

A Comparative Study of the Transfer of Learning and Training to Workplace in Public and Private Sector

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ABSTRACT

Today we find that organizations spend an enormous amount of money, time and effort in order to train their employees and workers. This is not the case only with private sector but also in public sector. Conduction of training program is also an important activity of government. The training programs are such organized that a balance between organization's requirements and employees needs is achieved. Training aims at improving the performance of the employee which in turn improves the final product and services in the present as well as in the future. Training is the most common form of HRD that helps organizations to enhance workforce effectiveness and productivity by means of specified learning geared towards performance improvement. However, most training outcomes fail to produce full and sustained transfer of new knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the job. Transfer does not just happen. It is a process that requires implementation of carefully planned strategies to facilitate positive transfer. It is equally important to minimize the effects of factors that are recognized as barriers or as causes of barriers to transfer.

Key words: *Intent or Motivation, Transfer of Training, Transfer of learning, skills and attitudes Cognitive ability, Self-efficacy, Goal orientation*

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic business environment we find continuous technological changes taking place within as well as outside the organization. Hence, transfer of training and learning to work place has emerged as the intellectual capital of organizations. Regular training programs are organized by companies but the transfer of learning to actual place of work is very limited. In recent years intellectual labor has become by far the most important factor of production. According to Drucker(1969) and Handy(1989) people are the core assets of organizations. When talking about the evaluation of training , training outcomes and transfer outcomes are the major parameters. Training outcome is the amount of original learning that occurs during a training program. Training outcomes should be gathered during or immediately after the training. Transfer outcomes refer to the measurement of how the trained skills have been maintained and generalized by the trainee after being on the job for some time (Baldwin and Ford 1988). The end goal of any training program is transfer and utilization of learning at work place. It is retention and application of knowledge, skills and attitude learned at work place. We say that transfer of training takes place when our existing knowledge ,skills and attitude affect the learning or performance of new skills or tasks. The study deals with the study of the factors affecting transfer of learning during a training program to workplace.

2. TRANSFER OF LEARNING

“Positive transfer of training is defined as the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in a training context to the job (Newstrom 1984, Wexley and Latham 1981). Transfer of training therefore, is more than a function of original learning in a training program (Atkinson 1972, Fleishman 1953). For transfer to have occurred, learned behaviour must be generalised to the job context and maintained over a period of time on the job.”(Baldwin and Ford 1988)

Transfer of training generally relates to adult education, vocational or professional training or workplace education, and is defined as the degree to which trainees effectively apply knowledge, and attitudes gained in a training context to the job environment (Newstrom, 1984; Wexleyand Latham, 1991)

Board and Newstrom defines it as “Transfer of learning from training is the effective and continuing application by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training (both on and off the job). Transfer may encompass both maintenance of behavior, and its generalization to new applications.”

The above definitions put forth that changed work behavior as a result of training interventions indicate transfer of learning. It also refers to the extent to which trainees apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained from the training back to the workplace.

However, transfer of training is a complex process which depends upon the intent or motivation among the individual worker.

3. MOTIVATIONAL FACTORS

Motivation can be understood as variability in behaviour not attributable to individual differences or strong situational coercion, and can affect whether or not a trainee chooses to attend training, expend effort during training, or apply trained skills in the workplace (Baldwin and Ford, 1988). According to Mumford et al (1988) trainee characteristics such as aptitude and motivational levels were among the most consistent predictors of trainee performance, stronger even than course content variables.

Studies reveal that the degree of motivation of trainees for attending training and learning, affects their level of acquisition of skills, retention, and willingness to transfer learning to the workplace (Martocchio and Webster 1992, Mathieu et al 1992, Quinones 1995, Tannenbaum and Yukl 1992). Other factors which influence motivation, include cognitive ability, self-efficacy, age, and anxiety of the individual, as well as a situational conditions such as organisation, peers, and supervisors (Colquitt et al 2000).

4. NEED FOR STUDY

Economic, political and social complexities in India make the learning process in India difficult. With the advent of globalization the need for training their human resources has increased manifold. The most important question after any training program is what percentage of the concepts learned in the classroom would be transferred to actual workplace. Training is considered to be the primary solution for performance improvement and companies invest substantial human and financial resources towards it. For transfer to take place it is important the learned behaviour is generalized to the job context and maintained over a period of time at the work place. The study focuses on the transfer of training under three heads viz: Participation, Organizational Climate and Situational Cues and consequences. 11 factors responsible for transfer of learning has been study both in public and private sectors.

5. THE SAMPLE

For the purpose of the study four organizations two each from public and private sectors were taken. Manufacturing and mining industries were selected from public sector while IT and banking services were taken from the private sector.

Stratified purposive sampling method was adopted. Stratification was based on the functional areas. Effort was made to include a considerable number of employees from each strata. Respondents from the manufacturing industries were predominantly males. However, 40% of the respondents were females selected from both public and private sectors.

For the purpose of selecting the tool for data collection the researcher had an interaction with a few of the employees of the organization and a general idea about the employee's demography and organization's working environment was developed. Based on the interaction, a list of items to be included in the questionnaire was selected. A structured questionnaire was used for the purpose of data collection. The first part of the questionnaire sought personal information about employees while the second part dealt with the training, learning and the transfer aspect.

6. ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In order to understand the factors influencing transfer of Training at work place for different sectors, a t-test was conducted and for each of the dimensions for Public sector as well as Private Sector industries. As shown in Table 1 significant level of difference is seen among the respondents belonging to Software and banking industries. The factor Participation encompasses the level of involvement in the training right from the design phase. Learning and thereby transfer was greater at places where the employees themselves got an opportunity to decide whether to attend the program. Involvement of the employees in framing of the training program led to greater motivation, self-efficacy and organizational commitment. Involvement of the employees in training design and framing also ensured the training content to match their expectation. Opportunity to perform also played a great role in effective transfer of the learning at work place. As per the respondents

transfer of learning was greater where the trainee was provided task similar to those for which they were received training. Performance also increased with the increase in number of opportunities provided at the workplace. However, the study shows that transfer of training in a software industry is greater than that in banking industry.

The second dimension which was taken up for discussion was organizational climate which encompasses organizational policies, managerial behavior and job security. Transfer of training learning was found to be greater in a flat organization where the employee got an opportunity to work as a team. Organizational policies included encouragement of the employees through a system of appreciation or rewards. Flexibility in certain norms of the organization also enabled to create a mixed culture in the organization thereby leading to greater motivation and transfer of learning from the training. Job security also played an important role in private sector especially in software industries.

Table 1: Factors affecting Transfer of Training in Private sector

Factors	Banking (N= 96)		Software (N=96)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
I. Participation					
a) Involvement in training design	20.46	6.07	27.31	4.15	9.21
b) Opportunity to perform	18.49	6.70	26.98	3.80	10.87
c) Motivation and self-efficacy	22.98	5.86	26.92	4.1	5.48
II. Organizational Climate					
a) Organizational policies	21.39	6.99	27.66	4.10	7.63
b) Managerial Behavior	21.06	5.98	27.18	4.27	8.23
c) Job Security	19.11	5.85	26.61	4.25	10.26
III. Situational Cues & Consequences					
a) Goal Cues	19.79	6.29	26.89	4.07	9.34
b) Task & Structural Cues	22.24	5.85	26.56	3.89	6.07
c) Self Control Cues	17.48	5.99	26.52	4.17	12.24
d) Reward System	21.10	5.57	26.95	4.05	8.39
e) Self Control Cues	22.35	5.44	26.95	3.67	6.92
Total	226.43	55.43	296.52	39.70	10.16
Significance level: p< 0.05					

Table 2: Factors affecting Transfer of Training in Public sector

Factors	Manufacturing (N= 96)		Mining (N=96)		t-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
I. Participation					
a) Involvement in training design	17.22	6.34	21.16	5.91	7.18
b) Opportunity to perform	17.01	6.59	27.16	4.95	10.79
c) Motivation and self-efficacy	15.65	6.28	25.77	5.31	9.05
II. Organizational Climate					
a) Organizational policies	14.52	6.44	24.23	6.03	9.72
b) Managerial Behavior	16.35	6.64	26.93	5.11	11.00
c) Job Security	14.87	5.68	24.91	5.40	11.34
III. Situational Cues & Consequences					
a) Goal Cues	16.39	6.90	26.49	5.23	10.16
b) Task & Structural Cues	16.92	5.79	25.29	5.96	8.97
c) Self Control Cues	16.14	5.96	26.99	4.56	12.59
d) Reward System	15.90	6.49	25.80	5.20	10.38
e) Self Control Cues	14.79	5.30	21.16	5.91	7.18
Total	175.77	61.92	280.12	49.28	11.52
Significance level: p< 0.05					

Manufacturing and banking industries were taken up for study under Public sector. Table 2 above shows that the transfer of learning among the employees of mining industries is greater than those among manufacturing industries. Opportunity to perform played a great role in deciding the transfer of learning to the workplace. Skill decay over time and not being able to perform similar type of job restricts employee to transfer learning at the workplace. Active learning and thereby transfer requires the employee to be involved in the learning process. Organizational policies and the culture enables the employee to get involved in the process and further take the learning to the place of work. Significant differences between the responses of employees at different industries in Public sector also revealed that the transfer of learning is greater in mining industries. Hence, the hypothesis H2 is rejected.

The study also reveals a significant difference in the level of transfer of learning among the workers in Public and private sector. Hence, H3 is rejected.

7. CONCLUSION

The study reveals that the transfer of training to workplace is one of the major objectives of a training program. Transfer of training can be enhanced through providing enough opportunity and place to apply those learnt. Involvement of the employees in the framing and designing of training program also plays a major role in the transfer of the training learning. Organizational policies which encourage through appreciation and reward is also a motivating factor towards transfer of training outcomes to the work place.

The study revealed that the transfer of learning is greater in Private sector , especially in software industries. The reason behind it was found more opportunities to perform. The employees participation in the designing of the training program was greater in private sector where they worked as a team. This led to greater motivation among the workforce. In order to compete in this dynamic environment of business private sector companies encouraged their employees towards implementation of the knowledge and skills learnt during a training program.

8. REFERENCES

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