Evaluation of In-Service Training for Senior Staff of a Public University in Ghana

Humphrey Danso[*] Michael Kofi Adu, Michael Kofi Twum-Ampomah, Richard Kwadwo Mprah

College of Technology Education-Kumasi, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana

P. O. Box 1277, Kumasi, Ghana

*dansohumphrey@yahoo.co.uk, mkofiadu@yahoo.com, mtampomah@ymail.com, rmprah@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study is an evaluation of the effectiveness and relevance of an in-service training workshop organized by Human Resource Division of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi of University of Education, Winneba, Ghana for Senior Staff. Data were obtained by the use of questionnaire that covered the content and outcome at the end of the workshop. The study found that: duration of the workshop was adequate but there was insufficient time given for discussions and questioning; there was inadequate material resources such as handouts, softcopies, CDs and slide presentations; the resource persons provided for the workshop were generally good; the training workshop was relevant to the participants in relation to their work; participants benefited from the training in terms of capacity building, awareness of new trends, confidence building and general change of attitude towards work. Recommendations are made for future improvement of such workshop.
Keywords: Evaluation, In-Service Training, Resources, Workshop

1. Introduction

In-service training within public service agencies is recognized as a key means through which staff are provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to improve overall institutional performance and achieve the objectives of the organization. Training is the process of acquiring specific skills to perform a job better (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005, p. 608). It helps people to become qualified and proficient in doing some jobs (Noe, 2009). Usually an organization facilitates the employees' learning through training so that their modified behaviour contributes to the attainment of the organization's goals and objectives. Reports of training expenditure within social services departments in the UK suggest increasing amounts of monies are invested in such activity in order to meet the changing demands placed on social care and greater expectations for higher standards in service delivery (Clarke, 2001). To make sure that the training program is accomplishing its goals, an evaluation of the training can be valuable. Training should have, as one of its critical components, a method of measuring the effectiveness of the training. Evaluation will help employers determine the amount of learning achieved and whether an employee's performance has improved on the job. The study therefore intends to evaluate the effectiveness and relevance of the in-service training workshop for staff of UEW, Kumasi campus.

Most recent study by Piyali, Joshi, Satyawadi, Mukherjee & Ranjan (2011) on evaluating effectiveness of a training program with trainee reaction, revealed that 75 per cent of managers and only 45 per cent of non-managerial employees found the training manual and handouts to be valuable as learning tools; a total of 65 per cent of trainees at the non-management level felt that the exercises/activities had given them sufficient practice; 85 per cent of the respondents also feel prepared to go out and perform the skills taught in the class; 80 per cent of the respondents (management level) felt that the length of the program was just right and 90 per cent of respondents (management level) felt that the program was worthwhile in terms of cost and their time away from normal job duties. In another study conducted by Kalargyrou and Woods (2011) on training competencies for the twenty-first century, which the participants found their training beneficial and also that good communication, enthusiasm and passion were significant ingredients to the success of training. Other researchers (Sundarajan, 2007; Miller & Osinski, 2002; Sian, 2003; Kirkpatrick, 1976; Raab, Swanson, Wentling & Dark, 1987; Trochim, 2008) focused on training and its

importance, types and methods of training, training materials and evaluation of training.

In-service training is an important tool for upgrading the skills and competencies of the staff of any organization, for them to be abreast with the modern trends in achieving the organizational objectives (Halim & Ali, 1999, p.8). Staff members of University of Education, Winneba, Ghana are no exception. However, by the researchers' observation there is limited in-service training organized for the Senior Staff of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi (COLTEK) of University of Education, Winneba (UEW). Fortunately, a 2-day in-service training workshop was organized for the senior staff of all sections and units on 19th and 20th September, 2011.

There is therefore the need to evaluate the relevance of the workshop for the senior staff so as to improve the subsequent workshops and make them relevant to the university's goals and objectives. This study seeks to assess the effectiveness and relevance of the workshop in relation to both the senior staff and the university at large. The study is important because it will provide the management feedback to develop the workforce towards the attainment of the goals and objectives of the University of Education, Winneba. Additionally, the results of the study will: help the senior staff to improve their existing knowledge and skills; help the management of the university to identify the training needs of employees and provide suggestions for future organization of such training workshops for staff.

The objectives of the study are to: examine the relevance of the training on participants' knowledge; examine the effectiveness of the training on participants' knowledge and provide suggestion for future organization of such workshop. For the purpose of achieving the objectives, the following questions were posed as a guide for the study: was the content of the training workshop relevant to staff's job schedule? What are the outcomes of the training workshop? And what are the suggestions for the future organization of such workshop?

2. Research Methodology
The researchers collected data through primary and secondary sources. With respect to the primary source, data were collected through questionnaires. The secondary sources included textbooks, articles, journals, reports and research works relating to the topic under study.

2.1 Research design
The design used for this study was that of an assessment which relied on questionnaire to generate data for analysis. The study was to find out the effectiveness and relevance of the workshop organized by the Human Resource (HR) Division of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi of University of Education, Winneba, Ghana in relation to both the senior staff and the university at large.

2.2 Participants of the study
The population for the study was the 87 participants of the workshop. Random sampling method was used to select 50 participants. In all 50 questionnaires were distributed to the sample for the study.

2.3 Instrument and data collection
The instrument for the study was basically questionnaire. The questionnaire items were based on the content and benefits of the workshop as well as suggestions for future organization of such workshop. The questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers that gave them the opportunity to interact with the respondents, explain in details the rationale for the study in order to give explanation where necessary. Enough time was given to the respondents to complete the questionnaire some of which were collected on the same day and others after a few days. The response rate of the questionnaire was 90% (thus out of the 50 questionnaires 45 were returned).

3. Data presentation and analysis of results
In this section, data is presented and analyzed under the main headings: respondents' demographics, importance of the workshop, frequency at which the workshop should be organized, benefit of the workshop to staff, some resources of the workshop, expectations for the workshop, the quality of resource persons, satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons and suggestions for future organization of workshop.

3.1 Respondents' demographics
The characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

In terms of gender, 55.6% of the respondents were males and 44.4% were females. The result indicates that greater

percentage (73.3%) of the respondents were young adults (between 21 and 40 years). In terms of type of staff, 13.3% of the respondents were teaching staff and 86.7% were non-teaching staff, implying that majority of the respondents were administrative staff (39 participants).

3.2 Importance of the workshop
The respondents were asked to rate the importance of the workshop. The summary of their response is presented in Figure 1.
Figure 1 indicates that 73% of the participants confirmed the workshop was very important, 25% also said the workshop was important and 2% of the participants were not sure of the importance of the workshop. The workshop was considered important to an overwhelming majority of the participants. Perhaps the 2% of the staff were not sure of the importance because they might not have enjoyed it or they already had the skills and knowledge the training provided.

3.3 Frequency at which the workshop should be organized
Table 2 shows the frequency at which participants would like the workshop to be organized. It suggests that 15.6% of the participants want the workshop to be organized once a year, 51.1% of them want it to be organized twice a year, 31.1% also want it to be organized quarterly and 2.2% of the participants want the workshop to be organized monthly. This suggests that majority of the participants want the workshop to be organized at least twice a year.

3.4 Benefit of the workshop to staff
The respondents were asked to indicate the benefit of the workshop as to whether it would help improve their work output. The summary of their responses is presented in Table 3.
Table 3 indicates that 97.8% of the participants were of the opinion that they benefited from the workshop while 2.2% are of contrary view. Again, while 6.7% of the respondents disagree that the workshop will help improve their output of work, 93.3% of the participants agree that the workshop will help to improve their work output. There appears to be a correlation between participants who saw the workshop as important or were not sure and those who benefitted or did not benefit from it. It is likely that the 2% who were not sure of its importance did not also see any benefit or improvement to be made in their work.

3.5 Participants' views on some aspects of the workshop
Participants' views regarding the duration, resources and time for discussions of the workshop are presented in Table 4.
The result depicts that 40% of the participants perceived that enough time was given to discuss their work problems while 60% thought otherwise. Also, while 47.7% of the respondents disagreed that the resources provided for the workshop were adequate, 52.3% of the respondents agreed that the resources provided for the workshop were adequate. Finally, 72.1% of the respondents perceived that the duration of the workshop was adequate while 27.9% were of contrary view. The time allowed for discussion of participants work problems was 1 hour each day, the resources provided for the training were note pads and pens, and the duration of the training was 2 days.

3.6 Expectations for the workshop
The respondents were asked if their expectations for the workshop were met. The summary of their responses is presented in Figure 2.
The result suggests that 60% of the participants confirmed that their expectations for the workshop were met while 40% of the participants confirmed that their expectations for the workshop were not met.

3.7 The quality of resource persons
Figure 4 shows the respondents' rating of the quality of resource persons used for the workshop. It indicates that 22.2% of the respondents rated the quality of the resource persons very high, 75.6% rated them high while 2.2% of the respondents rated the quality of the resource persons low. It would be noted that there could be a relationship between those who rated the quality of resource persons as low (2.2%) and those who did not benefit from the workshop (2.2%). They could not also have been satisfied with the responses provided by the resource persons (2.2% see Figure 4).

3.8 Satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons
Figure 4 shows the participants' satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons.
The results depict that 6.7% of the respondents were very satisfied with the responses to the questions, 86.7% were satisfied, 2.2% were not satisfied, while 4.4% of the respondents were not sure as to whether they felt satisfied with the answers provided by the resource persons.

3.9 Suggestions for future organization of workshop
The respondents were asked to make suggestions for future organization of such workshop. The summary of their responses is presented in Table 5. Out of the 45 respondents, only 34 made suggestions for future organization of such workshop.
Table 5 indicates that 21% of the participants suggested printed or electronic materials t, 18% suggested the inclusion of more relevant topics for discussion, 15% suggested the provision of more time for questions and discussions and 12% suggested such workshop should take place outside campus.

4. Discussions of results
In this section the results of the study as presented above are discussed to consider the input and output of the workshop.

4.1 Organizational resources of the workshop
The input deals with the organizational resources such as venue, training materials, resource persons, duration and incentives which were provided for the workshop. In addressing these issues, this sub-section covers the following sub-headings that are deemed appropriate: training duration, time allowed for discussing work problems and resources provided for the workshop.

4.1.1 Training duration
The findings of this study have many similarities with the results of Piyali, et al. (20011) study on evaluating effectiveness of a training program with trainee reaction. This study found that the duration for the training program was adequate from the perspective of the trainees, which is supported by the findings of Piyali, et al. This study (see Table 4) shows that 72.1% of participants were of the opinion the duration for the training program was adequate, and 80% of the respondents of Piyali, et al. study felt that the length of the program was just right. One possible reason for this response might be that for a very long time, the senior staff of the Kumasi Campus of the University of Education, Winneba have not had any in-service training and therefore having two days workshop duration was adequate.

4.1.2 Time allowed for discussing work problems
In Table 4, 60% of the participants of the workshop perceived the time that was allowed for them to discuss their work problems was insufficient. This is because the time given to them for each day to discuss their work problems and presentation was less than one hour, which was inadequate for discussion of work problems and suggestions for overcoming such problems. However, some of the senior staff perceived that the time allowed for the discussion on the work problems was enough. This might be that those staff members were able to discuss their work problems and were given suggestions as to how to overcome those challenges within the allowed time.

4.1.3 Resources provided for the workshop
Concerning the material resources provided for the workshop, some of the senior staff were of the opinion that the resources provided for the training were inadequate (see Table 4). This is because training materials such as handouts, softcopies, CDs and slide presentations were not adequate, which is also consistent with the findings of Piyali, et al. (2011). In this study, 47.7% of participants opinioned the resources were inadequate. Additionally, water and food provided for the training were insufficient. This is in line with 45% of the respondents of Piyali, et al. study who felt that the handout and other resources were not sufficient. However, 52.3% of the respondents of the current study were of the view that the resources provided for the training were sufficient. According to Figure 4, greater percentage of the senior staff rated the quality of resource persons provided for the workshop high. One possible

reason is that experienced persons in the administration of various universities were the resource persons who directed the proceedings and shared their experiences with the participants. Few of the participants rated the resource persons low, probably due to the fact that some of the resource persons' presentations were not captivating enough to them or they already know what the resource persons shared with them.

4.2 Outcome of the workshop
The outcome of the training considers factors such as benefit, importance and expectation of the workshop on the participants and their work output. In addressing these issues, this sub-section will cover the importance of the workshop, benefits from the workshop and satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons.

4.2.1 Importance of the workshop
The data in Figure 1 indicates that 98% of the senior staff confirmed that the workshop was very important and important. This is because the training was refreshing, enlightening and empowerment to them. Again, the participants saw the need to participate in such training because of the knowledge they acquired from it. However, 2% of the participants were not sure of the importance of the workshop.

4.2.2 Benefits from the workshop
In reference to the benefits of the study by the participants, the result of this study was consistent with those found by Kalargyrou and Woods (2011). In this study, 97.8% of the participants agreed they have benefitted from the training similar to that of Kalargyrou and Woods' study in which the participants found their training beneficial. One possible reason for this result of this study is that, the workshop provided a clear picture of the focus of the University, the area they fit into it and their role which fit into the realization of the aims and objectives of the University. In Table 3, 93.3% of the senior staff accepted that the knowledge acquired from the workshop would help improve their work output. This is possible because they were exposed to efficient and effective working practices and the need to equip themselves with modern trends in the work environment. Figure 2 indicates that 60% of the participants confirmed that their expectations for the workshop were met. This confirms that the participants really benefited from the training.

4.2.3 Satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons
The result in Figure 4 shows that 86.7% of the respondents were satisfied with the answers provided by the resource persons. This indicates that most of the resource persons provided for the training were experienced and knew more about the university system and its operations. However, few of the respondents were dissatisfied with the answers provided by some of the resource persons, which might be due insufficient time allowed for discussion.

5. Conclusions
In conclusion, there is a dire need not only for the participants but also for the institution that organizes the training workshop for regular in-service training. The findings of this study suggest the provision of resources for the organization of the training workshops such as adequate duration, sufficient time for discussion of participants work problems, provision of training materials (CDs, handouts, softcopies and slide presentation) and the use of experienced resource persons. Considering the outcome of the study, the findings depicted that the training workshop was relevant, beneficial and important to the participants, and would help improve their work output.

6. Recommendations
On the basis of the conclusions, the following recommendations are presented.

6.1 The need for frequent organization and extended duration
Since some of the participants were of the view that the duration was inadequate and some also suggested frequent organization of the workshop. This suggests the need to extend the duration and frequency of the organization of in-service training for the senior staff. It is therefore recommended that the HR Division of the University should organize in-service training frequently (at least twice a year) and if possible during vacation.

6.2 The need to provide printed/electronic materials

According to the results, there was lack of material resources such as handouts, softcopies, CDs and slide presentations for the workshop. Lack of such materials may affect the quality and import of the workshop. It is recommended that the management of the University should provide all the needed materials for the organization of future workshops.

6.3 Provision of certificates for participants
According to the participants, they were not given any certificate of prove for their participation in the training workshop. It is therefore recommended that the Human Resource Division of the University should provide certificates of participation for the participants of future in-service training for staff.

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Table 1: Demographic profile of respondents (n = 45)

Category	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	25	55.6
Female	20	44.4
Age		
21 – 30 years	10	22.2
31 – 40 years	23	51.1
41 – 50 years	6	13.3
Above 50 years	6	13.3
Type of staff		
Teaching	6	13.3
Non-teaching	39	86.7

Table 2: Frequency at which the workshop should be organized

Description	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Once a year	7	15.6
Twice a year	23	51.6
Quarterly	14	31.1
Monthly	1	2.2
Total	45	100.0

Table 3**:** Benefit of the workshop to staff

Question	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Did you benefit from the workshop	44	97.8	1	2.2
Will the workshop help improve your work output	42	93.3	3	6.7

Table 4: Duration, resources and time for discussions of the workshop

Description	Yes		No	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Were you given enough time to discuss work problems	18	40.0	27	60.0
Were the resources provided for the workshop adequate	23	52.3	21	47.7
Was the duration of the workshop adequate	31	72.1	12	27.9

Table 5:   Suggestions for the organizers of future workshops

Suggestions	Number of respondents	Percentage (%)
Provision of printed/electronic materials	7	21.0
Increase the duration of the workshop	4	12.0
Frequent organization of the workshop	1	3.0
Include more relevant topics	6	18.0
It should take place during vacation	1	3.0
Provision of more experienced resource persons	1	3.0
Provision of more time for questions and discussions	5	15.0
Include topics that will benefit the teaching staff	2	6.0
It should take place outside campus	4	12.0
Provision of allowance/honorarium for participants	2	6.0
Provision of certificates for participants	1	3.0
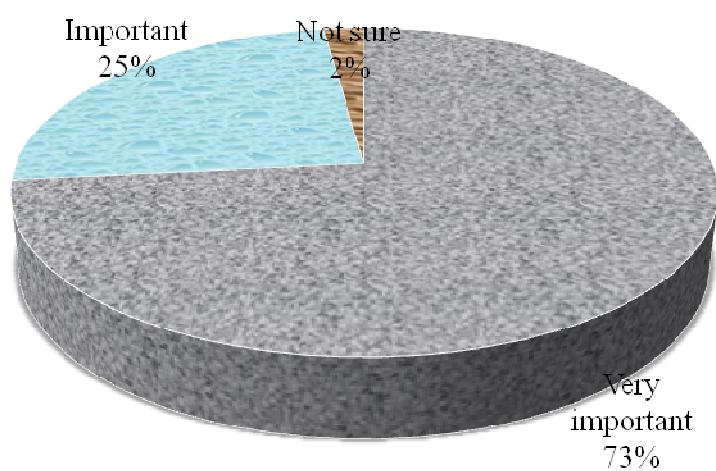
Figure 1: Level of importance of the workshop

Figure 2: Expectations for the workshop
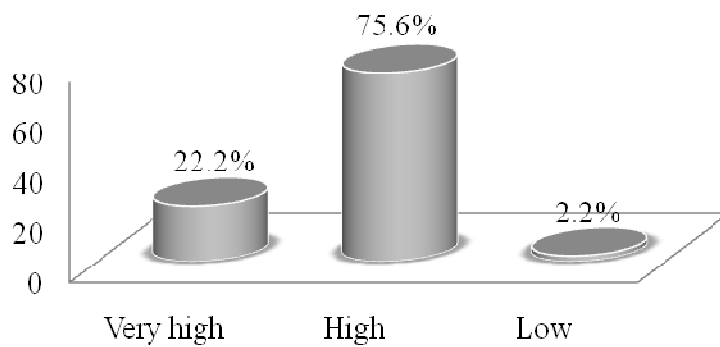
Figure 3: Rating of the quality of resource persons
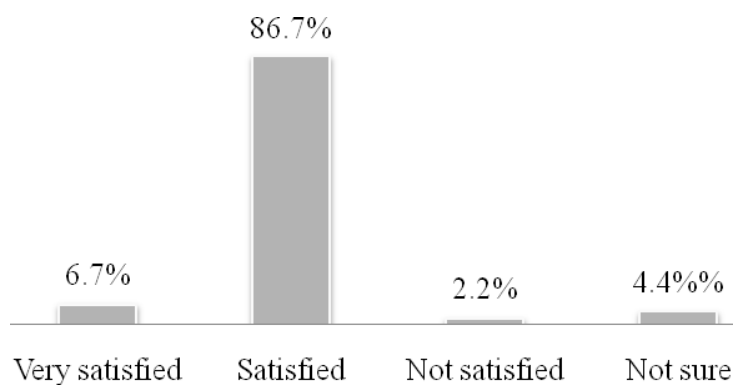
Figure 4: Satisfaction with answers provided by resource persons