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CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM AND CAREER TRAJECTORY AMONG SELECTED CIVIL SERVANTS IN BOARD OF INTERNAL REVENUE AWKA, ANAMBRA STATE

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ABSTRACT

Civil servants in Nigerian revenue boards face gaps in competencies due to limited access to continuous education. Hence, this study examines the effect of Continuing Education Program and Career Trajectory among Selected Civil Servants in Board of Internal Revenue Awka, Anambra State. Other specific objectives are to; (i) determine the degree of relationship that exists between continuing education program and greener pasture (ii) ascertain the level of relationship that exists between continuing education program and proper placement; and (iii) identify the extent of relationship that exists between continuing education program and new cadre. A survey research design was employed for the study. The sample size of 60 respondents was determined by Taro Yamane (continuing education program and proper placement 1967) sample size determination formulae. Descriptive and Inferential statistics were used to empirically and statistically analyze the data using simple linear regression to test the hypotheses with the aid of SPSS version 25. The findings of the study revealed that there is significant effect of continuing education program on greener pasture with (R^2= 0.555 and p-value < 0.05); there is significant effect of continuing education program on proper placement with (R^2=0.757 and p-value < 0.05); and there is significant effect of continuing education program and new cadre with (R^2=0.794 and p-value < 0.05). The study concludes that Continuing Education Program has significant effect on Career Trajectory among Selected Civil Servants in Board of Internal Revenue. This study recommends that organizations should integrate educational achievements into their career development and placement strategies and organizations should establish clear policies that recognize and reward continuing learning and development.

Keywords: Continuing Education Program, Career Trajectory, Civil Servants, Board of Internal Revenue

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Introduction

The concept of continuing education has gained significant attention in recent years, particularly in the context of career development and employee performance. According to Noe et al. (2020), continuing education is critical for employee growth, development, and career advancement. This is supported by the findings of Ellinger et al. (2020), who emphasize the importance of continuing learning in the workplace. Moreover, continuing education programs can help address skill gaps and deficiencies, ensuring that employees remain relevant in their careers (Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2020). Furthermore, continuing education can enhance employees' ability to innovate, think critically, and solve problems (Boud et al., 2020). Additionally, continuing education can lead to improved employee engagement, motivation, and commitment (Harter et al., 2020). Continuing education has emerged as a vital component of modern workplace learning, particularly in the context of career development and employee performance. Continuing education programs are designed to provide employees with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to advance in their careers and adapt to changing work environments (Maurer & Lipspreku, 2019). These programs are essential for employee growth, development, and career advancement, as they enable individuals to stay up-to-date with the latest industry trends, technologies, and best practices (Salas et al., 2019). By investing in continuing education, organizations can enhance their employees' capabilities, improve job performance, and drive business success (Aragon-Sanchez et al., 2020).

The Board of Internal Revenue (BIR) in Awka, Anambra State, is a critical agency responsible for revenue generation and tax administration. However, the BIR faces challenges in terms of employee development, leading to stagnation in career trajectory. As noted by O'Reilly et al. (2020), the lack of continuous education and training programs can hinder employee growth, leading to decreased job satisfaction and performance. According to a study by Salas et al. (2020), continuing education enhances employees' skills, knowledge, and competencies, leading to improved job performance and career growth. Moreover, continuing education programs can help address skill gaps and deficiencies, ensuring that employees remain relevant in their careers (Aragon-Sanchez et al., 2020). Furthermore, continuing education can lead to improved employee performance, job satisfaction, and career advancement (Nguyen et al., 2020).

The career trajectory of civil servants in the BIR, Awka, is influenced by various factors, including education, training, and experience. However, continuing education programs can play a significant role in shaping career trajectories by providing employees with the necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to advance in their careers. According to a study by Chien et al. (2020), continuing education programs can enhance employees' career prospects, leading to promotions, new job opportunities, and increased job satisfaction. Moreover, continuing education can lead to improved employee performance, job satisfaction, and career advancement (Nguyen et al., 2020). Furthermore, continuing education can lead to improved employee retention and reduced turnover rates (Tynjälä & Gijbels, 2020). The career trajectory of civil servants in the Board of Internal Revenue (BIR), Awka, is a critical aspect of human resource management in the public sector, as career development is essential for employee growth, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Kim & Lee, 2020). Continuing learning and development opportunities play a vital role in shaping the career trajectory of civil servants, enabling them to acquire new skills and knowledge to adapt to changing work environments (Wang et al., 2020). Effective leadership and mentorship are also crucial in career advancement and development, as they

provide guidance, support, and valuable feedback to employees (Cho & Lewis, 2019). Moreover, research by Armstrong (2020) highlights the importance of performance management and evaluation in determining career advancement, while Garavan et al. (2020) emphasize the need for aligning career development with organizational goals and objectives. The career trajectory of civil servants in the Board of Internal Revenue (BIR), Awka, Anambra State, is a critical aspect of human resource management that requires continuing attention. Despite the importance of continuing education in enhancing employee performance and career advancement, there is a growing concern that civil servants in the BIR, Awka, may not be adequately equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of their roles. This concern is exacerbated by the rapidly changing work environment, technological advancements, and evolving tax policies that demand continuing learning and adaptation. Moreover, the career trajectory of civil servants in the BIR, Awka, is influenced by various factors, including training and development opportunities, mentorship, leadership, and performance management. However, there is a paucity of research on the impact of continuing education programs on the career trajectory of civil servants in the BIR, Awka, Anambra State. This study aims to address this knowledge gap by investigating the relationship between continuing education programs and career trajectory among selected civil servants in the BIR, Awka, Anambra state. However, the Specific objectives are to: determine the degree of relationship that exists between continuing education program and greener pasture among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State, ascertain the level of relationship that exists between continuing education program and proper placement among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State and identify the extent of relationship that exists between continuing education program and new cadre among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State.

Review of Related Literature

Continuing Education Programs

Continuing education programs are essential for employee development and organizational success (Garavan & McGuire, 2020). The concept of continuing learning is critical in today's fast-paced work environment, where technological advancements and shifting market demands require employees to constantly update their skills (Kim et al., 2020). Effective continuing education programs require a comprehensive needs assessment, clear objectives, relevant content, engaging delivery methods, and regular evaluation and feedback (Oke & Chukwu, 2020). Moreover, continuing education programs can help employees develop new skills, improve their job performance, and advance their careers (Ismail et al., 2020). Continuing education programs can be delivered through various methods, including online courses, workshops, mentoring, and coaching (Adeyemi et al., 2020). These programs can focus on different areas, such as technical skills, soft skills, leadership development, and industry-specific knowledge (Ojo & Ogundele, 2020). Moreover, continuing education programs can be designed to meet the specific needs of different employee groups, such as new hires, mid-career employees, and senior leaders (Ibrahim & Alhassan, 2020).

Career Trajectory among Civil Servants

Career trajectory refers to the progression and advancement of an individual's career over time (Cho et al., 2020). In the context of civil servants, career trajectory is critical for employee development, job satisfaction, and organizational performance (Kim et al., 2020). Factors that influence career trajectory among civil servants include education, training, experience, performance, and organizational support (Lee et al., 2022). Career trajectory can be influenced by various factors, including individual characteristics, organizational factors,

and environmental factors (Park et al., 2021). Individual characteristics such as motivation, self-efficacy, and career goals can impact career trajectory (Jung et al., 2022). Organizational factors such as leadership, mentoring, and opportunities for advancement can also impact career trajectory (Choi et al., 2022). Career trajectory is also influenced by individual differences in personality, values, and motivations (Furnham, 2020). Moreover, career trajectory can be impacted by work-life balance, well-being, and job satisfaction (Harris et al., 2020). Additionally, the role of networking, mentorship, and social capital in shaping career trajectory cannot be overlooked (Liu et al., 2020).

Understanding career trajectory among civil servants is essential for developing effective human resource management strategies (Kang et al., 2022). By understanding the factors that influence career trajectory, organizations can develop targeted interventions to support employee development and advancement (Lee et al., 2022). This can lead to improved job satisfaction, increased productivity, and better organizational performance (Kim et al., 2020). Furthermore, career trajectory can be influenced by organizational change, restructuring, and downsizing (Mackenzie et al., 2020). The impact of technology, automation, and artificial intelligence on career trajectory is also a growing concern (Manyika et al., 2020). Understanding these factors can help organizations develop effective career development programs and support employees' career advancement (Nguyen et al., 2020).

Theoretical review

Social Learning Theory (SLT)

Social Learning Theory (SLT) was founded by Albert Bandura, a renowned Canadian-American psychologist, in the 1970s. Bandura's theory posits that individuals learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge by observing and imitating others. According to Bandura, learning is a cognitive process that involves attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. He suggests that individuals are more likely to adopt new behaviors if they observe others being reinforced for those behaviors. The core idea of SLT is that people learn through observation and imitation. Bandura's famous Bobo doll experiment demonstrated that children learn aggressive behavior by observing and imitating adults. SLT suggests that continuing education programs can provide civil servants with opportunities to learn from others, develop new skills, and adopt new attitudes. The theory also emphasizes the importance of reinforcement, feedback, and motivation in the learning process. Bandura's work built on the earlier contributions of Edward Thorndike and Clark Hull, who had also written about the role of observation and imitation in learning. SLT has been widely applied in fields such as education, psychology, and organizational behavior. The theory has been used to explain how people learn new behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge in a variety of contexts. Despite its contributions, SLT has faced criticisms and challenges. Some critics argue that the theory oversimplifies the learning process, neglecting the role of cognitive processes and environmental factors. Social Learning Theory has had a significant impact on our understanding of the learning process and its application in various fields

Empirical reviews

Ajufoh, Nwafili & Okwuise, (2024) investigated the impact of career trajectory on employee retention in public university teaching hospitals in South- South Nigeria. A cross-sectional survey research design method was adopted. Out of 357 questionnaires administered to nurses and doctors, a total of 313 questionnaires were retrieved representing 87.7% return rate. The data collected were subsequently subjected into both descriptive and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed a positive significant relationship between organizational support and employee’s retention (β=0.281, t = 2.651, P =0.008< 0.05). This

study suggested among others that hospital management should promote career development, staff welfare, and staff wellness in order to motivate personnel to stay with the hospitals.

Soegiarto, Sihite & Usmany, (2024) explore the intricate relationships between training and development programs, job autonomy, organizational culture, and employee outcomes, with a specific focus on the mediating role of job satisfaction. The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative analysis using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with qualitative insights gathered from interviews and focus group discussions. The results highlight the positive impact of effective training programs, job autonomy, and a supportive organizational culture on job satisfaction levels among employees. Job satisfaction emerges as a crucial mediator, translating these organizational factors into improved performance, motivation, and overall well-being. The findings underscore the importance of prioritizing strategies that enhance job satisfaction to foster a more engaged and productive workforce, ultimately contributing to organizational success.

Churnawan, (2024) explores the important role of training and development in the industrial environment and its impact on employees. This research uses a literature study with a qualitative approach, collecting data from articles, and journals. The results revealed that training and development plays an important role in improving employees' technical and non-technical skills, as well as encouraging their career development. Some of the factors that influence employee satisfaction and dissatisfaction include working conditions, pay, security, and interpersonal relationships. Training and development is identified as a key element to improve individual and organizational performance, as well as ensuring employee satisfaction through empowerment, effective communication, and recognition of their contributions. The implications of this study suggest that investment in employee training and development can provide a competitive advantage and improve overall organizational productivity.

Methodology

Survey research design was adopted for this study. The research aims to collect data directly from respondents, based on the fact that survey research design supports the collection of data primarily through the use of questionnaire. The population of the study consist 71 employees from 4 selected departments in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra state. Taro Yamane (1964) sampling technique was used to determine the sample size from the total population of the study which gave the sample size of 60. Convenience sampling was used to select respondents for the research questionnaire, source of data for this research is the primary source of data. Data are collected directly from respondents with the use of questionnaires. Content validity was selected to examine the correctness of the wording of the instrument and the objectives of the study, face Validity was adopted to ensure that research instruments measured what it was supposed to measure. Cronbach Alpha analysis was administered to obtain the reliability of instrument and a figure of 0.889, 0.863 and 0.976 was obtained which shows that the instrument is very reliable. This study used both the descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data generated. The data were coded and analyzed using SPSS for windows version 25. The descriptive statistics included frequency counts and simple percentage. The linear regression analysis was used to test the hypothesis of the study.

Data Analysis

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

$H0_1$: Continuing education program has no significant effect on greener pasture among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State.

Table 1a: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.745[a]	.555	.553	1.48022

a. Predictors: (Constant), continuous education program

Source: SPSS output, 2024

Table 1a shows the model summary. Result reveals the R-value, which represents the correlation between the observed value and predicted value of the dependent variable which gives 0.745. This shows that there is a high level of relationship between continuous education program and greener pasture. The R^2 value which is an indication of the coefficient of determination from the model summary is 0.555 which indicates that 55.5% variation in greener pasture is affected by continuing education program while the remaining 44.5% variation in greener pasture is stimulated by other unidentified variables in this model.

Table 1b: ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	291.753	1	97.251	44.385	.000[b]
	Residual	690.184	59	2.191		
	Total	981.937	100			

a. Dependent Variable: greener pasture

b. Predictors: (Constant), continuing education program

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) in table 1b revealed that the F-statistic value from the analysis was 44.385. Also, the table showed the p-value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, it indicates that the overall model is fit. However, the regression sum of square of 291.753 is less than the residual sum of square of 690.184. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected why the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 1c: Coefficients[a]				
Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	T	Sig.
1	(Constant)		5.262	.000
	Continuing education program	.112	2.058	.040

a. Dependent Variable: greener pasture

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The table of coefficients above showed how continuing education program influences customer satisfaction. It can be deduced from table 1c that, for every increase in continuing education program, there will be 11.2% increase in greener pasture. Also, the probability and [t-statistics] value of 0.040 and [2.058] further suggest that the relationship between continuing education program and greener pasture is significant since alpha level of 0.05 is greater than the p-value of 0.040. The conclusion therefore is that continuing education program has significant effect on greener pasture.

Hypothesis Two

$H0_2$: Continuing education program has no significant effect on proper placement among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State.

Table 2a: Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.870[a]	.757	.755	1.55041

a. Predictors: (Constant), continuing education program

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 2a shows the model summary. The result reveals the R-value, which represents the correlation between the observed value and predicted value of the dependent variable which gives 0.870. This shows that there is a high level of relationship between continuing education program and proper placement. The R^2 value which is an indication of the coefficient of determination from the model summary is 0.757 which indicates that 75.7% variation in proper placement is affected by continuing education program while the remaining 24.3% variation in proper placement is caused by other factors that were not present in the model.

Table 2b: ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	119.901	1	39.967	16.627	.000[b]
	Residual	757.189	59	2.404		
	Total	877.091	100			

a. Dependent Variable: proper placement
b. Predictors: (Constant), continuing education program

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) in table 2b above revealed that the F-statistic value from the analysis was 16.627. Also, the table showed the p-value of 0.000 which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. Therefore, it indicates that the overall model is fit. However, the regression sum of square of 119.901 is less than the residual sum of square of 757.189. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Table 2c: Coefficients[a]

Model		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)		5.825	.000
	Continuing education program	.155	2.912	.004

a. Dependent Variable: proper placement

Source: SPSS output, 2024

The table of coefficients above showed how continuing education program influences proper placement. It can be deduced from table 2c that, for every increase in continuing education program, there will be 15.5% increase in proper placement. Also, the probability and [t-statistics] value of 0.004 and [2.912] further suggest that the relationship between continuing education program and proper placement is significant since alpha level of 0.05 is greater than the p-value of 0.004. The conclusion therefore is that continuing education program has a significant effect on proper placement.

Hypothesis Three

$H0_3$: Continuing education program has no significant effect on new cadre among selected civil servants in board of internal revenue Awka, Anambra State.

Table 3a Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.891[a]	.794	.793	.14885

a. Predictors: (Constant), continuing education program

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Table 3a shows the model summary. The R which is the level of correlation between the two variables i.e. continuing education program and new cadre shows that 0.891 (89.1%) which indicate that there is high degree of correlation between the variables. Also, the result reveals the R^2 which is the coefficient of determination gives approximately 79.4%. This implies that 79.4% of new cadre (Dependent variable) is affected by continuing education program (independent variable) while the remaining 20.6% of the new cadre may be affected and determined by other unexplained factors.

Table 3b ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.706	1	1.706	3.214	.001[b]
	Residual	88.955	59	1.508		
	Total	90.661	60			

a. Dependent Variable: new cadre

b. Predictors: (Constant), continuing education program

The ANOVA table assesses the overall significance of the regression model. The F-value of 3.214 with a p-value of .001 indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, as the p-value is less than the common alpha level of 0.05. This suggests that the predictor, "continuing education program," significantly affects the likelihood of being promoted to a new cadre. The analysis shows that the model explains a significant portion of the variability in the dependent variable, and continuing education programs have a meaningful impact on promotion to a new cadre.

Table 3c Coefficients[a]

Model		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		Beta		
1	(Constant)		6.625	.000
	Continuing education programs	.162	3.700	.000

a. Dependent Variable: new cadre

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

The table of coefficients above shows how continuing education programs influence the likelihood of promotion to a new cadre. It can be deduced from Table 3c that for every increase in continuing education programs, there is a 16.2% increase in the likelihood of being promoted to a new cadre. Additionally, the probability and t-statistics values of 0.000 and 3.700 respectively, suggest that the relationship between continuous education programs and promotion to a new cadre is highly significant, as the p-value is much lower than the alpha level of 0.05.

Discussion of Findings

Based on hypothesis one, the findings suggest that continuing education programs significantly impact greener pasture opportunities for civil servants in the Board of Internal Revenue, Awka. This aligns with Ajufoh, Nwafili, and Okwuise's (2024) study, which highlighted the positive impact of organizational support on employee retention. Based on hypothesis two, the significant effect of continuing education programs on proper placement corroborates the findings of Soegiarto, Sihite, and Usmany (2024), who explored the role of training and development in job satisfaction and employee outcomes. Based on hypothesis three, the impact of continuing education programs on promotion to a new cadre supports Victor, Anna, Nomhwange, and Terhile's (2024) findings on career development's influence

on employee performance. Their study emphasized that career education and mentoring significantly enhance employee performance in the banking sector.

Summary of Findings

Based on these findings, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, confirming that continuing education programs significantly impact greener pasture.

The null hypothesis is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis is accepted, validating the significant effect of continuing education on proper placement.

The null hypothesis is rejected, affirming that continuing education programs significantly enhance the chances of promotion to a new cadre.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from the three hypotheses, it is evident that continuing education programs play a significant role in the career development of civil servants at the Board of Internal Revenue, Awka, Anambra State. The analysis confirms that continuing education programs significantly influence the opportunity for greener pastures, proper placement and new cadre. The strong correlation and significant statistical results indicate that continuing education enhances employees' ability to pursue better career opportunities. This finding underscores the importance of investing in educational programs as a means of improving career prospects and overall job satisfaction, aligning with previous research that links organizational support to enhanced retention and career advancement.

Recommendations

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

1. Given the significant positive impact of continuing education programs on greener pasture and promotion to new cadres, organizations should enhance their support for these programs. This includes increasing access to relevant training and development opportunities and ensuring that such programs are aligned with the career goals and aspirations of employees. Tailored educational initiatives that focus on skills relevant to career progression should be prioritized.
2. To maximize the benefits of continuing education, organizations should integrate educational achievements into their career development and placement strategies. Developing a structured career development framework that considers continuous education as a key component can help in aligning employees' skills with organizational needs, improving job placement outcomes and ensuring that employees are well-prepared for advancement opportunities.
3. The significant effect of continuing education on promotion to new cadres highlights the need for formalizing education as a key criterion in promotion decisions. Organizations should establish clear policies that recognize and reward continuous learning and development. This can include making participation in relevant education programs a prerequisite for promotion and integrating educational achievements into performance evaluations.

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