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# CHALLENGES OF CONSTRUCTION SITES OPERATIVES TRAINING IN OYO STATE NIGERIA

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**Abstract:** The research evaluates the challenges of construction site operatives training in Nigeria with a view to enhancing the performance of construction site operatives. To achieve this aim a convenient sampling technique was used to select the construction companies within the study area and random sampling to select the professional and operatives to be sampled. The sampling frame comprises the professionals in the built environments and site operatives. A total number of **160** questionnaires was administered out of which 142 was returned completed representing 88.75 response rate. Returned data were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 21.0. The result of the analysis showed that lack of support from government, lack of fund to finance the training, uncertainty of project continuity, high level of corruption among stakeholders, poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme, inadequate vocational centers were among the topmost challenges of construction site operatives training in Oyo State Nigeria. The study concludes that overcoming all this challenges will in no doubt reduce if not totally eradicate poor construction operatives training and as well bring about an improvement in construction operatives performance. It is therefore recommend that Government should provide adequate support both financial and nonfinancial for construction industries so as to aid ease operative training.

**Keywords:** challenges, construction site, operatives, performance, training

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In Human Resource Management training is fundamental and key, the significance and benefit of which has been perceived over time. Considering the reasonable citation coined from the word of a well-known old Chinese scholar and rationalist Confucius. "Give a man a fish and you feed him for limited days. Encourage a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime" McClelland (2002), This adage has clarified plainly that it is so critical to train operative to vanquish his/her work than simply give him/her a salary income task. The requirement for training is more articulated than any other time in recent memory, judging by looking closely into the present work atmosphere and the exponential development in innovation with its impact on the economy and society.

Various definitions have been utilized to elucidate the concept of training. For example, Noe (2008) and Murton, Inman and O'Sullivan (2010) defined training as a deliberate training cycle intended to guarantee that operatives in an organization are furnished with the correct abilities to meet the organization goals. In the same vein Kraiger (2003) and Armstrong (2004) defines training as method of teaching, educating and practicing to improve one's fitness and ability. Training in like manner, is the arranged and methodical change of conduct through learning occasions, projects and guidance which empower people to accomplish the levels of knowledge, expertise and fitness expected to complete their work successfully Armstrong (2000). By suggestion, training spread across interrelated stages and process that fortify operatives' skills and technicalities expected to carry out their activity adequately (Koster, 2004; Ogundipe, Ogunde, Olaniran, Ajao, Ogunbayo and Ogundipe, 2018)

In line with the above definitions, training can be viewed as corporate endeavors to change workers impression toward enhancing organizational performance. It is a focus on eliminating any hindrance between the required standard of operative's performance and their actual performance. In addition it is also a means of changing the conduct of people by equipping them with whatever particular extra knowledge, abilities or state of mind they required to perform up to required standard.

As indicated by Gittell (2002) operative capacities are modify via convincing training exercise. Not only does it upgrades operative overall performance to satisfactorily do well on current task but also enhance the capacities, knowledge and perspective of the workers indispensable for the subsequent task, thereby increasing the level of the prevalent organization performance.

Despite the important role training play in developing construction operatives, various researches have shown that large amounts of the operatives in construction industries in Nigeria still lack adequate training and development (Amusan, Ayo, Oluwatobi, 2017; Ogundipe, Olaniran, Ajao, and Ogunbayo, 2018; Gunu, Oni, Tsado and Ajayi, 2013; Nduka, Amusan, Akinbile and Owolabi, 2018).

According to Haslinda and Mahyuddin (2009) the inflow of the Togolese and Benin operatives into the Nigeria construction industries as prompted the termination of labor advancement in the nation in light of the fact that most contractors like to patronize them because of their comprehensive practical experience as well as satisfactory proficiency in discharging

their duties. This specialized capacity of theirs can simply be attributed to the training program or development scheme given by their governments or construction industry in their home land which has some way or another suffered set back in Nigeria.

In a research conducted by Bamisile (2004) he found out that in previous years huge numbers of the artisans (skilled workers) are been trained via give-and-take approach, expert training institutions as well as technical colleges, assessment test are also conducted at the tail end of the training time frame, regrettably, most of this genuine formal professional instructional hub for training experts is no longer in existence.

According to Osei (2000) the dependent on expert personnel should be minimal and furthermore that there ought to be an expanded training program that would provide enough high level technicalities and also specialized skills to address the economy demand in general. Similarly Edoghogho (2011) expressed that the factors to be consider in the requests of training of operative at work regarding cost, time, rate of return on investment (ROI) are part of elements hindering several construction companies from participating in operative training.

Similarly Wahab (2005) establish that economic and social changes, shortage of training staff, lack of fund, corruption are among the factors militating contrary to the accomplishment of organizing an operative training program. In an investigation carried out by Osei (2000) on assessing workers training in the National institute of strategy studies Kuru, recognizes the associated factors: lack of unit authorization, absence of usage of preparation strategies by firm, issue of specialists put in for unimportant training area, lack of capital.

Similarly Okuntade (2014) led an exploration on the relevance of structure building specialist preparation to contemporary building production firm in Nigeria. Descriptive survey method was adopted where 80 numbers of surveys form was designed and distributed to construction professional and 55 was returned and analyze. The studies revealed that the top ten among the factors affecting operative training are: inadequate inspiration, non-authorization of licensed innovation right, absence of capital, absence of staff improvement, insufficient inspiration for expertise training, absence of accessible period for training, absence of operational controlling body, poor arrangement and implementation of strategies, undesirable frame of mind of the board and absence of premonition. It is against this background this research is set to evaluate the challenges of construction site operative training with a view to enhancing the performance of construction site operatives.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study evaluates the challenges of construction site operatives training in Nigeria. To achieve this aim cross-sectional survey research design was adopted. This according to Ojo (2003) is the type of research design where the research variables are in existence and cannot be manipulated by the researcher and the survey is carried out at specific point in time.

The study focused on the construction companies that registered with Oyo state Government while the sampling frame was drawn from the list of built environment professionals such as Builder, Architect, Quantity surveyor, Structural/Service engineers as well as construction site operatives such as Skilled labour, Semi-skilled labour, Unskilled labour and Operators. The study makes use of convenient sampling technique in selecting the construction companies as well as random sampling technique in selecting the professionals and operatives in each company. 160 well-structured close ended questionnaires was design base on the study objectives to sample respondent opinion out of which 142 were completely returned representing 88.75 response rate. Returned data were analyzed with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 21.0 using percentile, relative importance index (RII) and Mann Whitney U Test.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In table 1 which shows the respondents profile, it was deduced that 22.7% of the operatives have between 6-10years experience of construction works, while 33.3% has between 11-15 years' experience of construction work representing the highest percentage, while 28.0% have between 16-20 years' experience of construction works, while 6.7% have over 21 years' experience of construction works, while only 9.3% have between 1-5 years' experience of construction works, in all 90.7% of the operatives have over 6 years' experience of construction works.

On the other hand only 11.9% of the professionals have below 6 years' experience of construction works while the remaining 88.1% of the professionals have over 6 years' experience of construction works. This implies that the respondents in both categories have adequate experience of construction works which makes their response to be more reliable.

The table also depicts the designation of the respondents, and it shows that only 6.7% of the operatives are unskilled while the remaining 93.3% are semi-skilled, skilled and operators. On the other hand all the professionals are affiliated with at least one profession in the construction industry. This means that all the respondents have undergone one professional training or the other which in turn qualifies them to fill the questionnaire correctly.

Table 1. Profile of respondents

Site operatives			Professionals		
Year of experience	Frequency	Percent	Year of experience	Frequency	Percent
1-5 years	7	9.3	1-5 years	8	11.9
6-10 years	17	22.7	6-10 years	14	20.9
11-15 years	25	33.3	11-15 years	18	26.9
16-20 years	21	28.0	16-20 years	21	31.3
21 years above	5	6.7	21 years above	6	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Designation of respondent			Designation of respondent		
Skilled	31	41.3	Architect	21	31.3
semi-skilled	19	25.3	Builder	20	30.0
Unskilled	5	6.7	Quantity surveyor	15	22.4
Operator	20	26.7	Structural engineer	11	16.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2. Challenges of operatives training on construction sites

Identified variables	Operatives		Professionals		Overall	
	RII	Rank	RII	Rank	RII	Rank
Lack of support from government	0.908	1	0.809	1	0.859	1
Lack of fund to finance the training	0.833	3	0.794	3	0.814	2
Uncertainty of project continuity	0.825	5	0.800	2	0.813	3
High level of corruption among stakeholders	0.792	15	0.788	4	0.790	4
Poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme	0.800	10	0.778	5	0.789	5
Inadequate vocational centers	0.797	12	0.778	5	0.788	6
Lack of adequate encouragement by organization	0.881	2	0.689	22	0.785	7
Negative attitude of management towards training	0.794	14	0.772	7	0.783	8
Lack of health and safety knowledge of the trainee	0.831	4	0.735	14	0.783	8
Inadequate of training staff	0.808	6	0.757	10	0.783	8
Government negligence to training of craftsmen	0.797	12	0.763	8	0.780	11
Poor planning and execution of policies	0.806	8	0.754	11	0.780	11
Expected financial benefits of training outcome not known	0.806	8	0.729	18	0.767	13
The procedure of technical training too cumbersome	0.800	10	0.732	16	0.766	14
Economic and social changes	0.808	6	0.720	19	0.764	15
Lack of organization foresight	0.772	19	0.742	13	0.757	16
Low level of sensitivity by organization	0.750	22	0.763	8	0.757	16
Lack of available time for training	0.781	18	0.732	16	0.756	18
Absence of knowledge of training functions	0.772	19	0.735	14	0.754	19
Frequent dispute among stakeholders	0.761	21	0.745	12	0.753	20
Lack of effective regulatory body	0.783	16	0.711	20	0.747	21
Lack of cooperation among managers	0.783	16	0.705	21	0.744	22

Table 2 shows the level of agreement of the respondents on 22 identified challenges of operatives training as it relates to their organization. Respondents are to rate their level of agreement on a five point likert scale where (5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= slightly agree, 2= disagree, 1= strongly disagree).

The top ten among the challenges are: Lack of support from government, Lack of fund to finance the training, Uncertainty of project continuity, High level of corruption among stakeholders, Poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme, Inadequate vocational centers, Lack of adequate encouragement by organization, Negative attitude of management towards training, Lack of health and safety knowledge of the trainee, Inadequate of training staff.

The major challenge in construction operative training is lack of government support. In other to organize a successful training for operative it is important for government to provide an enabling environment plus other financial and non-financial support in the absence of which it may be difficult for the organization to organize a successful training. This is against the observation of Okuntade (2014) as it was not ranked among the first ten variables identified. This implies that challenges faced by organization differ from location to another.

Another important challenge of operative training is lack of fund to finance the training. The financial implication of organizing training for operative has made it difficult for many organizations to train their operative especially when the financial benefit of the training to the organization cannot be ascertained and when there is no possibility of winning another contract relating to what they need to train the operative on. Most of this organization tends to look for less expensive alternative way to solve their problem rather than incurring the training expenses. This is in line with the findings of Osei (2000) who revealed lack of capital as one of the major challenges of construction operative training.

Similarly uncertainty of project continuity is another challenge of operative training. The non-continuity and uncertainty to get new contract due to the nature of construction work has made it difficult for many construction firms to invest in operative training instead they tend to subcontract the aspect of work that require training or temporarily engage the service of operative that has related knowledge as the case may be. This is done in order to minimize cost and maximize

profit. This is also against the view of Dzazu and Ayegba (2011) who revealed that lack of instructive and qualified expert personnel and low quality (low talented) representative at operative level are the major factors affecting operative training. Furthermore high level of corruption among stakeholders is another challenge of operative training. Corruption in Nigeria today as gradually become a major problem as it's now peculiar to many sectors if not all. In construction industry stakeholders tend to cut corner at all cost not minding the implication on the operative or on the project. This has made it difficult for resources allocated for operative training to be totally used for that purpose. This is equally against the view of Edoghogho (2011) who expressed that cost, time, rate of return on investment (ROI) are a portion of the factors hindering numerous construction firms from participating in operative training.

Also poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme is another challenge of operative training. In other to encourage an operative to participate in training there is supposed to be an incentive either financial or nonfinancial that will serve as a reward for operative who successfully participate in a training as this will serve as a morale booster for the operative and make them see reason to participate in the training. This is equally substantiated by Okuntade (2014) who revealed that inadequate motivation for skill training is among the challenges of operative training.

Similarly inadequate vocational center is another challenge of operative training. Vocational centers where operative supposed to learn practical skills, technicalities, knowledge and capabilities required by their job as gradually went into extinction in Nigeria and the little remaining are no longer effective as required. This is now posing a challenge for operative training as there are no alternative centers to fill the vacuum. This is in line with the observation of Bamisile (2004) who asserts that most of the genuine formal professional training centers for training experts is no longer in existence.

Finally negative attitude of management towards training is another challenge of operative training. When an organization does not have a positive attitude towards operative training such organization will never see a reason for organizing training for operative. Many construction firms in Nigeria do not include training in their priority list and hence does not have any plan to train their operatives. This is against the findings of Wahab (2005) who found that subjective and quantitative deficiency in operatives is one of the variables militating against the accomplishment of development of operative training program.

Table 3. Mann-Whitney U test on challenges of operatives training on construction sites

	Mann-Whitney U	Z	Sig.	Professional Median	Site Operative Median	R	Decision
Lack of adequate encouragement by organization	1143.50	-5.482	0.000	4.4	3.5	0.5	LE
Uncertainty of project continuity	2177.00	-0.806	0.420	4.2	4.1	0.1	SE
Lack of fund to finance the training	2040.50	-1.375	0.169	4.3	4.0	0.1	SE
Inadequate of training staff	2059.50	-1.319	0.187	4.1	3.9	0.1	SE
Poor motivation and lack incentives schemes	2212.50	-0.589	0.556	4.0	4.0	0.1	SE
Lack of available time for training	2026.00	-1.458	0.145	3.9	3.7	0.1	SE
Lack of effective regulatory body	1876.50	-2.171	0.030	3.9	3.6	0.2	SE
Poor planning and execution of policies	2089.50	-1.201	0.230	4.1	3.9	0.1	SE
Negative attitude of management towards training	2161.00	-0.854	0.393	4.0	3.9	0.1	SE
Lack of organization foresight	2107.00	-1.075	0.282	3.9	3.7	0.1	SE
Low level of sensitivity by organization	2183.00	-0.740	0.459	3.7	3.9	0.1	SE
High level of corruption among stakeholders	2338.50	-0.007	0.994	4.0	4.0	0.0	VSE
Lack of support from government	2286.50	-0.248	0.804	4.0	4.1	0.0	VSE
Government negligence to training of craftsmen	2173.50	-0.775	0.438	4.0	3.9	0.1	SE
Lack of cooperation among managers	1736.00	-2.818	0.005	4.0	3.5	0.2	SE
Inadequate vocational centers	2192.50	-0.698	0.485	4.0	3.9	0.1	SE
Absence of knowledge of training functions	2056.50	-1.354	0.176	3.9	3.7	0.1	SE
Lack of health and safety knowledge of the trainee	1641.50	-3.237	0.001	4.2	3.7	0.3	ME
Frequent dispute among stakeholders	2276.00	-0.296	0.767	3.8	3.8	0.0	VSE
The procedure for technical training too cumbersome	1898.50	-2.117	0.034	4.0	3.7	0.2	SE
Expected financial benefits of training outcome not known	1883.00	-2.122	0.034	4.0	3.7	0.2	SE
Economic and social changes	1741.50	-2.747	0.006	4.1	3.6	0.2	SE

[22] criteria.1 = small effect (SE), .3 = medium effect (ME), .5 = large effect (LE), < .1 = very small effect (VSE)

Table 3 shows the result of the Mann-Whitney U-Test on challenges of operatives training on construction sites. The result shows if there exist statistically difference in the opinion of operatives and professionals on the challenges of operatives training on construction sites or not. The above table shows that all the variables that have their level of significant above 0.05 are significant challenges of operatives training as it shows no difference in the opinion of operatives and professions while those that have their significant below 0.05 are less significant as it shows a clear difference in the opinion of operatives and professions.

The result revealed that there was a significant difference in the opinion of professionals and site operatives on lack of adequate encouragement by organization, lack of cooperation among managers, lack of effective regulatory body, lack of safety knowledge of trainee, the procedure for technical training too cumbersome, expected financial outcome of training not known, economic and social changes. This implies that these challenges are less significant and as it shows a clear difference in the opinion of professionals and site operatives.

The result also revealed that there is no clear difference in the opinion of professionals and site operatives on uncertainty of project continuity, lack of fund to finance the training, inadequate of training staff, poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme, lack of available time for training, poor planning and execution of policies, negative attitude of management towards training, lack of organization foresight, low level of sensitivity by organization, high level of corruption among stakeholders, lack of support from government, government negligence to training of craftsmen, inadequate vocational centers, absence of knowledge of training functions, frequent dispute among stakeholders. This implies that all this challenges are very germane and cannot be overlooked as the opinion of professionals and site operatives are the same on them.

Therefore for any organization to organize a successful operative training all this challenges must first be looked into and be given due consideration as they can serve as impediment to a successful operatives training.

#### 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

From the result of the investigation it is obvious that lack of support from government, lack of fund to finance the training, uncertainty of project continuity, high level of corruption among stakeholders, poor motivation and lack of incentive scheme, inadequate vocational centers, cumulatively contributed to the poor operative training in Nigeria's construction industry. Overcoming all this challenges will in no doubt reduce if not totally eradicate poor construction operatives training and as well bring about an improvement in construction operatives performance. It is therefore recommended that:

- Government should provide adequate support both financial and nonfinancial for construction industries so as to aid ease operative training.
- Government should provide more vocational centers and also resuscitate the existing ones in other to provide more training centers for operatives.
- In order to overcome the challenge of lack of available time for training, construction industries should incorporate training into their master plan.

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