# TRAINING AS A MEASURE NOT A SOLUTION TO WORKER'S PERFORMANCE IN NIGERIA

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**ABSTRACT:** *The prevailing rate of work performance among workers in most organizations in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria gingered our impetus or concern in carrying out the research as titled here of. However, the meaning of training, types of training, human resource training functions was critically addressed. Methodologically, the researcher made use of secondary source to generate theoretical data, which interestingly led the researcher into concluding after central thesis of the work, that training is a measure rather than a solution to worker's performance vis-à-vis productivity in Nigeria.*

**KEYWORDS:** Training, Performance, Worker, Input, Output

## INTRODUCTION

In any developing economy, there seem to be organizations that assist in the development process of a productive and non productive business. This is seemingly possible where human resource personnel's are employed to help manage such organizations in order to achieve relevant goals. By so doing, it remain valuable that those personnel's both new and old one's required to be trained and re-trained in order to imbibe the philosophy (incase of the new personnel) and update the knowledge and skills (incase of the old staff) needed to achieve the organizational objectives, hence the challenges surrounding the operation and maintenance of new machines. Therefore, it is most important to note that training becomes the obvious instrument in realizing these dreams. Thus training is defined as organized activity aimed at imparting information and\or instructions to improve the recipient's performance or to help him or her attain a required level of knowledge or skill (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/training.html#ixzz361jeoyTo). According to Oxford Learners Dictionary, training is defined as the process of learning the skills that you need to do a job.

Training is teaching or developing in oneself or others, skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. Despite, training has specific goals of improving one's capability, capacity, productivity and performance. It forms the core of apprenticeships and provides the backbone of content at institutes of technology. In addition to the basic training required for a trade, occupation or profession, observers of the labour-market recognize as of 2008 the need to continue training beyond initial qualification to maintain, upgrade and update skills throughout working life. People within many professions and occupations may refer to this sort of training as professional development (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/training). Training is the act of increasing the knowledge and skills of an employee for doing a particular job (Edwin .B. Flippo). Also training is an organized activity for increasing the technical skills of the employees to enable them to do

particular jobs efficiently. In other words, training provides the worker with facility to gain technical knowledge and to learn new skills to do specific jobs. Training is equally important for the existing as well as the new employees. It enables the new employees to get acquainted with their jobs and also increase the job-related knowledge and skills (http://www.yourarticlelibrary.com//employee-management/training-of-employees-meaning-objecti...). From the underlying definitions, it is note worthy to infer that training perhaps could be a measure adopted by organizations especially in public sector organizations to improve effectiveness of staff vis-à-vis productivity in Nigeria, other than a solution to ineffectiveness that popularly characterized and dominated the civil service.

However, there are a number of different types of training we can use to engage employees. These types according ————to Laura Portolese Dias quoting Gina Ruiz (2006) or http://www.workforce.com/section/ii/feature/24/35/18/.) Are usually used in all steps in a training process (orientation, in-house, mentorship, and external training). Therefore, the training utilized depends on the amount of resources available for training, the type of company, and the priority the company places on training. As such, human resource managers use a variety of these types of training outlined below to develop a holistic employee.

**Types of Training**

In view of the increasing popularity of poor work attitude and brain drain in the work-polity, organizations began to zero down into so many types of training programmes. These types of training can be discussed as follows: Technical or technology training, quality training, skills training, soft skills training, professional training, team training, managerial training etc.

1. **Technical or Technology training:** Depending on the type of job, technical training will be required. Therefore technical training is a type of training meant to teach the new employee the technological aspects of the job (Laura Portolese Dias). He further asserted that in a retail environment, technical training might include teaching someone how to use the computer system to ring up customers. According to the author (Laura Portolese Dias), in a sales position, it might include showing someone how to use the customer, relationship management system to find new prospects. In a consulting business, technical training might be used so that the consultant knows how to use the system to input the number of hours that should be charged to a client. In a restaurant however, the server needs to be trained on how to use the system to process orders. Thus technical training is often performed in-house, but it can also be administered externally.

2. **Quality training:** This is also an aspect of training given to employees. In a production-focused business, quality training is extremely important. Quality training refers to familiarizing employees with the means of preventing, detecting, and eliminating non quality items, usually in an organization that produces a product (Laura, Portolese Dias). However, in a world where quality can set your business apart from competitors, this type of training provides employees with the knowledge to recognize products that are not up to quality standards and teaches them what to do in this scenario. Numerous organizations such as the International Organization for standardization (ISO) measure quality based on a number of metrics. This organization provides stamp of quality approval for companies producing tangible products. This type of quality control measures can be replicated by other local organizations that

might not have such control framework. Consequently, with the increase in globalization, these international quality standards are more important than ever for business development. Therefore training employees on quality standards including 150 standards can give them a competitive advantage. It can also result in cost savings in production as well as provide an edge in marketing of the quality-controlled products.

3. **Skills Training:** Skills training is another type of training utilized by organizations for optimum input and output. This type of training includes proficiencies needed to actually perform the job. For example according to Laura Portolese Dias, an administrative assistant might be trained on how to answer the phone, while a sales person, at best might be trained in assessment of customer needs and on how to offer the customer information to make a buying decision. Think of skills training as the things you actually need to know to perform your job. An example of a type or skills training is from AT and apple who in summer 2011 asked their managers to accelerate retail employee training on the iphone 5 which was released to market in the pall (http://news.cnet.com/8301–13579 3–20083435-37/apple–at–t reportedly–prepping–staff–for-iphone–5-launch/). However, a cashier needs to know not only technology to ring someone up but what to do if something proceeds wrong. Most of the time, if not all the time, skills training is given in-house and can include the use of a mentor.

4. **Soft skills training:** This is the fourth aspect of training that can serve as a measure in updating the skills of employees in an organization. Thus soft skills refer to personality traits, social graces, communication, and personal habits that are used to characterize relationships with other people. Soft skills however might include how to answer the phone or how to be friendly and welcoming customers. It could include sexual harassment and ethics training. In some jobs, necessary soft skills might include how to motivate others, maintain small talk, and establish support. Therefore in a retail or restaurant environment, soft skills are used in every interaction with customers and are a key component of the customer experience. Infact, according to Laura Portolese Dias quoting computer world magazine survey executives say there is an increasing need for people who have not only the skills and technical skills to do a job, but also the necessary soft skills such as strong listening and communication abilities. Consequently many problems in organizations are due to lack of soft skills or interpersonal skills, not by problems with the business itself. As a result, human resource and managers should work together to strengthen these employees skills. This type of training can be administered in-house or externally.

5. **Professional training and legal training:** This is another type of training that is very relevant in any organization, whether public or private organizations. However, in some jobs, professional training must be done on an ongoing basis. Professional training is a type of training required to be up to date in one's own professional field. For instance or example, tax laws change often, and as a result, an accountant for H & R Block must receive yearly professional training on new tax codes (Jeannine, 2010). Thus, lawyers need professional training as laws change, so it is in every profession such as teaching, engineering, medicine, computer science, veterinary medicine, economics, lab technologist, architecture etc. However, some organizations have paid a high cost for not properly adapting their employees on the laws relating to their industry. For instance in 2011, Massachusetts General Hospital according to Julie, (2011) paid over ($1, 000000m) one million dollars in fines related to privacy policies that were not

followed. As a result, the organization has agreed to develop training for workers on medical privacy. These fines could have been prevented if the organization had provided the proper training to begin with. However according to the author (Julie, 2011), other types of legal training might include sexual harassment law training and discrimination law training. In any case, professional training and legal training exist in Nigeria through some registered professional bodies such as Nigerian society of Engineers (NSE), COREN, Nigerian medical Association (NMA), Nigerian Bar Association (NBA), Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) Academic staff union of Nigeria University (ASUU) etc. However, if the training given really achieve its purposes in an environment dominated by corruption, nepotism, ethnitism, religious cleavages, marginalization (Economic and political) among others, then how come that the pace of development is not significantly commensurate to our resources? The answer to this question will go a long way in resolving the ongoing perturbing research on whether training is a measure rather than a solution to workers performance in developing economy and even developed. Therefore, this training is normally given externally and is usually required for specific professions in which updates occur often, as in accounting industry, hospitals etc.

6. **Team training:** Team training is another kind of training required to update the skills and knowledge of groups in organized labour sector such as federal and state government ministries, extra ministerial departments and parasatals in Nigeria. Thus, team training is defined as a process that empowers teams to improve decision making, problem solving, and team-development skills to achieve business results. Often this type of training can occur after an organization has been restructured and new people are working together. Therefore, some reasons for team training include the following- improving communication, making the work place more enjoyable, motivating a team, getting to know each other, getting goal setting, teaching the team self-regulation strategies, helping participants to learn more about themselves (strengths and weaknesses), identifying and utilizing the strengths of team members, improving team productivity, and practicing effective collaboration with team members. Further, team training can be administered either in-house or externally. However, in Nigeria, team training is organized in form of workshops, seminars, group discussion, lecture methods, simulation etc, depending on culture and goals of the organization.

7. **Managerial training:** Managerial training explains that after someone has spent time with an organization, they might be identified as a candidate or employee for promotion. When this occur or happen, managerial training would occur. For instance or example, mastek, a global IT solution and services provider provides a programme called "one skill a moth" which enables managers to learn skills such as delegation, coaching and giving feed back. Thus the average number of total training days at mastek is 7.8 per employee (http://www.mastek.com/careers/learning-development.html.). The goal of its training programmes (managerial training) is to increase productivity which is one of the organization's core values.

8. **Safety training:** safety training is a type of training that occurs to ensure employees are protected from injuries caused by work–related accidents. Safety training is especially important for organizations that use chemicals or other types of hazardous materials in their production. Safety training can also include evaluation plans, fire drills, and workplace violence procedures. Nonetheless, safety training can also include eye safety,

first–aid food services, safety learning protection, asbestos, construction safety and hazmet safety. This occupational safety and health administration or OSHA, is the main federal agency charged with the enforcement of safety and health regulation in the United States. This type also exists in Nigeria irrespective of its lapses. Such federal agencies in Nigeria that assist in enforcing compliance in occupational safety and health administration are national drug law enforcement agency( NDLEA) and NAFDAC National agency for food and drug administration control. Despite those training types that is generally discussed, Gail Sessoms asserted that human resource management training covers all aspects of living and management personnel, from recruitment to separation, and the company related duties and responsibilities. He further adduced that the types of training required for human resource are fundamentals, labour employment law, compensation and benefits, and special training. Since training is an important instrument in organization and even family life, it is imperative to draw a close look to the training functions of human resource.

## Human resource training functions

The training functions of human resource cover many bases (www.ehow.com). Training involves everything from new employee's orientation to leadership training for seasoned employees. Therefore, according to the website www.ehow.com .citing the society of human resource management, training and development plays a large role in the overall success of an organization. In these circumstances therefore living good people and training them to be the best they can be help retain employees and creates a productive work force. As such, the key human resource training functions include: orientation, compliance, leadership, career planning and research (www.ehow.com). **Orientation:** New employee Orientation is an important part of the hiring process. It prepares the employees for new roles, and acclimate them to the company or organization. However the focus and length of orientation sessions are often determined by the employees' positions in the company or organizations. While hourly employees may be in orientation for one day, manager level employee orientation can last up to two weeks. In Nigeria, organization adopts the role of organizing orientation training for the new employees using some senior members of the organization, only if the resource to engage external firm is not available.

**Compliance**: This role encompasses work place violence, sexual harassment, drug and alcohol, and safety in the workplace. This particular aspect in terms of training assumes employees know how certain situations are handled. Policies and procedures are outlined, and the consequences are clearly spelt out. Therefore offering this type of training puts employees on alert and helps the company or organization avoid costly law suits.

**Leadership:** This is another human resource training functions. Here, offering leadership training helps the workforce to grow. It prepares the employees for the challenges of management and begins the succession planning process. Succession planning helps fill-high–level position by molding current employees. Retirement is inevitable and some positions are difficult to fill. Succession planning allows employees to train for certain roles, and when the times comes, they can successfully fill the vacant position

**Career planning:** Training and development also deal with employees career planning. Counseling determines their career goals, and can help them remain a part of the organization for years to come. Companies or organizations that offer career counseling show they care about their employees' future.

**Research:** This in the last but not the least human resource training functions. A large component of human resource training function is research. Skill development programs are ever–changing and therefore require periodic review in line with the new developments. Therefore, conducting research should be an on-going training activity. It will assure the programmes are fresh and relevant. Assessing the needs of incumbent employees will better shape them for future success and in turn guarantees the success of the organization.

## METHODOLOGY

In view of the relevance attached to this study, we employed secondary methods of data gathering such as textbooks, journals, websites, and government official documents among others.

## RESULT

The result generated from our analysis shows that training is generally employed in updating and upgrading skills and competencies of Nigerian workers. But from household source however, our result shows that in practice, training is seen as a formal process of influencing workers to perform an activity rather than solution for workers performance vis–a–vis their productivity, hence resources or funds given to workers to attend such training are diverted into some other activities. That is why Wahab (2006) reiterated to the participants during a workshop training titled "perspectives on contract due process policy organized by budget monitoring and price intelligence unit state house Abuja" affirmed that in line with due process principles, participation in this programme is full time. He further stated that the participants should please resist the temptation of using the opportunity for this training programme as an excuse to attend to other matter in Abuja.

## DISCUSSION

Over the past decades, training has predominated social science literature as an instrument that can assist employers of labour in upgrading and up dating the knowledge and skills of their workers for optimum performance. Concurring to this assertion, Donald W. Knox and Michelle while conducting a research on effects of leadership training of the manufacturing productivity of informal leaders found out that training increased the manufacturing productivity of informal leaders and could help manufacturing facilities increase their productivity without capital expenditure. However, research has shown that leadership training for executives and middle managers results in increased workers productivity (Barling Weber, and kelloway 1996, Bass, 1990). Leadership development training could have the same benefit if given to the rest of the workforce (11E Solution 1999). Accordingly, kapp (1999) asserted that manufacturing firms implementing programmes can expect an average gain of 17% in manufacturing productivity. Therefore, organizations or companies must understand, that is knowledge imparted to employees will leave with the employees, thus benefiting another company. This also according to Miller (1997) cited in Donald W Knox allows new employees to bring with them the knowledge gained from previous training programmes. It is from this view point according to Miller (1997) that a company must

manage the training programme to identify the skills set needed to increase problem solving for the present needs of the business. Consequently, the emphases adduced by scholars in this study are reflective of the taught that training is a measure to workers productivity rather than solution to organization's problem. In Nigeria, training assumes a theoretical stand or dimension than pragmatic. This is because officers that are sent for training perhaps atimes do not attend the training for which the organization gave them the resources. Rather the resources are diverted into their private purse, so as to enable them meet their family needs or obligations ranging from feeding, high house rent in urban cities, payment of school fees to extended family roles. Even though training of human resource is organized by various levels of government in Nigeria, the major hindrance of the training not reflecting in the workers, vis–a–vis. Performance is because of the selection process. Some people are selected on the basis of political patronage and on whom you know. At the end, the training would not achieve its desired results, thereby rendering training as a measure and not a solution to workers productivity. How can training be a solution in the mist of unstable economy, where crude oil price has gone down? Employers of labour only adopt training of personnel in line with available resources so as to hold grip the management of organizational activities. Under this current period of oil price cut and subsequent reduction in the revenue allocation to various tiers of government, training stands out to be a measure rather than a solution to workers productivity. No government that worth its onions would invest more interest on training and retraining of her workers (both home and abroad) in the face of dwindling resources, except on those that will contribute to revival of the economy. Nevertheless, part of the problems that training in Nigeria perhaps is seen as a measure and not a solution to employees productivity arise from corruption, ethnicities', poor work attitude , undefined work ethics in some organizations, particularly private sectors, Nepotism, god fatherism among others. At the level of local government in Nigeria, the local government service commissions in various states are empowered by relevant laws to train and retrain officers in their payroll. To do this, the commission would arrange for such in collaboration with consulting firms. For instance in 1994, there was a collaboration effort between the local government service commission and staff development centre Enugu to organize an orientation workshop for local government staff in Enugu state. So also were the lison consult associates limited in collaboration with the then sub-department of public administration and local government, University of Nigeria Nsukka to organize a workshop programme in 1998. This is to ensure that the staff are attuned to modern administrative practices as well as enhance their performance. But the question is why is it that after this training of staff at the level of local government, the efficiency remains stagnant rather than improving? The obvious answer has been earlier on posited in this paper. In addition, the 1999 constitution did not grant full autonomy to the local government as third tier powers are subsumed under the states in Nigeria. (Fourth schedule section 7sub section 2(d), of 1999 constitution).

Another instance is a training work shop organized by budget monitoring and price intelligence unit (due process) at state house, Abuja, on public procurement reform programme in Nigeria 2006 supported by United Nations development programme. This particular training in 2006 was to inculcate a measure of due process in the staff on about award and execution of government contracts. According to Wahab (2006), during the training period of unit officers representing their various states in the federation asserted that the training has become necessary as a result of the concern of the then administration to spread the reforms to all tiers and levels of government. He further opined that as you are aware, while the federal governments gets only about 48% from the federation account, the states and local governments control the balance of 52%. Therefore according to him

(Wahab, 2006), if the resources from the states are not managed efficiently and prudently, it will be quite difficult for the Nigerian masses, especially the majority of the rural dwellers to feel the impact of government. In addition, he stressed that the participant should resist the temptation of using the opportunity for this training programme as an excuse to attend to other matters in Abuja. This training according to Wahab (2006) will provide you the requisite tools and equip you with the knowledge to perform the required tasks. Although the training may have added little value to the participants in dealing with relevant tasks, but has not arrested the yearning desire of observing due process policy. Hence training is not a solution to poor output but rather a measure for workers performance. Thus, these training work shop goes a long way to attest that actually staff are trained using various apparatus as a good taught measure by government to improve their performance, but at last they seem not to be effective vis–a–vis input, output ratio per staff. Signaling that training can only be a measure and not solution in the context of prevailing economic environment in Nigeria-State.

## CONCLUSION

Training of human resource personnel is vital organizational routine roles whose interest borders on realization of bounty goals for optimum national and international development. But one illuminate fact is that training in part of this world (Nigeria) and perhaps other developing economy seem not to be pragmatic, since the prevailing orientation of the dominant class who are living in abject poverty, who in turn maybe an employee in either public or private sector would like to assist their families through diverting funds giving to them for training. This action would amount to misplacement of priority through misguided selfish interest. From the theoretical literature and abundant instances contained in this paper, it is a glaring fact that instead of training serving as a solution to workers performance, it will only be seen as a measure of influencing performance among Nigerian workers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

From the content of this study, the author made the following recommendations that may serve as a guide to organizations who maybe interested in training and retraining of their employees as a measure and not solution to workers performance.

i.   Organizations should have clear defined goals so as to enable employees have a clear mandate or what they are expected to achieve after the training.

ii.  Training of human resource should not be ambiguous but rather specific to targeted personnel( Applying specific types of training to targeted audience)

iii. Government should ensure that officers that are sent for training should desist from diverting funds meant for training and retraining to salvage their family roles thereby reducing the possibility of updating, upgrading their knowledge or imbibing the new philosophy of the organization, and modern techniques in administration. These could be done through close supervision and monitoring of the trainees by relevant agencies or organization that sent such officers for the training.

iv.   For training as a measure rather than to become a solution for workers performance in Nigeria, government should adopt a stringent measure to reduce such factors that tend to influence employees negative attitude to their job after training.

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