

The role of on the job training on organizational learning and its effect on improving staff performance

Hadi Pourbabaei¹ and Zohreh Jalalian²

¹ Department of Industrial Engineering and management systems Amirkabir University of Technology,

² Department of Industrial Engineering and management systems Amirkabir University of Technology

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ABSTRACT

Organizational learning and improved performance of employees can be achieved through several methods. On the job training creates the necessary skill and operationalize it in the individual and group level. The focus of the present study is on the role of on-the-job-training on learning and the improved performance of staff in the Iranian airport holding companies. The result indicates the significance effect of these trainings on reducing operational costs. In this regard, these training have been studied based on two effective internal and external factors on individuals' performances. The data were collected through interview, questionnaires and studying the organizational documents and the factors were analyzed from the empirical perspective. The result confirms the direct and indirect impact of the related training and skills on organizational learning and improving staff performance. Finally, a model has been presented to explain the affecting factors on organizational learning and improving staff performance.

KEYWORDS: On the job training, improving performance, organizational learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the main purpose of staff training is to improve their performance and environmental adaptation and increasing the quality of their skills and services; the individuals have always faced some limitations and restrictions in organization during their career and in order to fulfill their duties and mission [1]. Organizational learning in an organization which has the ability to create knowledge and acquire skills reflects the behavioral changes and new insights in that organization. Thus, one can define the organizational learning capability as an organizational and managerial feature which facilitates the organizational learning process [2]. Organizations try to provide a situation for their human resource, so they can be trained while performing their duties and job in order to overcome shortcomings and difficulties of work, and through increasing their skill and knowledge the efficiency and individual and group performances would increase. Moreover, training at the individual level refers to the creation of new insights and implicit and explicit knowledge from the available information [3]. Organizational performance improvement can be achieved through several methods. In fact, organizational learning is one of the possible factors which can be used as a medium between training and performance and consequently cause positive effects on organizational performance [4]. Training has a major role in these approaches, during which the company can create competitive advantage through human capital and organizational knowledge. The conducted researches and studies present evidences to confirm and support the positive and constructive effects of on the job training on individual and group levels [5]. The focus of this study is on the job training and organizational learning roles on improvement of the staff performance; the vital role of the organizational learning on the company's success along training as a key tool for organizational learning has also been discussed. Most of the organizations are looking to a way to adapt with business conditions and environment and obviously organizational training and learning can be one of the optimal proposed solutions. Training has been an essential and vital matter for a long time and the organizational improvement depends on improving the knowledge and skills of the human resource; for this reason, the internal and external training courses have high priority in organizations' agenda. Awareness of the effectiveness of the training courses and evaluating their effect on staff performance is very important for managers. On job, training is very necessary for identifying the priorities to allocate the limited resources and facilities in the most optimal way.

In the other side, employees should be on an acceptable level of skill and knowledge to reach organizational goals. This is a highly important matter for governmental organizations as their weak performance can cause failure in providing services, and for private sector companies that their weak performance will lead to failure in business. Therefore, according to conducted studies, on job training increase knowledge, skill and improve employee's insights and professional capacities. The present study focus on the role of the on job training courses on learning and improving the organizational performance, and also discussing the effective factors in this matter. The second section is the literature review including performance and organizational learning, human resources and effective factors on training, on job training and organizational learning, training and organizational performance. The third section is methodology and the final result is presented in the fourth section. Finally the conclusion and some suggestions for further researches are

Corresponding author: Hadi Pourbabaei, Department of Industrial Engineering and management systems Amirkabir University of Technology, Iran, +98 9124177084.

provided in the fifth section. The aim is to answer the following questions: What are the effects of the on the Job Training courses on organizational learning and improvement of the staff performance? What are the effective factors on organizational learning and improvement of the staff performance?

2. MATERIALS (LITERATURE REVIEW)

2.1. Organizational learning and performance

Organizational learning is generally a kind of replication strategy in organizations [6]. In fact, organizational learning is a multi-dimensional concept [2], [5] and [7]. In the other word, organizational learning exists in different and complicated aspects and various levels. Two main approaches are considered in organizational learning, First as a process through which organization acquires and develops the knowledge. Second, an organizational approach that as a capacity, facilitates learning process. This matter displays through organizing the organizational capacities and transferring knowledge and sometimes evaluating the organizational behavior for reflecting the new knowledge in the organization [2]. Organizational learning capacity is a feature that facilitates the learning process. These two mentioned approaches are trying to monitor and investigate the process of change and sharing practices [8]. Organizational learning needs analysis and consideration of different individual and group levels. Individual level consists of the process of implicit and explicit knowledge creation in organization; meanwhile. The individual learning ability reflects individual competitions and motivations [3]. The group level consists of transferring the individual knowledge to group and sharing it among members [9]. The influence of the actions on others and promoting the knowledge transfer attitude in group is described in this approach [10]. Despite the effectiveness in individual learning in organization, this approach does not grantee learning inside the organization, so the group level should also be considered. Here the considerations related to the organization and the relations between individual and group learning are important and their evidences have been positively evaluated.

2.2. Human resource and effective factors on training

One of the main stimuli of determining the effective factors on training and education is the existence of training process in organization. Two different patterns can be considered in this respect; first, the decision makers join the organization without any training process and methodology in order to investigate in human resource field. In this case, the decision makers decided to identify individuals based on the detected facts and train them based on the universal literature on the first level. The second paradigm were factors that define the probability of individual learning through training [1].

2.3. On-the-Job-Training and Organizational Learning

Human resource matters are amongst the primary effective instruments on individuals' abilities and skills which develop organizational culture and institutionalize knowledge sharing process [14]; training as an organizational culture developer can cause knowledge creation and transfer it to the organization. The recent studies focus on the relationship between training, HRM and knowledge transfer and need true conception and understanding of this relationship [15], [16] and [17]. There are not many studies about the relationship between training levels and organizational learning, yet evidences have been presented on the existence of a basic relationship in this case [1]. Having a long term approach which requires proper planning and developing the current perspectives is one of the features of organizational training [18]. Some studies represent a positive relationship between on the job training and organizational learning which id consists of current trainings and programs in organization [19]. Organizational learning requires several skills, expands people's flexibility and facilitates knowledge sharing process, so establishing team work during the organizational learning and training process seems essential and its effect in learning in individual and group level is considerable [15] and [21].

2.4. Training and organizational performance

Training as a systematic skill development and acquisition can expand people's knowledge and insight and optimize their performances [21]. Intangible resources are the main resource of competitive advantage in the organization [22]. Findings indicate the positive effects of training on increase in sales, individuals' salary, quality and productivity [23] and [24] but in some cases training is in contrast with the financial performance of organization [25], [26] and [27] but its significant effect on organization's beneficial outputs is not negligible [23], [28] and [29]. Based on the findings of other studies, there is a relationship between learning features and performance, specially its positive effects on performance [5], besides, training should be conducted during a long term course so its positive effect would appear. This is formal training which is against the informal, unorganized training. Multi skills training has a positive effect on performance and lead to organization's productivity. Team oriented training is also one of the results in the individual training and increase the members' engagement and support the leader [1].

3. METHODS

Iranian Airport Holding Companies is one of the largest organization in terms of sensitivity and importance of the mission, geographical extent and diversity of services, number of beneficiaries and stakeholders, complexity and technicality. This organization can have an efficient role in moving toward sustainable development, transport extension, specially the country's 2025 prospects in the field of transport. In this regard, the effect of on the job training in Iranian airports have been studied and analyzed and their effect on staff performances have been evaluated. Due to the particular position of airports as one kind of the entry and exit gates of country (passengers, commodities, services and passing flights through the airspace of the country, they can play a vital role in economic growth and development of the country. Thus, the managers and directors of the Iranian airports holding companies should provide the necessary groundwork for educational planning, design and on the job training services in order to develop their capabilities and their staff performance. The sample population consists of experts and managers of the administrative sections of the Iranian airports

holding companies. Data is collected through interviews, questionnaires and studying the organizational documents and two cases of the effect of on the job training on organizational performance improvement in the airport facilities and equipment office have been studied. The most specialized area of company’s activity is the equipment and lighting systems of the flight runways which is in the direct relationship with flight safety. Most of the necessary equipment of these system are supplied from abroad purchases so a substantial amount of money is being spent. In this regard, the effect of training on the reduction of transmitting equipment and spare parts to the airports. In the other hand, sending professional and administrative personnel to the airports impose high expenses on the company such as ticket, accommodation, the mission payment, etc.; also sending staff to other airports and their absence at their original place of service causes some problems related to administrative matters. The effect of training on the reduction of technical missions of personnel for repairmen and maintenance, the condition of equipment and number of the lighting systems on the flight runways have been studies. After summing the extracted concepts up, a survey was conducted on the managers and experts and the final results were analyzed.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The effect of training on transmitting equipment and spare accessories

According to the recent investigations, the statistics of the transmitted equipment for repairing and maintenance of the lighting systems in the Iranian airports during 2011 until 2013 is in the following table; with regard to the training course, this numbers has significantly reduced which followed by a great economic saving. Table 1 and figure 1 are representing the number of the transmitted airport equipment (runway lighting) during 2011, 2012 and 2013:

Table 1. The number of transmitted airport equipment (runway lights) years 2011, 2012 and 2013

No.	transmitted airport equipment	2011	2012	2013
1	runway lights	5758	4327	3650

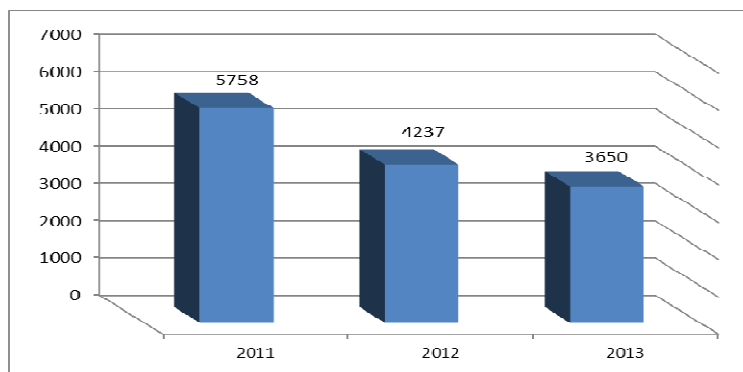


Fig1. The number of transmitted airport equipment (runway lights)

4.2. The effect of training on the reduction on the maintenance and troubleshooting missions

Regarding the technical and professional training courses for repairing, troubleshooting and maintenance of the above mentioned systems, the personnel’s mission drastically reduced; as the 127 missions for repairing and troubleshooting in 2011 has been reduced to 55 missions in 2013 that consequently resulted in saving in costs of sending technical personnel and other relevant expenses. Table 2 and figure 2 represents the number of the repairing and troubleshooting missions for runway lighting:

Table 2. Troubleshooting and repairing missions for runway lighting

No.	equipment	number
1	troubleshooting and repairing of runway lighting in 2011	127
2	troubleshooting and repairing of runway lighting in 2012	80
3	troubleshooting and repairing of runway lighting in 2013	55

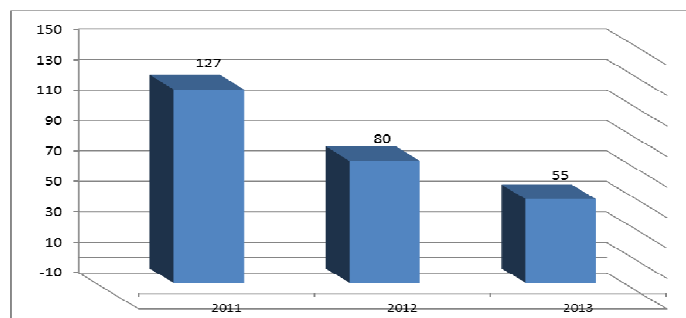


Fig.2. Troubleshooting and repairing missions for runway lighting

From the above information and tables, we can realize that different technical and professional training courses for airport personnel has caused significant reduction the number of problems and defects as each airport's personnel are able to supply their own required services. According to the surveys and interviews with managers, beside the mechanism and interior factors effecting on staff performance, the factors that are outside the company should also be considered. Political, economical, cultural and even environmental conditions are effective in organizational learning. On the other hand, regarding the particular type of this industry, managers are concern about the internal factors such as the necessity of training staff according to their professional conditions and requirements of the airport. On the job training based on the governmental policies, setting educational objectives based in facilities and particular priorities of the carrier and region, supplying the resources and considering the limitations, increasing staff knowledge through transforming and finally reviewing the educational programs according to the evaluations were factors concerning the managers. Two internal and external effective factors were identified.

5. DISCUSSIONS

5.1. Internal factors

5.1.1. Installing the training system

One of the greatest achievements of the field of education in the Iranian airports holding company is installing a training system in order to need analysis, planning, implementation and evaluation of training conditions. Because of the need for ongoing controlling and monitoring of the staff training status, this system is one of the factors which helped to identify and conducting the required trainings in the company. According to one of the managers, the reports in this system helped recognizing and improving the performance.

5.1.2. Adopting the new teaching tools

Infrastructures of online training courses are getting prepared and several professional courses have been held. Considering that the personnel, specially the operational personnel like the employees of the department of safety and rescue can be trained without leaving their workplace, their productivity and performance have improved significantly.

5.1.3. Facilitating the training process

Facilitating the training process and allocating the proper budget is one of the points mentioned by the executive managers if this industry. Regarding the high sensitivity of some professions in the Iranian airports holding company such as air traffic control experts, aviation electronics, aeronautical telecommunications network, aviation rescue and firefighting and also airport facilities and equipment and the need for professional training courses in order to avoid mistakes and human errors in air traffic control, installing and maintenance of air navigational aid devices, radar systems, flight runways, runways' lighting and providing services for passengers in terminals, the obstacles for these courses have been eliminated as much as possible. These courses are being held in the administrative section of the companies and airports with the least problems; also compared to other fields, a relatively fair budget is allocated for training.

5.1.4. Educational resources

Given the nature and types of the professional and technical training courses, the international rules and current regulations and instructions, most of the educational resources are developed by instructors and experts who are the company's staff. The instructors trained in courses abroad, can also be used as an update teaching resource.

5.1.5. Updated operational knowledge

Managers and practitioners of this field have special concern on continually increasing their staff knowledge through on the job training courses and consider it as a vital tool to lessen the consequences of the lack of knowledge in various fields. Hence, the operational knowledge have been updated with the help of the Iranian and foreigner experts and according to the international standards of the international civil aviation organization (ICAO) and International Air Transport Association (YATA).

5.1.6. Teacher training through participation in accredited international training courses

The international civil aviation organization (ICAO) and International Air Transport Association (YATA) are holding several training courses in the aviation and airport. Also, considering the purchase of the radar systems and navigation equipment from abroad, the company's staff need to be trained for the use, installation and maintenance of equipment. Thus, the number of eligible candidates obtained the necessary permission for abroad mission after a long official process and participated in the mentioned courses, after finishing their courses they will become instructors for training the staff of their company. This process resulted in optimization the performance and reduction the costs.

5.1.7. Job Promotion Mechanism

According to the job promotion path which is currently being developed, all the staff, from recruitment to retirement and regarding their organizational position and the location of their services, should be trained in related course in order to acquire the required professional knowledge and skill and have an enhanced performance.

5.2. External factors

5.2.1. Job security and the need to enhance people's knowledge

The aviation industry is recognized as one of the most complicated and sensitive industries and activists and practitioners of this field should have special training and skills. It is important for employees to increase their knowledge and strengthen their weaknesses, because neglecting this can lead to staff disappointment and gradually their separation from the company. The high sensitivity of this industry motivated the practitioners to automatically identify the weakness and strength points and put more effort in increasing the abilities and eliminating the shortcomings. For example, according to

the set educational level by ICAO, the air traffic controllers should maintain the required level by participating in the on the job training courses, otherwise, they are not allowed in the air traffic control tower and area control center.

5.2.2. Educational Infrastructures

Researches show that the required infrastructures in the airports and administrative units are the challenging points of the on the job training courses in companies. Despite access to proper resources, due to the lack of equipment and facilities and accredited educational institutes in some cities with airports, participating in such courses is not possible. Results of the surveys and evaluating the courses revealed that creating the necessary infrastructures beside other requirements are essential for achieving the objectives which consequently lead to holding courses with high quality and increasing people performances.

5.2.3. Attractions of aviation industry

Expressing the aviation industry attraction was one of the considerable points in the conducted interviews which was a motivating factor for staff to participate in courses and improve their knowledge. Regarding to the particularities and varieties of this industry, staff have great tendency toward acquiring knowledge and learning; as in some cases, they suggested these courses to their managers and the positive effect of the trainings was very tangible. For example, sending numerous requests from the staff company, especially administrative, financial and support section, for general aviation courses 1 and 2. According to one of the managers, the improvement of the efficiency and performance level of the staff was considerable.

5.2.4. Sanctions

Due to the nature of sanctions, they imposed a lot of problems to Iran aviation industry staff and practitioners and have had significant impact on air transportation like inability to transport the required technology and equipment. For instance, the radar system malfunction alongside the inability to supply the necessary parts and also lack of the necessary knowledge, will result in sending the experts abroad to be trained. According to the result, the trained staff abroad could fairly solve the mentioned problem. In another case, the acquired knowledge and skill in the similar courses lead to producing a convertor software for installing the new format of Flight Plan for the available radars.

5.2.5. International regulations

According to the managers' opinion, regarding the specific environment of the aviation industry and many components involved in this field, there is even more emphasis on obeying the international regulations. Due to the sensitivity of this industry and the need to comply the international regulations, inspectors of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) are coming to Iran in order to monitor the performance of some technical professions in specific time periods. These monitoring includes several aspects such as air traffic controllers' knowledge in different fields, their job qualifications and even the English competency. For example, according to ICAO regulation, the air traffic controllers should remain in the level of English competency specified by ICAO in order to clearly communicate with pilots; so general English and English for specific purposes courses seems necessary for air traffic controllers. In this case, the staff obliged themselves to participate in English language courses and achieving the required level of ICAO and the inspectors monitoring act like a leverage for effectiveness of these courses. According to the managers, developing the training programs without considering the mentioned regulations does not have functionality and in the case of any incident inside or outside the country, there will be huge consequences.

5.2.6. Governmental policies

Due to the sensitive nature of the aviation operational sections like traffic control, telecommunication and navigation, aviation network, airport safety and rescue, sometimes the governmental policies cause barriers in front of these courses and sometimes the state requirements might not be fully implemented. According to the company's managers, not holding the training courses resulted in the reduction of quality and staff performance while these courses have significant role in the reduction of aviation accident and updating staff knowledge and they have the opportunity to take advantages of the related benefits.

5.2.7. Cultural factors

Cultural factors seems to be a very important issue from the managers and experts of this field point of view. Due to the extension of the interaction of those involved in this industry with a variety of internal and external cultures, acquiring the necessary knowledge and applying it in relationships and interactions is unavoidable. Customer orienting, respecting the clients, the manners that the passengers, especially foreigner passengers, are treated in the terminals all have particular sensitivity. Sometimes, the practitioners of this industry are being considered as the representatives of a nation outside the borders as the behavior toward different nations is very complicated. The concept of culture in foreigner consideration is much more important than the civil cases and managers have allocated special attention to it. In this regard, several cultural and social training courses have been held and according to managers, the organizational learning and performance improvement is quite obvious.

5.2.8. Experts' recruitment mechanism

One of the main achievements of this study was the necessity of the knowledge and staff expertise in knowledge sharing and improving their performance. Even when the necessary infrastructures for courses and organizational learning were not available, because of recruiting staff with high expertise, they were voluntarily motivated to be trained in the highest level.

6. CONCLUSION

The present study has been conducted as a field study and according to the interviews with managers and experts on the Iran Airport company. The result revealed that the on the job training courses, reduction of transforming equipment and

repairing and maintenance missions has had a positive effect on the staff performances. In the other word, these courses result in promoting the knowledge and leads to organizational learning and finally operational costs' reduction. Moreover, the internal and external factors effecting on people's performances were identified and their impacts were analyzed separately. According to the result of this study, beside the strict aviation regulation, attention to specific environment of this industry and developing on the job training courses based on the required needs is very necessary. According to the result, managers should consider conducting field and adaptive studies and comparing the similar course in other countries. Developing and implementing the courses without considering the external factors will not be efficient and shortcomings and barriers will not be eliminated. It is essential that courses for each airport, should be based on its grading and all the regional and environmental conditions, as the differences in people's point of view, air traffic, geographical region, radar equipment and navigation systems of each airport requires specific training courses. Fig. 3 represent the effecting factors on organizational learning and staff performance improvement model.

7. Suggestions and executive strategies

7.1. Identifying and holding on the job training courses based on the necessary needs of the business should be specified and with participation of the related sections.

7.2. Identifying the effective factors on organizational learning and improving staff performances should be an ongoing process, as they can affect people from inside and outside of the company.

7.3. In order to improve the organizational knowledge level and holding the training courses based in the needs and world's industrial developments, it has been suggested that managers consider that teacher training approach by using the abroad training courses.

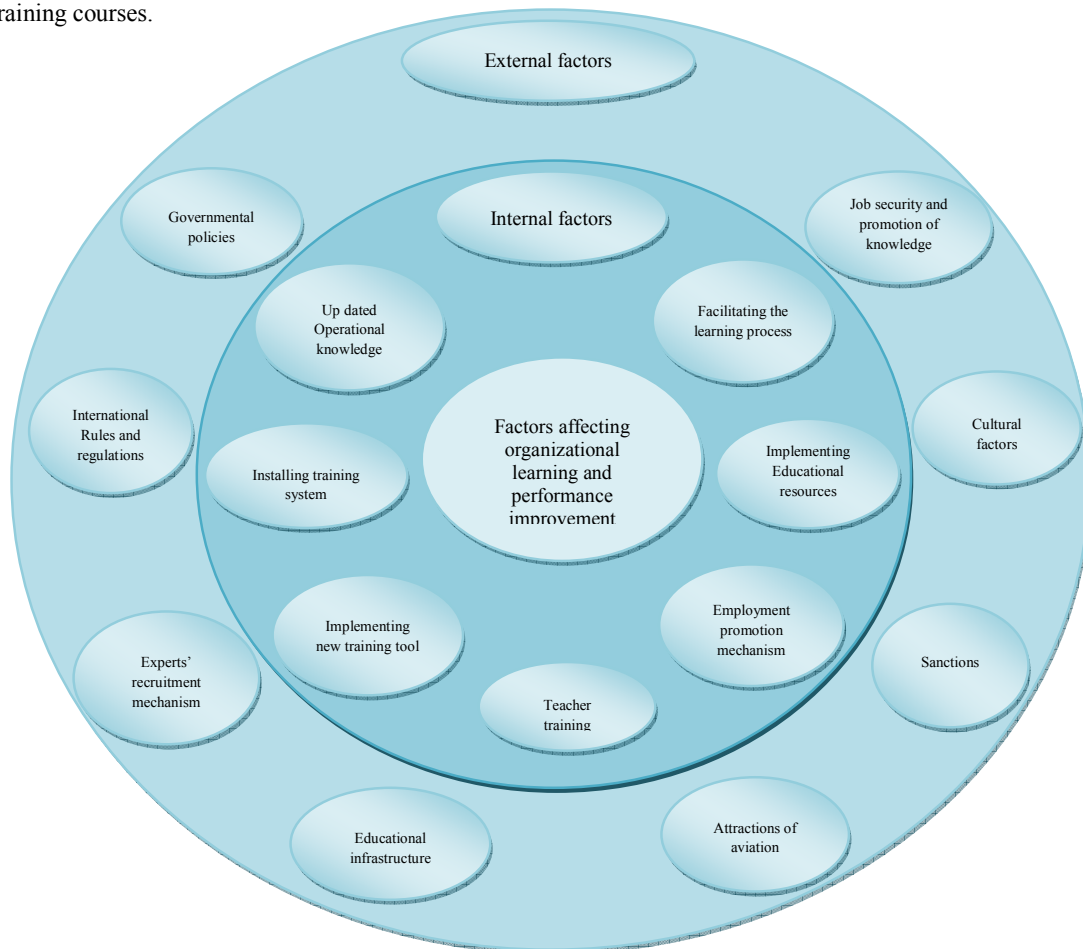


Fig. 3. Effecting factors on organizational learning and improving staff performance model

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