

**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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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Background

This thesis is about the ‘transfer of learning’ from the out-country training programs undertaken by the Ministry of Education of Bhutan personnel, between the period 1999 and 2003. Despite the long trend of developing human resources through out-country training programs with significant financial implications, the extent of the application of the learning has never been studied in detail.

Though this study looks at the Department of Education before it was restructured and upgraded to Ministry of Education towards the end of 2003, it is still referred to as the Ministry of Education in this study.

Ever since the formal launch of socio-economic development programs in 1961, the Government of Bhutan has accorded high priority to the Education Sector to address the critical shortage of human resources in the country. With the advent of modernisation, the challenge facing the sector has been continual and complex. The initial mandate of providing basic formal education, wherever feasible, has gradually been replaced by multifarious responsibilities of enhancing access to basic education, producing the requisite quantity of teachers, developing responsive curricula and creating a child-friendly education system. Yet, commendable achievement has been made over the past years. The primary school enrolment rate has risen to 81% in 2002, and the adult literacy rate to 54% (Department of Education,

2003:5). The efforts of the sector continue to meet all the challenges ahead. Notwithstanding the hard geographical terrain and the various other inherent impediments, the Ministry of Education has achieved success in expanding primary education. This has resulted in the need for a corresponding expansion in higher education.

Several international and bilateral development agencies have played an instrumental role in bringing the education sector this far. Some of those agencies are the Government of India (GOI), World Bank, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), HELVETAS, Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF), Bhutan Trust Environment Fund (BTEF), Save The Children Fund (USA), Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) and several others. Their generous financial and technical assistance further continue to support the provision of basic education and human resource capacity building.

One of the current prominent bottlenecks encountered by the education sector now is the acute shortage of trained and qualified teachers, especially at higher secondary education levels. As per the general statistics of the Ministry (2004), of the total 4376 teachers, 93% underwent formal teacher training. In terms of their academic qualification, however, about half the teachers have year 12 and 10 certificates. Five-percent do not have year 10 certificate. A total of 9% and 15% of teachers possess masters and bachelors degrees respectively.

The production capacity of the two National Institutes of Education (NIEs) is being enhanced through physical infrastructure expansion, curriculum development/revision and the training

and development of teacher trainers. In spite of this, as per the education Human Resource Development (HRD) Master Plan projection, the overall shortage of teachers across the sector is expected to be 20% by 2007. The current shortfall of teaching staff is being partially offset by recruitment of expatriate teachers from India. Currently, there are 803 expatriate teachers in the education system, including private schools (Ministry of Education, 2004).

The sector also lacks qualified and trained professional administrators and managers. Constant effort, wherever feasible, therefore, is being made to facilitate training opportunities for teaching, administrative and clerical staff. To this effect, the Ministry of Education envisions the development of “highly professional, competent and motivated personnel to provide quality education towards producing productive future citizens of Bhutan” (HRD Master plan, 2002-2007).

The objective of providing a quality education by such a large organisation, however, calls for an overall development of its human resources. The academic qualification levels of the academics need enhancement to enable them to cope with the expansion of secondary education. The managers, both in schools and support and direction offices, need to be updated with modern management techniques to increase their efficiency and productivity. Equally important, general support staff and technical staff across the organisation also need to be provided with the requisite knowledge and skills. The emphasis of the HRD plans and programs of the Ministry of Education, therefore, has been diverse and complex. In order to achieve the above all-round staff development objective, proper planning, implementation and evaluation are crucial.

Training plans and programs play a crucial role in fulfilling the vision. Towards this, in-service training and professional development activities are being offered through a combination of in-country and out-country training programs.

The definitions of these two types of training are provided below.

In-country Training

In-country training programs mainly consist of induction courses, curriculum, pedagogical aspects and are conducted in-house and at local training institutes. In-house training programs are conducted at three different levels, namely, National Based In-service Training Program (NBIP), Cluster Based In-service Training Program (CBIP) and School-Based In-service Training Programs (SBIP). In order to ensure efficient use of the scarce resources and for sustainability reasons, NBIP stresses creation of a pool of competent national trainers in particular fields. Such core groups of professional trainers further train other teachers in the respective school clusters through CBIP. Finally, CBIP trainees, who are generally school representatives train other teachers in the respective schools (SBIP). This hierarchy of training system is geared towards ensuring a trickle-down effect of Bhutan's training expertise. Further, this strategy is economical and facilitates teacher training at the teachers' convenience and close to their work places. In addition, short-term administrative and management training programs are tailored at the in-country training institute. In order to ensure long-term sustainability and self-reliance, the Government of Bhutan has been laying a constant emphasis on improving and enhancing the facilities of the in-country training and educational institutions.

Out-Country Training

The lack of in-country training facilities is the major reason for undertaking out-country training activities. Out-country training programs include in-service training and professional development programs, especially in the fields of technical, higher education and specialisation courses, which are undertaken abroad. In order to bring in an overall comprehensive quality education system, simultaneous training and development of professional and management staff also remains as a priority. Out-country training programs take place through either attending regular commercially packaged courses or tailor-made courses in overseas training institutes and universities.

A considerable amount of money is being spent annually on the training of staff from the Ministry of Education. Of an annual expenditure of an approximately USD\$800,000, about 65% go into out-country training programs.

The trend of out-country training programs is likely to continue. As per the Human Resource Development Plan of the Department of Education (2002-2012), altogether 265 and 452 slots of long-term out-country training requirement have been projected during the periods 2002-2007 and 2007-2012 respectively. In doing so, it is imperative to ensure optimal sustainable benefits of the increasing trend of out-country training activities. This can be achieved through standardisation of systems for training needs assessments, monitoring and ensuring of 'learning transfer' and maintenance.

As per the RCSC HRD Master Plan, 2002, the country's overall out-country: in-country training ratio in the Ninth-Five-Year plan (2002-2007) is predicted to be at 16:84 as against

59:41 during the Eighth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002). Nevertheless, as the rising training and educational needs become more complex, the local training and education providers will not be able to cope with such emerging needs for some time. Therefore, the Ministry of Education, as well as other sectors might need to continue training and educating its staff outside the country for a while.

The effectiveness of out-country training has been selected as the key focus of this study because of its huge financial implications. In addition, despite the long trend of developing its human resources through out-country training and education, the extent of the application of the learning acquired overseas has never been studied in detail. In-country training programs, on the other hand, are custom-designed and job-specific for which training needs assessments and post-training evaluations are regularly undertaken. Further, the in-country training program system is more institutionalised, as can be seen in the previous description of the hierarchy of training system. This study, therefore, is directed towards assessing the effectiveness of out-country training only and recommending a future course of action.

The ultimate value of such a non-profit oriented social sector HRD effort is difficult to quantify. Hamblin (1974) indicates that ultimate value of training in social service organisations like the Ministry of Education, in this case, is judged in terms of public welfare. Training intermediate effects such as learning and transfer of learning to the trainees' workplaces can predict the ultimate value to some extent. The application of knowledge, skills and attitude acquired from the training on the job is more likely to result in an ultimate HRD value.

Usually, donors undertake routine evaluations of all developmental support programs which include a training component. However, since training components are a part of the major support programs, donors either study the progress report submitted by the local project office or carry out only brief tracer-studies. The HRD unit does conduct some training impact studies, as required by the projects. However, owing to the lack of evaluation expertise and essential resources, the extent of such studies is limited to general feedback statements on training, collected through simple postal questionnaires. The focus of such training impact evaluations tends to be on the rate at which trainees return to their original profession, the rate of retention in the same organisation and general opinion of the trainees about the training. In this context, the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC), which is the central government agency for civil service, has substantiated the fact of the lack of systems for reviewing, monitoring and evaluation across the government agencies when it stated “in spite of the implementation of an impressive number of human resource development programs in the past, there were no systematic review, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms” (Civil Service Human Resource Development, 2002:54). This particular issue was one of the main concerns in the HRD area highlighted in the Vision 2020 document (1999). The HRD system of Bhutan was described to be more supply-oriented rather than demand-driven implying serious need for proper training needs analysis.

The effectiveness of training needs assessment can be discovered through the process of training impact evaluation. As such, an evaluation of the impact of the training programs in this study is expected to indicate the effectiveness of the planning and implementation processes adopted by the Ministry of Education. The emphasis of this study is, therefore, to determine the effectiveness of the out-country training programs with a special focus on ‘transfer of learning’.

Transfer literature shows that there are several factors affecting the transfer process. They range from trainees' personal characteristics through training design to organisational support. Transfer process is also said to differ according to the types of organisations, types of training, and duration of training (Holton et al., 2003 and Gaudine & Saks, 2004). While some factors can be influenced by the organisation, some may be beyond the control of the organisation (Noe, 2000). Therefore, transfer evaluation should focus on those parts of the transfer system that the organisation can influence. However, in order to do that, firstly, evaluation at various stages of the training process needs to be considered (Salas et al., 2001). The details of the theoretical framework are presented in Chapter 2 Figure 2.6.

In order to study the extent of transfer of learning, it is imperative to portray an overview of the training process. An overview of the training process of the Ministry of Education, for this study, is expected to enable the readers to understand the context and appreciate the extent of transfer of learning. The following section, thus, reviews the planning and implementation processes that the ministry follows.

An overview of the Ministry of Education training process

The HRD unit functions as the co-ordinating agency for planning and implementation of HRD activities of all the departments, divisions and sections under the Ministry of Education. The unit is also the secretariat to the HRD Committee whose membership comprises all department heads, and is chaired by the Secretary of the ministry. The Committee vets and endorses all out-country training proposals received from departments, divisions and sections to the head of the ministry for the ministerial approval. Subsequently, the proposals are

forwarded to the Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) for its final approval. The Royal Civil Service Commission is the apex body, which oversees all national HRD plans and programs. It is also the approving authority for all national HRD plans and their implementation. The following are the planning, implementation procedures, and administrative structure pertaining to out-country training process.

Planning

In line with the national development plans prepared on a five-year term basis, all departments and sections are involved in projecting their HRD needs. Due to the lack of expertise and time, however, the HRD needs are largely determined by the perceived needs. The needs are also guided by the belief in the principle of facilitating personal development and career advancement opportunities through the process of continuous and life-long learning. Some of the practical factors determining perceived training needs are: perceived low performance of the current staff, shortage of staff, projected work force requirement, and availability of funds. Therefore, the general factors that determine training-needs range from inefficiency of employees through the projected work force requirement to the availability of funds. While the first two factors are straight forward, the last two deserve elaboration. The fact of determination of training needs based on projected work force requirement indicates that normally new recruits, especially in non-teaching fields are untrained or lack work experience. The respective department or sections where new employees are likely to join in the near future keep training provisions for such posts. The availability of funds factor determines the priority of training needs. Depending on the availability of training funds, training needs of even low priority get incorporated in the training plans. The HRD unit coordinates and compiles all these plans as the ministry's HRD plan to be implemented over a

period of five years. This plan is further incorporated in the national HRD plan compiled by the RCSC.

Implementation

The HRD unit in close consultation with the respective department/divisional heads initiates and co-ordinates implementation of all training plans according to the work-plan. The respective departments/divisions/sections or the concerned heads initiate selections of candidates for training. In certain school-related selections, the HRD unit proposes nominations to the HRD Committee. In such situations, standard nomination criteria are relevance, academic performance record, and seniority in the post. Recommendation of field supervisors for nomination is sought in a situation where there is more than one eligible candidate for a particular training program. Therefore, the responsibility of nomination and selections of candidates for out-country training activities lies with different offices, whose nomination criteria also might differ from one another.

The organisational training plans are also subject to change responding to the emerging needs and priorities. Such change proposals, however, have to originate from the respective department/divisional heads. Endorsed by the HRD Committee and recommended by the ministry, the proposals have to be approved by the RCSC. Similarly, the implementation of each out-country activity is subject to the approval of this bureaucratic hierarchy.

Unlike in an ideal situation, employers and training organisers are different organisations; and implementation of HRD programs is subject to the availability of external supporters. The degree of control of HRD unit over the out-country training providers is limited. On top of all these factors, usually there is a condition that all the planned training activities have to be

completed by the end of the project. This condition, at times, compromises the quality of planning and implementation of training activities.

By now, it might be obvious under what sort of circumstances the concept of 'HRD' functions in terms of the out-country section of the Ministry of Education. There are numerous bureaucratic administrative procedures for planning and implementation of HRD programs, and several internal and external stakeholders are involved.

HRD systems might be similar in other government agencies in Bhutan as well, but such comparisons and references are outside the scope of this study. Thus, this study will look into the issues pertaining to the quality of the planning and implementation processes of out-country training programs, and their impacts on transfer of learning. Data on out-country training programs maintained by the HRD unit of the Ministry of Education will be used for the study. Of course, other modes of collecting data such as survey questionnaires and in-depth personal interviews are also employed.

The factors that motivated this study

Four main factors motivated the conduct of this study. Firstly, there is a lack of a standardised system for planning and implementation of out-country training programs. Secondly, there is a lack of any detailed study report on the effectiveness of out-country training undertaken by the Ministry of Education personnel. Thirdly, some of the out-country training programs have become an annual feature even though no training impact study has been conducted. Finally, there is a need to determine the effectiveness of out-country training in terms of implementation process and learning transfer to workplaces, and make recommendations for improvement in future.

In addition, further emphasis on training of the Ministry of Education personnel has received similar support of the government and the previous and current donor agencies. For instance, for the Ninth-Five-Year plan (2002-2007), the education sector has been allocated 16%, which is the highest of the total national HRD plan out-lay. There is, therefore, a genuine need to review the system for out-country training implementation, and study the extent to which learning has been transferred to the job. It is to be hoped that the present research will be able to identify the areas that needs intervention to improve the out-country training implementation process and ensure 'learning transfer' to workplaces.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of out-country training planning and implementation process; and the effectiveness of various out-country training programs, with particular focus on 'learning transfer', undertaken by the Ministry of Education Personnel between 1999 and 2003. The choice of this period has been determined to include a particular fellowship program of the Second Education Project (SEP), which has a major component on capacity building of the then Department of Education. The project commenced in 1998 and ended in December 2003. The World Bank and the Swiss Development Corporation (SDC) jointly funded the Second Education Project. A small proportion of fellowships, which are funded by other agencies indicated earlier in this chapter, have also been studied to capture wider views of the effectiveness of out-country training programs undertaken in various countries and at different points in time.

Over 90% of the Ministry of Education's out-country training programs were funded by the Second Education Project. Therefore, the results of this study are generalizable to the 10% not studied here.

Scope of this Study

To date, there has been no detailed impact evaluation on out-country training conducted in the Ministry of Education. This study, therefore, will be primary research which will form a basis for the conduct of any future training evaluation in the Ministry of Education. A range of different training programs undertaken during the period between 1999 and 2003 was chosen using a random sampling technique. The trainees were classified into three broad categories: Academics, Management and Technical. The first category consists of teachers, lecturers, curriculum developers and researchers. The second category includes trainees from the central administration and direction services, school heads and district education offices. The third category includes general technical and administrative support and finance personnel. The sample population was categorised as indicated above, because the nature and duration of the training programs differ among the professions. The range in length of training programs is 3 weeks to 30 months. This classification was expected to help the researcher avoid incorrect generalisation of the findings among the training programs of varying nature and duration. The study focused on the identification of the training outcomes and the factors impeding/assisting transfer of learning, through the perspectives of the trainees and their supervisors. The theoretical assumptions and the data collection and analysis tools and techniques are elaborated separately in Chapter 3 on Research Methodology.

Research Questions and Objectives

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent have the selected trainees been motivated to participate in the out-country training program?
2. To what extent has the learning of out-country training participants been transferred to the job, and shared among other colleagues in the workplace?

3. What are the factors affecting out-country training participants' utilisation of knowledge, skills and attitude in the workplace?
4. What are the perceptions of trainees and their supervisors of out-country training and the need for certain policy improvement?

Objectives of this study were to:

- explore if trainees were involved in training decision-making and objective setting processes;
- discover factors that affected transfer of the learning to workplace;
- ascertain the trainees' attitude towards the training decisions made;
- ascertain the extent of transfer of learning to the workplace;
- analyse the perception of trainees with respect to the overall quality of the out-country programs, in terms of the design, content, delivery and relevance;
- explore the existence of any general practice of sharing new knowledge and skills in the workplace;

Research Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative methods are the two major research approaches widely used in social research. Researchers, in practice, however, usually employ modified versions or even combinations of elements of both methods (Sarantakos, 1998: 41). Bell (1993: 63) stresses that no approach depends solely on one method; some approaches may depend heavily on one type of data-collecting method, but not exclusively. Human resource development researchers also use both quantitative and qualitative methods. According to Swanson et al., (1998), these research methods are valuable and, in fact, often quite powerful when used together (p: 66).

The nature of the study, therefore, underpins the adoption of the combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

Structured survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the trainees. To ensure the validity of self-reported data of the trainees, however, Cheng and Ho (2001) recommend collection of data from trainees' supervisors as well. As such, structured interviews were conducted with their supervisors. Trainees' semi-structured interviews were directed towards an elaboration of the quantitative data, wherever necessary, through open-ended questions. In addition, interviews facilitate closer interaction with the trainees to explore in-depth perspectives of the trainees on application of learning. Based on these two standard methods, a combination of postal survey questionnaire and personal interviews were used for the data collection. This combination was expected to foster reliability of the information.

Data Collection

The study, therefore, employed a combination of survey and in-depth interview methods for the data collection. The survey questionnaire contained a mixture of closed-alternative questions and open-ended questions, and was used for the trainees. In-depth interviews were conducted only with those participants who agreed to be interviewed. Interviews were used to complement the structured questionnaires for a substantive and in-depth analysis of the study. In other words, it can be called confirmation survey interviews, as it was targeted towards confirming earlier responses provided through written questionnaires. Structured interviews were used with the supervisors.

An effort was made to ensure minimal time and cost implications to the participants in relation to the study. Towards this effect, the interviews were conducted at the participant's respective locations and at a consented time of their convenience. Further, the questionnaires were posted to the participants along with a stamped self-addressed envelope. The completed questionnaires were received by the researcher directly under the care of the Personnel Section, Ministry of Education, Bhutan.

Simultaneous application of survey questionnaires and interview techniques might, sometimes result in contrasting responses. Nonetheless, the technique of conducting interviews following certain responses to questionnaire only, generally corroborate and substantiate the earlier responses rather than contradict them. The detail tools and techniques adopted for data collection has been elaborated in Chapter 3 under the title 'Research Methodology'

Interpreting the Data Gathered

Data analysis techniques depend on the nature of the variables and measurements. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive normative figures, frequencies, means, percentiles etc. On the other hand, responses to open-ended survey questions were grouped into thematic orders and listed in a rank order. Responses to the interviews were analysed to extract dominant themes. These themes were used to aid interpretation of the survey findings. In order to capture some actual experiences of the participants and to illustrate the originality of some qualitative data, some thematic comments have been presented in the original words of the participants (refer Table 4.16). To do so, prior consent of those participants was secured. The findings and their interpretations are presented in Chapters 4 and 5 respectively.

De-limitation and Limitation of the study

This study has one de-limitation and two limitations that are worth noting. The delimitation is that the quality of training was ascertained from the perspectives of the trainees only. Nine countries were involved in the out-country training programs that were selected for this study. Australia ranks the highest number of participant trainees with 35.33% followed by Canada with 34.67%. Other countries include India (11%), the Philippines (6%), Singapore (4.67%), the U.K (3%), Thailand (3%), Sri Lanka (1.33%) and Japan (0.67%). The findings and their interpretations have not been made according to the country categories. The researcher assumed that the training transfer was unlikely to result from the countries where the training was undertaken. This is because all the training programs were undertaken in reputed training institutes and universities. The difference would more likely result from the types of organisation, types of training and duration of training (Holton et al., 2003). Therefore, as reported in Chapter 3, the sample was grouped into three categories: academic, management and technical categories. First limitation is that data are based upon the retrospective perceptions of trainees and their supervisors some of whose involvement in training programs are up to five years. Their perceptions may have been affected by the period of time that has subsequently passed. Second limitation is that personal in depth interviews were conducted only with those who volunteered. This may not represent the views of the group as a whole.

Significance of the Study

The study will highlight the effectiveness of the overall out-country training programs. It will inform the Ministry of Education departments, divisions and sections of the benefits as well as the lapses where they have to intervene to develop training plans and implementation programs for a long-term and sustainable benefit. Most significant will be the extent to which

the training programs were beneficial to the candidates, in particular, and the Ministry of Education, in general. The study provides analyses of data to evaluate the worth of the emphasis of the Government of Bhutan and the external donors on the Ministry of Education's human resource capacity building activities.

The Ministry of Education has been allocated 16% of the national HRD budget, which is the highest among the HRD budget allocations for the Ninth Five-Year HRD plan (2002-2007). The study also signifies the extent of importance of capacity building of the in-country training institutes to provide needs-based or customised training programs. Finally, the researcher works in the Ministry of Education, Bhutan and is an out-country training participant. The researcher is therefore well placed to provide sensitive analysis of the data as well as an insider perspective but cannot guarantee avoidance of bias in interpretation of data.

In order to avoid conviction of subjectivity, the researcher holds the responsibility of clarifying his position, assumptions and their implications for this study. As an insider, the researcher has two main assumptions, which also partly guide the construction of the research questions. The first assumption is that the process of planning and implementation of out-country training programs across the Ministry of Education departments and divisions/sections lacks a standard procedure. Second, trainees may not be serious about the application of learning acquired from training to their workplaces. These assumptions, however, will not influence and direct the responses of participants of the research. The researcher's personal experience and perspectives on the out-country training program, which is currently being undertaken will not influence the responses and their interpretation of the research participants either. The research participants' responses will, therefore, be treated as objectively as possible given this caveat.

In other words, the intent of the research is not to undermine the usefulness of out-country training programs. It is rather aimed at ascertaining their effectiveness, and suggesting an intervention for enhancing their usefulness through ensuring transfer of learning.

The conclusion and directions for future research of this study are presented in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The focus of this study is on the effectiveness of out-country training programs, particularly in terms of ‘learning transfer’, undertaken by Ministry of Education personnel, Bhutan, between the period 1999 and 2003. In order to ascertain the effectiveness of training, evaluation at various stages of the training process needs to be considered (Salas et al., 2001). As indicated in the introductory chapter, effectiveness is going to be evaluated through the perspectives of the trainees and their supervisors. The concept of out-country training, in this context applies to any specific short-term training and long-term professional and higher academic studies.

Learning transfer process differs between the types of organisations, types of training and duration of training (Holton et al., 2003; Gaudine & Saks, 2004). The existing literature on training transfer, however, does not contain much information about such differences. It is rather mostly based on short-term and skills-specific training. Further, the limited literature specifically on out-country training pertains to country-specific training impact studies conducted for internal purposes. They however, do provide insights to ‘learning transfer’ of out-country training.

The areas covered in the literature review, therefore, consist of general training concepts, training evaluation, ‘learning transfer’ research highlighting pre-training motivation, training design and post-training work environment factors and out-country training impact studies.

Accordingly, the chapter reviews general training concepts, evaluation and training transfer studies, and then deals with literature on out-country training.

General Training Concept

Knowledge and skills are the essential ingredients of innovation, whose primary engine is intellectual capital (Wiggenhorn, 1996:19). The need to update and enhance knowledge, skills and attitudes is vital, particularly in this changing work environment. New employees need training in order to facilitate understanding of new tasks, technologies, organisation rules and regulations and procedures. On the other hand, the old employees need to update their knowledge and skills thereby giving them real “life-long learning” (Berman et al., 2001). Many organisations, therefore, spend much money on training, believing that training will improve their employees’ performance and hence the organisation’s productivity (Yamnil & McLean, 2001).

The importance of training is manifested even in organisational policies and government regulation (Sofo, 1999:122). For instance, in order to enhance the technical or skills efficiency of the Australian labour market and to increase international competitiveness, the Australian Government in 1990 introduced the Training Guarantee (Administration) Act 1990. The Act required all organisations with an annual salary bill of over AUS\$ 200,000 to spend between 1% and 1.5% of their annual revenue on eligible training programs.

There is also clear evidence of the increase in training and development budgets. For example, the gross direct expenditure on structured training in Australia in 2001-2002 financial year was \$4,018.2 million, an increase of 37.3% from 1996 (ABS, 2003). In the

United States, budgets for 1994 were up by 5% over 1993 (Phillips, 1996). Further, in 2001, USA organisations with more than one hundred employees are estimated to have spent US\$200 billion on training including indirect costs (Training Magazine, 2002, cited in Holton et al., 2003). Similarly, in Bhutan, the Civil Service HRD budget allocation for the 9th Five Year Plan has increased to US 39.7 million from US\$ 20 million of the 8th Five Year Plan (Royal Civil Service Commission, 2002).

Training Evaluation

The increased emphasis on training and competitiveness of the modern world has necessitated justification of the expense. Training is not an end in itself, but is one of the factors that contributes to the success of an organisation and its people. As such, there is a need to understand how it has contributed to the individual and the organisation. Phillips (1996) maintains that in any direction one chooses to take in the human resource development (HRD) field, the pressure to measure the results of training is increasing. In developing countries as well as in fully developed nations, the issue is a “hot topic”. Robbins, Doyle and Prokop (1996), argue that the rationale for evaluation of a training program is to acquire data that demonstrates the efficacy of the program and the value of the program to the organisation. They assert that it is no longer acceptable to believe in or accept on faith the intrinsic worth and value of training; it must be demonstrated through effective evaluation. Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001), say that the goal of training is not to have successful training events but to enable people to learn to do their work better. They further add that success occurs not in training but on the job. The focus of modern training according to them should be performance-based rather than event-based. The following are some of the definitions of training evaluation.

Evaluation of training, according to Smith (1987, cited in *Training and Development in Australia*, 1998), is concerned with the assessment of a program's value or worth. Evaluation of training can not only be used to justify current training activities, but also to obtain user-input in planning and designing future activities well (Jonathan et al., 2001). Similarly, Tachereau (1998) defines evaluation of training as a purposeful activity undertaken to affect policy and institutional development, to shape the design and implementation of future interventions and to improve the management of training and development programs. Tachereau maintains that evaluation studies have shown that a number of factors contribute to training impacts, such as:

- relevance of knowledge, techniques and skills to the job;
- ownership by the key stakeholder institutions;
- commitment of participants to the institution and support from the institution for the participants;
- appropriateness of participants;
- material conditions to implement what the participants learn.

As such, the general objectives of carrying out training evaluation are to enhance the efficiency of the employees and to improve the future training programs. There are, nevertheless, certain barriers confronting the need to evaluate training programs, which have to be addressed accordingly.

There are several models of training evaluation. A widely used training evaluation model is the one developed by Kirkpatrick (1998) at the end of 1950s. His four-levels of evaluation—reaction, learning, behaviour and result encompass the stages ranging from the immediate

end-of-course perspectives to the work place results. Kirkpatrick's evaluation model follows the sequence of trainee reaction, leading to learning, behaviour and outcomes.

Recent work has either expanded or pointed out weaknesses in Kirkpatrick's model, such as the need to develop more diagnostic measures (Salas & Canon, 2001). Arguing the inadequacy of the four levels of evaluation, Phillips (1996) stresses the importance of a fifth level –return on investment, to compare costs versus benefits. Knowles (1990) has also added one more level; re-diagnosis of learning needs, to the four-level model. Based on the fundamental conception of adult learning and continuing education, Knowles says that if every learning experience is to lead to further learning, as continuous education implies, then learners should be able to re-examine their competencies and reassess their learning needs.

Similarly, Hamblin (1974) formulated a training evaluation process into five levels: reaction, learning, job behaviour, organisational effects and ultimate value. The model is based on the assumption that there is a cause-and-effect chain in the five levels of training effects. The chain is said to snap at any of its links. Training evaluation is supposed to detect a failure in the chain then refine and improve the program in the future. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate at all the five levels to identify where the failure actually occurred. The model emphasises the setting of clear objectives at each level of evaluation, in order to avoid invalid information and unrealistic evaluation results. The evaluation of effects of each level leads to resetting and refining of objectives at each level and further leads back to refining evaluation at preceding levels to form an improved training program. This cyclical process continues until the last level and is expected to refine and improve the training process (see Figure 2.1).

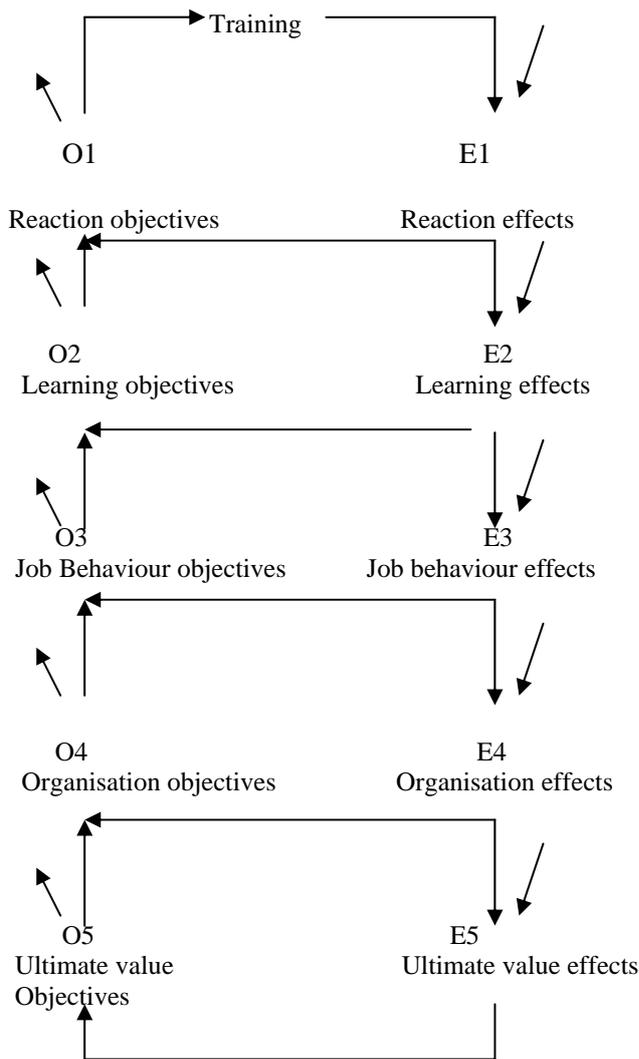


Figure 2.1: Model of evaluation (Hamblin, 1974)

Hamblin added fifth level called ultimate value to Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model. This level goes beyond measurement of effects of trainee’s job behaviour on the functioning of the organisation to ultimate criteria. Hamblin indicates that ultimate criteria a firm judges the success or failure of its activities are economic benefits. This assumption holds true in industrial organisations in a capital society.

Ultimate value of training may not be always measured in terms of financial benefits. In social service organisations or government departments, ultimate criteria to judge the success

or failure of training may be in terms of public welfare. In case of this study, ultimate criteria to assess the effectiveness of out-country training programs could be an overall improvement of the Bhutanese education system.

Brinkerhoff (1991) stresses that training must be able to meet two crucial criteria: provide learning efficiently and effectively, and increase organisational worth. With the view to ensuring that training will meet both these criteria, a six-stage evaluation model consisting of program development and operation has been framed. The basic assumption of this model is that the primary payoff from evaluation of training is the improvement of training programs. Unlike the aforementioned models, this model is based on the logic of making a series of correct decisions about training needs, design, operation, and effects. The series of decisions has been outlined in six steps and termed as ‘HRD Decision Cycle’. The six-stage evaluation model derives directly from the cycle of key training decisions (see Figure 2.2).

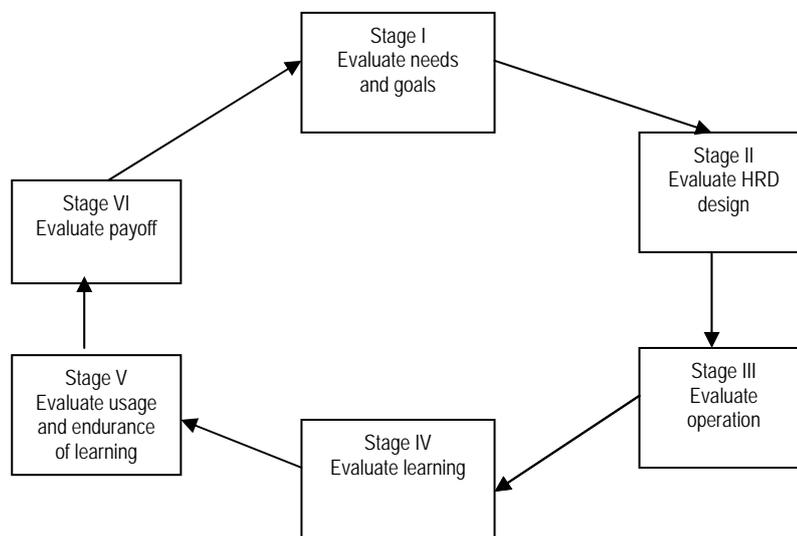


Figure 2.2: The six-stage model as a Cycle (Brinkerhoff, 1991)

A brief description of each stage follows:

1. Stage I evaluates the value and importance of problems and/or opportunities that may be responsive to training. This stage seeks data that will predict whether on-job

behaviour can or should be changed, whether specific Knowledge, Skills and Attitude (KSA) should be sufficient to effect that change, and whether the identified KSA are achievable through training intervention. Stage I includes all the evaluative data that will help decide whether training will produce worthwhile results.

2. Stage II aims to produce a plausible and feasible training design. This stage determines whether training can, finally, move beyond the design stage to implementation.
3. Stage III is concerned with whether the design is, in fact, being implemented according to plan. This stage basically consists of monitoring training activities, gathering feedback about the trainees' reactions and other matters. Data gathered in this stage is fed back to stage II to improve future designs.
4. Stage IV is based on the assumption that the training design was implemented satisfactorily, that necessary revisions were made, and trainees exited programs with certain new KSA and /or the positive reactions intended. If KSA were not acquired, then the question of application of new KSA and benefits of the training to the organisation does not arise. If this stage reveals that trainees acquired sufficient KSA, then, usage of some of the learning in the workplace can be expected.
5. Stage V assesses how much and how well acquired KSA are being translated into on-the-job behaviour changes. When such usage is achieved, organisational benefits can be expected.
6. Stage VI presumes that the training has worked thus far: trainees learned something and are being put into use. If the results of stage I were valid, the stage VI certainly should discover positive organisational results of value.

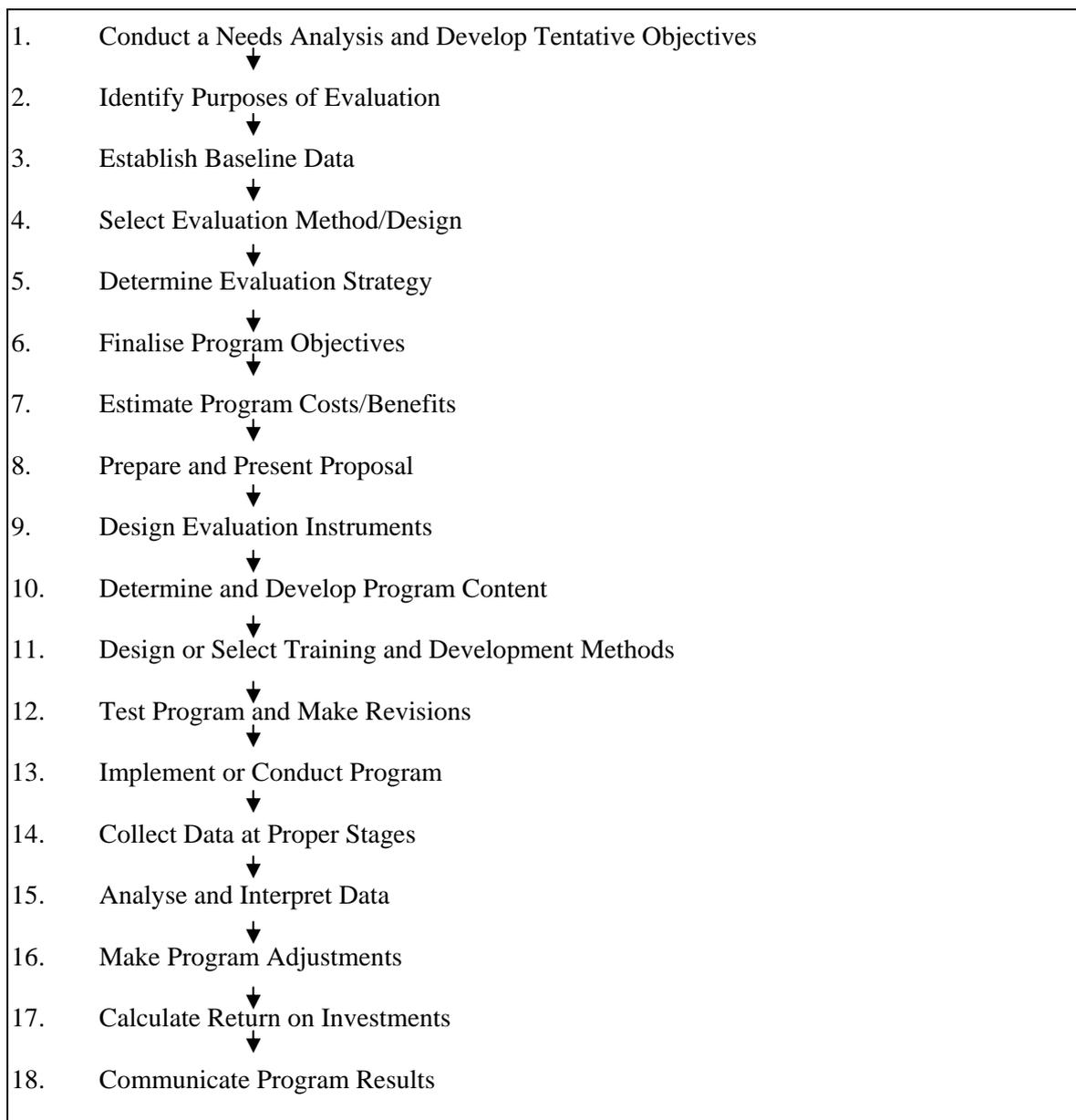
The Six-Stage Model shows arrows connecting stage VI and I, indicating the general cycle of feedback model. The cycling process, however, is determined by the extent to which the original goal has been achieved. This circular configuration of the model emphasises that training is a continuous process within the organisation and the training needs should always be reviewed and built anew on previous training experience.

Brinkerhoff's cyclical Six-Stage-Model is comprehensive. It starts with a problems/opportunity identification process and continues to assess the fulfilment of those needs until near the final stages of the process. This model, however, consists of both formative and summative evaluation, which is feasible only in an ideal case where an evaluation design has already been built in the training process. Further, such an evaluation process is feasible only where an employer is the provider of the training or where the employer and the training organisers are closely associated. Nevertheless, though the complete cycle of the evaluation model may not be applicable to out-country training, certain basic evaluation criteria remain common. For example, though employers may not be able to influence stages II and III, they can still make discrete choices for training through proper study of the ready-made training courses offered by the overseas training providers.

Phillip's (1991) HRD model emphasises evaluation. According to him, in order to have successful evaluations, the evaluations must be planned at the beginning of the training planning process, when the questions that will shape the training are asked. He stresses evaluation efforts before, during and after a training program. Phillip's "Results-Oriented HRD Model" comprises 18 steps, which can be used for different training situations and evaluation needs (see Table 2.1). The process can be terminated at any point depending on the type of need for evaluation.

Though the model is simple and straightforward, three technical observations have been made. Firstly, it lacks the cyclical process of evaluation. In other words, it is a uni-directional approach to evaluation. Secondly, the fourteenth step, 'collect data at appropriate stages', does not specify the stages of training to collect the data. Lastly, the model does not include evaluation of learning and change in behaviour at any stage. Return on Investment may or may not be worth assessing without firstly assessing the extent of learning or transfer of learning to workplaces.

Subsequently, Phillips also developed an overall framework of evaluation (1998). The framework was built on the original four levels of evaluation developed by Kirkpatrick in 1959, by adding fifth level called Return-on-Investment. While the descriptions of the first four levels of the model remain the same, Phillips describes the fifth level as the means to compare the monetary value of the results with the costs of the program.

Table 2.1: Phillip's 18-step HRD evaluation

In the case of out-country training programs, training providers are external training providers, which have different training objectives from employers (Hamblin, 1974). Employers' interest are in application while training institutes or universities' interests are in learning outcomes not applications. The latter build their training programs in consultation with industry and employer requirements. Therefore, for the external training organisations, the emphasis could be on only two levels of evaluation: one, reaction and two, ultimate value.

Firstly, evaluation at reaction level is conducted to find whether clients feel satisfied with the training and are likely to use the training organisation's services again. Secondly, ultimate value of evaluation is focussed on finding whether or not the training has accrued profit. In order to achieve the objectives of training, co-ordination among employers, trainers and trainees needs to be ensured. At least, learning objectives set by training organisations should serve the purpose of the employers as well. Employers and trainees making discrete choices for training can ensure this.

In view of the nature of the evaluation my research intends to undertake it is not possible to exclusively adopt any of the above models. This is because all training activities selected for this study have been completed, trainees have returned to their work and a time lapse of one to five years, between the training and the time of evaluation, has occurred. Furthermore, no baseline data had been gathered to compare the employees' performance before and after the training activities. Therefore, the evaluation will be based on the soft data generated through the collection of perspectives of the trainees and their supervisors (Phillips, 1991). It is to be hoped that, through the retrospective questioning of trainees and their supervisors, the fulfilment or failure of procedures and criteria in each stage of standard evaluation design, as that of Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001), can be ascertained. The nature of evaluation is summative which according to Michael Scriven (1967) assesses the merits of already completed educational programs. The nature of summative evaluation collects data after training.

This strategy will help reveal the stage(s) where the discontinuity of the steps in the training process actually occurred, so that future intervention can be accordingly recommended.

Transfer of learning literature emphasises that a critical issue with any training program is the successful transfer of the learning to the job (Ford, Quinones, Segó & Sorra, 1992). As such, while all stages in training evaluation models are equally important, on-the-job behavioural change is crucial. Objectives of training will not be met unless the training results in a positive impact on the job. Further, the positive impact of training cannot be seen unless learning has been transferred to the job and maintained in it. It is at this stage that the effect of training, at least, in individual trainees can be confirmed. Positive results at this stage can also help predict organisational effects.

The following are the common definitions of transfer of learning and the general factors influencing its process.

Transfer of Learning

‘Transfer of learning’ is the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training to the job and the subsequent maintenance of the learning over a certain period of time (Baldwin et al., 1988; Cheng & Ho, 2001). Sofo (1999:129) also defines transfer of training as the extent to which the learning acquired from training sessions is applied and maintained on the job to increase performance and productivity. Likewise, there are many other definitions of training transfer, but the distinctions between them are subtle (Garavaglia, 1995). It is generally agreed that the transfer of learning involves the application and generalisation of new knowledge and skills.

In spite of the being so vital, transfer of learning may be the most neglected phase of the training problem (Analoui, 1998). A recent survey shows that organisations often still do not routinely measure the impact of training on job performance (Kraiger, McLinden & Casper,

2004:238). Kraiger et al. discovered that among organisations participating in the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) Benchmarking Services, 75% measured training reaction, 41% measured learning, but only 21% measured behaviour and 11% organisational results. Lack of know-how was cited as one of the biggest reasons.

There are several aspects to be considered to ensure transfer of learning. For example, the accurate identification of the training needs of an organization is crucial to its success (Bramley, 1990). Odiorne and Rummler (1988) stress the importance of studying the causes of the present behaviour in order to confirm the necessity of the training to change that behaviour. Confirming the training objectives in close consultation with both the trainees and their managers, largely, would improve transfer of learning to the job. Inclusion of supervisors in the design of the programs and the evaluation of the programs will enhance the possibility of learners applying their learning and improving their performance (Nadler and Nadler, 1989:59). Training impact is also mostly determined by variables of the performance appraisal system and organisational culture (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001). These authors argue that the success of training depends on how the training has been used, as well as the influence of the prevailing cultural and systemic factors such as work habits, reward systems, preparedness of learners, measures and feedback procedures. Effective training delivery and follow-up techniques such as, simulation, action plan and post-course projects also ensure retention and transfer of learning (Lauder, 1998:107-122).

Nevertheless, the extent of transfer also depends on the nature of the training. For example, while the outcomes of technical and skills-specific programs are easy to observe and evaluate, behavioural outcomes, associated with management training are not so obvious and measurable (Phillips, 1991). Garavaglia (1995), in order to facilitate understanding of this

difference, has divided training transfer into two categories: (a) near transfer and (b) far transfer. Near transfer relates to skill-based training and far transfer relates to knowledge-based training (Garavaglia, 1995; Perkin & Soloman, 1992). In other words, near transfer concerns training for short-term objectives, and far transfer concerns training for long-term objectives. Laker (1999, cited in Yamnill & McLean, 2001) also defines near transfer as the application of learning to situations similar to those in which learning has taken place. On the other hand, far transfer is the application of knowledge dissimilar to those of the original learning events.

The objectives of the training in relation to the Academic, Management and Technical training programs can be both short-term (near transfer) and long-term (far transfer). The extent of transfer of learning from these three different categories of training may, therefore, be different. Long term objectives apply to those types of training activities that broaden knowledge or enhance the qualification levels in a particular field. Generally, such types of training include management skills training and general education advancement training. Managerial skills are transferable to various work settings (Cheng & Ho, 2001). The transferability of such skills by trainees to their workplaces is contingent upon an enabling culture in the workplace where opportunities are provided to apply these skills. On the other hand, some training has short-term objectives in order to fulfil the immediate training needs. Skills-specific training of immediate needs are job-oriented whereby the likelihood of transfer of the skills is high (Garavaglia, 1995).

The nature of the training resulting in far transfer and near transfer may be only one of the factors determining transfer of learning to the workplaces. There are several other factors such as motivational and organisational factors (Yamnill & McLean, 2001) that determine transfer of learning. The effect of the concepts of “far transfer” and “near transfer” on the training under three categories can be ascertained through the research question on factors affecting transfer.

Similar to the differentiation of learning as described above, some authors distinguish knowledge acquired in any training between explicit knowledge and tacit knowledge (Newell, 1999). According to Nonaka, (1966, cited in Newell, 1999:287), explicit knowledge is that knowledge, which can be easily expressed in formal, systematic language. On the other hand, tacit knowledge is rooted in action and involvement in the particular context and has both cognitive and technical elements. Newel asserts that tacit knowledge is much more difficult to codify and transfer from one person to another or from one country to another. It can be transferred only by example, observation, and demands practical experience in the relevant context. Therefore, while explicit knowledge can be codified and transferred, tacit knowledge has to do more with experience and contextual aspects. Newell uses the concept and the definition of tacit knowledge to argue that the transfer of business management knowledge from the West to China is ineffective. This is because of the differences in cultural values and contexts. For example, businesses in the West are accountable to their share holders, while businesses in China are accountable to stakeholders and are state welfare-oriented. Therefore, as seen above, there are two main types of knowledge that can be acquired in training, and the extent to which they can be transferred to the workplace are different. However, such a differentiation has not been made in transfer studies reviewed for this study. Nevertheless, the distinctions between the types of knowledge that one can acquire in training can provide additional good insight into the study.

Numerous studies and meta-study analyses have been conducted in the field of training transfer. Among such reviews, Noe's (1986) and Baldwin and Ford's (1988) are probably the most influential (Cheng & Ho, 2001). Cheng and Ho point out that Baldwin and Ford (1988) reviewed the major empirical studies of training transfer that were carried out on or before 1987. They describe the transfer process in terms of training-input factors, training outcomes,

and conditions of transfer (see Figure 2.3). Their framework highlights the importance of training inputs on training outcomes (learning and retention) and conditions of transfer (generalisation and maintenance).

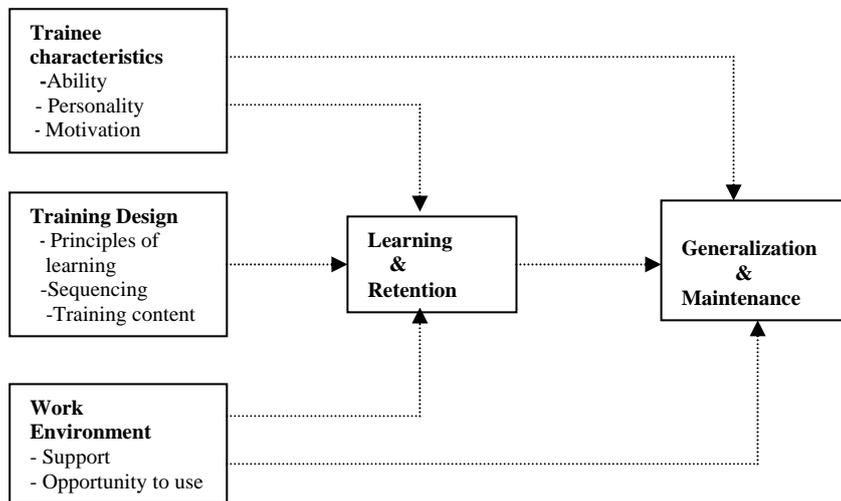


Figure 2.3: A Model of the Transfer Process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988)

According to the model, there are several input factors, including the training design and implementation that affect transfer of learning to workplace and sustain the skill and knowledge of trainees. Baldwin and Ford’s theoretical model framework illustrates the linkages between such inputs and training transfer. The theory is based on the concept that the impact of training on the ‘transfer of training’ is governed by various pre-conditions such as trainee characteristics, training design and implementation, and characteristics of the working environment. As the model indicates, training-input factors and training outcomes have both direct and indirect effects on the conditions of transfer. Training-inputs, however, have direct effects on the training output- “Learning and Retention”. Training outcomes of learning and retention are said to have direct effects on the conditions for transfer. That is, for transfer to occur, training material must be learned and retained. The essence of the model is that the conditions for satisfactory transfer of learning include both the generalisation of learning to any work setting and the maintenance of learning over an extended time period.

Pre-conditions under trainee characteristics comprise individual's motivation, personality and ability. The training design and administration process should ensure that the design of the training is in accordance with the individual and the organisational needs, adopts adult learning principles, and appropriately sequences the training material. The nature of the work environment determines the level of motivation of the trainee to pursue training and to transfer the learning to their work. Encouragement and support of supervisors for trainees to undertake relevant training and attitude towards the application of the learning by supervisors, colleagues and subordinates are essential factors for transfer of training. Many empirical studies have been carried out to investigate how individual characteristics, job attitudes and work environment affect the transfer of training process (Cheng & Ho, 2001). The focus of any transfer of learning literature on the above variables originates from the concept of trainability.

As mentioned above, the model only indicates the linkages among the training inputs (pre-conditions), the actual learning and the transfer of the learning. There are also linkages among the pre-conditions. For example, factors in the training design and work environment could be foreseen before the training as the factors, which could affect the process of transferring learning to the workplace. This perception can affect the pre-training motivation. Similarly, the extent of pre-training motivation can be either sustained or undermined by the nature of trainees' attitude towards the training when they have actually experienced the training (Mathieu et al., 1992).

Baldwin and Ford used their model to review transfer studies. In their meta-study review, Baldwin and Ford concluded that the samples, tasks, and design criteria used in the existing literature have limited the understanding of the transfer of training process (Noe & Ford,

1992). Subsequently, some researchers have written updated reviews. In 1997, Ford and Weissbein found that progress had been made in advancing the understanding of the impact of work-environment variables on transfer of training outcomes. They also recommended more in-depth studies to enhance the level of understanding of the relationship between work-environment factors with learning and transfer.

More recently, Cheng and Ho (2001) reviewed some major studies that were conducted between 1989 and 1998. Based on Kirkpatrick's (1987) taxonomy of training evaluation and the recommendation of Tannebaun (1991) on training effectiveness, they classified the training transfer process into four critical stages: pre-training motivation; learning; training performance; and transfer outcomes. In addition, they identified the nine independent factors affecting training transfer, which were most commonly examined in the past. They categorised the factors as:

- 1) individual (locus of control, self-efficacy);
- 2) motivational (career/job attitudes, organisational commitment, decision/reaction to training, post training interventions); and
- 3) environmental (e.g. support within organisations, continuous learning culture, task constraints) variables. Their review revealed that self-efficacy, decision/reaction to training, post-training interventions and organisational support were the factors tested most frequently and these factors had significant and positive relationships with training outcomes.

Cheng and Ho (2001:112) concluded that research methodologies needed to be improved to arrive at consistent findings. Some of the expected causes of the inconsistencies of the findings were:

1. Different samples: For example, data collected from working people might be different from college students. Cheng and Ho (2001) stress the importance of using organisational personnel rather than college students for the sample of studies by researchers. Using people who are not involved in work would not be able to reflect the actual work situation. The trend of using organisational personnel encourages researchers to develop co-operative relationships with organisations to design custom-made training programmes for their staff. Such training programs should not be designed totally in favour of the researchers. These organisations should be involved in the process of developing evaluation criteria and evaluation methods. The organisations should be able to ensure that such criteria or methods can effectively measure training outcomes and transfer performance on the job. Evaluation criteria of such organisational training programs should be able to answer intended research questions, and improve the quality and value to organisations.

2. Different kinds of training: The extent of training transfer depends on the nature of training. Skills-specific training and general training may be different. Skills-specific training results in near transfer and general training results in far transfer. The time gap between training would be different. For example, an MBA training programme is different from cashier operation training programme. While the former requires trainees to be more creative the latter requires trainees to be tolerable in handling a similar kind of job.

3. Different model design: Researchers normally tend to revise the standard models to suit their own situation thereby affecting statistical results.

4. Broad dimension of some variables: One of the greatest limitations of the training transfer literature is the lack of clear conceptual frameworks. For example, support in an organisation can imply support from top management, supervisors, colleagues or

even subordinates. Other variables with broad meanings are career and job attitudes, motivation, transfer outcomes, etc.

Cheng and Ho's (2001) study implied the need for development of common variables that are critical to different kinds of training and transfer situations. It also called for development of common scales or instruments that can be used in different research settings. Subsequently, Holton, Bates and Ruona (2000) have provided a Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI). The sixteen LTSI constructs provide a comprehensive assessment of factors that influence transfer, including program-specific transfer factors. It comprises sixty-eight items grouped into four major groups: trainee characteristics, motivation, work environment, and ability. The authors are further developing a more reliable and valid measure of transfer (Noe, 2000). Yet, the LTSI seems to be incomplete (Noe, 2000) and the constructs have different effects depending on the types of organisations (Holton et. al., 2003). The focus related to the LTSI is now on studying differences in effects of the variables by types of organisations and training.

It is useful to build a common understanding of the transfer variables and scales for researchers. It may however not be useful for practitioners to measure transfer variables that they cannot influence (Noe, 2000). This argument forms part of the rationale of selection of the theoretical framework of the research questions explained in the latter part of this chapter. Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001) have formulated a 'performance analysis' framework. The term 'performance' implies both learning performance and job performance. This framework identifies some of the critical environmental factors that influence performance. In the context of training, the performance framework analysis is firstly used to guide an analysis of the performance environment in which the trainee will perform after his/her training. In simpler words, it is a proper training needs assessment that can be made only in a positive work

environment. Secondly, it is used to identify opportunities and the need for building performance support programs.

Figure-2.4 shows that performance can be affected by a number of factors: (a) direction, (b) personal capability, (c) motivators, (d) work-design, (e) information, (f) performance feedback and (g) resources. A brief explanation of each factor follows:

(a) Direction: this factor ensure that employees and managers discuss performance expectations, goals and objectives. This factor is said to influence trainee's intent, attention and own the objectives of learning. This is similar to what is termed 'decision' and 'reaction' in the other models (Baldwin & Ford; Cheng & Ho, 2001) reviewed above. (b) 'Personal capability' represents the innate ability (both cognitive and physical skills) and abilities that trainees are capable of performing. In other words, it is trainability of the trainee. This concept matches the concept of trainee characteristics of the Baldwin and Ford (1988) framework. (c) 'Motivators' are incentives provided by organisations in terms of monetary and non-monetary benefits, in recognition of trainees' performance. Employees are, however, said to operate under different personal values. Rewards may have different values to employees. Some employees value tangible incentives in the form of goods while other employees value recognition and praise. (d) 'Work design' refers to confirming compatibility of the work process tools in use with the goals of learning. (e) 'Information' represents availability of updated information sources that are needed to support performance.

(f) 'Performance feedback' refers to the system for providing employees with knowledge of results of their performance assessed. Formal measurements and review systems and procedures are two major sources of performance feedback. (g) Resources is the main category that consists of basic performance influencers like time, office equipment, tools, etc.

Brinkerhoff and Apking consider this category as a “givens” and even when resources are not available this is an easy problem to address.

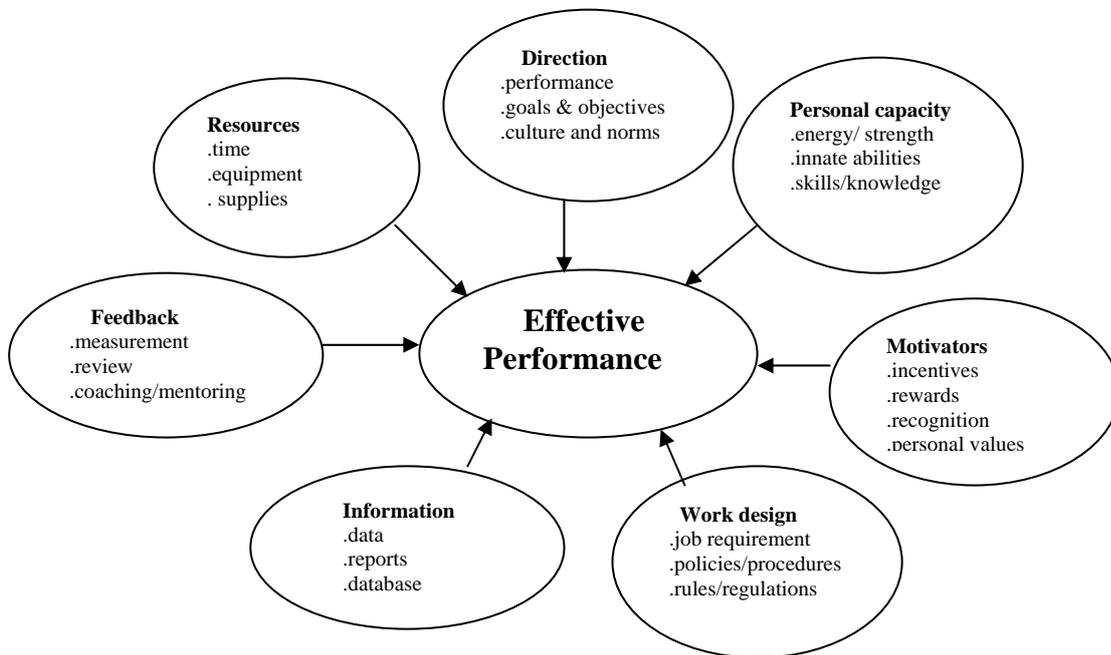


Figure 2.4: Performance System Elements (Brinkerhoff and Apking, 2001)

Brinkerhoff’s model indicates the importance of relationships between the human resource functions in order to achieve desired outcomes of the training. Different writers include different human resource functions. McLagan (1989, cited in Sofo, 1999) includes Human Resource Management (HRM), Human Resource Development (HRD) and Industrial Relations (IR) aspects. Similarly, Nadler & Nadler (1989) include HRM, HRD, HR environment and ‘others’.

For the purpose of this study, only HRM and HRD aspects have been discussed. HRM is about staff recruitment and management (attraction, recruitment and retention) while HRD is about developing people (Sofo, 1999:67). Sofo maintains that HRD needs to collaborate with other HR areas in a mutually supportive relationship to achieve desired outcomes for both

individuals and organisations (P: 65). HRD function cannot be effective if it operates in isolation. HRD functions depends on HRM functions in several direct ways. For example, HRD function identifies employees' training needs based on performance appraisals reports provided by HRM function. Similarly, the success of HRD effort depends on the appropriate placement of employees, according to the skills and knowledge acquired from their training, by HRM function.

Garavaglia (1995) also promotes the idea of a 'transfer maintenance' system in order to ensure transfer of training. (see Figure 2.5)

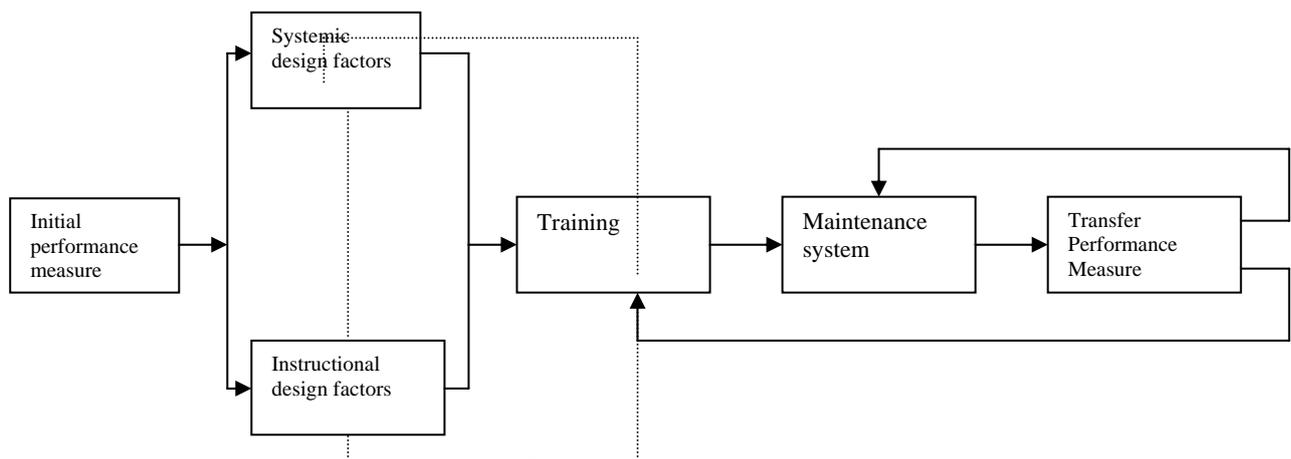


Figure 2.5: Transfer Evaluation Model (Garavaglia 1995)

Her transfer design model is based on the assumption that transfer of training is determined by several factors that exist before the training, during the training and after the training. The model also emphasises the importance of involvement of all the key people, such as the manager, the trainee and the trainer, before, during and after the training program. She suggests six stages to consider in the training transfer design. The design starts with the initial performance measure and continues through to the actual training program to post-training maintenance and performance measure. (Refer Figure 2.5 to identify six factors located in each of the six boxes) In order to determine the difference made by the training, the process

commences with initial performance measurement and ends with transfer performance measurement.

As seen above, there are many training transfer designs and evaluation models that are based on different conceptual frameworks. Nonetheless, generally, the factors said to be affecting training transfer can be classified into three main stages of the training process: pre-training; training; and post-training. Though transfer of learning researchers have identified several factors belonging to each of the above stages, either hindering or facilitating transfer process, they have not been studied all together (Belling, James & Ladkin, 2003). Some factors can be influenced by the organisation but, some may be outside the control of the organisation. Interventions will, therefore, have to be accordingly made suiting the specific situation (Salas et al., 2001). As such, transfer evaluation models should focus only on those parts of the transfer system that the organisation could influence directly (Noe, 2000). For example, a transfer of training model might include disposition and personality characteristics, but these are difficult to change.

This thesis follows Noe's recommendation that emphases should be made on a transfer evaluation model that is not only true to the literature but also useful for training practitioners. Along with this perspective, this study adapts the 'conceptual theoretical framework of Baldwin and Ford (1988) to help answer my research questions (see Figure 2.6).

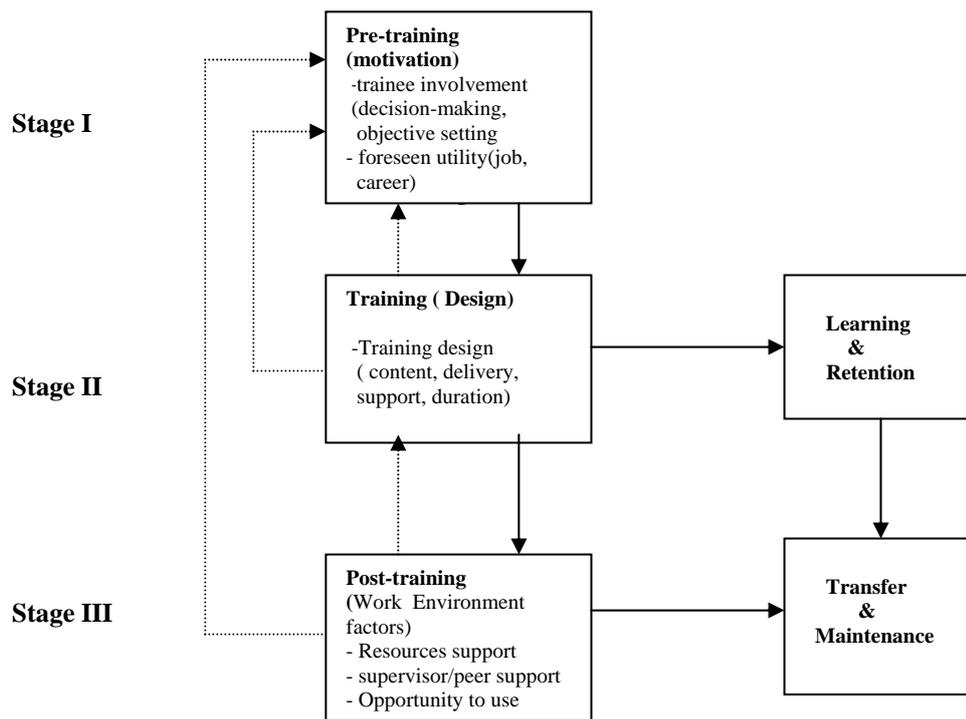


Figure 2.6: Transfer Evaluation Model (adapted from Baldwin and Ford, 1988)

In the adapted model, the nomenclatures of all the pre-conditions have been changed, as follows. The first pre-condition has been replaced by the term, ‘pre-training motivation’, and ‘personality’ and ‘ability’ factors have been excluded. The second pre-condition has been replaced by the term, ‘training’. The third nomenclature has been referred to as post-training work environment. As all the three pre-conditions appear somewhere at any stage of the training process, they have been classified as stage I, stage II and stage III. In addition, based on the literature, certain major factors that are said to affect training transfer process have also been included in each of these stages. Details of the adaptation are furnished below.

The first stage of the model constitutes only pre-training motivation, which includes: personal involvement in training decision-making process, objective and goal-setting, foreseen positive job and career utilities, and training relevance and foreseen applicability of the learning. The second stage is the actual training, and includes content relevance, instructor competence,

delivery methods, institute support, training duration, learning performance, and perceived transferability. The third stage is the work environmental factors that affect the training transfer process. Post-training environmental factors include material resources, supervisor support, colleagues support, opportunity to use, etc.

The adaptation of the above theoretical framework is based on the concept of cause-and-effect chain in the Kirkpatrick's four-levels of training evaluation (1958) and the Hamblin's five-level of training evaluation. Besides other factors, the nature and the level of pre-training motivation is determined by several foreseen factors in training design and work environment. This pre-training motivation, which is attributed to factors occurring before, during and after training (as shown in left hand arrows in Figure 2.6) is likely to affect the extent of learning. Consequently, the extent of learning contributed by several factors further influences the degree of transfer of learning to the workplace (Baldwin & Ford, 1988).

The following part of the review focuses on the previously mentioned three main stages in the training transfer system. Studies supporting the importance of these three stages and their variables have been highlighted.

Pre-Training Motivation

Research has shown that activities that occur prior to training have impact on the training effectiveness (Salas et al., 2001). Motivation is one of them. Adults tend to be more motivated towards learning whatever is more useful in their lives (Knowles et al., 1998). Knowles (1984) suggested choice and involvement in the training selection are potent motivators. The usefulness of the training can be ascertained through the trainee's involvement in the training

decision-making process. The involvement of prospective trainees in the training decision-making process enables them to contribute to the solution of problems rather than simply taking “medicines” prescribed by the training department (Lawrie & Boringer, 1971:8). Trainees who are offered opportunities to be involved in training design and decisions are more likely to perceive the training as useful for their jobs, thereby resulting in high levels of pre-training motivation. Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001), in their high impact-learning model, call this process ‘creating learner intentionality’.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Noe (1986) suggest the use of an expectancy framework for study training motivation. Accordingly, Mathieu, Tannenbaum and Salas (1992) used expectancy-type motivation measures in a study of proofreading training for university clerical employees. As predicted, they found that trainees with higher pre-training motivation demonstrated greater learning and more positive reaction towards training, even after controlling for educational differences.

Pre-training motivation induced through offering the right choice of training has an impact on subsequent learning and transfer. Baldwin and Majuka (1991) randomly assigned 207 trainees to one of three conditions: (a) no choice of training; (b) choice of training—but choice not received; (c) choice of training—with choice received. Results indicated that, after controlling for cognitive ability, those trainees who were given the training of their choice did have greater motivation to learn and. On the other hand, trainees allowed to choose but whose choice of training was subsequently not delivered were less motivated and learned less than those not provided opportunity to choose.

Foreseen positive training outcomes, especially job utility and career utility also play a major role in determining training motivation (Clark et al., 1993). Trainees' perception of the organisational support in the work setting influences the motivation to transfer. Prior knowledge of the transfer climate into which trainees would return could influence their motivation as well as their motivation to use the training and thus their transfer of learning behaviour (Mathieu et al., 1992). Further, job utility can result in higher career utility, as career utility is often dependent on job performance (Clark, 1993: 294). Baldwin and Majuka (1991, cited in Tracey et al., 1995) demonstrated that three organisational "signals" influence trainees' intentions to apply what they have learned to their jobs. They discovered that trainees reported greater intentions to transfer learning back to their jobs when trainees: (a) received relevant information before the training program, (b) recognised that they would be held accountable for learning, and (c) perceived training as mandatory. Therefore, pre-training motivation is crucial for the trainees to enter the training process.

The pre-training motivation may, however be, sometimes, altered/affected by the nature of the reaction towards the training (Mathieu et al., 1992). Therefore, pre-training motivation will have to be sustained through the transfer outcome by the nature of the trainee's reaction to the training that he/she attended. This issue is discussed separately under the heading "training design" below.

Training Design

The major training-design factors are the job relevance of the training content (Campbell, 1971; Ford & Wroten, 1984, cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988), and the incorporation of learning principles (Bass & Vaughan, 1966, cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The feeling of the training content being relevant and the feeling of having learned something are two of the

pre-requisites for training transfer (Haskell, 2001). Holton (1996 cited in Yamnill & McLean, 2001) also suggest that one cause of failure to transfer of learning is improper training design. That is, while cognitive aspect of learning may have occurred, trainees may not be given an opportunity to practise them or apply them on the job.

Yamnill and McLean (2001) use two existing theories to highlight the importance of training design for positive training transfer to occur: Identical Elements Theory and Principles Theory. The former stresses the importance of similarity of stimuli and responses in both the training and transfer settings. According to Holding (1965, cited in Yamnill & McLean, 2001), there are four types of transfer expected based on similarity of the stimuli and responses. In the first case, if the task is identical in both training and transfer, trainees are simply practising the final task during training whereby high positive transfer can be expected. In the second case assumes that task characteristics—both stimuli and response—are so different that practise on one task has no relationship to performance on the other task. In the third case, the stimuli are different in training and transfer settings, but the responses are the same. In the fourth case, when the response to identical stimuli is different in training and transfer setting, the type of transfer is said to be negative.

The latter Principles Theory, suggests that training should focus on the general principles that are necessary to learn a task so that the learners can utilise them to solve problems in the actual transfer settings. This theory emphasises the importance of underlying principles for learners to use in solving their practical problems.

Differences of learners' training approach preferences also can determine the extent of trainee learning. According to Rodrigues, Bu and Min (2000), different cultures, especially Western

and Asian, are said to have different learners' training approach preferences, which affect learning.

A formal way of ascertaining the extent of learning is successful completion of the training confirmed by certification. Besides that formal mechanism, it is believed that trainees' reaction towards training may indicate learning, and that reaction has a bearing on the extent of the subsequent application of the learning (Kirkpatrick, 1998; Mathieu et al., 1992). Training content relevance, trainer competence, learners' training approach preference, suitability of the training environment and appropriateness of the length of the training determine trainee reaction and attitude towards the training.

Trainees' attitude towards training may be changed once they experience training (Seyler et al., 1998). Reaction can also, therefore, indicate the quality of training design and delivery. Trainees who are satisfied with the training design and delivery technique will be likely to show positive reaction towards the training. Reaction may also influence the relationship between pre-training motivation and learning. For instance, a negative reaction to a program may discourage even motivated trainees, reducing their attention and inhibiting their learning. On the other hand, positive reaction may encourage even unmotivated trainees to learn (Mathieu et al., 1992). Therefore, it is equally essential to assess the quality of training for training transfer to occur.

However, positive reaction does not guarantee learning. The assessment of the quality of out-country training in this study is limited to the perspectives of trainees reported in the survey. The learning acquired here needs to be further transformed into practice with the support of

continued motivation and work environment factors. Thus, the third stage is equally important, if not more important.

Post-Training (Work Environment Factors)

Regardless of the extent of trainees' motivation before training, during training and after training, trainees cannot fully transfer their learning if organisational environment barriers exist. Aspects of the post-training environment can encourage, discourage, or even prevent the application of new learning on the job (Tannebaun & Yukl, 1992).

These environmental factors are also known as 'job/transfer climate' (Kirkpatrick, 1998, Goldstein, 1993, Burke & Baldwin, 1999) or 'performance support' (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001). The organisational support variables come from the social support when employees receive from client systems in the organisation (e.g. their supervisors and peers). This provides them with opportunities for practising new skills and knowledge in their job settings (Noe, 1986). However, different writers include different dimensions in the organisational factors that affect training transfer. For instance, according to Baldwin and Ford's (1988) transfer of learning process model, environmental factors refer to 'organisational support' in terms of supervisors, as well as constraints and opportunities to perform better. Burke and Baldwin (1999) define training transfer climate as trainees' perceptions describing characteristics of their work environment that may facilitate or inhibit the use of recently gained trained skills. In short, transfer climate can be termed as either supportive (i.e. favourable, positive) or unsupportive (i.e. unfavourable, negative).

Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) have identified transfer climate as comprising two major components: (a) situational and (b) consequential. The first set of situational cues reminds

trainees of their training or provides them with opportunities to use their training when they return to their jobs. There are four types of situational cues: goal cues, social cues, task cues and self-control cues. On the other hand, consequential cues are the items of the feedback trainees receive after they apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes they gained in the training to their jobs. There are four types of consequential cues: positive feedback, negative feedback, punishment, and no feedback.

In order to investigate the validity of their model, Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) conducted a study using a sample of new managers, who after attending mandatory training were assigned to different restaurants from a large chain of fast-food franchises. The results indicated that managers in restaurants with more positive transfer climates demonstrated significant trained behaviours and performed better on the job. The study thus, concluded that transfer climate was a potentially powerful tool that organisations should consider and use to facilitate training transfer. Tracey et al., (1995) replicated this study with 505 supermarket managers from 52 stores. This study also found transfer of learning climate was directly related to post-training behaviours. Similarly, Ford et al., (1992) conducted a study with graduates from an air force technical training program. The graduate trainees were reported to have performed better where the work group was felt to be supportive.

Cromwell and Kolb (2004) also examined the relationship between four specific work-environment factors (organisation support, supervisor support, peer support, and participation in a peer support network) and transfer of training. The study was conducted at three points: one month, three months and one-year points following supervisory skills training. The results of aggregate data showed that trainees who reported receiving high levels of organisation, supervisor, and peer support and who took part in a peer support network, reported higher

levels of transfer. Even, on segregation of data and examination by time lapse after the training, these findings were still significant for organisation, supervisor and peer support, but only at the one-year point.

One of the limitations of training transfer studies is the broad dimensions of the factors, including work environment (Cheng & Ho, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, work environment refers to trainees' working-conditions (material resources / tools, time) management support and work-group (peers and subordinates) support. As explained earlier, certain factors said to be affecting the transfer of learning process have been grouped under three critical stages: pre-training, training and post training. The following section reviews out-country training concepts and some case-specific out-country training impact studies.

Out-country Training Impact

The out-country training phenomenon originates from the generic HRD concept, which is being widely used to refer to professional development and personal growth activities initiated by employers. Out-country training is prevalent in developing nations as a result of the lack or shortage of requisite capacity of in-country training and education institutions. The majority of these out-country training activities are financed by international development agencies. In order to ensure the benefits and to justify the investments in and continuation of such aid programs, the respective aid organisations undertake impact studies. The beneficiary organisations do conduct some impact evaluation, but not in a detailed manner, due to the lack of expertise and resources.

The limited literature on out-country training mainly consists of country-specific impact studies conducted for internal use. However, they provide valuable insights to understanding of the out-country training transfer processes vis-à-vis the general training transfer process. The studies indicated no future research direction, as they were conducted for internal purposes.

The findings of the out-country training impact studies, reviewed for this study, have shown gaps in training and transfer. For instance, the Overseas Development Administration, U.K, in its publication on overseas fellowships, *Power of Change* (1992) highlighted the concerns about training relevance and sustainability. The term ‘sustainability’ implies financial resources, simultaneous strengthening of in-country training capacities and the sharing of knowledge with other staff to build ‘critical mass’. Training of only a few individuals may not be able to achieve much in terms of acceptance of the new knowledge/techniques acquired from the out-country training. Building up of critical mass ensures building inbuilt support and acceptance of the training program and its application to the job (Gaudine & Saks, 2004).

Williams, 1985, Hulme, 1990 and Harrison, 1991 (cited in *The Power of Change* 1992) also have similar recommendations on ‘relevance’ and ‘sustainability’ aspects. Concisely, the findings imply the need for greater emphasis on training needs assessment and sustainability. Sustainability can be achieved by simultaneous pursuit of efforts for development and promotion of in-country training capacities and through ensuring a multiplier-effect of the training benefits by sharing of the knowledge gain with colleagues back at work. Along similar lines, John Launder (1998) extended the transfer model developed by Ana Loui (1993). The model suggests that the effectiveness of training transfer increases with the increase in proximity to workplaces, while the learning increases with the lack of such

proximity. When the training occurs near the workplace, the trainees can apply their learning to their jobs at the same time. On the other hand, when the training occurs away from the workplace, there is less likelihood of distraction and therefore, can learn more. However, trainees will not be able to practise or apply their learning until the training is over. In the international context, Launder used this model to recommend the combination of In-Country training (ICT), Third Country Training (TCT) and Overseas Training (OT) to enhance training transfer. He proposes that more comprehensive and effective training options are training programmes, which combine overseas training (OT) with Third Country Training (TCT) or visit-and-train program. He also emphasises various techniques, such as, simulation, action plan and post-course projects, in order to ensure training relevance and transfer of learning to the job.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) conducted a study in 1997 to determine the impact of both out-country and in-country training programs undertaken by the Indonesian education sector trainees under the ADB funding (ADB, 1997). The Bank adapted a training transfer model developed by Baldwin and Ford (1988) as a framework to structure its investigation. The questions of the study focussed on three key aspects: trainee characteristics, training design and administration and work environment. These are input factors for training outputs and transfer of learning conditions.

A normal prerequisite for out-country training was found to be foreign language competence. On analysis, however, the ADB study did not show any correlation between foreign language competence level and training outcomes. Almost all participants reported high levels of motivation to attend their training. The correlation between high levels of motivation and training impact on working efficiency and technical skills was strong. The study found that

no detailed training needs analyses were made in advance. Only a small proportion of trainees discussed training objectives and work targets with their supervisors. More than 90% of the trainees improved working efficiency and technical skills where the trainees discussed training objectives and work targets with their supervisors. The ADB also observed conditions for re-entry into the work environment, working conditions and work atmosphere. These are the most important conditions for transfer of learning. In some of the vocational and technical schools, trainees were required to organise seminars to share their newly acquired knowledge with other staff. This initiative of sharing the newly acquired knowledge spread training outcomes among a larger group of people and improved their working relationships.

The ADB study concluded:

- Trainees definitely gained knowledge and skills from their out-country training programs,
- Effectiveness of out-country training programs could be further improved through the enhancement of trainee motivational levels, ensuring proper training needs analyses and ensuring organisational support both before and after training,
- A system of organising seminars enabled trainees to share the newly acquired knowledge with a larger group of people and improved working relationships with them.

Robert Cannon, University of Adelaide, also undertook an international training and education outcomes impact study in Indonesia, in 2000 (Cannon, 2000). The study mainly focussed on defining the outcomes of international overseas education from an Indonesian perspective, describing, and accounting for any outcomes bestowed on individuals. The research was undertaken to capture the Indonesian experience and to explore the values of training from an Indonesian perspective and compared the interpretations of the values of training between those made by Western countries and those made in Indonesia. The study used a limited number of open-ended questions in a questionnaire supported by small group

discussion and interviews. The dominant themes and sub-themes had been extracted from the written responses and listed in rank order. Though the international education and training experience advantages outweighed the disadvantages, the trainees generally had experienced re-entry cultural shock and difficulty applying their knowledge and skills at work places. These difficulties attributed to the lack of proper needs assessment and organisational support.

Georgetown University also undertook a similar study in 1999 to assess the impact of fellowships, which mostly comprised out-country training provided to the Pacific Region by the World Health Organisation (WHO, 1999). The study, which was commissioned by the World Health Organisation, was more focussed on the extent to which the fellowships affected the fellows' personal and professional growth. It further examined the fellow's career advancement and utilisation of the skills and experiences gained from the fellowships. Additionally, the study evaluated the strengths and limitations of the programs as perceived by the Fellows. The following main findings of the study reflect the quality of the systems for development and management of the out-country training programs by the beneficiaries of WHO fellowship support:

- Due to lack of “return-absorption” of the fellows into the right position by government, significant number of job changes were to the private and non-government organisations.
- Career paths were not clearly planned out by the government agencies and therefore, tended to promote demotivation and hopelessness.
- Lack of opportunity to utilise knowledge acquired during the training
- Fellowship goals and objectives were not necessarily aligned with those of the organisations.

The above out-country training impact studies generally indicated systemic lapses in implementing out-country training programs. The types of systemic lapses hindering process of transfer of learning acquired from out-country training programs, experienced in the Ministry of Education, Bhutan, might be either similar to or entirely different due to the differences in the cultures.

The ADB and WHO studies have put forward several recommendations for consideration by both employers and donors. However, the extent to which the recommendations were taken into account by implementing and beneficiary agencies is not known. While some recommendations can be immediately considered to improve future out-country training programs, some recommendations may not have been practical. Nevertheless, constantly following a standard and practical model of training transfer process will increase the probability of training transfer.

Conclusion

The literature review has looked at aspects of training ranging from general training concepts, evaluation models, through to training transfer and to case-specific out-country training impact studies. The term ‘training’ and ‘education’ have been interchangeably used in this study. This is because the term ‘education’ refers to advanced educational programs with specific focus on in-service trainee candidates. In addition, as Garavaglia (1995) differentiated, training transfer concerning short-term ‘training’ can be referred to as ‘near transfer’. On the other hand, training transfer concerning long-term training or education can be referred to as ‘far transfer’. Such differentiation, however, has not been made in the training transfer literature.

Several training transfer designs and evaluation models have been reviewed: Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation (1958), Hamblin's five-level training evaluation process (1974), Brinkerhoff's six-stage evaluation model (1991), Phillip's 18 steps Results-Oriented HRD model, Baldwin and Ford's Model of Transfer Process (1988), Cheng and Ho's Transfer Theoretical Framework (2001), Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001) model and Garavaglia's Transfer Evaluation Model (1995). Generally, evaluation models were based on the natural sequence of the training process, and focussed on each of the stages, which ranged from the training needs identification to ultimate training values.

Transfer of learning is crucial in that it can reflect both the extent of learning and predict the likelihood of the ultimate value of the training to the organisation. The degree of application of the learning acquired from training to jobs can be greatly influenced by the extent of learning acquired and factors motivating learning. Therefore, the extent to which the trainees were motivated before they participated in the training and the factors that attributed to learning are particularly assessed.

The study adapted the 'transfer design model' of Baldwin and Ford (1988). The main reason for modification is practicality (Noe, 2000). Trainee 'ability' and 'personality' factors under the pre-condition, Trainee Characteristics have been excluded for two reasons. Firstly, all the trainees were recruited through the Civil Service Commission, after fulfilling criteria of minimum qualification levels and required level of skills, and are all high performing employees. Secondly, even if these factors proved to be affecting transfer process, they would have been difficult to change. As Noe (2000) stresses, it may not be useful for practitioners to measure transfer variables that they cannot influence. This model stresses the importance of the effects of the training-inputs (pre-training motivation, training and work environment) on

the training outcomes and the conditions for generalisation and maintenance of learning. There are several factors included in these inputs.

For the purpose of this study, only certain factors under the three training-inputs are selected. The selection is based on the nature of the evaluation and for other practical reasons. Further, based on the literature, certain major factors that are said to affect the training transfer process have been selected to ascertain trainees' attitude in each of these stages. The nature of the research and its methodology warrant the adaptation of this design. Events occurring before training, during training and after training are important for training transfer (Salas et al., 2001, Gaudine & Saks, 2004). Through the perspectives of the trainees and their supervisors, the research can look back into all the three major stages of the transfer system, and identify what parts of the transfer system need intervention (Holton et al., 2003).

The model helped to guide the study to ascertain the attitude of trainees towards the selected factors in each stage: pre-training, training and post training. Evaluation of the trainees' responses pertaining to each stage is expected to help detect the strengths and lapses affecting transfer of learning.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Background

The chapter outlines the methods adopted for studying the impact of out-country training, particularly, in terms of learning transfer to the job. The major research questions originated from general training transfer literature. The training transfer model of Baldwin and Ford (1988) was adapted to structure the questions. A combination of survey and in-depth interview was used for data collection. Advantages and limitations of the research methodologies adopted are highlighted.

The research questions

The study aimed to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent have the selected trainees been motivated to participate in the out-country training program?
2. To what extent has the learning of out-country training participants been transferred to the job, and shared among other colleagues in the workplace?
3. What are the factors affecting out-country training participants' utilisation of knowledge, skills and attitude in the workplace?
4. What are the perceptions of trainees and their supervisors of out-country training and the need for certain policy improvement

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative methods are the two major research approaches widely used in social research. Researchers, in practice, however, usually employ modified versions or even combinations of elements of both methodologies (Sarantakos, 1998: 41). Bell (1993: 63) stresses that no approach solely depends on one method; some approaches may depend heavily on one type of data-collecting method, but not exclusively. Human Resource Development Researchers also use both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. According to Swanson et al. (1998:66), these research methods are valuable and, in fact, often quite powerful when used together. The nature of the study underpins the adoption of the combination of these two standard methods.

Structured survey questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were conducted with the trainees. To ensure the validity of self-reported data of the trainees, however, Cheng and Ho (2001) recommend collection of data from trainees' supervisors as well. As such, structured interviews were conducted with their supervisors. Trainees' semi-structured interviews were directed towards an elaboration of the quantitative data, wherever necessary, through open-ended questions. In addition, interviews facilitate closer interaction with the trainees to explore in-depth perspectives of the trainees on application of learning. Based on these two standard methods, a combination of postal survey questionnaire and personal interviews were used for the data collection. This combination was expected to foster reliability of the information.

Data sources

Two major sources of data were identified for the study.

1. Structured survey questionnaires for trainee participants;
2. Semi-structured interviews of the trainee and structured interviews of the trainees' supervisors.

Following are the general descriptions of the research tools, the rationale, and the manner in which they were employed in the study.

Survey Questionnaire

Surveys are the most common methods of data collection whereby information is gathered through oral or written questioning (Sarantakos, 1998: 223). For this study, the survey questionnaire was divided into four parts (Appendix -1). Part 'A' comprised pre-training motivation elements and aimed at studying the extent to which the candidates were involved in determining their training needs, and the relationships of their involvement with the extent of training transfer to their job. It contained eight-item measures based on Likert-type scale, with the higher values indicating more positive attitude.

Overall, the items under research questions were selected based on their emphasis in transfer literature. For instance, the items in part-A-were derived from transfer literature on pre-training motivation.

The items in part A and their sources:

Item 1: I was involved in my training needs decision-making process. This item was derived from the study of Baldwin and Majuka (1991) wherein the trainees who were involved were motivated and learned more. It was also derived from Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001). They stress the importance of involving trainees in making their training decisions.

Item 2: The training objectives were discussed with the supervisor. This item is an important element in any training transfer literature. This item was derived from general literature e.g. Kirkpatrick (1998) and Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001).

Item 3: I believed that the training would help me improve my performance in the job. The study of Clark et. al. (1993) found that perceived job utility of training predicted training motivation.

Item 4: I believed that training would improve my career prospects and opportunities.
This item too was derived from the study of Clark et. al. (1993).

Item 5: I recognised that I was accountable for learning. This item was derived from Brinkerhoff and Apking (2001). Direction of trainees to learn and transfer is obtained through discussion of objectives between trainees and their supervisors.

Item 6: I was confident that I can learn. This item was aimed at exploring the readiness and willingness of the trainees to undertake the training. The concept was derived from the principles of adult learning of Malcolm Knowles (1998).

Item 7: Given the option, I would have opted for a different training. This item was to examine how many trainees could undertake training of their personal interest. This concept was derived from the literature (e.g. Dugan Laird, 2003) on individual training needs and organisational training needs.

Part 'B' (relating to survey question 4) comprised training design and trainees' reaction and attitude towards the training. It consisted of seven-item measures based on five-point Likert-type scale, with the higher scores indicating more positive attitude towards the measure. Part 'C' consisted of matters related post-training benefits, application of learning and work environmental factors that affect training transfer process. It consisted of one open-ended question and four closed-ended questions. Part 'D' questions aimed at gathering trainees' perceptions on certain policies to be adopted by the ministry, to ensuring transfer of training and sharing. This part consisted of one five-item measure based on five-point likert-type scale and one open-ended question.

As indicated, the survey questionnaire included a combination of likert-type and closed-ended questions as well as two open-ended questions. Closed questions were constructed to include exhaustive lists of options to avoid biasing responses (de Vaus, 1990: 86). In addition, the groups of alternative responses included the category 'other' in order to capture all possible responses. Furthermore, in order to ensure avoiding gathering of incorrect responses, provision of a category called 'don't know' was included in the list of alternative responses. Dichotomous questions were accompanied by subsequent sub-questions to enable the respondents to substantiate and qualify their responses. For attitudinal measure questions, Likert-type scales were used. The questionnaire was pre-tested with professional colleagues in

Canberra and was also subsequently piloted with ten prospective participants in Bhutan to incorporate any unanticipated alternative responses and to improve validity and reliability.

Responses to closed-ended questions were mostly coded for descriptive and qualitative analysis. On the other hand, the open-ended questions were targeted towards capturing in-depth information on general unforeseen and personal feelings. Responses to such questions were grouped into thematic order and listed in a rank order.

A cover letter from the Ministry of Education headquarters (Appendix-2) was sent to all prospective participants. This letter contained brief project details, aims and objectives.

The participants were not provided any form of incentives. There is no historical data to show that incentives really increase response rates (Hodges, 2002: 133). Nevertheless, an effort was made to ensure minimal time and cost implications to the participants in relation to the study. Towards this effect, the interviews were conducted at the participants' respective locations and at a time of their convenience. Further, the questionnaires were posted to the participants along with a stamped self-addressed return envelope.

Personal In-depth Interviewing

Interviews are a means of collecting information through two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer with a specific focus in mind. They range from an informal or un-structured, to structured, or from non-directive to focused interviews (Cohen & Manion, 1989:307-309). The nature of interviews differed as per the nature of data: a formal or structured interview pattern was adopted for the pre-determined research objective data, while an informal or

semi-structured interview pattern was adopted for qualitative data collection. A major advantage of interviews was their adaptability, as it enables the interviewer to follow up ideas and probe responses and investigate motives and feelings (Bell, 1993: 91, Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The study used both semi-structured and structured interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were used with trainees (Refer Appendix 3) and structured interviews were used with their supervisors (Refer Appendix 4).

Semi-structured interviews were used with those trainees who agreed to attend interviews. Consent Forms were used to confirm trainees' participation in the interviews (Refer Appendix 5). The focus of the interviews, therefore, was on the predetermined topics and sub topics and on ambiguous responses to the returned questionnaires. Nineteen trainee participants were interviewed. The interview appointments were mutually agreed upon between the student researcher and the participants, and took about one hour each. The in-depth personal interviews took place in the form of dialogue and were partially guided by reflexive questions. Interview responses were recorded in the form of note taking.

On the other hand, structured interviews were used with twelve supervisors. The supervisors included one head of the two teacher training institutes, all six divisional heads (one represented by two of its section heads), and four district education officers. The district education officers were selected using convenience sampling technique. This technique is based on easy and accessibility of sample. All four district education officers were supervisors. The supervisors interviewed supervised all the surveyed trainees either directly or indirectly. The supervisors directly supervised 68% of the trainees while 32% of trainees received indirect supervision from two supervisors. Indirect supervision implies supervision from the Personnel Section and the Education Monitoring and Support Services Division

based in the headquarters. The former office is responsible for management of all staff while the latter is responsible for monitoring and providing support services to schools, especially in academic and management fields. Therefore, the number and the range of supervisors were highly representative of all the three categories of trainees.

The structured interviews were targeted towards gathering the collective perspectives of the trainees' supervisors on the effectiveness of the training undertaken by their subordinates. The interview of supervisors either supported or contrasted the aggregate responses of the trainees. The supervisors' structured interview questionnaire comprised three parts. Part 'A' dealt with pre-training motivation aspects and consisted of five-measure based on likert-type scale. Part 'B' pertained to post-training aspects, and consisted of two closed-ended questions and one four-measure based on likert-type scale. Part 'C' included general aspects and consisted of five-measure based on likert-type scale and three open-ended questions.

Simultaneous application of survey questionnaire and interview techniques may, sometimes result in contrasting responses, but these were theoretically critical to the study.

Sampling

Too large a sample might become unwieldy and too small a sample might be unrepresentative (Cohen et al., 2000). Gall et al., (1996) suggest a general rule to use a large sample size if there are many heterogeneous variables. Only out-country training programs were considered for the sample. Out-country events including conferences, meetings, seminars, study tours and workshops were not considered for the study. No minimum time was set as criterion to be included as out-country training program. The range in length of programs is 3 weeks to 30 months. The reasons for the exclusion of such programs were that they are usually unplanned,

short, and not directly job-oriented. In addition, there were cases where one person attended several such programs thereby making it difficult for sampling. A survey sample of 149 (40% of the total participants) who took part in out-country training that took place between the period 1999 and 2003, was selected. The target population of the study sample was the Ministry of Education personnel who trained in out-country training programs and returned to work between 1999 and 2003. The sampling frame, which is the total population of the study, was made available from the Human Resource Development section of the Ministry of Education, which maintains up-to-date information on training activities.

The sample of the population was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Critical characteristics of samples such as nature and duration of training and work group of the population were, nevertheless, considered while sampling, to ensure representative ness. The participants were, therefore, divided mainly into Academic (researcher / teachers / lecturers), Management (administrators and managers, school heads) and Technical (administrative support, finance and technical staff) groups. Following the stratification process, a further 40% of each category target population was selected for the final sample using a random sampling technique. (see Table 3.1)

Table 3.1: Method of sample selection

I. Category	II. Sampling frame (Total Population)	III. Sample (40% of II) (Randomly selected)
Academic	145	58
Management	115	46
Technical	113	45
Total	373	149

Pre-test of questionnaire

In order to ensure clarity and feasibility, the survey questionnaire was tested with two different groups in Canberra in early July, 2004. The first group comprised 'Questionnaire Design and Implementation' workshop participants. Through the courtesy of the workshop facilitator, fifteen of the participants were urged to comment and provide feedback on the questionnaire. The feedback included both the appropriateness of the language and the validity of some questions. The second group consisted of two professional colleagues. The test with them emphasised the clarity and the comprehensiveness of the questions. All valid comments and feedback provided by both the groups were taken into account.

Pilot Study

Validity of survey questions cannot be taken for granted (Belson, 1986:10). Therefore, the draft questionnaire was piloted with about 10 sample participants selected from the target population. The purposes of the pilot study, as Bell (1993:84) suggests was to estimate the time required to complete the questionnaire, to examine the clarity of the questions, to discover if any unusable questions could be deleted and to ascertain if any additional questions needed to be included. The pilot study was expected to enhance the validity of the questions. Further, it was targeted to ensuring smooth actual execution of the data-gathering instrument.

The pilot study was undertaken in two different ways: survey and in-depth interviews. I directly administered both the modes of pilot testing. Survey questionnaire pilot study

participants were urged to state in their own words the perceived meanings of each question. Furthermore, they were invited to make any criticisms and recommendations to improve the questions. On the other hand, the in-depth personal interviews were used to explore any other questions, besides the ones that were already identified in the questionnaire.

Maintaining Ethical Standards

As Gall et al., (1996) caution, even though researchers may have good intentions, their studies may harm the individuals and subsequent researchers, if a standard research protocol is not followed. A standard research protocol mainly concerns protecting of human rights through creating transparency of the research objectives and building goodwill and cooperation between research stakeholders. Approval from the University of Canberra Committee for Ethics in Human Research was granted to conduct the fieldwork.

Along with questionnaires, all participants were sent a letter from the thesis supervisor (Appendix-6) explaining the design and aims of the project. The letter also stressed the importance of frank and honest responses of participants for the success of the project. A copy of the Informed Consent Form was also sent to enable participants to understand the details of interviews, their rights and to assure them of the confidentiality of personal identities and information. Informed Consent Forms were also used to confirm participants' consent to participate in interviews following the survey questionnaire. Participants who agreed to attend interviews signed the Informed Consent Form and returned it to the student researcher. The schedules for interviews were mutually agreed between the student researcher and participants subsequently on telephone. The identities of the participants, however, were/are not disclosed at any stage of the study or anywhere in the report. They will, however, have access to a final

report of the findings. A Copy will be sent to their organisation and personally where requested.

It is ethical to maintain confidentiality of respondents' personal identities and information, especially if the research questions are highly personal and sensitive (Gall et al., 1996:294). However, respondents' personal identities were hard to maintain for follow-up requirements. Some respondents may have to be contacted for follow-ups on questionnaires, some for in depth interaction and clarifications of ambiguous responses. Therefore, a master code sheet that contained codes for each individual in the sample was maintained, so that the student researcher could call on the individuals accordingly.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analysed using descriptive figures i.e. frequencies, means, percentiles, and tables and graphs. The SPSS software was used to generate the descriptive figures like frequencies, means and percentages. On the other hand, responses to the interviews and open-ended survey questions were grouped into thematic orders and listed in a rank order. In order to capture some actual experiences of the participants and to illustrate the originality of some qualitative data, some thematic comments are presented in the original words of the participants. To do so, however, prior verbal consents of those participants were secured. Details of the data analyses plans are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Details of data analyses plans

Question	Data Collection Technique	Analyses Technique
1. To what extent have the trainees been motivated to participate in the out-country training program?	a) Survey question No. 1 from Part A b) Trainees' semi-structured interview question no.1 c) Supervisor structured interview question no. 1	a) Comparison of percentage of all categories in table form. b) Grouped into thematic order and listed in rank order. c) Comparisons of percentage in table form.
2. To what extent has learning been transferred and shared in the workplace?	a) Survey questionnaire part C question No.2. b) Survey question Nos. 4 and 5 c) Trainee interview question No. 3 d) Supervisor interview part 'B' questions No. 1, 2, and 3 from Part C.	a) Comparisons of percentage of b) Percentiles, means c) Percentiles d) Comparisons of means, percentiles
3. What are the factors affecting utilisation of KSA acquired from the out-country training?	a) Survey question No.3 from Part A b) Trainee interview question No.4 c) Supervisors interview part B, question No. 1	a) Comparisons of percentage b) Group in thematic order and rank order, percentiles.
4. What are the perceptions of trainees and their supervisors of out-country training program and the need for policy improvement?	a) Survey part D, question No. 1 b) Supervisor interview part C, questions No. 1, 2, 3 and 4. c) Survey question Part B	a) Comparisons of means, modes and percentiles. b) Group in thematic order and rank order.

De-limitation and limitation of the methodology

One de-limitation and one two limitations have been noted. The de-limitation is that the quality of out-country training was assessed through the trainees' perspectives alone. As reported earlier in chapter 1, the analyses of data were not based on the country categories but on type of trainee, academic, management and technical trainees. First limitation is that data

are based upon the retrospective perceptions of trainees and their supervisors some of whose involvement in training programs are up to five years. Their perceptions may have been affected by the period of time that has subsequently passed. Second limitation is that personal in depth interviews were conducted only with those who volunteered. This may not represent the views of the group as a whole.

Conclusion

The combination of the survey questionnaires and the in-depth personal interviews was geared towards fostering the reliability and generalisability of the responses and the findings. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods had complementary advantages. The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive normative figures, statistical representations, means, and percentiles. On the other hand, qualitative data were analysed using a technique of extracting dominant themes and listing them in a rank order. The interpretations of the findings are presented in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

As reported in Chapter 3, data were collected using postal surveys and interviews. The postal survey questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used with the trainees, and the structured interviews were used with their supervisors. Considerable effort was made in order to enhance the response rate. As outlined in Chapter 3, 97 of 149 questionnaires were completed and returned, giving the 65% response rate. The lack of a higher response rate can be attributed to several causes: lack of time to respond, late delivery of postal survey questionnaires due to the remoteness of some places and unavailability of prospective participants in the workstations. Nineteen trainee participants and twelve supervisors participated in the interviews.

The Chapter is divided into three main sections concerning each of the sources of data: survey, trainee interviews and supervisor interviews. The survey data consist of four parts and are presented by categories of trainees— academic, management and technical. As explained in Chapter 3 in the survey questionnaire section, overall, the items under research questions were selected based on their emphasis in the transfer literature. Trainee interview data are described by category of the trainees. Unlike the survey and trainee interview data, supervisor interview data are collective perceptions of all categories of trainees, and comprise three parts. All sections and their respective parts are briefly described.

Trainee survey

Out-country training participants were issued with survey questionnaires. Altogether, one hundred and forty-nine survey questionnaires were despatched with only 97 (65%) being

completed. The survey questionnaire comprised four parts whose descriptions and objectives are provided briefly under the respective headings (Appendix-1). The brief explanations following the data represented by tables and figures are based on the visual inspection of the findings.

Part A: Pre-training

This part consisted of eight-item measures based on Likert-type scale and were related to pre-training aspects. The overall objective of this part was to assess the extent to which the trainees were motivated prior to participating in the training activities. Involvement of trainees in the decision-making process, setting of training objectives, foreseen training utility and perception of trainees' of the training were selected as the determining factors of motivation.

Part-A Item 1: I was involved in my training needs decision-making process.

Table 4.1: Perceived involvement of trainees of all categories in training needs decision-making process

Level of perceived involvement in training needs decision-making process	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	13.3	4	9.3	0	0
Disagree	3	10.3	12	27.9	2	8.3
Neutral	10	33.3	8	18.6	1	4.16
Agree	7	23.3	12	27.9	10	41.66
Strongly agree	6	20.0	7	16.3	11	45.83
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

The nature of the responses generally differs between the categories of trainees. The responses of the academic category trainees are spread across the scales, with the highest concentration on 'neutral'. While 23% either disagreed or strongly disagreed, 43% either agreed or strongly agreed. Under the management category, the responses are also spread with more negative responses (37%). The responses of the technical category trainees are more positive than for academic & management categories. More than 87% either agreed or strongly agreed in the technical category.

Part- A item 2: The training objectives were discussed with the supervisor.

Table 4.2: Perceived extent of discussion of training objectives by all trainees with their supervisors

Extent of discussion of training objectives	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	1	3.3	4	9.3	0	0
Disagree	6	20	13	30.2	2	8.33
Neutral	6	20	9	20.9	2	8.33
Agree	11	36.7	13	30.2	11	45.83
Strongly agree	6	20	4	9.3	9	37.5
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Though the majority of academic category trainees responded positively, there are also numbers of respondents whose responses are below neutral. 20% remained neutral and 23% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Of the responses of the management category 39.5% were below neutral, while 40% responded positively. The response trend of the technical

category remained consistent. There were 83% who either agreed or strongly agreed. Still not a single respondent disagreed.

Part- A item 3: I believed that the training would help me improve my performance in my job.

Table 4.3: Perception of job utility of training of all trainees

Level of perception of job utility	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	0	1	2.3	0	0
Agree	9	30	14	32.6	6	25
Strongly agree	21	70	28	65.1	18	75
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

All the responses to the above statement are positive with the majority of the responses being ‘strongly agreed’. Only a small 2% of the management category trainees remained neutral.

Part- A item 4: I believed that the training would improve my career prospect and opportunities.

Table 4.4: Level of perception of career utility of training of all trainees

Level of perception of career utility	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	1	4.16
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	1	3.3	1	2.3	1	4.16
Agree	15	50	20	46.5	10	41.66
Strongly agree	14	46.7	22	51.2	12	50
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Generally, all the categories of trainees foresaw career utility of their training positively. However, a few technical category trainees strongly disagreed, and one trainee each in all the categories remained neutral.

Part- A item 5: I believed that I was accountable for learning

Table 4.5: Perception of trainees of their accountability for learning

Level of perception of accountability for learning.	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	1	3.3	2	4.7	0	0
Agree	9	30	22	51.2	9	37.5
Strongly agree	20	66.7	19	44.2	15	62.5
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

No trainees responded below neutral. All technical category trainees felt that they were accountable for learning. Only 3% of the academic and 5% of the management category trainees stood neutral.

Part- A item 6: I was confident that I could learn.

Table 4.6: Confidence of trainees to learn before the training

Level of confidence to learn	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	0	0	2	4.7	1	4.16
Agree	10	33.3	18	41.9	5	20.83
Strongly agree	20	66.7	23	53.5	18	75
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Except for three trainees in both the management and technical categories, all were confident about their learning capability.

Part- A item 7: I believed that the learning could be applied to my job

Table 4.7: Belief of trainees about their ability to apply learning to their jobs

Level of belief to apply training learning.	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	3	10	0	0	2	8.33
Agree	8	26.7	21	48.8	9	37.5
Strongly agree	19	63.3	22	51.2	13	54.16
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

All the responses clustered on the upper side of the scale. Only 10% and 8% of trainees under the academic and technical categories respectively remained neutral.

Part- A item 8: Given the option, I would have opted for different training.

Table 4.8: Degree of preference of trainees for different training

Preference for different training	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	4	13.3	2	4.7	3	12.5
Disagree	5	16.7	15	34.9	8	33.33
Neutral	8	26.7	10	23.3	1	4.16
Agree	6	20	6	14.0	7	29.16
Strongly agree	7	23.3	10	23.3	5	20.83
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Given the options, trainees had preferences for different types of training. Their preferences differed between the categories of trainees. Forty-three percent of trainees of the Academic category either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Similarly, almost 50% of the technical category trainees would have opted for different training. Unlike these two categories, 38% of the management trainees seemed to be happy with the training that they received.

Part B: Training

The overall objective of this part was to gather trainees' perspectives of the quality of the training. This part relates to research question No. 4. Seven-item measures were used to

determine the quality of training: training content relevance; training instructor competency; teaching-learning style preferences; administrative support; training duration; trainees’ ability to cope with the training; and trainees’ foreseen applicability of learning to their jobs.

Part- B item1: The content of the training was relevant to my job

Table 4.9: Relevance of training content to trainee’s jobs of all categories

Relevance of training content	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	4	13.3	4	9.3	3	12.5
Agree	15	50	23	53.5	9	37.5
Strongly agree	11	36.7	16	37.2	12	50
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

The content of the training was generally found to be relevant to all the categories of trainees. Over 85% of trainees of all the categories either agreed or strongly agreed that the content of the training were relevant to their jobs.

Part B item 2: The instructors/educators were competent

Table 4.10: Perceptions of trainees of the competence of instructors/educators

Perceptions of trainees of the competence of instructors	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	1	3.3	0	0	2	8.33
Agree	12	40	23	53.5	9	37.5
Strongly agree	17	56.7	20	46.5	13	54.16
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Not a single trainee of any category responded negatively. Only three trainee participants remained neutral on the statement of competence of instructors/educators.

Part-B item 3: The delivery of the training suited my learning preferences

Table 4.11: Perceptions of the trainees of the suitability of training delivery methods

Suitability of training delivery methods	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	3.3	1	2.3	0	0
Neutral	5	16.7	8	18.6	2	8.33
Agree	19	63.3	22	51.2	8	33.33
Strongly agree	5	13.3	12	27.9	14	58.33
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Only one trainee each from the academic and the management categories disagreed that the training delivery methods suited their learning preferences. All responses from the technical

category of trainees were above neutral. Only a number of responses of all categories of trainees stood neutral on the statement.

Part-B item 4: The institute/university provided adequate support for learning

Table 4.12: Perceptions of trainees of the adequacy of university/institute support

Perception of adequacy of learning support	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neutral	3	10	3	7	0	0
Agree	15	50	23	53.5	9	37.5
Strongly agree	12	40	17	39.5	15	62.5
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Over 90% of trainees felt the adequacy of training support provided by the training institutes. Only three trainees each from the academic and the management categories were neutral about the adequacy of the support.

Part- B item 5: The duration of the training was appropriate.

Table 4.13: Perceptions of the trainees of appropriateness of the training duration

Appropriateness of duration of training	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	1	3.3	2	4.7	0	0
Disagree	11	36.7	17	39.5	3	12.5
Neutral	3	10	11	26.6	8	33.33
Agree	9	30	10	23.3	9	37.5
Strongly agree	6	20	3	7	4	16.66
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Table 4.13 indicates that 40%, 44% and 13% of the academic, management and technical category trainees respectively complained of the inappropriateness of training duration. On average, 35% of trainees specifically complained of shortness of training duration. While the majority of the trainees of the technical category felt the duration to be appropriate, a variable number across the categories also remained neutral.

Part-B item 6: I had no difficulty coping with the training course standard.

Table 4.14: Perception of trainees of level of coping with training standard

Perception of difficulty of training	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	1	3.3	2	4.7	0	0
Neutral	3	10	5	11.6	1	4.16
Agree	13	43.3	28	65.1	14	58.33
Strongly agree	13	43.3	8	18.6	9	37.5
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

On the whole, all trainees reportedly coped well with their course standards. Only 3% and 5% of trainees of the academic and the management categories respectively reported difficulty coping with their course standards. In contrast, 100% of trainees of the technical category reportedly coped well with their course standards.

Part-B item 7: I believed that I could transfer what I have learned, to my job.

Table 4.15: Perception of transferability of learning acquired from training

Perceptions of trainees of transferability of learning	CATEGORY OF OUT-COUNTRY TRAINEES					
	Academic		Management		Technical	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	2	6.7	0	0	1	4.16
Neutral	5	16.7	1	2.3	2	8.33
Agree	14	46.7	30	69.8	7	29.16
Strongly agree	9	30	12	27.9	14	58.33
Total	30	100	43	100	24	100

Generally, trainees of all categories were confident about their ability to transfer their learning to their jobs. Only 7% of the academic and 4% of the technical category trainees were not confident of their ability.

Part C: Post-training

This part was targeted towards gathering both quantitative and qualitative information related to post-training. Post-training information included training personal and job benefits, extent of the application of learning acquired from training, work environment barriers affecting transfer of learning to jobs, sharing and modes of sharing the learning with other colleagues at work places.

Responses to Part-C question number 1: Please explain the benefits of the training program that you attended.

Generally, the out-country training programs had resulted in both personal and job benefits. Exposure to different cultural settings and systems, and financial benefits were stated most.

Table 4.16 reports some original typical responses to this item.

Table 4.16: Some typical responses on personal and job benefits

Personal benefits	Job benefits
‘I now have a Degree and feel fortunate to have got the opportunity’	‘The program enhanced my professional skills and outlook’
‘It has enhanced my qualification level and broadened my outlook’	‘Now I am quite confident with the subject knowledge and satisfied with what I am doing’
‘At least experienced with the outside people... and seen the development in remote schools with modern technology’	‘I am able to deliver services with confidence’
‘After the training, I became more broadminded and was able to understand myself better’	‘Solves teacher shortage problem’ Experience and skills, job security and of course grade promotion’
‘Encouragement in more reading and writing’	‘I was able to re-organise my whole school administration system’
‘Raised my confidence level and self-esteem and above all my level of thinking and grasp of broader issue’	‘I have become mature and confident in my work’
‘More private designs’	‘Able to make better decision’
‘Exposure, diminished my prejudices’	‘Improvement in research methods’
‘Mind opened to new opportunities, vision broadened’	
‘Of course little monetary benefits is involved’	
‘time for reflection’	

Response to question number 2: Have you been able to apply the learning acquired during the training to your job?

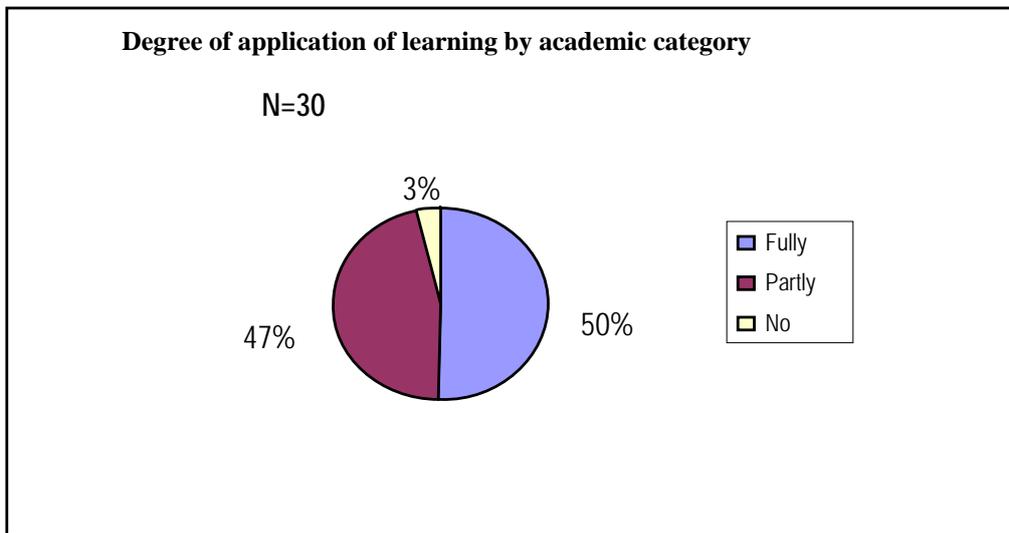


Figure 4.1: Degree of application of learning by academic category trainees

Figure 4.1 indicates that 97% of the trainees reported to be applying their learning in full or partly. Only 3% did not apply the learning at all.

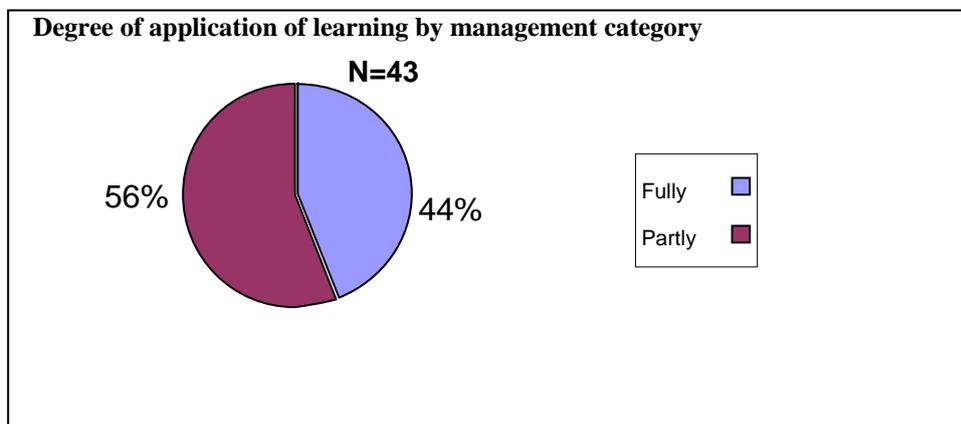


Figure 4.2: Degree of application of learning by the management category trainees

All trainees of the management category reported that they were able to apply either fully or partly. Forty-four percent reported applying their training fully and the rest applied partly.

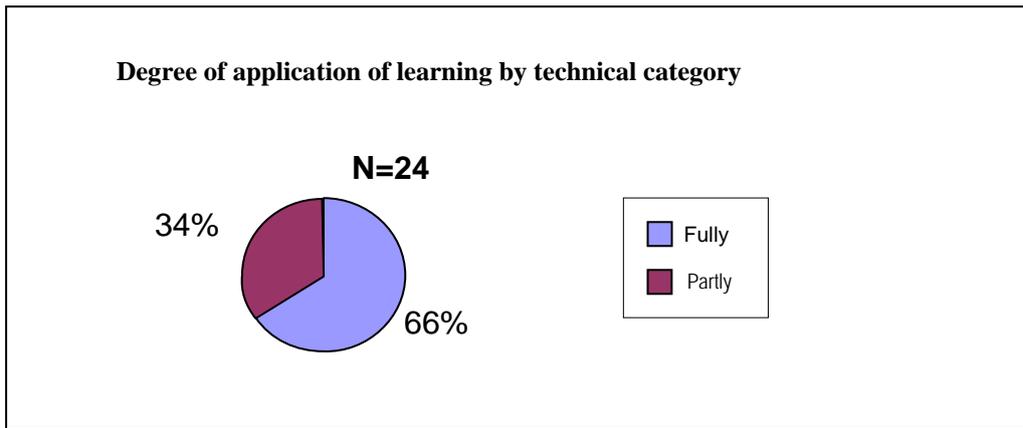


Figure 4.3: Degree of application of learning by the technical category trainees

The majority of the technical trainees (66%) reported full application of their learning. Only 34% reported part application.

The trainees who reported the extent of the learning application as ‘fully’ or partly, further answered one closed ended question. This question was aimed at ascertaining the frequency of their application of the learning at their workplaces. Frequency of application of learning was expressed as, ‘sometimes’, ‘frequently’, and ‘always’.

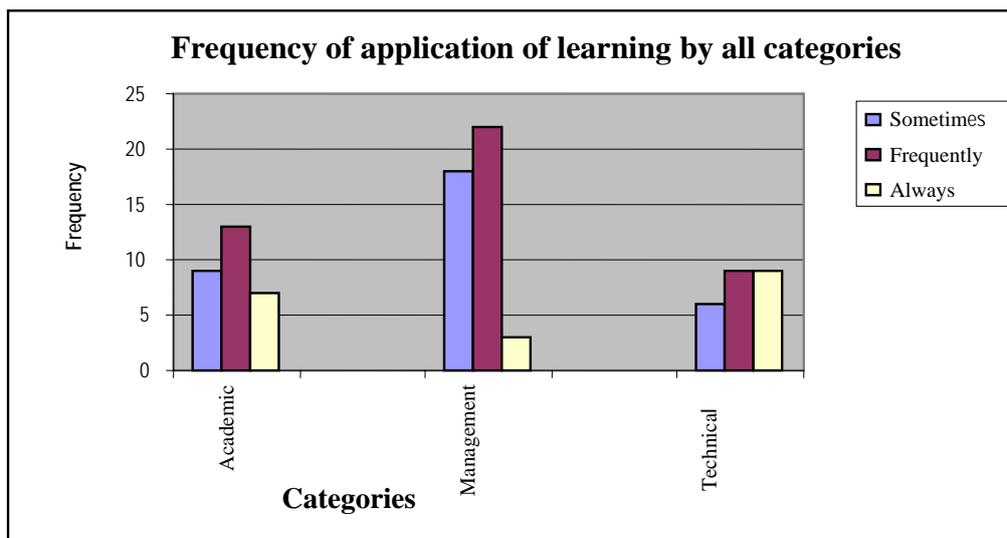


Figure 4.4: Frequency of application of learning by all categories

The frequency of application of learning acquired from out-country training, to their jobs differed among the categories. The frequencies of the application by the majority of trainees of the academic, management and technical were reported to be sometimes, sometimes and frequently/always respectively. As such, the majority of trainees who reported to be using their learning ‘always’ was the technical category, followed by the academic and the management categories.

Response to question number 3: What are the factors generally preventing the application of your learning acquired in the training, to your work place?

Table 4.17: Factors preventing application of learning as reported by all categories

	Factors	Academic	Management	Technical
		%	%	%
1	The training was not relevant to my job	3.3	0	4.3
2	The learning is not applicable because my job changed after I returned from my training	20	13.9	17.3
3	My supervisor does not support the new learning	0	4.6	4.3
4	My colleagues do not support new learning	0	16.2	0
5	My supervisors do not require me to apply new learning	10	6.9	0
6	I did not learn anything new in the training	0	2.3	0
7	I cannot recall what I have learned	0	0	0
8	I do not have the requisite materials to implement my learning	43.3	53.4	26
9	I am overloaded with my daily routine work	56.6	55.8	30.4

Excessive daily workload and inadequate supply of requisite resources were reported to be common major causes of the inability to apply their learning to the workplaces. The third major factor in respect of the academic and the technical categories was the mismatch of the

skills and the jobs. The third major factor in respect of the management category was lack of colleagues' support.

The lack of supervisor support has not been a major cause of the trainees' inability to transfer their learning. Not a single trainee of the academic category experienced supervisor resistance to the application of their new learning. Only slightly over 4% of the management and technical category trainees lacked the support of their supervisors. The extent of support of colleagues was a concern only to the management category trainees. Over 16% of the trainees reported the lack of colleagues' support as the main cause of their inability to transfer their learning. A distinct example of resistance from a supervisor and colleagues against a trainee's application of new idea was, when a management trainee was trying to discourage the practice 'corporal' punishment in the school. There were reportedly a few possible causes of this resistance. Firstly, the supervisor and other colleagues lacked the type of training in which the trainee participated. Secondly, the trainee himself initially, could not probably convince the rest of the staff of the concept and the disadvantages of corporal punishment. The perceptions of the supervisor and the colleagues of this new concept—corporal punishment— however, eventually converged through the trainee's commitment and perseverance.

The degree of support of colleagues for the academic and technical trainees was not at all a concern. Generally, the academic trainees had high 'locus of control' that their effort to transfer learning was individualistic. In case of the technical category also, the trainings were mostly conducted in groups, thereby facilitating building 'critical mass'. The application of new learning was, therefore, not problematic to the trainees in the technical category, as most colleagues equally valued the learning and, in most cases implemented the learning jointly.

Response to question number 4: Since you returned from your training, have you shared your learning with others in the organisation?

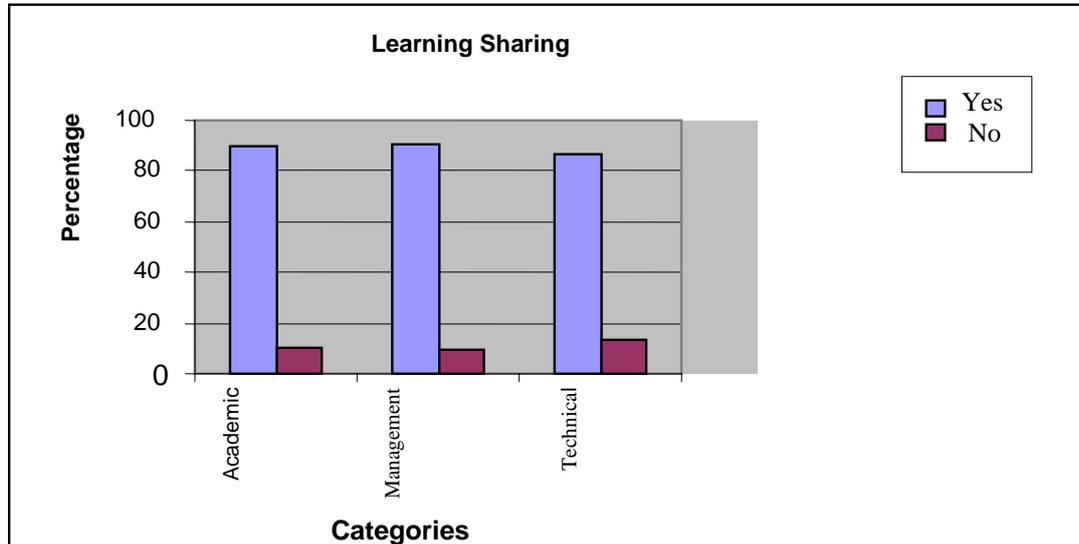


Figure 4.5: Extent of sharing of learning by all categories

Over 90% trainees reported to have shared their learning in their respective organisations either formally or informally.

Response to question number 5: Trainees were asked to rate the frequency of usage of different modes of sharing learning, as ‘never’, ‘once’, ‘sometimes’, and ‘often’. The trainees who reportedly shared their learning indicated that ‘informal conversation’ and ‘helping colleagues at workplaces modes were used ‘often’. (see Table 4.18)

Table 4.18: The common modes of sharing learning at workplaces

Category	Often	
	Informal conversation	Help at work places
Academic	48%	70%
Management	60%	53%
Technical	61%	54%

The most common modes of sharing the trainees' learning were informal interaction and help on-the job. Seventy-percent of the academic category trainees shared their learning through on-the job help, and 60% and 61% of the management and technical category respectively shared through informal conversation.

Part D: Trainee perception of policy improvement

This survey gathered the perceptions of trainees and their supervisors of the usefulness of improving certain HRD policies by the ministry. The policies were geared towards developing a system to ensure the right choice of training, encouraging learning, enabling transfer and facilitating sharing of the knowledge acquired from training. This part contained eight-item measures based on Likert-type scale, with the higher values indicating greater usefulness of the policies.

Response to item 1 (All categories): In your opinion how useful are the following possible systems for ensuring learning and transfer of learning?

The majority of the respondents across all three categories stated that the policies, if adopted, would be either useful or extremely useful. Between 2%-17% of respondents in all the categories perceived the policies to be either not useful or somewhat useful. In some cases, responses do not make 100% because the percentages have been rounded either up or down to the nearest whole number and there are some missing data.

Table 4.19: Perception of academic category trainees of certain adoptable policies

Policy	Not Useful (%)	Somewhat useful (%)	Not sure (%)	Useful (%)	Extremely useful (%)
All trainees to be involved in training decision-making process	0	10	3	47	37
All trainees to be held accountable for learning	0	0	0	37	60
All trainees report their learning to the Ministry of Education and respective offices	0	17	7	37	37
All trainees to share their learning with superiors, colleagues and subordinates formally.	0	3	3	23	67
Initiate and implement projects of significance arising from the knowledge and skills learned.	0	0	10	43	47

Not a single trainee reported that the above policy improvement measures would not be useful. The majority of the trainees perceived the need for policy improvement either useful or extremely useful.

Table 4.20: Perception of the management category trainees of certain adoptable policies

Policy	Not useful (%)	Somewhat useful (%)	Not sure (%)	Useful (%)	Extremely useful (%)
All trainees to be involved in training decision-making processes	7	12	7	44	30
All trainees to be held accountable for learning	0	2	12	33	54
All trainees to report their learning to the ministry and respective offices	7	7	12	44	30
All trainees to share their learning with superiors, colleagues and subordinates formally.	0	12	9	49	30
Initiate and implement projects of significance arising from the knowledge and skills learned.	0	9	9	49	33

Unlike the trainees in the academic category, trainees in the management category had a greater mix of responses. Seven-percent felt that involving of trainees in training decision-making process was not useful. Another 7% felt that reporting of trainees' learning to the ministry and the respective offices was not useful. Nevertheless, on the whole, the majority of the trainees felt the policies to be either useful or extremely useful.

Table 4.21: Perception of the technical category trainees of certain adoptable policies

Policy	Not useful (%)	Somewhat useful (%)	Not sure (%)	Useful (%)	Extremely useful (%)
All trainees to be involved in training decision-making process	4	8		50	38
All trainees to be held accountable for learning	0	0		38	63
All trainees to report their learning to the ministry and respective offices	4	4	8	25	58
All trainees to share their learning with superiors, colleagues and subordinates formally.	0	13	4	38	46
Initiate and implement projects of significance arising from the knowledge and skills learned.	0	0	4	46	50

Responses to question number 2: Are there any other matters related to your training that you wish to bring to my attention?

Altogether, 30% survey participants responded to this question. All the responses were vetted for extraction of major themes. The majority of the responses clustered around the themes of 'right placement' and follow-up implementation of learning acquired in the training, and the need for involvement of trainees in training decision-making processes and in determining training objectives. Thirty-Eight percent of the responses concerned the need for placement of trainees as per their fields of training, and follow-up on implementation of the learning in their work places. Twenty-one percent of the responses stressed the need for involvement of

trainees in training decision-making processes, and in determining training objectives in advance.

Trainee Interview data

Nineteen trainees (20%) were interviewed on face-to-face basis. Five interview participants (26%) belonged to the academic category, eight (42%) belonged to the management category and six (32%) belonged to the technical category. Based on the structure of the survey questions, the interview was divided into four broad questions (Refer Appendix-3). The first question concerned training needs identification. This question was aimed at confirming the involvement of trainees in the training selection process, and their attitude towards the training. The second question related to factors that affected trainees' performance in the training. This question explored any factors negatively affecting the trainees' performance during the training. The third question pertained to the application of learning in the workplace. This question was aimed at exploring any factors that affected application of learning acquired from the training to their jobs. The fourth question aimed at exploring trainees' suggestions towards enhancing transfer of learning. It was expected to draw on trainees' experience to generate ideas about enhancing transfer of learning to workplaces. Responses to each question are presented by categories as follows.

Question 1: How were your training needs identified? Are you happy with the training you were provided?

Academic category

All five respondents reported that their superiors, based on the perceived organisational needs identified their training needs. While all the respondents were happy at the identification of their training needs, one respondent felt that the level of training was below his expectation.

Management category

The choice of training and selection of candidates were made based on the organisational needs and the employment the trainees assumed then. While 5 respondents (62%) were content with the training choice, 3 respondents (38%) were not happy. For example, one trainee said that he lacked long work experience to be able to relate the training content to his work. This was because he was fairly new to the job. One school head teacher was more interested to pursue higher education in academic field rather than in management.

Technical category

Except in case of one respondent, all training needs were identified based on the respective organisation's needs. Only one respondent was not content with the type of the training offered. He felt that the training was not properly designed in terms of relevance and duration.

Question 2: While on training, did you encounter any factors that adversely affected your learning performance?

Academic category

Few significant problems were cited. The initial setback the trainees experienced was their lack of good computer knowledge.

Management category

The majority of the participants (62%) complained of the lack of good computer knowledge as the major impediment to learning. Other hindrances included the lack of adequate working experience related to the learning, and the short duration of the training.

Technical category

The majority of the respondents had not experienced any difficulty coping with the training. However, one respondent felt the duration of the training to be short, and one respondent initially faced some difficulty learning use of computers.

Question 3: Have you been able to transfer your learning to your job? If not, what are the factors affecting application of it?

Academic category

Three respondents (60%) reported full transfer of their learning, while two respondents (40%) reported transfer of a part of their learning. Curriculum officers, who bore dual responsibilities of teaching and developing of academic curricula, had greater opportunity of transmitting their learning directly in terms of teaching and writing textbooks. For example, the curriculum officers revised/developed textbooks besides their improved ways of regular teaching. Factors affecting transfer process were reported to be the lack of requisite teaching materials, the large size of the classes and excessive administrative and management workload.

Management Category

Only 25% of the respondents reported full transfer of learning. Seventy-Five percent could transfer only a part of their learning. The factors affecting transfer of learning included adaptability, lack of motivation and stakeholder cooperation. Trainees reported that the all the management techniques that they learned could not be applied due to the contextual differences. They also reported the absence of any recognition for applying their learning. The success of application of learning by management category trainees, especially school heads depended on the extent of co-operation they receive from their colleagues and student parents.

Technical category

Seventy-Seven percent and 23% of the participants reported to be applying their learning fully and partly respectively. For example, a financial management software package developed for project finance personnel was put in full use for reporting financial expenditures. Similarly, a trainee who specialised in construction management could apply his knowledge and skills in planning and managing regular school construction projects.

Question 4: What do you think could have been done to better ensure transfer of learning?

Academic category

Three respondents (60%) recommended streamlining of the selection process while 2 respondents (40%) suggested provision of better post-training support in terms of right placement and supply of requisite materials.

Management category

Fifty-percent of the participants suggested proper needs identification with the involvement of trainees and setting of training objectives. Twenty-Five percent recommended monitoring and evaluation once the trainees are back at their jobs. Another 25% recommended allowing more time to transfer.

Technical category

Proper needs identification, and support from all stakeholders after the training were stated most often to be facilitating factors for ensuring transfer of learning to workplaces. One

respondent suggested supply of requisite materials for implementation of learning, and one respondent suggested sharing of learning with others in the workplace.

Supervisor interview data

Altogether, twelve supervisors were interviewed using structured interview techniques (refer Appendix-4). The supervisors included one head of the two teacher training institutes, all six divisional heads and four district education officers. One division head was represented by two of its section heads. The interviews were targeted towards gathering supervisors' collective perspectives on the effectiveness of the training undertaken by their subordinates. The supervisors interviewed supervised all the surveyed trainees either directly or indirectly. The supervisors directly supervised 68% of the trainees while 32% of trainees received indirect supervision from two supervisors. Indirect supervision implies supervision from supervisors based at Headquarters, either in the Personnel Section or in the Education Monitoring and Support Services Division. The former office is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of performances of all staff, and the latter office is responsible for school staff.

The supervisors were in a position to comment on the target group's on-the-job behaviours for three reasons. Firstly, the supervisors monitor trainee behaviour through working closely with the trainees. Secondly, supervisors assess their subordinates' performance for annual performance evaluation reports. Thirdly, supervisors also receive annual reports of their subordinates' performance. Therefore, it can be said that the interviewed supervisors supervised 100% of survey participants.

The supervisor structured interview questionnaire comprised three parts. Part 'A' dealt with pre-training motivation and consisted of five-item measure based on Likert-type scale. Part

'B' pertained to post-training aspects, and consisted of two closed-ended questions and four-item measures based on Likert-type scale. Part 'C' included general aspects and consisted of five-item measure based on Likert-type scale and three open-ended questions. The majority of the questions were designed to correspond with the trainee survey questionnaire, to match the responses of the two.

Part-A : Pre-training

The objective of this part was to gain an additional perspective on the self-reported data of trainees, related to pre-training motivation, of the trainees of all three categories.

Table 4.22: Collective opinion of supervisors on Part-A (pre-training motivation) for all categories

Measures	Scales				
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
All the trainees were involved in the training decision-making process	17%	50%	8%	25%	
All the training programs were relevant to the candidates	0%	0%	8%	58%	33%
The training objectives were discussed with the candidates	0%	17%	25%	42%	17%
The candidates were accountable for learning and application	0%	0%	25%	58%	17%
I believed that the candidates had the potential to learn.	0%	0%	0%	83%	17%

The majority of the supervisors mostly disagreed to the statement concerning the trainees' involvement in training needs decision-making process. They, however, mostly agreed to other statements on training relevance, setting of training objectives, learning accountability and trainee ability.

Perspectives of supervisors on Part B, which pertains to ‘training’ were not been collected. This is because supervisors were not involved in the design and delivery of training, nor would they have any idea about the trainees’ performance in the training. Therefore, Part-B in the supervisor interview pertains to post-training aspects.

Part B: Post-training

This part relates to the application of learning in the workplace, and the sharing of the learning in the organisation.

Responses to part B question 1: Have the candidates been able to apply the learning acquired during the training, to their jobs?

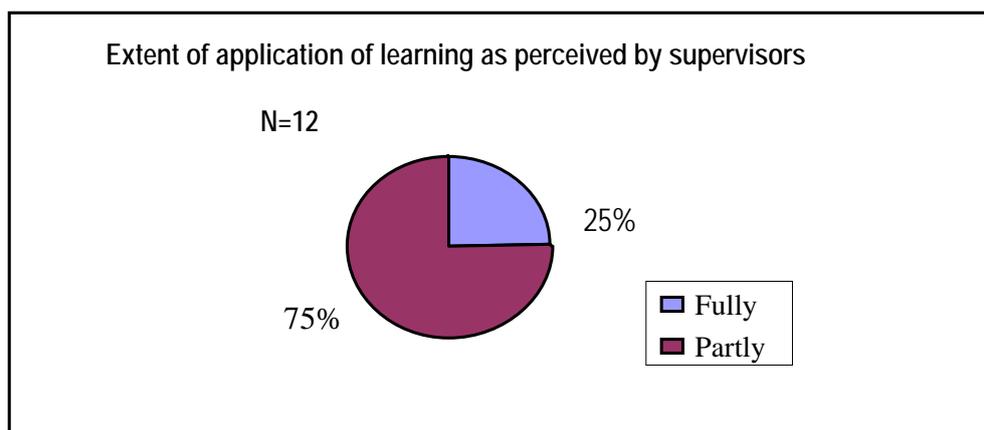


Figure 4.6: Perception of supervisors of trainees’ application of learning

The majority of the supervisors (75%) perceived that the trainees applied their learning to workplaces partly. Only 25% perceived full application of the learning. Only trainees who participated in short-term skills-based and project-tied training are able to apply their learning fully. Such training had more specific training objectives and were mostly conducted in groups. For example, trainees from School Planning and Building Division participated in a project-related group training whereby they were able to learn and apply jointly soon after

their return. Some supervisors, nevertheless, admitted the fact of the lack of a system for monitoring and evaluating their subordinates' performance after training.

Responses to part B question 2: Since the candidates returned from their training, have they shared their learning with others in the organisation. The purpose of this question was to see whether the learning acquired through the limited opportunity of out-country training was shared with other colleagues in the organisation.

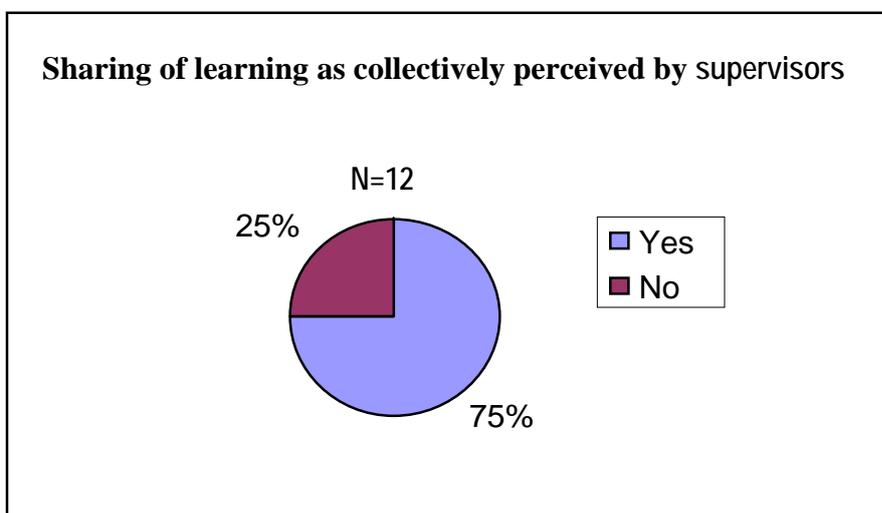


Figure 4.7: Perception of supervisors of trainees' sharing of their learning

The supervisors perceived that more than 75% of the trainees shared their learning at workplaces through different modes. For example, several academic trainees either conducted or facilitated in-country training in the fields of curriculum change, teaching pedagogy, subject refreshers etc. Trainees from the School Planning and Building Division also imparted training to private school builders on various topics such as new technology and construction project management.

Responses to part 'B' question 3 indicated the common modes of sharing learning after training.

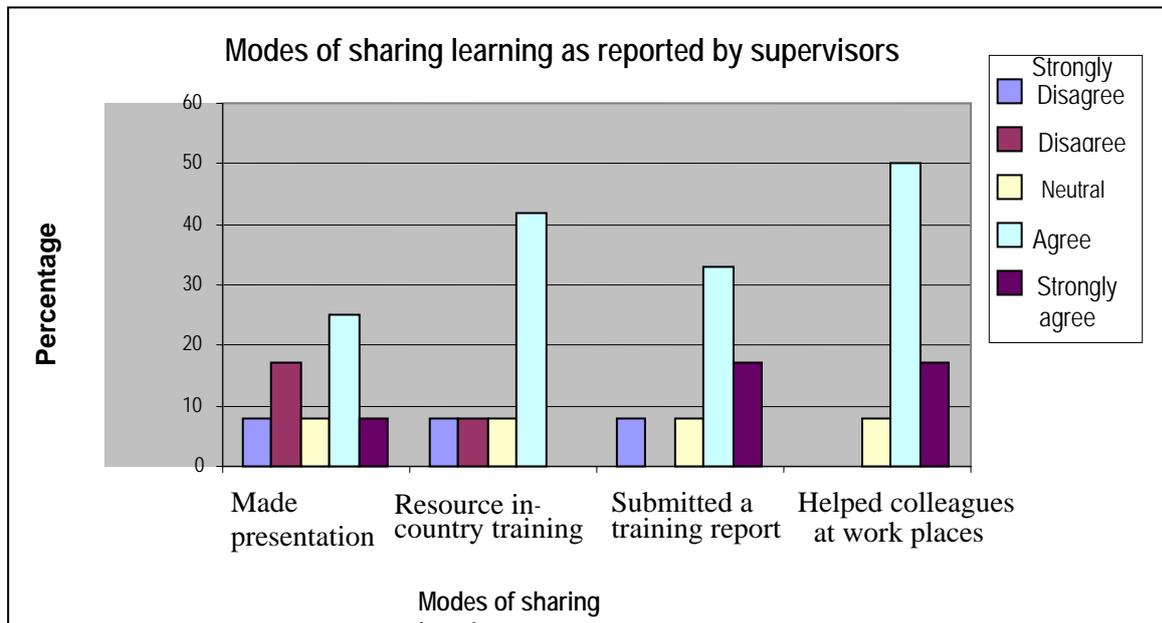


Figure 4.8: Perception of supervisors of trainees' mode of sharing their learning

The most common mode of sharing was informal conversation followed by resourcing in-country training programs and submission of training reports. The academic trainees mostly shared their learning through conversation and in-country training. However, there was no standard mode of sharing learning required to be followed by trainees.

Part C: Supervisor Perception of Policy Improvement

Part C: Question 1 has 5 items. This part consisted of one set of closed-ended questions and three open-ended questions. The objectives of the questions were:

Part C question 1: This question matched the perception of supervisors on certain adoptable policies for ensuring learning and transfer of learning with those of the trainees.

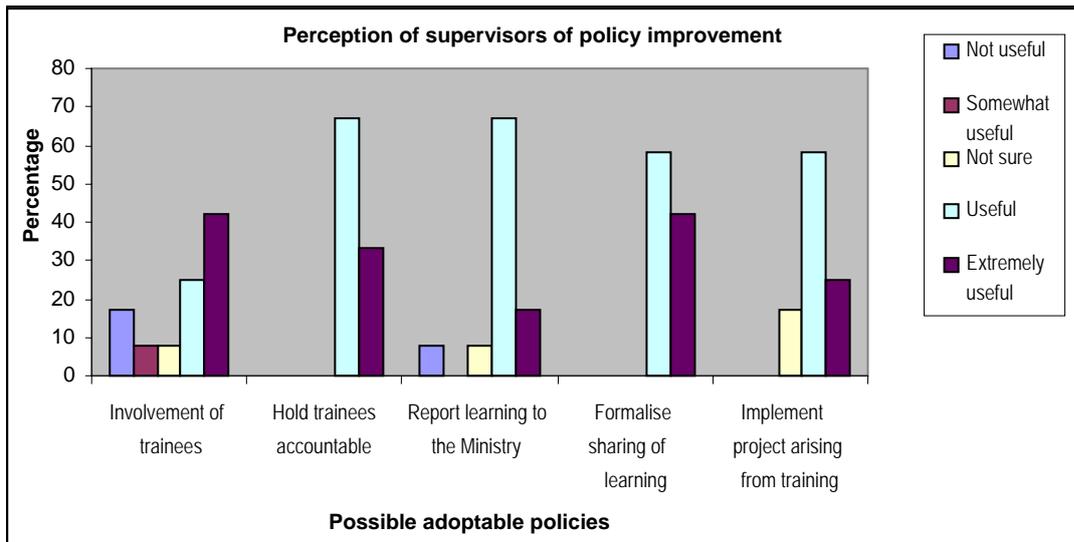


Figure 4.9: Perception of supervisors of adoption of certain policies

Like trainees in all categories, supervisors also generally perceived the policies to be useful. More than an average of 86% of trainees under all categories rated the policies useful and extremely useful. However, slightly less than 20% of supervisors did not feel the importance of involving trainees in the process of training decision-making. In addition, some trainees (8%) of trainees did not perceive the policy of trainees' reporting their learning to the ministry useful. The supervisors rather felt that the policy of sharing the learning formally with trainees' superiors, colleagues and subordinates more useful.

Part C question numbers 2, 3 and 4 are open-ended questions aimed at collecting qualitative data on the overall effectiveness of out-country training programs, and any other matters that they wished to share. This opportunity enabled supervisors to express their personal perspectives about out-country training systems in general. However, their views mostly pertained to general out-country training programs, which the ministry headquarters directly initiated and implemented.

Overall, the supervisors appreciated the effectiveness of out-country training program. Some however, made several comments and suggestions for its improvement. The responses are grouped and ranked under six headings: selection criteria; monitoring and evaluation; right placement after training; HR information and administration; involvement of supervisors in training selection; HRD program inconsistency; and proper organisational HR needs assessment. (see Table 4.23)

Table 4.23: Supervisors' comments on the ministry's present HR system

Themes of responses	%
Selection criteria	21
Monitoring and evaluation	21
Right placement after training	17
HR information and administration	14
Involvement of field supervisors in training selection	10
HRD program inconsistency	7
Proper organisational HR needs assessment.	7

Credibility of trainee selection criteria was one of the major concerns of the supervisors. To 21% of supervisors, the candidate selection systems followed by all agencies in the ministry was generally not commendable. Particularly, the training programs planned and implemented directly by the ministry headquarters seemed to lack an open and competitive system for selection of candidates. The supervisors believed that the standardisation of robust selection criteria could facilitate maximisation of out-country training benefits.

Another 21% of the supervisors viewed the lack of monitoring and evaluation system in the out-country training process as a major impediment to transfer of training. Any training expenditure was regarded as an investment that would automatically accrue positive returns. As such, trainees were trusted to return from training with greater knowledge and skills to perform their jobs better. One supervisor considered monitoring and evaluation tasks

personally sensitive. The HRD policy of the Ministry of Education did not stress the importance of it. Therefore, he confessed that he would be unpopular to introduce monitoring and evaluation system, which other divisions and sections do not adopt.

Another major concern expressed by 17% of the supervisors was the need for right placement of trainees after their training. They thought that the decision makers for deployment of staff did not consider the skills and knowledge those staff possessed. They recommended development and maintenance of a training database linked to the personnel information system to facilitate an effective deployment system.

Similarly, the need for maintenance of HR information was highlighted by 14% of the supervisors. They viewed it as highly useful in order to make any HR related decisions credible and effective.

Ten-percent of the supervisors perceived that supervisors whose subordinates were directly identified for training by headquarters lacked motivation to evaluate trainees' performance. Consequently, the supervisors also lacked the sense of responsibility for monitoring and evaluating their subordinates' performance after training. This situation, some supervisors thought did not hold trainees accountable for learning and application of their learning.

The detailed interpretation of this chapter is presented in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5 INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter is the interpretation of the findings resulting from the study. The interpretation is sequenced as per the structure of the trainee survey questionnaire: ‘pre-training motivation’, ‘training’ ‘post-training’ and ‘general’. The first three parts consist of interpretations in respect of all three categories of trainees— academic, management and technical. The fourth part includes perceptions of all the trainees and their supervisors of certain policies improvement. A brief summary of the interpretation of all categories is provided at the end of each part.

Part A: Pre-training motivation

Several studies on training transfer have revealed that activities, which occur prior to training have impact on training effectiveness (e.g. Salas et al., 2001; Knowles, 1998; Gaudine, 2004). In particular, involvement of trainees and their supervisors in the training decision-making process, e.g. setting training objectives, enhances transfer of learning (Baldwin et al., 1991, Goldstein, 1993, Kirkpatrick, 1998). Besides, positive foreseen job and career utility and organisational support also enhance training motivational level, which further results in transfer of learning (Brinkerhoff and Apking, 2001; Burke and Baldwin, 1999; Clark et al., 1993, Goldstein, 1993; Kirkpatrick, 1998 etc.).

Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964) also suggests that trainees are unlikely to be motivated to learn unless they believe that training will result in either improved job performance or career advancement. Likewise, in this study, the trainees across all the categories experienced several pre-training activities. However, the extent to which such activities affected the

trainees' motivational level to learn and transfer their learning varied from one category to another. Following is the interpretation of the pre-training motivation reports presented by categories.

Academic category

On average 56% of the trainees either agreed or strongly agreed that their training objectives were discussed with their supervisors. However, the interview data revealed that training objectives were not formally discussed and written down. All the five interview participants of the academic category reported that their supervisors decided the training. While all the respondents were happy with the training selection, one respondent felt that the level of the training was below his expectation. Trainees and their supervisors discussed only general training objectives such as better performance after training. In respect of technical skills-specific and project-tied training, both trainees and their supervisors had common implicit understanding of the training objectives. Only in some instances, training objectives were broadly discussed, but were not written down and formally agreed between trainees and their supervisors. The trainees were aware of their training needs, which were determined mainly based on the areas of their current job responsibilities and the ministry HRD policies. For example, a teacher in a remote primary school, characterised by acute shortage of teachers, would know that he/she needs training in multi-grade teaching skills. This is because multi-grade teaching skill is the skill a teacher needs to manage teaching students of different levels in one classroom. The emphasis on multi-grade teaching skill training has since long been influenced by the belief that it would address the problem of critical shortage of teachers in remote community and primary schools. Similarly, for example, a high school Physics teacher would know that the selection of his candidature for a Masters in Physics program is targeted

at enhancing his academic qualification and facilitating career development, so that he/she can teach better and prepare him to teach even at tertiary institutes later on.

Obviously, the other 50% of the trainees under the academic category did not agree that they were involved in the processes of training decision-making and objective setting. This indicates that the trainees were unsure of the ultimate objectives of their training in spite of the shared understanding about contexts and difficulties.

As such, the above finding indicates the absence of a formal process whereby trainees and their supervisors discussed and agreed upon the training needs and training objectives and goals. In spite of the non-participatory training decision-making processes, more than 98% of trainees foresaw the job and career utility of the training positively. This information signifies that the trainees were certain about how their trainings was going to benefit them in terms of their jobs and career. Clark et al., (1993:294) define job utility as the perceived usefulness of the training to facilitate goals associated with the current job, such as increased productivity and better problem-solving skills. On the other hand, they define career utility as the perceived training usefulness for attainment of career goals, such as getting a raise or a promotion or taking a more fulfilling job. The authors also suggest job utility can result in higher career utility, as career opportunity is often dependent on job performance. The nature of the trainees' perceptions of job and career utility, as described above, confirms that there is a common understanding of the training needs between the trainees and their supervisors.

Furthermore, the trainees were also highly confident of their learning abilities and the application of the learning to their workplaces. This fact could be attributed to two main factors: training relevance and job involvement.

Firstly, the relevance of the training indicated at least by the training titles, boosted their confidence to learn and apply the learning to workplaces. Trainees did not have to undergo any in-country English language course, as English is one of the media of instruction in the Bhutanese education system. In the ADB study (1997), one of the pre-requisites for Indonesian trainees to undertake out-country training was English language competence. It is therefore, advantageous for Bhutanese trainees to undertake any overseas courses conducted in English, so long as they are well directed.

Secondly, the degree of 'job involvement' of the trainees also signalled their ability to transfer the learning to their jobs. Job involvement is the degree to which the job situation is central to the individual and his/her identity (Blau, 1985, cited in Mathieu and Salas, 1992). In this case, the academic trainees had a greater degree of job involvement because they had unambiguous job responsibilities, and the outcomes of their performance would reflect their identities. An example similar to the above examples could be used: a curriculum officer, whose main tasks are teaching Mathematics at a teacher college and constantly reviewing curriculum, has a high degree of job involvement. Trainees under the above circumstances, therefore, foresaw the job utility more positively. The extent of the success to apply what the trainees acquired in the training was mostly contingent upon their own efforts and enthusiasm. Thus, as reported later in Part C, the degree of supervisors' support and the extent of colleagues' cooperation were not concerns to the academic trainees for their application of learning acquired in their training.

Overall, therefore, the academic trainees underwent the training courses with considerable degree of pre-training motivation.

Management category

Similar to the academic category, 42% of trainees in the management category reported to have been involved in the training decision-making and objective setting process. However, here too, training objectives were discussed only generally, and not written down. Five out of eight interview participants were happy with the training choices made by their supervisors. One respondent said that he lacked enough work experience to relate the training to his work. This information indicated the importance of prior work experience in order to benefit from the training.

The recent emphasis of the Ministry of Education on the development of administrative and managerial skills of the heads of schools (8th Five-Year HRD Plan, 1997 and 9th Five-Year HRD Plan, 2002) largely influenced the management training needs. That is why the majority of trainees reported their non-involvement in training decision-making process, because the Ministry of Education head office directly decided their training needs.

Some trainees viewed this training as an opportunity to enhance their qualification and professional development. However, some viewed as mandatory, because they were more interested in pursuing long-term higher education in their academic fields.

The heads of school's dual responsibilities of teaching and managing schools apparently culminated in ambiguity of their job identities. Jobs of teaching and managing schools are different in nature, and are dependent on different factors for performance effectiveness. For instance, performance of heads of schools in administration and management would be more dependent on support and co-operation of colleagues and other external stakeholders, e.g. students and parents. On the other hand, their performance in teaching would be more dependent on the effort and the enthusiasm of the respective individuals.

Under such circumstance of holding two different, but equally prominent responsibilities, trainees had the tendency of preferring one type of job responsibility to the other. Nevertheless, as the trainees were equally responsible for both the types of jobs, more than 98% of the trainees viewed the job and career utility of the training positively. In addition, almost all trainees were confident about their ability to learn and apply the learning in their workplaces. Therefore, the trainees under the management category also, overall, had a good level of motivation to undergo training.

Technical category

Unlike the trainees under the academic and the management categories, 85% of the trainees of the technical category reported to have been involved in the training decision-making and objectives setting process. However, again here the objectives were not written down and not formally agreed between the trainees and their supervisors. The trainees and their supervisors simply shared the common understanding of the training objectives verbally, and trusted that the learning would be subsequently transferred to the jobs.

While all the trainees rated the foreseen job utility of the training above 'agree', some trainees (8%) rated career utility of the training below 'neutral'. Trainees who rated career utility low, simply valued the training to enable them to help perform their jobs better. They did not foresee much help in terms of building their career or securing promotion or financial benefits after the completion of their training.

Most of the training under this category was short-term and skills-specific for which training outcomes were obvious to some extent. Furthermore, almost all the trainees were aware of their training objectives, due to which fact the trainees were confident to learn and apply the learning in their workplaces.

Summary

Different trainees reported different experiences of pre-training processes. All the training needs were purely based on the perceived or immediate organisational needs rather than the individual's expressed personal interest. Laird et al., (2003) define organisational needs as those needs felt by the majority of individual employees at any given point in time. In some instances, the organisational needs identified and finalised by the respective organisations directly seem to be in opposition to the trainees' personal interest. Forty-three percent of the academic category, 37.3% of the management category and 50% of the technical category were interested in attending training programs, which were different from what they were provided. However, in view of the nature of job responsibilities of the trainees that require training, their personal interests could not be recognized. As such, the emphasis of organisations on conducting only organisational needs-based training can, sometimes, preclude realisation of some individual training needs. In the case of this study, nevertheless, this situation did not make much difference, because the training selected for the trainees was at least relevant to trainees' current jobs. This assumption that the major emphasis on organisational training did not affect the trainees' attitude towards their training can be substantiated by the fact that almost all trainees foresaw job utility and career utility of their training positively.

Not all trainees were fully involved in the process of training decision-making and discussion of training objectives. Objectives of the training were broadly discussed and informally agreed between the supervisors and the trainees. This particular information indicates that there is definitely a lack of a standard system for planning and implementation of out-country training programs. Also, the process certainly lacked the system for setting of training objectives and work targets between supervisors and trainees.

Due to the lack of specificity of training objectives, the extent of understanding of the training objectives differed between the categories of trainees. The technical category trainees reported the highest degree of understanding of their training objectives, followed by the academic and the management categories. According to Kim (2004), the lack of training objectives and work targets can result in inappropriate estimation of trainees' work performance after the training. In such situations, trainees will also not feel accountable for learning and transfer of their learning, and supervisors too cannot monitor and evaluate the performance of their trainee subordinates.

Regardless of the extent of involvement of trainees in the processes of decision-making and objectives setting, all the training programs were reportedly relevant to the trainees' jobs and almost all trainees developed positive attitude towards the training. All trainees foresaw job and career utility of their training positively. Furthermore, indicating the right choice of trainees in terms of their trainability, all trainees were confident of their ability to learn and apply their learning in the workplaces. Therefore, overall, all the trainees were motivated to participate in the training.

The interpretation of the above findings under the pre-training motivation stage is substantiated by supervisors' perception of pre-training activities.

Supervisors' views on trainees' pre-training motivation

The supervisors confirmed that out-country trainees were normally not involved in training decision-making process. Only 25% of the supervisors reported that the trainees were involved in training decision-making and 42% reported that trainees were involved in setting of training objectives processes. They had their own views as to why the trainees were generally not involved in the training decision-making process, and why the organisational needs overrode individual needs. Though little emphasis was made on the involvement of trainees in the training needs decision-making process, they had some involvement in setting of broad training objectives. Training decisions were generally based on the nature of the job responsibilities held by the prospective trainees prior to the training. In addition, the limited options of out-country training opportunities reportedly restricted the negotiation of the training needs between the respective individuals and the organisations. Usually, out-country training programs are pre-determined, and are limited in number. In such a situation, discussing prospective trainee's personal training interest may not make any difference.

Twenty-five percent of supervisors felt that trainees were involved in the process of training decision-making process. On the other hand, an average of 58% of trainees reported that they were involved in their training decision-making process. Interview data showed discrepancy in the interpretation of the concept and nature of involvement in decision-making. Involvement to trainees meant any of the following incidents/situations prior to their final selection to undertake training. First, supervisors were informed of trainees' training needs and enthusiasm at any point in time prior to the final selection to undertake training. Second,

supervisors had informed trainees of their training needs at any point in time before the final selection to undertake training. On contrary, to supervisors involvement meant personal contact with trainees to seek their opinions verbally. This did not occur in 75% of cases.

The supervisors' claim about the relevance and authenticity of the training needs can be supported by the trainees' initial attitude towards the training. Most trainees foresaw job and career utility of the training that they were going to participate in positively. They were also confident about their ability to learn and utilise the learning in their workplaces.

The general literature on training transfer, however, emphasises the importance of involvement of trainees in the process of their training needs identification and setting of training objectives. The effect of the lack of a system for discussing training needs and training objectives between trainees and their respective supervisors can, nevertheless, be discovered in the subsequent stages of training transfer process: training (learning) and post-training (application and maintenance).

As such, the nature of training design and delivery is equally important for transfer of learning to occur. No matter how trainees were motivated prior to their training, they would not learn if the training is not worthwhile. It is essential to assess the quality of the actual training in order to connect pre-training processes and training outcomes. The following section is, therefore, concerning the second stage of the training process —Training.

Part B: Training

For positive training outcomes to occur, training design is as important as other factors. The major training-design factors include the job relevance of the training content (Campbell, 1971, Ford & Wroten, 1984, cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988); and the incorporation of

learning principles (Bass & Vaughan, 1966, cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Feeling that the training content is relevant and having learned something are also some of the pre-requisites for training transfer (Haskell, 2001).

The initial motivation of the trainees can be influenced by their subsequent reaction/attitude towards the actual training (Mathieu et al., 1992). Reaction influences the relationship among pre-training motivation, learning and post-training transfer effort. Trainees' change in attitude towards the training can also change their level of perceived ability to transfer learning. Along with these theories, trainees' attitude and perceptions pertaining to both pre-training and during the training were determined. Few changes have been discovered in respect of relevance, quality, foreseen job and career utility. However, perception of their ability to transfer learning reduced across all the categories of trainees, over the training period (see Table 5.1).

Table 5.1: Trainees' perception of ability to transfer before and after training

Time	Academic	Technical	Management
Prior to training	90%	92%	100%
After training	77%	87%	97%
Difference	-13%	-5%	-3%

Table 5.1 has been derived from part A question 1 item 7 and part B question 1 item 7 of the survey questionnaire. The purpose of the table is to show relationship between the perception of trainees of their ability to transfer before and after the training. No test of significance was conducted. Qualitative interpretation of these differences within broader context of transfer of training is important.

The findings under the 'Training' stage are interpreted in the following order.

Academic category

As mentioned above, the majority of the trainees in the academic category appreciated the relevance and the quality of the courses in which they participated. Nevertheless, they also experienced a reduced level of the confidence to transfer their learning after participating in the actual training. This situation occurred mostly to the trainees who went on short-term training.

Several factors affected their level of confidence to transfer. The data relating to the Academic trainees' confidence to transfer come from survey questionnaire Part B and table 5.1. The training participants generally felt that training duration was too short and practical lessons were not adequate. The foreseen availability of teaching-learning material resources back home also contributed to the change in the trainees' level of confidence to transfer their learning. The foreseen lack of requisite degree of supportive transfer climate/work environment, especially in terms of material support, undermined the confidence of the trainees. This finding supports the transfer literature stressing the importance of favourable transfer climate to ensure transfer of learning (Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001; Burke et al., 1999; Goldstein, 1993, Kirkpatrick, 1998; etc.).

The foreseen transferability of learning can be different at different stages of the training process, i.e. before training, during training and after training. In this particular case, the trainees' foreseen training transferability changed after attending the actual training. During or soon after the actual training, trainees could once again gauge the transferability of the

learning considering the contextual and infrastructural differences at their workplaces back home. For example, the primary school head teachers who attended multi-grade teaching attachment courses in Australia noticed a big difference between the class sizes in Bhutan and in Australia. The teaching of multi-grade classes, according to the trainees, especially needed small class sizes, and modern teaching-learning materials, e.g. audio-visual teaching aids. The new perceptions of their ability to transfer reduced their initial level of confidence to apply.

Management category

On the whole, the management trainees viewed the training positively. Only a few trainees complained of their difficulty adjusting with training delivery methods, and the short training duration. The complaint about the duration of training mostly emanated from the trainees who participated in short-term training. This information signifies that the types of regular training courses provided by external training organisations do not always match the requirement of all clients. As Hamblin (1974) states, external training providers have different ultimate training objectives in providing training, taking into consideration several different factors in order to meet training needs of their general prospective clients. Trainees will not be able to fully match his/her training needs by attending regular out-country training programs. In some cases, in order to make training more relevant and useful, employers can arrange tailor-made training. However, such courses are resource intensive, and usually need certain minimum number of participants to organise the training.

Technical category

With the greater extent of involvement (85%) of the trainees in their training decision-making and objectives setting processes, the overall attitude of the trainees towards the training was consistent through the training process. Only a few trainees experienced difficulty adjusting to training delivery methods. Thus, the level of confidence to transfer training learning did not change much, thereby indicating greater transferability of the learning. The interview data indicated that factors such as prior information on training, training relevance and group participation enabled them to cope with the training better. These facts are consistent with the research findings of Baldwin & Majuka (1991), Broad & Newstrom (1992) and Gaudine & Saks (2004).

Summary

Trainees' perceptions of the training outcomes occurred at two different stages of training process: before the training and after the training. The foreseen training outcomes before the training, however, can be influenced by the trainees' subsequent attitude towards the training.

Trainees' initial perceptions, in this case, were mainly developed based on the training subject matter, presumed transferability of the learning and foreseen utility of the training. After the training, however, other factors affected these initial perceptions. The change in the trainees' initial perception of their training can be attributed to several factors. For example, the perceived contextual differences and the need for certain material and time resources, in order to implement the learning, affected their initial perception of the training usefulness.

As mentioned above, the attitude of trainees towards the training differed before and after the training. Nevertheless, generally, the attitude of all trainees towards their training was positive, indicating an overall good quality of the training. Not a single trainee reported total irrelevance of the training. These findings signify the prudence of selection of training institutes and universities by the Ministry of Education headquarters and the concerned department/divisions. In addition, one trainee in academic category, and 2 trainees in management category reported difficulty coping with their courses indicating the right selection of candidates in terms of their trainability.

Part C: Post-training

Events that occur after training are as important as those occurring before and during training (Salas et al., 2001). The information gathered entails several aspects. They include: personal and job benefits of the training, extent of the application of learning acquired from the training, work environment barriers affecting transfer of learning to the jobs, sharing and the methods of sharing the learning with other colleagues at work places.

The objectives of any out-country training undertaken by the Ministry of Education personnel were certainly job-oriented (HRD Master Plan, 2002). Nevertheless, the training programs in this study have bestowed upon trainees both personal benefits and job benefits. For example, personal benefits included trainees' exposure to different countries and culture, qualification enhancement, broadening of perspectives and development of self-esteem and confidence. Job benefits, on the other hand, included acquisition or enhancement of knowledge, broadened professional outlook, respect for professionalism etc. This finding supports the theory of Owen and Rogers (1999) that intervention programs, such as, training, result in both intended

and unintended outcomes. It is, therefore, equally important to establish overall benefits of the training in terms of both personal and organisational benefits. The difference between personal and job benefits could, however, be generally subtle and overlapping. Only distinctive differences are, therefore, highlighted. Nonetheless, the emphasis has been laid on the job aspects, because the focus of this study is on the transfer of learning to workplaces. The following are their descriptions and interpretations.

A critical issue with any training program is the successful transfer of the learning to the job (Ford et al., 1992, Burke & Baldwin, 1999). One-time application of the learning to a workplace may not pay off the training expenditure. The emphasis should, therefore, be on 'subsequent maintenance'. One of the major concerns discovered in the out-country training impact studies was 'sustainability'. The term 'sustainability', according to ODA (1992) studies implies transferring, maintaining and sharing of the knowledge acquired from training abroad with other colleagues. The term further implied the emphasis on simultaneous development and strengthening of in-country training capacities. As such, further to the trainees' statements on training job benefits, the extent to which they were put into practice has also been determined.

Trainees under all the categories were able to apply the learning only to some extent. The reported extent of full transfer of learning by the academic, management and technical categories were 50%, 44% and 66% respectively. Several direct factors reportedly affected the transfer process. The evaluation of the transfer process also indicated that there are several indirect factors.

The two common major direct factors were excessive workload and material resource constraints. The third major direct factor in respect of the academic and the technical

categories was the mismatch of the skills and jobs. While the third major direct factor in respect of the management category was lack of colleagues' support.

Other indirect factors were the lack of a system for setting training objectives and goal setting prior to training; and the lack of monitoring and evaluation after training. The root cause of the second indirect factor i.e. lack of evaluation is the first major indirect factor failing to set training objectives. This is because monitoring and evaluation cannot occur without baseline information on pre-determined training objectives.

While both the direct factors and indirect factors were derived from the responses to the survey questionnaires and interviews, some indirect factors are the researcher's interpretation. The researcher's interpretation is based on the perception of trainees and their supervisors of the need for policy improvement, and the literature. For example, the indirect factor- lack of requirement- support the perception of trainees and supervisors of the need for policy improvement. The indirect factor - lack of clear training objectives – is derived from the literature emphasising importance of setting training objectives (Brinkerhoff, 2001). Without pre-determined training objectives there is no baseline for the subsequent monitoring and evaluation of the training.

The fact of trainees' discussion of training objectives with their supervisors revealed direct relationship with their level of ability to cope with the training and the extent of transfer (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2: Relationship of the discussion of training objectives with the level of ability to cope with training and the extent of full transfer

Trainee categories	Discussion of training objectives	Ability to cope with training	Extent of full transfer of learning
Technical	85%	95 %	66%
Academic	50%	83%	50%
Management	42%	84%	44%

Academic category

Generally, the academic trainees were motivated to learn and transfer the learning acquired in the training to their workplaces. As mentioned in the above sections, several factors determined their motivational level. For example, 50% of the trainees were clear about their training objectives and almost all of them foresaw job utility and career utility of the training positively. This pre-training motivational level of the trainees was sustained by their further positive attitude towards the training. The trainees appreciated the relevance and the quality of the training after they actually participated in the training. Their positive attitude towards the training predicted the transfer of learning to workplaces. Subsequently, 50% of the trainees reported transferring their learning fully, and 47% reported transferring partly. Only 3% reported not applying learning at all. Trainees who underwent long-term training transferred more than the trainees who underwent short training programs. Trainees who could apply only a part of their learning were those who went for short training. The trainees who could not make use of their training at all were those who were moved to new positions where they could not utilise any of their learning.

The trainees provided different reasons for their inability to apply their newly acquired knowledge and skills fully. For example, a significant number of academic trainees trained in the field of multi-grade teaching skills happened to be head teachers. They complained of the shortage of time to apply their learning due to their routine administrative and management work. Even those who were in the positions to implement what they acquired in the training were constrained by the shortage of requisite materials. Making the situation worse, several trained teachers (20%) reportedly were transferred to new positions where the application of the trained skills and knowledge was totally impracticable. This situation signifies the lack of contingency planning and commitment as well as lack of proper monitoring and evaluation system whereby the skills and the knowledge could be appropriately transferred. It also implies the lack of post-training support by the organisation to facilitate transfer of learning. The circumstance of job transfer as mentioned above can cause the value of the training investment to “be eroded”, and further increase training expenditure (Schaffner, 2001).

Researchers (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Cheng & Ho, 2001; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993) claim that support of supervisors and colleagues of trainees is one of the most important aspects of organisational support for transfer. However, the nature of support of supervisors and colleagues was not a concern at all to the academic trainees. The trainees indicated that given the opportunity to work in the same position they had absolute control over the extent of application of their knowledge and skills acquired in training, besides other factors. Thus, not a single trainee experienced resistance from their supervisors and colleagues to the application of the new learning.

Management category

The trainees were able to make use of the learning acquired in the training to some extent. Forty-four percent reported transferring their learning fully and the rest reported partial transfer of learning. As mentioned above, several direct and indirect factors affected the process of transfer. Direct factors reported were excessive workload (56%), lack of requisite materials (53%) and lack of colleagues' support (16%). The fourth direct factor was reported to be change of jobs after training (14%). On the other hand, the indirect factors are derived from the analysis of the training process and include: the lack of formal system for setting of training objectives and agreeing between supervisors and trainees and, the lack of a system for monitoring and evaluating performance after training.

On the whole, the management staff did not have clear understanding of their training objectives. The lack of training objectives restrained the focus of the training. The trainees, therefore, lacked 'direction', which, according to Brinkerhoff (2001), consists of discussion of performance expectations, goals and objectives. Several studies also have investigated the motivating effects of goal setting as post-training intervention to enhance transfer, and have reported positive findings (Richman-Hirsh, 2001). However, such post-training goals will have to be linked to the discussions and objectives set prior to training.

The interview data of the majority of trainees suggested the need for proper needs assessment, including the involvement of trainees. Less than half the trainees attributed the poor rate of transfer of training to the lack of post-training monitoring and evaluation. The lack of the system for monitoring and evaluating post-training performance did not motivate trainees to

try applying their new knowledge. Furthermore, there was no competition among the trainees to produce any outputs of the training in the workplace.

About 4% of the trainees lacked the support of their supervisors. The effectiveness of the support of the immediate supervisor was subject to the level of the support supervisors above him/her in the hierarchy of bureaucratic organisation such as like the Ministry of Education. The extent of support of field supervisors to their newly trained staff, in this particular instance, depends on the support from the headquarters. The support from the higher authorities is essential, especially if the need for support pertains to policies, material and financial resources. Further, the direct involvement of headquarters in deciding school head teachers' training limited the participation of field supervisors e.g. district education officers. The role of the ministry headquarters in deciding training did not continue with the process of monitoring and evaluation, which is crucial for training effectiveness. This practice of excluding field supervisors from the participation in their subordinates' training selection tended to lead to a lack of motivation to participate in post-training performance monitoring and evaluation. The district education officers were not able to rightly estimate the performance of their trained subordinates for monitoring and evaluation purpose, as they lacked the knowledge of the training objectives (Kim, 2004). As such, the ownership of the accountability for trainees' learning and application was apparently ambiguous.

The extent of support of colleagues was a concern to the management category trainees. Over 16% of the trainees reported the lack of colleagues' support as the main cause of their inability to transfer their learning. The management trainees have more stakeholders for successful application of their learning than the academic category trainees. Change in an

administration and management style of the respective schools depends on the cooperation and support of school department heads, teachers, general support staff and students' parents.

Besides the above factors, organisational structure, general literacy and economic factors also contributed to the trainees' inability to transfer their learning fully. For example, the trainees reported that the modern management theories were not fully practicable, where the bureaucratic organisations, like the Ministry of Education, followed top-down approach. The trainees' efforts to initiate and implement plans and programs were usually impeded by financial limitation and poor literacy of most students' parents.

Technical category

The technical category reported the highest in terms of both degree of involvement in decision-making and objective setting process, and also the extent of full transfer. Furthermore, like the other two categories of trainees more than 98% had positive views on the training utility.

The extent of their involvement in the process of training decision-making and objectives setting (85%) is related to the degree of full usage of their learning (66%). The setting of training objectives had several subsequent advantages. For example, in a situation where training objectives were determined prior to training, the trainees applied their learning acquired from the training, and shared the learning at the workplaces. This success of trainees in transferring and sharing their knowledge and skills acquired from training at the workplaces enhanced their working relationship with their supervisors and colleagues. The study conducted by ADB (1997) revealed similar findings.

Interview data from those trainees whose training objectives were not predetermined resulted in several negative consequences. For instance, supervisors who were unaware of training objectives of their subordinates tended to bear high and unrealistic expectation from the trainees. Consequently, the failure of trainees to meet such unfounded expectation of their supervisors led to poor work-relationship between trainees and their supervisors.

The training of technical category trainees was mostly short-term skills-specific and conducted in groups, thereby facilitating building of 'critical mass'. Transfer of learning of such short-term and skills-specific also occurs faster than that of long-term and general training (Garavaglia, 1995). Further, the application of new learning was not problematic as most colleagues equally valued the learning and in most cases implemented the learning jointly. The study of Gaudine and Saks, 2004, where the group of nurses equally applied the trained skills, which they acquired in a common training, supports this finding. The nurses in Gaudine and Saks' study constituted a 'critical mass' of trainees with common attitude towards a particular skill, which could be transferred jointly without resistance from the majority of the colleagues.

Supervisors' collective perception of the application of learning by trainees

Perceptions of the supervisors were collected to either confirm or refute the self-reported data of the trainees on the extent of learning transfer. The supervisors had different perceptions to those of trainees of the extent of transfer of learning by the trainees. Twenty-five percent of supervisors felt that trainees were able to transfer their learning fully. On the other hand, over 53% of trainees in all categories reported that they were able to transfer their learning fully.

The mismatch of the perceptions of the trainees and their supervisors can be attributed to the fact of lack of laid down training objectives between the supervisors and trainees. The supervisors had very high expectations of the trainees though the expectations lacked specificity. On the other hand, the trainees regarded the fact of application of any parts of their learning acquired during the training as an application. Without some agreement among stakeholders about the expected outcomes of training, desired performance results are likely to be estimated inappropriately (Kim, 2004:122).

Some interview participants reported that the absence of such agreement could lead to supervisors' development of unrealistic expectation about the trainees' performance. Non-fulfilment of this expectation can estrange work-relationship between supervisor and trainees. Secondly, the size of supervisors' sample (N=12) is small compared to trainees' sample size (N=97). One supervisor's negative perception can largely affect the supervisors' overall perception.

Summary

Survey data of all categories of trainees revealed similar factors that affected their ability to apply learning to their jobs. The major factors preventing or hindering application of the trainees' learning were the lack of time, inadequate supply of requisite materials in the work place, and change of jobs after the training. A few trainees stated the 'time-lapse' after the training as the reason for non-transference. According to Russ-Eft, (2002, cited in Cromwell & Kolb, 2004), time influenced by individual's workload either contributes to or hinders transfer.

It may be argued that the first major factor— lack of time —casts doubt on the explanation about the genuineness of the training needs. It indicates that the knowledge and the skills acquired from the training are not crucial to the trainees to carry out their incumbent responsibilities. Had the training been highly essential to the job, the trainees would have been more serious about applying the skills and knowledge acquired in the training. Furthermore, the respective supervisors would have required the application of the learning by the trainees to ensure the work effectiveness and efficiency.

Maintenance of the learning in workplace can be ensured through an emphasis on ‘multiplier-effect’. Learning can be multiplied through sharing of it with work-mates either formally or informally (ADB, 1997; ODA, 1992). Sharing of learning with work colleagues also enhances good working relationship (ADB, 1997). According to Bras, Tichey and Dansky (cited in Cromwell & Kolb, 2004), the process of exchange of information after training can also help trainees utilise peer networks. More than 85% of trainees under all categories reported to have shared the learning in one form or another. Supervisors also perceived that more than 75% of trainees shared their learning in the workplaces. However, there was no standard requirement of trainees to share their learning to multiply the benefit of the training in the organisation. The most common modes of sharing the learning were informal interaction and helping on-the job.

Trainees also generally felt they were not required to demonstrate the knowledge and skills acquired from the training in their workplaces. Nor, did there exist a system whereby trainees were rewarded for their application of knowledge and skills resulting in better outputs. Thus, the negative attitude towards the performance appraisal system affected the motivation of trainees to learn and transfer. This finding is in line with the findings of Mathieu et al., 1992.

Part D: Collective perceptions of trainees and supervisors of policy improvement.

Exploring perceptions of trainees and their supervisors of certain adoptable policies related to out-country training aided understanding of transfer of learning. The policies asked about were basically geared towards ensuring transfer and sharing of learning in the workplaces. This section of the study attempted to discover if there was a lack of standard system for maximising the benefits of out-country training programs.

More than 86% of trainees under all categories rated the policies useful and extremely useful. The range of policies included involvement of trainees in training decision-making process, learning accountability, reporting learning, formal sharing and implementation of projects arising out of training. The findings indicate the practicality of the policies, if adopted in the future. Similarly, the majority of the supervisors supported the trainees' perceptions of the adoptable policies. Supervisors recommended common standard HRD processes, so that all departments and divisions can follow a consistent strategy. Almost all supervisors indicated their unwillingness to initiate new and separate HRD practices. One supervisor explicitly expressed that he was not enthusiastic in introducing and following separate HRD procedures, which other departments and divisions did not follow. Both trainees and supervisors, therefore, indicated a strong sense of alacrity to comply with common standard ministerial policies. They were more confident that proper training needs identification followed by rational deployment and consistent performance monitoring and evaluation would help ensure transfer of learning.

While appreciating the effectiveness of out-country training programs, the supervisors made several comments and suggestions for their improvement. Selection criteria, monitoring and

evaluation and right placement were reported to be the areas of their major concerns. Generally, the supervisors perceived the trainee selection criteria followed by all departments and divisions to be different and unclear. The supervisors suggested standardisation of common transparent selection criteria. In addition, they felt the need for a system of monitoring and evaluation of trainees' performance both during training and after training. The third major concern implied the need for strengthening collaboration between the HRD unit and the personnel section, to ensure placement of trainees in right positions.

Over all, the factors reported to be affecting transfer of learning in this study fall within the theoretical framework of Baldwin & Ford (1988). However, a robust HRD standard system seems to play a major role in ensuring transfer of learning in case of the Ministry of Education. For instance, the lack of policy emphasising setting training objectives by all divisions/sections resulted in chain effects in subsequent stages of training process. The lack of clearly laid down training objectives prevented focus of trainees' learning (Knowles, 1998). The absence of pre-determined training objectives agreed formally between trainees and their supervisors prevented both trainees and their supervisors from monitoring and evaluation of learning and its application (Kim, 2004). Eventually, the lack of clarity of training objectives did not hold trainees accountable for applying their learning to their work. Perception of both trainees and their supervisors of the need for HRD policy improvement reported earlier support the importance of a robust HRD system for the transfer of learning to occur.

Therefore, in addition to the pre-conditions in the model of Baldwin and Ford (1988), there is a need for a standard HRD system, and consistent commitment of employers (supervisors) and trainees towards the implementation of the HRD system.

Conclusion

Not all the trainees were involved in the process of training decision making nor did all discuss training objectives with their supervisors. Discussion of broad training objectives occurred to some extent either formally or informally. The respective divisions/sections and the Ministry of Education headquarters determined the training needs of the prospective trainees, based on the perceived or immediate organisational needs. Nevertheless, in spite of the non-involvement of the trainees in the training decision-making process, almost all the trainees foresaw job utility and career utility of the training positively. During or after the training, however, other factors affected these initial perceptions. Several factors, for example, training content and contextual differences for applicability, contributed to the change in the trainees' initial unrealistic perception of their training.

Various direct factors affected the transfer process. The major factors reported to be directly preventing or hindering application of the trainees' learning were the lack of time due to excessive workload, an inadequate supply of requisite materials in the work place, and change of jobs after the training. Other indirect factors also resulted in the trainees' inability to transfer their learning. For example, the fact of an inadequate clear understanding of training objectives and goals set prior to training resulted in poor direction of the trainees for learning and transfer. In addition, the transfer process lacked the system for post-training monitoring and evaluation of trainees' performance.

There are several reasons for the lack of post-training performance monitoring and evaluation system. Firstly, there is no requirement of any comprehensive system for monitoring and evaluation after the training. Data from both trainees and their supervisors indicate that,

overall, the departments/divisions/sections or individuals are less proactive in terms of ensuring training transfer. They strictly abide by the system instituted by the Ministry of Education head office. Secondly, generally, there is the lack of a system for formal setting of training objectives in detail between supervisors and trainees. Even if training objectives were discussed, they were usually broad and verbal. Such broad and verbal training objectives neither enabled the trainees to focus their studies on, nor did they hold the trainees accountable for ensuring transfer of learning. Under the circumstances of lack of any explicit training objectives, supervisors also did not bear the responsibility of assessing the training outcomes after the training.

The recommendations for ensuring transfer of learning by the Ministry of Education are presented in the subsequent Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

Introduction

The focus of transfer of learning research has been evolving. Transfer researchers have pursued different streams of research (Holton et al., 2003). Their initial attention started with studying the effects of training motivation on transfer process. Gradually, the major focus shifted to studying work environmental variables. Now, the recent work has focussed on developing instruments to measure transfer and its antecedent factors in work places. Considerable progress has therefore been made in understanding factors affecting transfer. However, despite the wide range of areas covered so far, the literature on ‘training transfer’ is not comprehensive.

Similarly, there is a paucity of literature on out-country training evaluation. Even the limited literature available mainly consists of general donor supported program impact evaluations or country-specific training impact studies, which were conducted for the donors’ internal purposes. The findings of these studies also have shown gaps in training and transfer of learning. The major significant factors that affected the process of transfer of learning are the lack of proper needs analysis, lack of organisational support before and after the training and return absorption of trainees into appropriate positions. Though limited, the out-country training literature provides insight to ‘learning transfer’. The literature review for this thesis is, therefore, drawn from across the training and transfer literature.

This chapter is divided into only two sections. The first section deals with the general conclusion and suggestions for future research. The second section contains specific recommendations for the Ministry of Education in Bhutan.

Key findings from literature

In the field of general training transfer, researchers have identified a wide range of factors said to be either hindering or facilitating transfer process. These factors range from psychological aspects to socio-political factors. The transfer of learning process is also said to differ between the types of organisations, types of training and duration of training (Holton et al., 2003, Gaudine & Saks, 2004). Most studies do not make such distinctions. They are mostly based on general short-term and skills-specific training.

In spite of the diversity of factors influencing the transfer process, the factors have not been studied altogether (Belling et al., 2003). Generally, the transfer studies have focused on a specific variable or a few selective variables to determine their effect on the transfer system. In addition, in most cases the conclusions have varied depending on the situations and research designs. The trend of following such research designs makes the task of distinguishing the degree of effect of all possible factors from each other on the transfer process difficult. Besides, all factors affecting the transfer process can neither be fully avoided nor controlled. While some factors can be influenced by the organisation, some may be outside the control of the organisation. As such, interventions will have to be made to suit any specific situation (Salas & Cannon, 2001). Therefore, for any action-oriented transfer of learning research, like this thesis project, studying the degree of effects of all possible factors is essential. Appropriate interventions or continuing research can then, focus on the major factors affecting the transfer process.

Numerous factors have limited the understanding of the transfer of learning literature. Several studies and meta-study reviews have been carried out in the field of training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988 and Cheng & Ho, 2001). They discovered that several factors have resulted in inconsistency amongst the findings. For example, Baldwin and Ford concluded that the research samples, tasks and designs criteria lacked clarity. Cheng & Ho also emphasised improvement of research methodologies. Some of their expected causes of the inconsistent findings were different samples, different kinds of training, different model design and broad dimension of variables. The broad dimension of the variables, especially work environment, has been one of the major concerns. Different writers include different dimensions in the organisational factors that affect training transfer. Besides the above general limitations, the appropriateness of the time to measure training transfer is also not clear. Time-scales for measurement of training transfer are said to be different for training of short-term and long-term objectives.

Notwithstanding the several factors that affect the transfer process and the variety of transfer models to assess them, the transfer process can be classified into certain distinct stages. In a similar manner, Cheng & Ho (2001) classified training process into four stages in their meta-study review: pre-training; learning; training performance and transfer outcomes. For the purpose of this thesis, the training transfer process has been classified into three main stages. They are: 'pre-training'; 'training' and 'post-training'. Perspectives of trainees and their supervisors on each of these stages have been gathered as a method of data triangulation to balance data collected from trainees. Baldwin & Ford's (1988) conceptual theoretical framework of transfer has been adapted to help answer the research questions. The main reason for modification is practicality. Trainee personality and ability variables have been

excluded because they cannot be influenced by organisations (Noe, 2000). Their theory is based on the concept that the impact of training on the ‘transfer of learning’ is governed by various pre-conditions such as, trainee characteristics, training design and implementation, and characteristics of the work environment. As the model indicates, training-input factors (pre-conditions) and training outcomes have both direct and indirect effects on the transfer. Trainee characteristics and work environment have both direct and indirect effects on learning transfer, while the training design and implementation have an indirect effect only on learning transfer. The adaptation of the above model is also based on the assumption of a cause-and-effect chain as in Kirkpatrick’s (1958) four-level and Hamblin’s (1974) five-level training evaluation models. For the purpose of this study, based on the literature, only certain practicable factors have been selected to be assessed in each of the three stages of training transfer. For example, the first stage—pre-training—consists of only trainee motivational aspects, and does not include personality characteristics. The second stage—training—consists of the actual training design and delivery aspects. The final stage—post training—consists of organisational support, especially in terms of supervisors, colleagues, and material resources. The following is a summary of the pertinent findings and their implication for general researchers and the Ministry of Education in Bhutan.

Key findings from the study

Consistent with the existing literature, the extent of transfer of training by the Ministry of Education in Bhutan personnel varied across the types of training. The factors affecting the transfer process were explored along with the training process, which was split into three main stages as described above. The conclusion is also presented in this order.

Different trainees reported different pre-training experiences. The training processes certainly lacked a standard system for setting of training objectives and goals between supervisors and trainees. In a few cases, trainees were interested in pursuing training programs other than what the organisations mandated. In view of the nature of job responsibilities of the trainees, their personal interests could not be recognised. This situation did not make any significant impact, because the training selected for the trainees was at least relevant to trainees' current jobs. This particular assumption can be substantiated by the fact that almost all trainees viewed job utility and career utility of their training positively.

The interview data revealed that trainees' agreement to the statement on discussion of training objectives indicated a basic level of understanding of their training objectives. Therefore, the extent of trainees' understanding of the training objectives, which were developed informally differed significantly. The highest number of trainees reported to have understood the objectives were from the technical category (85%), followed by the academic category (50%) and the management category (42%). Despite the difference in the understanding of training objectives, all trainees similarly foresaw job utility and career utility positively. Trainees' positive foreseen job utility, career utility and ability to transfer indicates that the training programs selected for them were relevant to their current jobs.

Generally, the trainees' attitude towards their training was positive, indicating an overall good quality of training. Not one trainee under any category reported total irrelevance of the training signifying the prudence of selection of training institutes and universities by the HRD unit and the respective departments/divisions. Except for a few trainees under the academic and management categories, trainees generally coped well with the training programs. One of the major impediments the trainees experienced was operating computers thereby hindering

their initial learning performance. One academic trainee also highlighted the importance of work experience prior to undergoing training. On the whole, the reports on training imply right selection of the training candidates in terms of their ability to be trained.

Seyler et al. (1998) suggest trainees' attitudes towards training change once they experience training. Similarly, the trainees in this study changed their attitude towards their training after they participated in the training. Trainees were able to assess their perception of transferability better, based on the training content and contextual differences for applicability. Some trainees discovered the contextual differences, which developed their negative attitude towards the training, subsequently reduced their motivational level to transfer. Consequently, this change in attitude towards the training, particularly affected the trainees' initial perceptions of their confidence to transfer learning. The confidence level of the ability to transfer learning to their jobs reduced over the training period (see Table 5.1).

The academic category trainees experienced the most reduced level (13%) of confidence to transfer after their learning. The trainees' initial perceptions of training transferability were created by their unrealistic expectations and assumptions. Existing transfer studies (e.g. Mathieu et al., 1992) support the above findings.

The technical category of trainees reported the highest rate of full transfer, followed by the trainees in the academic and the management categories. Several direct factors reportedly affected the transfer process and the evaluation of the transfer process also indicated that there were also several indirect factors. The two common major direct factors were excessive work load and material resource constraints. While the third major direct factor in respect of the academic and the technical categories was the mismatch of the skills and jobs, the third major

direct factor in respect of the management category was lack of colleagues' support. Other indirect factors were; firstly, the lack of a system for setting training objectives and goal setting prior to training and secondly, the lack of monitoring and evaluation after training.

The first major direct factor preventing transfer of learning, excessive workload, substantiates the need for integrating the 'work load' aspect in the process of training needs assessment. While the nature of trainees' tasks could help justify the training needs, assessing the prospective trainees' current workload could be problematic. The literature suggests that trainees' amount of workload affects their opportunity to practice learning thereby preventing ultimate transfer. However, to my knowledge, a tool to assess the implication of trainees' current workload on the subsequent transfer of training does not exist.

The second major factor preventing transfer of learning, inadequate requisite materials, may probably be not an issue in the context of developed countries. Even in Brinkerhoff and Apking's model of Performance System Elements (2001) 'resource constraint' has been regarded as a 'givens' and even if not, they are said to be easy to address. In contrast, it is one of the daunting challenges in the context of developing countries. For example, provision of training and provision of requisite materials cannot take place concurrently. Training may be provided in anticipation of supply of adequate requisite materials, which in reality may never occur. Therefore, it is an issue to decide when to impart useful training programs under foreseen material resources constraints.

The third major direct factor reducing transfer of learning, mismatch of skills, apparently signifies lapses in human resource management systems. The cause of such an irrational deployment practice inevitably will occur sometimes. With effort and sacrifice, this factor could perhaps be the most simple to either improve or fix. The system for building a common

understanding of training objectives among all stakeholders would help prevent this lapse. Greater emphasis could be laid on strengthening of coordination with the human resource management department, who is responsible for deployment. As Sofo (1999) asserted, HRD needs to collaborate with other HR areas in a mutually supportive relationship to achieve desired outcomes for both individuals and organisations.

There are two major reasons for the lack of a system of monitoring and evaluation after the completion of training. They are the lack of formal setting of training objectives and the exclusion of appropriate supervisors of trainees from the process of training selection and setting of training objectives. Firstly, the lack of the formal system for pre-determining training objectives and agreeing between trainees and their supervisors prevents the concerned supervisors from developing realistic expectation from the trainees after the training. Similarly, under such circumstances, trainees are also not held accountable for learning and application of the learning to their workplaces. Secondly, the exclusion of field supervisors from the process of training selection and objective setting has several implications. Field supervisors, who are usually not involved in their subordinates' training selection and objectives setting processes would not be motivated to initiate and conduct monitoring and evaluation activities, after the training.

The necessity and the effect of support of supervisors and colleagues also differed between the trainees of the academic and the management categories. For example, for the academic category of trainees, generally, support of colleagues and supervisors was not a concern. Their success for transfer of learning acquired in the training depended on their own effort. The support of colleagues was more crucial to the trainees of the management category. This is

because management trainees usually have more internal stakeholders (e.g. colleagues) and external stakeholders (e.g. students' parents) determining their success of training transfer.

The technical category trainees, on the other hand, were not concerned about the support from their supervisors and colleagues. This is because the supervisors were clear about the training objectives. Such training programs were conducted in groups thereby building 'critical masses'. All colleagues who underwent the same training shared the same objectives and valued the training equally. These findings are in line with the findings of Holton et al., (2003). As such, the extent of organisational support, especially in terms of supervisors and colleagues' support, has different impact on the transfer process.

The interview data indicated that there is a severe lack of 'requirement' from the organisation for trainees to ensure learning and application of the learning in their workplaces. The majority of the trainees and their supervisors strongly felt the importance of 'requiring' trainees to ensure transfer of learning through improvement of ministry training policies. Section 'D' in chapter 5 presents the perceptions of both the trainees and their supervisors of policy improvement. The policies were recommended to be ministerial policies, and enforced consistently.

One supervisor expressed his lack of enthusiasm to initiate separate HRD policies, which the ministerial policies did not include. These common perceptions of the trainees and their supervisors suggest that the effectiveness of HRD systems would be enhanced if the ministry required trainees to ensure training transfer, rather than relying more on trust and faith. Along with the system of requiring trainees to transfer learning, however, the ministry or the concerned organisations need to be able to guarantee necessary support during execution.

Over 90% of trainees reported to have shared their learning in their respective organisations either formally or informally. Trainees shared their learning mostly through informal conversation and on-the-job assistance. The mode of formal sharing of learning comprised submission of normal training reports and facilitating some in-country training programs. Therefore, the system for the sharing of learning through formal mechanism initiated by the respective organisations was practically non-existent. Over 80% of trainees perceived the usefulness of formalising the sharing of learning at their respective workplaces.

Recommendation to the Ministry of Education, Bhutan

This section is devoted mainly to the recommendations culminated from the findings of this study for the Ministry of Education, Bhutan. It is preceded by brief summaries of the objectives, the findings and the implications of the study.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the effectiveness of various out-country training programs, in terms of learning transfer. The study was geared towards recommending ways to enhance the transfer of learning to ensure realisation of the ministry HRD objectives. In order to do this, the whole process of training was reviewed based on self-reported data from the trainees and their supervisors as well as selected interviews.

My position, as Ministerial insider and an out-country training participant, enables me to provide practicable recommendations for interventions by the Ministry of Education as a whole. The recommendations do not signify any absolute disapproval of the current Ministry of Education HRD system.

The recommendations are presented in order of the training process stages: pre-training, training and post-training. Wherever applicable, the recommendations are directed to specific agencies.

Pre-training

As outlined in the above general conclusion section, the findings revealed that almost all the trainees felt the relevance of the training programs, and their utility was also foreseen positively. The perceptions of all the interviewed supervisors corroborated this finding. Fifty-percent of the academic trainees, 42% of the management trainees and 85% of the technical trainees reported to have discussed their training objectives with their supervisors. Trainings was provided with the hope, trust that it will eventually somehow enhance trainees' capability, and benefit the organisation. Hardly any training objectives were laid down and agreed upon between trainees and their supervisors. The lack of documentation of training objectives resulted in poor focus and motivation of the trainees to learn and transfer. Nor did the supervisors have a clear idea as to what to expect of the trainees after their return. There is a need for stronger emphasis on setting of training objectives in writing, and agreeing between/among trainees and all their supervisors.

In doing so, the concept of hierarchy of supervisors needs to be discussed and understood in the context of a bureaucratic organisation like the Ministry of Education. Employees under such an organisation normally have several supervisors to whom they report either directly or indirectly. All such supervisors should be involved in the process of training decision-making and objectives setting in one way or another, because their attitudes can influence the performances of their subordinates. It is essential to involve all those supervisors and agree upon the aims and objectives of the training. The distance between supervisors and paucity of time may constrain implementation of this recommendation.

In the context of out-country training, the process of setting training objectives is dependent on a couple of factors. Firstly, trainees' supervisors will have to be appropriately identified to be involved in the process of setting training objectives. Secondly, training content will have to be made readily available to both trainees and their supervisors in advance. The responsibility for this particular task lies with either the HRD unit or the concerned department/divisions, depending on who arranges the training.

The success of HRD is also dependent on other stakeholders. For instance, efforts to train and develop human resources should be complemented by effective and efficient human resource management practice (Sofa, 1999). The meeting of training objectives would be far from possible if the personnel management department is unaware of the skills and knowledge that the employees had lately acquired. A mechanism needs to be developed whereby the personnel section of the Ministry of Education is updated on the employees' curriculum vitae. The involvement of the personnel section in the process of setting training objectives would facilitate rational deployment through regular personnel information updates.

Training

No major concern was discovered under this section. A few trainees experienced difficulty-operating computers thereby hindering their initial learning performance. The HRD unit needs to consider several recommendations. Progress of trainees on long-term training needs to be closely monitored, and support of the ministry will have to be guaranteed. A system for monitoring of trainees while on training can enhance the sense of accountability of trainees to achieve right learning and transfer it to their jobs. Support implies timely resource allocation & execution as well as providing any other necessary administrative and logistical support.

Post-training

As seen in the foregoing section, the extent of the transfer of learning was influenced by several direct and indirect factors. Direct factors refer to organisational barriers and mainly consisted of lack of time, inadequate materials supplies, change of jobs, and lack of colleagues' support. On the other hand, the indirect factors included the lack of documented training objectives and post-training follow-up actions. Post-training follow-up actions refer to monitoring and evaluation of trainee performance after the training. The root cause of both direct and indirect factors consists of faults in the HRD system, for which several offices of the ministry are accountable. Among such offices, HRD unit, personnel section, and field supervisors are considered the main agents, which could help redress the HRD system lapses. Above all, consistent administrative support by top management is crucial to the success of these agencies in streamlining and strengthening the HRD system.

The benefits of developing and agreeing upon training objectives should feature after the training at workplaces. The first and the foremost condition for transfer of learning to occur is right placement after the training. Consequently, it is only then that supervisors can base their monitoring and evaluation of their trainee subordinates' performance on the pre-determined objectives.

Prior to participating in training, trainees could be provided with ideas about what they are expected to do after their training. It is hoped that trainees could accordingly orient their studies. Any out-country training is a full-time program whereby trainees could be motivated to diversify their areas of studies at their own initiatives. This is more applicable to trainees undergoing long-term training.

On the whole, the out-country training programs were implemented without a standard process specifically geared towards ensuring transfer of learning. Both trainees and their supervisors lacked clearly laid down objectives thereby preventing them from taking initiatives of post-training monitoring and evaluation activities. In spite of these deleterious factors, the training programs can be said to be effective. There is a great potential to further enhance the effectiveness with the incorporation of the above recommendations. The recommendations are the culmination of both the analysis of the data collected during this research and the suggestions made by the trainees and the supervisors.

The findings of the study indicated the need for the Ministry of Education to standardise the out-country training system. In the absence of a clearly laid down procedure for out-country training activities, the effectiveness of such training programs cannot be ascertained. The proposed out-country training model can be a standard guiding tool to ensure transfer of learning.

Based on the HRD model of Brinkerhoff (1991) and the transfer design of Garavaglia (1995), an out-country training model has been proposed for the Ministry of Education, Bhutan (see Figure 6.1).

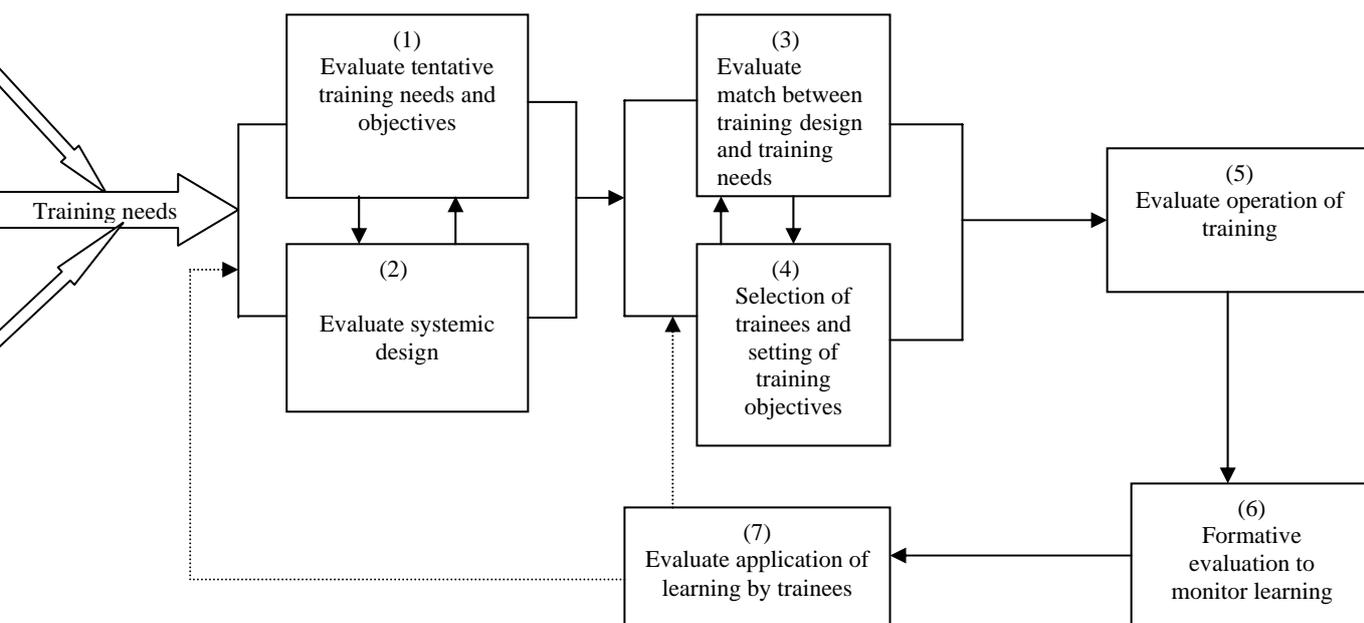


Figure 6.1: An Out-country Training Model

A variety of training needs or training proposals come from different departments. This model assumes that all such training needs have been scrutinised for possibilities of meeting them within the country through either in-house or local training institutes. The model also suggests involvement of key stakeholders in the various activities at different stages of the training process. The following describes the model:

Activities 1 and 2 occur concurrently. Activity 1 focuses on matching the training needs with the overall organisational objectives and goals, and on examining whether the proposed training could address any identified problems. Activity 2, on the other hand, scans for any existing systemic factors that would impede the application of knowledge and skills that would be acquired from the proposed training (Garavaglia, 1995). In other words, through activity 2, the applicability of learning acquired in the training, to the workplace is assessed. Participants from HRD and HRM offices, and trainee's immediate supervisor should be involved in both these activities.

Similarly, activities 3 and 4 occur simultaneously. Activity 3 is dedicated to design of training, and activity 4 is about selection of trainees. Training design, in the context of out-country training, implies both regular training and tailor-made training programs. The major emphasis in activity 3 would be content, relevance and duration of training (Knowles, 1998). Activities 3 and 4 are undertaken parallel to each other in order to facilitate participation of trainees in the process of training design and setting of training objectives. Key participants in this activity should be HRD, HRM, trainees' supervisors and the concerned external training organisation.

Activity 5 follows placement of trainees in out-country training. It mainly confirms the implementation of training as per the design pre-determined and discussed with training organisations. This activity is a part of the monitoring process initiated by the HRD office. Trainees can be the source of information for this activity. Therefore the HRD office and the respective trainees are involved in this activity.

Under activity 6, trainees' learning performance should be monitored and evaluated during training. This evaluation could be based on information provided by both trainers and trainees. Trainers can provide regular general feedback on the progress of trainees, and trainees can directly send their progress reports. The main objective of this activity is to monitor trainees while on training and help them maintain the focus of their studies as discussed prior to training. Key participants in this activity would be trainers, trainees and HRD office.

Activity 7 is evaluation of application of learning after training. This is the most important activity through which we can judge the effectiveness of the actual training (Hamblin, 1974). The realisation of training needs and its objectives could be ascertained at this stage of the training process. The validity of results in activity 1 would mainly determine the magnitude of organisational benefits of the training. Other subsequent activities 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are also important to ensure transfer of learning in order to derive organisational benefits. The results of activity 7 would generate recommendations for necessary improvement in the preceding activities. Key participants in this activity are HRD office, trainees' supervisors and trainees. This standard HRD process is cyclical in nature and is expected to constantly help improve the validity of results in each activity thereby optimising the benefits of out-country training.

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Questionnaire for Trainees**Appendix-1
Code:****“Transfer of Learning from Out-country Training Programs”****Part-A: Pre-training**

1. Please circle the response that best describes the situation before you actually underwent the training.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
I was involved in my training needs decision-making process	1	2	3	4	5
The training objectives were discussed with the supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
I believed that the training would help me improve my performance in my job	1	2	3	4	5
I believed that the training would improve my career prospects and opportunities	1	2	3	4	5
I recognised that I was accountable for learning	1	2	3	4	5
I was confident that I can learn	1	2	3	4	5
I believed that the learning could be applied to my job	1	2	3	4	5
Given the option, I would have opted for a different training	1	2	3	4	5

(i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors

(ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

Please comment on each of the above responses, if necessary.

Part-B: Training

1. Please circle the response that best describes your views about the following aspects of the training. [Please make any comments or suggestions that could have helped make the training better]

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
The content of the training was relevant to my job	1	2	3	4	5
The instructors/educators were competent	1	2	3	4	5
The delivery of the training suited my learning preferences	1	2	3	4	5
The training institute/university provided adequate support for learning	1	2	3	4	5
The duration of the training was appropriate	1	2	3	4	5
I had no difficulty coping with the training standard	1	2	3	4	5
I believed that I could transfer what I have learned to my job	1	2	3	4	5

Comments

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

Part-C: Post-training

1. Please explain the benefits of the training program that you attended. (Benefits can mean both to yourself personally and to your job. It can also mean immediate benefit that you already have noticed or benefits for the future.

Personal benefits:

Job benefits:

Other benefits, if any:

2. Application of learning

- 2.1. Have you been able to apply the learning acquired during the training to your job?

Fully
Partly
No

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

2.2 If no, could you explain what the barriers were to the application of learning acquired during training to your job?

2.3 If fully or partly, please tick the appropriate box against the scale.

- Sometimes
- Often
- Frequently
- Always

Please elaborate on your response above.

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

APPENDICES

3. What are the factors generally preventing the application of your learning acquired in the training to your work place? Please tick the responses that best suit your situation.

- The training was not relevant to my job
- The learning is not applicable because my job changed after I returned from my training
- My supervisor does not support the new learning acquired in the training
- My colleagues do not support new learning
- My superiors do not require me to apply the new learning
- I did not learn anything new in the training
- I cannot recall what I have learned in the training
- I do not have the requisite materials to implement my learning
- I am overloaded with my daily routine work

Please list others, if applicable, and comment.

4. Since you returned from your training, have you shared your learning with others in the organisation?

Yes (If yes, please go to question 5.)

No

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

APPENDICES

5. Please circle the appropriate number in the following scale, or add to the list and circle accordingly.

Medium of sharing learning	Never	Once	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Submitted a report	1	2	3	4	5
Made a presentation to colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
Resourced an in-country training Program	1	2	3	4	5
Informal conversation	1	2	3	4	5
Helped colleagues in the workplace as and when required	1	2	3	4	5
Others (please list)					
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

Part-D: Trainee Perception of Policy Improvement

1. In your opinion how useful are the following possible systems for ensuring learning, sharing and transferring of knowledge and skills that one acquires during training?

Possibilities	Not useful	Somewhat useful	Not sure	Useful	Extremely useful
All trainees be involved in training decision-making process	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees be held accountable for learning	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees report their learning to the Ministry and respective offices	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees share their learning with superiors, colleagues and subordinates formally	1	2	3	4	5
Initiate and implement project of significance arising from knowledge and skills learned	1	2	3	4	5

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
(ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

APPENDICES

2. Are there any other matters related to your training that you wish to bring to my attention? Please comment below.

Thank you for your participation.

- (i) Supervisor means Manager or Superiors
- (ii) Learning means skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired in training

[Letter requesting cover letter from the Ministry of Education]

[Date]

The Head
Administration and Finance Division
Ministry of Education
Thimphu : Bhutan

Re: Cover Letter for Research Project

Dear Sir,

As you are aware, I am undertaking a Master's of Human Resource Development course at the University of Canberra, Australia. I have completed the course units, and need to start my research component soon. A research project is compulsory for any HRD postgraduate students. Transfer of Learning from out-country training programs is, therefore, my research project. The nature of the project requires involvement of some past trainees to answer the questionnaires and attend interviews. In this regard, I would appreciate a letter from your office inviting the candidates to participate during the study project. The survey and interview processes have been scheduled for early August 2004.

All participants will be sent a copy each of the letter from the course supervisor concerning the project (copy attached)

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Tshewang Dorji

Appendix-2 continued



ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
Ministry of Education
Thimphu : Bhutan

Tel. No. 326412/322893
324826/321242/322578
Fax No. 325327
Post Box No. 612

16 August 2004

Dear

Tshewang Dorji of this Ministry is currently studying a Master's of Human Resource Development at the University of Canberra, Australia. As part of the study requirement, he is undertaking a research project on "Transfer of Learning of Out-country Training Programs". The research methods comprise a survey and personal interviews. The project focuses on the training programs undertaken by the Ministry of Education personnel between the period 1999 and 2003.

As a former participant of an out-country training program on.....
.....we would appreciate your completion of this survey questionnaire. Anonymity of your personal identities and responses will be highly maintained. You may refer the enclosed Information Sheet and Consent Form for more information on ethical matters.

Please return your completed questionnaire by:

- 1. Sealing it in the self-addressed and stamped envelope provided**
- 2. Posting it in the mail latest by2004**

With regards

Yours sincerely,

(Tashi Tobgye)

Head, AFD

Appendix-3

Trainee Interview Format

We are grateful that you have participated in the survey. Now, I would like to interview you on similar questions to get in-depth understanding of certain aspects related to your training. Please feel free.

1. How was your training need identified? Are you happy with the training you are provided?

2. While on the training, did you encounter any factors that adversely affected your learning performance? (The factors can include administrative, financial, personal, your academic qualification background, computer literacy, location etc.)

3. Do you think you have achieved what you intended to? How did you find the training?

4. Have you been able to transfer your learning to your job? If not, what are the factors affecting application of it?

5. What do you think could have been done to better ensure transfer of learning?

Appendix-4

Interview Questionnaire for Supervisors

Part A: Pre-training

- 1 Below is a list of some relevant statements to rate between a point scale of 1 to 5, 1 being strongly disagree and 5 strongly agree. Please circle the most appropriate degree to which you agree.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
All the trainees were involved in the training decision-making process	1	2	3	4	5
All the training programs were relevant to the candidates	1	2	3	4	5
The training objectives were discussed with the candidates	1	2	3	4	5
The candidates were held accountable for learning and application	1	2	3	4	5
I believed that the candidates had the potential to learn	1	2	3	4	5

Part- B: Post-training

- 1) Have the candidates been able to apply the learning acquired during the training to their jobs?

Fully

Partly

No

If **partly or no**, what do you think are the barriers to the application of learning acquired during the training to their jobs? Please list them in a rank order.

2. Since the candidates returned from their training, have they shared their learning with others in the organisation?

Yes (If yes, please go to question 4.)

No

3. Please circle the appropriate number in the following scale, or add to the list and circle accordingly.

Medium of sharing learning	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Submitted training reports	1	2	3	4	5
Made presentation to colleagues	1	2	3	4	5
Resourced in-country training Programs	1	2	3	4	5
Helped colleagues in the workplaces as and when required	1	2	3	4	5
Others (please list)	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5
_____	1	2	3	4	5

Part-C: Supervisor perception of Policy Improvement

- In your opinion how useful are the following possible systems for ensuring learning, sharing and transferring of knowledge and skills that one acquires during training?

Possible systems	Not Useful	Somewhat Useful	Not sure	Useful	Extremely Useful
All trainees be involved in training decision-making process.	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees be held accountable for learning.	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees report their learning to the Ministry and respective offices.	1	2	3	4	5
All trainees share their learning with superiors, colleagues and subordinates formally.	1	2	3	4	5
Initiate and implement project of significance arising from knowledge and skills learned.	1	2	3	4	5

- What is your opinion about the present Ministry HR planning and implementation system? Is it effective? If not, please suggest alternative ways for improvement in the future.
- What is your general comment about the Ministry’s out country training system?
- Are there any other matters related to out-country training that you wish to bring to my attention? Please comment below.

Informed Consent**Transfer of Learning from Out-Country Training Programs**

Researcher student: Tshewang Dorji

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA
Division of Communication and Education
School of Education & Community Studies

**Consent to participate in Research Project Interview**

- Title of Project:** Transfer of Learning from Out-Country Training Programs
- Researcher Student:** Tshewang Dorji
 Phone: 61-2 62572683
 Email: t.dorji@student.canberra.edu.au
- Supervisor:** Dr Francesco Sofo
 School of Education and Community Studies
 Phone 02 6201 5123
 Fax 6201 2263
- Ethics Approval:** This research project has been approved by the University of Canberra Committee for Ethics in Human Research.
- Principal Benefits:** The prevailing system for planning and implementing out-country training programs will be reviewed and the outcomes will be assessed through the perspectives of the trainees. The study will recommend improvement in the system based on the findings.
- Research Process:** Interviews will last for about one hour
- Personal risk:** Some participants may feel uncomfortable to talk about the system lapses or lack of their supervisors' support or non-acceptance of new ideas and knowledge. Participation in the research process is voluntary and you may decline to answer any questions or withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Confidentiality:** No individual names will be disclosed in any documentation or report on the research. Your participation will remain anonymous.

Voluntary

Appendix 5 continued

Participation: Your participation in the interview is voluntary. You may decide not to answer any question. You may choose to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Feedback: The researcher student welcomes any feedback or questions you may have about the research process and project or the questions asked by the researcher student.

Your Access: You may request copies of the findings and recommendations resulting from the project and these will be sent to you.

Data Storage: All data will be securely stored at the University of Canberra in locked filing cabinet of Supervisor, Dr Sofo.

Further Enquiries & Complaints: If you have any further questions or complaints following interview, you may contact Tshewang Dorji on the telephone or email addresses shown above. You have the right to have your complaint addressed by the University.

Copy of Consent Form: Please retain a copy of the consent form for your records.

Agreement: I have read and understood the information provided in this consent form. I am unaware of any medical or other condition that would prevent my participation in this research. I agree to participate under the conditions stated above.

[Print you full name]

[Your signature]

____/____/____ [Date]

Co-Signed by Researcher Student: _____



UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA
Division of Communication and Education
School of Education & Community Studies

12 July 2004

Dear

Tshewang Dorji of the Personnel Section, Ministry of Education, is currently studying a Master's of Human Resource Development at the University of Canberra, Australia. As part of the study requirement, the student is going to undertake a research project on the Learning Transfer of out-country training programs availed of by the Ministry of Education personnel during the five year period 1999-2003. The student, in this regard, wishes to meet past trainees and their supervisors.

Study objectives:

- help understand the benefits of the out-country training and education activities;
- detect factors affecting the quality of training and education programs;
- detect elements affecting learning performance;
- assess the effectiveness of the current Ministry HRD planning and implementation system;
- discover any factors affecting utilisation of the learning at workplaces.

Research Process

The methodology for implementation of the research project consists of a combination of questionnaires and interviews. While all participants are being distributed a set of questionnaire each to fill out, interviews will apply to only a few participants. However, your prior consent to participate in an interview, in case you are selected, is essential. You may confirm this consent by signing and returning the enclosed Informed Consent Form.

In the event you agree for an interview, the questions asked will be concerning the above objectives. The interview will last for about one hour.

Your free and frank participation in the study will help assess the effectiveness of the present system for planning and implementing of the Ministry of Education HRD programs. Further, your openly sharing of the practical difficulties impeding transfer of the skills and knowledge, acquired in the training and education, to the workplace will benefit in improving future plans and actions.

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA
Division of Communication and Education
School of Education & Community Studies



Ethical Standards

The student researcher will follow the University of Canberra Research Ethical Standards, whereby the individual rights of the participants will be highly respected. Anonymity of the participants' personal identities and responses will be highly maintained. In addition, the participants, under any circumstances related to the research study, will not be subjected to any unfavourable consequences

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tshewang Dorji at t.dorji@student.canberra.edu.au or contact me by email: Francesco.Sofa@canberra.edu.au

Sincerely,

Dr Francesco Sofo
School of Education and Community Studies
Phone: 61-2-6201-5123
Fax: 61-2-6201-2263