

DOES ON-THE-JOB TRAINING LEAD TO AN IMPROVEMENT IN STAFF ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOURS?

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ABSTRACT

An employee plays a key role in the success of any firm, and in this context, on-the-job training is utilized for augmenting the performance and profits of any company. It is incumbent on training and development professionals to design, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of their programs in reducing disputes in workplace performance. Several issues are addressed in this review of the training literature relating to firms given that it may be applicable to Saudi Arabia. On-the-job training is also known to lead to enhancements in behaviours and staff attitudes toward organisational performance. Furthermore, other aspects of technological adaptation also improve employees' attitudes and behaviours, which make employees prepared for promulgating the firm.

Keywords: On-the-job Training, Staff Attitudes and Behaviours, Technological Adaptation, Performance and Promotion.

INTRODUCTION

Training is typically defined as the continuous process whereby the trainee is provided with the necessary information to perform better specific tasks, as well as to positively develop their performance to be able to cope with future changes (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). The element of training is important because it is known to build confidence and competence within the employee and it is this confidence that impels them to improve their performance and attain the desired results. Due to the fact that training is an important component that helps safeguard the availability of competent staff, there is a constant need for staff training and development, thereby forming a key aspect of this process. Training is a learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skills, concepts, rules, or changing of attitudes and behaviours for improving employees' performance (Sabir et al., 2014).

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) has large oil reserves and a developing economy that supports them as a part of the Group of 20 and the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Indeed, the majority of the workforce in the Saudi private sector is expatriate, which has exerted pressure on the government to introduce policies such as Nitaqat & Saudisation (Hassan, 2012) to educate and train the younger population to gain the skills to replace expatriates (Wilson, 2012). Considerably significant investments in training, development, competitive advantage have been made to provide Saudi employees with the crucial competencies required to be employable, innovative and productive (Govaerts et al., 2017). According to Nda & Fard (2013), productivity refers to the efficiency with which things are being produced. Training is considered to have an enormous effect on organizational efficiency.

With the development of Vision 2030, the need for training in transferable skills among Saudi employees is acutely felt. Indeed, this Vision targets the improvement of Saudi employees' skill and knowledge profile as a requirement for boosting employee performance. This paper will help firms to find the benefit of on-the-job training and aid when hiring in the future.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Given that Saudi Arabia is one of the biggest economies in the world, the government of late has placed its emphasis on reducing shortage in the workforce and carrying out the Saudisation to provide Saudi employees with skills and knowledge so that they can get employment in the country. Saudi Arabia also has a significant percentage of expatriate labour. As mentioned before, on-the-job training can go a long way in helping firms become successful. However, very little empirical investigation has been done to examine ways of ensuring skill development via on-job training in Saudi Arabia (Sisyuk, 2018; Suleiman et al., 2017). Hence, it is important to undertake a detailed review of the existing literature.

As per Constantino & Merchant (1996), *“training and education are necessary components for a successful conflict management system”*. The failure to provide training and education by the organization could cause conflicts between employer and employee. Such conflicts may result in complicated scenarios, including but not limited to formal complaints by the employee which eventually become actual lawsuits against the organization, all of which could cost the industry time, energy, and money. When universities or businesses withhold opportunities for training and development, they also fail to demonstrate an understanding of how to identify organisational conflict. According to these same authors, all organizations should have a conflict management system in place (Constantino & Merchant, 1996). When conflict is manifested in the organization by clusters of dissatisfied employees, this group dissatisfaction state of mind can result in frenzied chaos, dissatisfaction, grievances, and turmoil in the organization. Again, having a conflict management system in place would potentially be able to short circuit such a disruptive process. Clearly, employees must benefit from on-going employer-provided training. To enhance job performance, training skills and behaviours have to be transferred to the workplace, maintained over time, and generalized across contexts (Holton et al., 2000).

On-the-job Training Affects Employee Behaviour

The attitudes toward on-the-job training reflected positively on behaviour and the opportunity to attain promotion in a firm in a rapidly changing environment. In this context, Graham & Verma (1991) stated that depending on how the employee responds to the program on-the-job training programs have direct effects. As is with the case with promoting positive attitudes to staff, skilled staff is crucial to the success of any organisation (Fisher & Dowling, 1999).

Similarly, Ahmad & Karia (2000) have emphasized the relationship between training and attitude as it relates to working with others. Employees with positive attitudes become stakeholders in the process and job accomplishment is of a higher priority. Furthermore, successful organizations achieve a partnership between workers and management. The partnership includes participation in teamwork activities and continuous learning applications.

The reported findings further suggest that an employee's participation in decision-making and problem solving develop organizational trust (Anschutz, 1995).

Measures of the Technological Adaptation in Performance

Fisher & Dowling (1999) posit that on-the-job training and skilled staff are central to increasing a firm's profits, with other organisational factors. Employees with good communication skills gather more information concerning procedures and technologies related to job performances, thus assuming greater accountability and subsequent responsibility, both of which improves proficiency (Adams & Lenz, 1989; Gordon & Norman, 1980). Also, training and education have been shown to have a significant positive effect on job involvement, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment.

Measures of the Challenges

Organizations undergoing fiscal challenges may target employee training as the first cost-cutting measure. If we follow the collective wisdom of successful businesses, conflict management system professionals, and the results of this empirical research, one must conclude that effective and ongoing training and development should be the final cost-cutting measure. Training and its positive effects on employee attitude and proficiencies create long-lasting stakeholders and could serve as the binding force for business success during troubled times.

Organisations are likely to profit from employee preferences' longer-term perception, which motivates employees to participate in on-the-job training. On-the-job training again plays an important role in improving such attitudes. To that end, the present study focuses on facing some challenges that affect employees' behaviour toward performance and promotion in their firm (Wooden, 1990).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objectives

The main objective of this qualitative analysis is to examine the relationship between on-the-job training and improvement of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviour towards work motivation, which, in turn, can lead to long-term benefits for both individuals as well as organizations.

The secondary objective is to examine the effect of on-the-job training and of technological adaptation on enhancing employees' attitudes and behaviours.

Interview Questions

Training and development are crucial to a firm's permanency. All staff should undertake a specified number of hours of on-the-job training after orientation. The main position on job training and development is that the reason it assumes significance is that the firm changes to improve staff attitudes and behaviours towards employee performance. In this study, the qualitative research methods used open-ended interviews, coupled with the constant comparative method, were used to analyse the data and discover the meaning of on-the-job training (Glaser et al., 1968). As has been established, the staff requires on-the-job training to attain current

knowledge in their qualified environments. In addition, they require the time and place to confer this knowledge with other staff to advance plans for the firm's strategy. For this purpose, a decision was taken to conduct interview with study participants. An interview is an oral or verbal statement or face-to-face dialogue, either structured or unstructured, to gather responses relevant for a research study (Kothari, 2004).

The next level, training, consists of induction training for all recruits to learn the firm's values, policies, rules and systems, technological and new systems training, as well as information sessions on the firm's business environment, its developing goals, and commitment (Al-Rasheedi, 2012). It is also necessary to monitor on-the-job training so that staff is aware of the legal issues of health and safety, privacy, finance, workplace policy, and environmental matters. Staff training, on the other hand, ranges from specific skills to retraining for new jobs or upgrading skills for promotional purposes. In this context, there is a range of teamwork and customer service training modules which could be attended by all staff.

To support on-the-job training the following interview questions were posed to the study participants:

1. How has on-the-job training affected employees' behaviour towards performance in your firm?
2. How has technological adaptation enhanced employees' behaviour towards performance in your firm?
3. How have on-the-job training improved employees' behaviour and the opportunity to increase promotion in your firm?
4. What have been the achievements of on-the-job training?
5. What are the challenges being faced during on-the-job training in your firm?

Study Sample

As mentioned above, the study used interviews to obtain answers to these questions from different employees in the Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, to understand employee opinions about on-the-job training in their firms. To meet the interview requirements, the interview comprised demographic information regarding the respondents and questions identified from the literature and from the Saudi background. The interviews occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic with several employees in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, firms in 2021. The interviews were conducted online for 69 employees, and the rate of response was 100 percent.

RESULTS

In order to describe the demographic characteristics of the participants, data were examined using SPSS-V. 21. The results from the analysis of the responses show support for the positive effect of on-the-job training on employees' behavioural improvements in their firms.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive analysis of the data collected from the employees who contributed to the study and the demographic characteristics of the participants. According to Table 1, the percentage of male students (72.5%) was greater than female students (27.5%). With regard to nationality, the sample demonstrates that the majority of the respondents were citizens (94.2%). The majority of participants were under the age of 40 years (91.3%), with 7.2 per cent aged 41 years and older. In the sample, all the respondents pointed out that they were employed

full-time. At the same time, most respondents (91.3%) reported that they had training either before or after 2010, and 8.7 percent had no training at their firm.

Table 1					
DESCRIPTION OF PARTICIPANTS (N=69)					
Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage	Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage
Gender			Marital Status		
Male	50	72.5	Married	46	66.7
Female	19	27.5	Single	23	33.3
Total	69	100.0	Total	69	100.0
Age			Nationality		
18–30 years	31	44.9	Arab	2	2.9
31–40 years	32	46.4	Other	2	2.9
41–50 years	5	7.2	Saudi	65	94.2
51–60 years	1	1.4	Total	69	100.0
Total	69	100.0	---	---	---
Experience			Training		
1–4 years	25	36.2	2010–2015	3	4.3
13–16 years	3	4.3	2016–2021	56	81.2
17 years or more	7	10.1	Before 2010	4	5.8
5–8 years	20	29.0	Never	6	8.7
9–12 years	14	20.3	Total	69	100.0
Total	69	100.0	---	---	---

The Interview Questions

This study was guided by give research questions:

1. How does on-the-job training affect employees' behaviour toward performance in your firm?
2. How does technological adaptation enhance employee behaviour towards performance in your firm?
3. How have on-the-job training improved employees' behaviour and the opportunity to achieve promotion in your firm?
4. What have been the achievements of on-the-job training?
5. What are the challenges being faced during on-the-job training in your firm?

Table 2		
BEHAVIOUR TOWARD PERFORMANCE		
Effect	No effect	N/A
63	1	5
91.30%	1.45%	7.25%

Table 2 illustrates that 63 of the employees interviewed in this study reported that on-the-job training went a long way in improving their behaviour and attaining promotion in their firm. In totality, on-the-job training reflected positively on their behaviour and the opportunity to be promoted in their firm (Hurt, 2016). During their interviews, participants were asked how on-the-job training affected employees' behaviour toward performance in the firm (Table 3).

Table 3	
SAMPLE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	
How does on-the-job training affect employees' behaviour towards performance in your firm?	
On-the-job training forms part of the succession plan for the employee to improve knowledge and build the required experience from both sides technically and from a leadership skills point of view.	

On-the-job training usually improves loyalty and the ambition for the employee towards the firm; for me, I owe my company, since I gained the knowledge of my job through the on-the-job training.
In my opinion, on-the-job training has increased employee engagement and satisfaction, which was reflected positively eventually on the employee's performance.
On-job-training is considered to be a powerful tool to enhance employees' performance since it creates a sort of competency due to the on-the-job training.
It often reflects positively on an employee's behaviour by providing them with an improved understanding of their performance and by extension; a better evaluation of the things that need improvement.
On-the-job training improves an employee's performance in many aspects; first, it increases employees' satisfaction, because they feel that the company is interested in developing them holistically; secondly, it increases the employees' learning curve by making them more efficient

Table 4		
TECHNOLOGICAL ADAPTATION		
Enhances	Depends	N/A
61	3	5
88.41%	4.35%	7.25%

Table 4 shows that 61 employees interviewed in this study did confirm that were able to improve their behaviour and improved performance in their firms now because of technological adaptation on-the-job training.

Overall, technological adaptation reflected positively on their behaviour and the opportunity to improve their performance in their respective firms.

During their interviews, participants were asked how technological adaptation during on-the-job training affected employee behaviour toward their performance in their firm (Table 5).

Table 5
SAMPLE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
How does technological adaptation enhance employee behaviour towards performance in your firm?
Technology tools and software such as simulation programs enhance the on-the-job training and build the experience in a very effective manner.
As digitalization enhances the employees' performance, it enhances their behaviour because it eases the implementation of the job and simplifies information procurement.
Technology adoption enables an employee to perform more efficiently than ever. The productivity of employees has increased significantly.
Technological adaptation is critical to compete other firms as well as globally. Through technological adaption, employees can finish their work much faster and efficiently. Thus, performance is improved.
It depends on the employees and their understanding of technology. It could enhance employee performance and behaviour or it could have an opposite effect in case there is some resistance to technology amongst employees due to a lack of understanding or uncertainty.
It has drastically improved employees' performance while also boosting their efficiency. With every new technological advancement, the employee resists the new technology, but once they get used to it, we can see an increase in performance.

Table 6		
OPPORTUNITY TO ACHIEVE PROMOTION		
Effect	No effect	N/A
62	1	6
89.86%	1.45%	8.71%

As seen in Table 6, 62 employees interviewed in this study reported that they improved their behaviour and achieved promotion in their firm due to on-the-job training. Overall, on-the-

job training reflected positively on their behaviour and the opportunity to achieve promotion. Participants were asked how on-the-job training affected employees' behaviour in terms of achieving promotion in their firms (Table 7).

Table 7 SAMPLE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
How have on-the-job training improved employees' behaviour and the opportunity to achieve promotion in your firm?
It has a significant impact on their performance. They become more confident and keener to make changes and add value to the team/section/department or division. They create impact and make a lot of achievements for the firm, which are the most important deliverables to be promoted. No one is promoted if they are not ready, and no one is ready without on-the-job training.
On-the-job training is part of improving employees' behaviour and skills to build expert employees; it increases their chances for promotion increase compared with others.
It allowed the employees to be more competent and confident while doing their duties. The promotion rates and competition have increased significantly.
On-the-job training shall increase the level of capabilities and by extension, the level of expected work, which will eventually increase the chances for the employees' promotion.
Employees' behaviour will improve as long as they are learning on the job by taking on different challenges in different areas.
When the employee receives on job training, an immediate effect on can be seen on his behaviour; for example, when upon returning to the workplace, his mood will become better, which will improve productivity. Eventually, he will be eligible for the promotions.

Table 8 ACHIEVEMENTS OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING		
Achievements	No achievements	N/A
62	2	5
89.86%	2.91%	7.25%

How has on-the-job training increased the achievements in their firm?

According to Table 8, 62 employees interviewed in this study reported that they increase their achievements in their firm due to on-the-job training. Overall, on-the-job training reflected positively on their achievements in the firm. Participants were asked during their interviews how on-the-job training affected their achievements in their firm (Table 9).

Table 9 SAMPLE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
What have been the achievements of on-the-job training?
Increased employee knowledge and experience makes them ready to deal with job challenges.
It enhances both my soft skills such as communication, time management, and presentations, and my technical skills, as well those related to improving my experiences in any part of my job role or where the firm needs.
Employees understand their role and responsibility, which contributed to the overall success of the organization.
I can provide an example of a one-million-dollar cost saving achieved through both field and technical training, as I have also been awarded by the company CEO.
It enhances employees' performance and therefore, the overall production of the organization.
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Correcting some of the old practices undertaken by the departments, which used to be usual things. 2. Increasing the efficiency of work processes and adopting faster ways to do things. 3. Cost-optimization and cost-efficiency.

Table 10		
CHALLENGES FACING ON-THE-JOB TRAINING		
Challenges	No challenges	N/A
61	4	4
88.41%	5.81%	5.81%

Table 10 shows 61 of the employees interviewed in this study reported that they faced some challenges in their firm with on-the-job training. Overall, the challenges being faced during on-the-job training reflected negatively on their behaviour as well as the opportunity to improve performance and achieve promotion in their firm.

During their interviews, participants were asked what challenges on-the-job training were faced in the firm and how these challenges affected employees' behaviour towards performance and promotion in their firm (Table 11).

Table 11
SAMPLE RESPONSES TO INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
What are the challenges being faced during on-the-job training in your firm?
The main challenge for on-job training is to have periodic feedback about the employee's progress and performance in the training program that he enrolled in, in order to complete the training successfully and efficiently.
Since last year, during the pandemic of COVID-19, we have faced delays in arranging on-the-job training. In addition, most of them have been cancelled, which has a direct or indirect effect on the job, especially for new employees.
People's resistance, unmotivated employees, and developing an on-the-job training program that fits all employees.
The biggest challenge relates to costs; there are times when the finance department tries to cut costs, and this is one of their favourite subjects.
Finding time to provide training to employees during hectic busy schedules.

CONCLUSION

The findings reported in this study suggest that on-the-job training has an impact on the performance of employees concerning their jobs. Training on-the-job leads to improving staff attitudes and behaviours toward performance in the firm. There are also aspects of technological adaptation that enhance employees' attitudes and behaviours, and ways for employees to achieve promotion in the firm.

The interviews were taken during the COVID-19 pandemic with a number of employees in Eastern Province, Saudi Arabia, firms in 2021. The interviews were online for 69 employees, and the rate of response was 100%.

Based on the results, our recommendation is to improve the availability, service quality, knowledge, and skills of on-the-job training to yield better student satisfaction at the employee's firms. This goal can be achieved by holding on-the-job training for employees.

However, extensive research is still required because of the conflicting outcomes present in the literature concerning on-the-job training and accompanying issues. Moreover, with a view to ensuring optimal results of on-the training, the workplace is one of the most critical factors that support, and motivate trained staff to preserve and improve their knowledge and skills after some time. Employers must use all recently acquired skills and knowledge from training for the benefit of the organization. However, it takes time, and constant practice to successfully apply a new skill and improve on it over time until it became a visceral part of their workplace processes. Workplace practice should be encouraged by supervisors and peers through training.

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