
IMPACT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF EMPLOYEES IN THE WORKPLACE, THE CASE OF UNILEVER PLC

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ABSTRACT

The research embarked on a comprehensive exploration of the impact of training and development on employee performance, employing Unilever as a case study. Utilizing a survey method, the study engaged 110 respondents, and their responses were meticulously analyzed. To assess the influence of training and development on employee performance, a correlation analysis was deployed to rigorously test the formulated hypotheses. The findings yielded compelling results, revealing a significant and positive correlation between the content of training programs and employee performance. Additionally, the study brought to light another noteworthy discovery – a substantial and favorable association between employee performance and development programs. Building upon these insights, the study proposes practical recommendations for organizations aiming to enhance their workforce's capabilities. The first recommendation emphasizes the importance of regularly evaluating a company's skill set. Through consistent skill assessments, areas of inadequacy can be identified, paving the way for targeted training initiatives tailored to each employee's specific responsibilities. Furthermore, the study underscores the significance of conducting job-specific training, aligning these training techniques with available resources, organizational structure, and corporate culture. By implementing these recommendations, companies can proactively address skill gaps and cultivate a workforce that continually contributes to organizational success.

KEYWORDS: Training and Development, Training contents, Employees' performance, Training Methods

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The personnel of the organization are its core. The organization's performance team finally decides what passes and what fails (Mwema & Gachunga, 2014). Managers of businesses must thus understand the importance of employee training and performance improvement. A company's superior knowledge, skills, and capabilities are what make it competitive in the modern global market. Despite a significant amount of research in this area, organizational leaders seem to have gaps and challenges in the area of employee performance training and development. This article's goal is to provide readers with accurate information on training, performance, and staff development (Kuruppu, Kavirathne, & Karunarathna, 2021). It also makes recommendations for chances for professional advancement and effective staff mentoring that boosts output. Ensuring the success of its personnel is one of the human resources department's primary responsibilities. One of the most important components of company success is the development of human resources, as an organisation cannot prosper without the talent and motivation of its workers. Thus, in addition to sharpening their present skills, employees need to get training in new ones. Training is one of the most crucial components of every company's performance management strategy (Husys, 2018).

Businesses require training to ensure that newly hired workers can fill newly established or empty roles following efforts to develop the employees (Habeeb, 2023). Employees must get training appropriate to their line of employment. Training and development programmes thereby boost employee productivity and inspire employees to improve the overall success of the business (Sung & Choi, 2014). Training aims to address performance inequalities, whether or not they can be foreseen, by equipping participants with the skills they need to succeed in the workplace. According to Kiruja and Mukuru (2018), when performance is sagging, training is the only approach to improving morality and organizational efficiency in general. Guidelines for programming and training are essential parts of the talent development process. Ensuring that people tend to acquire the skills and abilities they want yields better outcomes. Training and development programmes are crucial for producing supervisors as well as drawing in and keeping skilled workers since they provide chances to move from entry-level positions to more senior ones (Sugiarti, 2022). Those who get training do well and may even advance. The employer will need a discernible improvement in the workforce's overall performance in order to maximise each employee's distinctive contribution to the level of production and to match the workforce's size and skill set to the business's expectations for productivity (Kiruja & Mukuru, 2018). In light of this, the study used a survey technique to assess how training and promotions affected employees' job performance.

The relationship between training and development and employee performance has been the subject of several studies (Shen & Tang, 2018). For instance, Hafeez and Akbar (2015) found that training had a major influence on employee performance in Pakistani pharmaceutical enterprises. However, the findings of the study were limited to the pharmaceutical sector and cannot be generalized to other sectors. Falola, Osibanjo, and Ojo (2014) examined the relationship between training and organizational competitiveness in Nigeria's banking sector. The results of the research indicate a strong correlation between training and development and competitiveness, but they say nothing about the connection between employee performance and training and development.

Valentine (2023) looked into the relationship between these factors and staff performance at Kakamega County Hospital and came to the conclusion that training and development are crucial for enhancing performance. In an attempt to close the knowledge gap, this study examines the relationship between worker performance and training and development, with a focus on Unilever Plc. Scholars haven't focused much on this connection.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTUALIZED

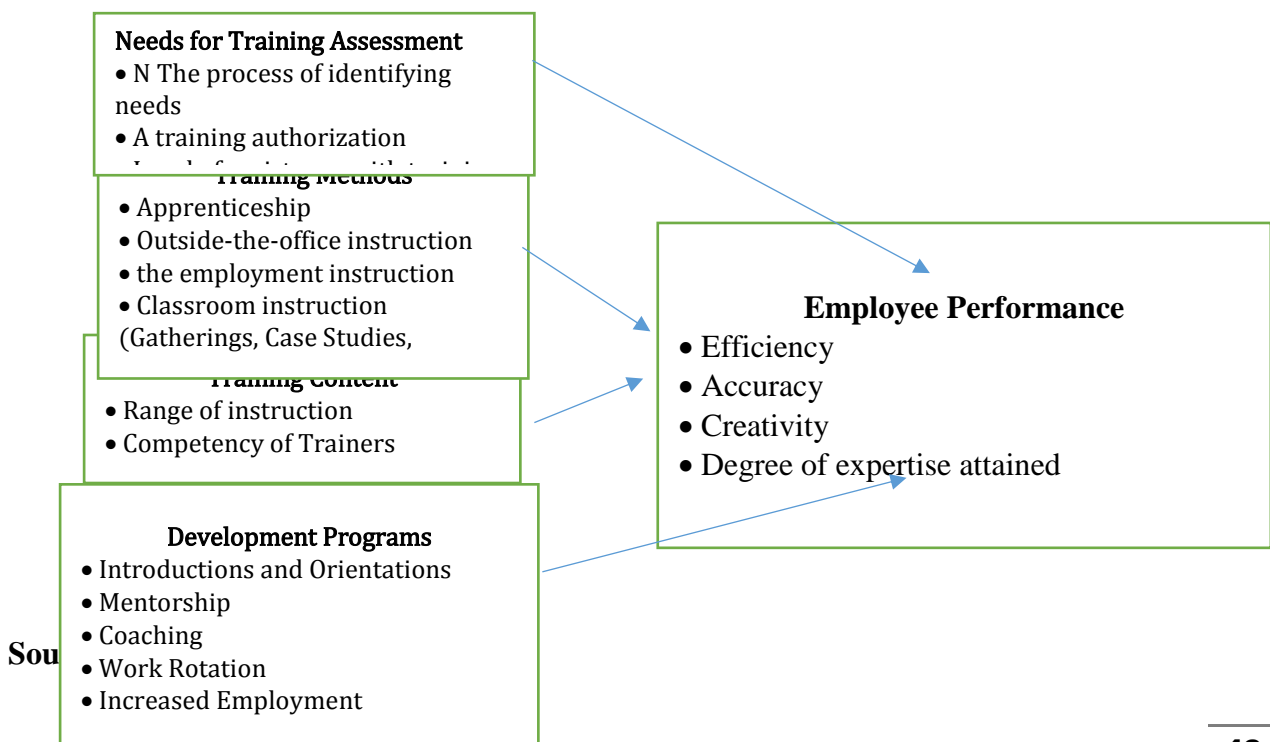
Employees are unquestionably the foundation of every business. According to Hameed and Waheed (2011), a company's most important asset is its workforce. The viability of a firm is determined by the performance of its personnel. They also agree that a company's profitability and efficiency are raised by having productive workers. Because of this, the entire performance of an organisation is crucial, and the first stages in improving performance include defining improvement goals and conducting frequent performance reviews. Projects and efforts are a waste of money if they don't provide the anticipated performance outcomes.

"An organised exercise aimed at conveying statistics and/or instructions to better the recipient's performance or to help him or her gain a required degree of competence or ability" is how the Business Dictionary defines training (training, n.d.). Nassazi (2013) defines training as a set of activities meant to enhance an individual's abilities, competencies, and knowledge.

2.1.2 PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF EMPLOYEES

The standards for determining and prioritising the level of performance, or employee overall performance indicators, are set by the performance management system. It's probable that some businesses evaluate employee performance using ad hoc techniques. Thus, there are concerns over the vague, ineffective, and imprecise evaluation outcomes of this activity (Ahmed, Sultana, Paul, & Azeem, 2013). Businesses must thus handle performance assessments with caution. Each employee's performance is assessed in compliance with company policies, and affects and behaviours are often used to assess employee performance. Many factors, including personal, organizational, environmental, motivational, ability level, aptitudes, and work perceptions, may affect an employee's success.

Model Framework



2.2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.2.1 SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

To construct the social mastering principle, Albert Bandura brought together the ideas of behavioural mastering, which maintains that mastery is influenced by responses to contextual signals, and cognitive mastering, which maintains that psychological aspects affect learning. Most research focuses on theoretical approaches to social mastery, such as modelling the environment and imitating others. According to the social learning theory, people pick up skills from others (models) who they regard as trustworthy and knowledgeable. This method also accounts for the possibility that behaviour based on rewards may get boring. The significance of observing and replicating the behaviours, emotions, and viewpoints of others is underscored by Bandura (1977). Since most individuals learn new behaviours via imitation, it could be easier to understand how people pick up new habits by seeing and imitating others.

According to Bandura's (1977) social mastery theory, an individual's behaviour is influenced by events, interactions with other people, and the outcomes of their surroundings. The social mastery theory holds that every individual has special talents that they may adapt to fit the needs of their line of work. An employee's environment, habits, and goals all affect how much work they produce (Jain & Sharma, 2019). Employee perceptions of the procedures used to track and assess overall performance may be influenced by workplace culture and personal preferences.

Before they may function at a higher level, Company employees must comprehend how social structure influences training and development programmes. Social contexts may enhance learning in a number of ways, such as via collaboration, mentorship, and teamwork. Facilitating opportunities for employees to engage with and gain knowledge from less seasoned colleagues may also enhance learning outcomes (Abba, 2018). This idea goes into more detail on how important education and training are to increasing employee productivity in businesses.

2.3 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

2.3.1 TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Enhancing the perspectives and comprehension of recipients about certain subjects, occurrences, activities, and procedures is known as training. Training aims to improve trainees' capacity to manage activities and work assignments by providing them with new operational knowledge, altering their behaviours and attitudes, and imparting skills (Kulkarni, 2013).

Kum, Cowden, and Karodia (2014) found that managers in businesses need to promote training programmes and provide resources in order to help employees learn new skills. This was discovered in a research on the impact of coaching and promotions on employee productivity. Authorised training programmes and resources would improve employee skills and average productivity by completing the gaps and meeting expectations. This is particularly true for highly productive teams. By doing this, operational costs would be reduced. Employees receiving this kind of training and development may also acquire new skills, attitudes, and information that enhance organisational performance in addition to improving their general capacity to operate in the modern workplace (Sandamali et al., 2018). Training increases an employee's capability, empowering them to effectively carry out job-related responsibilities and actively seek organisational goals. Furthermore, when workers get training that enables them to experience the instant high that comes with accomplishment and the knowledge that they are honing their innate skills, concerns about job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, and turnover may all be dramatically decreased.

According to Onyango and Wanyoike (2014), the performance of health professionals in Siaya County was significantly impacted by their low levels of motivation and job satisfaction. The

research also looked at how coaching affected workers' output. The county made the decision to require coaching courses, provide financial assistance, and promote them to all fitness staff members in an effort to defy the trend. The primary argument used to support this choice in the past was that education improves worker performance and production. In conclusion, the evaluation of trainee requirements, personality tests, and the choice of appropriate coaching techniques and delivery modalities are all essential components that must be considered for training to be totally successful. According to Asfaw, Argaw, and Bayissa (2020), in order to have an impact on employee performance effectiveness, financial support from top management and organisational management is also required. This is in addition to more time for trainees to receive on- and off-the-job training for education and improvement.

2.3.2 TRAINING METHODS AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

The best coaching programmes take use of the newest concepts and methods for employee growth. Each business chooses its own training techniques based on pre-established groups and factors that influence the learning process after consulting with its leaders or management. Githinji (2014) asserts that in order to guarantee the efficacy of employee performance sharing and training programmes, it is necessary to carefully balance the advantages and disadvantages of each. Teachers must possess both a substantial quantity of teaching experience and a solid foundation in the subject matter in order to successfully impart information to students. Wenzel (2014) asserts that anybody employed to provide training must really believe in the objectives and basic principles of the business, regardless of whether they are internal or external educators employed by the organisation.

In their 2014 study, Tahir, Yousafzai, Jan, and Hashim examined how staff development initiatives affected overall productivity. They concluded that in order to meet the organization's current and future goals, all HRD programmes should support the familiar development of businesses and individuals, teach new skills for careers that will require them in the future, and enhance character performance in already-existing vocations. Employers may assist staff members in acquiring new skills in two ways. Workers get coaching while they work in their usual settings; if not, they may receive coaching off the job as long as they focus entirely on the training.

2.3.3 CONTENT OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

Lastly, a lot of companies employ performance management systems to aid in the hiring of exceptional candidates. Because employees are participating in the growth planning process, there is a greater chance that highly motivated employees will emerge (Nassazi, 2013). Outstanding and environmentally conscious work is required to achieve organisational objectives, according to comprehensive overall performance management. It promotes customised lifelong learning based on the requirements and objectives of each individual (Mukuru, 2013).

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

To conduct their inquiry, the investigators used a descriptive method. The following questions are answered by the results of a descriptive study: who, what, where, when, and how much? For descriptive research, a precise hypothesis is required. Several insightful questions about the investigation's goals must be used in order to support the idea (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). Since the primary objective of the study was to ascertain how employee performance was impacted by training and development, a descriptive research approach was used.

3.2 Target Population

According to Lewis (2015), a population is made up of all the occurrences, things, and individuals that have a certain trait. The group the researcher was seeking for to participate in the study was the target demographic since they had the knowledge needed to respond to the research questions. The target group consists of all 250 Unilever Plc workers in two branches in Nigeria.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Technique

The total number of people or items chosen from a certain community is the sample size. Sample size is continuously impacted by the unpredictability of the population and the researcher's objective of assessing accuracy (Cooper & Schindler, 2011). According to Lewis and Thornhill (2009), a sample size may be determined using Taro Yammane's approach.

To calculate the sample size from the population, the researcher used Taro Yammane's approach.

This formula belongs to Taro Yamane.

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

Where N = population of study.

n = sample size

e = level of significance at 5% (0.05)

Consequently, Taro-Yammane's method suggests using the below formula to get the sample from the population.

$$n = \frac{250}{1 + 250(0.0025)} \\ = 150 \text{ (Approx.)}$$

1 = constant

Taro Yammane's approach was used to determine the sample size of 150 respondents for the research.

3.4 Instrumentation and Data Collection

The majority of the data used in this investigation came from traditional response surveys. The questionnaire includes closed-ended questions and was first created with the search aims in mind. Separate questionnaire sections include the four objective research variables and the demographic data. For the closed-ended questions, a five-point Likert scale with values ranging from 1 to 5 is used. To achieve this, the researcher used a drop-and-pick technique. Because respondents have more time to complete the questionnaire, response rates rise. Before the questions were selected for further research, the respondents were given a week to finish the questionnaires.

3.5 Validity and Reliability of Instruments.

It was determined that a test-retest value of 0.5 and a reliability coefficient of 0.81 would provide enough evidence for the use of a research instrument.

3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

All of the location's data had already undergone a data review procedure that included data editing, coding, and tabulation into simple summaries (Yin, 2017). The data were also imported into MS Excel and SPSS Mannequin 23.0 for similar analysis. Using descriptive data, the mean, median, frequency counts, percentages, and extreme deviations have all been calculated.

Using multiple regression analyses and the Anova test, the relationship between predictor factors (training and improvement components of the Training Desires Assessment, educational strategies, training materials, and improvement programmes) and the dependent variable (employee performance) was examined.

The F statistic was used to assess the validity of the study's regression model. The regression model was deemed valid when the F Statistic exceeded the F Critical value. If it wasn't, the mannequin was deemed inoperative.

The regression model was used to confirm the validity of the regression assumptions generated throughout the investigation before carrying out the inference. If there are any violations, using inferential techniques may also be inaccurate and result in false results.

The Multiple Regression Model followed this format:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \varepsilon \quad (3.1)$$

Where;

Y indicates Employees of Unilever Plc.

B_0 = Constant

At Unilever Plc, the coefficients representing the impact of training and development on employee performance are β_1 , β_2 , β_3 , and β_4 . ε = Error variable

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter's primary objective is the presentation of the results analysis. The presentation of the results, the interpretation and discussion of the findings, the demographic information, and the hypothesis testing are the three sections.

Table 1: Demographic Distribution of the Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Gender		
Male	64	58.2
Female	46	41.8
Total	110	100
Status Marital		
Single	78	70.9
Married	21	19.1
Divorced	10	9.1
Widowed	1	0.9
Total	110	100
Age		
21 - 30yrs	60	54.5
31 - 40yrs	38	34.5
41 - 50yrs	12	10.9
Total	110	100
Educational Qualification		
OND	7	6.4
HND/B.Sc.	87	79.1
PGD/M.Sc.	16	14.5
Total	110	100

Source: Survey, 2023

The tabular figures previously presented indicate that 46 (41.8%) and 64 (58.2%) of the participants are female. This makes sense given that the global consumer goods industry often employs more males than women. Compared to 70.0% of respondents who are single, 19.1% of respondents are married. The divorce rate is 9.1%. The percentage of widows is 0.9%. Twenty-one to thirty-five percent of the respondents fall within this age bracket when it comes to marital status. 34.5% of the respondents were in the 31–40 age group. In addition, the Table showed that 10.9% of the participants were in the 41–50 age range. It is clear that a larger percentage of respondents are young individuals given that 54.5% of respondents are under 30. Regarding qualifications, 14.5 percent of participants have a PGD or a M.Sc., and 79.1% have a B or an HND. 6.4% of individuals have a Sc and an OND. It suggests that an HND or a B.Sc. was the respondents' highest degree.

Table 2: Demographic data of the Respondents

Item	Frequency	Percent
Number of Years spent with the company		
0 - 2yr	5	4.5
3 - 5yrs	48	43.6
6 - 11yrs	24	21.8
Above 11yrs	33	30
Total	110	100
Position		
Junior_staff	63	57.3
Senior_Staff	39	35.5
Manager	8	7.3
Total	110	100

Source: Author's computation, 2023

Based on the aforementioned figures, 4.5% of respondents had worked for less than two years, 43.6% for three to five years, 21.8% for six to eleven years, and 30% for more than eleven years.

Furthermore, the graph indicates that junior workers account for 57.3% of responses, followed by senior employees (35.5%) and managers (7.3%).

Table 3: Reliability Test (Cronbach’s Alpha)

Variables	No of items	Cronbach’s Alpha
Training Needs Assessment	2	0.854
Training Methods	2	0.943
Training Contents	2	0.823
Development Programs	2	0.932

Source: Computed by the Author from SPSS output, 2023.

The test, known as a reliability test, in the previously mentioned table indicates the degree of dependability of the data used in the study. Data with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.7 or above are seen to be dependable and solid, as the accompanying table demonstrates. For the variables, the corresponding Cronbach alphas are 0.932, 0.943, 0.823, and 0.854.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4: H_{01} : There is no significant relationship between training needs assessment and performance of employees at Unilever Plc

Model	Unstandardized Coeff.		Standardized Coeff.	t	Sig.	R
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	.445	.017		5.231	.000	0.911
Training Needs Assessment	.902	.034	.987	39.432	.000	

Source: Computed by the Author from SPSS output, 2023.

a. Dependent Variable: employees’ performance

Results from further research indicate a robust positive correlation between workers' views of the need for training and performance. There is a link at the 1% level of statistical significance. This lends credence to the null hypothesis, which holds that there is no meaningful correlation between performance and how Unilever Plc employees assess their training needs. Assessing the training needs and performance of Unilever Plc employees makes more sense.

Table 5: H02: Training methods has no significant relationship with the performance of employees at Unilever Plc

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R Sq.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	.623	.226		5.460	.000	0.876
	Training Methods	.918	.040	.933	30.870	.000	

Source: Computed by the Author from SPSS output, 2023.

a. Dependent Variable: Employee’s performance

Previous research has shown a positive and robust correlation between staff productivity and training initiatives. The association is statistically significant at the 1% level. The findings show that the alternative hypothesis, which maintains that training strategies have a significant relationship with employee performance at Unilever Plc, is judged normal and that the null hypothesis, which maintains that there is no significant relationship between education techniques and overall employee performance at Unilever Plc, is rejected.

Table 6: H03: Training content has no significant correlation with the performance of employees at Unilever Plc

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R Sq.
		B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	1.056	.152		7.684	.000	.834
	Training Contents	.851	.023	.908	22.555	.001	

Source: Computed by the Author from SPSS output, 2023.

a. Dependent Variable: employees’ performance

The finding presented above suggests that training methods and employee performance have a substantial and beneficial relationship. The connection is statistically significant at the 1% level. Since there is a strong link between training content and employee performance at Unilever Plc, the alternative hypothesis—that there isn’t—is rejected, and the null hypothesis—that there isn’t—is accepted.

Table 7: H04: Development programs has no statistically significant relationship with the performance of employees at Unilever Plc

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R-Sq.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	-.478	.134		-3.065	.004	.843
Development_Programme	1.028	.054	.947	30.76	.000	

Source: Computed by the Author from SPSS output, 2023.

The data presented above has been used to demonstrate a significant and positive relationship between worker productivity and instructional tactics. At the 1% level, the correlation is statistically significant. The alternative hypothesis is widely acknowledged as valid, positing that there exists a statistically significant correlation between Unilever Plc employee performance and Development applications. The null hypothesis, which maintains that employee performance at Unilever Plc and development packages do not correlate in a way that is statistically significant, is rejected.

4.2 RESULTS DISCUSSION

The study's findings are consistent with those of Hafeez and Akbar (2015), who discovered that improving job performance and assisting staff members in filling up competency gaps via mentoring boost output at work. The study's findings support rejecting the null hypothesis that there is no significant correlation between training tactics and employee performance at Unilever Plc and accepting the null hypothesis that there is a substantial correlation between coaching approaches and employee performance at Unilever Plc. This is consistent with Wenzel's (2014) assertion that everyone selected for training, whether internal or external, has to articulate the organization's objectives and core values in unambiguous terms. As for the third hypothesis, the data shows that the research refuted the null hypothesis, which maintained that there is a substantial correlation between reading training materials and overall employee performance at Unilever Plc as well as between general employee performance and educational content. The study's main finding was that there isn't a statistically significant relationship between employee performance at Unilever Plc and development courses. Nonetheless, it is widely acknowledged that there is a statistically significant relationship between development applications and employee performance at Unilever Plc...

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study delved into the nexus between skill set evaluations and employee performance, uncovering a compelling correlation between targeted training needs assessments and enhanced employee outcomes. The implementation of training strategies, aligned with organizational rules and specific training requisites, demonstrated a pronounced positive impact on employee performance. Notably, tailoring training materials to individualized needs resulted in a substantial upswing in employee performance, especially concerning the onboarding of new hires through robust staff development programs.

To uphold training standards, the study recommends ensuring that training materials adhere to organizational rules and procedures, incorporating feedback mechanisms to enhance the learning experience. Furthermore, the paper suggests promoting employee coaching as a means to facilitate professional growth. In envisioning future research, the study recommends a comprehensive approach using both primary and secondary data, encouraging a nuanced exploration of training methodologies and their impact on employee performance.

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