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Qualitative Research Analysis
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QUALITATIVE RESEARCH - ANALYSIS

5.1. Introduction

This section attempts to analyze the perception of the respondents with regard to various dimensions of training and development (Attitude towards training, course content and design, course instructor and methodology, course administration, training climate and return on investment) with their industrial lives using Focused Group Discussion (FGD).

5.2. Focused Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus Group

A focus group is a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research. As a research technique, the focus group employees guided, interactional discussion as a means of generating "the rich details of complex experiences and the reasoning behind [an individual's] actions, beliefs, perceptions and attitudes". At the simplest level, a focus group is an informal discussion among a group of selected individuals about a particular topic (Wilkinson 2004).

5.3. Selection and Procedure Criteria Of FGD Members

The researcher conducted the FGD in Salem Steel Plant (SSP) where ten to twelve participants, participated in Focused to Group Discussion and discussed the six dimensions of Training and Development.

The researcher provided opportunities to meet the participants before the formal discussion began. It helped the researcher to introduce themselves to participants and more importantly for the participants to interact informally. In the session participants were seated in a circle to maximize face to face contact.
The researcher conducted Three FGD Programmes in Salem Steel Plant, with duration of thirty to forty minutes. All the FGD Programmes focused on the six dimensions and the importance of the employees’ perception on effectiveness of Training and Development in SSP.

The Questions for FGD were based on the objectives of the Effectiveness of Training and Development and mainly intended to bring out the qualitative perception of the respondents towards the training and development programme conducted.

A set of questions were constructed to cover the topics of the objectives of the present study, with attention to clarify the conceptual content, linguistic phrasing and order. The FGD questions were developed to elicit the key knowledge, attitudes and behaviors that might be anticipated to change as a result of proposed program activities.

All FGD participants were from different departments of Salem Steel Plant (SSP).

After the selection of the sample, the Employees of the organizations were contacted to ask for their participation and to inform them about the nature of the study. On the whole, thirty six employees of different departments from Salem Steel Plant participated in the research. The researcher her self acted as a moderator to carry out the Focused Group Discussion. The researcher opted for FGD since this allowed to adopt a uniform approach, while at the same time maintaining the ability to explore all topics in depth and to diverge into unplanned areas. All the conversations were recorded and allowed for a systematic analysis of the raw data.

In addition to the FGD, the researcher had access to organizational records about the initiatives that organizations undertook regarding training and development. These documents allowed the researcher to verify whether the employees provided a truthful view on the training and development initiatives in their organization. The researcher examined a number of interesting findings.
In all the three groups’ males were the majority respondents. The groups consisted of the employees from various departments and tended to express their opinions and ideas.

In FGD the participants discussed the attitude on Training and Development and course content and design, course instructor and methodology, course administration, training climate and return on investment.

Training and development becomes a priority for a majority of firms operating in modern and increasingly global economics and for countries seeking accelerated development.

The prominent role of Training and Development is in enhancing the success of employees and organizations.

Training and Development within human resource management has become widespread in today’s organizations.

On-the-job training and career development are essential HR practices in the development of employees. Therefore, in FGD, the researcher took initiatives concerning training, on-the-job training and development of individuals into account.

Training forms an important part of employee development within the organization. It keeps our employees up to date and competent and enables them to successfully perform the job at all times.

In FGD the researcher attempted the total participation of employees to make sure to organize the right education with the right direction and with the right tools.

Today we live in a world that is continuously changing. As a result we need employees who can easily adapt to new changing environment. Therefore it is important for our employees to keep on developing their skills and knowledge according to the changing need of the organization.
It is up to the organization to create opportunities for development, but it remains the responsibility of the employees to seize the opportunity and to make sure that their skills and knowledge are actually being developed.

Organizations which invest in training and development of their employees are often considered to be an attractive employer, making it easier to attract and retain valuable talents.

The responsibility for effectiveness of training and development obviously lies in the hands of the employee. Employees need to create the time and space for learning and developing their skills and knowledge.

5.4. Objectives

To get the opinion of the group members regarding the six dimensions (Attitude towards training and development, Course content: Course Design, Course instructors and Methodology, Course administration, Training climate, Return On Investment) of training and development programme.

FGD - I

Duration : Thirty minutes
No. of participants : 12

FGD – II

Duration : Forty minutes
No. of participants : 12

FGD – III

Duration : Thirty five minutes
No. of participants : 12
5.5. Discussion on the six dimensions

The focused group discussion assessed the broader view of the employee perception towards training and development programme and the employees were asked question based on the organization’s commitment in providing the right person for training. Data from the interviews were analyzed immediately after each interview to identify the perception of the employee. The researcher started off with questions about training and development programme in general. An attitude is an expression of favor or disfavor toward a person, place, thing, or event. Prominent psychologist Gordon Allport described attitudes "the most distinctive and indispensable concept in contemporary social psychology.” To assess the attitude of respondents towards the training and development programme the following questions were discussed, “Do you like the training programme?”, “If yes, highlight the significance”, “If no find out the causes”, “What is your overall opinion about the training programme?”, The attitude of the respondents were positive towards the existing training programmes. The respondent felt that, they were highly at ease towards training and development programme because they were well aware of the inevitability of training. The programmes were designed to suit the needs of the trainees and hence they took up training with high satisfactory levels. Employees’ attitudes, behaviour and mindset towards positive learning and development, are more important dimensions in fostering learning and development in the workplace.

When the respondents were asked questions on course content and course design, course instructors and methodology and course administration, the questions asked were “Do you think the content of training programme is relevant and useful?”, “Can you give suggestions to enrich the course content?” When the questions based on course content and design were discussed the participants showed an average opinion towards it and they showed a little dissatisfaction towards course content and design. The training programme made them acquire essentials knowledge required for practical application. But the respondents felt that the course content and design could still have been better to help them cope with the work demands.
Training faculty consisted of those who were in charge of training the participants. According to Fajana (1997) training faculty should be made up of competent instructors. The instructor should be competent in his or her areas of specialization and should have the personality to convey competence and ability. Atiomo (2000) explains that the training faculty should be aware in details of planned changes in policy, structure or process within the organization, as regards training. They should work more from within than from outside and be conscious of the need for continuity of training plans and activities. The growing complexity of industry and its problems makes increasing demands on the training faculty members to improve the quality of the workforce at all levels.

The course instructor should also have credibility with the trainees and should be able to use the chosen learning methods to meet learning objectives and they should be available whenever they are needed. In the final analysis training faculty members should not only come from within the organization but external consultants should also be encouraged to be faculty members so that they can bring independence, experience, expertise and as Armstrong (1995) says, the external faculty members can bring a useful 'extra pair of hands' to the training activities. The questions based on course instructor and methodology, are “How do you rate the competency of trainer?” “State the merits of the methodology adapted”, The respondents for the above questions expect an external trainer for their training and they also felt that course methodology need to be modified. The course instructor and methodology served, must be sensitive to the needs of the trainees. They should make a study of the grey areas of the trainees where they would be weak and need help and must alter the methodology to improvise the trainees.

On the one hand, it is important to question the same areas for all the participants. On the other hand, interviewing and observing is an evolving process during which interviewers and observers acquire new insights into the phenomenon of study that can subsequently influence follow-up questions or narrow the focus for observation. The extent to which judgments about similarities and differences of content are consistent over time can be addressed by an open dialogue by the researcher.
Course administration according to Fashola (2002) is the series of activities undertaken by the coordinator before, during and after a programme to ensure its success. Training administration is the deploying of all necessary inputs to achieve the objectives of a training programme. Simply stated, ‘climate’ is what it feels like to work somewhere, how motivating that is, and consists of six clear elements; clarity, commitment, standards, responsibility, recognition and teamwork - all of which can be measured and managed. Although many variables may influence the effectiveness of the training and development efforts, the organization's training climate appears to be playing an important role. When the questions were asked on course administration, training climate and return on investment the employees expressed their positive and negative opinion towards it. The questions were “What is your opinion regarding the following i) Duration ii) Selection of the trainee iii) Timing of the programme iv) Training material provided” and “How do you assess the infrastructure and food provided during the training programme?”, For the above questions the following statement has been made by one of the employees. “The managers or supervisors always have production as the most important thing on their minds. They always make it difficult to run training programmes smoothly. For example, when they (HRDC) have certain training programmes for the production workers, the first thing they do about is that they don’t have enough manpower on the production floor for anyone to go for training…” From the above statement it has been analyzed that need based training programme could be conducted. The above statement is substantiated by the Quantitative data collected from the respondents (Table 4.5 and Table 4.9). In table 4.5 it is found that 228 employee belong to technical category, but in Table 4.9 it is found that 242 had attended technical training. It is found that Non –technical persons are allowed to attend technical training. The respondents felt that the course administration was upto the mark the did not find anything wanting in the overall conduct of the programme. One more area where the respondents felt that the trainers could modify for the betterment of the successful organization of the programme is a training climate section. The trainees must be made to feel that the training they under go is as important as their contribution (i.e. they work) towards the organization. Such perspectives would enhance the climate of training and make the employees feel comfortable.
It is assumed that money spent for training programme is an investment on the part of management which transforms the employee more productive and extraordinary. The question on return on investment was “Does the training programme influence your attitude?”, and “Do you think the money spent for training and development is a real investment on employee engagement?” For the above questions based on return on investment, the respondents expressed positive opinion towards this dimension on training and development programme. The overall impression of the training programme derived by the respondents has been very positive and have been answered with complete contentment for ‘Return On Investment’. The employees feel confident of their contribution towards production in increasing the profit margin and reducing the loss percentage. The employees feel that their objective in having undertaken the programme has been fulfilled.

One of the main benefits of training and development lies in the fact that the different developmental practices no longer stands alone but instead are connected to one another. Thereby, the impact of these practices is maximized, which in turn ensures that you get the maximal result out of your investment. For example, by linking training to on-the-job learning practices we can ensure that the main ideas of training were put into practice in the workplace. If the organization does not embed the training for the employees in broader career development, they will be less motivated to put the training into practice.

Finally, organizations should recognize the importance of follow-up, encompassing an evaluation of the training and a regular revision of the training content, to enhance the effectiveness of training.

In the discussion the researcher found that most of the employees have not attended the health related training programmes and they felt that more importance should be given to improve the training climate and the training course materials should be updated.
It is up to the organization to create opportunities for development, but it remains the responsibility of the employee to seize these opportunities and to make sure that their competencies are actually being developed.

At the end of FGD, participants were asked for any other details or pieces of information that they felt was relevant. As such, the researcher ensure that all relevant topics regarding training and development are covered. The full FGD protocol is included in the appendix.

5.6. FGD – I

5.6.1. Outcome based on six dimensions

I. Attitude Towards Training
   - They have unanimously expressed a positive opinion towards the training programme.
   - Training Programme helps to enhance the skills of the employees.

II. Course Content: Course Design

III. Course Instructors And Methodology

IV. Course Administration
   - Latest Audio Visual Equipment can be used for the programmes.
   - Field visit could be arranged to other related industries.
   - External experts to be given more opportunities.

V. Training Climate
   - Off-the-campus programmes should be organized, so that they will put in a different environment.
   - Though they are satisfied with the food provided in the training programme, some felt that the quality should be little better.

VI. Return On Investment
   - The employees felt that training programmes improves productivity.
   - There is a greater workforce flexibility because of the training provided.
5.7. FGD – II

5.7.1. Outcome based on six dimensions

I. Attitude Towards Training
   - Training programme was well organized.
   - Employees felt that they should be informed prior about the training programme.

II. Course Content: Course Design

III. Course Instructors And Methodology

IV. Course Administration
   - Need assessment should be done before the training programme.
   - Need based training programmes could conducted.
   - Training syllabus should be revised and modification to be done

V. Training Climate
   - Compliments make the employee to be motivated and to participate in training programme. Hence the value of the compliments should be enhanced.
   - External Trainers should be given chance for the training programmes.

VI. Return On Investment
   - It also saves on material and capital cost.
   - They also felt that the training programme improves the quality of the final product or service.

5.8. FGD – III

5.8.1. Outcome based on six dimension

I. Attitude Towards Training
   - They suggested that the training programme should be relevant to the job of the employees.
   - The employee should be given the choice for attending the training programme.

II. Course Content: Course Design

III. Course Instructors And Methodology

IV. Course Administration
   - Individual development should be given more importance.
- Methodology to create divisions specific training.
- Provide assistance in identifying training needs.
- Provide counseling to employees regarding employee development concerns on a requested basis.

V. Training Climate
- Training programmes provide good climate for learning growth, and coordination.
- Improves communication between groups and individuals.

VI. Return On Investment
- The organization has the motivated workforce.
- Develops a sense of responsibility to the organization for being competent and knowledgeable.

5.9. Overall assessment of training and development programme
Employees felt that the training programme has
- Improved the quality and error rate has been reduced.
- Enhances organization’s image.
- Reduced employee turnover.
- Reduced employee absenteeism.
- Increased employee capacity to adopt new technologies and method.
- Increased employee motivation.
- Increased morale among employees.
- Improves employee management relations and
- Most of the employees expect health related programme, so that sound body and sound mind which can contribute for the success of the organization.