STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: A SINE QUA NON TO EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY IN NIGERIA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

Benedict I. Eze

Akanu Ibiam Federal Polytechnic Unwana, Afikpo

Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Abstract

The need to train and develop staff of the Tertiary Institutions in Nigeria is obvious given the growing nature of work environment, the rapid change in the institutions and advancement in technology among other things. Staff training and development helps to ensure that the members of staff of the institution possess the knowledge and skills they need to perform their duties effectively, take on new/additional responsibilities and adapt to changing conditions. Despite the recognition of the relevance of staff training by management experts and government as enshrined in the civil service rules and white papers on various reforms in Nigeria, the experience of staff training and development in the Nigeria Tertiary Institutions has not met the purpose for which it was meant. This paper examines Staff Training and Development with a view to understanding the determinants of effective service delivery in Nigeria Tertiary Institutions. It makes appropriate recommendations on the need to give all staff equal chance of being trained for effective service delivery in the institutions and the development of the country as a whole.

Key words: *staff, training, development, conference, seminars, workshops, management, tertiary institutions*

1. INTRODUCTION

The relevance of training and development of staff in Nigeria tertiary institutions has become more obvious due to the growing complexity of the work environment, the increasing changes in institutions and technological advancement which further brought about the need for continuous training and development of staff to meet the current challenges. For clarification sake and to enhance deeper understanding of this work we need to attempt a definition of the key words in relation to this topic namely:- Training and development, and Training programme.

2. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

By way of expression, training and development could be viewed as a function of human resource management concerned with organizational activity aimed at bettering the performance of individuals and groups in organizational settings irrespective of age, time, and locality. It has been known by several names including "human resource development", and learning and development.

However, training and development encompasses three main activities: training, education and development.

- Training: This activity is both focused upon, and evaluated against the job that an individual currently holds.

- Education: This activity focuses upon the jobs that an individual may potentially hold in the future, and is evaluated.

- Development: This activity focuses upon the activities that the organization employing the individual, or that the individual is part of, may partake in the future, and is almost impossible to evaluate in (Thomas N. Garavan, Pat.Costine, and Noreen Heraty, (1995)

3. TRAINING PROGRAMME

For beginners, a good training programme is just an actual programme, which looks at training as not just a one – time event. What makes a training programme different from an orientation programme is that it covers a much broader area.

Orientation: This is an introduction to the institution, the job, the target population, and the community. Even if it goes on through the first few months of employment, it is only an introduction, meant to get a staff member used to her new job and its environment.

Training is directly related to the skills, knowledge, and strategies necessary to do a particular job. It can include teaching staff members new skills, exposing them to unfamiliar ideas, giving them the chance to practice and get feedback on a particular techniques or styles of working with people, or simply encouraging them to discuss their work with one another. And it can, and should be ongoing throughout a staff members employment.

Staff Development: This is an ongoing training for all staff. According to Ademolekun (1983) it involves the training, education and career development of staff members.

Professional Development: While this term is often used interchangeably with staff development, it can be defined as leading either to specific new knowledge, or to the next level of expertise.

Professional Development might encompass several possibilities namely:

a) College or graduate courses.

b) Attendance at conference.

c) Study Circles: This refers to groups of professionals who meet regularly to discuss reading/or members' writing and research on topics of mutual interest. A study circle may have a facilitator to help guide reading and discussion or members may take turns acting as facilitators.

d) Field generated courses or workshops: This refers to courses or workshops that grow out of the need of practitioners, who find people to teach them.

e) Institute: This refers to courses run by non-academic institutions, often involving observation and hand-on practice instead of or in addition to lectures, discussion and reading.

In contrast, both staff and professional development require a certain amount of organizational/institutional support. At the very least, on-going training and professional development need to be viewed as part of every staff member's job; and a certain amount of paid time should be devoted to them. Other types of organization/institutional support can include:

- Payment of some or all tuition for academic courses (usually limited to a specific amount of money or course work per semester)

- Registration fees and travel reimbursement for conferences or institutes up to a certain amount.

- Release time (paid release from one's job during work hours) for specific training activities.

Finally, a training programme should apply to everyone in the organization, from administrators to line staff, then to support staff. All need, and should have the chance, to become continually better at what they do, improving both their own and the organization's effectiveness.

4. EMERGENCE OF TRAINING INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

The emergence of training institutions in Nigeria can be traced back to 1896 when some educated persons in Lagos proposed the establishment of a Training College and Industrial Institute. Though the idea was supported by the British government, it was not ready to make financial commitment on its part and the inability of the initiators to raise the required funds led to the demise of the proposal. Later, more concrete moves were made to establish institutions of learning in the country to cater for the acute shortage of manpower. The post independence efforts to develop a training system for the

Nigerian civil service can be traced to Professor C.P Wolle's survey of 1967 on the Training Needs of the Federal Civil Service in (Erero and Ayeni, 1992).

The Federal government commissioned the then Institute of Administration, University of Ife, Ile-Ife to carry out a survey on the training needs of the Civil Service. The study was conducted and report was submitted. The federal government came out with a White Paper on the Report in April, 1969. The document titled "Statement of Federal Government Policy on Staff Development on the Federal Public Service" has the following key elements:

- the appointment of department of training officers with responsibility for assessing staff development need and preparing and implementing programmes to meet these needs;

- the re-organization of the Federal Ministry of Establishments to give greater priority to training;

- establishment of a Standing Committee on Staff Development;

- encouragement of every large ministry/department to establish a training unit commensurate with its size and function; and

- the establishment of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON)

Despite the recognition of the need for training and staff development, the Public Service Reform Committee (PSRC) report of 1974 noted that there was deficiency in training programmes throughout the public service. To this end a substantial section of the report was devoted to training. Amongst others, it recommended the "reactivation of the Standing Committee on staff Development, and the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) and Centre for Management and Development (CMD) brought within its coverage". Today, there are not less than one hundred and sixteen (116) universities comprising thirty-seven (37) federal universities, thirty-six (36) state universities, and forty-four (44) private universities. Besides, there are numerous Polytechnics and Colleges of Education / Technology to serve as training and development centres for manpower in the country. Most of these institutions have designed or modified their programmes to accommodate the training needs in tertiary institutions. According to the public service training document, all arms of the service are strongly advised to approach the Polytechnics and Universities, particularly those of technology with specific request to design courses that are of special relevance and necessity for their professionals. In recognition of this, the federal government established the Department of Local Government studies in Ahmadu Bello University (ABU), Zaria; Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife and University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN); to cater for the training of the ever increasing personnel of the local government councils in their respective catchment areas. The old Institute of Administration in Ife and Zaria were known to train various categories of public servants across the country. In the case of Ife, the institute metamorphosed into a faculty with four departments that are actively involved in manpower training and development. These departments are Public Administration; International Relations, Management and Accounting; and Local Government Studies, in (Olu Okotomi and John Erero, 2005).

5. TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND AS FEDERAL GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION STRATEGY TO TRAIN AND DEVELOP STAFF IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN NIGERIA

Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) was established as an intervention agency under the **TETFUND ACT – TERTIARY EDUCATION TRUST FUND (ESTABLISHMENT, ETC) ACT, 2011;** charged with the responsibility for managing, disbursing and monitoring the education tax to public tertiary institutions in Nigeria. To enable the TETFUND achieve the above objectives, TETFUND ACT, 2011 imposes a two percent (2%) Education tax on the assessable profit of all registered companies in Nigeria. The Federal Inland Revenue Service (FIRS) is empowered by the Act to assess and collect Education Tax. The fund administers the tax imposed by the Act and disburses the amount to tertiary educational institutions at Federal and State levels. It also monitors the projects executed with the funds allocated to the beneficiaries.

The mandate of the fund as provided in section 7(1) (a) to (e) of the TETFUND ACT, 2011 is to administer and disburse the amount in the fund to Federal and State tertiary educational institutions, specifically for the provision and maintenance of the following:

i.   Essential physical infrastructure for teaching and learning;

ii.   Instructional material and equipment;

iii.   Research and Publication;

iv.   Academic staff training and development;

v.   Any other need which, in the opinion of the Board of Trustees, is critical and essential for the improvement of quality and maintenance of standards in the higher educational institutions.

TETFUND ensures that funds generated from education tax are utilized to improve the quality of education in Nigeria without direct contract awarding .It does this by:

i.   Providing funding for educational facilities and infrastructural development;

ii.   Promoting creative and innovative approaches to educational learning and services;

iii.   Stimulating, supporting and enhancing improvement activities in educational foundation areas like teacher education, teaching practice, library development etc;

iv.   Championing new literacy enhancing areas such as scientific, information and technology literacy. See (www.tetfund.gov.ng)

6. THE BREAKDOWN OF BENEFICIARIES FROM TETFUND ACADEMIC STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT AS AT SEPTEMBER, 2013

According to Mallam AliyuNa'iya, the Acting Executive Secretary of the Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) over seven thousand and three (7003) lecturers of the nation's tertiary education system have benefitted in various academic training and development programmes. Continuing, he admitted that a breakdown of the categories of beneficiaries revealed that eight hundred and ninety (890) lecturers were sponsored for Ph.D training outside the country while two thousand, one hundred and thirty-two (2,132) lecturers also benefitted from Ph.D programmes in various universities within the country. Another eight hundred and nineteen (819) lecturers benefitted from sponsorship for Master Degree training in foreign universities, three thousand and fifty-seven (3,057) benefitted from Master Degree Training from universities within the country while one hundred and five (105) lecturers were also sponsored for various foreign Bench works.

The above is geared towards ensuring the success of the transformation agenda of the Federal government of Nigeria targeted towards making available the needed manpower for the development of the country through Education. The purpose of these training programmes is also to ensure that lecturers in the Nigerian tertiary institutions acquire further training to equip them for proper teaching in the Nations institutions of higher learning. See (http://www.nigeriabestforum.com/index.php?)

However, TETFund has given the non teaching staff in the Nigeria tertiary Institutions the opportunity for full sponsorship in the following areas: Workshops, Seminars, and Conferences. This opportunity took effect from 2013.Before this intervention, the government had been applying the policy on staff development as enshrined in the staff manual which stipulates thus;

a. Further training of staff is generally recognized as one approach for achieving increased efficiency in an institution. At times, through staff appraisals, the organization identifies training needs of individual staff and prescribes a suitable programme of training.

In such a situation, a study fellowship may be granted to the staff in order to enhance the level of his contribution to the institution. In other instances, the individual staff seeks self development

and merely requires the assistance of the institution in achieving his ambition. A study leave may be granted to the staff to aid the realization of his full potential.

b. A policy on staff development for the institution must be consciously related to the primary aim of the institution which is, to effectively promote technical/technological education and training in support of manpower development for the country. In this regard, the proper measure of the success of any venture designed to improve the efficiency of the institution is that which relates to the primary function of the institution. Thus, in the allocation of the limited resources available for staff development, priority will be given to sponsoring programmes which will enable staff to contribute more effectively to the success of the institution. The Federal polytechnic Staff Manual (1986).

7. DETERMINANTS OF EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

Tertiary Institutions should realize that there are basic things that are universal and fundamental to effective service delivery. These conditions are necessary to ensure quality service, according to Paraseraman, Zeithamil, & Berry (1985).They are as follows:

Reliability: This implies dependency on the service provided by an institution. The beneficiaries want to be sure that the institution lives up to its promises in terms of quality. For instance, if a particular university says a candidate is coming in for a four-year programme, and the candidate becomes a graduate at the end of the fourth year, then the institution is said to be consistent in providing the service required by the parents. What is most important here is performing the service right at first time, following closely are the accuracy of the fees and tuition, keeping accurate records of the candidate, and performing the service at the designated time and place.

Responsibility: This measures the time it takes to attend to candidate's need, such as request for transcript, letter of recommendation request, semester result, payment of school fees, registration duration, check-in time in the hostels, parents complaints, medical emergencies, attending to suppliers, main gate administration, security alert, maintenance of the halls and offices, cafeteria services, telephone information request response time.

Competence: This is the ability to deliver the services advertised, the pre-requisite skill and knowledge and the know how to perform. This is more important with the skill of the contact person; examples of such are the skill of the lecturers, secretaries, registry staff, bursary staff, the security men, cafeteria, Hall administrators, grounds men, the maintenance team, development offices, student affairs, the academic administration, Dean, Heads of departments, faculty officers and others.

Accessibility: This has to do with contact; how easy is it to make contact and to approach the establishment/institution. Are there information that adequately answers common question on the website; ability to get information on telephone, geographical location and distance, are there on line real-time services on the internet, e.g admission requirements, admission period, admission forms, submission of forms, examination dates, checking of results, assignments and electronic interaction with the lectures, accessibility of electronic notes, dissemination of information by authority on the net, school's opening and break periods, electronic payment of fees etc.

Courtesy: In an institution, contact with the personnel creates a long lasting impression which actually has direct relationship with the quality of service as perceived by the receipient; the following are elements of courtesy, politeness, respect, consideration, and friendliness of the contact personnel,e.g; the security men at the gate, the receptionist , the secretary and the communication officers. The appearance, cleanness of offices, language and countenance of the personnel are very important.

Communication: This means getting the right information to people at the right time. Communicating with people in a language with which they can understand the content of the message without extra efforts. Efforts should be made to listen to their request or problems and their information requirement. It may require the organization to adjust its language for different people increasing the level of sophistication with a well-educated person and speaking simply and plainly

with a novice. This may involve explaining the service to be provided, the cost elements, and assuring people the ability to handle any problem emanating from the operations.

Credibility: Here, integrity is the focus. This lies more on the institution reputation and trust worthiness. The personal characteristics and behavior of the contact person is crucial. The contact persons may include the Staff, the Registry, Lecturers, Students, Security personnel. This virtually includes all Staff.

Security: The question here is, are we free from dangers? How secure are we from negative externalities. The person will consider issues like confidentiality of information and records, security of documents; are we safe from environmental hazards, can we confide in the counselors? Can we confidently discuss with the heads, absence of cultism, can students lodge complaints without being molested.

Understanding the recipient: There are diverse people with different needs. However, the focus here is the principal business of the institution e.g. quality education. Nevertheless, the understanding of people's specific requirements and needs should be taken seriously. The Heads of Departments, counseling units, the bursary staff and hall administrators will need to classify people so as to meet peculiar needs.

Tangibles: This is the environment where the services are delivered such as physical facilities, appearance of personnel, tools and equipment used to provide the service, and physical representation of the service. Examples of these are the main gate, the flower, the lawn, the building, power supply, the computers, E-classroom, physical appearance of the personnel, colour combination, the logo, students appearance and countenance, the dormitory layout, the students room arrangement, and the road net work.

8. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In summary, this paper examines staff training and development as a way of ensuring effective service delivery in tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Also, several literatures were reviewed and major determinants of effective service delivery were explained.

Effective service has been the bed rock of the success of any developed and successful establishments around the world. Tertiary institutions are real examples of a service industry where effective service delivery determines the success and continuous existence of such establishment. The major determinant of the growing concern of any tertiary institutions in Nigeria is the effectiveness of the service they deliver, since enrollment depends largely among other factors on effective service.

This paper has demonstrated the significant role played by the government in training and developing staff for effective service delivery in Nigeria tertiary institutions more especially in the use of Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) as an intervention strategy in training and developing staff and at the same time creating conducive environment for service delivery in the institutions.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS/SUGGESTIONS

From the foregoing, it is glaring that in order to achieve the best from the workforce/manpower, there is need for continual developmental programmes. We cannot deny the effort of the federal government through TETFund intervention, but a close look at the exercise and the targeted group seems to be one sided since non academic staff seem to be marginalized in terms of academic training. Therefore, the researcher wish to recommend as follows:

a. That TETFund programme be reviewed to accommodate non teaching staff in academic programmes.

b. That the 30% allocation to non teaching staff be reviewed upward considering the fact that they are larger in number.

c. That staff who are married be given extra allocation to enable their spouse visit them in the countries where they are running their programmes.

d. That fund be made readily available for staff who are nominated for these programmes as against the idea of asking staff to source for fund for programmes and to be refunded later by the institution.

e. Government should always endeavour to implement any agreement reached with the unions to avert industrial unrest which hinders effective service delivery.

f. There is need to decentralize the body Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON) to various geo-political zones in Nigeria for easy access by intending staff members.

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