



Full Length Research Paper

Training evaluation: A case of employee training and development within the service industries in Nigeria

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Abstract

In the mist of the current economic meltdown there is decreasing interest on the willingness for organizations to spend money especially on training and development. There is need to justify the commitment of resource on employee training and development through evaluation and review. The major aim of training evaluation is to determine the effectiveness of the component of training and development programs. Most of the service organisations in developing economies which Nigeria is part of has given little or no attention to training evaluations. This study investigates the evaluation of training and development within the service industries in Nigeria. Achieving a positive outcome from training and development programs is a very good level motivation for the employees. Also, the study will evaluate the perceptions of training evaluation from the perspective of the major three stakeholders responsible for training that is; the management, trainers and more importantly the participants of the training (workers). This study will present findings on training evaluations from the analysis based on the questionnaire presented on the data collected. The key issue to be discussed in this paper includes; training needs assessment, reasons for training evaluations focusing on Kirkpatrick four level model of training evaluation, and other review of literature relating to the concept of training and development. Finally, based on the outcome of the investigation carried through questionnaire methods of data collection, this study will present the analysis and findings.

Keywords- Training, Development, Evaluation models, Human Resource Development, Organization and Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to identify reasons for which training fail and what impacts does it have on employees and what are the benefits of training evaluation and what are the employee's views on training evaluation? A mixed research approach with combination of literature review was adopted and which requires distribution of a questionnaire survey. This study covers 86 sampled employees of different service firms in Nigeria. This study used a simple qualitative and quantitative approach to data collection, in future there will be need for a more in-depth application of quantitative techniques in order to validate the analysis on future data that might emerge. Hence, the need for future extension of this research so

as to shape the study and further expand the study. This is the first study that examines employees' perceptions on training and development evaluations within the service sectors in Nigeria.

The global economy and business environment are currently characterised by huge competition and the only way to sustainance and having a competitive edge is by differentiating business offering through creating enhanced human capital. Training and development of staff is very essential for every organisation especially in this era of competitions where organisations need to survive, grow and develop (Ongori and Nzozi, 2011:187). Moreover, the increased trends in new technology,

continues drive for quality, containment in cost, diversity in the workforce, and quest for change in business delivery has contributed to challenges being faced in human resources development in Nigeria.

Organisations achievements on enhanced human capital are possible through training and development. Saxena, (2012:2) maintained that corporate human resource development (HRD) functions stands as a most valuable assets used by the most successful organizations in fighting competition. Ashton and Felstead (1995:235) regard the investment that organisations made on the skills of its workers as "litmus test" this implies that changes in the skills of workers depends on how the organisation manages the skills (Saxena, 2012:2). The aim of human resource development is to loosen up those potentials that exist in employees and thereby given the employee the power to contribute to the attainment of organisational strategic goals and objectives (Adeleye, 2009:195)

Human resource development plays a very important role in the performance of every business organization. In the corporate sector management of human resources helps the organization in integrating its workforce so as to achieve the strategic aims and objectives within the organization's service delivery. Human resource development, training and development are an important aspect that many organisations and are expected to use in enhancing the performance of its employees through a learning process that involves knowledge acquisition, improvement of skills, concepts, rules or overall changing of attitude and behavior in the organization (Ahmed and Din, 2009:165). Human resource development incorporates the use of training and development, career development, and organisation development for the main purpose of improving performance (McLagan, 1983:7, Swanson, 1995:208, Saxena, 2012:3). This definitely goes to explain that ultimately organisations are viewed to be an institute of learning and individual's ability to work in the organisation can be influenced directly through deliberate and planned intervention to achieve work-based knowledge that will benefit both the individual and the whole organisation at large with the end result being individuals (employees) achieving job satisfaction and organisation achieving increased productivity (Onuka, 2006:13)

Similarly, training refers to the process of upgrading the knowledge, skill development that will bring about changes in behavior and attitude of individual and this goes to improve the ability of the trainee's performance at work. Stewart (1996), defines training and development as an organisation function which produces the result by ensuring that the contributions of individuals workers or groups in achieving organisational objectives through the development of knowledge, skills, attitude of employees that fits into plan of the organisation (Ongori and Nzozi, 2011:187). To Roy and Raymond (2008:89), Training is one of the fundamental means of human resource

development (HRD) in business organisation and it is aimed at motivating employees as well as developing potential and help workers to deliver a better service.

Training initiatives are achieved through the use of training methods. In recent years training methods used by the organisation has changed tremendously because of continuing changes in modern technology. Although it is believed that the method of training to employ in organisations should be based on the current level of expertise of the trainee as well as an identified training need of the individual. The following are the commonly used training methods; on-the-job includes; coaching, demonstration, mentoring Job rotation/planned experience and off the job includes; Lecture, vestibule training, role playing, case study, discussion, simulation, group exercise, team building, distance learning, and outdoor workshops. Also action learning, computer based training, videos, interactive video, multimedia training which forms under either on-the-job or off-the-job (Wang 2008:46 and Obisi, 2011:83).

Infact, they maintained that on-the-job training is the only way to develop and practice a given managerial team leading, technical, selling, manual, and administrative skills required for the effective performance of the organisation and it has the advantage of producing actual and immediate result as the individual performs his or her duty, as well as learns and develops expertise at the same time (Obisi, 2011:83). On the contrary, it could be ineffective if the learning process lacks quality guidance and coaching from the job. This drawback on on-the-job could be resolved if there exist regular training programs to sharpen the skills of the supervisor, managers and other internal trainers (Obisi, 2011:83).

A research revealed that on average a typical organisational training and development programs achieves a contribution of 10% success rate towards the improved individual and organisational performance (Brinkerhoff, 2005:88). This implies that for every 100 employees that takes part in training programs, only about 10 of them will reflect sustained changes in work performance and this is the reason a new approach to sustain organisation's training and development initiatives through training evaluation (Brinkerhoff, 2005:88).The objectives of organizational training program are to train their staff to achieve the needs of the maximum profit potential. Past researchers have come up with a series of training and development evaluation models that are required to be adopted by organizations to fill these gaps in training programs. Providing feedbacks to the Human Resource Development(HRD) department stands as a very good tool for evaluation framework (Brinkerhoff, 2005:88).

A survey by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) showed that Kirkpatrick model is highly influential among researchers and it's still the most commonly used evaluation frameworks among

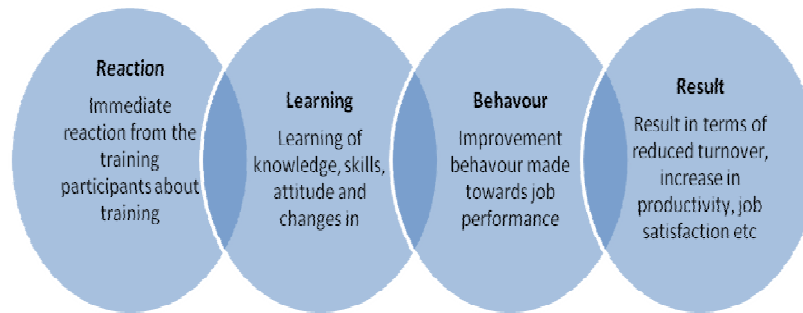


Figure 1. Kirkpatrick Four Level Model Adapted from; Ahmed & Din, 2009:166

companies. Cascio, 1987 maintained that the model is widely acceptable and underpins the standard of UK investors in People (Stantos and Stuart, 2003:28). Attempt at closing this gap requires proper evaluation based on Kirkpatrick four level models that helps in achieving the pre-requisite goals in training (Ahmed and Din, 2009:166);

- Training evaluation must be appropriate for the person and the situation
- Feedback is very important for not only the trainers but for learners confidence building
- Evaluation will not achieve effectiveness in training but properly designed training
- Successful evaluation depends on whether the means of evaluation were built into the design of the training program before it is implemented

The basic aim of evaluating training and development is to assess the training effectiveness regarding achievement of a given goal and implementing the outcome in future training support for learning. Important levels to be considered when evaluating training;

- **Reaction:** This is the immediate reaction from the training participant about training
- **Learning:** Learning of knowledge, skills, attitude and changes in abilities
- **Behaviour:** Improvement made on the job performance
- **Result:** Result in terms of reduced turnover, increase in productivity, job satisfaction etc.

Authors have revealed different models for evaluating training and development in organizations these include; Philips' five level model (2003) Swanson and Holton's model of evaluation (1999) and Kirkpatrick four level taxonomy (1976). Among these entire models the most commonly used model is Kirkpatrick model which will be the focus of training and development evaluation in this study. The Kirkpatrick model stands as one of the basic organizing design for training evaluations used for profit organizations for over the years. The popularity of the chain linked to the fact that it addresses training professional in understanding the need for training in a systematic manner (Bates, 2004: 341).

It should be noted that evaluation of training certainly has one basic aim to achieve that is to determine changes in organizational behavior as well as organizational structure (ALAjilouni et al. 2010:56). Below is the highlight on the Kirkpatrick training evaluation model framework; see figure 1 above

Similarly, Warr et al., (1976) came up with training acronym known as CIRO which is similar to Kirkpatrick model; CIRO stands for Context Evaluation, Input, Reaction and the Outcome.

CIRO deals more on factors such as;

- **Context Evaluation:** Identification of training needs, setting of goals based on organizational culture and environment.
- **Inputs** deals on evaluation based on design and delivery activities.
- **Reaction** evaluation focuses on attaining and using information about the quality experiences of the trainees.
- **Outcome** evaluation deals with what was achieved from the training activities and which is assessed in three stages; Immediate, Intermediate and ultimate levels. The immediate level evaluation attempts to measure changes in knowledge, skills or attitude before the participant goes back to the job. The intermediate evaluation focuses on the impact of training on the job performance and how knowledge is transferred back to the organisation and lastly, the ultimate evaluation refers to the overall impact of training on the organizational performance in terms of results achieved.

However, Esterby-Smith (1986) argued in contrast to this model assumption though he still believes that it can be used as an alternative evaluation framework (Santos and Stuart, 2003:29).

Literature Review

In business it is compulsory to manage the following resources; equipment, finance, information and finally people. Of all the resources available for business to manage, managing people which is known as human resource is the most difficult; this is because of the

dynamic nature of humans. Investment in human training and development can make them be more productive and more effective at work. Research has suggested that investment in training and development impacts greatly on individual and organizational performance (Santos and Stuart, 2003: 27).

Training and development in Human Resource Development (HRD) has gone through huge changes and expansion in vision in this twenty first century. Training is no longer restricted to instruct individuals to perform their duties and responsibilities at work efficiently and effectively. Training and development now extend to organisations incorporating non-training solutions that is aimed at achieving individual performance and as well as organisational performance (Korte, 2006:172).

Trainers are expected to impart factual information to the trainees through reading, lectures or even demonstrations as well as provide trainees with comprehensive documenting procedures necessary in performing their task (Stein, 2001:415, Qayyum et al. 2012:13). For instance, an organisation that is focusing on the on-the-job training method, trainers are expected to not only assist the trainees with job reflection but also seek means of interacting with the trainees through negotiation and interaction with them so as to make the best out of their various job experiences. The knowledge required in this job situation was found in the past experience of the employee. It is the responsibility of the trainer to select a situation that will be appropriate to engage learners in difficult, realistic, problem solving centered activities that will stimulate knowledge (Okereke and Igboke, 2011:401). On the other hand, trainees are meant to share with the experts in developing strategies required in solving problem. They are to observe how an instructor devises solution to problems and come up with their own solution path. Achievement of training and development objectives have a lot to do with the relationship that exist between the trainer and trainees.

Consequently, managers or owners of business play an important role towards the initiation of training and development programs. In a work environment, managers play key roles that are favorable for work integration and learning. Particularly, it is the duty of the employee's supervisor to potentially influence learning environment, foster employee learning through engaging in a series of development and training interventions that involves feedback and evaluation at the end (Coetzer, 2007:421).

However, training of staff starts with the management recognition of training needs through conducting job analysis, performance assessment, and organizational analysis. As soon as the training needs assessment is identified, the next step is to organise training programs (Tabassi and Baker, 2009: 473). One of the most important factor in the implementation of Human resource management is in corporate organisations is the need for effective identification of training needs (Nigel, 2009:6). It

is the responsibility of the manager to consistently evaluate and measure the performance of workers this will assist the organization in improvement monitoring among the staff and the nature of training techniques to be implemented. Omer et. al. (2009:3) states that, training process commences with the skills and knowledge assessment required to achieve organizational objectives, and putting into consideration if training is the most suitable solution to meeting the skills and knowledge needed. If training is deemed appropriate the next step will be to select appropriate participants for the training and the most appropriate way to evaluate the outcome of training.

Today the modern organisation focuses on achieving strategic learning through training and development by aligning the training and development effort of the organization to the strategic goals and missions of the organization as supported by the normative model-best fit model Integration of HR policies to overall business objectives via hard and soft model (Leege, 1995, Garavan, 2005). For training evaluation to be effective there is need for organization to align the training needs of the organization with the organization's strategic objectives (Adeleye, 2011:2031)

METHODOLOGY

Quantitative method approaches were employed in the evaluation of employee training and development within some sample servicefirms in Nigeria. The quantitative approach used in this study depend on the use of questionnaire method in collecting data. The researcher distributed via mail questionnaire to seven different reputable service firms in Nigeria, of which four of them where banks, the rest are telecommunication and travel firms and hotels. These questionnaires were sent to various individuals that have worked or still working with these firms to seek their views and evaluating the nature of training received from his/her employer.

The questionnaire was designed to clarify reactions of the firm's employees on the training evaluation initiative of the organization. The section highlighted on the following;

1. Section 1 contains the background information of the participants including nature of training methods used in the organization.
2. Section 2 focuses on professional training evaluations which includes;
 - Evaluation based on the general aspect of training
 - Evaluating the quality of the trainers
 - Evaluating the management as training initiators.
 - Evaluation based on the impact of training programs

These sections (1&2), contains a series of further questions. In section II, the questions are grouped using a

Table 1. (Section 1 of the Questionnaire)

A: Age =N86	Percentage (%) Rating
20-below	8
21-30	15
31-40	51
41-50	13
51-60	-
61-above	-
B: Sex= N86	(%)
Male	43%
Female	57%
C: Sectors=N86	(%)
Banks	49
Information Technology	28
Hospitality	7
Travel	13
Others	11
D: Employment Type=N86	(%)
Full time	72
Part time	15
Job share	8
Others	4
E: Years of Experience= N86	(%)
1-2years	21
2-5years	53
5-above	26
F: Training Techniques =86	(%)
On the job	56
Off the job	19
On/off the job	25

five point scale 'very poor up to 'very good (see Appendix). The aim was to seek participant's evaluation of training based on their past or current experiences. The four parts in section II represent various angles in which organizational training and development evaluation is expected to be focused on these includes; evaluation based on general expectations of training programs, evaluating the trainers be used to deliver training programs, evaluating the managers of these training programs whose responsibility is to initiate training programs that fits into the requirement of individual and organizational purpose, and lastly, the overall evaluation based on the impact of the training to individual employees. Overall, this study collected 86 (49 females and 37males) questionnaires from individuals that worked or still working with a related cooperate service organizations in Nigeria. This study maintained privacy of the information provided by the participants as well as data protection.

The study intentionally focused on the application of the Kirkpatrick model of training evaluation by focusing

on answering the research questions by looking at the four levels of training evaluation proposed by Kirkpatrick. In this study, the Kirkpatrick framework for evaluation was applied through the questionnaires in order to measure respondent's reactions on training and development within their various workplaces focusing on the effects of training evaluation on individual job performance and organizational impact.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Service organisations in Nigeria provide training and development opportunities to its employees through various types of on-the-job and off-the-job training methods. The tables (1 & 2) depicts inferences drawn from the analysis of data collected through the use of questionnaire focusing on the key levels of the Kirkpatrick training evaluation framework. It represents the summary of the questions and answers from the sampled employees of some the service industries in Nigeria. The

Table 2. (Section 2 of the Questionnaire) Training Evaluation

1. Evaluate the following	Very poor (%)	Bad (%)	Moderate (%)	Good (%)	Very good (%)
• Organization of training	53	49	46	31	16
• Quality of the content of educational and training material available for training	31	28	33	29	40
• Suitability of training used in the organization	12	28	17	38	43
• Regular feedback session on performance after training	21	13	24	23	19

2. Evaluation the quality of trainers	Very poor	Bad	Moderate	Good	Very good
• Trainers were prepared and knowledgeable	19	25	23	42	47
• The trainers were keen to train	35	33	41	31	25
• The training materials used are easy to understand	46	42	36	27	28

3. Evaluation on the management of the organization	Very poor (%)	Bad (%)	Moderate (%)	Good (%)	Very good (%)
• They put into consideration the training needs of the employees	19	14	30	20	17
• Passionate and commitment to training	22	12	31	21	14
• Ability to conduct training needs assessment	24	20	22	16	18
• Encourages independent learning and creativity	15	20	36	14	15

4. Evaluation on the overall impact of training	Very poor (%)	Bad (%)	Moderate (%)	Good (%)	Very good (%)
• The knowledge acquired is helpful for my future development	10	8	36	20	26
• The training acquired has improved my performance in the organization	5	8	13	30	44

tabular presentation shows a percentage representation of the outcome of respondents' views on each of the questions asked.

The above table presents the outcome of the survey on the demographic variables and some of the important aspect of the training evaluation. The essence is to have an insight into some of the demographic variables important in this study and to know the different groups of view on the nature of training and development techniques being used with the nature of employment.

Results from the percentage analysis from the table suggest that in the age of the participants there were younger people working in the service sector. The percentage of age from 31-40 stood at 51%, with this, it shows the commitment of firms in the training evaluation implementation towards organization strategic performance attainment and individual career improvement. This group of employee tends to have a longer years in their career and hence the need for continuing training evaluation. Secondly, evidence from the table showed that the majority of the service industry in Nigeria offers more of full time employment (72%), this explains the reason why firms are expected to devote more time to training evaluation because this group of employees with the nature of their employment have a

longer time to be with the organization and still a lot to give back to the organization only if organizations will ensure a continues training and development. Also, the table above revealed that the majority of the sampled firms relays more on the job training (56%) as oppose to off the job training method. The rate of globalization and competition demands that organizational strategy needs to be directed towards acquiring external knowledge that will make the firm to have a competitive edge and this can be achieved with employees embarking on off the job training.

Table 2 above shows the analysis of the major questionnaire questions that were formulated and directed towards providing answers to the research questions. The table presentation shows a rating of "very poor" to "very good". The exercise showed that there exists evidence of training and development activities in the service industry in Nigeria. The analysis covers four important sections of training evaluation.

Firstly, from question one in table 2 above it can be seen that there exists low response in the organization of training in the firms sampled. The information from the employee participant of these firms showed 53% very poor. This shows that the firm does not put much effort in organizing trainings. And likewise, only 19% of the

respondent believed that there exists a feedback section after training. Also, 40% agree that the training materials used for training are very good. (See table II: question 1)

Secondly, on the evaluation of the trainers that delivers the training programs shows a positive response with 47% very good and 40% good. From the analysis in table II question 2, it shows there are still a good percentage of the respondents that disproves on some of the statements about the trainers especially with the training material (46% very poor) and trainers enthusiasm towards training (35% very poor).

Lastly, from table 2 above the third and fourth questions shows response on the review on the management and overall impact of training to both the individual and the organization at large. From the employee's perspectives, management evaluation of training especially on the use of training needs assessment before selecting who to be trained and the nature of training to be offered show a very poor response, only 15% of the respondent agree on the management knowledge on the use of need assessment in training evaluation. As Miller et al. (2002:5) states that the main aim of training needs assessment is to identify performance required by the organization so as to help the organization channels its resources to the area with the greatest need and this will help in achieving the strategic objectives and improved productivity of the organization.

Also, it is evident from the participants' response that firms focus more on the use of training more extensively on achieving organizational performance and very minimal attention to achieving individual career objectives which will ensure job satisfaction which automatically leads to performance improvement (Bunch, 2007:145). (See table II: question 4)

CONCLUSION

For organization to achieve the best from training and development initiatives there must be a deeper understanding on the need for training evaluation. It is the responsibility of the organization to constantly carry evaluates the training programs and techniques implemented so as to establish how effective and efficient it is for both the organization and the individual. In this study from the employee's perspectives, it shows that some firms in the service industry in Nigeria are still behind when it comes to integrating the principles of good practice through training evaluations especially with respect to implementing training needs assessment before selecting individual for training. There is a need to incorporate the selection process of employees with a defined learning outcomes. Also, from the result of the data collected training evaluation needs to be strengthened in order to ensure future effectiveness of training activities in this industry. Therefore, there is need

for extension of this study, especially to establish the views of the management with respect to the application of training evaluation and show a more comprehensive analysis by applying an in-depth quantitative and qualitative approach of research through conducting an in-depth with the managers of these firms represented in this study sample. Hence the need for further research on this study to explore more views on training evaluation forms all other perspectives especially the managers.

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How to cite this article: Ugoji C. and Mordi C. (2014). Training evaluation: A case of employee training and development within the service industries in Nigeria. *J. Res. Int. Bus. Manag.* 4(1):13-20