The Relationship between Job Training and Job Satisfaction:  
A Review of Literature

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ABSTRACT

As stand-alone concepts, job satisfaction and job training have each been researched extensively. However, encouraged by researchers who have found a myriad of effects of job training on employee behavior in the workplace, the concepts of job training and job satisfaction are being examined together. Results of many studies indicate that the effects of job training go beyond those that might be considered traditional, that is, the acquisition of knowledge, the improvement of skill, and the increasing of efficiency in the workplace. This review of literature looks at the relationship between job training and job satisfaction, and also examines the concept of job training satisfaction. It has been found that the research on the relationship between these two concepts can be categorized as follows: job training satisfaction as a measured construct, workplace and employee studies, training methodology studies, perception and meaning, and additional outcomes. Training and development practitioners must be aware of the relationship between job training and job satisfaction when planning and promoting workplace training programs.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Job Training, Job Training Satisfaction, Training Outcomes, Workplace Training

INTRODUCTION

As stand-alone concepts, job satisfaction and job training have each been researched extensively. However, new information can be garnered when reviewing literature on the concepts together. This review of literature shows that there are many outcomes, results, or effects in the complex relationship between the concepts of job training and job satisfaction. Training and development practitioners must be aware of these connections in the planning and promotion of workplace training programs, as they go far beyond what might be considered traditional outcomes of training. Managers and supervisors must also understand the meanings that employees assign to job training, and the outcomes or effects, including job satisfaction, and that job training has on employees.

In this review of literature, the concepts of job satisfaction and job training will first be defined individually. They will then be analyzed together, the relationship between job training and job satisfaction will be discussed, and the concept of job training satisfaction will be introduced. Finally, the “bottom line” will be addressed in an examination of concepts
influenced by job training, job satisfaction, and job training satisfaction.

**JOB TRAINING DEFINED**

Landy’s (1985) comprehensive description defined training as a set of planned activities on the part of an organization to increase the job knowledge and skills or to modify the attitudes and social behavior of its members in ways consistent with the goals of the organization and the requirements of the job. Patrick (2000) described training as the systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by a person in order to effectively perform a given task or job. He goes on to note that training is a pervasive activity in society, taking place within industry and commerce, government agencies and departments, health care organizations, and all branches of the armed service.

Within every organization, training occurs at all levels of personnel, and trainees may vary in terms of age, work experience, disability, educational background, ethnic origin, and skill level (Patrick, 2000). Jewell (1985) noted that training is a sub-process of the overall process of matching individuals to jobs (a process that begins with the screening, selection and placement of employees.) He believes that training serves three important functions within an organization:

1. Maintaining employees’ existing performance as required by the organization.
2. Improving employee motivation by strengthening employees’ beliefs in their abilities to perform their jobs.
3. Assisting with employee socialization and understanding of organizational priorities, norms, and values. Training methodology, structure, delivery, and content all reflect these organizational issues.

Kraiger and Aguinis (2001) concurred, noting that in addition to training content, equally important are the informal processes by which trainees interact with their environment and form attitudes and perceptions about training or themselves. These attitudes have a direct impact on their receptivity to training and potential for learning.

Despite the widespread pervasiveness of job training, Buelens and Coetsier (1984) noted more than 20 years ago that very little attention has been paid to job training theory formulation and that there is very little conceptual agreement with regard to theory formulation. This, they believe, is because training includes a variety of very diverse processes, making it difficult to find common denominators upon which to develop theories. Almost 20 years after that assessment, Salas and Canon-Bowers (2001) concluded that “training research is no longer atheoretical, as charged by our predecessors” (pp. 474-475). They do note, however, that training theory includes constructs, concepts, and models that draw from learning theory, organizational theory, and systems theory, among others. Salas and Canon-Bowers (2001) suggest that training theory does cover a variety of frameworks and constructs that are “broad, general, and integrating” (p. 474). These include issues such as training design, delivery, and evaluation, pretraining conditions, transfer of training, organizational support, individual situational characteristics and motivation for training, performance measurement, and systems factors.

In their comments regarding the lack of job training theory, Buelens and Coetsier (1984) note that job training concepts are often borrowed from learning process theories and systems theories, which is similar (in part) to the findings of Salas and Canon-Bowers (2001). In reviewing literature on the subject, several authors distinguish between learning and training. Landy (1985) and Merriam, Caffarella, and Baumgartner (2007) describe learning as a relatively permanent change in behavior which comes through experience, and note that learning and training are actually dealing with the same phenomenon from two different perspectives. Landy (1985) believes that learning is something that takes place inside a person (a
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