

Seminar and Workshop as Determinants of Workers' Commitment in Akwa Ibom State Civil Service.

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Abstract

The study examined the effects of seminar and workshop as instruments of training and retraining workers on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. Ex-post facto research design was used for the study. 388 Civil Servants were sampled from the population of 13,537 employees working in the AKS Civil Service. "TRAINING AND RETRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE" (TRQ)" developed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was validated by experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation and the reliability coefficient of the instrument was .86. Data obtained were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings of the study revealed that there is significant effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. Finally, it was observed that there is significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. One of the recommendations was that the Federal Government should organize seminar training for civil service workers occasionally to improve their knowledge on a specific subject and also as a great morale booster to them.

Keywords: Seminar, Workshop, Workers' commitment

Introduction

Human beings are the pivot of work in a productive venture. This explains why organizations and nations take good steps to ensure the effectiveness of individuals. People provide ideas, innovations, invention and wealth for the benefit of both employers and employees (Sussman, 2006). These benefits cannot be achieved if workers are not properly trained. Hence, training has always been recognized as an important factor that contributes to improved performance of an employee right from the days of Fredrick Taylor of Scientific Management (Maduabum, 1992; Laff, 2006). Training according to (Garcia, 2005) is the acquisition of skills, knowledge and abilities to enable one function effectively in the performance of one's job. Training of workers is very important to the development and growth of any country, most especially the organization. Training is meant for increasing the usefulness of the workers at the work place. Commitment according to Jaw and Liu (2004) is not only a human relation concept but also involves generating human energy and activating human mind. Without commitment, the implementation of new ideas and initiatives will be compromised (Ramus and Steger 2000 cited in Jaw and Liu 2004).

Statement of the Problem

Employee' commitment has been a challenge in the Nigerian Civil Service. The civil servants are often described as exhibiting a care free work attitude characterized by the low productive, poor dedication, laziness, absenteeism, lateness, negligence and outright inefficiency (Babura, 2003). This non-challant attitude that leads to poor performance is observed in every Ministry of the Federation and it is no longer a story.

It has become a concern in the minds of many scholars why the aforementioned problems are prevalent among civil servants. Partly, the poor attitude among other factors has been identified to be caused by lack of training and retraining for the civil servants (Ostroff and Bowen, 2000). Hence the need for training through seminars and workshops to enhance productivity of civil servants in Akwa Ibom State.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine seminar and workshop as way of training and retraining workers and their effects on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service, while the specific objectives are:

1. To determine the effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.
2. To examine the effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Research Questions

1. What is the effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service?
2. To what extent does workshop affect workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.
2. There is no significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework: Human Capital Theory by Schultz 1961

The Human Capital Theory (HCT) is premised on neo-classical analysis of labour markets, education and economic growth. It assumes that people are productive resource and explores on whether more highly educated people are more productive than others. More importantly, the HCT is a cost-and-benefit-analysis of educational investment. The HCT considers that more specific training is characterized by provision of competences that can hardly be transferred from one organization to another. This non-transferable nature also has consequences that affect organizational behaviour. Since more specific training only benefits the organization providing it, there is no reason for rival organizations to make pay offers to employees (the individual employee's status in the job market will not increase in value) and on the other hand, "as workers do not receive any significant pay raises related to their higher productivity after specific training period, there will be no incentives for them to finance their own specific training. By focusing on a rational investment in education or training that is firmly rooted in Neo-classical economics thinking, the theory looks at the demand for training (by employees) and the supply of the training (by the employer).

Conceptual Review Seminar and Employee Commitment

A seminar is, generally, a form of academic instruction, either at an academic institution or offered by a commercial or professional organization. It has the function of bringing together small groups for recurring meetings, focusing each time on some particular subject, in which everyone present is requested to actively participate. This is often accomplished through an ongoing Socratic dialogue with seminar leader or instructor, or through a more formal presentation of research. Normally, participants must not be beginners in the field under discussion (at US and Canadian universities, seminar classes are generally reserved for upper-class students, although in UK and Australian universities seminars are often used for all years).

Usually, there are several keynote speakers within each seminar, and these speakers are usually experts in their own fields, or topics. Several topic reviews are scheduled each day throughout the seminar, and attendees can usually make their choice of topics from among these scheduled events. Using Web seminar software, trainers can set objectives and ways to measure learning. It's important not to assume that employees will get all information needed as passive listeners in a Web seminar, or "webinar." Trainers can design the webinar training to be interactive by using all tools in the Web seminar software. A webinar can also feature visual and discussions among participants, as long as each participant has a microphone. Some webinar software also enables communication over a screen chat or a video conference. Armstrong, (1995) puts forward that, an organization can plan seminar training that make learning fun and interactive. The format might include new reading material for employees, graphics presentations by the trainer, peer discussion groups, small group tasks, and employee self-reflections. Seminar training method must offer feedback on what employees have learned, usually by comparing results of pre- and post-assessments.

However, there are enormous advantages of seminar training methods in some organizations, these include; a wealth of knowledge usually, presented by many speakers at one time in one place. A lot of "learning" at one clip, with most material compressed into two or three days' worth of time; a sense of camaraderie, where individuals can meet others with the same interests/problems/concerns that they may have in their chosen field; a sense of renewed hope and inspiration (this is especially true for Internet marketing seminars), as sometimes, business concerns are enhanced by sharing experiences with others. Being with others that "understand" individual's problems or concerns, is usually a great morale booster; a great way for those that don't like to read, or attend classes, to improve their knowledge on a specific subject; a nice vacation, a good hotel. Most seminars take place in quality hotels, as this is part of the incentive to attracting attendees.

Workshop Training and Employee Commitment

These are centered on the management team or any other workforce that play a prominent role in an organization. Gutek (2007) defined workshop as a meeting on specialized subject area and often held in a day or more to discuss a topic of interest relevant to the organization. Adeniji (2002) sees this method as one planned for a management team to discuss new techniques and concepts that are about to be introduced into an organization.

Debrah & Ofori (2006) workshops combine training, development, team-building, communications, motivation and planning. Participation and involvement of staff increases the sense of ownership and empowerment, and facilitates the development of organisations and individuals. Workshops are effective in managing change and achieving improvement, and particularly the creation of initiatives, plans, process and actions to achieve particular

business and organisational aims. Workshops are also great for breaking down barriers, improving communications inside and outside of departments, and integrating staff after acquisition or merger. Workshops are particularly effective for (CRM) Customer Relationship Management development. The best and most constructive motivational team-building format is a workshop, or better still series of workshops, focusing on the people's key priorities and personal responsibilities/interest areas, which hopefully will strongly overlap with business and departmental aims too. Workshops can be integrated within regular monthly team meetings - an amazing degree of motivation progress and productivity can be accomplished within just a-90 minutes workshop per month. Workshop facilitation by a team leader or manager develops leadership, and workshops achieve strong focus on business' aims among team members. Workshops are very effective for training too, workshops encourage buy-in and involvement more than conventional training courses because they are necessarily participative, and the content and output are created by the delegates.

Empirical Studies

Adomi & Famola, (2012) conducted an empirical study on training and development as a tool for organizational performance: case study of selected banks in Nigeria which includes: United Bank for Africa, Diamond Bank, Skye Bank, Union Bank and Zenith Bank. The entire staff of these banks forms the population of this study. Thus, the population of staff according to these banks is 35,386. The study also considered those staff that was permanent staff with these banks, and this forms the sample frame of the study. The sample size was calculated, using Guilford and Flruchter formula, for estimating sample size of 395. Data collected from the respondents were presented and analyzed using frequency counts, descriptive statistics and Pearson moment correlation. The study indicated that organizational commitment to workshop method of training and development of staff has the highest mean score of 4.12 with standard deviation of 1.02. This was followed by seminar as a method of training in the select organization with a mean score of 3.91 with a standard deviation of 1.22 compared to all other variables.

The result further shows that employees' exposure to modern training facilities, recorded a mean score of 3.90 with a standard deviation of 1.07, and frequency of training and development recorded a mean score of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.28 respectively. This is not surprising as share-holders' satisfaction, recorded a mean score of 3.91 and standard deviation of 1.22. This result indicated that majority of the respondents agreed that their organizations are performing well, which could be as a result of their commitment to training and development.

Materials and Methods

Design of the Study

This study adopted an Ex-post Facto research design.

Area of the Study

The study took place in Akwa Ibom State.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consisted of all the 13,537 employees working in the AKS Civil Service (Civil Service Commission, 2008).

Sample Size Determination

The sample size comprised 388 Civil Servants drawn from AKS Civil Service. In determining the sample size, the researcher attempted to use Taro Yamane's (1967) formula

Research Instrument

The research instrument tagged “TRAINING AND RETRAINING QUESTIONNAIRE” (TRQ)” was used for data collection.

Validation of the Instrument

The research instrument passed through face, content and construct validation by experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation.

Reliability of the Instrument

A reliability test was conducted with Crombach Alpha as technique correlation, using 40 respondents who were not selected to participate in the main study. The instrument had reliability coefficients ranging from 0.78 to 0.86 respectively and were considered highly enough to justify the use of the instrument.

Administration of the Instrument

The instrument was administered personally in collaboration with five trained research assistants who were carefully selected and trained for the exercise by the researcher.

Method of Data Analysis

The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyse the personal data of the respondents and the research questions, while inferential statistics was used to test the hypotheses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One

The research question sought to find out the effect of seminar on workers’ commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. To answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see table 1)

Table 1

Descriptive analysis of effect of seminar on workers’ commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Seminar	N	X	Mean Difference	Remarks
Regular	116	15.16**	3.37***	***Remarkable Difference
Irregular	272	11.79*		

** The highest mean score

* The least mean score

Source: Field Survey

The result of the above table 1 presents the descriptive analysis of the effect of seminar on workers’ commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the level of commitment (15.16) to work by the workers who attended seminar regularly was remarkably higher than that of their counterparts who did not attend seminar regularly (11.79) with remarkable mean difference of (3.37). The result therefore

means that there is remarkable effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Research Question Two

The research question sought to find out the extent to which workshop affect workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. To answer the research question, descriptive analysis was performed on the data (see table 2)

Table 2

Descriptive analysis of extent to which workshop affect workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Workshop	N	X	Mean Difference	Remarks
Regular	97	14.98**	2.92***	***Remarkable Difference
Irregular	291	12.07*		

** The highest mean score

* The least mean score

Source: Field Survey

The result of the above table 2 presents the descriptive analysis of the extent to which workshop affect workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. From the result of the analysis it was observed that the level of commitment (14.98) to work by the workers who attended workshop regularly was remarkably higher than that of their counterparts who did not attend workshop regularly (12.07) with remarkable mean difference of (2.92). The result therefore means that there is remarkable effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Hypotheses testing

Hypothesis One

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Seminar as the independent variable
2. Workers commitment as the dependant variable

Independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the two independent groups (see table 3).

Table 3

Independent t-test analysis of the effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Seminar	N	\bar{X}	SD	t
Regular	116	15.16	0.69	32.81*
Irregular	272	11.79	1.01	

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =386; N =388; Critical t value = 1.960**

The above table 3 presents the obtained t –value as (32.81). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 levels with 386 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (32.81) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Hypothesis Two

The null hypothesis states that there is no significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. In order to test the hypothesis, two variables were identified as follows:-

1. Workshop as the independent variables
2. Workers commitment as the dependant variables

Independent t-test analysis was used in comparing the two independent groups (See table 4).

Table 4

Independent t-test Analysis of the effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Workshop	N	\bar{X}	SD	t
Regular	97	14.98	1.11	19.37*
Irregular	291	12.07	1.34	

***Significant at 0.05 level; df =386; N =388; Critical t value = 1.960**

The above table 4 presents the obtained t –value as (19.37). This value was tested for significance by comparing it with the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 levels with 386 degree of freedom. The obtained t-value (19.37) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960). Hence, the result was significant. The result therefore means that there is significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Discussion of the Findings

The result of the data analysis in table 3 was significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (32.81) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level with 386 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant effect of seminar on workers'

commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Armstrong, (1995) who puts forward that, an organization can plan seminar training that make learning fun and interactive. The format might include new reading material for employees, graphics presentations by the trainer, peer discussion groups, small group tasks, and employee self-reflections. He therefore concluded that Seminar training method must offer feedback on what employees have learned, usually by comparing results of pre- and post-assessments. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

The result of the data analysis in table 4 was significant due to the fact that the obtained t-value (19.37) was greater than the critical t-value (1.960) at 0.05 level with 386 degree of freedom. The result implies that there is significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service. The result therefore was in agreement with the research findings of Debrah & Ofori (2006), who stated that workshops combine training, development, team-building, communications, motivation and planning. Participation and involvement of staff increases the sense of ownership and empowerment, and facilitates the development of organisations and individuals. He also said workshops are effective in managing change and achieving improvement, and particularly the creation of initiatives, plans, process and actions to achieve particular business and organisational aims. The significance of the result caused the null hypotheses to be rejected while the alternative one was accepted.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the research work, the following conclusions are deemed necessary:

1. There is significant effect of seminar on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.
2. There is significant effect of workshop on workers' commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service.

Recommendations

In examining the effect of training and re-training on workers commitment in Akwa Ibom State civil service, the following are recommended:

1. The federal Government should organize seminar training for civil service workers occasionally to improve their knowledge on a specific subject and also as a great morale booster.
2. Government should inject more funds into the system for the procurement of workshop facilities for training staff to enhance their skill and to increase staff sense of ownership and empowerment.

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