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EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM OF COMMISSION ON AUDIT (COA) FOR NEW AND TENURED PERSONNEL: BASIS FOR AN ENHANCED HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (HRD) FRAMEWORK

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Abstract

Professional development programs play an essential role in strengthening employee competencies and improving organizational performance in government institutions. This study examined the effectiveness of professional development programs implemented for new and tenured personnel in a government auditing institution. Using a qualitative case-analysis design, the study explored the experiences and perceptions of employees who participated in various training and capacity-building initiatives. Data were gathered through interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and document analysis from the new recruits and tenured personnel and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring patterns and themes related to the effectiveness of these programs. The findings revealed that training programs significantly improved employee competencies, skills enhancement, job performance, ethical awareness, and increased employee engagement. However, several challenges were identified, including workload constraints, scheduling conflicts, and limited access to training opportunities. Based on the findings, the study proposed an enhanced Human Resource Development (HRD) framework that integrates skills development, leadership capacity, and ethical governance to strengthen professional development programs in government institutions. The proposed framework provides a strategic approach for improving employee competencies and institutional effectiveness in the public sector.

Keywords: Commission on Audit, Professional Development Program, Human Resource Development, Capacitation program, new and tenured personnel

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Audit (COA), as the Philippines' supreme audit institution, plays a pivotal role in ensuring transparency, accountability, and integrity in public administration. Its constitutional mandate requires not only technical competence but also a workforce equipped to address evolving governance

challenges. Recognizing this, COA has invested in professional development programs—trainings, seminars, workshops, and mentoring—to enhance employee performance and institutional resilience.

Republic Act No. 10912, the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Act of 2016, and Civil Service Commission (CSC) issuances provide the legal foundation for these initiatives. These policies emphasize lifelong learning, meritocracy, and institutional integrity, situating COA's HRD framework within national and international standards, including the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4: Quality Education; SDG 16: Strong Institutions).

Despite structured programs, empirical evidence on their effectiveness remains limited. Anecdotal reports suggest improvements in competencies and organizational outcomes, yet systematic evaluation is lacking. New recruits often struggle with role clarity and institutional integration, while tenured employees face challenges in sustaining motivation and adapting to new auditing standards. This research addresses these gaps by applying Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and Kirkpatrick's Training Evaluation Model (1994) to assess program outcomes.

Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What capacitation program (trainings, seminars, workshops, and mentoring) were provided by COA for the past three (3) years among its:
 - a. New Recruits
 - b. Tenured Employees
2. What is the extent of effectiveness of the COA Professional Development Program in the delivery of the capacitation program in terms of:
 - a. Acquisition of skills and competencies
 - b. Job performance
 - c. Job satisfaction
 - d. Role clarity and institutional understanding
 - e. Employee engagement and motivation
3. What challenges are encountered by the Professional Development Office from its:
 - a. New recruits during onboarding and initial training
 - b. Current employees during continuous professional development
4. How do capacitation programs through the professional development office influence organizational outcomes such as:
 - a. Service delivery
 - b. Productivity
 - c. Internal communication
 - d. Work quality
 - e. Employee retention
5. What best practices of the institution can be identified from implementing the professional development program?
6. What enhancement capacitation and development framework can be proposed based on the findings of this research?

METHODOLOGY

The following are hereby utilized as processes in the materialization of this article:

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case analysis design supported by triangulation to ensure depth, validity, and reliability of findings.

Participants/Respondents

The participants included 10-15 employees composed of new recruits and tenured personnel from the organization. Purposive sampling was used to select participants with relevant experiences in professional development programs.

Research Instruments

Data were collected using:

- Semi-structured interview guide
- Focus Group Discussion (FGD)
- Document analysis of training reports and HRD plans

Data Gathering Procedures

Data collection involved conducting interviews, administering focus group discussions, and reviewing institutional documents. Ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality were strictly observed.

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes from qualitative data. Coding procedures included open coding, categorization, and theme development.

Triangulation was applied through cross-validation of interview data, survey responses, and document analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Overview of Findings

The analysis of data generated five major themes: (1) Program Effectiveness, (2) Program Gaps, (3) Onboarding Challenges, (4) Tenured Employee Challenges, and (5) Effective HRD Strategies. These themes emerged through systematic coding and were validated through triangulation of interview narratives, focus group discussions (FGD), and document analysis.

B. Thematic Presentation with Narrative Integration

Theme 1: Program Effectiveness

Professional development programs were widely perceived as instrumental in enhancing employee competencies, confidence, and performance.

Participant narratives reveal that structured training programs significantly contributed to skill acquisition and job efficiency. One new recruit shared how training improved both competence and confidence:

"The seminars and workshops I attended significantly improved my understanding of audit processes. After each training, I became more confident in preparing reports and analyzing documents." (Participant 3)

Similarly, a tenured employee emphasized the importance of continuous learning:

"Training programs help me stay updated with new policies and procedures. Continuous learning is important because our work constantly evolves." (Participant 12)

Expanding beyond short responses, Participant 3 described a transformative learning experience:

"At first, I was hesitant in performing my tasks because I lacked practical knowledge. But after attending several training sessions, I noticed that I could already apply what I learned. I became more confident in making decisions and completing reports."

Another participant added depth to this perspective:

"Even after many years in service, I still find value in training because it refreshes my knowledge and sometimes introduces better ways of doing things."

Interpretation:

These narratives confirm that training programs contribute to human capital development by enhancing employee competence, confidence, capability, adaptive expertise and performance. The findings align with adult learning theory, which posits that learning

is effective when it is experiential and directly applicable. Triangulated survey data indicating high perceived usefulness of training further supports this finding.

The table below presents participants' verbatim responses illustrating how professional development programs enhance competencies, confidence, and job performance, leading to the emergence of the theme on program effectiveness.

Table 1.0 Verbatim-Based Thematic Matrix on Program Effectiveness of Professional Development Programs

Participant	Responses	Sub-Theme	Theme
P3	<i>"The seminars and workshops I attended significantly improved my understanding of audit processes. After each training, I became more confident in preparing reports and analyzing documents."</i>	Skill Acquisition; Confidence Building	Program Effectiveness
P3	<i>"At first, I was hesitant in performing my tasks because I lacked practical knowledge. But after attending several training sessions, I noticed that I could already apply what I learned."</i>	Learning Application; Competency Development	Program Effectiveness
P12	<i>"Training programs help me stay updated with new policies and procedures. Continuous learning is important because our work constantly evolves."</i>	Continuous Learning; Professional Growth	Program Effectiveness
P_	<i>"Even after many years in service, I still find value in training because it refreshes my knowledge and sometimes introduces better ways of doing things."</i>	Knowledge Enhancement; Learning Reinforcement	Program Effectiveness

Theme 2: Program Gaps

Despite the positive impact, participants identified significant gaps related to relevance, accessibility, and alignment of training programs.

A tenured employee highlighted the issue of misalignment:

"Some training programs are not aligned with my current responsibilities. They are too general and do not address the specific challenges I encounter in my work."
(Participant 10)

Similarly, a new recruit described accessibility constraints:

"There are times when I cannot attend training because of workload. It becomes difficult to balance learning and deadlines." (Participant 5)

A more detailed narrative illustrates systemic concerns:

Table 2.0 Verbatim-Based Thematic Matrix on Identified Gaps in Professional Development Programs

Participant	Responses	Sub-Theme	Theme
P10	<i>"Some training programs are not aligned with my current responsibilities. They are too general and do not address the specific challenges I encounter in my work."</i>	Misalignment; Irrelevant Training Content	Program Gaps
P5	<i>"There are times when I cannot attend training because of workload. It becomes difficult to balance learning and deadlines."</i>	Workload Constraint; Accessibility Issue	Program Gaps
P_	<i>"While I appreciate the effort to provide training, I feel that some topics are not directly useful to my assigned tasks. It would be better if the training programs were customized based on our roles."</i>	Lack of Customization; Role Mismatch	Program Gaps

Theme 3: Onboarding Challenges (New Recruits)

New employees consistently reported difficulties during the onboarding phase, particularly in understanding their roles and managing information overload.

Participant 1 described the adjustment struggle:

"When I first entered the organization, I felt overwhelmed by the complexity of audit procedures. The orientation was too condensed, and I struggled to absorb everything."

Participant 6 elaborated on cognitive overload:

"During the first few months, there were too many concepts introduced at once. I found it difficult to retain everything."

A deeper narrative highlights the lack of structure:

"I had to rely on my co-workers to understand how things actually work. The training was helpful, but it came after I already struggled."

Interpretation:

These narratives indicate the absence of a structured onboarding system. Triangulated evidence (survey responses and document gaps) strongly supports this finding, suggesting a critical need for phased onboarding programs.

The table below presents verbatim responses describing difficulties experienced by new employees during onboarding, including information overload, role ambiguity, and lack of structured guidance.

Table 3.0 Verbatim-Based Thematic Matrix on Onboarding Challenges among New Recruits

Participant	Responses	Sub-Theme	Theme
P1	<i>"When I first entered the organization, I felt overwhelmed by the complexity of audit procedures. The orientation was too condensed, and I struggled to absorb everything."</i>	Information Overload; Orientation Difficulty	Onboarding Challenges
P6	<i>"During the first few months, there were too many concepts introduced at once. I found it difficult to retain everything."</i>	Cognitive Overload; Learning Retention Issue	Onboarding Challenges
P_	<i>"I had to rely on my co-workers to understand how things actually work. The training was helpful, but it came after I already struggled."</i>	Informal Learning; Lack of Structured Onboarding	Onboarding Challenges

Theme 4: Tenured Employee Challenges

Tenured personnel reported issues such as resistance to change, training fatigue, and limited relevance of programs.

Participant 8 expressed training fatigue:

"After many years, some training programs become repetitive. They do not add much to what I already know."

Participant 9 described resistance to change:

"When new systems are introduced, it is difficult to adjust because we are already used to existing processes."

A more reflective narrative illustrates behavioral dynamics:

"It is not that we do not want to learn, but sometimes change feels overwhelming, especially when it disrupts routines we have mastered over the years."

Interpretation:

These findings align with change management theory, indicating behavioral resistance as a barrier to effective HRD implementation. Triangulation confirms moderate convergence across data sources.

The table below shows participants' narratives reflecting training fatigue, resistance to change, and perceived redundancy, which characterize the challenges faced by tenured personnel.

Table 4.0 Verbatim-Based Thematic Matrix on Challenges Encountered by Tenured Employees

Participant	Responses	Sub-Theme	Theme
P8	<i>"After many years, some training programs become repetitive. They do not add much."</i>	Training Fatigue; Redundancy	Tenured Employee Challenges
P9	<i>"When new systems are introduced, it is difficult to adjust because we are already used to existing processes."</i>	Resistance to Change; Adaptation Difficulty	Tenured Employee Challenges
P_	<i>"It is not that we do not want to learn, but sometimes change feels overwhelming, especially when it disrupts routines we have mastered over the years."</i>	Behavioral Resistance; Comfort with Routine	Tenured Employee Challenges

Theme 5: Effective HRD Strategies

Participants identified mentoring, experiential learning, and hands-on training as the most effective strategies.

Participant 4 emphasized mentoring:

"What really helped me adjust was having a mentor. Learning from someone experienced made a big difference."

Participant 13 highlighted experiential learning:

"Hands-on activities and case-based discussions are more effective because they relate to real audit situations."

A richer narrative reinforces this:

"Formal training gives us the foundation, but actual learning happens when someone guides you through real tasks. Mentoring bridges that gap."

Interpretation:

These findings support adult learning principles, emphasizing experiential and context-based learning. Triangulated data confirm strong preference for mentoring and practical training approaches.

The table below presents verbatim responses identifying mentoring, experiential learning, and hands-on training as effective strategies for enhancing employee learning and performance.

Table 5.0 Verbatim-Based Thematic Matrix on Effective Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategies

Participant	Responses	Sub-Theme	Theme
P4	"What really helped me adjust was having a mentor. Learning from someone experienced made a big difference."	Mentoring; Guided Learning	Effective HRD Strategies
P13	"Hands-on activities and case-based discussions are more effective because they relate to real audit situations."	Experiential Learning; Practical Application	Effective HRD Strategies
P_	"Formal training gives us the foundation, but actual learning happens when someone guides you through real tasks. Mentoring bridges that gap."	Mentorship Integration; Theory- Practice Link	Effective HRD Strategies

C. Cross-Analysis and Synthesis

Across all themes, triangulation revealed consistent patterns:

- Training programs are effective but not fully optimized
- Structural gaps exist in alignment and accessibility
- Onboarding is a critical weakness
- Tenured employees require differentiated learning strategies
- Mentoring and experiential learning are high-impact interventions

These findings collectively informed the development of an Enhanced HRD Framework, which integrates competency-based training, structured onboarding, and continuous evaluation mechanisms.

D. Discussion of Findings

The findings demonstrate that while HRD initiatives contribute to employee development, their effectiveness is contingent upon alignment, delivery, and contextual relevance. The convergence of narrative data and triangulated evidence suggests that a shift toward a more strategic and system-based HRD approach is necessary.

This study examined the effectiveness of professional development programs in a public sector institution using a triangulated qualitative approach. The findings revealed that while training initiatives contribute significantly to employee competency, performance, and engagement, several structural and contextual limitations hinder their full effectiveness.

1. Training Effectiveness and Human Capital Development

The findings affirm that professional development programs enhance employees' technical skills, confidence, and work performance. Participant narratives consistently demonstrated that training improved task execution, particularly in audit-related functions.

This supports Human Capital Theory, which posits that investments in employee training lead to increased productivity and organizational effectiveness. The results also align with contemporary studies emphasizing that structured training programs positively influence employee performance and organizational outcomes.

However, the study extends existing literature by demonstrating that effectiveness is not solely dependent on training provision, but also on timing, relevance, and delivery mechanisms, as evidenced by participant experiences.

2. Misalignment of Training Programs and Competency Needs

Despite the positive outcomes, a critical issue identified was the misalignment between training content and job-specific

requirements. Participants noted that some programs were too general and did not directly address their functional responsibilities.

This finding is consistent with recent HRD research emphasizing the importance of **competency-based training systems**. The lack of alignment suggests that current training practices are not fully responsive to actual workplace demands, thereby limiting knowledge transfer and application.

From a theoretical standpoint, this reflects a gap at the behavioral level of training evaluation, where learning does not fully translate into workplace performance.

3. Onboarding Challenges and Organizational Socialization

The study revealed that new recruits experience significant onboarding challenges, including role ambiguity, information overload, and lack of structured guidance. These findings highlight deficiencies in organizational socialization processes.

Existing literature underscores that effective onboarding programs facilitate faster adjustment, improve job satisfaction, and enhance retention. The absence of a structured onboarding framework in this study indicates a critical HRD gap that affects early employee performance and integration.

4. Resistance to Change among Tenured Employees

Tenured personnel demonstrated resistance to new systems and training initiatives, often due to familiarity with established processes and perceived redundancy of training content.

This finding aligns with Change Management Theory, which explains that resistance is a natural response to organizational change. It also reflects the similar training reduces engagement.

The study contributes to the literature by highlighting the need for differentiated and advanced-level training tailored to experienced employees.

5. Effectiveness of Experiential Learning and Mentoring

One of the most significant findings is the strong preference for mentoring and experiential learning approaches. Participants emphasized that practical, hands-on experiences and guidance from experienced colleagues were more impactful than traditional lecture-based training.

This supports Adult Learning Theory, which emphasizes that adult learners are self-directed and benefit from experiential and context-based learning. The findings suggest that HRD programs should shift toward more interactive and practice-oriented approaches.

E. Implications of the Study

1. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the field of Human Resource Development by:

- Extending Human Capital Theory through the inclusion of contextual factors such as training alignment and accessibility
- Reinforcing Adult Learning Theory in public sector training contexts
- Integrating Change Management Theory to explain resistance among tenured employees
- Demonstrating the value of triangulation in strengthening qualitative HRD research

2. *Practical Implications*

For public sector institutions, the findings suggest:

- The need to shift from generic training programs to competency-based systems
- The importance of structured onboarding programs for new employees
- The necessity of differentiated training pathways for new and tenured personnel
- The value of mentoring and experiential learning as core HRD strategies
- The implementation of continuous monitoring and evaluation mechanisms

3. *Policy Implications*

At the organizational level, the study highlights the need to:

- Institutionalize HRD policies that prioritize strategic workforce development
- Allocate resources for training customization and innovation
- Develop frameworks that support continuous learning and adaptability
- Integrate HRD into broader organizational performance and governance systems

F. **Proposed Enhanced Human Resource Development (HRD) Framework**

The Enhanced HRD Framework

The findings of the study led to the development of an Enhanced HRD Framework designed to address identified gaps and improve training effectiveness.

1. *Framework Components*

INPUT

- Professional Development Programs
(Trainings, Seminars, Workshops, Mentoring)

PROCESS

- Competency-Based Training Design
- Structured Onboarding System
- Differentiated Learning Pathways
- Experiential and Blended Learning
- Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

OUTPUT (Individual Outcomes)

- Enhanced Skills and Competencies
- Improved Job Performance
- Increased Job Satisfaction
- Higher Employee Engagement

OUTCOME (Organizational Impact)

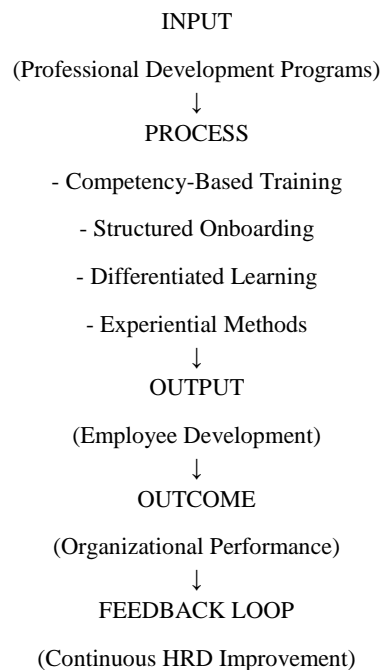
- Improved Service Delivery
- Increased Productivity

- Enhanced Work Quality
- Strengthened Communication
- Higher Employee Retention

FEEDBACK LOOP

- Training Evaluation
- Policy Enhancement
- Continuous Improvement

2. *Visual Framework Model (Textual Representation)*



3. *Framework Contribution*

This framework contributes by:

- Integrating training effectiveness, onboarding, and change management
- Addressing both new recruits and tenured employees
- Providing a systematic and scalable HRD model
- Serving as a policy and implementation guide for public institutions

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that professional development programs are essential in enhancing employees' competencies and professional capabilities. Training initiatives significantly improve job performance and organizational productivity, while also fostering greater motivation, engagement, and job satisfaction among employees. These findings affirm the critical role of continuous learning in building a competent and committed workforce.

However, the study also concludes that challenges such as workload constraints and limited training opportunities may hinder employee participation in professional development activities. Despite these limitations, the integration of structured training programs, leadership development initiatives, and ethical orientation establishes a strong foundation for an effective human resource development framework. Overall, promoting continuous learning and professional growth strengthens organizational effectiveness and contributes to improved public service delivery.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

For the Commission on Audit, the organization should continue strengthening its professional development programs by providing more opportunities for employees to participate in training activities. Increasing the number of sessions and ensuring equitable access can help maximize employee development.

Strengthening Leadership Development

Leadership development programs should be expanded to prepare employees for supervisory and managerial roles. This will ensure effective leadership succession within the organization.

Implementation of Blended Learning

The organization should adopt blended learning approaches that combine face-to-face training with online learning platforms. This strategy can improve accessibility and accommodate employees with heavy workloads.

Institutionalization of Mentorship Programs

Mentorship Programs should be institutionalized to facilitate knowledge sharing between experienced personnel and younger employees.

Continuous Program Evaluation

Regular Evaluation of professional development programs should be conducted to ensure that training initiatives remain relevant to employees' professional needs.

Future Research

Future researchers may conduct similar studies in government agencies to examine the effectiveness of professional development programs across different institutional context. Future studies may:

1. Conduct quantitative validation of the proposed HRD framework
2. Explore HRD effectiveness across different government agencies
3. Investigate the impact of digital learning platforms in public sector training
4. Examine long-term effects of mentoring on employee retention and performance
5. Utilize mixed-methods approaches for deeper analysis

DECLARATION OF NO CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest in the conduct and publication of this study.

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