

**Transfer of Learning from the Out-country Training
Programs (Ministry of Education, Bhutan)
Royal Government of Bhutan**

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of the out-country training programs, undertaken by the Ministry of Education personnel in Bhutan, between the period 1999 and 2003. The particular emphasis is on the Transfer of Learning.

The transfer literature shows that there are several factors affecting the transfer process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Cheng & Ho, 2001). They range from trainees' personal characteristics through training design to organisational support. The transfer process is also said to differ according to the types of organisations, types of training, and duration of training (Holton et al., 2003). While some factors can be influenced by the organisation, some may be beyond the control of the organisation. Therefore, transfer evaluation should focus on those parts of the transfer system that the organisation can influence (Noe, 2000).

Baldwin and Ford's (1988) theoretical framework was adapted to help answer the research questions. This framework is based on the concept that the transfer of learning is governed by several pre-conditions viz. pre-training motivation, training design and work environment factors. These three pre-conditions consist of several factors, and have been placed under three stages of the training process: pre-training, training and post-training. Through the perspectives of trainees and their supervisors, this research can look back into all the three stages of the transfer system and identify what parts of the transfer system need intervention (Holton et al., 2003).

Both quantitative data and qualitative data have been used. Quantitative data were collected using a trainee survey questionnaire, and the qualitative data were gathered using trainee in-depth personal interview and supervisor structured interview. Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive normative figures, means, percentages, tables and graphs. The Software Product for Social Studies (SPSS) has been used to generate the descriptive figures, means and percentages. On the other hand, dominant themes of the qualitative data have been extracted and grouped in rank order.

The training process was split into three main stages, pre-training, training and post-training, in order to assess the effectiveness of the whole training process through self-reported data. The questions were geared towards ascertaining the trainees' motivational level prior to training, quality of training and work environment factors that have affected the process of transfer.

Overall, the trainees participated in their training with a good level of pre-training motivation. However, trainees' attitude towards their training changed once they experienced the training. For example, the level of perceived ability to transfer learning to workplaces by the trainees in the academic category reduced after they experienced the training. Perceived utility of the training differed between job utility and career utility. While trainees in all the categories foresaw job utility of their training to be positive, a few trainees in the technical category did not foresee career utility of their training.

There are several direct and indirect factors that affected the transfer process. The direct factors include excessive workload, inadequate requisite materials and mismatch of jobs and skills after training. On the other hand, the indirect factors range from lack of clearly laid training objectives to lack of monitoring and evaluation after training. The lack of these main elements in HR system limited opportunities for trainees and their supervisors to ensure transfer of learning acquired from training.

On the whole, the out-country training programs were effective. However, there is a great scope for optimising the benefits of out-country training programs and enhancing the rate of transfer. The Ministry of Education needs to streamline and strengthen its HRD system, particularly in terms of clearly identifying training objectives and pursuing monitoring and evaluation after the training.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian development Bank
AusAID	Australian Agency for International Development
CBIP	Cluster Based In-country Program
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
GOI	Government of India
KSA	Knowledge, Skills and Attitude
NBIP	National Based In-country Program
NIE	National Institute of Education
RCSC	Royal Civil Service Commission
SBIP	School Based In-country Program
SDC	Swiss Development Cooperation
SEP	Second Education Project
SPSS	Software Products for Social Studies
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

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