessments to improve training, alongside mentorship and peer learning opportunities. 6. Regulatory Alignment: Ensure training covers regulatory requirements and industry standards, addressing stakeholder expectations to enhance the firm's reputation. 7. Employee Value Proposition: Communicate sustainability commitments during recruitment and encourage employees to embrace sustainable practices in all aspects of their lives (Everett, 2024).

2.2 RECOUPING TRANSFERABLE SKILLS COSTS AMID HIGH STAFF TURNOVER

Companies in the financial and IT sectors, both prone to high staff turnover, face the challenge of recouping investments made in employees' transferable skill training, especially when those employees leave shortly after upskilling (Malik 2017). It is essential to note that, without a clear agreement, employers generally have no automatic right to recoup training expenses from an employee who resigns shortly after receiving transferable training (Seidel, 2024). Most legal systems do not grant employers a statutory right to reclaim those costs; the arrangement must be pre-agreed and compliant with applicable labour laws. However, most of these companies have taken it upon themselves to reach a legal and contractual agreement which specifies that if an employee leaves within a set timeframe after receiving significant, transferable training, the employee must reimburse some or all of the training costs (Berwick, 2020). Repayment amounts often decrease over time: for example, 100% if leaving within three months, 50% after six, and 25% after nine, ensuring fairness (Clark, 2021).

The practical and financial limitations could ensue because recovery rarely covers the full training investment, especially if the employee's final paycheck is insufficient, or legal proceedings for debt collection would cost more than is recoverable (Berwick, 2020). The process requires careful management to avoid disputes, compliance issues, and negative corporate reputation among potential hires (Latilo, Uzougbo, Ugwu & Oduro, 2024). Hassan (2025) established that the turnover rates for technical roles in the IT sector can be up to 13% higher than average, with total replacement costs reaching 150–300% of annual salary for technical staff. This amplifies the incentive for employers to use clear repayment agreements, but also makes full recoupment rare in practice. According to Powell (2022), companies in the financial sector can save significantly by reskilling existing employees (compared to rehiring), but establishing structured repayment systems can be challenging, especially given ongoing talent mobility and high turnover rates.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study applied a quantitative method involving a survey design to assess the impediments of employee training as a facilitator for the sustainability of selected firms in Nigeria. The population of the study was 263 top management staff from 15 Deposit Money Banks, 35 Microfinance Banks, and 56 IT Companies in Lagos State, Ogun State, Rivers State, Akwa-Ibom State, Abia State, Kano State, and Abuja, Nigeria. The sampling technique adopted for the study was the census method. The rationale for this sampling method/criteria for selection was to enable all the respondents in the study area to have full and equal participation in the study since the population of the firms was manageable and controllable. Based on the survey method employed for the research, a questionnaire instrument was developed, validated and examined for reliability. The questionnaires were subsequently distributed to the sampled 263 top management (HR inclusive) in the study area. The Ordinary least squares and the independent t-test were used to test the hypotheses, and the results are as presented.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 presents the summary results of the means and standard deviations (SD) of the data on the strategies of employee training from 263 respondents. As indicated in Table 1, the means were well above 3.0, and the standard deviations were all below one (Training needs assessment; Setting clear goals that align with sustainability initiatives; Aligning training programmes with client specifications and adapting to technological changes; Promoting hands-on initiatives and gathering feedback). This indicates a good response and is clustered around the mean.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics (Strategies of Employee Training)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Training needs assessment should be designed to have a long-term impact.	263	2.00	5.00	4.0646	.85583
2. Setting clear goals that align with sustainability initiatives is essential.	263	1.00	5.00	3.9163	.86528
3. Aligning training programmes with client specifications and adapting to technological changes is also crucial.	263	1.00	5.00	4.0570	.94535
4. Promoting hands-on initiatives and gathering feedback are key components of successful training programmes.	263	1.00	5.00	3.7224	.89259
Valid N (listwise)	263				

Table 2 presents the results of the sustainability. The means and standard deviations (SD) of the data from the 263 respondents indicated that the means were well above 3.0, and the standard deviations were all below one. This indicates a good response because data on the sustainability in business which focuses on the long-term financial health of the business; ensuring business operations do not harm the natural environment and ideally contribute to its preservation; addressing the impact of the business on people—employees, communities, and society at large; and strengthening accountability, fairness, and compliance in business conduct were all clustered around the mean.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics (Sustainability in Business)

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. Focuses on the long-term financial health of the business.	263	3.00	5.00	3.9886	.86705
2. Ensures business operations do not harm the natural environment and ideally contribute to its preservation.	263	1.00	5.00	3.7985	.90865
3. Addresses the impact of the business on people—employees, communities, and society at large.	263	1.00	5.00	3.6996	0.74401
4. Strengthens accountability, fairness, and compliance in business conduct.	263	3.00	5.00	3.8251	.81950
Valid N (listwise)	263				

Our regression result, presented in Table 3, shows that staff training strategies were positive and significantly affected the sustainability of the business. The coefficient of determination R² showed a favourable fit of 0.464 with an adjusted R² of 0.462. This adjusted R² shows that about 46.2% of the observed changes in the sustainability in business were explained by changes in the strategies of staff training.

Table 3: Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.681 ^a	.464	.462	1.50215	1.517

a. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies_of_employee_Training
 b. Dependent Variable: Sustainability_in_Business

From Table 4, the $F_{cal} = 225.793$ that is greater than the $F_{critical}$, with the $P\text{-value} = .001 < 0.05$ indicates that strategies of staff training play a critical role in the sustainability of Business.

Table 4: ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	509.495	1	509.495	225.793	<.001 ^b
	Residual	588.938	261	2.256		
	Total	1098.433	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Sustainability_in_Business
 b. Predictors: (Constant), Strategies_of_employee_Training

Table 5 provides answers to objective two regarding whether there is a difference between the way in which the Banking and IT sectors companies can recoup the cost incurred on transferable skill trainings amid high staff turnover. The mean figure shows that there is not much difference between the mean of the Bank (mean= 4.1622) and IT Companies (mean= 4.1478) concerning establishing a legal and contractual agreement with the employees before commencement of training. The mean score for the creation of an effective repayment system shows a slight difference between the means. i.e. Bank (mean = 3.4527) and IT companies (Mean = 3.7478). The standard deviations were less than 1.0. This indicates a good response and is clustered around the mean.

Table 5: Recouping transferable skills costs amid staff turnover

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
1. Companies that establish legal and contractual agreement can recover their training investments when employees leave shortly after receiving upskilling.	aBanks	136	4.1622	.80111	.09446
	IT	127	4.1478	.90155	.10785
2. Creating an effective repayment system can help recover the full cost of training.	Banks	136	3.4527	.89910	.08377
	IT	127	3.7478	.76681	.08363

Our Levene test is nonsignificant at $p\text{-value}=0.790$ which means we have homogeneity of variance between the two groups on the dependent or outcome variable. In the t-test for equality of means, the $t\text{-value} = 0.460$ at a df of 261. This was accompanied with $p\text{-values}$ of both one-sided = 0.460 and two-sided = 0.920. Both indicates that there is no significant difference in the perception of the banking and the IT sectors in establishing a legal and contractual agreement to recover their training investments should employees leave shortly after receiving upskilling.

Table 6: Independent Samples Test

	Levene's Test for	t-test for Equality of Means
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		Equality of Variances									
		F	Sig.	t	df	Significance		Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						One-Sided p	Two-Sided P			Lower	Upper
1. Companies that establish a legal and contractual agreement can recover their training investments when employees leave shortly after receiving upskilling.	Equal variances assumed	.071	.790	.100	261	.460	.920	.01434	.14325	-.26773	.29641
	Equal variances not assumed			.100	244.433	.460	.920	.01434	.14336	-.26805	.29672
2. Creating an effective repayment system can help recover the full cost of training.	Equal variances assumed	2.312	.130	-.2454	261	.007	.015	-.29512	.12028	-.53196	-.05828
	Equal variances not assumed			-.2493	256.937	.007	.013	-.29512	.11837	-.52822	-.06203

About creating an effective repayment system as a means to assist in recovering the full cost of training, it was discovered from the t-test of the equation of means that the t-value was -.2454 at a degree of freedom of 261. This was also accompanied by p-values of both one-sided = 0.007 and two-sided = 0.013. However, these indicate that there is a significant difference in the approach of the Banking and the IT sectors concerning creating an effective repayment system to recover the full cost of training amid high staff turnover.

5. CONCLUSION

Employee training fosters the development of new skills that directly contribute to more sustainable business practices, lowering operational costs and environmental impact (Fada & Sabo, 2017). However, in order to avoid the pitfalls of misalignment of staff training with organisational goals, waste of resources, poor employee performance and lack of adaptability, it was discovered from this study that the employee training needs and other training strategies should be adequately aligned with the sustainability of firms. Such alignment will create a synergistic effect, empowering employees to contribute meaningfully while advancing the firm's sustainable growth, resilience, and market position in an increasingly eco-conscious world. Concerning recouping transferable skills costs amid high staff turnover, it was discovered that both the Banking and IT sectors confirm that establishing a legal and contractual agreement can help recover training investments

when employees leave shortly after receiving upskilling. This becomes expedient because a training reimbursement agreement not only safeguards this investment by allowing the company to recoup costs if an employee departs prematurely (Berwick, 2020); it can also prevent substantial loss and encourage employee retention (Clark, 2021).

There is a bit of divergent perception between the banking and IT sectors regarding an effective repayment system to help in recovering the full cost of training amid high staff turnover might be borne out of the fact that it is challenging, but needs to be effectively managed. Besides, not all effective repayment systems can lead to the recovery of the full cost of training. The amount of money available for deduction from an employee's final paycheck may be less than the total training cost, making full recovery impossible through this method. In some cases, the training cost can be thousands of Naira, far exceeding what can be deducted from final pay (Berwick, 2020). In some instances, pursuing legal action for debt collection can be more expensive than the recoverable amount, especially for smaller training investments. This makes litigation economically unfeasible. Despite these limitations, clearly defined, fair, and reasonable contractual provisions for training cost recovery are crucial for legal enforceability and transparency. Effective staff training strategies are therefore critical to achieve and maintain long-term sustainability, and staff should be well-trained and well-treated so that they do not want to leave.

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