

Training and Manpower Productivity in Nigeria Public Sector

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Abstract

The Nigerian public sector score-card over the years is equated to inefficiency and poor performance. This is owing to the understanding that public sector personnel are ill-equipped with necessary skills to turn around the fortune of the nation. This study therefore examined training and manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector: concerns and pathway for effectiveness. To achieve this, the study reviews literature on the concepts of training, manpower productivity, emergence and role of government in training and manpower productivity in Nigeria, and challenges of training in Nigeria public sector. This study utilized human capital and scientific management theory in order to build solid arguments for the discourse. It was therefore concluded that productivity in Nigeria public sector is contingent on proper manpower training and development. Hence, the study recommends the need to ensure that training is handled by competent human resources experts and practitioners for efficient results. Also, training and productivity-oriented organizations in Nigeria must be strengthened for effectiveness.

Keywords: human resources, manpower, Nigeria, productivity, public sector, training

In today's competitive business environment, manpower training is considered crucial in human resources management. This is because manpower training is a strategic means for both managerial and non-managerial personnel to acquire technical, human and conceptual skills for the maintenance of current job performance and improvement in future works activities (Attah, 2017). Equally, today's business world presents a new scenario with machines gradually taking a centre stage in production, yet the pivotal role of human resources in ensuring efficient utilization of other resources (money, machine, material) towards organizational goals and objectives cannot be underplayed.

Training is an important part of human resource development which helps to generate employees' productivity and creates competitive edge in an increasingly volatile business environment. Thus, lack of training will lead to manpower inefficiency and low productivity (Oni-Ojo, Salau, Oludayo & Abasilim, 2014). Training consists of two basic types: on-the-job and off-the-job

training. Each of these methods could be delivered either through role playing, case studies, simulation, demonstration, apprenticeship, classroom, T-group, conference and seminars. Irrespective of the approach adopted in an organization, it is pertinent that both trainer and trainee regularly review training objectives and ensure proper commitment to training programmes.

Manpower productivity on the other hand is the quantity of labour input required to produce a unit of output (Nda & Fard, 2014). The issue of manpower productivity in Nigeria is of great concern to researchers, policy makers and captains of industries. This is because Nigeria remains one of the largest economies in Africa, with full economic potentials arising from her large array of human, material and natural resources. Therefore, desired and adequate attention must be given to manpower productivity since higher productivity provides significant basis for adequate supply of goods and services for human development and social progress while low productivity hampers national development and economic growth (Adenikinju, 2005).

In recent times, researchers opined that the Nigerian public sector had witnessed drastic decline in manpower productivity due to perceived inefficiency and inadequate skills amongst workforce (Eze, 2016; Ofobruku & Nwakoby, 2015; Peretomode & Chukwuma, 2016). Similarly, Nigerian public sector score-card is equated to inefficiency and poor performance due to lack of budgetary support, poor funding and embezzlement that beset the day-to-day operations of her numerous productivity-oriented organizations. These organizations include: National Centre for Economic Management and Administration, Industrial Training Fund, Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, Centre for Management Development, National Manpower Board, National Productivity Centre, Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies, Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institute and many more (Aroge, 2012).

Albeit, several studies have examined training and manpower productivity in both private and public sectors across the globe (Adiele & Ibieta, 2017; Aibieyi, 2014; Colombo & Stanca, 2008; Dialoke, Ukah & Ikoro, 2016; Ekundayo, 2015; Fajoh & Faniran, 2016; Halidu, 2015; Ibrahim & Yemen, 2014; Idoko, Emmanuel & Dansuma, 2015; Malaolu & Ogbuabor, 2013; Ofobruku & Nwakoby, 2015; Peretomode & Chukwuma, 2016; Sunday, Benjamin & Ekpe, 2015) yet, there seems to be paucity of theoretical contention that explicitly captures current issues on training and manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector. Most of these studies embraced quantitative research method while very few utilized qualitative strand. In a bid to establish a distinction, this study argues for theoretical position to uncover the ineptitude in training and manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector and suggests pathway for its effectiveness.

Overview of Training

Training is the knowledge and abilities used in the development of character and mental power, acquired through systematic giving of instructions for the overall improvement of workers' skill and productivity (Ofobruku & Nwakoby, 2015). Similarly, training is a learning process that involves the

acquisition of knowledge, skills, concepts, rules to enhance the performance of employee on the job (Sabir, Akhtar, Bukhari, Nasir & Ahmed, 2014). According to Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert (2008), training is a strategic tool directed towards maintaining and improving current job performance and future work activities. For the purpose of this study, the authors conceptualized training as a strategic exercise employed for the improvement in skills, knowledge and capabilities of an employee so as to generate innovative and creative thinking for improved manpower productivity.

Training could be on-the-job and off-the-job. On one hand, on-the-job training is a training method that is provided to employees within the everyday working of an organization. It is simple and cost effective. This method helps in training employees in actual working scenario or environment (Aibieyi, 2014). On-the-job training techniques include demonstration, job rotation, coaching, temporary promotion, planned work activities, internship, apprenticeship and so on (Stoner et al., 2009, p.393; Kulkarni, 2013). To begin with, coaching is the method of training whereby a supervisor on a continued basis assists the trainee to perform his/her work and responsibilities more efficiently through the process of answering questions, guiding the individuals in finding answers to their problem, setting the right example, broadening their viewpoints, and providing them with feedback on the job (Banjoko, 2011). However, the coach should be a collaborator, assume a friendly posture with the trainee, using constructive corrective measure so as to achieve desirable results (Fajana, 2006).

Job rotation is the process of shifting employees from one job position to another so as to broaden their experience and familiarize themselves with various aspects of the firm's operations (Stoner et al., 2008). Demonstration is the process whereby the trainer helps the trainee by teaching him or her with examples such as making displays; it is the actual showing rather than telling the trainee what to do. This method is often called learning by seeing. Furthermore, simulation is a carefully developed exercise, modelled on realistic situations, in which trainees participate and receive feedback. Simulations are particularly useful for jobs in which the risk and costs of mistakes are high or in which direct observation and feedback are typically absent.

On the other hand, off-the-job training is a training method that is provided away from the actual working environment. It is used to provide training to both old and new employees. Techniques of off-the-job training includes: workshops, seminars, conferences, case studies, vestibule and many more (Armstrong, 2009; Ekundayo, 2015). For instance, vestibule is a training method which involves trainees learning in a non-work environment in which conditions and equipment are virtually identical to what will be encountered on the job. Actual work situations are stimulated through this method so that trainees are equipped with preliminary learning experiences prior to any actual work practice, hence, the problem of transferring learning from the learning environment to the work situation is minimized since the trainees are already doing what they would eventually end up doing in actual working situation.

Off-the-job training can also come in form of lecture. Lecture or class room method is the most traditional form of training. It involves the transmission of knowledge, ideas and factual information from the instructor to a large group of trainees at one time thereby having the advantage of being a relatively low-cost training method. It is very unique on its own by providing direct medium of communication with the trainees in addition to providing opportunity for an exchange of ideas between the trainees and the instructor. Also, it could come in form of a case study which is a written or oral description and summary of a real or hypothetical business situation or problem. A case study is the discussion and examination of real-life experiences in the classroom. In this method of training, the instructor guides the participants and does not interfere but acts out except when the participants are going off the track (Fajana, 2006).

In view of the above discussions, the benefits of training to an organization cannot be over-emphasized. Organizations whether small, medium or large can be managed successfully through proper and continuous training. First, training is beneficial to organizations by keeping workers abreast with constantly changing technology and helps to unlock the potential of an individual employee to gain competitive advantage in a dynamic business environment (Obi-Anike & Ekwe, 2014). Training remains beneficial to both individual and organizations simply because it helps in improvement of employee's capabilities, skills and knowledge in the discharge of their assigned tasks and consequently gives room for exceptional performance and productivity (Ekundayo, 2015; Obisi, 2011). Training helps to remove performance deficiencies, helps to match employee's skills and abilities with job requirements, enhances organizational viability and transformation process, and it helps to reduce costs of production and minimize avoidable waste.

Manpower Productivity Reviewed

As acknowledged by Robbins and Judge (2013), an organization is productive if it achieves its goals and does so by transferring inputs (labour and raw material) to outputs (finished goods or services) at the lowest cost. Productivity is an economic measure of output per unit of input (Nda & Fard, 2014). Singh and Mohanty (2012) considered productivity as the state of producing result in a fruitful, lucrative and profitable manner. Viewed from another perspective, productivity is the measure of how well an employee performs a given task using the organization's scarce resources to produce goods and services effectively and efficiently. Productivity could be categorized as total productivity or partial productivity.

A total productivity relates the value of all output to the value of all input using the ratio of total output/total input while the partial productivity has to do with the value of all output to the value of major categories of input using the ratio total output/partial input (Stoner et al., 2008, p. 586). The concept of productivity with respect to this discourse is not to make any distinction between the total and partial productivity but to simply unearth the concept of manpower productivity for clarity and how well it can be achieved through training. For

instance, manpower productivity in Nigeria over the last five years has been growing until the second quarter of 2016 when the economy officially slipped into recession and generated a negative growth for two consecutive quarters (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

It was equally reported by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) that manpower productivity increased from 2011 to 2015 but began to fall in the second quarter of 2016 due to the ravaging effects of economic recession that engulf the then giant economy in Africa. Remarkably, manpower productivity improved in the third and fourth quarters of 2016 respectively. Despite the marginal improvement, the Bureau noted that the figures are still low compared to other emerging economies in the world such as Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and Turkey with similar size (National Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Challenges of Training and Manpower Productivity in Nigeria Public Sector

There are several problems and challenges of training in Nigeria public sector as identified by researchers. First, poor funding and inadequate budgetary allocation to training exercise. That is, most ministries and parastatals usually provide meagre funds for training as compared to what employers in private sector invest in their employees for training programmes. Therefore, the utilizations of such meagre funds in most ministries and parastatals do not correspond to the way it is planned (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). Another challenge of training is the issue of corruption and embezzlement which has eaten deep into the system of an average Nigerian like cankerworm. Most administrators at the helm of affairs often divert the little amount budgeted for training which consequently hinders the goal of manpower training in Nigeria public sector (Fajoh & Faniran, 2016).

There is also the issue of bureaucratic politics, favoritism and god-fatherism. For instance, most administrators and managers who are expected to conduct performance appraisal in their department so as to ascertain training needs would rather select their friends, kinsmen and family members for training programmes even when it becomes obvious that such employee(s) do not need training at that particular point in time. There is also the lack of employees' commitment to training programmes; low priority accorded to manpower training by ministries, extra ministerial departments, agencies and parastatals in all the three tiers of government (Audu, Paul & Omisore, 2015). Failure of most organizations to evaluate training programmes so as to determine their effectiveness has equally posed a big challenge to manpower training in public sector.

Also, poor attitudinal disposition of some government employees equally hinders effective implementation of training and development programmes while insufficient co-ordination of the various training activities carried out by training agencies within the federal, state and local government levels pose a big challenge to good training and retraining exercise (Ewoh, 2014). There is the absence of articulate and comprehensive training and development policies to effectively

guide and regulate training programmes as well as inadequate training equipment or inappropriate methodology which makes the delivering of training programmes lopsided and yielding no positive result (Igbokwe-Ibeto, Osakede & Anazodo, 2015).

Role of Government in Training and Manpower Productivity in Nigeria

The origin of manpower training in Nigeria public sector could be traced back to the Wolle's Commission of 1967 inaugurated to investigate the training need of the Federal Civil Service. The Commission was chaired by Professor C. P. Wolle, a consultant for the Institute of Administration at the then University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria. Meanwhile, the report of the study was submitted in May 1968 under the heading *Training Needs of the Federal Civil Service*. The Federal Government gave vent to the report in April 1969 by coming out with a White paper on the report titled *Statement of Federal Government policy on staff Training and Development in the Federal Public Service* with the following key components; first, the appointment of Department of Training Officers with responsibility for assessing staff development needs, preparing and implementing programmes to meet these needs (Obadan & Olusola, 2000). Second, the restructuring of Federal Ministry of Establishments to ensure that greater priority is given to manpower training. Third, the establishment of standing committee on training. Fourth, the encouragement of large departments or ministries to establish a training and development unit commensurate with the size and function of the ministry, and lastly, the formation of Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (Adiele & Ibieta, 2012; 2017; Ewoh, 2014; Okotoni, 2015; Okotoni & Erero, 2005).

In addition, Adebo Commission of 1970 was set up to systematically examine several important issues in the public sector among which are: salaries and wages in the statutory public corporations and state-owned companies, establishment of a public service review commission, review of structure and functions of the public service commission simply to enhance the disorders in service delivery and to make adequate arrangement for staff training. In 1971, there was establishment of Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to promote and encourage the acquisition of skills in industry with the view to providing indigenous trained manpower sufficient to meet the needs of various sectors of the national economy.

In further attempt to improve productivity and efficiency among civil servants in Nigeria, the Udoji Commission of 1972 was instituted to restructure and tackle the inherent problems associated with manpower training and development among government officials and equally created formidable structure for effective management of the public sector, along with suitable methods of recruiting employees with good conditions of service. In 1973/1974, the Udoji Public Service Review Commission (PSRC) after due consultation noted deficiencies in training programmes throughout the public service and thereafter emphasized strongly on manpower training and development and thus recommended the reactivation of the standing committee on staff training; as well

as the reactivation of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) to provide diverse training facilities for senior manpower in Nigeria while the Centre for Management Development (CMD) was equally established for the development of managerial manpower and a broad range of skills to enhancing the quality of management for the attainment of national economic goals (Okotoni, 2015).

In further attempt by Federal Government to give civil servants the needed training in management and administration, actualizing strategies on manpower training and retraining of the government workers, improved performance and productivity in the public service necessitated another commission. Thus, the Dotun Phillips commission of 1985 was established and provided a lot of contributions to the report of the Presidential Task Force on the reorganization of the public service, which climaxed into the public service reforms of 1988. Some of the recommendations of Dotun Phillips commission in 1985 were that every ministry or division must set aside ten percent of its personnel cost to the training of all classes of workforce yearly. Also, the career advancement of federal government employees through organized training should be viewed as a right for every government worker and the obligation of the federal government.

Equally, the deployment and utilization of employees should be based on the relevance of training on the assigned duties so as to assist the employees to derive optimum benefits from acquired skills and abilities while courses selection for trainees should be based on a cautious appraisal of the training needs of the individual and his organization. Newly recruited senior officers in the public service should be viewed as trainees and should undergo training for six months before they are posted to respective places of assignments. To guarantee the achievement of this, Ministerial Training Committee system was introduced in every ministry as a major aspect of the implementation procedure (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). During this period, precisely in 1986, the National Centre for Economic Management and Administration (NCEMA) was established to provide in-service training for economic planners, budget officers and policy advisers for technical and managerial skills in planning and budgeting in the country. In 1991, the National Manpower Board (NMB) was established for periodic appraisal of manpower requirements in all occupation, and organization of in-service training for employees in both public and private sector.

In a follow up attempt, Allison Ayida panel in 1995 was inaugurated to review the disagreements among top Civil Servants concerning the politicization of the post of Permanent Secretaries. The panel was saddled with the responsibilities to survey and redefine the objectives of the civil service as to the implementation of government agencies, and make suitable recommendations on modalities for improving commitment, performance, and efficiency in the civil service (Omitola, 2012). In a further bid to sustain accountability and efficiency in the public service, former president Olusegun Obasanjo, shortly after assumption of power in 1999 established the Adegoke Adegoroye panel with a

major objective of restructuring the civil service and established a rule of conduct with regards to workforce, minimize payroll fraud, remove ghost workers and redundant positions, increase the standard of service delivery and improve the pay package that would motivate experienced staff to remain committed to service. During this period and precisely in 2004, the National Productivity Centre (NPC) came into being as a research-oriented parastatal to stimulate productivity consciousness and promote socio-economic growth and development in Nigeria.

This effort persisted till President Umaru Musa Yar'dua inaugurated Steve Oronsaye Committee to review the public service with utmost intention of repositioning and restructuring the federal agencies, parastatals and commissions for efficiency and high productivity. The Oronsaye committee had its focus on removing duplication of offices and making suitable recommendations to restructure, merge or scrap them completely. Meanwhile, the commission presented its reports on 16th April, 2012 with key references on the eradication of some ministries, and merging of some agencies and ministries into departments of related agencies. These recommendations led to the formation of regulation on employee mobility to ascertain that the appropriate employees are recruited and placed at the right offices in order to motivate other workers to perform effectively towards achieving the desired objectives (Adiele & Ibieta, 2017).

In addition to the above, the former president Goodluck Jonathan gave approval of numerous federal and state-owned tertiary institutions across Nigeria to cushion the negative effect of inadequate training and low manpower productivity in the country. Thus, redesigning and presenting new curriculum to incorporate training and productivity-oriented courses by institutions in order to enhance productivity and efficiency (Eze, 2016). In a bid to sustain this effort, the current administration of President Muhamadu Buhari on 6th of December, 2017 gave approval of additional six private universities to already existing 164 universities, 139 polytechnics, monotechnics and specialized institutions, 36 colleges of agriculture, 36 colleges of health technology and many more in Nigeria simply to enhance manpower training and productivity (NBTE, 2017; NUC, 2017).

Theoretical framework

Relevant to this study is the human capital theory. Human Capital Theory as proposed by Adam Smith in 1790 who viewed people as productive power of an economy that must be properly nurtured through training, education, and exclusive medical attention for higher productivity and profitability (Adenikinju, 2005). This theory recognizes people and their collective dexterity, skill and experience along with ability to deploy their skills in the interest of their organizations and equally consider people as source of competitive advantage to their organizations. The utilization of this theory was due to the confirmation of positive link between manpower and productivity since knowledge and skills are functions of education, training and experience.

Also, relevant to this study is the Fredrick Taylor's scientific management theory which centers on the perception that workers are economic beings and must be fully utilized for optimal productivity through the use of scientific training and development (Halidu, 2015; Stoner et al., 2008). Stoner et al. (2008) categorically stated that the whole idea of scientific management is on the need to increase productivity and efficiency by replacing the old rule of thumb with scientifically developed techniques; obtaining harmonious relationship rather than creating discord among workers; working for maximum output and complete training and development of workers for individual and organizational growth.

Pathway to Training and Manpower Productivity Effectiveness in Nigeria

Managing training and manpower productivity in the Nigeria public sector is an arduous task. However, managers and human resources experts must as a matter of necessity ensure that manpower training is properly shouldered so as to create a competitive edge in an increasingly volatile business environment and increase the Nigeria public sector productivity base. To begin with, managers must advocate for budgetary support to most productivity-oriented organizations as this will strengthen the organizations and enhance efficient delivery of their core mandates. There is need for a consistent and long-term strategy for productivity improvement by government and its agencies so as to provide significant basis for adequate supply of goods and services for human development, social progress, and national and economic growth.

To further provide pathway for the effectiveness and efficiency of training and manpower productivity in Nigeria, there is need for strong corporate linkages between educational system and requirements for the economy. The nation's educational system must be inclusive and encompassing in-line with international standards and best practices. Also, there is need to address the malfunctioning of labour and capital market, as well as dominance of public sector in the economy which has been identified as one of the banes of manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector. In addition to the above, there is need for adequate motivation of employees by managers because motivation will stimulate the inner minds of employees to perform more than expected on their job.

Employers of labour must equally give adequate attention to employees' job dissatisfaction because a satisfied employee is a productive employee. When an employee is satisfied with his or her job, it creates atmosphere for high productivity, organizational efficiency, improved morale, low labour-turnover, low-absenteeism and organizational commitment. Nigeria government must prioritize the provision of infrastructural facilities such as power and transportation to enhance the nation's productive base. Finally, there is need for Nigerian government to invest heavily in science and technology, and provide policy support to businesses so as to improve the productive capacity of the nation.

Conclusion

Training is the process of increasing and modifying employees' skills, abilities and capabilities towards ensuring that current and future jobs are carried out more efficiently. Therefore, once employees are employed in an organization, they must be trained and their potentials developed. In the same vein, those who are already on the job must be given continuous and retraining programmes so as to further acquire technical, human and conceptual skills for the maintenance of their current job performance and improvement in future works activities. An organization that is ready to achieve its goals and objectives should identify training requirements, plan for meeting training needs and ensure such plans are carried out efficiently with proper evaluation.

To this end, the benefits of training which range from improvement in existing skills, improvement in services rendered to the customer, opportunity for employee's personal growth, greater commitment to employee's moral conduct and improvement in job performance would be fully realized. Finally, since the objective of this study was to examine training and manpower productivity in the Nigeria public sector and all extant literatures reviewed in this study alluded to the fact that training has significant impacts on manpower productivity, it is logical to infer that manpower productivity in Nigeria public sector is contingent on proper training exercise.

Recommendations

In view of the above discussions, it is recommended that organizations in Nigeria, particularly the public sector should ensure that manpower training is handled by competent human resource practitioners so as to have a round peg in a round hole. Second, organizations must sensitize managers against the erroneous belief that training is purely staff function for which line managers have no business or responsibilities. Third, training and productivity-oriented organizations in Nigeria should be strengthened for efficient results. Above all, a detailed empirical study is required to draw solid inference.

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