ABSTRACT

Blended Learning is one of the leading trends in the training industry today. It is a combination of traditional classroom-based teaching methods and any of the electronic components. The aim of this study was to determine whether blended learning is effective in Manufacturing Industry. The three learning approaches like On-line learning, Instructor-led learning and Simulation Learning (Blended Learning) are discussed in this study with the support of Kirck Patrick’s learning evaluation model in particular to level 2 and level 3. The study assessed the employees’ learning outcomes of Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes and Behaviour and the impact of the training upon the organization by means of increased Job Performance. By assessing these learning outcomes and their relationships, the study demonstrated whether Kirkpatrick’s learning levels 2 & 3 are supported with the blended learning techniques and it can be used to predict the organizational impact.

The field of human resource development and HRD professionals are responsible for developing effective HRD programs within organizations. The increasing complexity of the workplace demands more on-the-job training and a more educated and trained workforce (Hudson, 2002; Newman & Hodgetts, 1998). With the increasing costs for advanced training, many organizations are trying to become more aggressive in determining the value of training upon employees’ performance, and in turn the value of the employees’ performance upon the continuous growth of the organization. Learning and skill development increases and becomes more integrated with business strategies, the need to evaluate the learning function is increasing.
While evaluation has long been an integral part of learning, organizational learning executives and HRD professionals continue to struggle with developing an evaluation system that measures the value of the learning function with the same precision as financial and accounting evaluation measures. Various evaluation models have been considered, but one of the earliest models that continues to be one of the most widely utilized, and adapted into other evaluation models, is Donald Kirkpatrick’s four-level evaluation model (ASTD, 2009; Kirkpatrick, 1959a; Kirkpatrick, 1959b; Kirkpatrick, 1960a; Kirkpatrick, 1960b; Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2006). The Kirkpatrick model evaluates a training program on four levels or areas: (a) the participants’ reactions to the program, (b) an assessment of the content, or what the participants learned, (c) the participants’ performances on the job, and (d) the impact of the training upon the organization.

The population for this study was Welders, Assemblers and Machinist at Caterpillar India Limited with the sample size of 240. Several Hypotheses were tested through Structural Equation Model, Chi-square, t-test, Friedman test and Correlation and Regression. Results from the analyses supported the hypotheses in this study. The significant improvement towards employee’s outcome of Knowledge, skills, attitude and behavior were found. Still there are some barriers found in the study relating to the implementation of learning skills at workplace. Moreover, the results demonstrated that the blended methodology allowed participants to acquire the knowledge and skills on how to integrate theory into their workplace more easily. The data revealed that the blended learning experience had a positive impact at their workplace and it will become a popular delivery method in future.