

Full Length Research Paper

Training, manpower development and job performance: Perception and relevance among civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Chukwunenye Iheanacho Okereke^{1*} and Igboke, Beatrice Nnenna²

¹Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Port Harcourt, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

²Abia State University, Uturu, Nigeria.

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The paper examined perception and relevance of influence of training and manpower development on employee performance, using civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria as reference. A pre-coded questionnaire was administered on 300 civil servants stratified into three categories: GL 04-06; GL 07-12 and GL 13+. The purpose was to ensure equitable representation of civil servants in the study area and to elicit their opinion on the theme of study. Using chi-square (χ^2) as a significant test, training was perceived to influence job performance at $\alpha 0.05$ and $\beta \alpha 0.25$. Also manpower development was perceived to influence job performance at $\alpha 0.05$ and $\beta \alpha 0.25$, but the influence of type of training on job performance was inconclusive. When cross-tabulated, only 49.8% of those that had training and those exposed to manpower development had high job performance as against 21.2% for their counterparts with no training and manpower development. This is suggestive of spurious factors (that may include leadership, organizational climate, management development, salary etc) that may intervene as motivation factors for high job performance. Of significance, is that the primary aim of training and manpower development was rather to meet statutory requirements (60%), as against improvement on the job (31.2%) and has policy implications for training and manpower development relevant to organizational need or goal to be provided to employees. This was a sufficiently promising result to encourage further study, not only to re-visit the theoretical explanation that training and manpower development directly result to improved job performance, but also to verify the circumstance within which training and manpower development enhance job performance.

Key words: Training, manpower development, performance, employee, Ebonyi, civil servants.

INTRODUCTION

Several studies (Owusu-Acheaw, 2010; Osterman, 2010; Singh, 2009; Colwling and Mailer, 1992) have been done recently to amplify existing organizational theories. Consistent with the scientific methods, expediency requires a frequent observation of organizational behaviour and the use of relevant scholarly findings as precursors for further collection of data to validate or repudiate earlier assumptions about organizational behaviour. More specifically, the system formed by social laws (theories, hypotheses etc) are less rigid than the

system of physical laws (Comte, 1663) due greatly to difference in socio-cultural, environmental and technical factors. Human behaviour is not as predictable as matter in the physical sciences. In effect, theoretical postulations about the capacity of training and manpower development to increase efficiency in employees' performance cannot always be guaranteed. This is the justification of this study, which focused on perception and relevance of influence of training and manpower development on job performance, amongst civil servants in Ebonyi state, Nigeria.

Training, as used in this context, refers to acquisition of skills and information directly required for the performance of a specific role. It includes on-the-job training, workshops, seminars and conference.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: chuokereke@yahoo.com. Tel: 234-803-7026-486

Manpower development broadly refers to job enrichment that has an intrinsic mechanism to motivate an employee to accept and play challenging organizational tasks. Specifically, Caroline and Charles (1997) argue that manpower development involves activities that enable an employee to comfortably and conveniently perform organizational tasks. Job performance, on the other hand, is more than a narrow economic measure (Cohen et al., 1995) as it connotes how well a group performs its required tasks to satisfy its customers inside and outside the organization, which suggests effectiveness and efficiency of the employees.

Although this study could erstwhile appear belaboured, its manifest significance includes the reference on civil servants who are apparently excluded from membership of "Organizations", strictly conceptualized as industrial organizations by scholars of organizational analysis and behaviour. The authors suspect that the variables (training and manpower development) might influence performance of the civil servants. The suspicion derives from findings on training and manpower development that variously point that training and manpower development endow employees with vistas that enhance efficiency in job performance.

Robbinson and Robbinson (1995) reiterated that the most significant direct benefits of training and manpower development are clarity in job duties and responsibility as well as increases in employee's competence among others. According to Graham (1987) and Glueck (1982), the reasons and advantages for embarking on training and manpower development include efficiency in performance. Similarly, Aina (1992) argues that training enables an employee to produce efficiently sooner, prepares him for a higher position (advancement), enhances his self-respect and increases his feeling of security and economic independence among others. Also, Rose (1981) maintained that the individual employee gains from training and manpower development by being able to perform his task well and gains satisfaction for efficient work. Consistently, Woolcut and Rose (1979) had argued that with training and manpower development, the organization would recognize the benefits in efficiency, safety, high quality, enhanced job satisfaction and performance. The duo noted a direct relationship between investment in training and manpower development of staff and their attitude to work.

It has been observed that some studies reveal that training and manpower development directly result to job satisfaction and increased performance. This mechanical assumption is a misplacement of what is sometimes, but not always the case. It evidently neglects the vital role played by 'motivation' as an interviewing variable between the polemics of training and manpower development and performance.

According to Mitchell (1978), there is consensus amongst theorists that 'ability to work' goes hand in glove

with 'motivation' to produce performance, as ability of the employees to do the job does not mean that they would do it. Although Ibbetson and Whitmore (1977) had indicated that several researches suggest that people must find their work satisfying in order to be motivated to do a satisfactory job, Mitchell (1978) argues that numerous reviews of literature show very little evidence that satisfaction causes increased performance. Many people can be excited with a high remuneration, interpersonally pleasant job and yet lack the requisite skill for effective job performance. In brief, there should be an adequate blend of ability to do a work, job satisfaction and motivation for a satisfactory job performance.

Obviously, most of the existing scholarly works on training, manpower development and on job performance concentrated on industrial settings to the neglect of services organizations typified in government ministries and parastatals. It is therefore the need to extend frontiers in knowledge on the aforementioned theme that this study focused on perception and relevance of training and manpower development on job performance using civil servants in Ebonyi State Nigeria as reference. Specifically, the study enquired into: (a) existence of training amongst civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. (b) existence of manpower development amongst civil servants in the study area. (c) To determine the perceived influence of (i) training on job performance (ii) type of training on job performance and (iii) manpower development on job performance of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

The author suspects that employees in government ministries and parastatals perform below standards, compared with their contemporaries in the private sector. The suspicion derives from the observed truancy, high rate of absenteeism to work, perceived lack of commitment to work, lack of distinction between organizational life and private life, high rate of nepotism and other non-achievement parameter. All these show in the dramatic decline in educational standard; commonality of injustices meted to people, poor quality medicare; absence of remarkable proactive efforts towards job creation that exacerbate unemployment (as tens of thousands of school leavers and graduates are turned out yearly in Nigeria) among others. The author argues that the below standard performance even scuttles brilliant policies of government and derives from a matrix of factors that include lack of relevant training, manpower development and enabling environment for effecting job performance.

The contingency/situational theory

The last three decades have witnessed a new trend in the study of organizational phenomena. This trend is associated with the argument that the internal functioning of work organizations must be consistent with the

demands of organizational tasks, technology or external environment among others. This approach has according to Lorsch (1980) and Cannel (2004) led to the development of '*Contingency Theory of Organizations*'.

Carlisle (1983) remarked that Taylor might be right on his thesis on one-best-way of performing a repetitive physical task, but would be faulted in tasks that involve planning, organizing, leading, controlling, and decision-making as differences in organization's tasks and competitive environment require different plans. In support, Koontz et al (1980) has argued that management theory and science can never advocate the one-best way to do things in the light of situations, especially as internal states and processes of the organization are contingent upon external requirements and needs of the members. Also, Onuoha (2000) pointed that the best way of managing depends on the specific circumstances and environments.

Training and manpower development are the products of given situations, such that no training method, technique or style is the best for all trainees under all conditions. Cascio (1988) has pointed that there are various techniques and methods of training and manpower development and that each can contribute maximally if appropriately applied.

In conclusion, employee training, manpower development, job performance and motivation are all variables that are affected by other factors.

METHODS

This study was conducted in Ebonyi State, which is one of the five Igbo-speaking States (Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States) out of the 36 States in Nigeria. Ebonyi State was created in 1996 out of Abia and Enugu States, owing to complaints over marginalization of Abakiliki province (the geopolitical zone that is now Ebonyi State). It is bounded at the East by Cross River State, at the West by Enugu State; at the North by Benue State and at the South by Imo and Abia States. It has plain topography, some swampy areas and arable farmland such that most of the inhabitants are farmers and indigenes of Ebonyi State.

The first administrator of Ebonyi State, Naval Officer Ayebanengiyefa Feghabo established ministerial and non-ministerial departments in 1996. In accordance with Federal Government of Nigeria White Paper on Civil Service Reform (1998), a commissioner is the Head and Chief Executive of the Ministry while a permanent secretary is the Chief Adviser to the commissioner and also the accounting officer of the Ministry. The permanent secretary is responsible to the commissioner in the policy and programme implementation of the Ministry.

As at the time of this study, there were 16 Ministries in the State, with 1,586 employees (Ebonyi State Head of Service, Statistical Figure 2006), comprising 1,377 employees at levels GL 04 and above and 209 at levels below GL 04). The employees at levels that are below GL 04 were deliberately excluded from the survey population owing to their low literacy that could hinder satisfactory completion of the research instrument. The employees were stratified into three categories viz: GL 04-06, (Clerical Assistants/Officers, and Typists) GL 07-12 (Secretary and Executive Assistants/Officers) and GL 13 and above (Administrative Assistants/Officers; Assistant Chief/Chiefs; Directors Permanent

Secretaries etc) to capture peculiar features of the strata. For equitable representation of all the Ministries, 25% of employees in each category were taken from each of the 16 Ministries, such that a total of 350 employees were selected into the survey population. This sample size is considered adequate due to its representativeness of the characteristics of the target population of civil servants in all the Ministries in Ebonyi State.

A partly coded questionnaire was administered on 350 civil servants in Ebonyi State – Nigeria to elicit information on training, manpower development and job performance in the Ministries. Section A of the research instrument enquired about the personal data of the respondents; Section B was on training and manpower development in the Ebonyi State Civil Service, while Section C dwelt on job performance. The questionnaire was pretested on 15 civil servants to ensure that ambiguities in the questions were clarified before the survey.

RESULTS

Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

Out of the 350 copies of questionnaire administered on the civil servants, 300 were retrieved as fully completed, making 86 percent response rate.

Amongst the 300 respondents with mean age 37.3 years, 66.7% were males while 33.3% were females. A preponderant 65% are married, followed by those that were single (20%), the widowed (10%) and those separated from their marital union (5%). A considerable proportion (48.3%) had post-secondary education (e.g National Certificate of Education (NCE, OND, HND, BSc., MSc. and their equivalents and PhD). This is followed by those with secondary school education (20%) and least were respondents with only primary school education (12.3%). The percentage distribution of respondents by rank in the civil service reveals Executive Assistants/Officers (26.7%), (Clerical Assistants/Officers (23%), Administrative Assistants/Officers (19.3%), Secretaries (14.3%), Typists (13.3%) and Permanent Secretaries (3.4%)

Training of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Table 1 shows that considerable proportions (78.3%) of the respondents are aware of training of civil servants in Ebonyi State, amongst who an overwhelming proportion (57.5%) indicated their source of information, was General Circular that conveys information about training opportunities for the civil servants. Statistics show that 25.5% learnt about training for civil servants through internal memoranda, 12.7% got the information from fellow employees while 4.3% heard from the media (radio, TV and Newspapers).

Data reveal that within the sub-population that has awareness about training of civil servants in Ebonyi State, 71.5% have had some training, which they said were in the form of either or combination of inductions,

Table 1. Training of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Awareness of training of civil servants (N=300)		
Yes	235	78.3
No	65	21.7
Major source of information about training of civil servants (N=235)		
General Circular	135	57.5
Internal Memorandum	60	25.5
Media (Radio, TV, Newspaper)	10	4.3
Individual Workers	30	12.7
Primary reason for training of civil servants (N=235)		
Statutory Requirement	141	60.0
Promotion Exercise	16	6.8
Improvement on the Job	78	33.2
Ever had training (N=235)		
Yes	168	71.5
No	67	28.5
Attitude towards training of civil servants (N=300)		
Favourable	240	80.0
Unfavourable	60	20.0

workshops, seminars, conferences, staff development courses and study leave. Sixty percent pointed that training is primarily a statutory requirement, 33.2% said it aims towards improvement on job performance, while 6.8% said that it is a pre-requisite for promotion to the next status/rank.

With respect to the questions 'What do you understand by training being based on Statutory requirements?' and 'What determines efficiency in employee's job performance?', there was consensus in opinion of the respondents. Statutory requirements depend on the length of service: Grade level 01-06 need 2 years working experience, GL 07-12 need 3 years, while GL 13 and above need 4 years working experience to qualify for training. Promotion to higher rank depends on appointment from government or Head of Service, while improvement on job performance depends on the seriousness, resourcefulness and hardworking of the employee. In terms of 'How are workers generally selected for training and manpower development?', almost all the respondents indicated that when circulars for training and manpower development are issued to Heads of ministerial and non-ministerial Departments, the latter use policy guideline to suggest or recommend qualified workers in their department to the Head of Service.

A negligible proportion of the respondents remarked that a non-achievement criterion (such as nepotism) is often in use to select workers for training. Nevertheless Table 1 reveals that 80% of all the respondents favour training of civil servants, as opposed by 20%. The preponderant reason given for their favourable disposition to training is that it enhances the financial base (income) of the employee, and enables the employee to gain experience. Amongst respondents that are against training, the outstanding reason is inability of management to increase the remuneration of the employee that has received training.

Manpower development in Ebonyi State civil service

Data in Table 2 shows that about three-quarters (71.7%) of all the respondents have heard about manpower development. In response to the question 'What do you understand by manpower development?', a preponderant proportion of the respondents gave responses that could be teased to indicate facilities and activities provided to employees to enhance their comfort and efficiency at job performance. This is closely followed by responses that point at incentives given to employees to enrich their personnel advancement and make them more productive

Table 2. Manpower development in Ebonyi State civil service.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Ever heard about manpower development (N=300)		
Yes	215	71.7
No	85	28.3
Does manpower development exist in Ebonyi State civil service (N=215)		
Yes	183	85.0
No	32	15.0
Attitude towards selection of staff for manpower development in the Ebonyi State civil service (N=215)		
Favourable	169	78.4
Unfavourable	46	21.6

to the organization.

Table 2 shows that most of the respondents (85%) affirmed the existence of manpower development in the Ebonyi State Civil Service, out of whom 78.4% have a favourable attitude towards the modus operandi for the selection of staff for manpower development.

In response to the question 'What is the modality for selecting workers for manpower development?', almost all the respondents pointed at merit, availability of funds which depends on government budgets/allocations and approvals. The 21.6% that did not favour the way staff are selected for manpower development explained that the selection lacks hindsight of the negative influence of organizational development and philosophy/attitude of immediate superiors on an employee's job performance.

Perceived influence of training and manpower development on job performance of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.]

Shown in Tables 3, 4 and 6 are the observed frequencies of opinion on influence of training on job performance, type of training on job performance and manpower development on job performance. The encapsulated figures are frequencies expected based on assumed hypotheses.

Statistics in Table 3 apparently reveal that training will affect job performance of civil servants at Ebonyi State, Nigeria at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Cal $X^2 = 26.27$; $df = 2$; Tab $X^2 = 5.99$) and even at $\alpha = 0.25$ (Cal $X^2 = 26.27$; $df = 2$; Tab $X^2 = 2.77$). Implicitly, efficiency in job performance will be compromised when there is absence of training for the employees. A cross-tabulation of the two variables (training and job performance) in Table 3 shows that 21.2% of the total population of respondents that had no training indicated high job performance, compared with 49.8% of the total population of those that received some training. The latter (49.8%), which is below 50% is however heuristic. It prima facie suggests a below

expected proportional effect of training on job performance and a need to explore into spurious factor(s) that intervene between the variables.

Consistently, Table 4 shows that however, Table 4 shows that the influence of type of training (whether in the form of workshop, in service training, conferences, seminars etc) on job performance is inconclusive at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Cal $X^2 = 6.59$; $df = 4$; Tab $X^2 = 9.49$) and at $\alpha = 0.25$ (Cal $X^2 = 6.59$; $df = 4$; Tab $X^2 = 5.39$). Consequently, enquiries were made on attitude/philosophy of superior officers as well as on organizational climate. Attitude/philosophy of superior officer includes value placed on the quality of training, perception of quality of the trainers, relevance of the training to organizational tasks and pedigree of the employee that received the training among others. On the other hand, organizational climate includes existence of a competitive market, existence of vacancy for the trained to practice the acquired knowledge or the absence of it etc.

Table 5 reveals that a predominant 92% of the respondents pointed that philosophy/attitude of superior officers and organizational climate exert influence on employee's job performance. Although the author did not intend to explore the depth of the influence, most of the respondents remarked that participants to training and manpower development programmes were often not allowed to practice what they learnt either because of the philosophy or attitude of their boss or due to organizational climate.

Data in Table 6 reveal that manpower development will influence job performance of civil servants in Ebonyi State at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Cal $X^2 = 26.26$; $df = 2$; Tab $X^2 = 5.99$) and at $\alpha = 0.25$ (Cal $X^2 = 26.26$; $df = 2$; Tab $X^2 = 2.77$), suggesting that little or no manpower development could frustrate targets at increased job performance.

DISCUSSION

Data reveal that within the sub-population of respondents

Table 3. Relationship between training and job performance among civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Training	Job performance			Total
	High	Moderate (average)	Low	
None (no training)	18 (35.4) (21.2%)	30 (27.5) (35.3%)	37 (22.1) (43.5%)	85 (28.3%)
Training (had some training)	107 (89.6) (49.8%)	67 (69.5) (31.2%)	41 (55.9) (19.1%)	215 (71.7%)
N	125 (41.7%)	97 (32.3%)	78 (26.0%)	300 (100.0%)

Cal $X^2 = 26.27$; $df = 2$; $\alpha = 0.05$; Tab $X^2 = 5.99$; $\alpha = 0.25$; Tab $X^2 = 2.77$.

Table 4. Relationship between type of training and job performance of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria.

Type of training	Job performance			Total
	High	Moderate (average)	Low	
Workshop	35 (37.0)	42(36.4)	18(21.5)	95
In-service	71(63.6)	55(62.5)	37(37)	163
Conference/Seminar	11(16.4)	18(16.1)	13(9.5)	42
N	117	115	68	300

Cal $X^2 = 6.59$; $df = 4$; $\alpha = 0.05$; Tab $X^2 = 9.49$ $\alpha = 0.25$; Tab $X^2 = 5.39$.

Table 5. Frequency distribution of influence of philosophy/attitude of superior officer and Organizational climate on employee job performance.

Does the philosophy/attitude of superior officer and organizational climate affect employee job performance? (N = 300)	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	276	92.0
No	24	8.0

Table 6. Relationship between manpower development and job performance of civil servants in Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Manpower development	Job performance			Total
	High	Moderate (average)	Low	
None (<i>No Manpower Development</i>)	18(35.4) (21.2%)	30(27.5) (35.3%)	37(22.1) (43.5%)	85 (28.3%)
Manpower Development	107(89.6) (49.8%)	67(69.5) (31.2%)	41(55.9) (19.1%)	215 (71.7%)
N	125 (41.7%)	97 (32.3%)	78 (26.0%)	300 (100.0%)

Cal $X^2 = 26.26$; $df = 2$; $\alpha = 0.05$; Tab $X^2 = 5.99$; $\alpha = 0.25$; Tab $X^2 = 2.77$.

that affirmed awareness of training of civil servants, an overwhelming 60% said it was a statutory requirement. According to Haines (1988), course participants often complain that their effectiveness will be limited as they would not be given sufficient liberty to put into practice what they learnt. This corroborates Data which reveal that only 33.2% of the respondents said the primary reason for the training was for improved job performance.

For both the favourable and unfavourable dispositions towards training of civil servants, there is an economic motive: In enhancement of financial base (income) versus training might not improve the finances (income) of the employee respectively. None of the respondents considered job performance as a possible target for training. Invariably, economic consideration appears to be the factor behind the use of non-achievement criteria (especially nepotism) in the selection of employees for training as reported by few of the respondents. The negligence of improvement of employee's job performance contrasts with several scholarly findings that the benefits of training include efficiency in job performance (Graham, 1987; Glueck, 1982) and personal advancement (Aina, 1992) as well as to gain satisfaction for efficient work (Woolcut and Rose, 1979).

Herzberg (Feldman and Arnold, 1983) argued that training enhances the advancement and growth of an employee, which could result to motivation for increased productivity. According to Bass and Vaughn (1986), a meaningful integration of learning experiences to the job makes for practice that will motivate the trainees to improve performance. Also, Bole (1985) argues that transfer of learning occurs when the acquisition of knowledge or skills of particular task facilitates the performance of that task. Consistently, Dakin and Armstrong (1989) had reiterated that training is said to be effective when attitude or behaviour of the person that attended training enhances his job performance. However, Brown and Moberg (1980) stress that human resources training and manpower development involve the growth of the employee, not only in learning as through training but also to growth in attitude, motivation in behaviour that the person becomes reliable in a work situation. In this case, training and manpower development vis-a-viz job performance are independent of each other. Brown and Moberg (1980) explanation provides the basis upon which the effect of training and manpower development on job performance of civil servants in the study area could be situated.

Data show that training will affect job performance and that manpower development will affect job performance of the civil servants both at $\alpha 0.05$ and $\alpha 0.25$ (chi-square X^2 test statistic). Accessibility of the civil servants to training and manpower development is expected to enhance their job performance and on the contrary (that is, when not accessible), job performance will be retarded. When cross-tabulated, only 49.8% of those that had training and those with manpower development had

high job performance as against 21.2% for their counterparts with no training and manpower development.

This suggests the existence of spurious factors that may include leadership, organizational climate, management development, salary etc, which may intervene as motivation factors for high job performance. Specifically, the respondents complained that participants in training and manpower development programmes were often not allowed to practice what they learnt either because of the philosophy or attitude of their boss or due to organizational climate. Consistently Haines (1988) reiterates that course participants complain that they would not be given liberty to put into practice what they learnt. It has been observed that the rationale for the denial of opportunity include management's lack of trust and confidence in the quality of training and trainers; non-relevance of the training to the prevailing organization's need; unappealing pedigree of the trained employee among others.

It is cautionary, however, to give attention to the modus operandi in selection of employees for manpower development for which some of the respondents complained lack hindsight of influence of externalities (such as dynamic technological challenges intrinsic in certain job specifications/task schedules; personal idiosyncrasies of some officers that might be quite uncomplimentary) on appraisal of employees' job performance. Correspondingly, Rotundu and Sackett (2002) had argued that when leadership and organizational climate are contrary to the intent and content of management development efforts, the results can be disastrous.

Policy Implications

1. Training and manpower development relevant to organizational goals should be provided to employees and recipients provided with an enabling environment to perform tasks (the enabling environment includes opportunity to put into practice the new skill and competence they acquired; commensurate monetary reward to, perhaps, compensate them for the rigours experienced in acquiring the new skill and competence.
2. Selection of employees should primarily be on merit, via an objective appraisal of all eligible employees

Conclusion

This report has underscored that the aim of training and manpower development might not directly gear towards job performance. Further study is required to ascertain the conditions within which training and manpower development could improve job performance amongst civil servant.

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