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Training and Post Training Evaluation for Employee Effectiveness: An Empirical Study on Supermarket in India

Dr. Saraju Prasad*

Biju Pattnaik Institute of Information Technology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha, India

Abstract

Training and development of employees is critical in organizations in this era of competition due to the fact that organizations need to survive, grow and develop. Consequentially, training and development has become an issue of strategic importance. Although many scholars have conducted research on training and development practices in organizations in both developing and developed economies, it is worth mentioning that most of the research has concentrated on the benefits of training in general. There is however, limited focus on evaluation of training and development practices in organizations and yet, training and development of employees is critical for the survival and growth of any entity. This study investigates effectiveness of training programme in four key areas like business focus, critical thinking, personal effectiveness and relationship management in retail sector on four categories of employees mostly retail warehouse workers, retail merchandisers, retail sales clerk and retail stocker also studied the extent of development in those four key areas through training.

Keywords: Training; t-test; Correlation; Significance; Employee effectiveness; Empirical study

Introduction

The term 'training' indicates the process involved in improving the aptitudes, skills and abilities of the employees to perform specific jobs. Training helps in updating old talents and developing new ones. 'Successful candidates placed on the jobs need training to perform their duties effectively'. Training, as defined in the present study "is the planned intervention that is designed to enhance the determinants of individual job performance" [1]. Training is related to the skills an employee must acquire to improve the probability of achieving the organization's overall business and academic goals and objectives. Positive training offered to employees may assist with reduction of anxiety or frustration, which most employees have experienced on more than one occasion during their employment careers [2]. The principal objective of training is to make sure the availability of a skilled and willing According to Bramley [3] "Training is a process which is planned to facilitate learning so that people can become more effective in carrying out aspects of their work." Again training is required to meet the changing requirements of the job and the organization, to make them abstain from obsolescence. It will give them a basic knowledge and skill in the new entrants for an intelligent performance of a definite job, prepare them for higher level tasks, assist to function more effectively in their present positions by exposing them to the latest concepts, information and techniques and developing the skills they will need in their particular fields. This process will build up a second line of competent officers and prepare them to occupy more responsible positions and ensure a smooth and efficient working of the departments for qualitative economic output.

Jasuja et al. [4] gave knowledge about 1.6 million people employed in India's organized retail sector and that will increase to another 10 million in the next 10 years out of which almost 90 per cent are expected to be in front-end jobs. The current in-house capabilities and outside training institutes are not equipped to impart skills to this large number. There is a skill gap exists in areas such as sales and customer management, store maintenance, visual merchandising, merchandise planning, billing package, merchandise planning tool, bar-codes, etc. Charania [5] indicated that retail organizations have now realized that their success, to a great extent, is dependent upon the performance of their HR department.

Such companies will succeed provided they employ and retain talent by following best HR practices. Mukherjee et al. [6] explained that organized retail outlets have a wide gradation of employees and such gradations are not present in the unorganized sector. Bisen et al. [7] examined that E-tailing can provide employment to 1.45 million people by 2021 and whose growth will spur the creation of new capabilities and human skills in the areas of logistics, packaging and technology. Nair [8] explained that retailers are dependent on their employees and if they can able to manage their employees efficiently they can able to attain sustainable competitive advantage. Dubinsky et al. [9] observed the relationships among perceived job characteristics, job satisfaction, motivation, organizational commitment, role perceptions, and job performance of retail employees. Lakshete [10] investigated that unskilled manpower, lack of talent, lack of formal retailing education, stressful working culture, high turnover are the major challenges faced by the HR departments in the retail industry in India. Filipe et al. [11] explores that frontline employees' creativity in their work plays a major role in service organizations to retain the customer satisfaction. Jeevananda [12] emphasized the role of retailers to identify the gaps exist between expected service levels and actual service levels provided by retailers and bring out the changes in retail store accordingly. Meera et al. [13] has given emphasis on the long term competitive advantage on the basis of personnel trained on right soft skills, concern for customer's problems, positive attitude, good communication and negotiation skills. Bhattacharya et al. [14] explained that in retail sector the sales manager has to ensure the sales personnel in developing and maintaining customer relationships over time. Coelho et al. [15] examined the significance of gap between employees' service and customer expectations because employees' tasks require different activities like skills, motivation and cognitive strategies.

*Corresponding author: Dr. Saraju Prasad, Biju Pattnaik Institute of Information Technology, Bhubaneswar, Odisha 751023, India, Tel: 9090080822; E-mail: saraju_prasad@rediffmail.com

In organized retail employees get training immediately after recruitment. In case of the sales staff, the training period lasts from 3 days to about a week. Trainings are usually provided by the specific brands, whose products the company sells. Training and updating of it also happens at the store level. The trainings basically cover two aspects: customer interaction and product knowledge. Detailed instructions regarding how to deal with customers are given, including manners, enhancement of communications skills etc. Product knowledge includes some knowledge provision regarding the variety, quality, material of the product. In case of the house-keeping and the security staff, the training is more rigorous and detailed. It includes instructions regarding use of cleaning fluids etc. to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of the mall. Srinivasan et al. [16] explained in their CRISIL report that organized retail is among the two most conducive sectors for the growth of skill development and is characterized by high demand outlook. According to NSDC most of the labor requirement is at the basic skill level and it is an attractive sector for private players to establish themselves in the training space. The heavy consumer focus on retail sector requires employees of strong communication skills and soft skills which motivate strongly for training.

International training and management development are always closely associated with the retail training carried out domestic countries. Gregerson et al. [17] in his research work gave emphasis on four strategies for developing global managers: international travel, formation of diversified teams, international assignments and training. Training is for the improvement of current work skills and behaviour whereas development is for enhancing abilities in relation to future managerial position or job [18]. The abilities in a global manager must be context-specific such as industry-specific and certain characteristics such as cultural sensitivity, ability to handle responsibility, ability to develop subordinates and ability to exhibit and demonstrate [19]. These qualities are considered as important international competencies and can be acquire through effective international training and development.

Objectives

This study provides a thorough understanding of training practices in the organized retail sector and provides information to ensure comprehensive and sustainable skill development to cater to India's steady growth and sustained competitiveness in the global market. This study has the objectives to know the profile of retail employees requires training for the improvement of their skills and give emphasis on the impact of training program on four categories of retail employees and finally the relationship of training program with their goal achievements.

Hypothesis

Hypotheses are generated to study the relevance of the different kind of training program on retail employees for their skill development.

Hypothesis-I

H0 = Organizational training changes the business focus of the employees

H1= Organizational training does not change the business focus of the employees

Hypothesis-II

H0 = Organizational training changes the critical thinking of the employees

H1= Organizational training does not change the critical thinking of the employees

Hypothesis-III

H0 = Organizational training changes the personal effectiveness of the employees

H1= Organizational training does not change the personal effectiveness of the employees

Hypothesis-IV

H0 = Organizational training changes the relationship management of the employees

H1= Organizational training does not change the relationship management of the employees

Research Methodology

This research is based on the employees working in retail industry and has taken training program for skill development. Sample data are collected from the respondents through questionnaire method, personal discussion and interaction. Data have been collected through quota sampling unit from newly appointed employees and old employees especially from Reliance Retail, Shoppers Stop, Big Bazaar, Pantaloon the biggest retailers in India. 400 questionnaires were distributed among the newly appointed and old employees and 268 questionnaire used for the analysis making an overall response rate of 67%. Mostly paired test and correlation test conducted through the software package to know the impact of before and after training skill development.

Literature Review

Training acts as a pathway for learning and creating a sense of progression in employees which indirectly leads the organizational achievement [20]. Choo et al. [21] explains that training has positive impacts on productivity which leads to higher level of customer and employee satisfaction and enhances brand value. Michael et al. [22] revealed that training effects performance develops the skill base and enhances the level of competence which helps in developing climate for learning which also supports self-managed learning practices like coaching and mentoring. Truelove [23] identified that learning is a result of experience or training whereas Sadler-Smith [24] explained that learning as an "elusive phenomenon" and drew upon learning from various fields whereas training was identified as one of those fields. He described again that it is a very formal, systematic and step wise process for acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment. Buckley et al. [25] explained that organizations' would need to respond in a timely and flexible way for survival and growth and to cope with the change by motivating the staff to be equipped with new knowledge, skills and attitudes. Garratt [26] postulated that the rate of learning shall be greater or equal to the rate of change so that one is able to survive, optimize returns or exploit new opportunities.

Burden et al. [27] found that ability of an organization to learn faster than its competitors is its sustainable competitive advantage. Acton et al. [28] explained that training not only positively changed job performance but also give improvement of employee ability to manage stress at work and also identified that training of employees does not only positively relates to employee job satisfaction but also contributes in building a negative relation to turnover. Winterton [29] stressed that failure to invest in training and development contributes to higher labor turnover. Similarly the study by Lopez [30] found that organisational learning is a mediator for high performance human resource and business achievements. However Clarke [31] contradicted

on his findings that there emerged some association between training and business performance. Dawe [32] explained success is one of the drivers for a successful training program can be thought of in terms of the extent to which it achieves desired objectives. Jolles [33] insisted that establishing utility of training program would make trainees understand the need to learn. Buckley and Caple [25] described that the training objectives is to speculate the activities which will be able to perform at the end of training whereas Silberman [34] has given emphasis on the importance of objectives which is a pillar to a training programs and explained that the value objectives bring to the training program is helping to create the basis for measuring the effectiveness of the training in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes. Wickramasinghe [35] insisted that objectives are prepared to choose a type of training programs required to provide an overview of participants' learning, to study the expectation of participants after the completion of the program and to validate or evaluate training programs. Gauld et al. [36] emphasized that effectiveness of trainers is a momentous in the final return on training investment. Moss [37] suggested that trainers always prepare plans to show encouragement and empathy to the learners. Buckley et al. [25] examined that the role of trainer is changing as active communicator, pro-active thinker to achieve training objectives with strategic dimension of the organisation holding central importance. Trainer plays an important role in transferring the learning to work. Broad [38] identified that poor training design is one of drawbacks in training programs to achieve good learning. Thus a complete trainer is one who has the skills ranging from foundation to administration. Sofo [39] reported learning acquired from training sessions is applied and maintained on the job to increase performance and productivity but still only about 10% of learning in training is applied on the job [40]. Even if the knowledge obtained through the training is accurate but the organizational performance will not improve [41]. Seyler et al. [42] implied that the environmental variables like opportunity to use, peer support, supervisor sanctions, and supervisor support have a broader influence not only on post-training behavior but also on motivation to transfer. In contrary Klink et al. [43] focused on just one environmental behavior like supervisory behavior has any impact on the transfer of training.

Hertzberg [44] proposed training is a hygiene factor and may not be a primary cause of employee satisfaction but on the contrary Rowold [45] found training was specifically designed to accomplish an explicit goal to enhance job satisfaction. Bedingham [46] observed that training brought changes in the employees' behavior and the benefits of this were established by the research of Eaglen et al. [47] that improved productivity, employee satisfaction, reduced turnover and willingness to accept strategic and organizational goal. According to Sadler-Smith [24] could be done through training as it provides a mean to master the skills employee's needs to advance in the company. Alvarez et al. [48] finds it to be an important variable that affects the training effectiveness before its commencement. Tai [49] observed that pre-information brings trainees more self-efficacy and training motivation to learn Thus, to raise employees' learning self-efficacy and training motivation, managers should clearly address the importance of training before they attend the training. Vianen et al. [50] examined individual and situational factors affect the relationship among the age, employee training and development willingness. Jackson [51] found that engaging trainees and providing discussion prompts are essential ingredient for a successful training similarly the success of the training session could be attributed to the reason identified by Choo et al. [21] who found trainees highly value a helpful and well prepared trainer. Vermeulen [52] explained that employees complete a training program with a feeling that it would be useful in daily work but once they get back to work it is not practiced they are likely to experience a transfer gap. Maurer et al. [53] examined that training is a necessary ingredient of the job that creates enhanced employee commitment and satisfaction with the training program has been found to be a contributor in attainment of job satisfaction. Evaluation determines the effect of training at individual, departmental and organizational levels [54]. Effective training can be evaluated by the capacity of trainees to apply knowledge, skills and abilities gained in training to their work environment and maintain them over time in their job contexts.

However, Berman et al. [55] argues that training effectiveness is constrained because of inadequate transfer of learning from training environment to workplace environment and also argue that training is not sufficient in improving performance. Rolf [56] outlines some of the consequences of inadequate training as poor planning skills and decision making, which in turn will impair the organisation's profit and success. Other symptoms of inadequate training include overtime, high labour turnover and poor employee morale. Formal training programmes are an effective way of directly transferring the organisational goals and values to a whole group of people simultaneously [57,58]. Appropriate training like knowledge and skills required to gain competency can develop managers at all levels to manage change in organisation and business environment [59]. Helliriegel et al. [60] observed that training in an organization enhances productivity through better job performance, with efficient use of human resources, goals and objectives by lessening cost due to reduce labour turnover, errors, accidents and absenteeism and capable of high retention of the existing staff. Echard et al. [61] stated that effective training techniques can produce significant business results especially in customer service, product development, and capability in obtaining new skill set and also improves the culture of quality in business and workforce. Huang [62] cite that well educated and trained workforce is essential to the maintenance of a business firm's competitive advantage in a global economy.

Training is an option for employees for self-improvement, promotion and job satisfaction by providing better job performance and a chance to learn new things and having ability to adapt and cope with changes [59]. This is supported by [63] by saying the objective of any organisation training program is to train the employees to meet the needs of the organization with the optimum profit potential. In addition Hower [64] explained that the purpose of training is to enhance the skills necessary to make decisions and accomplish the employees' tasks and skills to give outstanding service to customers. In the business of customer service, training is essential to the impact made on the customers. Lynton et al. [65] elaborated that employees' motivation for training will depend upon their involvement and the knowledge communicates to them through all its contacts and feel confident that the training are clear and shows perceptive concern for people taking part in the program. Guerrero et al. [66] found that systematic observations by a colleague of a employees' behaviour in a session and sharing indications of their effectiveness will greatly enhanced the motivation for training. Furthermore Bushart et al. [67] emphasizes that training leads to an increment in employees' satisfaction, updating of skills and an increased commitment to the organization.

Results and Implications

The study comprises the effectiveness of training for four categories of employees for organizational development. The four categories of employees are mostly taken for the research and they are mostly 'retail warehouse workers', 'retail merchandisers', 'retail sales clerk' and 'retail

stocker'. Retail warehouse worker is responsible to keep the products in right orders in warehouse so that the demand at the retail can be fulfilled smoothly. Retail Merchandisers determine the best ways to display each product in the department for maximum sales. Retail Sales Clerk will help the consumers who interact with the product for the first time. At night, Retail Stockers ensure that the shelves are full by replacing the appropriate products from stores.

Demographic profile

A demographic profile includes age, sex, income and education. A common way to gather more specific demographic information is using a survey through the research tool of questionnaire to gather employees' data.

Table 1 shows the demographic profile of the employees of different retail organizations' where 58.21% are male and 41.79% are female and 61.94% are graduation or more and 38.06% are below graduation. 67.16% are below the age of 25 years and 32.84% are above the age of 25 years. By considering the income level 60.45% are above Rs.10,000/- per month and 39.55% are less than Rs.10,000/- per month.

Results

Four areas mostly considered for the training effectiveness in retail employees. They are mostly: business focus, critical thinking, personal effectiveness and relationship management.

Business focus: Table 2 shows in business focus the highest change in mean score in the case of retail warehouse workers (2.22) and second highest in the case of retail sales clerk (1.73). This implies that these two categories of employees are more focus towards organization after the training than rest two. In Table 3 the high correlation in three categories

mostly retail merchandisers (0.806), retail stockers (0.709) and retail warehouse workers (0.632) hence null hypothesis (H_0) accepted which shows that there is a great impact of training on their business focus but has very marginal negative impact on retail sales clerk (-0.054) alternate hypothesis (H_1) accepted means no development after training.

Critical thinking: Table 4 shows in critical thinking the highest change in mean score in the case of retail warehouse workers (2.52) and second highest in the case of retail sales clerk (1.78). This implies that these two categories of employees are more creative in selling process and handling the merchandise in the organization after the training than rest two. In Table 5 the high correlation in three categories mostly retail merchandisers (0.826), retail stockers (0.752) and retail warehouse workers (0.654) hence null hypothesis (H_0) accepted which shows that there is a great impact of training on their critical thinking but has very marginal negative impact on retail sales clerk (-0.056) hence alternative hypothesis(H_1) accepted means no development after training.

Personal effectiveness: Table 6 shows in personal effectiveness the highest change in mean score in the case of retail sales clerk (1.79) and second highest in the case of retail warehouse worker (1.59). This implies that these two categories of employees are more effectiveness in their performance in the organization after the training than rest two. In Table 7 the high correlation in three categories mostly retail stockers (0.974), retail merchandisers (0.816), retail sales clerks (0.774) and retail warehouse worker (0.713) hence null hypothesis (H_0) accepted which shows that there is a great impact of training on their personal effectiveness.

Relationship management: Table 8 shows in relationship management the highest change in mean score in the case of retail

Employee Category	Sub-category	No. of Employees	Percentage
Sex	Male	156	58.21
	Female	112	41.79
Education	Below Graduation	102	38.06
	Above Graduation	166	61.94
Age	Less than 25 Yrs.	180	67.16
	Above 25 Yrs.	88	32.84
Income (per month)	Less than 10,000	106	39.55
	Above 10,000	162	60.45
Years of Service	Less than 5	98	36.57
	Above 5	170	63.43
Types of Job	Retail Warehouse Worker	72	26.87
	Retail Merchandisers	72	26.87
	Retail Sales Clerk	64	23.88
	Retail Stocker	60	22.39

Table 1: Demographic profile of retail employees.

Business Focus (Paired Samples Test)									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Types of Employees	Training Programme	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Retail Warehouse Worker	After Training – Before Training	2.222	0.419	0.049	2.124	2.321	45.040	71	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After Training – Before Training	1.194	0.988	0.116	0.962	1.427	10.260	71	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After Training – Before Training	1.736	1.048	0.124	1.490	1.982	14.056	63	0.000
Retail Stocker	After Training – Before Training	1.667	0.475	0.056	1.555	1.778	29.791	59	0.000

Table 2: Business focus (paired samples test).

Business Focus (Paired Samples Correlations)				
Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**N**	**Correlation**	**Sig.**
Retail Warehouse Worker	After & Before Training	72	0.632	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After & Before Training	72	0.806	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After & Before Training	64	-0.054	0.650
Retail Stocker	After & Before Training	60	0.709	0.000

Table 3: Business focus (paired samples correlations).

Critical Thinking (Paired Samples Test)									
		Paired Differences							
Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**		**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
					Lower	**Upper**			
Retail Warehouse Worker	After Training – Before Training	2.52	0.452	0.039	2.092	2.341	44.043	71	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After Training – Before Training	1.084	0.972	0.106	0.936	1.325	11.243	71	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After Training – Before Training	1.786	1.011	0.135	1.510	1.852	14.156	63	0.000
Retail Stocker	After Training – Before Training	1.558	0.485	0.058	1.585	1.688	28.792	59	0.000

Table 4: Critical thinking (paired samples test).

Critical Thinking (Paired Samples Correlations)				
Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**N**	**Correlation**	**Sig.**
Retail Warehouse Worker	After & Before Training	72	0.654	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After & Before Training	72	0.826	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After & Before Training	64	-0.056	0.504
Retail Stocker	After & Before Training	60	0.752	0.000

Table 5: Critical thinking (paired samples correlations).

		Paired Differences							
Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**		**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
					Lower	**Upper**			
Retail Warehouse Worker	After Training – Before Training	1.597	0.744	0.088	1.422	1.772	18.212	71	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After Training – Before Training	1.278	1.038	0.122	1.034	1.522	10.449	71	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After Training – Before Training	1.792	0.855	0.101	1.591	1.993	17.786	63	0.000
Retail Stocker	After Training – Before Training	1.292	0.458	0.054	1.184	1.399	23.945	59	0.000

Table 6: Personal effectiveness (pared sample test).

Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**N**	**Correlation**	**Sig.**
Retail Warehouse Worker	After & Before Training	72	0.713	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After & Before Training	72	0.816	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After & Before Training	64	0.774	0.000
Retail Stocker	After & Before Training	60	0.974	0.000

Table 7: Personal effectiveness (paired correlation).

Relationship Management (Paired Samples Test)									
		Paired Differences							
Types of Employees	**Training Programme**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Std. Error Mean**	**95% Confidence Interval of the Difference**		**t**	**df**	**Sig. (2-tailed)**
					Lower	**Upper**			
Retail Warehouse Worker	After Training – Before Training	1.625	0.488	0.057	1.510	1.740	28.283	71	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After Training – Before Training	1.042	1.027	0.121	0.800	1.283	8.607	71	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After Training – Before Training	1.167	0.919	0.108	0.951	1.383	10.769	63	0.000
Retail Stocker	After Training – Before Training	1.514	0.503	0.059	1.396	1.632	25.522	59	0.000

Table 8: Relationship management (paired samples test).

warehouse worker (1.62) and second highest in the case of retail stocker (1.51). This implies that these two categories of employees are more motivated to maintain better relationship with the organization after the training than rest two. In Table 9 the high correlation in three categories mostly retail sales clerks (0.784), retail merchandisers (0.766) and retail warehouse workers (0.774) hence null hypothesis accepted which show that there is a great impact of training on their personal effectiveness but retail stockers (0.345) has little impact from training hence alternative hypothesis (H_1) means no development after training.

Concluding Observation

This study investigates four key areas business focus, critical thinking, personal effectiveness and relationship management is most important for all employees. Designing a proper training program is more essential for effective development in those key areas. The four kinds of employees having similar kind of function considered to know the impact on their four key areas after training. All the three categories of employees' retail warehouse workers, retail sales clerk and retail stocker has great impact on training in business focus, critical thinking, personal effectiveness and relationship management but retail merchandisers have little impact. Further the rate of development through the training program can be observed from the correlation matrix of each category of employees. Highest positive correlation shows in the case of personal effectiveness followed by relationship management in all the categories of employees which reflects the employees' own development is more in the training program and have stronger bond with the organization. In business focus and critical thinking negative correlation is shown in the case of retail sales clerk which shows the they are mostly stereotyped and mostly non-interested for the betterment of the organization. All those four cases retail merchandiser rate of development is highest in the training program which reflects they are highly inspired and self-motivated personnel as they belongs to the core marketing area.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

It is a convenience sample which shares some characteristics of Indian employees of organized retail sectors. The research is based on the four categories of employees working in different retail formats of Hyderabad a city in state Andhra Pradesh and the prediction is on the basis of the city only. The four dimensions considered here for the analysis are limited to the employee's career and organizational development. The research mostly highlighted the quantitative part of the survey not the qualitative one. A study with a sample from different parts of India and the employees of the diverse organized retail sector can be recommended for further research. Other factors and research applications can be applied to know the employees' relative development through training in organized retail sector.

Relationship Management (Paired Samples Correlations)				
Types of Employees	Training Programme	N	Correlation	Sig.
Retail Warehouse Worker	After & Before Training	72	0.762	0.000
Retail Merchandisers	After & Before Training	72	0.766	0.000
Retail Sales Clerk	After & Before Training	64	0.784	0.000
Retail Stocker	After & Before Training	60	0.345	0.003

Table 9: Relationship management (paired samples correlations).

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