

DO ‘EMPLOYEE TRAINING PROGRAMS’ AFFECT EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE?

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to carry out the analysis of the interviews gathered from the managers and employees working at NGOs which may help in comprehending whether training has a significant impact on the performance of the employees. In this essence, the researcher selected three NGOs for carrying out interview analysis. The data was collected from the managers of the NGOs who were responsible for managing and carrying out training programs in their organizations to enhance employees' performance. The methodology involved informal interviews and in this connection, the researcher interviewed five managers from the NGOs in different districts of Hyderabad region, which helped in getting insights on the training strategies of their respective NGOs. The results concluded that there is a strong significant impact of training and development in organizations. The managers were of the opinion that training programs should be implemented at every level of the organization for enhancing the performance of the employees.

Keywords: *Trainings, Employees, Interviews, NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations).*

INTRODUCTION

Trainings provide an immense boost to the employees that makes them perform harder to achieve the organizational goals. Trainings directly influence the attitudes and behaviors of employees thus, ensuing in their performance enhancement (Dessler & Tan, 2006). The training programs tend to be the basic operational and functional foundations for the development of the employee's skills (Agarwal & Sudhakar, 2017). It is the key area of human resource management after the human resource planning, as through this, managers assess the number of employees required to undertake organizational activities and to achieve the

organizational objectives. After job analysis, efficient recruitment, and right placement of the people, the HR managers are concerned towards provision of required job trainings to the employees. The inclusion of employee on job training in HR practices is the best approach for employee development and enriching their skills and capabilities (Przewoźna-Krzemińska, 2017). Trainings play a vital role towards achievement of organizational goals as it integrates the individual and organizational interests (Argyris, 2017; Ahmad & Bakar, 2003), and increases the organizational and employees' competence and efficiency. On the basis of this backdrop, it is very essential to understand the key concept of employee training and its importance in delivering organizational efficacy. Training is a very essential activity which not only helps in accomplishing the overall organizational goals but also provides a strategic path to the human resource personnel, to amalgamate the organizational goals and objectives into its training and development plan. The trained and skilful human resource is a key for sustaining competitive advantage and many organizations today consider employee training as an investment rather than a cost (Schonewille, 2001). The organizations need to be very cautious when they are designing and planning the training and development programs as it involves great deal of time, effort and organizational cost (Blatter, Muehlemann, Schenker & Wolter, 2015; Dichter, Alexander, & Gagnon, 1993). After the designing of the program the human resource manager should be responsible to take the key inputs from the personnel themselves otherwise the whole activity will go futile and there will be no substantial results, as it is very important to understand what the trainees' feel about the training programs. This activity is also essential to gauge the change after the implementation of the training program.

Human resource is the most important resource in any organization. It requires immense focus and development to achieve organizational goals and objectives. Human Resource Development (HRD) is the structure or basis which helps employees advance their individual and executive abilities, knowledge, and skills. It is a framework through which employees in the organizations are given appropriate training and education. In current scenario, it is an area of focus study for academicians. Many researchers have come up with latest theories and philosophies which state a wide array of phenomena of attention towards the vocation of human resource development (Torraco, 2004). The

purpose of human resource development is to get employees learned, trained and educated after the process of recruitment and selection is accomplished. Defining human resource development has remained a topic of argument and debate for long for the researchers and not withstanding with the fact that several attempts have been made to define it (Wilton, 2016; Haslinda, 2009).

Human Resource Development is an area that falls under human resource management and deals with the development of skills through trainings. It is a function of human resource management (Werner & DeSimone, 2006). It involves systematic growth of employees by imparting them the required and relevant education, training and development. Human resource development has a direct connection with the performance. Human resource development plays a significant role in improving the performance of employees by ameliorating their skills, abilities and knowledge, through right and ample trainings and concerned education which ultimately influences and enhances the performance of the organization (Chew & Chan, 2008). The major focus of human resource development is over employee training and development and organizational development. Moreover it also focuses over human resource policies, awareness and empowerment, community mobilization and entrepreneurship (Khan, 2012).

With the scarcity of literature and prior research studies on job trainings and employee performance, there is a need to explore the currently available knowledge to recognize an effective mix of HR practices that are relevant in service sector like NGO's and in Pakistan context. An attempt to investigate an understanding of the HR practices pertaining to job trainings in Non-Government organizations is done through informal interview analysis.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many previous research studies have discovered and provided ample and extensive interview evidence that training has an impact on the performance of employees. Truitt (2011), carried out her study connecting training and development effects on attitude and approach of employees in four different organizations i.e. one academic and three business in the states of Maryland, Delaware and Arizona in the USA, relating them to training and working aptitudes and abilities. The results supported two suppositions trained employees possess positive training attitudes, and

therefore positive training attitudes are supposed to ameliorate job proficiency and skills.

Otuko, Chege, and Douglas (2013), conducted their research in Kenya on the effect of training dimensions on employee's work performance. The purpose of their study was to evaluate the effect of training dimensions on the performance of employees. They carried out their study by targeting 150 employees and 6 departmental heads through simple random sampling and purposive sampling respectively. The data was collected using interviews and concluded that there was a positive and major effect between training needs assessment and employee performance; positive and significant effect between training contents and employee performance; and positive and significant association between training evaluation and employee performance. The results thus indicate a positive and significant effect between all the training dimensions and performance of an employee.

The findings of the literature review suggested that training has its impact in different dimensions and manifestations but due to the scarcity of literature and prior research studies on job trainings and employee performance, there is a further need to explore the available knowledge to recognize an effective mix of HR practices that are relevant in NGO sector in Pakistan. In this study an attempt to investigate an understanding of the HR practices pertaining to job trainings in Non-Government organizations is done through informal interview analysis.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study has following objectives:

- To examine the relationship of training with the performance of employees at NGOs in Hyderabad Region.
- To know and analyse the effect of trainings on employees' performance at NGOs in Hyderabad Region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, informal interviews were conducted from the managers of the NGOs who were responsible for managing training programs in their organizations. In this context, the researcher selected five managers of three NGOs in Hyderabad, as reaching the managers for conducting informal interviews was relevantly convenient for the researcher. These five managers provided valuable insights to the researcher with respect to

training and development in their respective organizations which are intended to ameliorate the performance of the employees.

RESESRCH FINDINGS

The researcher interviewed five managers from the NGOs in different districts of Hyderabad, and gained useful insights on the training strategies of their respective NGOs. The interviewees were given the liberty to speak freely about the events and their beliefs and notions in accordance to the research study and following are the responses:

(a). Significance of Training & Development in the NGOs

The significance of training and development was extensively discussed by the interview participants. They were of the opinion that trainings should be implemented at every level of the organization in order to enhance the performance of the employees working in the organization. According to Dale (1970), training and development plays a significant role in creating a difference in the performance of the employees working at the organization. However, the process of improvement of the employees should be focused towards well execution of training and development programs in the organization. Effective implementation of the training programs requires a set of goals which can boost the employee performance and motivate them to work harder for the organization. In this essence, one of the NGO members highlighted the importance of training and development in the organization as:

"I think trainings can help the employees in improving their performance if they are properly designed according to the needs of the employees where they are lacking. The skills where the employees are lacking are required to be trained for proper execution of daily tasks. As our NGO is one of the prestigious organization in the vicinity which possess highly motivated working staff, we, therefore, have acknowledged the importance of training and development for which, we continually train our employees to solve their problems."

In this essence, another manager of the NGO stressed that:

"I prefer to design new training programs for the employees because I have realized the importance of employees' trainings which are significant as it introduces the employees to the existing culture of the organization which is very necessary for them to learn. Through this they can adapt

themselves according to the culture of the organization. We even provide training to our lower level staff which includes janitorial staff and drivers because we feel accountable to them as their effective work practices can make the organization more prosperous.”

The third interviewee reflected on the importance of training and development in the organization as:

“I believe that training is important for the performance enhancement of the employees within an organization as it caters to the problems and develop employee skills. However, the effectiveness in their task can be subjected towards the enhancement of the employee performance because it should meet the expectations and needs of the employees with respect to the work related tasks. I also believe that training and development is a factor which benefits the company, however, it incurs an adequate cost, however, it also provides an ultimate benefit to the organization. I suggest every organization to focus on training of the employees so as to enhance their productivity towards work.”

The interview responses reflect that the managers of the NGOs highly recognize the importance of training and development in the organizations. One of the managers even suggested to all the NGOs and organizations to acknowledge the importance of implementing training and development practices in the organization so that the performance of the employees can be boosted for the better productivity and efficient use of human resource.

(b). Organizations’ Investment in the Training & Development for the Enhancement of the Performance of their Employees

Investment in the training and development programs has significantly become important for the organizations due to increased globalization and increase in the competitive exposure of the companies. For this purpose, organizations try to invest in the activities which can help them in sustaining their competitive advantages, especially with respect to the development of human resources as it is considered as the core of the business choices. In this context, organizations largely invest in the training and development programs in order to make their business in line with the objectives of the company and further enhance the competencies and skills of their key employees. In this regard, one respondent of the interview highlighted that:

“Training and development is the lifeblood of a company because it helps generate an attitude in employees through which they can achieve the objectives of an organization. I believe that an adequate amount of funding should be invested in training activities so as to train the employees for the emerging challenges. As NGOs are involved in human interactions for day to day tasks and subjected to numerous challenges which can be resolved by the skilful strategic moves of the employees, therefore, investment in the training activities of the organization should be kept at priority list.”

Another manager spoke about the investment in training and development programs in the organization and said that:

“Training programs should be kept at precedence over other activities in the organization as investment in the training programs requires time, money and energy of the company. I believe that if you are spending a heavy amount on the training and development programs of the employees, there has to be some demonstrable benefit which should be returned back to the organization.”

Another participant of the interview responded to this question that:

“Investment in training should be given due importance in the organization as a person could not perform his task without receiving adequate training related to the job description. So, I am of the viewpoint that training is necessary and should be considered as a top priority in the organization because it helps improve the performance of the employees. I prefer to invest adequate amount in training and development of the individuals because it leads to ultimate benefits of the organization.”

According to the interview responses of the managers of NGOs, it is made apparent that the managers are of the opinion that a significant amount should be invested in the training of the employees so as to enhance their performance in the organization with respect to their job description. In doing so, the company can gain a competitive advantage over its competitors and can turn their expense into an asset.

(c). Challenges Pertaining to Planning an Appropriate Training Program for the Employees

In this era of globalization, the training and development of the

employees is found to be significant for the organizations with respect to training the employees according to structure, tradition and culture of the organization. For this purpose, trainers face certain difficulties related to planning the training programs for the employees. However, some of the practitioners and authors are of the opinion that training should be planned according to the skills and expectations of the employees for effective design and efficient utilization of the program. In this essence, one of the interview respondents highlighted that:

“Many of the training professionals in our NGO are females who are responsible for designing new training programs for the employees working in the company. They face some difficulties in designing new training programs for the employees as it is difficult to gauge each employees skill requirement due to their diverse work tasks. They also face difficulty in measuring the effectiveness of the training employed in a systematic manner because training evaluation is necessary to be carried out which assesses whether the training was effective for the employees or not. Therefore, our trainers face difficulty in planning training programs according to the policies and procedures followed by the company.”

It was also highlighted by the interview respondent of one of the NGOs that:

“Planning of training programs is full of challenges because it requires planning the activities according to the needs and lacking skills of the employees working in the organization. In our NGO, trainers have adopted a comprehensive set of framework which guides them to adapt relevant training activities for the benefit of the employees. I will again repeat my statement here that an effective training program is an ultimate benefit for the organization. For combating challenges, our trainers’ team conduct a quantitative assessment which helps in determining the area which requires more training of the employees in the organization. I have proposed the training team to primarily conduct surveys connecting the weak areas of employees and arrange the training programs in accordance to those weak areas.”

Another respondent also highlighted the nature of the challenges they face during planning a training program in their NGO:

“I believe that planning training program is a huge task which is more

complex for the trainers, because it is difficult to take every aspect into consideration in the process of planning. In our NGO, we plan the training programs by the nature of problems faced by the people working in the organization as I believe working in an NGO is indeed challenging for the employees who are working in direct or indirect contact with the people suffering or the children with down syndrome. Such people are required to be tackled with care and love for improving their health. Therefore, for handling the people, it is essential to build the patience and tolerance of the workers so that they do not get offended and tired of their work. These situations are often faced by the trainers of the NGOs and have to be handled by the managers in an effective manner. Therefore, we plan different strategies in order to handle the challenges which are currently faced by our trainers."

In this viewpoint, another interview respondent highlighted in the informal session that:

"We face intense challenges while planning training programs for the employees working in our NGO as our employees face numerous challenges in their job tasks. One day, a trainer complained to me that most of the fellow employees are not so well educated which is the reason they do not take into account the instructions of the trainers that are necessary to be adhered. This generates gaps in the understanding level between the employees and the trainer which creates difficulty in setting agenda for the training programs. Right now we are working on hiring highly educational human resource so that they can work according to the instructions of the trainers of the company."

The interviews highlighted that all NGOs faced certain challenges while planning training programs for their employees. However, they acknowledge the importance of planning training programs for the enhancement of the employee performance. An appropriate procedure should be adopted by the training managers to effectively implement the trainings in the organization in order to not only assist the employees but to result in the eventual value and ultimate benefit for the organization.

(d). Importance of Training Needs Analysis and Training Contents for the Enhancement of Employee Performance

In the light of Dale (1980), training needs analysis is regarded as the

effective component of the training and development in the organization as it helps in identifying the gaps between the performance of the employees according to the training needs and the skills of the employees. However, a successful planning of the training needs analysis will not only help the trainer in analyzing the skills which are lacking on the part of the employees but also to identify those that are necessary to be acquired in order to meet the expectations of the company. Furthermore, the content of the training is also important in the planning process of training because it reflects which subjects and key areas are to be included according to the skills and lacking abilities of the employees. In this essence, one manager from the NGO highlighted in the interview that:

“NGOs in Pakistan are undergoing major changes as the concept of serving the community is lost somewhere in the wake of gathering reputation for the NGO and increasing the number of trustees NGOs have now become a place to market things and generate profits whereas the ultimate objective of an NGO should be to provide community services to the needy people in the vicinity. In such case, managing the workforce is a highly crucial task because the employees are also here to get their salaries and monetary benefits for the work they conduct. But it is necessary to train the employees and allocate a significant budget to train them in a systematic manner. It is also necessary to set an appropriate content for the training according to the needs of the employees through which a counter training can be provided to the employees.”

In this essence, another manager of the NGO with the viewpoint about training needs analysis reflected that:

“Training has become crucial for filling the skill gaps in the employees so that they can perform complex tasks in most effective manner which is also cost effective for the company. Our trainers conduct an analysis on the training needs which is used to identify how the employees can be trained by the trainers and what kind of trainings should be provided to the employees. Through this, the trainers get to know the competencies and capabilities of the employees working in the organizations which can further be enriched in order to make them work effectively, as in the case of NGOs, different set of skills of the employees is required. I believe that a better outcome can be achieved by conducting

a training needs analysis of the employees working in the NGO so that the content of the training can be set in accordance to the training manual and needs of the employees.”

The responses of the interviewees highlighted that there is a significant importance of training needs analysis and content of the training as it can help in identifying the employee needs with respect to training and development. In this essence, a checklist can be created which helps in determining how to improve the job performance of the employees through means of training.

(e). Significance of Training Delivery Approaches and Training Evaluation for Improving Employee Performance

It is significant for the organizations to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the training programs because it sheds light on how well the training program was executed by the trainer and how the needs and objectives of the learners were met through the program. In addition to this, the evaluation of the training program helps in assessing the knowledge and skills which are imparted to the employees of the organization. In case of successful implementation of the training program, it can bring a desirable change in the organization by directly influencing the performance of the employees. In this context, the interviewee which was the manager of an NGO highlighted that:

“In most of the companies, training evaluation is not adequate as it requires spending resources of the organization which is followed by the comprehensive evaluation of training. I believe that it can be evaluated from the feedback process of the employees comprehend whether the training program is according to the needs and expectations of the employees or not. The training evaluation is also dependent on how it was delivered to the employees of the company which helps in assessing how the gaps in the performance of the employees can be filled. I believe that training evaluation should be conducted after one month of the training program for understanding the impact of the training on the employees. Our trainers are usually happy with the training sessions because they always result in positive outcomes and enhancement of the employee performance.”

In addition to this response, the manager of another NGO stated that:

“Our trainers are very much concerned towards evaluating the training provided to the employees because it helps in knowing the future prospects of the training and confirms whether you are going on the right track. Our trainer once stated that training evaluation helps in assessing how we can add value to the delivery approaches and the contents of the training so that we can perfectly impart the learning to shape the abilities of the employees. It is our due responsibility to train the employees and continuously evaluate them for the improvement of the training programs. I believe that gathering feedback of the training from participants will help in better evaluating the training program that whether it brought positive impact on the employees’ performance in the organization or not.”

The interview analysis revealed that there is a strong significance of training and development in their organizations as the managers were of the opinion that training programs should be implemented at every level of the organization for enhancing the performance of the employees. It was also highlighted that training and development also plays a significant role in the company which should be followed by an effective implementation of the training program requiring a set of goals which can boost the employees’ performance and motivate them. According to Truelove (1992), training is undertaken for providing knowledge, skills and attitudes essential to accomplish work connected responsibilities. It was also stated that the training programs should be properly designed so that the employees can be trained in an effective manner and according to the schedule of the training. This requires setting of training objectives which should cater the problems and skills of the employees and also help them in carrying out their day to day task.

The interview analysis also revealed that organizations should conduct investment in the training and development for the enhancement of the performance of their employees. This is also reflected in the study of Aswathappa (2008), that organizations should mainly invest in the strategies of training and development so as to make their business in line with the objectives of the company and also to enhance the competencies and skills of their key employees and management staff which can help in achieving objectives of the company. The interview analysis also highlighted the challenges pertaining to planning an appropriate training program for the employees. The interviewees stressed that the managers face difficulty in measuring the effectiveness

of the training programs which are employed in a systematic manner because training evaluation is necessary to be carried out which assesses whether the training for the employees was effective or not. The results reflected a positive significance of training of the employees for the enhancement of their performance.

CONCLUSION

Overall the informal interviews were conducted from the managers of the NGOs in Hyderabad Region who have reflected upon the importance of training and development in the organizations. The findings revealed that it should be prioritized by the managers of the NGOs because employees are in need of training and require enhancement in the performance according to the strategies of the company. Trainings are vital for the organizations as they can help the members of the organizations to increase their performance and further help in achieving the objectives of the firm in an effective manner. This was also revealed from the responses of the interview participants that training should be employed at every level of the organization including the lower management staff of the organization. Therefore, trainings should be considered important as they help in the up-gradation of employee knowledge and skills which eventually benefit the organization.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

- It is recommended to identify the employee skills which are required for the job and also the problem that is required for resolving the training gaps. This should be initiated with the job description and the task allotted to the employees so that they can be trained connecting enhancement of their skills. In addition, it is necessary to carry out training needs analysis which entirely focuses on the job tasks rather than inquiring people about what they want from their job which could also be misleading for the employees.
- It is also recommended to the managers of the NGOs to ignite the passion of the managers for coaching the employees which should entirely focus on the skills and knowledge and mentoring of the employees. In the highly competitive global environment, the managers' role in the organization has eroded as they are overburdened with the companies' responsibilities and also the new

hired people lack at the skills and competencies. In this essence, the organizations need to support the managers by providing them with incentives so that they can perform their tasks effectively.

- Training evaluation is considered to be the most critical and important stage of training program and plays an important and significant role in training session, thus, it is recommended to the management of organizations to give special emphasis on training evaluation in order to determine the effectiveness of training process.

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