Enhancing Employee Performance through Training: The Case of Tamale Teaching Hospital in Ghana

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Abstract

Training of employees has not been taken seriously by many organizations, more so when the organization faces challenges that appear more pressing. This study assessed the role of training on employees' performance at the Tamale Teaching Hospital. The key issues the study considered includes identifying whether there are training practices at the TTH, and also assessed the effectiveness of training practices the TTH undertakes. The study used a sample size of 160 respondents with questionnaire as research instrument for data collection. The study after analyzing the field data discovered that employee training could help improve performance and the growth and development of the organization and that good training programmes could help boost morale of employees and subsequently reduce labour turnover. The study finally recommended among others, that top management put emphasis and commitment to employee training issues as it will help the overall effectiveness of the organization.

Keywords: Training, performance, effectiveness, health facilities, motivation, satisfaction.

Introduction

The issue of employee training in every organization is key to the successful achievement of its goals. The Health sector is definitely no exception. This is even more important given that there is increasing work load on the health workforce by observing from the daily attendance at the various health facilities across the country particularly the Tamale Teaching Hospital.

Employees' skills and motivation are critical to organizational success. This has always been true, but the pace and volume of modern change is drawing increased attention to the ways the Human Resource training activities can be used to ensure that organizational members have what it takes to successfully meet their challenges. The challenges many organization face are complex, and new dimensions, such as globalization and increased diverse work force, makes it more difficult to ensure the success of HRD efforts. Unless those responsible for training and development makes informed choices about the content of a training programme and the methods of delivering it, the results of many HRD efforts will fail to meet expectations. Fortunately, there is a growing base of theory, research and practical experience to support HRD efforts. An example of such theory is the social learning theory which states that "many of our behavioral patterns are learned from observing others" (Randy and Werner, 2009). The notion that people should be regarded as assets rather than variable costs, in other words, treated as human capital, was originally advance by Beer et al (1984). This is in line with the general observation that for an organization to survive in a competitive and turbulent business environment, then the skills and competencies of its members (employees) must be up-to-date to match or even exceed that of its rivals. HRM philosophy, as mentioned by Legge (1995), holds that human resources are valuable and a source of competitive advantage. They should be trained and developed to meet the desired expectation of the organization.

Armstrong and Baron (2002) state that, people and their collective skills, abilities and experience, coupled with their ability to deploy these in the interest of the employing organization, are now recognized as making significant contribution to organizational success and as constituting a major source of complete and continuous achievement of these organizations must take training as a key aspect of their HR function.

In the words of Kochan (2007), he contended that, the HR profession has always had a special professional responsibility to balance the needs of the firm with the needs, aspirations and interest of the workforce and the values and standards society expects to be upheld at work.

This assertion gives a deep sense for organization to train its employees and lead them to choosing careers that could see them to the top of the organization. Kochan (2007) said, a regime which provides human beings (employees) no reason to care about one another cannot long preserve its legitimacy.

"In preserving its legitimacy and to serve in the best interest of society, the Tamale Teaching Hospital has

embarked on a number of training programmes geared towards equipping its employees with the requisite skills necessary to execute. These training programs ranges from long term such as study leave to study in training institutions and university campuses to short term programmes which include workshops, training seminars and on the job training programs. In the year 2010, the Tamale Teaching Hospital organized and released thirty three (33) employees on full time sponsorship programs in universities for various areas of specialization. In 2011, pursuing its course of training, another forty one (41) employees were released on study leave. Again in 2012, fifty seven (57) employees were released to pursue training and development programmes" (TTH Data base, 2013). A good number of workshops and internship programmes were also organized just to mention a few. The increment in the numbers released year after year shows a pattern of commitment by top management to training of employees.

It is in the light of all these happenings that the researchers are undertook the study to access the role of training on employee's performance. Focus will be on the constraints associated with this and also its benefits to individual employees and the organization as a whole.

Statement of the Problem

In the course of the past two decades, performance issues have become very crucial to the overall growth and development of businesses and organizations. The emphasis in most organizations have been to develop or otherwise sign performance agreements (contracts) with top level managers (CEO's) and other key employees by which their performances are measured and to inform decision making.

The question is to what extent have organizations been interested in the training of their staff along with the performance levels they expect from these employees?

The idea drawn from Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006) is that, the survival of every organization largely will depend on the efficiency and effectiveness of its staff in terms of their performance which has an inverse relationship with the training they may receive. Is the management of TTH aware of the possible impact training can make on its overall performance? And is training needs of employees given the needed attention? This study is conducted to assess the role training play in enhancing employee performance and its consequential benefits to the individual and the organization as a whole.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to assess the role of training in employee performance at the Tamale Teaching Hospital.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:
i) identify whether there are training practices at the Tamale Teaching Hospital.
ii) assess the effectiveness of training programmes at the Tamale Teaching Hospital.

Research Questions

An analysis of the above objectives and statement of the problem led the researchers to generate the following research questions:
i. What are the training practices in the Tamale Teaching Hospital?
ii. What are the effects of training programmes on employee performance in the Tamale Teaching Hospital?

Significance of the Study

A study of the role of training in employees' performance of an organization is important in several ways:

First it helps bring to light the strengths and weaknesses of various programmes the organization chooses in training its staff. To Human Resource development experts, it can serve as a formative feedback for programme review.

Secondly, the study can provide policy makers with ideas about actual competencies relevant to achieve improvement in performance of various staff. This may form the basis for competency based training programmes in future.

Thirdly, it will encourage individual employees and the organization to recognize capacity building as significant to organizational growth.

Finally, for researchers in staff training, the study can stimulate research in performance management and staff satisfaction by providing areas for further research.

Literature review

Many HR experts argue that the greatest resource of any organization is its employees. However, employees' training can often be sidelined or overlooked altogether as an organization faces challenges that appear more pressing. A rigorous employee training programmes takes into account the ambitions of personnel, while

focusing the organization's methods and practices and looking to the future with a renewed sense of purpose.

Good staff training should take account of the aspirations of staff, (according to Cristine M. Nimmo, Senior Editor at the American Society of Health System Pharmacists Inc). Indeed, these aspirations often help define the starting point of staff training process. Employees may desire to have more job responsibilities, may seek ways in which their remuneration can be enhanced, or may wish to propose changes to established working practices. The goal of any staff training process should be at least to consider such aspirations.

Armstrong (2010), states that, effective training strategy calls for an approach that explicitly take into account both organizational needs and employee interest. It calls for creativity in identifying ways to provide training opportunities.

Staff training should be an ongoing process. Whiles there are limitations to what can be achieved within the working day because of time pressures; ideally there will be an on-going commitment to training. This is especially important where jobs are changing in response to new technology, reformed working practices and global economics shifts. Making training opportunities available for staff should be an objective of staff training. According to the president of American Management Association, John McConnell, fulfilling the individuals training needs also hugely benefits the organization, sometimes in ways not predicted.

Montgomery Van Wart (2011), states that, organizations need to be led in order to make progress. To him, staff training process should aim to identify individuals with leadership skills who have the potential to become managers. In contrast to the way it is often portrayed in television dramas, as ruthless self-promotion, in reality leadership is about improving the performance of others, in tandem with improving personal performance. Would-be leaders will already be showing an awareness of the needs of colleagues. Effective staff process will harness these raw talents.

Staff training is variously conceptualized by different theories, and in the way it is operationalized by different organizations. Though there is agreement on the broad objective of staff training, which is to enhance individual (and hence organizational) development and performance, disagreement centre's on the means of this end. (Pilbean and Corbridge, 2006). According to Stewart (2005) staff training and development remains a confused and contested concept.

Training is a planned activity conducted over the short term to improve specific job-related knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA's). Education is a much longer term process, developing broad and general KSA's often not job related at all (Pilbeam and Corbridge 2006).

Both can contribute to individual training; the enhancement and growth of an individual skills and abilities through conscious and unconscious learning**.** However, sophisticated staff training strategies extend well beyond these activities. The focus is on individual (and hence organizational learning) rather than training and education, which represent just a fraction of organizational learning opportunities (Buckley and Caple, 2004).

According to Prior (1999,) training seeks to respond to the following organizational and staff needs:

- Ensuring an adequate supply of properly trained personnel.
- Keeping present job performance levels at required standards.
- Developing skills, abilities and attitude for future job requirements.
- Building greater job development flexibility.
- Coping with fast changing technologies.
- Meeting statutory training requirements.
- Coping with reduced staffing levels, redundancy and preparing staff for retirement.

Thompson and Mabey (1994) also suggested that the constituent parts of an organizations staff development strategy should involve: Recruiting and inducting high quality people and developing them effectively; Identifying and improving the skills and motivation of employees; Regular analysis of job content with regards to organizational objectives and individual skills; Renewing technology and the potential for replacing routine task; Performance management and measurement; Identifying training needs; Providing training to improve current performance and enhance individual careers; Helping employees to manage their own careers; and Encouraging employees to accept change as the norm and as an opportunity.

From this, the main features of staff training can be identified. For example, changing the design of work to allow greater autonomy for employees or appointing an experienced and effective manager can all have training consequences for employees and organizations. Though training is undoubtedly an important aspect of staff development, it is only one aspect, (Pilbeam and Corbridge, 2006).

The Conceptual Framework

After a careful study and review of various literatures on the topic the following conceptual framework has been formulated for the study.

Conceptual framework of Training that can support TTH Training Effort
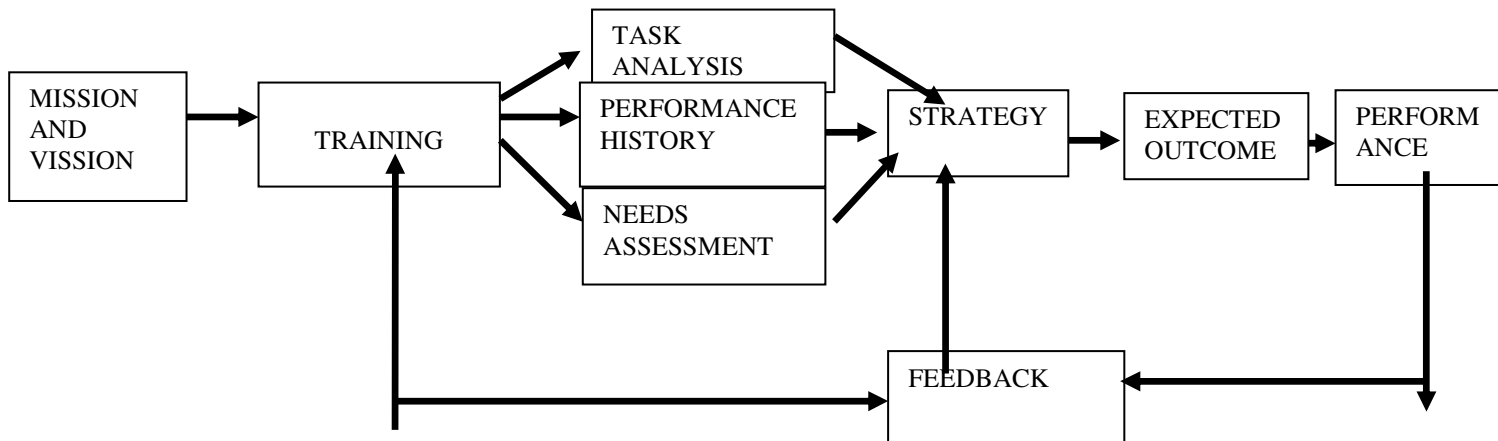
Source: Researchers Own Construct, 2014

Research Methodology

The study used the survey design mainly to elicit information from various levels of employees of the Tamale Teaching Hospital about the role of training in employee performance. This design was chosen because the researchers wanted to gather information from various levels of the institutions structure so as to make informed findings and draw meaningful conclusions that can be generalized. The design is also used to discover the relationship between employees' training and their performance.

Population of the Study.

The target population is 1597 employees, comprising all staff of the Tamale Teaching Hospital as at the time of the study. The population comprised of 908 (57%) males and 689 (43%) females.

In other to get a reliable picture and knowledge of the role training play in employee performance, it was decided to collect data mostly from those who have benefited from training programmes of the hospital. The data was therefore collected from those employees who benefitted from such programmes and also from some supervisors who assess the performance of such employees.

The Table below shows the staff strength and categories of the Tamale Teaching Hospital.

Table 3.1: Staff Strength Categories of TTH

CATEGORY	NO. OF STAFF	PERCENTAGE (%)
Doctors	187	12
Nurses	714	45
Pharmacists	41	2
Bio-medical Scientist	65	4
Support Staff	590	37
TOTAL	**1597**	**100**

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

The sample for the study was made up of 160 staffs from the Tamale Teaching Hospital representing approximately 10% of the targeted population. This was considered enough to generate confidence in the data collected and the subsequent generalizations. For a descriptive research it is sometimes suggested that the researcher selects between 10 to 20 percent of the population for the sample, (Ary et al, 1979).

The sampling design employed for the study was stratified and purposive sampling. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the study sample arbitrarily on the basis of some of the characteristics possessed by the elements the researchers deemed important for the study.

Data Presentation and Discussion

As part of the examination of the role training and development play in employee performance, the study took into consideration the demographic profile of the respondents. One of the key issues the study considered in this regard was the age of the respondents. That is respondents were made to indicate the age categories they belonged to and it was found that majority of them were very youthful.

Table 4.1: Age of respondents

DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Age		
20-35 yrs	98	82.4%
36-56+ yrs	21	17.6%
Department of respondents		
Administration	48	40.3%
Clinical	71	59.7%
Educational Qualification		
Diploma and above	99	84.0
Below Diploma	20	16.0
Gender of Respondents		
Male	78	65.5%
Female	41	34.5%
Length of Service		
1 – 7 years	101	84.88
8 years and more	18	15.12

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

After analyzing the field data, the study discovered that 82.4% of the respondents fell within the age group of 20-35 whilst 17.6% of them were identified to be within the age category of 36 and above.

This analysis implies that in terms of human resources, the Tamale Teaching Hospital can boast of a young human resource base that has the potential of working for longer time to ensure the goal achievement of the organization. Investment in the training and development of this workforce will be an investment in the right direction.

The study further examined the respondents in terms of the units they work with. It was realized that 71 respondents, representing 59.7% were from the clinical units. This means that much attention in terms of training was given to the clinical staff because of the line of business of the Teaching Hospital (heath service delivery).

Even though the mandate of the hospital is to deliver clinical service, effort should be made to provide training opportunities to ensure a balance between administrative staff and the clinical staff.

The education level of respondent was another area that was examined. It was discovered that 99 respondents representing 84% hold certificates in diploma or higher, while only 16% of the respondents have qualification below diploma. This analysis indicates that there is a potential for growth of employees which will have implication in their performance.

Gender was another area the respondents were asked question to indicate their sex. In analyzing the field data relating to gender it was discovered that 65.5% of the respondents were males whiles 34.5% were females. The percentage of female respondents indicates that gender issues in employment practices of the Tamale Teaching Hospital were not ignored.

Researchers also posed questions to find out how long respondents have been working with Tamale Teaching Hospital. This was to know how well the respondents understand in terms of experience policies relating to training and development as long as employee performance is concerned. In response to this, 101 respondents indicated that they have been with the Tamale Teaching Hospital between 1-7 years whiles 18 respondents worked in the hospital for 8 years or more.

Training Practices in Tamale Teaching Hospital
One of the specific objectives of the study was to identify whether the TTH has some training programmes in place.

To this regard questions were asked to elicit information from respondents as to whether there are any presences of clearly written and operational training policy for employees. For a total of the 119 respondents, 50 (42%) of them agreed that there are clearly written and operational training policies while 23 (19.9%) disagree to this assertion. However, 13 (10.9%) of them strongly agreed that such existed as figure 4.2 presents the field data results.

Fig. 1: Respondents' Ratings on Written and Operational Training Program.
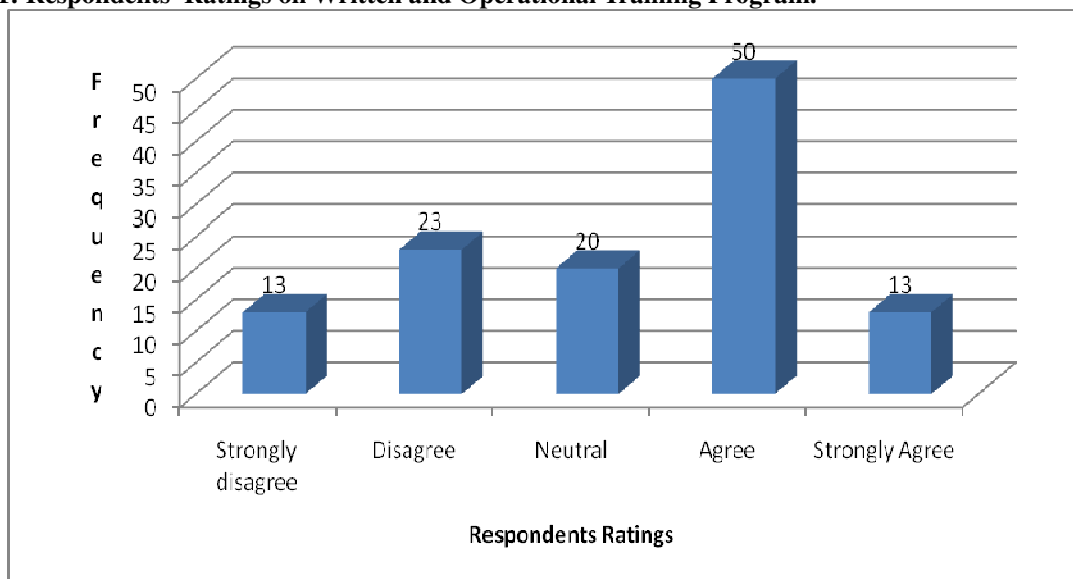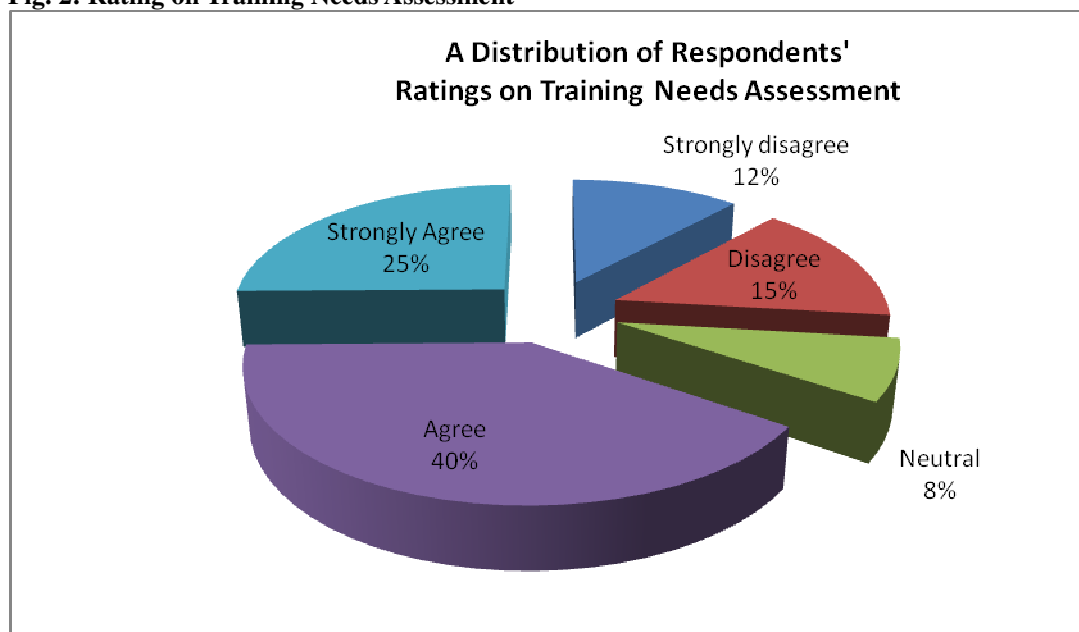

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

A careful study of the figures revealed that 20 (16.8%) of the respondent stood neutral to the question whiles 13 (10.9%) of the respondents strongly disagree that there were any presence of clearly written and operational training policy. The results clearly indicated that there is clearly written and operational training policy. However for the percentage that either disagreed or strongly disagreed with, this gives an indication that a total of 36 (30.8%) employees are not aware of such a policy. Therefore, the need for education and awareness creation of the policy will be prudent.

Another area in this objective of training and development practices was to assess the presence of continuous needs assessment of employees before training programmes are embarked upon. This was to examine whether training given to employees was strictly based on their needs as they relates to performance. Data gathered revealed 40% of respondents agreeing that needs assessment is a continuous practice in the Tamale Teaching Hospital, whiles 25% of the respondents strongly agreed with this assertion and 15% disagreed with that. The figure below depicts the analysis of the results.

Fig. 2: Rating on Training Needs Assessment

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

A cursory look at the figure indicates that whiles 12% strongly disagree with the point that there is continuous needs assessment 8% stood neutral on that. In the whole analysis, there is a clear indication that the Tamale Teaching Hospital undertakes training needs assessment before training its employees. This position of the Hospital is in line with the systematic training model proposed by Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006). Thompson and Maybe (1994) also suggested that the constituent part of an organizations human resource development strategy should involve among others, identifying the training needs of employees. What this results means is that the Tamale Teaching Hospital does its training of employees in line with the needs of the employee and in a way to achieve organizational objectives.

The researchers also sought to find out the linkage that exists between training and other human resource management programmes. This was to find out whether training and development was undertaken to solve actual employee training needs relating to other human resource practices that help develop employees. In all 44 respondents, representing 37% agreed that there were some linkages, 15 respondents 12.6% strongly agreed to that position. Interestingly 30 respondents representing 25.1% were neutral on this point. This means that other human resource management practices such as performance evaluation and monitoring, promotion, transfers, compensation management and length of leave were linked to training and development of employees. Find below table the field data results of respondents.

Table 4.2: Respondents level of agreement with linkages of training to other HR   practices

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly disagree	12	10.1%
Disagree	18	15.1%
Neutral	30	25.2%
Agree	44	37.0%
Strongly agree	15	12.6%
Total	119	100.0%

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

Another considerations on the table are that 18 (15.1%) of the respondents disagreed and also 12 (10.1%) strongly disagreed with that point.

The researchers further took data on the issue of whether there is continuity of monitoring and evaluation of training programmes. This was to find out whether training outcomes were in line with expectations and that they solve the problems for which training is targeted.

The responses analysed indicated quiet clearly that 37% of the respondents agreed and 20.2% strongly agreed that there is monitoring and evaluation of training programme. This means that it will help the Tamale Teaching

Hospital to keep present job performance levels at required standards. The implication of this can be seen in light of Prior (1999), that, training will ensure adequate supply of properly trained personnel and also develop skills, abilities and attitudes for future job requirements. The table below shows the field data results of respondents.

**Table 4.3: Responses on monitoring and evaluation of training programmes**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	13	10.9%
Disagree	19	16.0%
Neutral	19	16.0%
Agree	44	37.0%
Strongly Agree	24	20.2%
Total	**119**	**100.0%**

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

A further study of the table indicates that 16% of respondents were neutral and another 16% disagree whiles 10.9% strongly disagreed. 57.3% agreeing therefore mean that there is monitoring and evaluation of training programmes in TTH.

In respect of the above stated objective of identifying training practices, researchers also asked a question of presence of opportunity to work with mentors. In agreement43 (36.1%) of respondents indicated so, whiles 18 (15.1%) strongly agreed that they have opportunity to work with mentors. The responses on the opportunity to work with mentors are clearly shown in the figure below.

Fig. 3: Respondents Rating on Opportunity to Work with a Mentor
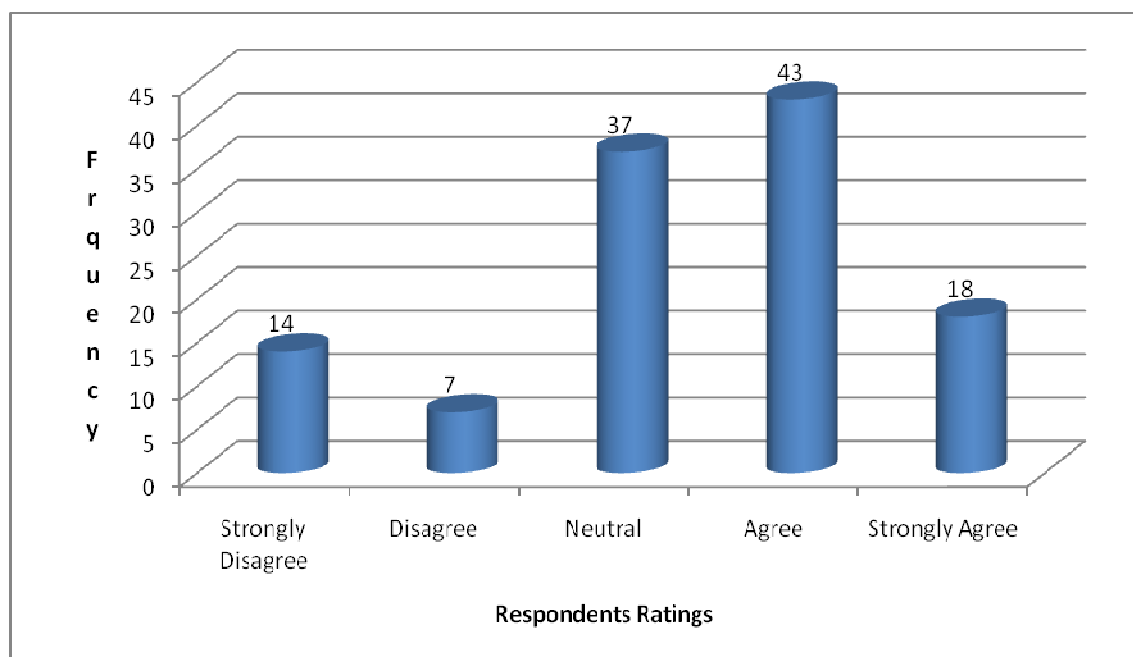
Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

In further analysis of the figure, 14 (11.8%) of the respondents said they were no opportunity to work with mentors in strong disagreement, and 7 (5.9%) were in disagreement. It is necessary to indicate that 37 (31.1%) were also neutral in their response.

The Effectiveness of Training Programmes

The study further examined the effectiveness of the training programmes available at the Tamale Teaching Hospital. The import of this is to find out whether training programmes actually improve performance and how they benefit the employees in terms of helping them do their jobs well, thereby facilitating the achievement of organizational objectives. In this regard questions were asked to elicit information from respondents on their opinions on the effectiveness of training programmes received. The key issue that was considered first was to find out whether respondents got training that makes them competent on their jobs. Data collected from the field

showed that 46.6% of the respondents agreed and another 23.7% also strongly agreed that training programmes leads to improved performance. This gives indication that training and development helps to make employees more competent on the job and that employees can use resources judiciously to benefit the organization. This is consistent with the idea of Pilbean and Corbrige (2006) which states that effective training is geared towards enhancing quality, reducing cost and improving performance. Below is a table illustrating the field data results.

**Table 4.4: Respondents' opinions on how training contributes to performance**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	5	4.2%
Disagree	17	14.4%
Neutral	13	11.0%
Agree	56	46.6%
Strongly Agree	28	23.7%
Total	119	100.0%

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

Further analysis of the table shows that 14.4% of the respondents disagreed that training makes them competent with a support of 4.2% strongly disagreeing. This assertion is contrary to the opinion of Pilbeam and Corbridge (2006).

Another issue of consideration in this respect was the issue of role ambiguity and confusion. The study examined how training could solve ambiguity and confusion issues in employees' tasks and responsibilities. An analysis of the field data collected discovered that 44% of the respondents were happy to have agreed in their ratings that having received training they better understood their roles. Supporting this position was another 14% who strongly agreed in their ratings. However 22% could not tell whether they clearly understood their roles by responding to neutral. Below is a diagram to illustrate the field data on using training to solve role ambiguity problems.

Fig 4: Respondents' view on using training to solve problems of Role Ambiguity
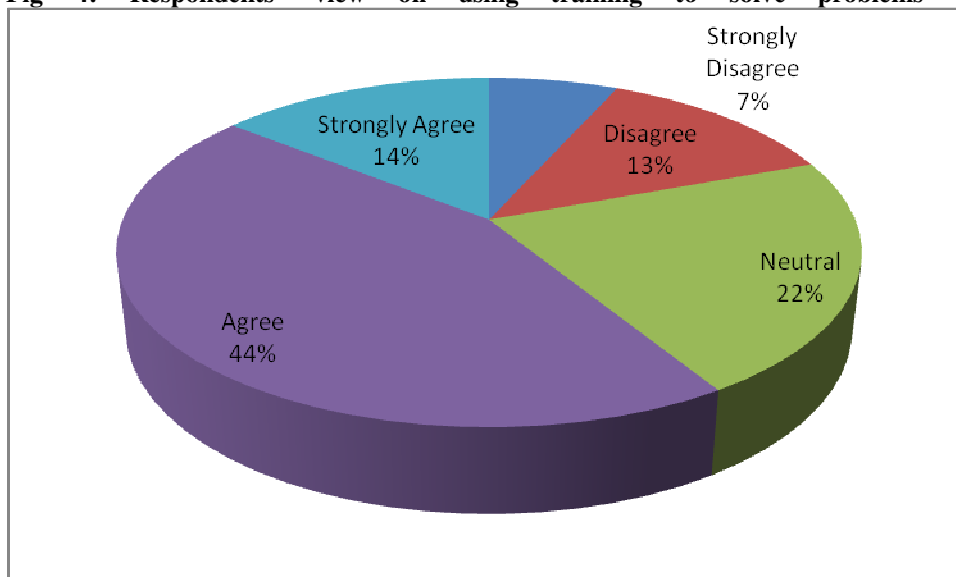
Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

Consequently the diagram showed that 13% of the respondents registered their disagreement whilst 7% strongly did not agree with that statement that training made them not to have role ambiguity and confusion. This implies that management still have a task to identify employees who do not clearly understand what the organization expects from them and give them the necessary training they need to do their jobs.

The next aspect of the study under this objective was to ascertain respondent's intentions about the organization whether to leave or to stay. This allowed the researchers to know the level of satisfaction the respondents derive from training programmes that motivates them to stay. The field data collected on this issue discovered that 43 (36.1%) out of the 119 respondents agreed by rating that they do not have an intension to leave the organization considering the role training created in their personal career development. While 21 (17.6%) of the respondents also strongly agreed that they do not wish to leave 33 (37.7%) of them were neutral on the issue. This implies that the employees feel part of the organization since their development needs are taken into consideration and will want to work hard to see the organization achieve its goals. With this understanding, it meant that the organization can create and maintain its talent pool. This is consistent with Armstrong (2006) description of the aims of training; that it explicitly takes into account both organization needs and employee interest. The table below consolidates the different responses of the respondents.

**Table 4.5: Respondents intentions to leave the organization**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	10	8.4%
Disagree	12	10.1%
Neutral	33	27.7%
Agree	43	36.1%
Strongly Agree	21	17.6%
Total	119	100.0%

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

The table further reveals that 10 (8.4%) and 12 (10.1%) of the respondents strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively to the statement that they do not have an intension to leave the organization.

The aim of training and development is to equip the employee with the skills and competencies necessary to carry out present work and to be able to face new challenges in the future (Armstrong 2010). The researchers in this study asked questions to elicit information from respondents as to whether they are able to apply knowledge received through training on their job assignment. After the field data was received and analyzed, it was discovered that, 49 (41.2%) respondents agreed to it whiles 18 (15.1%) of them strongly agreed. The figure below clearly mirrors the data for better understanding.

Fig 5: Respondents' Ratings on transfer of Training Knowledge Received
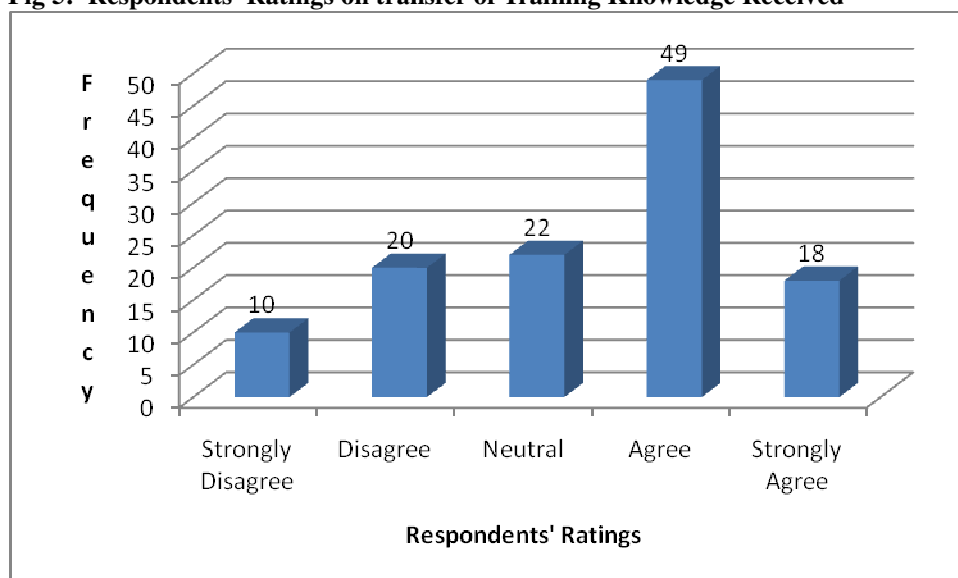
Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

However, 10 (8.4%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they could easily apply knowledge received from training on the job easily, whiles 20 (16.8%) of them disagreed. Only 22 (18.5%) respondents could not state whether they accept that position or not by staying neutral.

The study further examines whether training can make employees and for that matter the respondents flexible. The data collected on this was analyzed and has the following results; 50 respondents representing 42.4% agreed,

27 of them representing 22.9% strongly agreed and 17 respondents representing 14.4% were neutral. For this analysis, it is clear that training has impacted on employees the necessary competencies to be able to rotate on different jobs within the organization. These figures can be seen clearly on the table shown below.

**Table 4.6: Respondents agreement to flexibility after training**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	8	6.8%
Disagree	16	13.6%
Neutral	17	14.4%
Agree	50	42.4%
Strongly Agree	27	22.9%
Total	118	100.0%

Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

The figures further revealed that only 8 respondents, accounting for 6.8% strongly disagreed and 16 of respondents, representing 13.6% disagreed. Therefore a conclusion can be drawn that training makes employees flexible for job rotation.

Investigating further, the researchers examined data on job enlargement and enrichment prospects after training. The data on this is to help determine how effective training programmes help in job redesign in the study organization (TTH). The key issue that was considered was for the respondents to rate their level of agreement on the statement "training have made me able to perform multiple tasks than before". Analysis of the field data saw 44% of the respondents agreeing, 33% strongly agreeing with only 9% staying neutral. The figure below shows the respondents ratings on the statement.

Fig 6.   Respondents' Ratings on Multiple Tasks performed Training Received
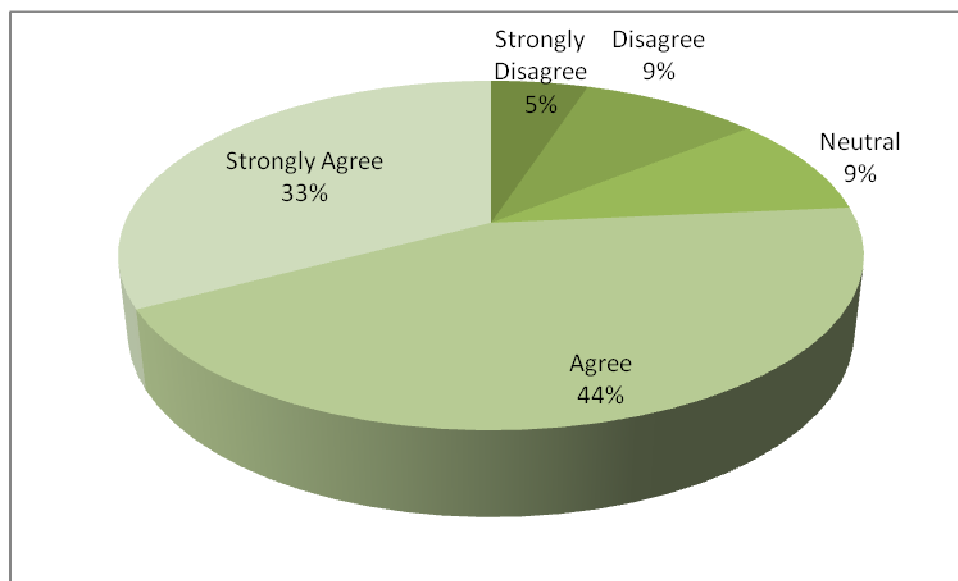
Source: Field Survey Data, 2014

The figure also showed that 9% of the respondents disagreed and only 5% strongly disagreed. With this small percentage in disagreement, the researchers concluded that training programmes constitute the basis for effective job enlargement and job enrichment.

Conclusion

The issue of training in every organization is key to the successful achievement of its goals. The Tamale Teaching Hospital is no exception. It is even more important as there is increased workload on the workforce.

It is in this regard that the study examined the role of training in employee performance. The key issues considered in the study were training practices as they exist in the organization and practices and the effectiveness of training programmes. The study concluded that training improves employee performance and lead to overall organizational performance. The study also noted that there was the need for emphasis on training programmes to be intensified.

Recommendations

Total analysis of the views of respondents on the role of training in employee performance empowered the researchers to make the following recommendations:

i.   More emphasis and top management commitment should be given to training issues of employees as this will help in the total growth and development of the organization.

ii. Broad communication and awareness creation among employees by management about training opportunities available to them in the Teaching Hospital should be given much attention, since some employees level o knowledge about issues relating to training proved to be insignificant based on the number of neutral respondents.

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