

## **Sales Force Training and Employee Performance of Insurance Firms in Port Harcourt**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study examined the requirements of sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt. This study adopted a cross-sectional survey and correlation investigation to establish relationship between sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in a non-contrived setting. Both primary and secondary methods of data collection were used to obtain relevant data for analysis. The instrument of data collection employed was the questionnaire. The population of the study consists of fourteen (14) registered insurance firms in Port Harcourt as obtained from Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA). The sample size of this study consists of one hundred and seventy-seven (177) workers as determined by Taro Yamane formula at 5% significant level. The data was analyzed using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient statistic through the aid of statistical packages for social science version 23.0. The result of the findings revealed the existence of significant and positive relationship between sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt. The researchers conclude that sales force training affect employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt and therefore recommended that management of insurance firms in Port Harcourt should intensify their efforts in sales force training in order to improve the skills of their sales force and overall performance.*

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**Key Words:** Sales Force Training, Employee Performance, Coaching, Role Playing Training

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## INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, employees are the important elements of any organization whereby success or otherwise of a given organization depend largely on the performance of its employees. Therefore, organizations usually commit large part of its resources on developing its employee. This is because the performance of employees in any organization is vital, not only for the growth of the organization, but also for the growth of individual employees (Meyer & Peng, 2016). According to Oparanma (2010) the concept of performance cuts across all spheres of operation within and outside the organization. In business, the analysis of performance whether financial, production, marketing, managerial, or in general activities, is very necessary because the outcome of the present decisions lie in the projection of the future. Hence, employee performance means that an individual successfully completes the tasks which are set by an organization according to the predetermined standards along with the efficient utilization of resources in a changing environment (Qadoos, Ayesha, Tayyab, Toqeer & Hafiz, 2015).

Consequently, the success of an organization greatly depends on the quality of the people (employees and managers) who work there to achieve such organizational objectives. Thus, the level of their skills, knowledge, abilities, capabilities and expertise, lies on the quality of training and development they receive. Today, very profound emphasis is placed by organizations on the training and development of employees and this has an implicit emphasis on the performance of the employees and organizations as a whole. Hence, any organization that fails to lay serious emphasis on training and skill development is preparing for obsolescence of its employees and managers, and inflexibility to adapt to fast-paced changing environment (Nwachukwu, 2000). Organizations need to adapt and develop because of ever challenging environment. To develop, training especially sales force training is required.

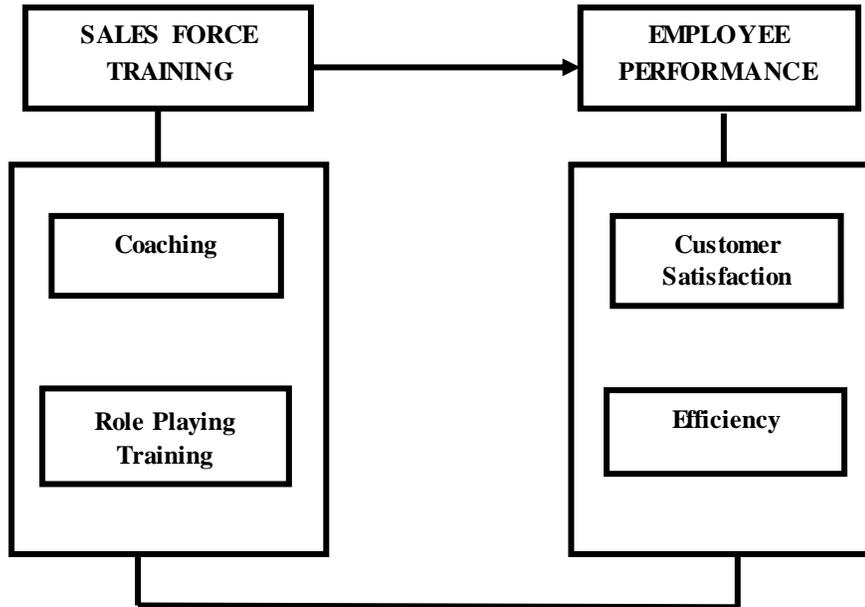
Armstrong and Kotler (2012) articulated that sales force training is the effort an employer puts forth to provide sales people job related culture, skills, knowledge, and attitudes that should result in improved performance in the selling environment. Sales force training entails the act of teaching, acquiring a skill or behaviour. Sales force training is considered as an investment as it yields increase in productivity, better moral, confidence on the job and efficiency in time and territory management, customer relationship, sales performance, profitability and competitive advantage (Cunha, Morgado & Brewster, 2015). Therefore, as organization reviews its goals, standards, and expands in operation, it is imperative that training is necessary to cope with the new challenges. However, in order for an organization to achieve its sales and market objectives, the principal recipients of training remain the sales force or those whose responsibility are directly tied to sale performance (Johnston & Marshall, 2018).

Several authors argue that sales force training is advantageous one in terms of its contribution to employee performance, as it is able to introduce trainees to real-world experience by giving them the opportunity to put into practice the knowledge and skills previously learned in classroom training (Jackson & Hisrich, 2019). Moreover, sales force training allows the salespeople to consider customer problems as their own and to become personally involved with the customers. This in turn leads to increase in customer satisfaction and improvement in organizational performance.

Furthermore, trained sales force focuses more on implementing a customer-oriented approach, which implies solving customers' problems, providing opportunities and adding value to the customer's business over an extended period of time (Saxe & Weitz, 2012). The empirical studies carried out by Williams and Attaway (2019) further show that sales force training leads to

the successful development of relationships with customers which in turn leads to improvement in market share, efficiency, effectiveness and profitability of an organisation. This study, drawing from the foregoing, aims at examining the relationship between sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

### 1.1 Conceptual Framework



**Figure 1.1:** Conceptual framework of sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt

**Source:** Research Desk (2023) as the dimensions of sales force training were adapted from Sunny & Tamunoiyowuna (2016) while the Measures of Employee Performance were Adapted from Michael & Okolie-Osemene (2017)

#### Concept of Sales Force Training Strategy

Every organization needs to adapt and develop because of ever challenging environment. To develop, training is required. According to Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2008) training is a strategic tool directed towards maintaining and improving current job performance and future work activities. Also, training is a strategic exercise employed for the improvement in skills, knowledge and capabilities of an employee so as to generate innovative and creative thinking for improved manpower productivity. Adeniji (2011) posited 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 organization, for realizing a maximum output and accomplishment of the organizational aims and objectives. The aim of training is to motivate employee 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 organization. This indicates that whatever the level of technological advancement of an organization, the ideal efficiency and optimum productivity rest upon the expertise of the employees.

According to Saleem and Mehwish (2011) training is an organized increase from the know-how skills and sensations needed for staff members to execute efficiently in the offered process, as

well as, to operate in underling situation. Training is considered as the process of improving the existing skills, knowledge, exposure, and abilities in an individual (Azara, Syed & Muhammad, 2013). Armstrong and Kotler (2012) articulate that sales force training is the effort an employer puts forth to provide sales people job related culture, skills, knowledge, and attitudes that should result in improved performance in the selling environment. Training entails the act of teaching, acquiring a skill or behaviour. Training is considered as investment as it yield; increase in productivity, better moral, confidence on the job and efficiency in time and territory management, customer relationship sales performance, profitability and competitive advantage (Cunha, Morgado & Brewster, 2013).

Therefore, every employee of an organization needs to undergo training at one point or the other especially when faced with a challenging new responsibility. As organization reviews its goals, standards, and expands in operation, it is imperative that a new training is necessary to cope with the new challenges. However, in order for an organization to achieve its sales and market objectives, the principal recipients of training remains the sales force or those whose responsibility are directly tied to sale performance (Johnston & Marshall, 2013).

## **Dimensions of Sales Force Training Strategy**

### **Coaching**

Coaching is centred on unlocking a person's potential to maximise his or her own performance. A focus on improving performance and the development of skills is the key to an effective coaching relationship. There are generally two accepted forms of coaching: directive and non-directive. Directive is a form of coaching whereby the coach teaches and provides feedback and advice. In contrast, non-directive coaching requires the coach to listen, ask questions, explore and probe and allows the person coached to find solutions to problems. In practice, this means that some coaches merely assert their expertise, whereas effective coaches enable individuals to go beyond their previous boundaries (Jarvis, 2004).

Coaching can be applied to a variety of areas, such as motivating staff, delegating, problem solving, tasking salespersons, relationship issues, teambuilding, and staff development. It focuses on what people being coached want, what their goal is and how they can achieve it. Coaching is a collaborative relationship which encourages people to know their values and live them while achieving their goals. Effective coaches challenge limiting beliefs and reinforce positive beliefs by providing tasks followed by feedback.

### **Role Playing Training**

According to Sogunro (2014) role playing training also known as business scenario training method uses real-life situations, thus enabling the participants to be able to implement those skills in working situation. This is a method of training conducted mainly in lecture rooms in which sales people create business plans with available data and then different scenario are presented to them through different information to see how they will make sound decisions based on the changing situations.

Cathrine (2013) stated that role playing and behaviour modelling method mainly focuses on emotional (human relation) issues than other ones. The essences are on creating a real life situation and have trainees assume parts of specific personalities (mostly interchanged roles of boss and subordinate to create empathy for one another). Authors generally have measured role playing in terms good rapport building skills, good communication skills and selling techniques presentation modelling, character building and relationship development (Olusanya, Awotungase

& Ohadebere, 2012). The objective is to provide the participants with increased awareness of how customers behave the perception of others about them and increased understanding of group process (Wright, Gardner, Moynihan & Allen, 2015).

### **Concept of Employee Performance**

Performance is the most imperative measure for profitability of a company. The term performance refers to the benefits emanating from shares and those from the functioning and operational activities of a firm (Rouf, 2012). Performance is a major, although not the only, prerequisite for future career development and success in the labour market. The concept of performance cuts across all spheres of operation within and outside the organization. In business, the analysis of performance whether financial, production, marketing, managerial, or in general activities, is very necessary because the outcome of the present decisions lie in the projection of the future (Oparanma, 2010).

Durga (2017) defined performance as the act of executing a task or an accomplishment or achievement. He adds that employee performance is how well an employee is effectively fulfilling his/her job requirement or discharging his/ her duties so as to achieve good results. Employee performance means that an individual successfully completes the tasks which are set by an organization, according to the predetermined standards along with the efficient utilization of resources in a changing environment (Qadoos, Ayesha, Tayyab, Toqeer& Hafiz, 2015). According to Michael and Okolie-Osemene (2017), performance can be referred to as the degree of achievement of the mission at workplace that builds up an employee's job; it is used to express the range of measurements of transactional efficiency, input and output efficiency.

Employee performance include all of the employees' efforts in terms of his/her commitment to work, punctuality, willingness to work extra hours, exertion of innovation in the execution of task to mention but a few directed at goal achievement at effective cost. However, this performance of employee is a function of employee motivation (Puwanenthiren, 2011). Naharudin and Sadegi (2013) emphasized that employees' performance depends on the willingness and openness of employees to do their job. Furthermore, they stated that by having this willingness and openness of employees to do their job, it could increase the employees' productivity which also leads to performance.

### **Measures of Employee Performance**

#### **Customer Satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is a feeling of satisfaction of a product or service by the customer. It is a part of consumption evaluative judgement concerning a specific product or service. Customer satisfaction means that the customer is entitled to give his money for goods that meet his demands and desires because he wants the goods to meet his or her demands not for other issues and survival in the current world (Kavusi, 2008).

According to Eggert and Ulaga (2002) customer satisfaction is the perceived feeling of a customer for which he/she has set standards if his or her expectations match with the standard, he/she is satisfied. Customer satisfaction is one of the most important issue concerning business organizations of all types which is justified by the customer-oriented philosophy and the principles of continuous improvement in modern organizations. It is generally accepted that satisfaction is a psychological state that results from consumer experiences after consumption. It deals with how customers are satisfied with the product or service of a company (Pleshko & Heins, 2016). Customer satisfaction is the individual's perception of the performance of the product or service in relation to his or her expectations. According to Akram, Alireza and

Houshang (2016) customer satisfaction is one of the essential factors for the success of a company. To achieve a high customer satisfaction, companies must know when and how their customers are satisfied about the products and services.

Customer satisfaction, as noted by Tahir, Waggett and Hoffman (2013) is a customer's perspective based on expectation and then subsequent post purchase experience. In other words, it is an evaluation of the level of quality of the products or services that meets or exceeds the customer expectations.

### **Efficiency**

Efficiency emphasizes how successfully a firm or an organization is able to transform its inputs into outputs. In other words, it is the difference between inputs and outputs. Efficiency measures include, per unit costs which refers to a measure of per unit cost and reveals how many resources are consumed in producing a unit of service. Cycle time: Measures the amount of time it takes for a process to be completed. Response time: Measures the amount of time it takes to respond to a request for service. Backlog: Measures the amount of work in queue, waiting to be processed. One way is to measure total work in queue waiting to be processed. Another way is to measure backlog as the amount of work not processed within a required or targeted time frame. Staffing ratios: Another way of looking at staffing is computing a ratio of staffing to a particular function or in comparison to the total organization and per unit Equipment utilization: Measures the efficient use of equipment. Efficiency is all about resource allocation across alternative uses (Kumar & Gulati, 2010).

According to Pinprayong and Siengthai (2012) there is a difference between business efficiency and organizational efficiency. Business efficiency reveals the performance of input and output ratio, while organizational efficiency reflects the improvement of internal processes of the organization, such as organizational structure, culture and community. It is important to understand that efficiency doesn't mean that the organization is achieving excellent performance in the market, although it reveals its operational excellence in the source of utilization process. Organizations can be managed effectively, yet, due to the poor operational management, the entity will be performing inefficiently (Karlaftis, 2004).

## **Empirical Review of Sales Force Training Strategies and Employee Performance**

### **Coaching and Employee Performance**

Adeyori and Fajebe (2019) examined training and manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector: concerns and pathway for effectiveness. To achieve this, the study reviewed literature on the concepts of training, manpower productivity, emergence and role of government in training and manpower productivity in Nigeria, and challenges of training in Nigeria public sector. The study utilized human capital and scientific management theory in order to build solid arguments for the discourse. It was concluded that productivity in Nigeria public sector is contingent on proper manpower training and development.

Okolo, Obikeze, Chinedum, Mmamel, Okafor and Nmere (2018) effects of sales force performance evaluation on effective and efficient sales management of First Bank Nigeria Plc. The relationship between sales force performance evaluation and training as well as the relationship between sales force performance evaluation and motivation were the two specific objectives of the study. The population of study is 100 executive staff of First Bank Nigeria Plc in Enugu metropolis was purposively targeted in the study. Primary data was adopted for the study and data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment correlation coefficient using

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The conclusion of the study is that there is a direct and positive relationship between sales force performance evaluation and both training and motivation. Researchers recommend that sales managers need to take the evaluation of salespeople seriously to be able to be accountable to management regarding the nature and personality of sales people they recruit.

Sunny and Tamunoiyowuna (2016) examined sales force training methods and sales performance of insurance firms in Rivers State. A sample of 70 respondents of sales managers and sales personnel were surveyed through questionnaire from 23 insurance firms in Rivers State. Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient was used for the analysis. The outcome revealed a very strong and positive relationship between training methods (coaching training and role playing) and sales performance (sales volume and market coverage).

Ndibe (2014) study aimed at identifying the effects of employee training on organizational performance with special emphasis on the process and procedure of selecting employee for training. The survey research was carried out in Enugu State, Nigeria. The population used for the study included 694 staff of Nigerian Bottling Company and 7UP Bottling Company. Sample size was determined using Yamane (1964) formula. A sample size of 254 was drawn. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the one-sample test were used to test the hypotheses formulated in the study. Findings from the study reveal that the extent to which unsystematic approach of employee training affected organizational productivity and there is a very strong positive relationship between employee perception of training and organizational performance.

### **Role Playing Training and Employee Performance**

Ohanyere, Ngige and Jacobs (2021) examined the effect of training on organizational performance of small and medium scale enterprises in Anambra state, Nigeria. The sources of data were through primary sources. The variables were on the performance of manufacturing firms and training. Questionnaire and interview were used to collect data from staff of the selected firms. The population of this study were 1300 across the ten selected firms. Sample size of 249 was determined through Borg and Gall (1973) while the returned questionnaire is 233. Simple percentage table and ANOVA regression were in the Analysis of the collected data. The research adopted purposive sampling method. The study concluded that training has contributed significantly to the performance of manufacturing firms in Anambra State and the need to conduct training needs assessment to ensure that the right training is given.

Gabriel and Rowland (2020) examined training and employee effectiveness of Port-Harcourt City Council, Rivers State, Nigeria. The study was designed as a Quasi-experimental research design. Data were generated from eight hundred (800) out of the nine hundred and seventy-eight staff currently engaged with Port-Harcourt city council, Rivers State while Taro Yamane's formula was used to determine the sample size of 267. The test of hypotheses was done using the Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Co-efficient aided with the Statistical Package for Social Science. The findings indicated that training significantly enhanced employees' effectiveness outcomes such as timeliness of work and quality of work.

Timothy, Abu, Dennis and Isah (2020) examined the effects of training on employee performance in organizations. This study used Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory of motivation to explain the relationship between training and employee performance in organizations. The study relies basically on secondary sources of data consisting of textbooks, periodicals, journal

publications, and other documentary sources such as internet and published empirical research reports. Findings from the study revealed that increase in training and development correspondingly increases 72.6% in employees' performance. This implies that, when managers/administrators embark on effective training and development the dwindling performance of employees and poor organizational performance could be remedy.

Ogbu and Osanaiye (2017) carried out a study on the impact of employee training on organizational performance of selected insurance firms in Abuja. Questionnaire was administered to population sample of one hundred and twenty (120) employees. Hypotheses formulated for the study were tested using t-test statistical technique. The study observed that induction and orientation have significant impact on employee job effectiveness. It was also discovered that on-the-job training has significant relationship with employee productivities while off-the-job training has significant relationship with employees' innovativeness in insurance industry.

## METHODOLOGY

The population consisted of fourteen (14) registered insurance firms in Port Harcourt as obtained from Port Harcourt Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (PHCCIMA). The sample size of this study consists of one hundred and seventy-seven (177) workers as determined by Taro Yamane formula at 5% significant level. The mathematical expression of Taro Yamane formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = the desired sample size

N = the estimate of the population size

1 = theoretical constant

e = probability of error (i.e., the desired precision, e.g., 0.05 for 95% confidence level)

$$n = 319 \frac{1}{1 + 319(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = 319 \frac{1}{1 + 319(0.0025)}$$

$$n = 319 \frac{1}{1 + 0.7975}$$

$$n = 319 \frac{1}{1.7875}$$

$$n = 177.468$$

$$n = \underline{177} \text{ (Approximately)}$$

## Data Analysis Techniques

The hypotheses testing were carried out through the use of Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient. The Spearman's rho is appropriate for our analysis because all the variables in this

study are measured in ordinal scales and very importantly suitable to calculate the relationship between two variables (bivariate data).

**DATA PRESENTATION**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between coaching and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**TABLE 1: CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF COACHING AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

			COACHING	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION
Spearman's rho	<b>COACHING</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.799**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	150	150
	<b>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.799**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	150	150

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

**Source:** Field Survey (SPSS Output), 2023.

Table 1 above shows the result of first hypothesis tested. As revealed by the Table, the Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient of 0.799\*\* which is positive and greater than 0.5 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between coaching and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**Decision on Hypothesis One:** Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis one (H<sub>01</sub>) and accept the alternate hypothesis one (H<sub>A1</sub>). The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between coaching and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between coaching and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**TABLE 2: CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF COACHING AND EFFICIENCY**

			COACHING	EFFICIENCY
Spearman's rho	<b>COACHING</b>	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.783**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	150	150
	<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	Correlation Coefficient	.783**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	150	150

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

**Source:** Field Survey (SPSS Output), 2023.

Table 2 above shows the result of second hypothesis tested. As revealed by the Table, the Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient of 0.783\*\* which is positive and greater than 0.5 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between coaching and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**Decision on Hypothesis Two:** Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis two ( $H_{02}$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis two ( $H_{A2}$ ). The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between coaching and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between role playing training and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**TABLE 3: CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF ROLE PLAYING TRAINING AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

		ROLE PLAYING TRAINING	CUSTOMER SATISFACTIO N
Spearman's rho	<b>ROLE PLAYING TRAINING</b>	Correlation	
		Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.791**
	<b>CUSTOMER SATISFACTION</b>	N	150
		Correlation	
		Coefficient	.791**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	150	

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

**Source:** Field Survey (SPSS Output), 2023.

Table 3 above shows the result of third hypothesis tested. As revealed by the Table, the Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient of 0.791 which is positive and greater than 0.5 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between role playing training and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**Decision on Hypothesis Three:** Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis three ( $H_{03}$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis three ( $H_{A3}$ ). The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between role playing training and customer satisfaction of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant relationship between role playing training and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**TABLE 4: CORRELATION ANALYSIS OF ROLE PLAYING TRAINING AND EFFICIENCY**

		ROLE PLAYING TRAINING	EFFICIENCY
Spearman's rho	<b>ROLE PLAYING TRAINING</b>	Correlation	
		Coefficient	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.773**
	<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	N	150
		Correlation	
		Coefficient	.773**
		1.000	

Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
N	150	150

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

**Source:** Field Survey (SPSS Output), 2023.

Table 4 above shows the result of fourth hypothesis tested. As revealed by the Table, the Spearman Rank Correlation coefficient of 0.773 which is positive and greater than 0.5 indicates that there is a strong positive relationship between role playing training and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

**Decision on Hypothesis Four:** Since the significant value (P-value) of 0.000 is less than 0.05, we therefore reject the null hypothesis four ( $H_{04}$ ) and accept the alternate hypothesis four ( $H_{A4}$ ). The conclusion is that there is a significant relationship between role playing training and efficiency of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

### Discussion of Findings

This study theorized that sales force training does not have a significant relationship with employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt. On the contrary, in Table 1, the correlation coefficient of the relationship between coaching and customer satisfaction is a high value of  $(r) = (0.799^{**})$ , inferring that a strong and positive relationship exist. Furthermore, in Table 2, the high Spearman's correlation coefficient value  $(r) = (0.783^{**})$  implies that a strong and positive relationship also exists between coaching and efficiency. Also, in Table 3, the high Spearman's correlation coefficient value  $(r) = (0.791^{**})$  implies that a strong and positive relationship also exists between role playing training and customer satisfaction. Likewise, in Table 4, the high Spearman's correlation coefficient value  $(r) = (0.773^{**})$  implies that a strong and positive relationship also exists between role playing training and efficiency. These findings are consistent with the work of Adeyori and Fajebi (2019), who showed that coaching and role playing training were found to have significant influence on customer satisfaction of footwear companies in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Furthermore, the findings is supported by the work of Okolo, Obikeze, Chinedum, Mmamel, Okafor and Nmere (2018) who established that coaching has significant relationship with employee efficiency of insurance firms in Rivers State. Also, This finding is supported by the work of Ohanyere, Ngige and Jacobs (2021) showed that coaching and role playing training were found to have significant influence on customer satisfaction of footwear companies in Ile-Ife, Osun State. Lastly, this findings is in tandem the work of Gabriel and Rowland (2020) who established role playing training is positively and significantly related to sustained productivity and efficiency of selected insurance firms in Abuja, Nigeria.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The relationships between sales force training and employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt has been established in this study. The findings of the study showed that the dimensions of sales force training (coaching and role playing training) adopted in this study contribute positively and significantly to the measures of employee performance (customer satisfaction and efficiency). Based on the findings, the study therefore concludes that sales force training has a significant positive relationship with employee performance of insurance firms in Port Harcourt.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since sales force training contributes positively to organizational performance, management of insurance firms should intensify their efforts in sales force training in order to improve the skills of their sales force and overall performance.

2. For training to be effective, insurance firms should formulate policy that will promote sales force training and a balanced training culture.
3. Proper sales force analysis and composition should be done followed by selection of training method appropriate for achieving the best from them, since different training methods give different weight of performance.
4. Insurance firms are advised to specially make use of coaching and mentoring methods of training in a situation where they are experiencing low sales, as it has proven to be efficient in increasing the sales volume and overall market share.

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