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**INFLUENCE OF SALESFORCE TRAINING ON SALESFORCE PERFORMANCE  
OF INNOSON VEHICLE MANUFACTURING COMPANY NNEWI, SOUTH-  
EASTERN NIGERIA**

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**Abstract:**

*Training is sine qua non toward enhancing salesforce performance and must receive serious management attention and commitment. However, this study investigated the influence of salesforce training on salesforce performance of Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nnewi, South-Eastern Nigeria. The specific objectives were first, to determine the influence of coaching on salesforce performance of Innoson vehicle manufacturing company and second, to determine the influence of role playing and salesforce performance of the company. The population of the study comprises 131 technical and administrative staff of the company at Nnewi. Using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for determining sample size, the sample size of 97 was obtained. Questionnaire was administered on the 97 respondents and 89 were correctly filled and returned. The value of the reliability test was 0.942, which was determined using Cronbach's alpha. Survey was adopted for the study and data were analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Findings revealed that coaching has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance of Innoson vehicle manufacturing company. Also, it was revealed that role playing has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance of the company. Although salesmen are born, adequate training is highly accentuated among sales managers. Such adequate training is necessary to enable the sales force gather enough and important knowledge and experience needed to distribute Innoson vehicles across national and international borders. Therefore, both coaching and role playing training programmes should be conducted for the sales force to improve sales performance.*

**Keywords:** Sales force, sales force training, coaching, role playing, sales performance, resource based theory

## **Introduction**

Getting the right calibre of salesforce to deliver customer satisfaction can only be realisable through adequate training of a company's salesforce (sales team). Achieving sales success in today's dynamic business world is herculean without properly educating the salesforce; getting them to gain adequate knowledge of their company, their products and services, their customers, their competitors, their competitors and the entire marketing and selling environment. As competition continues to soar in the manufacturing and service industries, salesforce training has become highly indispensable and as a matter of fact, raising a savvy and smart salesforce is very intractable. In this modern business world, organizations are confronted with several challenges, and training their sales force is absolutely high on the schedule of most organizations (Rao, 2010). Numerous changes have affected the personal selling tasks. Customers have more information and are aware of events happening in the market; demand levels have risen; customers demand quality service and have higher expectations (Angelova & Zekiri, 2011).

Globalization has altered the way organizations conduct their businesses and made competition more pronounced, and technology is constantly becoming more advanced, particularly in the area of telecommunications (Anderson, 1996). To cope with the constantly changing business environment, salespeople must be equipped with new and improved skills which training makes feasible (Dubinsky, 2003). Attia et al. (2014) suggested that organizations should employ every means to ensure and facilitate smooth training process through coaching, role playing, demonstration, seminar etc. manufacturing the best product and offering the best service environment is not enough; a properly trained sales team is required to make the goals of an organization realizable. If organizations must exist profitably, great attention must be given to salesforce training (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). This projects salespersons' performance the major area of interest and focus in attaining sales and overall business success for most managers (Boles et al., 2000). The task of salespeople has gone beyond attracting sales and generating leads and more towards building trust and fostering relationships with customers (Wilson et al., 2002; Ingram et al., 2001). Thus, salespeople should pay more attention to implementing a customer-oriented method, which denotes putting in the extra effort and providing excellent customer service, building customer confidence, resolving customers' predicaments (Krista, 2020).

Nevertheless, for automobile salesmen to become effective and skilled, and be capable of making more cars sales, automotive sales training is critical (Krista, 2020). It is clear that automobile salesmen were being majorly trained on how to close deals with little emphasis given to the other important selling skills. This leads to selling scenarios where pressure is applied rather than persuasion (Humbert, 2019). When automobile sales people use a sales process that is effective for their products and services, the results achieved becomes greater, more money earned and higher quality of sales realized. Sales performance is the most preferred end result of any sales entity in which personal selling and sales administration is evaluated. Sales people as the champion and getter of sales performance are very deliberate in sale performance initiative since they are the company and customers interface. Customers will be influenced via the exposition of salesforce to training and change in behaviour which in turn impart on firm's continued existence and performance (Kuster & Canales, 2011). Training is a

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practice of developing the act of teaching, learning and imparting a skill or behaviour for organization growth and performance as well as personal development (Green et al., 2000) that is becoming a viable tool for fast-moving firms. However, highly competitive firms are concerned about how to utilize salesforce potential knowing that automobile sales are got from, and on, direct personal selling.

In today's fast moving global economy, sales training has become a big challenge to large, small, national, international and even multinational companies. Millions of dollars are spent by organizations on employees training and that gulps a huge share of their sales budget (Tan & Newman, 2013). Despite this enormous spending by organisations, salesforce performance continues to dwindle (Siagian et al., 2020). The role of auto salesmen in the operations of every auto dealership cannot be overemphasized, however very few actually go through proper auto sales training (Krista, 2020). There is more to being a car salesman than just selling a product. Car sales process is complex and somewhat lengthy, and to achieve sales targets many obstacles to sales must be overcome. Effective sales training, therefore, is a necessary tool to overcoming these obstacles (Lassk et al., 2012). Hence, it has become challenging for firms deciding on the best training methods to train their salesforce in order to improve sales performance and overall market share. It follows that the core problem of this research stems from the fact that there are too many automobile firms with different products which require highly knowledgeable and skilled sales men to sell. As a result of the low patronage level of indigenous products in Nigeria, many customers have been lost to alternative competitors and so selling indigenous automobile has become very difficult. Unfortunately, companies in Nigeria embark on little or no training at all. Besides, a few studies have been conducted on salesforce training in Nigeria although none of them have delved into investigating coaching and role playing in the auto manufacturing industry. Against this backdrop, this study intend to investigate the influence of salesforce training on salesforce performance of Innoson vehicle manufacturing company Nnewi, South-Eastern Nigeria.

## **Review of Related Literature**

### **Sales Force Training**

Indeed, salesforce training is a very pertinent element of salesforce management (Schwartz, 2006). As a matter of fact, salesforce training is indisputable to both manufacturing and service organizations (Abeysekera & Jayakody, 2011). Krishnamoorthy et al. (2005) stated that the success of a company's salesforce lies in salesforce training. In support of this statement, enormous reward for an organization can be secured through salesforce training (Rahman et al., 2015). However, Okolo et al. (2015) opined that a company's salesforce need to be trained adequately to know how to make smart and effective sales presentations. They argued that a company's salesforce need to know their numerous customers' needs, motive and buying habits in order to serve them satisfactorily. The salesforce learn how to identify profitable customers and also learn how to produce quality sales report. Jobber and Lancaster (2009) posited that the salesforce is trained to understand and have good knowledge of the company they represent (objective, policies and organization), products, work organization, competitors, selling strategies, relationship management and report preparation. Basir et al. (2010) affirmed that what underlay salesforce training was good customer knowledge and understanding by salespeople.

Moreover, salesforce training is the act of transferring effective selling capability to an organisation's salespeople (Singh et al., 2015). It is the systematic and deliberate transfer of knowledge, acumen, skill and ability to salespeople aimed at improving their performance. Salesforce training to a large extent determines the success and survival of most organisations (Roman et al., 2002). In their study, they revealed that sales training has a significant effect on sales performance. In support of this, Sunardi et al. (2012) revealed that sales training transformed employee behavioural style. Also, study conducted by Rahman et al. (2015) revealed that salesforce training indirectly has significant impact on sales performance. In that study, salesforce training had direct impact on salesforce experience which on the other hand had positive impact on performance. In contrast, Okeke (2014) in his study discovered that the organisational performance of Globacom Ltd network provider in Nigeria was not influenced by salesforce training. No wonder Kraiger, McLinden, and Casper (2004) noted that training has not made any significant impact on a company's bottom line despite being faddish and expensive.

However, as a result of the indispensability of training most organisations pertinaciously invest heavily in training their salesforce right from the inception and ongoing development of their salespeople (Roman et al., 2002). In today's dynamic global economy, sales training has posed many challenges to many big and small organisations around the world (Singh et al., 2015). Emphatically, sales training engulfs huge amount of an organisations budget as they invest billions of dollars getting their salesforce trained (Singh et al., 2015; Sunardi et al., 2012). Consistent with this, Okeke (2014) reported that organizations in the United States of America spent a total of \$55.8 billion in 2006 in providing adequate training for their employees. Nevertheless, many benefits accrue to firms despite the enormous cost incurred in the course of offering employee training. Sales training programmes enable sales personnel to perform more effectively and efficiently. Sales training has the capacity to enhance the salesforce knowledge and skill thereby boosting sales performance (Singh et al., 2015). Previous empirical studies revealed that salesforce interpersonal skills have been improved through training and development initiatives (Basir et al., 2010). In tandem with this, it was revealed that training develops the interpersonal skills that lead to sales performance (Johlke, 2006). According to Krishnamoorthy et al. (2005) training bequeaths the salesforce with the skills needed to perform their tasks effectively thus enhancing salesforce productivity. In the same vein, Candemir et al. (2015) submitted that salesforce personal qualities which were enhanced through training have significant impact on sales performance.

The most effective and crucial strategy for imparting knowledge and skill toward preparing potential and current salesforce to get abreast of the challenges of attracting accounts and closing sales on their customers is adequate training (Rowold, 2008). In line with this, Bhatti and Kaur (2010) posited that training is very pertinent to an organisation's success being that it bolsters employee productivity. In order to earn competitive advantage, most organisations train their sales personnel so that they can intellectually, dexterously and diligently perform organizational tasks as effectively and efficiently as possible geared toward instituting a win-win situation between the organisation and their various customers (Rahman et al., 2015). Rahman et al. (2015) observed that because a whole lot of employees are employed without the full knowledge, skill and experience to manipulate certain organisational tasks, training became highly germane. Training shapes an individual's attitude by providing increased

motivation, higher performance and job satisfaction (Latif, 2012). Moreso, it reduces a firm's selling and supervision expenses by increasing its profits (Krishnamoorthy et al., 2005). They reported that a study of Nabisco's sales training program found that sales increased by \$122 and also, profit increased a twenty-fold for every \$1 invested in training.

### **Sales force Training Methods**

The different ways of impacting knowledge and skills on the salesforce of an organization to help them achieve their sales targets and organisational objectives are known as salesforce training methods (Shahid et al., 2013). Coaching, role playing, seminar, demonstration, apprenticeship, computer-assisted training, induction/orientation, vestibule and formal training are both on-the-job and off-the-job salesforce training methods (Igwe & Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). The most effective methods of training salespeople are on-the-job training (Roman et al., 2002). For them salesforce performance and customer orientation are influenced by the choice of sales training methods and contents.

### **Coaching**

Coaching is a training method that is mainly on-the-job (Kodz et al., 1997). It is used by management to develop and enhance salesforce performance (Bradford et al., 2017). In other words, sales outcome had been positively influenced by coaching (Blume et al., 2010). Nguyen et al. (2019) supports this view stating that both salespersons and organisational performance are improved through coaching. Coaching is the most effective salesforce training methods capable of achieving sales objectives as rated by most sales managers (Sales Management Association 2014). It is a robust management strategy for sales managers and has become a model for personal learning and effective selling by a company's salesforce (Matthews, 2004). Coaching is defined as a process of correcting organisational work related challenges aimed toward improving of improving performance (Wardoyo, 2019; Bradford et al., 2017). It refers to the practice of educating an employee about the rules, regulations, norms, culture and goals of the organization aimed at ensuring employee adaptability and performance (Richardson, 2009).

It is the transfer of knowledge, tools and opportunity from the trainer to the trainee aimed at making them more viable (Nguyen et al., 2019; Asiegbu et al., 2012). In other words, it is the impacting of knowledge from a professional such as the sales manager to the learner such as a salesperson. It is the process of inculcating knowledge, skill and ability (KSA) traits on the senior sales executives, sales managers and salespeople aimed at developing cognitive, psychological and behavioural tendencies projected towards attaining organisational goals (Badrinarayanan et al., 2015). Coaching is a leadership style which showcases the influence the coach wields on the employee (Hallberg & Pustelnik, 2013). Sales managers invest in capability control in organisations via coaching (Li et al., 2020). Logically, salesforce trainers or superiors offer coaching to give and guide direction and instruction necessary to increase and improve salesforce competence and performance in an organisation (Bradford et al., 2017).

Asiegbu et al. (2012) remarked that coaching creates an environment that leads to the development of a critical ideas, attitudes and behaviours about a phenomenon. It aids in increasing and improving the thought processes and knowledge of an individual in a particular working situation. Coaching is mostly done on the job and at such occasion, the coach uses real

tasks and problems to increase the performance of the learner. In coaching, according to Asiegbu et al. (2012), a salesperson with higher experience on sales job can coach a trainee by exposing him/her to the selling process stages. Coaching helps in achieving salesforce competence development (Asiegbu et al., 2012). Coaching encourages the personalization of the teaching material by granting an individual the opportunity to marry theory with practice in order to solve most problems that might face him/her (Hill et al., 1989). Cron et al. (2005) observed that unless management provides effective coaching as reinforcement, about 87 percent of the newly acquired skills learned as part of behaviourally focused training exercises are lost within one month. Previous study revealed that coaching has a strong significant and positive correlation with sales volume, market coverage, and lost account recovered in the insurance industry (Igwe & Tamunoyowuna, 2016).

### **Role Playing**

Role playing is a very essential part of salesforce training process (Singh et al., 2015). As an essential element of salesmanship, role playing has been greatly adopted by organisation for its pedagogical value (McDonald, 2006). Role playing provides the trainee with the opportunity to engage in product sale to imaginary customer (Rastogi, 2014). Role playing has been adopted by many companies as a strategy for developing new salespeople skills by observing and correcting their behaviours (Jobber & Lancaster, 2009). According to them, sales trainers place salespeople under real selling situation to gauge and guide their selling potentials. It is a form of simulation as it is not real time or practical selling scenario. For Rastogi (2014), role playing is a learning-by-doing exercise and scenario aimed at educating the salesforce on important and effective selling techniques especially at the inception of sales training programmes. Companies' sales volume and market share has dramatically improved through the provision of salesforce role playing sales trainings (Rastogi, 2014). Igwe and Tamunoyowuna (2016) observed that in real life situations, business scenario training approach which is also called role playing training allows participants to practice selling skills in working situation. In their study, it was revealed that sales performance of insurance firms was strongly, positively and significantly influenced by role playing.

Organisations employ role playing as a coaching strategy (Nguyen et al., 2019; DeLoyd et al., 2017). Nguyen (2017) stated that "role-playing served as a great way for sales coaches to practice new or previously experienced selling scenarios with salespeople." To reproduce an individual's feeling in a particular social situation such as situations dealing with attitudes and feelings, role-playing is mainly used. Role playing can be used as a tool for cognitive development and also for the development of skills such as conflict resolution, coaching and listening (Alkan & Christie, 2002). Cron et al. (2005) noted that task-related knowledge, skills and ability (KSA) that guides a salesperson's selling potentials by effecting a change in behaviour can be highly improved through role playing. A research conducted by Igwe and Tamunoyowuna (2016) revealed that role playing has positive, strong and significant correlations with sales volume, market coverage and lost account recovered. For firms to furnish their salesforce with the knack to build and maintain good relationship with their customers to make it easier to recover their lost accounts, insurance companies need to apply role playing strategy (Igwe & Tamunoyowuna, 2016). Inducting the salesforce using role playing technique bequeaths them with the unalloyed confidence to present products and

services, and close sales smartly on their clientele. It equally builds their communication relationship building skills thereby enhancing their sales performance (Igwe & Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). Olusanya et al. (2012) affirms that role playing bolsters employee confidence by increasing their chances of getting new customers through the establishment of relationships with different customers groups thus giving them the opportunity to adapt to different selling environments.

### **Salesforce Performance**

One of the most pertinent indicators of boosting salesforce performance as rated by sales managers is salesforce training (Roman et al., 2002). Salesforce performance is the contributions of a company's salesforce to the attainment of the goals in terms of their behaviour toward the sale of company products and services (Roman et al., 2002). It is a veritable aspect of sales management as it immensely contributes to the growth and survival of most organisations (Ahmad & Akbar, 2020). It has gained a lot of interest in the sales literature (Amyx, 2014). Al-Adamat and Alserhan (2020) conducted a study on performance appraisal systems. However, a study conducted by Ahmad and Akbar (2020) revealed that salesforce creativity has a significant positive impact on sales performance. Also, study conducted by Amue et al. (2012) discovered that financial incentives enhance salesforce performance. Incentives have a direct effect on salesforce optimistic approach to selling a company's products and services thereby playing a major role in the management of salesforce for enduring and compelling sales performance (Amoako & Okpattah, 2018). Salesperson performance is the actualisation and achievement of results in the carrying out specific activities which cuts across different selling jobs and situations (Singh & Das, 2012). Ahmad and Akbar (2020) revealed in their study that salesperson's experience has a strong and significant influence on sales performance.

However, the understanding, communicating and accepting of one's role and attainment of corporate objectives as a salesperson will definitely improve sales performance (Amyx, 2014). They noted that failure to understand one's role as a salesperson will loosen organisational commitment and pursuit of higher performance. Sales performance is improved through Salesforce training (Amoako & Okpattah, 2018). Increased sales growth and performance is achieved by training and motivating the salesforce adequately. Wardoyo et al. (2018) revealed that salesforce training has a significant effect on salesforce performance. As a matter of fact, the main goal of embarking on training the salesforce is to boost sales performance. Organizational performance is premeditated upon training; which is the process of educating the salesforce to deliver the act of selling products and services judiciously (Igwe & Tamunoiyowuna, 2016). Cron et al. (2005) stated that training leads to an immediate increase in sales performance. Also, Roman et al. (2002) in their study found that investing in salesforce training has a significant positive influence on sales performance. Also, Roman et al. (2002) in the same study conceptualised that salesforce training has a direct relationship with both salesforce performance and salesforce customer-orientation. Besides that, salesforce training moderated between salesforce performance and salesforce effectiveness.

## **Resource-based view or Theory**

In strategic management, the resource based theory has become a dominant paradigm and has been applied in related fields such as marketing, operations management, entrepreneurship and human resource management (Hitt et al., 2015). The theory originated in Economics and was propounded by Penrose (1959). Managers use this theory widely for project management (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014). Resource-based theory emphasizes the relevance of human resources in gaining competitive advantage and realizing organizational objectives (Barney, 2001). Kull et al. (2016) opined that a firm's competitive advantage is driven by the internal resources. So, competitive advantage can seamlessly be achieved through the acquisition, development and retention of the best human resources (Chidi, 2013). This theory explores the relationship between a firm's growth (performance) and its resources (Almarri & Gardiner, 2014). It has been widely applied in researches related to performance in organizations (Ahmed et al., 2018; Innocent 2015). The theory stipulates that organizational performance is highly a function of the capability of the human resources makeup (Ahmed et al., 2018).

However, management competencies, assets resources, capabilities resources, process resources, knowledge resources and technological resources are considered some of the major organizational resources (Ahmed et al., 2018). Ahmed et al. (2018) remarked that organizational performance is improved by these resources and capabilities which hitherto, earn competitive advantage for the firm. This theory strongly backs a positive relationship between organizational performance and its internal resources capabilities and competencies (Innocent, 2015). In view with this, Kull et al. (2016) added that resource based theory examines the connection between organizational performance and stakeholder relationships. Ahmed et al. (2018), Ahmed and Othman (2017b) and Pinho et al. (2014) described organizational commitment, culture and tactical orientation as unique internal resources owned by organizations that are aimed at actualizing substantial organizational performance and competitive advantage over competitors. This theory holds the view that the success and survival of an organization solely depend on the viability of its employees (Armstrong, 2009). Thus, coaching and role playing will generate more commitment, competitive advantage and improved salesforce performance for Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company.

## **Methodology**

The researcher employed survey method by administering structured questionnaire to gather primary data from the technical and administrative staff Innoson Vehicle Manufacturing Company Nigeria Limited. The scope of the study covered salesforce coaching and role playing and their relationship with salesforce performance in the company. The population of the study constitutes 131 technical and administrative staff of the company at Nnewi. Since they are the stakeholders in human resource practices in the establishment, the information they will provide about salesforce training will guide the study. Survey research method was adopted and structured questionnaires were administered on 97 technical and administrative staff who returned 89 that was eventually used in data presentation and analysis. Content validity was used to determine the validity of the instrument by giving questionnaire to marketing experts who modified and made the necessary corrections so that the instrument can be justifiable. The value of the test of reliability is 0.982 which was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha which indicated that there is internal consistency of the instrument. Analysis of data was done using



Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.

### Data Presentation and Analysis

Data generated from technical and administrative staff of Innoson motors manufacturing company Ltd Nnewi were presented using descriptive statistics and analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation coefficient statistical tool. The analysis was done with descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Table 1. Coded responses on the influence of coaching and salesforce performance**

| S/No         | Questionnaire items   | Strongly Agree | Agree      | Neutral   | Disagree  | Strongly Agree | Total (Freq) |
|--------------|---|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------------|--------------|
|              |   | Freq           | Freq       | Freq      | Freq      | Freq           |              |
| 1            | Salesforce performance will improve if they are coached on how to make persuasive sale presentation                                       | 42             | 28         | 15        | 04        | -              | 89           |
| 2            | Salesforce performance will improve if they are educated to understand their customer buying habits                                       | 47             | 29         | 12        | 01        | -              | 89           |
| 3            | Salesforce performance will improve if they are taught on how they can handle customer complaints better                                  | 39             | 33         | 11        | 05        | 01             | 89           |
| 4            | Knowing whom their competitors are through coaching, will help the salesforce to convince customers why their company products are better | 44             | 34         | 09        | 01        | 01             | 89           |
| 5            | Coaching the salesforce on how to deliver quality customer service will boost sales performance for the company                           | 36             | 40         | 10        | 03        | -              | 89           |
| 6            | When the salesforce learn how to close sales faster through coaching, their sales performance will improve                                | 38             | 31         | 18        | -         | 02             | 89           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |   | <b>246</b>     | <b>195</b> | <b>75</b> | <b>14</b> | <b>04</b>      | <b>534</b>   |

Source: fieldwork 2021

In Table 1, based on the aggregate response, a total of 246 indicated strongly agree, 195 indicated agree, 75 indicated neutral, 14 indicated disagree, while 04 indicated strongly disagree respectively. This implies that coaching has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance.

## Hypothesis One

H1: Coaching has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance.

**Table 2. Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | .946 <sup>a</sup> | .894     | .894              | .28101                     | .377          |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Salesforce Coaching

b. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

**Table 3. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F        | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 177.261        | 1   | 177.261     | 2244.801 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 20.926         | 265 | .079        |          |                   |
|       | Total      | 198.187        | 266 |             |          |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Coaching

**Table 4. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant) | .074                        | .090       |                           | .828   | .409 |
|       | Coaching   | .985                        | .021       | .946                      | 47.379 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

R = 0.946

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.894

F = 2244.801

T = 47.379

DW = .377

## Interpretation

Table 3 indicates that the regression sum of squares (177.261) is greater than the residual sum of squares (20.926), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 2, R is the correlation coefficient and has a value of 0.946, indicating that coaching has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance. R-square, the coefficient of determination, shows that 89.4% of the variation in salesforce performance is explained by the model. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of 0.28101. The Durbin-Watson statistics of 0.377 which is less than 2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. However,

coaching coefficient of 0.946 indicates that there is a significant positive influence of coaching on salesforce performance, which is statistically significant as shown in Table 4 (with  $t = 47.379$ ). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

**Table 5. Coded responses on the influence of role playing on salesforce performance**

| S/No         | Questionnaire items  | Strongly Agree | Agree      | Neutral   | Disagree  | Strongly Disagree | Total (Freq) |
|--------------|--|----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|--------------|
|              |  | Freq           | Freq       | Freq      | Freq      | Freq              |              |
| 1            | The salesforce learn from the sales manager how to close sales faster through role playing thus boosting sales performance                               | 45             | 36         | 05        | 02        | 01                | 89           |
| 2            | The salesforce learn how to do product demonstration from the sales manager through role playing and this boosts their performance                       | 37             | 38         | 08        | 05        | 01                | 89           |
| 3            | The salesforce learn how to make creative and persuasive sales presentation from the sales manager through role playing thus improving sales performance | 46             | 30         | 11        | 02        | -                 | 89           |
| 4            | Sales performance is improved when the sales manager teaches the salesforce how to recover customer service through role playing                         | 43             | 34         | 06        | 06        | -                 | 89           |
| 5            | Company sales performance improves when the sales manager educates the salesforce on how to appreciate customers through role playing                    | 36             | 35         | 14        | 02        | 02                | 89           |
| 6            | A company's sales performance improve when the salesforce are taught how to build good relationships with customers through role playing                 | 41             | 29         | 13        | 05        | 01                | 89           |
| <b>TOTAL</b> |  | <b>248</b>     | <b>202</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>22</b> | <b>05</b>         | <b>534</b>   |

**Source: fieldwork 2021**

In Table 5, based on the aggregate response, a total of 248 indicated strongly agree, 202 indicated agree, 57 indicated neutral, 22 indicated disagree, while 05 indicated strongly disagree respectively. This implies that role playing has a significant positive relationship with salesforce performance.

## Hypothesis Two

H2: Role playing has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance.

**Table 6. Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

| Model | R                 | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | .943 <sup>a</sup> | .888     | .888              | .27689                     | .340          |

a. Predictors: (Constant), Role Playing

b. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

**Table 7. ANOVA<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |            | Sum of Squares | df  | Mean Square | F        | Sig.              |
|-------|------------|----------------|-----|-------------|----------|-------------------|
| 1     | Regression | 161.713        | 1   | 161.713     | 2109.293 | .000 <sup>b</sup> |
|       | Residual   | 20.317         | 265 | .077        |          |                   |
|       | Total      | 182.030        | 266 |             |          |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Role Playing

**Table 8. Coefficients<sup>a</sup>**

| Model |              | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t      | Sig. |
|-------|--------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|------|
|       |              | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |        |      |
| 1     | (Constant)   | .718                        | .080       |                           | 9.003  | .000 |
|       | Role Playing | .854                        | .019       | .943                      | 45.927 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Salesforce Performance

R = 0.943

R<sup>2</sup> = 0.888

F = 2109.293

T = 45.927

DW = .340

## Interpretation

Table 7 indicates that the regression sum of squares (161.713) is greater than the residual sum of squares (20.317), which indicates that more of the variation in the dependent variable is not explained by the model. The significance value of the F statistics (0.000) is less than 0.05, which means that the variation explained by the model is due to chance. In Table 6, R is the correlation coefficient and has a value of 0.943, indicating that role playing has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance. R-square, the coefficient of determination shows that 88.8% of the variation in customer satisfaction is explained by the model. With the linear regression model, the error of the estimate is low, with a value of 0.27689. The Durbin-Watson

statistics of 0.340 which is less than 2 indicates that there is no autocorrelation. However, role playing coefficient of 0.943 indicates that there is a significant positive influence of role playing on salesforce performance, which is statistically significant as shown in Table 8 (with  $t = 45.927$ ). The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

### **Discussion of Findings**

Hypothesis one reveals that coaching has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance ( $R = 0.946$ ;  $T = 47.379$ ;  $F = 2244.801$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ) Consistent with this finding, Utrilla et al. (2015) revealed in their study that coaching has a significant influence on salesforce performance. Also, Nguyen et al. (2019) supports this view stating that coaching improves organisational performance. Another empirical study also revealed that salesforce performance is boosted via coaching (Bradford et al., 2017). Similarly, it was revealed that that role playing has a significant positive influence on salesforce performance ( $R = 0.943$ ;  $T = 45.927$ ;  $F = 2109.293$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). This is in tandem with Igwe and Tamunoyowuna (2016) who revealed in their study that role playing has a strong, positive and significant relationship with salesforce performance. However, market coverage, sales volume and recovered lost account were used as salesforce performance indicator in the study.

### **Conclusion**

Salesforce coaching and salesforce role playing are important and effective salesforce training methods used by manufacturing and service organization to secure customer interest and sustain their relationship aimed at continuously improving salesforce and organizational performance (Nguyen et al., 2019). This study revealed a strong positive influence of coaching and role playing on salesforce performance. The implication is that organizations (big or small) require to train their salesforce to enable them understand and earn good knowledge of their company, customers, competitors and the entire marketing environment in order to gain competitive advantage and sustained profitability. Coaching and role playing is indispensable as many salespeople do not possess the necessary experience to scout for profitable customers, make bold sales presentation and demonstration, handle objections effectively, close sales promptly, and follow-up on customers professionally.

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