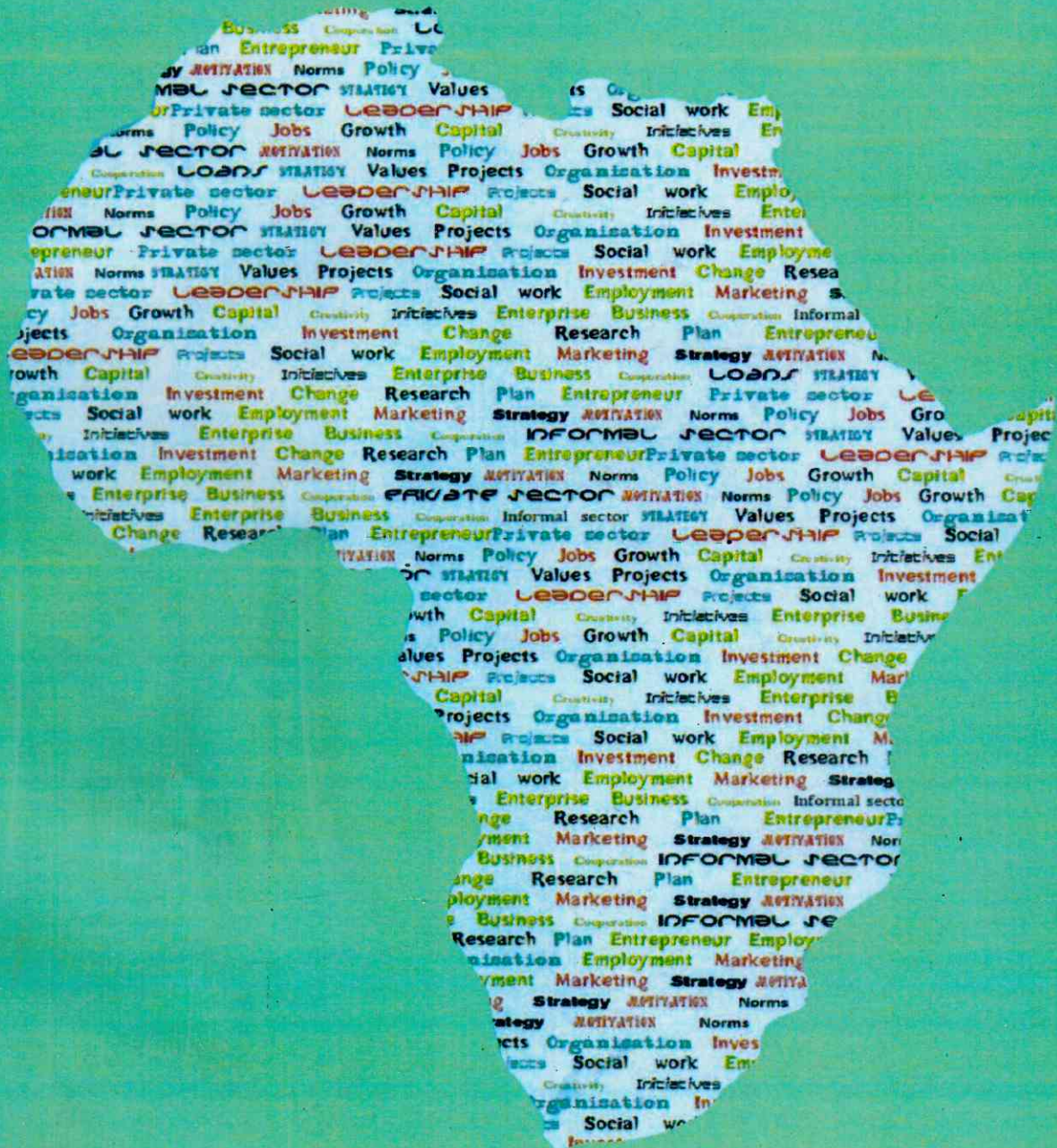


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The Effect of Organizational Politics on Employee Job Satisfaction in the Nigeria Police Force. NNAMANI Susan Kanene & SHAKUR Faruk, PhD	301
Uncertainty Avoidance Index and Employee Productivity in Kwara State Public Service ABOGUNRIN, Abiodun Peter; ADEYEMI, Emmanuel Adewale; OLUWASANMI, Oluwaseun & AREMU Nuha Salihu	315
Impact Of Organisational Agility on the Performance of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in Gombe State, Nigeria Baba Mukhtar, & Abba Kabir Sani Ahmad, Tijjani Usman, Ibrahim Muhammad Gadam	333
Effect of Economic Environment on the Performance of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Bauchi State, Nigeria Mukhtar Baba, Ahmad Tijjani Usman, Abba Kabir Sani, Ibrahim Yerima and Habiba Muhammad Abdullahi	345
Mediating Effect of External Environmental Factors on the Connection Between Entrepreneurial Marketing and Performance of SMEs in Kano State Muhammad Sani Gawuna PhD, Shakur Faruk PhD and Muhammad Datti Ibrahim PhD	358
A Critical Review of Investment Indicators and Economic Growth: Nigerian Experience. ONOWARO, Isaac Iroro, Dennis Osadebay University	374
Mitigating the Adverse Effects of Shocks During Short Run Business Cycles: The Role of Automatic Fiscal Stabilizers in Nigeria Ahmad Tijjani Abdullahi	388
The Determinants of the Manufacturing Sector Output in Nigeria ISHOLA Sulaiman Kunle, IBRAHIM Muhammad Saiwaai and MOHAMMED Ibrahim Karofi	405
Systematic Training and Development and Employee Competency in Kwara State Public Service ABOGUNRIN, Abiodun Peter; ADEYEMI, Emmanuel Adewale & AREMU, Nuha Salihu	417
Corporate Governance and Financial Performance of Selected Nigerian Deposit Money Banks ADEWUMI Ademola Adeniran, OMULA Godwin Gabriel & IBO Sunday Adekoya	436

SYSTEMATIC TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AND EMPLOYEE COMPETENCY IN KWARA STATE PUBLIC SERVICE

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Abstract

This study investigates the effect of systematic training and development on employee competency within the Kwara State public service. The research addresses the critical need to understand and integrate structured training frameworks into workforce management to enhance employee skills and organizational effectiveness. Specifically, it examines how targeted training programs and professional development initiatives influence employees' competencies in a public sector environment. By exploring this relationship, the study aims to bridge the gap in understanding the role of structured training and development in shaping employee outcomes and improving public service delivery. Utilizing a survey research design, the study draws data from a sample of 395 respondents, from a population of 32,500 public service employees. Primary data were collected across various Ministries and parastatal headquarters located in Ilorin, the state capital, using structured questionnaire. Employing regression analysis, the results reveal that systematic training and development have a significant effect on employee competency ($\beta = 1.154$; $t = 13.845$; $p\text{-value} < 0.005$) at a 95% confidence level. These findings accentuate the importance of training and development in fostering employee capabilities, particularly in public sector environments where skill enhancement and adaptability are critical to achieving strategic objectives. The study concludes that implementing well-structured training and development programs is essential for improving employee competency and recommends comprehensive training strategies, continuous professional development, and policy reforms to support a skilled and efficient workforce in Kwara State public service.

Keywords: Employee Competency, Public Service, Training and Development, Systematic Training Initiatives

1. Introduction

Employee competency is a cornerstone of effective public service delivery. Globally, and particularly in Nigeria, training and development are pivotal in enhancing employee skills and knowledge to improve

organizational performance (Mullins, 1999). In Kwara State Public Service, systematic training programs are essential to meet the evolving demands of governance and public administration (Dada, 2019).

Training and development involve organizational efforts to enhance the performance of individuals and groups by equipping them with relevant knowledge, skills, and abilities (Alabi, Salahu, Ambali, Yero & Kuranga, 2024; Adamolekun, 1983; Onah, 2012). Such initiatives are critical for adapting to policy shifts, technological advancements, and changing societal expectations (Anas, 2024). However, Nigeria's public sector faces challenges like inadequate funding, poor coordination of training activities, and insufficient needs assessments, which hinder effective training implementation (Obot, 2019). These issues result in a workforce often lacking the necessary skills for optimal performance (Alabi et al., 2024; Dada, 2019; Anas, 2024).

Employee competency is pivotal for effective public service delivery. In Kwara State Public Service, the need for a skilled and adaptable workforce is crucial given the evolving demands of governance and administration. However, despite various training interventions, public servants in the state often lack the necessary competencies to meet the challenges of their roles effectively. This deficiency leads to suboptimal service delivery, inefficiencies, and a diminished ability to implement government policies effectively (Manjo, 2019; Obot, 2019; Olowu et al., 2022).

In Kwara State, public service plays a key role in implementing government policies and delivering essential services. However, empirical evidence suggests employees often lack the necessary competencies for effective performance, leading to suboptimal service delivery (Manjo, 2019; Olowu et al., 2022). Addressing this requires

a comprehensive examination of training and development programs as strategies for competency enhancement. Effective training programs are linked to improved employee competency, job satisfaction, and organizational productivity (Saka, Salman & Akewusola, 2022). They also enable employees to adapt to new technologies and foster innovation, driving continuous service delivery improvements (Adiele, 2019; Ifaka & Unufe, 2021).

Thus, for Kwara State Public Service, such programs are vital to building an efficient workforce. Meanwhile, substantial research links training and development to employee competency globally, but gaps exist in the context of Kwara State. Limited studies have explored these relationships within the state's unique socio-economic and administrative dynamics, necessitating tailored approaches to addressing competency gaps. This study seeks to address this gap by examining the impact of systematic training and development on employee competencies in Kwara State Public Service. By identifying the relationship between structured training initiatives and workforce effectiveness, the study aims to provide actionable insights into designing and implementing robust training programs tailored to the state's specific needs. Thus, this study will contribute to the broader discourse on public sector efficiency and the role of human resource development in achieving sustainable governance and service excellence. The hypothesis is as follows:

H1: Systematic training and development significantly affect employee competency in Kwara State Public Service.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Employee Competency

Competency combines knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes essential for effective job performance (Boyatzis, 2008). It significantly influences organizational success by enhancing productivity, service quality, and adaptability. Competency frameworks typically include technical skills, like job-specific proficiency, and behavioral competencies, such as teamwork and communication (Salas *et al.*, 2022).

This represents the dependent variable (DV) used in this study and it is defined as the combination of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that enable effective job performance in Kwara State Public Service (Saka *et al.* 2022). It encompasses technical skills (job-specific proficiency and expertise); behavioral skills (teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities); adaptability (ability to embrace new technologies, policies, and processes) and ethical standards (adherence to public service norms and values). Competency reflects the overall capability of employees to meet their job requirements and align with organizational objectives (Salas, *et al.*, 2020).

In Kwara State Public Service, competency involves delivering high-quality services, upholding ethical standards, and effectively implementing policies. However, gaps persist due to inadequate training, outdated curricula, and misaligned skills (Olowu *et al.*, 2022). Addressing these issues requires a robust and tailored competency framework to align employee skills with organizational needs, enhancing public service effectiveness.

Concept of Training and Development

Training and development are vital components of human resource management, essential for enhancing employee competencies and driving organizational success (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021; Oforegbunam, 2011). Training focuses on structured activities designed to improve skills, knowledge, and performance in specific job roles (Adiele, 2019; Alabi *et al.*, 2024), while development prepares employees for future responsibilities by fostering critical thinking and broader strategic capabilities (Dada, 2019; Mullins, 1999). Together, these processes address immediate competency gaps and equip employees for long-term challenges, enhancing organizational resilience (Ifaka & Unufe, 2021; Noe, 2022).

Training emphasizes short-term skill acquisition tailored to job requirements (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020), while development involves broader, long-term initiatives for future leadership roles (Dessler, 2023). Contemporary perspectives underscore lifelong learning, adaptability, and innovation in response to technological and organizational changes (Salas *et al.*, 2022). These continuous processes are increasingly critical in fostering a workforce capable of navigating modern complexities.

Systematic Training and Development represent the independent variable, which is the cause or factor hypothesized to influence the dependent variable. Systematic training and development in this study refer to structured and organized efforts aimed at improving employee skills, knowledge, and performance. It is conceptualized to include targeted training programs (focused sessions

designed to address specific competency gaps), continuous professional development (ongoing learning opportunities for skill enhancement) and technological integration (The use of digital platforms, e-learning, and blended learning approaches). These systematic initiatives are intended to prepare employees to adapt to dynamic job requirements, thereby enhancing their overall competency (Salas *et al.*, 2022).

In Nigeria, public service has historically prioritized training to improve employee performance and service delivery. The 1974 Public Service Review Commission highlighted the importance of continuous training for result-oriented service (Adamolekun, 1983). However, challenges such as inadequate funding and political inertia have impeded implementation (Dada, 2019; Okafor & Agu, 2020). In Kwara State, public servants face unique challenges, including digital literacy, ethical decision-making, and effective policy implementation, necessitating systematic training and development programs (Adeoye & Elegbeleye, 2023).

Empirical studies confirm the positive impact of training on employee performance. For example, training at the Nigerian Gas Company significantly enhanced organizational productivity (Adeoye, 2019). Training also improves job satisfaction, reduces turnover, and fosters better interpersonal relations, driving overall organizational success (Jehanzeb & Bashir, 2020). Effective programs align with both organizational goals and employees' specific needs, ensuring resource optimization and employee engagement (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021). Conversely, poorly matched initiatives can lead to

resource wastage and disengagement (Noe, 2022).

Technological advancements have revolutionized training delivery, shifting from traditional methods to e-learning and immersive virtual reality (Gillet *et al.*, 2023). Blended learning approaches, combining online and in-person sessions, are increasingly effective in meeting training objectives. Continuous learning fosters employee adaptability, enhances competencies, and supports organizational agility in dynamic environments (McKinsey & Company, 2022). Invariably, training and development are indispensable for addressing competency gaps, preparing employees for future challenges, and fostering organizational effectiveness. In Kwara State, leveraging systematic, tailored, and technologically advanced training programs is crucial for equipping public servants with the skills needed to meet the demands of modern governance.

Interrelationship between Training and Development, and Employee Competency

The relationship between training, development, and employee competency is direct and reciprocal (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021). Training enhances competencies, while competencies shape the effectiveness of training programs. For example, a project management training program in Kwara State Public Service would improve employees' technical and managerial skills, enabling more efficient implementation of government projects (Salas *et al.*, 2022).

Studies show that targeted training initiatives boost job performance, employee satisfaction, and organizational outcomes (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021). Competency-

based training programs are particularly effective as they align learning objectives with specific skill requirements (Salas *et al.*, 2022). However, a notable gap exists between training initiatives and actual competency needs in public service. Limited research explores this misalignment in Kwara State and its impact on service delivery.

Theoretical Framework

Human Capital Theory

Becker's (1964) theory highlights that investments in employee training and development enhance individual competencies, boosting organizational performance through increased productivity and innovation. This concept applies to the Kwara State Public Service, where structured training can address skill gaps among civil servants. Public sector employees often lag in adopting modern administrative practices and technological tools (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021). Programs focusing on digital literacy and policy management can significantly enhance competencies, enabling employees to meet evolving job demands. Additionally, Becker's economic rationale emphasizes the need to justify public spending. Adeoye and Elegbeleye (2023) found that training investments in Nigeria's public service improve service delivery and citizen satisfaction, reinforcing the economic and social value of effective training initiatives.

Social Learning Theory

Bandura's (1977) theory emphasizes observation, imitation, and modeling in skill acquisition, suggesting effective training

should include mentorship and real-world examples. This approach aligns with public service structures, where experienced civil servants in Kwara State could mentor younger employees, facilitating the transfer of institutional knowledge and best practices (Eze *et al.*, 2023). Exposure to exemplary leaders can inspire ethical practices and efficient governance, while role-modeling sessions help employees navigate bureaucratic challenges effectively. Complementing this perspective, the theory underscores the strategic value of investments in training and development to enhance employee competencies (Becker, 1964; Aguinis & Kraiger, 2021). Targeted training in areas like e-governance and public financial management can significantly boost competencies over time (Adeoye & Elegbeleye, 2023).

This theory offers a comprehensive framework for examining the relationship between training and employee competency in Kwara State Public Service. It highlights how investments in education and skill acquisition improve employee value, organizational productivity, and overall service delivery. Training initiatives informed by this theory can address competency gaps in areas like administrative efficiency, digital literacy, and public sector ethics, fostering enhanced performance and adaptability within the public service.

3. Methodology

This paper examines the impact of systematic training and development on employee competency within the Kwara State public service. Focusing on Kwara State, Nigeria, the study considers the

unique cultural, political, and socioeconomic factors that shape organizational culture and employee performance dynamics in the civil service (Manjo, 2019; Oyeleye & Akinyele, 2019). A survey design was adopted, allowing for the description, analysis, and interpretation of key variables. This method enables data collection to answer research questions and test hypotheses effectively (Hair et al., 2017). The study's population includes all 32,500 civil servants employed in various departments, ministries, and agencies, responsible for delivering essential services such as education, healthcare, transportation, public safety, and social welfare (Kwara State Civil Service Commission, 2022).

A convenience sampling method was used to select participants from the headquarters of various ministries and parastatals. Participants were chosen based on their roles and responsibilities, ensuring a diverse representation across departments. This approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of training and development effects on employees at different levels of the public service in Kwara State. To determine the sample size for this study, we used the Taro Yamane formula, which is appropriate for estimating a sample size from a known population. The Taro Yamane formula is given as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

Where:

n = Sample size

N = Total population size

e = Margin of error (expressed as a proportion)

The margin of error is typically set based on the desired level of precision for the study's results. For most studies, a common margin of error is 5% (0.05) or 10% (0.10). Then, we calculate the sample size (n) as:

$$n = 32,500 / (1 + 32,500(0.05)^2)$$

$$n = 32,500 / (1 + 32,500(0.0025))$$

$$n = 32,500 / (1 + 81.25)$$

$$n = 32,500 / 82.25$$

$$n \approx 394.28$$

Since we cannot have a fraction of a participant, we rounded up the sample size to the nearest whole number:

$$n \approx 395$$

Therefore, the estimated sample size for this study was 395 participants. This sample size provide sufficient statistical power to draw meaningful conclusions about the variables under consideration.

Primary data were collected through a self-developed questionnaire using a four-point

Likert scale, measuring responses from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Reliability was ensured through the test-retest method and Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability index shown in table 3.1, indicating high consistency and reliability.

Table 3.1 Reliability Statistics of Research Variables

S/N	Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Remark
1	Systematic Training and Development (TrDev)	5	0.774	0.769	Reliable
2	Employee Competency (EmCom)	5	0.813	0.801	Reliable

Sources: Pilot Survey 2024

Data analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS (version 27.0), employing descriptive and inferential statistics. Bar charts illustrated respondents' demographic characteristics, while regression analysis assessed the effect of systematic training on employee competency. Relationships were

evaluated using p-values, with significance set at $p < 0.05$. If the p-value was below 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected; otherwise, it was not. This approach highlighted the strength and significance of relationships between the study variables.

Model Specifications for the Hypothesis

$$\text{EmCom} = f(\text{TrDev})$$

$$\text{EmCom} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{TrDev} + \epsilon$$

Where:

EmCom = Employee Competency (Dependent variable)

β_0 = Intercept of the model.

β_1 = Estimate of the parameter of the independent variable in the model of the slope.

E = Error term.

TrDev = Systematic Training and Development (Independent variable)

The a priori expectation is as; thus, $\beta_1 > 0$. According to the a priori anticipation about the link stated above, **systematic training and development** have a significant positive effect on **employee's competency in term of decision making process in Kwara State Civil service**.

The calculated value would be larger than or equal to the critical value for the null hypothesis to be rejected; otherwise, the null hypothesis is accepted at any level of significance.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Socio-demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Analyzing demographic traits provides insights into the participants' makeup, including variables like gender, age, education, work experience, and job category, which contextualize the findings.

Figure 1 illustrates the socio-demographic distribution of 395 respondents: 56.5% (223) are male, and 43.5% (172) are female. This gender distribution reflects broader organizational dynamics and helps establish connections between participant backgrounds and research goals. Bar charts further present these characteristics in percentages for clarity and relevance.

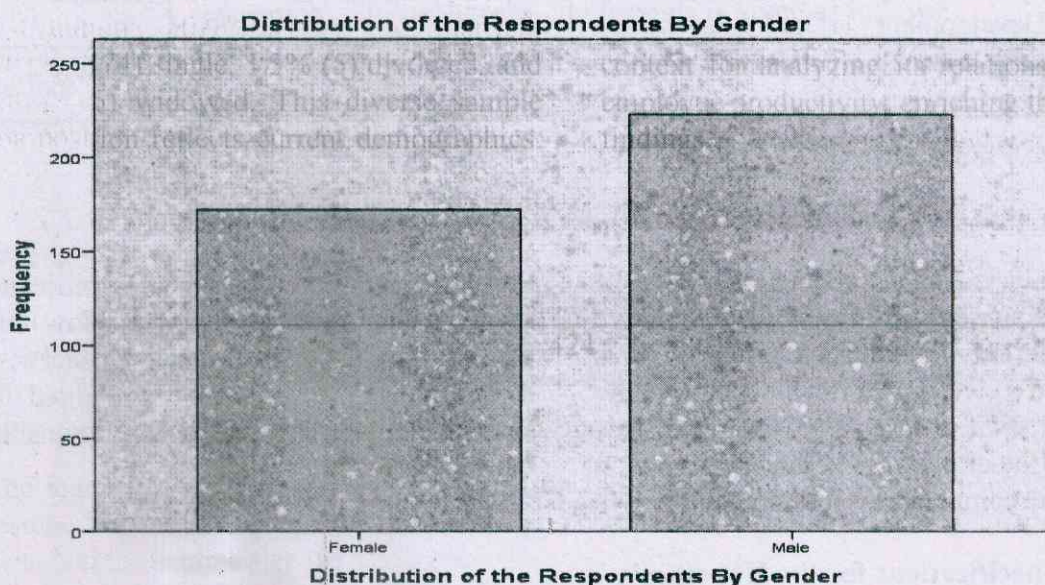


Fig. 1: Distribution of the Respondents By Gender
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 2 shows the marital status distribution: 50.9% (201) are married, 44.1% (174) single, 1.3% (5) divorced, and 3.8% (15) widowed. This diverse sample composition reflects current demographics.

Marital status, linked to job attitudes and performance (Kooij *et al.*, 2018), provides context for analyzing its relationship with employee productivity, enriching the study's findings.

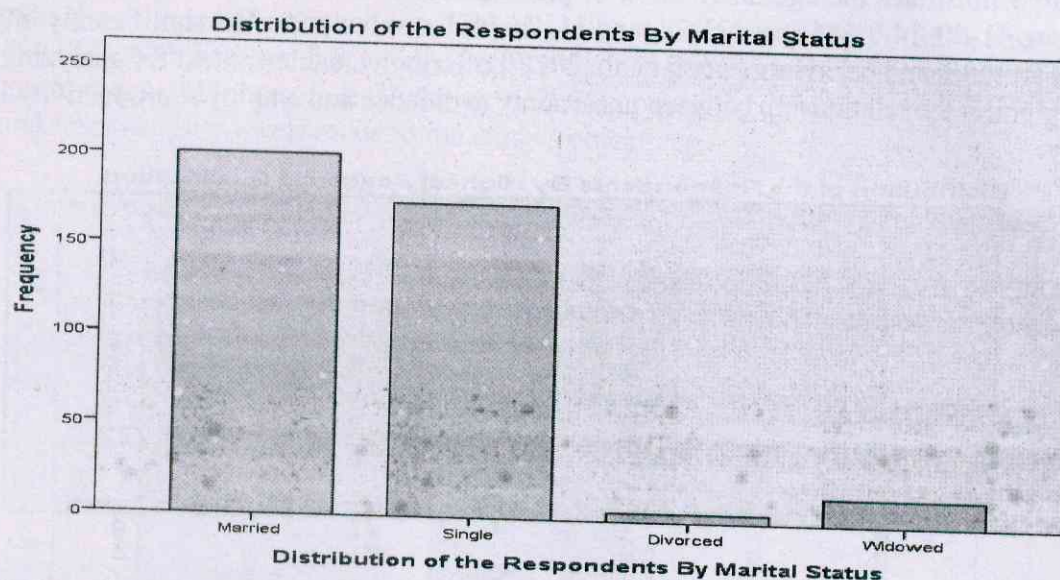


Fig. 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Marital Status

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 3 shows the age distribution: 57.2% (226) are 31-40 years, 16.5% (65) are 41-50 years, 14.9% (59) are 21-30 years, and 11.4% (45) are above 50. Age influences work attitudes and behaviors (Kooij et al., 2018), providing context for exploring how it moderates the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and employee productivity.

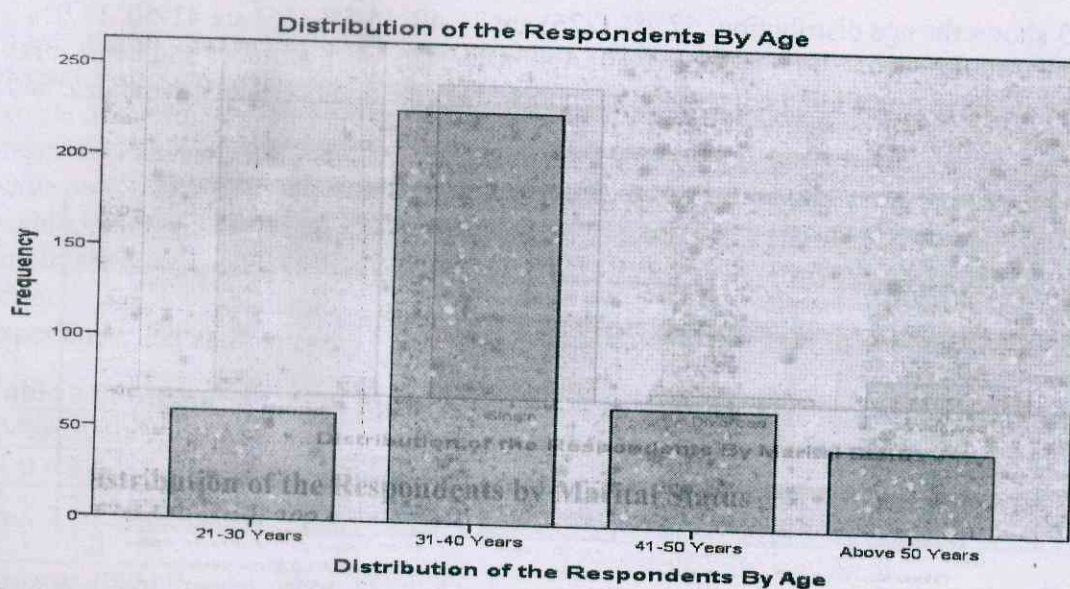
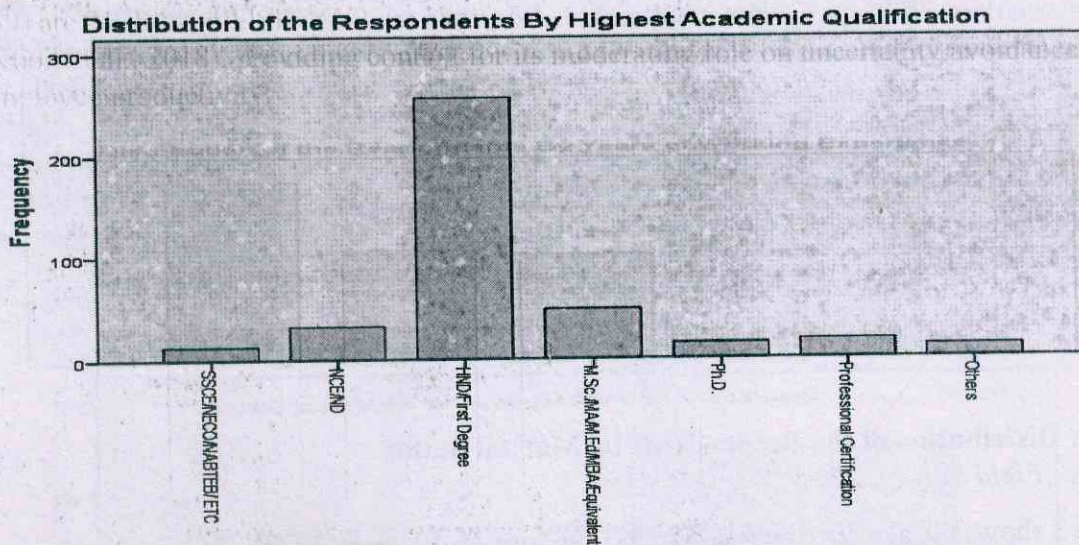


Fig. 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 3 illustrates the age distribution of participants: 57.2% (226) are aged 31-40, 16.5% (65) are 41-50, 14.9% (59) are 21-30, and 11.4% (45) are above 50. Age significantly impacts work attitudes and behaviors (Kooij et al., 2018), offering valuable context for analyzing how it moderates the relationship between uncertainty avoidance and employee productivity in the study.



Distribution of the Respondents By Highest Academic Qualification

Fig. 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Highest Academic Qualification
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 3 shows the age distribution: 57.2% (226) are 31-40, 16.5% (65) are 41-50, 14.9% (59) are 21-30, and 11.4% (45) are above 50. Age influences work attitudes and behaviors (Kooij et al., 2018), providing context for its moderating role on uncertainty avoidance and employee productivity.

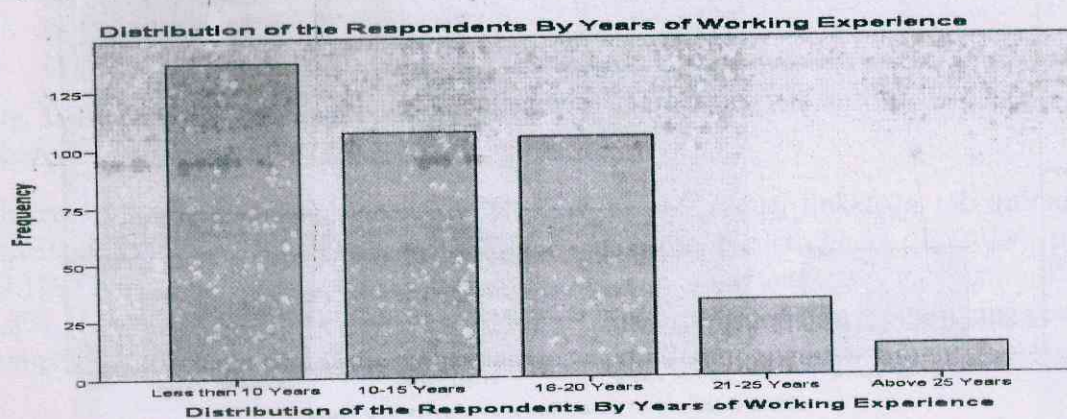


Fig. 5: Distribution of the Respondents by Years of Work Experience
Source: Field Survey, 2024.

Figure 6 shows the staff category distribution: junior staff make up 65.1% (257), senior staff 31.1% (123), and directors 3.8% (15). Staff categories influence job roles, responsibilities, and performance (Morgeson & Humphrey, 2006), providing a basis for examining how varying responsibility levels relate to the study's objectives.

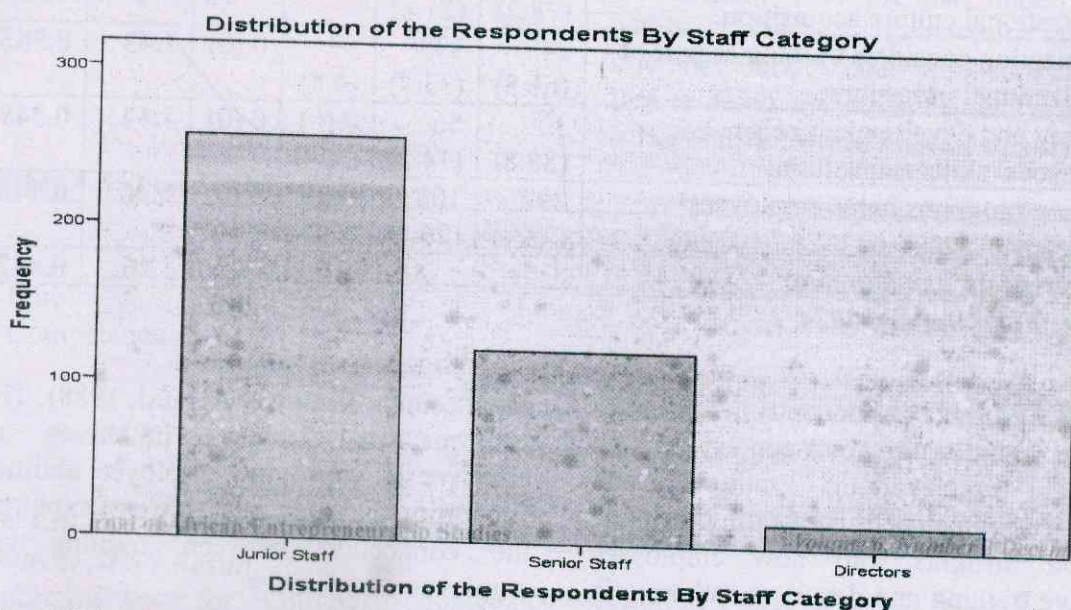


Fig. 6: Distribution of the Respondents by Staff Category

Source: Field Survey, 2024.

In summary, the analysis of demographic characteristics provides a comprehensive profile of the study's participants, setting the stage for investigating the relationships between systematic training and development and its relative effect on employee competency within the context of gender, age, academic qualification, experience, and staff category.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Eligible Kwara State Civil Service employees responded to questions on training, development, and competency using a four-point Likert scale: Strongly Agree (1), Agree (2), Disagree (3), and Strongly Disagree (4). This scale facilitated the evaluation of their responses.

Table 4.1: Measurement of Mean

Mean Value	Description
1.0 – 2.0	Positive/true statement
2.1 – 3.0	Neutral position
3.1 – 4.0	Negative/false statement

Source: Field Survey, 2024

The descriptive statistics of the responses are shown in the following tables. Further insights into the descriptive analysis are presented in the discussion of findings.

Table 4.2 Descriptive Statistics of Effect of training and development on employee competency N= 395

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	SD
Training & development aids organizational culture acquisition.	309 (78.2)	86 (21.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.22	0.413
Organization considers training as part of organizational procedure.	243 (61.5)	133 (33.7)	19 (4.8)	0 (0)	1.43	0.585
Training and development helps employees' skills acquisition.	339 (85.8)	56 (14.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.14	0.349
Training programs helps employees' competence.	292 (73.9)	103 (26.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1.26	0.440
Training and development					1.26	0.447

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 4.2 presents respondents' perspectives on the relationship between systematic training, organizational culture, and employee competence. The findings provide valuable insights into how employees perceive training and development's role in shaping competency within organizational culture. A majority (78.2%) strongly believe that training fosters organizational culture, aligning with Hofstede's model, which highlights training's influence on cultural values (Hofstede, 1980). This suggests employees view training as instrumental in instilling desired cultural norms, reinforcing its importance in enhancing competency.

Additionally, 61.5% strongly agree that training is integral to the organization's procedural framework. This indicates employees perceive training as a core organizational commitment, emphasizing its role in linking rewards and productivity (Noe, 2013). An overwhelming 85.8% agree that training significantly develops employees' skills, reflecting literature on training's impact on knowledge and skill

enhancement (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). This confirms that training initiatives are effective in improving employee abilities, supporting the study's objective of exploring the connection between training and employee competency.

Moreover, 73.9% of respondents agree, and 26.1% strongly agree, that training programs enhance competence. This highlights training's critical role in fostering collaboration and teamwork, essential for employee performance (Awuah & Amoako, 2016). The overall mean score of 1.26 indicates a broadly positive perception of training's impact on competence, aligning with the study's theoretical framework. In summary, the results in Table 4.2 emphasize the positive link between training and organizational culture, skill development, and employee competence, supporting the research objectives.

4.5 Assumptions for Multiple Regression Model

Diagnostic tests for linearity, multicollinearity, and normality were conducted to ensure the data met the assumptions required for accurate linear regression analysis.

Normality Test

It is common practise in statistics to presumptively presume that the observations are normal. This premise underpins the whole statistical framework, and the inference fails if the premise is broken. Before doing any statistical data analysis, it is imperative to verify or test this premise.

Table 4.3: Tests of Normality

	Uncertainty Avoidance Index	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	Df	Sig.
Employee Competency	STRONGLY AGREE	.346	779	.000	.767	779	.000
	AGREE	.389	630	.000	.708	630	.000
	DISAGREE	.437	151	.000	.576	151	.000
	STRONGLY DISAGREE	.348	19	.000	.641	19	.000
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction							

Source: SPSS Result, 2024.

Normality tests for "Employee Competency" response levels showed p-values of 0.000 (Kolmogorov-Smirnov) and <0.001 (Shapiro-Wilk) across subcategories. These results indicate significant conformity to normality for all subcategories.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 4.4: Multicollinearity Result

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Systematic Training and Development	.379	2.485
a. Dependent Variable: Employee Competency			

Source: SPSS Result, 2024.

Multicollinearity occurs in regression models when predictor variables are strongly correlated, potentially affecting results. Tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) assess this issue. Tolerance values near 1 indicate minimal multicollinearity; all values in this study exceed 0.2, showing no severe concerns. Similarly, VIF values below 5, as observed

here, are acceptable. These results confirm no significant multicollinearity among predictor variables in the regression model.

Linearity Test

Linearity, assessing the alignment of changes in the dependent variable with the independent variables, was tested. Figure 7 displays a scatter plot of residuals, showing

minimal spread. This indicates a linear relationship between Uncertainty Avoidance

Index (independent variable) and employee productivity (dependent variable).

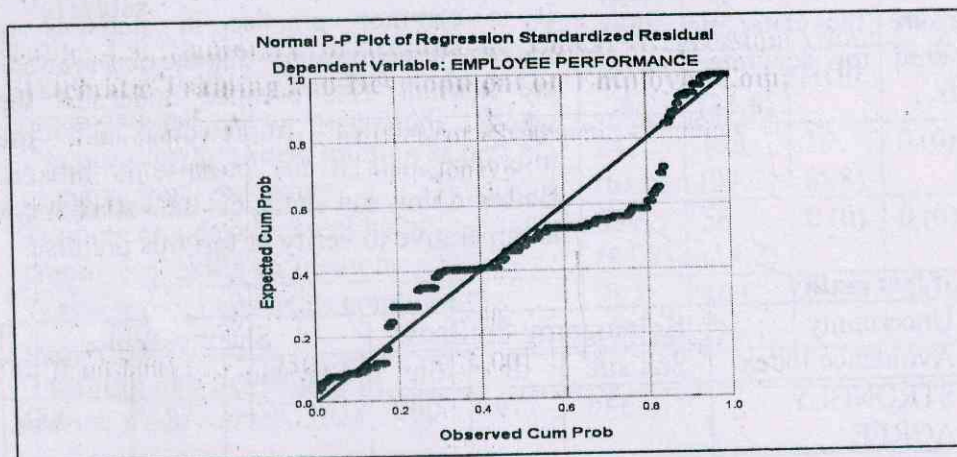


Figure 7: Linearity Test Result

Source: SPSS Result, 2024.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

A regression study explored how uncertainty avoidance index affect employee productivity. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to quantify this impact, with the table showing R^2 values indicating explained variance in employee performance.

Table 4.5: Summary of Results of Linear Regression Analysis for the Effect of Systematic Training and Development on Employee Competency

Model: $EmCom = \beta_0 + \beta_1 TrDev + \epsilon$		Effect of Systematic Training and Development on Employee Competency							
	B	t	Sig.	R	R^2	Adj R^2	df	F	Sig
(Constant)	.750	2.007	<.001	.581 ^a	.337	.335	1	191.677	<.001 ^b
TrDev	1.154	13.845	.000				394		

a. Dependent Variable: EmCom

Source: SPSS Result, 2024.

The regression analysis summarized in Table 4.5 reveals that systematic training

and development (TrDev) is a significant predictor of employee competency

(EmCom) in Kwara State Public Service. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.581 (58.1%) indicates a strong positive relationship between TrDev and EmCom. Additionally, the R-square value of 0.337 (33.7%) suggests that 33.7% of the variability in EmCom is explained by systematic training and development. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.335 confirms TrDev's contribution to variations in EmCom, demonstrating a good model fit for prediction. The F-statistic ($F=191.677$) is highly significant ($p=0.000$, $p<0.05$), indicating a strong overall model fit.

The regression coefficients further support the positive relationship: when other variables are held constant, EmCom starts at 0.750 and increases by 1.154 for every unit increase in TrDev. The beta coefficient for TrDev is 1.154, with a t-value of 13.845 ($p<0.005$), underscoring the significant effect of TrDev on EmCom. More so, the t-statistic exceeds the critical value of +1.645 at 394 degrees of freedom, supporting the hypothesis that systematic training and development significantly improve employee competency. At a 95% confidence level, the findings confirm that TrDev positively influences EmCom in Kwara State Public Service.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the hypothesis testing reveal that systematic training and development significantly enhance employee competency in Kwara State Public Service ($\beta = 1.154$; $t = 13.845$; $p < 0.005$). This significant effect underscores the influence of structured training programs on workplace outcomes, particularly improved employee competency. The results provide

strong evidence that systematic training and development (TrDev) positively impact employee competency (EmCom).

The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.581$) indicates a moderate to strong relationship, aligning with research emphasizing the role of structured training in workforce development (Noe et al., 2022). An R-square value of 0.337 suggests that 33.7% of the variability in employee competency is attributable to systematic training and development. While this demonstrates a substantial impact, it also highlights that other factors contribute to competency, such as organizational culture, leadership, and individual motivation (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009).

The adjusted R^2 value (0.335) validates the model's robustness, confirming that training initiatives meaningfully influence competency. This aligns with Elnaga and Imran's (2013) findings that training enhances employee skills and productivity. The significant F-statistic ($F = 191.677$, $p < 0.000$) further supports the model's reliability and underscores systematic training and development as a key determinant of employee competency.

Additionally, the t-statistic ($t = 13.845$, $p < 0.005$) affirms the hypothesis, echoing conclusions by Kadiresan *et al.* (2015) that systematic training enhances technical skills and adaptability to organizational changes. However, the R-square value also indicates that 66.3% of competency variability is influenced by other factors, such as workplace environment, leadership, individual characteristics, and external socio-economic conditions. Salas *et al.* (2020) emphasize the interplay of these

variables in shaping competency, advocating a holistic approach to employee development.

The study's contextual limitation to Kwara State Public Service suggests the findings may not generalize to other public sector organizations with different operational and cultural nuances. Hofstede (2020) highlights the influence of cultural and institutional factors on employee behavior and outcomes, warranting caution in broader application.

These findings have significant implications for public sector management in Kwara State. The positive relationship between systematic training and competency highlights the need to institutionalize structured training as a core workforce development strategy. Policymakers should prioritize continuous learning initiatives, customized training modules, and regular competency assessments to align with organizational goals. Additionally, leveraging technology-driven training platforms can improve accessibility and engagement, supporting modern e-learning advancements (Andriotis, 2021).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study confirms that systematic training and development significantly enhance employee competency within the Kwara State Public Service. Training initiatives are pivotal for improving employee performance, adaptability, and skill enhancement. However, the findings also highlight the influence of broader

organizational and contextual factors, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to workforce development.

To optimize employee competency, the following recommendations are proposed:

- i. Kwara State Public Service should establish and sustain tailored training programs addressing employees' technical, managerial, and soft skill needs. These programs must be periodically reviewed and updated to remain relevant and effective in meeting the dynamic demands of public service.
- ii. Managers should leverage e-learning platforms and technology-based training tools to improve accessibility and efficiency. Interactive modules, virtual simulations, and assessments can enhance engagement and provide flexible learning opportunities, particularly for remote or underserved employees.
- iii. Addressing the 66.3% variability in competency not explained by training requires fostering supportive workplace environments, promoting leadership development, and introducing motivational initiatives. Cultural and organizational dynamics must be considered to align with employees' preferences for stability and predictability, ensuring optimal outcomes. Thus, by implementing these recommendations, Kwara State Public Service can significantly enhance employee competency, thereby improving overall service delivery.

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