Training and Development Programmes and Public Sector Employees' Performance in Edo State Electricity Regulatory Commission

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Abstract

The Nigeria public sector has faced the challenges of poor performance and employees turn over due to lack of job training and development of their employees. Changes in work processes driven by technological trends and competitive environment has led to employee redundancy and poor service delivery. Thus, this study examined the implication of training and development on employee's performance within the Nigeria public sector, encompassing not only the existence and nature of training programs but also the methodologies employed for training and subsequent performance evaluation Also, it seeks to identify the deficiencies in planning and execution of training and development programs in the Nigeria public sector using the Edo State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC). Primary data were used for the study, which were generated through the use of questionnaires. The Human Capital theory was used to explain the importance of human investment to optimize performance. To guide the study, four research questions and hypotheses were posed. A total of 71 questionnaires were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences, SPSS 21.0. Major findings indicated that there is a positive impact of training and development on employee's performance. The issue of irregular training routine is seen as one of the challenges in ERC. The study therefore concluded that for training and development to have significant impact on employee's performance, employees need the organisation through its management to organize structured training programmes for employee's optimum performance in ERC. It was recommended that Effective trainings should be organized regularly and undertaken by ERC.

Key Words: Training, Development, Performance, Electricity, Regulatory, Commission

Introduction

Modern organisations are increasingly adapting to a landscape characterized by intense competition and constantly evolving high-tech environments. In today's dynamic space, characterized by rapid change, the implementation of strategic training and development programmes emerges as a crucial measure for employers to ensure their workforce possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and behaviour to maximize organisation's goal and employee's performance (Adiele & Ibietan, 2017). With the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technological advancements, certain jobs and skills are becoming redundant; therefore, increasing the demand for a skilled, highly trained and developed workforce. According to Cabrilo, Nesic, and Mitrovic (2014), the concern surrounding the potential displacement of human labor by robots and AI is profound while a new workforce with specialized technical skills will be crucial for operating and developing these technologies. This necessitates a continuous cycle of training and retraining to ensure technical competencies. Thus, manpower is the basis of all resources and it is the indispensable means of converting other resources to mankind's use and benefits. Therefore, how well we develop and employ human resources skills is fundamental in deciding how much we will accomplish as a nation (Cefai, 2009). Comma (2008), explains Manpower as the pivot point of every human institution, even in the developed and industrial nations of the world where the use of machines and technology is at an advanced stage.

In the competitive era of the 21st century, fostering a highly skilled and engaged workforce is critical for sustained growth in the organisation. Investing in employee training and development serves as a strategic lever. To effectively retain talent, inspire employees, enhance performance, elevate job satisfaction, bolster productivity, and foster workplace engagement, comprehensive employee training and development programmes are imperative (Aguilar, Galíndez and Velasco, 2005). The challenges faced by public sector organisations are increasingly compounded by the forces of globalization and ever-evolving consumer demands. To remain competitive and financially robust in a dynamic

environment, public sectors must prioritize the development of their human capital. This is why every government in developed and developing countries of the world acknowledges that the achievement of its social and economic development objectives depends on effective public services (Nti, 1996). As Casio (1989, p.256) observed "the economic and technological trends, the pace of innovation, change and development are growing faster year-by-year and as a result, provide clear signals that training and development are so relevant that both organisations and individual stakeholders must give a serious attention to".

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is experiencing a growing scarcity of skilled manpower, which has impacted the nation's global competitiveness, when it comes to global governance. The country is grappling with the task of nurturing a skilled workforce and enhancing employee productivity. As Evoh (2007) opined, a shortage of human capital makes it difficult for a country to secure the benefits of a global economy. According to Dialoke, Ukah & Ikoro (2016), this overwhelming issue of skilled manpower shortage is exacerbated by the unflinching desire for people to relocate abroad, colloquially referred to as "JAPA" in Nigeria. This, therefore, underscores the pressing need for policymakers to address the quality of training and development initiatives, to entice and retain its human capital. The ability of a country to educate, train, and employ its talent is critical to its national and economic success. That is why Ezeani and Oladele (2013) points out that an educated and skilled labor force is needed for an emerging information-based economy. The Nigerian public sector plays a crucial role in delivering essential services to the public, and the performance of its employees is vital for effective service delivery. Despite numerous government interventions and initiatives, the Nigerian public sector continues to exhibit shortcomings in terms of performance and competence, it is imperative to understand why these shortcomings in performance and create innovative measures to curb it.

Extant studies (Rajashree and Mahesh, 2024; Fajoh and Faniran, 2016; Gichohi, 2014) often focus on the types of training programmes available to public sector employees. The lack of adequate research and empirical evidence on the implication of such training and development programmes on employee's performance hinders policymakers, organisational leaders, and practitioners from

implementing evidence-based strategies to enhance employee performance and improve public service outcomes. As such, there is a gap in understanding the implications of such programmes on employee performance. Against this background, the study seeks to ascertain the impact of training/development on employee performance in the Nigerian public sector. Also, it seeks to identify the deficiencies in planning and execution of training and development programs in the Nigeria public sector using the Edo State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC). To this extent, the paper interrogates the following questions: What is the impact of training/development on employee performance in the Nigerian public sector? What are the deficiencies in planning and execution of training and development programs in the Nigeria public sector using the Edo State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC)?

Research Hypotheses

1. Ho: There is no significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC.
   Hr: There is a significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC.
2. Ho: There is no significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC.
   Hr: There is a significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC.

Conceptualizing Training and Development

Training

Training has been regarded as a way to help both individuals and organisations improve. It involves intentional, structured efforts to increase skills, knowledge, and abilities, helping people perform better and contribute to the organisation's goals. Fanibuyan (2001) defines training as the systematic process of altering the behaviour and or attitudes of employees in a direction to increase organisational goals. The systematic is this regard has to do with persistent and unrelenting efforts that organisations put in to keep their employees abreast with current trends. When this is done, it is expected that the individuals involved will put into use the skill-set that will help to achiece the organisation's objectives. To this extent, Punia and Saurabh (2013) argued that training is the application of gained

knowledge and experience. Through organized activities, training focuses on imparting knowledge and instructions to enhance performance or equip individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Planned training, according to (Jacobs and Washington, 2010), is an intentional attempt to build the abilities required for improved job performance. It improves a worker's capacity to produce better, more efficient work. The goal of training is to enhance present abilities and habits (Hafeez and Akbar, 2015). It is one of the most popular strategies for increasing worker productivity and bringing them into line with company objectives (Ekaterini, 2009). Furthermore, training makes employees feel more engaged to their work since it frequently results in acknowledgment from management for better performance (Rodriguez and Walters, 2017). This is another way that training enhances job satisfaction. Training has developed beyond only imparting knowledge on how to carry out duties quickly and correctly. It now includes more comprehensive tactics to improve performance at the person, process, and organisational levels, such as non-training solutions (Sam-Okere and Agbeniga, 2014; Swanepoel, Erasmus, and Schenk, 2012).

Development

The term "development" is used to describe a wide range of advancements, enhancements, or expansions in the social, economic, personal, and technological spheres. In economics, development typically relates to the improvement of living standards, infrastructure, and overall economic health in a country or region. On this note, Todaro and Smith (2020), economic development is a multifaceted process involving the reduction of poverty, inequality, and unemployment, alongside increasing productivity and economic self-sustainability. In terms of human or personal growth, development entails improving one's aptitudes, capacities, and self-knowledge. Goleman (1995) emphasises that this idea is frequently connected to ideas like emotional intelligence and lifelong learning. On the social angle, development focuses on improving the social well-being of people, such as enhancing access to education, healthcare, and justice. That is why the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) highlights social development as essential for creating inclusive, resilient societies that can support sustainable growth. Thus, development encompasses multiple domains, all aimed

at fostering growth, sustainability, and improved well-being through the process by which people continue to grow holistically and prepare for the duties and responsibilities that lie ahead of them.

It focuses on developing the abilities required for positions in the future, frequently in management or leadership (Terera and Ngirande, 2014). The goal of development is to get workers ready for future increases in responsibility. Ezeani and Oladele (2013) defines development as either the introduction of new ideas into society that lead to changes in how it's organized, or as the effective use of human resources to improve our physical and biological environments for our benefit. Corroborating this view, McNamara (2008) describes development as an ongoing, multi-dimensional process that includes training and is aimed at improving both individual and organisational performance while preparing them for future roles. Armstrong (2006) added that development is a journey that takes people from their current level of understanding and capability to a future state where they possess more advanced skills, knowledge, and competencies. According to Daniels (2003), developing employees just means allowing them to advance within the organisation and become qualified for roles that are higher in the future. Improving interpersonal and human interactions is the focus of development (Iwuoha, 2009). It is worthy of note that individuals develop internally, interpersonally, and in terms of their capacity to handle complexity

Training and Development Needs Analysis

Organisations across various industries create employee training and development programmes as an ongoing practice, with the overarching aim of enhancing employee performance. According to Iheriohama and Chukwuma (2009), these training initiatives seek to elevate employees' knowledge and skills following their participation. However, in some cases, organisations conduct these programs without clearly defining specific objectives, which can hinder their ability to gauge the acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees, as well as their alignment with job performance targets. Training need is any shortfall in employee performance, or potential performance which can be remedied with appropriate training. Organisations bear the responsibility of implementing workplace training in accordance with job demands and performance deficiencies. As a result, the firm must create a training program with clear goals and objectives

while keeping the specific needs of both the individual and the organisation in mind (Sharma & Taneja, 2018). As stated by Armstrong (2001), training need is concerned with defining the gap between what is happening and what should happen. Training needs can be identified when there is a disparity between an employee's current performance (or a group of employees) and the required performance, assessing whether this gap warrants an evaluation of competencies, since the person being evaluated is the most knowledgeable about their work performance.

The performance appraisal interview is widely regarded as one of the key tools for identifying training and development needs at the individual level (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). As such, the person being evaluated should be the primary source of information regarding accomplishments and areas for improvement. Any training and development program that would not add value should be abandoned. What purpose does training serve if it does not align with the employee's skill gaps, and the employee cannot effectively apply the newly acquired skills in the workplace to enhance productivity? A training program can only be considered beneficial if the participants can use the theoretical knowledge they have gained in a real-world job setting. Bates and Davis (2010). Enhancing the efficacy of training programs requires evaluating the demands for training. High performance requires training that is in line with organisational strategy (Delery and Doty 1996). But according to Armstrong (1996:p.17), an evaluation of training needs should take into account both current issues and upcoming requirements, such as if the company has to develop new competencies or acquire new ones. Employee training and development must be based on a need analysis derived from a comparison of "actual performance'' and behaviour with "required performance'' and behaviour, before training and development programmes are organized effort is made through individual and organisational appraisals to identify the training needs (Certo, 2003).

As outlined by Wognum (2001, p. 408), training and development requirements can manifest at three distinct organisational tiers:

- At the strategic level, top management evaluates the needs based on the organisation's overarching goals, mission, strategy, and challenges that require resolution or improvement.

- At the tactical level, middle management identifies needs associated with fostering collaboration and coordination between different organisational units.
- At the operational level, lower executive management and employees pinpoint needs related to operational issues, including individual worker performance and departmental challenges.

By choosing the right type of training, we ensure that our employees possess the right skills for our business, and the same needs to be continuously updated in the follow-up of the best and new HR practices, Niazi (2011, p. 43). Training should only be developed and provided after a thorough needs assessment has been conducted, therefore, a robust training needs assessment is crucial

Theoretical Framework

The paper is hinged on Human Capital Theory which was developed in the mid-20th century, with its origins often attributed to the work of economists Theodore W. Schultz and Gary Becker. Popularized in the 1960s and 1970s, the theory gained prominence when Schultz (1961) proposed that HC consisted of the 'knowledge, skills and abilities of the people employed in an organisation'. The Human Capital Theory is a basic economic concept that plays a pivotal role in understanding the relationship between education, training, and workforce performance. Shuller, (2000) stated that the fundamental principle underpinning Human capital theory is the belief that people's learning capacities are comparable value to the other resources involved in the production of goods and service. This theory emphasises the role of education and investment in developing human capital (Thomas, Smith and Diez, 2013). According to Aliaga (2001), human capital theory explains the gains of education and training as a form of investment in human resources. It is therefore appropriated to note that human capital lays the foundation for a nation's wealth, rather than real capital, income, or natural resources.

The type of training that can revolutionize the mindset of civil/public servants for improved productivity in the Nigerian public sector must be anchored on specific human capital that is capable of invigorating public employees on their current jobs (Fleischhauer, 2007:5).These initiatives are guided by the principles of Human Capital Theory, which posits that human capital comprising the knowledge, skills,

abilities, and attributes of employees holds the key to driving productivity, innovation, and competitive advantage within an organisation. The relevance of HCT to this study is to emphasizes the significance of investments in training and development programs, the theory gives an in-depth understanding that investments in education, training and development yield returns in the form of increased productivity, efficiency, and performance.

Methodology

The study adopted the survey research design which utilizes the questionnaire as an instrument to elicit information from respondents. The population of this study consists of staff of the Edo State Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC). They are drawn from two categories, the senior, who are 59 in number and junior members who are 16 in number, making a total population of 74 (ERC employee payroll, 2023). This also includes the sample size for the study. Data for analysis are sourced using the primary and secondary sources. The primary source entails gathering information through the administration of questionnaires which will be structure in line with the relevant objectives of the study, while the secondary data is collected from available books, publications, research studies, articles and internet, Newspapers, websites and annual data from various statistical sources. The study will employ simple description to analyze the data based on presented facts while the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, (SPSS) 21.0, will be used as the statistical tools for hypothesis testing.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One

Ho: There is no significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC.

Hr: There is a significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC.

Table 1: Correlation between training & development on employee's performance ERC.

Correlations

		Training and Development	Employee Performance
Training and Development	Pearson Correlation	1	.885**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	71	71
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.885**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	71	71

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above table reveals that, there exist a significant relationship between training and development on employee's performance ERC with a correlation coefficient *R* value of 0.885, indicating that, the concept of training and development has a very strong influence on employee performance in ERC. Furthermore, with the *p*-value (Sig = 0.000) less than (<) 0.05, the study thus rejects the null hypothesis (there is no significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC) and accept the research hypothesis (there is a significant relationship between training & development on employee's performance ERC).

Hypothesis Two

Ho: There is no significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC.

Hr: There is a significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC.

Table 2: Correlation between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC.

Correlations

		Training Programme Execution	Employee Performance
Training Programme Execution	Pearson Correlation	1	.704**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	71	71
Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	.704**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	71	71

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Data from table 27 shows a significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC. With a correlation coefficient value of 0.704, the table above reveals a strong correlation between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC. Based on the aforementioned statistical finding, the study thus rejects the null hypothesis (there is no significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC) due the *p*-value (sig = 0.000) less than 0.05, and accept the research hypothesis (there is a significant relationship between training programme execution and employee performance in ERC).

Discussion of Findings

The purpose of analyzing data gathered from the primary research conducted as outlined in the data analysis and interpretation section of this study is to find answers to research questions and meet research objectives. In this study, research objectives were formulated which guided the purpose of the study. Thus, with the analysis of data and interpretation, the study will therefore examine if the objectives of the study met its intended purpose. The study's findings, according to hypothesis one, show a significant association between training and development and employee performance in ERC, with a correlation coefficient R value of 0.885. The study discovered a link between these characteristics. The

relationship has a beneficial influence because the majority of employees believe that T&D improves their abilities, knowledge, and performance level, which supports earlier studies. According to Ariani (2013), human resource training and development can lead to enhanced productivity, lower labor turnover, and more employee satisfaction.

Bagyo (2013) observes that personnel who have not received proper training prior to being handed responsibilities lack the essential confidence to carry out their duties. According to Otieno et al. (2015), when an organisation's management develops employee capacity and capability through training, such employees are more likely to reciprocate by providing maximum commitment and engagement for the organisation's goal and objective achievement. Similarly, Gichohi (2014) says that there is a favorable and significant association between employee engagement through training and organisational performance, with the extra benefit of enhancing employees' knowledge and enlightenment.

The analysis emphasizes the importance of good training program design and delivery in maximizing employee performance, as indicated by the significant positive correlation found between these factors. However, the study also uncovered flaws in ERC's training methods. The majority of employees observed irregularities in program execution, and many staff members believe there is a disconnect between their identified skill shortages and ERC's training needs evaluations. Furthermore, low funding for training activities creates an additional barrier. The research by Amin et al. (2013) and Sultan et al. (2012) aligns with these findings. Their studies suggest that effective training, characterized by a management commitment to the process, can positively influence employee job satisfaction. This commitment necessitates a focus on three key areas: identifying employee training needs, developing appropriate training programs, and establishing a robust evaluation system to gauge the impact of training on knowledge, skills, and ultimately, job performance.

This analysis of pre- and post-training performance measurement methodologies at ERC revealed a significant connection between training and employee performance. The study demonstrates empirical evidence supporting the strong influence of training methods on employee performance outcomes. Notably,

ERC's practice of regularly following up on performance assessments with employee engagement demonstrates a strength in their approach. This aligns with research by Ologbo & Sofian (2013), who argue that employee involvement in training processes fosters engagement and commitment to workplace activities and responsibilities, leading to positive impacts on both short-term and long-term organisational performance. likewise, Olaniyan and Ojo (2008) suggested that an effective and efficient training approach and program might positively influence employee behaviour in the workplace, leading to optimum performance and productivity. To support the study findings in regard to training program execution and employee performance at ERC. Omodia (2009) investigated the impact of training and its methodologies on workforce organisational performance. The study findings stressed that to attain optimal productivity, the organisation and its management must be involved in sustaining the ideology of employee capacity building to stay up with new technology trends in the workplace environment.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study establishes a relationship between employee training for optimum engagement and Employees performance for effective service delivery. The study concludes that the nature of employee training and development programmes will increase the level of engagement in the organisation which will in turn ignite an effective, impactful public service delivery. The study discloses that there are inconsistency and discrepancies in engaging employees in training and development progrrammes for optimum engagement on the part of the management of the ERC. Although, training and development activities has impacted and increased employees' performance, job retention, and satisfaction in the organisation, yet factors such as inadequate regular training hinders effective performance in ERC.

Recommendations

Based on the research findings, the following recommendations are formulated to enhance ERC's T&D practices:

Prioritizing Manpower Development: Manpower development must be elevated to a top priority for ERC. The employee survey results demonstrably highlight the

substantial value employees place on T&D programs and their contributions to improved work performance.

Implementing a Cyclical T&D Process: To ensure continuous employee skill development aligned with organisational needs, ERC should establish a cyclical T&D process. This cyclical approach would involve: Regular Training Needs Assessments (TNAs): Conducting TNAs at predetermined intervals (e.g., quarterly or biannually) will identify current and emerging skill gaps within the workforce. Secondly, Targeted Training Programs: Based on the identified skill gaps, targeted training programs should be designed and delivered. These programs can leverage a variety of delivery methods, including in-person workshops, online learning modules, and blended learning approaches. Lastly, Evaluation and Feedback: Evaluating the effectiveness of training programs through post-training assessments and employee feedback mechanisms is crucial. This data can then be used to refine future training initiatives.

Leveraging Technological Advancements: The strategic use of technology can significantly enhance ERC's T&D delivery. Implementing a Learning Management System (LMS) can facilitate online learning opportunities, offer centralized access to training materials, and provide efficient program administration. Additionally, exploring e-learning platforms and other technological tools can create a more engaging and flexible learning experience for employees.

Fostering Strategic Partnerships: Establishing strategic partnerships with relevant private sector organisations can provide ERC with access to valuable expertise and resources for T&D programs. Identifying potential partners with complementary skill sets and industry knowledge can broaden the scope of training offerings and potentially contribute to cost-effective solutions.

Implementing Sustainable Funding Mechanisms: To ensure the long-term viability of ERC's T&D programmes, establishing a sustainable funding mechanism is crucial. This may involve allocating a designated annual budget for T&D activities, potentially supplemented by exploring alternative funding sources, such as grants or partnerships. The budget allocation should be linked to the T&D policy and strategically aligned with ERC's overall budget framework.

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