

**THE IMPACT OF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ON WORKER
PERFORMANCE AND PRODUCTIVITY IN PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS:
A CASE STUDY OF GHANA PORTS AND HARBOURS AUTHORITY**

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ABSTRACT

The quality of Human Resource is an asset to any organization and as a result Training has become an issue that has to be faced by every organization. This study, therefore, sought to determine the impact of Training and Development on public sector organizations using Ghana Ports and Harbors Authority (GPHA) as a case study. A questionnaire was designed using structured questions to collect primary data from employees of GPHA. Personal interviews were held with some management staff of the organization. The results indicated that GPHA's employees were not well informed about training and development programmes in the organization. Most of the employees were of the view that training and development were effective tools for both personal and organizational success. The findings revealed that training practices, methods and activities at GPHA are not in line with the best practices regarding the planned and systematic nature of the training process as is generally known. It was recommended among other things, that the processes involved in followed, GPHA should help its staff identify their career paths and to pursuit of higher education.

Key Words: *Training and Development, Worker Performance and Productivity*

INTRODUCTION

Human Resources have played a significant role in the economic development in most developed countries such as United States of America, Britain and Japan among others. It can, therefore be concluded that a developing country like Ghana, with its rich natural

resources and the necessary financial support can also experience such economic success if the appropriate attention is given to the development and training of her human resource. It is thus seen that in Ghana the government is taking adequate steps to ensure that people acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.

The provision of secondary and technical schools, vocational training institutes and colleges, professional and tertiary institutions, as well as the educational reforms currently taking place in the country, are all geared towards the acquisition of skills and knowledge to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in our workplaces. (Professor Mike Ocquaye, former Minister of the Ministry of Education at the 5th Congregation of Central University College, August 2004).

With these efforts by the government, it has become necessary for organizations to provide long and systematic training and development programs for its employees. This is because every aspect and activity of an organization involves people. For instance, a manager in an organization will not be successful until he has subordinates beneath him who are well equipped with skills, talent and knowledge.

To manage an organization both large and small requires staffing them with competent personnel. The formal educational system does not adequately teach specific job skills for a position in a particular organization. Few employees have the requisite skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies (SKAC) needed to work. As a result, many require extensive training to acquire the necessary SKAC to be able to make substantive contribution towards the organization's growth, (Barron & Hagerty, 2001).

If employees are to experience flexibility and effectiveness on the job, they need to acquire and develop knowledge and skills, and if they are to believe that they are valued by the organization they work for, then they need to see visible signs of management's commitment to their training and career needs. Training and development are the processes of investing in people so that they are equipped to perform. These processes are part of an overall human resource management approach that hopefully will result in people being motivated to perform (Barron & Hagerty 2001).

It goes without saying therefore that the training and development of employees is an issue that has to be faced by every organization. However, the amount, quality and quantity of training carried out vary enormously from organization to organization. According to Cole (2002), factors influencing the quantity and quality of training and development activities

include; the degree of change in the external environment, the degree of internal change, the availability of suitable skills within the existing work-force and the extent to which management see training as a motivating factor in work.

Many organizations meet their needs for training in an ad hoc and haphazard way. Training in these organizations is more or less unplanned and unsystematic. Other organizations however set about identifying their training needs, then design and implement training activities in a rational manner, and finally assess results of training. It is worth noting that Ghana has a huge public sector, employing the highest number of human resources with varied skills. One such organization in the public sector is the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA). The study intends to investigate the impact of training and development on employee performance and productivity at the Ghana Ports Harbours Authority.

Statement of the Problem

It is a well-known fact that training enhances SKAC and ultimately worker performance and productivity in organizations (Cole, 2002). Many organizations in Ghana and indeed the public sector engage in training and development of staff and have departments, units and sectors in charge of training and development. GPHA is one such organization that has been practicing training and development since its beginning and particularly for the past ten (10) years.

However, for some years now it appears training in Ghana Ports Harbours Authority is haphazard, unplanned and unsystematic, and several of its employees such as machine operators, junior and middle level engineers, accounts clerks, computer operators, secretaries, drivers and many other category of workers, have not qualified for any form of training nor is there any systematic process of staff development in place. A brief interaction with some employees did show that Management of Ghana Ports Harbours Authority see the cost incurred in the acquisition and maintenance of plant and equipment as more relevant than that expense on training and development of its staff.

In the absence of training and development of employees by Management of Ghana Ports Harbours Authority, the employees sponsored themselves in furtherance of their education to obtain professional or higher level certificates. Employees who expressed the desire to pursue university education were not given any form of assistance like study leave with pay. Their applications for study leave were turned down with those who were persistent being advised to resign. Those who sought for part-time programs were disengaged after their studies as

management claimed their programs were not relevant to the job. The few ones who were retained had no promotion to match their added skills and competencies. This it is believed to have led to high labor turnover in the organization. The study was therefore to assess the role of training on the human resource and how this affects worker performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Training

One major area of the Human Resource Management function of particular relevance to the effective use of human resources is training and development. Few people these days would argue against the importance of training as a major influence on the success of an organization. Employees are a crucial, but expensive resource.

In order to sustain economic growth and effective performance, it is important to optimize the contribution of employees to the aims and goals of the organizations. The importance of training as a central role of management has long been recognized by leading writers. For instance according to Drucker (1998), the one contribution a manager is uniquely expected to make is to give others vision and ability to perform.

The general movement towards downsizing, flexible structures of organizations and the nature of management moving towards the devolution of power to the workforce give increasing emphasis to an environment of coaching and support. Training is necessary to ensure an adequate supply of staff that are technically and socially competent and capable of career development into specialist departments or management positions. There is therefore a continual need for the process of staff development, and training fulfils an important part of this process. Training should be viewed therefore as an integral part of the process of total quality management.

For any enterprise to function effectively, it must have money, materials, supplies, equipment, ideas about the services or products to offer those who might use its outputs and finally people, which is the human resource, to run the enterprise. The effective management of people at work is Human Resource Management, Armstrong (1996). Human Resource Management has emerged as a major function in most organizations and is the focus for a wide-ranging debate concerning the nature of the contemporary employment relationships. Managing human resources is one of the key elements in the coordination and management of work organizations.

Several new technologies are used to ensure the creation and delivery of services and goods in modern economies. Whatever means are used, the role of individuals and groups as employees and the ability of management to effectively deploy such a resource is vital to the interest of both the employee and organization. Traditionally, Human Resource concerns itself with recruitment, selection, placement, training, compensation and industrial relations among others, (Armstrong, 1996).

Beer et al (1984) define Human Resource Management as the involvement of all management decisions and actions that affect the nature of the relationship between the organization and its employees-the human resources. According to Beer et al (1984), general management make important decisions daily that affect this relationship, and this leads to a map of Human Resource Management territory, the core of which they refer to as the four 'Cs' and these are;

Competence of employees: High competence creates a positive attitude towards learning and development. Commitment of employees: High commitment means that employees will be motivated to hear, understand and respond to management's communication relating to the organization of work. Congruence between the goals of employees and those of the organization: Higher congruence is a reflection of policies and practices which bring about a higher coincidence of interest among management, shareholders and workers alike. Cost effectiveness of Human Resource Management practices: means that the organization's human resource cost, that is wages, benefits, training and indirect costs such as strikes, turnover and grievances, have been kept equal to or less than those of competitors.

Beardwell and Holden (1993) argue that the recognition of the importance of training in recent years has been heavily influenced by the intensification of competition and the relative success of organizations where investment in employee development is considerably emphasized. They add that technological developments and organizational change have gradually led some employers to the realization that success relies on the skills and abilities of their employees, and this means considerable and continuous investment in training and development.

It is the view of Beardwell and Holden (1993) that Human Resource Management concepts such as commitment to the company and the growth in the quality movement have led senior management teams to realize the increased importance of training, employee development and long-term education. Such concepts require not only careful planning but a greater

emphasis on employee development.

According to Cole (2002), in his book *Personnel and Human Resource Management*, training is a learning activity directed towards the acquisition of specific knowledge and skills for the purpose of an occupation or task. The focus of training is the job or task for example, the need to have efficiency and safety in the operation of particular machines or equipment, or the need for an effective sales force to mention but a few.

Training is the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning events, activities and programs which results in the participants achieving the levels of knowledge, skills, competencies and abilities to carry out their work effectively (Gordon 1992). Pheese (1971) defines training as the systematic process of altering the behavior and or attitudes of employees in a direction to increase the achievement of organizational goals. This means for any organization to succeed in achieving the objectives of its training program, the design and implementation must be planned and systematic, tailored towards enhancing performance and productivity.

The Manpower Services commission of the United Kingdom, which was set up by the 1973 Employment and Training Act defined training as a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or skill behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. According to them, the purpose of training in the work situation is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future of the organization.

Most organizations have long recognized the importance of training to its development. As new technology progresses, making certain jobs and skills redundant, an increasing emphasis is being placed on the need for a skilled and highly trained workforce. Many of the jobs being replaced by machines have been of an unskilled and semi-skilled nature, and this emphasizes the need for higher education and skills for those wishing to gain employment in the future.

According to Armstrong (1996), expressing an understanding of training emphasizes that training should be developed and operated within an organization by appreciating learning theories and approaches if the training is to be well understood. This was also affirmed by Sherman et al (1996). They expressly indicated that the success of a training program depends more on the organization's ability to identify training needs and the care with which it prepares the program so that if the trainees do not learn what they are supposed to learn, the training has not been successful. They further indicated that training experts believe that if

trainees do not learn, it is probably only because some important learning principle had been overlooked.

What they are saying is that the success or failure of a training program is frequently related to the recognition and application of basic psychological principles of learning. This assertion is not necessarily right. If the trainees do not learn anything then of what benefit will they be for the organization. If trainees return empty, with nothing to contribute, it can also mean that even though the organization might have done all that is necessary to ensure a successful training program, the wrong candidate might have been selected for the training program.

McGhee et al. (1996) wrote on the nature of learning and said learning is a term used to describe the process by which behavioral changes results from experience. They also said the fact that learning has occurred could only be inferred from a comparison of an individual's behavior prior to the experiences of specific kinds of task.

This is not to say that there has been no learning if there is no overt behavioral change. Since training generally is intended to provide learning experiences that will help people perform more effectively in their jobs, organizational training should follow the learning principle.

Training therefore can be explained as a planned and systematic effort by management aimed at altering behavior of employees, in a direction that will achieve organizational goals. A formal training program is an effort by the employer to provide opportunities for the employee to acquire job-related skills, attitudes and knowledge, McGhee et al. (1996).

Training, Performance and Productivity

The quality of employees and their development through training are major factors in determining long-term profitability and optimum performance of organizations. To hire and keep quality employees, it is good policy to invest in the development of their skills, knowledge and abilities so that individual and ultimately organizational productivity can increase. Traditionally, training is given to new employees only. This is a mistake as ongoing training for existing employees helps them adjust rapidly to changing job requirements.

Organizations that are committed to quality invest in training and development of its employees (Evans & Lindsay, 1999). According to Evans and Lindsay (1999), Xerox Business Products and Systems invest over \$125 million in quality training. Motorola & Texas Instruments provide at least 40 hours of training to every employee quarterly. Training and development have become an essential responsibility of HRM departments in organizations particularly as employees require new skills, knowledge and abilities, which

should not be cost-justified as most public sector organizations engage in.

Neo et al. (2000) bemoaned the lack of training and development by employers in the United States when they stated that statistics suggests that only 16% of United States employees have never received any training from their employers. Now organizations are beginning to realize the important role that training and development play in enhancing performance and increasing productivity, and ultimately stay in competition. They reiterated that as a result of this realization, General Electric, Texas Instruments and Federal Express have all made substantial investments in training. They now invest between 3% and 5% of their payroll in training.

In a study in America on the impact of human capital investments such as employer-provided training and development, Black and Lynch (1996) citing Bishop (1994) indicated that employer-provided training and development raises subjective productivity and performance measure by almost 16%. Again Black and Lynch (1996) citing Bartel (1989) stated that returns on training and development investments increase productivity by 16%.

METHODOLOGY

The study is a survey in the form of cross sectional study in which data was collected once across a population through sampling. One hundred employees were selected using convenience sampling technique, to which questionnaires were administered. An interview schedule to gather information on the subject from the Management of GPHA was also used to ascertain Management's view on how GPHA has traditionally dealt with issues of training and development. The data for this research work was obtained essentially from primary and secondary sources. The qualitative data from interviews and secondary documents were analyzed using content analysis and logical analysis techniques. Quantitative data analysis was done by the use of Microsoft word 2003- integrated package on a personal computer and the SPSS software.

RESULTS

Effects of Training and Development on Worker Performance and productivity

Motivation through Training

Training is a planned and systematic effort by which Managements of organizations aim at altering behavior, and encouraging employees in a direction that will achieve organizational goals. One of the key known benefits of training is the motivation it provides those who

receive it. Indeed, according to Cole (2002), employees who receive training have increased confidence and motivation. That is, training can achieve high morale for an organization. Training is known to increase the availability and quality of staff. The study therefore sought the opinion of the respondents whether they feel motivated and satisfied with the training and how it is applied at GPHA. The table 1 below illustrates the responses.

Table 1: Motivation through training

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	41	74.55%
No	14	25.45%
Total	55	100%

Table 1 shows that an overwhelming majority of respondents (74.55%) don't feel motivated by the training activities of GPHA. This is significant because motivation generally seeks to boost employees' morale to work hard and thus increase productivity.

Table 2: Opportunity for personal development

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	3	3.75%
No	77	96.25%
Total	80	100

In the opinion of the respondents, training has not offered any opportunity for personal development. As many as 77 out of 80 respondents said 'No' to the question. This may not be surprising because it has been established in the earlier discussions that training at GPHA is generally unplanned and unsystematic.

Training and employee performance

Table 3: Respondents opinion of training effect on employee performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	8	10.00%
No	62	77.50%
Not Sure	10	12.50%
TOTAL	80	100%

Table 3 illustrates clearly that as many as 62 out of 80 respondents do not link their performance to training. In addition to the 10 who are not sure of any link, it can be concluded that a total of 72 out of 80 respondents do have the opinion that training had no effect on their performance. This is significant because the purpose of training at GPHA is to improve individual and organizational performance and if as many respondents think training does not impact their performance, then the whole process of training ought to be reviewed.

The respondents were further asked if the training and development activities in the organization have equipped them with higher skills for performance.

Table 4: Training impact on higher skills

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Equipped me with higher skills	8	10.00%
No impact on my higher skills	65	81.25%
Not Sure	7	8.75%
Total	80	100%

Higher skills are a key component of any productivity equation, and as many as 65 out of the 80 respondents do believe that training has nothing to do with their skills. This confirms the discussion on training impact on performance, because training affects productivity and performance through the higher skills it impacts to employees to enable them know their job better and perform it better. Clearly therefore, we can conclude that the hypothesis that “Training and development activities at GPHA have largely failed to positively impact worker performance and productivity” is largely supported.

Conclusion

The findings are that many of the respondents do not feel motivated by the training offered, and indeed many have even never participated in training and development activities. It was also established that the respondents do not feel training has offered them opportunity to identify potentials for further development. Clearly also, an overwhelming majority of respondents do believe training have had no impact on their performance and further indicted that training indeed had had no impact on their job skills. All the facts go to support the hypothesis that training and development activities have largely failed to positively impact on individual effectiveness and efficiency in the performance of their jobs. The results also revealed that employees sponsored themselves to acquire new skills, knowledge and abilities through formal education programs. These employees are however not promoted or upgraded because most the time their programs are seen as being unapproved by Management and therefore irrelevant to GPHA’s work.

Recommendations

Identification of training needs should be done more professionally in conjunction with the line manager as well as the individuals involved together with the HR personnel. Everyone involved should agree exactly to what the trainees are lacking, for instance what skill is

needed, and what attitudes need to be changed toward work performance.

Objectives should be SMART and unambiguous, and should develop individual as well as meet the needs of the Ports. Objectives should also include performance targets, measures standards and should be seen as attainable by individuals. Also a basis for motivating through intrinsic and extrinsic rewards should be provided as this will lead to commitment and improved performance. Provide Specific information to employees

Performance appraisal information system which is used yearly at the GPHA to assess employees' performance should provide specific information to employees about their performance problems and ways they can improve their performance.

Training needs should be considered on the basis of overall company objectives. The goals of the company should determine what training programs are to be organized for staff. Staff should be motivated to add value to themselves and to their lives.

In instituting proper training and development programs, GPHA should initiate a policy for motivation attached to training. Motivation include both extrinsic, such as more pay, allowance, fringe benefits, and intrinsic such as recognition, appreciation, acceptance by fellow workers, opportunities for promotion, career development and consultation for important matters.

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