



ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome

ISSN: 2351-0617 (print), ISSN: 2408-2058 (electronic)

Designing a Skill Enhancement Training Program to Improve Employee Performance at ABC Company

Aditi Shrestha

ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome Vol 13(3) pp. 76-96

<https://assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/odijournal>

Published by the
Organization Development Institute
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management
Assumption University Thailand

ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome
is indexed by the Thai Citation Index and ASEAN Citation Index

Designing a Skill Enhancement Training Program to Improve Employee Performance at ABC Company

Aditi Shrestha

¹Master of Management in Organization and Development (MMOD)
Graduate School of Business and Advanced Technology Management (GS-BATM),
Assumption University, Thailand. Email: g6719061@au.edu

Received: 4 September 2025. Revised: 20 September 2025. Accepted: 23 September 2025

Abstract

This research focuses on developing a performance-enhancing training program for employees of ABC Company. Currently, employees demonstrate the necessary competencies to complete their jobs, but a skills gap exists that prevents them from performing at their best. The absence of a formal training framework has hindered their professionalism, eroded their confidence, and compromised their ability to deliver quality service. This research intends to identify the skills that need development and reflect on how these skill gaps impact day-to-day performance. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and reflective questions with employees and supervisors, focusing on their opinions on current performance, their peak performance experiences, and the skills they wish to develop in the future. Interviews were held for a total number of eight (8) participants (4 sales team members, two digital marketing team members, one owner, and one manager), one-on-one, to find out what skills were most important for development. Informants discussed how well people are doing now, their best performance to date, and areas where they want to improve. The results showed that the employees are devoted and dedicated to providing a solid foundation on which to build their performance. This commitment to skill development is tied to a structured training program that enables employees to develop their skills, supporting their performance. The research revealed a strong need for role-specific and practical skills, as employees desire ‘on-the-job’ training opportunities that are relevant to their actual job roles. The skills gaps identified by employees were pitching sales, explaining products, creating digital content, and using Excel.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Training Program, Communication Skill, Customer Service Skill, Product Knowledge Skill, Interpersonal Skill, Digital Marketing Skill, Appreciative Inquiry

Introduction

Employee performance has a significant impact on customer satisfaction and overall business success in today's retail sector. ABC Company, a rapidly expanding retail company in Nepal, has built a solid reputation for its dependable atmosphere and devoted staff. Despite these advantages, a lack of a formal training program and skill gaps still make it difficult for many workers to perform at their highest level.

Singh (2023) explains that in Nepal, the issue of unemployment and the skills gap is a reality, as more than 1,700 youths leave the country each day in search of work. However, the local industry still claims to have unskilled labor that is unable to fill these roles. For example, there is a service sector business called Auto Village in Ghorahi, Dang, that has hired about 40% of its workers from India and even compensated them 50% higher than the local laborers, as they demonstrated better relevant skills for current market alignment. The situation in Nepal is such that unskilled labor is exported and skilled labor is imported from a neighboring country.

Singh (2023) summarized that there are possibly jobs available in Nepal; however, these jobs are virtually unattainable for local youth, especially those without competencies and vocational training. This broader national challenge reflects the micro-level reality within ABC Company, where employees also encounter skill gaps that restrict their ability to perform effectively. This naturally links to the present study, as it focuses on constructing a structured skills-enhancement training program for ABC Company Workers, enabling them to acquire the necessary market-driven skills to perform and grow confidently and competently.

Employee performance is one of the key drivers of an organization's success, particularly in the retail sector, where work is conducted directly with customers. At ABC Company, many employees are a willing and committed group of learners; however, they still have significant skill gaps in communication, customer service, product knowledge, interpersonal skills, and digital marketing. Therefore, closing these skills gaps as part of a training program is crucial for enhancing employee performance, improving customer experience, and fostering the long-term competitiveness of the organization.

Organizational Diagnosis

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis for this research was gathered through formal organizational analysis, conducted via phone calls and casual conversations with employees and supervisors, involving a total of 8 informants at ABC Company. Rather than directly asking participants to identify the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, open-ended questions are included in the conversation to encourage informants to share their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of the workplace. These informal conversations revealed several recurring themes that could be categorized within the SWOT framework. The formal approach allowed for more organic responses as participants were free to speak without providing structured answers.

Strength

- ABC Company has a strong retention rate, with staff leaving primarily for overseas opportunities, which is representative of a faithful and consistent workforce.
- The company has created a trusting work environment; there have been no incidents of theft or dishonesty, making staff feel that they never have to worry about losing the company's possessions.
- Employees are becoming competent in differentiating the products accurately, which is improving daily functions.
- Staff members are doing their work quickly and efficiently, improving productivity.
- The culture of the company is positive, which is leading to gaining trust between the teams, and all the team members are working at a consistent pace to make the operation effective

Weakness

- Many employees need to improve the essential skills, as the lack of competencies restricts their performance and prevents them from confidently meeting customer needs.
- Many staff have difficulty communicating effectively, which lowers the standard of customer service, reduces teamwork efficiency, and causes hesitation in sales conversations.
- The absence of a formal training process limits the opportunities for continuous development, leaving employees relying on informal learning, which results in uneven performance.
- Employees have little strategic understanding or awareness, which limits their ability to connect daily actions with ABC Company's long-term initiatives, limiting initiative and accountability.

Opportunities

- A formalized skills enhancement training program could enhance performance and develop employee confidence, especially in areas of communication.
- When it comes to the point of the overload of work or greater responsibility, upskilling employees enables ABC Company to advance and keep up with the market.
- Employees themselves often recommend ABC Company by word of mouth to the customers, their relatives, and friends, which creates opportunities to expand their network and build an employer brand together.
- The firm retains employees for years, so it can invest long-term in employee learning and training rather than hiring new employees time and again.

- As the concept of a retail mart like ABC Company is new to Nepal, employee opportunities exist to grow together with the business and become a part of the brand's expansion in the marketplace.

Threat

- The weakness of employee skills creates the opportunity for poor customer service, which increases customer dissatisfaction and loss of possible customers.
- ABC Company can lose sales by not having employees engage and adequately support customers with this concept on social media.
- Ineffective communication and hesitation in customer negotiations could harm ABC Company's reputation and weaken its market competitiveness.
- ABC Company's customers will shift to competitors with skilled employees within a developing neutral market.
- Without a structured training approach, performance gaps will widen over time as customer expectations continue to rise.

Problem Statement:

Employees at ABC Company already possess the skills, but they are at a minimum level and require skill enhancement. They also have skill gaps that prevent them from maximizing their skills to make the most of their work and work with the highest efficiency, ultimately providing excellent services. Without a structured training program in place, employees cannot be expected to develop professionally and acquire the skills essential for ABC Company. When they interact with customers, their confidence level in communicating and assisting them is also low, and they are often unsure of their capabilities. These things reduce the quality of service, indicating a performance gap in the company. As the company offers a variety of products, it also lacks sufficient knowledge about them. The increasing competition in retail indicates that an even skilled workforce is needed for ABC Company. If these skill gaps are not addressed immediately, ABC Company's market position may decline. As a result, ABC Company needs to develop a structured training program focused on skills, thereby enhancing staff members' skills and performance outcomes. The company is at risk from both competitors and dissatisfied customers due to the existing skill gap among employees, which necessitates immediate action.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the essential skills of employees at ABC Company that require skill refinement
2. To explore the gap caused by the absence of a structured training program in relation to employee performance
3. To design an appropriate skill enhancement training program tailored to the needs of ABC Company based on the results of the study.

Research Questions

1. What are the essential skills that require additional skill refinement?
2. What gaps in employee performance can be identified due to the absence of a structured training program at ABC Company?
3. What are the components that should be included in a skill enhancement training program to effectively meet the specific needs of the employees at ABC company?

Scope of Research

The research project focused on designing a skill enhancement training program aimed at enhancing employee performance at ABC Company, a retail business in Nepal, specifically, identifying essential skills related to communication, customer service, digital marketing, interpersonal skills, and product knowledge while exploring the gaps associated with the lack of formal training programs. The data collection was conducted qualitatively via online semi-structured interviews with selected employees and supervisors at ABC Company. The findings and recommendations are tailored to the needs of the staff at ABC Company and are not intended to be generalized or applied to other retail businesses. In summary, the research aims to develop a training-based framework that facilitates and encourages continuous learning processes, serving as an incentive for professional development and improved service quality at ABC Company.

Significance of the Study

The research will benefit ABC Company by identifying skill gaps within the company, facilitating the development of a structured training program, and enhancing competitiveness through improved employee performance and increased customer satisfaction. For employees, it provides an opportunity to learn and develop fundamental skills, gain confidence, and advance their careers. For the researcher, it offers experience in applying organizational development theories, data collection, and program development. For the senior management team, the researcher's findings highlight the skill gaps, the plan to address those gaps, and the planning for employee leadership development, improved communication, and alignment with long-term business objectives.

Literature Review

Human Capital Theory

Wuttaphan (2017) summarized the Human Capital Theory, which generally states that the increased productivity that results from the ability of people (through investing in and developing educational or training and skills) will lead to long-term benefits for the organization. Essentially, he explained the importance of understanding human resources, which is not simply a cost to be managed; instead, they should be regarded as an investment in developing and establishing human resources to provide a competitive advantage. He also showed the importance of measuring the impact of the investment, whether that is ROI, productivity, customer satisfaction, employee engagement, or employee turnover. Training and development should be measured to assess the effectiveness and impact of the investment.

Social Learning Theory

Sutton (2021) notes that Bandura's theory suggests that individuals learn behaviors by observing others and then adopt these behaviors if they are motivated to do so. Both prior behavioral theories and Bandura give significant weight to the interplay of the person, behavior, and environment in explaining learning through attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation. His research, including models, observations, and the Bobo Doll experiment, provides evidence for how modeling impacts behavior. Bandura's theory has been applied in the fields of education, training, and organizational development to promote positive behavioral changes.

Appreciative Inquiry

Sharp et al. (2016) also explained that the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 5D model, being Define, Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny, is rooted in discovering what is working well in an organization and building on it. Define sets a positive direction, Discover brings out what works well, Dream imagines what can happen in the future, Design provides plans to create that future, and ultimately Destiny implements change in the organization through shared ownership. In this research, the 5D model structured the training design by defining employee performance needs, identifying current strengths, envisioning desired skills, designing practical activities such as role-plays and workshops, and sustaining improvements through feedback and peer learning.

Employee Performance and Training Program

Arulsamy et al. (2023) Conducted a study on training and development with a focus on improving employee performance. They emphasized that providing employees with appropriate training opportunities can enable all employees to become more skilled, productive, motivated, and innovative. Training helped them not only to perform their current jobs effectively but also to be more satisfied and to stay with the organization longer.

Nzimakwe and Utete (2024) reported how staff training in the South African transport industry works. When employees are trained, they almost always perform better. Not only did the researchers find that staff trained performed better, but they also interviewed training professionals who were tasked with the training. They found that staff who were trained had greater confidence and needed less supervision, and they produced a better quality of work.

Communication Skills and Customer Service Skills:

Keyton (2010) explains that Communication is a vital component of retail service. Retail services involve listening, speaking clearly, and responding effectively. Poor communication mainly results in customers being dissatisfied and misunderstood. The author notes that communication refers not only to talking, but also to non-verbal communication, such as tone, body language, and facial expressions.

Phachirananwanich and Fernando (2022) employed the Needs Assessment Modified framework at PKK Auto in Thailand, identifying communication enhancements as the primary organizational need, which was closely correlated with employee performance. They suggested training programs tailored to these specific needs. According to Human Capital Theory, communication and customer service are very important for performance. Social Learning helps people improve these abilities by giving them more opportunities to use them, and Appreciative Inquiry builds on them. They work together to enhance employee performance by clarifying processes, addressing complaints, and fostering customer satisfaction and loyalty.

Interpersonal Skills

Gustari and Widodo (2023) reported a positive relationship between interpersonal skills and both creativity and contextual performance, with creativity serving as a driver as well. Using a structural equation model with 250 employees in Indonesia, it was found that interpersonal skills fostered creative thinking, which in turn led to increased engagement, planning, and collaboration that extended beyond work responsibilities.

Oyadiran et al. (2022) investigated the role of interpersonal skills, conflict resolution, communication, attitude, leadership, and teamwork within an organization. This study employs Social Exchange Theory as a conceptual framework, positing that strong social interaction is based on mutual giving and taking to achieve organizational objectives. Interpersonal Skills strengthen teamwork and collaboration, which improves service consistency and overall employee performance. Human Capital connects interpersonal skills to employee performance, Social Learning focuses on peer feedback and engagement, and AI collects stories about teamwork to help with development.

Digital Marketing Skills

Kraugusteeliana et al. (2024) explain the importance of training and developing as a strategic method in creating digital marketing ability in Human Resource Management. This study highlights the importance of digital marketing skills in achieving a competitive edge in the era of digital transformation. The authors considered targeting and training interruptions to be essential for developing capabilities such as social media presence, engagement with online customers, and creating digital content.

Kumar (2023) considers digital transformation to be more than just using new technology; it also involves changing the way the business operates by aligning its goals, generating new ideas, engaging leaders, and empowering employees. Building digital skills ensures that change lasts and helps employees perform better in the online marketplace by attracting, engaging, and converting clients. Human Capital stresses that being good with technology is essential for staying competitive. Social Learning stresses supervised practice and experimentation, while Appreciative Inquiry uses past successes to plan training that focuses on the future.

Product Knowledge Skills

Siagian et al. (2020) investigated how product knowledge affects salesperson performance and whether the salesperson's attitude modifies this original effect. They surveyed 65 salespeople using SmartPLS analysis and found that knowledge significantly improved performance, while mentality did not change or moderate the original relationship between the salespeople and their performance. Overall, the researchers concluded that product knowledge is crucial for job performance, even if attitude has a limited impact on employee improvement.

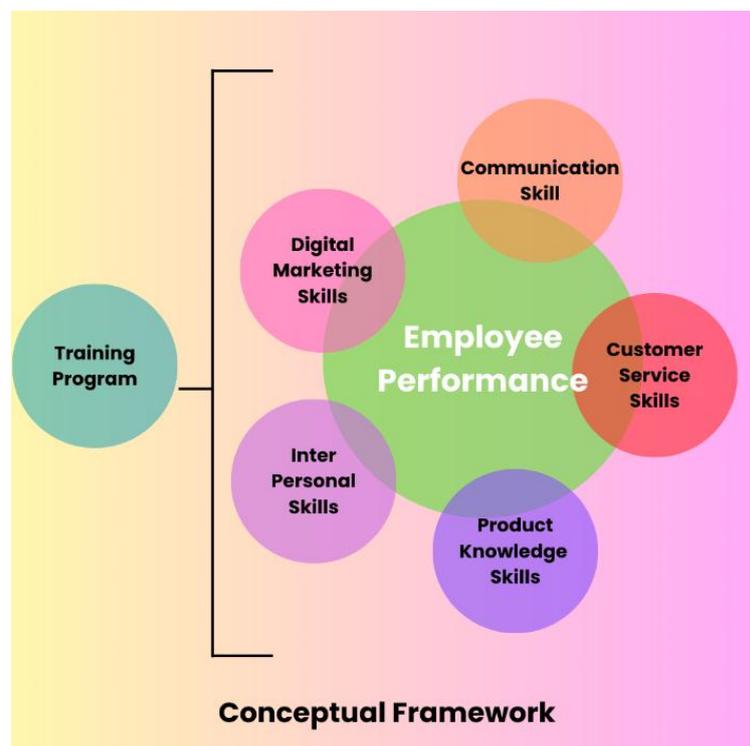
Rubianto and Ellitan (2024) conducted a study on the Semen Indonesia Group, utilizing elements of knowledge management, including creating, sharing, and reusing knowledge, in relation to employee performance. The findings showed that the creation of knowledge and the sharing of elements were functioning appropriately. The "reusing" element was not as successful, as participants had taken the time and effort to capture and document what they learned. Product knowledge boosts employee performance by enabling confident product explanations and persuasive customer recommendations. Human capital views expertise as a key asset that enhances performance. Social Learning focuses on learning by watching experienced staff, and AI employs the best ways to handle products to create training.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is based on organizational diagnosis and previous studies that consistently identified areas for improvement in communication skills, customer service skills, interpersonal skills, product knowledge, and digital skills. Skill gaps in these areas have resulted in hesitancy in communicating with customers, difficulty describing the specifics of a product, a lack of a teamwork-based environment, and limited use of available digital tools. If a formal training program can be developed that focuses on these variables, the anticipated outcome would be improved employee performance, enhanced through employees' higher levels of confidence, increased customer satisfaction, stronger collaborative practices, enhanced customer engagement through digital means, and overall business competitiveness as a result. Using these variables as a guide, the focus of this study is to capture the perspectives of employees and supervisors to gain insights into current strengths, gaps, and desired competencies.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework



Research Methodology

In this chapter, the research methodology includes identifying skills gaps and co-designing a training program to improve employee performance at ABC Company. Qualitative research following the Appreciative Inquiry 5D process (Define, Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny) and using purposeful sampling to collect data from employees and supervisors, in-depth interviews, and thematic analysis are used. The chapter also presents the research design, procedural Framework, sampling Method, research instruments, methods of data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design

The Research includes a qualitative research design for data collection, focusing on gathering in-depth data through one-to-one interviews with participants. This approach aims to understand the people's experiences and identify skills gaps, ultimately co-designing a training program to enhance employee performance at ABC Company. This research also provided insight into the existing skills that employees possess, what they want to improve in the future, and their feelings about their current professional growth situations.

The selected design is based on the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) 5D model, a strength-based research method for organizational development. This concept was utilized to ensure that data collection, as well as the design of the training, was modelled to inform this framework. The 5D processes (Define, Discover, Dream, Design, and Destiny) enabled the researcher and participants to share a standard view of their ideal future and how to achieve it.

This design was best for:

- Creating a space for the employees to talk openly in a way that made them feel safe.
- Showing what the employees are doing well is already a way for them to realize what already exists
- Discovering Strengths that exist but are not well-known and goals that most do not look for.
- Making sure the training program that is going to be designed will actually work with the organization's culture of the ABC Company.

Research Instruments

A Structured interview guide was used to collect data, with an Appreciative Inquiry 5D model serving as the basis for constructing the guide. Each phase had 1 question for the reflection on their experience. The questions that were included in the interview guide are as follows.

Employee Question

Define: In your opinion, what skills and actions show that you (or your co-workers) are performing your best at ABC Company?

Discover: Can you share a time when you felt you were doing your best at work?

Dream: Over the next year, what skill would you most like to improve to feel more confident and make your work easier and more enjoyable?

Design: What kind of developmental competency would help you learn best?

Destiny: How would you implement that developmental competency or support system to help you apply your skills more confidently and perform at your best every day at ABC Company?

Supervisor Question

Define: From your perspective, what does high employee performance look like at ABC Company?

Discover: Can you share a time when you observed your team performing at their best?

Dream: What key skills do you believe your team members need to develop and improve to become more confident and effective one year from now?

Design: What kind of developmental competency do you think would work best for your team to improve their skills?

Destiny: How would you implement developmental competency or support to help your team apply their skills more confidently and perform at their best every day at ABC Company?

Population and Sampling Procedure

The population for this study totaled (N=31) employees from ABC Company, including sales staff, supervisory staff, and digital marketing staff. Purposive sampling was used to select participants who could provide varied perspectives that addressed the study's purposes. The interviews were conducted with eight informants. The sample was small, but it represented a cross-section of the workforce. Responses would be included based on three factors; role in the company, which was essential to reflect people at different positions, duration of work in the company, with new employees to long-time employees to acknowledge different perceptions from both perspectives, and willingness (likely to have varied Comments on experiences, needs, and examples that were related to the area of research). For this qualitative study, 8 participants were considered adequate, as it often employs small samples, emphasizing the achievement of comprehensive insights rather than a large sample size. The responses reflected a diverse range of roles and experiences within the organization.

The sample consisted of:

- Owner- Provided strategic vision and expectations.
- Main Supervisor- Provided observations about the development and performance of the staff.
- Digital Marketing Team Member- Provided insights into the team, creating content, customers' experience, and digital marketing skills.
- Promoted Sales Supervisor (employed as sales staff) - Provided insights into being promoted and the skill development of staff in the first year.
- Sales Staff with experience- Provided practical examples of customer service, product knowledge, and collaboration/ teaming.
- Sales Staff for less than one year- Provided insights into their onboarding and initial learning.

Data Collection

Interviews were conducted over two weeks, utilizing voice and video calls as needed, based on availability. For each interview, the duration was 30 minutes. First, the participants were informed about the study, assured of confidentiality, and asked to provide verbal consent. Rapport was established through brief, formal conversations, and interviews were conducted in English, allowing participants to respond comfortably and naturally. Participants were asked to provide verbal consent to participate. The Researcher obtained permission to summarize and record the interviews, allowing the information to be used later for data analysis. A file is used to keep track of basic information about the participants, the status of the interviews, and the

organization of the coding. This helped ensure that the analysis process was open, easy to follow, and straightforward to track.

Data Analysis

Content analysis was conducted by the researcher on the qualitative data, involving the generation of themes from the participants' responses. This analysis was performed by three coders working together to systematically code the data, with the researcher also involved to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the results. The following steps were taken:

1. Transcribing: All interviews were summarized in written form
2. Initial coding: Selected words/phrases, ideas, and key statements were highlighted.
3. Thematic coding: Similar codes were categorized into five skill areas: communication skills, customer service skills, digital marketing, interpersonal skills, and product knowledge.
4. Identifying patterns: Themes were reviewed across multiple interviews, looking for commonalities, gaps, and outliers.

Demographic Data

The demographic data below presents the information of the eight informants who participated in the interview.

Table 1

Age of the informants

| Age | Frequency |
|----------------|-----------|
| Under 25 years | 3 |
| 26-30 Years | 2 |
| 31-35 Years | 1 |
| 36-40 Years | 2 |
| Total | 8 |

Table 1 shows that the three informants were under 25 years of age, followed by two informants in each of the age ranges of 26-30 years and 36-40 years, with one informant falling within the 31-35 years category.

Table 2

Gender of the Informants

| Gender | Frequency |
|--------|-----------|
| Male | 5 |
| Female | 3 |

Table 2 shows that the gender of the five informants is Male, and three informants are Female

Table 3*Education Level of the Informants*

| Education Level | Frequency |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| +2 (High School Diploma) | 4 |
| Bachelor's Degree | 3 |
| Master's Degree | 1 |

Table 3 shows that one informant has a Master's Degree, three informants have a bachelor's degree, and four informants have a high school diploma.

Table 4*Current Job Position of the informants*

| Job Position | Frequency |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Owner | 1 |
| Manager | 1 |
| Sales Supervisor | 1 |
| Sales Team | 3 |
| Digital Marketing Team | 2 |

Table 4 shows the current positions of the informants. Three informants are working in the sales team, two informants in the Digital Marketing Team, one sales supervisor, one manager, and one owner.

Table 5*Years of Service of the Participants*

| Number of Years | Frequency |
|------------------------|------------------|
| Below 1 Year | 3 |
| 1-2 years | 5 |

Table 5 shows the years of service of the informants who have worked in ABC Company. Three informants have worked for less than 1 year, and five informants have worked for 1-2 years.

Result and Discussion

Table 6

Summary of qualitative results from individual employees ' and supervisors' interviews

| Appreciative Inquiry | Similarities and Differences | Common Themes |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Define | <p>Similarities: Both stress communication, teamwork, product expertise, and customer service.</p> <p>Differences: Employees care more about digital content, while bosses care more about cleanliness.</p> | <p>Employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication & customer service skills Product knowledge/ awareness of the store Team spirit/supporting other staff Behaving appropriately & courteously Visual & cleanliness Digital awareness & content creator <p>Supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service/engagement Product knowledge/ efficacy Teamwork/support in busy times Communication/supporting other areas Visuals/store cleanliness |
| Discover | <p>Similarity: Both mention teamwork and cross-functional contributions.</p> <p>Difference: Employees stress creativity, supervisors stress loyalty and efficiency.</p> | <p>Employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initiative - being creative about jobs. Successful Customer Engagement Teamwork - with new staff Creativity - Digital/creative role of sales Staying calm in pressured situations Contributing to other areas <p>Supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pro-active decisions to overcome the unexpected Loyalty/commitment, e.g., being there early/late and/or supporting others Cross-pollination of areas, e.g., sales & digital Operating efficiently during peak demand |
| Dream | <p>Similarities: Both are looking for communication, technology/digital, and leadership.</p> <p>Differences: employees focus on confidence and product upsell; supervisors concentrate on time management and strategic thinking.</p> | <p>Employees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidence and communication skills Product knowledge/upselling Leadership & mentorship aspirations Digital/technical skills (e.g., Excel, Canva & content apps) First principles problem solving & decision making <p>Supervisors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Customer service/communication skills Technical skills, e.g., Excel/online tools Time management/multi-tasking Future leadership aspirations for the juniors Awareness of business thinking strategy |

| Appreciative Inquiry | Similarities and Differences | Common Themes |
|----------------------|--|--|
| Design | <p>Similarities: Both focus on scenario-based/roleplay, peer learning, and tools training.</p> <p>Differences: employees focus on creativity challenges; supervisors focus on structured platforms and discussions.</p> | <p>Employees Practicing role plays & real-life Customer role play. Peer learning & feedback systems Creativity challenges & themed engagement Training on tools (Excel, SEO & content apps) Mentoring & Buddy system</p> <p>Supervisors Training based on scenarios for Customers. Workshops & circle discussion communication Training-based resources for Excel and tools Peer-learning sessions across areas Resources or platforms to share knowledge, e.g., tips, quizzes, and reflections</p> |
| Destiny | <p>Similarities: Both focus on feedback, peer support, and a culture of continuous learning.</p> <p>Differences: employees focus on ownership and small wins; supervisors focus on structured recognition and formal learning protocols.</p> | <p>Employees Weekly learning goals and track Celebrating a small win Ongoing feedback and reflection Taking responsibility/ownership in jobs Every day, learning culture tools For teams to work collaboratively both online and offline</p> <p>Supervisors Team creating a culture for reflecting & storytelling. Recognizing and motivating, e.g., praise and reward Tracking/ giving feedback at the end of shifts Peer-learning and rotating mentorship roles Structured culture of learning "Training Fridays"</p> |

Tables 8 above show the findings of interviews with employees and the supervisors from ABC, including the similarities and dissimilarities.

Research Objective 1: To identify the essential skills of employees at ABC Company that require skill refinement

Based on the findings, employees of ABC company possess developmental needs in 5 key areas: communication, customer service, interpersonal skills, product knowledge, and digital marketing. Employees are generally hard-working and have a positive attitude towards development. However, many employees mentioned hesitations about how to engage with customers. Employees' challenges include sharing and pitching product information, as well as utilizing digital tools for content creation and developing practical communication skills. These

skills are essential for an efficient and seamless process that achieves customer satisfaction and enhances employee performance. Hu and Tantasane (2022) explained that knowledge and skills are the major parts of their study that affect the sales performance, followed by value and attitude.

Employees had problems with communication, customer service, digital marketing, interpersonal skills, and product knowledge. This fits with Human Capital Theory, which says that investing in skills improves performance, and Social Learning Theory, which says that learning via practice and role-playing improves skills. Zafar and Aleem (2023) found that a structured approach to digital media training, which included content creation, platform algorithms, analytics, and brand consistency, significantly improved employees' capacity, responsiveness, and productivity. The employees had a drive to learn something new and were hardworking and enthusiastic; however, different forms of uncertainty persisted in day-to-day life due to the lack of a structured training program.

Research Objective 2: To explore the gap caused by the absence of a structured training program in relation to employee performance

The interviews revealed that employees had to learn through trial and error because they lacked formal training. This led to uneven service, poor communication, and wrong product messaging. Supervisors said that client help was unreliable at busy periods and that communication across departments was bad. These gaps made it harder for people to work together and accomplish tasks, highlighting the importance of structured training in boosting confidence, professionalism, and overall performance.

Wuttaphan (2017) emphasized in the Human Capital Theory: The Theory of Human Resource Development and Implications, Wuttaphan (2017) said that training and development are essential investments in human capital. These kinds of investments help employees learn more, improve their skills, and produce better work overall, which directly benefits the company's development. If people don't receive regular training, they may struggle to perform their jobs effectively, which can result in lower productivity and failure to meet the company's goals. The research contends that firms that restrict training simultaneously inhibit employee potential, diminish performance outcomes, and hinder long-term adaptation.

The lack of training made it more difficult for workers to utilize new skills, ultimately making the company less competitive. Employees wanted to get better, but they didn't have a clear plan. Role-plays, peer teaching, and product briefings were all good ideas for how to do this.

Research Objective 3: To design an appropriate skill enhancement training program tailored to the needs of ABC Company based on the results of the study.

The results provide a framework for a practical training program that meets the demands of employees as they have expressed them. Employees preferred practical, role-specific training, which is in line with the ideas of Social Learning Theory and Appreciative Inquiry. The curriculum directly addresses skill deficiencies identified through interviews with

employees and supervisors. Its organized design focuses on critical areas, such as customer service, communication, and product understanding, to improve performance.

Phachirananwanich and Fernando (2022) have demonstrated that when employee skill gaps are specifically identified and subsequently addressed through adequate training, performance significantly improves. This research supports Objective 3 in explaining the importance of developing a training program tailored to the actual skills required by ABC Company employees. A program that is skill-based, such as communication, customer service, interpersonal skills, product knowledge, or digital marketing skills, can be tailored to address the challenges faced by its employees, potentially increasing performance and supporting future growth.

Designing Training Program

This three-month training program, based on themes derived from content analysis, aims to address the skill gaps identified in interviews with both employees and supervisors.

- Month 1: Focus on basic communication and service skills through role plays, helping employees build confidence and adapt to the retail environment for fundamental customer interactions.
- Month 2: Emphasize product knowledge so employees can differentiate products effectively and serve customers with greater accuracy and confidence.
- Month 3: Develop digital marketing skills with workshops on Canva, content design, and campaigns, boosting creativity, collaboration, and brand exposure.

Table 7

Designing Training Program

| Month | Factors Focus | Themes to Support the Outline | Activities | Recommendations and how it can be done | Outcome |
|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| 1st Month: Establishing the Groundwork | Communication Skill Customer Service Skill | Communication & Customer Handling Product Knowledge & Upselling Role-Specific & Practical Training Practicing role plays & real-life Customer role play Resources or platforms to share knowledge, such as flash cards, tips, quizzes, and reflexives | 1. Greetings, upselling, and complaints handling roleplays 2. Hands-on customer recommendation exercise using actual products 3. Body language, confidence workshop | -During morning gatherings, do short role-playing games. - Talk about real customer cases from the past few days. - Put staff in pairs to practice listening carefully and responding quickly. Make five skill areas the focus: plan sessions to develop communication, | Staff members welcome clients with confidence, remain calm under pressure, and improve their persuasion skills, gaining knowledge every day. |

| Month | Factors Focus | Themes to Support the Outline | Activities | Recommendations and how it can be done | Outcome |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | customer service, product knowledge, interpersonal skills, and digital marketing, so that all regions improve simultaneously. Hands-on experience like Roleplay and Peer Learning: Give brief, interactive sessions like live selling drills, display challenges, and content development workshops. | |
| 2nd Month: Building Relationships and Knowledge | Product Management Skill Interpersonal Skill | Communication & Customer Handling Product Knowledge & Upselling Teamwork & Peer Learning Digital/technical skills (e.g., Excel, Canva & content apps) Role-Specific & Practical Training Collaboration Across Sales & Digital Teams | 1. Flashcards and layout memorization for products every day 2. Basic Excel skills for keeping track of sales and stocks 3. A buddy system for working together and eaching others | Every day, supervisors give reports on products that last five minutes. - A little Excel class once a week for inventory and basic sales statistics. - Have fresh employees shadow experienced ones. Encourage collaboration across departments by setting up activities where sales and digital teams work together to connect techniques that work both online and offline. | Staff members who remember product details more quickly tend to work better in groups and collaborate more effectively |
| 3rd Month Digital Learning and Creativity | Digital Marketing Skill | Digital/technical skills (e.g., Excel, Canva & content apps) Collaboration Across Sales & Digital Teams | 1. A Canva design workshop for making posters and posts for social media 2. Brainstorming | Make and edit short product videos on your phone. - Plan promotions by having sales and digital teams meet | More people are engaging with you online, you have more unique marketing |

| Month | Factors Focus | Themes to Support the Outline | Activities | Recommendations and how it can be done | Outcome |
|-------|---------------|---|---|---|--|
| | | Workshops & circle discussion communication Communication & Customer Handling Product Knowledge & Upselling Teamwork & Peer Learning Continuous Feedback & Recognition | sessions for social media trends and hashtags 3. Workshops on how to make content for social media Planning a campaign for the sales and digital teams 4. Small sessions once a week to recognize and reward | together. - Set aside 15 minutes each week for small group competitions to see who can come up with the most excellent descriptions and hashtags. Recognition and Rewards: Utilize weekly feedback rounds and monthly recognition to keep employees motivated and track their progress. Make Gaining Knowledge the primary goal of everyday life: Encourage employees to reflect on what they have learned each day and share it with others, such as juniors and newcomers, to keep their skills sharp after the program ends and continually enhance them over time. | ideas, and your offline and online advertising work better together. |

Each component of the program is based on the findings from this research and is designed to address the skill gaps and development needs identified in the study. The program is designed to address the training needs of employees, focusing on enhancing their capabilities and individual development. Thus, the program emphasizes not only existing competencies but also the ongoing development of employees' skill sets, enabling them to improve their performance through continuous learning. This research presents recommendations specifically for employees, aiming to help them enhance existing skills, capabilities, and ongoing learning development, and apply these skills during the training program.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The main goal of this research is to create a training program that finds and fills in the major skill gaps that ABC Company workers have. The survey revealed that individuals were lacking in communication, customer service, interpersonal skills, product understanding, and digital marketing expertise. This was mostly because there wasn't an organized training program. To fill these gaps, a development plan that includes role-plays, themed challenges, product briefings, peer teaching, and SEO seminars was suggested as a fun and long-lasting approach. The integrated training program can help employees excel at work and keep the organization competitive by strengthening all five of these skill areas simultaneously.

Qualitative interviews revealed that staff were motivated to develop their skills and help the business grow; however, a disconnect exists because no formal training framework has been established. Staff viewed skills as necessary in establishing trust with customers, promoting teamwork, and enhancing sales performance. In contrast, supervisors communicated that confidence, knowledge of product placement, and inter-departmental collaboration are more important. Staff expressed a desire for practical strategies and hands-on learning, such as roleplays, themed display competitions, peer/supervisor teaching, and daily/weekly product briefings. These methods not only utilize subject matter content but also encourage staff engagement and knowledge sharing.

By considering the insights and suggestions of employees and supervisors, this study offers a distinctive contribution by collaboratively developing a role-specific, three-month skill enhancement program in accordance with the Appreciative Inquiry 5D framework. The training is hands-on and encourages participation, which helps make it last while also directly addressing the skill gaps at ABC Company. The training program outline now more accurately reflects the development needed at ABC Company, ensuring that skill improvements are more relevant and impactful. This training program outline will enhance ABC Company's standards, strengthen its competitive position, and contribute to the company's long-term growth and organizational development.

Recommendations

The training program should focus on learning by doing, incorporating elements such as role-plays, peer learning, and short daily activities, including live selling drills, product briefings, and customer case discussions. Sessions should focus on five main skill areas: communication, customer service, product knowledge, interpersonal skills, and digital marketing. This will make sure that everyone develops in a balanced way. Supervisors can help people learn by giving them short updates on products. Weekly Excel seminars and chances to shadow others help people learn more about how to use technology and how to do things in real life. Working together across departments, holding creative content workshops, and having small group competitions will all help with both teamwork and new ideas. Lastly, regular feedback, appreciation, and a culture of sharing information should help sustain growth.

Suggestions for further Research

This study demonstrates that skill enhancement training can enhance employee performance in various areas, including communication, customer service, digital marketing, interpersonal skills, and product knowledge. While the results are valuable, further research is needed to assess the long-term effects, including larger samples from other branches or retail businesses, as well as exploring innovative tools such as AI platforms or mobile training apps.

Future studies could adopt longitudinal, quasi-experimental, or mixed-methods designs to provide deeper insights and strengthen both academic knowledge and practical applications in retail training by examining the effectiveness of training across a broader range of retail contexts.

References

- Arulsamy, A. S., Singh, I., Kumar, S., & Bajaj, K. K. (2023). Employee training and development: Enhancing employee performance - A study. *ResearchGate*, 16(3), 406-416
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373775939_Employee_Training_and_Development_Enhancing_Employee_Performance_-_A_Study
- Gustari, I., & Widodo, W. (2023). Enhancing employees' contextual performance based on interpersonal skills and creativity. *JPPI (Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Indonesia)*, 9(3), 1465-1472. <https://doi.org/10.29210/020233117>
- Hu, G., & Tantasane, S. (2022). The influence of sales staff competency on the sales performance of Sichuan Houtian Technology Co., Ltd. *ABAC ODI Journal Vision. Outcome*, 10(1), 270-286.
<https://assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/odijournal/article/view/6118/3561>
- Keyton, J. (2010). *Communication and organizational culture: A key to understanding work experience* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Kraugusteeliana, K., Suherlan, S., & Zaakiyyah, H. K. A. (2024). Strategic exploration of training and development to enhance digital marketing competence in human resource management. *Journal of Contemporary Administration and Management (ADMAN)*, 2(1), 343-348. <https://doi.org/10.61100/adman.v2i1.130>
- Kumar, M. (2023, December 14). *Digital Transformation and Organizational Change*. ResearchGate;
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/376517164_Digital_Transformation_and_Organizational_Change
- Nzimakwe, T. I., & Utete, R. (2024). *Staff training and employee performance: Perspectives of the workplace*. ResearchGate; Bussecon International Academy.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/379232587_Staff_training_and_employee_performance_Perspectives_of_the_workplace
- Oyadiran, P. A., Ishaq, M., Lawal, Y., & Otu, J. A. (2022). *Impact of Interpersonal Relationship Skills on Organizational Performance*.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/372935952_impact_of_interpersonal_relationship_skills_on_organizational_performance
- Phachirananwanich, T., & Fernando, M. S. C. L. (2022). A needs assessment of communication and employee performance: A case study of PKK Auto Partnership Limited, Thailand. *ABAC ODI JOURNAL Vision. Action. Outcome*, 9(2), 182-201.
<https://assumptionjournal.au.edu/index.php/odijournal/article/view/5279/3392>
- Rubianto, A. S., & Ellitan, L. (2024). Knowledge management process and employee performance. *International Journal of Research*, 11(6), 36-44.
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/381229745_knowledge_management_process_and_employee_performance

- Sharp, C., Dewar, B., & Barrie, K. (2016). *Forming new futures through appreciative inquiry*. The Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services. <https://www.iriss.org.uk/resources/insights/forming-new-futures-through-appreciative-inquiry>
- Siagian, H., Putera, G., & Burlakovs, J. (2020). The effect of product knowledge on salesperson performance with the moderating role of attitude. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 76, 01011. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/20207601011>
- Singh, R. (2023). *Fixing the Unemployment and Skills Gap*. <https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/fixing-the-unemployment-and-skills-gap>
- Sutton, J. (2021, May 17). *What Is Bandura's Social Learning Theory? 3 Examples*. PositivePsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/social-learning-theory-bandura/>
- Wuttaphan, N. (2017, January). *Human capital theory: The theory of human resource development, implications, and future*. ResearchGate. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/344166132_human_capital_theory_the_theory_of_human_resource_development_implications_and_future
- Zafar, A., & Aleem, N. (2023). Digital media training programs and their role in enhancing employee skills and performance *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 14(2), 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.46568/pjass.v14i2.713>

