

SELF CONCEPT AND DEMOGRAPHICS AS DETERMINANTS OF ATTITUDE TO INDUSTRIAL TRAINING AMONG STUDENTS OF TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

The present study was structured to investigate the contributions of personality, motivational traits and demographic characteristics to attitude toward industrial training. This study employed a cross sectional – survey design. A sample of two hundred and fifty students was accidentally sampled from students engaged in the mandatory industrial training program from the Oyo State Polytechnic and the University of Ibadan, in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Result showed that respondents with high self-esteem reported more positive attitude towards training than respondents with low self-esteem. Further analysis revealed that the mean score for students high on need for achievement was significantly higher than those with low need for achievement and that age, sex and course level jointly predicted attitude towards training. The implications of the findings were discussed and recommendations made.

Key words: Self esteem, need for achievement, attitude and training

Introduction

Relating theoretical knowledge to real life experience is very important for budding future professionals in Nigeria as it eliminates ambiguities, erroneous beliefs and engenders the much needed competence and professionalism mentored by experts in the fields. Such information or knowledge gain (formal or informal) would help shape recipients into productive individuals. Students with industrial experience are expected to hopefully display adequate knowledge and competence that will help them to successfully accomplish various tasks in their

future jobs or endeavours. Understanding issues and feelings towards these activities is very important for coordinators, tutors and tertiary's institutions which inculcate knowledge for the purpose of improving students' performance. Research has demonstrated the importance of positive students' attitudes towards industrial training which form the basis of this study.

The major goal of industrial training (I.T) is to guide students toward having successful experience on the job. Industrial training is particularly important for making Sciences, Engineering and Technology students work ready. For example, to graduate from any of the programme in the Sciences, Engineering and Technology in the tertiary institutions all students must complete a minimum of 60 days of approved Industrial Training. It means, not only do the students graduate with some practical experience; the students also qualify for accreditation by the respective professional bodies. Thus, students experience what it is like to work in a professional organisation and this increases their technical, interpersonal and their oral and written communication skills. Many employers use industry work experience as a prerequisite for new graduates. Employers also use this period as a chance to assess new employees for future employment. Consequently, it is important to take into account students' interests, opinions, and needs and personal factors when developing a technological curriculum. It is equally important for those implementing the policy to have an understanding of students' attitudes toward Industrial training. Attitude in this study is defined as "negative or emotional relationship with or predisposition toward an object, an institution or person" (Le Roux, 1994). It has to do with people's emotions and how these influence their behaviour. Attitudes determine individuals' experiences and reaction to life. It is assumed that if students are positively disposed toward the industrial training, for example, "on the job technical knowledge", then they will be more interest in their field of endeavour. If a student is not well disposed toward Industrial training (IT), he or she may feel reluctant to undergo the training or display truancy during the training. Such a person is unlikely to want to learn and obtain skills or participate in assignments that require the use of the knowledge acquired from the Industrial training (IT). On the contrary students who exhibit a positive attitude toward a subject are more likely to actively engage in learning during and after instruction

(Popham, 1994). When a student dislikes Industrial training (IT), his attitude is reflected in actions resulting in limited engagement with the industrial training (IT).

It is almost impossible to develop or acquire the desired technological skills when factors related to students' attitudes are not identified as a matter of urgency, and feasible strategies and intervention programmes organised in situations in which this is negative. This is important because attitude affect subsequent actions. Such strategies might help in addressing the problem and hopefully encourage students in adopting meaningful and favourable attitudes toward industrial training. It is acknowledged in the present study that there are many other factors that influence student's attitudes toward industrial training. The psychological factors addressed in this study are self-esteem and need for achievement.

Self-esteem refers to an individual's overall self-evaluation of his/her competencies (Rosenberg, 1965). It is the evaluation and descriptive conceptualization that individuals make and maintain with regard to themselves. In this sense, self-esteem is a personal evaluation reflecting what people think of themselves as individuals. Self-esteem reflects the degree to which the individual "sees him [her] self as a competent and need-satisfying individual" thus, the high self-esteem individual has a "sense of personal adequacy and a sense of having achieved need satisfaction in the past" (Pierce and Gardner, 2004). Low self-esteem is widely recognised as a factor that is associated with poor educational attainment and non-participation in education and training. Self-esteem in individuals has an effect on inclusion and achievement. This is increasingly recognised in many of the key targets and initiatives that impact on the industrial training students. Low self-esteem is often seen as a barrier to people taking up learning opportunities, as identified by McGivney (2001). Lack of confidence relates to poor self-esteem as an attitudinal barrier to learning. Poor participation could be enhanced if greater understanding and attention is paid to the role of self-esteem in attracting and sustaining students' interest during their I.T training.

Need for achievement may also influence attitude towards I.T training. Need for Achievement is related to the difficulty of tasks people choose to undertake. Those with low N-Ach may choose very easy tasks, in order to minimise risk of failure, or highly difficult tasks,

such that a failure would not be embarrassing. Those with high N-Ach tend to choose moderately difficult tasks, with the belief that they are challenging, but within reach. It is expected that students high on N-Ach are characterised by a tendency to seek challenges and a high degree of independence thus, having positive attitude towards industrial training. Their most satisfying reward is the recognition of their achievements. Based on this, the study proposed that need for achievement will play a role in attitude towards industrial training.

In Nigeria, Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is a skill training programme designed to expose and prepare students of universities and other tertiary institutions for the Industrial Work situation they are likely to meet after graduation. The Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES) is the accepted training programme, which is part of the approved minimum academic standard in the various degree programmes for all Nigerian Universities. The scheme is aimed at bridging the existing gap between theory and practice of Sciences, Agriculture, Medical Sciences (including Nursing), Engineering and Technology, Management, and Information and Communication Technology and other professional educational programmes in the Nigerian tertiary institutions. It is aimed at exposing students to machines and equipment, professional work methods and ways of safeguarding the work areas and workers in industries, offices, laboratories, hospitals and other organizations. In Nigeria, participation in SIWES has become a necessary pre-condition for the award of Diploma and Degree certificates in specific disciplines in most institutions of higher learning in the country, in accordance with the education policy of government. The operator is the ITF, with other coordinating agencies (NUC, NCCE, NBTE), employers of labour and the institutions. While the funding is provided by The Federal Government of Nigeria, the beneficiaries include undergraduate students studying Agriculture, Sciences, Engineering and Technology, Technology, Environmental, Science, Education, Medical Science and Pure and Applied Sciences. The duration is four months for Polytechnics and Colleges of Education, and six months for the Universities (ITF, 2012).

SIWES plays a significant role in students and generally in human resource development in Nigeria. Students' attitude to Industrial training is an area that has been researched however; there are certain aspects that require further research. It is still unclear how students'

dispositions and motivation affects the development of students' attitudes toward industrial training. As a result of this, the researchers investigated factors influencing penultimate year students' attitudes toward industrial training subject. The present study was structured to investigate whether the contributions of personality, motivational traits and demographic characteristics are the most important dispositional determinants of attitude toward industrial training. Specifically the study seeks to achieve the following:

- To assess whether the perceptions of low or high levels of self-esteem among students play any role in their attitudes toward industrial training.
- To establish the extent to which students need for achievement influence their attitudes toward Industrial training.
- What is the combined and individual influence of age, type of discipline, gender, self esteem, need for achievement to the prediction students' attitude toward industrial training.

Attitude towards training

Training is teaching/learning activities carried out for the primary purpose of helping members of an organization to acquire and apply the knowledge, abilities and attitudes needed by that organization to carry out its job. Indeed, skills or attitudes, as a determinant of behaviour and performance can be shaped by new experience often provided by activities included in training programmes (Lawal, 2006; Adeyoju, 1999). This training can be carried out either in government or private organisations both locally and abroad. Rahman, et al. (2009) and Osman et al. (2008) identified that student prepare themselves and improve their personal attitude, work attitude, communication, leadership and other soft skills before they graduate through going on Industrial training. IT is reported to improve job opportunities for students since it allows them to refine their job skills and work values, focus on their career choices, directly access job sources, and impress potential employers (Mihail, 2006; Callanan and Benzing, 2004). It is a positive Industrial experience for university students to improve their ability to secure career-oriented positions (Callanan and Benzing, 2004), leadership skills (Wasonga and Murphy, 2006), specialist knowledge, information technology, time management, and teamwork (Mihail,

2006). It also gives the trainees direct contact with industry personnel, which could help them secure employment upon graduation.

Mat et. al. (2011) conducted a survey after some students have completed their five months industrial training in 2009. Overall, the students from the technology faculty achieved an average performance before the industrial training of 41% of the 'knowledge', 49% of the 'skills' and 65% for 'attitude'. After completing the industrial training, these three parameters were increased to 89% of the 'knowledge', 88% of the 'skills' and 95% for 'attitude'. On the benefits of industrial training, 91% of respondents agreed it was useful in providing added value to the career opportunities, while 88% agreed it was beneficial in improving their qualifications after graduation and 92% agreed it was useful in providing guidance for future careers. There was an increase in the knowledge, skills and attitudes aspect of the students themselves. They were able to use their learned knowledge in the actual work situation. Adaeze (2011) investigated the attitude of students and student-teachers towards the teaching profession in Minna, Niger State. The results revealed that participants held positive attitude towards the teaching profession but at different levels of significance. She concluded that the attitude of students and student-teachers to teaching profession is a reflection of the self esteem of school personnel towards their career.

Self-esteem

The most frequently used definition of self-esteem is global self-esteem, which refers to a person's beliefs of overall self-worth (Rosenberg, 1965). High self-esteem has been associated with happiness and well-being, whereas individuals with low self-esteem have been found to suffer from poor mental and physical health (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger and Vohs, 2003). Thomson (2005) found that high levels of self-worth influenced higher grades at school. Gonzalez-Pienda et al. (2002) reported that their self-concept was statistically related to their academic achievement.

Achievement Motivation

Motivation is an unconscious concern for achieving excellence in accomplishments through one's individual effort (Cooper and Locke, 2000). Individuals high in achievement motivation (or need for

achievement) are known to be good in setting challenging goals for themselves; assuming personal responsibility for goal accomplishment; are highly persistent in the pursuit of goals; take calculated risks to achieve goals by setting moderately difficult goals; and actively collect and use information for feedback purposes (Johns, 1996). They tend towards these behaviours even in the absence of external stimuli or incentives, and in the presence of achievement-arousing stimuli, they exhibit these behaviours more strongly than do individuals low in achievement motivation. Achievement motivation is theoretically predicted to contribute to effective leadership of small task-oriented groups and effective entrepreneurship. People who are high on need for achievement are concerned with making better their own performance and that of others. They are often concerned with innovation and long-term goal involvement. Johns (1996) believes they do these things because they are intrinsically satisfying. Achievement motivation concept can be effectively and conveniently promoted in the university system, especially at the departmental level where staff and students' sizes could be classified as small and medium-sized.

Self Esteem and Attitude towards Training

The empirical importance of self-esteem and its contribution to individual life-career success have been documented. Massey and colleagues (2003) found that the extent to which students have positive experiences in high school has important implications for their self-esteem and future plans to pursue post secondary education. Several studies have also evaluated self-esteem outcomes for unemployed people who attend training programs. Muller (1992) investigated the impact of personal development courses on unemployed women's level of self-esteem and depression and found that respondents who were engaged in personal development courses were high on self esteem but low on depression compared to those in the control group. Self-esteem benefits from the course were maintained at follow-up. Long-term benefits to self-esteem were identified in this study. Noe and Wilk (1993) explore the factors influencing employees participation in the training program, some of the factors identified are self-efficacy and work environment perception as reinforced by learning attitude and the developmental needs perception. Reimers (2003) reported that successful professional

development experiences have a powerful impact on teacher's work both in and out of classroom, especially as it improves their self esteem and positive perceptions about their job considering that a number of teachers are underprepared for their profession.

Need for achievement and attitude towards training

Several empirical studies have shown that employee's motivation is a major variable of interest in finding the level of participation in training program (Allen, 1999; Maurer, 1994; Noe and Wilk, 1993). Sagie and Elizur (1999) described the need for achievement as an impetus drive in undertaking obligated responsibilities perfectly and achieving success. That is, an individual who possesses a high level need for achievement has higher probability to be involved in entrepreneurial activity.

Evidence that trainee motivation may be related to transfer of training was demonstrated by Facticeau et al. (1995), who found that pre-training motivation was positively related to perceived training transfer. Thus, individuals who reported higher levels of motivation were more likely to indicate that they had benefited from the training. Additionally, research has shown that trainees who enter training with higher levels of motivation learn more and are more likely to perform better in training than their less motivated counterparts (Baldwin et al., 1991; Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas, 1990).

Method

This study employed a cross sectional – survey design. The independent variables are self-esteem, need for achievement while attitude towards industrial training is the dependent variable. The population of study comprises of students in The Oyo State Polytechnic and the University of Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria who were currently on industrial training. Two hundred and fifty (250) students of various institution of higher learning were sampled using the accidental sampling techniques.

Instruments

The instrument was a self report questionnaire. Section A tapped the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants used in the study. Attitude towards industrial training was measured using a 5-items adapted from Truiit et al (2012). For this study the responses were anchored on a 5-point scale which indicate "1" as "strongly disagree",

and "5" as "strongly agree". **Respondents with increasing scores above the mean scores were regarded as having favourable attitude towards industrial training. Reliability was 0.75 Cronbach alpha.**

Students' self esteem was measured using Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale (1995). The Rosenberg scale is the most widely used measure of global self-esteem (Demo, 1985). The RSE is a 10-item Guttman scale with high internal reliability (alpha .92). Rosenberg (1979) reported that the scale is correlated modestly with mood measures. Total score on the self-esteem scale was computed by summing the responses for all of the items on the scale. High scores above the mean represent positive self-esteem, while low scores represent low self-esteem.

Need for achievement was measured using the Mehrabian Achievement Motivation Scale (1968). Mehrabian (1975) reported internal consistency reliability coefficients of .72 for males and .61 for females and split-half reliabilities of .69 and .55 for the same scale. A six-point Likert-type format was used for subjects' responses, with a high score indicating a high level of achievement motivation. A total score on the achievement motivation scale was computed by summing the responses for all of the positive items on the scale, then summing the responses selected for all of the negative items on the scale. The difference between these two figures then was obtained and a constant of 20 was added to obtain the final score.

Procedure

The researchers sought from the manager or director of each of training centre selected for the study. The purpose of the study was duly explained to them and verbal consent was obtained to carry out the questionnaire administration in the training centres. The researcher also obtained a verbal consent from the respondent after explaining to the respondents the nature of the research and that the study was strictly for research purpose only. The respondents were assured that the information would be treated confidentially. Two hundred and fifty questionnaires were administer and retrieved immediately after completion. The properly completed questionnaires were used in the analysis.

Data Analysis

The data collected was analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.0. The demographic characteristics were analysed using frequency count and simple percentage and the items reliability was tested using Cronbach alpha item analysis. Four hypotheses were tested in the study; hypotheses 1 and 2 and 3 were tested using independent T-test to assess the differences in attitude towards industrial trainings based on the independent variables levels or dimensions. While fourth hypothesis was tested using multiple regression analysis in order to ascertain the joint and independent contribution to the prediction of the dependent variable.

Results

Eighty eight (88, 35.2%) are males, 162(64.8%) are females. Two hundred and thirty six 236(94.4%) of the respondents are single while 14(5.6%) are married. Based on type of training 236(94.4%) were trained on technological industrial training, 4(1.6%) were trained on computer and information science, 4(1.6%) engage in professional training, 1(0.4%) trained in other university degree programme, 2(0.8%) trained on microbiology, 1(0.4%) trained on Microsoft programme.

The result of the hypotheses tested revealed that respondents high on self-esteem ($M=35.59$, $S.D= 6.64$) reported higher scores on attitude towards training than respondents low on self-esteem ($M=28.78$, $S.D =6.67$). Respondents with high self-esteem reported more positive attitude towards training ($t(248) = -7.10$, $p<.05$) than respondents with low self-esteem. The significant influence of need for achievement was demonstrated $t(248) = -4.09$, $p<.05$. Result revealed that the mean score for students high on need for achievement ($M=34.22$, $S.D= 6.96$) was significantly higher than those with low need for achievement ($M=30.13$, $S.D =9.15$). Age, sex and course level jointly predicted attitude towards training ($R^2 = 0.11$, $F(3,246) = 10.37$, $p < .01$). When combined age, sex and level accounted for 11% of the change observed in the self-report attitude towards training where age ($\beta = .25$, $p<.01$), sex ($\beta = .18$, $p<.01$) and level ($\beta = -.16$, $p<.01$) were significant independent predictors of attitude towards training.

Discussion

Specifically, this study provided answers to three research hypotheses tested. The study found that students on IT with high self esteem significantly reported higher scores on attitude towards training scale than respondents with low self esteem. This result confirms the findings from several studies that have evaluated effect of self-esteem outcomes and demonstrated that self esteem influence individuals' personal attitude towards performance and productivity. The findings is similar to that of Noe and Wilk (1993) who demonstrated that self concept is an important determinant of participation in training, learning and development program (Maurer, 2002; Maurer & Tarulli, 1994; Noe &Wilk, 1993). When an individual believes that his/her self concept will be boosted after their training, there is the likelihood that such individual will participate actively in the training and learning to completion.

The result also demonstrated that students with high need for achievement significantly reported more positive attitude towards training than students with low need for achievement. This finding aligned with findings literature. Several empirical studies have shown that employee's motivation is a major variable of interest in determining the level of participation in training programs (Allen, 1999; Farr and Middlebrook, 1990; Kozlowiski and Farr, 1988; Maurer, 1994; Noe and Wilk, 1993). If an individual recognizes that the content of training fits well to his or her educational background or a personal learning needs, he or she will actively participate in training program up to completion in order to maximize the advantage offered by the training to acquire skill and knowledge that hitherto may be lacking. Similarly, if the training program is constructed in a way that follows well structure learning theories and instructional design principles, learners may find it more interesting and inspiring to participate up to completion. An individual with requisite skill and knowledge will develop a work attitude which reinforces and strengthens organizational performance and eventually promote stronger organizational commitment to human resources development aspects of employees' chosen career.

In conclusion, the study found that age, sex and level of education were significant joint and independently predictors of attitude towards training. This revealed that the collective presence of

socio demographic variables has significant influence on attitude towards training. Being older in age, female students in higher levels of their program were positive about the I.T training. As expected trainee socio demographic characteristics have been reported to have important relationship with participation in training (Wang, 1997). Wang, (1997) study demonstrated that gender differences exist in training attitudes. Women tend to be under pressure to prove themselves as such they engage in efforts that will enable them acquire the necessary competence compared to the males. In addition, literature has noted that women tend to find it difficult securing a tenure in male dominated professions (such as engineering and sciences that necessitates industrial training), consequently, they tend to see industrial training as a preview into the world of work and this encourages them to seek career in such professional calling (Eagly and Chaiken, 1998). These findings also support studies which found that gender affects the level of self-confidence of pre-service teachers. Several studies (Erdem and Demirel, 2007; Romi and Leyser, 2006; Woodcock, 2008) found that female teachers express a higher degree of perceived teaching-efficacy than their male counterparts. In a study of Mexican pre-service teachers, Forlin et al. (2010) also found that female pre-service teachers showed higher teaching -efficacy beliefs than their male counterparts.

In conclusion, this study has demonstrated that achievement motivation and self-esteem are crucial psychological factors determining acceptance of the students I.T training. Therefore, general and professional education should inculcate self-concept and psychological enhancement components in I.T programme. I.T should include motivational talks, self –esteem and social skills training for personal development of the students. The programme is incomplete without such components as a training module and should be regularly reviewed for inclusion of new relevant factors.

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