

THE ROLE OF CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL TRAINING IN CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN IN EDO STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the role of continuing professional training in career development for women in Edo State. The descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. The sample of the study was 200 respondents drawn from selected organisations (public and private) in Edo State using systematic random sampling technique. The instrument used for the study was Role of Continuing Professional Training of Women on Career Development in Organisation (RCPTWCDQ) constructed by the researchers. The study revealed that the most common training for women in organisation are computer appreciation, conferences/workshop/seminars and in-service training. Also the study revealed that expected roles of career women in organisation are to improve service delivery, enhance task performance, encourages employees' loyalty to organisation and improves their productivity. It was also found out that career women always take advantage of training programme and this enhances their self-esteem. It was also found out that timing and distance are the major problems associated with career women training programmes in the Organisations. Based on the findings it was recommended that employers should embark on training and retraining for career women in order to improve and meet the changing needs of both the organization.

Keywords: Role, Continuing professional training, career development, women

INTRODUCTION

A nation's growth and development is determined by its human resources (human capital). Non-human resources (physical material and financial) are to be mobilized and utilized by the available human resources to accomplish the set goals. In fact, it is the people (employees) in organizations or institutions that set goals, determine the resources for use, marshal the resources appropriately and coordinate the activities of organizations to achieve set goals. (Abdulkareem, 2001). In recent times, employees are now more career conscious than ever. They are demanding more in terms of personal growth and development. Organization that fails to allow employees to meet their individual needs will be losing valued employees. Continuous professional training and re-training programmes for career development therefore seeks to match the needs of employees with those of the organization with the major components being counselling and training.

Counselling provides employees with the opportunity to define their career goals and create new plans within the context of organizational realities. Training and retraining allows the employees to develop and acquire knowledge, skills and abilities required to enhance his or her current job and prepares them for future job opportunities. In today's era of information technology and globalization, no matter the discipline or the diversity in the world of work, information spread out at a very fast rate. Many organizations are now faced with the problem of retraining employees since it is expensive to replace employees who may have left the organization for greener pastures or those lured away by other organizations. New employees have to be recruited, selected, oriented and trained. In fact, it is estimated that it cost an organization approximately 1½ times the salary of vacated positions to replace an employee (Merchant, 2010).

Without continuous professional training programmes for career development therefore employees turnover can have a demoralization effect on an organization, and it may have great impact on the overall efficiency of the organization. This becomes even more critical in organizations that are service oriented, and requires highly developed skills and competencies. Worrysome, is the fact that there is no single strategy that best addresses the issue of employee retention. However, a number of organizations have responded to this issue of workers retention by implementing continuous professional training programmes on career development in the workplace. These programmes teach employees how to work towards their goal while continuing to do productive work for the organizations.

Clearly, continuous professional training programmes for career development in organizations have evolved from an isolated tool for individual employee's own initiative but now, many organizations have taken active roles in their employees' career through continuous career development programmes. Traditionally, it was assumed that every employee wants or should want the same thing in a career which usually is a direct path up the organizational ladder (Fink in Merchant, 2010). However, career development is not about "getting ahead", but rather about getting to be the best an individual can be and finding a place in an organization where they can express excellence and contribute to the growth of the organization. Professional training for career development encompasses vertical issues such as promotion and upward mobility but also horizontal movement (lateral job transfer) within the organization. Career development deals with the fundamental nature of the relationship between individuals to their work and employees to their work and employees to their organizations. A clearly defined plan of action in career development prepares employees for future and preserves an organization's ability to meet both existing and future needs.

In today's competitive business environment, it becomes imperative for all organizations to create the kind of work environment that fosters growth and development. It is apparent that this can be achieved by implementing a career development programme in the workplace. This will enhance organizational loyalty among employee, results in higher level of job satisfaction; improve turnover and fewer employee complaints (Werther and Davis in Merchant, 2010). According to Ake in Omodia (2009) the continuous development of indigenous manpower to serve as the propelling force to national growth and development is no doubt a key to Nigeria's socio-economic and political progress. However, in the organizations, enough attention is not given to the alternative path of career development that reflects more on personal aspirations, especially when those individual desires does not fit into the familiar pattern of traditional organizational life. Today's employees are now demanding more from their work in terms of job fulfillment and personal satisfaction. Hence, they use words, such as "empowerment and self development" in expressing demands. This shows the changing face of the workplace in the 21st century.

In recent years the role of continuing professional training in career in the development of human capital have been the focus of concern towards the development of a nation (Gyangi, 2011). This is for the fact that, the growth of tangible capital stock of a nation depends to a large extent on human capital development. Without adequate investment in career development through training and retraining programmes for the work force in order to increase their knowledge, skills and capacities, the possibility of growth in tangible capital stock of such a nation may be minimal. Besides, historical evidence shows that advanced countries of the world depended on career development for their rapid economic growth. According to Miachi (2006), the economic development of countries like United States of America, former Soviet Union, Denmark and Japan were as a result of their conceived efforts on human capital development. In these countries there were significant relationships between their economic growth and the quantum and kinds of professional training provided for their work force.

According to Schultz (2002) rapid socio-economic development of a nation has been observed to depend on the caliber of career women and their education in that country. Career bestows on women a disposition for lifelong acquisition of knowledge, values, attitudes, competence and skills (Aliu, 2001). It is in this direction that the study seeks to find out the role of continuing professional training in career development for women in organizations. No doubt, women have been subordinated and marginalized in all spheres of life and living, continuing professional training of women on career development will enable them acquire up to-date knowledge, skills and aptitudes in their various workplaces for enhanced performance. It will also help to promote gender equality in the world of work and it will maximally encourage the career women in all such workplaces to feel safe and willingly contribute their quota towards enhancing the present and future goals of the organization. It is against this backdrop that it will be proper and instructive to examine the role of continuing professional training and retraining of women in career development in organizations in Edo State.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In this era of computer technology and globalization, the world of work is fast changing and the traditional ways of doing things in the profession is also changing and employers of labour now expect their employees to deliver the good against all odds. Many organizations in the past have expanded their scarce resources on the training and re-training of their workforce to enhance performance, but not much on the role of continuing professional training for career women in organization. It is in this direction that the study therefore aimed at examining the role of continuing professional training for career women in organizations. The basic questions therefore is, what are the roles of continuing professional training in career development for women in Edo State.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to:

1. Find out the kind of training programmes career women undertake.
2. Examine the expected roles of professional women who have participated in a career training programmes in organizations.
3. Ascertain whether there are differences in terms of task performance in professional women in organizations who had attended a training programme on career development
4. Find out the problems associated

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What kind of training programmes do career women undertake in Edo State?
2. What are the roles expected of professional women in organization who participated in training and retraining programme on career development.
3. Are there differences in terms of task performance in professional women in organizations who had attended a training programme on career development and those who do not attend?
4. Are there problems associated with women continuing professional training programmes on career development in Edo State.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Role of Continuing Professional Training in Career Development

Career development is a continuous lifelong process of developmental experiences that focuses on seeking, obtaining and processing information about self, occupational and educational alternative “lifestyles and role options” (Hansen, 1976 in Linehan, 2013). This shows that career development involves planned programmes of action and experience needed to improve one’s performance on the job. Newmark (2008) view career development as a priority and a shared responsibility between organization and employees. Its goal is to equip employees and managers with knowledge, skills and competences they require to have in engaging career discussions. In other words, career development process is unusually a shared responsibility between the individual worker and the management of organizations because the whole essence is to equip both managers and employees with new and better ways of making decisions both for self and organizational improvement.

According to Gibbons (1995) career development is the process through which people come to understand themselves as they relate to the world of work and their role in it. Continuing professional training in career development therefore, relates to the process of training and retraining of employees in a given profession. The role of continuing professional training in career development is dual in nature namely: a) in organizational development; and b) personal development.

In organizations, continuing professional training for career development can mean to some people trying to get to the next step on the career ladder and for other people it might signify the acquisition of innovative skills, new knowledge, computer appreciation or on-the-job improvement skills. According to Davidson & Cooper (2008) employees who have access to career development processes, resources and tools feel much more engaged and supported by the organization. They slated further, that employee who have advancement opportunities are far more likely to be motivated and become optimally productive on a commitment basis. In other words, opportunities for continuing training boost employee engagement and the organization productivity.

Continuous professional training for organizations also allow them strengthen their success pipeline. According to Merchant (2010) with employee driven career development initiative in place, organizations developed top talent who can fill up vacant critical roles instead of employing new hands. In fact continuous training allows the most qualified employee to enter into vacant critical role. It also enables employees to generate knowledge transfer and tension. Continuous training initiatives in organization ensures that experienced workers are retained and transferred to areas where their services may be required for the benefit of the organization.

Continuous professional training helps the individual to acquire innovative skills and experience on the job so as to be able to effectively meet organization expectation of the individual. It also fosters success at each stage of development because it helps create a culture and processes that facilitate internal mobility as one of the best ways to fill these gaps within an organization. In other words, with continuous professional training employees can be developed mentally and physically to assume higher position of authority since the employees have acquired the desired competencies through training and retraining programmes.

In summary, continuous professional training on career development is a lifelong process that involves psychological and behavioural processes as well as contextual influences shaping one's career over a life span. As such continuous training involves the creation of career patterns, decision making styles, integration of life roles, value expressions and life roles concepts.

METHODOLOGY

The survey research design was used for the study. The method was considered most appropriate for the study because it enabled the researchers to obtain the opinions of the respondents on the role of continuing professional training of women in career development in Edo State, Nigeria.

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all the career women in organizations in Edo State. A total of two hundred (200) career women were selected from ten (10) different organizations through a systematic random sampling technique. 20 women were selected from each organization.

Research Instrument and Administration

The data for the study was obtained through the use of a structured questionnaire titled "Role of Continuing Professional Training of Women on Career Development in Organization" (RCPTWCDQ).

The questionnaire consisted of two sections, A and B. Section A focused on demographic data of the respondents – age, sex, marital status, educational level and position/designations while Section B contained selected items designed to help the researchers elicit information to the research questions raised for the study. The researchers administered the instrument to the respondents and ensured that the questionnaire were given with explanations offered to the respondents and collected same day.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Three experts in educational programme evaluation in the Faculty of Education, University of Benin determined the face and content validity of the instrument. The reliability was determined through a test-re-test method. 20 career women were used as pilot study. After a period of two weeks interval, the instrument was re-administered on the same subjects. The responses were collated and correlated using Pearson's Correlation index. A reliability coefficient of 0.68 was obtained.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics comprising frequency count and simple percentages.

RESULTS

The research questions were answered and results of data analysis are presented below:

Research Question 1

What kind of training programmes do career women undergo in organizations?

Table 1. Types of Training Programmes for Career Women in Organizations

S/N	Type of Training	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Computer Appreciation	64	32
2	In-service Training	46	23
3	Conferences/Seminars and Workshops	82	41
4	On-the-job training	8	4
Total		200	100

Table 1 shows that 64 respondents representing 32% indicated computer appreciation, 46 or 23% indicated in-service training 82 or 41% indicated conferences, seminars and workshop while 8 or 4% indicated on-the-job training. This means that conferences, seminar/workshop and computer appreciation are the most common training programmes in the organizations.

Research Question 2

What are the expected roles of career women who had participated in professional training programmes in organizations?

Table 2. Expected Roles of Career Women

S/N	Expected Roles	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Role Model	20	10
2	Improved Service Delivery	140	70
3	Loyalty to Organization	24	12
4	Enhanced Self Esteem	16	8
Total		200	100

Result in Table 2 above shows that 20 respondents representing 10% are of the opinion that career women are expected to be role model in the organizations. 140 representing 70% of the respondents agreed that career women roles are to improve service delivery while 24 or 10% said loyalty to organization and 16 or 8% indicated enhanced self-esteem. Therefore, the expected roles of career women in the organization are to improve service delivery.

Research Question 3

Are there differences in task performance of career women after participating in training programme in the organization?

Table 3. Difference in Task Performance after Training

S/N	Level of Response	Frequencies	Percentages
1	To a large extent	140	70
2	To an extent	32	16
3	To a marginal extent	20	10
4	To a low extent	8	4
Total		200	100

Table 3 shows that 140 of the respondents representing 70% indicted to a very large extent that there is a significant difference in their task performance for those who have not undergone training in the organizations 32 or 16 percent says to an extent, 20 or 10% says to a marginal extent while 8 or 4 % says to a low extent. This implies that there is a significant difference in their task performance.

Research Question 4

Are there problems associated with women continuing professional training programmes on career women development in Edo State.

Table 4. Problems Associated with Career Women Training Programmes in Organizations

S/N	Problems	Frequencies	Percentages
1	Timing	120	60
2	Distance	40	20
3	Financial constraints	30	15
4	Inadequate Motivation	10	5
	Total	200	100

Table 4 shows that 120 respondents representing 60% agreed that there is problem of timing associated with career women training programmes in organization 40 or 20% indicated the problem of distance while 30 or 15% said financial constraint and 10 or 5% opted for inadequate motivation. It can be concluded therefore that the major problems associated with career women training are that of timing and distance.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings revealed that most common training programmes in organizations include computer skills acquisition, in-service training and conferences/workshops. Therefore, career women usually take advantage of these training programmes to enhance their job performance. This is in line with the views, findings and opinions of Werther & Davis cited in Merchant (2010) that career development training in organization enhances employees organizational loyalty, higher levels of job satisfaction, improve turnover and fewer employee’s complaints.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that the expected roles of career women who have participated in organizations includes becoming role models, improved service delivery, enhanced self-esteem and loyalty to organization. This corroborates the findings of Herzberg (2011) that career training programmes results in higher levels of job satisfaction and employees loyalty to the organization.

Again the findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the task performance of those who participated in the training programmes. The findings further support the views of Myers (1994) Ishein (1998) and Merchant (2010) that training programmes in organization help to reduce waste, improve employees; effectiveness and also assist individual in meeting their needs.

Finally, the findings revealed that the major problems associated with career women training in organizations are that of timing and distance of the training. This is in line with the views of Burke Mackeen (2004) that women being home-makers sometimes shy away from programmes that takes them away from their family for a longer time.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was observed that career women take advantage of training programmes in organization to improve on both organizational and personal needs and as a result there is a significant improvement in task performance and service delivery in the organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the bases of the findings, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Employers of labour should embark on retraining frequently for career women in order to improve and meet the changing needs of both the organizations and employees.
2. Career women need to be highly motivated by their employers in order to sustain their interest in training programme so as to achieve group goals.
3. Employers of labour to organize training for career women within short duration and distance in order to minimize the problem of women leaving their families for a long time.
4. Employers should develop a favourable attitude towards career women training programmes in the organization.

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