

## Detrimental Organisation Behaviours and Their Effects on Training Efforts

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### Abstract

*The attitude of line managers to training is usually a consequence of the basic attitude of a traditional top management and of the 'climate' and the organization which goes with it. It is not necessarily an expression of the personal views of the managers concerned. On the other hand it can exist even when lip service is paid to the need for training. It arises more easily when managers are over-worked because of either poor organization or too fast a rate of development. In whatever way it appears, this attitude almost always undermines a training scheme. It is the seriousness of the consequences of the above on the organization performance and the role of training that motivates this study. The research design adopted for the study was a survey and documentary analysis. The area covered by the study consisted of manufacturing and engineering industries in South West Zone of Nigeria. Stratified sampling technique was used to select the respondents for the study. The instrument used was validated and pilot tested to ascertain the internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaires was 0.71. Data obtained were analyzed using mean, one-way analysis of variance, percentages and frequency count. The results of data analysis indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of the Training Managers, Trainers, Supervisors and line managers. It was observed that line management/training conflict occur even in relatively well-organized firms. They may easily spring from a clash of personalities. But in most cases they arise from a basic lack of understanding of the function of training in the organization. The consequence is that the training function is not properly integrated into the firm's organization, policy and procedures.*

**Keywords:** Attitude, Trainers, Organization, Behaviour, Line management, Training Specialist, Development

### Introduction

Training is the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competencies as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competencies. However, training has specific goals of improving one's capability, capacity, and performance. "Training:- a prophet in his own land that goes unheeded:-  
– Brian Nichol (1996).

The growth and development of effective training in a company or industry must be influenced by people's attitude to training in general.

There were indications from several directions (survey analysis of interviews and questionnaire results) that something has been wrong. Training which has a very high potential contribution to make to improving organization performance has been relegated to the backgrounds, the first area to be sacrificed in a budget crunch. However, the fact that training is 'coping' successfully with the era of resource scarcity is an indication that the function has matured, while it still gets pushed around it no longer simply quits the playing field.

Traditionally, much time and money are spent on the training and development of individuals in companies. This is however designed to prepare people fit for or improve them in the personal skills of their individual jobs. Since few people work, in isolation, but rather as part of a working team, and all members of a team interact upon and influence the behaviour of each other, attention is always paid to fitting people for the role of team member. This is usually done through an element of **Organization Development**, sometimes referred to as **Team Development** Research carried out by the writers in some Manufacturing and Engineering Industries in South West Zone of Nigeria on the impact of training in improving organizational productivity reveal that peoples attitude towards training may reasonably be assumed to have considerable influence upon the growth development and effectiveness of training efforts.

This research therefore examines some attitudes which the research discovered and considered detrimental to training efforts effectiveness.

The findings described are taken from the results of the survey of impact of systematic training in some manufacturing and engineering industries in South West Zone of Nigeria. The sample which was randomly selected was designed to include large, medium size and small companies spread geographically over the whole of Southwest Zone of Nigeria.

### ***Resistance to Change – The Force Field Theory***

“.....It must be considered that there is nothing more difficult to carry out nor more doubtful of success nor more dangerous to handle than to initiate a new order of things....” Niccolo Machiavelli – The Prince.

These are some well known sayings which in interventions for change, assumably are born out of fear of change, such as

“...from the frying pan into the fire....”

“...let sleeping dogs lie....”

“...you can't teach an old dog new tricks...”

When people are threatened with change in organizations, similar maxims about certain things, people or departments are trotted out to prevent any alteration in the status quo. According to Kubr (1997) fear of change is understandable but because the environment changes rapidly, and it has been doing so increasingly, organization cannot afford not to change. A major task of a manager or trainer is to implement changes and that entails overcoming resistance. Change, according to Kubr (1997) is the “raison deter” of training intervention. Change in organizations is linked with change in people and there are many influences, which operate in both directions – organization influence people and people influence the development of organizations. One of the most obvious and urgent problems at management level in organizations is the failure to achieve the expected benefits from investments in equipments, training, organization development inputs etc. these situations seem to have an element in common – the need to obtain commitment to change, if the required results are to be achieved. Commitment to change may be said to be composed of several different elements which in practical terms can be defined as attitude to change – managerial and organization style, the design of time, possible cost of achievement against which any proposal must be evaluated

### ***Resistance to Change***

It is implied in this study that organizational change efforts often run into some form of human resistance. Although experienced trainers are generally all too aware of this fact, few take time before an organizational change to assess systematically who might resist the change initiative and for what reasons. Instead, using past experience as guidelines, trainers all too often apply a simple set of beliefs, such as “production manager may probably resist the change and not accept our training intervention because ‘they’ are independent and suspicious of the Human Resource (HR) department and top management”. This limited approach in practice may create serious problems. Because of the many different ways in which individual and groups can react to change, correct assessment are often not intuitively obvious to come by. However, for a number of different reasons individuals or groups can react or object very differently to change, from passively resisting it to aggressively trying to undermine it, to sincerely embracing it.

For example people will resist change when they do not understand its importance/implications and perceive that it might cost them much more than they will benefit from. Again such problem will occur when trust is lacking between the person initiating the change and the employee or management or when there is a conflict of interest.

### ***The Force Field Theory***

A pertinent question has always been why should the introduction of a new method of doing things be a problem? The explanation for a problem like this may be multiple and complicated. It could be associated with any of the four common reasons presented below:-

- A desire not to lose something of value
- A misunderstanding of the change and its implications
- A belief that change does not make sense for the organization and or
- A few tolerance for change.

The tendency however, is for organization to attempt to demonstrate that the new way to get a new development activity accepted by members of the organization and to explain rationally, the advantage of the new activity over the old one. For example:

- We need to improve efficiency;
- We need flexible working hours;
- Effectiveness must be increased;
- Productivity must be increased;
- We must always remain alert for new management innovations etc.

To subordinates this is an indication that management feels compelled to sell them a bill of goods; an implication, which they resent. Subordinates will see little need (if managers are effective) for anyone to inform them that effectiveness should be increased, new concepts should be tried, productivity must be increased etc. they will resent anything that indicates that they are not doing this already.

The resistance may even increase because of:

- (a) The negative interpersonal impact of the new idea upon the line manager.
- (b) The mistrust and condemnation of the subordinates implied by the new programme.
- (c) The inhabitation of the questions and fears the subordinates may wish to express.
- (d) The feeling of being manipulated by the fact that the plan for change did not involve them at the planning stage.
- (e) The dependence and submissiveness caused by the unilateral training manager strategy.

Considering our findings in this exercise anyone who has planned major organizational change knows:-

- (a) How difficult it is to foresee accurately all the major problems involved.
- (b) The enormous amount of time needed to iron out the kinks and get the people to accept change.
- (c) The apparent lack of internal commitment on the part of many to help make the plan work manifested partly.
- (d) By people at all levels resisting taking the initiative to make modification that they see are necessary so that the new plan can work.

According to Enemali (2010) – managers need to increase their skills at diagnosing resistance to change and at choosing the appropriate methods for overcoming it. Experience has shown that many managers underestimate not only the variety of ways people can react to organizational change but also the ways they can positively influence, especially individuals and groups during change and again because of past experiences managers sometimes do not have an accurate understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the methods with which they are familiar .

### ***Summary of Literature Review***

The literature reviewed for this work indicates that attempts have been made by various authors to identify some obstacles and detrimental organization behaviours, militating against effective training in Industry. Literature also postulated – Kenny, John and Raid (1993) that training per-se cannot take place unless there are people and that organization is organic hence can not grow without people, and that people cannot grow in organization without adequate development or appropriate skills for productive purpose resulting from training.

One of the founders of management of organization Peter Drucker argued that the major obstacle to organizational growth is manager's inability to change their attitude and behaviour as rapidly as their organization requires.

Even when managers intellectually understand the need for changes in the way they operate, they sometimes are emotionally unable to make the transition. However, the change efforts described herein is keyed to the concept that continuous training in organization can assist or enable an organization to accomplish its objective. Our example also demonstrates that such a change in management strategy requires the involvement and commitment of people at all levels and that in the final analysis the real agent of change is the organization himself.

The review has been of tremendous importance in the construction of the instrument used for the study. Specifically the review indicated many variables especially on constraints militating against training in industry and training benefit thereof which stand in combinations with each other to show content and the design of the study.

However, the review showed a dearth of literature on clear areas of resistance to training and where training could pay off or make impacts which are worthwhile for organizations' operational performance. The situation presents a wider gap when one can not hold on to any specific study attempting to examine the extent of people's attitude to training and its impact on the operational performance of industry here or abroad.

In realization of the aforementioned, and bearing in mind the onerous task of improving operational performance in industries in Nigeria, there is urgent need to investigate the attitude of people to training of workers in industries in Nigeria.

### **Research Methodology**

The research design adopted for this study was a survey and documentary analysis. The area covered by the study consisted of manufacturing and engineering industries in Southwest Zone of Nigeria. The population for the study comprised all the Trainers, Training managers, supervisors, Personnel Managers operatives in the manufacturing and engineering industries in southwest zone of Nigeria. Stratified proportional random sampling technique was used to select a total of 626 industries for this study. Out of this number 556 industries responded to the questionnaires for the study.

The instrument used was personally developed by the researchers. The instrument was validated by experts from the field of Human Resources Management and Development. The validated questionnaire was pilot tested. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was determined using Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.71. Data obtained were analyzed using mean, frequency count, percentages and one-way analysis of variance.

Information was collected from line Managers, Training Managers, Supervisors, Trainers, Training Specialists and Operatives.

The methods used for data collection were personal interview and self completion questionnaire which were answered in the presence of the research workers except where figures were to be collected from record files. The attitude statement used in the questionnaire were developed from comments made to the researchers in an initial pilot study.

### **Summary of Findings**

A number of attitudes towards training were identified, but for the purpose of this article it is proposed to examine only those which the research considered were negative. The research proposed to discuss those attitudes which it would seem reasonable to assume are detrimental, and would obstruct rather than promote the growth, development and effectiveness of training.

### **Attitudes of Line Management to Training Specialists**

The study indicates that a large percentage (68.5%) of line management staff are of the opinion that training specialists do not know enough about the industry's Technology, organization and work practices. According to them, trainers do not see training as a service for line management; they train for the training's sake.

**Table I: Attitudes of Line Management to Training Specialists**

	RESPONDENT PERCENTAGE SCORE				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Disagree Strongly
	AS	A	N	D	DS
Training Specialists do not know enough about the industry's technology, organization and work practices and process	48.5	20	0.5	19	12
Trainers do not see training as a service for line management; they train for training's sake.	30	19.6	5.4	20	25

From the above, one can tentatively conclude that many members of line management do not hold the training specialist in high esteem. The trainer is often not seen as trying to help line management, although evidence elsewhere in this research suggested that most trainers did see training as a service for line management.

In addition, it might be interpreted that line management were in some doubt as to how well-equipped trainers were to help them. These of course are perceptions of reality, and they may be incorrect. However attitude and behaviour are based on these perceptions.

### ***Attitudes of Training Specialists to Line Management***

A large proportion (56.1%) of the training specialists feels that departmental management pay only lip service to training. 52.6% response feels that departmental management is not aware of the contribution training can make while 50% feels that departmental management has a distorted concept of training and 19.3% assert that departmental management wouldn't be able to recognize a training need if they saw one.

The relationship between trainers and line management discovered in this survey is not one which suggests the unity of purpose and harmonious partnership which may be necessary to identify and fulfill training needs. Clearly organizations should look further at the trainers' role and particularly at line management training specialist relations (See Table II below).

**Table II: Attitudes of Training Specialists to Line Management**

	RESPONDENT PERCENTAGE SCORE				
	Strongly Agree AS	Agree A	Uncertain N	Disagree D	Disagree Strongly DS
Departmental management pays only lip-service to training	50.1	6.0	10.9	13	20
Departmental management is not aware of the contribution training can make	49.6	3.0	7.4	22	18
Departmental management has a distorted concept of training	45.9	5.0	9.1	22	18
Departmental management would not be able to recognize a training need if they saw one	18.3	1.0	0.7	49	30

On the issue/subject of attitudes towards the responsibility for training, most of line management saw training as the ultimate responsibility of the training specialist and thought that the initiative for training should come from the training specialist. But most of the training specialists allocated responsibilities for training initiative to line management.

The research recalls that a large proportion of both groups (and a majority in the case of line management) felt that the job of identifying training needs belong to line management.

It could be argued that these results represent confusion over roles. It may be therefore that the absence of training or insufficient training, reflect the view of line management and training specialist that the other is not doing enough. It is a short step to hypothesis that this confusion over roles and responsibilities will affect line management/training specialist relations.

### ***Attitudes with Regards to Quality of Training Staff***

A large percentage of respondents consider that lack of staff development, absence of knowledge of training function, lack of qualified staff and managements negative attitude to training are major constraints to training and development in the organization. Enemali (2010) has argued that if employees are to contribute maximally to the success of their organization, they must undergo training and development programme to upgrade them to the level of skills required of their jobs.

Implicitly a number of people's attitude within organizations surveyed, can be deduced from the response to the survey questionnaire. It is being deduced from the results that possible reason for negative attitude on the part of management to training is that the quality of people employed in most cases for training function is not high enough for training to be worthwhile.

Responses such as lack of qualified staff, absence of knowledge of Training function, technical difficulty of proposed training etc. indicate that if the people employed are qualified they may be able to gain the acceptance of management and line-management and effect the change envisaged.

The research considered the attitude of trainers and line management towards each other, as great constraint to training efforts. It could be assumed that line management were in doubt as to how well equipped or qualified the trainers were to deliver the required training. A possible explanation for the negative attitudes and behaviour are based on these perceptions of line management.

A second possible explanation for the findings could be that of role ambiguity where the trainer has not sufficient information to enable him/her to be clear about what role is expected of him/her. It has probably been alluded to the lack of detailed staff development policies in the organization.

Additionally the research suggested that there were some ignorance among organization's training specialists about their role; it also reflects that the growth and development of effective training in organizations are influenced by people's attitudes to training in general. It also could be said that the key to maximum manpower utilization lies in the effectiveness of training and development.

### **Conclusion**

There are some points in this study which deserve re-echoing in view of their implication to the implementation of our findings:

- The importance given to the line management in some organizations in assessing training needs and making the main decision on training policy. The study found that training is a true service function and should not be left to line managers.
- The manner in which training budgets are cut down in some organizations and the apparent lack of commitment to assessing the cost effectiveness of different types of training undertaken by many organizations, must change.

The role assigned to training managers as the study shows and the way some training managers see their own task needs to be reviewed to avoid misunderstanding of roles. There is need for higher commitment and active involvement of management, in training to improve the current practice.

In many developed countries particularly Britain, many organizations devote a substantial number of man-hour to training and there are convincing general reasons why they do so – Armstrong (2007) Training is seen as part of organizations' effort to enhance the capabilities of its employees. For this reason the training responsibility of management and the individual employees which has been one of the central focus of this study must receive the attention of both government and employers of labour.

It is a matter of serious concern that in the opinion of most respondent, the expectation is expressed that for a number of reasons, training will gradually be extended to employees below the level to which it is mainly geared to at present. It is our view that in forming its training concept, organization (management) should concentrate on future requirements and be guided by the changes taking place in society in the following principal fields at national level:

- The social and political structure.
- The educational system
- The economic structure
- The technical, scientific and professional world.
- The working condition
- Management style and organization structure.

So far the argument has been developed that training in industry though beneficial has constantly been met with strong resistance in several organizations, however, there is need for adjustment in organization to give training a better chance of success, but in so doing new training requirements will be created. Unless an organization is in a static environment, the process of organization development and the creation of training needs will be on-going.

Training we hope will be taken really seriously by line management when seen as part of a wider process of increasing organizational effectiveness.

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