

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF TRAINING PRACTICES ON
EMPLOYEE SKILL DEVELOPMENT
(A CASE OF ECG ASHANTI EAST REGION)**

By

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ABSTRACT

The quality of human resource is an asset to any organization and as a result training has become an important issue that has to be faced by every organization. It is no wonder that Ghana Labour Act 2003, Act 651 imposes responsibility on employers to train their employees and enjoins employees to make themselves available for training. The study delved into the training practices at the Electricity Company of Ghana and its impact on employees' skills development. More specifically, the study sought to find out the training policy at ECG, training practices at ECG and effect of the training on skill development and its impact on performance. Questionnaires were the main instrument used to source for data from the respondents. Two structured questionnaires were designed for management and employees. The data collected were subsequently analysed quantitatively and qualitatively. The study revealed that ECG has a training policy but it was not accessible to employees of the company. It revealed that training practices at the company does not follow any systematic or scientific process. It was revealed however that while the training practices are not systematic, training has impacted positively on the skill development of employees. The study also revealed that employees performance have increased as a result of the acquisition of skills through training. It was recommended that ECG management should make the training policy available in all the company's operational offices. This is because managers at the regions did not have a copy of the policy upon request by the researcher. It was again recommended that management should as much as possible put into practice the generally accepted stages or best practices involved in training and this will consolidate the gains the company has made in its investments in training.

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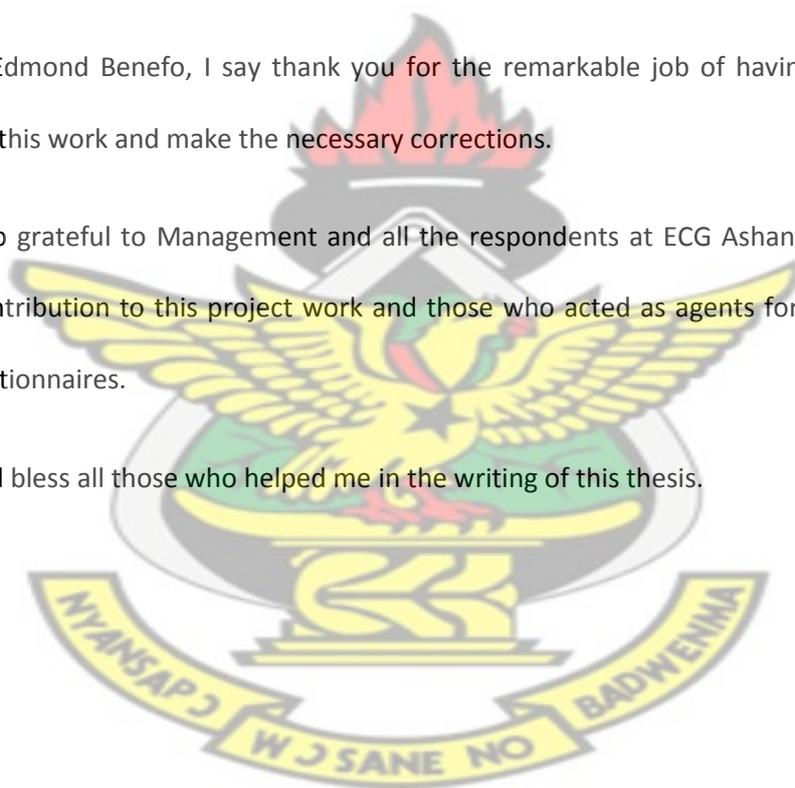
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Dedication

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

HRM	Human Resource Management
HRD	Human Resource Development
NED	Northern Electricity Department
ECG	Electricity Company of Ghana
VRA	Volta River Authority
SKAC	Skill Knowledge Abilities and Competencies

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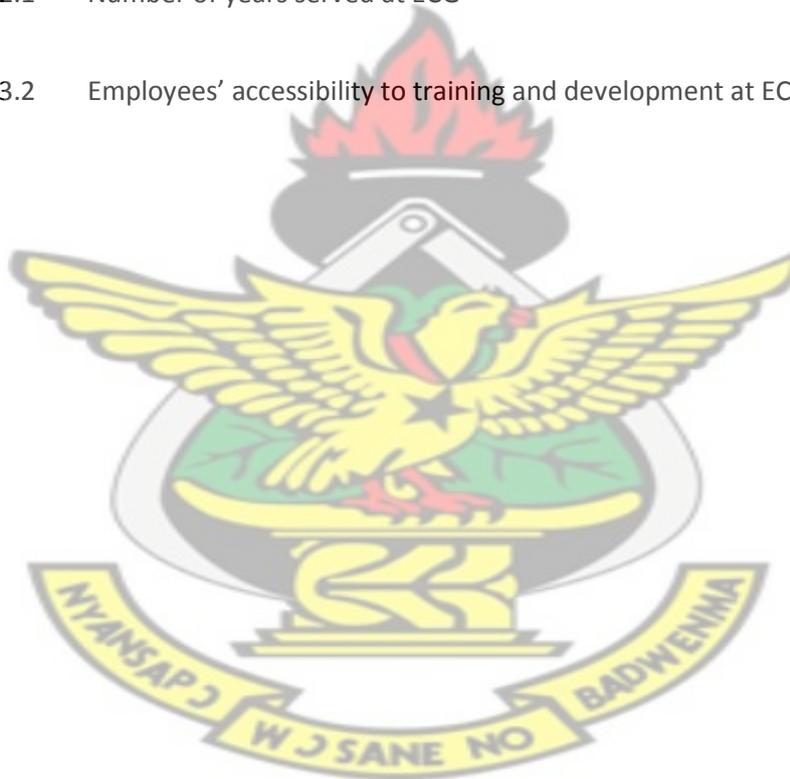
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background Information

Developing countries like Ghana and Nigeria are dominated by small and medium scale industries and organizations with government employing majority of the working population. The effectiveness of organizations in terms of achieving its set objectives depends on many factors, with the most important factor being quality of the human capital which has to do with human resources management.

“Human resource management is the strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organization’s most valued assets; the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement and objectives of the business” (Armstrong, 2006, page3). Human Resource has played and continues to play a significant role in the socio-economic development in most countries. Developed countries like United States of America, Great Britain, Japan and other G8 member countries’ economies are handled by the various successful organizations. For example, we can talk about Microsoft, CNN, IBM, Nike, Adidas and others. The quality of the human or intellectual capital possessed by these organizations is seen generally as the key factor in differentiating them from their rivals (Armstrong and Brown, 2001). The achievements of these named organizations are credited to today’s world with its technological changes which have resulted in the restructuring of many organizations and industries in order to meet their respective markets competitions. This competitive advantage in these industries can be achieved through the various

strategic roles played by the human resources department in organizations. Some of the roles include recruitment, training and development, compensation, performance management and ensuring discipline among others.

These technological changes have brought much pressure and this has resulted in the organizations embarking on massive training and development of its human capital.

Training and development is one of the most important strategies engaged by companies to achieve competitive advantage over their rivals. Training has been defined as a planned effort by the organisation to facilitate the learning of job-related skills by employees, (Fisher, Schoenfeldt and Shaw 1990). Armstrong, 2006 also defines training as the planned and systematic modification of behaviour through programmes and events which enable an individual achieve the level of SKAC needed to carry out their work effectively.

The importance of training of individuals to the success of organizations and the countries at large cannot be underestimated. It is therefore not surprising that governments and successive governments have over the years designed policies prioritizing the provision of quality education for its citizenry. The provision of qualified teachers and the motivation given to these teachers in secondary and technical schools, vocational training institutes and colleges, professional and tertiary institutions as well as the various educational reforms which have been undertaken by governments in the country are all geared towards the acquisition of the needed skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in our workplaces.

With these efforts by the government, it has become necessary for organizations to provide long and systematic training and development programs for its employees in order to achieve organizational goals. This is because training has become so critical to the success of many organizations in present world. This is so because other factors of production such as technology and capital cannot give sustained competitive advantage to organizations. For an organization to achieve its set objectives, it needs competent workforce. The manager or supervisor on the other hand, also ought to have well equipped, competent and skilful subordinates to work with in order to achieve the vision and mission of the organization.

To efficiently manage and achieve set objectives of an organization both large and small, it involves acquiring and utilizing the right calibre of staff in their right numbers at the right time. The formal educational system does not adequately provide students with all the needed skills for the job market and there have been the need for employers to train newly recruits to enhance their skills for the job market. It is therefore incumbent on the employer to train and develop these fresh graduates to enable them have the needed skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies needed for the work. It has therefore become necessary for many organizations to engage in extensive training and development of its employees especially those who are employed just from school to enable them acquire the necessary SKAC to be able to make meaningful contribution towards the organization's growth.

Again, to ensure high sense of experience, flexibility, innovation and effectiveness on the work, they need to be trained in order to develop their knowledge and skills. Training has been argued as one of the means mean to create bringing out innovation

skills of employees. It also reduces the cost associated with constant supervision of subordinates at the work place. Training instils in employees the confidence, skills and competencies that are needed in carrying out organizational objectives.

Training in addition also contributes to the competitiveness of an organization that takes training of employees serious.

Training and development of employees is an activity that is faced by every organization either continuously or at some point in time. However, the amount, quality and quantity of training carried out vary enormously from organization to organization and from country to country. According to Cole (2002:329), 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 in Africa and especially Ghana perform training activities in an ad hoc and haphazard way. Training in these organizations is more or less unplanned and unsystematic and even where there is a planned training programme, financing becomes a problem. Training which normally starts off in this unplanned manner may provide general knowledge to employees but may not help in solving real job related problem. The problem with training in our part of the globe stems from the fact that there is less competition in the market, rate of growth of technology is low and most employers see training of their employees as a favour to the employees. Most employers however, forget about the provision in the Labour Act of Ghana 2003

(Section 9 of Act 651) which entreats employers to train and develop the skills of its employees.

However, other organizations have well designed and defined policy which deals with training and development issues. Most organizations both public and private have policies and have respective departments or sections responsible for executing training programmes. These organizations with well defined policies and dedicated sections, departments and even managers start the training process by identifying training needs of employees. The training need analysis then enables the supervisor or the manager to identify who needs training taking into cognizance the policy of the organization, the introduction of a new plants and products, succession plan and also to keep to the standards of the company. The next step is to design and implement training activity based on the data gathered from the training need analysis, and finally evaluating training results and monitor performance of employees after training.

Ghana has a huge public sector, with the government employing the highest number of human resources with diverse skills, competencies and knowledge. However, the public sector and the few private companies do not always get the needed human capital from their recruitment and selection activities needed for their operations. This is because employers in some cases employ people with the least qualification for some sensitive positions which is critical to the success of the company. It has been argued in some quarters that training compensates for the inability of an employer to employ qualified or skilled person for a particular position. One such organization is

the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) which engages the services of people with the basic qualification for some of their sensitive operations.

The study intends to investigate the effect of training practices on employee skill development at ECG

1.1 Statement of the Problem

It has been established in many writings that training is one of the several means of enhancing the skill, competencies and knowledge of employees and ultimately employee performance at the work place. Many organizations across the world including Ghana invest so much financial resources into training of its staff to develop their skills in order to improve the service delivery to their customers.

However, worker performance seems not to meet the expectation of their customers to whom these training activities target. Recently, there were public outcry and the Vice President had course to complain to all the utility service providers in a meeting about their bad service which is having a negative impact on businesses (Daily Graphic, 2011). There have been occasions where customers have reported the bad behaviour of employees of the company to management for redress. This has badly affected the company's image even though ECG has over the years invested so much resource in the training of its personnel.

The wish of management of ECG is to have highly skilled employee who will exhibit high standard of behaviour to serve their cherished customers. This is because ECG wants their high financial and resource investments in terms of training of its personnel to pay off in their service delivery.

ECG has shown and continues to show a strong commitment in the training and maintaining of highly skilled personnel for its operations. ECG has dedicated departments, sections or units in charge of training and even has training center which core function is to sharpen the skills of its staff from time to time.

However, worker performance is not meeting the expectation of their customers for whom these training and development programmes aim at satisfying. The company's image is badly affected as a result of the inefficiencies of its staff. The company spends huge sums of money and time to organize training programmes for its employees especially the frontline staff just to improve their skills and performance to satisfy its cherished customers.

All these efforts seem not to yield the needed results and have rather resulted in customer dissatisfaction. The study therefore attempts to find the effects training practices in ECG have on developing employee skills which is very key to the success of the company.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are categorized into two. These are general objectives and specific objectives.

1.2.1 General objective

The general objective of this study is to ascertain the effect of training practices on employee skill development at ECG.

1.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:-

1. To ascertain the training and development policy operating at the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) Limited.
2. To investigate the training and development practices in ECG.
3. To find out the effect of training practices on employee skill development and performance at ECG.
4. To make recommendations on how the training practices at ECG can be improved to impact positively on employee skill development.

1.3 Research questions

Accordingly, the key research questions to be answered are:

1. What is the training and development policy in ECG?
2. What are the practices involved in training and development activities in ECG?
3. What are the effects of training practices on employee skill development and performance at ECG?
4. How can the training practices at ECG be improved to impact positively on employee skill development?

1.4 Significance of the study

The study hopes to throw more light on training and development at the organizational level and how it is used to develop skills, competencies and knowledge of employees and to what extent the training and development practices compensates

for an employer's inability to recruit skilled person. The study again will attempt to give insights to the frustrations and problems of employees with regards to their work performance. This will enable management of ECG to streamline its training development practices effectively in order to have a positive impact on performance. The study will also contribute to the already numerous debate on the importance of training and development on employee performance and skill development. It will also contribute to debate on development of the Ghanaian economy through training.

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1.5 Scope of the study

The study is limited as it looks at the effects of training practices on employee skill development of ECG employees in general and their Ashanti Regional branch in particular. The choice of Ashanti Region was made as a result of convenience and easy retrieval of information on the part of the researcher.

1.6 Overview of research methodology

The research adopts a case study, which investigates the impact of training practices on employees' performance in the Ashanti East Region of the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited. Its selection is to help gain a deeper understanding of the influence of training practices on skill development and its effect on performance of the employees at the company. Structured questionnaires will be used to collect data from a sample size of 150, which will be analyzed using SPSS.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The researcher anticipates the reluctance of the staff of ECG to divulge certain information that may be necessary to the achievement of the objectives of this research. We anticipate the unwillingness on the part of management to divulge information all in the name confidentiality as an inhibiting factor. Again, getting written reliable reports will also pose problem as it has been the practice of most public organizations. Finally, financial resource will also be a problem for this research since research of this nature will involve general errands all in the name of data collection.

1.8 Organization of the study

The study is organized into five chapters; chapter one introduces the study by giving the background information on the research problem, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. Various relevant literatures on the work under research would be reviewed in chapter two. Chapter three also, discusses the research methodology adopted for the study and relevant justifications. It outlines the methodology for carrying out the secondary and primary data collections and how results were analyzed. It also talks about a brief history of ECG. Again, chapter four presents the findings from the field. It will also lay out the researcher's analysis on the organization's responses from respondents. Finally, conclusions drawn from the research findings and recommendations are captured in chapter five.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to review related literature which has bearing on training and processes involved. It is about analysing documents that have already been written which are connected to this topic. These documents were sourced from books written by various writers, journals, legal documents and websites among other sources.

2.1 Human resource management (HRM)

Human resource management is defined as ‘a strategic and coherent approach to the management of an organisation’s most valued assets—the people working there who individually and collectively contribute to the achievement of its objectives’ (Armstrong, 2006).

Bartol and Martin (1998), also state that human resource management is the management of various activities designed to enhance the effectiveness of an organisation’s workforce to realize set goals.

Human resource professional’s plays a vital role in helping their organisation remain competitive in the changing marketplace. They need to be knowledgeable and skilled business partners as changes in the workplace demands they develop competencies in their own credibility in all aspects of learning, training and development.

The role of HRM as defined by Armstrong (2006) can be viewed as among others suggesting a strategic approach to the personnel function, serving the interest of management, gaining the employees' commitment to the values and goals laid down by strategic management, facilitating the development of the human resources that will help the organisation add value to its services and products.

Human resource development (HRD) is a part of human resource management. HRD policies are closely associated with the aspect of HRM that is concerned with investing in people and developing the organisation's human capital. (Armstrong, 2006). With reference to the definitions given by various writer's, human resource management is about managing and directing people within an organisation and human resource development means giving training to people in order to develop their skills. The HRD function of an organisation involves variety of activities to develop its employees, e.g. training and career development. It entails developing the skills of employees to enable them explore their potentials which would be beneficial to both the employee and organisation in achieving its goals.

2.2 Human resource development (HRD)

Human resource development is a process of developing and unleashing human expertise through organisation development and personnel training and development for the purpose of improving performance (Swanson, R. and Holton, E. 2001). According to Meggingson et al. (1999), the term human resource development is used to describe an integrated and holistic approach to changing work related behaviour, using a range of learning techniques and strategies.

According to Thomson and Mabey (1997), the main concern of human resource development in every organisation is about how to; recruit and induct high quality

personnel and their effective development, identify and improve the skills and motivation of existing and long serving staff. Human resource is concerned with identifying and analyzing training needs of employees to help in designing and implementing programs to address those shortfalls and also to provide training so as to improve current organisational performance and also to enhance individual careers among other activities.

The fundamental aim of HRD is to enhance the human resource capability in accordance with the belief that the human capital of an organisation is a major source of competitive advantage. The specific objectives of HRD are to develop intellectual capital and promote organisational, team and individual learning. Although, HRD strategies are business driven, its policies takes into account the individual aspirations and needs.

2.3 Training

Training is the process of developing knowledge and expertise in people, (Swanson, R. and Holton, E., 2001). It is a planned process to modify attitude, knowledge, skill or behaviour through learning experiences to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Training activities impart skills, techniques and methodologies to employers and their employees to assist them in establishing and maintaining employment. Armstrong, M. (2006) defines training as a planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, programmes and instruction, which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively.

Training has also been defined as a situation where an expert works with a learner to transfer to them certain area of knowledge and skills in order to improve current job,

(McNamara, 2008). Noe et al (2000) on his part also views training as a planned effort by a company to facilitate employees learning of the job-related competencies.

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 needs of the organization.

Training and learning should result in change in attitude or an acquisition of new skills. Honey and Mumford (1996) explains that learning or training can only be said to have taken place when people can demonstrate that they know something that they did not know before (insights, facts and realisations) and when they can do something they could not do before (skills). Training is job or task oriented. It therefore aims at enabling individuals to perform better on the job they are currently doing.

2.4 The training process

There are scores of literature available on training which indicate that traditionally, training in well established organization involves systematic approach which generally follows a sequence of activities involving the establishment of a training policy, followed by training needs identification, training plans and program design and implementation, evaluation and training feedback for further action.

2.4.1 Training policies and resources

Kenney et al (1992:3) makes a point that companies should have different policies for training depending on the class or level of employment or level of employees to be trained. They pointed out that training policies are necessary to provide guidance for those responsible for planning and implementing training, ensure that company's training resources are allocated to pre-determined requirement, provide equality of opportunity throughout the company and to inform employees of training and development opportunities available.

Even though these policies may seem accurate, they are silent on the elements of budgetary provision and top management support for training. According to Michael Armstrong in his book *A Handbook for Personnel Management Practice* (1996), training policies are expressions of the training philosophy of the organization. He also affirms the Kenny et al (1992) position, but furthered it that training policy shows the proportion of turnover that should be allocated to training.

He again advocated that a training philosophy is imperative to show the degree of importance the organization attaches to training. This will either reduce or eliminate entirely the laissez-faire approach to training in many organisations.

According to Joy-Matthews et al. (2004), training is viewed classically as a systematic process with an inherent and generally acceptable logic that begins with identifying needs, designing intervention, implementing it and then evaluating.

2.4.2 Analysing the need for training

The Analyses stage is the building block of any training programme and the basis for who must be trained, what to be trained in, when training will occur and where the training will take place are accomplished in this phase. According to G.A Cole (2002), if an organization has to justify the need to expend on training, it must do so on the basis of organizational need. This assertion was affirmed by Bernhard and Ingolis (1988), in studying training and its strategic implementations in US companies. Their study revealed that more money is thrown away because most companies fail to address fundamental issues such as analysis of training needs in relation to the short and long term business plan of the organisation. Organizations adopting a systematic approach to training will usually set about defining their need for training in accordance with a well organized procedure. Such a procedure will entail looking at training needs from a number of different perspectives. These perspectives include; organizational, departmental or functional, job and employee. Organizational need – the organizational analysis happens in a situation where effectiveness of the organization and its success in meeting its goals are analyzed to determine where shortfalls exist. This makes it easy to know what program to be implemented. According to Kaufman (1974:80), the organization analysis looks at the variances between their success and failure to ascertain which ones training could help remedy. Functional need – at this level, training managers analyze the specific ability needs determined by job descriptions and job specifications of the jobs in the work area or work unit.

The need can also be determined by observing the job performance of work groups and survey job holders, supervisors, and training committees. Any lapses in their

efficiency and effectiveness help determine the training need. Individual need – Kaufman continues that employees’ training needs could be measured by the individual performance of the employees. He stated that the effectiveness and efficiency is measured against the required standards through interviews, observations, attitude surveys, or objective records of their performance.

The researcher thinks that these three levels – organizational, functional and individual gaps between expected results and actual results can suggest training needs, for the researcher, active solicitation of suggestions from employees, supervisors, managers and training committees can also provide training needs ideas. The particular perspective chosen will depend on the circumstances. For example, if changes in the external environment of the organization are exerting pressures for change internally, then a corporate or organizational perspective needs to be taken. If, however, the issue is one of improving skills in a particular category of employees, then occupational or job group will provide the focus of efforts.

Training need is any shortfall in employee performance, or potential performance which can be remedied by appropriate training. Armstrong (1996) however, argues that training needs analysis should cover problems to be solved, as well as future demands based on whether the organization must acquire new skills or knowledge or must improve existing competencies.

2.4.3 Designing the training plan

This phase insures the systematic development of the training program. The process is driven by the products of the analysis stage and ends in a model or blueprint of the training process for future development. One of the things to consider in designing a

training program is what the program is to accomplish, that is the objectives. In other words a training program cannot be designed until what that program is to accomplish is known. It is imperative for organizations to realize that in designing a training program it is equally important to consider what the trainees should know or be able to do after the training is complete. Training objectives should however be attainable and measurable. A training program is successful if the objectives are achieved. Zaccarelli (1997) outlines the process of planning training as;

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2.4.4 Develop a training plan

Once attainable and measurable training objectives have been considered, a training plan can be developed. This **planning tool** provides a step-by-step written document for others to follow. A training plan can be either a complete training program or just one task. The training plan details the course content, resources required, method of training, who should do the training and who should be trained.

2.4.5 Design a training lesson

Once a training plan has been developed, the organization will need to concentrate on specific segments of that plan. This is done by embedding both individual and organisation needs into the training lesson. Kern and Miller (1997) in supporting this, they claimed that if a business objective cannot be cited as a basis for designing training and development programme, then no training and development should be offered.

2.4.6 Select the trainer(s) and trainees

There are some fundamental questions which need to be addressed by organisations in the selection of trainers for their training activities because the success of the

programme depends to some extent on the trainer. It is therefore incumbent on organisation to be extra careful in selecting trainers for their training activities. Questions such as: Who is going to train?, Who is a good communicator and has the necessary knowledge/skill to train?, What should the trainer do to get the trainees ready for the training?, should be answered by organizations in selecting trainers. Again it is important to take into consideration the trainees who are the beneficiaries of the training programme. Harrison (2005) contributing to the guidance on the design and delivery of learning events emphasized the need to involve trainees in the training designing by catering for their needs.

2.4.7 Developing the training programme

This stage elaborates and builds on the training objectives and steps that were produced in the design phase. It basically fleshes out all the previous content built in the prior two stages (Analysis and Design) into a complete training platform. It deals with the necessary activities that will make training a reality. According to Armstrong (2009), the methods used to deliver training should be appropriate to the purpose of the course and to the characteristics of participants. This means it should stream into their workflow as much as possible, rather than cause a cessation of their workflow. It also looks at the activities for the learners to perform on the basis that they will help them learn the needed skills and knowledge to support the organisational needs. This stage looks at methods of training; thus, off-the-job and on-the-job training. On-the-job training is widely used by organisations as a method of training because it is simple to carry out and less costly to operate. It again facilitates transfer of skills. Thus, the training places the employee in actual work situations and makes them appear to be immediately productive. Reynolds (2004) argues that this kind of

training is believed to be vastly more effective in building proficiency than more formalized training methods. Here, there is a close collaboration between trainer and learner. There are three common methods that are used in on-the-job training and these are; learning by doing, mentoring and shadowing and job rotation.

2.4.8 Implementation and Evaluating Training

This stage should not present too many problems if the planning and preparation for the programme or event has been carried out systematically. This so because if all the stages preceding this stage are duly followed and all challenges addressed, then implementation should go on smoothly without much of a problem. However, there is a need to monitor the delivery to fine tune where necessary because training events vary according to the features of the trainees' needs and their reactions also may differ.

This stage is where conditions are determined (who, what, when, where) under which the training will be offered and the solution implemented. This is done by reviewing the data collected during the life of the project, reviewing the lessons learned about field conditions from the validation, and discussing with employees who are knowledgeable about conditions at the job. Benabou (1996), contributing to the impact of training implementation said that for training to have positive effect on both trainees and the organisation supporting structures must be in place throughout the organization.

Evaluation is an integral feature of learning activities. In essence, it is the comparison of objectives with outcomes to answer the question of how far the event has achieved

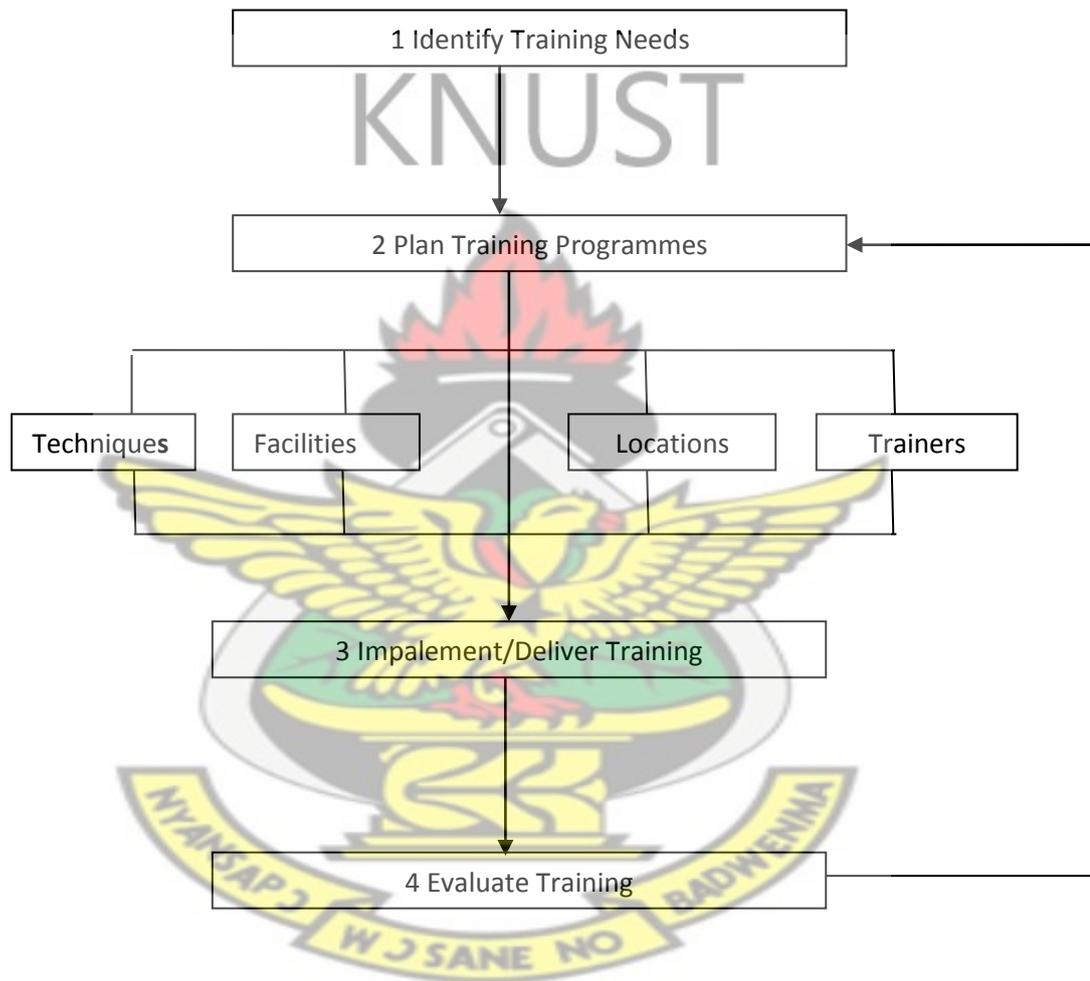
its purpose The evaluations will serve two purposes: first, should verify that employees have achieved the learning objectives; second, trainers' performance and method of presentation problems are identified and resolved. This stage ends when the company is prepared to carry out the tasks required to provide and support the product and administer the materials independently.

Again, evaluation is done to enable the trainer to determine if the training methods and material were effective and successful as well as accomplishing the goal and objective that were established. To evaluate the program effectively, data will be gathered from participants and the results will be carefully analyzed to identify any unforeseen problems or changing conditions. It is also essential to monitor the return on investment in the training program. There are several methods for evaluating training and Beardwell and Holden (1993) cited these as some of the methods of evaluating training. They are:

1. Questionnaires (feedback forms): this is a very common method which is used by organisations to elicit trainees' responses to training programs.
2. Tests or examinations: these are common on formal courses, especially those that result in certification for instance a diploma in word processing skills. Trainees are tested on what they have learnt during the session in order to help the trainer know if they have absorbed what they were taught.
3. Structured exercises and case studies also provide opportunities to apply learned skills and techniques under the observation of tutors and evaluators.

4. Interviews of trainees after the course or instruction period are another technique for gathering information directly from the learners. These can be formal or informal, individual or group, face-to-face or by telephone.

Figure 2.0 Systematic Training Model



Source: Armstrong .M. (2006)

2.5 Benefits of Training

The purpose of training is mainly to improve knowledge and skills, and to change attitudes or behavior. It is one of the most important potential motivators which can lead to many possible benefits for both individuals and the organization. Changing

technology requires that employees possess the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to cope with new processes and production techniques. According to Cole (2002) training increases employees confidence, recognition, enhanced responsibility with a possibility of increased pay which leads to motivation of the employee, it also lowers cost of production because trained staff able to make better economic use of materials and equipment thereby reducing waste if not eliminating it. Training brings a sense of security at the workplace which reduces labour turnover and finally it also helps in the management of change through the provision of skills and abilities needed to adjust to the changes

Derek et al (2000:55) looked at the training environment and the structure of organizations, and emphasized on the effects of internal political and cultural factors on training and development. Sherman et al (1996:16) argues that many new employees can be equipped with most of the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to start work, but others may require extensive training to ensure their effective contribution to the organization. A majority however, will require some type of training at one time or another to maintain an effective level of job performance.

According to Krietner (1995:8) in his book *The Good Managers Guide*, no matter how carefully job applicants are screened, typically a gap remains between what the employee does know and what they should know. An organization which desires to gain the competitive edge in its respective industry, needs among other things, extensive and effective training of its human resources.

Training is therefore a key element for improved organizational performance; it increases the level of individual and organizational competences. It helps to reconcile the gap between what should happen and what is happening – between desired targets

or standards and actual levels of work performance. Although many employers continue to have reservations about the cost and extent of tangible business returns from training, the development of skills has been identified as a key factor in sharpening competitiveness. Casio (1989:256) puts it this way “The economic and technological trends, the pace of innovation, change and development are growing faster year-by-year and as a result, provide clear signals that training and development are so relevant that both organizations and individual stakeholders must give a serious attention to.

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Contributing to the debate on the general benefits of training to both the employee and the organisation, McNamara (2008) outlined among other benefits that training increases job satisfaction and high morale among employees, increases efficiencies in processes resulting in financial gain and increase employee motivation. He further argues that training increases employees’ capacity to adopt new technologies and methods, brings out employees’ creativity and innovativeness in strategies and product and also enhances the image the image of the company.

Goldstein and Gilliam (1990) on their part gave six (6) reasons why companies believe that investments in their employees in terms of training help them gain competitive advantage. They cited some the advantages as increase in employee knowledge, prepares employees to accept and work more effectively, it promotes culture of creativity, innovations and learning among other benefits.

According to Leopold, Harris and Watson (1999) training activities serves as maintenance programme for the organization in the sense that it tries to carry out maintenance on the systems, processes and standards of work. It also serves as reactive response to situations, often job related crisis to solve problems. Training can

be proactive by ensuring that the organization has the needed skills available to adapt and deal with change rather being reactive to change.

2.6 Effects of Training Practice on Employee Skill Development

Employee training and development continues to be an essential element for organizations striving for sustainable competitive advantage and survival in the twenty-first century. In view of its importance, professional associations (e.g., American Society for Training and Development) and individual researchers in North America continuously conduct training surveys to gauge training trends and practices of North American organizations, including leading-edge companies (e.g., Bassi and Cheney, 1997; Bassi and Van Buren, 1999; Loo, 1991; Olian et al., 1998; Vicere, 1998).

A study by Zakaria and Rozhan (1993), using data collected in 1991 from the manufacturing sector, showed that only 44 per cent of the responding organizations conducted formal training. Another 38 per cent conducted only informal training. Of those who have formal training, 23 per cent did not conduct any training need assessment. The main reason for the failure to do so was the lack of expertise to conduct training need assessment. Half of those who did not perform training need assessment stated this as their reason. In the case of companies that did conduct training need assessment, 38 per cent took a reactive approach to this function. Among these respondents, the main source of information for training needs assessment was the problems faced by their organizations. Only 16 per cent indicated that their training need assessment was based on the strategic plan of the organization. This finding indicates a lack of strategic orientation in the way training was conducted. In the area of training evaluation, the study found that the main criterion

used was trainee reaction. About 30 per cent of the responding organizations indicated this. The same percentage stated that training evaluation was conducted at the end of training programmes. Only 21 per cent stated that they evaluated training effectiveness by measuring its impact on work behaviour. This evidence shows the lack of attention given to transference of skills in the training evaluation process.

Becker (1993), sought to better understand the relationship between the costs and returns to training by identifying two mutually exclusive forms of training – general training and specific training. General training is training that provides the worker with skill development not only applicable at the present employer, but also at other firms throughout the labour market. Some examples of general training programs are apprenticeship trainings, general computer training, and learning surgical techniques that could be used in other hospitals. Educational reimbursement is also an example of general training, as the skills acquired can be of use to many different employers (Kaufman and Hotchkiss, 2006).

Gary Becker's model suggests that because general training provides skill development that can be used at other companies, the employer will not invest in it. The underlying premise is that within a competitive labour market, employees are typically paid for their level of production. With that, a company that provides general training will have to pay the employee a wage that coincides with their newly learned skills and their higher level of production. Companies that continue paying employees the pre-training rate of pay, risk losing the employee to a firm that will provide the higher wage. As a result, turnover would increase. By paying the higher wage, as well as paying for the general training, the current employer would be unable to recoup its overall investment. As a result, companies have no incentive to pay for general

training and it is the workers themselves that will need to bear this cost (Frazis and Spletzer, 2005).

In contrast, specific on-the-job training is training that increases the workers productivity and output only at the company that provides it. The training is “specific” to that particular company only. Examples of specific training may include learning to drive a tank or operating machinery that is company specific.

Specific on-the-job training also differs from general training in that it is typically the company and not the individual worker that bears the cost of the training. The thought is that because training is specific to the individual company and non-transferable, the productivity of the worker increases for that particular company, but would remain the same for any other organization within the labour market. As a result, it is unlikely that specific training would result in turnover.

Gary Becker’s argument essentially states that the more specific the training the less likely turnover will occur. As the skills obtained are non-portable and non-transferable to other organizations, this type of specific training is paid for by the employer. In turn, employees typically receive less pay during the specific training period in anticipation of future wage increases. By contrasting Becker’s model with a commitment approach one can see that the employee’s investment of time and the anticipation of higher wages as potentially leading to an increase in commitment. Training in this context becomes a “side bet”. The investment of time and effort expended during the training process is one such factor that may enhance an employee’s commitment to the organization.

2.7 Training and Productivity

Employee performance is an important building block of an organization and factors which lay the foundation for high performance must be analyzed by the organizations. Since every organization cannot progress by one or two individual's effort, it is a collective effort of all the members of the organization. Performance is a major multidimensional construct aimed to achieve results and has a strong link to strategic goals of an organization (Mwita, 2000). Managers at all the levels have to input their efforts and make maximum use of their abilities which sometimes are produced under supervision or without it. However, there are many expectations from managers working for an organization. These expectations are sometimes fulfilled but in some situations these managers may be running to their boss for guidance. Therefore, the managers must be developed so that they can think and work on their own and fulfill their responsibilities innovatively, while understanding and foreseeing the market and business situations.

Training and development is essential to organizations which seek to gain a competitive advantage through a highly skilled and flexible workforce, and are seen as a major element to high productivity and quality performance. A skilled workforce can increase productivity by producing a higher level of work with greater value. A skilled workforce can improve a firm's operative flexibility as they will be easier to retrain due to their broad knowledge base of multi-skills. This allows management to be confident in using new technology and provide employers with progressive adjustment to change in production methods, produce requirement and technology. In today's competitive climate, "efficient production even of technically unsophisticated products benefits from technically advanced machinery operated by a workforce with a high level of skills" which in turn "a pre-condition for successful selective of

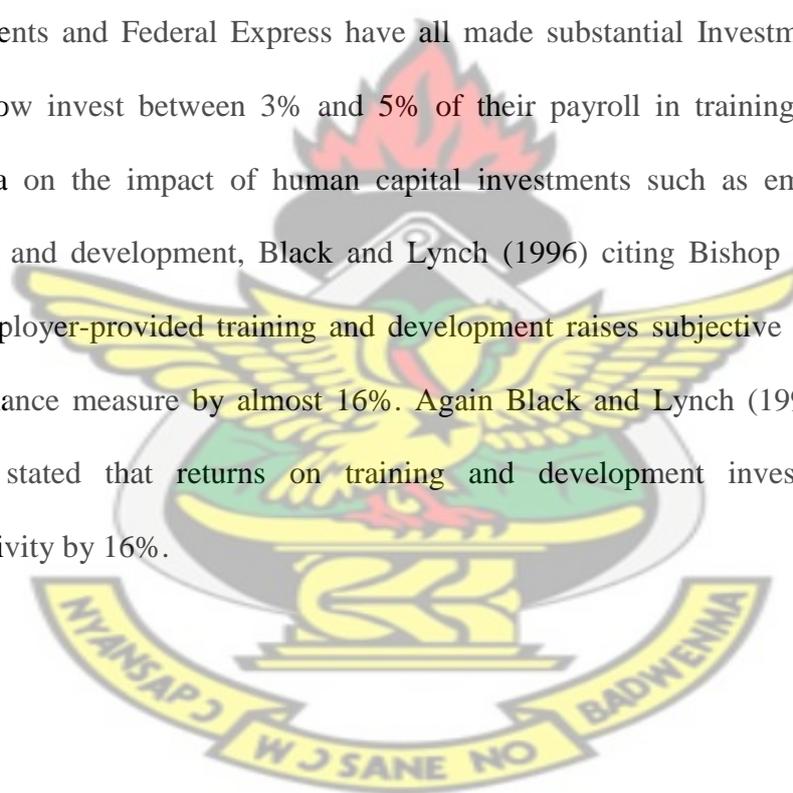
appropriate machinery and its efficient utilization” (Steedman & Wagner, 1989, p. 133).

The job satisfaction, employee commitment and motivation are highly regarded as important to the training and development measurement of organizational performance. Employees should be treated as valued assets, a source of competitive advantage through their commitment, adaptability and quality of skills and performance (Guest, 1997). Many organizations assume that employees are satisfied simply because they have a job. As a result, employers do not attempt to involve employees with decision making or motivating them; but, the emphasis should therefore be on generating commitment through “communication, motivation and leadership” (Storey, 1987, p. 6), “employees’ commitment will yield better economic performance” (Storey, 1995, p. 35). Implementation of customer service training programs can improve employee’s behaviour and enhance their performance. Customer service training will allow employees to become “familiarized” with the company’s “history, its growth and expansion, and the company’s expectations regarding customer service and the firm’s work ethics” (Dessler, 1999, p. 270). This program can help employees build value and integrity into the relationships with both internal and external customers.

Organizations that are committed to quality invest in training and development of its employees (Evans and 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%.



2.8 Conceptual framework showing the relationships that exist between performance gap, training, skill development, and performance

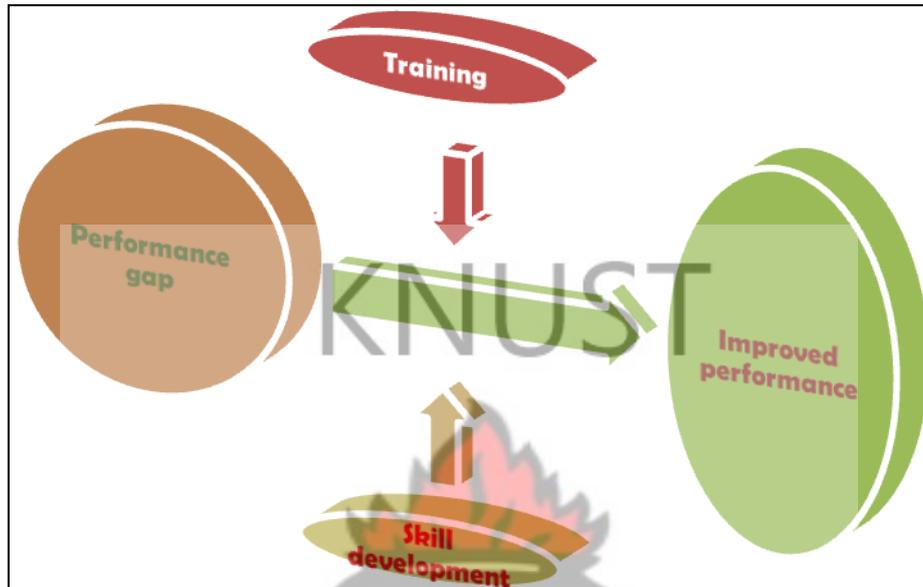


Figure 2.1: conceptual framework

Adapted from: Armstrong (2006) systematic training model

The above shows the possible relationship that could exist between performance gap, training, skill development, and performance. Before training takes place, there should be a need for it either from the organisational side or individual level. Series of activities, as indicated earlier take place before the actual training is delivered. The performance gap therefore represents both individual and organisational needs. Based on the need analysis, the appropriate training is implemented to enable the employees acquire the needed skills and competencies.

Through the acquisition and application of the skills acquired, performance improves, which fuels the organisation's overall performance thereby increasing their profits.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with the various procedures that were followed in conducting the study. It covers research design, sources of data, population, sample and sampling techniques, and data collection. In addition, the chapter presents the profile of the organization which was understudied.

3.1 Research design

The research was a case study which investigated the impact of training practices on employees' performance in the Ashanti East Region of the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited. This strategy, according to Robson (2002) in Sanders et al (2004) is an approach for doing a research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon. The strategy was used because the interest of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of training practices on skill development and its effect on performance of the employees in the Ashanti East Region of the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited. In addition, a case study is capable of generating answers to 'why?', 'what?' as well as 'how?' questions, which feature prominently in this study.

3.2 Sources of Data

The study used both of secondary and primary data.

3.2.1 Primary Source

The primary data was collected from the field. This information was gathered through the administration of questionnaires to the sampled employees of Electricity Company of Ghana Limited.

3.2.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data were obtained from books. Other secondary data including journals, articles, and reports were also obtained from the internet with the aid of databases such as Google Scholar and Emerald.

3.3 Population

The population for the study consisted of the entire ECG employees in the Ashanti East Region. It comprised of three groupings; management, senior staff, and Junior staff. The choice of Ashanti East region branch of ECG was as a result of the inability of the researcher to visit other regions because of resource constraints. More so, earlier interactions with a cross section of the company's employees revealed easy access to information in the Ashanti East Region. Below is a table showing the staffing situation of the company in the Ashanti East Region.

Table 3.1 Staff Population at ECG, Ashanti East Region

STAFF CATEGORY	STRENGTH
Management	9
Senior Staff	95
Junior Staff	368
Total	460

Source: HR department ECG, Ashanti East.

3.4 Sample size and sampling technique

Sample for data collection in a research study, according to Sanders et al (2004) is the subgroup or part of a larger population being studied. It is the proportion of the population of a study from which data are collected for analysis. He puts forward that data from entire population would not necessarily provide more useful result than collecting data from a sample which represents the entire population. This means that data from sample provides a valid alternative to data from entire population, especially so, when it is impracticable to reach every case in the population due to its huge size, or limited resources.

Following from the above reasons, the actual sample size formula:

$na = (n \times 100) / re\%$, where **na** is the actual sample size; '**n**' adjusted sample size; and '**re%**' the estimated response rate (Sunders et al, 2006) was used to calculate the sample size that was needed for data collection and analyses. With an adjusted sample size of 120, and estimated response rate of 80%, the actual sample size of 150 was obtained as the sample size needed for data collection and analyses; that is, $(120 \times 100) / 80$.

The population was then categorized into Management, Senior and Junior Staffs as shown in (Table 3.1). From the strata, the researcher selected 22% (2) respondents from the top management, the HR and the General Managers, deploying the purposive non-random sampling approach. The two were purposely selected because they are the two key top management members who are involved in decisions relating to training and development in the company. Lists of names were made out of the Senior and Junior Staff categories, and unique numbers were given to each list in the categories. The simple random sampling approach was then used to select 48 (50.5%) members from the Senior Staff category and 100 (27%) from the Junior Staff category, giving a total sample size of 150 employees. The technique was used to ensure that the senior and junior staffs were comprehensively represented.

Table 3.2 Sample size used for the study

STAFF CATEGORY	SIZE
Management	2
Senior Staff	48
Junior Staff	100
Total	150

Source: Fieldwork, 2011

3.5 Data collection procedure

Structured questionnaire was the main instrument used for data collection in the study. Two of them were designed. One was designed and used to collect data from the two key management members who are involved in the training of employees in the company in the Ashanti East Region. It contained 13 major and 3 minor items, apart from those that dealt with their personal profile. The items were mostly open-

ended, which sought to elicit data on training practices in the company and how they impacted both skill development and performance of the employees and the company in the Region. A second structured questionnaire was designed and administered to the senior and junior staffs of the company in the Ashanti East Region to collect data on training practices and its impact on their performance. It contained 13 major and 7 minor items, some with options for the respondents to choose from. The questionnaires were structured to ensure that standardized questions were asked all respondents.

To ensure reliability and validity of the instruments, a test-retest exercise was conducted in the organisation. The result of the exercise was used to correct all validity and reliability related concerns. The instruments were finally administered. The questionnaires were collected two weeks after their administration.

3.6 Data analysis technique

Data gathered from the study were analysed using SPSS. The outcome of the analyses was presented in frequency tables, and charts, which were discussed qualitatively using both the frequencies and percentages.

3.7 Organisational profile of Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) Limited

Electricity Company of Ghana started operations as early as 1914 when the first government sponsored public electricity supply began. It was then operated by the Railway Administration. In 1922, the Public Works Department also started its electricity supply under its electricity division. In 1965, VRA started its transmission power to the then Electricity Division of the Public Works Department. Two years

later in 1967, the Electricity Corporation of Ghana was established by law. Thirty years later in 1967, it was incorporated under the Company's Code, 1963 (Act 179). It succeeded the Electricity Corporation of Ghana which was set up by the Government in 1967. ECG is fully owned by the Government of Ghana. ECG buys electric power from GRIDCO in bulk and sells to companies and households in the country which is to extend electricity supply to towns and villages and also sells transformers to companies in Ghana (ECG, HR Dept., 2011).

Before 1987, ECG was transmitting electricity power to the whole country, however, in 1987, ECG transferred the supply of electric power to Brong Ahafo region and the three northern regions to VRA. ECG has since been operating in six (6) political regions in Ghana namely: Ashanti, Eastern, Western, Volta, Greater Accra and Central the rest of the regions i.e. Brong Ahafo, Upper East and West are Northern and are manned by Northern Electricity Department (NED) (ECG, PR Dept., 2011).

The law which established ECG as a company prescribed the nature of business for the company. The company was mandated to carry out the following underlisted activities:

- i. To purchase, takeover or otherwise acquire the undertaking and business previously carried out by the Electricity Corporation of Ghana as well as its goodwill, assets, properties, rights, debts, liabilities and obligations.
- ii. To transmit, supply and distribute electricity.
- iii. To purchase electrical energy in bulk from the VRA or any other supplier for distribution.

- iv. To construct, reconstruct, install, assemble, repair, maintain, operate or remove sub-transmission station, electrical appliances, fittings and installations.
- v. To carry out any activities incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects specified above.

The mission statement, values and vision statements of the company are as stated below;

Mission Statement

“To provide quality electricity services to support economic growth and development in Ghana” (Corporate Planning Division, 2006).

Value Statement

- We are passionate about our customers
- We want to be the best
- We value each other
- We can be trusted

Vision Statement

“To achieve customer satisfaction by providing services which fully meet the expectation of our customers” (Corporate Planning Division, 2006)

The operational set up of ECG constitutes of ten regions namely: Accra (East), Accra (West), Ashanti (East), Ashanti (West), Western, Central, Tema, Eastern, Sub Transmission and Volta and the organogram has ten (10) directorates namely; Human Resources, Operations, Engineering, Audit, Finance, Customer Service, Legal,

Material & Transport and Board Secretariat Directorates. Each of the regions is headed by a Regional General Manager and they report to the Operations Directorate (see attached Organisational Chart).

Ashanti East Region was carved out of the then Ashanti Region in the latter part of 2003. This was because both the customer population was increasing and the company's network was expanding which made it very difficult for the regional management to effectively manage the whole Ashanti region. The region was therefore split into two regions namely Ashanti East and Ashanti West regions (ECG, HR Dept., 2011)

Ashanti East region has seven (7) districts which serve as operational centres from where the region's activities are carried. The districts include Asokwa, Manhyia, Ayigya, Kwabre, Konongo, Mampong and Effiduase. Each district is headed by a District Manager. The Districts are categorized as 'A', 'B' or 'C' based on its customer population size and network. The districts are responsible for all commercial activities for all customers except Special Load Tariff (SLT) customers. They also carry out minor faults on the company's network under their respective jurisdiction (ECG, HR Dept., 2011).

The region is headed by a Regional General Manager. He is assisted by five Heads of Departments designated as Regional Human Resource Manager, Regional Accounts Manager, Regional Customer Service Manager, Regional Engineer and Regional Materials & Transport Manager (see attached Regional Chart).

The region's commercial operations are primarily based on the revenue target set by the company's head office. The target are made up of weekly cash collections, commercial loses reduction (ECG, HR Dept., 2011)

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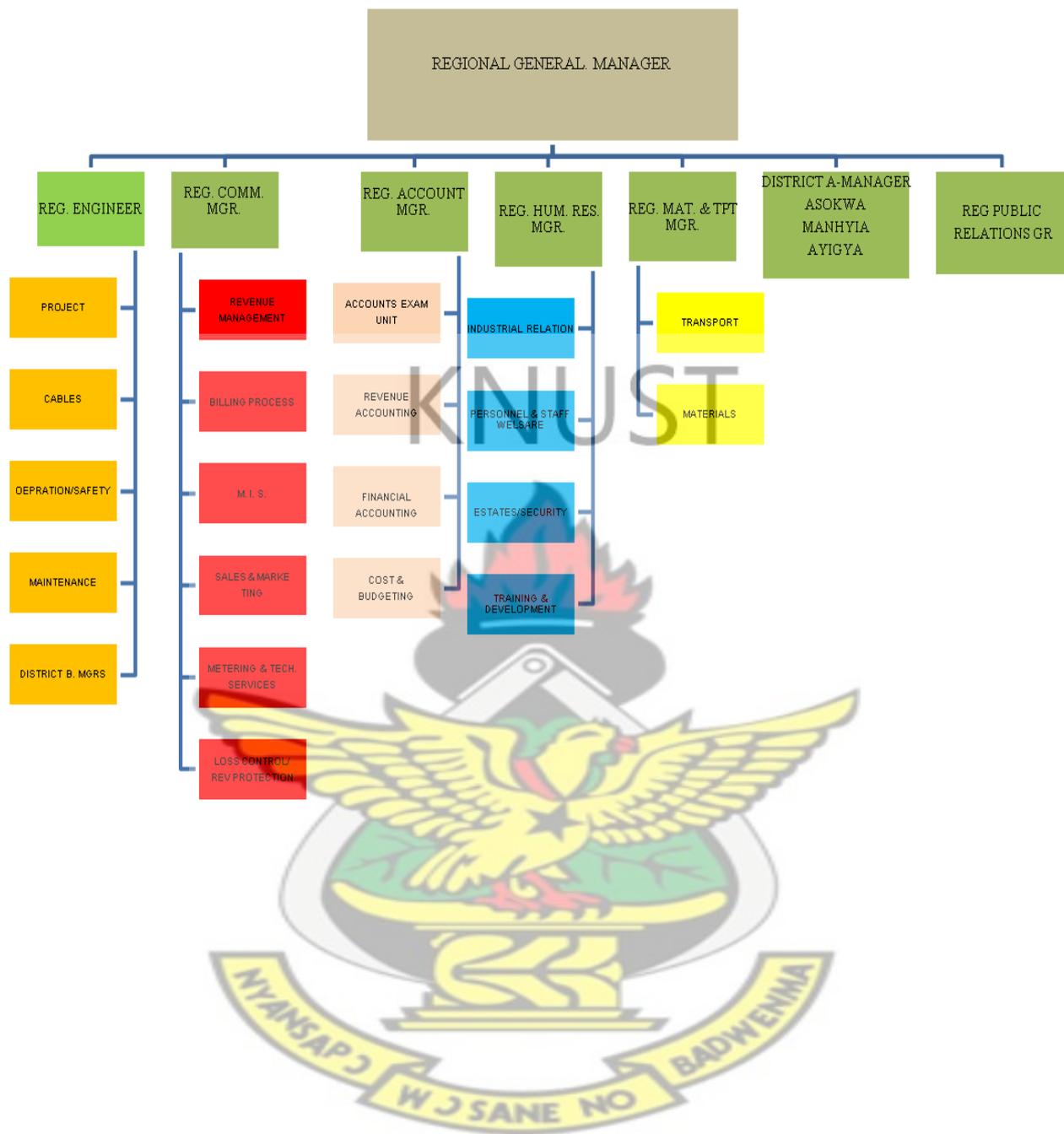


Fig 3.7.1 Organizational Chart-ECG, Ashanti East Region
 Source: Field work, 2011

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This section presents analysis of the findings of the study on the effect of training on employee skill development in the Ashanti East Region of the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited. The analysis is divided into five main parts. The first part examines the demographic characteristics of respondents. The second part presents and analyses information on respondents' employment detail. The third section assesses the level of employee awareness of training and development policy in the company. The fourth section deals with the training practices at ECG, while the final part looks at the effect of the training on skill development and performance of employees in general in the company.

In all, 150 questionnaires were administered to employees in the Ashanti East Region of the Electricity Company of Ghana Limited. However, 106 of the questionnaire, representing 70.7% were completed and ready for collection on the last day of the three weeks, which was allowed for the employees to complete them.

Data gathered from the administration of questionnaires for the study have been analysed in this section using the SPSS.

4.1 Respondents' Bio data

This section gives detail information about respondent in the light of their age and education as related to the study.

4.1.1 The gender of respondents

Table 4.1.1

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	79	74.5
Female	27	25.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012.

Table 4.1.1 above presents data on gender of respondents. The figure shows that the male respondents formed majority of the target population with a total of 79 representing 74.5%, while 27 respondents representing 25.5% were females. The dominance of male respondents can be attributed to the nature of work at ECG which is more masculine.

4.1.2 Age of respondents

Table 4.1.2

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
18 - 25 yrs	4	3.8
26 - 35 yrs	59	55.7
36 - 45 yrs	28	26.4
46 - 55 yrs	15	14.2
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The researcher needed to know the age distribution of respondents to help categorize the employees because ECG Ashanti East Region employs a lot of employees. Figure 4.1.2 above summarizes the data obtained on the ages of respondents.

Analyzing the data obtained from the questionnaire, table 4.1.2 reveals that 59 respondents between 26-35 years representing 55.7% formed the majority with 28 respondents aged between the ages of 36-45 representing 26.4%, while 15 respondents in age range of 46-55 had 14.2%. 4 respondents aged between 18-25 representing 3.8%.

4.1.3 Educational background of respondents

Table 4.1.3

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Senior High School	11	10.4
Ordinary/Advance Level	17	16.0
HND	22	20.8
1st Degree	17	16.0
Masters Degree	2	1.9
NVTI/EET	37	34.9
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Table 4.1.3 shows the educational background of the respondents. At the time of the research none of the respondents was a JHS certificate holder, 37 (34.98%) held either NVTI or EET certificate 22 respondents representing 20.8% were HND holders. 17 respondents had both bachelor's degree and ordinary/Advance level certificates

representing 16% each, while 11(10.4%) of the respondents were SHS holders, and 2 masters degree holders.

4.2 Employment details of respondents

This section details the employment data about the respondents in the study.

4.2.1 Job Title / Department of respondents

Table 4.2.1

	CSD	Operations	Finance	Total
Cashiers	0 .0%	0 .0%	21 19.8%	21 19.8%
Fault	0 .0%	40 37.7%	0 .0%	40 37.7%
Field Investigators	23 21.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	23 21.7%
CRA	5 4.7%	0 .0%	0 .0%	5 4.7%
Billing Officers	8 7.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	8 7.5%
Disconnectors	9 8.5%	0 .0%	0 .0%	9 8.5%
Total	45 42.5%	39 36.8%	22 20.8%	106 100.0%

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The table above gives details of respondents' job title or activity and its corresponding Department which they belong. From the table below respondents from CSD were the majority with respondents of 45(42.5). Within the CSD section, 23 respondents representing 21.7% were field investigators, CRAs were 5 representing 4.7% of the total respondents while Billing Officers and Disconnectors were 17 with 8 (7.5%) and 9(8.5%) respectively representing. Operations section had 40 respondents from its faults gang representing 37.7% of the total respondents. The remaining 22 (20.8%) respondents were all cashiers in the finance section. It is also important to note that all the respondents from the finance section were females.

4.2.2 Respondent's rank

Table 4.2.2

Rank	Frequency	Percent
Junior	80	75.5%
Senior	26	24.5%
Total	106	100.0%

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The table above shows the job rank of respondents in ECG. Table 4.2.2 indicates that respondents in the junior rank were 80(75.5%) and 26 respondents were in the senior rank representing 24.5%.

4.2.3 Employment status of respondents

Table 4.2.3

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Temporal	0	.0
Permanent	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

It was important for the researcher to ascertain the employment status of respondents as this could influence their responses because employers normally do not invest heavily in contract employees. From table 4.2.3 below, it was found out that all the 106 (100%) respondents were permanent staff of ECG.

4.2.4 Number of years served at ECG

The study also sought to find out the years of service the respondents have rendered to the organization to enable us put their responses into proper perspective. Figure 4.2.4 below represents the categories of years of service as indicated by the respondents.

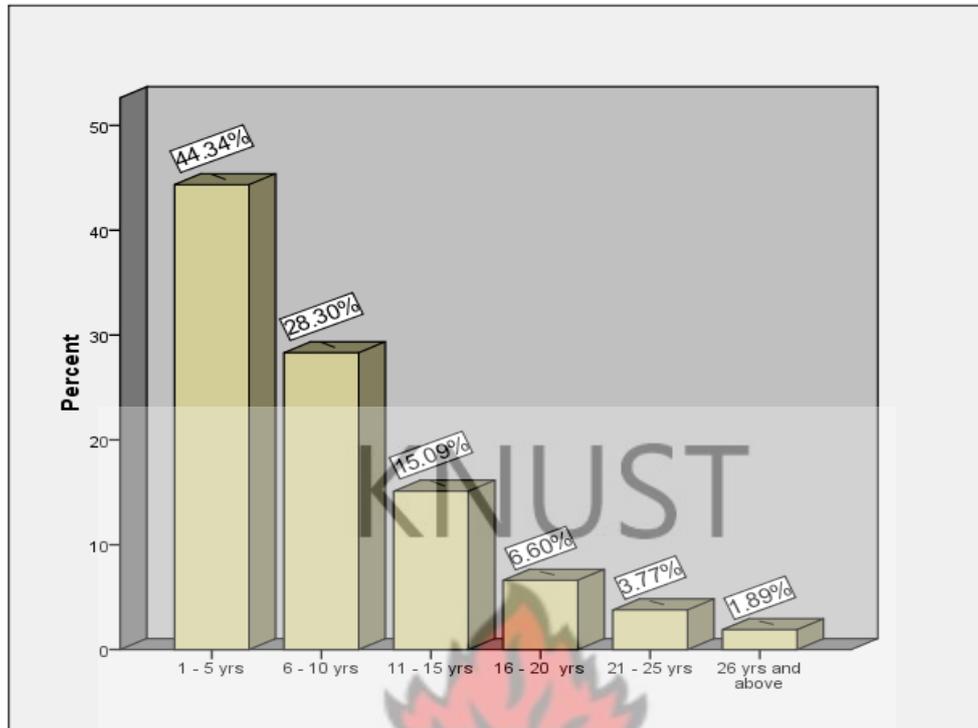


Figure 4.2.1: Number of years served at ECG

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Figure 4.2.4 shows the number of years the respondents have been working at ECG. There were 47 (44.3%) respondents who had worked between years 1-5, 30 (28.3%) had worked between 6-10 years. 16 (15.1%) and 7(6.6%) respondents had worked with ECG for 11-15 and 16-20 years respectively. 4(3.8%) respondents had worked between 21-25 years, while 2(1.9%) has worked with ECG for 26years and above.

4.3 Ascertaining the training and development policy at ECG

The section provides data on whether or not ECG has training and development policy in existence, and how it is administered in the company.

4.3.1 Existence of training and development policy at ECG

Table 4.3.1

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	101	95.3
No	5	4.7
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The first objective of the study relates to the existence of training policy at ECG. The objective sought to establish whether there existed any blue print on training activities at ECG. It was found that ECG had a training and development in place.

Views sampled from a cross section of the employees through the questionnaire to know whether employees were even aware of the existence of a training policy indicated that 101 (95.3%) of respondents were aware as against 5, representing 4.7% of the total respondents who were not aware of the existence of the training policy as shown in the above table confirming what Kenney et al (1992:3) has said earlier on the need for training policy in organisations.

It was also found that even though most of the respondents knew of the existence of the training policy, accessibility of the policy by respondents was very difficult.

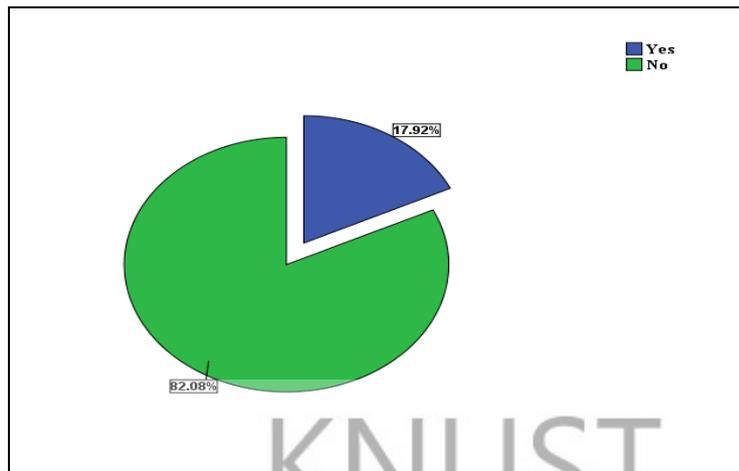


Figure 4.3.2: Employee's Accessibility to training and development policy at ECG
Source: fieldwork, 2012

Figure 4.3.2 indicates that the training policy is not accessible to 82.08% of the respondents, while only 17.02% of them can access it. The inaccessibility of the policy to the employees was further corroborated by both the Regional Human Resource and the General Managers. It can be said from the results that almost all the employees in Ashanti East do not know the content of the training and development policy operating in the company. This however, contradicts what literature has said about making training policy known to employees as indicated by Kenney et al (1992). It could be said from the above data that, employees of ECG are not able to make full use of the policy since they have no knowledge of the content.

4.3.3 Attendance of training and development courses at ECG by respondents

Table 4.3.3

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree Strongly	23	21.7
Agree	64	60.4
Disagree Strongly	2	1.9
Disagree	17	16.0
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The importance and relevance of training to organizational performance is established in many writings. The study sought to know the proportion of respondents who have ever attended any form of training program at ECG. Table 4.3.3 presents their responses.

Table 4.3.3 is indicative that 64 (60%) of respondents agreed they have participated in training in one form or the other, while 23 (21.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed when they were posed the same question. 17 (16%) of respondents disagreed that they have attended training programmes and 2 (1.9) of respondents strongly disagreed. It could be concluded that majority of the respondents have attended or participated in one form of training programme or the other and it is very encouraging and good for ECG to train majority of its employees.

4.3.4 Time of last training and development course attended at ECG

Table 4.3.4

Response	Frequency	Percent
1 - 6 months	29	27.4
7 - 12 months	17	16.0
1 - 3 yrs	32	30.2
4 yrs and above	16	15.1
Never	12	11.3
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Even though there was no clear rule on who qualifies to attend a training programme, majority (94) respondents out of 106 indicated that they have undergone one form of training more with only 12 respondents answering that they have never undergone any training since they joined the company as shown in table 4.3.4 above.

4.3.5 Number of training and development courses attended

Table 4.3.5

Response	Frequency	Percent
Once	27	25.5
Twice	24	22.6
Several times	42	39.6
Never	13	12.3
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

4.4 Training and development practices

Training, as has been put forward in literature, is a planned and systematic flow of activities involving determining training purpose and policy, and following through by determining training needs, planning the training, implementing the training, and evaluating the training. Series of questions were posed to respondents in this study to determine the training practices at ECG.

4.4.1 Training needs identification

Table 4.4.1

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	28	26.4
No	78	73.6
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Respondents were asked whether they have participated in any form of training need identification in ECG. Table 4.4.1 above shows the responses of respondents.

Seventy-eight (73.6%) of the respondents indicated that they have not participated in any training need identification, while 28 (26.4%) respondents pointed out they have indeed participated in training need identification exercise before. The HR Manager however, indicated that training needs are received from various sections and District to the HR department which informs the planning and execution of the training programme. According to G.A Cole (2002), if an organization has to justify the need to expend on training, it must do so on the basis of organizational need and this seemed not to be the case at ECG.

4.4.2 Selection of employees for training courses

Table 4.4.2

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	86	81.1
No	20	18.9
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The above table shows that majority of ECG employees has participated in one form of training before even though most of them have not undergone any training need identification exercise. 86 respondents out of 106 indicated that they have been selected to participate in training before whiles 20 of the total respondents that they have not attended any training programme before. These results made the researcher more curious to find out the mode of selection participant to training programme

Following from the above responses, a further question was posed to find out how employees in the company were selected for training. Table 4.4.3 below summarizes the responses of respondents.

4.4.3 Mode of selection

Table 4.4.3

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
By management	56	52.8
Through performance appraisal	7	6.6
Through training need analysis	10	9.4
No idea	33	31.1
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Literature tells us training is a planned and systematic flow of activities involving determining training purpose and policy, and following through by determining training and development needs, planning the training, implementing the training, and evaluating the training. Selecting participants through a careful process of training needs identification is therefore the proper process of initiating training.

As shown in Table 4.4.3, 56 (52.8%) of the respondents said they were nominated by management to participate in training, while 7 (6.6%) and 10(9.4%) of the respondents indicated that they were selected through performance appraisal and training need analysis respectively. However, 33(31.1%) respondents indicated that they had no idea as to how they were selected. When the HR and the General Managers were asked about the criteria for selecting employees for training, their responses indicated that participants are selected based on various criteria. The HR manager said that training programmes are tailored to meet target groups and out of the target group, participants are selected.

A good training practice demands that participants of a training programme be told about the objectives of the training programme. The respondents were therefore asked if they were usually told about the objectives of training programmes they have participated in. Table 4.4.4 below captures the responses from the 106 respondents.

4.4.4 A clear statement of training objective(s)

Table 4.4.4

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree Strongly	12	11.3
Agree	76	71.7
Disagree Strongly	4	3.8
Disagree	14	13.2
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

The table above shows that often participants in a training programme are always clear about the objectives of the training. The HR and the General Managers indicated that the objectives of the training programmes are normally stated in the invitations sent out to the trainees.

To confirm their responses, the respondents were further asked about some of the objectives of the training programmes they have participated in, as shown in Table 4.4.5 below.

4.4.5 Examples of training and development objectives

Table 4.4.5

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
To help improve performance	42	39.6
To improve employee competencies	51	48.1
Not applicable	13	12.3
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Fifty-one (48.1%) of the respondents indicated that the training objective was to improve their competencies, 42(39.6%) indicated that the training was to help improve their performance, while 13(12.3%) indicated no objective. The latter represented employees who have never been selected to participate in any training programme before. The above data shows that majority of employees have are informed of the objectives of the various training programmes as stated in the various literatures on the training.

4.4.6 Forms of training

Table 4.4.6

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Seminar	71	67.0
On-the-job training	32	30.2
Formal lectures	3	2.8
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

DeCauza et al (1996:70) explained that the most popular training and development form used by organizations can be classified as either on-the-job or off-the-job training. Off-the-job training programmes are normally formal lectures, seminars, workshops among others. Respondents were asked the form training take in ECG.

From Table 4.4.6 above, it is clear that seminars are the main form of training used by ECG, Ashanti East, as indicated by 71(67%) of the respondents. 32(30.2%) of them indicated they have participated in on-the-job training, while 3 (2.8%) of the respondents indicated theirs was a formal lecture. They two managers on their part confirmed that seminar was the main form of training they have adopted. They were however; quick to add that all new employees undergo on-the-job training, especially the technical employees and cashiers before they are posted to their job locations.

4.4.7 Evaluating training at ECG

Table 4.4.7

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	97	91.5
No	9	11.3
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

On training evaluation, 97 (91.5%) of the respondents indicated that training programmes are evaluated, while 9 (11.3%) of them responded in the negative. The HR and General Managers confirmed that training programmes were evaluated. This confirms the various literatures on training evaluation. Evaluation is the last stage in every training process as indicated by Armstrong (2006) in his systematic training

model. This affirms what the literature has said on the need for training evaluation, because it affords the organisation to know the strength and weaknesses in the training they organise for their employees. However, the researcher could not establish whether corrective measures are taken from the training evaluation reports.

4.4.8 Training evaluation methods at ECG

Table 4.4.8

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Oral assessment	75	70.8
Written assessment	22	20.8
Not applicable	9	8.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Regarding the mode of training evaluation, 75 (70.8%) respondents indicated evaluation of training is done orally, while 22 (20.8%) of the respondents said written assessment was the mode of the training evaluation. These results fall within the parameters of Beardwell and Holden (1993), who in their discussion on method of evaluating training mention written test, feedback forms, and interviews among others. Oral assessment seemed to be the dominant form of evaluation at ECG, because it has been argued by some writers as the most practical form of exhibiting the skill that one has acquired.

4.4.9 Planned training and development activities

Table 4.4.9

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	42	39.6
No	64	60.4
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

According to Joy-Matthews et al. (2004), training is viewed classically as a systematic process with an inherent and generally acceptable logic that begins with identifying needs, designing intervention, implementing it and then evaluating. The researcher therefore asked respondents if they think training at ECG is planned and systematic. 64(60.4%) of respondents indicated that training is not planned and systematic while 42(39.6%) of respondents believed training is planned and systematic. In relation to literature, it can be said that training at ECG, Ashanti East Region is not systematic and planned as indicated in the various literatures. This practice at ECG contradicts what the various literatures by Armstrong and others have written about the need for training to be systematic.

4.5 Effect of training on skill development and performance

Armstrong, M. (2006) defines training as a planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, programmes and instruction, which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively. The purpose of training in the work situation is therefore to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future needs of the

organization. Following from this, questions were asked to find out the effect of training on employee skill and performance.

4.5.1 Effect of training on employees' competencies

Table 4.5.1

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Agree Strongly	31	29.2
Agree	63	59.4
Disagree Strongly	3	2.8
Disagree	9	8.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Higher skills are a key component of securing higher productivity. As many as 94 (83%) out of 106 respondents agreed that training has improved their skills and competency level, as against 12 (11%) who disagreed that training has improved their skills level. This confirms literatures on the effect of training on skill and competencies because through training employees are equipped with skills to enable them know their job and perform it better. Even though the processes seem not to be systematic, it has contributed to the development of skills and competencies at ECG.

4.5.2. Application of skill acquired to job

Table 4.5.2

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	98	92.5
No	8	7.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

According to Honey and Mumford (1996), training can only be said to have taken place when people can demonstrate that they know something that they did not know before and when they can do something they could not do before. Again, it has been argued by Reynolds (2004), that the transfer of expertise by outside experts is risky since their design is often removed from the context in which work is created. The researcher therefore asked the respondents if they are able to transfer the skills acquired to the current job. Respondents were asked if they were able to apply the skills they have acquired on to their job. 98 (92.5%) of the 106 respondents answered in the affirmative, while 8 (7.5%) responded in negative as shown in Table 4.5.2. The results confirm what Honey and Mumford (1996) said on the application of skills acquired by trainees. The results again disband what Reynolds, (2004) has said about training of employees by outside experts. Training as has been argued in some writers can be said to have effectively taken place, if the trainees have the necessary materials and environment to apply the skills acquired.

4.5.3 Effect of training on performance

Table 4.5.3

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	98	92.5
No	8	7.5
Total	106	100.0

Source: fieldwork, 2012

Table 4.5.3 above, illustrates clearly that as many as 98 out of 106 respondents believe training has helped in improving their performance, while 8 respondents think that training has not contributed to their performance. Their reason being the environment within which they find themselves does not give them the chance to perform. The HR and General Managers were further asked areas where training has helped increased performance. Customer service and increased job satisfaction among other areas were mentioned. Despite the challenges they still have with their service delivery and complaints from customers, they believed employees on the average have performed well due to investments in training.

The ultimate goal for any training is to effect change in attitude and behaviour. McNamara (2008) and other writers argue that training increases employees capacity to adopt new technologies and methods and also ensure that employees have the basic skills to work with new technology. Responses received confirms that training has increases the capacity of employees in handling certain difficult tasks like customer complaints handling among others.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This part of the thesis deals with the summary of findings of the study. It is followed by conclusions drawn, and recommendations based on findings of the study.

5.1 Summary of findings

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the effect of training practices on employee skill development. Training has been touted as one of the essential activities organisations undertake to equip the skills of its employees in order to enhance performance and increase productivity, motivates staff and also serves as competitive advantage. The study was conducted to find answers to whether there exists training policy in ECG.

5.1.1 The training and development policy at ECG

The findings revealed that ECG has a training policy document that sets out the company's general guide on training and development of employees in the company. However, the training and development policy was found from the study not to be accessible to employees and even management of ECG, Ashanti East Region. This to a larger extent makes the existence of the policy irrelevant because if employees cannot access the policy to take advantage of it, then the existence of the policy is of no use.

5.1.2 Training and development practices

Armstrong, M. (2006) has defined training as a planned and systematic modification of behaviour through learning events, programmes and instruction, which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively. Effective training therefore demand systematic occurrence of series of activities in a coherent manner. The study revealed that some of the practices if training are not followed when it comes to training in ECG. Majority of the respondents from study revealed that they have not participated in training need identification exercise before they have participated in series of training programmes. This was directly related to their selection to a training programme. It was found from the study that most trainees are selected by management without following any scientific process.

5.1.3 Effect of training on skill development and performance

On the effect of training on developing the skills of employees of ECG, the study found a positive effect on skill development as a result of training. Most respondents indicated that their competence and skill level has improved as a result of training gained at ECG. Management indicated areas such as complaint management, communication skills, team work among other areas as where there has been improvement in skill development. Directly linked to improved skills and competencies is performance. The study found that the transfer of skills acquired through training has improved employee performance at ECG. Both management and staff agreed that employees' performance has increased as a result of the training activities they have participated. Management even on their part gave examples as

productivity, customer care among other areas as areas where performance has increased.

5.2 Conclusion

On the whole, the study sought to investigate the impact of training practices on employee skill development in ECG, Ashanti East Region. The study has established that ECG has policy on training and development; however, it was not accessible to most of the employees in the company as indicated in the study. The effectiveness of the training practices can be described as average as the company need to improve on a number of areas such as training need identification, mode of selection of trainees. The study established that employees' skills and competencies have improved through training despite some of the challenges the company seemed to face in its training processes. Both employees and management were convinced that training has contributed positively to their performance.

ECG was found to face certain challenges. While the awareness level on the existence of the policy was very high, accessibility to the policy was very low, even management confirmed this situation and when the researcher requested for a copy, it was not readily available in the region. Training practices at ECG was found to be haphazard even though management was getting the needed results in terms of skill development and increase in performance.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations have been made:

5.3.1 Communication of the training and development policy at ECG

The study found out that there exist a training policy at ECG, however, it was inaccessible to both staff and management. It is therefore recommended that the training policy should be circulated in all ECG operational areas and offices to enable employees of the company know the contents. This will help employees take advantage of the contents of the policy and also guide managers in the regions and districts in the implementation of the policy.

5.3.2 Unsystematic training practices at ECG

The study revealed that training at ECG to some extent is not systematic. This is because some of the due process involved in training is not adhered to. It appears that training programmes are organised based only on the organisational needs. Again selection of trainees is not scientific in the sense that no training need analysis is done before individuals are selected for training.

Therefore it is recommended that management should as much as possible undertake training need identification exercise at least once in a year as it is the first activity in any training programme. Management should make the selection of trainees more scientific taking into consideration both the employee and company needs as this will reduce abuse of the process.

5.3.3 Forms of training

The study revealed that ECG has adopted more of off-the-job training as main form of training. This is shown in the responses received from the questionnaires administered as majority of the respondents indicated that seminars were the main form of training they have participated in at ECG.

It has been argued in many writings that on-the-job form of training is more efficient in terms of skill acquisition and transfer of the skills to the job. It is therefore recommended that management should adopt more of on-the-job training like mentoring, learning by doing, job rotation among others especially for the technical and field workers.

5.4 Suggestions for further research

It is suggested that future research be undertaken to expand this study to a larger variety of organisations. With such a bigger sample size a clearer understanding of training and its impact on skills can be assessed.

Again, future research can delve into the various forms of training thus; on-the-job and off-the-job training and its impact on skill acquisition. Such research will bring to bear the known and hidden merits and demerits of the various forms of training to the individual and organisation at large.

Also, it is suggested that future research focus on return on investments. This is because organisations spent huge sums of money and time on the training of its employees yet the performance does not meet customers demand. Such research will

therefore measure organisations investment in training and its impact on performance from the customers' point of view.

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Appendix 1



**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGERIAL SCIENCES
KWAME NKRUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
KUMASI**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR FRONT LINE STAFF

This questionnaire has been designed to solicit information purely for academic purposes. This is to enable the researcher KWAME KYERETWIE a final year student of the School of Business, College of Arts and Social Sciences of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, complete his thesis on the topic; **‘An assessment of the effect of training practices on employee skill development: a case study of ECG Ashanti east region’**, in pursuance of Master of Business Administration degree.

The questionnaires are completely anonymous. Confidentiality is assured. For the research to yield valid results, it is important that you answer all the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible *by ticking (✓) or writing in the appropriate spaces provided*. The answers must reflect your own opinion and perception. Please answer all the questions and statements.

Should you want to seek further clarification on anything relating to this questionnaire, do not hesitate to contact me on 0266600101. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

SECTION A: EMPLOYEE BIO DATA

Please tick (✓) or write in the appropriate spaces provided.

i. Gender					Male	Female
					()	()
ii. What is your age in years?	18 – 25yrs	26 – 35yrs	36yrs – 45yrs	46yrs – 55yrs	Above 56yrs	
	()	()	()	()	()	
iii. What is your highest level of formal education?			Junior High School			()
			Senior High School			()
			Advance Level			()
			Higher National Diploma			()
			First Degree			()
			Masters Degree			()
			Other (please specify).....			

SECTION B: EMPLOYMENT DETAILS

Please tick (✓) or write in the appropriate spaces provided.

iv. Name of Department /Section						
v. Job title						
vi. Are you a Senior staff or Junior staff?						
vii. What is your employment status?					Temporal	Permanent
					()	()
viii. How long have you worked with ECG	1-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16-20yrs	21-25yrs	25 yrs plus
	()	()	()	()	()	()

SECTION C: TRAINING ACTIVITIES AT THE WORKPLACE

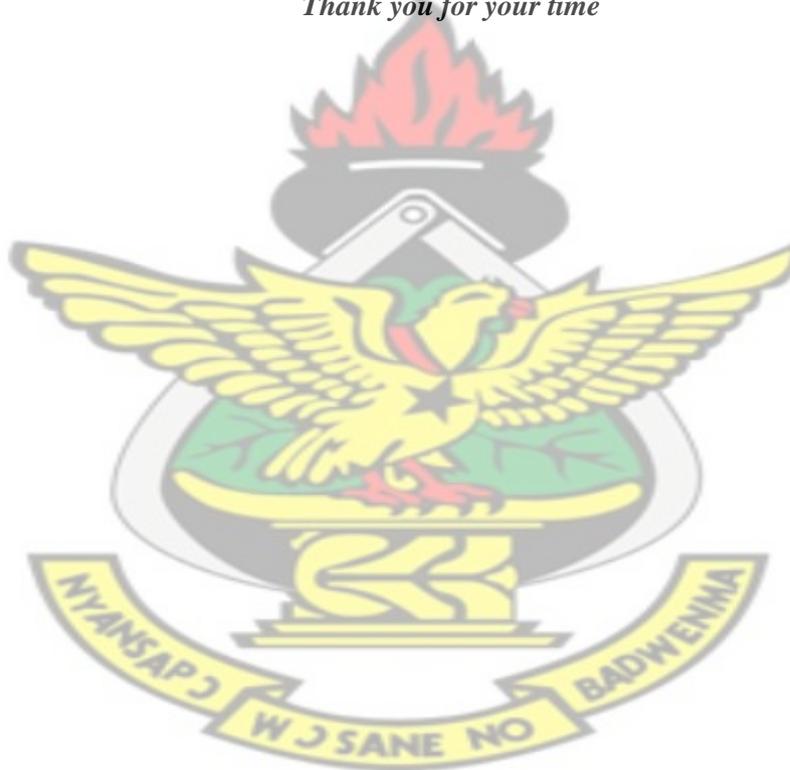
Please tick (✓) or write in the appropriate spaces provided.

1. Does ECG have a policy on training and development?	Yes	()		
	No	()		
2. If your answer to item (1) is 'Yes', is the training policy document assessable to all employees?	Yes	()		
	No	()		
3. If your answer to question (1) is 'No', why?				
4. I have attended training and development courses and workshops since I joined ECG.	Agree strongly	()		
	Agree	()		
	Disagree strongly	()		
	Disagree	()		
5. If your answer to item (4) is YES, how long ago?	1-6 months	7-12 months	1-3 yrs	4 yrs plus
	()	()	()	()
6. How many times have you had training, since you joined ECG?	Once	Twice	Several times	Never
	()	()	()	()

7. Have you ever participated in Training Needs identification at ECG?	Yes	No		
	()	()		
8. Have you ever been selected for a training programme at ECG before?	()	()		
9. How were you selected for the training programme?	By management	Through Performance Appraisal	Through Training Need Analysis	No Idea
	()	()	()	()
10. The objectives of the training were clearly stated.	Agree strongly	()		
	Agree	()		
	Disagree strongly	()		
	Disagree	()		
11. If you answered 'Yes' to item 10, what were some of the objectives?	To help improve performance	()		
	To improve employees' competencies	()		
	Other (please specify).....			
12. What form does training at ECG normally take?	Seminar	On-the-job training	Understudying training	Formal lectures
	()	()	()	()
13. Is training evaluated after its completion?	Yes	No		
	()	()		
14. If you answered YES to item 13, how was it done?	Oral Assessment	Written Assessment		
	()	()		

15. In your opinion, do you think training at ECG is planned and systematic?	Yes	No
	()	()
16. Training has improved my competency and skill level at ECG.	Agree strongly	()
	Agree	()
	Disagree strongly	()
	disagree	()
17. Are you able to apply the skills and knowledge that you have acquired to your job schedule?	Yes	No
	()	()
18. If your answer to item (17) is 'Yes', has training helped in improving your performance?	()	()
19. If your answer to item (17) is 'No', why?		
.....		
.....		
.....		

Thank you for your time



Appendix 2



**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGERIAL SCIENCES
KWAME NKURUMAH UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY
KUMASI**

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MANAGEMENT STAFF

This questionnaire has been designed to solicit information purely for academic purposes. This is to enable the researcher KWAME KYERETWIE a final year student of the School of Business, College of Arts and Social Sciences of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, complete his thesis on the topic; AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECT OF TRAINING PRACTICES ON EMPLOYEE SKILL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ECG ASHANTI EAST REGION, in pursuance of Master of Business Administration degree.

The questionnaires are completely anonymous. Confidentiality is assured. For the research to yield valid results, it is important that you answer all the questions as honestly and truthfully as possible *by ticking (✓) or writing in the appropriate spaces provided*. The answers must reflect your own opinion and perception. Please answer all the questions and statements.

Should you want to seek further clarification on anything relating to this questionnaire, do not hesitate to contact me on 0266600101. Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study.

Respondents' Profile

I. Gender	Male		Female		
	()		()		
II. Rank					
III. Department					
IV. How long have you worked with ECG?	18-25 yrs	26-35 yrs	36-45 yrs	46-55 yrs	56 yrs and above
	()	()	()	()	()

Training Activities at the Workplace

1. Does Electricity Company of Ghana have a policy on training?	Yes	()
	No	()
2. If your answer to item (1) is 'Yes', is the training policy document accessible to all employees?	Yes	()
	No	()
3. Training programmes are designed and developed based on the analysis of performance needs and assessment of employees and ECG	Agree strongly	()
	Agree	()
	Disagree strongly	()
	disagree	()
4. Which of the following training implementation methods is used by ECG?	In-house	()
	Out-sourced	()
	Both in-house and out-sourced	()
5. How often are employees at ECG sent on training?	Quarterly	()
	Twice in a year	()
	Once in a Year	()
	Rarely	()
6. How are employees selected for training at ECG?		
7. Who qualifies for training at ECG?		
8. Are there procedures for ascertaining training effectiveness on skill development?	Yes	()
	No	()
9. If your answer to item (8) is 'Yes', state how you ascertain the effectiveness of training on skill development		
10. How do you conduct training need analysis at ECG?		
11. What method(s) of training do you use at ECG?		

12. What reason(s) account for the choice of the methods mentioned in 12?	
.....	
13. Do you evaluate training programmes at ECG?	Yes ()
	No ()
14. How is the evaluation of training programmes at ECG done?	
.....	

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15. Training and development programmes at ECG have improved the skills and performance of employees	Agree strongly	()			
	Agree	()			
	Disagree strongly	()			
	disagree	()			
16. To what extent has training at ECG improved the performance of employees in each of the areas below?					
Performance area	No improvement	Fairly good	good	Very good	better
Productivity	()	()	()	()	()
Customer service	()	()	()	()	()
Low customer complaints	()	()	()	()	()
Increased job satisfaction	()	()	()	()	()
Coping with internal and external environmental challenges	()	()	()	()	()
17. To what extent has training at ECG improved the skill development of employees in each of the areas below?					
Area of skill development	No improvement	Fairly good	good	Very good	better
Team work	()	()	()	()	()
Complaints management	()	()	()	()	()
Judgement and decision making	()	()	()	()	()
Communication skills	()	()	()	()	()
Interpersonal relationship	()	()	()	()	()

Thank you for your co-operation