

## Professional Development Needs Assessment of Hotel Workers in the Ho Municipality

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### Abstract

This study assessed the Ho Municipality hotel staff's needs for professional development. Hotel employees' professional experiences, training programs put in place to further their career growth, their training needs, and operational challenges are all examined. Utilising a cross-sectional descriptive survey design, a quantitative approach was used. 200 hotel staff members were chosen at random from the Ho Municipality using the random sample technique. The instrument used to collect the data was a questionnaire. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse the data. According to the survey, most hotel staff in the area being studied had neither formal education nor industry-relevant professional training prior to working in the hostel sector. Among the training programs provided to employees were classes on how to style rooms, make beds, fold towels, and prepare different dishes. In order to ensure optimal performance, the report suggests that hoteliers arrange training for staff members who lack hotel service knowledge through the area organisation. Hotel employees should receive frequent training from Ghana Tourism Authority officials.

**Keywords:** *Assessment, Evaluation, Staff Development, Hotel Workers*

**Introduction**

Ghana's hotel industry is comparable to more general patterns seen throughout Africa. The mining, oil and gas, and tourism industries have all expanded recently, contributing to the industry's notable growth (Acquaful et al., 2016). As a result of this expansion, the number of international visitors to the nation has increased, including tourists, business colleagues, and experts. In order to meet the growing demand, new hotels are being built, and existing ones are being improved as a result of the increase in foreign visitors. In the present situation, hotels are gradually moving away from their formerly unofficial operations, which has increased competitiveness amongst industry players. However, Sarkodie and Adom (2015) emphasised that having a skilled and competent personnel is essential to succeeding in the fiercely competitive hotel sector. This emphasises how crucial it is for Ghanaian hotel companies to invest in their staff members' professional development.

The research was guided by the motivation theory proposed by Herzberg et al. (1959). This theory highlights the importance of individuals or groups acquiring training to develop their skills. Herzberg et al. (1959) aimed to clarify the factors that motivate people by acknowledging and addressing their specific needs, desires, and the objectives they strive to achieve.

The study's foundation is the idea put forth by Herzberg et al. (1959), which supports the necessity of professional development for hotel staff in the Ho Municipality's hotel business.

Hotel companies in Ghana must have qualified workers to survive and sustain a strong presence in the fiercely competitive market (Asirifi et al., 2013). Other hotel businesses must put professional development programs in place to raise the technical proficiency of their staff in order to satisfy industry demands and expectations. This is because the arrival of multinational hotel firms has raised the standards of professionalism and service in the country (Sarkodie and Adom, 2015). However, the lack of comprehensive training and development programs targeted at improving the skills of hotel employees is a significant issue in the local hotel industry, according to Acquaful et al. (2016).

Because of the frequent staff turnover in the hotel sector and the expensive expenses of establishing professional development programs, Rotich et al. (2012) state that there are significant concerns regarding who should be in

charge of employees' professional development. As a result, businesses depend on these skilled workers to meet service quality standards and achieve organisational expansion objectives, even though employees need this kind of professional development to remain competitive in the market (Perman & Mikinac, 2014). However, Horner (2018) contends that in order to increase their ability to meet industry standards and customer expectations, hotel companies should concentrate on how they can effectively manage the risks involved in investing in the professional development of their employees.

Employee professional development is rather prevalent among both large domestic hotel companies and foreign hotel organisations, according to Perman and Mikinac (2014). But for a lot of Ghanaian small and medium-sized hotel businesses, it is a big problem. Given the growing competition in the industry or the possibility of having their market share taken by big, international hotel firms, Sarkodie and Adom (2015) proposed that professional development for staff members has become crucial for local hotel businesses. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the small and medium-sized domestic hotel businesses to improve the professional growth of their employees. But according to Acquaful et al. (2016), determining the professional development needs of employees in small- to medium-sized hotel enterprises is a significant difficulty because of their varied backgrounds.

Business organisations must adopt a variety of professional development strategies because no single strategy to employee professional development is effective for all employees, according to Acquaful et al. (2016). Employers should provide a range of standard workshops, seminars, and workshops for employees to select from (Horner et al., 2018). Therefore, in order to balance motivation and activity, according to Nischithaa and Narasimha (2014), staff development initiatives ought to provide opportunities for involvement.

A wide range of facilitated learning opportunities are covered by the professional development program, including conferences, skill-building workshops, college degrees, organised, standardised subject seminars offered during in-service days or training sessions, and casual conversations with coworkers about job operations that are incorporated into daily tasks (Desimone & Garet, 2015). Consequently, numerous organisations are implementing professional development initiatives to cater to the diverse demands, abilities, and knowledge of their workforce.

One strategy to create a workforce that is more adaptable in light of new developments in technology or industry trends is through training (Otoo & Isaac, 2018). Additionally, according to Abdul et al. (2011), training is any procedure or activity meant to enhance a worker's abilities, dispositions, comprehensions, or performance in their current or future roles. Usually, the goal of training programs is to increase the efficiency of an organization's entire staff. It is therefore the structure that, in theory, satisfies organisational goals while permitting personal development. Employee development and professional progress are the main focal points, and as such, a lot of emphasis is placed on enhancing individuals' abilities and potential (Kennedy, 2016). Developing skills and knowledge through training is a management technique that can enhance employee performance, effectiveness, and results—and ultimately, those of an organisation (Chu et al., 2016). This approach helps employees to enhance their skills and competencies to meet the need of the organisation and customers.

Training activities include preparing both on and off the job. Coworkers and the immediate superior provide on-the-job training. It can be informal or formal, and it usually involves teaching the worker the best ways to do the task (Singh et al., 2013). On the job training offers the avenue for major benefit to the worker the opportunity for easy teaching Without the inefficiencies of trial and error, a staff member has the opportunity to do a work correctly (Nischithaa and Narasimha, 2014). On the other hand, off-the-job training takes place somewhere other than the workplace. According to Acquaful et al. (2016), it is frequently employed when individuals require instruction in non-technical subjects or activities including leadership, motivation, and effective communication. The best people to oversee these learning domains are trainers who instruct both theory and practice.

Given the importance of professional development for boosting organisational growth and competitiveness, identifying the traits that contribute to successful staff development is just as important as the process itself (Timperley, 2011). Shaffer and Thomas-Brown (2015) asserted that employees have the greatest influence on organisational growth and performance, creating effective professional development for them is a positive step. According to Templeton and Tremont (2014), effective and thorough professional development has been shown to improve employees' knowledge and alter organisational

procedures. Good professional development is ensured by many qualities, including coherence, length, partnership, job-embedded, active learning, and content focus.

Although the hotel industry acknowledges that educational institutions are performing well in teaching a variety of professionals for the business, there are a number of issues and variables affecting the professional growth of those employed in the sector (Acquaful et al., 2016). Adler and Rigg (2012) claim that most providers teach the incorrect people in order to obtain a training subsidy because they lack sufficient and trustworthy instructions. Industry training would not address the problem of training and skill gaps, despite the fact that it might boost worker productivity and professionalise the sector (Bunakov et al., 2015).

Employee preparedness must be combined with other retention strategies. Hotels could effect changes like internal capacity building, regional succession planning, continuous marketing and networking with territorial authorities (Asirifi et al., 2013). Horner (2018) contends that even while these programs have certain advantages, it would still be challenging to find and keep qualified workers in an environment with low unemployment. Nischithaa and Narasimha (2014) asserted that the industry ought to modernize the hiring and training process by implementing a career advancement and structure, regardless of the overall state of the economy. Therefore, the sector ought to offer workers the chance to progress their careers via training, education, apprenticeships, and traineeships. Perman and Mikinac (2014) assert that such programs will result in more motivated, skilled, and devoted workers.

Rotich et al. (2012) state that although education and training provide new employees with the abilities needed. Often lack of work ethics, attitude, enthusiasm, desire, passion and reasonable opportunities (Rotich et al., 2012). Following participation in professional development programs, this has a major impact on hotel sector staff productivity. The fact that most coaches are not from the sector and are unable to accurately assess the degree of engagement and career development path of recently employed staff members is one of the drawbacks of the current training system (Zaitseva et al., 2016). Therefore, in the absence of appropriate screening standards, unfit people may be recruited, onboarded, and trained in the field. Training employees in the hotel industry could be more feasible if it were integrated into the company's

regulatory structure, according to Sarkodie and Adom (2015). This covers areas of public responsibility such job cover enforcement, general hygiene regulations pertaining to food storage, food and beverage service, basic first aid, hazard reduction techniques, and occupational health and safety.

Professional improvement is thought to be essential for empowering employees to perform higher-order tasks, operational difficulties can occasionally compromise the programs' ability to have the required effect on workers' output (Singh et al., 2013). In light of this, Sarkodie and Adom (2015) recommended that hotel firms assess these issues in order to determine the possible effects of their professional development programme on employees and create plans to lessen or deal with them. The difficulties in obtaining scholarship for further education, lack of accreditation for certain training programs and monotony of training programme. Other recommendation from Sarkodie et al (2015) was little industry to absorb trainees to practice while under training.

According to Horner (2018), the majority of hotel staff training programs concentrate on customer service, security, and food. Management personnel typically organise these training programs internally through coaching, induction, and orientation. It is uncommon for hotel staff to have the opportunity to participate in conferences, seminars, and workshops as a means of enhancing their professional development, according to Chu et al. (2018). This is partially because these training programs are expensive. However, staff dedication to the program's principles and employee morale might occasionally be impacted by the repetition of the training sessions. Bad working relationships sometimes do bring internal issues which should be considered while planning training programme else it may negatively influence the programme.

There is very little cooperation and collaboration that has been noted in the hotel industry (Perman & Mikinac, 2014). Workers in the sector are unable to communicate and formally exchange ideas and experiences to improve their capacity to operate in the industry due to a lack of teamwork. Sarkodie and Adom (2015) claim that hotel companies' fear of poaching is the reason for their lack of industrial cooperation. While these concerns are legitimate, Zaitseva et al. (2016) noted that efforts to establish industry standards to direct workers' actions are thwarted by a lack of inter-organizational cooperation.

Employees may be able to construct their career development path around the industry with the help of such standards.

The necessity of having competent and appropriate staff in Ho Municipality's hotels may help attract more guests to the sector. The evaluation of hotel employees' demands for professional development in the Volta Region, particularly in the regional capital, has lacked empirical support. The investigation is warranted given its potential to uncover the professional development and training initiatives employees took to expand the hotel sector in Ho Municipality.

Volta Region in Ghanaian has the potential grow the hotel industry. The region has many tourist attractions, like Afadjato, Wli waterfall, Lake Volta, Keta Lagoon; tropical beaches; Likpe-Todome ancestral caves and several forest reserves for ecotourism. As a result, the hotel industry in the region has the potential to support the tourism industry. Agotime Kente celebration (Agbamevorza) and the Hogbetsotso of the Anlo people are two examples of the numerous traditional festivities. All year long, many visitors patronize the tourist sites in the region from within and without the country to enjoy the attractive areas. The hotel industry in the region also becomes a place for accommodation and food to visitors to the area. To meet the needs and service demands of visitors, hotel business has to develop in response to the abundance of tourist sites available in the region. It is impossible to overstate the importance of employees' professional growth in this endeavour. This study looks at the steps the Ho Municipality's hotel enterprises have taken to improve the professional growth of its employees.

The study's goal was to evaluate the Ho Municipality's hotel employees' needs for professional development. Investigating the professional backgrounds of hotel employees in the Ho Municipality as well as the kinds of training programs designed to advance their professional growth were the goals of the study. The professional backgrounds of the hotel employees in the Ho Municipality were one of the study's research topics. What professional training programs were put in place to increase the hotel staff's capacity, furthermore?

## **Methods**

### **Research design**

The research design used in the study was descriptive. According to Bluman (2013), a descriptive research design includes observing a subset of the population, describing the current state of affairs, examining the connections between different factors, and demonstrating the effects of the variables on one another without any interference or intervention. A cross-sectional approach was selected in order to collect data at a specific time and describe the needs for professional development of the hotel staff in the Ho Municipality.

### **The target population of the study**

Participants in the study were employees of hotels in the Ho Municipality. Among them were staff members of guesthouses, lodges, and hotels. There were 782 hotel employees in the Ho Municipality, according to the Volta regional branch of the Ghana Hotels Association.

### **Sample and sampling procedure**

Two hundred participants made up the study's sample size, which was established by examining the target population. Israel (2009) used the method  $n = N/(1 + Ne^2)$  to calculate the sample size, where  $n$  is the required sample size,  $N$  is the population (there are 782 hotel employees in the Ho Municipality), and  $e$  is the standard deviation (0.05). The formula states that, given the size of the population, the sample size should be 265. Nonetheless, two hundred hotel staff members consented to participate in the study. This indicated a 75.6% response rate. Two-star hotels make up the majority of the hotels in the Ho Municipality. More than 90% of the hotels in the Municipality were two-star enterprises, according to data from the Ghana Hotels Association's Volta Regional Branch. Because the study's sample strategy was restricted to two-star hotels, stratification was not used. Simple random selection was used to select a sample of the twenty-two-star hotels in the Municipality.

The lottery approach employed a straightforward random sampling process. The researchers were given a list of hotels in the Ho Municipality by the Ghana Hotels Association's Volta Regional Branch. The lottery method was used to write the hotel names on equal-sized pieces of paper and fold them into a tub.

To make sure they weren't in any specific order, the papers were mixed together for a while. The hotel's name and contact details were recorded, and the first draw was conducted without a substitution. Until all 20 hotels were sampled and their names were removed for ethical reasons, the procedure was repeated. The researchers planned to engage all 273 employees of the hotels in the sample in order to do a census. Two hundred (200) of them did, however, volunteer for the study. Some refused to participate, while others could not be reached because they had turned off their cell phones when the data was being collected.

### **Instrument**

A questionnaire with multiple sections served as the data gathering tool. In order to improve the abilities of hotel employees, the questionnaire considered industry training programs and professional development courses. They were closed-ended enquiries. Twenty hotel employees who were not involved in the study pre-tested the questionnaire. As part of the pre-testing process, the questions, their quantity, and their word choice were reorganised. Following the pre-test, the instrument's Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.80, indicating its reliability in gathering consistent data for the study.

### **Data collection procedure**

Google forms were utilised to gather data from the respondents for the study because some of them had hectic schedules. Google forms were used to make the data gathering process for the study more convenient. In order to collect data, the researchers arranged the sampled respondents' phone numbers and sent them Google Forms. Face-to-face interviews were used to help those who were illiterate. The researchers began by stating the background of the participants and the objective of the research. The researchers delivered an introductory letter for the data collection exercise to the respondents by email, WhatsApp, or any other electronic media that was convenient for them in an effort to reassure them utilizing Google Forms.

Prior to involving the research participants in the study, the researchers obtained their consent. In order to arrange a suitable time for the data gathering exercise, the researchers also permitted the respondents to be interviewed. Making ensuring the responders were content and at ease with the exercise was the goal. The researchers honoured the timeframes to do the interview

after the appointment time was set. The researchers posed the query and verified that the respondents had provided the right answers.

### **Ethical considerations**

Assuring respondents of their privacy and response confidentiality, as well as getting their consent before involving them in the data collection procedure, were the majority of the ethical issues brought up in the study. Therefore, neither the names of the hotels nor the personal identities of the respondents were gathered for the analysis. As part of the ethical considerations, the researchers also followed health and safety procedures to make sure that the participants in the study were not subjected to any health concerns. In order to prevent the exercise from interfering with the respondents' hectic work schedules, appointments were scheduled to be convenient for them.

### **Data analysis**

To prevent duplicate entries, unique identification numbers were assigned to the research instruments. The data was cleansed to guarantee correctness. The descriptive statistical methods that were utilised to analyse the data were pie charts, bar charts, frequencies, and percentages. These descriptive statistical tools were used to assess research objectives one and two.

## **Results**

### **Hotel employees' professional experiences**

Taking into account a number of variables, including gender, age, department of service, academic specialisation, job designation, and years of experience in the hotel business, this section provides the results of the professional backgrounds of hotel employees in the Ho Municipality., and educational attainment. The results in Table 1 show that women made up most of the respondents (61.5%), while men made up 38.5 percent.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	77	38.5
Female	123	61.5
<b>Age (years)</b>		
Below 20	23	11.5
20 – 29	72	36.0
30 – 39	61	30.5
40 – 49	27	13.5
50 and above	17	8.5

Source: Field survey (2020)

Of the respondents, 11.5% were under the age of 20, 36% were between the ages of 20 and 29, 30.5% were between the ages of 30 and 39, and 13.5% and 8.5% were between the ages of 40 and 49 and 50 and older, respectively, according to Table 1. The respondents ranged in age from 17 to 69, with 43 representing the middle age range. The findings demonstrated that individuals in the economically active age group controlled the hotel industry. With a standard deviation of 3.2, the respondents' average age was 34.7 years. According to the poll, the majority of respondents were between the ages of 20 and 39. This suggests that the hotel business appeals more to young people. In order to draw in customers, the hotel industry's fast-paced environment primarily demands young, vivacious employees that can deliver effective and efficient customer service (Rotich et al., 2012).

This section also examined the educational attainment of hotel employees in the Ho Municipality. Final figures are shown in Figure 1. A basic level of education was completed by 31.5% of respondents, senior high school (SHS) by 45%, and university education by 23.5%, according to Figure 1. According to the findings, every respondent has completed some kind of formal schooling. A question concerning the respondents' academic specialism was asked as part of the study's analysis of their educational characteristics.

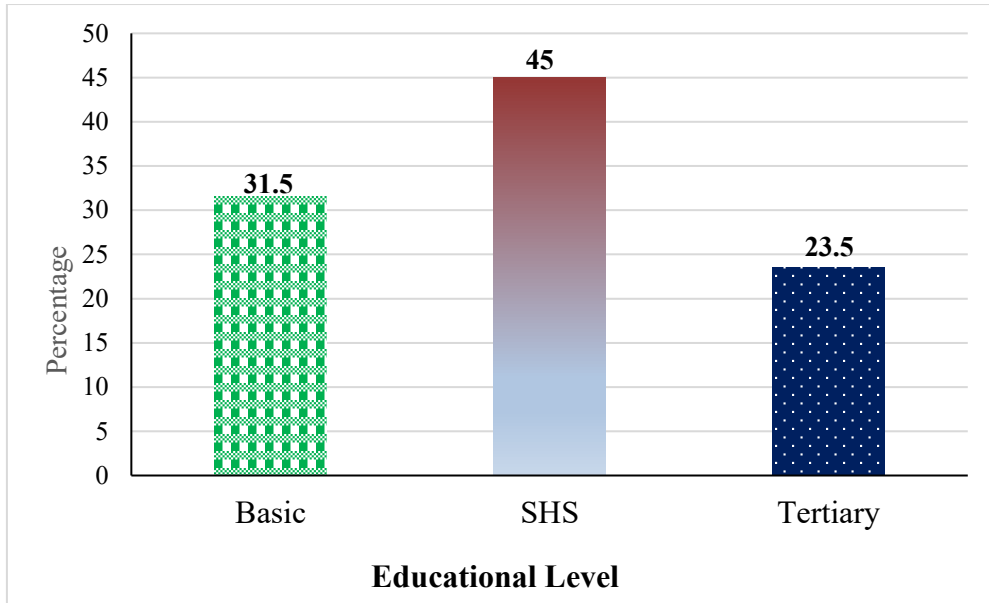


Figure 1: Education level

Source: Field survey (2020)

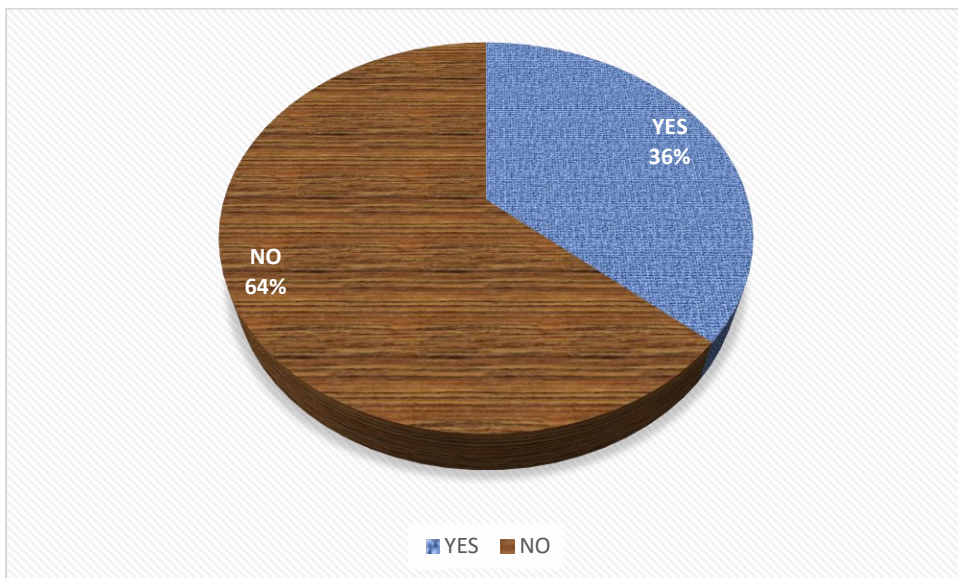


Figure 2: Academic specialisation

Source: Field survey (2020)

The pie-chart indicated that most of the respondents (64%) did not have specific academic qualifications that specialized in hotel services while 36%

of the respondents lacked academic expertise in the hospitality sector. Perman and Mikinac (2014) state that since the hospitality sector employs people from a variety of professions, the lower proportion of respondents who lacked a speciality may also have a role in the sector. The majority of academic specialisations in the hospitality sector focused on hospitality management and catering. This supports the claim made by Rotich et al. (2012) that the academic community has not given the majority of hospital industry departments adequate attention in order to support the development of employees' intellectual capacity. The different departments the respondents work within the hotel surveyed has its result presented in Table 2.

Table 1: Operational department

<b>Departments</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Administration	31	15.5
Transport	12	6.0
Safety and security	19	9.5
Technical	16	8.0
Restaurant Food and beverage	68	34.0
Sanitary	42	21.0
Others	12	6.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey (2020)

Table 2 shows that the food and beverage departments of the hotels employed 34% of the respondents, followed by the sanitary departments (21%), the administrative departments (15.5%), and the safety and security departments (9.5%). The results showed that food and beverage services accounted for a significant portion of the hotels. This was due to the fact that almost all hotels featured a food and beverage section that catered to guests. This illustrates the significance of catering for hotel services. Another item discussed in this area was having any necessary professional training in the hospitality industry before entering the business. This was essential for assessing the level of skill of individuals employed in the hotel industry.

### Training programmes organised for hotel workers

The study's second objective was to examine the training programs intended to promote hotel staff members' professional development in the Ho Municipality. The type of training programs the employees had participated in, how the employer assessed the employees' training needs, the lessons learnt from the training programs, and the extent to which the training programs had advanced the professional development of hotel industry employees were among the many factors considered in this section. Table 3 displays the findings.

Table 3: Responses on training programme

Training Programmes	Frequency	Percentage
Vocational skills	92	46.0
No specific skill	89	44.5
Customer service	44	22.0
Quality of service	31	15.5
Hotel administration	19	9.5
Technical	13	6.5

Source: Field survey (2020)

According to Table 3's findings, 44.5% of respondents had never taken part in any hotel staff training programs, 22% had taken part in customer service training, 15.5% in quality-of-service training, and 9.5% and 46%, respectively, had taken part in hotel administration and vocational skills training. Folding towels, decorating rooms, making beds, and cooking continental food were among the vocational talents discovered. The length of the training programs was another problem covered in this section. Table 4 presents the findings.

Table 4: Training Duration

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
in a day	18	16.2
for a week	41	36.9
for a month	30	27.0
more than a month	22	19.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Field survey (2020)

Table 4 shows that 16.2% of the participants stated that their training lasted less than a day, 36.9% completed it in a week, 27% completed it in a month, and 19.9% completed it in a few months. Of the respondents to the poll, the majority (64.9%) said that the training programs were in-house, while 35.1% said that outside facilitators or trainers performed their training sessions. On the question financing of further training in hospitality industry, the result is presented in Figure 3.

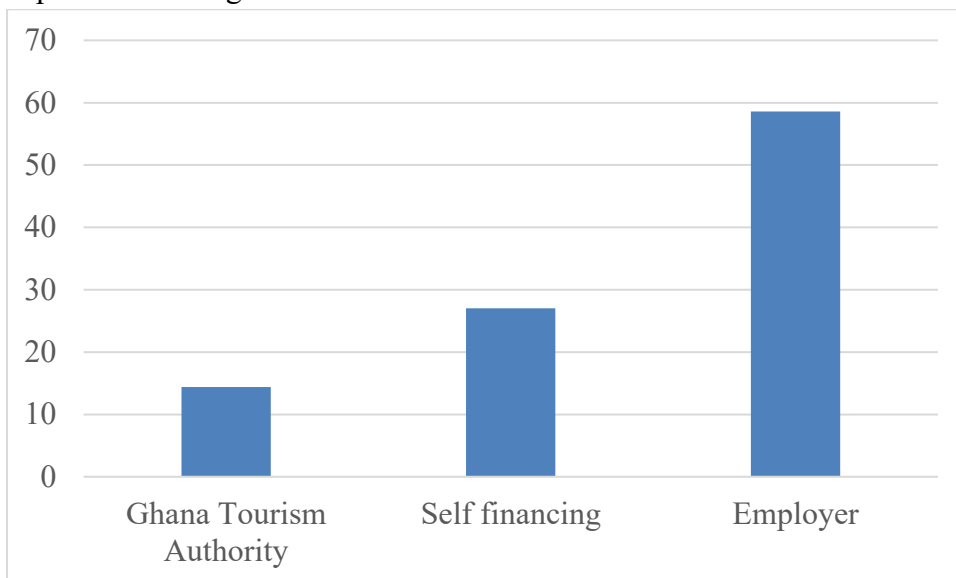


Figure 3: Funding source of training

Source: Field survey (2020)

The result in Figure 3 shows that 27% of the respondents acknowledged that they had covered the cost of their own training programs, 58.6% said their employers had covered such costs, and 14.4% said the Ghana Tourism Authority had covered those costs.

The method by which the employers determined the workers' training needs was another matter covered in this section. Table 5 presents the findings.

Table 5: Responses on the training needs respondents

<b>Approaches</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Do not know	32	28.8
Interviewing	18	16.2
upon recommendation	11	9.9
Complaints from customer	39	35.1
Personal complaints	52	46.8
Observation from Employer	71	64.0

Table 5 showed that 28.8% of respondents did not know how their employers determined their training needs, 16.2% said that their employers used interviews, 9.9% said that employee performance review recommendations were used, 35.1% said that guest complaints were used, and 46.8% and 64% said that their complaints and employers' observations were used, respectively. The respondents were asked to identify or tick the items to indicate what they had learnt from the training programs. Table 6 presents a summary of the findings.

Table 6: Lessons learnt from the training programme

<b>Lessons</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Improved ways to attend to guests	85	76.6
Improved administrative procedures	12	10.8
Enhanced store management	17	15.3
Learnt new security arrangements	11	9.9
Learnt the preparation of new cuisines	40	36.0

Table 6 revealed that while 9.9% and 36% of the respondents, respectively, learnt about new security arrangements and new cuisine preparation, the majority (76.6%) of the respondents said the training had improved their ability to serve guests, 10.8% said it had improved their administrative procedures, and 15.3% said it had improved their store management skills. The degree of satisfaction that training recipients had with the programs was another issue that was taken into consideration under this clause. Figure 4 displays the findings.

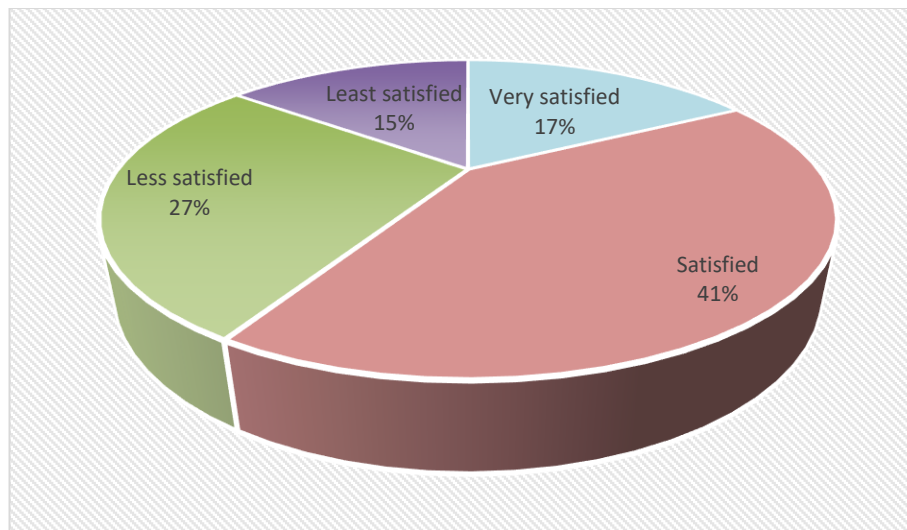


Figure 4: Satisfaction with training Programme

In order to increase the training program's effectiveness in the Ho Municipality with respect to hotel employees' professional development, respondents were asked to list the aspects of the training programs that they felt needed improvement. The results are summarized in Table 7, and Figure 5 shows that 17.1% of training recipients said they were extremely satisfied with the program, 41.4% said they were satisfied, and 27% and 14.4% said they were less and least satisfied, respectively.

Table 7: Areas for training needs

Call for training	Frequency	Percentage
Training based on workers' need	45	40.5
increase training duration	47	42.3
Training should be formal	52	46.8
Trainers should award certificates	66	59.5
Resource persons for training should come from external	30	27.0
Training should be funded by employers	25	22.5

The training needs of the participants varied as presented in Table 7. Most of the respondents (59.5%) wanted certificate to be awarded after their training

programme and the least number 25 representing 22.5% wanted the training to be funded.

## **Discussion of Results**

The study was to evaluate the needs for professional development of the hotel employees in the Ho Municipality. The findings showed that the majority of those surveyed did have experience working as hotel managers in the Ho Municipality. The age range of 20 to 39 years old was the most prevalent among the respondents' age characteristics. Being a service sector, the hotel industry needs proactive individuals to offer customers effective and efficient services. Asirifi et al. (2013) state that young people dominate the hospitality sector because they are more up to date on the newest technical developments and can offer visitors high-quality, efficient services. Younger people were more erratic in their job search, according to Acquafal et al. (2016). Accordingly, Acquafal et al. (2016) proposed that the hospitality sector facilitates young people's easy access to the workforce and uses these experiences to land jobs in other fields. Therefore, it was suggested by Acquafal et al. (2016) that the age distribution of the personnel in the hotel sector be balanced.

Additionally, the study found that over half of the participants (63.5%) had prior academic experience in the hospitality sector. According to Nischithaa and Narasimha (2014), the hotel industry has a variety of functions that draw in workers from other industries who are not directly specialized in the field. The fact that people without formal training in the field predominate in the hotel industry in the Ho Municipality lends credence to this. Thus, additional specialists were drawn to the hospitality sector by ancillary services like banking, transportation, and security. However, Perman and Mikinac (2014) asserted that professional development programs are always necessary for those from other professions who work in the hotel business in order to help them understand the sector's service values and quality requirements.

The findings demonstrated that a sizable fraction of the hotels were dedicated to food and beverage services. The significant number of employees from the food and beverage department was brought on by the necessity for a big number of workers as kitchen staff to prepare various cuisines and waiters and waitresses to serve the food to guests. Additionally, the large number of hotel

housekeeping employees demonstrated the hoteliers' primary responsibility for maintaining the cleanliness and upkeep of the establishments' common areas and facilities. Additionally, the housekeeping staff maintains the guest rooms and arranges them to appeal to visitors. Among the technical staff were carpenters, plumbers, and electricians. However, it was discovered that some of the hotels only hired technical experts when their skills were required rather than having them on staff all the time. This was done in an effort to lower the hotels' operating expenses. However, because some of the technicians might not always be available to cater to the hotels' demands, it could also cause some hassles for the guests. It was also discovered that several of the hotels hired any available technicians in town rather than having permanent specialists.

Even though such a system was effective in saving the hotels some money, it could pose a serious risk to the hotels' operations because certain employees may not fully comprehend the concepts underlying earlier work completed by others, which could result in the introduction of risks into the hotel operations. To make their hotel services a complete package and increase client comfort, several hotels, for instance, provided additional auxiliary services. The various services that the hotels provide show how much complementarity exists in the hospitality sector, as participants offer lodging, catering, and tourism services to visitors. However, Sarkodie and Adom (2015) state that hoteliers' ability to offer full hospitality services depends on both their financial and technological capabilities. To put it another way, hoteliers need to hire technical staff to handle some of these services internally and make sure they have the necessary space and amenities to do their jobs well. Nevertheless, the hotels' financial resources were primarily responsible for hiring such staff and setting up the necessary equipment and space.

The findings supported the claim made by Sarkodie and Adom (2015) that because the hospitality industry is still developing, its core services—which are offered by the majority of hospitality firms—need to be supplemented by the services of people from other professions. Before entering the hospitality industry, employees received professional training through a variety of programs, includes training programs, technical and vocational education, hospitality management, and apprenticeships. As a result, the majority of our past expertise came from managing restaurants and hotels.

The low number of workers having prior knowledge and training in hospitality services could pose a serious danger to the industry's survival and service quality, as the majority of employees in the sector require training to comprehend the profession. Furthermore, it's possible that a small percentage of the municipality's population was eager to dedicate their careers and training to the hospitality industry, given the low level of prior knowledge and training among its employees. The lack of possibilities for people to register in training programs in the hospitality industry to improve their abilities and prepare for the area is another factor.

A lot of the hotel staff were hired formally for different kind of work, majority of respondents from the other departments were recruited through the informal process. According to the study's findings, the majority of participants (68.5%) obtained their jobs through unofficial channels, such as recommendations from others or relationships with the owners. This was because many of the administrative workers had advanced academic certifications from different professionals. The identified professional were accounting, administration, hospitality and human resource management. Meanwhile majority of the employees in the other hotel sections lacked higher academic qualifications in their respective fields.

The current result asserted with the earlier study of Rotich et al. (2012) which indicated that recruiting employees through informal recruitment procedures prioritises relationships and altruistic factors over professionalism and competence, which are not scientifically proven to ensure the necessary abilities, commitment, and dedication required for high standards of service quality. Rotich et al. (2012) state that the informal hiring procedure in the hotel industry is primarily linked to the higher upfront costs of training new hires to ensure they fully comprehend the industry's principles and can deliver high-quality services that will increase the competitiveness of hospitality businesses in the sector.

The findings also demonstrated that while workers in the economically active age cohorts who were middle-aged to upper-aged were willing to stay in the industry, individuals in the lower age cohorts were hesitant to dedicate their professional careers to the hotel industry. Younger employees were therefore less inclined to dedicate their professional careers to the hotel industry. According to Horner (2018), concerns about compensation or an appropriate

human resource management system, such as a well-designed promotion system, decent working conditions, and guaranteed pension plans comparable to those in other sectors or industries, may be the cause of employees' reluctance to dedicate their professional careers to a specific industry. It is implied that the younger employees thought that opportunities in other businesses and career sectors were better than those in the hotel industry. This indicates that in order to attract and retain younger employees and support their further professional growth in the industry, hoteliers need enhance their human resource management system.

According to the findings, staff training programs mostly focused on training in customer service, hotel management, and vocational skills. According to the report, a sizable percentage (44.5%) of the hotel employees in the Ho Municipality had not taken part in any training courses to advance their careers. The sector's employees' professional growth and service quality are probably going to be impacted by this. Regular training is necessary for business organisations to help employees develop their technical and professional skills so they can provide the needed level of service quality (Abdul et al., 2011). Acquaful et al. (2016) also suggested that regular training for workers enable companies to introduce workers to new technology and emerging forms of accomplishing job duties. However, the study discovered that some of the employees had benefited from several hotel industry training programs. Regarding the vocational skills training, it was discovered that the employees were learning how to cook various dishes, make fashionable towels, arrange beds, and design rooms. Some of the respondents have the opinion that they had technical skills training from the National Vocational and Technical Institute as well as training and certification from the Electricity Company of Ghana. The investigation discovered that some hotel administrators had gone through retail management, accounting, and marketing courses as part of the hotel administration training programme.

According to the report, hotel operators trained their staff to increase their capacity for providing high-quality service by utilising both internal and external expertise. In order to preserve service quality standards, organisational managers can transfer the operational culture from seasoned employees to less seasoned ones by using internal actors to conduct training programs for staff members (Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz, 2015). However,

Capps and Crawford (2013) suggested that because in-house training programs are primarily utilised by the facilitators and do not provide certifications, employees typically do not take them seriously. However, Bautista and Ortega-Ruiz (2015) contended that when stringent policies and packages are in place, internal training programs are highly successful because the facilitators are aware of the employees' operational difficulties and shortcomings and provide training tailored to their individual problems. External training programs are primarily designed to introduce participants to new trends in quality service delivery and assist in certifying personnel for their engagement in certain job responsibilities and duties, according to Desimone and Garet (2015). It follows that the Ho Municipality's hotel employees' professional growth may be enhanced by the implementation of training programs from both internal and external sources.

The findings demonstrated the dedication of different stakeholders (employers, employees, and the Ghana Tourism Authority) to enhancing the professional abilities of hotel industry workers in order to guarantee ongoing expansion and advancement. As a result, the fact that most of them had their training programs funded by their employers showed how dedicated hoteliers were to helping employees advance their professional abilities. The results also showed that some of the staff members were committed to advancing their careers for the sake of the hotel sector. According to the report, the majority of employees who funded their own professional development programme were those that needed more certification to boost their ability or obtain official approval to carry out specific tasks and responsibilities, such as managerial and electrification duties.

The capacity needs of both employees and employers' demands for high-quality services are better met by training programs that stem from scientific processes and engagements, such as performance appraisal procedures and negotiations for each party to agree and accept the necessity of participating in specific training programs (Desimone and Garet, 2015). The findings indicated that employers used a variety of methods to determine the training requirements of employees in the hotel industry. Through the use of employee performance reviews and interviews, employers show a two-way approach by involving their employees in the decision-making process about training programs.

The findings demonstrated that every employee who took part in training programs in the industry was better equipped to deliver higher-quality services. It follows that training initiatives positively impact employees' capacity building and professional growth in the hotel sector. These demonstrates that the more training programs like these are developed for staff, the more capable they will be of providing guests with excellent service in the hotel industry. According to the research, the majority of training responders (58.5%) were satisfied with the training programs provided in the hotel business. The Ho Municipality's hotel staff will be motivated to learn a lot from the training programs due to their level of satisfaction, which will benefit their professional growth.

Most training participants in the hotel industry (59.5%) recommended that participants receive certificates from the program's organisers. To put it another way, the training recipients desired that the programs be formalised so that they could receive certificates for their involvement. Therefore, the issuance of training certificates serves as evidence of their ability to carry out certain job duties in the industry, which may allow them to advance in the field in comparison to their peers who did not take part in such exercises.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Any industry's growth and progress depend on professional development. In order to maintain the required degree of service quality, it aids in enhancing employees' technical competency in the professional methods and principles of the industry. In the fiercely competitive hotel industry, retaining the highest levels of professionalism and service quality is essential to drawing in customers and growing hotel firms' market shares. The travel and tourism industry, as well as cross-border trade between Ghana and Togo, are significantly impacted by hotel enterprises in the Ho Municipality. This brought into question the professional development of the hotel employees in the Ho Municipality, which could allow them to carry out such crucial tasks to support the growth and development of the industry. As a result, the study evaluated the Ho Municipality's hotel employees' professional development needs.

In general, the majority of employees in the Ho Municipality's hotel industry lacked academic specialism in the field and had not received any industry-

related professional training before entering the field. This was caused in part by the fact that the majority of the sector's employees interacted with one another informally through personal connections as opposed to professionally through background checks and capacity evaluations. The hotels offered training programs to their employees as part of their endeavours to enhance their professional abilities. These included instruction on designing rooms, making beds, folding towels, and preparing various meals.

Although the training programme had significant impact on the professional development of hotel employees, the study also discovered that some technical weaknesses remained among the employees. The flaws that were found were a lack of professionalism, an inability to cook several continental foods, and a lack of administrative skills., a lack of confidence in their job duties, and an inability to communicate in English and French so that they could interact with foreign guests effectively. Additionally, some employees struggled with insufficient logistics to function efficiently, a heavier task because of the small workforce, and insufficient funding for consumables.

According to the report, regular in-service training should be conducted to keep staff members informed about the best ways to serve their guests. In order for employees who have not taken part in any training programs throughout the years to stay up to date on the latest developments in hotel operations, hotel operators could also host training seminars. As more individuals in the Municipality seek hotel services, the regular training that hotel employees undergo may assist draw more guests to the establishments and maybe boost their revenue.

### **Ethical Statement**

All the respondents were provided with informed consent to participate in the study.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### Authorship Contribution Statement

Apakah: concept and design, data acquisition, drafting manuscript, funding acquisition and administration, technical or material support, supervision. Ankrah: data analysis / interpretation, funding acquisition. Ashun: drafting manuscript, critical revision of manuscript, funding acquisition and administration, technical or material support, supervision. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

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### Generative AI Statement

The authors made minimal use of the AI tool (ChatGPT), solely for the purpose of clarifying the English language.

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