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EFFECT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

Kyenge Selumun Solomon
(+2347030364065)
selumunsolomon@gmail.com
Department of Business Administration, Nasarawa State University, Keffi, Nasarawa State
&
Agoh Job
(+2348034576136)
jobagoh@gmail.com
Jos Electricity Distribution Company, No.20 Otukpo Road Makurdi
&
Tyonande Iorwuese (PhD)
(+2348137608438)
isaaciorwuese1@gmail.com
Department of Entrepreneurship, University of Benin, Benin City, Edo State
&
Dewua Philip (PhD)
Department of Business Management, Rev. Fr. Moses Orshio Adasu University, Makurdi.
dewuaphil75@gmail.com

ABSTRACT
Building and construction sector has remained driver of economic development in any nation, despite its critical role, many building and construction firms in Benue State continue to experience low employee productivity, skill gaps, and limited career growth opportunities, which undermine overall employee performance. Thus, the study examines the effect of career development practices on employee performance in Benue state with a focus on building and construction companies. The study specifically examined the effect of employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement on employee performance of building and construction companies. A cross sectional survey design was adopted for the study. Questionnaire was used as the instrument for data collection. Taro Yamane formula was used to determined simple size of 286 from the population of 1003 employees. Simple percentages, mean and standard deviation were used for data presentation and analysis while multiple regression analysis was used to test the extent of the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable. Findings of the study revealed that employee training; career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement all had significant positive effect on employee performance. The study recommended, among others, that the management of building and construction companies in Benue State should invest in continuous and targeted training programs to equip employees with up-to-date knowledge, technical expertise, and practical competencies relevant to their roles. Such capacity-building initiatives will not only enhance employee performance but also improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of building and construction projects.

Key Words: *Career Development, Employee Training, Career Mentoring, Career Counseling, Career Advancement, Employee Performance*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the 21st century, employee performance has become a growing concern in every sector, particularly among firms operating in emerging economies. In building and construction sector for instance, many firms continue to struggle with declining and inconsistent employee performance (Sharma & Singh 2025). Many building and construction companies are facing career development related challenges such as limited career progression opportunities, inadequate training, poor motivation, ineffective supervision, weak organizational support systems amongst others and this has adversely affected the productivity and commitment of both skilled and unskilled workers (Ngoma, Kaliba & Mwanaumo, 2025).

Employee performance is the ability and effectiveness with which workers execute their assigned tasks within an organization (Smith, Tillema & Wright, 2019). In building and construction firms, performance is reflected in areas such as productivity, efficiency in resource utilization, quality of workmanship, adherence to project timelines, and overall contribution to the success of construction projects (Nechifor, Ramos, Ferrari, Laichena, Kihiu, Omanyo & Kiriga, 2021). Evaluating employee performance is therefore essential for ensuring that projects are delivered on time, within budget, and to the required standards. Given that the construction industry is highly labor-intensive and project-driven, the skills, commitment, and performance of employees directly influence organizational outcomes. For this reason, construction firms devote considerable resources to recruiting, training, motivating, and retaining competent professionals and artisans. Emerging research underscores the importance of career development opportunities as a key determinant of employee performance (Kieti & Maende, 2024; Hsu & Huang, 2021; Gupta & Sharma, 2018).

Career development practices are essential strategic considerations for all organizations regardless of size, sector, market, or profile (Rahaju, 2019). Career development is a lifetime process of learning, acquiring, and digesting information about oneself and one's occupation to improve performance (Mckay, 2020). Career development helps retain and motivate employees. Through the career development process, employees are assisted in setting realistic goals and developing the required skills and abilities for target positions (Rahaju, 2019). Career development practices has been decomposed by Makr and Nzulwa (2018) into four constructs of career mentoring, career counseling, career advancement and employee training. Career advancement includes acquiring of new competences which are worthwhile to the organization and employees in meeting future career needs. Career advancement increases job security for the employees which increases staff retention and reduces staff turnover (Ainebyoona, 2021). Career counseling relates to the process by which employees learn more about themselves and also acquire new skills. As revealed by Tuvulla and Byaruhanga (2021) career counseling enables employees to learn about a particular condition such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders by which the employee is affected, so that the employee better understand treatment option. Career mentoring relates to the process of leveraging strategic knowledge and skill throughout the organizaton by sharing and spreading acquired learning and know-how. It allows the learner to acquire new skills, abilities and knowledge that enhance their competences and help in career development (Utor, Ugba, Nomhwange & Terhile, 2023).

In building and construction and firms, career development constitutes a fundamental component of the human resource management system, given the industry's reliance on skilled professionals

such as engineers, architects, project managers, quantity surveyors, and site workers (Agyekum et al 2024). As building and construction organizations strive to deliver quality infrastructure projects within budget and time constraints, they depend on their workforce which is compose of employees with technical expertise, experience, and innovativeness in targeted towards achieving operational efficiency, safety compliance, and competitive advantage (Agyekum, Ayarkwa & Adinyira, 2024; Kim & Park, 2023).

Career development has been acknowledged globally as a vital determinant of employee performance, influencing not just growth opportunities but also productivity irrespective of type of industry. In every sector, employees who perceive that management of the organizations are committed to their professional growth through training, certification, and career progression pathways tend to exhibit higher levels of productivity, affective and normative commitment (Ofori & Sackey, 2025; Nguyen, Pham & Hoang, 2023). In building and construction industry, providing structured career development opportunities motivates building and construction workers not only to upgrade their technical competencies but also adhere strictly to safety standards, and improve overall job performance (Almeida & Teixeira, 2024).

In advanced economies such as Japan, organizations recruit, promote, reward, train, and develop employees based on merit, fostering innovation and creativity through well-structured career development systems. Such systems not only ensure fairness but also enable the implementation of new ideas at the highest levels of management, thereby enhancing organizational adaptability in dynamic environments (Higgins & Dillon, 2017). In contrast, in Nigeria and in building and construction companies in particular, the reality appears to be different. Employees often report inadequate access to career development training, limited opportunities for career counseling and advancement, poor and inconsistent salary structures, unjustified salary cuts, delayed or denied promotions, and violations of established labour standards. There are also reported cases of harassment, intimidation, and disregard for employee welfare which has further undermined morale, commitment and performance of employees (Ituma, Agu, Chinweike & Onwe, 2024). It is against the background the study intends to evaluate the effect of career development practices on employee performance with a focus on building and construction companies in Benue state.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to examine the effect of career development practices on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state. The specific objectives are:

i. To examine the effect of employee training on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.
ii. Ascertain the effect of career mentoring on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.
iii. To investigate the effect of career counseling on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.
iv. To determine the effect of career advancement on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are postulated in line wth the specific objectives.

H_{01}: Employee training does not have a significant effect on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.

H_{02}: Career mentoring does not have a significant effect on employee performance in building and construction companies Benue state.

H_{03}: Career counseling does not have significant effect on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.

H_{04}: Career advancement does not have a significant effect on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORY

This section focuses on the reviewed of related literature under the following headings; conceptual framework, empirical and theoretical framework.

2.2 Conceptual Review

This part conceptualized the study variables such employee performance, career development.

2.2.1 Employee Performance

According to Ronny (2020) employee performance refers to the degree to which an activity, program, or policy is carried out in a way that advances the organization's vision, mission, goals, and objectives as outlined in its strategic planning. Employee performance is the ability to complete duties effectively and efficiently in a dynamic work environment while adhering to the criteria set by the organization or supervisor and being validated against established, acceptable benchmarks (Hafiz, 2017; Igbomor, 2023). One way to assess employee performance can be via the use of key-performance indicators (KPI). The KPI includes but not limited to sales revenue, customer satisfaction, quality of work, attendance and punctuality, efficiency and productivity, time management, teamwork and collaboration.

Performance is a critical factor in organizational success, helping to also improve overall productivity, profitability, and employee morale. By assessing employee performance regularly, organisation can identify areas that need improvement, provide support and training to employees, and ensure that everyone is working towards the same goals. Many companies assess their employees' performance on an annual or quarterly basis to define certain areas that need improvement and to encourage further success in areas that are meeting or exceeding expectations. The success in achieving performance is not only determined by the mastery of in-depth knowledge but also strongly influenced by the behavioral attitudes that employees have in dealing with work (Utor, Ugba & Nomhwange, 2023).

According to Silitonga and Sadeli (2020), employee performance is often interpreted as representative of the organization's performance and has a direct impact on the organization's image. Khan and Mashikhi (2017) stated that performance has been considered as the ultimate outcome of an organization as well as an employee. Creativity, innovation, and a higher level of commitment among employees are the sources of organizational success and glory. A study by Prange and Pinho (2017) mentioned that, since human resources are important factor in any

organization, organizational productivity and efficiency depend on the performance of its employees.

2.2.2 Career Development

Career development is widely recognized in the literature as a continuous, dynamic, and strategic process through which individuals enhance their skills, competencies, and career trajectories while aligning with organizational goals. Rather than being a one-time activity, it represents a lifelong progression of learning, adaptation, and professional growth (Navern, Quraisha & Anis, 2015; Alfa, 2018). Scholars generally converge on two dominant perspectives of career development: the individual-driven perspective and the organizational-driven perspective. From the individual standpoint, career development is viewed as a process of self-improvement, goal setting, and personal advancement**,** where employees actively pursue learning opportunities and build competencies to achieve desired career outcomes (Mardiyah & Purba, 2019; Novita, Dewi & Muhammad, 2022). This perspective emphasizes continuous learning, adaptability, and proactive career planning as essential elements for achieving long-term career success.

Conversely, the organizational perspective conceptualizes career development as a structured human resource strategy designed to ensure that employees possess the necessary skills and capabilities required for current and future roles (Oheita, 2021; Ituma *et al.,* 2024). Within this framework, organizations implement mechanisms such as training, mentoring, coaching, succession planning, and promotion systems to facilitate employee growth and enhance performance (Rodriguez & Waltens, 2017). These initiatives not only improve employee competence but also contribute to talent attraction, retention, and organizational sustainability**.**

Importantly, career development is often operationalized through two interrelated components: career planning and career management. Career planning involves employees assessing their strengths, interests, and career goals and developing actionable strategies to achieve them. In contrast, career management refers to the organizational support systems and policies put in place to guide and enable employees' career progression (Gyansah & Guantai, 2018). The interaction between these two components highlights that effective career development is a shared responsibility between the employee and the organization**.** Furthermore, contemporary literature expands the concept beyond vertical promotions to include lateral movements, skill acquisition, and role diversification, reflecting the evolving nature of modern careers (Firman, 2021). This broader view acknowledges that career growth is not limited to hierarchical advancement but also includes the accumulation of diverse experiences that enhance employability and adaptability.

Overall, career development can be synthesized as a multidimensional construct encompassing continuous learning, career planning, organizational support, and professional progression. It represents a mutually beneficial process, where employees achieve personal and professional fulfillment, while organizations build a competent, flexible, and high-performing workforce.

2.2.2.1 Dimensions of Career Development

The study conceptualized career development into four dimensions of employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement (Makr & Nzulwa (2018; Ituma1, Agu, Ozo, Chinweike & Onwe, 2024; Utor, Ugba & Nomhwange, 2023).

Employee Training: Training is a systematic development of attitude and skill behavior pattern required by an individual to perform a given task effectively. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2023) are of the view that training is a systematic modification of behaviors through learning which occurs as a result of education instruction development and planned experiences. Training is designed to change the behaviors of the employee in the workplace in order to stimulate efficiency and higher performance standards. Mohammed, Mohammed and Gana (2022) opined that employee's training is a programme implemented by a manager or person of authority to provide specific staff members with the necessary skills and knowledge for their current role. It is often compulsory for some level of training to be offered to new members of staff to prepare them for their role.

Training enhances employee's skill, knowledge and competency, necessary to perform job effectively (Abdullahi, Gwadabe & Ibrahim, 2018). Training refers to bridging the gap linking the current routine performance and the standard desired performance (Lola, Thank-God & Philip, 2017). Training is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies (Okpimah & Red-Well, 2022). Employees' training is described as programs that furnish employees with information, capabilities, new skills and professional development opportunities (Sanusi et al., 2021). Training is not persuading people to do what is wanted but rather a process of creating organisational conditions that will cause employees to strive for better performance.

Ajayi and Okhankhuele (2019) and Lola *et al.* (2017) disclosed that training could be imparted via diverse methods such as peers' cooperation, coaching and mentoring and participation by the subordinates. Training could be imparted via on the job training, Induction/orientation, Apprenticeship, Demonstration, Vestibule and Formal Training, while development could be carried out through under-study, Job-rotation and Self-assessment. Abdullahi *et al.* (2018) argued that training can also take place in a number of ways, on the job or off the job; in the organization or outside organization. On the job training is required to improve the staff that had inadequate academic qualification for his job performance, while off-the job training is a process of acquiring skill and knowledge at a location different from the employee office (Sanusi, Adedoyin & Ishola, 2021)**.**

Career Mentoring: Mentorship is one of the most vital tools that contribute greatly to employees performance and development via offering guidance, supports and knowledge-sharing; hence, mentoring play an imperative role in aiding employees attain their full potential. As observed by Gary (2023), it refers to an imperative tool required to enhance performance by aiding employee knowledge transfer, personalized guidance, self-confidence motivation, network as well as continuous learning. Nyamori (2020) also submitted that mentorship is a symbiotic, one-on-one relationship that enables people to learn and grow. Mentoring makes employees to become more stable in a workplace, besides enabling newbie employees to learn from their more experienced seniors, mentorship also boost their career prospects.

There are numerous impacts of mentoring on employee development and performance. As noted by Nyamori (2020), motoring aids knowledge-transfer as well as employee skill development. One of the vital ways via which mentoring enhances employee performance is by means of knowledge-transfer. Typically, mentors are more experienced and knowledgeable hence can share their expertise and insight to mentees (when this occurs, it is called sharing of knowledge or knowledge-

sharing). Knowledge-sharing allows mentees to obtain novel skills, learn best practices and gain useable industry-specific knowledge.

Career Counseling: Oputa (2021) argued that counseling is a process between a client and therapist to explore difficulties, learn to see things clearly, and facilitate positive change. Counseling at the workplace intended to help employees to manage situation in a better way. Tuvulla & Byaruhanga (2021) opined that the objective of employee counseling is to assist both the employments parties tackle problems at hand through an active problem-solving approach. Counseling relieves distress, build resilience, improve self-esteem, and ultimately improve lives. The more successful this process is, the easier it is to prove misconceptions wrong and see and accept therapy and counseling in their true light (Igbomor & Olisemenogor, 2023).

The objectives of counseling among others are; to explore and find the key sources of difficulty and reviewing the current strategies of the individual employee; these include managing difficulties as well as instituting strategies of addressing the issue at hand, consequently alleviating the issue and evaluate the effectiveness of chosen strategies. The application of counseling has been widened to include performance management and designing the most appropriate intervention for such declines, employees can be helped by counselors to maintain work that uses their skills, talents, and attributes in order to support career engagement and advancement. Counseling offer people with a problem and requires professional guidance to enable them overcome such problems (Melissa, 2020).

Career counseling is a service that helps people begin, change, or advance their careers. It can include one-on-one conversations between a counselor and a career seeker, as well as assessments, activities, and projects designed to help career seekers make the most of their strengths. A career counselor is similar to a career coach in that professionals in both roles can help you navigate your career path and understand your career goals. Although, these terms are often used interchangeably, professionals may identify themselves as one or the other and describe their services in very specific ways, (Coursera, 2023). Ubani, Okechukwu, and Mbah (2024) defines career counseling as a process of assisting individuals in the development of a life-career with the focus on the definition of the worker role and how the role interacts with other life roles. Career counseling has been known by different names over the years, vocational guidance, vocational counseling, occupational counseling (Ubani, Okechukwu & Mbah, 2024).

Career Advancement: Career advancement according to Muhammad, Nadeem and Huzaifah (2022) is generally characterized by upward movement toward your career goals, and it can take many forms. Gibson (2023) argued that career advancement is a progression to the next level of one's career - this type of progress may come with an enhanced job title, increased responsibilities, expanded skill sets, and a greater salary. Career advancement can improve job satisfaction, open new opportunities, and illuminate continued learning pathways (Mohammed, Mohammed & Gana, 2022; Igbomor, 2024). Impacts of career advancement include getting a promotion, moving into a new department or field and expanding your job responsibilities. This takes forms such as: promotions or raises, lateral moves and new skills or training (Muhammad *et al.*,2022; Ofobruku, 2019).

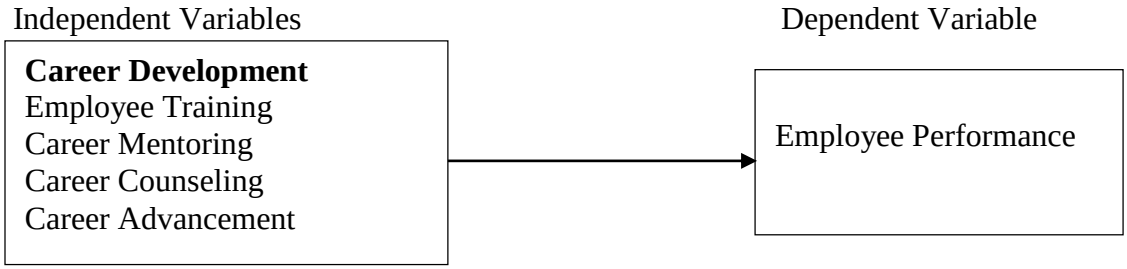
Career advancement is the professional development path that involves moving from an initial position to a higher position within an organization or industry (Greer & Kirk, 2022). Its relevance to performance lies in employees' motivation to increase productivity due to clear advancement opportunities (Naa *et al.*, 2021). The advancement process usually requires skill development and knowledge, which, in turn, enhances an individual's ability to handle more complex tasks (Sakamoto, 2019). Performance evaluation often serves as the basis for career advancement, and with career advancement, employees face greater responsibilities (Bui, Shoaib, Vu, Nguyen, & Nhuận, 2021). Career advancement also serves as recognition for good contributions, creating an environment where rewards for high performance can enhance overall employee motivation and satisfaction (Madhani, 2020). Additionally, structured career development plans help employees plan the necessary steps to achieve their career goals (Madhavan, Venugopalan, Gupta, & Sisodia, 2023).

From the above discussion on the dimensions of career development (employee training, career mentoring, career counseling, and career advancement) collectively represent a comprehensive and interrelated framework for enhancing employee capability and organizational performance. Employee training builds the foundational knowledge, skills, and competencies required for effective job performance, while career mentoring strengthens continuous learning, knowledge transfer, and professional confidence through guided relationships. Career counseling complements these by addressing individual challenges, aligning personal aspirations with organizational goals, and facilitating informed career decisions. Meanwhile, career advancement serves as the motivational outcome of these processes, providing employees with tangible growth opportunities, recognition, and increased responsibilities. Taken together, these dimensions do not operate in isolation but rather reinforce one another to create a holistic career development system that fosters employee engagement, productivity, and long-term organizational sustainability.

2.2.3 Conceptual Framework

This subsection present a conceptual model of career development and employee performance as presented in the Figure1 as follow.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Source: Researchers' Conceptualization, 2025

The conceptual framework discusses two major variables, which are career development (independent variable) and employee performance (dependent variable). Career development is decomposed into, employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement.

It is hypothesized that career development reflected by employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement impact on employee performance.

2.4 Empirical Literature Review

In Delta and Edo States Nigeria, Ogbuma (2025) investigated the effect of career development on employee performance of selected firms. Descriptive research survey design was utilized in the study. The study population comprised of all managers and staff in selected manufacturing firms in Delta and Edo States, Nigeria (Vintex Aluminum Asaba, Life Flour Mill Sapele, Differential Aluminum, Benin City and Nelux Paint Benin) with estimated population of 413 employees. A sample of 203 was obtained from the total population of 413. Out of the 203 copies of questionnaire that were administered to employees, 199 were retrieved and fully completed. Data obtained were analyzed using descriptive, Pearson Correlation and simple linear regression analysis. The study revealed, mentoring, career counselling, training and Career advancement have significant effect on employee performance. The study relates with the present in it adopted, mentoring, career counselling, training and Career advancement as independent variables. However, the study was conducted in the manufacturing industry.

In the food processing industry of Kneya, Kieti and Maende (2024) revealed that a positive and statistically significant correlation between career development practices and employee performance in food processing firms in Nairobi. The study adopted a descriptive design. The sample consisted of 55 food-processing enterprises located in Nairobi County. Two managers were selected from each the target firms, with a sample size of 110 respondents. Questionnaires were the tools used to collect data and analysis of the data used Statistical Package for Social Sciences. The study used a regression model to determine the influence of career development practices on employee performance. The study relates with the present study in that it was also on career development and employee performance. Moreover, the study aggregates career into a broad construct, leaving unclear how specific dimensions such as career counseling, career mentoring, employee training and career advancement contribute individually to employee performance.

Using data collected from 186 employees of selected deposit money banks in Makurdi metropolis Utor, Ugba and Nomhwange (2023) revealed that career education, career mentoring and career commitment have positive and significant effect on employee performance of Deposit Money Banks in Makurdi Metropolis The study adopted cross-sectional survey design. Data which was collected from respondents through structured questionnaire was analyzed using simple multiple regression. The study also adopted career mentoring as one of the surrogates of career development. However, it was conducted in the banking sector.

Wang and Huang (2022) investigated the effect of career development on employee performance in the healthcare sector in Ghana. The findings demonstrated a positive correlation between career development and employee performance of Ghana sector. The study adopted a survey research design and multiple regression was used a tool for data analysis. The study adopted career development and employee performance as independent and dependent variable just like the present study. However, it was conducted in the health sector.

Employing a case study design, Mark and Nzulwa (2018) determined the effect of career development programs on employee performance in National Hospital Insurance Fund

headquarters Nairobi. The study targeted a population of 402 employees of National Hospital Insurance Fund headquarters Nairobi from which a sample of 120 respondents were drawn using 30% of the target population. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to present and analyze the data. From regression analysis it was revealed that there was statistically significant positive relationship between employee training; career counseling, employee mentoring and career advancement on employee performance. The study also adopted employee training; career counseling, employee mentoring and career advancement as independent variables. However, it was conducted in a different cultural setting, its findings cannot be generalized on employee performance in building and construction sector.

Dialoke and Nkechi, (2017) explored the impact of career advancement on employee performance using the non-academic members of the Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike in Abia State. The data demonstrated a good and significant relationship between career development and the university's nonacademic staff's performance. The findings demonstrated a positive and significant relationship between career development and the performance of the university's non-academic workforce. The study adopted career development as independent variable just like the present study. However, the study failed to come out clearly with various dimensions of career development. The present study decomposes career development in four dimensions of career counseling, career mentoring, employee training and career advancement.

Using the National Cereals and Produce Board as a reference, Kakui and Gachunga (2016) aimed to ascertain the impact of career development on the performance of employee in the public sector. A descriptive survey was used in the investigation. The participants in this research were the staff members of the National Cereals & Produce Board headquarters located in Nairobi with 200 employees in total. Stratified random sampling was adopted. Utilizing structured questionnaires, data was gathered. Using SPSS version 20 software, the data was tabulated and subjected to regression and correlation analysis. According to the result, on-the-job training improves an employee's performance by broadening their knowledge base, improving their job specifications, inspiring them, lowering their level of intimidation, and giving them the opportunity to network. The study also revealed that career mentoring has significant impact on worker performance Although Kakui and Gachunga s' study also frames career development broadly, the study does not disentangle employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement as discrete predictors. The study was conducted in the public sector as against the present study which is in the private sector.

2.4 Trait and Factor Theory

The study adopted the trait and factor theory propounded by Parsons (2009). It proposed the trait and factor theory to explain the process of vocational choice. Parson' theory is predicated on the assumption that individuals differ as well as occupations, thus bringing in to limelight the old adage of individual differences. The theory sets out to match people and occupations in respect of their abilities, interests, intelligence, attitude and aptitude. The theory also asserts that the individuals needs and values can only be fully realized when they are matched with those jobs which are relevant to such needs and values (Opadeyi & Akpa, 2021). Parsons proposed the following as basic steps through which an individual goes in his attempt to choose a career: a clear understanding of himself, his abilities, aptitudes, intersects, ambitions, resources, limitations and their Causes, a good knowledge of the requirement and prospects in different jobs; and a sound

reasoning of the relationship between the above two groups of factors and selection of a good match (Utor, Ugba, Nomhwange, 2023).

The trait and factor theory by Parsons (2009) holds significant relevance to the study in that it emphasizes the alignment between an individual's abilities, interests, and values with suitable occupational roles, which directly informs the importance of career development initiatives. In building and construction companies, where projects demand diverse technical expertise, physical skills, and managerial competencies, applying career development practices grounded in this theory ensures that employees are guided to recognize their strengths and match them with roles that maximize efficiency and safety on-site. The theory's focus on self-awareness, job knowledge, and logical matching highlights the importance of structured career counseling, targeted training, and systematic performance management in enabling workers to fully realize their potential. Consequently, when construction firms adopt such tailored career development strategies, they not only foster personal and professional growth but also enhance overall organizational performance by ensuring that employees are properly placed, motivated, and optimally engaged in delivering quality projects within time and budget constraints.

Despite the relevance of trait and factor theory, the theory has been criticized as a result of its assumption that individuals have access to detailed and accurate information about themselves and the labor market, which is not always realistic, particularly in under-resourced settings or complex institutions like building and construction companies. The theory also assumes that individuals make career choices through logical and objective analysis, which may not reflect the complexity and emotional nature of real-life decisions influenced by personal, social, or economic factors (Iyke-Ofoedu, Okafor & Ogbuagu, 2023).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted quantitative research using a cross-sectional survey method. This is because data were collected at a point in time using questionnaire instrument. Questionnaire is considered cheap and helps in collecting data from primary source. The population of study is 1003 employees of Building and Construction companies. Such Building and construction companies include Telland Nigeria Limited, Insitu Holdings Limited, Leansotor Investment Limited, Soserock Energy Limited, Heads Engineering, Murdland Construction Limited, Olasunkanmi Building Contractors, Koku Building Contractors and Muklar Limited. The selection of the study organizations is premised on the grounds that they represent a diverse cross-section of Building and Construction firms operating within Benue State in terms of size, operational capacity, and project specialization. A sample size of 286 employees was determined from the population using Taro Yamane's (1964) formular. Formula and its application is as shown below:

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

Where N = Population size
n = Sample size
e = level of significance

The researcher assumed 95% confidence

$$n = \frac{1003}{1+1003(0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{1003}{1+1003(0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{1003}{3.5075}$$

$$n = 286$$

The Cronbach's Alpha Reliability for the career development and employee performance instruments ranged from 0.78 to 0.89 which proofed the usefulness of the instruments in the study. A total 286 copies of questionnaire were issued out but only 211 validly answered copies of the questionnaires were retrieved. Multiple regression analysis was used to test the effect of the career development constructs on employee performance of building and construction companies in Benue state.

The regression equation for the study was thus: $Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + + \beta_4 x_4 + \varepsilon.$

Where
Y =. Employee Performance
x_1 = Employee Training
x_2 = Career Mentoring
x_3 = Career Counseling
x_4 = Career Advancement
β0 = Intercept of the model (Constant)
$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4$ = Regression Coefficients

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section presents and analyses the data collected using questionnaire instrument to test the hypotheses and make conclusions.

4.2 RESULTS

The data for this study were analysed using regression analysis as presented subsequently.

Table 1: Model Summary.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error	Durbin Watson
1	0.762	0.581	0.574	0.485	1.95

a. **Predictors:** (Constant), Employee Training, Career Mentoring, Career Counseling, Career Advancement
b. **Dependent Variable:** Employee performance

Source: Author's Computations using SPSS Version 26.

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Table 1 presents the model summary of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the effect of career development dimensions on employee performance in building and construction companies in Benue state. The model produced an R value of 0.742, indicating a strong correlation between the combined independent variables: employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement and the dependent variable, employee performance. The R-squared value of 0.550 shows that 55.0 percent of the variance in employee performance is collectively explained by these dimensions of career development, while the remaining 45.0 percent may be attributed to other factors not captured in the model. The adjusted R-squared of 0.541 accounts for the number of predictors in the model and confirms the model's robustness. The Durbin-Watson statistic of 1.978 indicates that there is no significant autocorrelation in the residuals, suggesting that the model meets the regression assumption of independent errors. Overall, the model demonstrates a good fit, indicating that career development dimensions are meaningful predictors of employee performance in building and construction sector.

Table 2: ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	54.21	4	13.55	57.68	0.000
Residual	39.01	94	0.201		
Total	93.22	98			

a. **Predictors**: (Constant), Employee Training, Career Mentoring, Career Counseling, Career Advancement

b. **Dependent Variable:** Employee performance

Source: Author's Computations using SPSS Version 26.

Table 2 presents the ANOVA results for the regression model, assessing the overall significance of the effect of career development dimensions on employee performance. The F-value of 68.74 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant at the 5% level, meaning that, collectively, employee training, career mentoring, career counseling and career advancement significantly predict employee performance. This result confirms that the relationship observed in Table 1, is not due to random chance, and the model reliably explains a substantial portion of the variation in employee performance. In essence, the ANOVA findings demonstrate that the four dimensions of career development, when considered together, have a meaningful and significant impact on employees performance.

Table 3: Regression Coefficients

Predictor	Unstandardized B	Std. Error	Standardized Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	4.152	0.210	-	19.770	0.000
Employee Training	0.321	0.058	0.221	3.98	0.001
Career Mentoring	0.182	0.054	0.175	3.37	0.001
Career Counseling	0.289	0.061	0.267	4.74	0.000
Career Advancement	0.341	0.062	0.312	5.50	0.000

a. **Dependent Variable:** Employee Performance

Source: Author's Computations (2025) using SPSS Version 26.

The regression results in Table 3 indicates the extent to which each dimension of career development predicts employee performance, as well as the statistical significance of these relationships. Starting with the constant (B = 4.152, p = 0.000), this represents the baseline level of employee performance when all the independent variables (employee training, career mentoring, career counseling, and career advancement) are held constant at zero. The high t-value (19.770) and significance level show that the intercept is statistically meaningful, suggesting that even in the absence of these predictors, a foundational level of performance exists within the organizations.

Employee training (B = 0.321, β = 0.221, p = 0.001) indicates positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance. Specifically, a one-unit increase in training led to a 0.321-unit increase in performance. The standardized beta (0.221) shows a moderate contribution relative to other predictors, while the p-value confirms that the effect is statistically significant. This implies that investment in structured training programs enhances employees' skills and competencies, thereby improving their job performance in construction firms.

Also, career mentoring (B = 0.182, β = 0.175, p = 0.001) shows a positive and statistically significant relationship with employee performance. Although its effect size is smaller compared to other variables, it still contributes meaningfully. This implies that mentoring relationships such as guidance from experienced professionals play an important role in improving employee effectiveness, though it may not be as strong as other career development practices.

Career counseling (B = 0.289, β = 0.267, p = 0.000) has a relatively strong positive influence on employee performance. The standardized beta value (0.267) indicates that it is one of the more influential predictors. The result suggests that when organizations provide career guidance and support services, employees are better able to align their personal goals with organizational objectives, leading to enhanced productivity and performance.

Career advancement (B = 0.341, β = 0.312, p = 0.000) emerges as the strongest predictor of employee performance among all the variables considered. Its highest standardized beta (0.312) and significant p-value indicate that opportunities for promotion and career progression have the greatest impact on performance. The implication is that when employees perceive clear growth opportunities within the organization, they are more motivated, committed, and productive.

4.2 Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that all the dimensions of career development; employee training, career mentoring, career counseling, and career advancement have positive and statistically significant effects on employee performance. This suggests that career development practices are critical drivers of improved workforce outcomes in building and construction firms. Specifically, employee training was found to have a significant positive effect on employee performance (β = 0.221, $p < 0.05$). This result collaborates with the empirical work of Kakui and Gachunga (2016) who revealed that on-the job training has a positive and significant effect on employee performance of the National Cereals and Produce Board. The result is also in tandem with empirical work of Mark and Nzulwa (2018) who revealed that employee training has a positive and significant effect on employee performance of national hospital insurance board of

Kenya. This finding implies that equipping employees with relevant technical and professional skills enhances their efficiency and productivity on the job.

Similarly, career mentoring demonstrated a positive and significant influence on employee performance ($\beta = 0.175$, $p < 0.05$), although it contributed the least among the predictors. The results collaborate with of Ogbuma (2025) revealed a positive significant effect of career mentoring on employee performance of selected firms in Delta and Edo states, Nigeria. Also, the result is in support of the empirical results of Utor, Ugba and Nomhwange (2023) who revealed a positive significant effect of career mentoring on employee performance of deposit money banks in Makurdi. This indicates that mentoring relationships, such as guidance from experienced colleagues or supervisors, play an important role in shaping employee attitudes, confidence, and work behavior. The relatively lower effect size, however, suggests that mentoring may be underutilized or less structured in the studied firms. Nonetheless, its significance underscores the importance of knowledge transfer and interpersonal support in enhancing performance.

The result further shows that career counseling has a strong and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.05$). The result is in tandem with the empirical works of Mark and Nzulwa (2018) who revealed that career counseling has a positive significant effect on employee performance of National Hospital Insurance Fund headquarters Nairobi. This implies that when employees receive adequate career guidance and support in planning their professional paths, they are more likely to be focused, motivated, and aligned with organizational goals.

Notably, career advancement emerged as the most influential predictor of employee performance ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.05$). The result collaborates with empirical findings of Kneya, Kieti and Maende (2024) who revealed that a positive and statistically significant correlation between career development practices and employee performance in food processing firms in Nairobi. The result also is in tandem with Ogbuma (2025) who revealed a positive significant effect of career advancement on employee performance of firms in Delta and Edo states, Nigeria. This finding indicates that opportunities for promotion and upward mobility significantly motivate employees to perform better. In line with motivational theories, employees tend to exert greater effort when they perceive that their performance will lead to tangible career growth. In construction firms, where career progression may sometimes be unclear, providing structured advancement opportunities can significantly boost morale, commitment, and productivity.

Overall, the findings align with human capital and motivation theories, which posit that investments in employee development and growth opportunities yield improved performance outcomes. The results also corroborate empirical studies that highlight the importance of integrated career development practices in enhancing employee effectiveness

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study examined the effect of career development practices on employee performance in building and construction companies. The findings reveal that employee training significantly enhances performance by equipping workers with the technical skills, safety knowledge, and practical competencies required to execute projects efficiently. Career mentoring positively influences employee performance, although its effect is comparatively weaker than other variables. This suggests that mentoring exists but may not be fully structured or maximized

within the organizations. Career counseling also contributes significantly by assisting workers in making informed career choices, setting realistic goals, and overcoming workplace challenges such as role conflicts and project pressures. Furthermore, career advancement is the most powerful predictor of employee performance, indicating that opportunities for promotion and growth strongly motivate employees to perform better. Employees are more committed and productive when they perceive clear prospects for progression. The study concludes that all career development practices; training, mentoring, counseling, and advancement play a vital role in enhancing employee performance in the building and construction industry.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations **a**re made to enhance employee performance through effective career development practices in building and construction companies in Benue State, Nigeria:

i. Management of building and construction companies in Benue State should invest in continuous and targeted training programs to equip employees with up-to-date knowledge, technical expertise, and practical competencies relevant to their roles. Such capacity-building initiatives will not only enhance employee performance but also improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of construction projects.
ii. The building and construction companies should establish formal mentoring frameworks that pair less experienced employees with seasoned professionals. Clear mentoring objectives, regular interaction, and performance tracking should be implemented to strengthen its impact on employee development and performance.
iii. A dedicated career counseling unit should be established within every building and construction company Human Resource department to offer regular counseling sessions. These services should help employees identify their career goals, overcome work-related stress, and make informed professional decisions that align with both personal and organizational objectives**.**
iv. Management of building and construction companies should develop transparent and merit-based promotion policies. Clear career paths, succession planning, and internal promotion opportunities should be communicated effectively to employees to boost motivation, retention, and overall performance.

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