

Making Employee Training and Development a Tool for Efficiency and Effectiveness in Ghanaian Universities

Kweku Esia-Donkoh¹, Hagar Bampoh-Addo^{2*}, Deborah Afful³

1. Department of Basic Education, University of Education, Winneba, P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
 2. Faculty of Languages Education, University of Education, Winneba, P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
 3. Division of Human Resource, University of Education, Winneba, P. O. Box 25, Winneba, Ghana
- *E-mail of the Corresponding Author: hagarbampohaddo@yahoo.com

Abstract

Employee training and development are considered critical when it comes to employee efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. The proposition of this paper was that employee training and development could ensure efficiency and effectiveness in university administration. The paper focused on the benefits of training and development, and training methods. It also buttressed some training and development programmes in Ghanaian universities. The paper concluded that the success of every organization, including universities, depends heavily on quality human resources. It therefore follows that there is the need for universities in Ghana to ensure that programmes designed for training and development are holistic in nature to equip employees with the requisite knowledge, attitude, skills and experience for job effectiveness. It is thus recommended that management of universities, especially those in Ghana should make training and development programmes a continuous activity to maintain and appraise employees' skill levels, and motivate them to grow and improve professionally.

Keywords: training, development, efficiency, effectiveness

1. Introduction

Various factors such as capital, equipment, human resource etc. contribute to the success of any organization (including educational institutions), and the significance of these factors cannot be overemphasized. However, the most important of these factors is the human factor since it is the people in the organizations that put the other resources to work. As a result, management needs to pay attention to the human resource in order to achieve the goals and objectives of the organizations. Amewudah (2002) supports this by indicating that human resource is perhaps, the most important and dynamic of all of an organization's resources; and one of the key strategies for human resource development is employee training and development. To him, most organizations see employee training and development as a tool for employees to improve upon their performance and also, help the organization to grow.

Training and development are very crucial to the employees, the organization and their effectiveness (Devi & Shaik 2012). Training, according to Cole (2002), is the preparation for an occupation or for specific skills which is job or task oriented rather than personal. Training could also be seen as a learning process that seeks a relatively permanent change in an individual that will improve his or her ability to perform on the job. According to Onasanya (2006) training is a form of specialized education aimed at giving the trainee a particular or specialized knowledge, skill and attitude which he must possess to effectively perform in a given position (Aroge 2012). Training therefore involves the acquisition and changing of specific skills, knowledge, attitudes and social behaviour for the purposes of an occupation or work.

Development on the other hand is seen by Owens (2000) as a process of employee improvement through approaches that emphasize self-realization, self-growth and self-development. This development includes those activities aimed at improvement and growth of abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge of employees in an organization. To Owens (2000), development involves promoting employee acquisition of skills, information, attitudes, and behaviour patterns needed within the organization's work units. For Onasanya (2006) development is concerned with specific programmes specifically designed to prepare and groom employees with particular education and training for higher responsibilities (Aroge 2012). Development may therefore be seen as a learning activity directed towards future needs rather than present needs. It is concerned more with career growth than immediate performance. The focus of development is thus basically on an organizations future human resource requirements, and secondly, on the growth needs of individual employees at the workplace.

It is acknowledged worldwide that employee training and development contribute to organizational effectiveness and efficiency. However, not every top management is committed to employee training and development. Probably, the reason could be that such top management who are not committed to the training and development of employees do not see the relationship between productivity and human resource development (Amewudah 2002). Safo (2006) is of the view that any leader who compromises the training of his or her personnel is only walking on a landmine and it certainly would not be long for the obituary of that organization to be read. This

perhaps, shows the need for top management to make reasonable investments in the training and development of their employees. Hamid (2011) maintains that organizations that have policies which are more progressively people-oriented have excelled, leaving the competition behind. The main reason is that when organizations invest in people, in their training and development, they obtain higher skill and greater competence that helps improve morale and productivity (Devi & Shaik 2012).

According to Sarvadi (2005) many top managers of organizations seem to view employee training and development as more optional than essential, a viewpoint that can be costly to both short-term benefits and long term progress. In the view of Sarvadi (2005) the primary reason employee training and development is considered optional by so many managers and leaders of organizations is because it is seen as an expense than an investment. The truth however is that employees, who undergo training and development programmes are exposed, have higher knowledge and skills and perform better. It is thus a paradox to see some top managers set monies aside to purchase and maintain expensive equipment, vehicles and renovating but not the training of the people who oversee the equipment and the use of other resources.

2. Objectives

The paper seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- To find out the nature of employee training and development in Ghanaian universities
- To determine appropriate employee training and development methods
- To contribute to existing body of knowledge on employee training and development in educational institutions.

3. Benefits of Employee Training and Development

Regardless of the size or type of an organization, training and development can have a measurable impact on performance. In the view of Smith (2001) training that meets the needs of both the employees and employer can increase the quality and flexibility of the organization's services by fostering accuracy and efficiency, good work safety practices, and better customer service. To him, productivity increases as training takes place. In the opinion of Smith (2001) staffs who receive formal training can be more productive than untrained colleagues who are working in the same role. High labour productivity, thus, increases organizations output and can open a greater share of the market or expand it by improving products, services and reputations. Alao (2010), In the development of organizations, training and development play a crucial role, and improves performance, increases productivity, and eventually put organizations in the pole position to face competition and stay at the top. This implies that a significant difference exists between the organizations that train their employees and organizations that do not. Training generates benefits for the employee as well as for the organization by positively influencing employee performance through the development of employee knowledge, skills, ability, competencies and behavior (Sultana, Irum, Ahmed & Mehmood 2012).

Smith (2001) intimates that training and development increase staff retention which is significantly cost saving. Organizations with effective employee training and development programmes do not experience high turnover rate because the trained employee feels he has a future with the company. He believes he is valued and respected. Smith (2001) posits that the loss of one complete employee can be the equivalent of one year's pay and benefits. According to Smith (2001) training programmes in some organizations have reduced employee turnover by 70%. Safo (2006) postulates that it is only those employees who have nowhere to go that will remain with an organization that does not train its people. It must be noted that today's employee is always looking for an environment that promotes personal growth and to such people, training is just as important as their salary. In line with this, Safo (2006) indicates that as the news of how progressive you are as an organization goes round, job seekers would flock to you.

Smith (2001) intimates that the benefits of employee training and development in one area can flow through to all levels of an organization. With time, training reduces costs by decreasing wasted time and materials, maintenance cost of machinery and equipment, workplace accidents which leads to lower insurance premiums, recruitment costs through the internal promotion of skilled staff, and absenteeism. He argues further that organizations must continually change their work practices and infrastructure to stay competitive in a global market. Training and development programmes could help employees to manage the implementation of new technology, work practices and business strategies. Such training can also serve as a benchmark for future recruitment and quality assurance practices (Gross Esq 2006a).

In the opinion of Smith (2001), continuous employee training and development promotes development of new competencies and skills and help to meet the changing technologies of the world. Jobs such as nursing, teaching, and computer programming require further training. Also, individuals who develop their knowledge and skills through training and development report high motivation, morale and job satisfaction. Hutchings, Zhua, Coopera, Zhangb & Shao (2009) contend that training and development practices had a positive impact on

preparing them to be more effective in their work, increasing their technical abilities, interpersonal abilities, teamwork, job confidence and work motivation (Devi & Shaik 2012). Training and development programmes do not only teach employees how to do their jobs better, but it also helps them to work more independently and develop a can do attitude. Smith (2001) is also of the view that employee training and development, apart from impacting on an organization's profit margins, can improve staff morale and satisfaction, soft skills such as inter-staff communication and leadership, time management, and customer satisfaction.

4. Employee Training Methods

According to Cole (2002) and Smith (2001), training methods refer to the means by which information, ideas, skills, attitudes and feelings are communicated to employees at a workplace. The most popular training methods are classified as either on-the-job or off-the-job. On-the-job training is the most widely method used by organizations and it is a situation where employees are placed in an actual working situation and makes them appear to be immediately productive. It is learning by doing where the person is put in a real situation to enable him learn more about the job in the practical sense. They are of the view that on-the job training is simple to operate, cost effective, places the employees in actual work situations, provides immediate feedback to trainees on their performance, and it is a flexible method because the equipment or job change, modifications are easily made in the training. Despite these advantages that could be derived from on-the-job training, one cannot lose sight of the fact that it may have some setbacks such as low productivity while the employees develop their skills in the actual work situation. Again, trainees could make errors as they develop their skills. Some of these errors could be disastrous to the organization. Forms of on-the-job training methods include job instruction training, job rotation and secondment.

Off-the-job training on the other hand is a method of employee training conducted away from the worksite. It could be provided by external providers like private consulting firms, colleges or universities. It could also be provided by internal providers, that is, the permanent employees. The use of external providers is however more popular these days (Cole 2002; Smith 2001). The advantages that could be derived from off-the-job training include enabling participants learn to think on their feet, explore interpersonal relations and share feelings, develop analytical and problem solving skills, stimulate new ideas and creative suggestions and provide the opportunity to share ideas on real day to day problems. These merits notwithstanding, participants may be bored when resource persons are not professionals or are not effective. It also ignores the comprehension levels of the participants. Lectures, conferences, workshops, as well as simulation exercises and brainstorming are forms of off-the-job training methods (Cole, 2002; Smith, 2001; Gross Esq 2006b).

5. Training and Development Programmes in Ghanaian Universities

The success of every organization greatly depends on how well its employees are trained and developed. The most successful and productive employees are those who have received extensive training and development programmes. Such well trained employees are seen as the cream of the crop, often with the strongest stake in the future of the organization. In an ideal world, an organization would be able to hire people who already possess the exact skills needed by the organization. However in today's competitive labour market, demand for skilled workers far exceeds supply. That is where training and development come in. Training and development do not only arm employees with the needed professional or technical skills, but it also shows that the organization has invested in them and interested in bringing them into the future of the organization. This helps keep employees motivated and involved.

Universities in Ghana, as tertiary educational institutions, employ workers with varied qualifications, knowledge, skills and experience to help the Universities grow to achieve their vision and mission. In so doing, each university has in place a policy on employee training and development which seeks to upgrade the knowledge, skills, and experience of workers at all levels (senior members, senior staff and junior staff) to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and productivity. Such training and development of workers are seen in scholarships for employees to pursue higher degrees and other professional courses, sponsoring employees to participate in workshops, seminars and conferences. Job rotation is also a training method employed by Universities to enable employees have a greater understanding of different functional areas for them to be generalist.

6. Conclusion

Generally, every organization succeeds when it has quality human resource to work to see to it that the goals and objectives of the organization including universities are effectively achieved. For any manager, irrespective of the size of the organization by which he is employed or its range of activities, a capable, loyal team of staff is of great importance if his organization is to operate smoothly and efficiently. No matter how automated the organization or part of it may be, the output of the organization would ultimately be achieved through the efforts of the people. This makes the human resource in an organization the most important and complex resource who

must be handled with care and treated with the necessary care. Most organizations therefore device means of training and developing their human resource so that effectiveness, efficiency, increased productivity and loyalty among others could be achieved by the organization.

It must be made clear that in today's economy, an organization that does not learn has the tendency of being overtaken by events. Employees are the ones that produce, refine products, deliver and manage products or services everyday, year in year out. With the rapid pace and international reach of the 21st century market place, continual learning is very critical to an organizations continued success. Creating a learning environment that enables staff to grow and reach personal goals, in partnership with achieving organizational goals, will help staff to remain focused, goal-oriented and loyal to organizations. An educated workforce could be easier to manage and will welcome new techniques, equipment and materials into the organization. The commitment shown to the well-being of employees by creating a learning culture, will make them more marketable, and increase their loyalty and commitment to one's organization. For employees and organizations to reach their full potential, they must be trained, developed and retained.

6. Recommendations

For management of Ghanaian universities to successfully implement and improve its policy on employee training and development, and reap the benefits from it, the following recommendations are made:

- Management should stress training and development of employees as an investment. The reason training is often considered optional in many organizations is because it is taught of as an expense rather than an investment. Even though employee training and development can be costly upfront, it is a long term investment in the growth and development of an organization's human resource.
- Management should determine the training and development needs. A training need is any shortfall in terms of employee knowledge understanding, skill and attitude against what is required by the job, or the demands of organizational change. In determining the needs, the strengths and weaknesses in the university should be considered. Thus, deficiencies that when corrected, represent a potential for upside gain in the university should be identified. Needs analysis could be done under three levels-individual, group and system. Individual needs include matters that relate to position effectiveness, position transition, personal and professional development and position security. Group needs could be illustrated by analysis that indicates serious gaps between instructional objectives and instructional programmes. Organizational needs are those involving the total system such as the creation of opportunity for further study or adherence to policy governing minimum employee competency requirements. It could be deduced that considerations for employee training and development should look at the total development needs of the organization, the needed improvements in the specific knowledge and skills of individual employees and the potential of employees for growth and development. As the management of Ghanaian universities may probably not have unlimited time or funds to execute an employee training programme, it would be prudent for management to decide early on the focus that employee training should be. Management must determine the skills that are pertinent to address current or future needs of the university or that which would provide the biggest payback. The question Ghanaian university management should ask is "how will the training and development programmes eventually prove beneficial to the university?"
- Management should promote a culture of learning. A learning culture is a set of attitudes, values and practices that support the process of continuous learning within an organization. Promoting a learning culture would enhance superior performance, better quality of service, better customer satisfaction, committed and result-focused workforce and greater ability to deal with change. In today's fast-paced economy, if an organization is not learning, it will definitely fall behind. An organization learns as its workforce learns. Management should therefore communicate their expectations that all employees should take the necessary steps to hone their skills and stay on top of their professions or fields of work. Management should also ensure that resources needed to accomplish this goal are provided. In situations where employees pay their own training expenses, it would be much appreciated if university management refund some or all of the cost incurred by the employees, so long as the training acquired is useful to the university.
- Management should be on board. Once a prioritized list of training objectives and topics that address key needs within the university have been developed, management should be convinced enough to rally behind the initiative. Management should be sincerely committed to training and development programmes and must ensure that the right people are selected for the right training. Training programmes should not be treated as a reward or favour extended by top management. According to Safo (2006) it is on record that some people attend courses at exorbitant costs to organizations, only to sleep because they do not understand the issues being discussed or they are senior officers attending

courses designed for junior officers. Thus, before employees are sent on training programmes, the knowledge and skills needed by the employees should be determined in line with corporate goals. Management should also provide the needed support for the employees to use their new knowledge and skills and closely monitor their progress. When this is done, management would not be sponsoring employees who would only go and sleep to add to the university's costs.

- Management should choose quality instructors and materials. It must be noted that whoever is selected to conduct the training will make a major difference in the success of the efforts of the university management, whether it is a professional educator or simply a knowledgeable staff member. Again, management should endeavour to have the right training materials. This is important because after the training is over, these materials become valuable resources for trainees.
- Management should clarify connections. Some employees may feel that the training they are receiving is not relevant to their job. It is therefore important for such employees to be helped to understand the connection easily so that they do not view the training sessions as a waste of valuable time. Employees should be made to see training as an important addition to their professional portfolios. This implies that training programmes should award employees with completion certificates at the end of the programmes.
- Management should make training and development programmes an ongoing activity. Training programmes should not be limited solely to new employees. Organized, ongoing training programmes will maintain all employees' skill levels, and continually motivate them to grow and improve professionally.
- Management should measure results. Without measurable results, it would be impossible to view training and development as anything but an expense. Measuring results forms part of the control process of training and development programmes. It gives feedback about the results or outputs of training, and to use this feedback to assess the value of the training, with a view to improvement, where necessary. Management should decide on how to obtain an acceptable rate of return on the training investment. It would also be easier for management to budget funds for future training and development if concrete results could be demonstrated. A perception based approach is appropriate and effective when training programmes are to be measured or evaluated, and it seeks to ask participants to rate the persons conducting the programmes, the content of the programme, the organization of the programme, the place and time when the programme was presented. When a training programme centers on skill or technique acquisition it is appropriate to conduct a follow up evaluation after the participants have had the opportunity to implement the techniques or use their new skills. These are used as feedback in future design and provide data to improve the whole staff development programmes.

References

- Alao, B. S. (2010), "The impact of training and development on employees' performance: A case study of Nigerian bottling company", *B. Sc. Research Project*, Faculty of Business and Social Sciences, University of Ilorin.
- Amewudah, N. D. K. (2002), "An evaluation of staff training and development activities at the University of Cape Coast, 1987-1997", *Journal of Educational Management* **4**, 164-178.
- Aroge, S. T. (2012), "Employee's training and development for optimum productivity: The role of Industrial Training Fund (ITF), Nigeria", *Developing Country Studies* **2**(4), 50-58.
- Cole, G. A. (2002), *Personnel and human resource management*. (5th ed.). London: ELTS with Continuum.
- Devi, V. R., & Shaik, N. (2012), "Training and development: A jump starter for employee performance and organizational effectiveness", *International Journal of Social Science and Interdisciplinary Research*, **7**, 202-207.
- Gross, Esq. B. (2006a), "The benefits of skill-based training". [Online] Available: <http://www.allbusiness.com/human-resource/careers-job-training/1151-1.html#tipnews> (October 14, 2006).
- Gross Esq. B. (2006b), "Employee training tips". [Online] Available: <http://www.allbusiness.com/human-resources/careers-job-training/1465-1.html> (October 14, 2006).
- Hamid, S. (2011), "A study of effectiveness of training and development programmes of UPSTDC, India: An analysis", *South Asian Journal of Tourism and Heritage*, **4**(1), 72-82.
- Hutchings, k., Zhu, C. J., Cooper, B. K., Zhang, Y., & Shao, S. (2009), "Perceptions of the effectiveness of training and development of 'grey-collar' workers in the People's Republic of China", *Human Resource International*, **12**(3), 279-296.
- Onasanya, C. M. D. (2005), "Effective personnel management and industrial relations" (CMD 2005), p. 206.
- Owens, R. G. (2000), *Organisational behaviour in education*. Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon.

- Rebore, R. W. (2008), *Human resources administration in education: A management approach* (7th ed.). New Jersey: Allyn and Bacon.
- Safo, W. B. K. (2006, May 20), "How valuable is employee development?" *The Mirror* (No. 2683), p. 16.
- Sarvadi, P. (2005), "Importance of employee development". [Online] Available: <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/0,4621,321261,00.html> (June 5, 2006).
- Smith, A. (2001), "Return on investment in training: Research readings". [Online] Available:<http://www.training.com.au/portal/site/public/menuitem.62b357084.html> (June 5, 2006).
- Sultana, A., Irum, S., Ahmed, K., & Mehmood, N. (2012), "Impact of training on employee performance: A study of telecommunication sector in Pakistan", *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, **4**(6), 646-661.
- BLOGSPOT (2008), "Effects of training and manpower development on productivity of workers", [Online] Available: <http://www.adekass.blogspot.com/2008/08/impact-of-motivation-onemployees.html> (February 7, 2013).

This academic article was published by The International Institute for Science, Technology and Education (IISTE). The IISTE is a pioneer in the Open Access Publishing service based in the U.S. and Europe. The aim of the institute is Accelerating Global Knowledge Sharing.

More information about the publisher can be found in the IISTE's homepage:

<http://www.iiste.org>

CALL FOR JOURNAL PAPERS

The IISTE is currently hosting more than 30 peer-reviewed academic journals and collaborating with academic institutions around the world. There's no deadline for submission. **Prospective authors of IISTE journals can find the submission instruction on the following page:** <http://www.iiste.org/journals/> The IISTE editorial team promises to review and publish all the qualified submissions in a **fast** manner. All the journals articles are available online to the readers all over the world without financial, legal, or technical barriers other than those inseparable from gaining access to the internet itself. Printed version of the journals is also available upon request of readers and authors.

MORE RESOURCES

Book publication information: <http://www.iiste.org/book/>

Recent conferences: <http://www.iiste.org/conference/>

IISTE Knowledge Sharing Partners

EBSCO, Index Copernicus, Ulrich's Periodicals Directory, JournalTOCS, PKP Open Archives Harvester, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek EZB, Open J-Gate, OCLC WorldCat, Universe Digital Library, NewJour, Google Scholar

