

Impact of Workers' Training on Industrial Strikes in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of workers' training programmes on industrial strike reduction among industrial workers in Nigeria. This is for the purpose of ascertaining the relevance of workers' training programmes, as an alternative approach to human capital formation, to industrial strike reduction among industrial workers in Nigeria. A total of 230 respondents were selected for the study using stratified sampling technique to reflect the two strata of public and private organizations. Two sets of questionnaire, with three subscales, titled 'Workers Training Programmes Scale (WTPS) and Industrial Strike Reduction Scale (CRS) were used for data collection. All the hypothesized research questions were examined using Regression Analysis and t-test statistical methods at 0.05 alpha levels. The finding revealed that workers' training programmes (taken together) had significantly influenced industrial strike reduction among industrial workers. It was also found that only three independent variables (conflict skill, communication skill and interpersonal relations skill training programmes) have significantly influenced industrial strike reduction. However, it was found that management skill and computer skill training programmes were not as significant in influencing industrial strike reduction in selected work organizations. Also, there was no significant difference in the level of female and male workers' participation in workers' training programmes in both public and private organizations selected for the study. Based on the findings of study, it is recommended that workers' training programmes should be given priority by all establishments in order to forestall industrial peace for all levels of workers. Also, training needs of the organization as well as that of workers must be identified before making recommendations for training. This will possibly foster specialization and encourage technical-driven training in work organizations.

Key Words: Workers, Training Programmes, Industrial strike reduction, Organizations, Nigeria

1. Introduction

Managing resources for results requires certain managerial skills for effectiveness and efficiency in resource utilization. In work organization across the world, productivity, improved performance and competitive advantage had become issues of concern among the stakeholders. It has been argued invariably that workers' training tends to foster skill acquisition and utilization towards propelling industrial peace and harmony, the hypothesis which this study is designed to measure. However, it can be immediately ascertained whether workers' training programmes have a direct positive influence on job security, increased productivity and improved workers' performance among workers. Omole, 2003; Onimode, 1999 and Olagunju, 2008). Similarly, it was reported by some researchers (Johnbul, 2008, Rita, 2007 and Peterson, 2006) that manpower development programmes did not have any form of influence directly or indirectly on job satisfaction, reduction in industrial strike and conflict reduction in work organization, while some other schools of thought held to a quite opposite views. These findings require further empirical verification. However, Akintayo (2008) observed that organizations invest a colossal margin of time, energy and funds on designing and implementing appropriate manpower development programmes for its employees. This is usually with a view to ensure that employees attain the optimal functional level and productivity. However, the facts still remain that this level of investment in man power development may not be a major point of job security for employees.

Armstrong (2002) asserts that human resource development is concerned with providing learning and development opportunities, making training intervention and planning, conducting and evaluating training programmes. The author discloses that the overall aim of manpower development programmes is to see that the organization has the quality of workforce its needs to attain its goals for improved performance and growth.

Ahanor (1990) submits that the objective of manpower development programmes in any work organization is achieved by ensuring as far as possible, that everyone in the organization has the knowledge and skills and reaches the level of competence required to carry out their works effectively. In the same vein, Osterman (1995) posits that the performance of individual employees and teams in work organization is subject to continuous improvement on their skills and employees should be developed in way that maximizes their potentials.

Ajala (2010) and Beach (2010) contend that human assets grow and increase in value; maintaining and upgrading employees' skills not only tend to increase productivity; but also increase commitment and motivation. The authors assert further that the approach to manpower development within the firm will vary according to the technology, traditional policies and the value of management. Akintayo (2010) posits that multinational firms in Nigeria had invested heavily in manpower development programmes to develop their talents and skills; and had virtually impacted employees improved performance and organizational productivity.

On-the-job training, according to Fajana (2004), Lyod and Reynolds (1994), is particularly for all levels of employees being employed to achieve certain specified organizational goals. The authors maintain that the individual employee becomes accustomed to the machinery and materials that he will use in his subsequent work and to learn in the same

physical and social environment. The point of view of these authors tends to suggest that on-the-job training is a specific form of job instruction, geared towards imparting and acquiring those skills and attitudes needed by the workers to perform particular function effectively. On the other hand, the off-the-job training method as perceived by Zymelman (2000) differs from the former in that, it occurs in a location removed from production or a revenue earning environment. Thus, workers trained outside the working place tend to acquire skills for proficiency and effectiveness on the job (Olaniyi, 2010).

Ajala (2010); Zymelman (2007), Akintayo and Davies (2010), Schular (2005), Koehorst and Verhoeven (2002), Whitefield (2000), Maglen and Hopkins (1998), Milkman (1997), Bass and Vaghan (1991) and Steinmetz (1990) reported that manpower development programmes had been found to have capable of influencing: high turnover of profit, improved quality of service, better use of human resources, increased safety on the job (reduced number of accidents), increased staff motivation, less resistance to change, less cost due to human error, more efficiency and productivity.

Meanwhile, industrial strike refers to as total stoppage of work at workplace (Akintayo, 2010). Mayor (2010) submitted that relationship between workers and employer needs to be sustained by both parties since employment relations require mutual understanding and cooperation. This author argued further that training and management education are integrals to maintenance of peace and tranquility at workplace for corporate goals and objectives to be effectively achieved. Jonson and Asdode (2009); Joel and George (2010) and Theresa (2010) reported that workers training and development were found to have significantly influenced workers cooperation, compliance and commitment. The authors submitted that once workers cooperation and compliance are achieved at workplace, there is tendency for relative peace and harmony to be achieved vis-à-vis organizational goal achievement.

However, the literature reviewed in this study established the relationship between manpower development programmes and workers' job satisfaction, commitment, productivity, quality of service delivery, cooperation, commitment and occupational safety. Most of the studies did not focus on workers' training programmes as it affect industrial strike reduction. In the existing literature, it has been argued severally and there has not been any concrete agreement on whether or not organizations should invest heavily on training programmes. This is especially true, because it has not been clearly established whether workers' training programmes have any influence on industrial strike reduction or not. Besides, it is pertinent to note that the research findings reviewed above did not embrace the relative and combined influence of workers' training on industrial strike reduction, which necessitates further empirical verification.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Against this background, this study investigated the influence of worker' training programmes on industrial strike reduction in work organizations in Nigeria. This is for the purpose of ascertaining the relevance of skill acquisition and utilization to industrial strike reduction among industrial workers in Nigeria.

1.1.1 Research Questions

The following research questions were generated for the study:

- 1 What is the combined influence of worker` training programmes (Conflict management skill training, Communication skill training and Labour relations skill training and Interpersonal relations skill training,) on industrial strike reduction?
- 2 What is the strength of causation of predictor variables (worker` training programmes) on industrial strike reduction?
- 3 Is there any significant gender difference in exposure of workers to training programmes?
- 4 Is there any significant difference in exposure of workers to training programmes in public and private organizations?

1.1.2 Participants

There are two sectors of organization in Nigeria. They are the private and the public sectors of organizations. It is the characteristic of these organizations to organize training programmes for their workers irrespective of their levels of education, once they are employed. Out of these numerous organizations, six were randomly selected for this study. These include three private organizations (First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Guinness Nigerian Plc and Nigerian Portland Cement Plc) and three public organizations (Power Holding of Nigeria Plc, University of Ibadan, Ibadan and Federal Civil Service Commission).

However, all employees in these organizations formed the population for the study. A total of 230 respondents were selected for the study using stratified sampling technique. The stratified sampling technique was used to select respondents on the basis of the two strata of organization (Private and Public) and gender (male and female). Thus, a sample size of 115 respondents, which represent 50 percent of the selected population, was randomly selected from each of the two strata of organization (Public and private). Moreover, 135 (58.7%) male respondents and 95(41.3%) female respondents participated in the study. The age range of the respondents was from 25-64 years with mean age of 21.45 and standard deviation of 10.05.

1.1.3 Instrumentation

Instrument used in this study include records obtained from the selected work organizations. Besides, two sets of structured questionnaire, with four subscales, were used for data collection. These include: Workers` Training Programmes Scale (WTPS) and Industrial Strike Reduction Scale (CRS). The following workers` training scales were utilized for data collection: Labour Relations Skill Training Scale (LRSTS), Interpersonal Relation Skill Training Scale (MSTS), Conflict Management Skill Training Scale (CMSTS) and Communication Skill Training Scale (CSTS). The Industrial Strike Reduction Scale (ISRS) was used as the second set of scale to collect data on efficiency of workers` training programmes on sustainable peace and harmony at workplace.

2. Workers' Training Programmes Scale (WTPS)

The WTPS developed by Omole (2004) contain 32 items relating to workers' training programmes as it affects industrial strike reduction at workplace. It was divided into 3 sections, A, B and C. Section A contains 10 items concerning the personal bio-data of the respondents. For instance; Name of organization, type of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification, working experiences, frequency of participation in training, position held in organization and department.

Section B contains 7 items, which focused on the various forms and types of training programmes undergone by the respondents. For instance, in your organization, workers have been exposed the following training programmes: Labour relations training, interpersonal relations training, computer training, management skill training, conflict management training, problem-solving training and effective communication skill training. Also, you usually update your skills through: on-the-job training, off-the-job training, vestibule training, apprenticeship training and distance learning and learning by correspondence.

Section C contains 11 items relating to relationship between workers' training and conflict reduction. For instance, in your organization, participation in training programmes guarantee: peaceful co-existence, industrial harmony, team work spirit, good working relations, improved labour-management relations, reduction in labour turnover, sustainability of workers' cooperation, increase in workers' salaries, workers' recognition at work place, reduction in industrial conflict and improved profit turnover. The response formats was a modified four point Likert type rating scale ranging from (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. The author reported co-efficient alpha of 0.87 for the scale. For the present study, alpha co-efficient of 0.91 was obtained.

2.1 Conflict Management Skill Training Scale (CMSTS)

The CMSTS developed by Whitfield (2000) contains 13 items relating to conflict management skill training as it affects industrial strike reduction at workplace. It was divided into section A and B. Section A contains 6 items relating to the demographic information about the respondents. For instance: Name of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification and working experience.

Section B contains 6 items which focused on relationship between conflict management skill training and industrial strike reduction at workplace. For instance, in your organization, participation in conflict management skill training program has fostered: improved labour-management relations, industrial peace and harmony, workers' commitment, reduction in industrial conflict, loyalty to organization, cordial interpersonal relations at workplace. The author reported reliability co-efficient of 0.78. For the present study, the researcher obtained alpha co-efficient of 0.81. The response format was a modified four point Likert type rating scale ranging from (1 – Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree).

2.1.1 Communication Skill Training Scale (CSTS)

The CSTS was developed by Maglen and Hopkins (1998) with 13 items relating to communication climate and industrial strike reduction at workplace. Section A contains 6 items relating to the demographic information about the respondents. For instance: Name of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification and working experience. Section B contains 7 items which focused on relationship between communication climate and industrial strike reduction at workplace. For instance; As a result of your participation in effective communication skill training programme: You are assured of job security, you are proficient in written and spoken English Language, words as expressed in memorandum and bulletin seem not to be ambiguous, you are able to negotiate well with your boss, you are able to utilized modern communication technology effectively, you usually participated actively in discussion of issues and problems affecting your organization, you usually participated well in decision making process. The response format was a modified four point Likert type rating scale ranging from (1 =Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree. The author reported co-efficient alpha of 0.76 among executives. For the present study, alpha co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained.

2.1.2 Labour Relations Skill Training Scale (LRSTS)

The LRSTS developed by Huselid (1995) contains 14 items relating to labour relations skill training as it affects industrial strike reduction at workplace. It was divided into section A and B. Section A contains 6 items concerning the personal bio-data of the respondents. For instance: Name of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification and working experiences.

Section B contains 8 items which focused on relationship of labour relations skill training and job security of workers. For instance, in your organization, participation in labour relations skill training programme has fostered: Job security, improved labour-management relations, reduction in industrial conflict, reduction in industrial strike, job involvement, good placement on the job, participation in decision making process and serious attachment to be organization. The author reported reliability co-efficient of 0.87. For the present study, the researcher obtained alpha co-efficient of 0.89. The response format was a modified 4 point Likert rating scale ranging from (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strongly Agree).

2.1.3 Interpersonal Relations Skill Training Scale (ITSTS)

The ITSTS developed by Zymelman (2000) contains 14 items relating to interpersonal relations skill training as it affects industrial strike reduction at workplace. It was divided into section A and B. Section A contains 6 items concerning the personal bio-data of the respondents. For instance: Name of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification and working experience.

Section B contains 10 items which focused on relationship of interpersonal treatment skill training and industrial strike reduction at workplace. For instance, in your organization,

participation in interpersonal treatment skill training programme has fostered: Continuity of membership of the organization, commitment to work, guarantee of confidence of service to organization, assurance of organizational support, reduction in industrial conflict, reduction in industrial strike, security against job hazard and cordial relationship among/ between workers and the employer. The author reported reliability co-efficient of 0.83. For the present study, the researcher obtained alpha co-efficient of 0.85. The response format was a modified 4 point Likert type rating scale ranging from (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 = Strong Agree).

2.1.4 Industrial Strike Reduction Scale (ISRS)

The ISRS developed by Akintayo (2004) contains 12 items relating to industrial strike reduction at workplace. It was divided into section A and B. Section A contains 6 items concerning the personal bio-data of the respondents. For instance: Name of organization, marital status, age, sex, highest educational qualification and working experience.

Section B contains 6 items, which focused on industrial strike reduction. For instance, in your organization: You enjoys cooperation of co-workers,, there is no threat of conflicting situation, there is no signal of unhealthy rivalry, promotion of culture of peace, increased job loss, reduction of industrial conflict and harmonious labour-management relations . The author reported reliability co-efficient of 0.81. For the present study, the researcher obtained alpha co-efficient of 0.81. The response format was a modified four point Likert type rating scale ranging from (1 = Strongly Disagree to 4 strongly Agree).

3. Procedure

The researcher administered the measuring scales, which guarantee anonymity of the respondents, personally with the assistance of three trained research assistants. The researcher consulted with the Director of Personnel Administration in each of the selected private and public organizations in Nigeria, in order to intimate them with the purpose of the study. The researcher explained all aspects of the questionnaire to the respondents. The researcher through the help of the Directors of Personnel Administration was able to administer the questionnaire with ease. However, it took the researcher a period of four weeks to administer and retrieve the distributed measuring scales due to geographical location of Nigeria. Meanwhile, out of 245 copies of questionnaire administered in the selected organizations, 230 completely filled copies of the questionnaire were utilized for the purpose of the study.

3.1 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed using percentage and frequency counts for demographic information about the respondents. However, hypothesized research questions one and two were tested using Regression Analysis. Hypothesized research questions three and four were tested with the use of t-test statistical method. All the four hypothesized research questions were tested at 0.05 alpha levels.

3.1.1 Results

The results of the study were presented on the basis of the four hypothesized research questions generated for the study.

3.1.2 Research Question One: What is the combined influence of workers' training programmes (Conflict management skill training, Communication skill training, Labour relations skill training and Interpersonal treatment skill training,) on industrial strike reduction?

Table 1: Summary of Regression Analysis Table on Combined Influence of the entire Workers' Training Programmes on Industrial Strike Reduction in Work Organizations.

R=0.599 R Square=0.358 Adjusted R Square=0.324 Standard Error=0.747						
ANOVA						
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P	Remarks
Regression	35.225	6	5.871	10.513	0.000	Significant. (P < 0.05)
Residual	63.100	313	0.558			
Total	98.325	319				

Table 1 shows that all the workers' training programmes (taken together) significantly influenced industrial strike reduction. All the workers' training programmes account for 35.8% of the total variance in industrial strike reduction. (R Square = 0.358). This implies that the workers' training programmes are very important in ensuring industrial strike reduction in work organizations.

3.1.3 Research Question Two: What is the strength of causation of predictor variables (workers' training programmes) on industrial strike reduction?

Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis Table on the Strength of Causation of Predictor Variables (Workers' Training Programmes) on Industrial Strike Reduction in Work Organization.

Workers` Training Programmes	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remarks
	B Error	Std.				
Conflict management Skill training	0.354	0.216	0.187	1.634	0.001	*
Effective Communication skill	0.433	0.251	0.238	1.726	0.087	NS
Labour relation skill Training	0.858	0.198	0.457	4.334	0.000	*
Interpersonal treatment Skill training	0.518	0.219	0.285	2.366	0.002	*

Significant ($P < 0.05$)

NS = Not Significant ($P > 0.05$)

Table 2 revealed that only three independent variables (conflict management skill training, communication skill training and labour relations skill training and interpersonal treatment skill training) have significantly influenced conflict reduction. However, it was found that communication skill training programme was not as significant as conflict management skill, labour relations skill and interpersonal treatment training programmes in influencing industrial strike reduction in work organizations.

3.1.4 Research Question three: Is there any significant gender differences in exposure of employees to workers` training programmes?

Table 3: t-test Summary on Gender Differences in Workers` Training Programmes Exposure.

	Sex	N	Mean	SD	t	P	Remark
Conflict management Skill training	M	163	1.2857	.4554	-1.660	0.100	NS
	F	157	1.4474	.5039			
Effective communication Skill training	M	163	1.6349	.4853	1.592	0.115	NS
	F	157	1.4737	.5060			
Labour relation skill Training	M	163	1.3968	.4932	0.545	0.587	NS
	F	157	1.3421	.4808			
Interpersonal treatment Skill training	M	163	1.1746	.3827	-0.755	0.452	NS
	F	157	1.2368	.4309			
Both organization types	M	163	1.0635	.2458	0.222	0.825	NS
	F	157	1.0526	.2263			

Degree of freedom (df) = 318,

NS= Not Significant ($P > 0.05$)

Table 3 shows that there is no significant difference between male and female employees exposure to each of the workers` training programmes. The finding revealed that there was no gender discrimination in the selection of workers for both on-the-job and off-the-job training programmes in each of the selected organizations in Nigeria. Also, there was no significant difference in the level of both male and female workers participation in workers` training programmes in both public and private organizations selected for the study.

4. Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the influence of workers` training programmes on industrial strike reduction among the workers in work organization in Nigeria. The finding of the study revealed that workers` training programmes have directly influenced industrial strike reduction in work organization. Finding further indicates that all workers` training programmes account for 35.8% of the total variance in industrial strike reduction. This implies that workers` training programmes are very important factors in ensuring industrial peace and harmony among workers in selected work organizations. The finding corroborates Armstrong (2002), Steinmetz (1990), Koehorst and Verhoeven (2002), Keep and Mayhew (1999) and Huselid (1995) who reported a significant relationship between manpower development programmes and reduction in labour turnover and industrial strike.

Moreover, finding has also revealed the strength of causation of predictor variables (conflict management, labour relations skill training, interpersonal treatment skill training and communication skill training programmes) on industrial strike reduction among workers in selected work organizations. The finding tallies with Olaniyi (2010), Ichmowski (1997) and Peterson (2004) who submit that manpower training programmes, especially the communication skill training, labour relations and interpersonal relations skill training

programmes had significantly influenced workers' commitment, cordial interpersonal relations and good placement on the job, since the training programmes cover all aspects of employment relations.

Furthermore, the finding established that conflict management skill, communication skill, labour relations skill and interpersonal treatment skill training programmes predict industrial strike reduction among workers in work organizations. It was also found that conflict management skill training, labour relations' skill and interpersonal treatment skill training programmes account for 33.8% of the total variance of the industrial strike reduction in work organizations. This finding shows that these three variables are inevitable factors to be considered while measuring the influences of workers' training programmes on industrial strike reduction in selected work organizations. The finding of the study tallies with Johnbul (2008), Peterson (2006), Rita (2004), Shadare (2010); Akintayo and Babajide (2010) who submit that labour relations and interpersonal skill training programmes have significantly influenced workers' sustainable relationship with the employer. The findings disagree with Reach (1999), Milkman (1997), Zymelman (2007) and Akintayo (2010) who reported that human resource development programmes tend to influence workers' job performance effectiveness and could possibly lead to labour turnover resulting from occupational mobility.

The third and fourth hypothesized research questions revealed that there is no significant difference between male and female employees' exposure to each of the workers' training programmes in both public and private organizations selected for the study. This implies that male and female workers were encouraged to undergo the same workers' training programmes in both public and private work organizations without gender discrimination. The finding of the study corroborates Keep and Mayhew (1999), Lesile and Russel (1998), Steinmetz (1990), Koehorst and Verhoeven (2002), Ajala (2010) and Oloyede (2007) who reported that human resource development programmes tend to foster occupational mobility of workers, sustainability of employer's confidence and preference of both male and female trained workers. The finding implies that there was no significant gender difference in the level of workers' participation in workers' training programmes. In essence, both male and female respondents have equal chance of participation in workers' training programmes devoid of gender discrimination in selected work organizations.

4.1 Conclusion

The findings of the study established that workers' training programmes have directly influenced industrial strike reduction. The finding revealed that even in this era of computer age, the human side of the enterprise should not be underrated. The quality of manpower of any organization determines the productivity and profitability of that organization. The finding implies that workers' training programmes are worthy of huge investment especially on the side of the employer. The ultimate dividend is increased productivity, resulting to maximization of profit and therefore enhances industrial peace and harmony. The finding further implies that the employers need to bear the cost of workers' training programmes and should be concerned to ensure that training facilities are modernized and overhauled from time to time in order to foster competitive advantages on the part of the organization itself.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, and bearing in mind the dynamism of Nigerian working environment, it is recommended that:

- i. Workers` Training programmes should be given priority by all establishments in order to forestall industrial peace and harmony through reduction in industrial strike. Also, training needs of the organization as well as that of workers must be identified before making recommendations for training. This will possibly foster specialization and encourage technical-driven training in work organizations.
- ii. Workers` training policies should be well defined and be entrenched in the mission statement of all work organizations in Nigeria, in order to foster equity and promotional skill acquisition. The workers` training programmes should be organized for all levels of workers on continuous basis in order to provide opportunity for workers toward updating their skills, improving their performance on the job and virtually sustained their relationship with all levels of workers.
- iii. Opportunity for training must be available to all staffers and should be sponsored solely by the management of the organizations. There should not be gender or tribal discrimination in the selection of workers for participation in workers` training programmes. This will definitely ensure organizational goal achievement vis-à-vis conflict reduction in any work organization across the globe.

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