Article

Impact of Locus of Control, Trainer's Effectiveness & Training Design on Learning

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Training Effectiveness depends upon the learning of trainees and its transfer on the job. There are various organizational and individual factors which affect the success of a training program. The present study is focussed on the impact of Locus of Control, Trainer's Effectiveness and Design of Training on learning in a training program conducted in a government training institute. It is observed that Internal Locus of Control, Trainer's Effectiveness and Training Design have positive correlation with learning, whereas External Locus of Control has negative correlation with learning.

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Introduction

Organisations are realizing the importance of well-trained and experienced workforce in order to fulfil the organisational objectives. Change is all pervasive and is affecting the functioning of organisations. Changed economic, political scenario calls for up gradation of skills and knowledge of individuals. Training provides the solution to this gap. The idea of being more effective through learning and training is not new. However, education through training programs is even more valued in companies because upgrading skills is a necessity rather than a choice. Considering the above facts it is critical that training is delivered in a way that ensures that trainees receive the right messages and are imparted in ways that would benefit them and the organisations they serve.

Effectiveness of training depends upon the learning and its transfer on the job. Learning from training varies from one individual to the other and depends on motivation to learn, Locus of Control, job involvement etc. Learning also

depends on organisational factors like culture of organisation, Design of Training, infrastructure support etc. The present study finds the relation of individual factor (Locus of Control) and organisational factors (Design of Training and Trainer's Effectiveness) to the learning of a trainee.

Objectives of the Study

1) To ascertain the impact Locus of Control of trainee on his learning from the training program.

2) To study the impact of Trainer's Effectiveness and Design of Training on learning of trainees in a training program.

Literature Review

The past ten years have witnessed a veritable explosion in training research literature, highlighting significant developments in training methodology, evaluation and theory (Salas 2001), and in defining what training actually means and is designed to achieve. It was once considered quite acceptable to perceive training as one off, independent event. In more recent years, training practice has increasingly been acknowledged as having a strategic focus, as an event that occurs within existing organisational frameworks, and is custom designed to achieve specific organisational goals (Salas 2001, Goldstein 2002).

There are increasing expectations for trainers to demonstrate the link between training and organisational outcomes (Church & Waclawski 2001, Hesketh 1999) to evaluate training (Warr, Allan & Birdi 1999) and to justify organisational investment in training (Baldwin & Ford 1988, Salas 2001, Warr et al 1999). Although the "bottom line" for most training programs is effectiveness, little attention has been devoted to studying why training programs are effective for some individuals and ineffective for others. Training effectiveness usually is determined by assessing some combination of the criteria presented in Kirkpatrick's (1967) hierarchical model of training outcomes. This hierarchy is composed of four levels of training outcomes: (a) trainee's reactions to the program content and training process (reaction); (b) knowledge or skill acquisition (learning); (c) behaviour change (behaviour); and (d) improvements in tangible individual or organisational outcomes such as turnover, accidents, or productivity (results). Each training outcome affects the next level in the hierarchy. Trainees' satisfaction with the program is believed to have an important influence on learning, the content of the training program must be mastered to some degree of improvements in on-the-job behaviour, and behaviour change is important for positive changes in results such as quality or quantity of production (Noe 1986).

Transferring of information from training to the job is meaningless unless an individual learns effectively. Establishing conditions for effective

transfer is therefore fundamental. (Goldstein & Ford 2002)

The first step in developing training is to facilitate learning and transfer. Goldstein and Ford (2002) define three critical areas to be investigated by the trainer in relation to the learning environment:

1. Instructional Design:
    - Objectives
    - Instructional plan
    - Learning principles
2. Trainee Factors:
    - Readiness and motivation to learn
    - Work Characteristics:
    - Opportunity for practice
    - Organisational climate that values the training
    - Supervisor support to ensure trainees can access resources and strategies that will facilitate transfer of learning to work practice.

Locus of Control refers to individual's belief that events, which happen to him, are contingent upon his behaviour or circumstances.

An organisation is composed of individuals, it is necessary to understand individual differences and their impact on training effectiveness. Therefore, role of personality variables like need for achievement, introversion, extroversion, locus of control etc. has been investigated by psychologists. These variables affect motivation, job involvement, and performance of employees.

Locus of Control refers to individual's belief that events, which happen to him, are contingent upon his behaviour or circumstances. It is a stable personality trait that is likely to affect individual motivation and ability to learn. Based on Rotter's (1966) definition, individuals who are *Internals* believe that job performance and events that occur in the work setting are contingent on their own behaviour and are, therefore, under personal control. Because *Internal*s feel they can control their environment, opportunities at work which may increase the probability of receiving rewards such as promotion, pay increases, or recognition are particularly salient to these individuals. An *internal* person feels in control of things, which happen to him whereas an external person thinks that events are beyond his control. Internal/external tendencies have implications for employee's attitude, perception and behaviour in the organisation. *Externals* believe that work outcomes are beyond personal control and, therefore, attribute the cause for work outcome to luck, fate, or the actions of others.

In a recent review, Spector (1982) suggested that because Locus of Control

is a personality characteristic that influences beliefs about the ability to improve skills, it should be an important determinant of individual's trainability. Internals may exert greater effort towards collecting relevant information in a training situation than Externals. A study by Broedling (1975) supports the link between Locus of Control and effort-performance expectancies. Here, Internals were more likely to believe that performance was contingent on their personal effort than Externals. Applied to a training situation, the results of this study suggest that Internals may exert greater effort toward collecting relevant knowledge and skills in a training situation than Externals because they believe mastering the program content is under their personal control.

Internals are more likely to exhibit high levels of motivation to learn in a training program.

Trainees with an Internal Locus of Control are more likely to act upon feedback regarding their skill strengths and weakness than Externals; that is, Internals are more likely to exhibit high levels of motivation to learn in a training program. Internals may doubt the accuracy of negative feedback (Stone, Gueutal, & McIntosh 1984).

Noe (1986) proposed a model of the motivational influences on the effectiveness of training programs (fig.1). The dependent variables for the model include the multiple measures of

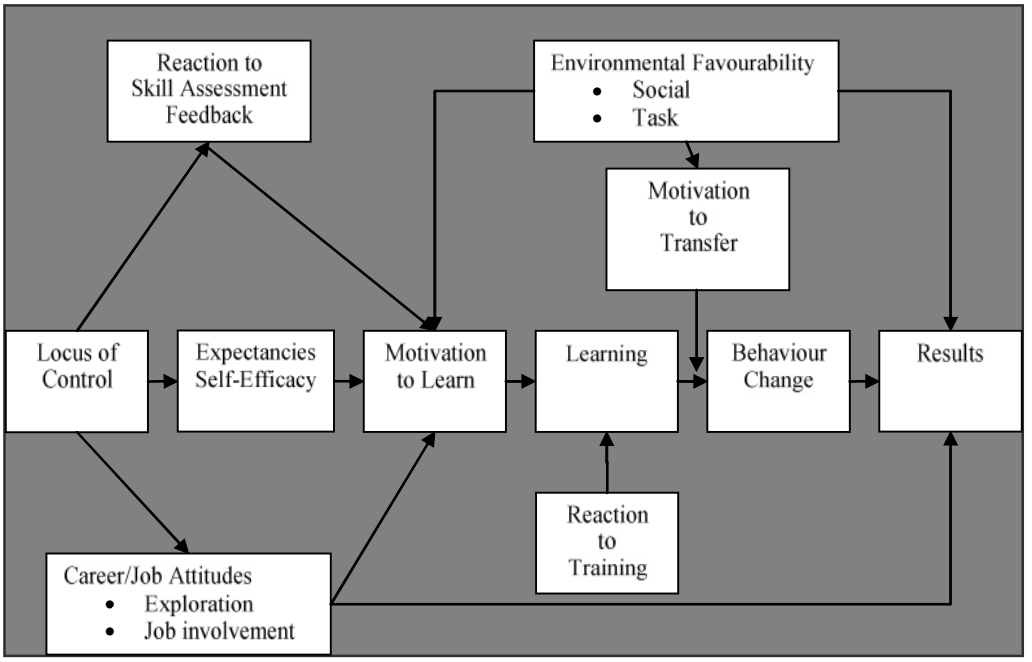

Fig.1 Noe's Model of Motivational Influences on the Effectiveness of Training

training effectiveness described by Kirkpatrick (1967). The model describes the possible influences of trainees' attitudes towards their behaviour, job, career, and work environment on learning, behaviour change, and attainment of desirable organisational outcomes. The variables included in the model were chosen on the basis of a review of the organisational behaviour and training and development literature.

Goldstein and Ford (2002) also proposed a model of learning and transfer outcomes, which further demonstrates links between critical areas necessary for transfer outcomes. As shown in the model (fig 2), learning outcomes (trainee and retaining material) are influenced by both:

- the quality of instruction
- a trainee's readiness and motivation to learn

These factors indirectly affect transfer outcomes because they impact on learning outcomes occurring during the training session. The extent of transfer of learning outcomes to the workplace (transfer outcomes) also depends on factors within the workplace (work characteristics).

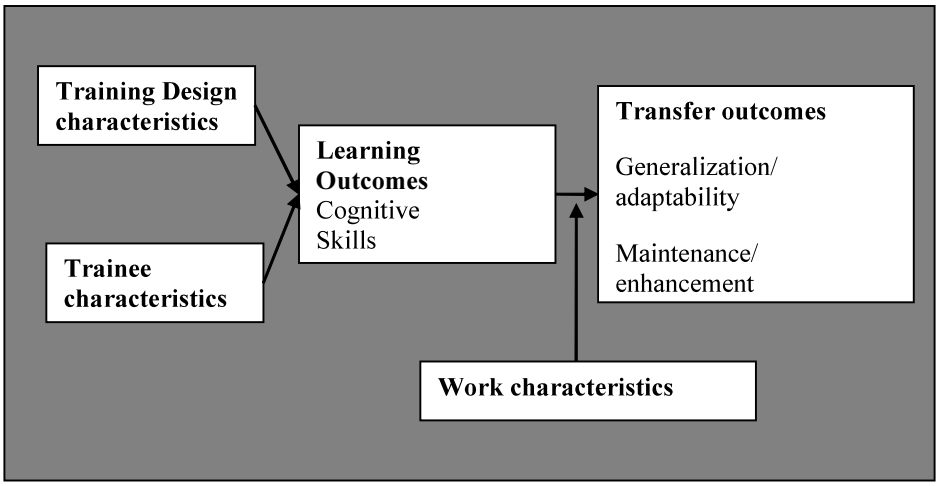

Fig.2 Goldstein & Ford's Model of Learning and Transfer

Success of training depends hugely on the objectives of training, content, methods, and the need for the training.

Lynton and Pareek (2000) stated that a circumspect procedure is required for starting the design process. It is similar to that required for developing the overall strategy: within its narrower confines, it must include all the key components and provide for successively finer approximation.

Singh (2004) observes that designing the training program with clearly defined objective is a vital step in the entire gamut of training activities. Training is a means to achieve an end. It is not an end in itself. Unless the objectives are clearly defined and program designed in such a way that it leads to the achievement of the objective set out, it will be only a wasted effort. The linkage between the design and the objectives must be carefully thought through by the trainer before announcing a program.

Emphasizing on the importance of training, Blanchard, Jame, Thacher (1999) observed that design of training integrate what we know about "how people learn" (Learning theory) with "what they need to learn" to develop the appropriate training, that is, how the training needs will be addressed.

Scherer (1984) opines that "People learn best when they feel they have control over the pace and depth of the learning process. Therefore, training designer should allow trainees to have input into the pace and time spent on topics. Trainees will attend to things in the environment that are most important to them. Thus the learning events and process should be structured so that the most important things are learning events and materials. (Blanchard, Jame & Thacher 1999)

The linkage between the design and the objectives must be carefully thought through by the trainer before announcing a program.

Trainers are no longer mere providers of activities; their role is increasingly to add value to organisational learning as the foundation for future competitiveness.

Trainees benefit from training objectives in a number of ways. First, by seeing these objectives at the beginning of training, the trainee understands exactly what will be required at the end of training. Knowing what is expected up front can serve to reduce the stress of the training. It also provides a context for focusing trainee's attention, and attention is the first step in the learning process (Blanchard, Jame & Thacher 1999). Trainers are no longer mere providers of activities; their role is increasingly to add value to organisational learning as the foundation for future competitiveness. "A trainer is a craftsperson at work. Intent on the utility and elegance of the result, he or she also varies the pace to go with the learners' best pace " (Lynton & Pareek 2000). Gilleard (1998) conducted a study on how the attitudes, feelings, and experiences of three trainers affected their role of change-maker, within one particular training program. The results suggest more account of trainers' belief systems may be necessary if change management objectives are to be credibly and consistently achieved. Employers, managers, and peers, as well as the individual all have a part to play in enabling trainer empowerment as bedrock for organisational change-making.

Masih (2007) proposed the idea of treating the role of training as leading in the classroom and emphasized on rich overlaps and similarities between the role of a leader and a trainer. Both require knowledge, passion, and motivation. The author gave a framework of roles of a trainer and elaborated on the leadership component of each.

No study could be traced pertaining to the impact of Locus of Control of trainees, Training Design and Trainer's Effectiveness on learning behaviour of the trainees, however. This study, therefore, seeks to explore questions concerning the affects of Locus of Control, Trainer's Effectiveness, and Training Design on Training Effectiveness.

Method

The study is conducted in a government training institute. In the present study 30 trainees of the junior management level underwent a refresher training program. The trainees were asked to appear in a test before the training to ascertain the level of knowledge they possess. During the pre-training stage, Locus of Control questionnaire was also administered to the participants. Thereafter, the trainees underwent training program covering various topics. Upon conclusion of the program, the same test was re-administered on the trainees to obtain the addition in learning of individual participants. Reaction was also obtained on the quality of Training Design and Trainer's Effectiveness. The data obtained have been analysed using simple correlation between Locus of Control, Trainer's Effectiveness, Training Design, and learning.

Instruments Used

(a) Learning Index: A test questionnaire was developed in consultation with various faculties of the training program. Pre-training and post-training scores of individuals were taken with the help of these questionnaires. Thereafter, a learning index was determined by using the formula used by Virmani and Seth (1986) in their study in ASCI Hyderabad:

$$\text{Learning index} = \frac{\text{Post-training Score (\%)} - \text{Pre-training Score (\%)}}{\text{100-Pre-training Score (\%)}} \times 100$$

(b) Locus of Control: Scale developed by Pareek (1997) was used for measuring Locus of Control. It has 29 items in a 5 point rating scale. It measures internality (others) and externality (luck).

Reliability: Split-half reliability coefficients for the instrument were 0.43, 0.45 for I, E-O sub-scales, and even-odd reliability coefficients were 0.41, 0.48 respectively.

Validity: High correlation (0.89) between Levenson's instrument and Loco Inventory, in a sample of twenty-six bankers, indicates the validity of the inventory.

(c) Training Design: A questionnaire was developed on a 5 point scale to know the reaction of trainees on the quality of training design. It has 29 items covering design parameters like objectives, content, methods, participants profile, duration, need based, and training aid. Reliability of the questionnaire was tested and Cronbach alpha was found to be a = 0.918

(d) Trainer's Effectiveness: A questionnaire was developed on a 5 point scale to know the reaction of trainees on the Trainer's Effectiveness. It contains 12 items covering factors like knowledge, skill, enthusiasm, and problem orientation. The Cronbach alpha was found to be a = 0.85.

The a being high in both cases the reliability of the instrument is established.

Hypothesis

1. Trainees with higher *Internal* Locus of Control learn more in the training program**.**
2. Trainees with higher *External* Locus of Control learn less.
3. Trainer's effectiveness will directly affect the trainee's learning.
4. Better the Training Design more will be the learning from the training program.

Personality traits (such as Locus of Control) and job attitude have been found to be linked to training motivation.

Findings

Table 1. Correlation (Pearson) Table

	Learning Index
Locus of Control	
Internal	0.55
External	-0.51
Training Design	
Objective	0.59
Contents	0.64
Methods	0.67
Trainee Profile	0.73
Need Based	0.66
Duration	0.61
Training Aid	0.65
Training Design (Total)	0.83
Trainer's Effectiveness	
Knowledge	0.56
Skill	0.57
Enthusiasm	0.31
Problem Solving Orientation	0.73
Trainer's Effectiveness(Total)	0.70

Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed)

i. There has been a positive correlation between learning and *Internal* Locus of Control. Hence, the hypothesis, trainees with higher *Internal* Locus of Control learn more, is correct. Salas (2001) has observed that personality traits (such as Locus of Control) and job attitude have been found to be linked to training motivation.

ii. There has been a negative correlation between learning and *Internal* Locus of Control. Hence, the hypothesis, trainees with higher *External* Locus of Control learn less, is correct.

iii. There has been a positive correlation between learning and Trainer's Effectiveness. Hence, the hypothesis, Trainer's Effectiveness will directly affect the trainee's learning is correct.

iv. There has been a positive correlation between learning and Training Design. Hence, the hypothesis, better the training design, more will be the learning stands correct. Scorth (2000) also emphasized on development of training task that is similar to transfer task and that the content is consistent with the job requirement.

Individuals with higher *External* Locus of Control should be given training on the behavioural areas to enhance their self-image and confidence and to inculcate faith in them.

Managerial Implications

Training effectiveness is dependent on a number of organisational and individual factors. It is difficult to suggest any generic prescription for enhancing the training effectiveness. However, the implications of the findings are:

I. Learning from a training program is dependent on Locus of Control of the individual. The study indicates that trainees with higher *Internal* Locus of Control learn more in the program and those with higher *External* Locus of Control learn less. Therefore, it is useful to train those individuals who have high *Internal* Locus of Control. Individuals with higher *External* Locus of Control should be given training on the behavioural areas to enhance their self-image and confidence and to inculcate faith in them. Otherwise, the whole exercise of training will be a wasteful expenditure.

II. Positive correlation between Trainer's Effectiveness and learning of trainees indicates that the trainer has an important role in the overall effectiveness of training. Trainer has to play an active part in designing, planning, execution, and evaluation of training. The trainer should demonstrate professionalism. He should have effective communication, facilitation skills and should ensure trainee involvement and participation. Therefore organisations should take utmost care in choosing right kind of trainer and should also focus on Trainer's Training

III. Better the design of training, more will be the learning amongst the trainees. Training Design should be done carefully. Need based design ensures that training is the most appropriate solution to a problem and will increase the likelihood that trainees receive information that is relevant to their needs and practice oriented. All organisational problems cannot be

solved by training. The trainer must be able to identify the performance problem. After ascertaining the training interventions and non-training interventions, considerable efforts should be made to identify the content, objective, methods, and other design parameters.

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