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# Relationship Between Training Needs Assessment and Employee Performance Among the Customer Care Agents at Airtel Limited Call Center

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## Abstract

This study aimed at investigating training needs assessment on employee performance among the customer care agents at Airtel Limited call center. The study employed a quantitative research design and collected data from 200 employees using structured questionnaires. 155 questionnaires were returned and 45 were not returned. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics summarized the distribution of scores using measures of central tendency, variability, and distribution. Data collected from participants was coded correctly and analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson correlation and Regression analysis were used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Pearson correlation analysis indicated that training needs assessment had a correlation of .786 ( $p < 0.01$ ) with employee performance, suggesting a strong and significant relationship. In the regression analysis, Training Needs was a significant predictor of Employee Performance, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of  $\beta = 0.401$  and a p-value of  $p = 0.001$ . The study found that conducting a thorough training needs assessment has a positive effect on employee performance. Organizations that properly assess the training needs of their employees are able to provide targeted, relevant training that leads to better job satisfaction, commitment, and performance. It is recommended that Airtel Kenya should continue to invest in comprehensive training needs assessments to ensure that training programs are tailored to address the specific skills gaps and development needs of employees.

**Keywords:** *Training Needs, Employee Performance, Customer Care, Agents, Airtel Limited, Call Center*

## **1.1 Background of the Study**

Training is one of the most effective tools and a fundamental one to achieve the organizational goals and objectives in today's globalized world. There are many ways of defining the term training. It is the systematic application of formal processes to help people to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for them to perform their jobs satisfactorily. (Armstrong, 2020). The success of any organization, regardless of location, relies heavily on the quality of its workforce. Therefore, organizations must focus on recruiting and retaining a skilled, dedicated, and motivated team. This involves assessing future staffing needs and actively fostering the growth of employees by enhancing their skills, potential, and overall employability. Offering continuous learning and development opportunities is key to achieving this (Nassazi, 2021). The significance of training programs as an integral component of human resource development (HRD). It is well acknowledged that all tasks, regardless of their scale or the size of the organization, whether in the primary, secondary, or tertiary sector, necessitate the involvement of human resources. Human resources are a vital asset for any organization to which they are affiliated. It is imperative that these human resources receive comprehensive training and development to acquire optimal skills, knowledge, and competences (Siddiqui, 2018). This will enable them to function with greatest confidence and contribute to both personal career success and organizational advancement. Training programs are utilized as effective means to transmit essential knowledge and facilitate learning processes. Training methods can be classified into two categories: on-the-job training and off-the-job training and development approaches. This study serves as a conceptual exposition in this particular direction.

Training is a strategic tool essential for achieving organizational goals in today's dynamic business environment. Organizations that align training initiatives with their core objectives tend to remain competitive and agile in responding to technological and market changes. Reports such as the LinkedIn Learning Workplace Learning Report (2024) and Corndel Workplace Training Report (2025) highlight that most organizations view learning and development as key to improving performance and retention, with 77% planning to increase their training budgets. Effective training directly enhances employee retention, satisfaction, and commitment. Studies show that when employees see genuine investment in their development, they are more engaged and loyal. For instance, a 2023 study on hotel employees found that training and career development improve performance through stronger organizational commitment, while another *Frontiers in Psychology* (2025) study confirmed that relevant, well-delivered training enhances satisfaction and belonging. Additionally, Corndel (2025) reported that 64% of employees consider access to reskilling opportunities a major factor in staying with an employer. Despite its proven importance, organizations still face challenges such as budget limitations, poor alignment with strategy, and inadequate measurement of training outcomes. According to HR Dive (2025), some companies are deprioritizing training even amid rising skill shortages, while emerging technologies like AI are reshaping learning delivery and personalization. Therefore, organizations must view training as a continuous, strategic investment—integrating technology, aligning with goals, and tailoring programs to employee needs to ensure sustainable performance and growth.

Global competition has caused organizations to focus on every aspect of their operations, questioning how each function and process can contribute to strategic goals. The constantly evolving business landscape requires lifelong learning as a vital strategy for adaptation. As

business environments shift, there is a continuous need to update employee skills and competencies to enhance job performance, foster growth, and ensure the ability to adjust to fast-changing economic conditions, helping the organization maintain its competitiveness. Studies on the effects of Training and development on employee performance have been conducted throughout different organizations in different parts of the world including developed and developing countries. For instance, a study conducted in Malaysia by (Teng & Ahmad, 2021) revealed that employee performance is positively associated with training and development. A study conducted by McDowall and Saunders (2020) in the United Kingdom (UK) explores the views and understandings of training among managers. The findings of the study revealed various conceptualizations and offer valuable insights into the ways in which these perspectives impact managerial actions in the UK. The research highlights the non-uniformity of managers' perceptions, which are influenced by a range of factors such as company culture, Personal experiences, and industry conventions. The research also highlighted the importance of aligning training and development activities with the company's strategic goals. Managers who fully understand this alignment are more likely to effectively integrate training and development initiatives into their overall management strategies. The authors stress the necessity for companies to provide adequate resources, managerial support, and a conducive learning environment to achieve positive results in training and development.

Harrison (2020) highlights that in Canada, employee performance is enhanced through training, which increases knowledge, skills, and abilities required to perform job tasks effectively and achieve organizational goals. He emphasizes that training helps employees improve their skills, knowledge, and attitudes, leading to better performance. Harrison argues that schools cannot achieve higher employee performance without fully utilizing their training and development programs, which should address the specific job needs of employees to help them perform more effectively. He concludes that selecting the right training interventions is crucial for schools to resolve problems and boost employee performance in achieving school objectives.

Training and development are widely recognized as strategic mechanisms for improving employee performance and achieving organizational effectiveness. Becker (2019), in his seminal human capital theory, emphasized that investment in education and employee development increases the productive capacity of workers and, consequently, the performance of organizations. This theoretical underpinning suggests that training is not merely an operational expense but a long-term investment yielding measurable economic returns. Building upon this, Harrison (2020) and Isaac Mwita (2020) contend that employee development is integral to organizational systems that aim for continuous quality improvement and service excellence. They argue that developing human capital through training strengthens institutional capabilities and promotes innovation—critical factors for competitiveness in today's dynamic environments. Empirical studies across sectors consistently validate this theoretical foundation. Afshan, Sobia, Kamran, and Nasir (2021) examined the telecommunications sector in Pakistan and found a strong positive relationship between employee training and job performance. Their study revealed that employees who participated in structured training programs exhibited higher motivation, task proficiency, and adaptability to technological changes. Similarly, Amin et al. (2018) investigated the education sector in Pakistan and demonstrated that effective training interventions enhanced teaching quality and employee efficiency, ultimately leading to improved institutional performance. These findings

affirm that well-planned and implemented training programs enhance both individual competence and organizational productivity.

Training is widely acknowledged as a strategic tool that enhances employee performance and drives organizational success. Afshan, Sobia, Kamran, and Nasir (2021) assert that training is a structured and systematic process designed to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities, enabling them to perform effectively in their roles and adapt to dynamic work environments. Their study in the telecommunication sector revealed that employees who underwent regular training demonstrated improved motivation, job satisfaction, and performance efficiency. Similarly, Amin et al. (2018) emphasize that training not only improves employees' technical competence but also influences their attitudes and behaviors positively, leading to higher productivity and innovation. These findings align with Becker's (2019) human capital theory, which posits that investments in employee education and development yield measurable returns through increased individual and organizational performance. In the African context, effective training has been shown to play a transformative role in public and private organizations alike. Asfaw, Argaw, and Bayissa (2021) found that employee development programs in Ethiopia's District Five Administration Office significantly enhanced workers' effectiveness and morale, which in turn contributed to improved service delivery. Their study underscores that organizations with structured training frameworks experience fewer operational errors, higher staff commitment, and greater overall efficiency. Similarly, Wright and Geroy (2019) argue that training can fundamentally shift employee mindsets, helping them embrace change and align their goals with the strategic direction of the organization. In Kenya, this is especially relevant, as Ndunge (2018) reports that the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) continues to face service delivery challenges due to limited investment in employee capacity building. The lack of adequate training opportunities has led to increased attrition, depriving the organization of vital skills and creating manpower shortages, particularly in technical and artisan roles. Ndunge recommends implementing competency-based training programs to equip employees with interpersonal and analytical skills necessary for improved performance and retention.

The telecommunications sector is distinguished by rapid technology breakthroughs and intense competition. As a result, effective training programs are critical for improving employee performance and retaining talented workers. Vodafone has put in place comprehensive training initiatives designed to upskill staff members to handle the demands of the digital revolution. Their training programs emphasize leadership development, technical abilities, and customer service. According to a 2019 Kearney study, Vodafone's investment in staff training was closely linked to higher customer satisfaction ratings and increased operational effectiveness. The company has reported that its training programs have led to a significant increase in employee performance metrics, such as call resolution rates and customer service ratings (AT&T, 2021). Overall, the telecommunications sector understands training's vital role in improving employee performance. Companies that invest in employee development can boost productivity, raise job satisfaction, and retain talent in a competitive market.

Different scholars have defined training in various forms with emphasis on various factors such as core elements that includes knowledge, skills and attitude and focus area that includes human resource investment, processes of organizational improvement and systematic development of knowledge among others. Intellectual components that have been acquired and retained via

education and life experience are referred to as knowledge (Lehrer, 2018). It's also known as an organization's cognitive capability. As a result, it is crucial to make operations efficient, developing business processes, or predicting the results of business (Phelps, Heidl & Wadhwa, 2019). The ability to do one's job more successfully and efficiently is what we mean by skills (Whiting, 2020). However, skills may be categorized into three types that include technical skills, which involves mastery of a particular kind of activity or job that involves methods, process, procedures or technique. Second, the ability to function well in groups is a human skill.

Finally, you will need conceptual skills, which include an understanding of how various parts of the organization are interconnected (De Meuse, Dai & Wu, 2019). Organizational training process strives to bring about positive change by improving the skills and attitudes of employees, which has an effect on the performance of the impacted personnel (Kulkarni, 2018). An employee's behavior can also be changed in a systematic way in order to prepare the employee for a job or to improve the employee's present work performance, while development entails preparing an employee for improving conceptual, decision-making, and interpersonal skills in a structured situation (Niazi, 2021).

The systematic development of an employee's individual knowledge, abilities, and attitudes is another definition of training that can be used to better enable an employee to carry out their responsibilities (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger & Smith-Jentsch, 2020). In addition, it can be described as a procedure for improving the efficiency of an organization's workers by fostering the development of their abilities, knowledge, and character traits (Niazi, 2019). Training is about achieving business results. It is not about teaching, but it's about learning. In some cases, according to Russo (2018), there is more instruction than learning. In others, there is more learning than instructions. Obviously the second case is more successful. It should leave the trainee feeling confident that the task could be performed without supervision and performance standards can be achieved.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Staff training is essential for achieving organizational goals, as it maximizes employee contributions to these aims (Armstrong, 2020). Continuous staff development is necessary, with training playing a key role in enhancing workforce motivation and performance (Sultana et al., 2020). Human resource management aims to create environments that unlock employee potential and secure their commitment to organizational success. According to Chang (2021), evaluating training efforts should demonstrate how they improve job performance and contribute to overall organizational goals. Training and development significantly impact competitiveness and economic performance at both national and enterprise levels. While previous studies have explored training effects in various sectors, research specifically focusing on call centers in the telecommunications industry, like Airtel Limited, remains limited, indicating a gap that this study aims to address.

## **1.3 Objective of the Study**

To investigate training needs assessment on employee performance among the customer care agents at Airtel Limited call center.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

The section presents theoretical review and empirical review.

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

Skinner highlights that people are driven to do or avoid specific behavior owing to the past consequences coming from such behavior. The theory argued that in order for learners to learn, alter behavior, or improve their skills, trainers must discover what outcomes the learners find best and unpleasant and then link these outcomes to the learning process. Training is also a strategic tool that makes work more exciting and functions as an avenue for employees to better their performance, which ultimately leads to promotion of employees for their great performance, originality, and creativity as a result of the trainings they attend (Skinner, 2019). External variables such as Pavlov's Classical Conditioning and Skinner's Operant Conditioning, according to this idea, reinforce and govern an individual's behavior (2021). Trainers should embrace positive reinforcement and feedback in order to provide a better learning experience for their students. Because of this, the theory of reinforcement suggested that in order for trainees to learn new information, change their behavior, or improve their skills, the trainer must first identify the desired outcomes that trainees prefer in order to determine the best way to deliver trainings that will lead to improved performance and organizational success.

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

A study by Vasudevan (2019) explored the impact of training on work commitment, job satisfaction, and job performance in Malaysia. The research highlighted the significance of four key training components training commitment, needs assessment, content and delivery methods, and evaluation in human resource management. According to Vasudevan (2019), these four components play a crucial role in the effectiveness of training programs within HR management. The results of the study revealed that training commitment, training needs assessment, training contents and delivery approaches and training evaluation had a positive and significant influence the employee's work commitment, job satisfaction and job performance. A study by Omusebe, Gabriel and Douglas (2019) assessed the effects of training needs assessment on employee performance in the Mumias Sugar Company, Kenya. The study also sought to determine the effects of training contents on employee performance and the effects of training evaluation on employee performance. The results showed that there was a positive and significant effect between training needs assessment and employee performance in Mumias Sugar Company Limited. Training contents has a positive and significant effect on the employee performance in Mumias Sugar Company Limited while training evaluation and employee performance were positively correlated. Furthermore, they argue that it is necessary to establish the limits of a trainee to determine the training program that will address the specific shortfalls realized. In addition, it has been established that in the public sector, staff training that are designed to assist employees acquire specific knowledge skills and attitude usually demonstrate high performance in their task assignments.

## **3.0 Research Methodology**

The research was a case study investigating training needs assessment on the performance of Airtel employees. The study employed a quantitative research design and collected data from 200 employees using structured questionnaires. The study employed both descriptive and inferential

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statistics to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics summarized the distribution of scores using measures of central tendency, variability, and distribution. Data collected from participants was coded correctly and analyzed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Regression analysis was used to examine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

#### 4.0 Research Findings and Discussion

The response rate refers to the percentage of individuals who responded to the survey out of the total number of individuals in the target population (Fincham, 2008). A total of 200 questionnaires were distributed to employees at the Airtel call center, out of which 155 were completed and returned. This represents a response rate of 77.5%. A response rate of above 60% is adequate for analysis (Fincham, 2008). These results are captured in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Response Rate**

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Questionnaires Distributed	200	100
Questionnaires Returned	155	77.5
Questionnaires Not Returned	45	22.5
Total	200	100

#### 4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The distribution of gender among the respondents in the study was examined, revealing that the majority of participants were male. A total of 91 male respondents, representing 58.7% of the sample, were recorded. In comparison, 64 female respondents, accounting for 41.3% of the sample, participated in the study. This gender distribution suggests a relatively higher representation of male employees in the Airtel call center. The total number of respondents in this section was 155, making up 100% of the sample.

**Table 2 Gender Distribution**

	N	%
Male	91	58.7%
Female	64	41.3%

The number of years worked for Airtel among the respondents was analyzed, showing a diverse range of experiences within the company. The highest proportion of respondents, 54 individuals (34.8%), had worked at Airtel for 5 years or less. This was closely followed by those with 6 to 10 years of experience, comprising 49 respondents (31.6%). A smaller proportion, 27 respondents (17.4%), had worked for Airtel between 11 and 15 years, while 25 respondents (16.1%) had been employed by the company for 16 years or more.

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**Table 3: Distribution of Number of Years worked for Airtel**

	N	%
5 years and below	54	34.8%
6 - 10 years	49	31.6%
11 -15 years	27	17.4%
16 years and above	25	16.1%

The distribution of respondents by education level shows a clear preference for higher education, with the majority holding a degree. Specifically, 55.5% of participants had a degree, indicating that most employees at Airtel have pursued university-level education. The second-largest group, comprising 32.3%, held a diploma, suggesting that a significant portion of the workforce has completed secondary or tertiary education beyond the basic level.

**Table 4: Distribution of Education level of Participants**

	N	%
Diploma Level	50	32.3%
Degree Level	86	55.5%
Post graduate Level	19	12.3%

The smallest group, at 12.3%, held a post-graduate degree, highlighting that while some employees have pursued further education after their degree, this group is relatively small compared to the others. These findings indicate that Airtel’s workforce is primarily composed of individuals with a university education, with a notable presence of diploma holders as well.

### 4.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation was conducted to examine the relationships between training needs and employee performance measurement.

**Table 5: Correlations Analysis Results**

		Training Needs	Employee Performance Measurement
Training Needs	Pearson Correlation	1	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	155	155
Employee Performance Measurement	Pearson Correlation	.765**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	155	155

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

There results indicated that there was a very strong positive correlation of 0.765 ( $p < 0.01$ ) between training needs and employee performance measurement, indicating that understanding and addressing training needs significantly contribute to more accurate performance measurements.

#### 4.4 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of the independent variable: Training Needs on the dependent variable, Employee Performance Measurement. The Model Summary table indicates a strong positive correlation between the predictors and the dependent variable, with an R value of .845. The  $R^2$  value of .714 reveals that approximately 71.4% of the variance in Employee Performance Measurement is explained by Training Needs. The Adjusted  $R^2$  value of .708, which is slightly lower than  $R^2$ , suggests minimal loss of explanatory power when adjusting for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (.43601) suggests a reasonable level of accuracy in the model's predictions.

**Table 6: Regression Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.845 <sup>a</sup>	.714	.708	.43601

a. Predictors: (Constant), Training delivery styles, Training Needs, Training Methods

The ANOVA table further confirms the model's statistical significance, as indicated by the F-value of 125.537 and a significance level of 0.001. This demonstrates that the predictor has a statistically significant effect on Employee Performance Measurement.

**Table 7: ANOVA**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	71.595	3	23.865	125.537	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	28.705	151	.190		
	Total	100.300	154			

In the Coefficients table, the individual contributions of each predictor are evaluated. The constant value, or intercept, is .199, though it is not statistically significant ( $p = .165$ ).

**Table 8: Regression Coefficients**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.199	.142		1.397	.165
	Training Needs	.410	.073	.401	5.587	.000

Training Needs has unstandardized coefficient at .410 ( $p = .001$ ), with a standardized  $\beta$  of .401, indicating strong prediction on Employee Performance Measurement. This implies that for each

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unit increase in Training Needs, Employee Performance Measurement would increase by .410 units, assuming other factors remain unchanged. Based on the regression coefficients from the analysis, the resulting equation for predicting Employee Performance Measurement (Y) using the independent variables—Training Needs (X1), can be expressed as follows:

$$Y = 0.199 + 0.410X2$$

Overall, these results indicate that the predictor contributes significantly to Employee Performance Measurement, the model's findings underscore the critical role of training needs assessment in enhancing employee performance at Airtel.

## 5.0 Conclusions

The study's findings on the role of Training Needs Assessment in enhancing employee performance directly addressed the first research objective, which sought to determine the extent to which identifying training needs impacts employee performance outcomes. The correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between Training Needs and Employee Performance, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of  $r = 0.765$  and a p-value of  $p = 0.001$ . This strong correlation suggests that a well-conducted assessment of training needs is associated with enhanced performance levels among employees. In the regression analysis, Training Needs was a significant predictor of Employee Performance, with a standardized coefficient (Beta) of  $\beta = 0.401$  and a p-value of  $p = 0.001$ . This implies that, among the training-related factors analyzed, Training Needs had a considerable impact on performance, indicating that employees who receive training based on specific, assessed needs are more likely to demonstrate improved performance outcomes. Moreover, the model summary revealed an adjusted R Square of 0.708, indicating that 70.8% of the variance in Employee Performance could be explained by the training variables (Training Methods, Training Needs, and Training Delivery Styles) included in the model.

The results of this study are consistent with previous literature that presents the importance of Training Needs Assessment in enhancing employee performance, commitment, and job satisfaction. The findings align with Vasudevan's (2018) study, which found that a well-conducted training needs assessment positively and significantly influences employees' work commitment, job satisfaction, and overall job performance. This supports the view that addressing specific training needs fosters greater employee engagement and commitment, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes. Similarly, Omusebe, Gabriel, and Douglas (2019) found that training needs assessment positively and significantly impacts employee performance within Mumias Sugar Company in Kenya. Their study emphasizes the effectiveness of tailored training programs, which focus on the actual skills and knowledge gaps among employees, resulting in enhanced job performance. The study found that conducting a thorough training needs assessment has a positive effect on employee performance. Organizations that properly assess the training needs of their employees are able to provide targeted, relevant training that leads to better job satisfaction, commitment, and performance.

## 6.0 Recommendations

It is recommended that Airtel Kenya should continue to invest in comprehensive training needs assessments to ensure that training programs are tailored to address the specific skills gaps and development needs of employees. By aligning training with both organizational goals and employee aspirations, the company can improve employee performance and satisfaction.

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Conducting regular needs assessments will allow for more targeted interventions and the creation of personalized training paths that address individual growth needs.

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