Coaching and Talent Retention of Selected Tertiary Institutions in Abia State

Otagburuagu Uloma Angel
Department of Business Administration
College of Management Sciences
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,
Umudike, Abia State.

S.M. Okebaram PhD
Department of Business Administration
College of Management Sciences
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture,
Umudike, Abia State.

https://doi.org/10.56201/ijefm.v11.no10.2026.pg141.150

Abstract
The study investigated coaching and talent retention of selected tertiary institutions in Abia State. The specific objective is to determine the relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State. This study adopted a mixed-methods research design. The study adopted primary source of data to collect information from the respondent. The population of this study was seven thousand five hundred and seventy-four, (7574) obtained from the three selected tertiary institutions in Abia State. The sample size is 366 staff derived from Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. The study adopted a stratified sampling method. ANOVA model and Pearson correlation coefficient model test were employed to test the hypotheses of the study. Three hundred and sixty-six (366) copies of questionnaire was administered to academic staff of Abia State University, Aba, Michael Okpara University Umudike, and Ogbonnaya Onu University, however, twenty-nine (29) copies of questionnaire were lost while three hundred and thirty-seven (337) copies of questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents with 92.1% retrieved which formed basis of this study. The study found out that there is a positive significant relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State. The study concluded that institutions that invest systematically in their employees are better positioned to retain talent, improve staff output, strengthen learning outcomes, enhance employee engagement, and improve service delivery. The study recommended that tertiary institutions should continually assign an experienced staff and directors as coaches to guide younger employees, provide constructive feedback, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and support their professional growth.

Keywords: *Coaching, Talent Retention, Performance and Tertiary Institutions*

.

Introduction

Background to The Study

Workforce training in tertiary institutions in Nigeria reflects the broader evolution of the Nigerian educational system and national manpower development efforts. From the colonial era to the modern digital age, tertiary institutions have continuously adapted their workforce training practices to meet changing educational, technological, economic, and global demands. Workforce training has therefore become a critical instrument for enhancing institutional effectiveness, staff productivity, educational excellence, and sustainable national development in Nigeria (Ezeani & Oladele, 2023). According to Onah (2018), in recent years, workforce training in tertiary institutions has focused on improving staff competence in research, innovation, entrepreneurship, digital education, leadership, and institutional management. Institutions now organize regular seminars, conferences, workshops, orientation programs, and professional development courses aimed at improving employee productivity and educational quality. The introduction of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund by the Tertiary Education Trust Fund has significantly improved coaching and training in Nigerian tertiary institutions (Reid & Barrington, 2019).

Coaching is particularly relevant because institutions require competent personnel to sustain teaching quality, research productivity, administrative effectiveness, and community service. Regular coaching can facilitate knowledge transfer between experienced and less-experienced employees, strengthen professional relationships, improve confidence, and prepare promising staff for leadership responsibilities. For academic staff, coaching may involve guidance on research publication, grant applications, teaching methods, postgraduate supervision, and academic career progression. For non-academic staff, it may involve guidance on administrative procedures, technology use, service delivery, and professional development (Ofobruku & Nwakoby, 2015).

However, the contribution of coaching to talent retention may depend on the quality and consistency of the coaching relationship. Coaching that is irregular, poorly structured, or perceived as favouritism may have limited retention effects. Conversely, coaching that is objective, developmental, accessible, and aligned with employees' career aspirations can strengthen employee commitment and reduce intentions to leave. Contemporary coaching in Nigerian tertiary institutions now includes digital literacy, entrepreneurship education, research methodology, quality assurance, leadership development, innovation management, emotional intelligence, and professional ethics. Coaching methods have also become more diversified through online learning platforms, webinars, international collaborations, mentoring systems, and continuous professional development programs (Ajibua & Ayeni 2021). Therefore, this study examined coaching and talent retention of selected tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Statement of The Problem

Workforce training have been viewed as a single, homogeneous activity. Different training approaches may influence different dimensions of employee and institutional performance. Coaching may address the retention of talented employees through continuous developmental support. Tertiary institutions operate in an environment characterised by increasing demand for quality teaching, research, administrative efficiency, student support, technological adaptation, and institutional competitiveness. Universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other tertiary institutions require employees who can continuously update their competencies and respond to emerging institutional demands. However, the effectiveness of coaching may depend not merely on whether training programmes exist, but on the specific approaches used to develop

employees. Coaching and talent retention represent different approaches through which institutions can strengthen workforce capabilities. Where these approaches are inadequate, poorly structured, irregular, or disconnected from employees' actual responsibilities, the expected improvement in institutional performance may not be achieved. It is against this backdrop that this study examined coaching and talent retention of selected tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Objectives of The Study

The main objective of the study is to examine examined coaching and talent retention of selected tertiary institutions in Abia State. The specific objective is to:

i. determine the relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Research Question

i. What is the relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State?

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses formulated will be tested at .05 level of significance:

Ho_1: There is no positive relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State

Review of The Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Workforce Training

Various factors such as capital, equipment, human resource etc, contribute to the success of any organization (including educational institutions). The significance of these factors cannot be over-emphasized. However, the most important of these factors is the human factor since it is the people in the organizations that put the other resources to work. Therefore, to understand the concept of manpower training, it is important to understand the term "manpower" as it relates to this study. Manpower refers to the total supply of personnel available or engaged for specific job. It is also regarded as the most significant assets needed for the production of goods and services which is also the main instrument for promoting speedy national development and effectual service delivery. Manpower are men and women which constitute the total labour force of a nation and the ultimate basis for the wealth of nations. Therefore, workforce is a useful element for coordinating other resources for national development. Organisations cannot accomplish their set objectives without manpower which is seen as a labour force. Therefore, manpower become an indispensable instrument for increased productivity in an organisation. Manpower training is an important idea usually used by different individuals. It has different meanings to different people. Some researchers see training as the impartation of 'knowledge', 'enlightenment' or 'wisdom' (Ofobruku & Nwakoby, 2015). Manpower training is not merely concerned with the worker's present activity, but prepares the worker for imminent work requirements. Therefore, effective training programmes must be put in place to allow management sustain a body of workers that could adequately substitute employees who may exit the organisation or who are redeployed to different departments. Hence, manpower training enables employees to adjust to advanced or modern-day technology, and ensures that suitable manpower is made available for expansion into different and new areas. Abonyi (2017) further posits that training is possibly regarded among the

reliable strategies for manpower improvement. It implies the orientation of an employee for achieving the goals of the organisation, for realizing a maximum output and accomplishment of the organisational aims and objectives. According to him, the aim of staff training is to encourage workers to accumulate greater skills to operate at the most acceptable standard on the present job and to broaden their knowledge towards future opportunities in the organisation. This indicates that whatever the level of technological advancement of an establishment, the ideal efficiency and optimum productivity rest upon the expertise of the workforce.

Coaching

This method of training has to do with person- to-person or direct way of influencing the behaviour of a worker. It is designed to achieve some specific purpose within a short time. Generally, coaching is designed in a way that the learner follows certain guidelines that is focused on improving the method of job performance. The individual being coached is usually exposed to a number of programmed instructions to speed-up the learning process. For instance, the learner may be given a unique task, possibly as a team member. Sometimes, the learner could be requested to act in place of the manager or supervisor and may assume a larger responsibility related to his job or he can be systematically associated through a chain of jobs. Coaching is an effective training technique of a business enterprise. It takes place most often and naturally in the superior-subordinate relationship (Otti, 2011). Employees are coached with regards to the level of performance on the present job. An employee may be struggling on his job performance because he is newly employed while other may have been trained but are yet to attain an acceptable level of performance. The coach's target is to improve the confidence of the personnel by giving specific instructions on ways to perform difficult tasks. He may further delegate similar assignment by setting higher goals for the personnel to achieve. Coaching is beneficial to an organisation in so many ways such as: increases employees' commitment to his job and the goals of the organisation; improves communication between the employees and management; improves the culture of organisations; employees will have greater understanding of the job by improving their skills and job performance and improves the professional ability of employees since some organisations may prefer to employ external professional provide these services.

Coaching is a systematic human resource development practice through which a more experienced person, such as a manager, supervisor, senior colleague, or professional coach, provides continuous guidance, feedback, encouragement, and support to an employee to improve performance and develop professional capabilities. Unlike conventional training, which often involves structured instruction for a group of employees, coaching is generally more personalised and focuses on the specific needs, competencies, challenges, and career aspirations of an individual employee. According to Whitmore (2017), coaching involves unlocking an individual's potential to maximise performance by helping the person learn rather than simply providing instructions. Coaching facilitates knowledge sharing, problem-solving, performance improvement, confidence building, and employee development. It enables employees to identify their strengths and weaknesses, establish professional goals, receive constructive feedback, and develop the competencies required for effective job performance. In tertiary institutions, coaching may involve senior academic and administrative personnel guiding junior employees in teaching, research, administration, leadership, and career development. Consequently, coaching represents a continuous developmental process through which employees are supported to improve their capabilities and contribute more effectively to organisational objectives.

Talent Retention

Talent retention refers to an organisation's deliberate ability to attract, motivate, develop, and maintain employees who possess valuable knowledge, skills, competencies, experience, and potential within the organisation for an extended period. It involves the implementation of organisational practices that encourage talented employees to remain rather than seek employment opportunities elsewhere. According to Cappelli (2000), talent management requires organisations to address the changing demands for skills and ensure that critical human resources are available when required. Talent retention is particularly important because employees with specialised knowledge and experience constitute strategic resources that contribute to organisational performance and continuity. Effective retention practices may include competitive compensation, career development opportunities, recognition, supportive leadership, employee involvement, favourable working conditions, mentoring, and opportunities for professional growth. Hausknecht et al. (2009) further indicate that employees' decisions to remain with organisations are influenced by factors such as organisational commitment, job satisfaction, career opportunities, rewards, and the quality of the work environment. Talent retention refers to the capacity of universities, polytechnics, colleges of education, and other higher education institutions to retain competent academic and non-academic personnel. Retaining experienced lecturers, researchers, administrators, technologists, and other professionals helps institutions preserve organisational knowledge, sustain teaching and research quality, strengthen institutional leadership, and maintain continuity in service delivery.

Theoretical Review

Goal-Setting Theory Propounded (Edwin Locke, 1968).

The Goal setting theory had been proposed by Edwin Locke in the year 1968. This theory suggests that the individual goals established by an employee play an important role in motivating him for superior performance. This is because the employees keep following their goals. If these goals are not achieved, they either improve their performance or modify the goals and make them more realistic. In case the performance improves it will result in achievement of the performance management system aims (Salaman *et al,* 2005). The relevance of the theory to the present study are; It implies that managers and their organizations must constantly guarantee the adequacy of the hygiene factors to avoid dissatisfaction amongst members of the workforce. This is because employee dissatisfaction leads to loss of morale which in turn leads to a decrease in employee productivity levels. Also, managers must make sure that the kind of work or responsibilities assigned to employees is challenging, exciting and fulfilling so as to ensure workers are inspired to improve work related performance levels. This theory lays emphasis on job-enrichment so as to encourage workers to be highly productive. Finally, to ensure that employees are highly productive, managers must ensure that the kind of task being assigned to the workers should maximally utilize their abilities and experiences. Focusing on the motivational factors can improve work-quality and employee performance in the organization.

The Human Capital Theory (Barney, 1991).

This theory is the basic theory of Human Capital Management which emphasizes the added value that employees can contribute to an organization. It regards people (employees) as important assets and stresses that investments by organizations in people will generate worthwhile returns. The theory therefore underpins the philosophies of human capital

management. Human capital theory is associated with the resource-based view of the firm as developed by Barney (1991). It emphasizes that human capital is the composition of employee skills, knowledge and abilities and it is a central driver of organizational performance when the return on investment exceeds labour costs. According to human capital theory and the behavioural agency model, manager's motivation to invest in their industry and firm specific human capital depends on their perceived return on such investment. Boxall (1996) is of the view that a distinction should be made between human capital advantage and human process advantage. The former results in employing people with competitively valuable knowledge and skills. The latter, follows from the establishment of difficult to initiate, highly evoIved processes within the organization, such as cross - department cooperation and executive development. Accordingly, in human resource advantage, the superiority of one firm's labour management over another can be thought of as the product of its human capital and human process advantages. Proponents of human capital theory believe there are three effective inputs that will grow intellectual capital in underdeveloped economies.

For the employer, investments in training and developing people is a means of attracting and retaining human capital as well as getting better returns from those investments. These returns are expected to be improvements in performance, productivity, flexibility and the capacity of innovation that should result from enlarging the skill base and increasing levels of knowledge and competence. The general message is persuasive; skills knowledge and competences as key factors in determining whether organizations and will prosper. This theory relates to the topic in the sense that if the three selected organizations value the contributions made by their employees, then they are sure to achieve organizational productivity.

Empirical Review

Ugoji (2021) conducted a study the effect of coaching on organizational performance. The study used secondary data. Four hypotheses were developed to see the impact of all the independent variables on the overall Organizational Performance. The results show that training and development, on the job training, training design and delivery style have positive significant effect on organizational performance. He further presented a report on the impact of training (and vocational education) investments on company productivity and other performance indicators using a metal analysis. The result shows that investment in training have a positive and significant impact on company performance indicators. This result confirms the key role attributed to the investment in skills in the European strategy for smart and sustainable growth, Europe 2020, and the initiative agenda for new skills and jobs. Therefore, he provided advance understanding of the effects of training on organizational-level outcomes by reviewing the results of previous studies that have investigated the relationship between training and human resource, performance, and financial outcomes. The results of meta-analysis from 67 studies suggest that training is positively related to human resource outcomes and organizational performance but is only very weakly related to financial outcomes. Furthermore, training appears to be more strongly related to organizational outcomes when it is matched with key contextual factors such as organization capital intensity and business strategy. Further, training is related independently to organizational outcomes in support of the universalistic perspective of strategic human resource management rather than a configurationally perspective.

Anyanwu (2021) carried out a study the effects of training on employee productivity. The paper provides a review of the current evidence of such a relationship and offers suggestions for further

investigation. He reviewed extensive the literature in terms of research findings from studies that had attempted measuring and understood the impact that training have on employee productivity across various sectors. The focal point of his review was on training practices and employee productivity and their relationship. The outcome of his findings varied. While some studies reported a positive association between training and employee productivity, some reported negative and some no association whatsoever. Harbison (2022) investigated the impact of human capital training on firm performance, and he outline possible reasons for his finding. According to him, responses to the survey were given during a period of financial difficulty, as reflected in the tendency to reduce training budgets as a relatively easy way to cut expenses in the periods of slack demand. Where firms offer more training, they may be doing so in an inadequate manner, either because they train in the wrong areas or because they do not follow up on the training to ensure good results. He argued further that it is clear that the link between training and productivity is a complex one, and there may be many external variables which interplay to determine the nature of the impact that investment in training has on business performance. The missing link may be in linking training investment to other business performance mechanisms, such as ensuring delivery of training that is matched to overall business objectives. He concluded that it may be that the training-productivity link is weak because it has not been understood in a broader context.

Sanusi (2021) carried out a study on the impact of coaching on employee productivity in commercial banks in Kenya. The study argued that 37 failed banks in Kenya in 1998 would have been averted if some of the problems like weak supervision and equipping employees with expertise, necessary skills and knowledge were addressed through employee training to improve performance of the banks. His result reported a significant positive effect of training and development on employee productivity and organizational performance. Other studies also explored if there is a relationship between skills and other organizational outcomes.

Methodology

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative methods to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between workforce training and the performance of tertiary institutions in Abia State. The study adopted primary source of data to collect information from the respondents**.** The total population of (7574) consists of staff of the three (3) selected tertiary institutions in Abia State Nigeria. The selected university are Abia State University, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike and Ogbonnaya Onu Polytechnic, Aba. The study used the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula to arrive at the sample size of 366. A stratified sampling method was adopted and it will give the entire staff an equal chance of being selected. Pearson correlation coefficient model test was employed to test the relationships between dependent and independent variables of the study. Three hundred and sixty-six (366) copies of questionnaire was administered to academic staff of Abia State University, Aba, Michael Okpara University Umudike, and Ogbonnaya Onu University, however, twenty-nine (29) copies of questionnaire were lost while three hundred and thirty-seven (337) copies of questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents with 92.1% retrieved which formed basis of this study.

Table 1: Determine the relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Statements	SA (5)	A (4)	UN (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	Total	Mean	SD
Goal setting increases productivity of the employees	190	105	20	10	12	1,462	4.34	0.97
Performance feedback improves employee morale	200	100	18	9	10	1,482	4.40	0.93
Skill development improves confidence of the employees	205	98	16	8	10	1,491	4.42	0.92
Knowledge sharing increases employees' commitment to his/her job	198	105	17	8	9	1,486	4.41	0.90
Skill improvement boosts talent retention	210	95	14	8	10	1,498	4.45	0.91
Guidance and support improve communication between employees and management	195	103	18	9	12	1,471	4.36	0.96
Problem-solving assistance improves effectiveness and efficiency	202	101	16	8	10	1,488	4.42	0.91
Motivation and encouragement boost higher responsibility	188	108	19	10	12	1,461	4.34	0.97

Source; Field Survey, 2026

The table shows a high level of agreement that coaching positively affects talent retention in tertiary institutions in Abia State. All the statements recorded mean scores above the 3.50 decision benchmark, indicating that respondents agreed with the statements. The highest mean score was recorded for **"**Skill improvement boosts talent retention" (Mean = 4.45, SD = 0.91), with a weighted total of 1,498. This indicates that respondents strongly perceived continuous skill improvement as an important coaching practice for retaining talented employees. This was followed by skill development improving employees' confidence and problem-solving assistance improving effectiveness and efficiency, both with a mean of 4.42. Performance feedback (Mean = 4.40), knowledge sharing (Mean = 4.41), guidance and support (Mean = 4.36), goal setting (Mean = 4.34), and motivation and encouragement (Mean = 4.34) also recorded high mean scores.

Test of Hypotheses

H_{o1}: There is no positive relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State

Table 2: Correlation coefficient between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Correlations

		Coaching	Talent Retention
Coaching	Pearson Correlation	1	.669
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.004
	N	337	337
Talent Retention	Pearson Correlation	.669	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.004	
	N	337	337

Sources: Field Survey, 2026

The analysis of the table above shows the relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State, rho= .669; p-value = .004 < .05 level significance. This shows that there is 67% relationship between coaching and talent retention. We therefore reject the null hypotheses and accept the alternative hypotheses, which state that there is a positive significant relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State.

Discussion of Results

The result of hypothesis one of the studies stated that there is a significant difference on the effect of coaching on talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State. Respondents strongly perceived continuous skill improvement as an important coaching practice for retaining talented employees. This was followed by skill development improving employees' confidence and problem-solving assistance improving effectiveness and efficiency, both with a mean of 4.42. Performance feedback, knowledge sharing, guidance and support, goal setting, and motivation and encouragement also recorded high mean scores. This finding is in tandem with findings of Ugoji (2021), training and development, on-the-job training, training design, and delivery style significantly improved organizational performance. Investment in training positively influenced organizational and human resource outcomes, though the relationship with financial performance was weak. Anyanwu (2021)**,** findings were mixed, with some studies reporting positive, negative, or no significant relationship between training and employee productivity.

Summary of Findings

There is a positive significant relationship between coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State (p-value of 0.004 < 0.05 level of significance. This implies that a unit increase in coaching leads to a unit increase in talent retention

Conclusion

This study examined the effect of coaching and talent retention of tertiary institutions in Abia State, the study revealed that coaching has a positive effect on talent retention in tertiary institutions in Abia State. Coaching provides employees with guidance, constructive feedback, professional support, and opportunities to improve their capabilities. The study concluded that institutions that invest systematically in their employees are better positioned to retain talent, improve staff output, strengthen learning outcomes, enhance employee engagement, and improve service delivery.

Recommendations

i. Tertiary institutions should continually assign an experienced staff and directors as coaches to guide younger employees, provide constructive feedback, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and support their professional growth.

ii. Tertiary institutions should periodically identify the skills and knowledge gaps of staff and design training programmes that directly address those gaps.

References

Abonyi, N. N. (2007). Systems of manpower development for effective local government administration in Nigeria. *International Journal of Studies in the Humanities, 4*, 120–133.

Ajibua, P., & Ayeni, H. (2021). Human capital development and economic growth in Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Management, 3*(9), 29–38.

Anyanwu, D. M. (2021). *Effects of training on employee productivity*. Routledge.

Cappelli, P. (2000). A market-driven approach to retaining talent. *Harvard Business Review, 78*(1), 103–111.

Ezeani, E., & Oladele, B. (2023). Patterns of information storage and retrieval in university libraries in Nigeria. *Library Hi Tech News*.

Harbison, R. (2022). *Human resource development in the knowledge economy*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Hausknecht, J. P., Rodda, J. M., & Howard, M. J. (2009). Targeted employee retention: Performance-based and job-related differences in reported reasons for staying. *Human Resource Management, 48*(2), 269–288. https://doi.org/10.1002/hrm.20279

Ofobruku, S. A., & Nwokoby, N. P. (2015). Mentoring and employee performance in Nigeria. *Psychological Review, 84*(2), 191–208.

Onah, V. (2018). *Reconciling organizational performance and employee satisfaction through training: The case of Soroti District Local Government* (Master's thesis). Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

Otti, N. N. (2011). *A critical analysis of manpower development in Nigeria* (Master's thesis). University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus.

Reid, L., & Barrington, A. (2019). Measuring the efficiency of public services: The limits of analysis. *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society: Series A (Statistics in Society), 168*(2), 401–417.

Salaman, L., Sam-Okere, J., & Agbeniga, F. I. (2005). Training as capacity development for effectiveness and productivity of lower cadre employees of local governments. *Journal of Research and Development, 2*(3), 1–10.

Sanusi, T. (2021). Coaching and employee productivity. *Information & Knowledge Systems Management, 5*(3), 153–169.

Ugoji, P. (2021). Coaching and organizational performance. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 4*, 145–156.

Whitmore, J. (2017). *Coaching for performance: The principles and practice of coaching and leadership* (5th ed.). Nicholas Brealey Publishing.