

**LINE MANAGERS' ROLE IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE  
PERFORMANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE FIRST BANK OF  
NIGERIA**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The objectives of this research are to outline the benefits of involving line managers as internal coach in improving staff performance, to outline how the First Bank of Nigeria can motivate its line managers for more involvement in subordinate coaching, and give an outline of how the First Bank of Nigeria could organize its line managers to efficiently and cost effectively train and coach her staff. For the First Bank of Nigeria, these line managers are Heads of Units such as Branch Operations Managers and Branch Sales Managers. The First bank of Nigeria spends annually over 1billion Nigerian naira which is about 2.5% of her profit before tax of 50billion naira, on staff training and development. Despite this huge training cost, the First bank of Nigeria has challenges with improving operational efficiency, improving customer satisfaction and reducing costs. This necessitated the study to examine if involving line managers in subordinate training through coaching will aid the bank to overcome these challenges.

The quantitative research method is used on the First Bank of Nigeria Owerri Main Branch. The stratified sampling technique was used to select the respondents. A combination of open ended and closed questions made up the questionnaire administered personally on 34 respondents.

The findings suggest that the line manager as internal coach has positive influence on employee performance improvement and that it is far less expensive. The First Bank of Nigeria should hence motivate her line managers' commitment to coach through financial incentives, promotions, awards and recognition. Managers should be trained.

This research could be used in guiding the development of training manual on how coaching in the First Bank of Nigeria between a manager and a subordinate ought to improve operational efficiency, reduce cost and enhance profitability. The research also benefits corporations in Namibia and around the world.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is solemnly dedicated to Almighty God Jehovah from whose jar of undeserved kindness I drink.

## DECLARATIONS

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **1. INTRODUCTION – DEFINING THE RESEARCH PROBLEM**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The Nigeria Banking System, over the last three (3) years, has experienced various reforms which have positioned the banks for growth. This growth has necessitated increasing need for employee skills and training in order to meet the expected growth. A study of the First Bank of Nigeria's operations, published in the 2011 annual report, reveals that one of the challenges in the bank is to improve operational efficiency and reduce fixed and variable costs to enhance profitability (First Bank, 2011). This improvement sought can be better met by well trained employees.

Researchers have not reached a conclusive opinion on what improves employee performance. Buckingham and Coffman (1999, p.4) noted that "it is the employee's immediate manager, not pay, benefits or the charismatic corporate manager who plays the critical role in building a strong workforce". Northgate (2011, p.1) added that it is the competence of the line manager that helps improve performance when he said that "four-fifths of organizations believe that underperformance in their workforce is a problem, with six in ten employers believing that their managers were not competent to manage underperforming staff". In contrast, Kinlaw (1993, p.13) observed that the line manager's commitment and attitude plays an important role in improving staff performance when he wrote: "My work with organizations has convinced me that managers do not always place improving the competencies of



their subordinates high on their list of their priorities or responsibilities”. Ripley (2002, p.4) added that training is not always the appropriate intervention to employee performance problem but suggested forging effective partnerships between Human Resource managers and line managers to improve employee performance. In sharp contrast, Gibb (2003, p.288) argued that although greater line management involvement in Human Resources Management may be a central part of the way forward for many organisations, line management involvement should not but be in the field of learning and development. The reason he gave is that promoting line manager's greater involvement with learning and development is simply to emphasize that the allocation and use of specialist Human Resource managers is not a necessary part of implementing improvements in learning and development at work. To this end, he advised the use of specialist learning and development staff to create partnerships with the wealth of educational knowledge and experience in teaching and learning institutions.

On the other hand, Gberevbie (2010, p.7) pointed to organizational commitment, through enhanced and regular salary package, and employee involvement in decision making as vital in improving staff performance. Other factors he mentioned are the working environment, employee's personal domestic problems, job dissatisfaction and job stress, and management style. Supporting these statements, Ripley (2002, p.1) reported that “two-thirds to four-fifths of the causes of employee performance problems are attributable to the work environment, not the employees”. Roelofsen (2002, p.248) added: “A pilot research project held among 170 people in six office buildings reveals that there is a clear relationship between job stress, job dissatisfaction, the indoor environment and employee performance.”

On one hand the conclusion is that it is organizational commitment through enhanced and regular salary package, on the other hand, some suggest it is employee participation in operational decision making, still some suggest the immediate manager's attitude and competence are key to improving employee performance, a contrary report was also that line managers should not be involved in employee learning and development. Other contending factors are said to be the work environment, employee' personal domestic challenges, stress arising from work pressure, the management style which could be participative or facilitative and job dissatisfaction. Therefore, this research study examines the role line manager's involvement in subordinate learning/coaching plays in improving employee performance.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2012, p.1) defined line managers as “those managers to whom individual employees or teams, who do not have any managerial or supervisory responsibility, directly report and who have responsibility to a higher level of management for those employees or teams”. The inference is that line managers are responsible to the organization they represent for the performance of staff under their supervision. Emphasizing the essence of training as part of the line managers' responsibility as Storey (1992) pointed, “The line manager's responsibilities can include training and development, motivating teams, on-the-job coaching, reducing costs, improving quality, continuous improvement and deploying labour” (as cited in Cunningham & Hyman, 1995, p.5).

However, Cunningham and Hyman (p.13) reported one of the reasons why many line managers have not succeeded as good coaches to be the difference arising from

line managers and supervisors perception of their competence level in dealing with such crucial issues as training/coaching of their subordinates and the actual. Also, the level of commitment of line managers was said to be low. These reasons explain why Cunningham & Hyman (1995, p.13) continued by contending that line managers and supervisors usually think competence and preparation in subordinate training and development activities emerge through a combination of applying common sense and experience. Such complacency, they noted, is demonstrated by line managers and supervisors not attending training programmes channelled at employee relations either because their immediate superiors, or the managers themselves, felt that they had more pressing commitments.

To avert the possibility of line managers displaying this lack of commitment toward training/coaching employees, Cheese et al (2008, p.244) emphasized that line managers have the most impact and influence on employee performance and that “organizations must ensure that line managers are responsible for developing their people, through training and support now than in the past”. This statement implies that organizations should more than ever examine the underlying benefits of trainings administered through line managers on their subordinates.

The First Bank of Nigeria recognizes the importance of employee learning and development through trainings to her staff performance improvement. Isiaka (2011, p.5) affirmed this when he stated that “First Bank of Nigeria devotes appreciable resources to staff training and development through both local and foreign facilitation”. This led the bank to establish five (5) regional learning centres nationwide in addition to the established First Bank Academy at Lagos, Nigeria.

According to him, the bank as reported in the Abridged prospectus dated May 7, 2007 expended a total of N2,614,137,000 (two billion six hundred and fourteen million one hundred and thirty seven thousand naira) on training and development in three years. Also, in 2011, a total of 7,626 (seven thousand six hundred and twenty six) out of over 8,000 (eight thousand) staff, representing over 98% of its workforce, was trained (First Bank, 2011).

However, one of the challenges of the First Bank of Nigeria is in improving operational efficiency, that is, to optimize her internal resources which include the employees of the bank. A second challenge is to reduce costs to enhance profitability. Another challenge of the bank is in the area of customer satisfaction where it was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> amongst Nigerian banks in 2011 from a customer satisfaction survey (First Bank, 2011). From the vision and mission statement of the First Bank of Nigeria, it seeks to be the clear leader through provision of the best financial services possible. These challenges (operational efficiency, cost reduction, and customer satisfaction) on the other hand, can easily erode the leadership position the bank aims in its vision statement.

Kanghwa (2010, p.138) pointed out reasons why companies itching to stay competitive and aspiring continued growth should improve their operational efficiency when necessary when he said that “operational efficiency involves optimizing the company’s internal resources which includes the workforce with the result that resources previously needed to manage operational tasks can be redirected to new, high-value initiatives that bring additional value to the organization. Another reason he gave is that improving operational efficiency helps drive down the cost of

routine operations to a desired level. Thus, I deduce from this statement that the challenge of cost reduction that the First Bank of Nigeria faces can also be overcome if she improves her operational efficiency. This is further dealt with in Chapter 2.

Other benefits that can be derived by an organization from line manager involvement in employee learning supposed by Hay (2002, p.53) include employee satisfaction when he wrote: employee satisfaction are most likely achieved when their skills or talents are properly developed or when managers take an interest in their career development. Connecting to this inference, in their five-year research study, Maddern et al (2007, p.1013) found that employee satisfaction aside service quality is a key driver of customer satisfaction. Neale (2009, p.80) reported: “A US company found that every 5% increase in employee satisfaction leads to 1.3 percent improved customer impression, which in turn drives a 0.5 percent in profit growth. Thus, I connect these points to state that the 3 (three) major challenges the First Bank of Nigeria experiences are centred around employee performance improvement and which integrating line managers in their subordinate training and coaching may as reported by previous research findings be beneficial.

The First bank of Nigeria spends annually over 1billion Nigerian Naira which is about 2.5% of her profit before tax of 50billion naira, on staff training and development. The huge cost the First Bank of Nigeria expends on staff trainings are channelled to trainings conducted through in-house learning, action learning workshops, cross postings, e-learning, overseas programme and training modules adapted to different cadres of staff (First Bank, 2011). The First Bank of Nigeria is yet to adopt the practice of subordinate coaching through its line managers.

In explaining the possible risk of disintegrating line managers from coaching their subordinates, Hay (2002, p.53) reported that employees are most likely to quit an organization when their skills or talents are not properly developed or when managers fail to take an interest in their career development. Adding to the fact that integrating line manager's role to include coaching should be an organizational initiative, as Ellinger & Keller (2003) asserts, "The line manager as coach role is an organisational development strategy that focuses on changing the relationship between manager and employee" (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.292). Their findings suggest that supervisory coaching behaviour is positively associated with employees' job satisfaction and performance.

To further explain what the manager as coach role involves, King and Eaton (1999, p.146) postulates that "regular, constructive, and meaningful feedback from managers and supervisors brings out that "little extra each time" which adds incrementally to overall performance" (as cited in Ellinger et al (2005, p.621). McLean et al (2005) supported this assertion when he stated that employee coaching through the manager as coach role should be a core managerial skill. It involves skills such as effective and open communication, a team focus, valuing people over task, and accepting the ambiguous nature of the working environment for the purpose of developing employees and improving performance (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.293). However critiques have challenged the need for line managers to acquire these skills since in their belief, line managers cannot be better skilled than Human Resource specialists trained on employee learning and development at work. Other reasons they gave for this criticisms are that managers see this role as time consuming, interfering with the multiple demands on managers.

Also, managers may not be inclined to invest in others to develop and improve if they see human attributes as innate and unalterable. Managers may also be scared that an empowered employee may usurp them out of their leadership role (Gibb, 2003, p.281-293).

Despite the criticism against line manager's acquisition of training skills, Goleman et al (2002) added that such skills as emotional intelligence amongst others are crucial to managers in predicting coaching outcome from subordinate (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010, p.294). Consequently, though there are justifiable reservations about increasing line managers' involvement in employee learning, it is important to consider the benefits in the light of its direction to attain improved performance in various fields of work and organizations.

In summary, coaching in the workplace, between a manager and a subordinate, is part of an overall organizational development and performance management philosophy. For this reason, this study examines why the First Bank of Nigeria should involve its line managers in reinforcing staff training and learning to improve operational efficiency, reduce cost and enhance profitability. Also, it considers how, based on the findings, the First Bank of Nigeria can motivate its line managers to be better involved in their subordinates' learning. The findings from this study will give an inference to whether the First Bank of Nigeria should or should not integrate its line managers in the training and coaching of its employees.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The First Bank of Nigeria seeks to improve her operational efficiency, reduce costs and improve customer satisfaction (First Bank, 2011). “Operational efficiency is what occurs when the right combination of people, process and technology come together to enhance the productivity and value of any business operation, while driving down the cost of routine operations to a desired level” (Kanghwa, 2010, p.138). In other words, operational efficiency involves optimizing the company’s internal resources which includes the workforce with the result that resources previously needed to manage operational tasks can be redirected to new, high-value initiatives that bring additional value to the organization (cost reduction). An improved customer satisfaction is mainly driven by satisfied employees (Maddern et al, 2007, p.1013). In turn employee satisfaction is most likely achieved through skill and career development/training (Hay, 2002, p.53). Summarily, Neale (2009, p.80) reported: “A US company found that every 5% increase in employee satisfaction leads to 1.3 percent improved customer impression, which in turn drives a 0.5 percent in profit growth.

Although the First Bank of Nigeria incurs large cost on staff trainings to improve operational efficiency (Isiaka, 2011, p.5), the need to improve its operational efficiency still remains one of its challenges. Another challenge of the bank is in the area of customer satisfaction where it was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> amongst Nigerian banks in 2011 from a customer satisfaction survey (First Bank, 2011). Satisfying customers is a core business challenge which has attracted considerable research attention says Maddern et al (2007, P.999). Outlining the benefit of customer satisfaction to a



financial service organization like the First Bank of Nigeria, Maddern et al continued by contending that customer satisfaction creates customer loyalty leading to growth and profit (p. 1000). In their five-year research study, Maddern, et al (2007, p. 1013) found that employee satisfaction aside service quality is a key driver of customer satisfaction. Hay (2002, p.53) inferred that employee satisfaction are most likely achieved when their skills or talents are properly developed or when managers take an interest in their career development.

It is in this light that this research study seeks to determine if integrating line managers in staff training can help the First Bank of Nigeria to improve the performance of her employees and ultimately improve her operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and reduce cost.

Howard, (2006) added that those high in emotional intelligence are more likely to understand their own motives, as well as those of others, and build social relationships which positively influence performance (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.294). Therefore, a manager's inclination towards coaching, workload and available time, coaching skill and emotional intelligence are all factors which underpin the success of a line manager in the manager as coach role. It is in this context that the research study further examines ways in which the First bank of Nigeria can motivate its line managers to be more involved in employee learning and coaching.

Thus, the objectives of this research study are;

- a) To outline the benefits of involving line managers in training and coaching in improving the performance of employees of First Bank of Nigeria; and
- b) To identify how the First Bank of Nigeria can motivate her line managers for their involvement in staff trainings.
- c) To give an outline of how the First Bank of Nigeria could organize her line managers to efficiently and cost effectively train and coach staff.

### **1.3 Significance of the study**

This study broadens the stakeholders' understanding of the important role a line manager plays in his or her team's learning, training and development. Also, it aids the First Bank of Nigeria to recognize the important role its line managers play in achieving higher staff performance. It will in addition, help corporations in Namibia to consistently improve profitability through enhanced staff learning. The study further creates avenues for future research into the underlying benefit(s) of aligning a line manager's role to staff performance improvement in the Banking Industry and both profit and non-profit making organizations around the world.

Employees' competencies are one of organizations' most important assets. In other words, employee competencies are fundamental to organizations' ability to nurture and sustain innovation and growth (Bjornali & Storen, 2012, p.402). Highlighting one of the basic role of a great line manager, Buckingham and Coffman (1999, p. 6) pointed that a great manager must develop his people to help them find the right fit. Adding further, they noted that great managers seek a new career for their employees

even if it means the employee going back a step. Many people they argued are promoted to their level of incompetence due to the line manager's inability to determine the role they are best fit by matching individual talent with the new role. Therefore, to improve operational efficiency at the least possible cost, a line manager must be committed towards optimizing performance from every employee under his/her supervision through training/coaching.

Managerial coaching is a distinct leadership style for improving employee performance. It comes out of getting the most out of people while retaining their respect and value (Ellinger et al, 2005, p.631). Although Hotek (2002) noted that "leadership literature contends that line managers' roles are changing to become more focused on the development of subordinates", Goleman (2000) suggested that the coaching style of leadership is not being sufficiently leveraged by many organizations because managers are unfamiliar with their potential benefits and/or because they are not skilful enough at giving ongoing performance feedback to subordinates (as cited in Ellinger et al, 2005, p.631).

As Redshaw (2000) states, managerial coaching has "enormous benefits" for firms and for the individuals they employ, recent studies suggest that investing in line manager-subordinate coaching helps develop the individual level of competence to improve both performance; and customer satisfaction (Kiger, 2002, as cited in Ellinger et al, 2005, p.621). Stressing further the benefits of line manager involvement in coaching in today's competitive business environment, Ellinger et al (2005, p.631) suggests that organizations wishing to remain competitive will increasingly evaluate the feasibility of adopting more people-oriented supervisory

approaches like coaching that focus on growth and development, and may produce more intrinsically rewarding work environments for employees.

#### **1.4 Limitations of the study**

Due to time and financial constraints, the study will focus on only one branch of the First Bank of Nigeria. That is, there is insufficient time and limited financial resources to study more than one branch of the First Bank of Nigeria.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Although the study focuses on the role of line managers in improving employee performance, various researchers have reported differing factors for improving employee performance. In other words, researchers have not reached a conclusive opinion on what improves employee performance.

While some researchers concluded that it is organizational commitment through enhanced and regular salary package that improves employee performance, some suggested it is employee participation in operational decision making, still there are also those who asserted that the immediate manager's attitude and competence are key to improving employee performance. A contrary argument however is that line managers should not be involved in employee learning and development. Other factors postulated are the work environment, employee's personal domestic challenges, stress arising from work pressure, the management style which could be participative or facilitative, and job dissatisfaction. This chapter thus reviews previous research publications, their agreements and disagreements on what and who improves employee performance. Their varied conclusions therefore justify the need for this research study.

## **2.2 Definition of Concepts/Concept of Manager as Coach (MAC)**

Brennan (2008, p.4) defined employee performance as a measure of work standard set by an organization with a view to improve performance. From this definition, the inference is that organizations are responsible for their employee performance. Confirming that an organization should examine its employee performance individually, employee performance is further described as a way to determine an employee's effectiveness in an organization and is thus a system designed on individual performance rather than group to determine where an employee might improve (Longenecker, 2010, p.33). This definition proposes that focusing on the individual employee performance facilitates improvement of such performance. But the question is: Why then should an organization be interested in improving individual employee performance?

Gibb (2003, p.291) asserts that it is complexity, competition, and change that set the agenda for organization to include in their vision and strategy the need for high knowledge informed workers, supported by high knowledge informed line managers. Ellinger et al (2005, p.620) added that "The success of many firms is becoming increasingly linked to the growth, development, and retention of human capital. Kavei (2011, p.21) stated the cost to an organization for poor retention of human capital as; failure to realise return on investment for up to 60% of lost hire, lost productivity during vacancy, diminished productivity of those covering for lost talent, reduced productivity of those training new hire, increased labour costs of temporary, contract, or consulting staff, decreased client satisfaction, increased

future staff turnover and consequent loss of institutional knowledge, and potential loss of trust from remaining employees.

Accordingly, managers and leaders are being urged to promote a more people-oriented approach to management. Pousa and Mathieu (2010, p.34) stresses that in a time when organizations face increasing “competition and they struggle to maintain their market positions, the need to make use of managerial tactics to increase employee performance has become extremely important”. Kavei (2011, p.8) explained the reason why employee performance should be improved when he stated: “We are well into the intellectual economy dependent on the human mind, talent/skills availability is not guaranteed. Now more than ever, Human Resource managers need to focus on attracting and retaining critical talent; and improving performance of each hire”. Therefore, a number of researchers deduced that organizations seek to improve individual employee performance because organizations are faced with increasing competition either globally or locally which may hinder their growth and/or survival. In addition, the complexity and change in business environs necessitates the need for talents/skills which though not generally available, can be developed and/or improved. And to achieve this, an organizational culture which supports individual employee performance improvement has to be reflected in firms’ vision and strategy.

Pousa and Mathieu (2010, p.34) as described above, suggests the use of managerial tactics to improve employee performance. One of these managerial tactics is communication. This is why Ellinger et al (2005, p.621) noted that “although effective people management is believed to enhance economic performance, firms

often fail to establish basic communication processes” (aimed at improving employee performance) “between employees and their managers”. Thus, it becomes necessary for these organizations wishing to stay competitive to appreciate the value that good lines of communication between employees and their managers create. These values may include improved relationship between subordinates and their line managers leading to improved employee performance, employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, organizational growth and sustenance. The advantages of a good manager-subordinate relationship is clarified by Busch (2010, p.2) as;

It creates a work environment that fosters and encourages collaborative endeavour, everyone working with each other, each fulfilling their designated role, each contributing their fair share of ideas and input to a collective goal.

- a) It helps unleash the spirit of initiative, creativity, passion and sense of cohesive ownership that leads to high quality performance which creates the potential for organizations to move forward.
- b) It creates a relationship that encourages a subordinate to perform at their best which generally results in both quality and efficiency of effort.

Cohesively, organizations must increasingly understand that there is a positive relationship between improving employee performance, good lines of communication between employees and their managers, a good manager-subordinate relationship and employee satisfaction. These are crucial to an organizations’ success and survival.



That is why, Hay (2002, p.53) infers that employee satisfaction are most likely achieved when their skills or talents are properly developed or when managers take an interest in their career development. Connecting to this inference, in their five-year research study, Maddern, et al (2007, p. 1013) found that employee satisfaction aside service quality is a key driver of customer satisfaction. Outlining the benefit of customer satisfaction to a financial service organization, Maddern, et al (p. 1000) contends that customer satisfaction creates customer loyalty leading to growth and profit. Supporting this, Neale (2009, p.80) reported: “A US company found that every 5% increase in employee satisfaction leads to 1.3 percent improved customer impression, which in turn drives a 0.5 percent in profit growth. Wheeler (2011, p.1) sustained this notion that provision of excellent customer service is critical to the survival of organizations especially service oriented organizations when he maintained that: “Profit and growth are stimulated by customer loyalty. Loyalty is a direct result of customer satisfaction. Satisfaction is largely influenced by the value of service provided to customers. Value is created by satisfied, loyal and productive employees”. However, of much interest is the fact that for an organization to achieve employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, excellent customer service, customer loyalty and value, its employee competencies are fundamental. As Bjornali and Storen (2012, p. 402) put it “employee competencies are crucial to organizations' ability to nurture and sustain innovation and growth”. Thus, it becomes necessary to note that improving individual employee performance ultimately improves organizational performance.

Considering 5 (five) necessary factors for employees to be able to perform well on their jobs which include;(i) clear job expectations; (ii) clear and immediate

performance feedback; (iii) adequate physical environment - proper tools, supplies and workspace; (iv) motivation and incentives to perform as expected; and skills and (v) knowledge required for the job; the IntraHealth International (2002, p.1) defined employee performance improvement as a method for analyzing employee performance problems and setting up systems to ensure good performance. This implies that for employee performance to be improved, the root cause of their performance problem(s) must first be identified. That explains why an excerpt from Reproline (2003, p.1) defined employee performance improvement as, “a process that considers an employee’s desired performance, identifies gaps between desired and actual performance, identifies root causes, selects interventions to close the gaps, and measures changes in performance”. This definition further affirms that improving employee performance is not just a process but a continuous process. This process is however better achieved by the employee’s immediate or line manager. Supporting this, Buckingham and Coffman (1999, p.4) noted that “it is the employee’s immediate manager, not pay, benefits or the charismatic corporate manager who plays the critical role in building a strong workforce”. Furthermore, Gibb (2003, p.282) noted that the recent need for integrating work and learning in organizations by the human resource professionals “explicitly identifies the role of line managers in learning and development at work”, and thus suggesting its importance in contrast with past perceptions where the focus was on learning and development specialists.

The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (2012, p.1) defined line managers as “those managers to whom individual employees or teams, who do not have any managerial or supervisory responsibility, directly report and who have

responsibility to a higher level of management for those employees or teams”. The inference is that line managers are responsible to the organization they represent for the performance of staff under their supervision. The definition also implies that line managers are responsible for the functional management of their supervisees. As noted at the beginning of this chapter, researchers have not reached a conclusive opinion on what improves employee performance. While some researchers conclude that it is organizational commitment through enhanced and regular salary package that improves employee performance, some suggest it is employee participation in operational decision making, another opinions is that the attitude and competence of an employee’s immediate manager is key to improving employee performance. In contrast, another report is that line managers should not be involved in employee learning and development. Still other factors put forward are employees’ work environment, employee’s personal domestic challenges, stress arising from work pressure, the management style of the organization (participative/facilitative), and job dissatisfaction.

To expatiate, Gbrevbie (2010, p.7) pointed to organizational commitment, through enhanced and regular salary package, and employee involvement in decision making as vital in improving staff performance. However, Buckingham and Coffman (1999, p.4) noted that “it is the employee’s immediate manager, not pay, benefits or the charismatic corporate manager who plays the critical role in building a strong workforce”. In addition, in a recent survey into managing underperformance, the researchers found that a line manager’s competence is required to improve staff performance when they noted that “four fifths of organisations believe that underperformance in their workforce is a problem, with six in 10 employers

believing that their managers were not competent to manage underperforming staff” (Northgate, 2011, p.1). In contrast, Kinlaw (1993, p.13) observed that the line manager’s commitment and attitude plays an important role in improving staff performance when he wrote: “My work with organizations has convinced me that managers do not always place improving the competencies of their subordinates high on their list of priorities or responsibilities”.

In sharp contrast, Gibb (2003, p. 288) argued that although greater line management involvement in human resources management may be a central part of the way forward for many organisations, line management involvement should not but be in the field of learning and development. He continued by stating that promoting line manager's greater involvement with learning and development is simply to emphasise that the allocation and use of specialist human resource managers is a necessary part of implementing improvements in learning and development at work. He further advised the use of specialist learning and development staff, technology-based learning resources and partnerships with the wealth of educational knowledge and experience in teaching and learning institutions. Gibb’s argument can as well be related to Ripley’s assertion that training is not always the appropriate intervention to employee performance problem and suggested that organizations should forge effective partnerships between human resource managers and line managers in their bid to improve employee performance (2002, p.4). In addition, in his study, Wheeler (2011, p.1) reveals that there’s no explicit link between good coaching behaviours and the achievement of organisational goals. Rather, it merely implies that the link exists.

Other contending factors for improving employee performance are said to be the working environment, employee's personal domestic problems, job dissatisfaction and job stress, and management style of leadership. That explains why Ripley (2002, p.1) reported that "two-thirds to four-fifths of the causes of employee performance problems are attributable to the work environment, not the employees". In addition to this report, Roelofsen (2002, p. 248) stated: "A pilot research project held among 170 people in six office buildings reveals that there is a clear relationship between job stress, job dissatisfaction, the indoor environment and employee performance."

At this point, it is important to re-emphasize that the research study focuses on the role of line managers in improving employee performance through coaching. Although Ellinger, et al (2008) criticized managerial coaching for being predominantly practice-driven and guru-led, and lacking solid theoretical basis (as cited in Pousa & Mathieu, 2010, p.35), as noted earlier, a number of researchers have found that line managers should be involved in employee learning through coaching/training. Emphasizing the essence of training as part of the line managers' responsibility as Storey (1992) points, "The line manager's responsibilities can include training and development, motivating teams, on-the-job coaching, reducing costs, improving quality, continuous improvement and deploying labour" (as cited in Cunningham & Hyman, 1995, p. 5). That is why Cheese, et al (2008, p.244) added that line managers have the most impact and influence on employee performance. They continued: "organizations must ensure that line managers are responsible for developing their people, through training and support than in the past". Here, Cheese, et al inferred that training or coaching should be part of a line manager's role in improving employee performance. Also, in his decade of studying the

practices of high performance business leaders around the world, Longenecker (2010, p.32) found that for a manager to produce sustainable long-term results, they must demonstrate real skill at coaching the people who report to them. He continued by stating that successful leaders use ongoing coaching and performance feedback as a tool to elevate the performance of their people.

As Longenecker (2007) stated, the word “coach” can mean, encourager, counsellor, mentor, or guide. He further stated that while the word “coach” can mean many different things to many people, his research findings strongly suggested that a coach “is an individual who is in a position to provide feedback, counsel and be accountable to another individual with the purpose of helping them improve their performance and develop their talents” (as cited in Longenecker, 2010, p.33). As cited in Wheeler (2011, p.3), Whitmore (2004) defined coaching as “unblocking a person’s potential to maximize their performance, helping them to learn rather than teaching them”. Wheeler (2011, p.1) added that coaching means “Interactions that involve a line manager using facilitative approach and empowering, as opposed to directive and prescriptive techniques, to help team members improve their performance against organizational goals, through personal learning and development. Peering into various definition of coaching, Matthews (2010, p.5) defines coaching as “any conversation in which we support another in making progress towards a preferred future”. Matthews adhere to this definition because;

- a) It places an emphasis on ‘supporting another’ not ‘helping’ and so implicitly keeps the agenda and action with the coached or member of staff.

- b) It is future-oriented as the definition states that the support to another is with a view to ‘making progress toward a preferred future’. Therefore, the definition proposes a process that favors a conversation focused on creating a better future, not in analyzing the mistakes of the past. Although analyzing past mistakes to prevent a reoccurrence is quite necessary, dwelling too often on past mistakes can dampen the zeal to forge ahead.
- c) It is positive in that it puts emphasis on ‘making progress’. Each coach’s conversation is seen culminating in agreement on a small step, no matter how small.
- d) It clearly states that coaching is ‘a conversation’ (not a monologue or a manipulation), albeit one with a very distinctive purpose. One who has the skills of conversation can be a coach.

Since the late 1980s, the concept of a line ‘manager as coach’ has received much support and quite a number of authors present coaching as an integral part of a manager’s role; one that demonstrates a progressive and contemporary approach to leading a team (Wheeler, 2011, p.3). Managerial coaching occurs as part of the day-to-day relationship between employee and supervisor and is “one of the strongest retention tools in a manager’s arsenal” (Ellinger et al, 2005, p.621). Ellinger et al (2005, p.631) added that managerial coaching is a distinct leadership style for improving employee performance. It comes out of getting the most out of people while retaining their respect and value. Drawing inference from the earlier definitions of employee performance improvement as “a process” and the definition of coaching as supporting another “towards a preferred future”, it is noteworthy that both employee performance improvement and coaching refer to an ongoing activity.

Further describing what a manager as coach involves, Ladyschewsky (2010, p.293) confirmed that the Manager as Coach (MAC) role is a process where managers create opportunities for individual employees to gain insights into their performance, aimed at guiding and inspiring employees to improve their work. As Rogers (2000) noted, most definitions of managerial coaching revolve around the notions of empowering people to make their own decisions, unleashing their potential, enabling learning, and improving performance (as cited in Ellinger et al, 2005, P.622). The reason as Gibb (2003, p.288) stated is that:

*“Managers cannot lead anymore by fear; rather they need to inspire their talent to perform through coaching. Good leaders are good coaches. Being a good personal coach, an executive coach, means being observant and honest, helping with practice, providing tools and helping people help themselves”.*

Although Hotek (2002) notes that the leadership literature contends line managers' roles as changing to become more focused on the development of subordinates, Goleman (2000) suggests that the coaching style of leadership is not being sufficiently leveraged by many organizations because managers are unfamiliar with their potential benefits and/or because they are not skilful enough at giving ongoing performance feedback to subordinates (as cited in Ellinger et al, 2005, p.631).

Stressing why organizations should take coaching of employees seriously, Gibb (2003, p.291) stated:

*“It is generally accepted that work is changing; from the physical to the knowledge based, that knowledge matters most, and that the workplace is above all a learning*



*environment. Organisations need to provide conditions for people to operate as part of a good learning environment. They need people to accumulate, to have and retain subject matter expertise. They need people to support problem solving. They need people with Meta cognitions, or reflective skills. They need people with communication skills, who can facilitate networking. They require people with high degrees of self-regulation of motivation. They need people to produce and benefit from creative turmoil”.*

Considering these benefits, Matthews’ (2010, p.7) indicated requisite skills as not only of ‘inquiry’ - the ability to formulate and ask effective questions, but also those of ‘advocacy’ - the ability to be able to present, ‘tell’ and even sell another view point and then to facilitate a mutual understanding of a shared future”. He thus emphasized that the skills of dialogue becomes paramount. In other words, it is believed that coaching includes the ability to be directive, of telling, of offering advice, but it is the timing and context of the ‘telling’ intervention that is crucial. Stressing his point, Matthews proposes that in performance coaching, engaged in by the line managers with a vested interest in the outcome, it is the skill of dialogue, the negotiation of a shared preferred future that is a crucial skill. Coaching must be seen by both parties as a collaborative exercise.

Also, Longenecker (2010, p.33) affirmed: “Without effective coaching organizations and their managers will be harder pressed to compete in our global marketplace at this time when people can and must be a primary source of competitive advantage”. Now the question is who can better take on the coaching role to drive employee performance that gives an organization a competitive edge? In his words, Ripley

(2002, p.1) suggested that human resource managers should partner with line managers to remove barriers to exceptional employee performance. Giving his reason for this suggestion, he said it is because “every manager, no matter what his or her role, knows that exceptional employee performance is critical in today's world”. The word “every manager” definitely includes line managers. In addition, In his words, Longenecker (2010, p.32) affirmed that: “Employees cannot improve their performance if they don't know there is a need to do so, if they don't know what to change, if they don't know how to change or if they lack the proper support” and reinforcement for effective performance”. we have found that employees, regardless of position or level in an organization, need effective coaching following any training and development experience if the individual is going to implement and perfect the desired skills and their organizations are going to get a return on their investment (Longenecker and Neubert, 2005, as cited in Longenecker, 2010, p.32). In their study, Ellinger et al (2005, p.629) found that:

*“The low levels of supervisory coaching behavior reported by respondents are consistent with the report that many firms' supervisor development programs place very little emphasis on developing the skills and qualities of effective employee coaching. Besides, many supervisors continue to be rewarded primarily for successfully achieving task-related activities. Consequently, although supervisors may also be held responsible for the growth and development of their subordinates, these efforts often fail due to lack of time and training”.*

More so, Wheeler (2011, p.1) indicated that the cultural characteristics of organisations play a part in supporting, or otherwise, the success of coaching's

contribution to improved performance and achievement of organisational goals. This implies that if the culture of an organization supports coaching, it can play a part in improving employee performance and should it not, organizations may keep struggling as to how to improve their employee performance in achieving their own goals.

An important way organizations can show their commitment towards the manager as coach role as enumerated by Ladyschewsky (2010a, p.296) is to analyze their performance management philosophy which he affirms influences the manager as coach relationship with subordinates and the outcomes of the coaching relationship. The reason he gave quoting him is that “if management preaches teamwork and cooperation yet performance appraisal is used to emphasize accountability, efficiency and productivity, it may be more difficult to create trust and engage subordinates in a coaching paradigm”. That is, organizations wishing to pursue the manager as coach (MAC) must distinguish between “performance management and “performance appraisal”. While performance appraisal focuses on measuring or evaluating performance against a set of key indicators or specific duties, performance management focuses on improving performance through the MAC relationship. Also, he noted that though “the manager must still appraise performance, the development of deficits and the elevation of strengths, flows from the MAC in the performance management relationship. In other words, it is when a manager takes on the role of a coach that he is able to, on a continual basis, identify gaps in performance, and recognize improvements and not through a performance appraisal approach. Following this, The MAC needs to have regular discussions of performance with subordinates. This extends beyond formal meetings designed for

this purpose and must include just in time information on good and poor performance (Lindbom, 2007; as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.296). The conversations between a manager as coach and his subordinates should revolve around discussions relating to core competencies, with processes in place to help employees understand what targets they need to reach, and strategies and resources to help them get there.

Another significant component of the performance management process as stated in Ladyshevsky (2010a, p.297) is the organization's culture towards learning and development. He noted that though the management of organizations advocate participative work cultures, teamwork and empowerment of individual employees through coaching and delegation, there is still a large reliance on performance appraisal to stress accountability and decide about performance based pay and promotion. These mixed messages between the participative management style, performance appraisal system and reward systems can interfere with the engagement process needed in the MAC and subordinate relationship. In an attempt to discourage organizations from using the performance appraisal system and thus encouraging the performance management process, Marshall and Wood (2000) noted with disapproval that "despite all the literature and information on developing human resources, the practice of performance appraisal continues to present with dissatisfaction and problems" (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.298). These researchers posit that this is due to the fact that performance appraisal does not adequately deal with the practical problems most managers have to deal with in the work environment. The focus of performance appraisal is still too centred on design and measurement as opposed to context, motivation and relationship building. As

Joo (2005) noted, “the manager as coach role is focussed on producing learning, behavioural change and growth and requires a specific set of skills separate from measurement and appraisal (as cited in Ladyshewsky, 2010a, p.298).

Redshaw (2000) added that, managerial coaching has “enormous benefits” for firms and for the individuals they employ, and recent studies suggest that investing in line manager-subordinate coaching helps develop the individual level of competence to improve both performance; and customer satisfaction” (as cited in Ellinger et al, 2005, p.621). More to this, the research study by Goleman et al. (2001) provided evidence in support of the effects of coaching on organisational climate and productivity. They argue that;

*“Coaching helps employees identify their strengths and weaknesses and these, in turn, help them to work on improving their work performance. Coaching helps employees develop long-term goals and the iterative process that takes place with the manager/coach creates a partnership that enhances organisational commitment and job satisfaction. This in turn has a positive effect on organisational climate and improves productivity and outcomes for the business”* (as cited in Ladyshewsky, 2010a, p.298).

Matthews (2010, p.2) added that “coaching is beneficial for:

- a) Creating motivated and engaged members of staff
- b) Addressing areas of poor performance
- c) Achieving meaningful annual reviews
- d) Personal and professional development plans

- e) Conflict resolution and solving relationship issues
- f) 'Un-sticking' stuck careers, and
- g) Creating personal and professional development plans that add value to the organization and fulfil the individual

Stressing further the benefits of line manager involvement in coaching in today's competitive business environment, Ellinger et al (2005, p.631) suggested that organizations wishing to remain competitive will increasingly evaluate the feasibility of adopting more people-oriented supervisory approaches like coaching that focus on growth and development, and may produce more intrinsically rewarding work environments for employees. Inferring whose responsibility plays a key role in improving employee performance, he added that: "Most managers are under increasing pressure to improve performance which is hard, if not impossible, to achieve without a motivated, talented and properly supported workforce (p.38). The ongoing natures of improving employee performance through coaching thus suggest that the line manager's role as a coach be examined particularly in the light of the First Bank of Nigeria chosen as a case study amongst other Nigerian Banks affected by some reforms from the governing Bank – the central Bank of Nigeria.

### **2.3 Nigeria Banking Reforms in the Last 3 years**

The Nigeria Banking System, over the last three (3) years, has been faced with different reforms which have positioned the banks for growth (Alford, 2010, p.1). In order to appreciate the implication of this reform to the study, the following policy reforms, noted by Alford (2010), was issued by the Central Bank of Nigeria, the

governing bank for Nigerian Banks. These policy reforms are briefly enumerated hereunder:

- a) The Central Bank of Nigeria issued a policy requiring Nigerian banks to adopt a common accounting year for 2009. Different reporting years for Nigerian banks made financial comparison difficult among banks and limited transparency of bank financial results. A common accounting year according to the Central Bank of Nigeria will “further enhance the level playing field in the banking sector post-consolidation” (p.7).
- b) The Central Bank of Nigeria is also seeking banks to adopt International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) by the end of 2012. Currently, most banks follow Nigerian Generally Accepted Accounting Principle. On January 18, 2010, the Central Bank of Nigeria issued a circular detailing the type and format of financial information that must be disclosed by banks in their annual financial statements. These actions illustrate that the Central Bank of Nigeria is aggressively pursuing accounting reforms “to improve disclosure to regulators, investors, and depositors regarding the financial health of Nigerian banks p.8).
- c) Another important component of the banking reform in Nigeria is the removal of toxic assets or non-performing loans from the books of the 8 (eight) banks receiving government support through the establishment of “an asset management company which will purchase toxic assets from the banks” (p.10).
- d) The Central Bank of Nigeria is interested in attracting investors to purchase the eight government-supported banks. This is to achieve increased foreign

ownership of Nigerian banks though it insists that the investors must be interested in investing in Nigeria for the long term, and they must possess the expertise for risk management, corporate governance and overall management. The purpose is that “Foreign ownership of these banks will aid in raising capital from international markets and in transferring needed skills to Nigerian bank employees” (p.12).

This rapid reform shows the intense efforts of the Central Bank of Nigeria to assist with the near collapse of the Nigerian banking system since 2009. The reform program advocated by the Central Bank of Nigeria in Alford (2010, p.14) rests on the following four pillars:

- a) Enhancing the quality of banks
- b) Establishing financial stability
- c) Enabling healthy financial sector evolution, and
- d) Ensuring the financial sector contributes to the real economy

Thus, the growth the Central Bank of Nigeria seeks with the above enumerated reform has necessitated increasing need for employee skills and training among Nigerian Banks (Alford, 2010, p.13).

## **2.4 The First Bank of Nigeria as a Case Study**

A study of the First Bank of Nigeria’s operations, published in the 2011 annual report, reveals that one of the challenges in the bank is to improve operational efficiency and reduce fixed and variable costs to enhance profitability (First Bank,



2011). This improvement can be better met by well trained employees (Kanghwa, 2010, p.6). Isiaka (2011, p.1) noted the following reasons why organizations should invest in employee training:

- a) Training is one of the most important strategies for organizations to help employees gain proper knowledge and skills needed to meet the environmental challenges;
- b) That many organizations have seen for themselves that training is where skills are developed, attitudes are changed, ideas evolve and the organization is reinvented.
- c) That by training, in the course of learning the skills that will increase sales, build effective teams, improve quality, standards or meet a wide range of other objectives, employees create a new organizational culture.
- d) The need to look at business beyond the national boundaries and thinking strategically have forced many organizations to accord training and development due attention;
- e) Since an organization can rarely secure people who are at the time of employment, total masters of their unique requirements, organizations need a good training and development programme;
- f) Training changes uninformed employees to informed employee; training changes unskilled or semiskilled workers in to employees who can do their assigned tasks in the way the organization wants them done, into workers who do things the right way.

- g) Training tends to be focused on the skills required in employee's current jobs, to be viewed in a short-term and to have as its major purpose, the improvement of individual and thereby organizational performance frame.

From his study, Isiaka found 4 (four) of the reasons why banks see investing in training as important to be; (a) To respond to skill deficiency, (b) As a moral duty of the organization towards the staff, (c) To develop new hire; and (d) To Increase productivity

The research study focuses on addressing the benefit of line manager's involvement in staff learning to the First Bank of Nigeria. The First Bank of Nigeria is chosen as the case study because it sees its employee's performance improvement as one of the key factors to achieve its vision and mission. The vision statement of the First bank of Nigeria is to "Be the clear leader and Nigeria's bank of first choice. The mission statement is: "Remain true to our name" ('First') "by providing the best financial services possible" (First Bank, 2011). These vision and mission statements have positively kept the bank dynamic to market and environmental changes. Also, the First Bank of Nigeria recognizes the important role employee training plays in keeping up with her vision. Isiaka (2011, p.5) affirmed this when he stated that "First Bank of Nigeria devotes appreciable resources to staff training and development through both local and foreign facilitation". This led the bank to establish five (5) regional learning centres nationwide in addition to the established First Bank Academy at Lagos, Nigeria. According to him, the bank as reported in the Abridged prospectus dated May 7, 2007 expended a total of N2,614,137,000 (two billion six hundred and fourteen million one hundred and thirty seven thousand naira) on

training and development in three years. Also in 2011, a total of 7,626 (seven thousand six hundred and twenty six) out of over 8,000 (eight thousand) staff, representing over 98% of its workforce, was trained (First Bank, 2011).

However, one of the challenges of the First Bank of Nigeria despite these training costs is in improving operational efficiency and reducing costs to enhance profitability. Another challenge of the bank is in the area of customer satisfaction where it was ranked 8<sup>th</sup> amongst Nigerian banks in 2011 from a customer satisfaction survey (First Bank, 2011). From the vision and mission statement of the First Bank of Nigeria, it seeks to be the clear leader through provision of the best financial services possible. These challenges (operational efficiency, cost reduction, and customer satisfaction) on the other hand, can easily erode the leadership position the bank aims in its vision statement.

Kanghwa (2010, p. 138) pointed out reasons why companies itching to stay competitive and aspiring continued growth should improve their operational efficiency when necessary when he said that “operational efficiency involves optimizing the company’s internal resources which includes the workforce with the result that resources previously needed to manage operational tasks can be redirected to new, high-value initiatives that bring additional value to the organization. Another reason he gave is that improving operational efficiency helps drive down the cost of routine operations to a desired level.

The First bank of Nigeria spends annually over 1billion Nigerian Naira which is about 2.5% of her profit before tax of 50billion naira, on staff training and development. The huge cost the First Bank of Nigeria expends on staff trainings are

channelled to trainings conducted through in-house learning, action learning workshops, cross postings, e-learning, overseas programme and training modules adapted to different cadres of staff (First Bank, 2011). That is, the First Bank of Nigeria often times engages the services of external coaches in training their staff. The First Bank of Nigeria is yet to adopt the practice of subordinate coaching through its line managers. For the First Bank of Nigeria, these line managers are Heads of Units such as Branch Operations Managers and Branch Sales Managers. Considering one of its challenges which is cost reduction, there is a need for the bank to look inwards for alternative means of staff learning and development at reduced costs. This is why this study examines if the role the line manager plays as his/her subordinate's coach as suggested by various writers can assist the First Bank of Nigeria to effectively deal with her challenges.

## **2.5 The Line Manager as an Internal Coach or an External Coach/Specialist**

### *The Line Manager as an Internal Coach*

As Ellinger and Keller (2003) asserts, "The line manager as coach role is an organisational development strategy that focuses on changing the relationship between manager and employee" (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010a, p.292). Their findings suggest that supervisory coaching behaviour is positively associated with employees' job satisfaction and performance. Carter (2005, p.9) added that a line manager as an internal coach benefits an organization in the following ways:

- a) It is far less expensive than hiring external coaches.

- b) Internal coaches have more in-depth knowledge about the organization and its culture. Thus, they are able to work more quickly and create development plans efficiently since they know what resources are available.
- c) As they reside within the organization, they are easily contactable and available.
- d) The internal coach is able to gather feedback on the coached which can be used to alter the development plan as it is needed.
- e) Also, internal coaching is compatible with the culture of the learning organization.
- f) Organizations can achieve more leverage by developing coaches within an organization than through any other activity or investment. The reason is because internal coaches are essential for continually developing skills that will benefit the organization in real time and can be applied everyday as new opportunities and challenges arise.

#### *An External Coach as a Specialist*

Matthews (2010, p.3) however stressed that “the most attractive benefit of implementing a coaching culture is the way it encourages a model of distributed leadership, where individuals take responsibility for their performance and the manager’s intervention is regular one-to-one coaching sessions, designed to develop the capability, confidence and capacity of the individual to perform”. This builds the ability of individual employee to take on more responsibility with less supervision. Despite this said benefit, Matthews argues that though using internal managers as coaches appears nice in theory, in the face of various kinds of pressures like time,

money and personal reputation which management impose directly or indirectly on managers, can a line manager ever truly be an effective coach to their team? A line manager's responsibilities go beyond coaching to his capacity as a leader and manager in the organization. As such, his 'coaching' role may easily lose out to other pressing obligations.

For all these reasons, the argument for using external coaches is very compelling, especially in the current economic environment, where there is increased pressure on managers to improve financial performance. Such pressure stretches the trust relationship between managers and their teams to the limit. The following are benefits of external coaches as stated by Carter (2005, p.9):

- a) External coaches are likely to have vast experience as they coach within a number of different organizations.
- b) The role of the external coach is often more defined, that is, while internal coaches are likely to have additional roles and responsibilities, the external coach is there just for the coaching.
- c) It is more likely to be beneficial when the coach and the coached have different mindsets that will create a more stimulating learning environment.

Notwithstanding, an external executive coach, brought from the outside into an organization is usually detached from the organization's system and as such Mathews (2010, p.3) conversely noted that:

- a) An external executive coach can be disinterested in the outcome of the coaching conversation.

- b) An external executive coach may stay out of offering direct advice, unless clearly contracted for this purpose, due to the power structure at play on a day-to-day basis in the organization.
- c) Many external coaches, when training coaching skills in organizations, seem to train from an independent perspective without a connecting relationship with the coached in the organizational context.

Thus, I deduced that the practice of adopting line managers as internal coaches and specialists as external coaches have their benefits and limitations. But Cunningham & Hyman (1995, p.5) emphasized that: “Gone are the days when staff learning and development were left to personnel specialist alone. Line managers and supervisors now have a prime role in ensuring the success of performance outcomes”. Thus, the following review focuses more on the line manager as an internal coach. That is, the components of a line manager as an internal coach, the skills required for managers to succeed, the motivating factors and the underlying benefits.

### **2.5.1 Components of a Line Manager as an Internal coach**

Ladyshevsky (2010a, p.300) gave the following important components of the manager as coach (MAC) role. These are explained considering the views of other authors:

- a) Establish goals – According to Matthew (2005, p.7), both the coach and the coached must have a prioritized overview of what is important, and they need to be clear about what they are trying to achieve. What are the individual’s performance goals for the coming year, in the context of the team’s goals and

those of the organization, and can they make the connection? Everyone needs and sets their own targets. This involves setting targets for every individual in the organization, clearly aligned to the goals of the organization, and created in a coaching dialogue between the team member and the manager. Targets need to include the 'how' the person will behave as well as the 'what' they will achieve. The individual targets need to be made simple and visible and the expectations on performance ought to be within the control of the individual. Though managers often set targets that are outside the performer's control, a good manager should establish what things the individual can put in place, that they have control over, and that would achieve the target.

- b) Feedback - Feedback implies "the degree to which the job provides employees with clear and direct information about job performance" (Quinn et al, 2003, p.159). These definitions suggest that feedback is one of the major factors to helping an employee improve his performance on the job. King and Eaton (1999) postulated that "regular, constructive, and meaningful feedback from managers and supervisors brings out that "little extra each time" which adds incrementally to overall performance" (as cited in Ellinger et al (2005, p.621). Without feedback, effective performance is not reinforced, ineffective performance is not identified, and employees will not know if their performances are meeting the expectations of their managers or supervisors, or the requirements of the firm's customers. Thus, when information about performance is frequent, consistent with information from other sources, and situated in a process that is seen as reasonable, individuals experience a more positive and trusting outcome (Ladyshevsky, 2010a,



p.300). However, Wheeler (2011, p.9) noted that although feedback is one of the most difficult coaching behaviours for line managers to adopt due to a natural human tendency to avoid confrontation, feedback plays an important part in coaching by line managers and that feedback between managers and their team members is of primary importance to staff development”. Also, as Ellinger et al (1999, p.762) wrote, provision of “feedback is one of the most effective coaching behaviours (as cited in Wheeler, 2011, p.9). In clear terms, effective coaching requires regular feedback. Gallop and Hafford-Letchfield (2012, p.104) identified feedback as an important factor in promoting self-esteem and self-improvement in employees which creates a strong sense of satisfaction and security in employees as to how the organization treats them.

- c) Commitment – Line managers must continuously develop their subordinate to help them find the right fit. Buckingham and Coffman (1999, p. 6) expressed that many people are promoted to their level of incompetence due to the line manager’s inability to determine the role they are best fit, by matching individual talent with the new role. To improve operational efficiency at the least possible cost, a line manager must be committed towards optimizing performance from every employee under his/her supervision.
- d) Trust - Confidentiality, displays of integrity by following through on one’s word, personal self-disclosure, honesty, and being authentic about wanting to invest in the relationship between the manager and subordinate. Ellinger et al. (2005, p.622) justified this by noting that:

*“Coaching is primarily dependent on trust, and therefore, successful coaching-style of leadership implies a shift from a command-and-control style of management based on motivation by job insecurity, to a management style that is based more on “partnership for achieving results and commitment through collaboration to accomplish new possibilities”. Also, a good manager/coach has to believe that people are worth developing, and is an enabler rather than someone with the answer to all questions and problems. Therefore, managerial coaching skills include questioning, listening, giving and receiving feedback, communicating and motivating, rather than the more traditionally recognized skills and qualities of a successful leader/manager like competitiveness, being in control, solving problems, and being seen as an expert. Successful manager/coaches are also proficient delegators who are prepared to accept short-term failures if they lead to long-term development”.*

In addition, Ladyshevsky (2010a, p.302) observed that many organisations are in a trust crisis and that managers themselves may be more apprehensive about performance conversations than the actual employees at the centre of the process. He thus suggested that increasing trust may reduce this apprehension. However, according to him:

*“This can only occur if the psychological basis of the relationship between the parties (manager and subordinate) is developed and secure. The relationship between a manager and a subordinate is a psychological one, and one cannot just separate out the performance dimensions. This has been evidenced in research on over 50,000(fifty thousand) employees in the public and private*

*sector. In this study, researchers found that supportive managers, where trust and respect were dominating characteristics of the relationship, had employees who were less stressed and more productive”.*

However, as Wheeler argued, “trust is a characteristic of a relationship rather than a behaviour and so has limited relevance to questions around how coaching behaviours impact on performance”. As such, for the purpose of this study, the trust component of managerial coaching will not be examined further.

### **2.5.2 Requisite Skills for a Line Manager as Coach**

- a) Competence -Cunningham & Hyman (1995, p. 13) contended that line managers and supervisors usually think competence and preparation in subordinate training and development activities emerge through a combination of applying common sense and experience. Such complacency, they noted, is demonstrated by line managers and supervisors not attending training programmes channelled at employee relations either because their immediate superiors, or the managers themselves, felt that they had more pressing commitments. As Harris (2005) states, “a manager’s personal characteristics in terms of personality, relationships and self-confidence are potential barriers to their willingness to coach” (as cited in Wheeler, 2005, p.3). Another challenge of managers as coach are said to be because many managers have never been trained in effective coaching practices and very few managers have coaches to help coach them on how to become better coaches (Kets de Vries et al., 2007, as cited in Longenecker, 2010, p.33).

Also from Longenecker's study, participants believe that coaching is an area that needs development for a large percentage of managers. As such, Longenecker (2010, p.39) suggested that line managers must take their roles as coaches seriously and that organizations must do their level best to equip and support their managers at all levels in this regard. This is because trainings not administered by a line manager are usually not aligned with an employee's current job coverage and perhaps not with the organization's overall goals and strategy.

- b) Communication - This involves increasing mutual levels of participation in discussions about performance. Thus a line manager must invest time in his dealings with subordinates. McLean et al (2005) stated that employee coaching through the manager as coach role should be a core managerial skill. It involves effective and open communication, a team focus, valuing people over task, and accepting the ambiguous nature of the working environment for the purpose of developing employees and improving performance (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010, p.293). Wheeler (2011, p.1) added to this view stating that " the skills that most significantly represent good coaching include clear communication of expectations, providing accurate feedback, offering suggestions when working alongside staff and developing warm relationships with employees". Matthew (2005, p.7) however noted that the success of coaching does not only lie with the coach (line manager) but also the coached. Therefore, for a manager's responsibility in keeping the coached engaged to be successful, the coached

must be committed to or obligated to follow, must share fully in the future that the organization wishes to create.

- c) Emotional Intelligence – As Howard (2006) stated, “those high in emotional intelligence are more likely to understand their own motives, as well as those of others, and build social relationships which positively influence performance (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010, p.294).
- d) Wasylysyn (2003) specified other skills as interpersonal effectiveness, listening, empathy, patience, adaptability and problem solving (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010, p.293).
- e) Other requisite skills described by Evered and Selman (1989) as being fundamental to success in coaching are: “an ability to develop a partnership; a focus on goals; compassion and acceptance; communication skills that drive action; responsiveness; respecting the individuality of the coached; practice and preparation; openness to being coached in return; and sensitivity (as cited in Ladyshevsky, 2010, p.294).

Therefore, line managers will be more prone to developing these requisite skills where the organizations they represent create an environment that best motivates them. The 3 (three) challenges (operational efficiency, cost reduction, and customer satisfaction) the First Bank of Nigeria experiences could be said to be key challenges because they can easily erode the leadership position the bank aims in its vision statement. Notwithstanding though, it is important to note that these challenges are all centred around employee performance improvement and which integrating line managers in their subordinate training/coaching can as reported by previous research findings be beneficial.

Kanghwa (2010, p. 138) described “operational efficiency” as “what occurs when the right combination of people, process and technology come together to enhance the productivity and value of any business operation, while driving down the cost of routine operations to a desired level”. In other words, operational efficiency involves optimizing the company’s internal resources which includes the workforce (employee) with the result that resources previously needed to manage operational tasks can be redirected to new, high-value initiatives that bring additional value to the organization (cost reduction).

It is in this context that it becomes necessary to evaluate what motivates and why organizations and in this context, the First bank of Nigeria should motivate its line managers to be more involved in employee learning and coaching.

### **2.5.3 Barriers to Line Manager as Coach**

During his years of consulting practice, Matthews (2005, p.2) found that most managers are struggling to implement what can seem a time consuming and long winded process – ‘coaching’. 2 (two) of the reasons are that many line managers:

- a) Come to realise that there is an inherent power imbalance in the relationship.  
Both players are in the power system of the organisation. How objective can the coach be?
- b) Feel that the whole conversation takes place under significant pressure created by the economic challenge. As a consequence, a shortage of time, resources, money and patience means effective coaching can be difficult.

Gibb (2003, p. 281-293) gave the following limitations to line managers as coaches;

- a) Where time is not set aside for learning and development, coupled with pressure in the workplace such as where the need to deal with immediate task takes precedence, learning will suffer and many employees less developed. Even if time is still set aside for learning it may be that, in the absence of well structured training plans and courses, employees will not get a complete and coherent package of learning and development at work.
- b) Line managers cannot be better skilled developers than specialists trained in learning and development at work, no matter how much development they receive as “teachers” or “trainers”. This implies that most line managers will not be able to organise and evaluate high quality learning and development processes and practices as would specialists. Line managers will not be as accurate as others can be in objectively determining learning and development needs of each of employees under his/her supervision. Line managers will likewise not be as good at instructing, coaching or facilitating development as specialists.
- c) Depending on line managers to fulfil these roles may mean marginalising specialists’ roles in or perhaps the actual or practical exclusion of specialists from learning and development. However, some argue that the specialist role will become transformed to roles like an internal consultant or advisors to the line manager.
- d) While managers need to evaluate performance and help out where they can, the responsibility for an employee's development should lie in part with a neutral third party such as a learning and development specialist. This is

because the line manager-employee relationship may involve clash of interests that the manager may not be in a position to resolve effectively. Also, in many organisations, the traditional problems of managing career and personal development are compounded by the pace and scale of change, workforce restructuring and harsher internal labour market regimes. Surviving in such a tough climate is a problem for everyone. What happens to the line manager as developer when, for example, the managers are asked to make decisions about the development needs of staff who might in a few months be competing for that line manager's job/position?

Adding to the hindrances aforementioned by Gibb, Ladyshevsky (2010b, p.27) postulated that;

*“Many managers who feel comfortable with a traditional command and control way of working will be reluctant to do anything which they fear might lessen their power or ability to control employees. They will cling to the view that their authority is best directed at telling the staff what to do rather than working with them in a more supportive way. Even those who concede there may be a benefit in changing to a more open, trusting, developmental way of working may feel they do not have the time to do anything other than lead by command and control for fear of endangering the bottom line. They will tell you their job is to ‘manage’ rather than coach”.*

More so, Ladyshevsky (2010a, p.296) noted that a move towards more coaching practices in the manager as coach process can create real fear in management about loss of power and control. Hence, the concept of the manager as coach role raises



interesting challenges for the manager because of issues of span of control and may explain the reluctance of its adoption by some managers. His study found that:

- a) Loss of power – Most managers do not want to coach their workers for fear that an empowered employee will attempt to usurp them out of their leadership role.
- b) Loss of control - The senior members were clearly focussed on developing their own careers, and stunting any co-worker who threatened their rank, or position within the company.
- c) Loss of power as a means of control - There is often a fear that coaching will only promote competition for the established manager's position.
- d) Interest alignment - the importance of managers understanding their team members' aspirations, values, is key to effective management.
- e) Lack of credibility - Many managers approach to coaching is a failure because they do not communicate their expectations clearly and by lack of communication with their staff they do not know the problems faced by the team. The low job satisfaction and lack of support results in the team's poor performance.
- f) Lack of capability - The lack of commitment and direction by many managers leads to employees under their supervision to seek other environments in which to achieve their career goals. This includes leaving the organisation, due to the unconvincing effort by the managers to coach their staff.
- g) Managers had to make an effort to get to know their staff at a personal level, and engage in discussions, which identified values. This helped to increase

alignment between the MAC, the individual staff members and the organization.

The foregoing barriers would better be weighed considering the benefits or advantages of greater line manager's involvement in employee learning.

#### **2.5.4 Benefits of Line Manager as Internal Coach**

Gibb (2003, p. 283) acknowledged the following benefits of a manager as coach for an organization:

- a) There will be more and continuous development for a wide range of people if line managers are more involved in learning since learning should be an integral feature of working life. Today's business environment has become competitive that keeping pace with new knowledge and skills is not just desirable but has become more essential. Line managers will better help support employee continuous learning than learning that happens periodically in formal classroom-based settings.
- b) There will be better quality of employee learning since the gap between organisational performance needs and individual performance can be closed where those who are familiar with both the organisational need and the individual play a greater role; that means line managers rather than training specialists who may neither understand the organisational need or the individuals needs; or, indeed, fail to understand them both.
- c) Requiring line managers to be more involved in the learning and development of employees will lead to a transformation of managers

themselves. The belief is that by taking developmental responsibilities on, line managers will have to change more generally, ultimately becoming more competent in interpersonal interactions in work teams. There are then benefits to line managers as they become more competent at managing people because they have to take responsibility for their development. These benefits help to enhance management in the organisation as a whole.

- d) Enlisting line managers as developers of people can contribute to broader organisational change and transformation of human relations at work to being more quality oriented, or with being more innovative, or with being more efficient and giving greater value for money. Simply put, people will be more inclined to and more able to talk to each other, to trust each other and to work together in periods of change.

Maddern, et al (2007, p. 1000) outlines the benefit of customer satisfaction to a financial service organization like the First Bank of Nigeria as creating customer loyalty leading to growth and profit. This means that improving individual employee performance ultimately improves organizational performance.

Considering that the benefits stated above are fundamental to the continued growth and survival of an organization, it is important to determine how an organization can motivate its line managers as internal coaches.

### **2.5.5 Motivating Line Manager as Coach**

Pousa and Mathieu (2010, p.34) stressed that: “As organizations are interested in promoting managerial coaching behaviour in order to develop and increase their

employees long-term performance, they also need to be interested in understanding line managers' motivation to coach and what affect coaching behaviour". Organizations should pay much greater attention to the management of line managers as drivers of employee performance. Kotelnikov (2012, p.1) specified 2 (two) kinds of motivation as:

- a) **Attitude Motivation** – This has to do with the way an organization addresses the manager's thinking and feelings towards coaching. When managers do not feel that their coaching contribution to staff performance makes a difference, then the organization would have failed to engage the managers effectively.
- b) **Incentive Motivation** – That is the reward an organization provides managers for taking up the coaching role which subsequently improves people's performance. Employee performance improvement can be compared by comparing current with previous performance. To motivate managerial coaching, an organization must provide a correspondingly just reward. The greatest management principle is that the things that get rewarded get done. "You get more of the behaviour you reward. You don't get what you hope for, wish for or beg for. You get what you reward" (Kotelnikov, 2012, p.1). With this in mind, organizations can get line managers motivated towards coaching their subordinates with a proper reward system.

Explaining the role of organizations to motivating manager as coach, Ladyshevsky (2010a, p.296) suggested that organizational developers, wanting to develop the manager as coach role in their institutions, must invest time and energy into

changing beliefs, building a learning culture and training managers in this role. Thus, he wrote:

*“Training and development of managers in the coaching process, and encouraging leadership to adopt more learning centred practices in their organizations, also will facilitate the adoption of coaching practices more readily into the workplace by all parties. This will facilitate engagement between managers and subordinates in the process and hopefully lead to more successful learning and development and worker performance. The training experience, however, must go beyond teaching managers basic coaching skills. Factors such as emotional intelligence, building trust and understanding the role of values and how these inspire and motivate staff need to be addressed in these training initiatives. In addition to these components, exploring the personal perspectives of managers with respect to staff development must also be considered in training and development programs. For some managers, such training will be quite transformational for them in their role as manager as coach. The MAC role requires a paradigm shift in many managers, and any training or organisational development strategy to position these leaders in to the MAC role must take this into consideration”*(2010a, p.303).

Hence, I gathered that an organization will succeed in motivating managers as coach when those managers are trained, equipped with the required coaching skill discussed earlier in this chapter such as competence, communication, and emotional intelligence amongst others. Also, managers’ attitudes must be transformed to adopt the coaching role.

Although there are justifiable reservations about increasing line managers' involvement in employee learning, considering the benefits outlined above, it becomes increasingly important that line managers more than before become involved in subordinate coaching since coaching facilitates improved performance in all fields of work and organization. Good leaders are good coaches. Coaches are people whose primary role is to help others learn and improve their performance. A discussion of primary data in Chapter 4 provides further motivational factors for line managers.

#### **2.5.6 When Coaching Yields Better Results**

Campbell (2011, p.1) emphasized that managers should know when to coach and gave the following instances:

- a) When a member of the team has recently learned new skills - Coaching helps them apply this learning, often with the line manager adding useful advice and guidance during the coaching conversation.
- b) When helping a team member identify and embed good practice or build on superior results - Combining coaching with feedback from the line manager bolsters morale and greatly increases the likelihood of a repeat performance.
- c) When an experienced team member needs to identify and change poor practice or unsatisfactory performance, particularly in a situation where the individual is not aware of the need to change - Feedback from the line manager, combined with coaching the team member to reflect on their

performance and work out how to do things differently next time, increases self-awareness and commitment to change.

- d) When a team member brings a problem or an idea to their manager, and the team member has the expertise and experience to work out the way forward - With this it is useful to check what the team member is seeking – is it a straightforward view from their boss so that they can add that perspective to their deliberations, or do they want the boss's time and attention to coach them so that they can work out the way forward for themselves?

Time invested in coaching in any of these situations will reap rewards and repay itself many times over. It is motivating when both the manager and his team build a positive relationship that rapidly drives up performance. On the other hand, it is good to note that the timing of coaching is also important. That is when managers in their enthusiasm to embrace coaching do so when it is not appropriate, they waste time, and frustrate their teams.

In summary, in a time when organizations face increasing competition and they struggle to maintain their market positions, the need to make use of managerial tactics to increase employee performance has become extremely important. Coaching in the workplace, between a manager and a subordinate, is part of an overall organizational development and performance management tactics. Coaching, in particular, has been identified as a critical managerial role that every line manager should employ in order to develop and improve performance of employees under his/ her supervision. The manager as coach role rejects the command and control model of leadership. The manager as coach role is designed to help employees

address individual functional knowledge gaps and skills, create opportunities for an individual to gain insights into their performance, aimed at guiding and inspiring employees to improve their work. It then becomes necessary that managers gather the requisite skills needed to coach their staff effectively. The level of manager's commitment and motivation is also paramount to a successful MAC role. Organizations must therefore continually seek ways to motivate managers to transform their attitude to embrace the MAC. Neale et al (2009, p.81) stated the benefits of an improved employee performance as:

- a) It helps in retaining top performing staff who may have contemplated leaving.
- b) It reduces turnover of staff.
- c) It Increases revenue due to increased performance by managers and staff.
- d) It helps managers and staff in exceeding their goals.
- e) Improved customer satisfaction
- f) It creates a positive work environment which allows staff to focus on strategic areas such as account development and higher sales volume.

Various researchers have differing opinions as to what improves employee performance. However, a number of researchers have reported that line manager's involvement in coaching their people can help improve performance. The study hence examines if this holds true in the case of the First Bank of Nigeria.



## **CHAPTER 3**

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS**

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This chapter focuses on identifying research designs and methodology suitable to provide answers to the research objectives for the study. Research methods are means of gathering data basically grouped as qualitative and quantitative research methods. The quantitative research method is chosen for quantitative primary data gathered through survey questionnaires administered on the Owerri main branch of the First Bank of Nigeria. The causal research design, as a type of quantitative method, is considered most suited for the study in order to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

As noted in chapter 2, various researchers have differing opinions as to whether a line manager as an internal coach or engaging the services of specialists referred to as external coaches better improves the performance of employees in an organization. The First Bank of Nigeria has been chosen for the study because it is yet to adopt the practice of integrating subordinate coaching as part of its line management role. For the sake of emphasis, the objectives of this research study are:

- a) To outline the benefits of involving line managers in training and coaching in improving the performance of employees of First Bank of Nigeria; and
- b) To identify how the First Bank of Nigeria can motivate its line managers for their involvement in staff trainings.

- c) Give an outline of how the First Bank of Nigeria could organize its line managers to efficiently and cost effectively train and coach its staff.

Punch (2005, p.36) explained the roles of research objectives in a research. These include; (i) they organize the research work to give it direction and coherence, (ii) they delimit the project to show its boundaries, (iii) they keep the researcher focused during the project, (iv) they provide a framework for writing the project, and (v) they point to the data that is needed. Thus, research objectives have great value in bringing the research back on track. Further, these objectives guide the researcher on what data are appropriate for the study. That is why, Punch (2005, p.54) asserts that once the research objectives is established, then the study can move from content to methods. That is, what data is needed and how these data are collected and analyzed. Knowing which data best answers research objectives help spell out the research design and methods that are suitable for gathering and analyzing such data.

Data are evidence, information, or empirical materials which can be quantitative or qualitative (Punch, 2005, p. 55). Quantitative data are numerical, that is, they are information about a phenomenon in the form of numbers. Although this information does not occur naturally in the form of numbers, researchers turn the data into numbers. Quantitative data may range from structured to unstructured and may or may not involve researcher imposed constructs. Qualitative data on the other hand does not involve numbers but include interviews, recordings and notes, observational records, personal experience and audiovisual materials. The basic difference between quantitative and qualitative data lies in the process of measurement and which has

been at the centre of debates between proponents of the 2 (two) approaches. To move past these rigid positions does not however mean that a researcher must combine the two types of data except when appropriate. Thus, there are 3 (three) possibilities for any empirical study. It can have all quantitative data, it can have all qualitative data, and it can have a combination of both. The type of data a researcher chooses should be determined primarily by what he is trying to find out, considered against the background of the context, circumstances and practical aspects of the particular research projects (Punch, 2005, p.55-58) .

For the purpose of this study, quantitative data is used to examine the objectives of this study. There are few types of research designs that can be suitable for quantitative data. Punch (2005, p.62) defines research design as the design of a study with reference to the way a researcher guides against and tries to rule out alternative interpretations of results. Thus research design situates the researcher in the empirical world and connects the research objectives to data.

Due to some limitations hindering the effectiveness of each type of research design, the most suited research design for the study is the quantitative research method to obtain primary data. Steinberg et al (2010, p.14) explains that the quantitative research focuses on analysis of numerical data from quantitative variables. These variables in a research study are the concrete manifestations of critical thinking. The quantitative approach often follows the scientific method of data collection by using designs that permit various levels of confidence in making causal inferences. Causal inferences imply that cause precedes effect. Polit and Hungler (1995, p.144) notes that “most quantitative studies are highly structured and spelt out in advance of any

data collection. In a typical quantitative standard, a researcher specifies the nature of any interventions, the nature of the comparisons, the method to be used to control extraneous variables, the timing of data collection, the study setting, and the information to be given to subjects – all before a single piece of datum is gathered”. This according to Polit and Hungler (1995, p.144) is because once data collection is underway, modifications to the research design are rarely instituted. This implies that when changes are found to be needed, such needed changes reveal that some aspects of the design did not work.

Sukamolson (2012, p.8) stated that quantitative research is appropriate in the following circumstances:

- a) When a quantitative (numerical) answer is wanted - For example, how many staff of the First Bank of Nigeria do not require training to excel on their job? Or how many line managers are not interested in training their subordinates? The reason why quantitative research is used to answer this kind of question is because qualitative, non-numerical methods will obviously not provide the numerical answer needed.
- b) Numerical change can only accurately be studied using quantitative methods. For example, ‘Are the numbers of staff of the First Bank of Nigeria rising or falling? or ‘if falling, will an improvement in staff performance help increase staff retention? A quantitative study is needed to find out the answer.

- c) Quantitative research is useful for conducting audience segmentation - It is done by dividing the population into groups whose members are similar to each other and distinct from other groups.
- d) Quantitative research is also useful to quantify opinions, attitudes and behaviors and find out how the whole population feels about a certain issue - For example, to find out the exact number of staff who think that line manager's involvement in staff coaching will help improve staff performance and thus the operational efficiency that the First Bank of Nigeria is challenged with, the quantitative research becomes appropriate.
- e) Quantitative research is suitable to explain some phenomena. For instance, 'What factors motivate managers' disposition to coach their subordinates? Or what factors are related to improvement of staff performance? These questions can be studied successfully using quantitative methods.
- f) Also, quantitative research is especially suitable for testing of hypotheses. Although quantitative methods are not very fit for developing hypotheses and theories, they are well suited for testing hypothesis. For example, to determine whether there is a relationship between line manager's involvement in staff learning and staff performance improvement.

The quantitative research method is categorized with the following types of research designs case study design, descriptive design, experimental design and causal-comparative design. The University of Southern California Libraries (2012, p.2-6)

explains these various research designs, their advantages and limitations as hereunder. However this study adopts the most suitable design type.

- a) Case Study Design – A case study is an in-depth study of a particular research problem rather than a sweeping statistical survey. It is often used to narrow down a very broad field of research into one or a few easily researchable examples. The case study design is also useful for testing whether a specific theory and model actually applies to phenomena in the real world. It is a useful design when not much is known about a phenomenon.

*Advantages of Case Study Design*

- i. This approach excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue through detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships.
- ii. A researcher using a case study design can apply a variety of methodologies and rely on a variety of sources to investigate a research problem. Design can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research.
- iii. Social scientists, in particular, make wide use of this research design to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of concepts and theories and extension of methods. The design can provide detailed descriptions of specific and rare cases.

### *Limitations of Case Study Design*

- i. A single or small number of cases offers little basis for establishing reliability or to generalize the findings to a wider population of people, places, or things.
- ii. The intense exposure to study of the case study may bias a researcher's interpretation of findings.
- iii. Design does not facilitate assessment of cause and effect relationships.
- iv. Vital information may be missing, making the case hard to interpret.
- v. The case may not be representative or typical of the larger problem being investigated.
- vi. If the criterion for selecting a case is because it represents a very unusual or unique phenomenon or problem for study, then the interpretation of the findings can only apply to that particular case.

The use of the First Bank of Nigeria as a case study could have necessitated adopting the case study design. However, due to the fact that the case study design does not facilitate assessment of cause and effect relationship which is useful for interpreting the findings of this research, the case study design is not suitable.

- b) Descriptive design – Descriptive research design helps provide answers to the question of who, what, when, where, and how associated with a particular research problem; a descriptive study cannot ascertain answers to why. Descriptive research design is used to obtain information concerning the

current status of the phenomena and to describe “what exists” with respect to variables or conditions in a situation.

#### *Advantages of Descriptive Design*

- i. The subject is being observed in a completely natural and unchanged natural environment. True experiments, whilst giving analyzable data, often adversely influence the normal behaviour of the subject.
- ii. Descriptive research is often used as a pre-cursor to more quantitative research methods, the general overview giving some valuable pointers as to what variables are worth testing quantitatively.
- iii. If the limitations are understood, they can be a useful tool in developing a more focused study.
- iv. Descriptive studies can yield rich data that lead to important recommendations.
- v. Approach collects a large amount of data for detailed analysis.

#### *Limitations of Descriptive Research Design*

- i. The results from a descriptive research cannot be used to discover a definitive answer or to disprove a hypothesis.
- ii. Because descriptive designs often utilize observational methods (as opposed to quantitative methods), the results cannot be replicated.
- iii. The descriptive function of research is heavily dependent on instrumentation for measurement and observation.



Questions such as ‘what’ and ‘how’ which the descriptive design considers will be answered in this study. That is, what role does a line manager play in improving employee performance and how can the First Bank of Nigeria motivate its line managers. These ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions make the descriptive design seemingly acceptable for the study. However, since the descriptive design often uses observational methods and not the quantitative methods that this study uses, the descriptive research is not suitable.

- c) Experimental design - A blueprint of the procedure that enables the researcher to maintain control over all factors that may affect the result of an experiment. In doing this, the researcher attempts to determine or predict what may occur. Experimental Research is often used where there is time priority in a causal relationship (cause precedes effect), there is consistency in a causal relationship (a cause will always lead to the same effect), and the magnitude of the correlation is great. The classic experimental design specifies an experimental group and a control group. The independent variable is administered to the experimental group and not to the control group, and both groups are measured on the same dependent variable. Subsequent experimental designs have used more groups and more measurements over longer periods. True experiments must have control, randomization, and manipulation. In other words, experimental research establishes the cause-effect relationship and does the comparison, but the cause, the independent variable, is manipulated.

*Advantages of Experimental Design*

- i. Experimental research allows the researcher to control the situation. In so doing, it allows researchers to answer the question, “what causes something to occur?”
- ii. Permits the researcher to identify cause and effect relationships between variables and to distinguish placebo effects from treatment effects.
- iii. Experimental research designs support the ability to limit alternative explanations and to infer direct causal relationships in the study.
- iv. Approach provides the highest level of evidence for single studies.

*Limitations of Experimental Design*

- i. The design is artificial, and results may not generalize well to the real world.
- ii. The artificial settings of experiments may alter subject behaviours or responses.
- iii. Experimental designs can be costly if special equipment or facilities are needed.
- iv. Some research problems cannot be studied using an experiment because of ethical or technical reasons.

- v. Difficult to apply ethnographic and other qualitative methods to experimental designed research studies.

Due to the fact that this study examines the cause and effect relationship between 2 (two) variables, the independent variable and dependent variable, the true experimental design could be suitable. Nonetheless, since the independent variable must be manipulated for a true experiment, the true experimental design is not suitable. Further Polit and Hungler (1995, p.175) affirms that a vast number of human characteristics are inherently not subject to experimental manipulation and thus, the effects of human characteristics on some phenomena of interest, such as this research study, cannot be studied experimentally. More so, in research for which human behaviour is of primary interest, numerous variables which possibly could be manipulated should not be manipulated for ethical reasons. In addition, there are many research situations in which it is simply not practical to conduct a true experiment. Constraints may involve insufficient time, lack of administrative approval, excessive inconvenience to respondents or inadequate funds.

- d) Causal Design – Also referred to as causal-comparative research. Causality studies may be thought of as understanding a phenomenon in terms of conditional statements in the form, “If X, then Y.” This type of research is used to measure what impact a specific change will have on existing norms and assumptions. Most social scientists seek causal explanations that reflect tests of hypotheses. Causal effect occurs when variation in one phenomenon,

an independent variable, leads to or results, on average, in variation in another phenomenon, the dependent variable.

#### *Advantages of Causal Design*

- i. Causal research designs helps researchers understand why the world works the way it does through the process of proving a causal link between variables and eliminating other possibilities.
- ii. There is greater confidence the study has internal validity due to the systematic subject selection and equity of groups being compared.

#### *Limitations of Causal Design*

- i. Not all relationships are casual! The possibility always exists that, by sheer coincidence, two unrelated events appear to be related. Conclusions about causal relationships are difficult to determine due to a variety of extraneous and confounding variables that exist in a social environment. This means causality can only be inferred, never proven.
- ii. If two variables are correlated, the cause must come before the effect. However, even though two variables might be causally related, it can sometimes be difficult to determine which variable comes first and therefore to establish which variable is the actual cause and which is the actual effect.

The causal design is deemed most suitable for this research study because it is used to infer a cause and effect relationship between 2 (two) variables - the

independent variable and the dependent variable. Also the causal design is most suitable for this study since the study neither adopts a third (control) variable nor manipulates a variable. Although the causal design is limited since it cannot be proven, but inferred, the research does not prove but infers that line manager's role as an internal coach plays a vital role in improving employee performance.

The quantitative research method therefore uses the causal design to establish a cause and effect relationship in the role line manager's involvement in staff learning plays to improve employee performance. In an attempt to qualify the causal research design, Steinberg et al (2010, p.12) compared the works of various authors and notes that good quantitative research;

- a) provides a theoretical framework,
- b) uses scientific design (e.g. causal method) to allow causal inferences,
- c) uses measurement techniques that possess demonstrable validity and reliability,
- d) uses appropriate statistical procedures for analysis, and
- e) generalizes beyond the idiosyncratic case so that others can learn from the results.

To draw a cause and effect conclusion, dependent and independent variables are defined. As Polit and Hungler (1995, p.22) suggest, an important distinction should be made between 2 (two) types of variables in a research study before proceeding to later chapters. This is the distinction between the independent variable and dependent variable.

- a) Independent Variable (IV): Polit and Hungler (1995, p.23) defines an independent variable as the presumed cause of an underlying phenomenon. In addition, Steinberg et al (2010, p.13) defines an independent variable as “a variable that is selected or controlled by the researcher, to determine its relationship to the observed outcome of the research - also called explanatory, predictor, or manipulated variable. Before a variable is selected as independent, the nature of the variable should be carefully described so that the variable’s characteristics clearly prove that the variable is independent. For the purpose of this study, the independent variable is the line manager’s involvement in staff learning.
- b) Dependent Variable (DV): Polit and Hungler (1995, p.23) simply defined a dependent variable as the variable a researcher is interested in understanding, explaining or predicting. Also, just as an independent variable is the presumed cause, Polit and Hungler (1995, p.23) described a dependent variable as the presumed effect of an underlying phenomenon. Steinberg et al (2010, p.13) explained that a dependent variable is the variable being measured as an outcome also called outcome, response, criterion, or explained variable. Variability in the dependent variable is presumed to depend on variability in the independent variable. An example of dependent variable (variable of interest) is employee job satisfaction and motivation which is dependent on an observable factor (the independent variable). For the purpose of this study, the dependent variable is employee performance improvement.

However, it is important to understand that variables are not inherently dependent or independent. A variable classified as dependent in one study may be considered an independent variable in another study (Polit & Hungler, 1995, p.24). For example, in the context of this research study which focuses on line managers' role in improving employee performance, the independent variable is the line manager' role as coach, and the dependent variable is employee performance. On the contrary, where another researcher, for instance, studies the position an organization plays in motivating its line manager coaching role, the line manager coaching role here becomes a dependent variable and the organization's position to motivate becomes the independent variable. Further the causal design makes it possible to increase the likelihood that a difference on the dependent variable results from the difference on the independent variable.

Therefore, despite the few limitations of the causal design, the causal design best suits this research study to infer the relationship between the 2 (two) variables, improving employee performance (dependent variable) and line manager involvement in subordinate learning through coaching (independent variable). To make this inference possible, primary and secondary data are gathered and examined.

Oyegun (2003, p.68) defined primary data as information obtained at first hand from an original source without passing through any other source either by means of surveys, interviews, observations or other processes of measurement. With primary data, a researcher often comes face to face with the source of data and therefore is able to arrange his data collection instrument to enable him obtain the data required

for examining a study. The following advantages and disadvantages of primary data are given by Okpo (2008, p.86):

*Advantages of Primary Data*

- a) The data are original and not subject to adulteration as they are directly from the source. Their validity is therefore enhanced.
- b) The exact data needed may be obtained
- c) Misinterpretation of the data may be avoided
- d) The researcher is able to make adjustment to his instrument at the slightest opportunity in the field as he does not need to come back before doing that.

*Disadvantages of Primary Data*

- a) It may contain bias as the data may not be subject to confirmation
- b) It may be too costly to obtain
- c) Due to the spread or location of the sources, it may be very difficult to obtain
- d) The data may contain unwanted information as they are not subject to review and adjustments where necessary.

In order to provide for the shortcomings of primary data, a combination of secondary data gives room for more superior data collection. Secondary data are data which have been already collected by another researcher and readily available from other sources. That is, secondary data are data obtained from sources different from the original or main sources (Okpo, 2008, p.87). Although secondary data may have been collected for purposes different from what they are being used for, secondary data are necessary in a research study because:



### *Purposes of Secondary Data*

- a) Secondary data help a researcher improve the understanding of the problem.
- b) Secondary data provide the basis for comparison for the data that is collected by the researcher.
- c) Secondary data helps to make primary data collection more specific since with the help of secondary data, the gaps and deficiencies of primary data collected are easily identified to determine further additional information that needs to be collected.

Further Okpo (2008, p.88) summarized the following advantages and disadvantages of secondary data as:

### *Advantages of Secondary Data*

- a) The data have been tested and subjected to verification/confirmation before publishing
- b) It saves time and cost that are involved in large data collection
- c) It might enjoy widespread acceptability
- d) They are verifiable
- e) The quality of data is high because an existing data bank is likely to have higher quality data than the lone, inexperienced researcher can hope to obtain.
- f) It makes difficult populations accessible

### *Limitations of Secondary Data*

- a) The real challenge of secondary data is with finding ways of forcing the data, collected by someone, quite often with entirely different theoretical and analytical orientations, to answer the present research objective. This challenge thus necessitates the importance of primary data.
- b) Data may not be relevant to the present research problem. In other words, secondary data may not contain exact data needed.
- c) Data might have been adulterated
- d) Secondary data may not be in a suitable form.

To provide for the limitations of secondary data, comparing the results of a primary data with the secondary data helps draw a more concrete inference. Secondary data is obtained and adopted from relevant books, journals, private research organizations, business institutions, and online data base and compared with primary data to draw inference.

### **3.2 Population of the Study**

The Population of this study is the First Bank of Nigeria. The First Bank of Nigeria was incorporated in Liverpool as the Bank for British West Africa in 1894 and incorporated locally as the Standard Bank of Nigeria Ltd in 1969. It was listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange in 1971 and established the first offshore financial subsidiary of a Nigerian-owned bank in the United Kingdom in 2002. In 2005, the First Bank of Nigeria acquired 2 (two) Nigerian banks and floated Nigeria's biggest share offer in 2007.

The key concepts of a research is the population, that is, the total target group who would, in the ideal world, be the subject of the research and about whom one is trying to say something or make inference (Punch, 2005, p.101). The population of study refers to the collection of all items, elements, subjects or members that constitute the study area (Okpo, 2008, p.71). The members of the population share certain attributes or characteristics in common which identifies each member to the population. Okpo (2008, p.72) identified two types of population as:

- a) Finite population – this represents the population which could be ascertained or whose members are known and existent. For example, the human population.
- b) Infinite population – this represents population in which actual members that constitute the area of study cannot be ascertained. That is, it represents a continuous population.

This study uses the finite population because the population of this study, the First Bank of Nigeria is known. The First Bank of Nigeria has been through many seasons since 1894, from being the only bank in Nigeria for decades to weathering the "banking explosion" of the 1930s to 1950s. The Bank has also survived from an era of government ownership and control to a flurry of consolidations and then gradual growth in number of banks up to the early 1980s. Then yet another industry growth spurt in the early 1990s when the banking sector was deregulated leading to an industry shake-up in the late 1990s, which reduced the number of banks from 126 to 77 and later resuscitation and growth to 89 banks leading to the recent shake-up to 25 banks. All through the seasons, the First Bank of Nigeria has remained resilient.

The First Bank of Nigeria has 717 (seven hundred and seventeen) branches in Nigeria and it employs 7,781 (seven thousand, seven hundred and eighty one) people in Nigeria. The justification for choosing First Bank of Nigeria is based on its leadership position in terms of financial asset and customer base. First Bank of Nigeria has its headquarters in Lagos and international presence in Paris, France; Beijing, China; Johannesburg, South Africa; Abu Dhabi, UAE; and Kinshasa, DR Congo (First Bank, 2011).

### **3.3 Sampling Frame**

The stratified sampling technique, an appropriate sampling method for causal research design is chosen for this study for the selection of sample from the population. As noted earlier, the population of the study is the First Bank of Nigeria. Sample will be taken from one branch, the Owerri Main branch of the First bank of Nigeria. The major justification for sampling from only a branch out of the 717 branches nationwide is because the sampled branch is representative of the whole population demographically and socio-economically. That is, the Owerri Main branch has similar staff composition in terms of age structure, gender, race, hierarchy, and income levels like other branches of the bank..

As noted earlier, the key concept of any research is the population (the total target group, who would in the ideal world, is the subject of the research, and about whom one is trying to make inference). The second concept is the sample, that is, the actual group who are included in the study and from whom the data are collected (Punch, 2005, p.101). Sampling models are the basis of statistical inference and statistical

inference remains a key-decision making tool in quantitative research (Punch, 2005, p. 95). As Miles and Huberman (1994) states: All research, including quantitative research, involves sampling. This is because no study whether quantitative, qualitative or both, can include everything. That is, it is not possible to study everyone everywhere doing everything (as cited in Punch, 2005, p.101). Supporting this, Sukamolson (2012, p.9) notes that “the ultimate goal of any quantitative research is to generalize the truth found in the samples to the population”. These suggest that sampling is important to any form of research method, which in this case is the quantitative research. The importance of sampling is seen in Steinberg et al (2010, p.17) assertion that “In quantitative research, poor research design or sampling issues lead to results that cannot be generalized or applied to other situations or populations”. Also, punch (2005, p.131) suggested that sample versus population makes for valid statistical inference.

Okpo (2008, p.72) noted the following reasons for adopting sample:

#### *Reasons for Sampling*

- a) Cost – The cost associated with the study of the population may be so enormous that the cost outweighs the benefits. This is so particularly where the data for the research work is scattered and to obtain such data may be too expensive. Therefore, adopting the sample may reduce the cost and make the research work cheaper.
- b) Time – To obtain data for the study of the population may be time consuming, particularly where the data are not located in one place, therefore it is expedient to adopt sample in the study to save time.

- c) Attribute – Some elements in the population may share similar attributes and therefore it becomes necessary to study the sample.
- d) Ease - Sample does not impose so much load and pressure on the researcher thereby allowing time to thoroughly supervise his work.

Thus sampling helps to save cost, time and other administrative rigors associated with studying the entire population. These reasons form the basis for adopting sample from a population in a research work. As good as it seems, sampling also has limitations which are worth considering to guide the research work. These are explained by Okpo (2008, p. 73) as follows:

#### *Limitations of Sample*

- a) Bias – It may contain some elements of bias. No method of sample selection has so far been found without bias. The bias could be as a result of faulty method of selection or peculiar nature of the phenomena being studied.
- b) Representation – There is always difficulty in selecting a truly representative sample. The validity of the sample could only be ascertained only if the sample is a true representative of the population.
- c) Skill – The selection procedure could require some level of specialized knowledge which many people may not have.
- d) There are some instances where the use of sample might not be necessary. This is particularly so where the population is few or are made up of very large items. Also, there could be cases where the population is made up of heterogeneous elements so that selecting the sample becomes difficult.

As earlier explained, to ensure that the quantitative research chosen for this study is appropriate, other research design types were compared and the most appropriate is the causal design. The inference from Steinberg et al statement is that if the chosen research design is inappropriate, the sampling type becomes defective. That is why Okpo (2008, p.73) points to the following factors as those which affect sample design.

*Factors Affecting Sample Design*

- a) Objective of the research – This relates to whether the method will produce the kinds of data needed to answer questions posed by the study.
- b) Accuracy of measurement – This has to do with whether the measures and observations used as the source of the data are representations of the universe of measurements and observations which they are supposed to portray.
- c) Adaptability (generalization) of results – It is essential to know if the sample group itself is representative of the population about which conclusions are sought.
- d) Explanatory power – The goal of any (if not most) social research is to move beyond description to the analysis of causation. The issue not only becomes ‘who?’ or ‘what?’ but ‘why?’.
- e) Administrative convenience – Decisions about research methods often hinge on three administrative considerations namely; cost, speed and organizational complexity. Only those methods which provide high accuracy, generalization and high explanatory power at low cost are desirable.

- f) Avoidance of ethical and political problems – two sets are distinguished in most surveys. These are:
- i. Those which could have been avoided through proper judgement and planning; and
  - ii. Those which are inescapable and so must be confronted and considered as part of the survey. Political difficulties are most likely to stem from charges that the research is meant to serve foreign or outside sponsors or that the results will be biased towards certain set of interest.

Considering the above factors, I chose the appropriate sampling technique for the causal design in order to draw a cause and effect relationship between the independent and dependent variables of the population – The First Bank of Nigeria respectively. Sampling simply refers to the process of collecting a sample from the study. Okpo (2008, p.72) specifies the reason for sampling which is that “sampling enables research to be carried out in the area in which the entire population would have been impossible to obtain. It is not possible to obtain data from the entire staff of the First Bank of Nigeria who are spread across the 36 (thirty-six) states in the country, for this study, due to time and financial constraints.

Bearing in mind the limitations of sampling explained earlier, the following characterizes a good sample according to Okpo (2008, p.82):

- a) Representativeness – The sample should be able to predict the entire population. That is, every attribute of the population is represented in the sample.



- b) Randomness – This implies that every member of the population has equal chance or opportunity of being selected. In other words, the steps involved in selecting the sample should ensure that each possible sample of a given size that will be taken from the population has a calculable chance of being selected.
- c) Non-bias – samples which are not representative of the population and which are not randomly selected may be said to be biased. Even samples randomly selected may be biased. For example, where different groups are brought together and a selection is randomly made. It may happen that all units/items selected may come from the same group. To ensure that bias does not arise, stratification may be used in the selection. A good sample should be drawn in such a way that bias is totally removed in the selection process.
- d) Errors – A good sample should have sampling errors that are as low as possible. That is, the accuracy of the sample in predicting the population should be very high.

The logic of quantitative sampling is that the researcher analyzes data collected from the sample but wishes in the end to make statements about the whole population from which the sample is drawn. To explain this, when a population is chosen, the sample data collected from the population is analyzed and findings are inferred back to the population. This is referred to as representativeness. Representativeness is a key concept in sampling. Sampling to achieve representativeness is usually called probability sampling which involves the idea of random selection. Random selection is done to ensure representation. In random selection, each element in a

population has an equal chance or equal probability of being selected equal probability of being selected.

The theory of statistical sampling rests on the assumption that the selection of sample units (members) has been done in a random manner. The choice of sample such that every member of the population has at least a known (non zero) chance of being included in the sample is called random or probability sampling and such a sample is said to be unbiased. There are various sampling techniques suitable for each type of research design. But for the sake of this study, due to the limitations other sampling types may place on this research work, the stratified sampling is considered most appropriate for the causal research design.

### ***The Stratified Sampling***

With stratified sampling, the population is, prior to sample selection, divided into sub-populations called strata. In a social survey, for instance, there is usually stratification by age, sex, and social class. This implies that the sampling frame must contain information on these three variables before these threefold stratification can be made. Properly handled, stratification ensures a representative sample since it guarantees that every important category have element in the sample. If the sample proportion of individuals is chosen from each stratum, then the proportionate structure of the sample will exactly reflect that of the parent population. More so, since each stratum is represented by a randomly chosen sample, it can be treated as a domain of study in its own right, valid inference is capable of being made about the stratum in the population. The main purpose of stratification is to increase precision. This depends on the variability in the population being sampled. Stratification

obviously requires prior knowledge of each individual in the population. Sampling frames do not always carry this information.

In order to ensure that the sampling for this study represents the entire population, I adopted the stratified sampling technique. The stratified sampling technique is “a method of sampling designed to ensure that the sample has certain characteristics, usually that it is representative of the population on key variables” (Jupp, 2006, p.1). By key variables, like I earlier noted, before making the decision to sample only a branch out of the 717 branches, I ensured the age, sex and social-economic characteristics of the sampled branch is the same as that of the entire population. As with all sampling methods, Jupp (2006, p.2) explains that stratified sampling is used when there is insufficient time or resources to conduct a census (which collects information from every member of a population). Cohesively as earlier noted, the study is limited by time and financial factors.

Two forms of stratified sampling according to Jupp (2006, p.2) are the quota sampling and the stratified sampling. “The quota sampling is used where the population is divided into strata and the number of sample members in each stratum is predetermined” (Jupp, 2006, p.1). Quota samples can be representative of the population in terms of the stratifying variables but are not random because not every population member has an equal chance of being selected. The stratified sampling is a technique which ensures that all parts of the population are represented in the sample in order to increase the efficiency, that is, to decrease the error in the estimation (Jupp, 2006, p.2). According to Okpo (2008, p.77), “Stratification ensures a representative sample since it guarantees that every important category have

element in the sample. The main purpose of stratification is to increase accuracy or correctness. Also, since each stratum is represented by a randomly chosen sample, it can be treated as a domain of study in its own right. That is, valid inference is capable of being made about the stratum in the population (Okpo, 2008, p.78).

Simply sampling an entire population randomly usually does not generate enough analyzable cases for a population of particular interest. Therefore, under stratified sampling, at any given stage of sampling, each member of the population has the same probability of being chosen as any other member (Okpo, 2008, p.77).

Okpo (2008, p.78) stated the advantages and disadvantages of stratified sampling as:

*Advantages of Stratified Sampling*

- a) It ensures that all classes that make up the population are represented in the sample
- b) If the stratum/group is homogenous, selection of even a small unit from it would not only be possible but the findings can be generalized on the entire population.
- c) If the proportions of the sub-sets are known, it can generate results which are more representative of the whole population
- d) Correlations and comparisons can be made between sub-sets

### *Disadvantages of Stratified Sampling*

- a) Bias may be caused in the sampling where there is improper stratification or where the strata selection is disproportionate. For instance, where there is a 30% selection of one strata and a 70% selection of another.
- b) The proportions of the sub-sets must be known and accurate if it is to work properly
- c) It can be hard to stratify questionnaire data collection, accurate up to date population data may not be available and it may be hard to identify people's age or social background effectively

As noted earlier, the sample is representative of the whole population because it consists of similar staff composition demographically and socio-economically as other branches. Other reasons for choosing one branch are time and financial constraints. Thus, the sampling frame is drawn from the First Bank of Nigeria Owerri Main branch staff list, obtained from the Human Resource Department of the bank. The list comprised staff names and roles respectively. Thus the staffs were divided into two groups or strata: the line managers and staff members. These are basically the two major groups of employees in every organization and relatively in the First Bank of Nigeria. As noted earlier, where the unit of each stratum or group is homogenous, selection of even a small unit from it is representative of the entire population.

There are 67 (sixty seven) staff of the Owerri Main Branch of the First bank of Nigeria. Of these staff, 56 (fifty six) are staff members who do not hold a supervisory role while 11 (eleven) line managers. The staff list was obtained from

the Human Resource Department of the Bank. A 50% (fifty percent) sample is taken from the population group in order to assure proportionate representation in the sample. As Okpo (2008, p.77) stated, “If the same proportion of individual is chosen from each stratum, then the proportionate structure of the sample will exactly reflect that of the parent population”.

Therefore the sample will be carried out on 28 (twenty eight) staff members and 6 (six) line managers of the branch, who are randomly selected. This selection is carried out by randomly picking staff names on the staff list up to the required 50% from each strata or group – line managers and staff members. That is, the simple random technique was used to select staff from each stratum.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The study employs the use of both open ended and closed questionnaire to aid me guide and follow through the thoughts of the respondents.

Questionnaires are “a structured sequence of questions designed to draw out facts and opinions and which provides the vehicle for recording data” (Okpo, 2008, p.93).

This definition draws out the following purposes of a questionnaire:

- a) It enables accurate data to be obtained from respondents.
- b) It provides the structure for asking questions as the same question can be administered in the same way on various respondents.

- c) It facilitates data processing as answers are recorded in a common place on each questionnaire so that simple counts can be made of how many people said what.

Okpo (2008, p.1) noted that there is no one type of questionnaire that is all encompassing, neither the opened nor closed. Open ended questionnaire allows the respondent “the option of answering the questions in any manner he wants to” while close questions are guided and provide the respondents options that best describes his viewpoint (Okpo, 2008, p.99). The following are advantages and disadvantages of open ended and closed questionnaires were given by Okpo (2008, p.99).

#### *Advantages of Open Ended Questionnaire*

- a) There is greater responsibility for the respondents as they are able to answer the questions in a manner suitable to them.
- b) It allows the respondents to give more adequate presentation of his particular case.
- c) It allows the respondents the freedom of answering the questions
- d) The true feelings of respondents are expressed

#### *Disadvantages of open ended questionnaire*

- a) The major drawback of open ended questionnaire is that at the end, there may be varied responses which may make analyses very difficult since each respondent will have his own answer to the questions.
- b) Another disadvantage is the apparent misrepresentation which could arise from the responses. Since there is liberty to answer in the manner suitable to

the respondents, there is the possibility that the responses can be out of context thereby rendering it irrelevant for the purpose of the research work.

- c) The researcher may forget, or ignore vital points in the responses
- d) To minimize the limitations associated with open ended questions, I combined closed questions.

#### *Advantages of Closed Questionnaire*

- a) The risk of misinterpretation is minimized.
- b) Analysis or processing of data generated is made possible.
- c) Consistency of the response is attained and therefore validity if the data is enhanced.
- d) Arbitrariness and irrelevancy of points made is avoided.
- e) It helps keep the questionnaire to a reasonable length.

#### *Disadvantages of Closed Questionnaire*

- a) Responses are confined to the ideas of the researcher as the respondents are not allowed to express their opinions which sometimes may be different from that of the researcher.
- b) It does not give room for flexibility.
- c) There are certain questions which need to clarify the views of respondents and which closed questions do not give room for.

Therefore, in order to avert the limitations inherent in either the open or closed questions, both open and close questions are combined in the questionnaire. Thus, respondents are guided to keep their answers focused on the purpose or objective of



this study to allow for ease of data interpretation. Secondly, respondents are allowed the freedom to present their case in the best way suitable to them and thus are thus able to express their true feelings.

### ***The Design of the Questionnaire***

The importance of questionnaire in the research process cannot be overemphasized. This is in view of the fact that questionnaires facilitate the collection of relevant data which are used for analysis. Therefore, for this to be possible, the questionnaire should be designed to enable the appropriate data to be collected. Questionnaire design is described by Okpo (2008, p.96) as “a refining process in which a rough draft is eventually converted to a precise and formatted document”. Okpo also noted that the success or otherwise of questionnaire depends to a large extent on the design of such questions. Hence, he recommended that the design of a questionnaire should involve:

- a) Definition of the problem – This involves defining the problem to know what it is and what it constitutes. It includes the objectives of the study.
- b) Analysis of the Hypothesis – The hypothesis of the study should be analyzed into component units. Analyzing the hypothesis will also enable each unit of the hypothesis to have some questions from the questionnaire that allows for appropriate data concerning the area to be obtained.
- c) Submission for Scrutiny – This is anchored on the fact that two heads are better than one. It involves ensuring that the questions are vetted or scrutinized by experts or professionals in that area for necessary modifications to be made on the questions. The questionnaire for this

research was submitted to the Head of Human Resources of an organization who with his experience and expertise, made valid inputs.

- d) Test of Validity and Reliability – the essence of this stage is to evaluate the adequacy of the questions, whether the questions are related to the topic under investigation or whether adequate coverage of the topic is met. It is essential that the validity of the questionnaire is established prior to its use, for validation is an aspect of questionnaire development. Punch (2005, p.98) recognized “reliability and validity as the 2 (two) main psychometric characteristics of measuring instruments. Validity of a research instrument is of great importance because when such designs are faulty, it will lead to research findings that are not valid. The 2 (two) main approaches among the various approaches to validation of instruments according to Punch (2005, p.97) are:

- i. Content validity – this examines whether the full content of a conceptual definition is represented in the measure. The indicators in a measure should sample all ideas in the definition. Therefore, the 2 (two) steps involved in content validation are to specify the content of a definition, which for the purpose of this study are line managers and other staff, and to develop indicators which sample from areas of content in the definition. This has been properly explained under ‘Sampling Frame’ which shows how the stratified sampling technique is used to cater for proportionate representation of line managers and other staff members.

- ii. Criterion-Related Validity – An indicator is compared with another measure of the same construct in which the researcher has confidence. This comparison is done using questions 2 – 4 of the questionnaire (see ‘Appendix A’) to examine if the respondents have worked in any previous organization, apart from the First Bank of Nigeria, which embraces in-house learning initiatives and if such translates to an improved service delivery. This helps make valid comparison of responses in the context of the First Bank of Nigeria and generalize to other organizations.
- iii. Construct Validity – this refers to how well a research instrument, in this case the questionnaire, conforms to theoretical expectations through predictions. The theoretical expectation through predictions in this instance is the research hypothesis. Thus, construct validity is about how well the questionnaire is aligned with the research hypothesis already formulated. Thus, question 9 of the questionnaire (see ‘Appendix A’) is formulated to address the questionnaire.

Reliability means consistency. That is, to what extent will another researcher, given the same research instrument (in this instance the questionnaire), and people (in this case the respondents of the First Bank of Nigeria Owerri Main branch), get the same result at a different time. To the extent that another researcher will get the same result given this circumstance, the measuring instrument is reliable, otherwise, it becomes unreliable. Determining the reliability of a research instrument involves testing for internal consistency through calculation of coefficient. This helps examine the extent to which all

items comprising the research instrument (questionnaire) are working in the same direction. Either the coefficient or test-retest can be used to estimate the reliability of the measuring instrument (Punch, 2005, p.95). The test for reliability used is the Phi Coefficient examined in chapter 4 Section 2 (4.2).

- e) Final Production – This is the last step and it involves finalizing the production process and producing the final questionnaire ready for administration.

Other guidelines in the design of a questionnaire suggested by Okpo (2008, p.58) and which I observed are:

- a) Anonymity and Confidentiality –To provide for confidentiality, anonymity of the respondents for ethical reasons, the names of the respondents was not requested for in the questionnaires administered. This also allows respondents to freely express their views without fears.
- b) Inclusion of relevant details - The date of the interview is provided for to indicate or as a proof that the instrument is administered for the purpose of the research study. My name as the interviewer is reflected in the cover letter of the questionnaire to create awareness that the questionnaire is solely for research purpose and to facilitate a better relationship with respondents for better responses.
- c) The design – the questionnaire should make effective use of space so that questions are clear and easy to read. Questions and responses should be laid in a standard format. There should be an open space at the end for the

respondents to freely make their comments. This is notable in the questionnaire.

- d) The respondents – The questions should be framed in respondents' friendly manner. It should not be in too much an ambiguous manner. It should not be subject to much interpretation. In this vein I used simple words that will not misguide the respondents.
- e) Order of questions – The questions should flow easily from one to another especially from general to specific questions. That is, the questions should be grouped in topics of logical sequence.

Further, Okpo (2008, p.95) wrote that a good questionnaire is characterized by the following:

- a) It should deal with an important or significant topic so that it appeals to the respondents to respond. This means that its significance has to be stated in the cover letter.
- b) It seeks the responses which could only be obtained from the respondent that is, his personal opinion, feelings or attitudes on the subject.
- c) It should be as short as possible and only long enough to obtain the essential data.
- d) Notwithstanding the fact that it should be short as stated above, it should be comprehensible enough not to leave out any relevant or crucial information.
- e) It should be attractive in presentation, neatly arranged and clearly printed.
- f) Directions should be clear and complete, important terms clarified. Also, each question should deal with a single idea, and is worded in as simple and

clear manner as possible and provides opportunity for easy, accurate unambiguous response.

- g) The questions should be objective, with no clues, hints or suggestions as to the responses desired. Leading questions should be avoided.
- h) Questions should be presented in a good order flowing from general to more specific responses. This order helps the respondent organize his own thinking so that his responses will also flow in a logical sequence.
- i) Double negative words should be avoided.
- j) Putting two questions in one should be avoided.

In order to ensure that the questionnaires administered meet the above characteristics, the objectives of the study are used as a guide. These objectives appeal to the respondents because, the organization they represent – the First Bank of Nigeria is known as one of the leading learning organization in Nigeria, interested in staff learning and development. These objectives are also clearly spelt out in the questionnaire cover letter. Due to the busy nature of the bank staff, the questions are simply worded, short and comprehensible. Important terms like ‘line managers’ are simply clarified as ‘immediate supervisor’ on the cover letter. Also each question deals with a single idea thus avoiding putting two questions in one. The questions are also presented in a good order flowing from general to more specific responses. In other words, the questions flow from one stage to another. More so, leading questions are avoided.

Thus, a combination of open and closed questionnaire (see ‘Appendix A’ is administered on 28 (twenty eight) staff members and 6 (six) line managers of the branch as 2 strata and each stratum is randomly selected.

### **3.5 Procedure for Data Collection**

Data is obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data is obtained through the administration of open ended and closed questionnaire on 28 (twenty eight) staff members and 6 (six) line managers. Punch (2005, p.101) states: “It is unfortunate in research when an excellent job has been done of developing a data collection instrument but the same thought and effort has not been put into the data collection procedures”. Thus, I stayed in control of the data collection through face to face administration of the questionnaire combined with the assistance of a staff that represented the First Bank of Nigeria in monitoring the administered questionnaire. That is, the questionnaire was hand delivered to the representative of the Owerri Main Branch of the First Bank of Nigeria Plc for onward distribution to selected staff and line managers. Of the 34 (thirty four) questionnaires administered on staff members, 32 (thirty two) were returned adequately filled. This impressively represents a 94% average response rate. A low response rate to a questionnaire carries the possibility of biased results. More impressing is the fact that the 6 (six) questionnaires distributed to 6 (six) line managers were all returned properly filled. This is a 100% response from respondents of this group.

The success of the response rate is also credited to the confidential and professional manner I approached the respondents. That is, the respondents were fully informed

about the purpose and context of the research, about confidentiality and anonymity and about what use will be made and by whom of the information they provide.

Secondary data is sourced from published and electronic materials such as journals, books and online database. These secondary sources have been thoroughly examined in chapter 2 and are also referred to in latter chapters for the basis of generalizing research findings and making meaningful conclusion. The secondary data are also fully referenced at the end of this thesis.

In summary, the objectives of a research work determine to a large extent the type of data to be gathered and as such the type of research method and designs to be adopted. For the purpose of this study, the quantitative research is adopted. The type of quantitative research that is best suitable for the research study is the causal design to infer a cause and effect relationship between 2 (two) variables - the independent variable and the dependent variable. With reference to this study, the cause - the independent variable - is the line manager's involvement in staff learning. The effect – the dependent variable – is employee performance improvement. Thus, the causal design is chosen to infer if a relationship exists between line manager's involvement in staff learning and employee performance improvement.

To achieve this purpose, the causal research design, through the survey technique, uses the stratified sampling method to obtain primary data from the finite population – the Owerri Main Branch of the First Bank of Nigeria. The primary data is gathered using a combination of open and closed questions in the questionnaire to guide respondents, as well as give them the freedom to air their views. Secondary data are obtained from secondary sources such as books, journals, online databases and



private research organization. Data gathered from the primary and secondary source form the basis for the findings in the study.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **4. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

#### **4.1 Presentation of the Findings**

The aim of this chapter is to present the primary data gathered to provide answers to the research objectives. For the sake of emphasis, the objectives of this study are to outline the benefits of line managers' involvement in their subordinate learning to improve the performance of the staff of the First Bank of Nigeria, to outline how the First Bank of Nigeria can motivate her staff for more involvement in staff trainings and to give an outline of how the First Bank of Nigeria could organize its line managers to efficiently and cost effectively train and coach her staff. The essence of these research objectives in the context of the First Bank of Nigeria chosen as the case study is to examine if line manager involvement in staff trainings as internal coaches can help the bank surmount the 3 major challenges she is faced with. Thus, the major findings of the research data are presented in this chapter.

The presentation of data facilitates easy understanding and analysis of data, saves the time of the reader, helps readers spot important details, see relationships, get concise overview of findings, and grasp the significance of data more quickly and easily. As noted in chapter 3, primary data were obtained from the Owerri Main Branch of the First Bank of Nigeria to determine if line manager's involvement in staff learning through coaching and in-house trainings will help to improve the performance of staff with a view to improving the operational efficiency of the First Bank of Nigeria at the least possible cost.

It is important to stress that there is an impressive average response rate from the sampled staff and line managers of 94% to the administered questionnaire. This level of responsiveness has thus helped to significantly reduce bias and increase the level of representation on the entire population. A presentation of the primary data, its findings and analysis is carried out as follows:

Table I: Presentation of data (n=32) from 6 line managers and 26 staff members of the Owerri Main Branch of the First Bank of Nigeria.

	LINE MANAGERS							OTHER STAFF						
	Yes		No		Not Really		Total	Yes		No		Not Really		Total
	%		%		%			%		%		%		
Years of service between 0 and 10 years	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26
Previous employment aside First Bank	5	83	1	17	-	-	6	20	77	6	23	0	-	26
Previous employer practiced coaching by line managers	4	67	2	33	-	-	6	19	73	7	27	0	-	26
The MAC role improved your performance/ service delivery	4	67	1	17	1	17	6	17	65	7	27	2	8	26
Trainings you have attended with First Bank helps improve your performance	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26
Coaching by line managers a regular practice	3	50	2	33	1	17	6	20	76	3	12	3	12	26
Subordinate coaching by line managers fosters a better relationship	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26
Your line manager as an internal coach better understands individual performance strength/weaknesses than an external coach	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26
Line managers better improve staff performance than external coaches	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	24	92	1	4	1	4	26

Staff will be more motivated to perform better should line manager's provide regular feedbacks and training needs before mid/end of year appraisal	5	83	-	-	1	17	6	25	96	0	-	1	4	26
The First Bank should motivate line managers more by providing coaching incentives/rewards	5	83	-	-	1	17	6	19	73	2	8	5	19	26
You are aware of existing incentives by First Bank to line managers as internal coaches	0	-	2	33	4	67	6	3	12	23	88	0	-	26
Improved staff performance improves overall customer satisfaction	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26
Improved staff performance will improve operational efficiency (that is, optimize internal resources)	6	100	-	-	-	-	6	26	100	0	-	0	-	26

(Source: Fieldwork, 2013)

Table I shows that the proportionate 50% of line managers and staff members randomly sampled are 6 and 26 respectively. That is, the total sample consisted of 32 staff members, 6 of which are line managers.

From the table, I found that that of all the 32 respondents sampled, the duration of their years of employment is between 0 and 10 years. This possibly relates to a high staff turnover by the bank.

Also the table showed that 67% of line managers and 73% of other staff members have been previously employed in an organization where coaching/training by line managers is a significant part of staff learning/development. This implies that a good percentage of respondents are familiar with the role of line managers as internal coaches. Their responses are more objective and succinct to the findings. The 67% of

line managers and 65% of other staff members agree that line manager as internal coach improved their performance/service delivery.

Further, there is a 100% acceptance by line managers and staff members respectively that trainings they have participated in at First Bank has helped improve their performance on the job.

Noteworthy is that while 50% of line managers and 76% of staff members agree that coaching by line managers is a regular practice in the branch, 33% of line managers and 12% of staff members disagree. Also, 17% of line managers and 12% of staff members are not sure that such coaching by line managers is a practice in the branch. Cumulatively, 50% of line managers, that is, those who are at the fore front of this coaching practice, have shown that coaching by line managers is not a regular practice in the branch.

The table also revealed that a 100% of line managers and staff respectively interviewed believed that if their manager becomes actively involved in providing in-house training for staff under his supervision, it can help promote better relationship between the manager and his subordinates.

In addition, a 100% of line managers and staff members respectively agree that line manager as an internal coach better understands staff performance strengths and weaknesses than would an external coach. However of this 100%, only about 8% disagree that an internal coach better improves staff performance than external coach. Thus, on a general note 31 respondents see the performance benefits in

engaging line managers as internal coaches. Some notable reasons given by respondents are:

- a) The line manager works with the staff daily, identifies his shortcomings, provides correction and sees him through the improvements whereas an external coach only visits from time to time and may not be on ground to provide correction immediately when needed by the staff.
- b) There is a closer bond between line manager and staff than there could ever exist between external coach and staff.
- c) From interaction and regular communication with staff, the line manager will better identify weaknesses and strong points of staff and can address them effectively.
- d) A line manager best knows the strength(s) and limitation(s) of each staff and how this can be improved. Also due to day to day work relationship between them, a line manager can best motivate his staff.
- e) A line manager as an internal coach knows the performance indicators of the bank better than an external coach and thus can drive staff performance towards achieving the standard.
- f) A line manager helps develop your strength and work on your weakness(es).
- g) As an internal coach, a line manager interacts with his subordinates directly and that enables him to know their capabilities and resolve challenges quicker.
- h) A line manager is closer to the challenges that staff have at any time.

- i) The line manager is a better influence since he is on ground and understands the peculiarities of each staff with respect to his work environment, personality and challenges.
- j) The line manager is involved directly with me and knows the area that needs to be improved better.
- k) An internal coach knows his subordinates better than an external coach and will know better ways of coaching his subordinates.
- l) An internal coach will understand his subordinates better, understands his weakness and strength and also what is required to improve his subordinates.
- m) Because of the close relationship between a line manager as an internal coach and his staff, he knows the staff's strength and weaknesses and stands a better chance of inculcating ideas that can improve the staff performance to a larger extent than an external coach.

Considering the above statements of respondents who are of the opinion that a line manager as an internal coach better improves staff performance than an external coach, it is also important to consider the reasons given by a respondent who disagrees in order to make a balanced judgment. The reasons given are:

- a) An external coach impacts the knowledge more professionally than would an internal coach.
- b) The external coach usually presents a different view in his coaching which I will call a necessary distraction or a fresh breath of air since it is only natural that one becomes used to his line manager's style of coaching.

- c) At times, an external coach can have much experience, more knowledge on how to improve individual performance.

From these statements, it is good to note that knowledge, experience and commitment are required by line managers in providing adequate coaching to staff, which may also require that line managers, as stated in chapter 2, are trained to acquire coaching skill and motivated for commitment to achieve a success of line managers as internal coaches.

Regular feedback is also noted by respondents as crucial to motivating them towards an improved performance. That is why about 83% and 97% of line managers and staff respectively agreed to this fact while 17% and 4% respectively were not really sure feedback has any positive impact on improving their performance.

Furthermore, 1 out of 6 line managers does not really think that the First Bank of Nigeria should motivate managers through incentives/rewards for more involvement in coaching. This I infer is because this respondent earlier did not agree that regular feedback from line managers to subordinates can improve performance. That is, this line manager may not believe in subordinate coaching. It is in this light that the First Bank of Nigeria may create awareness through trainings and incentives for managers to become increasingly passionate about subordinate coaching/mentoring. Notwithstanding though, 83% and 73% of line managers and staff members respectively agree that line managers should be provided with some incentives or rewards as a source of motivation to coach/train subordinates and make coaching regular.



It is imperative to consider the fact that a cumulative 100% of line managers and 88% of other staff members do not know any incentives that the First Bank of Nigeria provides to reward and motivate line managers as internal coach. This explains why the respondents suggested the following motivational factors for line managers:

- a) Cash awards if the subordinate scores a particular mark in the performance appraisal
- b) A Commendation letter, issued to a line manager who has excelled in coaching their staff towards an improved performance, from Human Capital management and Development (HCMD) of the First Bank of Nigeria.
- c) The First Bank of Nigeria should create an avenue for subordinates to continuously assess their individual line manager's competence and regularity of coaching.
- d) Trainings for line managers as internal coaches
- e) Promotion as and when due
- f) Payment of all allowances as at when due
- g) Permission to go on vacation as and when due
- h) Quarterly review of coaching/mentoring relationships, with rankings and rewards
- i) Develop line manager as coach role as a part of the line manager's Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for appraisal purposes.
- j) A survey of members of his team can and will be very revealing. This will inform management on the line manager to award, and who to counsel aright.

For the performing manager, recognition bank-wide, with some monetary or prestigious award will go a long way in improving their commitment.

- k) Financial incentives will motivate the manager towards more commitment.
- l) Training him or her the more on the job.
- m) Fringe benefits like awards or recognition. For example, 'Best Coach', 'Mentor of the Year', and so on.
- n) Internal monthly staff awards, for example, 'Best Performed Staff' to enable others sit up and motivate line manager.
- o) More managerial skill classes to improve line managers' coaching/supervisory skill.
- p) Recognition of line manager for growth, promotion of subordinates through point scoring (KPI) in line manager's appraisal.

Customer satisfaction which has also been one of the challenges that the First Bank of Nigeria faces is unanimously agreed can be improved through improving staff performance on a 100% scale by both line managers and staff. The benefits of improving staff performance to exceeding customers' satisfaction experience has been identified by

Finally but central to this study is a 100% undisputed agreement by both line managers and staff that should their performance be improved through trainings/coaching, it will go a long way in improving the operational efficiency that challenges the First Bank of Nigeria. Thus, the First Bank of Nigeria is better able to optimize her internal resources including employees/staff which will in turn reduce operational cost.

In summary, the First Bank of Nigeria has one of the best performance enhancement programs with dedicated training centres across Nigeria. High performing employees reduce employee dissatisfaction. It is observed that the Bank has high rate of staff turnover which is usually costly to an organization in terms finance, operational efficiency employee motivation. The lower the rate of employee turnover, the higher the performance the First Bank of Nigeria is likely to experience, and vice versa. Respondents, who have been previously employed with other organizations where line managers are a central part of staff learning and development, recognize the role of line managers as internal coach in improving staff performance and above all service delivery. A considerable percentage of line managers (50%) are of the opinion that they do not make subordinate coaching a practice in the branch. However, a good number of line managers and staff believe that line managers as coach can better improve their performance than an external coach and promote a better relationship between line managers and staff. The respondents also came to a common ground that should there be more coaching, training and mentoring by line managers, their performance can be improved towards an improved customer satisfaction, operational efficiency and consequent reduction in the operating cost of the branch and the bank as a whole. Given these benefits, the respondents suggested motivational factors such as financial incentives, promotion, trainings, recognition as factors which the First Bank should consider and improve upon to motivate line managers in their coaching role.

The following general comments by respondents are also worth considering:

- a) Line managers are the eye of every organization as they can either motivate staff to high performance or demoralize them. Every new day brings a new challenge, new idea and new way(s) or method(s) of doing things. If competent and committed, line managers are better coaches than external coaches as they provide well tailored guide for everyday need of their subordinates. Motivating managers towards subordinate coaching largely depends on the management of the organization. As such, management should keep encouraging line managers by way of giving commensurate incentive to them because their efforts reflects positively on service delivery.

Thus, section 4.2 shows the extent to which line managers as internal coaches have influence on improving performance of First Bank staff.

## **4.2 Analysis of Data**

### **4.2.1 Data Analysis**

The non parametric statistical test is used to analyze sampled data. The type of non parametric statistical test intended for use is the Chi Square Test of Independence. However, due to the fact that the conditions for using the Chi-Square Test of Independence is not met, the Fishers Exact Test, considered most suitable, is employed. A benchmark of 5% (0.05), often referred to as significance level, is thus allowed for to show that there is 95% certainty that the sample results are not due to chance.

According to Holosko and Thyer (2011, p. 147), there are two main bodies of inferential statistical test. The first and most frequently used are called parametric statistical tests. The second are called nonparametric tests. “Nonparametric tests are statistical tests used when the data represent a nominal or ordinal level scale or when assumptions required for parametric tests cannot be met, specifically, small sample sizes”. Data gathered for this study are nominal and thus, the nonparametric statistics is adopted.

The non parametric statistics intended for use is the Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ). The Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) is a nonparametric test of statistical significance appropriate when the data are in the form of frequency counts and used to determine if 2 (two) or more classifications or categories of the samples are independent or not.. That is, it compares frequencies actually observed in a study with expected frequencies to see if they are significantly different. The Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence is therefore adopted as it is designed to determine whether two variables are independent or related in which case the study determines if line managers’ involvement in staff learning (independent variable - Y) and staff performance improvement (dependent variable - X) are independent or related.

The Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) test of independence is used under the following conditions; (i) The samples are randomly selected, (ii) The population is at least 10 (ten) times as large as its sample (iii) The variables under study are categorical, and (iv) If sample data are displayed in a contingency table, the expected frequency count for each cell of the table is at least 5. That is, the chi-square test is performed only if at least 80% of the cells have an expected frequency of 5 or greater and no cell has an expected

frequency smaller than 1.0. To compute the Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) I formulated hypotheses based on the objectives of the study. These hypotheses are the null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis formulated as:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between improving staff performance and line managers' involvement in staff coaching.

H<sub>1</sub>: There is significant relationship between improving staff performance and line managers' involvement in staff coaching.

The above stated hypothesis is obtained from question 9 of the questionnaire (see 'Appendix A') which states that "Can a line manager as an internal coach better improve staff performance than an external coach?"

Of the 32 respondents who returned their questionnaires, 6 (six) are line managers and 26 (twenty six) are other staff members. Of the 6 (six) line managers, 5 answered 'yes', while 1 answered not 'really'. From other staff members, 24 (twenty four) answered 'yes' and only 2 answered 'not really'.

As noted earlier, the significance level for this study is 0.05 (5%). This also implies that there is 95% confidence level that the hypothesis test is true.

Using sample data, I determined the degrees of freedom, expected frequencies, test statistic, and the P-value associated with the test statistic as follows:

**Degrees of freedom** - The degrees of freedom is equal to:

$$DF = (r - 1) * (c - 1)$$

Where;

‘r’ represents the number of rows; and

‘c’ is the number of columns

Thus, with a 2 x 2 contingency table,  $DF = (2-1) * (2-1) = 1$

**P-value** - The p-value is used to determine if enough evidence exists to reject the null hypothesis in favour of the alternative. The p-value is the probability of incorrectly rejecting the null hypothesis. The p-value is intended to be calculated using the chi-square formula.

The Chi Square ( $\chi^2$ ) formula is:  $\chi^2 = (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$

Where:  $f_o$  = observed frequencies, and  $f_e$  = expected frequencies.

Using the 2 x 2 contingency table, the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is dependent on the relationship between the observed and expected frequencies of the tabled data. That is, the chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value is compared with the p-value ( $\chi^2$  critical value). The p-value at 5% significance level and 1 degree of freedom is 3.841. If the computed  $\chi^2$  value exceeds the p-value then the decision is to reject the null hypothesis, otherwise, it will be accepted.

The observed frequencies are the different opinions of the two categories of respondents (staff members and line managers), summarized as either ‘agreeing’ or ‘disagreeing’ with the hypothesis. The expected frequencies are the comparisons of opinions of the two categories of staff with a view to determine which of the stated hypotheses is true. To compare the observed and expected frequencies, I produced chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) value using the formula:  $\chi^2 = (f_o - f_e)^2 / f_e$

### *2 x 2 Contingency Table*

The 2 x 2 contingency table is based on the Null Hypothesis: “There is no significant relationship between improving staff performance and line managers’ involvement in staff coaching”.

	Other Staff (X)		
Line Managers (Y)	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	1	24	25
Disagree	2	5	7
Total	3	29	32

Table II: Observed Frequencies on the null hypothesis.

To calculate the expected frequencies using the observed frequencies, I assume

Table III below using Table II above:

	Other Staff (X)		
Line Managers (Y)	Agree	Disagree	Total
Agree	a	B	a + b
Disagree	c	D	c + d
Total	a + c	b + d	n

Table III: Explaining the expected frequencies

Understanding Table III above, the following facts are thus true:

i.  $a + b = 25$

ii.  $c + d = 7$

iii.  $a + c = 3$



$$\text{iv. } b + d = 29$$

**To calculate the expected frequencies,** the expected frequency counts are computed separately for each level of one categorical variable at each level of the other categorical variable. Compute  $r \times c$  expected frequencies, according to the following formula:

$$f_e = (a + b) (a + c) / n$$

Where;

- $f_e$  is the expected frequency count; and
- $n$  is the total number of sample observations

$$\text{Thus, } f_{ea} = (25) (3) / 32 = 2.34$$

$$f_{eb} = f_{ea} + f_{eb} = 25. \text{ Thus, } 2.34 + f_{eb} = 25; f_{eb} = 22.66$$

$$f_{ec} = f_{ea} + f_{ec} = 3. \text{ Thus, } 2.34 + f_{ec} = 3; f_{ec} = 0.66$$

$$f_{ed} = f_{eb} + f_{ed} = 29. \text{ Thus, } 22.66 + f_{ed} = 29; f_{ed} = 6.34$$

Therefore, I computed the expected frequency table as in Table IV below:

	Agree	Disagree	Total
Line Managers	2.34	22.66	25
Other Staff	0.66	6.34	7
Total	3	29	32

Table IV: Expected frequencies based on the null hypothesis.

One of the earlier stated conditions under which the chi-square test is used is only if at least 80% of the cells have an expected frequency of 5 or greater and no cell has an expected frequency smaller than 1.0. However, from the expected frequency calculated above, 2 cells have expected frequencies less than 5 which implies that 50% of the cells have expected frequency less than and/or greater than 5. Thus, the chi square test is not suitable. Since the Chi-square test requires the expected frequency of each cell in the cross tabulation of these two categorical variables to be larger than 5, when the assumption fails, Fisher's exact test is recommended (Preacher & Briggs, 2001, p.1). The Fisher's test is exact because it uses the exact hyper geometric distribution rather than the approximate chi-square distribution to compute the p-value. The strength of the Fisher's exact test is that it produces valid results regardless of the sample size and especially when dealing with small counts, that is, cells less than 5. Using R. A. Fisher's exact test, the two possible conclusions, after assessing the data, are to:

- a) Reject the null hypothesis where the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level i.e.  $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$  and conclude that the alternative hypothesis is true at the pre-determined confidence level of X%, or at the observed and more specific confidence level of  $100*(1 - p\text{-value})\%$ .
- b) Fail to reject the null hypothesis where the p-value is greater than the significance level i.e.  $p\text{-value} > \alpha$  and conclude that there is not enough evidence to state alternative is true at the pre-determined confidence level of X%.

For the purpose of this study, the significance level is 0.05 (5%) which implies a predetermined 95% confidence level. Thus, using the Statistical Process Control (SPC) Q1 Macros software for Excel, I calculated the p-values from Fishers exact test as in Table V:

	Other Staff (X)						
Line Managers (Y)	Agree	Disagree	Total	<b>Fishers</b>		Total Expected	Fishers Expected
Agree	1	24	25	<i><b>p-value</b></i>	<b>0.048683</b>	2.34	22.66
Disagree	2	5	7			0.66	6.34
Total	3	29	32				

Table V: Computing the p-value using Fisher's exact test

The resulting p-value, obtained from the data gathered, using Fisher's exact test is approximately **0.049**.

#### 4.2.2 Statistical Decision

As noted earlier, using Fisher's exact test, "Reject the null hypothesis where the p-value is less than or equal to the significance level i.e.  $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$ ". Therefore, the p-value of approximately 0.49 is less than the significance level of 0.05. Thus I reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the alternative hypothesis is true at the pre-determined confidence level of 95%. Hence, there is a significant relationship between improving staff performance and line manager involvement in subordinate learning coaching more especially with the observed case of the First Bank of Nigeria.

Given the above statistical conclusion, I test for reliability of this analytical instrument (Fisher's Exact Tests '2x2 Contingency table') using the Phi Coefficient of association as follows:

$$\text{Phi} = \frac{(b \times c) - (a \times d)}{\sqrt{[(a + b)(c + d)(a + c)(b + d)]}}$$

$$\text{Phi} = \frac{(24 \times 2) - (1 \times 5)}{\sqrt{[(1 + 24)(2 + 5)(1 + 2)(24 + 5)]}}$$

$$\text{Phi} = 0.35 \text{ (Approx).}$$

Interpretation: The Phi Coefficient indicates that there is a moderate strength of association between the two variables and this also tends towards the result of the Fisher's Test.

#### **4.2.3 Discussion of Results**

As shown from data analyzed, the line managers of the First bank of Nigeria can contribute invaluable to improving the performance of employees and the Bank at large. To achieve this, the bank should; (i) place the retention of staff as a priority on their list as poor retention can be costly to the bank (ii) understand that promoting line managers as coach facilitates better communication and helps foster a good relationship between managers and subordinates (iii) Realize that subordinate coaching by line managers better aligns employee performance management with the bank's vision and strategy (iv) Recognize the fact that with line manager as coach, employees, through regular feedbacks are able to weather job-related challenges.

External coaches also have their benefits in that they bring in their wealth of experience to the table and may possess better coaching skills. Nonetheless, line manager as coach focuses on individual employee performance management. This is because line managers are better aware of the strengths of each staff, areas for improvement and what best motivates their performance on the job and more importantly that it is far less expensive.

However, the First bank of Nigeria has to play her part in motivating line managers to coach through financial incentives, promotions and recognition for those line managers who excel as coach. Also, part of the motivating factors for line managers is trainings to improve their competence and coaching skill.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. CONCLUSION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Complexity, competition and change have put strain on organizations to focus on employees as major drivers of organizational performance. Thus, the success of organizations is now more than ever increasingly linked to growth and retention of human resource. For employees to grow and feel committed to improve their performance, an organization has a role to play. Employee training through coaching by line managers has been reviewed to contribute to the continued growth, profitability and sustainability of any organization. This is due to the positive impact supervisory coaching has on employee satisfaction and performance.

Subordinate coaching by line managers has been examined with the conclusion that, if adopted, the First bank of Nigeria will be better able to tackle the major challenges confronting the bank. Line managers like other staff members need motivation to excel in their responsibility as coaches owing to other pressing task-related activities which faces them on a daily basis. Some of the motivational factors include financial incentives, promotions and recognition for those line managers who excel as coach.

The quantitative research method adopted for this study chose the causal research design to draw inference to the extent of the relationship between the line manager's involvement in subordinate coaching and employee performance improvement. The questionnaire was administered on randomly selected staff of the Owerri Main

Branch of the First bank of Nigeria at a 50% proportion on each group, using stratified sampling.

The result of data gathered from the bank shows that a good representation of line managers and staff agree that line managers as internal coach better improves employee performance. Although the professional nature of external coaching also has its benefits, line managers as coach better aligns employee performance improvement with overall business strategy, focuses on managing individual employee performance, promotes good flow of communication and improved relationship between managers and subordinates, and more importantly, it is far less expensive.

The research does not however suggest that external coaches or specialist should not be engaged by organizations. On the contrary the study suggests that organizations especially the First bank of Nigeria should more than now consider integrating her line managers more in staff learning. This is so that the bank continually drives her overall performance strategy towards maintaining her vision and mission which is to be the clear leader by providing the best financial services possible. Line manager as coach encourages good manager-subordinate relationship which in turn drives employee satisfaction. Every percentage increase in employee performance boosts customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and organization's competitiveness.

Profit making organizations like the First Bank of Nigeria have a duty to keep increasing returns on shareholders investments. Every cost cutting initiative which will not impact negatively on the organization should be considered. Part of this cost reduction plan is the adoption of line manager as coach as a regular practice.

The First Bank of Nigeria can organize her line managers to efficiently and cost effectively train and coach staff by providing adequate trainings for these managers in order to improve their coaching skill and competence. Also, managers must be trained on how to determine when coaching yields better results.

In a nutshell, the various reforms on Nigeria Banking system by the governing bank, the Central Bank of Nigeria, in the last 3 years have necessitated the need for the First Bank of Nigeria among other Nigerian banks to focus more on improving employee performance. This is much so because continuous improvement of the bank's employee performance will help the bank overcome the ongoing challenges of operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and cost reduction.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The cultural characteristics of the First Bank of Nigeria should be reviewed to encourage and motivate line managers as internal coach. Specific trainings tailored to increasing line managers' competence and commitment to coach should be organized by the bank periodically.

Line managers should not only be rewarded for successfully achieving task related activities but should be held responsible for the growth, learning and development of their subordinates.

The performance management system which focuses more on continuous development of employees should be adopted by the First Bank of Nigeria as against performance appraisal currently used by the bank.



This research could be used in guiding the development of training manual on how coaching in the First Bank of Nigeria between a manager and a subordinate ought to improve operational efficiency, reduce cost and enhance profitability.

The findings of this research do not only benefit the First Bank of Nigeria or the Banking Industry, but is crucial to corporations in Namibia, stakeholders, and both profit and non-profit making organizations around the world.

### **5.3 Critique of the Research Approach**

Firstly, this study did not consider the extent to which line managers should be involved in employee training as compared to external coaches. Future research may consider this.

Secondly, this work adopted quantitative research method using the questionnaire as instrument for data collection and Fisher's Exact Test to test the variables. Future research should adopt other data collection instruments and more complex statistical techniques to test variables for more acceptable results.

Thirdly, the sample size of 32 respondents from a branch was small, though the branch was representative of other branches of the First bank of Nigeria in terms of similar staff demographics and socio-economic attributes. Future research should increase the sample and test same hypothesis to ascertain the results.

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