



EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE OF HOTELS IN OBIO AKPOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, RIVERS STATE

ODOR, CHINENYE BLESSING

Department Of Tourism Management Technology,
Federal Polytechnic, Bida.

STEPHEN-AMAKO, MARIYAMU RITA

Department Of Hospitality Management Technology,
Federal Polytechnic, Bida.

Abstract

This study examined the relationship between employee motivation and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. The research investigated how Non-Monetary Incentives and Training and Development, as dimensions of employee motivation, influence hotel performance. A descriptive survey design was adopted, with a target population comprising employees and managers of six selected hotels in the area. Using purposive sampling and the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 122 respondents was determined. Data were collected via a structured Likert-scale questionnaire and analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient with the aid of SPSS version 25.0. Findings revealed significant positive relationships between both dimensions of employee motivation and hotel performance. The study concludes that non-monetary incentives and training and development are critical drivers of improved hotel performance in the region, and recommends that hotel managements institutionalise recognition programmes and continuous skills development initiatives to sustain a motivated and high-performing workforce.

Keywords:

Employee Motivation, Hotel Performance, Non-Monetary Incentives, Obio-Akpor, Training and Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

The hotel industry is a service-oriented sector providing lodging, food and beverage, and ancillary services to diverse clientele, generating employment across multiple skill levels globally (Mhlango, 2018). In Nigeria, the hospitality industry has grown significantly in response to urbanisation and increasing business travel, with hotels in commercial hubs such as Port Harcourt facing intensifying competition that demands consistent service quality and operational excellence. Within this environment, employee performance has emerged as one of the most consequential determinants of hotel success, given the labour-intensive and customer-facing nature of hospitality operations (Chien, Mao, Nergui, & Chang, 2020).

Motivation is widely recognised as the primary driver of employee behaviour and output at work. Robbin and Decenzo (2008, p. 180) define motivation as the processes that account for

an individual's intensity, direction, and persistence of effort toward attaining a goal. When employees are sufficiently motivated, they are more productive, more committed to their organisations, and more likely to deliver superior service outcomes (Ollor & Orupabo, 2020). Conversely, the absence of adequate motivation has been consistently linked to high turnover, diminished service quality, and declining organisational performance (Nduro, 2012).

Despite growing awareness of the importance of motivation in the hospitality sector, managers continue to face challenges in identifying and deploying the most effective motivational tools. Non-monetary incentives, including recognition, praise, flexible scheduling, and awards, have received increasing scholarly attention as cost-effective complements to salary-based remuneration, particularly for small and medium-sized hospitality establishments (Gabriel & Nwaeke, 2015; Sarpong, YunFei, & Coffie, 2020). Similarly, training and development have been identified as powerful mechanisms for enhancing employee competence, confidence, and job satisfaction, with downstream benefits for organisational performance (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017; Vincent, 2020).

While studies in banking (Ibikunle et al., 2023) and large-scale hospitality contexts (Kumar & Lee, 2022) have explored these dynamics, there remains a notable research gap concerning hotels in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, one of Nigeria's most commercially active regions. Existing research either generalises across sectors or focuses on large-scale enterprises, overlooking the unique operational constraints faced by locally owned hotels. This study therefore aims to examine the relationship between employee motivation and hotel performance, with specific attention to how non-monetary incentives and training and development influence performance outcomes.

Specifically, the study seeks to:

- i. Determine the relationship between non-monetary incentives and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.
- ii. Examine the relationship between training and development and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is anchored on two foundational theories: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory (Maslow, 1943) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, 1959). These theories were selected for their enduring relevance to understanding workplace motivation and their complementary explanatory power in the hospitality context.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs posits that human motivation is structured around five progressive levels of need: physiological, safety, social belonging, esteem, and self-actualisation. In an organisational context, this framework suggests that management must attend to employees' basic needs, such as fair remuneration and job security, before higher-order motivators such as recognition and self-development can take effect (Srivastava, 2005). For hotels in Obio-Akpor, where many employees are young and moderately experienced, ensuring that both lower-order and higher-order needs are met provides a theoretical rationale for the importance of non-monetary incentives such as recognition and awards, which directly address esteem needs.

Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory distinguishes between hygiene factors, which are external conditions whose absence causes dissatisfaction, and motivators, which are intrinsic elements such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and advancement that drive genuine job satisfaction and performance (Armstrong, 2010; Herzberg, 1959). This theory underpins the study's conceptualisation of non-monetary incentives as motivators that stimulate discretionary effort, and of training and development as tools that fulfil employees' needs for growth and competence. Together, these theories provide a robust foundation for examining how specific motivational dimensions translate into measurable performance gains in the hotel sector.

3. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

3.1 Concept of Employee Motivation

Motivation refers to the internal forces that stimulate, direct, and sustain human behaviour toward a desired outcome (Daft & Noe, 2001). In the workplace, motivation encompasses the psychological processes that energise employees to invest effort in their roles, persist through challenges, and align their behaviour with organisational goals (Cameron & Green, 2019). Scholars have distinguished between intrinsic motivation, arising from the inherent satisfaction of the work itself, and extrinsic motivation, which is driven by external rewards such as pay, promotion, or recognition (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Both dimensions are relevant in hotel settings, where the interpersonal nature of service delivery demands both intrinsic commitment and responsiveness to external incentives.

Mikkelsen, Jacobsen, and Andersen (2017) identify direction, intensity, and duration as the three dimensions of motivated behaviour, emphasising that effective motivation must not only initiate effort but also sustain it over time. This is particularly important in the hotel industry, where service consistency across shifts and seasons is critical. Understanding individual motivational styles, as argued by Hsiung and Tsai (2017), helps managers predict and shape employee affect, cognition, and behaviour in ways that enhance both individual and organisational performance.

3.2 Non-Monetary Incentives

Non-monetary incentives refer to non-cash forms of recognition and reward that fulfil employees' psychological, social, and esteem needs, including praise, employee-of-the-month awards, flexible work arrangements, and professional recognition (Shanks, 2017). Unlike salary adjustments, which may produce only short-term behavioural change, non-monetary incentives foster intrinsic motivation by signalling that the organisation values and appreciates employees' contributions (Sarpong, YunFei, & Coffie, 2020).

Gabriel and Nwaeke (2015) found significant positive relationships between non-monetary incentives, specifically job enrichment, job autonomy, and promotion, and employee job satisfaction among hotel workers in Port Harcourt. Sarpong, YunFei, and Coffie (2020) extended this finding, demonstrating that tangible, social, and job-related non-monetary incentives collectively increased the probability of improved job performance in Ghanaian hotels. Their hierarchical logistic regression revealed that younger, more educated employees responded most strongly to non-monetary incentives, a finding with direct relevance to the predominantly youthful workforce characteristic of Nigerian hotels. Alka Rai et al. (2017) further established that rewards and recognition improved both in-role and extra-role performance through the mediating mechanism of employee engagement, underscoring the strategic value of non-monetary recognition systems.

3.3 Training and Development

Training and development constitute a systematic organisational investment aimed at enhancing employees' knowledge, skills, and competencies to improve individual and organisational performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Nassazi, 2013). In the hospitality industry, where service quality depends heavily on interpersonal skills, product knowledge, and operational proficiency, training and development are not merely supportive functions but strategic necessities (Rodriguez & Walters, 2017).

Vincent (2020) demonstrated that training and development positively impacted employee job performance in Nigerian organisations, noting that continuous training enhanced both productivity and employees' capacity to perform their roles more competently. Rodriguez and Walters (2017) argued that investing in training and development assists employees in attaining diverse goals, including improved morale, greater engagement, and enhanced task competency—outcomes that collectively improve hotel performance. Worlu Okechukwu (2017) similarly found that training and development positively influenced job satisfaction and performance among university staff in Malaysia, suggesting broad applicability across service sectors. In hotel contexts specifically, Islam and Tariq (2018) found that a learning-oriented organisational environment motivated employees to perform beyond their formal job descriptions, demonstrating that training investments generate returns not only in task performance but also in discretionary effort.

3.4 Hotel Performance

Hotel performance in this study is conceived as a composite outcome reflecting how effectively hotel employees execute their responsibilities and contribute to the attainment of organisational goals. It encompasses task performance, including the core job-related activities that constitute the technical core of the hotel's operations, as well as broader indicators of employee effectiveness such as adaptability and contextual performance (Fragouli & Ilia, 2019; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). Task performance describes the accuracy, timeliness, and quality with which assigned duties are carried out (Borman & Motowidlo, 1993). Adaptability reflects employees' capacity to adjust to changing conditions, new demands, and evolving guest expectations (Ployhart & Bliese, 2006). Contextual performance captures the discretionary, collaborative behaviours, such as helping colleagues, sharing knowledge, demonstrating initiative, that support the broader social and organisational environment (LePine, Hanson, Borman, & Motowidlo, 2000). Together, these dimensions provide a holistic account of employee contribution to hotel performance, extending beyond narrow productivity metrics to capture the full range of behaviours essential in a customer-centred service environment (Ollor & Orupabo, 2020).

3.5 Empirical Review and Hypotheses Development

The literature linking employee motivation to performance in the hospitality sector is substantial, though studies specifically examining Obio-Akpor's hotel context are scarce. Sarpong, YunFei, and Coffie (2020) established positive associations between non-monetary incentives and employee performance in hotel contexts, while Rodriguez and Walters (2017) and Vincent (2020) demonstrated that training and development enhance task effectiveness and job satisfaction. Cheng-Yi Luo et al. (2022) found that employees' psychological capital, nurtured in part by organisational investment in learning and development, significantly promoted adaptive performance in Chinese hotels, while Fernandez et al. (2022) confirmed that structured training design supports the development of adaptive performance in team-based

service settings. Islam and Tariq (2018) further documented positive linkages between learning environments and extra-role, contextual performance.

Drawing on this body of evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between non-monetary incentives and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between training and development and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State.

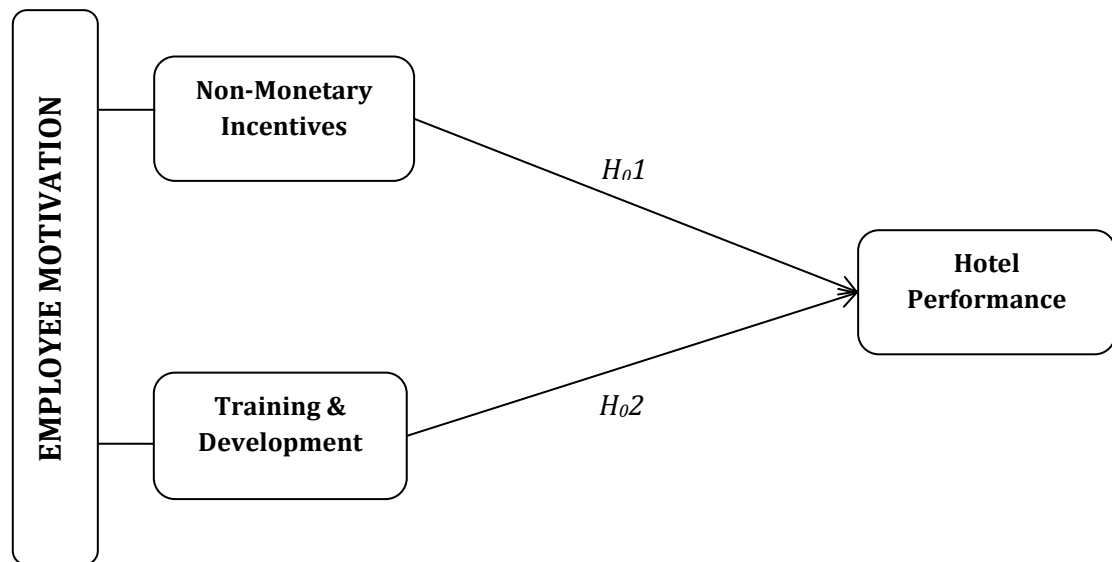


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for the Relationship between Employee Motivation (Non-Monetary Incentives; Training & Development) and Hotel Performance in Obio Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State. *Source:* As Conceptualized by the Researcher, 2026.

4. METHODOLOGY

A descriptive correlational survey design was adopted to examine the relationship between employee motivation and hotel performance. The target population comprised employees and managers of six selected hotels in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State: Pentagon Hotel and Suites, Helena Haven, Happy Rollings Guest House, Kokoon Hotels, Compact Hotel, and Chocolate Hotel, with a total accessible population of 175. Using the Taro Yamane (1967) formula at a 0.05 margin of error, a sample size of 122 respondents was determined. A purposive sampling technique was employed because respondents were selected based on their ability to provide relevant information on the study variables.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed from a review of extant literature (Alarifi & Adam, 2023; Habib, Khalil, Manzoor, & Jamal, 2017; Rodriguez & Walters, 2017). The instrument consisted of two sections: Section A captured respondent demographic information, while Section B contained Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) measuring non-monetary incentives (5 items), training and development (5 items), and hotel performance (16 items). Content and face validity were established through supervisor review and expert assessment. Reliability was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients: non-monetary incentives ($\alpha = 0.702$), training and development ($\alpha = 0.846$), task

performance ($\alpha = 0.820$), adaptability ($\alpha = 0.747$), and contextual performance ($\alpha = 0.829$), all exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70 (Nunally, 1978). Data were analysed using descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient via SPSS version 25.0, with hypotheses tested at $p < 0.05$.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Demographic Profile

Of the 122 questionnaires distributed, 112 were retrieved and deemed usable, yielding a response rate of 91.8%. The sample was predominantly female (57.1%) and youthful, with 51.52% aged between 20 and 29 years. The largest departmental group was Food and Beverage (32.48%), followed by Front Office (25.76%). The majority of respondents had 3–5 years of work experience (42.56%), indicating a moderately experienced workforce. Most were single (62.72%). This demographic profile reflects the labour market characteristics of the hotel industry in Port Harcourt as being youthful, service-oriented, and predominantly female in frontline roles.

5.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics indicated positive employee perceptions across all study variables, with grand means exceeding the criterion mean of 3.0. Non-monetary incentives recorded a grand mean of 4.22 (SD = 0.694), with the hotel's recognition of the best employee of the month receiving the highest individual score (M = 4.39). Training and development yielded a grand mean of 3.99 (SD = 0.741), indicating that employees valued the training opportunities provided. Hotel performance, captured across task performance (M = 4.622, SD = 0.661), adaptability (M = 4.298, SD = 0.733), and contextual performance (M = 4.278, SD = 0.767), demonstrated a consistently high level of self-reported performance, with an overall grand mean of 4.282. These results suggest a performance-oriented workplace culture within the sampled hotels, underpinned by perceived motivational support.

Table 1: Summary of Descriptive Statistics (N = 112)

Variable	Grand Mean	Std. Deviation	Decision
Non-Monetary Incentives	4.22	0.694	Accept
Training and Development	3.99	0.741	Accept
Task Performance	4.62	0.661	Accept
Adaptability	4.30	0.733	Accept
Contextual Performance	4.28	0.767	Accept
Overall Hotel Performance	4.28	0.720	Accept

Source: SPSS Output, 2026. Criterion mean = 3.0

5.3 Hypotheses Testing

5.3.1 Hypothesis One: Non-Monetary Incentives and Hotel Performance

Table 2: Correlation Analysis for Non-Monetary Incentives and Hotel Performance

	Non-Monetary Incentives	Hotel Performance
Non-Monetary Incentives	1	0.597**
Hotel Performance	0.597**	1
Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
N	112	112

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). *Source: SPSS Output, 2026.*

The results in Table 2 reveal a positive and moderate correlation between non-monetary incentives and hotel performance ($r = 0.597$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$). Accordingly, H01 is rejected. This finding indicates that as non-monetary incentives increase, hotel performance improves commensurately. The result aligns with Sarpong, YunFei, and Coffie (2020), who demonstrated that tangible, social, and job-related non-monetary incentives collectively raised the probability of improved performance in Ghanaian hotels. The finding also resonates with Alka Rai et al. (2017), who established that rewards and recognition enhanced both in-role and extra-role performance through heightened employee engagement. These converging findings support the argument that non-monetary recognition systems, by fulfilling esteem needs and signalling organisational appreciation, foster the motivation, commitment, and discretionary effort essential to superior hotel performance.

5.3.2 Hypothesis Two: Training and Development and Hotel Performance

Table 3: Correlation Analysis — Training and Development and Hotel Performance

	Training and Development	Hotel Performance
Training and Development	1	0.588**
Hotel Performance	0.588**	1
Sig. (1-tailed)		0.000
N	112	112

** Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). *Source: SPSS Output, 2024.*

Table 3 shows a positive and moderate correlation between training and development and hotel performance ($r = 0.588$, $p = 0.000 < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of H02. This result confirms that increased investment in training and development initiatives is associated with enhanced hotel performance. The finding is consistent with Rodriguez and Walters (2017), who argued that training and development improve employee task competence, morale, and overall

contribution to organisational objectives. Vincent (2020) similarly found positive impacts of training on job performance in Nigeria, emphasising that continuous learning programmes equip employees with the skills required to perform both routine tasks and emergent responsibilities more effectively. The result also accords with Cheng-Yi Luo et al. (2022) and Fernandez et al. (2022), who demonstrated that structured development opportunities enhance adaptive performance; a dimension of hotel performance particularly critical in an industry characterised by volatile demand and diverse guest needs. Furthermore, Islam and Tariq (2018) established that a learning-supportive environment promotes extra-role behaviours, suggesting that training and development foster not only core task proficiency but also the collaborative, initiative-taking behaviours that distinguish high-performing hotel employees.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the relationship between employee motivation and hotel performance in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area, Rivers State, with specific focus on non-monetary incentives and training and development as motivational dimensions. Both hypotheses were rejected, confirming that non-monetary incentives ($r = 0.597$, $p < 0.05$) and training and development ($r = 0.588$, $p < 0.05$) each share a significant positive relationship with hotel performance. These findings underscore the strategic importance of non-financial recognition and continuous skill development as levers for enhancing employee output in the hotel industry.

The implications for hotel management are twofold. First, formalised recognition programmes, including employee-of-the-month awards, departmental commendations, and supervisory praise, should be institutionalised as standard management practice rather than ad hoc gestures. Such programmes are cost-effective yet impactful in reinforcing performance norms and elevating employee morale. Second, hotel operators should invest consistently in structured training and development programmes that address both technical hospitality competencies and soft skills such as communication, adaptability, and teamwork. Given the youthful and moderately experienced composition of the workforce, mentorship components and on-the-job learning opportunities are particularly recommended.

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine how motivation-performance dynamics evolve over time within the hotel sector. Comparative studies across other geopolitical zones of Nigeria would help determine the extent to which findings from Rivers State generalise to broader national contexts. Qualitative approaches could further illuminate the mechanisms through which non-monetary incentives and training programmes shape employee attitudes and behaviours.

REFERENCES

- Alarifi, G., & Adam, N. A. (2023). The role of participatory leadership and employee innovative behavior on SMEs' endurance. *Sustainability*, 15(3), 2740.
- Alka Rai, Piyali Ghosh, Ragini Chauhan, & Richa Singh. (2017). Improving in-role and extra-role performances with rewards and recognition: Does engagement matter? *REGE Revista de Gestão*, 24(4), 131–143.
- Armstrong, M. (2010). *Armstrong's handbook of human resource management practice* (11th ed.). Kogan Page.

- Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (1993). Expanding the criterion domain to include elements of contextual performance. In N. Schmitt & W. C. Borman (Eds.), *Personnel selection in organizations* (pp. 71–98). Jossey-Bass.
- Cameron, E., & Green, M. (2019). *Making sense of change management: A complete guide to the models, tools and techniques of organizational change*. Kogan Page.
- Cheng-Yi Luo, Chin-Hsun Tsai, Ching-Hui Su, Hyun Jeong Kim, Jun-Li Gao, & Ming-Hsiang Chen. (2022). How does hotel employees' psychological capital promote adaptive performance? The role of change readiness. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 103, 103201.
- Chien, G. C. L., Mao, I., Nergui, E., & Chang, W. (2020). The effect of work motivation on employee performance: Empirical evidence from 4-star hotels in Taiwan. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Management*, 42, 185–196.
- Daft, R. L., & Noe, R. A. (2001). *Organizational behavior*. Harcourt College Publishers.
- Elnaga, A., & Imran, A. (2013). The effect of training on employee performance. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 5(4), 137–147.
- Fernandez, R., Rosenman, E. D., Plaza-Verduin, M., & Grand, J. A. (2022). Developing adaptive performance: A conceptual model to guide simulation-based training design. *Simulation in Healthcare*, 17(3), 193–201.
- Fragouli, E., & Ilia, I. (2019). Working smart and not hard: Key to maximise employee efficiency? *International Journal of Information, Business and Management*, 11(2), 74–111.
- Gabriel, J. M. O., & Nwaeke, L. I. (2015). Non-financial incentives and job satisfaction among hotel workers in Port Harcourt. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 7(34), 169–178.
- Habib, S., Khalil, J., Manzoor, S., & Jamal, S. (2017). Non-monetary rewards and employee engagement: A study of the health sector. *Journal of Business and Social Review in Emerging Economies*, 3(1), 53–62.
- Herzberg, F. (1959). *The motivation to work*. Wiley.
- Hsiung, H. H., & Tsai, W. C. (2017). The joint moderating effects of activated negative moods and group voice climate on the relationship between power distance orientation and employee voice behavior. *Applied Psychology*, 66(3), 487–514.
- Islam, M. A., & Tariq, J. (2018). Learning organizational environment and extra-role behaviors: The mediating role of employee engagement. *Journal of Management Development*, 37(3), 258–270.
- LePine, J. A., Hanson, M. A., Borman, W. C., & Motowidlo, S. J. (2000). Contextual performance and teamwork: Implications for staffing. *Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management*, 19, 53–90.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.
- Mhlango, T. (2018). Human resources management in the hospitality industry. *Academic Journals*.

- Mikkelsen, M. F., Jacobsen, C. B., & Andersen, L. B. (2017). Managing employee motivation: Exploring the connections between managers' enforcement actions, employee perceptions, and employee intrinsic motivation. *International Public Management Journal*, 20(2), 183–205.
- Nassazi, A. (2013). Effects of training on employee performance: Evidence from Uganda. University of Applied Sciences.
- Nduro, M. (2012). The effect of motivation on the performance of employees at GT Bank Ghana. *Journal of Public Administration and Policy Research*, 4(7), 62–75.
- Ollor, H. Y., & Orupabo, S. S. (2020). Lodging administrators and employees' predicament in hospitality establishments. *International Journal of Management Sciences and Entrepreneurship*, 11(7), 147–156.
- Ployhart, R. E., & Bliese, P. D. (2006). Individual adaptability (I-ADAPT) theory: Conceptualizing the antecedents, consequences, and measurement of individual differences in adaptability. In C. S. Burke, L. G. Pierce, & E. Salas (Eds.), *Understanding adaptability: A prerequisite for effective performance within complex environments* (pp. 3–39). Elsevier.
- Robbins, S. P., & Decenzo, D. A. (2008). *Fundamentals of management: Essential concepts and applications* (6th ed.). Pearson.
- Rodriguez, J., & Walters, K. (2017). The importance of training and development in employee performance and evaluation. *World Wide Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 3(10), 206–212.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1), 68–78.
- Samale, N. (2016). Investigating the factor structure of adaptability: A measure of adaptive performance. Thesis, San José State University.
- Sarpong, S. A., YunFei, S., & Coffie, F. O. (2020). Non-monetary incentives: Nexus between employee motivation and job performance at selected hotels in Ghana. *African Journal of Hospitality, Tourism and Leisure*, 9(2), 1–18.
- Shanks, N. H. (2017). *Introduction to health care management* (3rd ed.). Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Srivastava, S. K. (2005). *Organizational behavior and management*. Sarup & Sons.
- Viswesvaran, C., & Ones, D. S. (2000). Perspectives on models of job performance. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 8(4), 216–226.
- Vincent, A. (2020). Impact of training and development on employee job performance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management Invention*, 9(5), 50–57.
- Worlu Okechukwu, G. (2017). Influence of training and development, employee performance on job satisfaction among the staff of School of Technology Management and Logistics, Universiti Utara Malaysia. *Journal of Technology Management and Business*, 4(1), 1–13.
- Yamane, T. (1967). *Elementary sampling theory*. Prentice-Hall.