

Training and Employee Work Attitudes of Selected Manufacturing Firms in Port Harcourt

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Abstract: The growing ignominy and decadence of public and private sector organizations in Nigeria as a result of the persistence of poor employee work attitudes is such that requires apt attention, given the growing concerns of failure rates for organizations and its implications on other facets of the economy. This study empirically investigated the construct of training as an antecedent to enhancing employee work attitudes with data generated using the cross sectional survey from selected manufacturing firms in Port Harcourt. A total of five hypotheses were postulated and tested using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for the bivariate and the Partial Correlation Coefficient for the multivariate associations. The results showed that training, which was operationalized using on-the-job and off-the-job training; is significantly associated with employee work attitudes and enhances attitudinal measures such as job involvement and satisfaction. The results also revealed that organizational culture significantly moderated the relationship between training and employee work attitudes; hence in conclusion the assertion follows that features of training which allowed for variety and thus varied experiences was a motivating tool and fostered an understanding between management and the employee as regards employee development and contributions to the organization, furthermore, practical work experiences created an avenue for bonding and mentoring between management and employees; therefore it was recommended that occasions for such forms of training be implemented and consistently followed up through cultural support systems and values as this would serve to improve on the attitude of the employees in the workplace.

Keywords: Training, Employee Work Attitudes, On-the-job training, Off-the-job training, Job involvement, Job satisfaction, Organizational Culture.

I. INTRODUCTION

The attitude and performance of employees is what drives success and continuity in any economic setting. Research by (Fenn, 2000; Kraiger 2002), assert that the employee can be considered as the organizations most valuable resource given their ability to grow with the organization as well as the knowledge they contribute in facilitating organizational competitive advantage (Satterfield and Hughes 2007). It is important that organizations remain conscious about factors such as involvement and job satisfaction. Most organizations erroneously believe that employees are looking for only financial benefits and monetary compensation from their jobs. This perception neglects the inherent effect and significance of various psychological factors, inner drives and motivation; thus employee work attitudes can be considered as a primary concern with respect to getting the required performance levels from the employee (Barber, 2004).

Rosenwald (2000) describes employee work attitudes as the various behavioural dispensation and expressions of levels of role acceptance, satisfaction, commitment, involvement and motivation towards work obligations and workplace issues. It reflects the employee's inherent tendencies and feelings of work and life meaning through perceptions of accomplishment, relevance and recognition; furthermore, previous research (Judge & Bono, 2001) argue that one primary personal characteristic as relates to core self-evaluation, is significantly associated with employee job satisfaction. According to (Judge & Bono, 2001), employees perception of work is a primary outcome of the relationship between effect of circumstances happening at a particular time on employee work attitudes was the nature and characteristic of the job itself with regards to core self-evaluation with empirical results revealing that other personality factors such as levels of extraversion as well as conscientiousness also significantly affect outcomes of employee work attitudes (Judge, Heller, & Mount, 2002).

It is expected that organizations endeavour to acquire employees who are can be considered as competent and capable of swiftly adjusting to a continuously fluctuating external and internal business environment. Currently, most organizations are making effort with respect to training and development of employees with huge amounts being invested in employee training and skill acquisition programs as a means to achieving competitive advantage and service exceptionality (Petrecca 2000; Bartlett 2001). This is as (Satterfield and Hughes 2007) opines that the importance of training cannot be overlooked given the ever changing business environment and the dilemma the ever changing nature of global technology presents; hence the rapid growth and emphasis on talent management as a means for attaining corporate relevance and competitive advantage (Satterfield and Hughes 2007; Petrecca 2000).

According to Kleiman (2000) the important aspects of any effective training program should focus on employee orientation, as well as the management and operational skills of the employee. It is important that training is structured in such a way that it not only attempts to endow the employee with knowledgeable skills but also should endeavour to inspire the desire and personal drive for accomplishment and growth in the employees; similarly, Holton (2003) described effective employee training as comprising of the core proficiencies, skill sets and appropriate structure through which organizations modify and develop their businesses at corporate level.

The emphasis and objective of training should be geared towards the attainment of the required knowledge, cooperation, innovativeness, creativity, invention, and the solving of identified problems; this is as Petrecca (2000) observed that it is important that an organization identifies required skill sets and ensures that efficient employees are in line with the expectations of such and remain technically more powerful and noticeable in the global market; hence, for organizations to add the required value to their human resource, it is important that they recognize and enhance the employee knowledge and skill levels through adequate training and development programs (Kraiger 2002; Aguinis, 2009). However Judge, Heller, & Mount (2002) note that skill levels and knowledge base, although important, are not all there is to getting the best out of the employee; factors such as job satisfaction and involvement; should be given due consideration.

Studies, in the past decade, have sought to link training to work attitudes of employees (job involvement and satisfaction) with some (Rosenwald, 2000; Satterfield & Hughes 2007) opining that training and development programs most often result in the effective aligning of employee goals and objectives with that of the organization just as others (Petrecca, 2000; Aguinis, 2009) argue that training opportunities and events serve as instruments in achieving employee retention (Bartlett 2001). Irrespective of the variation in observations, most studies (Gerbman, 2000; Kraiger 2002), posit that one of the complicated human resource practice is training of employees which can extensively and intensively affect the effectiveness and performance of organizations. This is as Petrecca (2000) observed that vocational training increase employees' job involvement and satisfaction levels and facilitated their identification and commitment to the organization.

This study contributes by texting the relationship training has with work attitudes of employees in Nigerian manufacturing industry; given the dearth of research on the study variables within this socio-economic and national context evidenced from the paucity of materials; hence the contribution to the observed knowledge gap and point of departure from previous research endeavours. Furthermore, the assumed organizational culture acting as a moderator is to be examined based on arguments (Amah, 2009; Bartlett 2001) as relates to the possibility of differing cultural contextual basis with possible intervening effects; this choice is based on Amah's (2009) assertion that the culture of the organization is a microcosm of that of its parent Nationality or society within which it operates and does business.

2.1 Statement of the Problem

Poor employee work attitudes; according to Rosenwald (2000); hinders cooperation and impacts negative on overall employee performance. Its effect extends to sprouts of conflict and strives between peers and between subordinates and their superior with feelings of discontent and dissatisfaction expressed through nonchalance, absenteeism, disrespect and disregard for authority as well as low productivity (Fenn, 2000; Kraiger 2002). This is as Gerbman, (2000) notes that most poor attitudes expressed by employees within the organization are premised on perceptions of poor treatment, lack of recognition, inadequate attention or concern over their plight, disparity in terms of compensation and most often lack of development and growth opportunities within the organization.

Gerbman, (2000) described learning programs as being supportive in improving and enhancing employees work attitudes and invariably affecting work abilities and performance as Cheng and Ho (2001) observe that training and development programs are necessary factors in achieving and establishing an effective conflict management system. Studies (Rosenwald, 2000; Satterfield & Hughes 2007) assert that poor training and development structures and programs result most often in outcome discrepancies and workplace conflict as a result of poor attitude and discord within the organization. Furthermore, Hammonds (2005) ties outcomes of poor worker attitudes and discontent with their jobs to perceptions of career and skill stagnancy and poor technical knowledge with regards to global technologies, proficiencies and competencies (Mattson 2005; Fox 2003). Similarly, Mullins (2007) observes that competent employees, although quiet expensive are imperative to organizational competitive advantage and sustained economic and market performance, as a result of this, based on the need to maintain competitive advantage and performance, it is imperative that firms act optimally in their pursuit of the actualization of their goals through development as well as training programs and activities.

This study, having identified and stated the problem of poor employee work attitudes which are manifested through expressions of dissatisfaction and nonchalance; examines the influence of training in enhancing employee work attitudes and thus facilitating job involvement and satisfaction within culture as a moderator.

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Theoretically, study findings would promote the recognition of training roles as a variable which affects employee work attitudes. The theories put forward herein would serve as a framework for futuristic research on training and employee work attitudes relationship and would contribute to literature on the study variables; thereby creating a room for intending research activities closely related to this study.

Practically, this study draws its significance from the empirical evidence of its results and the generalization as well as applicability of such outcomes on the population of the study. Managerial decisions and policies could be based upon results from the study given its practical tendencies and its emphasis on models which adequately represent the core of the problem and the attributes of the population. Its findings can be used to further the advocacy of its result-related evidence within the Nigerian manufacturing industry with recommendations based on empirical evidence.

Research Hypothesis

The following hypotheses are postulated:

- Ho: 1** There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and job involvement.
- Ho: 2** There is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and job satisfaction.
- Ho: 3** There is no significant relationship between off-the-job training and job involvement.
- Ho: 4** There is no significant relationship between off-the-job training and job satisfaction.
- Ho: 5** The culture of the organization does not significantly moderate the relationship between training and employee work attitudes.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The theoretical scope for this study is limited to content bordering training and employee work attitudes relationship with a moderator of organizational culture; as the previous chapter specifies the intent, questions and hypothetical assumptions

with regards to the stated problem upon which the study is premised. This chapter reviews related and relevant literature concerned with the influence of training on employee work attitudes and a moderator of organizational culture. On the content of this research, training is examined as a predictor in enhancing the work attitudes of employees, given the possibility of such an exchange of cost-benefit in achieving improved attitude expressions; hence, the theoretical framework adopted in examining this association between the variables (predictor, criterion and moderating) is the social exchange theory (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003).

The social exchange theory can be described as involving unspecified obligations or expectations which if undertaken invariably induce certain outcomes which although not precisely defined, cannot be bargained or negotiated upon (recognition, concern, loyalty and support) that actually affects the feelings and generates attitudes such as personal obligations, gratitude, and trust. An employee behaviour towards another the same way they feel towards them with regards to the nature and characteristic of social relationships is stronger especially in the event where both interested parties are ready to avail the required and necessary resources which each considers valuable (Aselage & Eisenberger, 2003). Coyle & Shore (2007), Eisenberger et al (2001), this is as subordinates most often prefer and value beneficial treatment, whereas superiors rather prefer and most often sought for loyalty, respect.

A major socio-psychological or behavioural-motivational assumption encapsulated by the social exchange theory is that of the individual attitude, character or behaviour as a function or consequence of punishment and reward, cost and benefit, advantage and disadvantage. Similarly, Molm et. al (2003) assert that the extent of reciprocation is dependent on the observed level of favour or benefit the recipient receives; hence there is the tendency through a sense of obligation for the recipient to try and repay or balance the favour; this is as a result of perceptions or feelings of indebtedness as a result of the gain or advantage obtained from the favour, however Han, Li & Hwang (2005) note that such reciprocity may not entirely be acted out consciously but may also be as a result of the subconscious awakening to a sense of responsibility and obligation to reciprocate in a like manner.

The relationship between training and employee work attitudes as examined within this framework (the social exchange theory) is premised on the subordinate expectations of training, development and other growth and career opportunities which would serve to equip and enable the employee to be more competitive, effective and productive; thus, enhancing the subordinates well-being and work dispensation; hence the possibility of attaining a more positive and favourable work attitude shown in their involvement and satisfaction on the job. This as Molm et al (2003) observe that a partners reciprocity of benefit are usually contingent on the activities or the other partner and is most often difficult to organize into discrete stages or phases based on the self-reinforcing nature of the cycle of actions which is usually continuous until intervened upon or breached by any of the interested parties; this is as a result of the desire of each party to create a sort of equilibrium or balance.

3.1 Training and Employee Work Attitudes

Swart et al., (2005) argued that if organizations in Nigeria must survive, their employees must be willing to work and express the motivation and desire to do perform. The degree to which emphasis is laid on motivating and getting the best out of the worker however, varies from organization to organization given varying evaluations of cost-benefit estimates. Organizations are constantly seeking and researching for better ways of getting their employees involved and satisfied with live within the organization. A life that is meaningful and less complicated and which offers the employee greater prospects and opportunities, thus facilitating identification and commitment (Weil & Woodall, 2005; Yusuf & Metiboba, 2012). Due to productivity & performance issues, so many studies have dealt with the different aspects of employee expectations from organizations; this is as employees, no matter the organization or establishment concerned, hold various expectations ranging from the issues of getting adequate compensation from their jobs, to being secured in their place of employment, and to being placed and recognized as significant and important in the organization, having being equipped with the necessary tools, knowledge, skill and equipment for the accomplishment of organization's goals.

Yusuf and Metiboba (2012) also assert quality reasons with regards training need viewed as an important requirement and ingredient of the organizational training system where motivating employees within the organization to acquire current knowledge, skills, competencies and also to hold and express good attitude, may strongly improve subsequent desirable employee-personal results in terms of satisfaction, performance, effectiveness, trust and personal ethics. Thus, such results could further motivate employees towards the achievement of the overall organizational objectives. Furthermore, the

greater the difference between the skills necessary for the performance of a role and the actual skills available for the performance of such role, the greater the job dissatisfaction and the more the rise in employee turnover intentions within the organization; hence, not having the required knowledge given the role expectations to perform a job correctly can frustrate an employee and lead to incidences of failure (George et al., 2008).

Umar (2013) opines that poor performance as a result of inadequate training can produce employee dissatisfaction and alienation as well as a negative work attitude. The employee’s goals are based on the achievement of success and growth in their careers, hence their desire to perform their roles better and in a more efficient as well as effective manner. Moreover, employee participation in training programs has been linked to improved workers perceptions and attitude within the organization; this is as Torrington (2005) suggested that trainings programs tend to expand the employee’s psychological and physical work related attitudes; therefore, creating opportunities for employees to further learn and develop themselves with regards to expected roles will increase employee’s effectiveness and efficiency as well as expose them to various aspects of the organization. The necessity of adequate training for employees cannot be overemphasized given its focus and concern.

3.2 The moderating Effect of Organizational Culture

Studies (Saari & Erez, 2002; Saari & Schneider, 2001) reveal researches on organizational culture influences on employee work attitudes and actions on job involvement and satisfaction going with the global business challenges faced by human resources managers and their ability to understand and solve them.

Hofstede (2011) examined employee work attitudes in 66 countries beginning from 1967 to 1973 and found that these countries systematically varied along several dimensions like uncertainty avoidance 7 risk taking; individualism & collectivism; power distance & unequal distributed power and masculinity & femininity referred to as achievement orientation.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population for this study comprises of a total of 495 staff of eight (8) selected manufacturing companies duly registered with the Manufacturers Association of Nigeria (MAN) and sourced from the Bayelsa/Rivers State Chapter directory. The number of participants was sourced from the HRM/administrative departments and other relevant directories of the target companies. Table 4.1 below is used to illustrate the population.

Table: 4.1. List of Companies

S/N	Manufacturing Firms	No. of Staff
1	Dufil Prima Foods	88
2	Nigerian Bottling Co.	131
3	Nigerian Engineering Works	56
4	Air Liquide Nigeria	40
5	First Aluminum	77
6	Eastern Wrought Iron	32
7	Hoison Energy & Resources	38
8	Skypoint Merchandise	33
TOTAL		495

Source: Data result, 2015

The employees of these companies are targeted for study as a result of their shared experiences in working in the target companies which form a part of the Nigerian manufacturing industry and which are the focal point of this study. The sample size for this study is calculated mathematically with the below Taro Yamane formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Using the proportional sampling, the sample size was divided as follows:

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Where n = Desired sample size
 N = Population of the study
 e = precision of sampling error
 Therefore: N = 495 participants
 e = 0.05 level

Thus:

$$n = \frac{495}{1 + 495(0.05)^2} = \frac{495}{1 + 1.2} = \frac{495}{2.2}$$

$$n = 225$$

Table 4.2: Distribution based on proportionate stratifications according to company size

S/N	Manufacturing Firms	No. of Staff	Proportion
1	Dufil Prima Foods	88	40
2	Nigerian Bottling Co.	131	60
3	Nigerian Engineering Works	56	25
4	Air Liquide Nigeria	40	18
5	First Aluminum	77	35
6	Eastern Wrought Iron	32	15
7	Hoison Energy & Resources	38	17
8	Skypoint Merchandise	33	15
TOTAL		495	225

Source: Data result, 2015

Table 4.2 above illustrates the proportionate distribution of participant allocation based on the size of the company where

$$Cn = \frac{CN}{N} * \frac{n}{1}$$

Where Cn = estimated participant unit allocation per company
 CN = population per company
 N = Total population of the study
 n = Sample size of the study

The participants are to be selected using the non-probability simple random sampling technique within each company which allows for an equal probability chance for each member or element of the population to be selected (Bryman& Bell, 2003; Sarantakos, 2005).

Decision Rule for Acceptance or Rejection of the Null Hypothesis:

Where P < 0.05 reject the null hypothesis
 Where P > 0.05 accept the null hypothesis

Table 4.3: Result for descriptive analysis of organizational culture

		On-the-job training	Off-the-job training	Job Involvement	Job Satisfaction
On-the-job training	Pearson Correlation	1	.523**	.696**	.640**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	172	172	172	172
Off-the-job training	Pearson Correlation	.523**	1	.937**	.927**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	172	172	172	172

Job Involvement	Pearson Correlation	.696**	.937**	1	.901**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	172	172	172	172
Job Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	.640**	.927**	.901**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	172	172	172	172

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Data output, 2015

Hypothesis HO₁: there is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and job involvement.

The relationship between on-the-job training and job involvement is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .696 and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables even at a 99% confidence interval also implying a 0.01 level of significance. The hypothesis of no relationship is rejected based on the decision rule of $P < 0.05$. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate the on-the-job training is significantly associated with job involvement.

Hypothesis HO₂: there is no significant relationship between on-the-job training and job satisfaction.

The relationship between on-the-job training and job satisfaction is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .640 and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables even at a 99% confidence interval also implying a 0.01 level of significance. The hypothesis of no relationship is rejected based on the decision rule of $P < 0.05$. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate the on-the-job training is significantly associated with job satisfaction.

Hypothesis HO₃: there is no significant relationship between off-the-job training and job involvement.

The relationship between off-the-job training and job involvement is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .937 and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables even at a 99% confidence interval also implying a 0.01 level of significance. The hypothesis of no relationship is rejected based on the decision rule of $P < 0.05$. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate the off-the-job training is significantly associated with job involvement.

Hypothesis HO₄: there is no significant relationship between off-the-job training and job satisfaction.

The relationship between off-the-job training and job satisfaction is revealed to be significant given the observed correlation: .927 and a p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. The correlation value shows a strong and significant relationship between both variables even at a 99% confidence interval also implying a 0.01 level of significance. The hypothesis of no relationship is rejected based on the decision rule of $P < 0.05$. We therefore reject the null hypothesis and restate the off-the-job training is significantly associated with job satisfaction.

Table 4.4: The relationship between the variables of the study

		Training	Employee Work Attitudes	Culture
Training	Pearson Correlation	1	.963**	.884**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	172	172	172
Employee Work Attitudes	Pearson Correlation	.963**	1	.954**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	172	172	172

Culture	Pearson Correlation	.884**	.954**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	172	172	172

Source: Data output, 2015

Table 4.4 above illustrates the association between the variables of the study and signifies significant levels of association between the three variables of the study.

Table 4.5: The control for the moderating effect of organizational culture

Control Variables			Training	Employee Work Attitudes
Culture	Training	Correlation	1.000	.853
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000
		Df	0	169
Employee Work Attitudes	Employee Work Attitudes	Correlation	.853	1.000
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.
		Df	169	0

Source: Data output, 2015

Table 4.5 above illustrates the moderating effect of organizational culture on the relationship between training and employee work attitudes.

Hypothesis HO₅: The culture of the organization does not significantly moderate the relationship between training and employee work attitudes.

The data as illustrated on table 4.14 reveals that organizational culture significantly moderates the relationship between training and employee work attitudes where $R_{.963} > R_{.853}$ at a $P < 0.05$ coefficient. Therefore the previously stated null hypothesis of no relationship is hereby rejected.

V. CONCLUSION

The finding from our analysis reveals a significant correlation between training and employee work attitudes as well as a significant level of moderation from organizational culture on the study variables; this further observed expressions involvement and satisfaction on the job within same organizations. Therefore based on these observations and the results of the hypotheses which revealed significant associations between both variables; the following assertions and conclusions are hereby proffered:

- i. That the experience of on-the-job training by workers enhances their appreciation of organizational operations and hands-on processes and also affords them practical learning avenues which further creates opportunities for involvement, supports their perceptions of recognition and value to the organization and invariably leads to job satisfaction and desirable work attitudes.
- ii. That the experience of off-the-job training by employees offers them the opportunities for varied work environment experiences and occasions and allows for considerable exposure to other professionals, techniques, experts and processes within a most often relaxed and social framework. Such an approach enhances employees’ perceptions of working conditions and allows for good interpersonal relations between management and staff, thus furthering outcomes of involvement and satisfaction.

That the integration of training activities within the framework and context of the culture of the organization enhances its capacity for an enhanced effect on the attitude of the workers; this is as attributes such as the consistency, continuity and

participation in decision-making of such programs have been revealed to significantly translate training events into outcomes of job involvement and job satisfaction.

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