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EMPLOYEE PERCEPTION ON TRAINING: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE SECTOR

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Abstract

Competitive Industrial Organizations have realized the potential of training and development needs of employees for Human Resource value creation. However the employees perspective differ across manufacturing and service sector in India. The objective of the study is to do a comparative study of manufacturing and service sector in India with respect to employees' perception of the training program regarding: its design, quality of the programme and its functions and role at various levels. An exploratory research is carried out on selected organizations amongst employees in both manufacturing and service organizations. It may be stated that in both manufacturing and services sector, though there exists a planned approach for employee training, the quality of training programmes needs to be improved. Manufacturing sector employees have better peception regarding the quality of training programs. Regarding functions and role of training program at individual level and role of training programme at the organisational level service sector employees have a better perception. Practical implications of these findings for manufacturing sector is that they need to review the objectives of the training prgrammes, which, it seems, need to be aligned with individual and organizational goals. Services sector needs to improve the quality of training programs.

Keywords: Training, Employees perception, Manufacturing Sector, Service Sector

INTRODUCTION

Competitive industrial organizations can no longer ignore the training and development needs of its employees without seriously inhibiting its performance.

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Even the most careful employee selection, does not eliminate the need for training, since people are not moulded to specifications and rarely meet the demands of their jobs adequately.

An exhaustive literature review is carried out to understand the various facets of a training process viz: its design, development, implementation and evaluation. Employee's perspective on these issues is gauged to further compare how it differs in manufacturing and service sector. Its role is highlighted and recommendations are made to further improve the process. An empirical research is carried on identified manufacturing and service industries on a sample of around 100 employees at various levels in Indian Organizations.

LITERATURE STUDY

An exhaustive literature review is carried out to understand the various facets of a training process viz: its design, development, implementation and evaluation process. The issues related to it are identified to gauge employees' perception on the same.

Training has evolved as a term which not only relates to an employee but, also in terms of growth, development and learning initiatives that takes place in an organization. From an employee perspective: 'Training (and development) is the process to obtain or transfer knowledge, skills and abilities needed to carry out a specific activity or task (Mello, 2009). It is concerned with providing an individual with the opportunity to learn what s/he needs to, in order to do their job more effectively, (Megginson and Pedler, 1992)". Thus, training may be seen as a complex learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, competencies, sharpening of skills, concepts, rules or changing of attitudes and behaviours to enhance the performance of employees. Training is an activity leading to skilled behaviour.

Issues related to Training: External and internal environmental forces pose various threats and opportunities to an organisation. The internal forces are the various demands of the organization for a better learning environment. An organisation must continuously update itself to create an environment of learning and development. Therefore, trainers need to be aware of these forces which may impact the content, form, and conduct of the training efforts. The training process can be categorised under following stages:

Planning and Designing stage: Bhatti and Kaur, (2010) highlighted the dual role of perceived content validity as a factor to develop positive trainee reaction and increase trainee performance self-efficacy. Furthermore, the study proposes that transfer design and perceived content validity increase trainee performance self-efficacy, which leads to maximizing training transfer through transfer motivation. Before starting a training program, a trainer analyzes his technical, interpersonal, judgmental skills in order to deliver quality content to trainers.

Implementation stage: Various innovations are being done to make the training process effective. According to a survey conducted by International Coach Federation (ICF), more than 4,000 companies are using coach for their executives. These coaches are experts, most of the time outside consultants. Brotherton and Evans. (2010) found that the role of the individual trainer is a crucial factor in retaining business clients, with quality of training delivered and the professionalism of the trainer being of utmost importance. Panagiotakopoulos, (2011) suggested that training activities in industrial micro-firms are significantly affected by the business strategy adopted by micro-firms, the owner commitment towards employee training and development and the way work is organized. He further concluded that better access to information on the applicability and usefulness of HRD to small firms can be crucial to overcoming the barriers to skills development that exists among such firms. The analysis suggests that a key challenge for policy makers in this area is to facilitate changes in owner attitudes, improve access to training interventions and create the necessary institutional conditions to encourage SMEs to move to high value-added trajectories. Parijat Upadhyay et. al., (2011) highlighted four crucial factors that influence the ERP implementation process in the Indian MSME (manufacturing) segment. Broadly, they may be summed up under the following heads: project execution competency; product and vendor perspective; organizational climate; and technical perspective. All these four aspects may be improved through proper training. Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock, (2010) found that spaced rather than massed training practice resulted in greater transfer quality, higher self-reports of sales competence, and improved key figures. Spaced training did not surpass massed training in terms of transfer quantity. McGuire and Bagher, (2010) found that the value of diversity training to promoting inclusivity, equality and fairness in organizations is underlined as is the importance of the human resource development community, adopting a more proactive role in addressing the issue of diversity through research and course curricula.

Evaluation stage: Evaluation of training effectiveness is a highly desirable step in total training program so that one can judge the value or worth of the training. Hamblin, (2010) has defined training evaluation as "any attempt to obtain information (feedback) on the effect of a training program and to assess the value of the training in the light of that information". Training as a service quality results requires, continuous evaluation to achieve continuous improvement. Evaluation should pervade the training process. Ford, (2009) found that for most training professionals, learning in the classroom does not have a direct correlation to new workplace behaviors. However, with planning, diligent attention, and small changes to the process, training professionals can buck this trend. Keys to transferring training from the classroom to the workplace include a reasonable number of objectives, pre-learning and post-learning activities, active training experiences, and follow-up to create follow-through.

Aziz and Ahmad, (2011) suggested the main characteristics of a training programme, that stimulate training motivation are; option to voluntary attendance,

training reputation, appropriate training design, and the relevance of training for job, career and personal-related needs.

The present paper studies the employees' perspective on training initiatives in manufacturing and services sector in India. A comparison is drawn to understand how the training issues in both the sector differ.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The present study is a combination of Exploratory and Descriptive research. The objective of the study is do a comparative study of manufacturing and service sector in India with respect to employees' perception of the training program regarding: its design, quality of the programme and its functions and role at various levels. Both the primary and the secondary data has been used for the study. Primary data was collected by taking direct feedback from the employees through face to face interview and information was collected through structured interview. Secondary data has been gathered from the various websites by using the internet, text books, etc. Questionnaire was designed keeping the research objectives in mind. It consists of 18 questions in total out of which there were 16 closed-ended questions along with 2 open-ended questions. Dichotomous as well as Likert scale was used for the study. The method of conducting survey was semi-structured. A total sample of 100 employees in four Indian organizations was drawn for the study. Two organizations were in service sector (banking) and two were in manufacturing sector. Adequate representation of senior, middle and lower employees including non-executives were taken to get a homogenous opinion about the survey. This is a cross sectional study. The methodology being applied was non-probabilistic in nature. The sampling units were picked up randomly. However the possibility of convenience of the researcher is not ruled out to avoid the limitations of time and cost. The data collected was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences 4.5). Statistical methods used were cross-tabulations and Mann-Whitney U Test measures for mean value calculations of the sample population amongst service sector and manufacturing sector.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

Sample Profile: 50 employees were covered from service sector and 50 from manufacturing sector. These covered employees at top, middle and lower level of management. Non-executives were also covered in both the sectors. This is represented in the table below (Table 1).

Table 1Industry that belongs to* Level of Management Respondent belongs to Crosstabulation

			Level of Management respondent belongs to				
			Senior	Junior	Middle	Non-executive	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	7 14.0%	9 18.0%	23 46.0%	11 22.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	3 6.0%	9 18.0%	31 62.0%	7 14.0%	50 100%
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	10 10.0%	18 18.0%	54 54.0%	18 18.0%	100 100%

Data has been collected to perceive information on following aspects

- Training system
- Quality of Training programme and
- Functions and role of Training programme

Important findings of the result are as follows:

Employee perception on Training system: Inputs have been taken from employees regarding; training calender appropriateness, identification of employees for the training programme, method employed for need analysis, method of training employed, capability of trainers and their effectiveness. These factors have been considered keeping the various stages of training program in mind viz; Planning and Designing stage, Implementation stage and Evaluation stage.

A well-defined and systematic training calendar is the first step to proper training initiatives. It can be seen from Table 2 that majority of employees in both the sectors agree that there is a training calender in their organisation, but the service sector has a better planned approach towwards training than the manufacturing sector.

 Table 2

 Industry that company belongs to* Is there a Training Calendar Crosstabulation

				ere a Calendar	
			Yes	No	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Manufacturing	Count %within industry that company belongs to	33 66.0%	17 34.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	41 82.0%	9 18.0%	50 100%
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	74 74.0%	26 26.0%	100 100%

When it comes to getting actual training, it can be observed from Table 3 that the perception of majority (more than 80 percnt) of employees in both the sectors is that training is equally given to all the levels in both the sectors.

Table 3
Industry that company belongs to* What Levels of Management gets
Training Crosstabulation

			What Levels of Management gets Training				
į			Senior	Middle	Lower	All Levels	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	1 2.0%	4 8.0%	2 4.0%	43 86.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	0.0%	2 4.0%	7 14.0%	41 82.0%	50 100%
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	1 1.0%	6 6.0%	9 9.0%	84 84.0%	100 100%

Training needs may be identified by the HR department, by superior, by employee himself/herself or by recommendation. It is found that employees in manufacturing sector were identified majorly by HR department followed by

superiors, and recommendation. While in services sector besides these three methods, employee can also request for training. This is represented in the Table 4 below:

Table 4
Industry that company belongs to* How is Training need Analyzed
Crosstabulation

	- ,,		Но	How is Training need analyzed				
			Recom- endation	Request from Emloyee(s)	Decided by HR	Decided by Boss	Total	
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	10 20.0%	0.0%	28 56.0%	12 24.0%	50 100%	
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	2 4.0%	9 18.0%	31 62.0%	8 16.0%	50 100%	
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	12 12.0%	9 9.0%	59 29.0%	20 20.0%	100 100%	

Training method was examined with reference to whether internal, external or outsourced training was given. As shown in Table 5 one major difference between the two sector is that in manufacturing sector trainer can be internal, external or there can be outsourced training process while in service sector trainers are internal experts.

Table 5
Industry that company belongs to* How is Training given
Crosstabulation

			Ho	l			
			Have own Internal Trainer	Heir External Trainer	Outsource Training Process	Either of Three	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	12 24.0%	16 32.0%	2.0%	21 42.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	49 98.0%	0.0%	0 .0%	1 2.0%	50 100%

		How is Training need analyzed				
		Have own Internal Trainer	Heir External Trainer	Outsource Training Process	Either of Three	Total
Total	Count %within industry that company belongs to	61 61.0%	16 16.0%	1 1.0%	22 22.0%	100 100%

Majority of the employees in both the sectors believe in the capability of these trainers (Table 6). This is reflective of a good selection criteria adopted by the organizations in both the sectors regarding the trainers.

Table 6
Industry that company belongs to* Opinion about Trainers' Capability
Crosstabulation

			Opinion ab	Opinion about Trainers' Capability		
			Highly Capable	Capable	Average	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	19 38.0%	25 50.0%	6 12.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	26 52.0%	18 36.0%	6 12.0%	50 100%
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	45 45.0%	43 43.0%	12 12.0%	100 100%

In both the sectors on-the-job training seem to be a preferred method than off-the-job methods (Table 7). This may be due to productivity considerations and to control costs in terms of time and money. The disadvantage is that this may add extra burden on the employees since they have to be concerned about productivity even while they are learning.

Table 7
Industry that company belongs to* Training method used
Crosstabulation

			Opinion al	Capability		
			On the Job Training	Off the Job Training	Either may be used	Total
Industry that company belongs to	Mfg.	Count %within industry that company belongs to	31 62.0%	12 24.0%	7 14.0%	50 100%
	Services	Count %within industry that company belongs to	35 70.0%	5 10.0%	10 20.0%	50 100%
Total		Count %within industry that company belongs to	66 66.0%	17 17.0%	17 17.0%	100 100%

Employees Perception on Quality of Training Programmes: Employees' perception was gauged through four item scale. The objective was to understand if any differences exist between the perception of employees in the two sectors. The items were: delivery of the training program, design of the training material, facilities provided during the training and overall organization of the training program.

Rating scale was a five-point scale where 1=Very good; 2=Good; 3=Average; 4=Bad; 5=Very bad. The following hypothesis were formulated:

H01: There exists no significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups viz; manufacturing and service sector with respect to quality of training programmes.

The alternative hypothesis: H01A: There exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups viz; manufacturing and service sector with respect to quality of training programmes. First a normality test was conducted on both the groups (employees of service sector and employees of manufacturing sector) to understand whether the sample was normally distributed or not (Table 8 and Table 9).

 Table 8

 Tests of Normality (b) for manufacturing sector

	Industry	Kolmogorov- Smirnov(a)		Shapiro- Wilk(b)			
	that company belongs to	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Rate training program delivery	Manufacturing	.210	50	.000	.808	50	.000
Rate design of training material	Manufacturing	.271	50	.000	.862	50	.000
Rate facilities provided during the training	Manufacturing	.238	50	.000	.866	50	.000
Rate the overall training program delivery	Manufacturing	.274	50	.000	.809	50	.000

a Lilliefors Significance Correction

b Industry that company belongs to = Manufacturing

Table 9.1Tests of Normality (b) for Service sector

	Industry	_	Kolmogorov- Smirnov(a)			Shapiro- Wilk(b)		
	that company belongs to	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.	
Rate training program delivery	Services	.250	50	.000	.818	50	.000	
Rate design of training material	Services	.254	50	.000	.861	50	.000	
Rate facilities provided during the training	Services	.273	50	.000	.833	50	.000	
Rate the overall training program delivery	Services	.295	50	.000	.830	50	.000	

a Lilliefors Significance Correction

b Industry that company belongs to = Services

We split both the groups and apply Shaprio Wilk test in both the cases. Since the significance level is .000, which is less than 0.05 we can conclude that "each of the

rating given by employees for both the groups is not normally distributed".

Thus to measure the difference between the employees perception of both the groups we apply Mann Whitney U Test. The Mann-Whitney U Test is used to compare differences between two independent groups when the dependent variable is either (a) ordinal or (b) interval but not normally distributed. It is the nonparametric alternative to the independent t-test. The basic assumptions which are met are as follows:

Assumptions

- Random samples from populations
- The dependent variable is either ordinal, interval or ratio
- Samples do NOT need to be normally distributed

Table 9.2Ranks

	Industry that company belongs to	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Rate training program delivery	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	52.45 48.55	2622.50 2427.50
Rate design of training material	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	55.38 45.62	2769.00 2281.00
Rate facilities provided during the training	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	52.18 48.82	2609.00 2441.00
Rate the overall training program delivery	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	57.51 43.49	2875.50 2174.50

Ranks table provides information regarding the output of the actual Mann-Whitney U Test. It shows mean rank and sum of ranks for the two groups tested (Manufacturing and service groups). It is very useful as it indicates which group had the highest rating viz: the group with the highest mean rank. In this case, the Manufacturing sector employees had the highest rating on the delivery of the training program, design of the training material, facilities provided during rating and also on the overall program delivery (Table 9.2).

Table 10Test Statistics (a)

	Rate training program delivery	Rate design of training material	Rate facilities provided during the training	Rate the overall training program delivery
Mann-Whitney U	1152.500	1006.000	1166.000	899.500
Wilcoxon W	2427.500	2281.000	2441.000	2174.500
Z	712	-1.776	617	-2.611
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.476	.076	.538	.009

• a Grouping Variable: Industry that company belongs to

From this data it can be concluded that there is, statistically significant difference between the manufacturing and service group's median value on the following aspects as follows:

Rating of the training program delivery (U = 1152.50, P = 0.476).

Rating the design of the training material (U = 1006.000, P = 0.076).

Rating of the facilities provided during the training (U = 1166.000, P = 0.538).

Rating the overall training program delivery (U = 899.00, P = 0.009).

These results indicate that a significant difference exist between the mean of the two groups, i.e., manufacturing and services sector, thus leading to acceptance of alternate hypothesis, 'There exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups manufacturing and service sector related to quality of training programs'.

Employees Perception on the Functions and Role of Training Programme: Employees' perception on the functions and role of training program was gauged on how it helped in the job, contributed to personal growth and helped in the learning process (knowledge gain).

The following null hypothesis was formulated:

H02: There exists no significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups, manufacturing and service sector, related to training and job help, personal growth contribution and learning process.

The alternative hypothesis: H02A: There exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups, manufacturing and service sector, related to training and job help, personal growth contribution and learning process.

We use the non parametric test Whitney U Test to conclude the following:- As shown in Table 11, the mean rank value and the sum rank for the service sector group employees on 'job help' and 'knowledge gain' aspect is higher indicating that the training program is received well at the individual level and is well suited to the employees vis a vis employees in the manufacturing sector.

For the item 'personal growth of employees' we can take the scores to be more or less equal a gap of .04 between the mean rank (50.52-50.48). However the higher rating has been given by employees in the manufacturing sector.

Table 11 Ranks

	Industry that company belongs to	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Rate if training program helps in job	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	49.26 51.74	2463.00 2587.00
Rate if training helps in personal growth of employee	Manufacturing Services Total	50 50 100	50.52 50.48	2526.00 2524.00
Rate if training results in knowledge gain for employees	Manufacturing	50	48.21	2410.50
	Services Total	50 100	52.79	2639.50

The results of Mann – Whitney U test for each of the items is as follows (see Table 12):

Job help (U=1188.000, P=.647)

Personal growth (U=1249.00, P=.994)

Learning (knowledge gain) (U=1135.500, P=.402)

This clearly indicates that a significant statistical difference exists between the mean of the two groups viz; manufacturing and service sector, thus leading to acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, 'There exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the individual level between the groups, manufacturing and service sector related to training and job help, personal growth contribution and learning process'.

Table 12
Test Statistics (a)

	Rate if Training Program helps in Job	Rate if Training helps in Personal Growth of Employee	Rate if Training results in Knowledge gain for Employees
Mann-Whitney U	1188.000	1249.000	1135.500
Wilcoxon W	2463.000	2524.000	2410.500
Z	459	007	839
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.647	.994	.402

a Grouping Variable: Industry that company belongs to

Employees Perception on Role of Training pogramme: In order to study the employees' perception on role of training programme various items identified are: level of enhancement of employees future potential in the organisation, handing and adjustment in complicated job situations, increase in organizational efficiency & effectiveness and its role in employees motivation.

The hypothesis formulated as follows:

H03: There exists no significant difference in the perception of the employees at the organizational level between the groups manufacturing and service sector related to the role of training in enhancement of employees future potential in the organisation, handing and adjustment in complicated job situations, increase in organizational efficiency & effectiveness and leads to motivated employees with high morale.

The alternative hypothesis is

H2A: There exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the organizational level between the groups, manufacturing and service sector, related to the role of training in enhancement of employees future potential in the organisation, handling and adjustment in complicated job situations, increase in organizational efficiency and effectiveness and leads to motivated employees with high morale.

We use the non parametric test Whitney U Test to conclude the following: Table 13 shows that the mean rank value and the sum rank for the service sector group employees on all the items is higher. It may be concluded that training programs are fulfilling the organizational objectives in service sector.

Table 13Ranks

	Industry that company belongs to	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Rate if training helps in better awareness of own potential	Manufacturing	50	49.42	2471.00
	Services Total	50 100	51.58	2579.00
Rate if training helps employee to adjust to complicated situation	Manufacturing	50	47.33	2366.50
Situation	Services Total	50 100	53.67	2683.50
Rate if training helps to improve efficiency & effectiveness at work	Manufacturing	50	44.36	2218.00
emotiney & emotiveness at work	Services Total	50 100	56.64	2832.00
Rate if training results in motivated employees	Manufacturing	50	48.14	2407.00
	Services Total	50 100	52.86	2643.00

The results of Mann – Whitney U test for each of the items is as follows (Table 14):

Future potential in the organisation (U=1196.000,P=.693)

Preparedness for difficult work situation(U=1091.500,P=.223)

Organizational efficiency and effectiveness (U=943.000, P=.023)

Enhances employees motivation and high organisational morale (U=1132.000, P=.382)

This clearly indicates that the statistical difference between the mean exist between the two groups viz; manufacturing and service sector, thus leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, 'there exists a significant difference in the perception of the employees at the organizational level between the groups, manufacturing and service sector, related to the role of training in enhancement of employees future potential in the organisation, handling and adjustment in complicated job situations, increase in organizational efficiency and effectiveness and leads to motivated employees with high morale'.

Table 14Test Statistics (a)

	Rate if training helps in better awareness of own potential	Rate if training helps employees to adjust to complicated situations	Rate if training helps to improve efficiency & effectiveness at work	Rate if training results in motivated employees
Mann-Whitney U	1196.000	1091.500	943.000	1132.000
Wilcoxon W	2471.000	2366.500	2218.000	2407.000
Z	395	-1.220	-2.267	873
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.693	.223	.023	.382

a Grouping Variable: Industry that company belongs to

From the various statistical tests conducted conclusions can be drawn as given in the next section.

CONCLUSION

Training is an important activity both from the perspective of an employer as well as an organization. Various facets of a training program relate to training design, implementation and evaluation stages. At each of the stages relevant decisions are to be taken at different levels. These are related to training system, quality of the training programme and functions & role of training programme. It may be stated that in both manufacturing and services sector there exists a planned approach for employee training, taking care of employees at lower, middle and top management level, even at non-executive level. HR department plays an important role in training. Trainers have been perceived to be capable and on-the-job training method is the preferred method. However, there is a significant difference in perception of employees of the two sectors regarding quality of training programmes, where manufacturing sector employees better peception regarding the quality. Regarding functions and role of training program at individual level and role of training programme at the organisational level, service sector employees have a better perception.

It may be implied that in manufacturing sector though the quality of training programmes is better than that of services sector but it is not fulfilling the objectives of individual organizational development as much as in services sector. Practical implications of these findings for manufacturing sector is that they need to review the

objectives of the training programmes, which, it seems, need to be aligned with individual and organizational goals. Services sector needs to improve the quality of training programs.

This research however has limitations of sample size. An elaborated research including firms across industries and sectors can be studied. Keeping in view above constraints of the present research, future research may be conducted covering larger number of organisations, including employees all over India so as to get a more generalised picture.

In a developing economy like India that is gradually shifting towards services from manufacturing employee training tends to be of prime importance. Organizations need to keep this trend and growth in mind and design proper and adequate training programs to survive in the industry and attract the best of minds besides being able to retain the good employees.

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