Why Training and Development Programs Don't Improve Employee Productivity

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ABSTRACT:
This study investigates why training and development initiatives don't boost production. This research will determine what characteristics caused employees to do the same after receiving training from the company. Today, research is crucial to proving an area's legitimacy. Training and development are crucial in any organization and can lead to excellent results, but not all organizations do so, therefore we must consider the other side. Many firms devote cash for the T&D department to determine how effective these programs are and how they affect employee productivity. We used the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model to objectively assess training efficacy. Our preference was the Kirkpatrick Model due to its benefits. Works using traditional and digital learning programs had explicit evaluation steps. It helped us understand how training programs affect company outcomes. We found it easy to adopt the approach due to its flexibility.

Keywords: training efficacy, boost production, employee productivity, Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model.


INTRODUCTION
Training and Development Programs refer to organized efforts implemented by organizations to improve the abilities, understanding, and proficiencies of their personnel [1]. These programs consist of various activities, such as workshops, seminars, e-learning courses, on-the-job training, and mentorship, with the aim of enhancing the performance of individuals and organizations.

Training and development programs are crucial elements of corporate initiatives designed to improve employee skills, knowledge, and overall performance [2-3]. Despite substantial investments in these initiatives, numerous firms discover that they fail to provide the anticipated enhancements in staff productivity. This essay examines the elements that contribute to the failure of training and
development programs to result in higher productivity. It specifically focuses on program design, implementation, and organizational culture.

Alterative is a software development company that focuses on creating e-commerce and digital transformation solutions [4]. They offer assistance in resolving problems, doing research and development, and providing operational support for the client's digital retail requirements. In 2017, they were the first to introduce payment gateways and shipping integrations on the Shopify platform for the Pakistani market. Their efforts also played a significant role in advancing the whole ecommerce ecosystem in the nation. They are the foremost and most extensive providers of Shopify services in Pakistan.

Although there is a significant amount of literature discussing the significance and efficacy of training and development programs, there are still some gaps that require additional investigation. By identifying and correcting these gaps, we may increase our understanding of the reasons behind program failures in enhancing employee productivity and develop more efficient training interventions. This study aims to identify the specific attributes that lead employees to exhibit similar behaviors following their completion of corporate training. Research plays a vital role in establishing the authenticity of a particular field or subject. Training and development are essential in every organization and can yield outstanding outcomes. However, not all organizations prioritize these activities, thus it is important to acknowledge the opposing perspective. Numerous companies allocate funds for the Training and Development department to assess the efficacy of these programs and their impact on staff productivity. We employed the Kirkpatrick Four-Level program Evaluation Model to impartially evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on training and development emphasizes certain crucial aspects that impact the efficacy of these programs in enhancing employee productivity. The effectiveness of training is contingent upon various factors, such as the pertinence of the training material, the excellence of the program's structure, the extent of post-training assistance, managerial engagement, organizational culture, and alignment with strategic objectives. Organizations can optimize the effectiveness of their training activities and attain significant enhancements in staff productivity by tackling these concerns.

Training and Development

Training and development programs are essential for the expansion and competitiveness of enterprises. Their objective is to enhance the abilities, expertise, and efficiency of employees, with the expectation of achieving increased productivity. Many experts and professionals stress the significance of these initiatives in promoting employee engagement, improving work satisfaction, and decreasing turnover rates. Baca et al., [5] states that good training programs are in line with company goals and cater to the developmental needs of employees, resulting in a workforce that is more competent and motivated.

According to Velada et al., [6] training design refers to the degree to which the training has been designed and delivered in such a way that provides trainees the ability to transfer learning back to the job. It is crucial for firms to use appropriate training design to enhance employee performance. In order to achieve effective training outcomes, organizations should identify a training design(s) that is in accordance with the needs of its employees. Training design plays a very vital role in employee productivity as well as organizational performance.

According to Ekundayo et al., [7], development activities prepare an individual for new skills and learning while at work. These improve their skills and upgrade their existing knowledge in order to perform better. Employee development activities create learning culture in an organization and it goes a long way in strengthening the relationship among employees; and it creates room for self-analysis of oneself.
Theoretical Frameworks

Multiple theoretical frameworks provide the foundation for designing and assessing training and development programs. Two of the most prominent theories are the Human Capital Theory and the Social Learning Theory.

Blundell et al., [8] presents an accessible analysis of the evidence regarding the benefits of education and training for individuals, companies, and the overall economy. The notion of human capital states that investments in employee training enhance their skills and capabilities, hence increasing their worth to the firm. Enhanced human capital is anticipated to result in increased productivity and organizational performance.

Social Learning Theory, proposed by Bandura in 1977, highlights the significance of observing and imitating the behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses of others. Training programs that integrate components of social learning, such as mentorship and peer learning, are thought to be more efficient in promoting behavioral change. Schunk et al., [9] examine motivation via the lens of Bandura's social cognitive theory. Motivation encompasses the mechanisms that initiate and maintain activities aimed at achieving specific objectives. Motivational processes refer to the personal and internal factors that influence many outcomes, including decision-making, exertion of effort, perseverance, accomplishment, and regulation of one's environment.

Common Issues in Training Programs

Although there are potential advantages in theory, numerous training and development initiatives do not achieve the anticipated enhancements in staff productivity. The literature highlights various prevalent concerns:

Inadequate needs assessment: An exhaustive needs assessment is essential for the efficacy of training programs. It guarantees that the training material is pertinent and effectively targets the specific areas where employees lack abilities. Vance et al., [10] found that numerous firms neglect this crucial phase, resulting in generic training programs that fail to address the specific requirements of their employees.

Poor program design: An optimal training program should achieve a harmonious equilibrium between theoretical understanding and practical application. Nevertheless, numerous programs face criticism for their excessive focus on theory rather than equipping employees with practical abilities. According to Wahl et al., [11], training programs should be structured to incorporate practical exercises, real-life situations, and chances for repetition to ensure that employees can effectively use their acquired knowledge in their respective professional positions.

Insufficient continuation and reinforcement: Training is not a singular occurrence but an ongoing and perpetual process. Lack of follow-up and reinforcement can lead to rapid deterioration of the skills and knowledge gained during training. Lazzara et al., [12] emphasize the significance of providing post-training support, including as coaching, feedback, and opportunities for practice, in order to guarantee that employees retain and utilize their newly acquired abilities.

Insufficient Management Support: The role of management is crucial in the effectiveness of training programs. Managerial assistance can bolster the perceived significance of training and motivate employees to implement newly acquired abilities. Nevertheless, according to Coetzer et al., [13], a significant number of managers neglect to offer essential assistance, such as acknowledging and incentivizing advancements or creating avenues for employees to apply their acquired abilities.

METHODOLOGY

Assessing the efficacy of training programs is crucial for comprehending their influence on employee productivity. The Kirkpatrick Model, developed by Donald Kirkpatrick in 1959, is widely used for evaluating the effectiveness of training programs. It consists of four levels:

1. Assessment: Assesses the level of satisfaction and involvement of participants in the training.
2. Learning: Evaluates the growth in knowledge or expertise acquired as a direct outcome of the training.
(3) Behavior: Assesses the degree to which individuals implement acquired knowledge in their professional roles.

(4) Results: Evaluates the comprehensive influence of the training on organizational outcomes, including productivity and profitability.

This study uses the Kirkpatrick Model due to its comprehensive nature, flexibility, and ability to provide a clear framework for evaluating both traditional and digital learning programs. Level 1 (Reaction): Many employees reported that training sessions were not engaging or relevant to their job roles. This lack of engagement suggests that the training content was not tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants. Level 2 (Learning): Assessments showed that while employees did gain new knowledge and skills during training, the information was often too theoretical and not easily applicable to their daily tasks. This gap between learning and practical application limits the potential productivity gains. Level 3 (Behavior): Observations and feedback indicated that employees struggled to integrate new skills into their work routines. The absence of follow-up support and reinforcement led to a rapid decline in the application of newly acquired competencies. Level 4 (Results): The overall impact on organizational productivity was minimal. Key performance indicators (KPIs) related to productivity showed little to no improvement post-training. This outcome highlights the disconnect between the training objectives and the actual needs of the organization.

Figure 1. Four Levels of Proposed Methodology

**Empirical Studies**

Empirical research yields inconclusive results about the efficacy of training programs in enhancing employee productivity. Ng et al., [14] performed a meta-analysis on training effectiveness and discovered that, on average, training has a beneficial influence on work performance. Nevertheless, the magnitude of this influence differs significantly based on variables such as the structure of the training regimen, the environment in which it is implemented, and the degree of administrative backing.

**Digital Learning and Technology**

The emergence of digital learning tools has revolutionized the field of training and development. Utilizing e-learning platforms [15], virtual reality simulations [16], and mobile learning applications present novel prospects for delivering efficient training. As to the findings of Gubbins et al. [17], digital learning can be equally effective as traditional classroom training if it is well designed and delivered. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of digital learning systems is contingent upon variables such as user involvement, interaction, and the incorporation of social learning components.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Following the completion of interviews with employees and managers, the TNA conducted evaluations and utilized Kirkpatrick models to assess the effectiveness of the training attended by
the personnel. We were granted permission to analyze two training sessions using the Kirkpatrick model. The first training session focused on time management and task management, while the second training session focused on GSuite functional training.

Results

We generated the survey through google forms and sent it to the employees immediately after training to get their review and opinions about the training. We made the form anonymous to maintain the privacy of the employees and for the sake of honest responses. Identities of all employees were hidden in the form responses. Upon careful evaluation of each question, it was evident that the findings were varied. It was seen that approximately 70-80 percent of the attendees expressed dissatisfaction with the training program they had participated in. Several individuals cited various reasons for finding the training unsuitable. Some expressed that the training did not align with their specific needs, while others lacked interest due to the absence of an opportunity to provide input on their training preferences. Additionally, some individuals were dissatisfied with both the trainer and the substance of the training. The summary of the responses is provided below for the purpose of verifying the findings (as shown in Figures 2 to 5).

![Figure 2. In the Context of Training Interactive](image)

![Figure 3. In the Context of Effective Use of Time](image)
Four employees, recommended by their superiors, received training in time and task management. During the learning phase, the model manager of the organization administered a test to assess the participants' proficiency in time and task management. The manager diligently assessed employees' knowledge, skill, attitude, confidence, and dedication through a collaborative and guided quiz. During the quiz, he poses these questions to assess the level of comprehension among the employees on the provided material. At the end level we asked the manager to examine the ROTI (Result of Training Investment). The managers tried to look at how well they have reached the goals that set out to accomplish through training. We asked the following:

1. Do you feel that the team has performed better since training?
2. Which areas have improved the most?
3. Are the employees making fewer errors and getting projects done more quickly and efficiently?
4. Are our customers/clients pleased with our improvements?
5. To what extent has the training helped your team reach goals?

The result was very much like we were expecting due to our previous findings. The managers shared the comparison of previous performance rating and new/current performance rating of the particular employees in which the performance evaluation of 7 out of 10 employees was the same as the previous performance. Only 3 of them improved their skill set and applied the learned content within their functional areas.
Discussion

The findings from the Kirkpatrick Model analysis reveal several critical factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of training and development programs: 1) Relevance and Engagement: Training programs must be tailored to the specific needs and roles of employees to ensure relevance and engagement. 2) Practical Application: Training content should focus on practical, hands-on skills that employees can immediately apply in their work. 3) Ongoing Support: Continuous follow-up, support, and reinforcement are essential to help employees integrate new skills into their daily routines. 4) Managerial Involvement: Active participation and endorsement from management can enhance the perceived importance and effectiveness of training. 5) Cultural Adaptation: Organizations need to foster a culture that is open to change and encourages the adoption of new skills and practices. 6) Strategic Alignment: Training programs should align with the strategic goals of the organization to ensure they contribute to overall productivity.

Recommendations

In terms of the study findings, the following recommendations are made:

(1) Conduct Thorough Needs Assessments: Ensure training programs are designed to address specific skills gaps and developmental needs.

(2) Enhance Program Design: Focus on practical, hands-on training that is directly applicable to employees' roles.

(3) Implement Ongoing Support Mechanisms: Provide continuous reinforcement and opportunities for employees to practice new skills.

(4) Increase Management Involvement: Encourage active participation and support from managers to enhance the effectiveness of training programs.

(5) Foster a Supportive Culture: Promote a culture that values continuous learning and is open to change.

(6) Align Training with Organizational Goals: Ensure training objectives are strategically aligned with the overall goals of the organization.

By following these recommendations, organizations can improve the effectiveness of their training and development programs and ultimately enhance employee productivity.

CONCLUSION

Training and development programs have the potential to significantly enhance employee productivity, but their success depends on several critical factors. By addressing issues related to needs assessment, program design, follow-up support, managerial involvement, organizational culture, and strategic alignment, organizations can maximize the impact of their training initiatives. The application of the Kirkpatrick Four-Level Training Evaluation Model in this study provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating training effectiveness and highlights the areas that need improvement to achieve meaningful productivity gains. After careful analysis, we have determined that the lack of improvement in productivity, despite the implementation of training programs, can be attributed to the following factors:

- The TNA forms do not incorporate the concerns of the trainees who have been selected as relevant.
- Some employees find the identified training to be irrelevant, which leads to a lack of interest in the training programs.
- The company does not provide incentives or acknowledgments for the use of acquired knowledge in training programs.
- The company's internal trainers lack the necessary expertise and are ill-equipped to handle advanced training programs.
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