

ENTREPRENEURIAL NON-FORMAL EDUCATION TOWARDS ACHIEVING WORKPLACE'S PRODUCTIVITY

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Abstract

The workplace in Nigeria faces new challenges and opportunities. As a matter of fact, the relationship between labour and management on industrial harmony is noted to be at low ebb for the lack of adequate skills and knowledge. Erroneously, it is believed that such skills and knowledge could only be offered the parties at workplaces through the means of conventional schooling system only. However, the application of the various non-formal education strategies to trained workers as revealed through this study, indicated appropriate methods for empowering the parties at workplaces towards high productivity. Therefore, a 35-item questionnaire was drawn for 120 respondents randomly selected from the 5 units formed the Petroleum Product Marketing Board (PPMB) at Ore Depot of NNPC. The instrument's reliability was carried out using test-retest method. The result gave reliability coefficient, $r = 0.86$. The result, revealed further that entrepreneurial non-formal education's strategies were appropriate and effective for workers at workplaces to acquire skills and knowledge. The paper therefore recommends among others that, there is the need for an adequate fund for the non-formal education programmes in Nigeria.

Background of the Study

Non-formal education encompasses all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system, such as functional literacy, remedial and vocational education, community education and workers education (Grattan, 1995; Kelly, 1970; Benavot, 2008). For the needed day-to-day knowledge and the ability to increase the frontiers of knowledge, there is no way a man could achieve the optimum feat in this day-to-day pursuit of knowledge if he has to limit his experience on what he did achieve during his past activities within the four corners of a school. Moreso, many industrial workers joined the service with little or no education (Townsend & Cole; 1988; UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO, 2007).

In the course of this study, the extent of which the non-formal education strategies such as constant workshops, seminars, on-the-job, career trainings and short time trainings had been employed towards capacity building and acquisition of skills for workers at the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) at Ore depot Ore was looked into. It should be noted that many of the NNPC's workers joined the service with little or no education; and that there is an assumption that many of them may not go for further studies through the formal schooling system. In this case, industrial workers with the initial little knowledge and skills are needed to be provided with functional education in order to assist them towards high productivity. Hence, such workers require constant training without compulsorily going back to the formal conventional schooling system, through means and strategies of non-formal education such as in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional trainings in order to improve upon their skills. Omole(1999), alluding to Yoder (1958), Allen and Silverzweig (1976), was of the view that most organizations needed training programmes to identify and correct the deficiencies of the products of the formal school system. Apart from such

deficiencies, Omole and Yoder noted that workers trained through the higher institutions of learning like the Universities or Polytechnics might not be adequately to meet the ever-rising demands of organizations; and to correct such shortage, some companies embark on training programmes for their employees right there in the factory or company to meet their specific needs.

The adult workers at workplaces therefore need opportunities for various forms of technical and professional trainings in order then to be productive. Lack of training opportunities tend to slow understanding especially between the union leaders' representative and the general workers on one hand, and between the owners of Industries and the entire workers on the other hand. This is due to the lack of needed variables such as training, education, communication, and so on Chatters (2007). Assuming these variables are provided initially, neither the management nor the union would in most cases take ill steps to slow down production unnecessarily. The management on behalf of the owners of industries for example embarks on wrong actions, like lock out action, those that are not only justifiable but morally wrong, since they (the management at various workplaces) too are far short of needed trainings would enhance cordial relationship with general workers (Beach, 1980).

It is on this note that the study is based, to find out whether the application of non-formal strategies such as training, career opportunity and on-the-job could be employed in providing equal access to educational opportunities for workers at workplaces as stated in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004, 1(5) (C)), that there should be:

Provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system (Pg7).

Alluding to the above, the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1973 opined that:

Non-formal education is the only tool that can guarantee equal educational opportunity for the citizenry. It shows well that the education, if properly managed will bring oriented result in any nation's educational policies because of its flexible choices, training facilities, maximum self-development and fulfillment. (pg.24).

Buttressing the advantages of the non-formal education further, the Exeter Paper of Liverright and Haygood (1968) in Omolewa (1981), submitted that, non-formal education/adult education,

is a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full time basis (unless special full time), undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge, acquisition of new skills, changes of appreciation and attitude for the purpose of identifying and solving personal and community problems. (pg.53).

The above signifies that non-formal education methods of giving knowledge and training are much needed tools towards the growth and sustainability of industries, such as the NNPC in Nigeria. Furthermore, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), Section 6 (32) (iv) states one of the responsibilities of non-formal education as to

Provide in-service, on-the-job, vocational and professional training for different categories of workers and professionals in order to improve their skills.(Pg 25)

Buttressing the above, section 6 (35)(iv) emphasized that non-formal education has a special objective of “*training the required manpower for the state agencies.*” Nevertheless, section 6 (35)(iv) does not limit its capacity to state agencies alone, since the issue of manpower development could not and should not be limited only to the state government in providing education. Private organizations, parastatals and corporations could also make use of the non-formal education strategies towards the improvement of their teaming workers.

In a similar vein, the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999:12) states that,

Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate education opportunity at all levels.

The policy interpretation of the above section does not refer to the conventional system of schooling as the only means of ensuring the “*equal and adequate educational opportunity*”. On this note, the application of non-formal strategies in response to Nigeria’s needs and priorities especially at the level of workplace development could be achieved by using non-formal strategies/programmes. Giving advice, the UNESCO suggested that the developing countries could develop their workplaces by various strategies by paying attention to workers/workplaces through

- educating and training workers constantly towards building learning workplace community;
- training workers to develop competency for quality human resources for adults;
- strengthening Institutional capacity for ownership and sustainability; and
- encouraging advocacy, development, coordination and mobilization, (UNESCO, 2007).

To say the least, the above four points could be easily attained at workplaces through the application of non-formal education strategies to constantly develop and train workers for higher productivity achievement, bearing in mind the cost effective aspect of non-formal education comparing with the formal education system.

Statement of the Problem

The UNESCO (2006) points to the fact that education has a role to play in the concept of the development of workers at industries by receiving training and knowledge in schools, workplaces and private trainings by given by organizations. Benavot (2008) was of the opinion that to move forward at workplaces, the application of non-formal education, because it involves less spending unlike the formal schooling system, needs to be employed for the successful socio-economic development in any country. It is believed that conventional schooling system could not accommodate all people that needed one form of education or the other, for lack of facilities – human and materials, financial strength, one station in life, etc. Therefore arrangements are needed in the course of building learning workplace community; with the view to developing competence for quality human resources for adult workers; strengthening institutional capacity for ownership and sustainability; and ensuring advocacy towards workplaces’ coordination and mobilization for high productivity at every workplace in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The study sets out to ascertain the extent to which the application of non-formal method/strategy could be used to develop workers towards higher productivity achievement in Nigeria. Precisely, the study was focused on the application of non-formal education strategies, such as in-service-training, career training, workshops and on-the-job trainings as methods of training and re-training of the NNPC's workers towards industrial harmony and productivity achievement.

Research Questions

- i) Could the non-formal education programmes (strategies) be used to develop workers education towards industrial harmony at workplaces?
- ii) Could the non-formal education strategies be used to train workers towards skill acquisition?
- iii) Could the non-formal education strategies/programmes be appropriate for achieving knowledge and skills through workshops, seminars and career training for higher productivity achievement

Subject: The subjects, based on workers that had already put in five years and above, were selected from the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC). That is, from the company's Petroleum Product Marketing Board (PPMB), One hundred and twenty PPMB's workers were randomly selected in the five units that formed the Board at Ore depot. Among the 120 respondents, the information gathered through the questionnaire items revealed that 18 were degree and post degree holders, 36 respondents were HND and OND equivalent, others were school certificate holders and equivalent with outstanding experience. The random selection was however purposeful in the sense that the questionnaire was administered on those respondents who had already put in five years and above; and that they had also undergone certain courses of trainings as workers, through non-formal arrangements.

Research Instruments: Questionnaire and interview were the main instruments. The researcher personally developed A – 35 items questionnaire. It consisted of 3 sections. Section A consisted of 10 items on gender, age, marital status, academic qualification, designation, years of experience, number of training and education received through non-formal arrangements. Section B consisted of 25 items, to ascertain the extent of which the non-formal education strategies' application in training the workers in the organization (depot) have contributed towards higher productivity achievements in the areas of the building learning workplace community, competence for quality human resources and strengthening workplace capacity for ownership, and sustainability (as suggested by the UNESCO's mandate to developing nations).

Procedure and Reliability

The respondents were requested to rate their interest on the application of non-formal education strategies towards the achievement of industrial harmony by using a 2 points scale; that is, Agreed and Disagreed. The instrument was developed through the test-retest method. The outcome gave reliability co-efficient, $r=0.86$. This is reliable.

Analysis, Findings and Discussions of Findings

Simple descriptive analysis (percentage) was used to interpret the data.

Questions 1 and 2 responded on the matters of Industrial harmony and on the achievement of skills towards job quality.

Table 1: Industrial harmony and skills development at workplace using Non-formal education strategies

N=120

	Items	NFS Effective		NFS Non-Effective	
		Respondents	%	Respondents	%
1.	Using non-formal strategies to train workers on managing industrial conflicts	73	62.5	47	39.1
2.	Using Non-formal strategies to impact skills towards workers ' job quality performance	66	55	54	45

NFS: Non-Formal Strategies

Table 1 above reveals how effective the application of non-formal education strategies i.e on-the-job, in-service and career training, could be used to train workers (both union and management members) towards manpower development at workplaces in Nigeria instead of the workers living their job for full time conventional schooling system. The result therefore shows that non-formal education could be acceptable in imparting technical know-how and training towards skills acquisition of the workers in managing industrial conflicts at workplace, and for training workers towards quality job performance giving 62.5% and 55% respectively.

Table 2: The application of non-formal strategies towards achieving the UNESCO's mandate, for higher productivity achievement in Nigeria.

N=120

	Items	NFS Effective		NFS Non-Effective	
		Respondents	%	Respondents	%
a	Building learning workplace community	62	51.6	58	48.3
b	Developing competence for quality human resources for adults	68	56.7	52	43.3
c.	Strengthening institutional capacity for ownership and sustainability	48	40	72	60
d.	Advocacy, Development, Coordination and Mobilization	38	31.7	82	68.3

NFS: Non-Formal Strategies

Data in table 2 reveals that the building leaning workplace community could be achieved through non-formal strategies. This agrees with the findings of Yorder (1958), Beach (1980) and Omole (1999). Also, the table establishes that non-formal strategies/programmes could be effectively employed towards the attainment of skills and competencies for quality human resources for adults. This therefore corroborates the findings of Townsend and Coles (1988), Kelly (1970) and Benavot (2008), that non-formal education is comprehensive educational system towards competency as skills acquisition. However, the respondents' responses revealed that non-formal strategies could not be effective towards the attainment of the strengthening of Institutional capacity for ownership and sustainability; and also that non-formal strategies could not be applied towards advocacy (that is,

measures, legislations, workers' rules and regulations). Key Informant Interview (KII) carried out with some of the top management of Ore depot revealed that the issues of institutional capacity and advocacy matters are those areas that are being determined by the government's regulations and labour laws, and not through mere training of the workers at workplaces.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper has established that non-formal education is a tool towards development of workers at workplaces. Precisely, non-formal education's strategies such as workshops, seminars, career training, etc, are good alternatives to giving skills and education to teeming industrial workers in Nigeria. In this vein, it is deemed pertinent to recommend the following among others that:

- Adequate funds should be made available for non-formal education in Nigeria;
- There is the need for an overhaul of the strategies, organization and administration of non-formal education in Nigeria;
- There should be public enlightenment for workers at workplaces to appreciate the worth of non-formal education towards accelerated and sustainable development of the social, political and economic growth of our industries in Nigeria;
- There is the need for the Nigerian government to employ the service of the United Nations' Technical Committee in facilitating the workability of the UNESCO's suggestions (as highlighted above) especially in the areas of developing capacity for ownership and advocacy, and for the improvement of workplaces in Nigeria.

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