

**REFOCUSING MARITIME EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR EFFECTIVE
MANPOWER DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

BY

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Abstract

The importance of Maritime Education and Training (MET) cannot be understated particularly with the current global market scenario and implementation of the Revised Standard Training and Certificate Watch Keeping (STCW) convention and code which attributed about 80% of Maritime accidents are to human error. This paper examined issues and challenges of Maritime Education and Training in Nigeria such as poor funding of Maritime Education and Training, leadership problem, lack of academic freedom, poor training facilities, obsolete curriculum, corruption, nepotism, security issues and managerial in capabilities. Findings revealed that the curriculum of Maritime Education and Training are obsolete and should be updated. To this end, it was recommended that the Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy should provide training ships for cadets, students and instructors for on the job training and practical simulation of professional skills.

Keywords: *challenges, effective maritime development, issues, maritime education and training, manpower development and strategies.*

Introduction

Education is the bedrock of any country's development worth investing upon, and manpower development is considered a lifelong learning process. According to Okafor and Egenti (2021), education is a process of accumulating knowledge and ideas that condition and shape man's action, attitude as well as achievement. Education and technical training are a basic resource considered an indispensable means of converting other resources for man's use and benefit. It is undisputable that after graduation from institutions of learning, the best is capacity building and developmental training followed by manpower development, to increase knowledge on the job. Both take the form of tailored training to suit job and industrial demand. Maritime Education and Training anywhere in the world is targeted at producing qualified maritime personnel to serve maritime community locally and internationally. Therefore, refocusing of maritime education and training entails re-organizing the Maritime Education programs for the actualization of its goals. (Nwogbo, 2023)

Baylon (2019) observed that proper Maritime Education and Training ensures improvement in maritime safety, better protection of marine environment and better efficiency

of international shipping and ports. Maritime Education is a critical factor to improving the quality of human resource in general and in particular for developing new skills, cultural value and behavioral pattern needed for a better understanding of the sea. With ship technology changing rapidly and the world becoming increasingly knowledge-based, Maritime Education has emerged as a key determinant in shaping our understanding of the oceans and their potentials in pursuit of our national interest. Since the general level of educational attainment in the country has improved, it is implicit indication of its technological capability. Then the maritime industry, which is a component of the Nigeria system, must also evolve a Maritime Education strategy that emphasizes critical thinking, leadership, cultural awareness, innovation and adaptability.

Maritime Education and Training is one area whose manpower needs keep increasing; so also, its capacity development requires consistent training and re-training and such training in the maritime sector holds a key to a successful future for seafarers and the maritime industry in general. In fact, education and training is an important pathway for improving access to employment opportunities. The global shipping industry continuously provides attractive career opportunities with a broad international perspective (Erdogan & Demirel, 2017).

Literature Review

Contemporary Maritime Education and Training began in Nigeria with the establishment of the Maritime Academy of Nigeria (MAN), Oron, in 1979. Originally, called the Nautical College of Nigeria, it was set up to educate and train shipboard officers and shore-based management personnel. In 1988, the College's mandate was expanded to training of all levels and categories of personnel for all facets of the Nigeria maritime industry. By the end of 2023, the Academy had trained about 8,300 merchant Navy officers and more than 68,000 other workers in marine engineering, nautical science, maritime transport and business studies, ship building, port operation, marine insurance, maritime law, maritime security and

other specialized maritime courses. Today, over four decades of intensive and consistent maritime education and training, the Nigerian Maritime industry still faces the problem of poor staffing and acute shortage of skilled manpower. Lack of preparedness on the part of the industry to face stiff international competition and the challenges of inadequate infrastructure, non-enforcement of safety regulations and indiscriminate pollution of the marine environment are eloquent testimonies to this assertion. When the Nigeria Maritime Administration and Safety Agency, (NIMASA) in 2009, called for 50,000 seafarers to enable the Nigeria shipping industry realize its full potential, Nigeria had less than 3,000 seafarers resulting in the hiring of an army of foreign seafarers to man the more than 2,000 vessels engaged in cabotage between Nigerian ports (Baylon, 2019).

Agency Theory

Agency theory assumes that individuals are utility maximizers but does not assume the organizations are structured in the way they are because it is the most efficient method of organizing. This is demonstrated not only in the assumption that managers and workers act as opportunistic agents, not in the interest of the owners, but also by the preoccupations of agency theorists with governance and methods of controlling non-owners to maximize profits (returns to shareholders) to the owners.

Agency theory is an economic theory that views the firm as a set of contracts among self-interested individuals. An agency relationship is created when a person (the principal) authorizes another person (the agent) to act on his or her behalf.

The difference in priority and interest between agents and principal is known as the principal -agent problem. To resolve the differences in expectations is called "reducing agency loss". Performance -based compensation is one way that is used to achieve a balance between principal and agent.

Common principal-agent relationships include shareholders and management, financial planners and their client, and lessees and lessors

Areas of dispute in Agency theory address disputes that arise primarily in two key areas: a difference in goals or a difference in risk aversion (Mitnick, 2013). The authors hold unto this theory.

Overview of the Current State of Maritime Education and Training

The current state of Maritime Education and Training is at a deplorable condition due to attendant reduction of maritime stakeholders at World Maritime University at Malmö Sweden and International Maritime organization conferences and workshops. The present curriculum used in Maritime Education and Training is obsolete and there is need to review and update the curriculum to meet Marine and Blue Economy' goals and objectives. Again, there is no instructional facility like training ships in any Maritime institution.

Issues and Challenges of Maritime Education and Training in Nigeria

There are many issues and challenges confronting maritime education and training in Nigeria, some of which include:

Poor Funding: The major problem facing effective management of Maritime Education in Nigeria may be attributed to inadequate funds and inability to access funds meant for Maritime Education. Adegbite (2021), observed that the major challenge facing the management of education in Nigeria is inadequate funding. Adeniran (2017) posited that when education is not adequately funded, the foundation of such education is weak. Consequently the products of such education are weak intellectually, thereby implicating and influencing national growth and development.

James (2020) posited that the government's priority to maritime education is still very low. Apparent shortage of funds available to maritime institutions has been responsible for

declining library infrastructure, laboratories and instructional materials in recent years. Staff proficiency and competency training and re-training are necessary in maritime environment. This is done through conferences, seminars, workshops, symposia, book reviews, and book presentations. These cannot be done without effective financing of maritime education. Nigerian maritime administration and safety Agency (NIMASA) is expected to pay at least 5% for maritime education and training annually.

Lack of Proper Accountability: Another factor is lack of proper accountability on the part of institutional heads. According to Nzotta (2018), accountability is the ability of an institution to demonstrate that it has effectively achieved certain ends and has employed the most efficient means to achieve those ends. But where there is little or no proper accountability in terms of financial management such as value of money spent, effective management suffers a set back. According to Abdallah et al. (2023), digitalization has transformed the maritime industry, but accountability and transparency remain challenging due to the centralized nature of electronic data exchange platforms. They posited that a modular and distributed block chain infrastructure to notarize actions within the existing system will increase transparency and accountability, as recommended by the International Maritime Organization (Manila Convention, 2012)

Political Interference and Lack of Academic Freedom: Political interference and lack of academic freedom affect Nigeria Maritime Institutions, particularly in the choice of chief executive. According to James (2017), the issue of academic freedom and due process is at the heart of the teaching and learning enterprise and transcends institutional tradition. The systematic infringement on academic freedom on appointment, transfer and removal of rectors, provosts and vice-chancellors becomes the prerogative of the “visitor” (Head of Government or Governor) which brought about serious dislocation in the operation of tertiary education system

Inadequate Training Ships: Maritime institutions in Nigeria are without functional ships for sea training of cadets and students as demanded by International Maritime Organization (IMO). Lack of functional training ships for seafarers training reduces instructional delivery among Maritime teachers (IMO 2019), a condition required by International Maritime Organization (Manila Convention, 2012 as Amended)

Excess Workload: Maritime teachers have many roles to play in helping to develop their students. During the school day, the teacher is called upon to monitor students' activities, give lectures, mark attendant register, supervise project, supervise exams and mark scripts of over 50 students in a class. All these culminate in stress. James and Afanga (2014) observed that there were numerous references to the fact that class size and class composition are closely linked and directly related to work load. There is also evidence that smaller class size results in reduced stress and greater satisfaction level among teachers as well as increase in pleasure derived from teaching, as required by Standard Training Certification and Watch Keeping (Manila Convention, 2012).

Problem of Staff Qualification and Experience: Inadequate number of senior lecturers with Ph.D qualification has affected Maritime Education and Training. Alabe (2018) posited that for educational program to take its rightful place in the country, the Government should train and retrain its teachers. Again, there is need for collaboration between the academia, industry and policy makers to ensure that the curriculum is updated to meet the needs of the industry, as required by standard Training Certification and Watch Keeping (Manila Convention, 2012).

Cadets and Students Lack of Exposure to Industrial Sea Time Experience: According to Ojo and Ajagbe (2020), the major qualities of a good seafarer are technical ability, imagination, keeping of rules, industry partnership and solid judgement. They maintained that technical abilities depend on technical knowledge. Sadly, Maritime Institutions have not gained the

cooperation of industries in the Students Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES). Students find it difficult to get position for sea time experience. There is need to bridge the gap between academia and industry and promoting collaboration and partnership with industries to provide students with practical experience and exposure to the latest technologies (James, 2023), as required by Standard Training Certification and Watch Keeping (Manila Convention, 2012 as Amended).

Lack of Vibrant Staff Development Programme: Most institutions of higher learning in Nigeria lack functional staff development programme for training and re-training of staff. Standardized staff development programme on a continuous bases will help academic and non-academic staff to modify their behavior, attitude, value, skills and competence. In this way they grow, learn on the job and develop their knowledge and thus become more effective and efficient in the performance of their duties. Staff development programme is necessary and worthwhile in maritime Education and training. particularly in this era of knowledge-based economy, but lack of it reduced staff efficacy and encourages poor performance (James, 2017), as required by Standard Training Certification and Watch Keeping (Manila Convention, 2012).

Strategies for Effective Maritime Education and Training in Nigeria

For effective refocusing of Maritime Education and Training, the following strategies must be adopted:

Manpower Development Strategy: All Maritime teachers should be trained and retrained periodically to meet the demands of technological age. The government should employ ‘train the trainer’ approach, particularly on technical courses that require special skills. According to Egunsola et al (2018), technical education is a vital tool that fosters national development when the environment in which the trainee is prepared resembles the environment he is to get employed, and that means the individual is trained directly and specifically in the thinking and habits required in the desired occupation. This will help in filling the gaps created by shortage

of manpower in Maritime training, cabotage trade, international trade and Nigerian-owned shipping involved in the lifting of crude oil. It would help in addressing the issue of capital flight occasioned in repairing ships abroad and create opportunity for Nigerian Cadets to build ship as required in cabotage law.

Provision of Instructional Space and Instructional Materials: Instructional Space and Instructional Materials are essential in teaching and learning process. One cannot expect high level instructional role performance of Maritime teachers when instructional space such as flipped classrooms, laboratories and technical workshops for effective teaching and learning are inadequate. Dauda (2021) stated that the major challenge of flipped classroom is power supply because most instruments and gadgets are electrically operated. He observed that the environment space can support or hinder the goal of the organization. Adequate space, proper equipment and a comfortable environment contribute to job satisfaction, causing an employee to be more productive, stay longer and affiliate positively with co-worker. Maritime teachers need physical arrangement that supports instructional programme.

Upgrading and Expansion of Maritime Institutions: To ensure effective refocusing of Maritime Education and Training in Nigeria, the Maritime institutions should be upgraded to university status with all rights and privileges attached as a degree awarding Institutions where lecturers will be allowed to embark on sabbatical leave, earn workload allowance and research grants. Ashameri (2021) observed that the institution has faced challenges in transforming itself into a world –class institution before now and that there is a relative transformation in infrastructure in recent times. Oyetola (2023) maintained that Nigeria is committed to repositioning of maritime sector through development of long and sustainable development plan. According to James (2023), refocusing of higher education is crucial in building a

workforce that has the skills, knowledge, and competencies to succeed in the changing economy.

Curriculum Reform: To achieve this, the Nigerian government needs to work with experts in the technology industry to update the maritime education curriculum regularly. The curriculum of maritime education and training in Nigeria is beyond thirty years in operation and should be reviewed in every five years as recommended by International Maritime Organization Manila Convention 2012 as amended. It is essential to include industry specific projects and internship to enable students and cadets to apply the knowledge gained in the classroom in real-world scenarios. In addition, there should be a focus on developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as these are critical skills required for success in technology industry. Curriculum should cover areas such as artificial intelligence marine security and blue economy. Curriculum reform is an essential strategy to reposition maritime education and training in Nigeria and create a sustainable blue economy (Adomi, 2017). Again, Mkpandioke and Ukpai (2017) maintained that maritime institutions, allied industries and stakeholders in a collaborative effort should review maritime education and training curriculum to incorporate sustainable development imperative and pedagogical practices.

Conclusion

In conclusion, therefore, it is obvious that the government should revamp Maritime Education and Training through adequate manpower training, adequate funding, proper supervision, adequate accountability, purposeful leadership, curriculum reforms and innovations, provision of infrastructures and academic freedom. These will help to reposition Maritime Education and training in Nigeria to a world standard. Again, the product from Nigeria Maritime institutions would be recognized globally. This would ensure safe, secure, clean and efficient ship operations and safety of life at sea.

The paper recommended the followings as remedy to the issues and challenges confronting maritime education and training.

It is recommended that proper accountability on the part of institutional heads should be maintained as well as full implementation of Maritime Education and Training budget and policies. The Government should provide adequate funding for Maritime Education and Training programs grant autonomy and easy access to funds without bureaucracy.

The Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy should provide functional training ship for cadets, students and lecturers for proper sea time experience.

The Federal Ministry of Marine and Blue Economy should provide adequate instructional space and instructional material in Maritime institutions in order to improve the instructional role performance of Maritime teachers.

The Federal Government of Nigeria should include Maritime institutions in Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND) programs for Academic staff training and re-training.

Internally Generated Revenue: Internally Generated Revenue (IGR) of maritime institutions should be improved upon to assist in running the day to day financial needs of the institutions through consultancy programmes.

The present curriculum of Maritime Education and Training should be reviewed and updated to meet global standard.

The federal ministry of Marine and Blue Economy in conjunction with Nigerian Maritime Administration and Safety Agency should give adequate funding to Maritime Education and Training.

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