



# **Manpower Training and Productivity in the Nigerian Public Sector: An Appraisal and Human Capital Discourse**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper examines the impact of manpower training on productivity in the Nigerian public sector, using the Human Capital Theory as framework of analyses. With a reliance on secondary data backed by textual analysis, the paper observed that deficient and inadequate skill acquisition are traceable to the predominance of traditional learning styles and techniques upon which training processes and school system are anchored in Nigeria. Findings show that funding inadequacies, poor coordination of training activities, faulty training needs assessment and inappropriate methodology for delivering training programmes are major impediments to public sector productivity. It recommends that definite and properly coordinated training needs/programmes targeted at continuous improvement of employees' productivity in the Nigerian public sector should be put in place. Merit based selection criteria and techniques anchored on the adoption of qualitative tools and adequate funding holds the key to a productive public sector in Nigeria. Other suggestions proffered are also capable of redressing the impediments to manpower training and productivity in the public bureaucracy in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Manpower; Training; Productivity; Public Sector; Human Capital; Discourse

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The major objective of every organisation, whether private or public, is to improve its productivity, and this achievement to a great extent depends on the quality and competence of its human resources. Responsible organisations recognize that human resources are their main resource in achieving the desired objectives. Consequently, workers must be equipped and trained adequately to ensure that their knowledge, skills, and abilities facilitate the attainment of organisational goals and objectives. To corroborate, Singh & Mohanty (2012), posit that training is a central and powerful instrument for the effective achievement of organisational goals and objectives, resulting in greater productivity. As such, the performance of an organisation to a great extent relies on the capacity and expertise of the employees at the managerial and lower levels of the organisation and such capacities and abilities derive from the knowledge and training they receive (Dialoke, Ukah and Ikoro, 2016). Also, training is fundamental, in view of the evolving technology; the automated work environment; the rapid transformation in administrative settings, accompanied by the demands of diversity management as hallmarks and trappings of globalization.

The importance of training has no doubt been recognized in many organisations as the key factor for improved productivity. However, manpower training in the public sector is threatened with a number of problems like the absence of systematic training despite the various reforms that laid emphasis on training (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). This is because, the various reforms in the public sector have not considered it necessary to initiate definite and continuous training programmes that will increase employees' productivity. This implies that when training need is recognized and resources and time are committed, the training exercise can still be inadequate in addressing the productivity deficit. Sometimes, the training

exercise is haphazard or lopsided in design, implementation and participation. At times, training is based on a faulty diagnosis of training needs.

Again, there are instances where public sector managers do not recognize employees who have participated in training programmes to acquire additional skills and knowledge. Such recognition may come in form of salary increase, promotion and other fringe benefits to reward their efforts. In cases where training has taken place, management may not be willing to deploy such staff to other departments where they are relevant. Also, job enlargement are performed without adequate regard to the skills and capabilities of the staff, which may result in low morale and frustration on other employees who desire to undergo further training. The above mentioned attitudes of management to manpower training can result in progressive degeneration of capabilities of employees to cope with challenges arising from the social, economic and technological changes.

The narrative would have been different if the Nigerian federal government have embraced the 1988 and 1999 recommendations of the civil service commission which indicated that ten percent of the total annual emoluments of all personnel be reserved for staff training and development. However, majority of the public organisations have failed to honour these recommendations. For instance, employees of most public sector organisations are seldom sent on training and those who expressed their desire to undertake any form of training may not be given any form of assistance like study leave with pay, to sustain the programme. In some cases, the relevance of the training to the requirements of the present job and future postings are not considered before employees are sent on training. Even when the staff embark on skill acquisition programmes, the management may not provide the necessary equipment to enhance operations. The resultant effect of this, is that such employees may find it difficult to cope with the evolving technological work environment.

## **2.0 METHOD, MAIN ARGUMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER**

This paper presents a longitudinal study of the impact of manpower training on productivity in the Nigerian public sector. Essentially, it is a qualitative research which relied on secondary sources of data and was complemented with Human Capital Theory as framework of analysis. These informed and invigorated discussions, findings and recommendations of the paper.

The main argument of the paper is that low productivity in the Nigerian public sector is traceable to poor coordination and unsystematic approach to manpower training. Additionally, deficient and inadequate skill acquisition are traceable to the dominance of traditional learning styles and techniques upon which training processes and school system are anchored in Nigeria. The initiatives/measures aimed at redressing these maladies by successive central administrations in Nigeria found expression in the institution of several reform committees/commissions from 1934 to 2012. Some of the prominent reform commissions, their features and recommendations are discussed in section five of this paper.

The paper is structured sequentially as follows: Abstract; Introduction; Method, Main Argument and Structure of the paper; Conceptual Clarification; Approaches to Manpower Training and Benefits of Manpower Training in Public Organisations; Problems of Manpower Training in Public Organisations; The Concept of Productivity; Theoretical framework and Application of the Theory; An Evaluation of Manpower Training and Productivity in the Nigerian Public Sector; Conclusion and Recommendations.

## **3.0 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION**

The concepts of manpower training and productivity are explained in this section.

### **3.1 The Concept of Manpower Training**

Some researchers see training as the impartation of 'knowledge', 'enlightenment' or 'wisdom' (Ofobruku and Nwakoby, 2015:30). This implies that these attributes underline manpower training and are vital ingredients of training, which equips the employee with the wherewithal for effective performance of duties and routine assignments. This, impact on productivity and the realization of organisational objectives ultimately. Igbaekemen (2014) affirms that training is a procedure or strategy through which the abilities, talent and knowledge of a worker is upgraded and expanded. As such, a fruitful training programme must add to the development and improvement of workers at all levels. Training influences

employee development in a way that the workers' state of mind is improved with a view to eliciting their commitment to duties and organisational effectiveness.

Manpower training is not merely concerned with the worker's present activity, but prepares the worker for imminent work necessities (Kum, Cowden and Karodia, 2014). Therefore, effective training programmes must be put in place to allow management sustain a pool of workers that could adequately substitute employees who may exit the organisation or are redeployed to different departments. Hence, manpower training enables employees to adjust to advanced or modern-day technology, and ensures that suitable manpower are made available for expansion into different and new areas. Abonyi (2007) further posits that training is possibly regarded as one of the best strategies for manpower improvement. It means orienting an employee towards the goals of the organisation, for the purpose of maximum output and accomplishment of the organisational goals and objectives. According to him, the aim of staff training is to encourage workers to accumulate greater skills in order to perform at the most acceptable level on the present job and to broaden their knowledge towards future opportunities in the organisation. This indicates that no matter how automated an enterprise may be, the ideal efficiency and optimum productivity rest upon the expertise of the workforce.

A critical examination of the above definitions indicates that the scholar failed to provide a comprehensive definition of manpower training. Manpower training does not only imply knowledge building or skill acquisition; it comprises the improvement of attitudes required for employees to carry out their jobs accurately on a given assignment. It stands to reason that training is the overall procedure through which an individual behaviour is modified to conform to a pre-defined and specified outcome. Training mainly focuses on teaching employees the procedure to perform their present jobs and also acquire the knowledge and skills they need to become effective performers (Jones, George and Hill, 2000; Ndibe, 2014). These definitions did not consider the dynamic and changing nature of the environment in which organisations operate. Skills needed by employees are continuously changing. Besides, the ever changing enhancement in information technology makes knowledge and skills obsolete in a short while (Okanya, 2008). Hence, the Human Resources Department of every organisation ought to consider the current and future requirements of the organisation when planning for employee training (Beardwell & Holden, 2001:324).

Some scholars hold conflicting views with regard to the effect of manpower training on workers' productivity. While some believe that training leads to efficiency and increased productivity, others feel that it has nothing to do with productivity. For instance, Raza (2014), found that manpower training had positive relationship with employee productivity in Pakistan, Elnaga and Imran (2013) in their study on Saudi Arabia did not find any relationship between training and employee performance within the business environment. Consequently, the inconsistency in these empirical works makes it essential to provide additional evidence on the impact of manpower training on employee productivity in the Nigerian public sector. In harnessing the points, Onah (2003) maintained that manpower training should include an organized and coordinated expansion of knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by an individual to master a given challenge or perform a certain task within organisation setting. This is essential for employees to cope with the complexity of the work environment and the rapid changing nature of organisations among other things (Okotoni and Erero, 2005). These divergent views of scholars seem to underscore the dynamism of this concept in Public Administration.

### **3.2 Approaches to Manpower Training in Public Organisations**

There are various methods of manpower training that an organisation can adopt, and this largely depends on the objectives of the organisation. The specific approach chosen by an organisation would be determined by the cost of the training, available time and number of people to be trained. Approaches to manpower training can be generally classified under three major headings: (i) On- the-job training (ii) Off-the-job training and (iii) Simulation methods. However, organisations often use a combination of the three methods as no training programme is perfect for all training needs. The type of training chosen should reflect the objectives of training to be accomplished, the available resources and the needs of

employees for training and development. Olaniyan & Ojo (2008) and Okeke (2011) identified the following approaches:

**On- the-job training**

On-the-job training is a broadly used technique, where learning takes place in the work environment. This method operates in the context of work, at the same time, the actual work is being performed. Most organisations prefer on-the-job training for the acquisition of effective skills and abilities. With this method, employee's development and skills advancement is achieved more rapidly and employees benefit from relating with co-workers (Okeke, 2011). The employee is in the real work situation and shown the job. He learns in the same environment where he will, in future, be working. Kulkarni (2013), confirms that one of the advantages of on-the-job training is that it reduces the difficulty in transferring knowledge associated with other approaches to training; it expedites the transfer of knowledge because the learner has instant opportunity to practice; it also reduces the cost of training as no additional training facilities are required. On-the-job training could take the following forms:

**Orientation/Induction Training:** This approach is precisely designed for new employees to enable them get acquainted with the overall requirement of the organisation such as norms, ethics, goals, rules and regulations. It is also geared towards getting the new employees acquainted with the organisation's goals, structure, culture, work standard and different conditions of employment. This familiarisation with the work environment protects them from making costly mistakes. Dialoke, et.al (2016), affirm that orientation or induction training is given to newly hired or appointed staff immediately they are employed, to get them familiarised with their new positions and to make them understand the overall objectives, scope, programmes, problems, policy and structure of the organisation. Induction courses are imperative for newly hired officials to enable them gain self-confidence and perform up to expectation. The duration may range from few days to three weeks depending on the situation.

**Apprentice Training:** This approach to manpower training entails the acquisition of skill through extensive training for a period of time by the apprentice. Isiwu (2012:28), submit that the training medium could either be formal or informal. In the informal setting, the apprentice is attached to the trainer, and he/she is required to pay for an agreed period of apprenticeship. On the other hand, the formal environment requires an employee to be placed under apprenticeship within an organisation with pay. Ofobruku and Nwakoby (2015) observed that this strategy for training is attractive in the industries, for example, the metal exchanges, printing merchants and building development, which require a consistent stream of new employees who are relied upon to become versatile skilled craftsmen. Since this training is long and requires continual supervision, this method of training can be expensive.

**Vestibule Training:** This approach to manpower training requires the acquisition of skills and knowledge in a similar work environment (Nongo, 2005). The employee practices his skill with instruments or equipment that he uses at his normal work location. Some of the advantages are: workers are trained as if they were on the job, but it does not disrupt production, reduces costly mistakes that could affect the normal production. A good example of vestibule training is where a technical staff, especially those who deal with the tools and machinery, are given the job education/training in the workplace other than the main production plant. Another example is the cashier training (Omodia, 2009). There are special trainers or specialists, who impart training on the technical staff, thereby reducing the burden on the line supervisor, who has to supervise the entire production process. Under this training approach, the emphasis is on learning rather than production. Other procedures under this method are: film show and exhibition, role-playing, educational television customised direction and others.

**Job Rotation:** Job rotation is a management approach where employees are shifted between two or more assignments or jobs at regular intervals in order to expose them to master what goes on, in other sections or departments in an organisation. Job rotation is an organised practice to reduce the boredom of doing same type of job every day in order to explore the hidden potentials of an employee. The essence of this programme is to widen the knowledge and capabilities of workers in different professions. The added knowledge may be needed for performing higher level tasks and taking up higher level responsibilities. Some advantages of job rotation are: to help management discover the talent of employees and determine what he or she is best at; it gives an employee a chance to explore his or her own interests and gain

experience in different fields or operations, to provide a general idea of organisational objectives; to encourage co-operation among departments and to promote organisational flexibility through dynamic human resource utilisation (Lawal, 2006:15).

**Coaching:** This is the most direct and effective manner for a person to influence the behaviour of another person. Coaching generally follows the format of individual guidance that is focused on job performance and aimed at one person per time. Usually, the person being coached is exposed to a chain of planned instructions to accelerate his development. He may be given a unique assignment, possibly as a member of a committee or task force, he can also stand-in for the boss or be delegated part of his obligation, his activity can be enlarged, or he can be systematically associated through a chain of jobs. Coaching is an effective training technique of a business enterprise. It takes place most often and naturally in the superior-subordinate relationship (Otti, 2011). The coach specifically advises the personnel on how to perform a particular task, they provide constructive feedback and delegate further similar tasks, setting goals or higher-level tasks for the individual to complete. One of benefits of coaching is that the employees improve their performance and skills by receiving one-on-one training to develop career prospects. Also, majority of coaching is generally delivered within the organisation by an immediate supervisor or manager. Though, some organisations may prefer to employ external professional coaches to provide these services.

**Off-the-Job Training:** These are professional trainings aimed at exposing employees to new techniques adopted in modern work environments. They are usually performed on full-time basis in educational institutions like, universities, polytechnics, colleges and so forth, lasting through a specific period (Malaolu & Ogbuabor, 2013). Off-the-job training occurs when employees are taken away from their place of work to be trained. The major disadvantage of this type of training is that employees after acquiring new skills/qualifications may leave for better jobs.

**Formal Training:** This type of training is done within or outside an organisation. It is also referred to as in-house or off-the-job training which takes place in universities, polytechnics, training institutes/centres. Off-the-job training may also be provided by members of the training department, external education and training establishment or training providers like training consultants or guest speakers. Many organisations prefer to use external training providers rather than sustaining their own training methods (Konings, 2010). Formal learning programmes are typically synonymous with full-scale learning systems, with courses and curricula planned in a very structured way. As a result, the content is generally created by a specified group of instructors, designers and trainers. The learning materials can be delivered in a classroom training model, with lecturers to impact the learning. It requires reading and scheduled testing.

**Guided Discussion:** This method is a leader-centred approach to training and problem solving. It permits the group leader greater opportunity to get reactions to an idea than does the lecture method. In the guided discussion method, the leader presents an idea to the group and encourages them to discuss it, but makes it clear to the group that he reserves the right to make the ultimate or final decision (Otti, 2011). Guided discussion exposes employees to a variety of perspectives, helps them recognize and investigate their assumptions, improves listening and conversation skills, fosters connection to a topic, and affirms employees as co-creators of knowledge. As they participate in discussion, employees situate new knowledge within the context of their current understanding, thus facilitating a thorough understanding of the course material.

**Programmed Instruction:** This is a modern training method that uses coaching machines, programmed books or filmstrips. It differs from traditional forms of training in which the instructor guides the learner to acquire new techniques, because the materials to be used is presented in a manner which the learners can control. Programmed instruction is a method of presenting new subject to students in a graded sequence of controlled steps. Students work through the programmed material by themselves at their own speed and after each step, they are tested on comprehension by answering an examination question or filling in a diagram. They are then immediately shown the correct answer or given additional information. Computers and other types of teaching machines are often used to present the material, although books may also be used. Computer-assisted instructions, which both tests students' abilities and marks their progress, may supplement classroom activity or help students to develop ideas and skills independently

(Kulkarni, 2013; Dialoke, et.al (2016). One advantage of programmed instruction is that it can contribute to more efficient classroom procedure and supplement conventional teaching methods. Teaching machines enable students to work individually, calling for active participation of the learner. In the industries and the military, programmed instruction is often used to train personnel.

**Workshops, Seminars and Conferences:** There are various institutions that organise workshops/seminars aimed at inculcating specific skills on workers. Experts present papers and discussions centered on them in such conferences. New techniques and ideas are examined and members are encouraged to ask questions and express their views (Okereke and Igboke, 2011). A seminar is a type of scholastic guideline, either at a scholarly establishment or offered by a business or expert association. It has the capacity of uniting little gatherings who concentrate on some specific subjects where everybody present papers. While a workshop is a sort of intuitive preparation where members complete various exercises rather than listen to an address or presentation. Comprehensively, two types of workshops exist: a general workshop for a blended gathering of people, and a closed workshop that is customized towards meeting the preparation needs of a particular group.

### **3.3 Benefits of Manpower Training to Public Organisations**

The benefits of effective manpower training to any organisation cannot be over emphasized. The rising economic enhancement is a proof that investments in manpower training are related to longer term profitability in an organisation. (Omodia, 2009) asserts that the era of technological change and innovation requires both old and new personnel to be trained to replace their knowledge with new capabilities and keep them abreast of the new development in the strategies and techniques of doing their jobs in an effort to achieve individual and organisational targets. Therefore, any employer that desires to have a competitive advantage over others should embark on manpower training.

Training is important not only to improve productivity, but to encourage and arouse the interest of employees by educating them on the importance of their jobs and to give them necessary information required to perform on those jobs (Banjoko, 2011). Effective manpower training programmes should contribute to the achievement of organisational goals in the following ways: (i) reduction of overhead and labour expenses by means of shortening the time required to carry out operations involved in production of goods and services; (ii) reducing the cost of managing personnel activities resulting from absenteeism, injuries, grievances and complaints; and (iii) minimising administrative costs by developing the physical and emotional/psychological needs of every employee towards the achievement of organisational objectives (Rao & Kishan, 2012). The general benefits of manpower training as identified by Iyayi (2007) are:

**Technological Development:** New technology is being developed all the time, therefore training personnel enables them handle materials and the equipment economically to reduce wastages. Regular training will ensure that staff are using the latest technology conveniently and to full potentials. Also, training employees will reduce the rate of accidents and damages to machinery and equipment, which will invariably contribute to increased cost savings and overall economy of operations.

**Lesser need for supervision:** Trained employees will reduce the need for constant supervision. A well-trained employee can be relied upon in carrying out his assignments because he knows what to do and how to do it better. Under such situations, close supervision might not be necessary.

**Increased job satisfaction:** Through continuous investment in manpower training, staff can have a higher sense of job satisfaction, which can improve their motivation towards their work. This reduces employee turnover and increases productivity, which directly improves productivity. The organisation will continue to grow and remain competitive.

**Maintain knowledge and skills:** It is important to train employees to help them develop skills on their jobs and to retain knowledge. Again, Mullins (2007) noted that manpower training improves knowledge and skills and changes trainee's attitude. Thus, training becomes one of the most important potential motivators.

### **3.4 Problems of Manpower Training in the Nigerian Public Sector**

Manpower training in the public sector has been identified with numerous problems such as haphazard manner in which training is planned and executed, inadequate funding, and favouritism. Although budgetary allocations are usually made for personnel training, the release and utilisation of such funds do not correspond to the way it is planned (Sam-Okere & Agbeniga, 2014). Even when funds are made available, the content of such training may not indicate the immediate needs of the organisation before embarking on the training sessions. Sometimes, the quality of facilitators who are appointed on consultancy basis is also another militating factor. Some of these consultants may not have the requisite experience for their tasks. The training programmes may sometimes be contracted to party loyalists or persons with some form of attachment to the chief executives of the organization, largely for patronage. This raises a very serious accountability question which no doubt is a fundamental issue in the administration of the public service in Nigeria (Olusegun, 2009). In view of the above challenges, effective manpower training programmes for personnel in the Nigerian public sector is imperative for development and stability.

Audu, Paul and Omisore (2015:11) argued that manpower training has not produced the desired effect/impact on productivity in public organisations in Nigeria due to a combination of the following factors: poor financial allocation for training; misappropriation of the existing insufficient funds; poor coordination of training activities; outmoded and outdated training equipment and facilities; lopsided nature of training programmes; faulty training needs assessment and inappropriate methodology for delivering training programmes. The above argument was stretched further and corroborated by Madubueze, Ananti, Onyekwelu and Okpalibekwe (2015) with a taxonomy into economic and political factors. The economic factors as documented by these latter scholars bear convergence with those identified by Audu et al (2015), and requires no restatement. The political factors include interference in employee selection for training and bureaucratic activities through which politics influences routine and official procedures in the bureaucracy. The implication of these is a rupture outcome for training initiatives, and this has the tendency to circumscribe public sector productivity.

### **3.5 The Concept of Productivity in Public Organisations**

Productivity is a measure of the performance of an employee and an essential determinant of cost efficiency. It can be used to examine efficiency and effectiveness of any activity conducted in an economy, business, government or by individuals (Naveen, and Ramesh, 2015). According to Onah, (2010) in Dialoke, Ukah and Ikoru (2016), productivity is the driving force behind an organisation's success and profitability. Productivity is the link between output of goods/services and employees input. It is the measure of the input of human and non-human resources used in the production process. In other words, productivity is the ratio of output to input. The higher the numerical value of this ratio, the greater the productivity. This implies that when the employees are efficient, they accomplish more in a given time. Public sector productivity is one feature that determines how effectively public funds are utilized (Kaimahi, 2015).

Simpson (2008) opines that in recent years, there had been several requests to improve productivity in the public sector which have not been responded to. This is due to the magnitude of the public, which requires large number of employees and receives funding from the federal government and the general public. Hence, it is very imperative for the public to get value for resources expended, hence the need for an effective and vibrant public sector capable of qualitative service delivery to the citizenry.

Similarly, Kaimahi (2015) argues that productivity in the public sector is interrogated for two reasons. One of the reasons is that the public sector has been subjected to a variety of reforms and restructuring over the past fifty years. While majority of these initiatives have been justified on the basis that they might increase productivity, the experience of many public servants has been that they have led to redundancy, proliferation of work, and an increase in activities that do not contribute to public sector productivity. It is also arguable that these reforms has resulted in lower quality services being delivered to citizens. According to Pritchard (2002), the second reason why productivity issues are more difficult to deal with in the public sector is that public sector productivity is difficult to measure. Productivity is

typically measured with regards to the output. It is much more difficult to measure where the service being provided has no monetary value or where services are provided generically to wide range of consumers.

#### **4.1 Theoretical Framework: Human Capital Theory**

The theoretical framework considered applicable to this study is the Human Capital Theory. The first use of human capital as a term in modern economic literature was by Theodore Schultz (1961), who classified expenditures on human capital as investment rather than consumption. However, the first application of the theory in Economics accrues to Gary Becker (1964) who developed a model of individual investment in human capital which he likened to “physical means of production,” and refers to “all activities that influence future real income through the embedding of resources in people” (Becker cited in Fleischhauer, 2007:4). Further contributions and refinements to the theory are traceable to these scholars: Mincer (1962); Denison (1962); Bowman (1969); Blaug (1976); Psacharopoulos and Woodhau (1985); Romer (1986, 1987, 1990); Becker, Murphy and Tamura (1990); Cohn and Geske (1990); Becker (1993); Bontis (1996); David and Lopez (2001) cited in Nafukho, Hairston and Brooks (2004:547-548).

The Human Capital theory developed as a rebuttal to the naïve conception of some earlier economists that labour is constant or given, and its performance cannot be increased. The illuminating analysis of celebrated scholars like Adam Smith; Milton Friedman and Alfred Marshall on investments in education and training as positive correlates of productivity were not integrated into discussions on this theme (Krasniqi and Topxhiu, 2016). This situation pervaded until early 1960s when the growth of US economy became inexplicable by the traditional (four) factors of production. The lacuna created by this development is known as the ‘residual factor’ which was identified as ‘human capital’ (Schultz, 1961 cited in Nafukho et al, 2000:545).

To be sure, human capital refers to knowledge, skills, attitudes, aptitudes and other traits that contribute to production (Goode in Fleischhauer 2007:4). This latter author, building on other scholars identified two main complimentary components of human capital as early ability (acquired or innate); and skills acquired through formal education or training on the job. It is particularly noteworthy that this is a restatement of the original treatise by Schultz (1961) who conceptualized human capital as “the knowledge and skills that people acquire through education and training being a form of capital...(which) is a product of deliberate investment that yields returns” (cited in Nafukho et al, 2004:547). Corroborating this, Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008) affirm that human capital represents the investment that people make in themselves which enhance their economic productivity. Krasniqi and Topxhiu (2016) invigorated by the writings of Kenneth Arrow posit that these investments in training and education must inform the perfection of work through better use of available technology which ultimately increases productivity.

Albrecht (1976:2) infers from the works of Becker, Mincer and Porath that the Human Capital theory (HCT) is pivoted on these (three) basic assumptions:

1. Labour skills are durable and malleable.
2. Current productivity contributes to current earnings and affects future productivity.
3. There is a positive association between amounts of schooling and individual earnings.

Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008:479) summarized the above tenets or assumptions of HCT based on the submissions of the human capital theorists as follows:

...human capital theory rests on the assumption that formal education is highly instrumental and even necessary to improve the production capacity of a population. Human capital theory emphasizes how education increases the productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human capability which is a product of innate abilities and investment in human beings.

A thorough scrutiny and understanding of the above averments reveal that there is a manifest convergence on this theme by Nafukho et al (2004); Fleischhauer (2007); Krasniqi and Topxhiu (2016). The common denominator is that education and training should facilitate workers’ productivity through appropriate skill acquisition. It is pertinent to note that human capital accumulation can be achieved through formal schooling; on-the-job training; and off-the-job training (Becker in Fleischhauer, 2007). These three



approaches underscore the theme and focus of this paper. Becker (1964) made a distinction between general and specific human capital. General human capital are skills, knowledge, aptitudes and traits that are useful and applicable beyond the current employment, while specific human capital increases employees' productivity on his current job only.

#### **4.2 Application of Theory**

It is evident from this and other studies conducted on performance in the Nigerian public bureaucracy that there is a preponderance of low productivity. This issue has given rise to the inauguration of several reform committees from 1934 to 2012 (Anyim, Elegbede and Gbajumo-Sheriff (2011); Okorie and Odo (2014); and Otiye (2015)). Apart from wage reviews and incentive packages to boost workers' morale and productivity, it is observable that the Adebo Commission of 1970; Udoji Committee of 1974; and Ayida Review Panel of 1995 emphasized insufficiency in training incentives and programmes in the public service. This was corroborated on a macro level by Adamolekun and Olowu (2015:108) thus: "the result of two decades of these kinds of reforms is to produce reform fatigue, an anaemic state and poorly performing CSIs. Ghana and Nigeria would readily fit into this group of countries..."

To reiterate, the various tiers of government are not oblivious of the fact that labour skills are essential/requisite for improving productivity in the Nigerian public sector, or that there is a positive association between training or education and workers' remuneration (as tenets of the Human Capital theory). However, the value attached to education by successive Nigerian central governments leaves much to be desired as reflected in the dismal allocation of less than 26% UNESCO benchmark for education in national budgets. This has been a thorny issue between several Teachers Union and various tiers of government and administrations in Nigeria. It is perhaps predicated on these, that Adamolekun (2007:88) in a general review of African Civil Service Institutions (CSIs) suggested "...capacity development through skills development and upgrading," which are achievable through robust and impactful on-the-job; off-the-job; and other forms of training/education.

The above point underscores the establishment of various universities and tertiary training centres for civil/public servants in Nigeria (see Aroge, (2012) and Mohammed (2014) earlier cited in this paper). Building on earlier studies, Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008:481) posit that education has not had the expected positive impact due to the limitations of the schooling system which provides few (or no) skills. To redress this condition, these scholars submit that education and training must be "anti-traditional to the extent that it liberates, stimulates and informs the individual and teaches him how and why to make demands upon himself." This has the tendency of bringing about development-producing capacities geared towards national growth. The type of training that can revolutionise the mindset of civil/public servants for improved productivity in the Nigerian public sector must be anchored on specific human capital that is capable of invigorating public employees on their current jobs as canvassed by Becker (cited in Fleischhauer, 2007:5).

#### **5.0 Manpower Training and Productivity in the Nigerian Public Sector: An Evaluation**

In the Nigerian public sector, low productivity has given rise to several reforms and some of the committees recommended manpower training as an avenue to address concerns on low productivity, and aims at making government more responsive and effective. The overall objective is to ensure efficiency, service delivery, transparency, improved conditions of service and productivity in the public sector. (Olaopa, 2008 in Okorie and Odo, 2014). This position underscored a tenet of Human Capital theory as reflected by Goode (in Fleischhauer, 2007:4) in the theoretical framework above.

The Wolle commission was inaugurated to investigate the need for training in the federal civil service in 1967. The Commission was headed by Professor C. P. Wolle, who consults for the Institute of Administration at the University of Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) (Mohammed, 2014). According to Isiwu (2012), the report of the study was published in May 1968 with the title "Training Needs of the Federal Civil Service". Therefore, the federal government gave vent to the report in April 1969 through "statement of federal government policy on staff training and development on the federal public service", with the following key components: (i) the establishment of Department of Training with responsibility of assessing the need for staff development, the preparation and implementation of training

programmes to achieve the desired training needs;(ii) the restructuring of Federal Ministry of Establishments to ensure that greater priority is given to manpower training; (iii) the institution of a standing committee on development of the workforce and the encouragement of large departments/ ministries to establish a training centre suitable with the function and size of the ministry; and (iv) the formation of the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria and Centre for Management Development (Elozieuwa, 2012:45). These undoubtedly lends credence to the views of Olaniyan and Okemakinde (2008:479) on the impact of formal education and training as platforms for improved productivity in public organisations.

Additionally, the Adebo commission of 1970, was set up to review the issues of salaries and wages in the statutory public corporations and state-owned enterprises; to establish a public service review commission; to review the structure and functions of the public service commission, to improve the conditions of service and to make adequate arrangement for staff training (Adewunmi, 2012). Thereafter, the Udoji Public Service Review Commission (PSRC) submitted its report in 1974, with emphasis on insufficiency in training programme throughout the public service and consequently dedicated a substantial segment of the report to staff training. Hence, the commission suggested amongst others, the resuscitation of the standing committee on staff training; the reactivation of Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), Centre for Management Development (CMD), and other Federal Training Centres, (Mohammed, 2014: 116). It is pertinent to note that inadequate funding and excessive formalization of training programmes, coupled with poorly articulated training needs conjointly stymied the benefits accruable from the above laudable initiatives.

The establishment of the following institutions also explains attempts at improving public sector productivity through manpower training: the Industrial Training Fund (ITF) in 1971, the Centre for Management Development (CMD) in 1972, Nigerian Council for Management Education and Training, the Nigeria Institute for Policy and Strategy (NIPSS), the Agricultural and Rural Management Training Institution (ARMTI), and the Institute for Labour Studies (Aroge, 2012:80). Had these led to improved and massive skill acquisition with the adoption and utilization of current technology in multiplying human efforts through improved productivity in the Nigerian public sector, then, the views of Kenneth Arrow as projected by Krasniqi and Popxhiu (2016) on the tenets of Human Capital theory would have been very apt.

Aside from the above named institutions, there are several federal and state training institutions and centres all over Nigeria such as colleges, polytechnics and universities, as platforms for manpower training and development. Many of these colleges and institutions have redesigned their programmes to further the training needs of the public service (Okotoni & Erero, 2005). This is with a view to improving efficiency and productivity in public sector organisations, but this is still a mirage, and the search continues.

The Allison Ayida review panel was inaugurated in 1995 by the regime of late General Sani Abacha following the disagreement among the top Civil Servants concerning the politicisation of the post of Permanent Secretaries. The major assignment of the panel was to: (i) survey the role and redefine the objectives of the civil service as the implementation agency of government, and make suitable recommendations on modalities for improving commitment, performance, and efficiency in the civil service; (ii) make appropriate recommendations on procedures to increase workers morale, suggest modalities to curb the problem of accountability and co-ordination in the governmental agencies; and (iii) examine the dissolution of the office of Head of Service of the Federation and the pooling system among others (Anazodo, Okoye and Chukwuemeka, 2012:23). The anticipated benefits of this initiative or step, especially in relation to the first two objectives were not realized as the Obasanjo civil administration that was inaugurated on 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1999 had to embark on a gamut of civil service reforms till the end of his administration in 2007 (Ibietan and Oni, 2013).

Again, in order to ensure accountability and efficiency in the public service, former President Obasanjo immediately after his inauguration in 1999 established the Adegoke Adegoroye panel with the aim of restructuring the public sector and set standard with regards to staff strength, tackle payroll fraud, remove ghost workers and large number of redundant posts, improve service delivery standards and facilitate a

process of pay reform that will provide incentives for quality staff to come into the service and stay there (HTSPE, 2007:1). This underscores the issue of continuous reforms (mentioned above), which are targeted at improved efficiency and public sector productivity in Nigeria.

The former (President Jonathan) administration inaugurated the Steve Oronsaye committee on 18<sup>th</sup> August, 2011 to carry out a review on public service with a view to repositioning and restructuring the federal agencies and commissions for efficiency and greater productivity (Okorie & Odo, 2014). The Oronsaye committee had its main focus on areas of duplication of functions with a view to making appropriate recommendations to either restructure, merge or scrap them. (Otive, 2015:15) maintains that “the committee submitted its report on 16<sup>th</sup> April, 2012 with major recommendations on abolition of 38 agencies, merger of 52 and reversion of 14 agencies to departments of relevant ministries, merger of the National Council of Arts and Culture with the National Troupe and the National Theatre into one agency to be named National Council of Arts and Culture; Industrial Training Fund to be self-funding”. These recommendations led to the formulation of policy on the employee mobility policy to improve human resource management and ensure that the right personnel are placed in the right office at the right time to motivate officers to deliver service with competence, objectivity and integrity. This report has not been executed till date, either due to lack of political will or avoidable politicization of issues. These and other factors discussed in Section 3.4 of this paper have adversely affected public service delivery and development in the country.

The various reforms have focused on the search for a more responsive, reoriented, restructured and effective manpower training and its attendant utilization. Peretomode and Chukwuma, (2016) posit that the central idea underlying manpower training in the Nigerian public sector is to identify a suitable way to keep employees current, vibrant and resourceful, so that they can constantly perform effectively and efficiently, which ultimately leads to improved productivity, but this falls short of the desired expectation as underscored by the analyses below.

The Nigerian public sector ought to be an instrument for national development. However, Nigerians over the years have been denied qualitative service delivery by the public sector as characterized by public offices being associated with waste, inefficiency, corruption, and weak implementation of government policies (Obi-Anike & Ekwe 2014). Nigerians are living witnesses to the inability of the privatised National Electric Power Authority (now called Power Holding Company of Nigeria) to meet the energy needs of the citizens, the failure of Nigerian National Petroleum Company and other agencies in the oil and gas sector to provide quality and regular supplies of petroleum products, the inability of the national shipping lines and airlines to provide quality services and remain competitive in the global market, to mention but a few (Esu & Inyang, 2009:99). This disturbing profile is emblematic of a public sector that requires further attention and urgent action.

The public service which is expected to be the major tool for national development lost its value and confidence. These shortcomings necessitated reforms which, have led to rightsizing of the public sector and dwindling service delivery (Agagu, 2008). These reforms have been obstructed by successive governments which has hindered its success. The application of the tenets of Human Capital theory coupled with the adoption of proactive and continuous reform measures hold the promise of reversing this trend.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The paper examined the impact of manpower training on productivity in the Nigerian public sector, using the Human Capital theory as the analytical framework. It is observable that there has been a continuous search for efficiency and productivity in the Nigerian public bureaucracy, and this gave rise to the various reform initiatives/panels from 1934 to 2012. Through the application of HCT, it was found that the limitations of the school system in Nigeria made skills acquisition deficient, because training processes and instructional modes are largely anchored on traditional learning styles and techniques.

Another major find of this paper is that the political governance and policy process (especially the budgeting phase) has not been fair to education and manpower training in the Nigerian public sector.

Based on the foregoing, the paper recommends the following:

1. There must be definite and properly coordinated training needs and programmes targeted at continuous improvement of employees productivity in the Nigerian public sector. This must be backed by adequate financial provision and other resources as necessary planks for effective training outcomes.
2. The paper canvasses effective human resource utilization and deployment consequent upon completion of training. This will facilitate judicious application and management of human capital.
3. Accord optimum value to civil/public servants as agents of national transformation through improved public service productivity, which is realisable by techno-bureaucratic competent professionals.
4. The conception-reality gap that has led to a turnover or litany of reform panels must be attenuated through a well-manned and sustained Public Service Reform machinery which is appropriately calibrated for effective performance.
5. There should be continuous improvement in public sector remuneration and other motivational packages to cushion the effects of economic recession occasioned by the current inflationary trends. This will boost employee morale and ultimately galvanise productivity.
6. There is an urgent need for attitudinal change on the part of Nigerian governing and bureaucratic elites which enables them to construe public office as 'public trust,' thus serving in public interest based on altruism.
7. The paper also recommends as a corollary to the above, that the political elites should muster sufficient courage to engage the necessary political will to pursue reform recommendations to their logical conclusion for desired impact on the public bureaucracy.
8. Education/training manuals and delivery processes should be participatory and inclusive. These parametres and platforms have the potency of mental revolution and breaking the unproductive traditional modes of learning. The institutions and personnel saddled with compliance must be capacitated and should live to their billings.
9. Additionally, merit-based selection criteria and techniques anchored on the adoption of qualitative tools for training holds the key to a more productive public sector in Nigeria.
10. The Anti-graft crusade and war should be pursued with renewed vigour and without selection in the public bureaucracy and political governance. This has the tendency to plug public financial abuses and resource plunder in public affairs, thus serving as deterrent to actual and potential offenders in this regard.

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