

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT: A TOOL FOR EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN THE DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES IN GHANA

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Abstract

Training and development activities are a crucial exercise in any organisational set-up. It has attracted intense debate and scholarly attention in the human resource management arena over the years. However, its application to public sector has received little attention. This paper attempts to rectify this position by considering training and development as a tool for employee performance in the district assemblies in Ghana. In a sample of fifty (50) full time staff members of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly, the research revealed direct relationship between training and development and employee performance ($r = 0.3347$, $p = 0.030$). Also the results from the data analysis indicated that significant relationship exist between training and development and job satisfaction (r value (0.3338) is greater than p value (0.0307)). Finally, the study revealed that management and employees faced peculiar problems during training and development exercises. Management complained about funds whilst employees' expresses concern about the time allotted to various training and development programmes.

Key Words: Training, Development, Performance, Satisfaction

1. Introduction

Employees play a crucial role in every organisational set-up. Achieving organisational goals cannot be done without human resource (employees). Most jobs in organisations are performed by human beings. It is people (employees) not buildings, the equipment, or brand names that make an organisation. Thomas J. Watson, the founder of International Business Machine (IBM), once remarked "you can get capital and erect buildings, but it takes people to build a business" (Bohlander and Snells, 2004). The Reuters Group also acknowledges this fact by noting that "a major source of competitive advantage for Reuters comes from the energy, ideas and commitment of its employees" (Reuters Group plc Annual Review, 2001).

The efforts of employees can determine the success and survival of an organisation (Drucker, 1994; Barney, 1995). Training and development is potentially one way in which those efforts can be aligned with the aims of an organisation. Employees can be motivated and their performance managed leading to improved performance and productivity (Orpen, 1997; Martin and Bartol, 1998; Cook and Crossman, 2004). If an organisation wants to remain competitive it has no choice but to train and develop its employees (Ngirwa, 2009). According to Pynes (2008), both training and development programs seek to change the skills, knowledge, or attitudes of employees required by the job post. Programmes may be focused on improving an individual's level of self-awareness, competency and motivation to perform his or her job well. This in turn makes employees feel that they are part of the organisation's family. It creates a sense of belonging in employees, enhances the employee's skills, and motivates while improving financial gain. This in the long run makes employees feel indebted to the organisation.

Training and development is among the most important human resource practices and one of the most heavily researched topics. Most of these researches are for the private sector and companies which are profit oriented. This makes this study very relevant as it targets the public sector. Some organisations express dissatisfaction with their productivity after subjecting their employees through rigorous training and development programmes. Barrington and Stimpson (2002), suggest that there should be clear objectives of training of employee. Thus, training is needed so as to introduce a new process, improve the efficiency of the staff, equip unskilled workers to make them more valuable to the firm; decrease supervision needed; improve the opportunities for internal promotions as specific skills, communication and behavior, and decrease the chances of accidents. According to Tsai, Yen, Huang, and Huang (2007), employees who are ready to learn showed a higher level of job satisfaction which has a positive effect on their performance. This view is supported by Qureshi et al., (2007).

The acquisition, development, motivation and maintenance of the needed human resource which are the 'most valued assets' in any organisation whether public or private have been seen by most experts as major ingredients in ensuring the achievement of all organisational goals and objectives. However, in Ghana, especially in the public sector and more particularly in the local government structures such as the Metropolitan, Municipal and District Assemblies, the acquisition, training and development, and retention of employees have always been a major challenge. The central government in 1988 decentralised the administration of the country. According to Thomi and Yankson (2000), District Assemblies have been accorded administrative, deliberative, legislative and executive functions to execute their mandates to make life meaningful to their citizenry. The assemblies are responsible for the general development and well being of its citizenry. This includes ensuring sanitation, supervision of school projects, district health centers, recreational facilities within the metropolis, granting of building permits, to mention but a few.

Despite the attempt made by the central government to empower the District Assemblies to take their own initiatives and execute their programmes, citizens complain about the attitude of

employees to work in the public service. The question that often comes to mind is “Do these training and development programmes organised by various assemblies have any significant impact on the economic and social lives of these employees?”

The Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA), an important local government structure and pivot around which local development revolves, is no exemption to this inept attitude of employees (Aryee, 2003). The study explores the extent to which training and development aid employee performance. It assesses training and development as a tool, examines the effect of training and development programmes on employee performance, and finally identifies the constraints that management and employees face during training and development exercises. Our findings could enrich discussions of appropriate policy frameworks that could stimulate district assembly concept in Ghana.

The next section discusses the literature review and hypotheses of the study, research method and material, the results and discussion and outlines the conclusion and recommendation.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses

This section undertakes both theoretical and empirical review of the study. Empirical studies conducted in various destinations on training and development has also been reviewed.

Employees in both public and private sector in an economy need training and development to be more conversant with organisational goals and objectives. Training is defined as a learning process in which employees acquire knowledge, skills, experience and attitudes that they need in order to perform their job better for the achievements of their organisational goals (Ngirwa, 2009). According to Armstrong (2006), development is an unfolding process that enables people to progress from a present state of understanding and capability to a future state in which higher-level skills, knowledge and competencies are required. It takes the form of learning activities that prepare people to exercise wider or increased responsibilities. There are two broad types of training available to organisations. These are, on the job and off the job techniques respectively. Taylor (2009) identifies six types of training and development practice in business environment. These include on the job training and lecture, programmed instruction, computed assisted instruction, audiovisual techniques, simulations, and business games. According to Tzafirir (2005), training is an important element in producing the human capital. It provides employees with the skills, abilities and knowledge required by the post (Danvila del Valle et al., 2009).

Training and Development as a Tool for Employee Performance

According to theories proposed by some scholars, training and development positively influences employee performance which in turn influence profit or revenue (Fey et al., 2000). This view is supported by Soltan, et al., 2004 who pointed out that employee training and development is ranked as the most important in the performance management studies in Scotland, U.K. Almost three-quarters (¾) of employees from Canada and United States who have received job-related training and development from their employers reported in the study that they were using their acquired skill at work to a great extent and that their work performance had improved. This they recounted had improved the performance of the organisation as a whole.

Impact of Training and Development on the Employee Performance

Employee performance may be seen as the result of congruence between training and development and organisational goal. On the other hand, Fey, et al., (2000) were of the view that, there is a strong positive relationship between employee training and development program and organisational performance in the Russian team-based subsidiaries of Western corporations. This suggests that

employee training and development relate significantly to firm performance. Champathes, (2006) was of the view that whenever, employee performance increases, it leads to organisational effectiveness. Investment in training and development of employees working in various district assemblies can therefore help as a catalyst to improve performance of districts in terms of development. However, other studies such as Sahinidis, et al., (2002) suggest that sometimes employees feel that trainings do not provide them with sufficient skills or knowledge. And therefore was of the view that improper training can result in conflicts between employees and their organisations. This could impact negatively on the organisations performance and effectiveness. However, the presences of inconsistent findings suggest further study in this area is necessary. It is therefore hypothesised that:

H1: There is significant relationship between training and development of employees and employee performance in district assemblies.

Training and Development and Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction can come from feeling comfortable within the organisation, job proficiency and even from the knowledge that an employee can work hard and get promoted. Training programs can contribute to all of these factors and lead to more satisfied employees who perform at exceptional levels. According to Tsai, Yen, Huang, and Huang (2007), employees who are committed to learning showed a higher level of job satisfaction that has a positive effect on their performance. Rowden and Shamsuddin (2000) and Rowden and Conine (2005) argue that the most thoroughly trained employees will better satisfy the needs of their customers and employees. Training programmes increase an employee's job knowledge. An increase in job knowledge means that the employee will feel more comfortable doing his job and will perform at a high level and be happy (Ngirwa, 2009). There is little empirical support for this suggestion. There is a need to provide such empirical support to either enhance the previous studies or reject the findings. It is therefore hypothesised that:

H2: There is a significant relationship between training and development and employee job satisfaction

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Area of Study

The Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA) is one of the twenty seven (27) Metropolitan, Municipal, District Assemblies (MMDAs) in the Ashanti Region. It is one of the old Administrative Districts in the Country; it dates back in the colonial days when it was called the Kumasi City Council with Kumasi always being the District Capital. The KMA has nine operational sub-metros and these are the Oforikrom, Bantama, Nhyiaeso, Kwadaso, Subin, Manhyia, Suame, Old Tafo and Asokwa sub metros.

The KMA shares boundaries with the Kwabre East District Assembly to the North, Bosomtwe and Atwima Kwanwoma District Assemblies to the South, Ejisu-Juaben Municipal Assembly to the East and the Atwima Nwabiagya District to the West. Kumasi is located in the transitional forest zone and is about 270km north of the national capital, Accra (<http://kma.ghanadistricts.gov.gh/>). It is between latitude 6.35°–6.40° and longitude 1.30°–1.35°, an elevation which ranges between 250 – 300 meters above sea level with an area of about 254 square kilometers. The unique centrality of the city as a traversing point from all parts of the country makes it a special place for many to migrate to. (Regional Statistical Office, Kumasi). There are 119 communities. The Assembly has eleven Members of Parliament. The Metropolitan Chief Executive (MCE) is the political head of the Assembly. The MCE is nominated by the President of the Republic of Ghana and needs the

approval of two-thirds majority of the Assembly to be confirmed as such. The population of the Kumasi metropolis based on the 2010 population and housing census (GSS, 2010) is 2,035,064. The main economic activities of the people are services and manufacturing. The main language spoken in the District is Twi. Akwasidae festival is celebrated by the chiefs and peoples of Kumasi every forty-day. As at the end of January, 2014, the HR/Personnel unit of the assembly gave the total number of management and staff of KMA as four hundred and thirty (430) (both male and female).

3.2 Population

The target population for this study consists of all the employees of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly as of January, 2014.

3.3 Sampling Design, Size and Procedure

All the fifteen departments of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly were used for the study. Selection of employees within the fifteen departments was done by simple random sampling method. In each department, at least three employees were selected across the departments using the same method of sampling (simple random sampling). The researchers chose this method in order to avoid bias and give every employee the chance of being selected.

Five principal officers of the Assembly were selected using the non-probability method (purposive method). This method was chosen because the researchers targeted those at the top level. Altogether, the sample size is fifty (50) which was made up of 3 respondents each from the fifteen selected departments plus five principal officers of the Assembly.

The researchers employed probability technique to select sample respondents for inclusion in the sample for the study. They used random sampling techniques to select all the elements. Primary data for the study were obtained with the aid of questionnaire administered personally to the respondents. Data collected was based on employee performance, effect of training and development programmes on employee performance, and finally identify the constraints that management and employees faced during training and development exercises. Information on general characteristics of staff members were also obtained. Data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics. The survey data were coded, verified and cleaned up, and then entered and analysed with the help of Statistical Programme for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study were presented using appropriate tables and charts to ensure easy interpretation. The survey distribution period of this paper lasted from January to March 2014. A total of 50 questionnaire were collected.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 General Characteristics of the Respondents

The general characteristics of the sample are reported in Table 1. In terms of gender distribution, male respondents of the overall sample are higher 58.00 % than female respondents. In terms of age, the result indicates that half (50.00 %) of the respondents were within the age group of 18-30. This means that the working team in the assembly is still young, fresh and inexperienced can pursue training and development activities so as to improve their performance of the work and can make reasonable positive changes in the assembly. In terms of educational background, the employees of the assembly tended to be averagely educated, the majority had secondary qualification. In order to enhance organisational growth the researchers are of the view that more need to be done to improve upon the human capital of the assembly through training and development programmes. Armstrong

(2006) defined human capital as the stocks and flows of knowledge available to an organisation. It can be strongly associated with the concept of intellectual enhancement of workers, and this can go a long way to increase productivity of the district. The study also reveals that the assembly has a blend of experienced (40.00 %) and young working team (60.00 %) that requires constant training and development to up-grade their skills so as to perform well in their job.

A. Hypothesis I

HO: There is a significant relationship between training and development of employees and employee performance in district assemblies

To analyse this hypothesis, a response to the questionnaire was used. Spearman correlation test was employed to test statistical significance of the relationship between training and development on one hand and employee performance (Table 2).

In reviewing the relationship between two variables of training and development and employee performance, Spearman's correlation coefficient was used. Its amount is 0.3347 (p-value=0.030) which shows a direct and significant relation between these two variables. The rate of correlation between two variables of training and development variable and employee performance is 0.3347 which indicates that the relation between these two variables is not intense but a moderate.

This study suggests that training and development activities equipped the members of staff of the assembly with new skills and technical knowledge to improve upon their competent level to act in a different way in terms of performance. It also leads employees to become more efficient and effective towards customers in their delivery process.

The findings tend to support earlier research, notably, Fey et al., (2000) and Champathes, (2006) which found training and development and performance as significant. However, it is important to point out that there is variation in term of number of training and development activities organised within the assembly.

B. Hypothesis II

HO: There is a significant relationship between training and development of employees and job satisfaction in district assemblies

To analyse this hypothesis, a response to the questionnaire was used. Spearman correlation test was employed to test statistical significance of the relationship between training and development and job satisfaction. The result is presented (Table 3).

The hypothesis which states that there is significant relationship between training and development and job satisfaction is accepted at the significant value of 0.05 based on the fact that r value (0.3338) is greater than the p value (0.0307). This finding suggests that employees within the district assembly are satisfied. Well trained and developed staff always becomes confident and motivated to execute tasks assigned in exceptional levels. This is consistent with the previous research findings by Ngirwa (2009) and Tsai, Yen, Huang, and Huang (2007).

For organisations to run efficient and effective systems, its human resource is most crucial. This can be done when employees are well equipped with skills and knowledge acquired through training and development exercises. Organisations, especially the public sector cannot execute such a complex task without adequate budget allocation for funding. From Table 4, the constraints faced by management during training and development exercise differ widely, 40.00 % of the respondents indicated that funds are the major problem. Unavailability of funds can trigger the delay of training and development issues in an organisation which in turn affects the scheduled programmes. The entire training programme can be delayed or postponed for a year or two to the detriment of the

organisation as training and career development are the major factors influencing the success of an organisation. The results, therefore, indicate that the assembly has a challenge with funds to execute the training and development programmes. This can affect the level of performance of the staff members of the assembly, if training and development issues are not organised frequently.

In Table 5, 50.0 percent of the employees complained of inadequate time allotted to the training as a major problem that they faced during training and development. This means that organisers of the various training programmes within the assembly do not give enough time to staff members to know more about what they are in for. The researchers are of the view that more needs to be done by the assembly to make sure that organisers of various training and development programmes break down their training modules to the level which the participants will get enough time, ask questions and easily understand to aid them in their performance so far as assembly duties are concerned.

5. Conclusion

Training and development among staff is inevitable in any modern organisational set-up. It is indeed a crucial tool for the survival of every organisation. Competition among organisations is a serious key factor to consider because of the growing number of innovative products or services. In order for organisations to achieve their overall objectives, it is essential for organisations to apply training and development in their broad activities to attain organisational goals and mission. Employers need to pay serious attention and apply all the resources allocated within their budget for training and development for this crucial exercise, to enhance the performance of the organisation as well as the workers for smooth co-existence in the organisation. The paper therefore, assessed how training and development is aiding the performance of district assemblies in Ghana, using primary and secondary data obtained from management and employees. The study revealed that, there is strong positive correlation between training and development and employee performance, even though the training and development issues are not done on frequent basis and clearly shows that performance of the assembly was average. All these give out a signal that the assembly needs to sit up in its dealings which can easily affect the assembly goals and mission on the long run. It was also clear that, there is significant relationship between training and development and job satisfaction. The result shows that majority of employees were not happy about time allotted for their training and development programmes and express their sentiments that it can affect performance.

Finally, it was evident that, management faced constraints during the training and development exercise because of, funds (40.00 %), positioning training closer to work site (20.0 %), lack of qualified trainers (14.00 %), staff co-operation (12.00 %) and measuring the effectiveness of training (6.00 %).

6. Recommendation

In the light of the findings and conclusion above, it is recommended that:

- i. Intensive training should be offered to members of staff on regular basis in order to achieve the objectives of the assembly. Management should focus more on innovative training and development issues for employees to perform better.
- ii. Management should set up a special fund from the district assembly common fund for training and development.
- iii. Management must ensure that the organization identify the knowledge and skills required to meet its goals and take steps to hire qualified trainers with requisite

- skills to take employees through the training programmes for better understanding.
- iv. Finally, it is recommended that Management of Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly should organise on and off training sections to the members of staff.

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Table 1: Sample Characteristic

Sample characteristic	Items	Frequency (N= 50)	Percent of Total
Gender	Male	29	58.00
	Female	21	42.00
Respondents age	18-30 years	25	50.00
	31-40	5	10.00
	41-50	15	30.00
	51-60	5	10.00
Education	Elementary	14	28.00
	Secondary	25	50.00
	Tertiary	9	18.00
	Others	2	4.00
Number of years at post	Below 1 years	3	6.00
	1-3 years	14	28.00
	4-6 years	13	26.00
	7-9 years	7	14.00
	10 yrs & above	13	26.00

Table 2: Training and Development and Employee Performance
Spearman

Number of obs =	42
Spearman's rho =	0.3347
Test of Ho: training and development and employee performance are independent	
Prob > t =	0.0303

Table 3: Training and Development and job satisfaction
Spearman

Number of obs =	42
Spearman's rho =	0.3338
Test of Ho: training and development and job satisfaction are independent	
Prob > t =	0.0307

Table 4: Constraints Faced by Management During Training and Development

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Funds	20	40.0
Lack of qualified trainers	7	14.0
Staff co-operation	6	12.0
Measuring effectiveness/efficiency of training	3	6.0
Linking organizational and performance needs to programme delivery	4	8.0
Positioning training closer to work site	10	20.0
Total	50	100.0

Table 5: Constraints Faced by Employees During Training and Development

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Lack of understanding of training modules		
Inadequate audio-visual aids	12	24.0
Time allotted to the training	8	16.0
Venue of training not comfortable	25	50.0
	5	10.0
Total	50	100.0