

**TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT IN LOKOJA LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCIL
KOGI STATE, NIGERIA 2003-2009**

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ABSTRACT: *The centrality of effective training and development to the efficiency of any organization can hardly be overemphasized. This paper empirically evaluated the effectiveness of training and development programmes in enhancing the job performance of Lokoja Local Government Council personnel from 2003-2009. The study adopted the systematic approach to training, as well as its concomitant derivatives such as the frequency, timing, equity and relevance of training programmes, as benchmarks for effective training and development. Data for this study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. Also, the responses generated from the randomly selected respondents were analyzed using simple cross tabulation and percentages. The paper found that the glaring absence of the systematic approach to training is at the root of the numerous obstacles that beset training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council. It strongly recommended, inter alia, the need to incorporate training needs assessments and training evaluations into the configuration of training and development activities in Lokoja Local Government Council.*

KEYWORDS: Human Resource, Training and Development, Performance, Local Government Council

INTRODUCTION

The most prized and valuable asset of any organization is undoubtedly its workforce. However, for the workforce of any organization to perform optimally, effectively and efficiently, it needs to be equipped with the relevant skill, knowledge and attitude hence; the need for training and development programmes (Flippo, 1984). While emphasizing on the place of training and development programmes in organizations, Pigors & Myers (1981:280) posited that:

No organization can choose whether or not to train its employees. All new employees regardless of their previous training, education and experience need to be introduced to the new employer's work environment and to be shown how to perform specific tasks. Moreover, specific occasions for retraining arise when jobs change and new skills must be learned ...

According to Kleiman (2000), training and development are planned learning experiences designed to equip workers with the requisite knowledge, skills and competencies needed to perform their current and future jobs effectively and efficiently. In the view of Iyayi (2007), training and development programmes are undertaken by employees to produce positive changes in their job performance ability.

The Local Government in addition to its status as the third tier of Government in Nigeria is widely acknowledged, strategically located, and constitutionally designed, as a veritable avenue for speedy grass-root socio-economic development and rapid rural transformation respectively (Okoli, 2000; Bagaji, 2002). It is however instructive to note that the effective execution of socio-economic functions of the Local Government is not dependent on the representativeness and responsiveness of its legislators and political executives alone. The effective execution of these socio-economic activities is also contingent upon the virility and potency of the Local Government Administrative machinery. More so, because it is the Local Government Administrative machinery that implements policies and decisions made by Local Government legislators (The Councilors) and political executives respectively. To this end, Dalhatu (2007) submitted that, all the 774 constitutionally recognized local government areas should as a matter of urgency re-address their attitudes towards national consciousness and nationalism and that there should be an urgent empowerment and reorientation of local governments (human resource) for specific programme capable of enabling them to meet their constitutional expectations. It becomes imperative to ensure effective training and development programmes in the Local Government Councils in order to equip their bureaucrats and technocrats with the relevant skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes. This is undoubtedly inevitable, if the Local Government is to function effectively as a reliable vehicle for promoting and sustaining grass-root development and rural transformation respectively.

On this note, Dibia (2004) after carrying out a Field Survey in 150 Local Governments in Nigeria during the summer of 2001 arrived at the conclusion that most Local Governments in Nigeria pay lip-services to the training of their personnel. In the same vein, Agu (2002) asserted that Local Government training and development in Nigeria are in deep-wood and are experiencing enormous problems. The likely repercussion of the massive neglect of effective training and development programmes in the nation's Local Government Councils is glaringly obvious. It has led to a situation whereby the Nation's Local Government Bureaucrats and Technocrats are denied the necessary skills, competencies and knowledge needed to carry out their jobs efficiently thereby stagnating socio-economic development at that level of governance. Little wonder Akpan (1984) stereotyped Local Governments in Nigeria as graveyards of amateur and inexperienced staff which according to him, resulted in their poor performance. These negative workplace attitudes, according to Nwachukwu (2007) are obvious manifestations of the absence of effective training in organizations.

Consequent upon the above, this paper attempts to identify the key challenges militating against training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council with the view to making relevant recommendations that will ensure the efficacy of such programmes so as to enhance the job performance and productivity levels of the Local Government staff.

Statement of the Problem

In the Nigerian Local Government system, the Local Government Service Commission of each State is responsible for the training of senior staff of all the Local Governments that such a State is comprised of. The responsibility for training Local Governments' junior staff however lies with the Junior Staff Management Committee of each of the Local Governments of the federation (Egonmwan & Ibodje, 1988; Obi, 2005). However, in spite of the presence of these two training and development structures in Lokoja Local Government Council, there seems to be strong prima facie evidence that the staff of the Local Government exhibit undesirable workplace dispositions such as, tardiness, excessive absenteeism, lack of interest

in their jobs, negative attitude to work, and excessive complaints, amongst others. These entire negative work-place attitudes, amongst others, are indicative of the absence of effective training programmes in the organization.

Consequently, this paper is attempted at addressing the probable challenges militating against training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council. Therefore, this study sees the challenges with the:

- i. Training needs assessments and training evaluations in Lokoja Local Government Council.
- ii. Obstacles besetting training and development programmes in the Local Government Council.
- iii. Absence of practical strategies and measures that should be adopted in order to guarantee effective and result oriented training and development programmes in the Local Government Council.

Research Questions

In order to assess the potency of training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council, and to proffer solutions, the following research questions underlie this study;

- (1) Are training needs assessments and training evaluations carried out before and after most training programmes are conducted in Lokoja Local Government Council?
- (2) What obstacles beset training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council?
- (3) What strategies and measures should be undertaken so as to guarantee effective and result-oriented training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council?

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess and examine the effectiveness of training and development programmes in enhancing staff performance in Lokoja Local Government Council, and to proffer realistic solutions where necessary. Specifically, the objectives of this study include the following:

- (1) To determine whether training needs assessments and training evaluations are carried out before and after most training programmes are conducted in Lokoja Local Government Council;
- (2) To identify the obstacles besetting training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council; and
- (3) To suggest and recommend practical strategies and measures that guarantee effective and result-oriented training and development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meaning and importance of Training and Development

In the submission of Cole (1996:177), Training and Development are planned learning experiences designed to provide workers with competencies needed to perform their current or future jobs. Similarly, Iyayi (2007) referred Training and Development to the process of acquiring new knowledge and skills for carrying out responsibilities at workplace. In the words of Maduabum (2006:222) authorities are unanimous in accepting that training involves the acquisition of knowledge, skill and attitude required to perform a given job or group of jobs, duties and tasks. In the light of the above definitions, training and development can be seen as a wide-range of deliberate efforts and activities employed by organizations to equip their workforce with the relevant skills, knowledge and attitude in order to carry-out their duties and tasks effectively and efficiently.

Flippo (1984) accurately captured the importance of training and development programmes in organizations, when he asserts that such programmes help to increase productivity, reduce costs, boost morale and promote organizational stability and flexibility. He further points out that through training and development programmes, decision making skills are enhanced, interpersonal skills are promoted, job knowledge is effectively acquired and organizational knowledge is developed, and individual deficiencies are addressed.

In the same way, Correl & Kuzmits (1982) highlighted the following general objectives of training and development;

- To improve performance and achieve effectiveness.
- To update employees' skills and avoid managerial obsolescence.
- To promote job competency
- To solve problems
- To prepare for promotion
- To orient new employees, and
- To satisfy the personal growth needs of staff.

It is logical to say that the effective training and development of Local Government public servants will undeniably position the Local Government bureaucracy to function effectively as a potent instrument of rural development and grass-root transformation respectively. That is the reason why Ezeani (2004) concluded that a carefully planned but flexible training programme is vital if the Local Government workforce is to be willing and able to achieve the socio-economic and political goals set for the organization.

Factors critical to the Effectiveness of Training and Development Programmes

It is important to emphasize the fact that an effective training and development programme lies in its ability to equip the recipients (trainees) of such a programme with the relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and competencies they need to perform their duties efficiently and effectively. It is also germane to acknowledge that many scholars like (McGhee & Thayer, 1961; Cole, 1997; Noe et al, 2004; Bloisi, 2007; Nwachukwu, 2007; Dessler, 2008) amongst others have arrived at the unanimous conclusion that for training and development to be

effective, such programmes have to assume a systematic pattern. Now, what exactly constitute a systematic pattern (model) of training? According to Cole (2002:331),

A systematic approach to training and development will generally follow a logical sequence of activities commencing with, the establishment of a policy and the resources to sustain it, followed by an assessment of training needs for which appropriate training is provided, and ending with some form of evaluation and feed-back.

The basic elements that constitute the systematic model of training and development are discussed below:

Training Policy

While emphasizing on the need for suitable, comprehensive, and adequate training policy in organizations, Sachedeva & Sogani (1980:363) pointed out that;

Training policies should be developed which will provide guidelines on the detailed planning of training, by defining the scope and aims of the training schemes, the basis of the training plans, the procedure for developing formal training schemes, and the methods of evaluating and controlling training.

Also, Monappa & Saiyadain (1979) asserted that an organization's training policy reflects the commitment of its top management to training, and that such commitment is expressed in the rules and procedure that influence the standard and scope of training in the organization. They further emphasize the fact that training policies are necessary for the purpose of highlighting the organization's approach to the training function, help in identification of priority areas in training, and to communicate the firm's intent regarding an employee's career development.

Training Needs Assessment

Pertaining to the Identification of training needs, otherwise known as 'training needs assessment' Bernadin (2007) pictured that a training needs assessment is a systematic and objective determination of the training needs in an organization. He further asserts that the objectives of training programmes should be predicated on such training needs assessment, if the training needs in organizations are to be adequately and appropriately met.

It is instructive to note that although there are many methods of identifying training needs in organizations, the Thayer and McGhee model is the most commonly acknowledged. This model comprises three primary types of analysis, namely; organizational analysis; Task analysis; and Person/man analysis (Monappa & Saiyadain, 1979). Pertaining to the collection of information for a training needs assessment exercise, Ivancevich (2000) advocated at least one or all of the methods which involved analyzing employees' performance appraisal forms among others.

Planning and Execution of Training:

Under the systematic approach to training and development, the planning and execution of training programmes immediately follows the completion of the training needs assessment exercise. This phase is otherwise known as the 'implementation process' or the 'development phase' respectively. This phase to Imanyi (2004:67) is observed thus:

....Then through training needs analysis, the problems that training can adequately solve are sorted out from the ones that are not amenable to training solutions, it is only after this that the implementation process begins with objective setting, programme design, before the commencement of the training activities...

In addition, Bernadin (2007) reiterated that the goal of the development phase of training is to design the training environment necessary to achieve the objectives. He also adds that the trainer must identify or develop training materials and techniques to be used in the programme after which the appropriate learning environment is designed or selected, and then, the training is conducted.

Concerning who is saddled with the task of executing training and development programmes in organizations, Cole (1993) articulated that some organizations meet their training needs via their training or personnel departments with little reliance on outsiders. Other organizations, believe in contracting out their training to external providers such as Colleges, Consultants and private training organizations. He also maintains that some organizations however adopt a midway position by adopting both methods.

Evaluation of Training:

According to Cole (2002), the basic cycle of the systematic training theory ends with some form of evaluation and feed-back. Hamblin (1974) evaluated training as an attempt to obtain information (feed-back) on the effects of a training programme and to assess the value of the training in the light of that information. The goal of evaluation phase is to examine whether the training programme has been effective in meeting the stated objectives. It also ensures that programmes are accountable and are meeting the particular needs of employees in a cost effective manner. What is more, the information collected in the evaluation process would enable the organization improve on the programme for future trainees (Bernadin, 2007; Nwachukwu, 2007).

Kirkpatrick (1967) maintained that trainers should endeavour to collect four types of data when evaluating training programmes (Generally referred to as the four criteria of training evaluation). Namely; (i) **Reaction** (ii) **Learning** (iii) **Behaviour** (iv) **Organizational result**.

Pertaining to the collection of data for the aforementioned four areas of training evaluation in organizations, Byars & Rue (2008) viewed that reaction evaluation in questionnaires are normally administered following training programmes in order to elicit trainees' disposition towards such programmes. They also stated that to determine how much learning is occurring, paper-and-pencil tests, as well as other standard tests should be administered to the trainee both before and after training programmes. Since one of the goals of training is to modify the on-the-job-behaviour or performance of trainees, it then follows that behaviours can be measured by relying on the performance evaluation system to collect ratings of trainees (Bernadin, 2007).

Iyayi (2007) noted that the approach sees training as an activity that contributes to organizations' overall goals, as well as to employees' personal goals. He further notes that systematic approach to training criticizes the old practices of using one method or gadget, hazy objectives, and absence of evaluation. Dwelling on the prevalence and pre-eminence of the systematic approach to training in organizations, Bernadin (2007:197) highlighted that

training needs assessments and evaluations are often rare despite their importance, and most training is informal even though this is not the best approach to use. This view was further reinforced by Cole (2002:329) when he maintains that “many organizations meet their needs for training in an ad-hoc and haphazard way. Training in these organizations is more or less unplanned and unsystematic...” Ezeani (2004) supportively said that despite efforts at staff training in the Local Government system in most African Countries, training is still sporadic and unsystematic. Apart from the systematic approach to training and development, other variables crucial to the effectiveness of training and development programmes in organizations are discussed below:

- **Frequency of training:** Training should be arranged frequently and repeatedly for employers requiring crucial skills and techniques, this provides opportunities for practice, which is important whether the skills being learnt are technical or behavioural (Iyayi: 2007). This is perfectly compatible with the view of Byars and Rue (2008), which draws attention to the fact that practice and repetition always enhance effective learning.
- **Motivation:** According to Monappa & Saiyadain (1979), a trainee needs to have a desire to learn and benefit from the programming, but if he is not interested, or is demotivated, then the learning outcome is going to be insignificant and the company will have spent its money badly.
- **Transfer of learning:** Maximum use of training can be made if the trainee is able to transfer his learning to his actual work role. The more similar the learning situation is to the job situation, the higher the degree of transfer the trainee can expect, and hence the greater the relevance of the training programme (Monappa & Saiyadain, 1979).
- **Competence and Quality of Trainers:** The best-planned training programmes are likely to be ineffective if the trainers are poorly qualified. A well qualified trainer is one who not only has mastery of the technical details of the particular job, but knows how to train, that is to teach (Pigors & Mayers, 1981). Nwachukwu (2007) viewed a good trainer as one who encourages maximum participation of employees, has a positive attitude, shows enthusiasm in what he is doing, and has confidence in himself.
- **Support of top Management and Adequate Budget:**
- **Appropriateness of training methods and Techniques:** In the submission of Monappa & Saiyadain (1979), it is pertinent to analyze and select the best method or combination of methods when carrying out training programmes. Nwachukwu (2007) noted that there is no hard and fast rule as to how to select methods and techniques of training. What matters according to his view is that the appropriate method should be used for a particular purpose. Philips (1983:59) also emphasized that for different teaching objectives, different teaching methods should be used if training is to be effective.
- **Orientation:** For Training and Development Programmes to be effective in organizations, it is essential for such programmes to be extended to new entrants. To Kleiman (2000), orientation referred to training designed to inform new employees about their specific jobs, their work units, the organization, and its policies and

procedures as Dessler (2003) emphasized orientations' importance when he observed that without basic information on things like rules and policies, new employees may not only make time-consuming and dangerous errors, but their performance as well as the organization's will be adversely affected. He therefore, concluded that Orientation is potentially important if new employees are to be productive. Similarly, Byars & Rue (2008) speculated that an effective orientation programme has an immediate and lasting impact on new employee and can make the difference between his success or failure. They further indicate that regardless of the type of organization, orientation should be conducted at Organizational Orientation and Departmental Orientation.

- Other factors crucial to effective training and development programmes includes, ensuring that such programmes are conducted in a conducive environment (Fleishman, 1967). And, also feed-backing the trainees about their progress and performance during the training process (Monappa & Saiyedain, 1979; Iyayi, 2007).

At this point, it is pertinent to draw attention to the fact that if the above factors critical to effective training and development are juxtaposed with the systematic approach to training and development, it becomes glaringly evident that these factors are inherent in the systematic approach to training. For instance, the point has to be made that a systematic approach to training guarantees the regularity of training as a result of the existence of a training policy which regulates the frequency of training in the organization (Monappa & Saiyadain, 1979; Cole, 2002). Such a policy also implies that the staffs are carried along in the training process hence, are motivated. In addition a training policy to some extent elicit the commitment of top management staff to training programmes, and also ensures that adequate budget is set aside for training purposes (Iyayi, 2007). Besides, competent trainers, appropriate facilities, and relevant techniques are likely to be utilized and adopted respectively (Ekhator, 2002; Bloisi, 2007). Finally, it has to be stressed that since systematic training ends in evaluation, it inexorably avails the trainees the opportunity to being feed-backed about their progress and performance in the training process (Kirkpatrick, 1967).

Following these developments, it is germane to re-emphasize that the factors critical to effective training and development programmes are concomitant effects of the systematic approach to training.

Challenges of Training and Development Programmes in Local Government Councils in Nigeria

Dobie (2004) after surveying 150 Local Government Councils in Nigeria during the summer of 2001 arrived at the conclusion that most Local Government Councils in Nigeria pay lip-services to the training of their employees. He further asserts that the rather lackadaisical attitudes of most Local Government Councils staff to their official duties can not be extricated from the cavalier disposition of most Local Government Councils in the country to issues of training and development. While discussing problems relating to training, especially Local Government staff, Oladosu (1981: 176-180) enumerated seven major problems as follows:

- i. How to design programmes for students of different educational backgrounds, experience and age.
- ii. How to design programmes that would meet the needs of different units with different standards.

- iii. Communication problems, especially for the lowly educated.
- iv. The general dislike of courses which involve calculation or use of numerical ability.
- v. The nature and timing of the programme.
- vi. How to give the programme local flavour.
- vii. Problem of staff – recruitment of the right caliber of personnel, who are conversant with training procedure.

Ezeani (2004) analyzed that in most sub-Saharan African countries, training of Local Governments' staff is still sporadic and unsystematic. He further posits that there is little emphasis on training for technical and professional staff, for instance surveyors, accountants, engineers and doctors. And that the emphasis seems to be on the administrative cadre. Agu (2002) accepted the fact that against the backdrop of the Local Government reforms of 1976, and in order to ensure the realization of the objectives of the Local Government staff training and development, the Federal Government designated and recognized three training centres in three zones of the federation. These are; (a) The University of Nigeria, Nsukka, for the Eastern Zone; (b) The Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for the Northern Zone; and (c) The Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, for the Western Zone. He also observed that in nearly all the states of the federation, there are myriads of centres and agencies that are saddled with the responsibility of Local Government staff training and development are ill-equipped; the meager funds available at their disposal are poorly utilized, and are inefficiently coordinated.

Another constraint to training and development in Nigeria's Local Government Councils is the counterproductive disposition of the Local Government Service Commission of the various states of the federation to the training and development of Local Government Senior staff on grade level 07 and above. For instance Mukoro (2007) pointed out that the "training fund" at the disposal of the Local Government Service Commission of most States of the federation are expended more on casually organized workshops and seminars for staff rather than the much more rigorous and carefully planned formal classroom training programmes that have the capacity to equip staff with requisite skills, knowledge and competencies. In a similar way, Agalamanyi (2002) saw that some Chairmen of Local Government Service Commissions now see the training fund as a ready source for personal aggrandizement. And, as a result spurious consultancies are undertaken as veritable channels for siphoning the training funds, consequent upon which the aim of staff training and development is defeated.

Other less than impressive role played by the Local Government Service Commissions in the training and development of Local Government staff is in perpetration of ethnicity, nepotism, favouritism, bribery and god-fatherism, amongst others, rather than merit (Agalamanyi, 2002). This precipitates the selection of wrong candidates for training programmes, thereby defeating their objectives thereof. In addition to the above, obstacle to training and development in Nigerian Local Government Councils is the absence of the evaluation of such programmes. To this end, Agu (2002) contended that in spite of the significance of evaluation training programmes there seems to be no systematic attempt to evaluate the various training and development programmes conducted for Local Government staff in Nigeria.

Following these developments, several scholars in Nigeria like (Nwankwo, 1988; Adebayo, 2000; Mukoro, 2007; Nwachukwu, 2007; Abasili, 2008; Olaopa, 2008; Onah, 2008), amongst

others, have identified plethora of factors as responsible for undermining the effectiveness of training and development in Government-owned organizations. Implicit amongst these factors, are highlighted below;

- i. Poor financial allocation for training and development in Government institutions and organizations;
- ii. Misappropriation of the insufficient funds allocated for training and development purposes by those in custody of such funds;
- iii. Low priority accorded to training and development by ministries, extra ministerial departments, parastatal agencies and other Government run institutions;
- iv. Poor attitudinal disposition of Government employees and staff to training and development programmes;
- v. Insufficient co-ordination of the various training activities carried out by varying training agencies within the federal, state and Local Governments levels;
- vi. Poor training equipment and facilities;
- vii. Massive disconnect between the training situation and the job situation, that is, lack of opportunity for the trainee to practice what he or she has learnt in training programmes;
- viii. Selection and release of staff for training based on non-merit criteria;
- ix. Absence of articulate and comprehensive training and development policies to effectively guide and regulate training programmes;
- x. Low incidence and unimpressive regularity of training and development programmes in government organizations;
- xi. Lopsided nature of training and development programme, which its attention, appears to be focused on senior and management training to the relative neglect of junior staff;
- xii. Absence of the evaluation of training and development programmes to determine their efficacy;
- xiii. Use of inappropriate methodology in delivering training programmes; and
- xiv. Conducting training and development programmes for staff without assessing their training needs.

Theoretical Framework

For the purpose of this study therefore, we will adopt the Systems Theory as given by Eckstrand (1964). The systems approach was first developed in the biological and engineering sciences before it was adapted by social scientists in explaining social and organizational phenomena. Easton (1965) utilized the approach in his system analysis of political life. Katz and Khan (1966) also used the open systems approach in studying The Social Psychology of organizations. Nwachukwu (1988) also adopted the systems approach in his analysis of education and training for public management in Nigeria. According to Onah (2008), the systems approach to the study of a phenomenon focuses on the system as a whole, the environment of the system, the interdependent relationships between parts of the system, and the dependency for the system to strive for survival by negotiating with its environment. In the same vein, koontz et al (1980) asserted that the advantage of approaching any area of inquiry or any problem as a system is that it enables us to see the critical variables and constraints and their interaction with one another. They further add that the systems theory forces scholars and practitioners in the field of management to be constantly aware that one single element, phenomenon or problem should not be treated without regard to its interacting consequences with other elements.

Nwizu (1997) summarized the major concepts involved in the Systems Theory as follows:

- **Sub-systems:** The parts that make up a whole of a system are called sub-systems. And each system in turn may be a sub-system of a still larger whole.
- **Synergy:** This means that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A watch that is disassembled has the same number of parts as one that is properly assembled. However the assembled watch has a phenomenon that the disassembled one lacks – it keeps time (synergy).
- **Open and closed systems:** A system is considered an open system if it interacts with its environment. It is considered a closed system if it does not.
- **System Boundaries:** A system has its boundary and can be viewed in terms of its relationship with other systems.
- **Inputs-Transformation-Output:** This is the process whereby a system constantly seeks and import resources (inputs) in both human and material form, and transforms these inputs into product and services (output), using internal/social and technological processes.
- **Feed-Back:** This is the process whereby a system receives and measures the reactions and responses of the environment to its activities (outputs). Feedback is used to keep the system on course with regard to its goals, and to evaluate the performance of its sub-units.

Having discussed the systems theory from a broad perspective, we will now apply the theory to a more specific level of training and development as Eckstrand did in 1964. According to Eckstrand (1964), the systems theory application to training is analogous to the development of a weapon system. In which case, the system engineer begins with an operational requirement; a precise statement of the objective to be achieved by the system. The systems engineer then works backward from these objectives to produce an arrangement of sub-systems which, when operated according to some operational plan, will fulfill the requirement. Eckstrand (1964) maintained that the design of a training system can proceed in the manner. The behaviour, which men' must exhibit on the job, becomes the objective which must be achieved by the training system. The job of the training designer, then, is to select the sequence of a series of learning of experiences which will produce the desired behaviour. A testing (evaluation) phase is required to assure that the training programme designed succeeds in producing men capable of performing as specified.

This study has adopted Eckstrand's system approach to training because phenomena such as staff training and development are considered not only in terms of objectives perse, but also in terms of the objectives and goals of the total organization or "system" in which the individual will be performing his task. An approach that is in conformity with the principle of the general Systems Theory which implies that one must be concerned with the objectives of the particular component within the system. Besides, Eckstrand's system approach to training enables the trainer to understand and keep in mind the different elements that constitutes the total training process as he tries to accomplish his objectives by designing and executing training programmes that will boost staff performance towards achieving organizational objectives (Onah, 2008).

Put succinctly, the application of the systems theory to training and development programmes from Eckstrand's approach implies that the various elements that constitute the training process (such as training needs assessments which give rise to training objectives; training contents; training methods; training materials; the actual training activities and; training evaluations) should not only be harmonized with one another, but also be synchronized with the wider organizational objectives. This is instrumental to achieving the goals of training programmes, and that of the total organization as well. It is therefore logical to conclude that the systematic model to training and development is a sine qua non for effective training and development programmes in organizations. Training programmes have to assume a systematic pattern if such programmes are to equip their recipients (employees) with the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and attitudes instrumental to performing their jobs effectively and efficiently.

GAP IN LITERATURE

An in-depth assessment, perhaps if not a cursory examination of the aforementioned literature pertaining to the challenges of training and development reveals that most of them tend to approach the problems of training and development programmes in Nigeria from the 'general' or 'aggregate' perspective of the public service (Government organizations). They paid little or no particular attention to the challenges of training and development from the context of "Local Government Councils". Also, most of them essentially adopt a theoretical approach in their works. There are few empirical attempts to find out the root causes of the basic problems, and key challenges, militating against effective training and development programmes in Nigeria's public service in general, and the Nation's Local Governments in particular. Most of them ignored the centrality of systematic training and development to ensuring and guaranteeing the efficacy of such programmes.

In view of the foregoing, the original contribution of this research work to existing knowledge in the field of training and development in Nigeria stems from the fact that it attempts to fill in these gaps by approaching the challenges, adopting an essentially empirical approach and paying ample attention to the extent which training and development programmes in Nigeria's Local Government Councils are systematically configured (Using Lokoja Local Government).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this paper is the case study research design as noted by Osuala (1982); Ezejule & Ogwo (1990). The sample size drawn for this study is informed by the fact that several scholars, for instance Bailey (1982); Ikeagwu (1998) and Ojo (2003) acknowledged that a sample size of at least ten percent (10%) of the entire target population is considered adequate for most empirical investigations in the Social Sciences. Consequently, since 54 staff is more than ten percent (10%) of the entire population of Lokoja Local Government staff which is 300 responded to the close-ended questionnaire and the structured interview.

Table 3.1 Number of Lokoja LGC Staff as at December 31st 2006.

S/N	DEPARTMENT	CATEGORIES OF STAFF		TOTAL
		SENIOR STAFF	JUNIOR STAFF	
1	Admin. & General Duties	15	40	55
2	Agric. & Natural Resources	11	30	41
3	Education	16	45	61
4	Finance & Supplies	13	35	48
5	Health & Medical Services	12	34	46
6	Works & Housing	13	36	49
	TOTAL	80	220	300

Source: Lokoja Local Government Council (2006).

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 4.1 Frequency of Training and Development in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	4	6	10	18.5%
(b) occasionally	5	8	13	24.0%
(c) rarely	9	22	31	57.4%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2010).

Table 4.1 shows that majority of the respondents (57.4%) affirmed that they rarely receive training and development programmes, while 18.5% and 24% of the respondents indicated that they receive training and development programmes regularly and occasionally respectively.

Table 4.2 Training and Development of staff immediately after promotion.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	3	5	8	14.8%
(b) occasionally	4	7	11	20.4%
(c) rarely	11	24	35	64.8%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2010).

Table 4.2 reveals that 64.8% of the respondents indicated that they rarely receive training programmes immediately they are newly promoted. Only 14.8% of the staff affirmed that they regularly receive training programmes immediately they are newly promoted, while 20.4% of them indicated that they sometimes receive training programmes immediately they are newly promoted

Table 4.3 Training and Development of staff immediately after transfer/posting in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	3	4	7	20.4%
(b) occasionally	5	10	15	27.7%
(c) rarely	10	22	32	59.3%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

Table 4.3 shows that majority of the respondents (59.3%) indicated that they rarely receive training programmes immediately after they are transferred or posted to a new job or office within the Local Government Council. However, 20.4% and 27.7% of the respondents revealed that they regularly and occasionally receive training and development programmes whenever they are transferred or posted to a new job or office within the Local Government Council respectively.

Table 4.4 Training and Development of New Employees in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	2	5	7	13%
(b) occasionally	4	6	10	18.5%
(c) rarely	12	23	35	64.8%
(d) don't know	-	2	2	3.7%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

In table 4.4, most of the sampled staff (64.9%), affirmed that new employees of the Local Government rarely undergo orientation and induction programmes, 13% and 18.5% of them indicated that new employees of the Local Government regularly and occasionally undergo orientation and induction programmes respectively. However 3.7% of the sampled staff revealed that they do not know how often newly employed staffs receive orientation programmes.

Table 4.5 Comparison of the prevalence of training programmes between senior and junior staff of the Lokoja Local Government.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) senior staff	11	23	34	63%
(b) junior staff	2	1	3	5.6%
(c) almost the same	3	4	7	13%
(d) don't know	2	8	10	13%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

In table 4.5, majority of the sampled staff (63%) indicated that training and development programmes are more prevalent amongst senior staff of the Local Government than the junior staff, conversely, only 5.6% of the sampled staff affirmed that junior staff received more training programmes than senior staff of the Local Government. Also, 13% of the respondents indicated that the prevalence of training activities between senior and junior staff of the Local Government is almost the same. However, 18.5% of the respondents revealed that they do not know whether senior staff receives more training than junior staff or vice versa.

Table 4.6 Training Needs Assessment in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	1	4	5	9.3%
(b) occasionally	5	4	9	16.7%
(c) rarely	12	28	40	74.0%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

In table 4.6, on overwhelming majority of the sampled staff (74%) indicated that they rarely undergo training needs assessment before receiving training programmes, 16.7% of them affirmed that they occasionally undergo training needs assessment before receiving training programmes. However, only 9.3% of the sampled staff indicated that they regularly undergo training needs assessment before receiving training programmes. Also, the two interviewees also confirmed that Training needs assessment hardly preceded most training programmes in the Local Government Council.

Table 4.7 Evaluation of Training and Development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
(a) regularly	3	3	6	11.1%
(b) occasionally	4	5	9	16.6%
(c) rarely	11	28	39	72.2%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009)

In table 4.7 most of the respondents (72.2%) revealed that whenever they receive training and development programmes, the organizers of the programmes rarely seek their reactions or views about such programmes, 16.6% of them however indicated that their views or reactions toward such programmes are occasionally sought by their organizers. Only 11.1% of them indicated that their views or reactions toward training programmes are always sought after by those who package such programmes.

Table 4.8 The degree of relevance of training and Development programmes to the Job Schedule of Lokoja Local Government Council Staff.

Responses	Respondents		Total	Percentage
	Senior Staff	Junior Staff		
Highly relevant	5	6	11	20.4%
Slightly relevant	8	16	24	44.5%
Irrelevant	5	14	19	35.2%
Total	18	36	54	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

In table 4.8, 20.4% of the respondents indicated that the content of training and development programmes they have received are highly relevant to the duties and demands of their jobs. However, 44.5% of the respondents affirmed that such programmes are slightly relevant to the duties and demands of their jobs. Also, 35.2% of the respondents revealed that the content of training and development programmes they have received are irrelevant to the duties and demands of their jobs.

Table 4.9 Job Performance/Productivity Rating in Lokoja Local Government Council.

Responses	Respondents Senior Staff	Percentage
(a) Outstanding		
(b) Good	5	27.8%
(c) Average	8	44.4%
(d) Below Average	5	27.8%
Total	18	100%

Source: Field work (2009).

(Due to the performance appraisal content of this question, only the sampled senior staffs including the Heads of Departments were involved). Table 4.9 shows that 5 of the sampled senior staff which represent 27.8%, rated the performance/productivity level of the Local Government's staff as "good". 8 of the sampled senior staff which translate to 44.4% rated the performance/productivity of the Local Government staff as "average". 5 of the sampled senior staff which translate to 27.8% however rated the performance/productivity of the Local Government's staff as "below average".

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This paper found that:

- (i) The training and development policy of Lokoja Local Government Council is not sufficiently comprehensive to effectively guide, regulate and condition training and development programmes provided for the Local Government staff.
- (ii) Training and development programmes conducted for the Government's staff are not only infrequent, but also, hardly take place at strategic periods (for

instance, when new staffs are employed, and when existing staff are promoted /transferred).

- (iii) Training and development activities in the Local Government are biased and lopsided, as the senior staff in the Local Government are favoured than their junior colleagues.
- (iv) The contents of training and development programmes in the Local Government are scarcely congruent with the duties and demands of workers' job schedule; and
- (v) The "not too impressive" level of job performance exhibited by the Local Government's staff is not unconnected with the undesirable features that beset training and development programmes in the organization.
- (vi) Training needs assessment and training evaluations both of which are central to systematic training are seldom carried out before and after training programmes are conducted in the organization;

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the pivotal roles played by the Local Governments in driving, facilitating and sustaining socio-economic developments at the grassroot level, its bureaucrats and technocrats have to be equipped with the requisite skills, knowledge, competencies and attitudes.

This study is unique as it covers training and development from the context of Local Government using an empirical approach. And, with a sharp focus on systematic training as the benchmark for effective training. It is also instructive to note that the findings and recommendations of this investigation would be invariably relevant and useful to other Local Governments in the federation, more so, because of their homogenous identity in structure and functions. Finally, the unique approach of this empirical investigation undoubtedly opens up new vistas for prospective research into the training and development programmes of Local Government Councils in particular, and other public service institutions in general. It is therefore recommended that:

- A robust and comprehensive policy framework that will effectively guide, regulate and condition training activities should be designed by both the Junior Staff Management Committee of Lokoja Local Government Council and the Local Government Service Commission respectively.
- Training and Development programmes in Lokoja Local Government Council should be conducted more frequently and periodically than they are presently.
- Training programmes should be evenly spread to the junior staff of the Local Government as well.
- At least 1% of the statutory allocation from the Federation account to Lokoja Local Government Council should be set aside quarterly to meet the training needs of its junior staff on grade level 01 – 06.

- Kogi State Local Government Service Commission and the Junior Staff Management Committee of Lokoja Local Government should ensure that the three main components of training needs assessments, namely; organizational, task, and person analyses should precede most training programmes conducted for staff of the Local Government.
- Kogi State Local Government Service Commission and the Junior Staff Management Committee of Lokoja Local Government should also ensure that training evaluation exercise should be carried out after most training programmes are conducted for staff of the Local Government Council. The evaluation of training and development programmes in the Local Government should assume finding out the reactions of trainees, determining whether trainees have learnt the knowledge, skills, facts and concepts presented at training programmes and observing and evaluating work-place behaviour of staff by their superiors to ascertain the impacts of training programmes on the job performances of the trained staff.

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