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## **HOTEL EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTIONS OF TRAINING PRACTICES IN A DEVELOPING ECONOMY: IMPLICATIONS FOR IMPROVING SERVICE DELIVERY.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study examined employees' perception of training practices in the hotel industry in a developing economy, and adopted a purely quantitative approach, using the cross-sectional field survey. Data were collected using self-administered survey questionnaires and was analysed using percentages. Using a sample of 195 full-time employees from 61 registered hotels in the Cape Coast Metropolis and the Elmina Townships in Ghana, the findings showed that hotel employees perceived all the elements of training practices as adequate except evaluation of training where training effectiveness and reaction to trainees were found to be inadequate. Indicatively, employees' ability to transfer learning from training to the workplace significantly affects their service delivery. The authors recommend that managers invest in staff training but pay particular attention to hotel employees acquiring and transferring the requisite skills and knowledge required to improve service delivery.

### **Key words**

Training, organisational performance, Ghana, Hotels, Cape Coast, Elmina

### **Introduction**

The hotel industry is one of the fastest growing sectors in contemporary times but this growth has not been commensurately matched with training and this has negatively affected service delivery across the world (Tefera & Govender, 2017; Kifle, 2012; Enz, 2010; Kattara, Weheba & Ahmed, 2008). Employee training, therefore, is important in ensuring quality service delivery in the hotel industry in Ghana (Enz, 2010; Kattara, et al.,

2008). This maxim is driven by the thinking of the Human Capital Theory (HCT) which suggests that training (education) increases the productivity and earnings of individuals; therefore, training is an investment, and in fact, this investment is not only crucial for

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individuals but it is also the key to the economic growth of a country (Emrulla, 2014). Employees constitute an essential strategic resource of an organisation and are the active agents who utilise the passive factors of capital and natural resources to build social, economic and political organisations (Acheampong, 2006). Employees are trained to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge required to combine the other resources to achieve organisational goals and objectives; and therefore require continuing investment through training (Lerman, 2013). Organisations that recognise and provide employees with training and development opportunities do so not only to maintain a high-quality workforce but also attract the best talents (Boohene & Asuinura, 2011), and improve upon the abilities of their workforce (Bloisi, 2007). Training, therefore, plays an important role in both public and private sector organisations by improving and building the skills and knowledge of employees (Armstrong, 2006).

Previous studies have looked at the importance of training (Nischithaa & Rao, 2014), training and employee performance (Amari & Kasani, 2014), impact of training on employee development and performance (Hanif, 2013), and conceptual review of the role of hotels in developing economies (Anaman & Dacosta, 2017). It appears

no study has yet been conducted on employee perceptions of training practices in the hotel industry and their implications for quality service delivery. Again, none of the previous studies linked training practices to the HCT. Drawing on the HCT which refers to any stock of knowledge or the innate/acquired characteristics a person has that contributes to economic productivity (Gonzalez & Oyelere, 2011; Garibaldi, 2006); this paper argues that for hotel employees to improve service delivery, training is imperative. Therefore, this study seeks to examine employees' perception of training practices and their implications for improving service delivery in the hotel industry in a developing economy context.

The Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) has classified hotels, resorts and motels into one star (4th class); two stars (3rd class); three stars (2nd class); four stars (1st Class) and five stars (luxury) based mainly on some tangibles and other safety measures as required by safety laws in Ghana. According to Mensah (2009), the 3-5star hotels (mainly located in the cities) with world-class facilities have spas, gyms, restaurants and swimming pools. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2014), the contributions to gross domestic product (GDP) from 2009-2013, by the hotel and restaurant industry in Ghana progressively recorded growth, as presented in Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current market prices by economic activity of hotels and restaurants in Ghana from 2009-2013.**

Figure 1 shows the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at current market prices by economic activity of hotels and restaurants in Ghana from 2009-2013. Although the trend indicates a progressively increase to GDP, these figures are more likely to improve, if hotel management provide their employees with training opportunities required to enhance their skills base, increase their innovativeness, improve their ability to respond to competition, and create competitive advantages that are valuable, rare and inimitable (Enz, 2010; Boohene & Asuinura, 2011; Manoj, 2013). The absence of appropriate training for hotel employees and meeting the high expectations of customers has remained a challenge for hotels (Amissah, 2014; Bondzi-Simpson, 2012; Clark, Hartline, & Jones, 2009; Akyeampong, 2007). Given this statistics, employees' perception of training practices.

and their implications for improving service delivery in the Ghanaian hotel industry is fundamentally important. The main objective of this study therefore is to examine employee perceptions of training practices in the hotel industry and to determine how these can improve service delivery in the hotel industry in Ghana

### Literature review

#### *The Human Capital Theory*

The human capital theory states that a person's education or training is an investment involving costs in terms of direct spending and opportunity costs which makes the individual more productive, thereby accruing to that person a future stream of benefits such as superior productivity, higher wages and other non-monetary benefits (Torrington, Hall &

Taylor, 2008). Classical authors such as Schultz (1971) and Becker (1993) affirmed that the time and money spent on education builds human capital hence one should be able to estimate the rate of return (ROR) on such investment. Human capital signifies the combined intelligence and experience of staff as a source of competitive advantage that cannot be imitated by rivals. Employees are an investment that generates a return (Torrington, Hall & Taylor, 2008), and to be successful, hotels must invest in and maintain the workforce.

Similarly, training significantly contributes to the economic growth of any nation and should be considered as a form of investment (Babalola, 2003). The investment from training yields benefits for the individual, the organisation and the nation as a whole. The theory stresses that an educated population is a productive population and education increases productivity and efficiency of workers by increasing the level of cognitive stock of economically productive human resources. This assertion indicates that training augments the individual's human capital which leads to increased output for the society or firm and enhanced earnings for the individual worker (Buford, 1995). Hotels can, therefore, achieve sustained performance advantage by leveraging the knowledge of their employees towards improving service delivery. In addition to imparting knowledge and skills to individuals, education helps to nurture the values, attitudes, and aspirations of hotel employees towards developing the requisite skills needed to improve service delivery in the industry.

### *Concept of employee training*

Training is defined as the systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by an individual to perform adequately a given task or job (Bloisi, 2007). It is an organised procedure for increasing the knowledge and skills of people as well as modifying their behaviour (Noe, 2002). It consists of the planned programmes designed to improve performance at the individual, group or organisational levels (Casio, 1992). Training is important for both the individual employee and the organisation. Although recruitment and the selection of best people are fundamental to the success of every firm, harnessing the skills and knowledge of existing employees is inevitable if the firm is to achieve optimum success (Mullins, 2007). The individuals who undergo training change or improve their behaviour and perspective, following a systematic acquisition of knowledge and skills imparted through training (Armstrong, 2006).

Similarly, training prepares employees to use new technologies, function in new work systems such as virtual teams and encourages them to communicate and cooperate with peers, customers, and all other stakeholders from different cultural backgrounds. Training is therefore required to rejuvenate the desire to serve and improve hotel service delivery. Hotel managers should understand the reasons why employees have a higher level of service quality perceptions so as to make accurate and complete evaluations. To benefit from improved service quality, hotel managers must control and modify employees'

unresponsive, unwilling and insensitive behavior through relevant training and evaluation programmes. The incompetence of employees in perception, unresponsive and unwilling hotel personnel, their commitment to the hotel, emotional labour, job satisfaction and mobbing may be associated with their capabilities and training.

As the lifeblood of every organisation, employees are trained to acquire the requisite skills and knowledge needed to combine various resources to achieve organisational goals and performance (Cole, 2006; Jency, 2016). To corroborate this, Boohene and Asuinura (2011) emphasised that employees are valued assets whose competencies must be developed. This means that the training and development of employees also culminate in the development of the organisation. Clearly, organisations and nations that fail to develop the skills and knowledge of their people or utilise them effectively will not be able to develop anything else (Cole, 2006). Training has become essential because it plays a key role in the public, as well as private sector organisations in improving and building the skills and knowledge of their workforce. Training create awareness of the rules and procedure to guide employees performance on their current job or prepare them for an intended job (David & Jayakumar, 2014)

Organisations that wish to survive and prosper in this modern and technology-oriented world of rapid change are those that improve upon the abilities of the workforce through training (Bloisi, 2007), as information is provided to the employees and their attitudes are nurtured in order to help them to be more efficient in their organisations.

Training, therefore, increases efficiencies in work processes which result in financial gain, innovation, and capacity to adopt new technologies and methods. As posited by Armstrong (2006), training reduces inefficiencies of the employment relationship and helps attain competitive labour outcomes which enable the firm to achieve key organisational outcomes. Training also reduces problems associated with employees' supervision, thereby increasing the employee's worth to the organisation. An organisation that provides training creates a pool of employees who easily replace retired staff or those lost to other organisations for various reasons.

#### *The elements of training*

Training is an organised process, involving the frequency and commitment to training, training needs assessment, training design and delivery and training evaluation (Noe, 2002). Frequency and commitment to training are measured by the nature of induction and orientation practices, regularity in training, conducive learning atmosphere, and support for training (Armstrong, 2006), including planning. Organisations must implement training continuously throughout the employees working life (Armstrong, 2006). Every hotel must therefore clearly define its strategy and objectives to drive its decisions by stating plans on training, indicating designated time and funds allotted, including the conditions to be fulfilled before and after the training. As hinted by Bloisi (2007), training sequence should begin with an establishment of a policy on training. This ensures accountability and consistency in implementation. Inconsistency in training programmes

would mean that hotel employees will lack the skills required to offer improved service delivery.

The actual training intervention, according to Bloisi (2007), should begin with training needs assessment that establishes a justification for training. A training need is a shortfall in employee performance which can be remedied by an appropriate training programme (Cole, 2006). According to Kempton (1995), training need can be identified at three levels. The first is the organisational level which involves identifying where within the organisation is the training required. The second is the occupational level which identifies the content of the training and the third and final level is the individual level which identifies skills and knowledge needed to match the profile of the individual and the job description. Training needs assessment is generally measured by indicators such as selection opportunities, existing levels of knowledge and preference for existing trainers (Cole, 2006). Hotel employees' training needs should not be generic in nature but should address the specific areas of skills set required to improve service delivery. If hotel employees perceive that such training practices may not have any effect on service delivery, motivations for such exercises appear to be insignificant.

The design and delivery of training is an essential component of training and must be designed to inculcate job descriptions, standards, and procedures (Armstrong, 2006). The content and method of the training must be linked to the needs identified and the resources available for training. Individual learning styles must be taken into consideration in selecting the methods of training. Thus, the design and delivery of training are

measured along the availability of materials, adequacy of venues, methods of training and sponsorships. Hotel employees should be trained according to their job descriptions and standards in order to exhibit and display their individual learning styles and skill set required to improve service delivery. As hinted by Hower (2008), the purpose of training is to empower associates with the skills necessary to make decisions and accomplish their daily tasks and skills that help them give extraordinary service to customers. The final part of a training programme is training evaluation (Basarab & Root, 1992). According to Nas (1996) training evaluation forms a criterion for further investment in training. While there are three common models of training: the cost-benefit analysis, Kirkpatrick's four-level framework and Phillip's five levels of return on investment framework, this study was based on Kirkpatrick's four-level framework (Bloisi, 2007; Armstrong, 2006). This model evolved out of a research in 1952 when Kirkpatrick evaluated a training programme to measure participant's reaction, the amount of learning that took place, the extent of behavioural change after participants have returned to their jobs and any final result from a change in behaviour. Thus, the model has four levels, including reaction, learning, behaviour and results. This model was developed to clarify the elusive term 'evaluation'.

#### *Approaches to training*

There are three main approaches to employee training: (1) the traditional approach, (2) the performance-based approach and (3) the experiential approach (Cercione, 2008; Sims,

2006). In the traditional approach, the trainer designs the objectives, contents, teaching techniques, assignments, lesson plans, motivation, tests, and training evaluations all alone and impose them on the trainee during the actual training. The focus in this model is the trainer who is more active than the trainee. In the performance-based approach to training, goals are measured through attainment of a given level of proficiency instead of passing grades of the trainees. Emphasis is given to acquiring specific observable skills for a task rather than gaining some level of output (Lerman, 2013).

In experiential training, the trainee is involved in the learning process by reflecting on past experiences and applying what has been learned (Cercone, 2008), with much emphasis on learners doing something than listening and watching the trainer (Lerman, 2013), to guide their future action (Gilroy & Winch, 2006). The trainer designs activities and experiences, assesses what trainees know, provides suggestions for their improvement, and teach trainees self-assessment skills that give them the opportunity to transfer the competencies they have learned from the training (Lerman, 2013). This is what Kolb sought to achieve with his experiential learning theory. According to the theory, learning is a “holistic adaptive process that provides conceptual bridges across life situations such as school and work” (Kolb, 1984, p. 33).

### *Hotel Service delivery*

Scholars and practitioners in the hotel industry are constantly probing for ways to advance the quality of service, and particularly so,

when the differences in perceptions can create barriers to achieving the desired level of service quality (Kamau & Waudu, 2012), among different stakeholders (Torres, Adler, Lehto, Behnke & Miao, 2013). Employee behavior and tangibles are the factors contributing to hotel service quality delivery. For this reason it becomes imperative to understand how employees perceive training and its relationship with service performance. If employees perceive that the training practices will not meet their required training needs, service delivery will be highly compromised and vice-versa. A view shared by Hooper, Coughlan and Mullen (2013) indicates that one of the most influential factors on customers’ perceptions of service quality is the employees, however, employees who have higher service quality perceptions may not meet their customers’ expectations (Kuşluyan, Kuşluyan, İlhan & Buyruk, 2010). Employee training, therefore, plays a pivotal role in improving employee performance in terms of offering better quality services and hence helps hotels to achieve competitive advantages.

Employees are often not aware that their behaviour influences the hotel’s reputation, and may equally lead to indolence on the part of long-term employees. Kimungu and Maringa (2010) highlighted that high levels of employee turnover will negatively impact the quality of service, and as such, establishments need a relatively stable labour force to allow internalization of service standards. Alternatively, Wei and Yan (2010) also stated that the possibility of long-term-employed workers becoming overcome by emotional fatigue is higher. Hotel managers who organise training programmes for their employees



with regular intervals would definitely result in skill enhancement, improved efficiency and productivity, development and support of understanding and sustained attitude change, and growth opportunities for employees.

Studies have also hinted that higher caliber staff or employees, better-motivated, and more friendly or hospitable staff usually tend to deliver better quality services, and vice versa (Kotler, Bowen & Makens, 2010). Similarly, hotels that employ higher caliber of workforce tend to pay their employees well and appear more hospitable and well-motivated to deliver high-quality services, and vice versa. It is thus believed that hotels in the region can do better by way of patronage if they pay closer attention to their human resource capacity issues. Recruiting the right caliber of personnel, who are qualified, well-motivated, and willing to work, would enhance service delivery. Steps should therefore be taken by these hotels to regularly invest in their human resource through training and re-training which according to Kotler, et al., (2010) will help equip them appropriately with the right and or new skills considered necessary to deliver the right type of service to meet clients' demands or the expectations.

## Methodology

The study was conducted in the Cape Coast Metropolis and Elmina Township both in the Central region. These two study areas were chosen because their dominance in tourist patronage often results in a high demand for hotel facilities and associated services to accommodate the visitors. Out of a total number of 61 licensed hotels, there are 48 in the Cape Coast Metropolis and 13 in the Elmina

Township (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014). However, many of these hotels (especially the lower grade ones) within these communities lack adequate facilities and offer poor services (Anaman & Dacosta, 2017).

The study adopted a purely quantitative approach and employed questionnaires as the main research instrument. The study population constituted all workers in the hotel industry in the study areas. A comprehensive list of registered hotels and guest houses in the area was sourced from the Ghana Tourist Authority (GTA). It was deduced from this list that the accessible population added up to 490 employees. In view of the limited time and resources, the researchers sampled 195 subjects for the study, using Fisher, Laing, Stoeckel and Townsend's (1998) formula for determining sample sizes of populations less than 10,000.

The stratified sampling technique was used for selecting hotels for the study. This approach was deemed appropriate because stratified sampling is appropriate when representations in groups (strata) have some significance to the researcher (Sarantakos (2005). The hotels in the study area were categorized into 5, based on star ratings (3-star, 2-star, 1-star, budget and guest houses), and since there are many more small hotels in the sampling frame than large ones, it was appropriate to select sub group samples in proportion to their sizes in the population in order not to be biased. For instance, the 3-Star Hotels with a population of 183 had  $183/490 * 195 = 73$ . The other categories had  $78/490 * 195 = 31$  (for 2-Star),  $60/490 * 195 = 24$  (for 1-Star),  $128/490 * 195 = 51$  (for Budget) and  $41/490 * 195 = 16$  (for Guest House) as presented in Table 1. All the facilities in each

category were selected, though, in some facilities, some members were reluctant to provide an answer to some of the questions.

was voluntary, and respondents were informed that any information they provided will be treated with the utmost confidentiality.

**Table 1: Study population and sample members**

<b>Hotels</b>	<b>Number of workers</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
3-Star	183	73
2-Star	78	31
1-Star	60	24
Budget	128	51
Guest House	41	16
<b>Total</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>195</b>

Source: Field Survey, 2015

In the final stage of the sampling process, the lottery method of simple random sampling was used to select the individual respondents. In this regard, each non-managerial employee was numbered. The numbers were written on different pieces of paper that were then folded and mixed together in a small box. The sample members were drawn randomly from the box. The box was shaken consistently after a number was picked. This was to ensure that members were randomly selected into the sample. The questionnaires were self-administered to the employees during the day in their respective hotels, and sometimes in the night for those on night shifts. The researchers anticipated a number of ethical issues that might arise during the data collection. As a result, specific approval was obtained from the Directors/Managers/ Owners of each of the Hotels selected for the study. Participation

### **Findings and discussion**

The demographic information employed for the study included gender, age, the level of education and years of service as shown in Table 2. The demographic information was important because they indicated the level of maturity, objectivity, authority, and independence of the respondents in providing meaningful information on which research reports and decisions could be made. The sample was male dominated with most (108 or 55%) respondents being male with the remaining 87 being female. This skew is fairly representative of the status quo of usual male dominance in Ghana's hotel industry as submitted by Akyeampong (2007).

In terms of academic qualification, 113 of the respondents had Senior High School Certificates.

**Table 2: Population, Sample size, Age, Academic qualification and Gender of respondents**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>3 – star</b>	<b>2 star</b>	<b>1 star</b>	<b>Budget</b>	<b>Guest House</b>	<b>Total</b>
<i>Gender</i>						
Female	19	17	9	30	12	87
Male	25	20	15	35	13	108
<i>Age</i>						
18 - 39	51	39	28	55	6	179
40 - 59	3	2	1	4	1	11
60 and above	1	0	1	1	2	5
<i>Qualification</i>						
Junior High	4	3	4	4	2	17
Senior High	27	20	14	40	12	113
Diploma	10	8	7	12	3	40
First Degree	5	4	3	7	2	21
Masters	2	0	0	2	0	4
<i>Length of service</i>						
1 – 10	45	35	25	68	15	188
11 – 20	3	1	0	2	0	6
20 and above	1	0	0	0	0	1

Source: Field Survey, 2015

This was followed by those holding the Higher National Diploma (40), Graduate and Post Graduate Degrees (25) and certificates (17). The majority of the respondents (179) were between the ages of 18 and 39, while only a few (5) were 60 years and above. There were 11 employees between the ages of 40 and 59 years. Thus, most of the employees are relatively young and energetic.

This result indicates that the industry stands to benefit more from investment in the training of younger employees which according to Armstrong (2006) can yield long-term benefits for the hotels.

The results show that 96.41 percent of the respondents had stayed with their employers for one to ten years (Table 2). This finding diametrically contradicts numerous studies

(BLS, 2004; World Economic Forum, 2006; Anaman & Dacosta, 2017) which essentially hold that Ghana's hotel industry is notorious for its high attrition rates. The findings however support Kimungu & Maringa's (2010) study that hinted that to achieve quality service; establishments need a relatively stable labour force to allow internalization of service standards. However, at this case in point, the contradiction is evident based on the length of service criteria ratings adopted by the current authors, which are 1-10 years, 11-20 years and 20 years and above. Indeed, different criteria ranging from 1-3 years, 4-6 years etc., could have supported previous studies of high attrition rates. Consequently, the remaining findings indicated that only one employee and

six employees had stayed with the organisation for 20 or more years, and between 11 and 20 years, respectively.

Attention is now turned to training-related issues. The data gathered indicated that the four basic elements of employee training were employed in the industry, although at varying degrees. The elements were: frequency and commitment to training; training needs assessment; design and delivery of training; and evaluation of training. These are discussed in turn

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#### *Frequency and commitment to training*

Table 3 presents the results of frequency and commitment to training in the hotels in the study area.

**Table 3: Frequency and commitment to training in the hotel industry in Ghana**

Responses	Highly Adequate %	Adequate %	Inadequate %	Highly Inadequate %
Induction and Orientation	59 (30.3)	81 (41.5)	54 (27.7)	1 (0.5)
Regular training	38 (19.5)	84 (43.1)	43 (22.1)	30 (15.4)
Conducive learning atmosphere	58 (29.7)	91 (46.7)	40 (20.1)	6(3.1)
Support for training	64 (32.8)	96 (49.2)	31 (15.9)	4 (2.1)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

N=195

The frequency and commitment to training were assessed on the basis of induction and orientation, regular training, conducive learning atmosphere and support for training as displayed in Table 3. These indicators were measured on a scale ranging from highly adequate to highly inadequate. On management support for training, the majority (49.2%) of the employees rated it as being adequate, 32.8% rated it as highly adequate and 15.9% rated as inadequate. Only 2.1% employees rated support for training as highly inadequate. With regard to conducive learning atmosphere, 46.7% employees felt that it was adequate while 29.7% and 20.1% employees rated it as highly adequate and inadequate respectively.

Again, only 3.1% employees rated conducive learning atmosphere as highly inadequate. Out of the 195 participants, 43/1% rated regular training as being adequate, 19.1% rated it highly adequate and 22.1% rated it inadequate. Some (15.4%) employees

felt that regular training was highly inadequate. The trend was almost the same for induction and orientations where 41.5% employees felt training was adequate, 30.3% felt it was highly adequate and 27.7% felt it was highly inadequate. Inversely, only 0.5% employee rated induction and orientation as highly inadequate.

#### *Training needs assessment*

The data collected on training needs assessment is presented in Table 4. As respondents were mainly non-managerial employees, training needs assessment was conducted on the individual level, though the authors were aware that needs assessment could also be done at the organisational and task levels. The individual level assessment requires an analysis of employees' existing knowledge and skills, their preference for existing training styles and the trainers involved, selection opportunities and training for skill deficiency.

**Table 4: Training needs assessment in the hotel industry in Ghana**

Responses	Highly Adequate %	Adequate %	Inadequate %	Highly Inadequate %
Selection opportunities	51 (26.2)	97 (49.7)	39 (20.0)	8 (4.1)
Existing levels of knowledge	59 (30.3)	105 (53.8)	20 (10.3)	11 (5.6)
Existing levels of skills	46 (23.6)	72 (36.9)	57 (29.2)	20 (10.3)
Training for skill deficiency	33 (16.9)	83 (42.6)	51 (31.3)	18 (9.2)
Preference for existing training styles	50 (25.6)	95 (48.7)	37 (19.0)	13 (6.7)
Preference for existing trainers	38 (19.5)	78 (40.0)	43 (22.0)	36 (18.5)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

N=195

Overall, existing levels of knowledge was rated highly adequate by about a third (30.3%) of the respondents. This was followed by selection opportunities (26.2%), preference for existing training style (25.6%), existing levels of skills (23.6%), preference for existing trainers (19.5%) and training for skill deficiency (16.9%). The majority of the participants (53.8%) also rated existing knowledge as being adequate, and this was followed by selection opportunities (49.7%), preference for existing training style (48.7%), training for skill deficiency (42.6%), preference for existing trainers (40.0%) and existing levels of skills (36.9%).

On the contrary, preference for existing trainers was rated the attribute rated the most highly inadequate (18.5%) followed by existing levels of skills (10.3%), training for skill deficiency (9.2%), preference for

existing training style (6.7%), existing levels of knowledge (5.6%) and selection opportunities (8%). Again, the majority of the participants (29.2%) rated existing levels of skills as inadequate. This was followed by training for skill deficiency (31.3%), preference for existing trainers (22.0%), selection opportunities (20.0%), preference for existing training style (19.0%) and existing levels of knowledge (10.3%).

#### *Design and delivery of training*

Data on design and delivery of training for employees in the study area is presented in Table 5. The design and delivery of training were assessed on the basis of defining training objectives, availability of materials, adequacy of venues selected, methods of training and sponsorship of employees.

**Table 5: Design and delivery of training programmes in the hotel industry**

Responses	Highly Adequate <i>f</i> %	Adequate <i>f</i> %	Inadequate <i>f</i> %	Highly Inadequate <i>f</i> %
Defining training objectives	50 (25.6)	84 (43.1)	38 (19.5)	23 (11.8)
Availability of materials	48 (24.6)	92 (47.2)	41 (21.0)	14 (7.2)
Adequacy of venues selected	59 (30.3)	82 (42.1)	35 (17.9)	19 (9.7)
Method of training	37 (19.0)	92 (47.1)	54 (27.7)	12 (6.2)
Sponsorship of employees	48 (24.6)	67 (34.3)	48 (24.6)	32 (16.4)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

N=195

As indicated in Table 5, the adequacy of venues selected was the attribute with the highest rating of adequate (30.3%). This was followed by defining training objectives (25.6%), availability of materials (24.6%), sponsorship of employees (24.6%) and methods of training (19.0%). The evaluation of

training programmes was measured on the basis of training effectiveness, reaction to trainees, transfer of learning, training results and organisational efficiency. Organisational efficiency had the highest score of 32.8 percent. This variable was followed by training results (31.8%), transfer of learning (28.7%),

**Table 6: Evaluation of training in the hotel industry in Ghana**

Responses	Highly Adequate <i>f</i> %	Adequate <i>f</i> %	Inadequate <i>f</i> %	Highly Inadequate <i>f</i> %
Training effectiveness	48 (24.6)	55 (28.2)	55 (28.2)	37 (19.0)
Reaction of trainees	51 (26.2)	88 (45.1)	47 (24.1)	9 (4.6)
Transfer of learning	56 (28.7)	83 (42.6)	44 (22.6)	12 (6.2)
Training results	62 (31.8)	86 (44.1)	37 (19.0)	10 (5.1)
Organisational efficiency	64 (32.8)	91 (46.7)	29 (14.9)	11 (5.6)

Source: Field Survey, 2015

N=195

### *Evaluation of training*

Data on the evaluation of training programmes in hotels of the Cape Coast Metropolis and Elmina Township are presented in Table 6. The evaluation of training programmes was measured on the basis of training effectiveness, reaction to trainees, transfer of learning, training results and organisational efficiency. Organisational efficiency had the highest score of 32.8 percent. This variable was followed by training results (31.8%), transfer of learning (28.7%), the reaction of trainees (26.2%) and training effectiveness (24.6%).

the reaction of trainees (26.2%) and training effectiveness (24.6%).

The results obtained from employees may imply that management of hotels in Cape Coast Metropolis and Elmina Township have recognised the importance of harnessing the skills and knowledge of existing employees to improve service delivery within their respective organisations. The frequency and commitment of management to training, as indicated by induction and orientation, regularity of training, the provision of a conducive learning atmosphere and support were either rated highly adequate or adequate. In this regard, it could be said that management

supports the idea that existing employees continuously require training throughout their working life as proposed by Armstrong (2006).

In all the six areas where training needs assessment were measured – selection opportunities, preference for existing trainers, existing knowledge, skills, employee preference for existing training styles and training for skill deficiency – the results were highly adequate or adequate. The implication here is that management could justify the basis of their training programmes. This finding corroborates the conclusions drawn by Cole (2006) and Bloisi (2007) that training must begin with training needs assessment to ensure the justification for the usually huge expenditures associated with training.

On training design and delivery, each of the five assessment areas – defining training objectives, availability of materials, adequacy of venues selected, methods of training and sponsorship – were rated highly adequate or adequate. This meant that management recognised the design and delivery of training as an essential component of the training process as submitted by Armstrong (2006). The final aspect of training, and one of the most important components of training – evaluating training – was also assessed as being either highly adequate or adequate.

The responses of employees suggest that management performed very well on each of the five factors considered as being very important in measuring training (training effectiveness, the reaction of trainees, transfer of learning, training results and organisational efficiency). These findings support Basara and Root's (1992) and Nas's (1996) submission that evaluating training forms an important criterion for further investment in

training. The findings also show that management of hotels in the study area used the famous Kirkpatrick's four-level framework for evaluating the success or otherwise of their training programmes.

The findings enhance understanding of the HCT and how it forms the basis for investing in training hotel employees to acquire the relevant skills that make each employee more productive towards improving service delivery in hotel industry in Ghana, and particularly those in the Cape Coast Metropolis and Elmina Township. The application of HCT to training practices in Ghana also provides a developing country perspective of how services can be improved by combining the intelligence and experience of staff as a source of competitive advantage that cannot be imitated by rivals, and generate a return.

## **Conclusion and implications**

Employing a purely quantitative approach, using the cross-sectional field survey, the study examined employees' perception of training practices in the hotel industry in Ghana, specifically within Cape Coast Metropolis and Elmina Township. Data were collected using self-administered questionnaires from a sample of 195 full-time employees from 61 registered hotels within the study area, and responses were analysed using percentages. The study found that hotel employees perceived all the elements of training as adequate except evaluation of training where training effectiveness and reaction to trainees were found to be inadequate. Indicatively, the transfer of learning appears to affect excellent service delivery. The authors recommend that managers invest



in staff training but pay particular attention to the evaluation of training where hotel employees can transfer the acquired requisite skills and knowledge necessary to improve service delivery.

The practical implications of this study add to the increasing understanding of how hotel management and employees must appreciate proper training practices to improve service delivery. The respondents agree to the relevance of training and its influence on service delivery, hotel reputation and both employee and hotel performances. However, the evaluation of training transfer has indicated that knowledge acquired through training is not totally transferred and demonstrated on the job. This may have some implications on the service delivery of employees in the hotel industry.

Employee behaviour is one of the factors that contribute to hotel service quality, and for this reason, how employees perceive training towards improving the quality of service performance becomes of the essence. Hotel management that views training as an investment, provide employees with training and development opportunities not only to improve upon the abilities of their workforce but to also maintain a high-quality workforce that has acquired the requisite skills and knowledge required to improve individual, group and organisational performance.

Additionally, by their actions (as deduced from the responses from the employees management of hotels in the study area appear to be aware that the employee is a major asset to a company only when they recognise that the asset residing in the employee is a depreciating asset that requires continuing investment through training. Indeed, the productivity of

long-term-employed employees engaged in emotional labour may fall as they experience emotional exhaustion. It is expected that the study will bring to the attention of hotel management whether they are providing quality service from employees perceptive on the training practices offered. Hotel management's failure to address all employee related issues like job satisfaction, skills/training, employee's behavior and attitudes and low motivation of employees will adversely affect service delivery. As a result, investment in employee training will contribute significantly toward raising the productivity and performance of hotels. Researchers such as Jency (2016) and Bloisi (2007) have suggested that consistent efforts need to be made to ensure effective and adequate training is provided to employees so they can achieve organizational goals with a higher degree of confidence.

The major limitation of this study lies in the fact that that the perceptions of the respondents were limited to only hotel employees at the neglect of hotel managers and customers, which could have provided a holistic perception of training practices in the hotel industry in Ghana. Again, the study areas were limited to only hotels in the Cape Coast Municipality and Elmina Township at the neglect of other hotels in other regions. Additionally, the study could be limited by the biases of employees not wanting to report negative information about their hotels' training practices; hence the findings may not be very objective. The study was also limited by the methods in that the study only used questionnaires and did not engage in physical observation process or interviews to ascertain the phenomenological or lived

experience perspectives of the phenomenon. This study concentrated on the employee perceptions of training practices in the hotel industry, and particularly Cape Coast Municipality and Elmina Township, and in order to allow for generalization of findings to other industries, this study recommends that another study be conducted targeting hotels in other regions to allow for improvement of services delivered in the hospitality industry to boost the Ghanaian economy. A replica of this study can be conducted in other industries to appreciate employees' perception of training practices position in Ghana. This will allow generalization of findings to the whole sector. The study further recommends that research is done in other African countries where hotel services are significant to economic and national development.

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