

An Evaluation of the Effects of Training on Employee Job Performance: Ghana Ministry of Trade and Industry Employees in Retrospect

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Abstract

Training undoubtedly is a costly but necessary practice that can guarantee effectiveness and efficiency in operation of all incorporated and unincorporated entities. The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) in Ghana saw the importance of training and has put in place modalities that can help exposed its employees to training activities of all kind. This study was set out to investigate the existence of training programmes and how training correlate with performance. With a sample of 40 (66%) out of a population of 61 staff from the northern sector of Ghana, it was established that training programmes conducted by MoTI is frequent, rated as very good in quality, relevant to the needs of the employees and highly correlated to increase in employee performance with a correlation coefficient of 0.84. However, the major challenge experienced in the delivery of its training programmes is inadequate budgetary allocations for training. It is recommended that MoTI should intensify its training programmes and seek more funding from both local and its international beneficiaries to meet the huge funding requirement for its training needs.

Key Words: Evaluation, Training, Effects, Job performance, Effectiveness, Employees,

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I. Introduction

Undoubtedly, governmental and non-governmental organisations worldwide are confronted with increasing competition in service delivery to their clients due to globalization, changes in technology, political and socio-economic complexities of the environments (Evans, Pucik & Barsoux, 2002) and serves as a prompter to these organisations to sharpen the skills of their employees through training. Training which is noted by Issahaku (2020) as a systematic process of acquiring knowledge, skills and attitudes that collectively lend credence to enhancing performance in some specific environments is necessary to help sharpen the skill of employees. Training ultimately remains the surest way among the ways to prepare employees to adjust to the increasing demand on them to enhance their job performance. Employees should be trained and developed to meet the desired expectation of the organisation (Martini, Rahyuda, Sintaasih, & Piartrini, 2018; Issahaku, Dramani & Paaga 2014), because human resources are the intellectual property of the firm that is capable of helping the organisation to gain sustained competitive advantage (Johnson et al., 2005) and training and development helps to make employees more competent on the job, use resources judiciously to benefit the organisation, and the focus is towards enhancing quality, minimising cost and enhancing performance (Younas, Farooq, Khalil-Ur-Rehman & Zreen, 2018; Issahaku, Dramanu & Paaga 2014; Ratnah, Tawe, Akbar & Rakib, 2018). Training modifies behaviours through learning, (Armstrong 2001), influenced by education, instructions, development and a planned process. Training need not be limited strictly to a formal activity, however, if training is not formal, it should be systematic if it is informal. Mindfully, training for public sector employees must be planned and systematically designed in order to facilitate enhanced level of skill, knowledge and capabilities deemed necessary and relevant for the performance of assigned work effectively and efficiently. Training as a systematic process should be considered as attitude, knowledge, skill and behaviour modifier which should be executed through a learning process which could be formal or informal. These attitude, knowledge, skill and behaviour as modified should lead the system and individual concerned to experience positive change in performance in activities or series of job activities assigned them. This explains

why Corporations of all sizes and types are consciously designing and providing different training programmes to meet employees knowledge, skills, behavioural and attitudinal change needs which the Ministry of Trade is no exception.

Once an employee is knowledgeable and skillful on his job, he/she needs to build confidence and the level of morale will be high and this has the tendency of improving performance. Traditional training model has a tendency of emphasising and focusing on subject-specific knowledge requirement instead of trying to build fundamental learning abilities. Training, which is an organised activity has the aim of imparting information and instruction to the recipients to help improve performance and this directly help job holders attain the required level of knowledge and skill. Employees in most service organisations requires training in group dynamics, interpersonal relations, right office space attitude and systems thinking or conceptual skills to facilitate the understanding of how the various components of their organisation fit together and influences each other.

1.1 Concept of Employee Performance

From the behavioural approach perspective, employee performance represents the quantity or quality of work done, basically, some products produced or services provided by someone doing what is assigned him/her, (Martini, Rahyuda, Sintaasih, & Piartirini 2018). To Rubindra and Lalatendu (2017), and Oluwakemi & Olanrewaju (2014), employee performance is what employees do or do not do. Employee job performance is the degree to which an individual employee on duty executes a particular role or responsibility, in line with certain specified standards of performance. Alternatively, it is the ability of the employee to combine skillfully appropriate behaviour towards the achievement of organisational strategically determined goals and objectives (Oluwakemi & Olanrewaju 2014; Olaniyan, 1999). Performance could be represented by what employee achieved or did not achieve. This is an indication that the employee performance could be positive or negative, productive or counterproductive and acceptable or unacceptable while Sedarmayanti (2007) viewed employee performance as the result of employee work guided by the management process or the organisation structure, system and procedure as a whole. Performance results should be capable of being shown as evidence in concrete terms and can be measured appropriately. Performance indicators can comprise task performance, adaptive performance and contextual performance (Tabiu et al., 2016; Rubindra & Lalatendu, 2017; Lu & Lin, 2011). Viswesvaran and Ones, (2000); Rotundo & Sackett, (2002) suggests that factors influencing employee performance are categorised into three, being; task performance - employee behaviour that directly contributes to producing goods and services, organisational citizenship performance - employee behaviour that helps others and creates a positive work environment and counterproductive performance - employee behaviour that is harmful to the organisation while Sundi, (2015); Gomes, Faustino and Cardoso (2003) asserts that employee job performance comprises the quality and quantity of work, timeliness of work, job autonomy, individual relationships, job knowledge, cooperative, dependability, initiative and personal qualities. To Mangkunegara and Miftahuddin, (2016) employee performance indicators comprise; absence, target of work, responsibility, initiative and teamwork. Employee performance is influenced by many factors both from internal and external, where internal factors includes but not limited to employee work competency, work commitment, job satisfaction, attachment, work culture, while external factors also include organisation structure and system, policies, procedures, communication channels, supervision, pay and incentives system, working condition, occupational safety and health system and leadership style.

II. Statement of the Problem

Documentary evidence indicates that there is low employee performance in developing countries. Armstrong (2001) recognises that staff training is critical in the achievement of organisational goals and objectives. This notion of low performance of employees in developing countries is more endemic in public sector organisations where remuneration is from the public purse. Training activities therefore serves as an attempt to stimulate workforce involvement with a view of enhancing job performance. Human resource management has its primary objective of seeking to create a situation where the hidden potential of the employees can be unearthed. It also encourages employees to be committed at all levels to ensure that the success of the organisation is secured and this can be done through training. Asare-Bediako (2002) posits that trainees need to acquire new knowledge, strengthen their skills and gain new behavioural attitudes that will enable them to enhance on job performance. This is an indication that any effort to evaluate the training effort of an organisation should seek to explain how training contributes to the bottom line. Undoubtedly, training turn to have positive effect on competitiveness, economic viability and job performance (Asare-Bediako, 2002). Empirical evidence exist that; the effectiveness of training on job performance of In-Flight attendants in Kenya Airways established that employees desired to be consulted in decision making with regards to their personal development (Asare-Bediako 2002); the correlation between training activities and job performance have a significant effect on performance (Issahaku 2020; Issahaku, Dramanu & Paaga 2014; Gakuru 2006); planned and systematically designed training produced higher results than unplanned and non-systematically designed

training (Issahaku 2020; Gakuru 2006); staff training practices are put together to guard employees' acquired soft and cognitive skills (Issahaku 2020) training aid trainees improve their skills, competencies, behaviour, knowledge and attitudes geared towards improved performance (Issahaku, Obeng & Yeboah 2021; Nguku 2006), and training enable the acquisition of the best way of utilizing knowledge and skill (Issahaku, Obeng & Yeboah 2021; Rahman et al. 2018; Salas et al., 2006). In Ghana, studies report indicated positive match between training and employee job performance, even though the training programmes and their related activities are not carried out frequently (Issahaku, 2020, Issahaku, Dramanu & Paaga, 2014; Boadu, Dwomofokuo, Boakye & Kwaning, 2014).

Presently, there is little empirical evidence of the effects of training on employees' job performance in the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Ghana. Meanwhile, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has the highest number of training programmes for its staff among the numerous Ministries in Ghana. Little literature also exists on the effects of training on state entities, especially the government Ministries, and training effectiveness has become suspect, due to political meddling and weak perception that political appointees show lack of interest in training. This weak perception of political appointees who are mostly in the various Ministries is based on the belief that the employees leave with the government in power and may not get an opportunity to stay and apply the knowledge acquired during their tenure in the Ministries. MoTI is also the Ministry with the highest donor support for training of its staff both home and abroad, hence, the need to explore the effects of training on employee performance in the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

To find understanding and achieve the aim of this study of ascertaining the effects of training on employee's performance, the general objective of exploring the effects of employee training on job performance was adopted. To realise the main objective, specific objectives were derived to help achieve the general objective. Specifically, this study sought to: assess the MoTI policies on staff training; determine the types of training programmes available to employees of MoTI; examine the effects of training of MoTI employees' job performance and to examine the challenges associated with MoTI training of its employees.

III. Research Methodology

To make a holistic exploration of the subject under study, the descriptive case study approach was adopted by the researchers. This approach made room for in-depth investigation using multiple sources of evidence within actual situation (Yin, 2005). The descriptive case design provided a systematic, accurate and precise account of events with the number of times training occurs for employees. Facts, opinions, attitudes and perceptions were also sought using the descriptive case approach. This serves the interest of this research since training is about different opinions, attitudes and perceptions of individuals and groups. Data collected by this design also represent actual field conditions creating a room to help answer questions analytically because it has to do with describing, recording, analysing and interpreting situations in manner they are presented.

For the population of the study, the total number of staff working at the Ministry of Trade and Industry and its departments and agencies in the selected areas for this study - Northern, Upper East and Upper West - was considered. Information was sought from the records of the Human Resource Directorate and 61 staff were identified as the study population. To Singh and Masuku (2014), sample size makes possible the generalisation of the results, hence, it is considered an important feature of any investigation. This is aimed at making inferences about the population from the sample. In general, the sample size used in a study is determined based on the cost of data collection, and based on sufficient statistical power of the researcher (Singh & Masuku, 2012). The researchers decided to use more than half of the population as the sample. More than half of the population will give strong evidence to generalise the findings and results of the study. Hence, 66% of the population was drawn from the population (61 staff) to constitute the sample for this study which gave a sample size of 40 respondents. Purposive and quota sampling techniques were used to determine the appropriate sample relevant for this study. Quota sampling method was deployed to identify and select relevant persons from departments, agencies and units of the Ministry. A purposive sampling technique was also used on Directors of the Departments and Agencies under the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The reason is that the determination of training programmes is always undertaken by these key officers.

IV. Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

Data gathered were analysed using descriptive statistics and results presented using bar charts and data table in a very simplified manner to facilitate comprehensive understanding of all possible readers and potential users of this study. The presentation followed the order of the specific objectives outlined for this research study.

4.1 Types of Employee Training Programmes

Interview with the Head of Human Resource Unit indicate that training was given to staff anytime there is a change in technology. Training of this nature are designed to help employees acquire and possess the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to handle the new work processes. It was gathered that selection for

training is based on skill gaps identified. As a result, the objective for training is clearly to fill a skill gap or upon the introduce of new technology, to equip staff with the requisite knowledge to cope with new processes and procedures to perform their duties. The main training programmes indicated were foreign training, coaching/mentoring, job rotation, off-the-shelf and further studies for selected employees which is dependent on the knowledge and skills gap identified at the specific time. All the respondents interviewed indicated that they had received at least two different types of training in the areas of communication skills, proposal and report writing skills, data management, monitoring and evaluation skills, mentorship and coaching skills, stress and interpersonal conflict management skills.

In Figure 1, majority of the respondents, about 93% have been trained on stress and interpersonal conflict management, about 90% trained on communication skills, about 88% trained on mentorship and coaching, about 75% received training on proposal and report writing skills and about 60% received training on data management, monitoring and evaluation skills. Each of these mentioned training has independent objectives. This conforms with Kenney et al (1992) observation that organisations or entities ought to have different guides and object clauses for their training programmes which should be informed by the class or level of trainees or the employees that need to be trained. The results is an indication that MoTI is more poised in delivering on its mandate and thus, so resolved to increasing employees morale, guide employees to acquire more knowledge, and to ensure employees acceptance of change with no or minimum resistance.

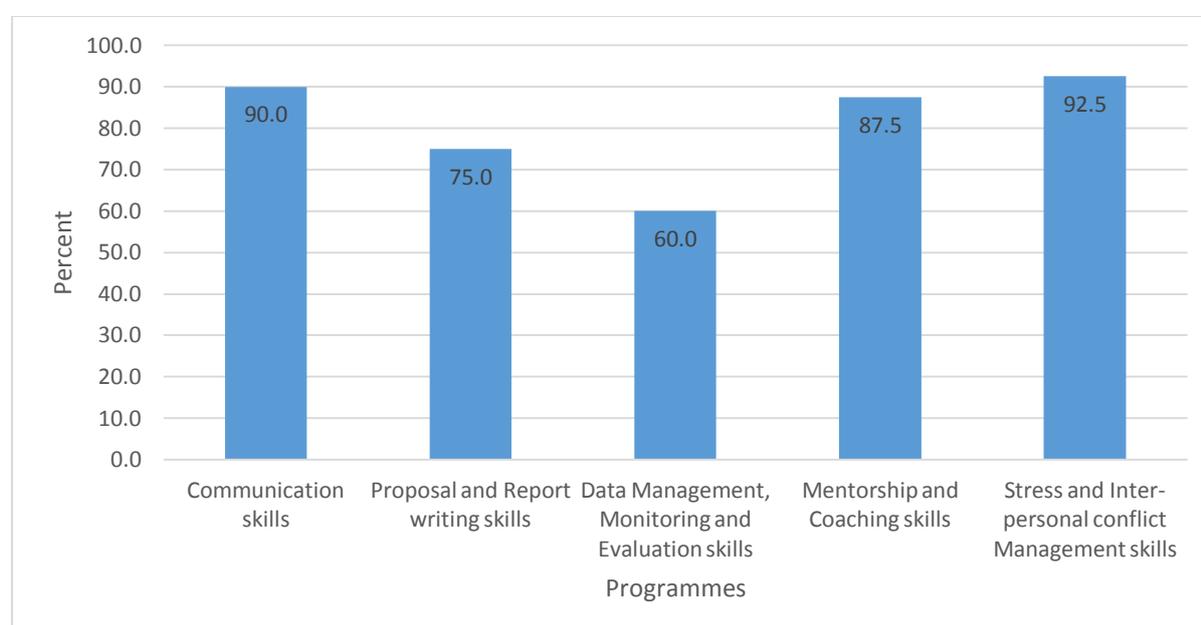


Figure 1: Types of Training
Source: Survey Data, 2020.- Multiple responses

4.2 Frequency of Training

Through interview, effort was made to establish from the respondents the frequency of training. It is expected that knowledge of the frequency of training would serve as a guide to understand what effect that is likely to have on the performance of the employees. In view of this, the respondents were quizzed on the number of times various training programmes were made assessable to them. From 1 to 5, where 1 is an indication of Not Frequent, 2 an indication of Less Frequent, 3 being an indication of Not certain, 4 representing Frequent while 5 indicates Very Frequent in terms of the number of times employees were involved in training programme. The results as shown in Table 1 are summaries of data gathered from respondents. In accordance with the five-point Likert scale rating outlined above, a variable identified is considered significant if its mean score is equal to or exceeds 3.5. If two or more variables scores the same or equal mean, the variable with the least standard deviation will be considered as having the highest significant ranking. On the other hand, any variable with standard deviation score of less than 1.0 is an indication of consistent responses among the respondents who are selected for this study.

The results for the study based on the ranked variable was providing orientation for new employees. The Orientation variable for newly appointed employees registered a mean of about 3.6. This provided guide to researchers and thus it can be concluded that this is one of the most significant training activity carried out in the Entities, Departments, Agencies and Units of the MoTI in Ghana. The standard deviation were considered consistency among the respondents responses because the standard deviation for this activity was lower than 1.

The respondents agree with the assertion that the most frequently projected training activity provided was the provision of orientation for newly appointment employees. This is comprehensible because most Ministries have an in-house training, knowledge, style and culture necessary to getting job done. Despite the fact that most contracts awarded are documented and have a format to be followed as dictated by the Public Procurement Authority, the procedures and processes must be followed in a manner prescribed by organisations' rules, regulations, policies pace as indicated.

The second highest activity is performance appraisals with a mean score of 3.4. Even though this is considered not significant, it is one of the activities done at most of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies of government. Consistency was also seen to exist among respondents because standard deviation for this activity was recorded as lower than 1.

Table 1: Frequency of Training

	W	RII	Rank	Mean	Std. D.
Training is considered importance by employees	66.00	0.63	3	3.14	.793
There exist an operational policy on training	66.00	0.63	3	3.14	.854
Management shows committed to training	64.00	0.61	4	3.05	.740
New employees are always given Orientation	75.00	0.71	1	3.57	.811
Employee assessments are taken serious	72.00	0.69	2	3.43	.978
Job-related training is given to new employees	57.00	0.54	5	2.71	.956

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

4.3 Perception of Effectiveness of Training Programmes

The study sought to enquire on the effectiveness of the training with regard to quality of the training, relevance of the training to purpose, contribution in improving trainees' performance after the training and motivation of the training to the trainees.

4.3.1 Quality of the Training Provided

Data on the quality of the training programme is presented in Figure 2. The responses sought were categorised into four – excellent, very good, good and average – and respondents were required to select based on their perspective of the training provided. The findings clearly illustrate that, 19 respondents, representing about 48% rated the quality of training as very good. Also, 13 respondents representing about 33% indicated the quality of training as excellent while 5 respondents representing about 13% showed that the quality of all training programmes they participated in was Good. Again, only 3 respondents representing about 8% said that the quality of all training programmes they were involved in was average. The findings imply that the overall impression of respondents is that the quality of training conducted for staff of MoTI is considered above average.

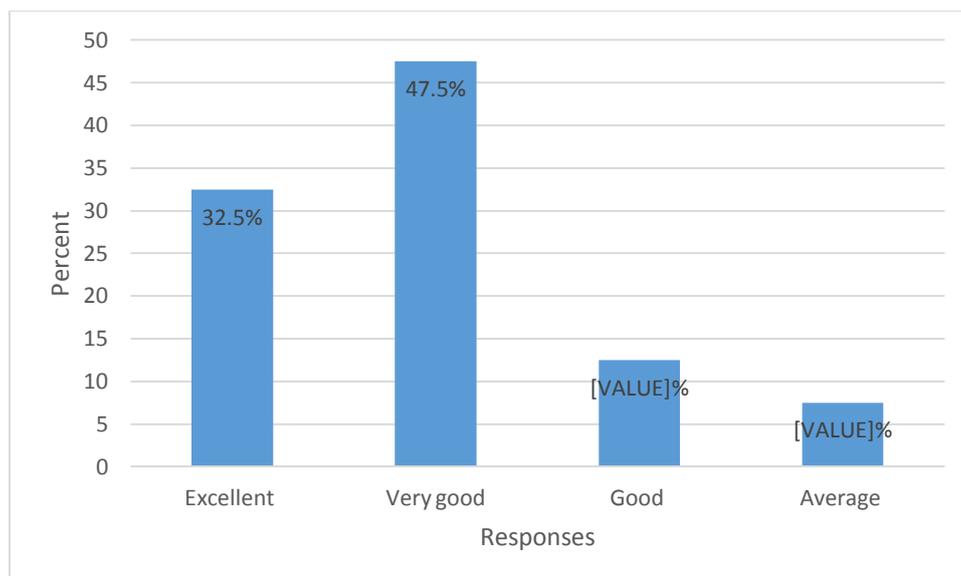


Figure 2: Rating of Quality of Training

Source: Survey Data, 2020

4.4 Training Relevance to Current Job Holders Performance

Table 2 presents results on the relevance of the training programmes to the respondents relative to their current job roles. The data showed that 33 of the respondents, representing about 83% of the total sample size agreed that the training programmes organised for them was very relevant to their current job performance needs. Whereas 5 respondents representing about 13% felt that the training was not relevant, 2 respondents representing 5% were not sure of the relevance of the training to their current roles. The result of this study concurs with Younas, Farooq, Khalil-Ur-Rehman and Zreen, (2018) that training and development leads to better and increased employee performance in the banking sector of Pakistan. Interviews with some key staff in the Human Resource Directorate of the Ministry of Trade and Industry indicates that the relevance of the training programmes were borne out of the fact that trainees were consulted and their views incorporated in the design of training objectives and training delivery mode. They also indicated that training objectives were considered based on the issues that challenge employees in the discharge of their duties. The interviewed staffs emphasised that training objectives are selected in such a way that they are able to enhance the value of current performance of employees who are nominated for the training.

Table 2: Has the Training been Relevance to your Current Job?

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	33	82.5
No	5	12.5
Uncertain	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

4.5 Effects of Training on Employee Job Performance

This sub-section presents the results on the effects of training on employees' current job performance levels.

4.5.1 Does Training Lead to Effective Employees' Job Performance?

Table 3 clearly indicates that an overwhelming majority of 37 respondents representing about 93% said that training has effects on their job performance. These results are significant since the purpose given for training is to help improve individual employees and organisational performance. The results as discussed is an indication that training programmes conducted are able to meet their envisioned objectives. The results also conform with the literature reviewed for this study which clearly outlined that training influences performance in part through employee skills improvement, which empowers them to know and carry out their job better (Issahaku, Dramanu & Paaga, 2014; Issahaku, 2020; Wright, 2001).

Table 3: Does Training Lead to Effectiveness on Employees' Job Performance?

Response	Frequency	Percent (%)
Yes	37	92.5
No	1	2.5
Not sure	2	5.0
Total	40	100.0

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

4.6 Training and Employees' Job Performance Relationship

Table 4 presents the correlation coefficient (r) of 0.84, which indicates a statistically strong, and positive relationship between employee job performance and training. The results indicate that training has a direct and significant positive relationship with employee performance ($r = 0.84, p < 0.003$). This result supports Younas, Farooq, Khalil-Ur-Rehman and Zreen, (2018), Saleem, Shahid and Naseem, (2011) and Collins and Holton (2004) finding that there exist a huge effect on employees' performance when it comes to training programmes especially when employees are conscious that training programmes provide them with better knowledge, improved skills and ideas for future career paths. The study findings indicate that the main effects of training are: 1) improves work output of staff by 69% compared to the previous outputs of 44%. This result conforms with Zreen, Aneeqa, Muhammad Farooq, and Yasmin. (2018) that there exist a close relationship between training and employee performance in Pakistan, Ghafoor, Ahmed and Aslam (2011), Hameed and Waheed (2011) findings that training and employee development leads to increase in job performance. 2) the findings also indicate that there is significant decline in interpersonal conflict because majority of the staff feel motivated to always work without unnecessary worries of resources. 3) The results show that training has increased time consciousness of the staff. Until now, most staff used to report to work late or leave their offices early than the mandated closing time. 4) The study findings indicate that there is improved work relationship among the staff at both horizontal and vertical level.

Table 5: Relationship that Exist Between Training and Employees' Job Performance

Variables	Coefficient correlation	Training	Employee job performance
Training	Pearson correlation	1	0.84
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.003
	N	40	40
Employee job performance	Pearson correlation	0.84	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.003	
	N	40	40

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

4.7 Challenges of Staff Training

From literature, evidence shows that there exist a number of training challenges that when identified with a training programme, they erode the benefits that comes with training programmes in organisations. The beneficiary of the training programme (respondents) were required to rate the level of significance these challenges were using the Likert scale. Table 6 shows the results of the data analysis on the challenges associated with training and employee performance. It is established that a criterion to be used to rate the significance of the challenge is deemed significant if it has a mean score of 3.5 or more. A critical examination of the results indicated that four (4) out of five (5) challenges identified had a mean score of above 3.5 showing how significant the challenges are to the Ministry training programmes.

The highest ranked challenge is inadequate budgetary allocations for training. The findings show that inadequate budgetary allocation for training has a mean of 4.00 and a standard deviation of 1.225 shows the extent of variability in the results per the data in table 6. This finding concurs with Clardy (2005) that states that the lack of financial resources constitute a major challenge in accessing training opportunities for employees. The relative delays in the release of budgetary allocations to the Ministry, high overhead cost and late disbursement or utilisation of budgetary allocation for training among other reasons puts a stress on the Ministry and derails its from effectively implementing its training programmes.

The next highest rated challenge is the high number of staff applications for study leave with pay and other forms of scholarship to further their education. The least ranked challenge was lack of appreciation of the role of training which recorded a mean of 3.38 and standard deviation of 1.161. This also confirms with Colquitt, LePine and Noe (2000). Furthermore, the findings indicate that inadequate external support is a big challenge in training of employees with a mean of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.077. Finally, the results of the study show that high employee mobility is a challenge with a mean score of 3.57 and a standard deviation of 1.165. This challenge is borne from the fact that training increases the employability of the trainees in their current organisation and outside his current organisation. Once employees are trained, their value is increased (Issahaku, Obeng and Yeboah, 2021; Issahaku 2020) and this facilitates and enhances their mobility within their industry and across industries.

Table 5: Challenges Affecting Staff Training

Challenges	W	RII	Rank	Mean	Std. Dev.
Inadequate budgetary allocation for training	84.00	0.80	1	4.00	1.225
High number of staff applications	78.00	0.74	2	3.71	1.102
Inadequate external support	75.00	0.71	3	3.57	1.076
Employee mobility is very high	75.00	0.71	3	3.57	1.165
Low appreciation of training contribution to human capital	71.00	0.68	5	3.38	1.161

Source: Survey Data, 2020.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study was limited to the Ministry of Trade and Industry in Ghana looking at training specifically and the benefits of training to the Ministry, how training contributes to the effectiveness of the Ministry and the possible challenges associated with training programmes. The results revealed that the Ministry has defined training programmes that are designed and geared towards contributing to employee effectiveness and the Ministry overall effectiveness in meeting its mandate locally and internationally. Training programmes are designed carefully and trainees selected carefully based on the training need assessment coupled with the Ministry's objectives.

It is recommended based on the results from this study that the Ministry should intensify its training programmes and seek more funding both from local and its international beneficiaries to meet the huge training needs of its large working population. The Ministry should also curve out a strong retention policy couple with bond policy that will ensure strict compliance when its employees benefit from training of any form. This bond system will compel staff who are trained to stay and serve the Ministry. Also, selection of staff for training should also take into consideration the willingness of trained staff to stay and work for the Ministry.

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