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Employee Tenure, Training Access, and Perceived Organizational Support as Determinants of Career Advancement Opportunities of Commercial Bank Staff in South-East, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: This study examined the relationship between employee job status and career advancement opportunities of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria, focusing specifically on three dimensions of employee experience: tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organizational support. The study was motivated by growing concerns in the Nigerian banking sector, where the increasing reliance on core, contract, and outsourced staffing arrangements has produced unequal access to career progression, skill acquisition, and organizational support among employees performing similar roles. The study was anchored on Social Exchange Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Equity Theory. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population comprised 5,000 staff drawn from first-tier, second-tier, and third-tier commercial banks across Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States, with a sample size of 370 respondents determined using Taro Yamane's formula. Stratified random sampling ensured proportional representation across job status categories. Data were collected using structured questionnaires, and analyzed using descriptive statistics and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at a 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a strong positive and significant relationship between employee tenure and career path ($r = 0.648$, $p < 0.05$); a strong positive and significant relationship between access to training and development and career path ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.05$); and a strong positive and significant relationship between perceived organizational support and skill development ($r = 0.671$, $p < 0.05$). The study concluded that employee-centered organizational practices, particularly tenure recognition, equitable training access, and organizational support, significantly enhance career path clarity and skill development among commercial bank staff. It recommended structured career development frameworks, continuous and equitable training programmes, and support-oriented human resource policies that recognize the contribution of all categories of staff regardless of job status.

Keywords: Employee Job Status, Employee Tenure, Access to Training and Development, Perceived Organizational Support, Career Path, Skill Development.

INTRODUCTION

The banking sector remains a critical pillar of Nigeria's socio-economic development, serving as a catalyst for investment, employment, and financial inclusion. In South-East Nigeria, a region long associated with entrepreneurial vibrancy, commercial banks have remained major employers of labour, offering structured employment across diverse job categories. As the sector has evolved through digital innovation and

cost-driven restructuring, concerns around workforce dynamics, particularly job status and career growth, have taken centre stage in academic and professional discussions. Recent evidence from commercial banks operating within Anambra State shows that human-resource practices such as compensation structuring continue to shape workforce performance and retention outcomes, underscoring the strategic importance of how banks manage their staff (Remigius, Okeke, & Williams, 2025; Remigius, Gbenga, & Ngige, 2025).

Traditionally, commercial banks in Nigeria maintained hierarchical and rigid staffing models in which progression depended heavily on years of service and loyalty. However, the shift toward digital banking, cost-minimisation structures, flatter organisational designs, and increased contract staffing has disrupted these traditional structures, producing a segmented workforce comprising core, contract, and outsourced employees. This segmentation has raised important questions about fairness, motivation, and career advancement opportunities across job classifications, particularly where competition for limited banking positions is intense.

Employee job status refers to an employee's formal position within an organisation, defined by the nature of the employment relationship, level of responsibility, and degree of job security. It commonly distinguishes permanent or core staff from contract, outsourced, and part-time employees, and these classifications shape not only employees' roles but also their access to organisational resources, benefits, training, and decision-making processes. Employees with higher or more secure job status typically enjoy greater exposure to professional development opportunities, mentoring, and structured promotion pathways, while employees on temporary or contract appointments often experience limited access to training and appraisal systems, which can hinder long-term career growth.

Career advancement opportunities refer to the perceived and actual possibilities available to employees to progress within an organisation through promotions, lateral movements, skill acquisition, and recognition. These opportunities are central to employee motivation, engagement, and retention, particularly in competitive sectors such as banking. Understanding employee job status therefore provides a necessary foundation for examining disparities in access to career advancement opportunities and highlights the need to assess how tenure, training access, and organisational support shape employees' career trajectories within commercial banks.

One of the key variables influencing career advancement is employee tenure, the length of time an employee has worked in an organisation. Research suggests that longer tenure often correlates with a higher likelihood of promotion and inclusion in long-term development plans; however, in modern banking institutions where performance-based systems are emphasised, tenure may no longer guarantee upward mobility, particularly for contract staff whose roles are limited in scope and duration. Another important variable is access to training and development. Employees who receive continuous learning opportunities and professional development support are more likely to experience upward career mobility, yet access to such programmes often varies by job status, with core staff typically receiving more structured and strategic training than their contract or outsourced counterparts.

Perceived organisational support (POS) is a further crucial dimension influencing career outcomes. POS refers to the extent to which employees believe that their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. Employees with high POS are more likely to commit to organisational

goals, engage in continuous learning, and pursue long-term careers within the institution, while employees who feel marginalised, particularly those on non-core appointments, may experience diminished morale and constrained long-term career prospects. Beyond job status itself, broader workforce management practices such as leadership style and workplace inclusion have also been shown to shape how supported and productive employees feel within Nigerian financial and service organisations (Okafor, Odira, & Williams, 2025; Maduagwuna & Gbenga, 2025).

Given the strategic importance of human capital in driving efficiency, customer satisfaction, and profitability in the banking sector, it becomes imperative to assess how tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organisational support shape career advancement within commercial banks in South-East Nigeria. Doing so will not only shed light on the structural factors that support or constrain employee growth but also provide a basis for policy reforms aimed at improving employee experience and institutional sustainability.

Statement of the Problem

In principle, career advancement in commercial banks should be merit-based and performance-driven, with tenure, training access, and organisational support working together to build a competent and motivated workforce. In practice, however, the relationship between these dimensions of employee experience and actual career advancement has become a growing concern in the Nigerian banking sector, particularly in South-East Nigeria. With the increasing use of contract and outsourced staff to reduce operational costs and enhance flexibility, disparities in access to developmental opportunities have intensified.

A major problem is tenure-related disparity in career growth. In Nigerian commercial banks, permanent employees account for a disproportionately large share of promotional opportunities, while contract and outsourced staff are often placed on fixed-term appointments with little or no eligibility for promotion, meaning that experience and loyalty do not always translate into career mobility for all categories of staff. A related problem is the limited access to training and development opportunities faced by employees in non-core job statuses; training budgets and capacity-building programmes are frequently directed toward permanent staff, leaving non-core employees unable to acquire the skills required for upward mobility. Furthermore, perceived organisational support is often unevenly distributed, with contract and outsourced employees recording markedly lower levels of organisational support and job satisfaction than their permanent counterparts, a disparity that signals to lower-status employees that they are undervalued and constrains their motivation to pursue skill development and long-term career growth.

This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by empirically examining how employee tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organisational support relate to career path and skill development among commercial bank staff in South-East Nigeria. Previous studies have often treated these variables in isolation or outside the specific context of Nigerian commercial banking; this study provides an integrated, region-specific understanding of these dynamics and offers evidence-based recommendations for more inclusive career development strategies.

Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of this study is to examine the relationship between employee job status and career advancement opportunities of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the relationship between employee tenure and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.
2. Examine the relationship between access to training and development and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.
3. Assess the relationship between perceived organizational support and skill development of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed in null form:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between employee tenure and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between access to training and development and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between perceived organizational support and skill development of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Job Status

Employee job status refers to the classification of employees within an organisation based on the nature and terms of their employment, typically distinguishing core, contract, part-time, and outsourced workers. This categorisation shapes employees' experiences, access to organisational resources, and career development opportunities (Edeh & Ugwu, 2021). Job status is often linked to job security and benefit access: core employees usually enjoy better benefits, job security, and promotion pathways, while contract or outsourced workers face uncertainty, reduced benefits, and limited growth opportunities (Chinweuba & Ugochukwu, 2021), a disparity that can create a dual workforce within the same organisation where job status becomes a source of inequality affecting morale and performance. In Nigerian commercial banks specifically, many institutions rely heavily on contract staff for frontline service delivery while rarely offering them access to leadership development programmes, a pattern that often leads to demotivation and high turnover among lower-status employees (Eze & Okonkwo, 2022).

Employee Tenure

Employee tenure refers to the length of time an individual remains employed with a particular organisation, and it is often used to evaluate job stability, loyalty, and workforce retention. It reflects the cumulative experience an employee acquires over time and plays a role in shaping expectations regarding promotion, job security, and development opportunities (Johnson & Taylor, 2021). From a human resource management perspective, tenure has traditionally been linked with promotion and career growth, as employees with longer tenure are often viewed as more experienced and more likely to be promoted into leadership roles (Ibrahim & Okonkwo, 2023). However, in dynamic sectors such as banking, where performance and skill agility are increasingly prioritised over length of service, tenure alone may no longer guarantee upward mobility, particularly for contract staff whose roles are limited in scope and duration. Tenure can also produce both positive and negative organisational outcomes: while longer tenure may enhance organisational commitment and reduce turnover, it can also result in complacency and skill stagnation, underscoring the need for continuous employee development regardless of tenure length (Olaoye & Okonkwo, 2020).

Access to Training and Development

Access to training and development has become an essential pillar of modern organisational practice, particularly in competitive, dynamic sectors such as banking. Training refers to the systematic

improvement of employees' skills and knowledge to enhance performance in current roles, while development focuses on long-term growth and preparation for future responsibilities (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2020). Access implies not only the availability of such programmes but also equitable inclusion of all staff, regardless of employment status or rank. Access to training and development is strongly linked to employee motivation, performance, and career advancement, yet it often varies by job status, with core staff receiving more structured and strategic training than contract or outsourced employees (Chukwu & Obasi, 2020), a disparity that can lead to dissatisfaction and restricted upward mobility, particularly in sectors that rely heavily on contract staffing.

Perceived Organizational Support

Perceived Organisational Support (POS) reflects employees' beliefs about how much their organisation values their contributions and cares about their well-being. The construct is rooted in social exchange theory, which posits that employees who feel supported reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviours toward the organisation (Eisenberger, Malone, & Presson, 2020). POS is a multidimensional concept encompassing both instrumental support, such as training and resources, and socio-emotional support, such as fairness, trust, and inclusion (Kwak & Park, 2021). Importantly, POS is not uniformly experienced across job statuses; core employees typically report higher POS than contract and outsourced staff owing to their greater access to benefits and job security (Obi & Ibekwe, 2023), a disparity with implications for motivation, productivity, and employees' willingness to invest in continuous skill development.

Career Path

Career path generally refers to the trajectory or progression an individual follows in their professional life within or across organisations, comprising a series of roles that lead toward higher positions or deeper expertise (Adu & Osei, 2020). Career paths need not always be strictly upward; they may also include lateral movements that broaden an employee's skillset and experience (Ibrahim & Okoro, 2022). Career path clarity, defined as an employee's understanding of how to progress within the organisation, has been positively associated with job satisfaction and organisational commitment, while ambiguity or perceived politicisation of advancement often leads employees to disengage or seek opportunities elsewhere (Njoku & Nwachukwu, 2022). In commercial banks, job status can significantly affect how an employee envisions and experiences their career path, particularly in rigidly hierarchical institutions (Eze & Ogbuagu, 2023).

Skill Development

Skill development refers to the process by which individuals acquire, enhance, and apply the competencies necessary for effective workplace performance, encompassing both formal and informal learning processes (Adu & Adeoye, 2020). It can be categorised into hard skills, such as technical or system-based competencies, and soft skills, such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving, with contemporary literature emphasising that the integration of both is essential for effective performance in service-driven sectors like banking (Nwachukwu & Okoro, 2023). Skill development is increasingly framed as employee-driven, with individuals taking greater responsibility for their own learning while organisations provide the necessary support systems (Ibrahim & Musa, 2021); however, contract and outsourced staff in many Nigerian banks continue to receive fewer opportunities for formal training than core employees, a disparity that affects their prospects for career advancement (Ume & Adebanjo, 2023).

Theoretical Framework

Social Exchange Theory

This study is anchored on Social Exchange Theory (SET), originally proposed by Homans (1958) and later expanded by Blau (1964), with subsequent contributions from Cropanzano and Mitchell (2005) applying the theory to organisational settings. SET holds that workplace relationships thrive on trust, perceived fairness, and mutual benefit, and that employees evaluate their employment relationship in terms of perceived support, rewards, and recognition. Applied to this study, SET explains how employees' perceptions of organisational support and fairness in training access shape their attitudes toward career advancement: when employees perceive that their organisation supports their growth through training, inclusion, and consideration for advancement, they are more likely to reciprocate with loyalty, improved performance, and aspiration toward career progression. In commercial banks in South-East Nigeria, core employees may feel more supported and valued due to their eligibility for benefits and promotions, while contract or outsourced staff may perceive reduced organisational support, weakening the exchange relationship and, by extension, their motivation to pursue skill development and career growth.

Human Capital Theory

The study is further anchored on Human Capital Theory (HCT), developed by Becker (1964), which explains how investment in people through education, training, and experience enhances individual productivity and organisational value. Subsequent contributions by Mincer (1974) and Schultz (1971) expanded the theory to emphasise the returns of on-the-job training and formal education, respectively. HCT provides a framework for understanding how access to training and development, as well as accumulated tenure, affect employees' career progression in the banking sector: when employees, regardless of job status, are given equal opportunities to acquire skills and accumulate experience, they become more valuable to the organisation and more likely to advance in their careers. Where training and development opportunities remain concentrated among core staff, however, uneven investment in human capital deepens disparities in career advancement across employee groups.

Equity Theory

The third theoretical foundation is Equity Theory, developed by Adams (1963) and later extended by Walster, Berscheid, and Walster (1973) and Greenberg (1990). The theory holds that individuals evaluate the fairness of their treatment by comparing their inputs, such as effort, tenure, and experience, against their outputs, such as promotions, recognition, and support, and by comparing this ratio to that of others. Equity Theory is highly relevant to this study because it explains how employees assess their treatment relative to colleagues in different job status categories: core staff may feel fairly rewarded given their access to career advancement, while contract or outsourced staff who perceive inequity in access to tenure-linked benefits, training, or organisational support may become frustrated, disengaged, or less willing to invest effort in skill development.

Empirical Review

Employee Tenure and Career Path

Okeke and Nwankwo (2021) investigated the influence of career development opportunities on employee tenure in the banking sector in South-East Nigeria. The study sampled 300 employees across five commercial banks using a purposive sampling technique, with data gathered through a standardised questionnaire (α = 0.88). Findings revealed that employees who perceived strong opportunities for advancement were more likely to remain with their organisations, and the study concluded that structured career progression frameworks positively impact long-term employee retention.

Ahmed and Musa (2022) explored how mentorship programmes affect career path

clarity and employee tenure in manufacturing firms in Northern Nigeria. Using 250 respondents selected via systematic sampling and regression analysis (α = 0.82), the study found a strong correlation between mentorship participation and clear career trajectories, which in turn significantly influenced employee retention, and recommended institutionalising mentorship as a tool for managing career paths.

Ibrahim and Yusuf (2020) examined the impact of internal promotions on career satisfaction and tenure among civil servants in Abuja, using a multistage sample of 400 respondents (α = 0.90). The findings showed that timely promotions increased job satisfaction and encouraged longer employee tenure, with the researchers emphasising the need for transparent promotion policies to foster career loyalty. In a related study within the hospitality sector, Abayol, Gbenga, and Mbah (2025) examined work-life harmony and employee career advancement in quick service restaurants in South-East Nigeria and similarly found that employees who experienced supportive, balanced working conditions reported clearer perceptions of career progression, reinforcing the broader pattern that stable, well-managed employment relationships underpin career advancement across service-oriented sectors.

Akinola and Ibrahim (2020) explored the effects of training and development on employee career advancement and tenure in oil and gas firms in Port Harcourt. Using a sample of 280 employees and a validated instrument (α = 0.83), the findings indicated a significant link between targeted training programmes and perceptions of career advancement, which contributed to longer tenure, with the authors advocating for aligning training initiatives with career path development.

Access to Training and Development and Career Path

Adewale and Sanni (2022) explored the influence of professional training on career advancement among employees in the banking sector in Lagos State. Using a sample of 312 employees and regression analysis (α = 0.88), the results indicated that access to certified training courses positively impacted the speed and direction of employees' career paths, and the study recommended continuous professional development to boost retention and internal mobility.

Ngugi and Kamau (2020) examined training accessibility and its influence on career trajectory among public sector employees in Nairobi County, Kenya, using a cross-sectional survey of 245 respondents (α = 0.80). Results demonstrated a significant association between structured training access and clarity in career progression, and the research emphasised the importance of equitable training access for career growth in public institutions.

Olaoye and Ajibola (2023) assessed how on-the-job training programmes affect career path development among technical employees in the oil and gas sector in Rivers State, using a sample of 230 employees and regression tools (α = 0.84). Findings showed a strong correlation between participation in job-related training and clearly defined career advancement pathways, highlighting the strategic role of developmental initiatives in workforce planning.

Chukwu and Obi (2022) explored the effect of mentoring and training access on career progression in the public education sector in Anambra State, using a sample of 212 educators and both qualitative and quantitative tools (α = 0.85). Findings indicated that employees who had access to both training and mentoring experienced a smoother and more directed career path, with the authors emphasising dual support mechanisms for development. Relatedly,

Maduagwuna and Gbenga (2025), examining workplace diversity and employee satisfaction in hospitality businesses in Anambra State, found that inclusive workplace practices, of which equitable access to development opportunities is a key component, were strongly associated with higher employee satisfaction, lending further support to the view that equitable access to growth-oriented programmes underpins positive career and workplace outcomes across service sectors in the state.

Perceived Organizational Support and Skill Development

Adeoye and Afolabi (2021) investigated the influence of perceived organisational support on employees' participation in training programmes within Nigerian banking institutions. Sampling 400 employees across five major banks in Lagos ($\alpha = 0.82$), the findings revealed a strong positive correlation between employees' perception of organisational support and their willingness to engage in professional development activities, and the study recommended that management continuously communicate their support for staff development to improve participation rates.

Osei and Boateng (2020) explored the effect of perceived organisational support on skill enhancement among healthcare workers in Ghana, using a stratified sample of 250 medical professionals ($\alpha = 0.88$). Results showed that when healthcare workers felt supported by their organisations, they were more inclined to pursue continuous education and professional training, concluding that supportive organisational environments foster a culture of continuous learning.

Chukwuma and Nwankwo (2022) examined perceived organisational support and its effect on the skill-acquisition behaviour of employees in the Nigerian manufacturing sector, using 320 participants selected through multi-stage sampling ($\alpha = 0.87$). Regression analysis revealed a significant positive effect of perceived organisational support on employees' efforts to acquire new technical and managerial skills, with the authors emphasising the need for organisations to institutionalise support structures to enhance employee capability.

Lee and Kim (2021) conducted a study on the impact of organisational support on skill development motivation among IT professionals in South Korea, using 280 respondents and structural equation modelling ($\alpha = 0.89$). The study found that perceived organisational support significantly predicted employees' motivation to develop new technological skills and adapt to digital transformation trends. In a Nigerian setting, Okafor, Odira, and Williams (2025) examined transformational leadership practices and employee productivity in retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State and found that supportive, transformational leadership behaviour, a key expression of organisational support, significantly enhanced employees' productivity and willingness to develop new competencies, reinforcing the view that how supported employees feel by leadership shapes their engagement in skill-building activity.

Ibrahim and Salisu (2022) studied the impact of supportive work environments on training effectiveness in tertiary institutions in Nigeria, using a sample of 270 academic and non-academic staff ($\alpha = 0.83$). Results revealed that perceived support from management and colleagues significantly enhanced the effectiveness and uptake of skill-development training programmes, and the study recommended collaborative support models to promote staff development.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational survey research design, which was suitable for

examining the relationships between employee tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organisational support (independent variables), and career path and skill development (dependent variables), without manipulating any variable. The study was conducted in South-East Nigeria, comprising Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo States. The target population consisted of 5,000 staff drawn from first-tier, second-tier, and third-tier commercial banks across the region.

The sample size was determined using Taro Yamane's formula for a known population, at a 5% margin of error, yielding a sample size of 370 respondents. The study adopted a stratified random sampling technique, stratifying the population by job status (core, contract, and outsourced staff) across states and proportionately selecting respondents from each stratum. Data were collected through structured, self-administered questionnaires distributed both physically and electronically, with items rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument was subjected to face, content, and construct validation by experts in Human Resource Management and Organisational Psychology, and reliability was established using Cronbach's Alpha, with a pilot test conducted among 30 staff members outside the main sample area yielding coefficients above the acceptable threshold of 0.70.

Data collected were coded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 23. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, mean, and percentage were used to analyse the research questions, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to test the hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Values of $r \geq 0.5$ were interpreted as indicating a large association, r between 0.3 and 0.49 as a moderate association, and $r \leq 0.3$ as a small association. Out of 370 questionnaires administered, 350 copies (94.6%) were correctly completed and found valid for analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic analysis showed that 60.0% of respondents were male and 40.0% female, indicating a fairly balanced gender representation across the sampled banks. The majority of respondents (34.3%) fell within the 31–40 years age bracket, followed by those aged 20–30 years (25.7%), suggesting that the sample was dominated by employees in their active and productive working years. Most respondents (42.9%) held a B.Sc/HND qualification, while 54.3% were married. With respect to tenure, 31.4% of respondents had spent between 1 and 3 years in their current bank, followed by those with 4–6 years of service (28.6%), while 22.9% had more than 6 years and 17.1% had less than one year, reflecting a mix of newer and more experienced employees that strengthens the reliability of the study's findings on tenure and career progression.

Hypothesis One: Employee Tenure and Career Path

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between employee tenure and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

Descriptive analysis showed that respondents generally agreed that their length of service contributed positively to their understanding of promotion structures and to their career progression, with tenure-related items recording mean scores between 3.83 and 3.90. Career path items similarly recorded strong agreement, with mean scores ranging from 3.76 to 3.82, indicating that respondents perceived the existence of relatively clear advancement pathways, though career guidance was rated comparatively lower, suggesting room for

improvement in structured career counselling. The Pearson correlation analysis, presented in Table 1, showed a strong positive relationship between employee tenure and career path ($r = 0.648$, $p < 0.01$), which is statistically significant. This suggests that employees with longer tenure are more likely to experience clearer career progression and advancement opportunities within the banking sector. Accordingly, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) is rejected.

Table 1: Pearson Correlation between Employee Tenure and Career Path

Variables	Employee Tenure	Career Path
Employee Tenure	1	
Career Path	.648**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	350	350

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: SPSS Version 23 (2026)*

This finding is consistent with Okeke and Nwankwo (2021), who found that employees with access to career development opportunities were more likely to remain longer in the banking sector, suggesting a link between tenure and career advancement. Similarly, Ahmed and Musa (2022) established that mentorship programmes significantly improved career path clarity, which in turn influenced employee retention. Ibrahim and Yusuf (2020) further demonstrated that timely promotions increased job satisfaction and encouraged longer tenure among civil servants, while Abayol, Gbenga, and Mbah (2025) similarly found that stable, well-managed employment conditions in the hospitality sector were associated with clearer career advancement perceptions. Collectively, these studies reinforce the current finding that longer tenure enhances familiarity with organisational structures and increases opportunities for advancement, supporting the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis Two: Access to Training and Development and Career Path

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between access to training and development and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

Descriptive analysis revealed that respondents generally agreed that they had access to regular job-related training and workshops (mean = 3.88) and that training received had enhanced their job performance (mean = 3.89), although access to mentorship or coaching was rated comparatively lower (mean = 3.79). The Pearson correlation result, presented in Table 2, revealed a strong positive relationship between access to training and development and career path ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that employees who have greater access to training opportunities tend to experience better career growth and advancement. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H_{02}) is rejected.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Access to Training and Development and Career Path

Variables	Training & Development	Career Path
Training & Development	1	
Career Path	.662**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	350	350

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: SPSS Version 23 (2026)*

This result corroborates the findings of Adewale and Sanni (2022), who reported that professional training positively influences the speed and direction of employees' career advancement in the banking sector, and Ngugi and Kamau (2020) and Olaoye and Ajibola (2023), who established that structured training opportunities improve career trajectory and advancement pathways. The finding also aligns with Chukwu and Obi (2022), who found that dual access to training and mentoring produces smoother, more directed career paths, and is consistent with Maduagwuna and Gbenga (2025), whose study of hospitality businesses in Anambra State found that inclusive access to development-oriented practices was strongly linked to positive employee outcomes. These studies collectively reinforce the current finding, confirming that training and development are critical drivers of career path advancement.

Hypothesis Three: Perceived Organizational Support and Skill Development

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between perceived organizational support and skill development of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria.

Descriptive analysis showed that respondents generally agreed that their organizations supported their professional development and encouraged career progression, with perceived Organizational support items recording mean scores between 3.82 and 3.89. Skill development items recorded even higher agreement, with mean scores ranging from 3.85 to 3.92, the highest being agreement that respondents had gained new skills since joining their organisation. The Pearson correlation result, presented in Table 3, indicated a strong positive relationship between perceived organisational support and skill development ($r = 0.671$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that when employees perceive higher levels of organisational support, they are more likely to develop relevant skills. This provides sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}).

Table 3: Pearson Correlation between Perceived Organizational Support and Skill Development

Variables	Perceived Organizational Support	Skill Development
Perceived Organizational Support	1	
Skill Development	.671**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
N	350	350

***Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). Source: SPSS Version 23 (2026)*

This finding aligns with Adeoye and Afolabi (2021), who found that perceived organisational support significantly increases employees' participation in training programmes, and with Osei and Boateng (2020) and Chukwuma and Nwankwo (2022), who reported that supportive organisational environments enhance employees' willingness to acquire new skills. The finding is further reinforced by Lee and Kim (2021) and Ibrahim and Salisu (2022), who found that organisational support motivates continuous learning and improves training effectiveness, and by Okafor, Odira, and Williams (2025), whose study of retail telecommunication firms in Anambra State found that supportive, transformational leadership behaviour significantly enhanced employees' engagement in productivity- and skill-

related activities. These consistent findings validate the rejection of the null hypothesis and confirm that perceived organisational support plays a vital role in enhancing employee skill development.

Summary of Findings

This study examined the relationships between employee tenure, access to training and development, perceived organisational support, and organisational outcomes specifically career path and skill development among commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria. A sample of 350 staff members was surveyed, and Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to test the hypotheses. The key findings are as follows:

1. There is a strong positive and significant relationship between employee tenure and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria ($r = 0.648$, $p < 0.01$).
2. There is a strong positive and significant relationship between access to training and development and career path of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria ($r = 0.662$, $p < 0.01$).
3. There is a strong positive and significant relationship between perceived organizational support and skill development of commercial bank staff in South-East, Nigeria ($r = 0.671$, $p < 0.01$).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that employee tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organisational support significantly contribute to career path clarity and skill development among commercial bank staff in South-East Nigeria. Employee tenure enhances career path clarity as longer-serving staff gain experience and a better understanding of organisational systems, though tenure alone is insufficient without structured advancement pathways. Access to training and development improves career progression by equipping employees with the competencies required for higher responsibilities, while perceived organisational support plays a vital role in fostering skill development, as employees who feel valued and supported are more motivated to engage in continuous learning. Banks that recognise tenure fairly, invest in equitable training access, and cultivate supportive work environments across all categories of staff, core, contract, and outsourced, are more likely to achieve improved career development outcomes, employee performance, and long-term workforce sustainability. The findings reinforce Social Exchange Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Equity Theory by demonstrating that reciprocity, investment in human capital, and perceived fairness are critical mechanisms through which employee job status shapes career path clarity and skill development in the commercial banking sector. Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Commercial banks should implement structured career development frameworks that recognise and reward employee tenure, ensuring that long-serving employees, regardless of job status, have clear pathways for advancement.
2. Management should invest in regular, equitable, and relevant training and development programmes that align with employees' career goals and organisational needs, extending access beyond core staff to contract and outsourced employees.
3. Organisations should strengthen perceived organisational support by creating policies that promote employee recognition, fairness, and professional growth, particularly for employees on non-core appointments, in order to enhance skill development.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study contributes to knowledge in the following ways. Empirically, it provides

integrated evidence on how employee tenure, access to training and development, and perceived organisational support jointly shape career path clarity and skill development among commercial bank staff, extending prior studies that often examined these variables in isolation. Geographically, the study offers region-specific evidence for commercial banks in South-East Nigeria, an area that remains under-represented in the wider literature on employee job status and career development compared with studies conducted in Lagos, Abuja, and other regions. Theoretically, the study reinforces and extends Social Exchange Theory, Human Capital Theory, and Equity Theory by demonstrating how reciprocity, human capital investment, and perceived fairness interact to shape career advancement outcomes across employees of differing job status within the Nigerian commercial banking sector.

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