

Employees' Perception and Motivation Towards Training and Development Programmes in Health Sector of Pakistan: A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtun Khwa

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Abstract: Training is the one of the most important function of human resource in any organization. It increases the efficiency and the effectiveness of both employees and the organization. The focus of this research paper is to know about the training and development programs in the health sector of Pakistan. And also to evaluate the employees' motivation and perception about these training and development programs. The researchers have used Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) province as a case for this. Data was collected through questionnaire and semi structured interviews from the concerned department and was analyzed through SPSS. The findings clearly revealed that there is no systematic and strategic approach for conducting training and development programs in the health sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The main barriers appeared to be organizational environment and the political intervention. Moreover, organizational environment and political interventions are identified as the most important barriers for effectively conducting training and development programs.

Key words: Training and development • Employees' motivation • Employees' perception • Health sector • KPK • Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

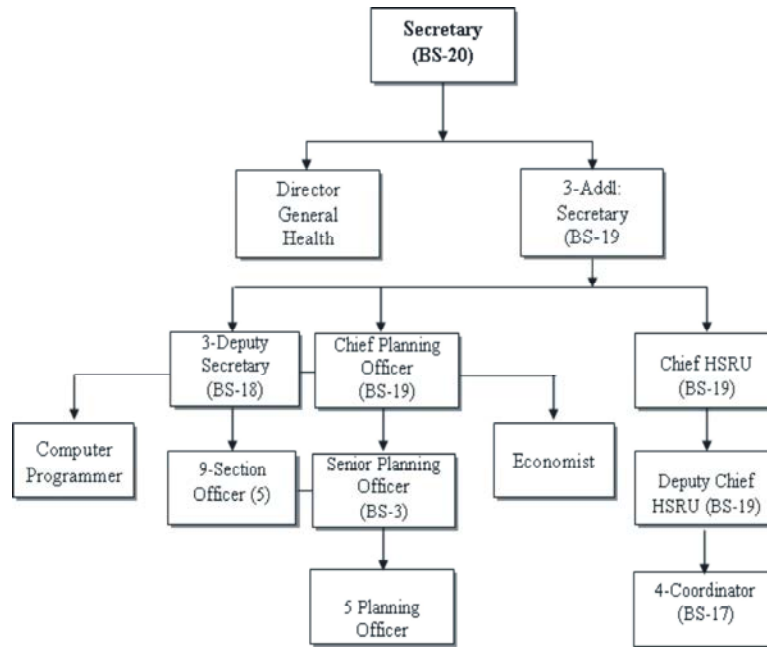
In today's dynamic world organizations whether for profit or non-profit are adopting new practices and procedures in order to compete successfully together with the need to utilize their resources effectively and efficiently. One of the important resources of an organization is human resource who plays fairly significant role in the success of any organization in both public and private sector. Successful organizations emphasize the importance of human element in the organizational effectiveness and focuses on their development, satisfaction, commitment and motivation in order to achieve desired objectives [2]. Another study indicates that in an organization human potential has become a major competitive factor which provides the organization with mid to long term success [1].

This importance of human resource in the organization requires organization to develop their employees up to the required standards where they are valued by organizations. Modern organizations require following characteristics of employees i.e. ability to learn and adapt to changing working situations, who

conceptualize the organizational effectiveness through contribution of their role, capable of working without supervision and possess qualities of problem solving and creative thinking [3]. These points raise the importance of human resources within an organization regardless of type which needs to be understood by organizations in today's competitive environment. In order to achieve best out of the employees, human resource department perform certain functions and one of which is training and development of the workforce. Training is one of the most important investments because it enhances the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behavior of employees: the human resource [4].

Demand of the today's business environment requires the companies to adopt new and best human resource strategies within which the training works as a catalyst to respond to required organizational changes effectively [5].

People need competencies e.g. knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to perform tasks efficiently. Higher degree of quality performance by the staff requires higher level of skills which can be acquired through training and development [6].



Source: (Health department, 2010)

Fig. 1: Organizational chart of health department of KPK

Training and development of the workforce can play a vital role in the success of both public and private sector organizations. Now a day's training is the most important factor in the business world because training increases the efficiency and the effectiveness of both employees and the organization. Various factors contribute towards the performance of employees but most important is training [7].

Research Objectives: The main focus of this research paper is on training and development programmes in Health Department Pakistan. The researchers have used KPK as a case for this study. There has been no evidence of such research in the past neither in the health department of KPK or in any other public sector organization of Pakistan. Generally, people in Pakistan do not realize the importance of research practices which is vital in the progression of organizations to achieve maximum benefits within the available resources. Therefore, Pakistan being a developing nation lacks the availability of such research which is very important in the development of good organizational practices.

In the Light of the above Discussion the Main Objectives of the Research Are:

- To know about the training and development programmes in the health department of KPK.

- To assess the employees' motivation and their perception about training and development programmes in the health department of KPK.
- To evaluate the benefits associated with these training and development programmes.

Health Department of KPK, Pakistan: The mission of Health department Provincial Govt. (KPK) is to protect health of all citizens in the province with a vision to reorganize health sector of Provincial Govt. and provides the citizens with basic health services in accordance with the international quality standards within the available resources [8].

Provincial Govt. health department like other public sector organizations has bureaucratic hierarchical structure. Bureaucratic structure is mostly found in the public sector organizations which were previously designed for high efficiency in which power and control increases from bottom to top and every one is only answerable to his superior in the hierarchy. They further explain that critics argue that centralized control of the bureaucratic system has negative impact such as low motivation of the staff because of tense working environment, inflexibility, less advancement and responsiveness, can be real issues in a turbulent environment. Similarly health department of provincial Govt. has the same structure as well where above mentioned issues can be seen [9].

Training and Development: Training and development are two different terms which in the organizational context are used interchangeably together with education and various authors define them separately and or use them together as all these activities are coordinated and improve organizational performance as a whole [10].

Training is defined as “the planned and systematic modification of behavior through learning events, programmes and instruction which enable individuals to achieve the levels of knowledge, skill and competence needed to carry out their work effectively”, whereas, development as the growth or realization of a person’s ability and potential through provision of learning and educational experiences [11].

Therefore, training and development can be used together as both terms are clearly linked with each other. Both training and development involve the learning of individuals to varying extent within the organization who in turn acquire knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes. Similarly training is defined as the development of person’s knowledge, skills and attitude [12].

Another study presents the same view by pointing training and development as critical mean to learning in the organizations which enhance knowledge, skill and attitude of the employees to become effective performers required to gain competitive edge [13]. However it is further pointed out that training can bring such benefits depending on the perception of employees being trained [7].

Another research conducted on the same issue further supports that for employees to be effective they must be motivated and committed to learn and apply the learned knowledge and skills in their workplace [14]. This means that motivation is an important employee related factor towards the effectiveness of training and development programmes because if employees are not motivated then they will not be able to acquire and use knowledge, skills and attitude required for their effectiveness.

Motivation: Motivation is “the process of encouraging people to apply their efforts and abilities in ways that will promote the attainment of the organization’s goals as well as the satisfaction of their own needs [15].

Employees’ motivation towards training programmes is an important factor in the effectiveness of such programmes [16]. Another researcher describes in his study that job utility and career utility greatly affects employees’ motivation towards training and development programmes [10].

Well-motivated employees are more likely to have a positive perception of the training environment in their organizations. This has been shown to lead to greater participation in training activities [7]. Empirical research also indicates that those motivated to learn tend to apply learnt skills more effectively in their work [17, 18]. The benefits resulting generate positive feelings towards the organization and so enhance affective commitment.

In training and development context according to another study employees will be motivated to learn if they perceive the importance of training and development with respect to their expectation in the form of improved performance, reward, bonuses and promotion [19]. Employees who perceive training beneficial will be more committed to organization [20]. Furthermore, it is pointed out that “the best result that training alone can is an increase in capability i.e. the ability to perform”. It is further explained that in order to achieve high level performance from employees there should be incentive or rewards together with proper feedback, direction and job aids which in turn drives effective performance. This means that employees who perceive training effective means of satisfying their lower level needs together with high level needs such as self esteem or self actualization will be more effective performers [21].

A model was presented which shows a complete system approach towards training and development process and emphasize that training and development is an ongoing process rather than a single step activity [22].

The input factors affect the whole processes which are required for the proper need assessment, design of training activities according to need, implementation of training programmes and evaluation through proper methods and the whole process should be evaluated on the basis of feedback from the outcomes [22].

Therefore, to achieve the benefits of above model organizations need to have a competent HR department which fulfills the input requirements such as long term HR policies, allocating proper resources to carry out planned training and development activities successfully, management commitment and knowledge of importance of the whole process and employee motivation towards training and development programmes otherwise these input factors can be barriers towards achieving the outcomes.

Therefore, organizations whether private or public sectors need to understand the importance of human resource department and especially training and development of employees so, that motivation factor should be taken into consideration in first place for the effectiveness of this important HR function.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Researchers have used mixed triangulation for this study. Methodological rationale of this study is the use of multi methods approach involving mixed philosophies approach because in researchers' view not only quantifiable realities are important but also the personal experience counts as well especially of those who are involved in the decision making process. Therefore, it is not possible to research the topic properly by following a single philosophy. The approach followed uses the incorporation of both theory and practice of training and development from both organizational and employee perspective specific to healthcare sector in KPK, Pakistan.

This research involves the use of both interviews and questionnaires in order to collect qualitative data regarding research objectives. Semi structured interviews are used to target the specific topic areas to cover research objectives clearly. Secondary data has been collected in the form of literature review from various sources such as books, journal articles and internet websites.

The qualitative data collected has been interpreted into simplified text and is categorized according to the themes identified in the literature review which are required for strategic and systematic approach towards training and development programmes. While the quantitative data from questionnaires has been analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software which helped to organize the data and present them in to graphs and tables. The graphs and tables are then interpreted in to simple text to obtain the employees' perspective regarding various themes such as organizational culture and perception of training and development programmes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpretation of Results from Questionnaire

Perception of Training and Development: The perceived availability of training is taken to be the extent to which employees feel they are able to access training opportunities. Prior research suggests employees with positive perceptions of this will be more committed to the organization [23]. But the result interpreted from the questionnaire elaborates that training and development programmes in the health department are perceived to be helpful in obtaining the basic job skills. From the Figure 2, it is clear that nearly half of the respondents believe training to be satisfactory in terms of provision of basic knowledge and skills required to perform the job, whereas,

the same number of employee consider training to be effective partially with respect to basic job requirement. However, for technical staff training is more important than administrative and clerical staff with respect to job requirement as shown in Figure3.

Benefits Associated with the Training: Employees become more confident, open to change and supportive of each other [24]. In addition, employees are more motivated to achieve improved performance as a result of training. But the situation in health department is quite different as it is clear from the chart below that employees do not see any benefits associated with training and development programmes apart from basic knowledge and skills required to perform the job. However, small percentage of the employees (about 12 %) consider self development opportunity, whereas, same percentage of the employees do not see any benefit at all.

Interpretation of Results from Interviews: Interviews have been very helpful in obtaining specific in depth information regarding current status of training and development programmes in the health department KPK which could not be achieved through questionnaire or through review of the literature.

Management Perception of Employees and Their Training:

Finding from interviews clearly states that management perceives the role of employee very important in the achievement of their aims and therefore they clearly state training and development policies in accordance with the organizational objectives. Similarly, management is struggling hard to achieve capacity building target which involve not only the recruitment and selection of employees but also their training and development. Management also realizes the need for proper training and development of the existing employees as the productivity at the moment in the department is very low. This low productivity together with shortage of staff in the department is creating problems thereby indicating the lack of provision of basic health services to citizens.

Training and Development Setup: Interviews clearly indicate that the management approach towards training and development programmes is not systematic and strategic in nature. The training and development setup lacks proper need assessment, training evaluation and lack of clarity of performance appraisals. According to one of the participant

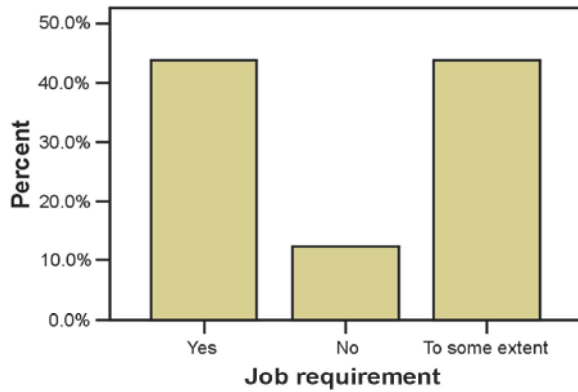


Fig. 2:

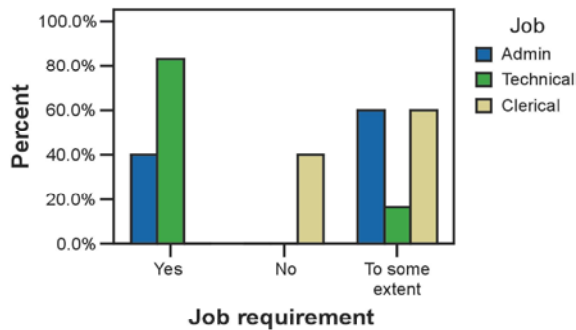


Fig. 3: Perception of training and development among various job categories

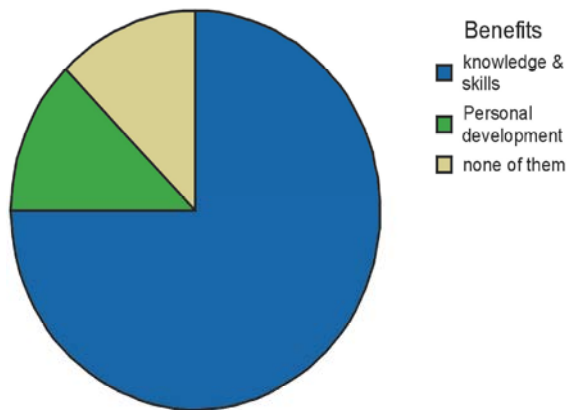
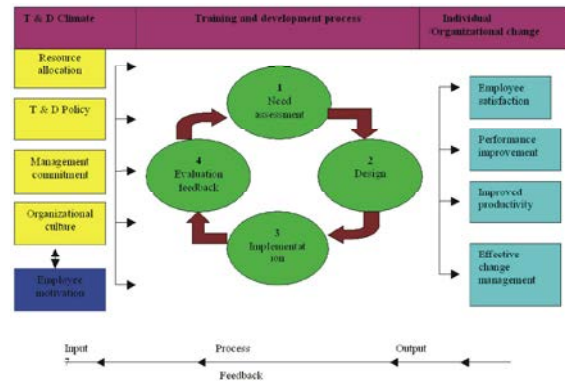


Fig. 4:

- “Performance appraisal is just a formality, it is there to do the assessment and evaluation of performance but no one does it. The only organization where there is structured approach is Army and that is it. In other public sector organizations if you know your superior he may forward your performance evaluation report in positive sense to higher authorities for promotion’s sake but again no one takes it seriously unless they have political back up”



(Adopted from Al-Khayyat & Elgamal, 1997. p. 90)

Fig. 5: A systematic approach towards Training and development

Furthermore, the amount of training is restricted to budgets so if the department is having enough budgets they arrange for training and development sessions otherwise the department suffers from the problems associated with the lack such programmes. Similarly, the department lacks the facilities to provide on time training and development programmes in accordance with the introduction of new technology or restructuring programmes.

Employee Motivation: Employees’ motivation for training programs is another objective of this study. The primary research findings helped to explore the health department employees’ motivation towards training and development programmes. It has been observed that employees do not perceive training and development very important apart from fulfilling job requirement which means that employees are only motivated to learn or to attend a training and development session thereby satisfying their lower level needs. Further, one of the other basic needs of employees in the health department KPK is pay which has been found to be poor and as there is no financial reward system in the form performance related pay in place, employees will not be committed to apply the learned knowledge and skills which is important for their effectiveness as mentioned in the literature¹⁴. However, on the other hand if the employees see benefits of the training and development programmes like any reward in the form of incentives or promotion they will be motivated and job satisfaction could be achieved which in turn can bring improved performance and productivity.

Therefore, training and development programmes will be only effective if individual employee needs are being satisfied together with the organizational goals through these programmes in the health department KPK.

CONCLUSION

The first objective of the study was to know about the employees' perception about the training and development programmes within the health department KPK. It has been seen that provision of training and development programmes in the health department KPK is not based on strategic and systematic approach at all. However, it has been observed that top management within the health department KPK is well aware of the importance and need of training but still fails to adopt a strategic and systematic approach towards these programmes.

The second objective of this study was to assess the employees' motivation and their perception about the training and development programmes within the health department of KPK. It has been observed that employees neither motivated nor they perceive training very important in the current situations as they see no benefits other than just a formality in the routine job.

The last objective of this research was to evaluate the benefits of the training and development programmes within the health department of KPK. It has also been found in the study that the training and development programmes in the health department are not that much effective as the employees in the health department are not productive enough according to organizational expectation leading to decreased performance by the organization. As mentioned in literature review that lack of training and development in the developing countries can lead to decreased productivity, low motivation and customer complaints. This can be confirmed in a statement against health department in the parliament that health department of KPK has been criticized for overall poor performance of the hospitals which fails to provide the citizens of KPK with basic healthcare services [8].

Furthermore, politicians possess enormous control in various situations such as resource allocation, project approvals, policy implementation and promotions. This poses problems to the achievement of various important organizational objectives at all levels within the health department KPK. Thus, leading to observation that in order to follow a strategic approach the Health department KPK needs to overcome certain barriers which pose hinders in the whole process.

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