Effects of Training and Development on Employee Performance at Abia State Polytechnic, Aba

Ikoro Emenike Innocent & Enyioko Victoria Uzoamaka
Department of Industrial Relations and Personnel Management
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
ikoroike@gmail.com

Nwosu Ndubuisi Levi
Department of Business Administration
Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike
nnlevi@yahoo.com

Abstract

The study was undertaken at Abia State Polytechnic on the topic "The effect of training and Development on Employee Performance at Abia State Polytechnic". The purpose of the study was to investigate whether training and development would have an effect on the performance of employees with Abia State Polytechnic as a case study. The methodology that was used for the study was survey plan. Primary data was collected from a sample of fifty (50) senior staff. Self - administered questionnaire was used in the collection of data for analysis. The study revealed that there were organizational issues such as lack of management support for training and development programmes, which constrained training and development. It was also found that training and development had positive impact on employees of the Polytechnic. The study recommended that in order for Abia State Polytechnic to be successful as the first choice Polytechnic in Nigeria, management must empower all departments to engage in the training and development of employees to build potential and strengthen employees' competencies.

Keywords: training, development, employee performance, Abia State Polytechnic.

Introduction

"The ergonomics of the work environment, state of the art equipment as well as quality raw materials can make production possible, but it is the human resources that actually make production happen", Asare-Bediako (2008).

Human resources are a crucial but expensive resource and therefore in order to sustain economic and effective performance of this resource, it is important to optimize their contribution to the achievement of the aims and objectives of the organization through training and development.

Training is therefore necessary to ensure an adequate supply of employees that are technically and socially competent for both departmental and management positions. (Mullins, 2007)

According to Heathfield (2012), the right employee training, development and education at the right time, provides big payoffs for the organization in increase productivity, knowledge, loyalty and contribution.

Abia state Polytechnic is a public sector tertiary educational institution which was established by edict No 8 of 1994. It is however a semi-autonomous institution and therefore the recruitment, selection and training and development of its employees are the responsibility of

the management. Abia state Polytechnic (Abiapoly) which started as a tertiary institution in 1993 currently has over 0ne thousand three hundred and thirty three (1331) employees made up of management, academic staff (lectures and instructors) and administrative staff (office employees, workshop assistants and technicians, drivers, security and cleaners). The administrative staff (office employees) is further structured into management, senior members, senior staff and junior staff. This study however concentrated on the senior staff of the Polytechnic. Interviews were also conducted among management members as well as junior staff in administration. The senior members are the supervisors of both senior staff and junior staff and are also the heads of various departments. The interviews conducted with management and junior staff members supported whatever survey (questionnaire) that were administered to the research units.

Human resource management is today considered as a strategic partner of the other functional areas of business organization, namely; marketing, finance, production, purchasing, management information systems and administration. The human resource of any organization is that which is expected to bring about the competitive difference, since the success or failure of an organization is dependent on the quality of this resource as well as its orientation. This is based on the notion that human resource is the competitive advantage a business organization has. This is because as said earlier, while equipment, infrastructure, methods of production, packaging and distribution strategies could all be copied by other competitive organizations, however the innate quality, innovativeness, knowledge, abilities and skills of the human resource cannot easily be copied.

Training is a very important part of the human resource development (HRD) activity of human resource management practice. For employees to carry out their duties effectively and efficiently they must have the relevant skills, knowledge, values, attitudes and competencies and well as understand their organization's culture.
More often, newly employed do not have all the competencies usually required for successful or excellent performance on their jobs.

Even though Abia state Polytechnic is described as the premier Polytechnic by its management and employees, it appears that it does not currently have a staffing policy, training and development policy as well as a succession plan. Training and development is therefore more or less unplanned and unsystematic. It looks like the majority of the employees are not trained (orientation) upon appointment. As a result, administrative employees' skills and abilities have over the years not been enhanced to enable them become effective and efficient. Though there is an academic board sub-committee on scholarship and staff development, it seems it does not have any laid done policy which directs members in their work. Therefore, implementation of "training" plans (which is mainly granting of study leave without or without sponsorship for either a National diploma or a higher diploma degree) has been based on precedence and discretions.

Is an organizational staffing policy necessary? How would the existence of a staffing policy lead to effective and efficient performance of employees? Does training and development affect the performance of employees and the achievement of organizational goals and objectives? What must be the bases for the need for training and development? How is training and development needs determined? Who must determine training needs of employees? Who conducts training for employees? Where and when must training be carried out? Is training and development policy relevant at all? What must be done to ensure skills and competencies acquired from training transfers back to the job situation? What role would

performance appraisal and job description play in the determination of training needs of employees?

The research sought to find answers to the questions above as well as other relevant issues that arise from the research in respect to the topic.

Research Objectives

The research identified the effects of training and development on employee performance of Abia state Polytechnic Aba. But specifically the research has the following objectives:

1. To find out whether there are organizational issues that constrain training and development in the Polytechnic.
2. To investigate how training and development needs of employees are determined.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors working against training and development in the Abia Polytechnic?
2. How are training and development needs of Abia State Polytechnic employees determined and by whom?

Review of Related Literature
Conceptual Framework

Well trained employees are key to a business' success. It has been shown that the most successful and productive employees are those who have received extensive training and development. These groups of employees can be described as the "cream of the crop" that often has the strongest stake in an organization's future.

According to Dessler (2008), even when employees are carefully selected, it does not still guarantee totally acceptable performance from the employees. This is because while the potential of an employee to perform is one thing, performing is another and therefore an employee with a high potential to perform may not still perform his job if he does not go through training and development. This is why training of newly employed starts with organizational orientation.

Cole (2004), postulates that human resources are the most dynamic of all the organization's resources and therefore they need considerable attention from the organization's management, if the it human resource are to realize their full potential in their work.

Training and development activities just as most other activities in an organization depended on the policies and strategies of the organization. An organization with a well-organized training would refer to it as "systematic training" which is why job descriptions are inevitable during the recruitment and selection process. Furthermore, in establishing what training and development needs an organization has must start with a job description and later performance appraisal.

In part III (Protection of Employment) of the Labour Act 2003, Act 651 section 10 (Rights of a worker), it states that "the rights of a worker include the right to be trained and retrained for the development of his work and to receive information relevant to his work.

Concepts of Training

DeCenzo & Robbins (2000), explain training as a "learning experience, in that, it seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his ability to perform on the job". This mean training must be designed in such a way that, it will involve the either the changing or enhancing of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and social behavior. This change or

enhancement of skills, knowledge, attitudes, and social behavior could involve what the employee knows, how he works, his relations and interactions with co-workers and supervisors.

Training thus consists of planned programmes designed to improve performance at the individual, group or organizational levels, Cascio (1992).

Training and Development Policy

Policies are formulated to provide guides to action and to set limits to decision making; what should be done in certain circumstances and how particular requirements and issues must be dealt with, Armstrong & Stephens (2005). Policies are therefore set up in such areas as marketing, finance, operations as well as human resource. In human resource, there could policies on training and development, recruitment and selection and salary administration and compensation; just to mention a few. Such organizational policies (human resource policies) are either formally expressed in manuals or informally as haven grown from customs and traditional practices over the years. However, to avoid ambiguity, it is very important that all major policy statements are formally expressed in manuals. This makes it possible and easier for managers, supervisors, union/association executives to familiarize themselves with relevant policies and how they should be interpreted. Again there is the need for senior management to communicate policies if they have not been written. The attend time taken that could be used on more pressing issues and the confusion that comes with oral traditions could be avoided with some formally expressed policies in a manual. Again it is the position of the researcher that, since employees come and go, while management and leadership of unions / associations also changes, there would be the strong need for policies to be more formally expressed in manuals for to avoid misinterpretation and to encourage consistency and fairness.

Concept of Development

Development is defined as the progress a person actually makes and includes conceptual or intellectual growth along with practical performance. Employee development focuses on preparing employees to move with the organization as it develops and experience growth. Employee development could also be said to represent the process whereby an employee is enabled to grow on the job, through acquisition of wide experience, breath and increased confidence resulting from the exercise of varied and tested responsibilities.

Organizational development is a systematic, integrated and planned approach to improve the effectiveness of people and groups in an enterprise. Organization development focuses on the total organization, while employee development concentrates on the progress individuals make on the job. Organizational development offers solution and techniques regarding how best to improve on an organization's effectiveness, especially where the best matters are not functioning effectively (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998).

The points of view above contend that organizational development has two objectives:

- To develop techniques aimed at improving the satisfaction of organization members.
- To improve organizational effectiveness.

Employee Performance

There is no doubt in it that employees are the building blocks of an organization. As put forward by Noe (2006), the most value adding possessions (assets) available to any firm, business, or organization are its workforce. The performance on part of the workforce is the driving force behind the survival of any business firm. Further, they are of the view that well performing employees contribute to the efficiency and success of the organization. So, performance is crucial for the organizations and making strategies to improve performance

and measuring it from time to time are a basic step that is to be taken. Without desired performance results, it is of no use continuing to invest in processes and projects

Concept of Training & Development

Training & Development have been defined in several ways by different authors. The main idea that each one of them highlighted in their studies is the workforce capability enhancement. Monappa & Saiyadain (2008) identified Training and Development as the components of the human resource development (HRD) model. Training & Development help building and strengthening the work related attributes of the human resource (workers or employees) in any organization. Moreover, in training there a specialist who delivers the understanding about the expertise required for enhancing the job proficiency keeping in view both present and future job related skill required 2g (Heathfield, 2012). Hence, we may say that Training & Development is a more logical and organized way of improving the skills, knowledge, and attributes needed by the workers to better fulfill their job tasks.

Although Training & Development have been taken as one for sake of simplicity in this study yet going into the depth there are present certain distinguishing features. These features, as given by Noe (2006), are: focus, use of work experiences, goal, and participation. In training the focus is current, use of work experiences is low, goal is to gain skills for the present job, and participation is mandatory if initiated while vice versa is applicable for development initiatives. Development is more self-directed and requires self-motivation to explore and find the ways for career and personal advancement.

Concept of Training & Development in Nigerian Tertiary Institutions

Bass & Vaughan (1969) people are the most vital factor contributing to the organizational productivity, sustainability, and image building. People are, without any suspicion, an organization's ultimate strengthening asset. The students undergo a complicated experience in gaining knowledge that involves both the mental and physical interaction (Moorhead & Griffin, 1998) with the knowledge providers i.e. the institution. These facts lead us to conclude that employees must be skilled enough to provide the delighting services to the students that least chances remain there for student dissatisfaction. Skills are obviously injected into the workforce through some systematic process of competency training. Tertiary institution focus in their strategy building and philosophy, i.e. how and when to train their employees. They plan out what training methods to be used at the various levels of the organizational workforce. Role of training & development in tertiary institution cannot be questioned.

Methodology
Research Design

The design that was considered for the research was survey. The case study approach that was adopted took place at Abia Polytechnic. The case study method was chosen because; case study is suitable for practical problems. It is often seen as being problem - centered, small scaled and manageable. Again, case study method has the uniqueness ability to use and apply differently a lot of different empirical evidence, Yin (1994). The aim of this research was to identify the extent to which Abia state Polytechnic have been using planned and systematic training and development to motivate and improve the performance of its employees and therefore the choice of case study.

Instrument of Data Collection

With the source of information been the sampled senior staff, the data collection procedure adapted was the self-administered questionnaire by the respondents (selected senior staff).

The questionnaires were pretested on a smaller size of the sampled respondents for the research. This was to ensure that the questionnaires designed solicited the appropriate responses from the respondents to answer the research question for the achievement of research stated objectives. The use of closed end as well as opened ended questions allowed the researcher to make easy categorization and analysis.

Population of the Study

The case study focused on senior staff of the Polytechnic. This was based on the assumption that, this group of employees within the administrative set up were the fulcrum around which all administrative activities in the Polytechnic revolves. The total population of the senior staff in the Abia state Polytechnic (including senior staff in academic) is about One Hundred and fifty-two (152). Therefore, the purposive sampling would eliminate from the population those who do not matter in the research (senior staff in academics). A sample size of fifty (50) senior staff within Abia State Polytechnic administration were selected and interviewed for the research.

Types of organizational factors constraining training and development
Table 1: Organizational factors constraining training and development at Abia State Polytechnic

Organizational issues	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Employees failure to understand the training needs of Abia State Polytechnic	10	20.0
Lack of top management support for the training and development	20	40.0
Inability to gain the understanding and acceptance of employees	5	10.0
Failure to ensure that adequate resources (finance, people and time) required to implement the training	15	30.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**

Source: Field Research, 2017

Regarding the types of organizational issues that constrain training and development at Abia Poly, table 1 shows that 40% indicated that the lack of top management support for the training and development at Abia State Polytechnic was the main organizational issue. Thirty percent (30%) indicated failure to ensure that adequate resources (finance, people and time) required to implement the training was the organizational issue, 20% said employee's failure to understand the training needs of Abia State Polytechnic whilst 10% said inability to gain the understanding and acceptance of employees. This observation confirms the position of Cole (2000) which indicates that several organizational issues constrain training and development which must be addressed in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

Current training and development strategies which have influenced the achievement

Table 4.2: Current training and development strategies which have influenced the achievement of Abia State Polytechnic goals

Organizational issues	Frequency	Percentage (%)
An attraction and selection strategy that delivers the right talent at the right time and acts as a starting place for effective employee engagement	10	20.0
A development strategy and system that grows the technical, core and leadership competencies that accelerate Abia State Polytechnic's performance	25	50.0
An integrated performance and rewards strategy that engages and motivates employees to deliver results and offers employees what they need to excel in their work	15	30.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**

Source: Field Research, 2017

Table 4.1 above indicates that a maximum of 50% of respondents indicated that a development strategy and system that grows the technical, core and leadership competencies that accelerate Abia State Polytechnic's performance was the current training and development strategy which has influenced the achievement of Abia State Polytechnic goals. Another 30% stated an integrated performance and rewards strategy that engages and motivates employees to deliver results and offers employees what they need to excel in their work, whilst 20% mentioned an attraction and selection strategy that delivers the right talent at the right time and acts as a starting place for effective employee engagement. The observation is similar to the statement of Mumford (1987) which indicated that training and development strategies such as developing a strategy to grow technical and leadership competencies can influence the achievement of goals. Therefore, Abia State Polytechnic must provide a framework for making training and development decisions based on its vision and strategic plan.

Summary of Findings

This research examined the effect of training and development on employees' performance, motivation, retention and morale, a case of Abia State Polytechnic. The research had the objectives to find out how training and development of employees contribute to the achievement of the goals of the Polytechnic. Again it found out whether there were organizational issues that constrain training and development in the Polytechnic. Furthermore, it investigated how training and development needs of employees were determined.

To achieve these objectives a sample of 50 senior staff were selected and questionnaire were administered. This was further supported with an interview of the rector, registrar and finance officer of the Polytechnic. The study revealed the following interesting findings:

Firstly, total respondents representing 100% indicated that training and development contributed to achieving effectiveness and efficiency of A - Poly goals. Additionally, this same percentage mentioned that training and development has traditionally been used to ensure that, the right person is in the right job at the right time. Again the total respondents representing 100% said that there were organizational issues constraining training and

development at Abia State Polytechnic.

Furthermore, 60% of the sampled employees admitted that, impact of training on their work performance was excellent. They indicated also that, training content was relevant to achieving their personal needs, goals and self-development. Below are the summaries of findings itemized:

1. A large number (60%) of the sampled employees admitted that impact of training on their work performance was excellent.
2. The study also revealed the training content was relevant to achieving their personal needs, goals and self-development.
3. Total respondents representing 100% all indicated that training and development contributed to achieving effectiveness and efficiency of Abia State Polytechnic goals.
4. Regarding analysis on the organizational issues constraining training and development at Abia State Polytechnic, total respondents representing 100% indicated that there were organizational issues constraining training and development at A Poly.
5. The research also revealed that 40% indicated that the lack of top management support for the training and development at Abia State Polytechnic was the main organizational issue, 20% said employee's failure to understand the training needs of Abia State Polytechnic whilst 10% said inability to gain the understanding and acceptance of employees.
6. A large percentage (50%) of the respondents mentioned a development strategy and system that grows the technical, core and leadership competencies which accelerate Abia State Polytechnic's performance was the current training and development strategy which has influenced the achievement of Abia State Polytechnic goals.
7. All the 50 respondents representing 100% mentioned that that training and development has traditionally been used to ensure that the right person is in the right job at the right time.

Conclusions

Based on the results of the study, it became clear that training and development strategy was a haphazardly carried out activity at Abia State Polytechnic. Although the respondents were aware of the various aspects of training and development, there was no strategic framework in place as the basis for an operational plan for the training and development strategy even though all respondents indicated that training and development was part of the strategic business plan process of Abia State Polytechnic.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that clear human resource management in general, and training and development in particular at Abia State Polytechnic, should become more closely tied to the needs and strategies of Abia State Polytechnic. As this occurs, training and development at Abia State Polytechnic will be the thread that ties together all other activities and integrates these with the rest of the departments.

It became clear from respondents that the major organizational issue constraining training and development at Abia State Polytechnic was lack of top management support for the training and development programs. Therefore, Abia State Polytechnic in its attempt to enhance employee performance, motivation, retention, and morale competition must endeavour to ensure effective training and development strategies across all departments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are outlined for

addressing challenges identified as well as ways of improving training and development at Abia State Polytechnic:

1. Training and development should be seen not only as the thread that ties together all human resource practices, but also as the instrument for establishing and signaling when and how work practices should change. In other words, employees of Abia State Polytechnic should take on the role of organizational change agents (Beer & Walton, 1987). To be effective in this role, the HR manager will need to create a framework for making HR decisions based on Abia State Polytechnic vision and strategic plan.

2. In order to position Abia State Polytechnic for success, management must empower departments in the various branches to engage in training and development. Corporately, three key directions have been identified to assist management in managing the workforce changes. They include:
   a) Building Our Potential
   b) Strengthening Our Competitiveness
   c) Renewing Our Workplace.

The purpose of this is to ensure that Abia State Polytechnic workforce and strategic objectives are aligned to guarantee the delivery of quality programme and services to the public, and that the training would assist in positioning Abia State Polytechnic for the future. Through a collaborative process, each department should develop its own training and development plan, which outlines its critical strategic issues for the next 3 - 5 years as well as proposed strategies to address those issues.

3. Some key examples of how departments can plan for the future training and development must be outlined in a document and should be used to help mitigate any negative impacts as a result of demographics, Abia State Polytechnics priorities and competency requirements. The documents can also help ensure that Abia State Polytechnic departments have what they need to get the job done, and that there is efficient matching of skills and competencies to departmental tasks, requirements and outcomes.

To better compete in the global market, Abia State Polytechnic will need to create and implement corporate strategies to promote itself as a "preferred employer" - investing in progressive HR policies and programs with the goal of building a high-performing organization of engaged people, and fostering and creating a work environment where people want to work, not where they have to work.

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