

Appraisal of systematic training practices by building construction firms in Nigeria. **A5**

Calistus Ayegba^{1*} and W. E. Dzasu² 1. Department of Building, School of Environmental Technology, Federal University of Technology Minna Niger State, Nigeria. 2. Department of Building, Federal University of Technology Yola, Nigeria

Abstract

The study investigated the frequency of training programmes, organizations that meet firms training needs, funds reimbursement by the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) to firms for training, the constraints and strategies that could be adopted to enhance the practice of systematic training by construction firms in the development of their workers. It was observed that 89.65% and 91.38% of the respondents agree that management and technical staff training is only embarked on when needed; that ITF provides 24.49% of the firms training needs for operatives/semi skilled workers. Also, lack of funds and training/staff development policies which had combined mean of 4.2 respectively was identified as a factors militating against the practice of systematic training of building construction workers. This study shows that systematic training of building construction workers serves a means of maintaining standards and ensuring that those who are newly engaged into existing jobs and practices are able to adapt quickly.

Key words: Systematic training, practice, productivity.

E-mail: calistus.ayegba@futminna.edu.ng.

Received: 2013/12/22

Accepted: 2014/05/26

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/njtr.v9i1.4>

Introduction.

Systematic training is a planned, integrated purposeful and sequential training approach or procedure used by an organization to facilitate employees learning so that their resultant behaviors contribute to the attainment of its goals and objectives. This involves four inter-related steps which include: identification of needs, designing of training programmes, implementation of the training programmes and evaluation of training results (Kunder, 1998). The proportion of skilled labour required in the industry is high and consists predominantly of craftsmen. Reports on shortage of skilled labour in the construction industry has now become a worldwide issues with long term implications and direct consequences (Kashiwagi and Massner, 2002; Bamisile, 2004; Bokinni, 2005; Lill, 2008; Oslen *et al*, 2012; and Killin, 2013).

Oni and Van Wyk (2012) reported that the current building construction skill shortages in Nigeria has constrained the productivity capacity of the sector and aggravated the nation's housing problems.

Training and skills manpower development, in industry and commerce were not taken too seriously until the advent of the indigenization Decree of the early 1970s when the Federal Government identified some of the constraints to effective manpower training and development in the country. These include as stated by the industrial training fund:

- Inadequate educational and professionally qualified personnel;

- Poor quality (low skilled) employees at technician and craft level etc.

In identifying these constrains, the industrial training fund observed that despite the difficulties often encountered by employers in finding qualified professionals to recruit, many establishments particularly in the private sector, place the lowest premium on skills training and thus employer training effort has been negligible. This goes to support the argument by Killin (2013) that if you stop training new skill workers, you won't have them when you need them and for the construction industry to have a stable, skilled and well trained workforce, a sufficient number of new workers must be brought in to replace retiring aged ones as well as meet the increasing demands for craftsmen in construction and replace people leaving construction for office and administrative positions.

This situation prompted government to evolve a comprehensive and well articulated manpower training scheme. It argued that there was the urgent need for a reduction in the reliance on expatriate personnel and that, through increased training efforts there would be adequate supply of high level manpower as well as technical skills to meet the needs of the economy as a whole, including the need of individuals, industrial and commercial companies (Osei, 2000).

According to Armstrong (1991), the process of training consists of the following steps:

- Identify needs – the analysis covers problems to be solved as well as future demands. Two

points are usually considered at this stage; the best and most cost effective way to meet those training needs.

- Define learning requirements – it would be important at this stage to examine the skills and knowledge level that is required to be developed in order to meet the new objectives identified by the training needs.
- Planning training programmes – Training techniques and locations of training should be considered at this stage. They must also be designed to meet training needs and objectives and learning requirements.
- Techniques, facilities, locations and trainers – These factors are based on the training programmes being developed to meet the needs and objectives by using the correct combination of training techniques and locations. A decision as to who provides the training, from within or outside the organization, has to be made on the availability of suitable training, and the source of responsibility, i.e. training department or manager.
- Implement the training – effective training methods must then be applied in order to allow trainees to gain the required skills, skills, knowledge and attitudes they need.
- Evaluate training – this step is considered to be of vital importance where trainee performance are monitored in order to find out if training objectives have been met.

Solomon, (2006) observed that in order to achieve the desired result from construction workers, training should be done systematically. It is therefore imperative for research on factors militating against the practice of systematic training of workers in the building construction industry. This study was designed for the following objectives:

- To examine the nature and frequency of systematic training in the building construction industry
- To examine the activities of training organizations with regards to the building construction industry.
- To identify the constraints militating against the practice of systematic training in the building construction industry.
- To establish strategies that would enhance the practicing of systematic training approach in the development of workers in the building construction industry.

Materials and methods.

Data for the study was collected via oral interviews and the use of a structured questionnaire designed to assess the views of respondents on systematic training practices by building construction firms in Nigeria with

particular emphasis on the nature and frequency of systematic training, activities of training organizations, the constraints militating against the practice of systematic training in the building construction industry and strategies that would enhance the practicing of systematic training approach in the development of workers in the building construction industry. The area covered by the study consists of Building construction firms in Adamawa State, Bauchi State, Plateau State and Abuja. The population for the study comprised of the training officers, supervisors, training managers, personnel managers and workers in the construction firms. A total of 70 questionnaires were distributed equally amongst the selected building construction firms in the study area. 58 firms responded by completing and returning the forms administered to them. The purposive or judgment sampling technique was used for the study. In analyzing the data generated from the study, simple percentages and frequency count were used. The mean statistics and standard deviation were also used in the analysis of questions relating to constraints and strategies required for smooth implementation of training policies.

Results and discussions

Frequency of training program for workers

Table 1. shows the response of training managers, trainers and supervisors regarding the frequency of training for the different categories of staff. Data reveal that 89.65% of the respondents agree that management training is only embarked on when needed, 10.35% indicate that training at this level was carried out yearly while a zero response was recorded for weekly, monthly and quarterly training at this level. The data also show that 2 of the respondents representing 3.45% agree that supervisory training is done yearly training at this level recorded a zero response. Similarly, 8.62% of respondent indicated that technical training was carried out by their firms yearly and 91.38% when needed. However, the result also shows that all respondents (58) agreed that clerical and other training not suggested was only carried out when needed.

Table 1. Frequency of Training Program for Workers

	No of response	Frequency of training									
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Management training	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	10.35	52	89.65
Supervisory Training	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	3.45	56	96.55
Technical training	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	8.62	53	91.38
Operatives/semi skilled	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	100
Clerical	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	100
Others	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	100

No. = Number of workers trained

DISTRIBUTION TREND OF TRAINING ORGANIZATIONS THAT MEET FIRMS' TRAINING NEEDS.

Table 2. shows that a higher number of the training needs of the firms were met by training organization other than the industrial Training Fund (ITF), Administrative staff college of Nigeria (ASCON) and the centre for management Development (CMD), except for training at the level of the operative/Semi

skilled workers with ITF providing 24.49% of the firms training needs. This result is an indication that majority of the firms in the study area did not benefit from the services of the ITF, CMD and ASCON in the area of the training for their workers.

Table 2. percentage distribution of training organization that meet firms' training need

Training type	Respondent	ITF		ASCON		CMD		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Management training	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	16	100
Supervisory Training	38	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	100
Technical training	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	100
Operatives/semi skilled	49	12	24.49	-	-	-	-	37	75.51
Clerical workers	27	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100
Others	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100

ITF = Industrial training fund, ASCON = Administrative Staff College of Nigeria, MD = center for Management Development.

Training reimbursement to construction firms from the ITF.

Information in table 3. shows that in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, only three firms i.e. Impresit Bakalori, Bouyues Nigeria Limited and Julius Berger PLC benefited from training reimbursement from the Industrial

Training Fund. Furthermore, the data show that no construction firm benefited from the training reimbursement fund from Adamawa, Bauchi, and Plateau states. This result further buttress the low participation of construction firms in the training of their staff.

TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT from ITF BETWEEN 1998-2006

	ABUJA	ADAMAWA	BAUCHI	PLATEAU
1998	1. IMPRESIT BAKALORI	-	-	-
1999	1. IMPRESIT BAKALORI 2. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2000	1. IMPRESIT BAKALORI 2. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2001	1. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2002	1. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2003	1. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2004	1. SALINI NIG. LTD. 2. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2005	1. JULIUS BERGER PLC 2. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-
2006	1. BOUYUES NIG. LTD.	-	-	-

SOURCE: ITF HEADQUARTERS JOS

Constraints militating against the practice of systematic approach in the training of construction workers.

Table 4. shows the overall mean responses for trainers, training managers and supervisors on the constraints militating against the practice of systematic approach to the training of construction workers in the area under study. The data show that the respondents accepted the lack of fund and absence of staff development policy with combined mean score of $\bar{x} = 4.42$ each, the absence of knowledge of training function $\bar{x} = 4.2$, the procedure for systematic training too cumbersome $\bar{x} = 4.2$, lack of foresight and

lack of sensitivity $\bar{x} = 4.23$, negative attitude of management $\bar{x} = 4.02$. lack of cooperation by managers $\bar{x} = 4.82$ item vii, item x and xii with $\bar{x} = 3.25$, $\bar{x} = 2.54$ and 2.91 respectively were read by the participants as moderate constrains militating against the practice of systematic training in their respective firms. However the respondents also rated lack of available time for training $\bar{x} = 2.91$ and frequent disputes $\bar{x} = 2.21$ as low constraints.

TABLE 4. RESPONDENTS MEAN SCORES O THE CONSTRAINTS MILITATING AGAINST THE PRACTICE OF SYSTEMATIC TRAINING.

Constraints militating against the practice of systematic training	(TR) No. = 15		TM No. = 11		(SU) No. = 32		COMBINED MEANS	REMARKS
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Negative attitude of management	4.06	1.07	3.97	1.20	4.03	0.98	4.02	H
Lack of foresight	4.27	0.98	4.17	1.09	4.26	0.98	4.23	H
Lack of sensitivity	4.29	1.02	4.33	0.89	4.07	2.27	4.23	H
The procedure for systematic training too cumbersome	4.29	0.87	4.25	0.94	4.26	0.95	4.26	H
No training/ staff development policy	4.37	0.91	4.48	0.60	4.40	0.75	4.42	H
Lack of fund (no budgetary provision)	4.34	0.92	4.47	0.60	4.45	0.67	4.42	H
Lack of qualified staff	4.05	1.03	3.79	1.31	1.90	1.17	3.25	M
Lack of cooperation by managers	4.86	1.49	4.29	0.88	4.31	0.92	3.82	H
Absence of knowledge of training function	4.33	0.92	4.23	0.94	4.28	0.91	4.28	H
Changes in social situation	2.73	1.84	2.46	1.41	2.42	1.43	2.54	M
Frequent disputes	2.22	1.31	3.19	1.18	2.23	1.29	2.21	LC
Lack of available time for training	3.74	1.37	2.51	1.52	2.48	1.82	2.91	M
Expected financial benefits of training not known	2.01	1.22	2.65	1.41	2.28	1.49	2.31	LC

TR= Trainers. TM = Training Mangers, SU=Supervisor, SD= Standard Deviation, H= Higher constrains, M= Moderate, LC= Low constraints L= Lowest constraints.

Strategies to enhance the practice of systematic training by firms, government agencies, for training managers and trainers.

Table 5. reveal that trainers =, training managers and supervisors all strong agree to all the items asked in (a-h) and (a-c) respectively for the firms and trainers as being strategies that could enhance the practice of systematic training in the construction firms. Firms giving positive support to training and cooperating with training personnel had a combined mean $\bar{x} = 4.93$.

Similarly, the data reveal that trainers, training managers and supervisors all strongly agree with all the suggested strategies except one requiring government agencies to provide training facilities for training of workers in the construction industry which was rated as agreed with a combined $\bar{x} = 4.40$. similarly,

the respondents moderately agreed with a combined $\bar{x} = 2.58$ in the area requiring the government to fund the training of trainers.

Table 5. Respondents mean score on the strategies that would enhance the practice of systematic training**i. Firms**

	(TR) No. = 15		TM No. = 11		(SU) No. = 32		COMBINED MEANS	REMARKS
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Firms should have well articulated training policy	4.68	0.72	4.71	0.73	4.68	0.89	4.69	SA
Firms should employ full time training specialist or officers with the responsibility	4.59	0.77	4.56	0.87	4.61	0.73	4.59	SA
Firms should have adequate budgetary provision for training and development	4.77	0.67	4.77	0.68	4.74	0.74	4.76	SA
Firms should provide facilities for training	4.76	0.67	4.75	0.68	4.74	0.72	4.75	SA
Firms should positively support training and cooperate with training personnel	4.97	0.10	4.92	0.53	4.89	0.43	4.93	SA
Firms should properly integrate training function into the firms organization policy and procedure	4.84	0.44	4.84	0.44	4.84	0.44	4.84	SA
Firms should accept training implicitly or explicitly as fulfilling the organizations policy	4.84	0.40	4.84	0.44	4.85	0.40	4.84	SA
Firms should see training as an integral component of management action which not only develops resources of individual but help the firm to adapt to changing conditions	4.84	0.44	4.84	0.44	4.84	0.44	4.84	SA

ii. The government agencies for training

Government agencies for training must generate greater awareness of the strategies firms	4.79	0.55	4.81	0.46	4.51	0.46	4.70	SA
Providing training equipment and facilities	4.41	0.90	4.40	0.87	4.59	0.78	4.57	A
Appraise facilities provided for training by employers	4.54	0.94	4.57	0.87	4.59	0.78	2.58	M
Fund the training of trainers	2.60	0.77	2.56	0.87	2.59	0.78	2.58	M
Conduct or assist others to conduct research into all matters relating to systematic training in the industry	4.60	0.77	4.49	0.40	4.88	0.46	4.83	SA
Encourage greater relationship between the industry and the training agencies	4.91	0.23	4.69	0.40	4.88	0.46	4.83	SA
Train more relationship between the industry and the training agencies	4.56	0.59	4.56	0.60	4.56	0.59	4.56	SA
Entrench in organizations a permanent programme for facilities	4.56	0.59	4.56	0.60	4.56	0.59	4.56	SA
Get the generality of people in the industry to be aware of the impact of human resource training and development.	4.60	0.77	4.56	0.87	4.59	0.78	4.58	SA

III. The training Managers.

The managers should promote and encourage positive attitude to training	4.79	0.77	4.56	0.87	4.598	0.78	4.65	SA
Related more closely with the training agencies in order to identify and fulfill training needs of their organization	4.57	0.55	4.57	0.56	4.57	0.56	4.57	SA
Cooperate with training specialist, supervisors and personnel officers for the identification of training	4.60	0.77	4.56	0.87	4.59	0.78	4.58	SA
Training managers should regard systematic training as an integral part of the company development policy	4.76	0.76	4.77	0.54	4.59	0.78	4.71	SA

iv. The Trainers

Trainers must be conversant and knowledgeable on how to identify what training is needed	4.84	0.32	4.84	0.32	4.84	0.33	4.84	SA
Who to plan appropriate program to meet the needs	4.84	0.32	4.84	0.32	4.82	0.31	4.83	SA
How to evaluate the effectiveness and satisfy any residual training requirement	4.83	0.36	4.84	0.35	4.83	0.36	4.83	SA

TR= Trainers. TM = Training Managers, SU=Supervisor, SD= Standard Deviation, SA= strongly agree, M= Moderately and A = Agreed

Conclusion.

Results from the study shows that there are less concerted efforts by the construction industry, training organizations as well as the government to stress the importance of good training practices. Training has been considered in this study as one the ways to maintain the smooth operation of the firms; it plays a part by ensuring that workers have the required knowledge, attitude and skills to carry out efficiently and effectively their tasks under existing system of operations. However, while systematic training procedures when rightly established have many advantages in the process of organization development over earlier forms of training, they also have their disadvantage and difficulties. In the first place they involve an additional outlay of expenditure. More people, space, equipment and facilities are required for instruction. The study has found out that further difficulties may arise from the choice of unsuitable instruction and from the attitude of older workers.

The attitude of the managers to training is seen as a great constraint to systematic training. This study feels that this attitude almost always undermines a training scheme. Line management/training conflicts occur even in relatively well-organized firms. They may also

easily spring from a clash of personalities. But in most cases they arise from a basic lack of understanding of the function of training in organization.

References.

- Armstrong, M. (1991). A hand book of Personnel Management Practice, UK: Kogan page, 302p.
- Bamishile .A. (2004). Building Production Management. Wemimo Adetayo Publishers. Lagos
- Bokinni, S.K. (2005). Skills Acquisition and Development for Craftsmen and Artisans. The professional Builder, Journal of the Nigerian Institute of Building (NIOB) pp.100-111.
- Ehab, A. (1996). Expert systems for Management training in the construction industry. An Unpublished PhD. The is submitted to the University of Edinburgh.
- I.T.F, (2002). Journal for Apprenticeship and vocational Training. Lagos: ITF
- Killin, J. (2013). Construcion Industry has a Shortage of Skilled Workers. Daily Journal of Commerce. Available from <http://djcoregon.com> [Accessed 18 February 2013].
- Kunder, L.H. (1998). Employees' perceptions of the statues and effectiveness of the training and Development System.
- Lill, I. (2008). Sustainable Management of Construction Labour. The 25th International Symposium of Automation and Robotics in Construction. Available from: www.isarc2008.vgtu.lt/[Accessed 10 July 2013].
- Oni, O.J. and Van Wyk, J.J. (2012). Strategies to Address Skill Shortage in the Nigerian House

Construction Sector. The Construction, Building and Real Estate Research Conference of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors Sept. 2012. Nevada, Arizona State University USA.

Osei, O. (2002). An Appraisal of staff training at the National Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies Kuru. An Unpublished P.G. Thesis submitted to the University of Kashiwagi, D.T. and Massner,S.(2000). Solving the Construction Craftsperson Skill Shortage Problem

through Construction Undergraduate Training and Graduate Education. ASC Proceedings of the 38th annual Conference, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, PP 165-176..

Oslon, D., Tatum, M. and Defnall, C. (2012). How Industrial Contractors are Handling Skill Labour Shortages in the US. 48th Associated Schools of Construction (ASC) Annual International Conference Proceedings.