

Human Resource Development (HRD) Practices and Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Competencies

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this paper is to examine the role of employee competencies on the association between human resource development practices and organizational performance. An integrated research model was developed by combining principal factors from existing literature. Data were collected through questionnaire from 800 employees and guests of the selected hotels. The validity of the model and hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The reliability and validity of the dimensions are established through confirmatory factor analysis. The results indicate that some human resource development practices impact organizational performance through their influence on employee competencies. The finding further indicated the mediating role of employee competencies on the association between human resource development practices and organizational performance. The research was undertaken in the hotel industry and the analysis based on cross-sectional data which cannot be generalized across a broader range of sectors and international environment. The findings of the study have the potential to help policy makers, stakeholders and management of hotels in espousing properly and well-articulated HRD practices which will stimulate positive behaviours in employees and impact their knowledge, skills and attitudes, and in turn increase productivity and performance. This study contributes to the human resource development literature, integrating HRD practices and employee competencies into a comprehensive research model that influences organizational performance.

Keywords: Employee competencies, HRD practices, Hotel industry, Organizational performance, SEM.

INTRODUCTION:

Human resource development thrives as an important area of research practice. HRD intent towards advancing a diversity of competence of workers and promoting a vigorous work philosophy in the organization to harness the competencies of employees and inordinately enhance organization effectiveness (Rao, 1987). HRD has progressively developed importance considering the fact that, the conventional management supposition that there existed only two essential assets, money and time is absolutely not legitimate, given that knowledge has developed into an unvaryingly imperative resource (Delahaye, 2003; Stacey, 2003). Such resources take on special relevance when dealing with labour-intensive service industries, especially, the hospitality industry, where the accomplishment of the business is contingent predominantly on the success of the synergy among the guest and the employee (Ford et al., 2012). The hospitality industry encompasses different activities and purposes, including lodging, catering, and other establishments besides hotels. However, Dittmer (2002) argued that, the hotel industry represents a key segment of the hospitality industry. Several other authors (Enz, 2009;

Lockyer, 2007; Poulston, 2008) deliberates that, the hotel industry is a people industry. They further indicated that, employees are cogitated as the focal point of the hotel industry for the reason that, they may possibly develop a dazzling image for prompt and cozy service or taint the perfect vacation reality. HRD practices are a basic factor for employees to acquire competencies that in turn significantly improve organizational functioning (Kehoe and Wright, 2013). Draganidis and Gregoris (2006) posited that competencies are a combination of tacit and explicit knowledge, behaviour and skills that gives someone the potential for effectiveness in task performance. Zhang et al. (2008) opined that, the organizational performance is the extent of success to which the organization reaches its aims. Many studies on HRD and organizational performance linkage have been conducted dealing with many different industries at the same time (e.g. Alagaraja, 2013; Alagaraja et al., 2015; Clardy, 2008; Tseng and McLean, 2008). However, Cappelli and Neumark (2001) asserted that, there is an advantage in investigating HRD within a single industry. Such a limited population, they argued ensures that measured organizational performance is comparable across observations. Despite the hotel industry's unique feature of labour intensity, only a few studies investigated the relation between HRD practices and organizational performance. Those few studies moreover, examined only a single HRD practice and organizational performance (Rahman et al., 2013; Riordan et al., 2005; Ruona and Gibson, 2004). Thus, the results of the studies might be considered as biased to some extent. Since a single practice can represent only a part of the effects of overall HRD practices, examining the relation between a single practice and company-wide organizational performance may inflate the true effects of the single practice. Therefore, this study, attempted to (1) examine the influence of various human resource development practices on employee competencies and (2) to study the role of employee competencies on the association between HRD practices and organizational performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT:

Human Resource Development Practices:

McLagan and Suhadolnik (1989) describes that, human resource development as the integrated use of training and development, career development and organizational development to improve individual and organizational effectiveness (p.1). Human resource development practices are programs which are designed to be strategically oriented to organizational process for managing the development of human resources to contribute to the overall success of the organization (Werner and DeSimone, 2006, p.26). Yuvaraj and Mulugeta (2013) contended that, HRD interventions continuously improve employees' capability and performance through the existing practices of training, career development, performance appraisal and management and organizational development component of HRD. Rao (1987) identified training and development, performance appraisal, rewards, organizational development, career development, feedback and counselling, potential development, employee involvement and job rotation as HRD practices. Therefore, for the purpose of this study the following human resource development practices are considered: training and development, performance appraisal and employee involvement.

Employee Competencies:

Boyatzis (1982) define competence as the underlying characteristic of a person that could be a motive, trait, and skill, aspect of one's self-image or social role, or a body of knowledge which he or she uses. This view appears to be supported by Bhardwaj, (2013) who contend that, competencies are a basically a mix of knowledge and skills that are needed for an effective performance. Hellriegel and Slocum (2011) identified employee's ethical competency, self- competency, diversity competency, cross country competency, team competency and change competency as the seven key competencies that affects the behaviour of individual, teams and effectiveness of an organization. Along the same lines, several authors found team competency, ethical competency, change competency, communication competency and self-competency are major competencies needed for the hospitality occupations (Hai-Yan and Baum, 2006; Jauhari, 2006). Accordingly, the following competencies are examined: self-competency, team competency, change competency, communication competency and ethical competency.

Organizational Performance:

Tomal and Jones (2015) define organizational performance as the actual results or output of an organization as measured against that organization's intended outputs. Dyer and Reeves (1995) proposed HR outcomes (turnover, absenteeism, job satisfaction), organizational outcomes (productivity, quality, service), financial accounting outcomes (ROA, profitability), and capital market outcomes, (stock price, growth, returns) as the four possible measurement for organizational performance. Several research findings in performance management are advocating an emphasis on both financial and non-financial dimensions such as

competitiveness, service quality, customer satisfaction, organizational flexibility, resource utilization, and technology (Harris and Mongiello, 2001; Atkinson and Brander-Brown, 2001). Harris and Mongiello (2001) argue that, even though a hotel is thought of in a service context, in reality it encompasses three different types of industrial activity (rooms, beverage, and food) that exhibit different business orientations. These three orientations call for a diverse set of performance indicators. Fitzgerald et al. (1991) emphasized the importance for performance measures to direct attention to such non-financial factors as service quality and customer satisfaction. Based on the literature, the following non-financial measures were used in the study, service quality and customer satisfaction.

Human Resource Development contributions to Organizational Performance:

Several practitioners and academic have advanced theories and concept in their quest to investigate and establish a synergy between human resource development and organizational performance. Prior research in human resource development has established an association between human resource development and organizational performance (Rao, 1987; Ruona and Gibson, 2004; Swanson, 2009). Alagaraja et al. (2015) identified five important approaches for examining the linkage of human resource development and organizational performance and effectiveness: best-fit model, best-fit approach, best-practice model, combination of best-fit approach and best-practice model and stake holders' perception based. Similarly, several other author authors have conceptualized and empirically established positive relationship between single or interrelated sets of human resource development practices and organizational performance (Colbert et al., 2014; Jiang and Liu, 2015; Rahman et al., 2013). Nilsson and Ellstrom (2012) emphasized that, developing human resource development policies in firms provides a gateway for the work force to enhance their competencies which improves firm performance.

Human Resource Development Practices and Employee Competencies:

Kehoe and Wright (2013) deliberates that, human resource development was the basic factor for employees to acquire competencies that in turn significantly improve organizational functioning. Along the same lines, Haslinda (2009) postulated that, human resource development practices improve employees' capabilities on the job, productivity and efficiency, as well as enhance the quality of goods and services. Similarly, Clardy (2008) opined that, organizations have used human resource development practices as an important strategic mechanism to stimulate positive behaviour in individuals and impact their knowledge, skills and attitudes which can increase productivity and performance. This is consistent with the contentions of Swanson and Holton (2009) who assert that, there is an increasing demand to develop effective and efficient human resource development practices to improve the competence of the workforce and for enhancement of organizational effectiveness.

Training and Development and Employee Competencies:

The significance of training and development to organizational development and performance has been recognized by many researchers (Cheng and Brown, 1998; Cho et al., 2006; Thang et al., 2010). Mackelprang et al. (2012) and Millar et al. (2012) postulate that, training enhances employees' capabilities which are instrumental in improving overall organizational performance. Similarly, several other authors who argued that, the implementation of various training and development programs foster learning and improves competence of overall organizational members (Blackburn, 1995; Boella, 2000; Jones, 2002). This is consistent with several other authors who contend that training and development improves the expertise and competencies of a workforce, which sequentially, boost their efficiency and functioning. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: Training and development has a positive influence on employee competencies.

Performance Appraisal and Employee Competencies:

Performance appraisal can be defined as the process of determining and communicating to an employee how well he or she is performing on the job and ideally establishing a plan of improvement (Byars and Rue, 2004; Young et al., 1995). Similarly, Osman et al. (2011) contend that, an ineffectual appraisal procedure results in numerous undesirable challenges comprising stalled employee efficiency, less morale, less enthusiasm in supporting organizational values and objectives, consequently stalling the effectiveness of the organization. This view appears to be supported by Meyer and Kirsten (2005) when they contend that managing performance of employees forms an integral part of an organization and reflects how they manage their human capital. Empirical evidence suggests that the integrated human resource and performance management policies has significant influence on employee attitude and commitment (Caldwell et al., 1990; Kinicki et al., 1992). The following is hypothesized.

H2: Performance appraisal has a significant influence on employee competencies

Employee Involvement and Employee Competencies:

Randolph (2000) and Vroom and Jago (1988) posited that, employee involvement is the degree to which employees share information, knowledge, rewards and power throughout the organization. McShane and Von Glinow (2003) assert that, when there is involvement, employees have some level of authority in making decisions that were not previously within their mandate. Along the same lines, Denison and Mishra (1995) emphasized that, involvement as an important dimension of corporate culture that influences its effectiveness. This is consistent with the study of Chu et al. (1997) who indicated that, employee involvement can help achieve better implementation of customer focus, quality and continuous improvements. The following is hypothesized.

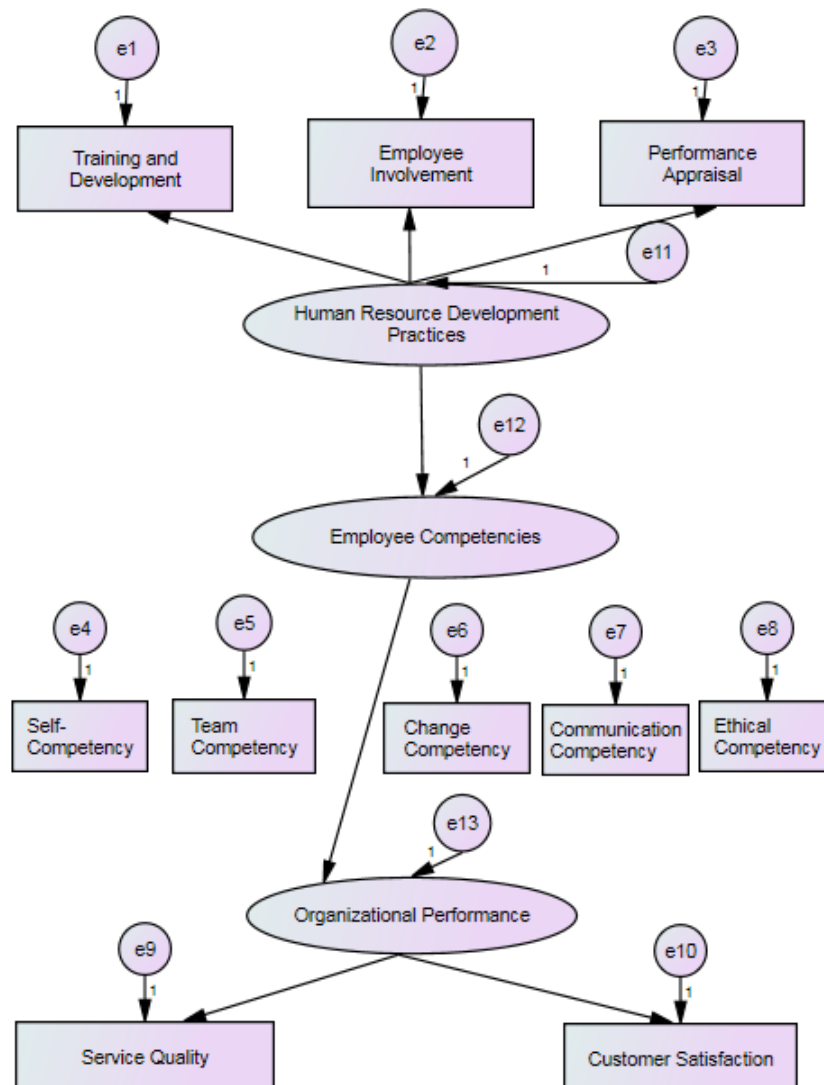
H3: Employee Involvement has a significant influence on employee competencies.

Employee Competencies and Organizational Performance :

Competency is an important concept in organization management since it is closely related to excellent work performance (Levenson, Van der Stede and Cohen 2006). Martina et al. (2012) assert that, competency is a mixed of the persons' knowledge, skills, ability and how employees behave in the work place, these aspects are an outcome that reflecting organizations performance level. Similarly, Kehoe and Wright (2013) contended that, the enhanced levels and quality of in-role and extra-role task efforts driven by increased commitment and competence of employees contribute to effective organizational functioning, which in turn is reflected in the financial performance of an organization. This is consistent with several author who found that, improvements in employee competencies significantly enhances organizational performance (Asree et al., 2010; Lockhart, 2013; Palan, 2005; Rose et al., 2006). The following is hypothesized.

H4: Employee competencies has a significant influence on organizational performance.

The Structural equation model is depicted in figure1



METHODS :

Research Setting and Data Structure:

In order to test the proposed model, an empirical study was conducted in star rated hotel establishments in Ghana. Information on the hotels was taken from the 2015 Ghana Tourism Authority Directory. 385 star rated hotels met the conditions for inclusion in the study. The Yamane (1967) simplified formula was used in determining the sample size. In order to obtain their cooperation, a cover letter was sent to the general managers explaining the purpose of the study. They were later contacted by phone for a meeting. A structured questionnaire was used and employees and guests were chosen as key informants for the study. The questionnaire addressed to the employees asked for information about their perceptions of the human resource development practices implemented by their hotels, and their evaluation of some employee competency attributes. On the other hand, the questionnaire given to the customers was designed to obtain information about their assessment and evaluation of organizational performance indicators of the hotels. A total of (1200) respondents were identified and reached in the selected hotels and (800) respondents reverted back with full required information corresponding to a response rate of (66.6%). Five questionnaires were excluded due to inconsistent responses and omitted answers. From Table 1, majority of the 550 employee respondents were males (65.5%) and in the age group 26 - 35 years (52.7%) with 1 to 5 years working experience in the hotels (42.7%). As far as the 250 guest were concerned, majority (68 %) were males, and in the age group 26 - 35 years (38 %). More than half (52 %) had stay in the hotel thrice.

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

Employees				Guests			
Variables		Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)	Variables		Frequency (s)	Percentage of totals (%)
Gender	Male	360	65.5	Gender	Male	170	68
	Female	190	34.5		Female	80	32
Age	18-25	140	25.5	Age	18-25	45	18.0
	26-35	290	52.7		26-35	95	38.0
	36-45	80	14.5		36-45	55	22.0
	46-55	40	7.3		46-55	40	16.0
Education	Junior High	80	14.5	Occupation	Business executive	100	40.0
	Senior High	145	26.4		Self employed	60	24.0
	Diploma/ HND	200	36.4		Civil servant	35	14.0
	Bachelor's degree	100	18.2		Public servant	25	10.0
	Master's degree	25	4.5		Student	15	6
					Retired	15	6
Department	Front office	110	20	Frequency of stay	Less than once a year	10	4.0
	Food and Beverage	190	34.5		Once a year	35	14.0
	Maintenance	70	12.7		Twice a year	130	52
	Housekeeping	70	12.7		Four times a year	50	20.0
	Food production	80	14.6		Five times or more a year	25	10.0
	Safety and security	30	5.5				
Experience	Less than one year	60	10.9				
	1-5 years	235	42.7				
	6-10years	90	16.4				
	11-15years	70	12.7				
	16-20years	60	10.9				
	20years and above	35	6.4				

Measures:

The variables used in this study were assessed using multiple items from different studies in the extant literature. All the items were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale, where the respondents had to indicate their level of conformity with the different statements (1: strongly disagree to 5: strongly agree).

Training and Development: Singh (2004) and Santos and Stuart (2003) effectiveness of training scale was adopted in measuring training and development. The scale which consists of fifteen items were modified according to the current study. The scale is made up of three items with a reliability of 0.83.

Performance Appraisal: Walker et al. (2011) and Singh (2004) scales of performance appraisal was adopted in measuring performance appraisal. The scale which consists of seventeen items were modified according to the current study. The scale is made up of nine items with a reliability of 0.76.

Amah and Ahiauzu (2013) employee involvement and Denson (2007) Organizations culture survey was adopted in measuring employee involvement. The scale which consists of twelve items were modified according to the current study generated three items with a reliability of 0.84.

Employee competencies: Five dimensions of employee competencies were measured by adapting Hellriegel and Slocum (2011) employee competency scale.

Self-competency: Tafarodi and Swann (1995) self-competence/self-liking scale was adopted in measuring self-competency. The scale which consists of twenty items were modified according to current study generated five items with a reliability of 0.81.

Team competency: Team competency was measured by adapting Eby and Dobbins (1997) teamwork scale. The scale which consists of eight items were modified according to the current study. The scale is made up of five items with a reliability of 0.79.

Change competency: Change competency was measured by adapting Ashford, (1988) change competency scale. The scale which consists of ten items were modified according to the current study. The scale is made up of two items with a reliability of 0.82.

Communication competency: Communication competency was measured by adapting Wierman's (1997) communication competency scale. The scale which consists of 25 items were modified according to current study generated four items with a reliability of 0.82.

Ethical competency: Ethical competence was measured using Rest (1994) competent model" for determining moral behaviour scale and Duckett and Ryden (1994) implementing the moral decision scale. The scale which consists of thirty –five items were modified according to current study. The scale is made up of three items with a reliability of 0.79.

Service quality: Three dimensions of global service quality was measured using the multi-dimensional and hierarchical measurement scale developed by Martinez Caro and Martinez Garcia (2007). The scale which consists of thirty –three items were modified according to current study. The sixteen item scale has a reliability of 0.88.

Customer satisfaction: Customer satisfaction was measured by adopting the customer satisfaction scale developed by Matzler and Sauerwein (2002). The scale which consists of sixteen items were modified according to current study and generated twelve items with a reliability of 0.80.

Analytic Approach

The efficacy of the proposed model and hypotheses were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 20.0 and the Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS) 20.0. In the first step, the researcher tested the measurement model. To establish construct validity, the researcher examined: (a) the relationship between the observable indicators and their latent constructs and (b) correlations among sub-dimensions. The second step was to test the overall model. Baron and Kenny (1986), classical product method was used to examine the role of employee competencies on the association between HRD practices and organizational performance.

Handling Common Method Bias:

Podsakoff et al. (2003) defined common method bias "as a bias attributed to a measurement technique as oppose the construct the measures denote" (p. 879). Craighead et al. (2011) postulate that, the unchecked presence of common method bias can dent the contribution to knowledge of a study. This study adapted the techniques in handling common method bias as suggested by Conway and Lance (2010) namely; a) confirmation of pragmatic strides in assuaging the dangers of method effects, b) construct validity evidence, c) contention for the appropriateness of self-reports and d) paucity of overlay in items of distinct constructs. The scales used in the study were adapted from recognized sources and a confirmatory factor analysis was performed for validity testing. The results indicate that the established benchmarks were adequate (Anderson and Bateman, 1997; Mossholder et al., 1998). Throughout the process, respondents were assured of the

protections of their anonymity thus reducing evaluation apprehension (Conway and Lance, 2010; Podsakoff et al., 2012). These approaches warranted common method bias consequences remained insignificant.

RESULTS:

Descriptive Statistics:

The descriptive statistics estimates are provided in Table 2. The results show that each of the constructs is positively and significantly correlated.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix

Items	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5
Training and development	10.31	3.22	1				
Employee Involvement	7.45	2.14	0.291**	1			
Performance Appraisal	13.80	3.64	0.367**	0.242**	1		
Employee Competencies	53.63	15.40	0.477**	0.284**	0.476**	1	
Organizational Performance	30.71	6.87	0.353**	0.200**	0.237**	0.185**	1

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Measurement Model:

The overall fit of the measurement model as reported in (Table 3) was found to be reasonable. The chi-square/df ratios (3.79) were within suggested threshold (i.e., less than 5.0) indicating a reasonable fit (Hu and Bentler, 1999; Wheaton et al., 1977). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value (0.072) and standardized root mean residual (SRMR) value (0.069) were lower than 0.08, indicating adequate fit (Brown and Cudeck 1993; Byrne 2013). In addition, all other indices (i.e., TLI and CFI estimates) were greater than the recommended 0.90, indicating adequate fit (Fan et al. 1999; Schermelleh-Engel and Moosbrugger, 2003).

Table 3: Results of the Measurement and Structural Model Tests

	χ^2	Df	χ^2/df	P	RMSEA	SRMR	TLI	CFI
Measurement model	235.566	62	3.79	0.000	0.072	0.069	0.928	0.953
Structural model – Overall model	138.096	48	2.81	0.000	0.056	0.042	0.965	0.979

Note: RMSEA=Root mean square of approximation; SRMR=Standardized Root Mean Residual; TLI=Tucker-lewis index; CFI=Comparative fit index; $p < 0.00$.

Reliability and Validity of the Scales:

To study the validity and reliability of the measurement scales used, a confirmatory factor analysis was carried out. To establish convergent validity, the three important indicators were examined; factor loadings (standardized estimates), average variance extracted (AVE) and composite reliability (CR). The results are depicted in Table 4. Cronbach's alpha values of constructs ranged between 0.79 and 0.88, exceeds the suggested threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994; Kline, 2010). Constructs standard estimates ranged between 0.62 and 0.97, exceeding the recommended criterion of 0.60 or higher (Hair et al., 2010), and statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Constructs average variance extracted ranged between 0.56 and 0.70, which exceeds suggested threshold of 0.50 indicating higher reliability of a construct (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Kline, 2010). Constructs composite reliability ranged between 0.79 and 0.97, exceeds the recommended criterion 0.70, indicating consistency adequacy (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2006; Kline, 2010). From Table 5, it can be inferred that, there was a significant indirect (mediated) effect of HRD practices on organizational performance (0.09, $p < 0.05$).

Table 4: Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Factor Names, Factor Loadings and Cronbach's alpha

Factor	Items	(λ)	AVE	CR
Training and Development ($\alpha=0.83$)	The skills and knowledge related resources that were used in the training program are available for use on the job	0.865		
	The activities of the training program provided meet the needs of the employees	0.812	0.64	0.84
	Employees are sponsored to training programmes on the basis of relevant training needs	0.713		
Employee Involvement ($\alpha=0.84$)	Everyone in this organization believes that he/she can make an impact	0.660		
	The capacity of people in this organization is viewed as an important source of competitive advantage	0.900	0.66	0.85
	This organization relies on horizontal control and coordination	0.870		
Performance Appraisal ($\alpha=0.79$)	Organization provides a written and operational performance appraisal system	0.694		
	Performance is measured on the basis of objective and quantifiable results	0.811		
	Employees are provided performance based feedback and counselling	0.728	0.57	0.80
	Performance review discussions are conducted with the highest quality and care	0.779		
Self -competency ($\alpha=0.81$)	I perform very well in many important situations	0.806		
	I am capable person	0.693		
	I am very talented	0.693	0.58	0.87
	I deal appropriately with challenges	0.890		
	I am very competent	0.696		
Team competency ($\alpha=0.79$)	I can work very effectively in a group setting	0.708		
	I can contribute valuable insight to a team project	0.676		
	I can easily facilitate communication between people	0.709	0.59	0.88
	I am effective at delegating responsibilities for tasks	0.857		
	I am able to resolve conflicts between individuals effectively	0.877		
Change competency ($\alpha=0.82$)	I believe i perform well in job situations following restructuring	0.761	0.70	0.82
	Provided training i can perform well following the change	0.909		
Communication competency ($\alpha=0.82$)	I am a good listener	0.638		
	I generally know what type of behaviour is appropriate in any given situation	0.802	0.56	0.83
	I generally know how others feel	0.713		
	I say the right thing at the right time	0.818		
Ethical competency ($\alpha=0.79$)	I make decision based on reliable evidence	0.718		
	I make decision with priority on the thoughts and values of the organization	0.744	0.56	0.79
	I make decision in consideration of what the organization places importance on	0.780		
Service quality($\alpha=0.88$)	The attitude of employees of the hotel demonstrate their willingness to help me	0.811		
	Employees of the hotel possess the required knowledge in meeting guest's needs	0.975		
	Employees of the hotel are competent	0.855		
	Employees of the hotel understand the importance of resolving guest's complaints	0.665		
	The hotel decor is stylish and attractive	0.905		

Factor	Items	(λ)	AVE	CR
	The hotel ambience is excellent	0.964		
	The hotel atmosphere is comfortable and appropriate for the purpose of stay	0.826	0.68	0.97
	The hotel has accessible fire exist	0.784		
	The hotel layout makes it easy for me to move around	0.627		
	The hotel layout serves my purpose or needs	0.620		
	Guest of the hotel feel a sense of belonging	0.730		
	The hotel services are evaluated favourably by guests	0.832		
	The waiting time for services is realistic	0.740		
	Employees try to minimize guest waiting time	0.964		
	Employees of the hotel understand that waiting time is important guest	0.886		
	Employees of the hotel show their interest in accelerating service	0.905		
Customer satisfaction($\alpha=0.80$)	It is easy to access to the hotel (transportation, loading and unloading area, car parking area. etc.)	0.931		
	Getting information about the facilities and services of the hotel via phone, internet, direction sign is easy	0.972		
	The hotel and its facilities have operating hours convenient to all guests	0.764		
	The hotel provides the services as they were promised	0.652		
	The hotel performs the services right the first time	0.650		
	The hotel provides flexibility in services according to guest demands	0.688		
	Employees of the hotel possess the required skills and knowledge to perform the service	0.815		
	Employees of the hotel have in-depth professional knowledge in terms of foreign language, communication skills etc.	0.817	0.64	0.95
	Employees of the hotel have knowledge to provide information and assistance to guest in relation to shopping, museums, places of interest, etc.	0.916		
	Employees of the hotel always treat guests in a friendly manner	0.615		
	Employees of the hotel are courteous at all times	0.929		
	Employees of the hotel gives guests individualized attention that makes them feel special	0.770		

Notes: AVE represents average variance extracted; CR represents composite reliability. All Factor loadings are significant at $p < 0.05$

Table 5: Standardized direct, indirect and total effects of HRD Practices

	HRD Practices			
	Direct	Indirect	Total effect	p value
Employee Competencies	0.381		0.381	$p < 0.05$
Organizational Performance	0.351	0.09	0.441	$p < 0.05$

Test of Hypotheses:

The proposed hypotheses were tested using structural equation modeling (SEM). The results of the structural model test depicted in Table 3, indicate a good fit to the data. The chi-square/df ratios of (2.81) were within the suggested threshold (i.e., ≥ 3.0) indicating a good fit (Hoyle 2011; Kline 2010). The root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of (0.047) and standardized root mean residual (SRMR) value (0.042) were lower than the suggested thresholds (i.e., less than 0.60 and 0.05) indicating a good fit (Bentler and Bonnet, 1980; Fan and Sivo 2005) In addition, all other indices (i.e., TLI and CFI estimates) were greater than the

recommended cut off value of (0.95) indicating a good fit (Bentler, 1990; Tabachnick and Fidell, 2007). Thus, the overall structural model reflects desirable psychometric properties. Table 6, which report the results of the hypotheses show that, three out of the four hypotheses were supported and accepted in data set.

Table 6. Inferences drawn on Hypotheses

Hypothesis	Beta coefficient	p value	Result
H1: Training and development has a significant influence on employee competencies.	0.599	$p < 0.05$	Accepted
H3: Performance appraisal has a significant influence on employee competencies.	-0.008	$p > 0.05$	Rejected
H5: Employee Involvement has a significant influence on employee competencies.	0.202	$p < 0.05$	Accepted
H6: Employee competencies have a significant influence on organizational performance.	0.383	$p < 0.05$	Accepted

DISCUSSION:

This study reveals important empirical results that make a significant contribution to clarifying the question of the mediating role of employee competencies on the association between HRD practices and organizational performance. Results confirmed hypothesis 1 by showing that training and development had a significantly positive influence on employee competencies. This results parallels findings by other studies which found that, studies which found that, training and development improves the expertise and capabilities of a workforce, which sequentially, boost their efficiency and functioning (Mertens, 2004; Salas and Cannon, 2001; Youndt, et al., 1996 Youndt and Snell, 2004). Results of H2 suggests that, performance appraisal does not have any significant influence on employee competencies. This results supports the findings by Osman et al. (2011) who contend that, an ineffectual appraisal procedure results in numerous undesirable challenges comprising stalled employee efficiency, less morale, less enthusiasm in supporting organizational values and objectives, consequently stalling the effectiveness of the organization. Hypothesis 3 confirms a significant influence of employee involvement on employee competencies. This result is compatible with the findings and arguments by Ardichvili et al. (2003) when they emphasized that, employee involvement is an essential element in the effective execution of contemporary management strategies as well as plays a significant role in ascertaining the extent of job satisfaction, increase employee commitment and motivation. Finally, results for H4 indicate that employee competencies have a significantly positive influence on organizational performance. This results support the supposition by Cartwright and Baron, (2002) when they contend that, the accomplishment of an expected tactical outcomes hinges on the workforce's coherence, interaction, harmonization, dedication and the improvements of suitable competencies.

Theoretical Implications:

The finding of this study support the contention in literature on the subject of improvements of employee competencies suggested by Levenson (2005) and Palan (2005) about which further research is needed in the hotel industry. HRD plays an important role in all sectors of the economy; however, it is especially important in hospitality industry where their significance is even greater. This industry is characterized as being labour-intensive and focused on the interaction between employees and customers at the service interface, which makes it unique for studying (Kandampully et al., 2011). The finding of this study addresses the recommendation to further investigate the relationship between human resource development practices and organizational performance. Relatively few studies exist on human resource development in the hospitality setting (Cho et al., 2006; Esichaikul & Baum, 1998). Similarly, relatively few studies exited on employee competencies in this organizations (Asree et al., 2010; Lockhart, 2013). Previous empirical and theoretical study on human resource development and organizational performance linkage focused on strategy and design, whereas this current study focused on employees. The study will also contribute to knowledge by contributing to the scarce number of previous studies that have focused on the important function of employee competencies in the human resource development and organizational performance linkage literature in the hotel industry. The finding of the study also assists in clarifying the ambiguity in literature in relation to human resource development practices and organizational performance (Bartlett, 2001; Clardy, 2008; Macky and Boxall, 2007). The findings of this study emphasizes the relevance of employee competencies as a valuable resource in enhancing the influence of human resource development practices on hotel industry performance.

Consequently, this current study finding has not been previously established in literature empirically. Distinctively, this current study adduces evidence empirically that, employee competencies mediates the association between human resource development practices and organizational performance in the hotel industry in Ghana.

Managerial Implications:

The results of this study leads to the consideration of a series of implications for the hotel industry. It is recommended for policy makers, stakeholders and management of hotels to encourage the adoption of properly and well-articulated HRD practices in hotel industry. These HRD practices the research revealed are important strategic mechanisms that stimulate positive behaviour in individuals and impact their knowledge, skills and attitudes, which increase productivity and performance (Clardy, 2008). At the same time, these practices help improve the skills and abilities of employees to generate returns through increased productivity and business performance (Shih et al., 2006). The findings of the study further indicated that, HRD practices influences employee competencies through training and development interventions and employee involvement intervention. Management of the hotels should ensure that employees are sponsored to training programs on the basis of relevant training needs training programs. Also training programs should be conducted to employees in all facets of quality. They should ensure that the activities of the training program provided meet the needs of the employees. Furthermore, management should ensure that the skills and knowledge related resources that were used in the training program are available for use on the job. Management of the hotels should ensure that employees are given the opportunity to influence management decision. Along the same lines, employees should be highly involved in their work. Also, management should encourage the cooperation and collaboration across functional roles and should ensure information is widely shared in the organization. Furthermore, the study revealed employee competencies significantly influences organizational performance. This study highlights the need to create a system of enhancing the competencies of the employees. Therefore, the hotel industry should encourage the improvements of these competencies since they influence the conduct of persons, groups and efficacy of an organization (Bhardwaj, 2013; Levenson et al. 2006). Furthermore, the study suggests that human resource development practices should be configured such that employees function effectually and meet performance expectancies through enhanced personal capabilities which will culminate in improvements in organizational performance.

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE STUDY:

There are certain limitations that offer important avenues for future research. The results of this study cannot be generalized because they come from a sample of hotels in a specific context. We should also be careful when applying the results obtained to other sectors, given the specific characteristics of the hotel industry. Furthermore, the data used in this research are largely subjective opinions of employees and guests. Subjective assessment obtained through multi-item scales are in general fairly consistent with objective measure. Future studies could adopt the use of objective measures. Moreover, in this research the analysis is based on cross-sectional data, and so future studies could adopt a longitudinal research design to test causal relationships among the variables. In addition, the possible moderating role of other variables, such as employee performance, has not been analyzed. Based on this limitation, future research could explore how employee performance mediates the association between human resource development practices and organizational performance. Finally, the possible mediating role of employee performance on the association between human resource development practices and organizational performance have not been analyzed because this would require a change in the paper's structure and extend it beyond its original purpose. Future research is encouraged to explore the effects of employee performance on organizational performance using different human resource development interventions.

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