

Influence of Workplace Environment on Participation of Female Civil Servants in In-Service Training

Olutayo Toyin **OMOLE**
E-mail: vicayoade@gmail.com
+234 802 763 2352

*Institute of Education,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan, Oyo State*

Abstract

In-service training is one of the ways of improving the skills of workers, yet many female civil servants do not participate in such training programmes. Researchers have tried to identify reasons for low participation of women in in-service training programme. However, despite the importance of physical, psychological and sociological conditions of workplace environment and tendency of going for in-service training, there is dearth of information on how workplace environment explains this phenomenon. This study therefore examined the extent to which workplace environment influences participation of female civil servants in in-service training. Survey design was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to select female civil servants who had participated in in-service training programme. Instrument for data collection was validated, and the Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient was $r = 0.91$. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression. The result showed that workplace environment did not correlate significantly with women participation in in-service training $\beta = 0.024$, $t(1026) = 0.76$, $p = 0.05$. There should be cordial workplace environment which will encourage the females to participate in in-service training programme.

Keywords: Workplace Environment, In-Service Training, Female Civil Servants

Introduction

Workplace systems rely on employee's skills, knowledge and initiative to identify and resolve problems. This, therefore, underlines the need for organizations to send their employees' on training programmes for the purpose of increasing the skills and knowledge of their workforce. In other words, training programmes are necessary in any organization for improving the quality of work of the employees at all levels. It enhances and engenders high performance in workplace systems. In recent years, the need for workers' training, education and continuing education has increased because of world's high technological advancement and globalization. The current trend in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) necessitates retraining of workers. This is to keep them abreast of best practices in workplace.

In Nigeria, according to Okotoni and Erero (2005), In-service training programmes are in different forms. These are:

- 1) Induction or orientation course. This is usually for new employees. It is usually done at the point of entry into the service. Usually, it is carried out to introduce new employees to their duties, responsibilities, challenges and expectations required of them.
- 2) In-house training: This is usually carried out by Staff Development Centre (SDC) and Bureau of Establishment and Training (BET) of Ministries and Agencies.
- 3) Off-the-job training programme. This is a refresher course involving officer in management cadre. Off-the-job pupillage training are for officers in Administration, Accounts, Cooperative and Engineering departments. It is usually a long term training programme.
- 4) Specialist/technological training programme: This is for doctors, nurses and other specialists. This training may be organized for specialists within or outside the country. It is usually funded with foreign assistance and sometimes by state governments.
- 5) Study leave with or without pay: This is for individuals wishing to improve their professional and academic qualifications.

Despite the importance of In-service training for all categories of workers, available statistics show that not many females in civil service participate in In-service training programme. Reports from research institutes and consultancy service outfits, such as Centre for Management Development (CMD), Lagos, Nigeria; Simeon Adebo Training Centre, Oyo State Secretariat, Ibadan, Supreme Management Consultancy Services, Ibadan, Nigeria among others, which are actively involved in the regulation of standards and development of managerial manpower show that the number of females who took part in In-service training at these centers was low compared to their male counterparts. For example, in 2011, CMD records show that for the training on Target Setting and Performance Improvement, four males as against two female attended. The conference of Director of Planning and Statistics has thirty-nine males and nine females in attendance. Other trainings, workshops and conferences organized by the centre show that more males participated than females.

A pertinent question arises here, why do fewer women participate in In-service training programme than men? Olojede (2007) observes that women suffered various forms of discrimination, inequality, exclusion and violence. From the available records (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs [FMWA], Abuja, Nigeria, 2006) females are been discriminated against and the low level of their participation in In-service training may be as a result of this. Training for female is a big challenge since a significant gender gap in education still remains in many countries including Nigeria (Beijing, 2005). As a matter of fact, female's progress in all spheres of human endeavour is hindered on the basis of gender, early marriage and childbearing, government policy and workplace environment. This may also account for low level of participation of female in In-service training programme.

In this study, efforts were made to explain how workplace environment, influences participation of female in In-service training. A workplace environment is a combination of people with different interests, personalities, and lifestyles that come together for a common purpose. It is a place of excitement, a place of wonder, and a place of familiar surroundings. A workplace environment can be warm

and friendly, or cold and foreboding or it can be a mixture of both (Timothy, 2011). It changes with times and keep pace with everything that happens on the outside. The workplace provides the microscopic image of the day to day lives of people who come to work, do their jobs, and live within the framework of organisation rules and regulations. The workplace environment has its advantages. Apart from being a place to earn salary, the workplace environment is a place to learn and grow as a human being, and therefore should be a place to develop skills and to garner worthwhile experience. Many people form lifelong friendship at workplace and get to know each other's family, wives and children, friends and associates and they may spend much of their time away from work together. These bonds may run long and deep over the years, they may become unbreakable (Timothy, 2011).

The quality of the workplace impacts directly on issues of customer services and productivity. A good working environment is where employees trust the people they work for, have pride in what they do and enjoy the people they work with. Therefore, workplace environment should engender a very high level of trust between the employees and the management. Since most people spend the majority of their hours at work, the quality of the workplace experience tends to have a big impact on their lives. Workplace environment has a lot of implications on how female perform their duties and the level of their productivity. It may also dictate whether they will participate in In-service training or not. The problem is aggravated if the interpersonal relationships between the female staff and their male colleagues are not completely congenial or if attitude of supervisors is inflexible in terms of helping female to reconcile professional and domestic duties (Cook, 2009). Conflict arising out of performance of divergent roles can affect a woman's mental and physical health (Repetti, 1989), limiting her ability to perform her duties efficiently especially when her workplace environment is not supportive of her needs (Siddiqui, 2007). No doubt, work attitudes of male and female employees are better in gender-balanced workplace

environments than in environments where gender parity is skewed in either direction (Appold, Siengthai and Kasarda, 1998).

Workplace environment refers to the psychological and sociological factors at workplace that encourage the female's participation in In-service training. With regards to relationship at work, most employees prefer to work in an environment with warm and cordial social interaction (Locke, 1976). Ngulube (2000) agrees with this view. Hence, working with friendly and supportive co-workers, and working in a friendly and relax environment could enhance job satisfaction and productivity of the employees. Irons (2006), asserts that there is a link between a comfortable workplace environment, productivity of an employee and workers attending In-service training programme.

Literature on women participation in In-service training reveals dearth of empirical information on the extent to which workplace environment influences the level of participation in In-service training. Indeed little study had explored the extent to which workplace environment influences females going for In-service training in the civil service. Therefore, it is on the basis of this that the study examined the extent to which workplace environment influences participation in In-service training among female civil servants.

Research Questions

1. What is the level of participation of the female civil servants in In-service training?
2. Is there any significance difference in the level of participation of the female civil servants in Ogun and Osun State?
3. Does workplace environment significantly influence female participation in in-service training?

Methodology

The study adopted survey design. This design was used for the study because the data were collected through questionnaires from female civil servants that have participated in In-service training programme

between 2008 and 2010. In other words, no variable was manipulated in the study.

The population for the study comprised all the female civil servants in Ogun and Osun States who had participated in In-service training between 2008 and 2010.

Two validated instruments were used for this study, these are, Workplace Environment Questionnaire (WEQ) The reliability coefficient was determined by using Cronbach Alpha and it gave a value of 0.91 and Participation Scale (PS). Cronbach Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire. The reliability coefficient was 0.82.

Questionnaire was used for data collection, the instrument was developed by the researcher, and was distributed to the respondents with help of two trained research assistants after the administration of the instruments, and the instruments were collected for analysis. Descriptive research statistics like frequency count, mean, standard deviation and t-test were used to analyse the data collected.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of participation in In-service training of the women civil servants in (a) Ogun state and (b) Osun state civil service?

To answer this research question, the responses of the female civil servants in both Ogun and Osun states were analysed and the result shows that the mean score was 27.38 (SD: 8.69). However, on disaggregation of Ogun and Osun female civil servants, it was observed that Ogun had higher mean score (Mean = 27.53; SD: 8.19) than Osun state (Mean = 26.97; SD: 10.00).

Research Question 2: Is there any significance difference in the level of participation of the Women civil servants in Ogun and Osun State?

Table 1: t-test of the Mean Difference (Participation)

State	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	Mean Difference	Degree of Freedom	t	p-Value
Osun	266	26.97	10.00	0.56	1033	0.913	0.36
Ogun	769	27.53	8.19				

Table 1 shows that there was no statistically significant difference in the mean score of participation between women civil servants in Osun and Ogun States, $t(1033) = 0.913$, $p > 0.05$. This shows that despite the disparity in the number of those who had gone for the training, their scores in the participation level is the same. Meaning that in Osun state, it is likely that female civil servants have gone for training on more than one occasion.

Research Question 3: Does workplace environment significantly influence female participation in in-service training?

To answer this research question, responses of female civil servants in both Ogun and Osun states to questionnaires on workplace environment and participation scale were analysed using both descriptive statistics and simple regression. The mean score of the female civil servants in in-training participation scale was 27.38 (SD: 8.69) while the mean score in workplace environment questionnaire was 62.5 (SD: 10.09). The correlation coefficient between workplace environment score and participation score was $r(1033) = 0.042$, $p > 0.05$. The relationship is low, though positive and not statistically significant.

Discussion

The results showed that workplace environment does not correlate with female participation in in-service training. Why this kind of result? Female civil servants still participate in in-service training despite their opinion that their workplace environment is not very conducive for their day-to-day schedule of duties. However, female civil servants still

go because of status enhancement, increase in salary. Also, they go out to meet with other people.

Research has shown that before 1980, in-service training could be used as a pre-requisite for promotion unlike now that such training does not have any direct beneficial contribution to the career progression of female civil servants.

Conclusion

This study showed that despite the disparity in the number of those who had gone for the training, Ogun state female civil servants participated more in in-service training programme. Also, Osun state female civil servants are likely to have gone for training on more than one occasion and that work environment is very conducive for women civil servants.

Recommendations

- 1) There is the need for government to encourage going for In-service training. This will enable them know more about the recent developments in their careers.
- 2) More women should be allowed to participate in In-service training programme, this will improve the socio-economic status of their family.
- 3) In-service training for women should be a continuous process for career prospects.

References

- Appold, S.J., Siengthai, S., and Kasarda, J. 1998. The Employment of Women Managers and Professionals in an Emerging Economy: *Gender Inequality as an Organisational Practice. Administrative Science Quarterly, Volume 43(3), pp. 538-565.*
- Cook, A. 2009. Connecting Work-family Policies to Supportive Workplace environments. *Group and Organisation Management, Volume 34(2), pp 206-240.*
- Irons, K.R. 2006. Is Your Workplace environment Conducive to Productivity? Accessed from: <http://www.associatedcontent.com>

- Locke, E.A 1976. *The Nature and Causes of Job Satisfaction. Handbook of Industrial and Organisational Psychology*. Dunnette Chicago: Rand McNally.
- Ngulube, P. 2000. Staff Retention in the National Archives of Zimbabwe. *African Journal of Library, Archival and Information Science* 10.2: 148-150.
- Okotoni O. and Erero J. 2005. Manpower Training and Development in the *Nigerian Public Service*. *AJPAM Vol. XVI, No 1 January 2005*.
- Olojede I. 2007. Women and Public Administration, in Olojede I & Fajonyomi B. (eds), *Essentials of Public Administration*, Lagos: Dept of Public Administration, LASU. pp. 192-208.
- Repetti, R.L. 1987. Individual and Common Components of the Social Environment at Work and Psychological Wellbeing. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Volume 52, No. 4, pp 710-722.
- Siddiqui, R. 2007. Balancing work with family: Issues and policies. *Paper presented at seminar on "Women Employment in Public Sector" organized by Ministry of Labour and Manpower, Government of Pakistan*.
- Timothy, F. Mc Carthy. 2011. Workplace environment. Retrieved on January 8, 2012. From www.masters101.com.
- Yoloye, T. W. 2004. Stress and adaptive responses in the workplace. *Nigerian Journal of Applied Psychology*. 7/8; 211, 1-10; June 2004.