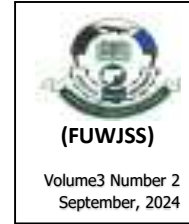


AN EVALUATION OF FACTORS AFFECTING EFFECTIVE TRAINING IN PLATEAU STATE PUBLIC CORPORATIONS, JOS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Training is generally viewed as the process of increasing and improving the knowledge and skills of employees for excellence in executing job schedules assigned to them. As a means of inculcating skills and knowledge into employees, training has been faced with numerous challenges in its processes within Plateau State-owned public corporations. The use of obsolete methods, facilities and technologies has impeded the achievement of effective training processes thereby undermining efficiency in public corporations within Plateau State. In attempts to explicate these nuances, this paper examines factors affecting the effective training of employees in Plateau State-owned public corporations. The study wherein data for this paper emerged adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. Data were collected using structured questionnaires from respondents drawn from Plateau Radio Television Corporation Jos, Plateau State Water Board and Plateau State Fire Service. Data were analysed using simple percentages statistics; while ANOVA statistics was used to test the study's hypotheses. The study results reveal that factors such as incomprehensible training policies; lack of relevant training facilities; differential learning styles; generational gaps; language and literacy barriers; training inconsistency; turnover and absenteeism; regulatory compliance issues impede the attainment of effective training processes in Plateau State-owned public corporations. The study concludes that nepotism, poor funding for employee training as well as lack of effective mechanism for monitoring of training implementation negatively affect effective training in Plateau State-owned corporations. Thus, the study recommends that there is need to include the provision of better training facilities and equipment in Plateau State Public Corporations.

Keywords: Training, efficiency, public servants, public corporations

Introduction

In the history of organisations, capacity is needed for one to deliver or execute any task effectively. The capacity of an employee has to do with the quality and quantity of work that the employee can execute under a period of time (Dandak, 2022). It speaks about the ability, competence and volume of work that a worker can accomplish. One key component of capacity in an organisation is skill. Without skill, no task can be accomplished successfully (Dandak, 2023). Often times, organizations have to organise series of training programmes that would help impact employees with the needed skills, knowledge as well as to boost and update existing skills. Skills are organization's guarantee to achieving organizational goals. Therefore, it is imperative for organisations to equip their employees with skills through training which is the major tool to achieving it. Little wonder the concern of the human relation school, as the worker is believed to be the major factor in improving productivity. (Mayo, 2004)

The underpinning theory used in this paper is the Instructional System Development theory which advocates for 'Analysis' by Smriti (2015). Training need assessment and job analysis, all geared towards achieving the objective of employee training. Ultimately, the model argued that training objectives are defined on the basis of job responsibilities and job description, while individual progress is measured on the basis of the defined objectives. The Instructional System Development Model explains ways of achieving effective training through its five stages. The first stage is analysis which is basically concerned with needs assessment. The second is planning. This stage comprises of setting of goals of learning outcome, instructional objectives that measure behaviour of a participant after training. The third stage is development. This is the stage where designs and decisions are translated into training materials like workbook, visual aids, hand-out and so on. Stage four is the execution phase where attention is focused on logistical arrangements, such as arranging speakers, equipment, benches, podium, cooling, lighting, parking and other training accessories.

Evaluation is the fifth stage. As the last stage, the purpose of this phase is to make sure that the training programme has achieved its aim in terms of subsequent work performance.

The model allows for the identification of strengths and weaknesses of training exercise. It is therefore reliable in identifying and clearing out factors that usually impede the achievement of effective training.

Historically, the government of Nigeria accepted that there is the need and wisdom to use training as a vehicle for enhancing productivity and efficiency in the public service (Williams, 2004). It therefore issued a white paper in 1968 titled “Statement of Federal Government Policy on Staff Development in the Federal Public Service”. This serves as the evolution of Public Service Training Policy. Sometimes, the process, strategies and delivery of employee trainings may not be effective in transferring the necessary skills of the training offered due to poor provision and handling of logistics. This poor or inadequate nature of training could constitute a huge constraint resulting to factors hampering the achievement of effective training of workers in the corporations. Some of the factors impeding the achievement of effective training lack of managerial support, peer encouragement and adequate resources. (Sanjeevkumar Yenani, 2011). These issues seem to be prevalent in the PSPC and impeding the effectiveness of employee training. It is against this backdrop that this paper seeks to evaluate the factors affecting effective training using the case of the civil service in Nigeria by identifying and examining the factors that determine effective training, examine the process of training that ensure effective training, examine the nature and type of training for effective training and to make recommendations towards improving and ensuring effective training.

Conceptualizing Employee Training

Training refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competence as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relates to specific useful competence (Trevisani 2015). It is a process through which the skills, talents and knowledge of an employee is enhanced and increased (Obisi, 2011). The prevailing challenges of technological revolution and the quest for more knowledge around the globe have prompted most organisations and countries to seek new ways to meet up with the trend in globalisation. Taking cue from countries like Japan and China, that are considered successful in the industrial sector, organisations now ascribe productivity to advancement in the skills of their human capital. Therefore, personnel training is being prioritised consequent to the fact that organisations can be efficient by improving their capacity to manage change and innovations relevant to their work. The human capital was recognized as one important factor of national economic growth in the modern economy and therefore emphasized investment for the development of the human capital (Chen & Zheng, 2017). This is due to the new service

delivery needs which pose a challenge to training for effective service delivery. For example, countries like Germany, Australia, USA, UK and Newzeland in the 1970s and 80s, respectively embarked on what they called "New Managerialism". This represents the deployment of new managerial principles in public sector bodies (Lynch, Grummell and Devine, 2012 in Lynch, 2014). It connotes "stripping public services of moral and ethical values and replacing them with the market language of costs, efficiencies, profits and competition" (Lynch, 2014). Thomas et al (1995) stated that the East Asian experience has underscored the critical contributions of the public service in fostering rapid development. Arguably, there seems to be general agreement that employee training is imperative to equip the public corporations.

In assessing the African experience, it will be logical to reason in the following direction: why is training so important? What is the quality of training? The dominant complaints among workers in the third world countries have been inefficiency and inadequate training programmes; lack of adequate welfare, conducive working condition as well as bad leadership or management. Another complaint is the problem of excessive political and executive pressure with tribal sentiments in the service community. Addressing and establishing well organized training programmes will help eliminate this inefficiency and lack of drive among workers. The development of indigenous manpower to serve as the propelling force for natural growth and development is no doubt a key to Nigeria's socio-economic and political development (Anazodo, 2009). The choice of Public Corporations in Plateau State is based on the fact that it is a body that has a training policy, mandated to train workers (give source) input relevant sustainable development. The Nigerian public corporations under the Nigerian Civil Service which has been in existence since 1962 has undergone some reforms, each structured to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the civil service. Unfortunately, this has not been adequately achieved. Although, a policy exists on manpower development, there exist a gap between it and the output of its implementation (Nwachuku in Akpanabia, 2012).

Public Corporations in Plateau State, Nigeria

Shebbs et al (2015) define public corporations as government owned outfit which perform exclusive functions for the general public and citizens of the state. They are mostly called 'Government Controlled Enterprise' (Khan in Shebbs, 2015). They are also viewed as 'State Owned Enterprise' (Shirley in Shebbs 2015). These Corporations are

created specifically to address market deficit and capital short-fall, promote economic development, reduce mass employment and ensure national control over the economy (Khan, 2015). The operations of the public corporations ranges from the provision of goods and services sold out into the domestic and global market, while the profit gets back to the state. The state government are to be committed to making and utilising gains effectively through these corporations. "Public corporations are most essential in the sustenance of government's reputation" (Shebbs et al, 2015:90). Their existence of is mainly to enhance government's capacity to deliver social services and welfare packages to its citizenry. Abuh et al (2016), concur with Shebbs et al (2015) when they pointed that these corporations exist as more of social infrastructure driven to improve the wellbeing of the citizenry at affordable rate. However, the unresolved challenges of these corporations however, include rising corruption, management inefficiencies, overstaffing and so on. (Public Enterprises: UCN, 2005).

Plateau Radio Television Corporation (PRTVC) as a public corporation has been able to training about seventy personnel between 2012 and 2015 in different training centres and tertiary institutions as well as through workshops and seminars organised to update staff skills. The Plateau State Water Board (PSWB) on the other hand, has made several efforts to enhance the skills of her employee but the board was handicap as a result of some factors chief of which it is the insufficient water academy.

Factors Influencing Effective Training

Usually, both human and material resources are needed in other to achieve effective employee training. Itemizing, these could include: resource persons, facilities and funds etc. However, the absence or insufficiency of any of these materials could constitute an impeding factor. To identify the key factors within and outside the training context that could affect training effectiveness, Wiley (2016) argued that the most important variables that were found to facilitate trainee learning and training transfer are: measurement of trainee knowledge before and immediately after training; supervisory support and encouragement for the application of new skills and knowledge; intrinsic rewards for applying newly learned skills and knowledge; a participative/sociotechnical organisation that is characterised by a high degree of employee involvement; and, a continuous learning environment that encourages frequent participation in multiskilling

training and retraining programmes (Wiley, 2016). Manda's (2013) study reveals that a major constrain to quality service delivery is the human resources, in terms of knowhow and organisational capacity. This has been viewed as an important determinant of service delivery. This view however, puts across the need to develop the human resource skills through the instrument of training.

In line with factors affecting training, Austin (2016) discussed some challenges as prominent. They are: differing learning styles, generational gaps, language and literacy barriers, training consistency, turnover and absenteeism, regulatory compliance issues, environmental, social and corporate responsibility. In his analyses of these challenges, he opined that a good number of people are familiar with terms like "visual" and "auditory" learners. Therefore, when presented with important information, some people must see it to truly understand it. Once they have a visual, everything falls into place. Others, he (Austin, 2008) argued, can simply read the information, or have it read to them, and their brain absorbs it. Still, others require a more interactive environment. His findings indicate that people have different ways or styles of learning. He (Austin, 2008) therefore observed that relying on a single traditional training method may work for some, but may be ineffective for others. He however stressed the good news that technology has made it easier than ever to accommodate multiple learning styles. Evaluating generation gap as a challenge to effective training, Austin observed that in the 1970s, the modern workforce was made up of distinct generations (Y) with different values, attitudes and ways of learning, whose demographic age he tagged 'senior'. They were the largest and most powerful in Nigeria's history. Behind them is generation X, a much smaller demographic that has had the challenge of competing with the 'senior' generation, while also responding as adults to profound shifts like the greater expectation for college and advanced degrees and the Internet revolution. The youngest members of the workforce alternately he dubbed Generation Y. He observed that many of them grew up with computers from a very early age. They are the first generation for whom the Internet, mobile phones and other high technology are the "norm," rather than a radical change. He advances his argument to say that each of the groups above leans toward their own style of digesting information. At the older end of the spectrum, there still is a preference for traditional training methods, while the younger workers are more likely to expect a technology-enhanced, interactive learning experience. Again, the Internet is making it easier and more affordable for businesses

to deliver training solutions that will reach the broadest range of people. On language and literacy barriers he learned that many workers have limited understanding of English and rely heavily on their native tongue. This hampers effective passage of information and understanding on the path of the trainee. So, how does an employer communicate training objectives and ideas to a multilingual workforce on the Plateau? One other finding is training consistency. The argument draws back to traditional, instructor-based training method that all trainers are not created equal. And, even if an organisation invests considerable resources to create consistent programmes and presentation materials, the effectiveness of the training will vary from trainer to trainer. Different supervisors working from the same programme directives and notes may interpret information differently, emphasize different points or even leave out key information. Acknowledging that turnover and absenteeism are a challenge for many organisations, Austin opined that when employees leave, positions quickly must be filled and personnel must be shuffled into new roles to meet changing needs. Ensuring that people in new roles receive the appropriate training in a timely fashion can be difficult and costly if your programme relies on scheduled classroom training.

Some of the factors affecting effective training include: high level bureaucratic bottleneck, nepotism, corruption and quackery amongst others. The prevailing thing about training in the country today is the quests for a more attractive and respectable resume (*curriculum vitae*). The political instability, corruption and bureaucracy in the country today pose a question of whether or not the number or personnel being trained in the training institutions each year is sufficient to meet the need for trained policy makers and employee at large. The implication and significance of a training policy in any organisation is that it should be handled by management through training officers. However, experience has shown that the practice in Nigeria has been different due to the fact that knowledge acquired from the institution over the years is not yielding the required impact in the public system in Nigeria, as policies are not being considered important. As such, it has not brought about the expected improvement in all the ministries, departments and parastatals. The situation in Nigerian economy has grown worse over the years with problems on the increase such as; high level of unemployment, high level of corruption, falling standards of education, lack of accountability, lack of basic infrastructure, high level of insecurity and syphoning of public funds by public servants amongst others. This is the reason Eze et al

(2019) observed that achievement oriented shrewd observers of Nigeria people at work, have always come out with a common impression that generally, Nigerian workers are lazy, slow, sleepy, reluctant to act, unconcerned and deceitful in their approach. These workers are said to lack the zeal, the briskness, and momentum of hard working people and generally, they dislike hearing people talk about efficiency, dedication, honesty, competence, determination and productivity, all of which characterised achievements of people in a production oriented society. (Eze et al., 2019). Then the big question starrng before us is, are Nigerian workers in the Public Corporations inefficient? Are they incompetent? Slow and do they lack the zeal to work? What are the factors surrounding low productivity in the Public Service and what should be the remedies? As stated earlier, Nigerian Public Corporations has passed through regimes and political processes some of which came with drastic measures (like retrenchment, dissolution and redeployment of top management officers as government change baton) that left the service in tatters.

Research Methodology

The design adopted for generating data for this study is the survey research. Questionnaires were distributed as instrument for collecting data and interview of relevant personnel was also conducted as workable framework for accessing more data. The personnels interviewed are three management staff, representing about 10% of the managerial staff. Data were also gathered and assembled from authoritative textbooks, journal article and other official documents from the Public Corporations constitute the secondary data for this paper. Data analyses were anchored on the instructional system development theory. The Population of the study is the Public servants in some Plateau State Public Corporations. Specifically, Plateau Radio Television Corporation, Plateau State Water Board, and Plateau State Fire service. PRTVC has a staff strength of about two hundred and seventy staff, enacted to inform, educate and entertain the Plteau state citizenry. Plateau State Water Board as the name implies is saddled with the responsibility of providing portable water for the citizenry. It has three hundred and sixty-one staff while the Plateau State Fire Service has one hundred and sixty-nine staff strength. The PSFS is basically responsible for combating fire outbreaks in order to prevent and or minimised the lost of lives and properties which are likely to occur during such disasters. The total number of staff from these three agencies amounted to eight hundred and two, out of which fifty percent

was randomly drawn as sample for this study. This Fifty percent of the staff totalling four hundred and forty-one were randomly selected. Therefore, the four hundred and forty-one questionnaire were administered and all retrieved, giving a total response of one hundred percent. The instrument for data collection is structured into two sets (questionnaires), one for the staff of the selected agencies while the other is for the beneficiaries of the services provided by the agencies both in like scale structure.

Table 1: 50% of Staff Drawn According to their Categories

| S/N | Category of Staff | Population |
|-----|-------------------|------------|
| 1 | Managerial | 21 |
| 2 | Senior | 60 |
| 3 | Intermediate | 116 |
| 4 | Technical | 28 |
| 5 | Junior | 206 |
| 6 | Internal Audit | 10 |
| 7 | Total | 441 |

Source: Author's Field Work, 2022.

The purposive sampling technique was used to select the agencies from which the staff were selected (PRTVC, PSFS and PSWB). The choice of this technique is because selection was based on the researcher's knowledge of the study.

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected directly from the field using the questionnaire and in- depth interview. The data collected are from the three agencies in the Plateau State Public Corporations as well as from the citizens of Plateau State. Data were obtained from journals, textbooks, official documents like the public service scheme, yearbooks, internal memoranda, circulars and special reports. The instruments used are questionnaire and interview guides.

Result and Discussion

This section of the paper considers the results obtained, discussions and positions as it relates to the factors that have affected effective training of personnel in some selected organisations of government.

Table 2: Effectual Use of Modern Equipment and Facilities

| Responses of Staff | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Invalid | 10 | 2 |
| Strongly Agree | 16 | 4 |
| Agree | 40 | 9 |
| Strongly Disagree | 223 | 50 |
| Disagree | 152 | 35 |
| Total | 441 | 100 |

Source: Author's Field work, 2022

The data presented on Table 34 show that 88% of the respondents were of the view that they can now use modern equipment after being trained on how to use them, while 10% disagreed with the claim. The analyses of these data unveil the fact that the ability to use modern equipment is a function of training. As postulated by Mthokozisi and Clifford, the importance of training is bolstering employee performance. Due to technological changes and advancement, the PSPCs have need to train a number of its staff on how to operate modern equipment. This has resulted in remarkable improvement in some areas. Going by this analysis, training has great potentials in boosting the performance of employee.

Table 3: Training Material and Qualified Resource Persons are adequately provided

| Responses of Staff | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| Invalid | 10 | 2 |
| SA | 8 | 2 |
| A | 31 | 7 |
| SD | 270 | 61 |
| D | 122 | 28 |
| Total | 441 | 100 |

Source: Author's Field work, 2022

Table 3 above shows that 2% of the responses are invalid. Another 2% strongly agreed that training materials and qualified resource persons are adequately provided for their training, while 7% agreed that training materials and qualified resource persons are adequately provided for their training. Meanwhile, 61% strongly disagreed that training materials and qualified resource persons are adequately provided for their training,

while 122% training materials and qualified resource persons are adequately provided for their training. Looking at the analysis presented, it can be concluded that training materials and qualified resource persons are not adequately provided for their training.

The result of this study reveals that agencies of the Plateau State Public Corporation have come under pressure and debate in recent time concerning the need to equip it. Wiley, (2016) Manda (2013) study reveals that a major constrain to quality service delivery is the human resources in terms of knowhow and organisational capacity. This has been viewed as an important determinant of service delivery. In with factors affecting training, Austin (2016) Discuss some challenges as prominent. They are: deferring learning styles, general gaps, language and literacy barriers, training consistency, turnover and absenteeism, regularity, compliance issues, environmental, social and corporate responsibility. His findings indicate that people have different ways or styles of learning. He therefore observed that relying on a single traditional training method may work for some, but may be ineffective for others. The fining of this study reveal that PSCS employees are not satisfied with the training opportunities available to them.

Results from interviews conducted on some key management staff revealed that other factors affecting effective training in PSC include lack of sufficient training facilities, use of obsolete method and strategies/technology of training, poor funding and lack of proper appraisal system during and after the training. One of the management staff interviewed actually lamented on the fact that the only water academy available in the North is the Kaduna called National Water Resources Institute, Kaduna. Evaluation is the fifth stage of the theory is evaluation. This phase is staged to ensure that the training programme has achieved its aim in terms of subsequent work performance. Arguably, this principle is eccentric to the corporations due to the absence of a monitoring and evaluation team or unit in the corporations. The usual practice is for workers to look forward to their training allowance as the ultimate about the training and no one bothers to evaluate service delivery after training. One major challenge of training implementation in the corporation is the lack of equipment, tools and relevant materials to aid in reflecting the skills acquired. This can constitute a major setback in a situation where the corporation does not have the requisite work gadget. This can also pose a challenge in achieving the objective of training, and the importance of training in PSC can never be over emphasised.

As pointed out in the findings of this study, the budgetary allocations for training of employees are usually inadequate and inconsistent in its disbursement, thus, resulting to irregular employee training. The training processes and procedures have been marred by Nepotism and other practices like favouritism as well as bribery and corruption. In addition, the findings of this study as revealed by the questionnaire administered, indicate that there are inadequate qualified trainers, inadequate training facilities and the use of obsolete methods and gadgets as factors affecting effective training. Instructional System Development theory was propounded to provide answers to training problems commonly faced by most government organisations. The model is widely used in organisations because it is concerned with training needed for job performance and therefore considered suitable for this study; being centered on the evaluation of better skills for effective service delivery. It was therefore used to ascertain the functionality of the training policy used as well as its implementation process. Apparently Plateau Public Corporations did not observe some vital steps and stages in its training process as demonstrated by the ISDM. This could be one of the reasons why service delivery has not improved. According to the oral interview with their various management, workers are ambitious, as such, they take responsibility for their training in order to earn promotions and more favourable positions. This is consequent to lack of adequate training opportunities in the corporations. The practice is prevalent in the corporations due to lack of needs assessment in the training process of the corporations. The Instructional System Development theory advocates for 'Analysis'; training need assessment and job analysis, all geared towards achieving the objective of employee training. Ultimately, the model argued that training objectives are defined on the basis of job responsibilities and job description, while individual progress is measured on the basis of the defined objectives. However, based on the result of this study, the corporations have failed in adhering to the culture of assessing the areas of organizational needs and the individual employees to be nominated for training in order to achieve the desired result. Indeed, the research reveal that only privileged personnel who are related to political leaders and or top management of these corporations go on trainings and needs assessments are hardly administered due to the nepotism inherent in the processes of nomination. What is obtainable when workers train themselves is the high tendency of developing themselves in areas and skills that would suit their personal ambitions and not organisational objectives as it is the standard. If indeed individual

progress is measured on the basis of the defined objectives, this situation is definitely not beneficial to the corporations.

On the relevance of the training offered to the employees, the responses on table thirty-five reveals that sixty-two percent of the respondents say that the training offered to them are usually not relevant to their work and this is usually the consequences of lack of conducting the training need analyses as argued by Austin. The findings of this study reveal that the employees of PSPC are not satisfied with the training opportunities available to them. Analysis of individual employee's job as prescribed by this theory would have answered the challenge of the relevance of training offered or sponsored at every point in time.

Being a model with five phases, the planning stage stresses the importance of setting the goal of learning outcome, instructional objectives that measure the behaviour and performance of employee after training, are strategies which are crucial in equipping the employee. This is a process that is achievable if only the annual performance appraisal could be heeded to. However, managements of the corporations in Plateau state have turned it into a mere game, thereby operating a superficial system that only breeds inefficiency and lack of adherence to the policy. Consequent to this weakness, the third phase of the five stages in Instructional System Development theory is usually not considered or executed. The third stage which is basically concerned with translating designed decisions into training materials, consist of developing course materials for the trainer. Although these corporations have training units, they hardly engage in in-house training. Rather, most workshops are contracted out to consultants who mostly train to satisfy their business pursuit. The in-service training on the other hand does not give room to developing course material. The fourth stage of the theory focuses on logistical arrangement meant to ensure the smooth running of the training programme. Sadly, the experience in the corporations has been that of compromise as revealed by the study.

Conclusion and Recommendation

In conclusion, defective training policy, obsolete and insufficient facilities, equipment and technology and ineffective strategy for training used in the Public Corporations are some of the factors impeding effective employee training. Other issues unveiled by this paper are poor funding for employee training as well as lack of effective mechanism for monitoring of training implementation. It is recommended that Plateau

State Public Corporations should put in place effective mechanism for monitoring of implementation where defaulters of training policies and implementation processes should be sanctioned by the same body to ensure compliance and avoid waste of the resource used in the process of training. Simply assessing training against training policy standards and sanctioning corrupt practices associated with training and training processes. In addition, Government should ensure that only qualified resource persons are hired to train employees as consultants for seminars and workshops and the provision of better training facilities and equipment in Plateau State Public Corporations.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interests.

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