IMPACT OF SOFT SKILLS TRAINING ON A CATERING COMPANY IN VIETNAM

by

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Dedication

Accomplishing the doctorate program at seventy, I dedicate my dissertation work to my family and many friends. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my deceased parents for providing me with a basic educational foundation so that I could go further in my studies despite the difficulties of my family and country. I have a special feeling of gratitude to my wife and children whose words of encouragement and push for tenacity ring in my ears. I also dedicate this dissertation to my many friends and church family who have supported me throughout the process. I will always appreciate all they have done for me throughout the doctorate program. All of them have been my best cheerleaders.

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ABSTRACT

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LIEM LE THANH

2024

Dissertation Mentor: Prof. Dr. Saša Petar, Ph.D

Many employees express difficulty in communicating with their customers, especially in customer service where there are numerous issues and challenges during service and communication. Providing specific training in soft skills is one way to enhance the communication between employees and their customers. We developed and implemented a soft skills training program for employees, consisting of three teaching modules: (1) Basic Communication (BC); and (2) Teamwork Communication (TC).

This study focused on a comprehensive 4-day soft skills training program, including didactic sessions and experiential small group role plays. Employees who participated in the program provided valuable feedback through course evaluations, self-reports, and pre-and post-standardized customer assessments. The results were overwhelmingly positive, with participants reporting substantial increases in self-efficacy in their customer communication abilities across various contexts. Furthermore, there was evidence of significant improvements in empathic skills and the ability to clarify information effectively.

Soft skills training is becoming an increasingly important function of HR. It helps organizations, especially in the service sector, enhance human resource capital and compete efficiently in a rapidly changing business environment. Large investments have been made in soft skill training programs for employees, and it is a challenge for the training department to justify its financial investment. Our work demonstrates that implementation of a soft skills training program at a catering company is feasible and acceptable and has a significant impact on participants' behavior and company benefits using Kirkpatrick’s four levels evaluation model, this paper specifically examines (1) the reactions of the employees to the training programs; (2) the level of employee’s learning; and (3) the employee’s transfer of training. A sample of 46 employees who attended the Mina Better Behavior (MBB) was selected through the stratified sampling method. Training feedback questionnaires, pre-and post-tests, learner development plan reports, and behavioral surveys were used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training course.

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CHAPTER I:

OVERVIEW

1.1 Introduction

Oxford Languages defines soft skills as *"personal attributes that enable someone to interact effectively and harmoniously with other people."* In the workplace, we rely on soft skills for communication and collaboration, building relationships with our colleagues, problem-solving, managing conflict, and much more. Unlike hard skills, soft skills are not job-specific or unique to specific tasks; they are universal and can be transferred across different roles and contexts.

Ultimately, soft skills are what differentiates us from machines. They are a way of thinking and being, and they are said to underpin emotional intelligence — "a type of intelligence that involves the ability to process emotional information and use it in reasoning and other cognitive activities" (as per the APA Dictionary of Psychology). Soft skills have not always been a high priority in hiring and training. However, the world of work is changing, bringing the ever-increasing importance of soft skills to the fore. With the rise of remote work, continuing globalization, and the slow but steady shift toward automation, communication, empathy, problem-solving, and creativity are critical for navigating the modern workplace and running a successful business (Anika, 2023).

In addition, soft skills are personal strengths that help a person collaborate, lead, create, and grow in his role. They are the perspectives, reactions, and mental frameworks he uses that are not exclusive to the job. An employee cannot be successful in a job without soft skills. The most competent IT manager in the world would not be good at their job if they could not communicate processes clearly to their team. The best copywriters on the planet would not get anything done if they could not manage their time and spend three weeks on a low-priority project that could have been done in a day (Steph Knapp, 2023). Soft skills tend to be more personality-focused, as opposed to being based on qualifications, technical skills, or vocational experience. That includes things like people skills, social skills, interpersonal skills, and transferable skills. In contrast, hard skills are technical skills that are often job-specific. They come from certification programs, employee training, and work experience and can be taught, measured, and tested through exams and practical assignments or quizzes. Hard skills relate to an organization's core business, such as writing, computer networking, machine operation, business analysis, design, and construction. Soft skills deal more with interpersonal relationships and involve conflict resolution, communication, listening, and problem-solving (Jamie Birt, 2023).

1.1.1 The importance of soft skills – Improvement- Training

How well a person interacts and treats others is crucial for career success. Trust develops through positive interactions and relationships, and productivity increases in environments where soft skills flourish. Although not customarily acquired through formal training, soft skills can be learned. To improve soft skills, an individual must be open to feedback and willing to change behaviors. Training can provide tips and strategies for developing better practices, such as active listening and empathizing with others. Practicing can strengthen areas where deficiencies exist. Soft skills training is training to help develop or improve interpersonal skills. It consists of lessons to improve communication, increase active listening, resolve conflicts, and more.

1.2.1 Soft skills Training in the workplace

This research will mention Soft skills Training in the workplace. According to Continu Team, soft skills are interpersonal or character traits that determine how a person appears in relationships. These are skills like leadership, creativity, work ethic, and flexibility. These skills are crucial for new team members or job hopefuls who must stand out from other candidates during an interview.

Communication is vital in the workplace because it determines our individual success and sets company productivity standards. Communicating effectively in the workplace makes all the difference. It improves customer service, helps build relationships between coworkers, and may even get you the promotion or job offer you have been hoping for. Employers have begun implementing soft skills training into their companies' learning programs to improve trust and productivity.

1.2.2 The Business Value of Providing Soft Skills Training

Research shows that when you proactively nurture soft skills within your organization, you can benefit from the following:

- Increased revenue
- Enhanced productivity
- Higher employee retention rates
- Better internal mobility
- Improved employee wellbeing and workplace culture

1.2.3 Soft skills training for employees

Training employees in soft skills can bring them out of their shells to make conversation and interaction more effortless and organic, personally and professionally. Sometimes, soft skills training programs may also include effectively handling conflicts and stressful situations. To succeed in business, you must learn to communicate professionally versus personally. You will also learn how your attitude affects others around you. After all, unhappy employees who socialize more with their coworkers than customers or clients because they have trouble separating work from play will affect their productivity (Continu Team, 2022).

Soft skills training is helpful for employers because it improves corporate communication, trust, and company culture, which increases productivity. Bettering workplace relationships positively influences internal operations, thereby contributing to an overall improvement of the business environment. Training also focuses on character-building because research shows that individuals with solid values and strong work ethics are less likely to leave a company for another opportunity, increasing profits in the long run.

There are many different types of soft skills training, ranging from management and leadership skills to communication training:

Management and leadership skills training: Managers have various responsibilities, like overseeing daily operations, making financial decisions, hiring new employees, and evaluating current ones. Knowing how to treat employees and foster a positive work environment is pivotal for a manager or someone who wants to move into management.

- Communication and conflict management training: To do well, teams must communicate efficiently and without problems getting out of hand. Communication and conflict resolution training can boost a team's EQ (emotional intelligence) and contribute to a drama-free workplace.
- Customer service training: Customer service must be one of your top priorities. After all, without customers, your company does not have an income! In addition to good customer service, training teaches you how to resolve conflict. Knowing how to respond to conflict is especially important for teams to address issues without escalating them. Consider using a customer service training manual to outline your approach and serve as foundational knowledge (Jennifer Herrity, 2023).

Communication Skill

Communication in the workplace is important because it boosts employee morale, engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. Communication is also key for better team collaboration and cooperation. Ultimately, effective workplace communication helps drive better results for individuals, teams, and organizations.

To take it a step further, as a manager, building good communication skills has profound short- and long-term benefits for your organization. An effective communicator can motivate their team to get more done with better results and fewer misunderstandings. And who does not want fewer misunderstandings? All of these things can contribute to the company's success — and your success as a leader.

There are 7 common types of communication in the workplace. Not all work communication is made equal. We have all had the experience of sitting through a boring, lengthy meeting with the thought, "This should have been an email." Different communication channels are ideal for different types of communication. Depending on the type of information being conveyed, those different channels can enhance or detract from how it is received. An effective communicator will develop different skills and tools to match the type of communication needed (Allaya, 2022).

Teamwork Skill

Teamwork is when a group works together toward a collective goal efficiently. Read on to learn the 11 top benefits of teamwork in the workplace and examples for each. Teamwork is one of the most important tools for organizational efficiency. Though we can all agree that teamwork is important, not everyone realizes just how impactful it is in the workplace. Teamwork in the workplace is when a group of individuals work together toward a collective goal efficiently. Your business can flourish when multiple people work together toward a common goal. What is teamwork? Teamwork is the process of working collaboratively with a group of people to achieve a specific goal. It involves the combined efforts of individual members who bring their unique knowledge and skills to the table. Effective teamwork in the workplace relies on key components such as active listening and open communication and ensures each person's input contributes towards reaching the team's goals.

Teamwork in the workplace is important because it supports an organization's operational efficiency. Strong team dynamics enable individual members to divide complex projects into manageable tasks, which enhances productivity and enables an organization to function more effectively. Moreover, successful teamwork creates a supportive network that can significantly enhance job satisfaction and employee morale.

When teamwork functions at its best, it encourages generating new ideas, leading to innovative solutions. It also helps individuals complete challenging tasks more effectively. Team leaders play an important role in promoting open communication and ensuring that each member's voice is heard, which can lead to better decision-making and a positive impact on your company’s bottom line (Team Asana, 2024).

1.2 Research Problem

1.2.1 Training Effectiveness

While training evaluation is a systematic process of assessing the outcomes of training programs (King et al., 2001), training effectiveness is a study of characteristics of the individual, training, and organization that affect training processes before, during, and after training (Alvarez et al., 2004). According to Alvarez et al. (2004), training effectiveness focuses on the learning system as a whole, thus providing a macro view of training outcomes, whereas training evaluation focuses only on the learning outcomes, providing a micro view of training results. Many past studies have shown the relationship between training effectiveness and performance. For instance, De Meuse, Hostager, and O'Neill (2007) examined the effectiveness of workplace diversity training on employee performance. The findings revealed that workplace diversity training positively impacted the employees. Haslinda and Mahyuddin (2009) investigated the effectiveness of training and development in the public sector. They found similar results as De Meuse et al. (2007), who suggested that training programs conducted in the public sector helped the employees to contribute significantly to their organization by applying the knowledge and skills learned in the training. Other past studies related to evaluating training effectiveness are Ehrhardt et al. (2011); Ji et al. (2011); Jones et al. (2011); Ng and Dastmalchian (2011); Mani (2010); Sitzmann et al. (2008); Huque and Vyas (2008); Chi et al. (2008); and Kirkpatrick (1998). Based on the empirical evidence found in these studies, the researchers admitted that it is important for each training program to receive positive feedback from the participants about satisfaction. If training programs fail to show a reasonable return on the organization's time and money investment, probably the organizations will discontinue investing more time and money in training. Consequently, future training programs will be at risk. Therefore, training evaluation is essential to ensure the effectiveness of a training program (Rosmah & Arni, 2012).

1.1.2. Training evaluation

Training evaluation is the systematic process of collecting information and using that information to improve training programs. Evaluation provides feedback to help identify if the training achieved the intended outcomes and helps you decide about future training. It is the regular analysis of how efficient and effective training programs are. It involves learner feedback, comparing their job performance before and after the program, accomplishing the company's strategic priorities, and much more.

Many companies implement training to improve their employee productivity and work performance. However, how can you tell that it works? Moreover, how do you know what you should fix in your courses to make them more effective? The best way is to start evaluating training programs. Commonly, new employees have to complete some kind of onboarding training. Most organizations also have employee training programs for existing employees to help them improve and enhance their skill sets. We might offer corporate training to our team, but we should know how much information employees retain. Evaluating training effectiveness gives a clear picture of what information employees know well and identifies areas for improvement.

When we assess a training program, we can determine whether it is producing the outcomes we want to see. Regularly evaluating the training programs helps us identify where the training might be falling short or not engaging learners. Employees will get more from corporate training to improve performance by addressing these areas. Evaluations involve training technology and the people who use it to keep learners and trainers accountable through an assessment builder, so we can easily track employee training. Managers can gain insights into employees' engagement with various training programs, administer surveys, and understand training ROI. Regular evaluations hold everyone accountable for our company's standard of training. Benefits Evaluation of training gives comprehensive feedback on the training programs' value and effectiveness in achieving business goals. It helps the management better understand and identify skill gaps to analyze the desired outcomes of training programs. It also helps the organization to:

- identify issues and improve the overall processes of training programs;
- analyze the effectiveness of training materials and other tools;
- determine the needed leadership competencies to solve critical problems;
- support continuous change in career development; and
- assess the overall training experience of the participants.

In addition, the training evaluation will improve the Employee Retention Rate. Individualized, quality development makes employees feel more rationally and emotionally committed to their jobs. Furthermore, effective training helps employees feel more confident in their work by up-leveling their skill sets. In most cases, employees are more inclined to stay with companies that invest in their learning and development. Improving retention rates means saving the company from high onboarding costs. And better training also means higher ROI. Investing in employee training can increase profit margins, help predict future growth, and even improve stock-market performance. Use regular evaluations to measure training effectiveness, refine the training methods, provide a better experience to learners, and increase ROI as a result (Safety Culture, 2023).

1.3. Purpose of Research

Before developing evaluation systems, the purposes of evaluation must be determined. These will affect the types of data and the data collection methods. The most common reason for evaluating training programs may be to determine the effectiveness of training programs in order to improve future programs. Evaluation can help us learn from the experience of past training programs. For example, we may want to know which parts of the training were successful and which were not or whether the approach to the training should be changed. We can use these lessons learned to improve plans for future training programs.

Torres (2005) has identified the following as the purposes for evaluating training programs planned and implemented:

- To determine whether the objectives of the training were achieved.
- To see how the knowledge and skills learned in the training are implemented.
- To assess the results and impacts of the training programs.
- To assess the effectiveness of the training programs.
- To assess whether the training programs were properly implemented
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the training programs.
- To assess whether the training programs were suitable regarding the training contents, timing, participants, and other aspects.
- To find problems in the training programs and solutions for improvement.

In addition, **accountability issues** may be one of the reasons for evaluating training programs. Evaluation can increase the accountability of implementing agencies to concerned stakeholders. Other reasons for evaluation depend on the objectives, contents, participants, and other factors; each training program might have different evaluation purposes. Therefore, the evaluation design can be adjusted for each training program to meet the specific purposes of the evaluation. Some examples of the reasons for evaluating training programs are shown as follows:

- To determine success or otherwise in accomplishing program objectives.
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses in the human resource development process.
- To compare the costs and benefits of a human resource development program.
- To decide who should participate in future programs.
- To test the clarity and validity of tests, cases, and exercises.
- To identify which participants were the most successful with the program.

- To reinforce the key points made to the participants.

-To gather data to assist in marketing future programs.

- To determine whether the program was appropriate for the specific need.

- To establish a database that can assist management in making decisions (Torres, 2005).

1.4 Significance of the Study

This research will contribute to the specified business the research is conducted on by providing immediate feedback and recommendations. In addition, the industry on the potential benefits that could be gained through this training method and the academic world by publishing the research paper. Finally, this research paper, through its descriptive statistics and inferential statistics, will also provide a solid foundation for further research to build on.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics will be used in this study. Descriptive statistics will describe and explain the participant characteristics and data being gathered. Inferential statistics will make this research relevant to the total population. Descriptive statistics is a valuable tool and strategy for summarizing and describing data (Fisher & Marshall, 2009). As described by Stapor (2020), inferential statistics is taking a sample descriptive statistic and then using that to infer the population.

This study is of the utmost significance since companies invest large amounts of capital into training to increase engagement and performance, as shown in several research and business studies. For example, according to Bretz and Thompsett (1992), as shown in their research, companies in the United States invest $44 billion per year on training initiatives.

However, Aturam (2016) demonstrated that inadequate training could lead to disengagement and attrition, while Ahmed, Phulpoto, Umrani, and Abbas (2015) found that effective training design enhances an employee's willingness to engage in the learning process, which later boosts job performance through the newly enhanced skills.

According to the Gallup study conducted by Harter, Schmidt, and Keyes (2003), disengaged employees miss an average of 3.5% more days per year than engaged employees. This employee disengagement has resulted in lost production, costing the United States economy $292 to $355 billion annually. This potential disengagement can be remedied through employee training, which, as found by Ahmed et al. (2015), enhances initial and post-training engagement, helps significantly reduce employee turnover, improves employee behavior, and increases employee job satisfaction and performance.

Therefore, businesses must look at ways to increase their competitive advantage by increasing employee engagement and improving their performance levels or risk of going out of business. This would affect not only the company that has to close its doors but also the community the business is in, the employees that work there, and ultimately, the economy, which is why this research is highly significant. It will provide essential data that could add a tool that businesses could use to increase employee engagement during cost-effective training courses. In that case, it can assist them in keeping operating costs under control and have better employee engagement, likely resulting in higher performance and a reduced attrition rate.

1.4.1. A Preliminary Study

The article "The Effect of Soft Skills and Training Methodology on Employee Performance" in *the European Journal of Training and Development (Ibrahim et Al,* 2017)) investigates the effect of soft skill acquisition and the training methodology adopted on employee work performance. In this study, the authors study the research trends in training and work performance in organizations that focus on acquiring technical or "hard skills" for employee training and evaluating work performance. This study was conducted to redirect the focus of employee training and development goals to acquiring soft skills, which have a very high and lasting impact on improving employee performance.

Design/methodology/approach: This study adopted a quantitative research approach. Questionnaires were administered to selected managers and executives of a few Malaysian private companies. The questionnaire was specifically designed to examine the competencies of various Malaysian-based company managers, executives, and supervisors who had undergone a soft skills training program for a period of a few weeks or months. These soft skills training programs were not conducted consecutively but rather with a break or "time-space" in between each session. The target population in this study consisted of 810 employees from nine companies. The sample size was 260 trainees who were selected from the population with a 95 percent confidence level within 0.05 risk of sampling error. Findings: Using regression analysis, this study estimated the relationships between employees' acquisition of soft skills, the training methodology adopted by the trainer, and work performance. The results indicate that the two predictors--soft skill acquisition and training methodology--significantly predict employee performance. The authors propose that employers redesign the methodology for training employees in soft skills. Based on the findings, "time-spaced learning" is highly potent in undermining the hindrance associated with training transfer. Practical implications: This study's findings help raise the awareness of employers, human resource managers, professional and industrial experts, and the government to rethink the need to improve soft skills training methodologies. Specifically, this can be achieved by giving the trainees "space" or breaks to practice, apply and internalize what they have learned intermittently during the training program. This will enhance employee performance and, consequently, organizational performance. These findings also inform company managers that the time-spaced learning method enables employees to acquire soft skills more effectively, which will invariably bring about positive behavior changes in employees towards their work and co-workers. Originality/value: The originality of this research is based on the fact that the results are peculiar to Malaysia, whereas most of the works of literature on training methodology, especially the time-space and soft skills, have focused on developed countries. Furthermore, the study emphasized that time-space learning training methodology helps employees transfer knowledge acquired during training to their work. The research also emphasized that soft skill acquisition brings about an increase in employee work performance. This research shows a 14.5 percent increase in employee work performance in the selected companies because their employees acquire soft skills, and a 27.9 percent increase in employee performance is based on time-space training methodology. This makes investigating the effects of soft skills acquisition and the training methodology adopted on employee performance very important for organizational survival (Rosli, 2017).

1.4.2. Training Evaluation in Vietnam

There are many researches on human resources training in enterprises in Vietnam, which mostly focuses on the following aspects:

The training process includes designing, implementing, and evaluating training in enterprises or proposing models for training management and human resources development.

- Factors affecting human resources training in enterprises.
- Analyzing the current situation of human resources training in specific industries or fields such as garment and textile, demining, and Small and Medium Enterprises in Vietnam by *Nguyen Van*

Thuy Anh (2014); Nguyen Trong Canh (2009). Since the study subjects are different, it is quite difficult to compare human resources training in enterprises/organizations.

Some working papers on quality measurement scales often emphasize the use of Kirkpatrick's 4-level scale in training evaluation or university education quality measurement scales. Tran Xuan Kien (2006) of Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration surveyed 260 students and used the SERVQUAL scale, consisting of 5 components: (i) Facilities, (ii) Teacher's Enthusiasm, (iii) Teaching Staff's Qualifications, (iv) Ability to Perform Commitments, and (v) Attention by University; Lai Xuan Thuy and Pham Thi Minh Ly (2011) evaluated training quality in the Faculty of Finance and Accounting, Hue University of Economics from the learners' perspective based on the survey of 331 students and benchmarked to the set of criteria for training quality evaluation of AUN (ASEAN University Network); Nguyen Kim Tho and Tran Thi Kim Loan (2013) performed a study on accrediting MBA training quality measurement scale in Vietnam based on a survey of 307 MBA students in Public and Private Universities in HCMC and neighboring provinces.

One observation that can be made is that the MBA training quality measurement scale includes 5 components: (1) Quality of Program Contents; (2) Quality of Learning Environment; (3) Quality of Teachers; (4) Quality of Utilities/Facilities; and (5) Quality of Output; Nguyen Thanh Long (2012), used the SERVPERF scale for training quality evaluation in An Giang University. In Vietnam, the Ministry of Education & Training (MOET) 2007 issued standards for university training quality evaluation named "Regulation on Standards for Quality Evaluation of University Education."

It can be observed that while attention is paid to the university training quality measurement scale, it is not the case for studies on the human resources training quality evaluation scale at enterprises. Particularly, there is very little research on DCI in Vietnam; if any, they are just a small part of the overall study on Information Technology in Vietnam. There are no specialized books or intensive studies on Vietnam DCI. There has been only one source titled "ICT White Book 2009-2013". The book provides an overview and figures of information technology in 2 years, 2009 and 2013. It only spends 4-5 pages on the DCI overview and figures on its human resources training and demand. Therefore, apart from using the DCI theory provided by Law on Information Technology and Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Information Technology and Communication, the paper mainly focuses on foreign materials.

Changsukim (2010), when studying the characteristics, value, and tendency of digital content, used available selective data in Korea and highlighted one of the biggest impacts on digital content: innovation value, which comes from humans. Thus, creating new things and the endless invention of new things themselves are requirements for digital content professionals. Requirements for learning skills, innovation skills, group working skills, communication skills, and so on, are also part of the study Shubha Jayaram (2013) on the model for DCI employee training in low and middle-income countries. A study on telecommunications in Pakistan by Afshan Sultana and counterparts (2012) based on a survey of 100 employees from different organizations in Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan, showed the implications of training on employee performance in telecommunications. Huey-Min Sun and his counterparts (2010) also made two important conclusions about enterprise employees' innovation skills and ground-breaking skills, which help improve organizational performance in DCI.

There is a wide range of working papers on the impact of training on employee satisfaction, learning performance, working performance, and enterprise performance. However, we cannot find any study accrediting the human resources training quality measurement scale in DCI, especially in Vietnam. (Ngan & Duyen, 2017)

1.5 Research Purpose and Questions

This research aims to build on and contribute to previous knowledge about training, specifically new research on evaluating soft skill training programs for catering business establishments in Vietnam.

Training evaluation gives comprehensive feedback on the training programs' value and effectiveness in achieving business goals. It helps the management better understand and identify skill gaps to analyze the desired outcomes of training programs. It also helps the organization to:

- identify issues and improve the overall processes of training programs;
- analyze the effectiveness of training materials and other tools;
- determine the needed leadership competencies to solve critical problems;
- support continuous change in career development; and
- assess the overall training experience of the participants. (Safety Culture, 2023)

Other words:

- refine and optimize your training programs and ultimately maximize the value that participants receive.
- determine their training expenditures' critical return on investment (ROI).

While most people refer to the four criteria for evaluating learning processes as “levels,” Kirkpatrick never used that term; he normally called them “steps”. In addition, he did not call it a model but used words such as “techniques for conducting the evaluation” (Craig, 1996, p.53). The four steps of evaluation consist of:

Step 1: **Reaction** - How well did the learners like the learning process?

- Step 2: **Learning** - What did they learn? (the extent to which the learners gain knowledge and skills)
- Step 3: **Behavior** - (What changes in job performance resulted from the learning process? (capability to perform the newly learned skills while on the job)
- Step 4: **Results -** What are the tangible results of the learning process regarding reduced cost, improved quality, increased production, and efficiency? (Kirkpatrick, 1998)

CHAPTER II:

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

There are two main theoretical approaches to employee training: the human capital approach and the technology-based approach. According to Luo (Citation 2000), the human capital approach regards training as an investment in human capital. Thus, training is provided only when the benefit from productivity gains is greater than the cost of training.

According to Armstrong (Citation 2020), human capital is the knowledge, skills, and abilities of the people employed in an organization. Human capital theory regards people as assets and stresses that investments by organizations in people will generate worthwhile returns. The concept of human capital is associated with the concept of intellectual, social capital, and organizational capital. Intellectual capital is defined as stocks and flow of knowledge available to an organization and is regarded as the intangible asset associated with people, and also as cited (Mathis & Jackson, Citation2016), human capital is the collective value of the capabilities, knowledge, skills, life experiences, and motivation of an organization's workforce, intellectual capital to reflect the thinking, knowledge, creativity, and decision-making that people in organizations contribute.

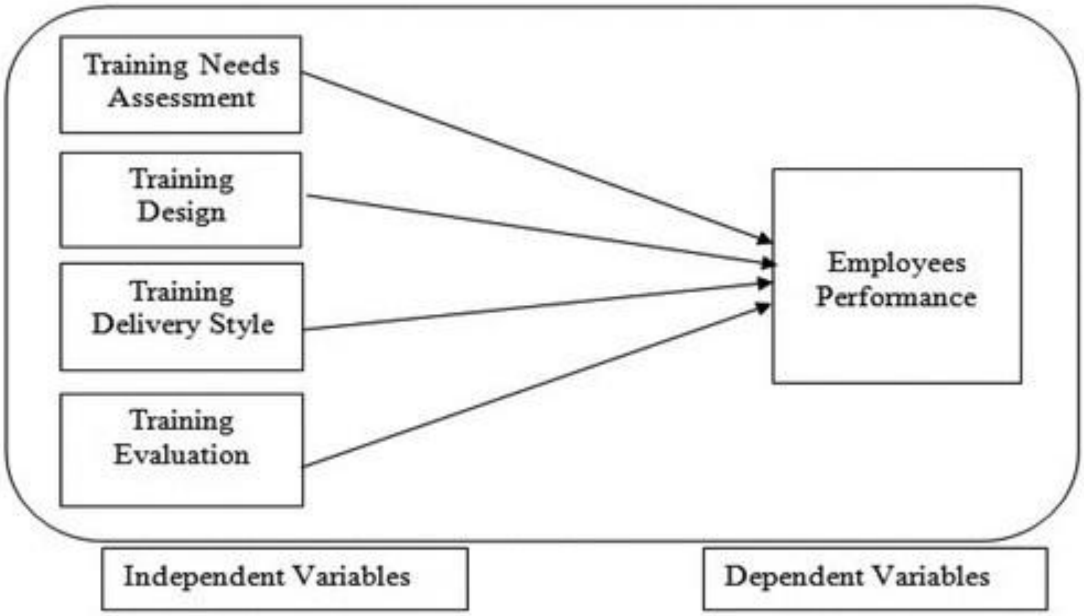
On the other hand, the technology-based approach regards training as a skill-formation process. According to this approach, expanded training in the contemporary period is driven by rapidly changing technologies and work reorganization. Thus, training is provided because it satisfies an organization's functional needs and equally contributes to human capital accumulation or skill formation. However, these approaches largely overlooked employee training content, which could result from training design and delivery style (Luo, Citation 2000).

Luo (Citation 2000) stated that organizations face training challenges due to four different factors. First, the training that is conducted is not essentially tied to the technicality of the role. Second, prior needs assessments are rarely performed, despite suggestions to do so in most training guides. Third, training instructors and organizations rarely evaluate the outcome resulting from training. When one is done, evaluation is often focused on how trainees feel about the training, not what was learned. Feedback forms, often called “smile sheets”, are trainees' responses to determine the training's impact. Fourth, the rapid expansion of personal development and training has taken place with little or no consideration of scientific evidence that may link such training with improvements in organizational goals.

Raja and Mohammed (Citation2011) stated that training has a positive and significant with the level of performance. This indicates that the trainees will reach the desired level of performance if the training is well designed. Clearly defined objectives indicate well-designed training, relevant and updated content, effective training methods, and trainer selection.

As cited in Young (Citation 2009), the conceptual framework (Figure 1) refers to a diagrammatical representation depicting the relationship between dependent and independent variables. This study uses a conceptual framework to explain the interrelationship between the variables; that is, employee performance is a dependent variable, and employee training is an independent variable (Mahommed, 2022*)*.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework model.



(Mahommed, 2022*)*

In corporate learning and development, the effectiveness of training programs is a critical determinant of organizational growth and success. Training evaluation models offer structured frameworks to assess training initiatives' impact, efficiency, and value.

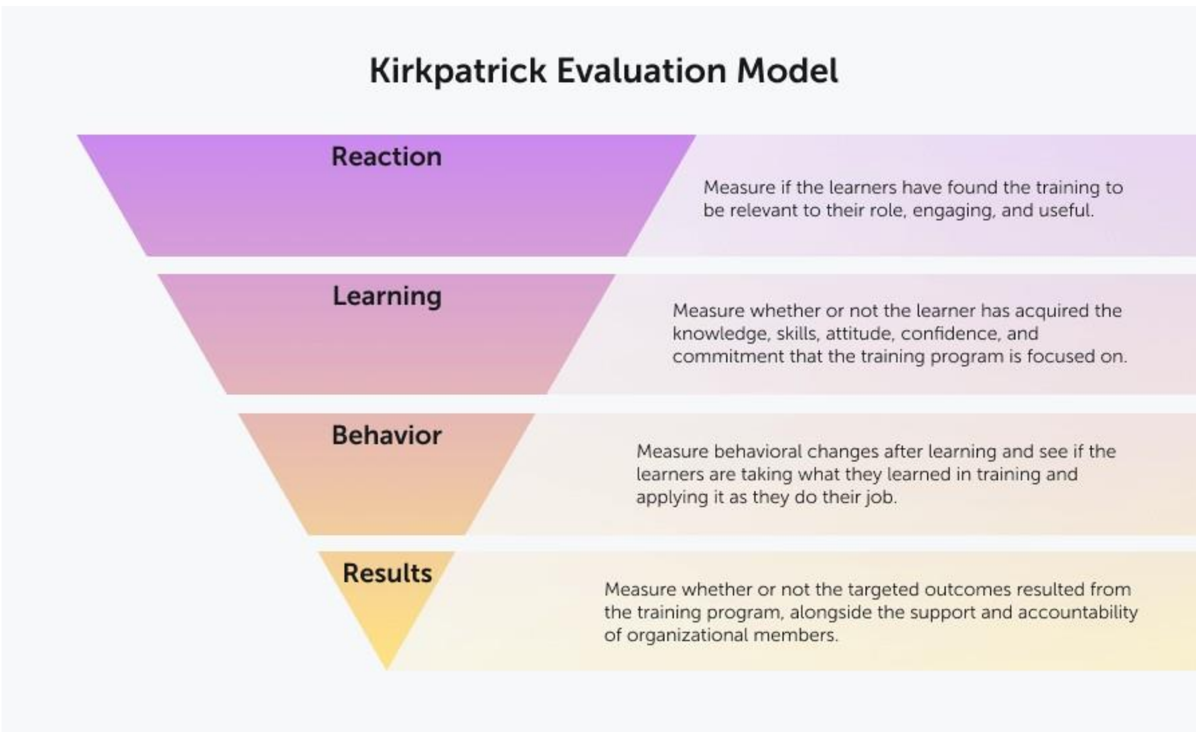
Training evaluation models provide invaluable insights into how well training resonates with learners, influences behavior change, and aligns with business objectives. This article overviews popular training evaluation models, explores their benefits, shares real-world applications, and breaks down best practices for implementing each (Disha, 2023)**.**

What Are Training Evaluation Models?

Training evaluation models are systematic frameworks designed to assess the effectiveness, efficiency, and outcomes of training programs within organizations. These models provide a structured approach to measuring the impact of learning and development strategies on learners and their alignment with organizational goals. They help organizations gather data, analyze results, and make informed decisions to optimize training strategies.

Training evaluation models consist of various levels or stages that guide the evaluation process, ranging from assessing participant reactions and learning outcomes to measuring behavior change and business impact. Evaluation models offer valuable frameworks for gauging the effectiveness of training efforts, facilitating continuous improvement, and demonstrating the value of learning initiatives to stakeholders (Disha, 2023).

Figure 2. Kirkpatrick Evaluation Model



The above conceptual framework (Figure 2) was developed based on the objective of this study, which is to evaluate the effectiveness of employee training programs in Mina Catering in Vietnam using Kirkpatrick's four-level evaluation model. This study examined the participants' reactions, learning, and behaviors to measure whether communication and teamwork skills were effective in individual and organizational performance (Disha, 2023).

2.2 Theory of Reasoned Action

Around the world, training and development are in a state of crisis. Training budgets are among the first to be cut when economic times get tough, and it is no wonder training departments often see training as an end unto itself rather than something that is simply a contributor to on-the-job performance.

This lack of connection to performance and accomplishing key organizational results puts training into the “nice to have” category instead of something that is required for organizational success. Failure to make a strong business case for training as something that is required to enhance performance and measurably contribute to the most important organizational outcomes has left training in a precarious position (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

According to Kirkpatrick, training professionals who think only about training events and not what happens before and particularly after them will become extinct. They are already being replaced by inexpensive, off-the-shelf, and outsourced training. These will probably be no more effective, but they are less expensive and will likely be equally effective. Whether you are one of the in-house survivors or a struggling consultant, no training professional can coast indefinitely on lofty notions about continuous learning and employee development. Training professionals should question the purpose behind all training, even if it is requested or budgeted. There should be a conversation about the specific result that the training should support and what the targeted group will have to do on the job to accomplish it.

You must provide compelling evidence that training delivers bottom-line results and contributes to mission accomplishment. Training must reinvent itself and transcend the classroom to earn its budget and maintain its existence. Savvy business professionals and enlightened organizations know that training has little value unless what is learned gets applied on the job. The subsequent on-the-job performance contributes to key organizational outcomes.

Kirkpatrick suggested three Reasons to Evaluate Training Programs

There are three major reasons to evaluate training programs:

- to improve the program
- to maximize the transfer of learning to behavior and subsequent organizational results
- to demonstrate the value of training to the organization.

2.2.1 Evaluating to Improve the Program

Most training professionals are accustomed to evaluating training programs to improve the program. Using formative (during the program) and summative (after the program) methods, they ask questions about how participants enjoyed the program, whether they learned key information, and how the program might be improved for future sessions. This type of information is useful to learning and performance professionals to gauge the quality of their training programs, materials, and presenters. If the evaluation of the training program shows that the program was well received and key information was learned, then the program can be called effective training.

Effective training: Well-received training that provides relevant knowledge and skills to the participants and the confidence to apply them on the job. Effective training is likely what many training professionals feel they are charged to deliver and perhaps what is included in their job descriptions. However, most organizations expect more from the training department; they expect what is learned in training to be implemented on the job and the implementation to make a measurable difference in key organizational results.

Returning to Maxine's story will punctuate the importance of going beyond simply providing effective training. About six months prior, Maxine was called to a meeting with Bernie, the sales manager. Bernie said that sales were down, so some product knowledge training should be conducted the following month in an off-site, one-day training event.

Maxine took the bait. She accepted the assignment and returned to her office to begin designing some product training, pulling from existing resources and developing others. After all, her job description was to deliver training to support company goals. Sound familiar? This type of training order occurs around the globe daily.

The problem was that Maxine had no idea what was causing sales to drop or if lack of product knowledge was part of the cause. She designed and delivered a wonderful, effective training program. Before leaving the program, she confirmed that each sales rep had good product knowledge, and she reported these findings promptly to Bemie a few days after the event.

Unbeknown to Maxine, sales not only did not increase after training, but they actually continued to drop. Bemie knew there were probably multiple causes, but he ultimately viewed the training as part of the problem. Unfortunately, the sales decrease was actually not due to a lack of sales representative product knowledge, so the training was a waste of resources. This brings us to our next purpose of training evaluation (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

2.2.2 Evaluating to Maximize Transfer of Learning to Behavior and Subsequent Organizational Results

More savvy training professionals realize that even the most well-designed and well-received training programs are useless unless what is learned in training is relevant and implemented on the job. This is often called the transfer of learning to behavior. It is here where deliberate implementation of the Kirkpatrick Model will help to increase the degree of on-the-job application and, thus, impact the business or organizational mission. Better organizational results can be achieved if what was learned translates into improved job performance. If training evaluation shows that on-the-job performance increased and results improved, then training effectiveness has occurred.

Training effectiveness: Training and follow-up leading to improved job performance that positively contributes to key organizational results

Returning to our story about Maxine and Bernie's sales training: Maxine could have done much more for her organization by conversing with Bemie about his sales training request. She could have asked some probing questions about what Bemie thought might be causing the decrease in sales. She could have asked his permission to interview a handful of the reps informally to get their opinions. Ultimately, she needed to find out what needed to change in on-the-job performance to improve results, in this case, sales volume.

If Maxine could have gotten this information, she could have made sure before investing the time and resources in a training program that training would actually help solve the problem. She might have discovered that product knowledge was not the issue; perhaps a competitor had recently entered the market, introducing competition that did not exist. In that case, training on how the competitor's product compared to the company's product and how to effectively sell the company's product might have been a better use of resources. When training professionals leave the training order-taking mode and instead consider training requests as an invitation to a conversation about increasing performance and maximizing results, the die stage is set for training value, a die situation that training professionals need to have. After training professionals partner with the business and design, develop, deliver, and evaluate training that improves performance and results, the next thing they need to do is to show that value in terms that their stakeholders understand and appreciate.

2.2.3 Evaluating to Demonstrate the Value of Training to the Organization

One of the most common excuses L&D professionals use to refute the possibility of demonstrating value is, “There are just too many variables for us to demonstrate the value of our training.” This book will eliminate this excuse going forward and demonstrate how to turn this negative into a positive. Instead of attempting to isolate one factor in performance and business success (training), this model promotes the practice of demonstrating the relative value of many components. This, therefore, requires L&D professionals and functions to involve themselves in as many of those factors as possible. These include activities that occur prior to and after training.

Learning and performance professionals must be able to show the organizational value of their training. Like any other department in an organization, training is not exempt from showing how the resources allocated to it have been put to good use. By gathering data related to effective training and training effectiveness, learning and performance professionals can credibly show the value that training has brought to the organization (Kirkpatrick, 1998).

2.3 Evaluation methods

2.3.1 The four levels of evaluation

The four levels of evaluation are one of the most commonly used methods for evaluating training programs. The four sequential levels of evaluation were originally proposed by

Donald L. Kirkpatrick, Professor Emeritus at the University of Wisconsin. This concept has been increasingly adopted in private companies to evaluate their training programs, and gradually applied for training programs under technical assistance projects of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Torres, 2005). According to his concept, capacity development is realized by the four sequential steps: (a) Reaction, (b) Learning, (c) Behavior, and (d) Results.

a. Reaction

Evaluation on this level measures how participants react to the training program. It is important to get a positive reaction. Although a positive reaction may not ensure learning, participants will probably not be motivated to learn if they do not react favorably. “Evaluating reaction is the same thing as measuring customer satisfaction. It training is going to be effective, it is important that trainees react favorably to it. Otherwise, they will not be motivated to learn.” Kirkpatrick (2006) Evaluating Training Programs

b. Learning

Evaluation on this level measures the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills after attending the training program. One or more of these changes must occur for a change in behavior to happen.

c. Behavior

Evaluation on this level measures the extent to which participants’ behavior has changed because of attending the training program. Four conditions are necessary for change to take place: The person must have a desire to change, know what to do and how to do it, work in the right climate, and be rewarded for changing.

d. Results

Evaluation on this level measures the final results that occurred because the participants attended the training program. Examples of the final results include increased production, improved quality, and decreased costs. It is important to recognize that these results are the reason for having some training programs.

2.3.2 Some Other Evaluation Models

The following are some of the evaluation models and approaches mentioned in the evaluation literature. (“5. Evaluation Models, Approaches, and Designs” Building Evaluation Capacity)

a. Behavioral Objectives Approach

- Focuses on the degree to which the objectives of a program have been achieved.
- The major question is “is the program achieving its objectives?”

b. Responsive Evaluation

- Evaluators are responsible for the information needs of various audiences or stakeholders.
- The major question is “what does the program look like to different people?”

c. Goal-Free Evaluation

- Focuses on the actual rather than intended outcomes of a program.
- The major question is “what are all the effects of the program, including any side effects?”

d. Expertise/Accreditation Approaches

- The purpose is to provide professional judgments of the quality of programs based on expert opinions.
- The major question is, “How would professionals rate this program?”

e. Participatory/Collaborative Evaluation

- Emphasize stakeholders' engagement in the evaluation process to understand better the evaluation and the program being evaluated and ultimately use the evaluation findings for decision-making purposes.

-The major question is, “What are the information needs of those closest to the program?”

f. Organizational Learning

- Views evaluation as a social activity in which organization members construct and act on evaluation issues.

- The major question is, “What are the information and learning needs of individuals, teams, and organizations in general?” (Torres, 2005).

2.3.3 Evaluation Tools

Various evaluation tools can be selected depending on the purposes and methods of evaluation

- Questionnaires
- Surveys
- Tests
- Interviews
- Focus group discussions
- Observations
- Performance records

For the training programs targeting local administration officials, a questionnaire may be used for “Level 1: Reaction”; a pre/post-test may be used for “Level 2: Learning”; and an impact survey may be used for “Level 3: Behavior” and “Level 4: Results.”

2.3.4 How to Evaluate the impact of soft skills training

Many in the learning and development community have hit a wall when trying to gauge the effectiveness of their soft skills training. How can we objectively measure something so subjective, something like leadership, creativity, or empathy? Such intangible qualities are different in everyone, and the form they take varies by the situation; in contrast to hard skills, soft skills are not something we can check off as complete or incomplete.

2.3.5 Evaluate the Effectiveness of Soft Skill Training Programs

The first step in assessing training program effectiveness is identifying KPIs (Key Performance Indicators). Choose specific data points that are the most important lift in specific product sales, such as more monthly sales calls, higher employee engagement, etc. These are the primary indicators we will use to determine whether training is working or not.

2.3.6 Administer a Pre-Training Assessment

Conduct an initial assessment before employees start a new training program. A pre-training assessment provides a baseline of what employees do and do not know. We can then compare results at the end of the training, which makes measuring training effectiveness easier.

2.3.7 Check-in During Training

Do not wait until a training program is finished to get feedback. Check-in with the employees as they work through the content. Survey learners to find out **what they** think of the training, what they enjoy, and what they would change to improve the learning experience. Take notes of employee feedback and consider using it to adjust the training program for the future**.**

2.3.8 Measure Engagement

Employee engagement is one of the primary metrics used to assess training effectiveness. Consider how our team is reacting to the training content. Are employees only completing minimum training requirements? Or are learners going above and beyond to complete non-required training? Additionally, evaluate the different training to see which is most engaging.

2.3.9 Assess Knowledge Retention

Next, assess knowledge retention. We can do this by having employees take the same assessment that they completed before training began. Measuring knowledge retention helps us identify what employees have learned and if they will remember it outside of the virtual classroom

2.3.10 Measure Behavior

In addition to testing knowledge retention, it is important to measure employee behavior. How have employees' behaviors changed since they completed their training? Are they more confident on the job? Do they ask fewer questions? **Are** they getting things done more efficiently? We can virtually survey employees or have coaches evaluate behavior changes**.**

2.3.11 Measure Results

Finally, the results of the employee training program will be measured. How to measure training effectiveness and results circles back to KPIs. Evaluate employee training results based on the selected KPIs, such as sales numbers and customer satisfaction ratings since the training took place. Are the trainees more engaged? Are there higher levels of productivity and fewer common mistakes employees may make throughout the day?

2.3.12 Determine indicators of training effectiveness

To effectively evaluate training programs, practitioners of the training program must first define the indicators of “effectiveness.” As a guide, practitioners or organizations should answer this guiding question: “In what sense will the training program be considered successful?” Below are some examples of factors or indicators that can help in measuring training effectiveness:

- New skills and knowledge
- Learning experience
- Employee happiness
- Cultural impact
- Efficiency impact
- Financial impact

2.3.13 Choosing the right method and collecting data

Training evaluation methods refer to approaches in collecting the data. Once the training evaluation’s purpose, technique, and measurements for training effectiveness are identified, the next step is to choose the right method or tools for collecting the needed information in regards to the training program. Below are some of the common training evaluation methods practitioners can use:

- Questionnaires are sets of questions commonly used for gathering statistical information from participants on a particular topic. This can be used as a tool when conducting surveys for trainees after completing the training program.
- Interviews—these can be conducted either face-to-face or online. This method allows practitioners to delve deeper into the participants' responses. Interviews can help provide practitioners with more valuable and detailed information on the employee's experience with the training.
- Focus groups—these are facilitated discussions among a small group of participants who underwent the same training program. They are helpful if the practitioners' goal is to explore the participants' insight and feelings towards the training and gather feedback on how the training can be improved. The entire staff of a Mina company, which is approximately 500 persons, will be participants in the focus group.
- Observation—This method involves observing the participant's behavioral change in a workplace setting. The practitioner or assigned evaluator will observe how the participant completes tasks or engages with processes and team activities. Once a method has been selected, practitioners can collect the data.
    - A Digital Tool to Evaluate Training Programs includes digital training evaluation forms that can be applied (Safety Culture,2023).

2.3.14 Best Time to Evaluate Training

Training evaluation should be tied to the purpose of assessment. It is measured against a range of expectations regarding when training effectiveness for employees and the business should be noticed. Consider periods such as appraisal, adaptation, application, and achievement to map what outcomes are expected at those levels. Training evaluation can be performed early, mid, or end of the year, depending on the purpose of the evaluation. Usually, early and mid-year evaluations are performed to shape the training program and the teaching approach. It helps address any issues and make improvements within the current program. At the same time, the annual evaluations measure the training programs' success and the instructor's performance. It is usually used for annual reviews, hiring, or promotion.

2.3.15 Analyze Data

The final step is to analyze the data collected and to document the findings of the performed training evaluation. The record of the training evaluation will be a critical component for future improvements in the organization’s approach to training programs. Below are sections and questions that we can use for the training evaluation form.

2.3.16 Program objectives

a. Were program objectives clearly defined?

b. the facilitator covers all program objectives?

2.3.17 Course content and relevance

a. Was the material the right level of complexity for your background?

b. Were the course materials well organized?

c. Does the course material help support course objectives?

d. Was the content relevant to your role’s needs?

2.3.18 Facilitator knowledge and effectiveness

e. Did the facilitator demonstrate a good understanding of the program material?

f. Did the facilitator effectively deliver the program material?

g. Did the facilitator do a good job at generating participant interaction while keeping a safe learning environment?

h. Was the pace of the program good?

i. Is the duration of the learning session appropriate for the content objectives and complexity?

2.3.19 Program evaluation

j. Was the assessment a fair representation of the program content?

k. Did the role-plays or simulations fairly represent the program content?

2.3.20 Facility

l. Did the training area have adequate lighting?

m. Was the temperature comfortable and conducive for a learning session?

n. Did the participants have access to a computer and/or tools to simulate and have kinesthetic practice?

In addition to these 5 sections, you may also choose to add a section for participants to express their final thoughts and a space for them to sign. Below is an example of a finished training evaluation form. This evaluation form was created using this training evaluation form (Unboxed Staff, 2020).

2.4 Human Society Theory

In Chapter 7: HUMAN SOCIETY, the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Copyright © 1989, 1990) wrote: As a species, we are social beings who live out our lives in the company of other humans. We organize ourselves into various kinds of social groupings, such as nomadic bands, villages, cities, and countries, in which we work, trade, play, reproduce, and interact in many other ways. Unlike other species, we combine socialization with deliberate social behavior and organizational changes over time. Consequently, the patterns of human society differ from place to place and era to era and across cultures, making the social world a very complex and dynamic environment.

Insight into human behavior comes from many sources. The views presented here are based principally on scientific investigation. However, it should also be recognized that literature, drama, history, philosophy, and other nonscientific disciplines contribute significantly to our understanding of ourselves. Social scientists use qualitative and quantitative approaches to study human behavior from various cultural, political, economic, and psychological perspectives. They look for consistent patterns of individual and social behavior and scientific explanations of those patterns. In some cases, such patterns may seem obvious once they are pointed out, although they may not have been part of how most people consciously thought about the world. In other cases, the patterns revealed by scientific investigation may show people that their long-held beliefs about certain aspects of human behavior are incorrect.

This chapter covers recommendations about human society in terms of individual and group behavior, social organizations, and the processes of social change. It is based on a particular approach to the subject: sketching a comprehensible picture of the world that is consistent with the findings of the separate disciplines within the social sciences—such as anthropology, economics, political science, sociology, and psychology—but without attempting to describe the findings themselves or the underlying methodologies.

The chapter describes seven key aspects of human society: cultural effects on human behavior, the organization, and behavior of groups, the processes of social change, social trade-offs, forms of political and economic organization, mechanisms for resolving conflict among groups and individuals, and national and international social systems. Although many of the ideas are relevant to all human societies, this chapter focuses chiefly on the social characteristics of the present-day United States (Science, 1990).

Cultural Effects on Behavior

Human behavior is affected both by genetic inheritance and by experience. How people develop is shaped by social experience and circumstances within the context of their inherited genetic potential. The scientific question is how experience and hereditary potential interact to produce human behavior.

Each person is born into a social and cultural setting—family, community, social class, language, religion—and eventually develops many social connections. The characteristics of a child's social setting affect how he or she learns to think and behave, using instruction, rewards and punishment, and example. This setting includes home, school, neighborhood, and also, perhaps, local religious and law enforcement agencies. Then there are the child's mostly informal interactions with friends, peers, relatives, and the entertainment and news media. How individuals will respond to all these influences, or even which influence will be the most potent, tends not to be predictable. However, there is some substantial similarity in how individuals respond to the same pattern of influences—that is, being raised in the same culture. Furthermore, culturally induced behavior patterns, such as speech patterns, body language, and forms of humor, become so deeply embedded in the human mind that they often operate without the individuals themselves being fully aware of them.

Every culture includes a somewhat different web of patterns and meanings: ways of earning a living, systems of trade and government, social roles, religions, traditions in clothing and foods and arts, expectations for behavior, attitudes toward other cultures, and beliefs and values about all of these activities. Within a large society, many groups may have distinctly different subcultures associated with region, ethnic origin, or social class. If a single culture is dominant in a large region, its values may be considered correct. They may be promoted—not only by families and religious groups but also by schools and governments. Some subcultures may arise among special social categories (such as business executives and criminals), some of which may cross national boundaries (such as musicians and scientists).

Fair or unfair, desirable or undesirable, social distinctions are a salient part of almost every culture. The form of the distinctions varies with place and time, sometimes including rigid castes, tribal or clan hierarchies, and sometimes a more flexible social class. Class distinctions are made chiefly based on wealth, education, and occupation, but they are also likely to be associated with other subcultural differences, such as dress, dialect, and attitudes toward school and work. These economic, political, and cultural distinctions are recognized by almost all members of a society—and resented by some of them.

The class into which people are born affects their language, diet, tastes, and interests as children, influencing how they perceive the social world. Moreover, class affects the pressures and opportunities people experience and, therefore, the paths their lives are likely to take—including schooling, occupation, marriage, and standard of living. Still, many people live lives very different from the norm for their class.

The ease with which someone can change social class varies greatly with time and place. Throughout most of human history, people have been almost certain to live and die in the class into which they were born. The greatest upward mobility occurs when a society undertakes new enterprises (for example, in territory or technology) and thus needs more people in higher-class occupations. In some parts of the world today, increasing numbers of people are escaping poverty through economic or educational opportunities, while increasing numbers are impoverished in other parts.

What is considered to be acceptable human behavior varies from culture to culture and from time period to time period. Every social group has generally accepted ranges of behavior for its members, with perhaps some specific standards for subgroups, such as adults and children, females and males, artists and athletes. Unusual behaviors may be considered either merely amusing, distasteful, or punishably criminal. Some normal behavior in one culture may be considered unacceptable in another. For example, aggressively competitive behavior is considered rude in highly cooperative cultures. Conversely, in some subcultures of a highly competitive society, such as that of the United States, a lack of interest in competition may be considered out of step. Although the world has a wide diversity of cultural traditions, there are some kinds of behavior (such as incest, violence against kin, theft, and rape) that are considered unacceptable in almost all of them.

The social consequences considered appropriate for unacceptable behavior vary widely between and even within different societies. Punishment of criminals ranges from fines or humiliation to imprisonment or exile, from beatings or mutilation to execution. The form of appropriate punishment is affected by theories of its purpose to prevent or deter the individual from repeating the crime, to deter others from committing the crime, or simply to cause suffering for its own sake in retribution. The success of punishment in deterring crime is difficult to study, partly because of ethical limitations on experiments assigning different punishments to similar criminals and partly because of the difficulty of holding other factors constant.

Technology has long played a major role in human behavior. The high value placed on new technological inventions in many parts of the world has led to increasingly rapid and inexpensive communication and travel, which in turn has led to the rapid spread of fashions and ideas in clothing, food, music, and forms of recreation. Books, magazines, radio, and television describe ways to dress, raise children, make money, find happiness, marry, cook, and love. They also implicitly promote values, aspirations, and priorities by the way they portray the behavior of people such as children, parents, teachers, politicians, and athletes, and the attitudes they display toward violence, sex, minorities, the roles of men and women, and lawfulness (Science, 1990).

Group Behavior

In addition to belonging to the social and cultural settings into which they are born, people voluntarily join groups based on shared occupations, beliefs, or interests (such as unions, political parties, or clubs). Membership in these groups influences how people think of themselves and how others think of them. These groups impose expectations and rules that make members' behavior more predictable and enable each group to function smoothly and retain its identity. The rules may be informal and conveyed by example, such as how to behave at a social gathering, or they may be written rules that are strictly enforced. Formal groups often signal the kind of behavior they favor using rewards (such as praise, prizes, or privileges) and punishments (such as threats, fines, or rejection).

Affiliation with any social group, whether one joins it voluntarily or is born into it, brings some advantages of larger numbers: the potential for pooling resources (such as money or labor), concerted effort (such as strikes, boycotts, or voting), and identity and recognition (such as organizations, emblems, or attention from the media). Within each group, the members' attitudes, which often include an image of their group as being superior to others, help ensure cohesion within the group but can also lead to serious conflict with other groups. Attitudes toward other groups are likely to involve stereotyping—treating all group members as though they were the same and perceiving in those people's actual behavior only those qualities that fit the observer's preconceptions. Such social prejudice may include blind respect for some categories of people, such as doctors or clergy, as well as blind disrespect for other categories of people who are, say, foreign-born or women.

The behavior of groups cannot be understood solely as the aggregate behavior of individuals. It is impossible, for example, to understand modern warfare by summing up the aggressive tendencies of individuals. A person may behave very differently in a crowd—at a football game, at a religious service, or on a picket line—than alone or with family members. Several children together may vandalize a building, even though none would do it on their own. By the same token, an adult will often be more generous and responsive to the needs of others as a member of, say, a club or religious group than he or she would be inclined to be in private. The group situation provides the rewards of companionship and acceptance for going along with the shared action of the group. It makes it difficult to assign blame or credit to any one person.

Social organizations may serve many purposes beyond those for which they formally exist. Private clubs that exist ostensibly for recreation are frequently important places for engaging in business transactions; universities that formally exist to promote learning and scholarship may help to promote or reduce class distinctions; and business and religious organizations often have political and social agendas that go beyond making a profit or ministering to people. In many cases, an unstated purpose of groups is to exclude people in particular categories from their activities—yet another form of discrimination (Science, 1990).

Social Change

Societies, like species, evolve in directions that are opened or constrained in part by internal forces such as technological developments or political traditions. The conditions of one generation limit and shape the range of possibilities open to the next. On the one hand, each new generation learns the society's cultural forms and thus does not have to reinvent strategies for producing food, handling conflict, educating young people, governing, etc. It also teaches aspirations for how society can be maintained and improved. On the other hand, each new generation must address unresolved problems from the generation before tensions that may lead to war, wide-scale drug abuse, poverty and deprivation, racism, and a multitude of private and group grievances. Slavery in the early history of the United States, for example, still has serious consequences for African Americans and the U.S. economy, education, health care, and judicial systems in general. Grievances may be relieved just enough to make people tolerate them, or they may overflow into a revolution against the structure of the society itself. Many societies continue to perpetuate centuries-old disputes with others over boundaries, religion, and deeply felt beliefs about past wrongs.

Governments generally attempt to engineer social change using policies, laws, incentives, or coercion. Sometimes these efforts work effectively and make it possible to avoid social conflict. At other times they may precipitate conflict. For example, setting up agricultural communes in the Soviet Union against the farmers' wishes to farm their private land was achieved only with armed force and the loss of millions of lives. The liberation of slaves in the United States came only as one consequence of a bloody civil war; a hundred years later, the elimination of explicit racial segregation was achieved in some places only by the use of legislative action, court injunctions, and armed military guard—and continues to be a major social issue.

External factors—including war, migration, colonial domination, imported ideas, technology or plagues, and natural disasters—also shape society's evolution. The outlook of the

Soviet Union, for example, is strongly influenced by the devastating losses it suffered in both world wars. The societies of American Indians were ravaged and displaced by the diseases and warfare brought by colonists from Europe. In the United States, forcible importation of Africans and successive waves of immigrants from Europe, Latin America, and Asia have greatly affected the political, economic, and social systems (such as labor, voting blocs, and educational programs), as well as adding to the nation's cultural variety. Natural disasters such as storms or drought can cause failure of crops, bringing hardship and famine, and sometimes migration or revolution.

Convenient communication and transportation also stimulate social change. Groups previously isolated geographically or politically become ever more aware of different ways of thinking, living, and behaving, and sometimes of the existence of vastly different standards of living. Migrations and mass media lead to cultural mixing, the extinction of some cultures, and the rapid evolution of others. Easy worldwide communications and transportation force confrontations of values and expectations—sometimes deliberately as propaganda, sometimes just incidentally, as in pursuing commercial interests.

The size of the human population, its concentration in particular places, and its growth pattern are influenced by the physical setting and by many aspects of culture: economics, politics, technology, history, and religion. In response to economic concerns, national governments set very different policies—some to reduce population growth, some to increase it. Some religious groups also take a strong stand on population issues. Leaders of the Roman Catholic church, for example, have long campaigned against birth control, whereas, in recent years, religious leaders of other major faiths have endorsed the use of birth control to restrict family size.

Quite apart from government policy or religious doctrine, many people decide whether to have a child on the basis of practical matters such as the health risk to the mother, the value or cost of a child in economic or social terms, the amount of living space, or a personal feeling of suitability as parents. In some parts of the world—and poorly educated groups in any country—couples have little knowledge of, or access to, modern birth control information and technology. In the United States, the trend toward casual adolescent sexual relations has led to increasing numbers of unexpected and unwanted pregnancies.

In turn, social systems are influenced by population—its size, rate of change, and proportions of people with different characteristics (such as age, sex, and language). Great increase in the size of a population requires greater job specialization, new government responsibilities, new kinds of institutions, and the need to marshal a more complex distribution of resources. Population patterns, particularly when they are changing, are also influential in changing social priorities. The greater the variety of subcultures, the more diverse the provisions that must be made for them. As the size of a social group increases, so may its influence on society. The influence may be through markets (such as young people who, as a group, buy more athletic equipment), voting power (for example, old people are less likely to vote for school bond legislation), or recognition of need by social planners (for example, more mothers who work outside the home will require child-care programs).

Social Trade-Offs

Choices among alternative benefits and costs are unavoidable for individuals or groups. To gain something we want or need, it is usually necessary to give up something we already have or at least give up an opportunity to gain something else instead. For example, the more the public spends as a whole on government-funded projects such as highways and schools, the less it can spend on defense (if it has already decided not to increase revenue or debt).

Social trade-offs are not always economic or material. Sometimes they arise from choices between our private rights and the public good: laws concerning cigarette smoking in public places, cleaning up after pets, and highway speed limits, for instance, restrict the individual freedom of some people for the benefit of others. Alternatively, choices may arise between aesthetics and utility. For example, a proposed large-scale apartment complex may be welcomed by prospective tenants but opposed by people who already live in the neighborhood.

Different people have different ideas of how trade-offs should be made, which can result in compromise or continuing discord. How different interests are served often depends on the relative amounts of resources or power individuals or groups hold. Peaceful efforts at social change are most successful when the affected people are included in the planning, when information is available from all relevant experts, and when the values and power struggles are clearly understood and incorporated into the decision-making process.

There is often a question of whether a current arrangement should be improved or an entirely new one should be invented. On the one hand, repeatedly patching up a troublesome situation may make it just tolerable enough that the large-scale change of the underlying problem is never undertaken. On the other hand, rushing to replace every system that has problems may create more problems than it solves.

It is difficult to compare the potential benefits of social alternatives. One reason is that there is no common measure for different forms of good—for example, no measure by which wealth and social justice can be compared directly. Another reason is that different groups of people place greatly differing values on even the same kind of social good—for example, on public education or the minimum wage. Value comparisons are further complicated in a very large population because a tiny percentage of the population can be many people. For example, in a total population of 100 million, a rise in the unemployment rate of only one-hundredth of 1 percent (which some people would consider trivially small) would mean a loss of 10,000 jobs (which other people would consider very serious).

Judgments of consequences in social trade-offs tend to involve other issues as well. One is the distance effect: The farther away in distance or the further away in time the consequences of a decision are, the less important we are likely to give them. City dwellers, for instance, are less likely to support national crop-support legislation than are farmers, and farmers may not wish to have their federal tax dollars pay for inner-city housing projects. As individuals, we find it difficult to resist immediate pleasure even if the long-term consequences are likely to be negative or to endure immediate discomfort for an eventual benefit. As a society, we are likely to attach more importance to immediate benefits (such as rapidly using up our oil and mineral deposits) than to long-term consequences (shortages that we or our descendants may suffer later).

The effect of distance in judging social trade-offs is often augmented by uncertainty about whether potential costs and benefits will occur at all. Sometimes it is possible to estimate the probabilities of several possible outcomes of a social decision—for example, that sexual intercourse without birth control results in pregnancy about one time out of four. If relative value measures can also be placed on all the possible outcomes, the probabilities and value measures can be combined to estimate which alternative would be the best bet. However, even when both probabilities and value measures are available, there may be debate about how to put the information together. People may be so afraid of some particular risk, for example, that they insist it is reduced to as close to zero as possible, regardless of other benefits or risks.

Finally, people's reactive nature usually complicates decisions about social alternatives. When a social program is undertaken to achieve some intended effect, people's inventiveness in promoting or resisting that effect will always add to the uncertainty of the outcome (Science, 1990).

Soft Skills Training and Development (T&D)

Due to today's fast-paced global and technological development, the consensus view is that firms should be vigilant in aligning their HRM practices with training a productive and competitive workforce to contribute to the organisation's profitability and advantage. Hence, workforce training and development is deemed important (Rahman et al., 2013). 'Training' aims to bridge the gap between the current and the desired performance and needs to match business needs and objectives defined by the organization (Ludwikowska, 2018). 'Development' is the long-term strategic activity for employees to fulfill changing organizational goals (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Stam & Molleman, 1999). Rahman and Nas (2013) described 'employee development' as both employee/employer consistently engaging to improve employees' overall effectiveness while the investment is returned in the form of more productive and effective employees. In the human capital theory, Becker (1993) classifies training into general and specific training. He suggests firms should pay the cost of specific training, as it raises employees' productivity at the firm providing it. The investment might be lost when an employee leaves the firm. For general training, employers might not be able to capture any future returns on their investment; employees themselves should pay for the cost. According to Mishra and Smyth (2015), general training focuses on soft skills, complements specific training, and enhances a firm's performance. In contrast, Grugulis and Vincent (2009) find that soft skills and technical skills are not always complementary. However, Kessler and Lülfesmann (2006) suggest that firms can invest in general and specific training as both investments have interacting effects.

Soft skills training is important to sustain a firm's competitiveness (Ibrahim et al., 2017). Hard skills are taught for job performance. Hard skills training prepares employees on a need-to-know basis and works within a more restricted setting than soft skills training. In contrast, soft skills training provides a good-to-know basis for dealing with a more uncertain context (Laker & Powell, 2011; Botke et al., 2018). The transfer of soft skills training can be considered as the most problematic type of training transfer. It would be a waste of effort if trainees failed to use the trained knowledge and skills in the work (Botke et al., 2018). Soft skills training is typically scattered, insufficient, or quasi-non-existent in higher education programs. Employers do not consistently provide soft skills training to their employees for the long-term growth of the organisation (Bertolini & Goglio, 2017; International et Foundation, 2013). In practice, most employers do not give priority to soft skills as the benefits of soft skills are difficult to quantify (International Youth Foundation, 2013). This implies that it is necessary to create performance tools to evaluate the quality of soft skills training (Science, 1990).

Training Process

Training Needs, Training Objectives, and Training Evaluation Sound training and development plans are compelling in increasing employees' productivity and quality of work (Niazi, 2011). Hence, much attention must be paid to the details of the training plan and the desired outcomes. Past studies show that to align training policy with human capital development, firms should adopt procedures to detect training needs, establish training objectives, and conduct training evaluation (Hughey & Mussnug, 1997; Otuko et al., 2013; Úbeda-García et al.–Sáez, 2014). According to Kirkpatrick (1996, cited in Iqbal, Maharvi, Malik, & Khan, 2011, p.275), training objectives, training contents, training material, trainer, training methods, training environment, and training management are training characteristics that affect the outcomes of training evaluation. 2.3.1 Training Needs are important to maintain employees' skills and competencies to meet future challenges and enhance the firm's performance. To cope with the rapidly changing environment and to bridge the skills gap, firms should take a proactive approach to training needs analysis (TNA) to define the problems, plan the expected training, and identify who needs the training (Niazi, 2011). TNA is a proactive process that includes anticipating future needs and identifying the gaps between employees' current competencies and the desired competencies, which training can fill (Ludwikowska, 2018). Hence, needs assessment provides guides and serves as a basis for program design and development, setting of learning objectives, delivery, and evaluation (Otuko et al., 2013)

Training Objectives The outcome of TNA is the specification of training objectives, skills, and tasks to be trained (Otuko et al., 2013; Kucherov & Manokhina, 2017; Ibrahim et al., 2017). Effective training and development programs should improve employees' performance, reduce the skills gap, and improve organisational performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013; Ludwikowska, 2018). The learning objectives should align with the company's strategic plan (Úbeda-García et al., 2014) and clearly defined in the strategic training policy (Stam & Molleman, 1999). 2.3.3 Training Evaluation Training evaluation is an important component of effective training and development (Otuko et al., 2013; Úbeda-García et al., 2014). Its purposes are: to find the relationship between acquired knowledge, transfer of knowledge at the workplace, and training, and to improve the quality and relevance of training programmes to ensure training effectiveness and cost (Iqbal et al., 2011; Olexová, 2017). The evaluation aspects include alignment with the firm's strategies, training objectives, training content and methodological design, quality of facilitators, skills, and knowledge acquired by trainees, and impacts on the firm's performance (Iqbal et al., 2011; Kucherov & Manokhina, 2017; Tharenou et al., 2007). However, Santos and Stuart (2003) state that such immediate training evaluation is not practical for soft skills training. Pre- and post-evaluation procedures cannot effectively transfer knowledge and skills acquired to the workplace. A well-developed appraisal and personal development planning system for pre and post-training is needed (Bee-Lan Lok, 2021).

2.5 Summary

This review defines soft skills and training programs and mentions the importance of soft skills in evaluating training effectiveness and assessing a training program. Then, we have to take a closer look at the current training program and set up the evaluation program, the evaluation model, including the corporate training metrics, the evaluating action plan, and the results of this evaluation program. This will keep refining the training program to benefit both individual employees and corporate growth.

Investing valuable resources like time, money, and energy into training programs is essential to measure whether they are working or not. However, intentions for training will be unique to the business and long-term goals. This is why we need to define clear objectives at the start. If we fail to do this, then any results we receive will be meaningless because we do not have a target in sight. Once we know where we are heading and our desired outcome, measuring training effectiveness will help to see if we are on the right track or if we need to make any adjustments. To ensure that the soft skills training evaluation is effective, there are several best practices, include:

- Determine the Purpose of the Evaluation: Before conducting the evaluation, it is important to determine the specific goals and objectives of the training program. This will help you to identify the most appropriate evaluation methods to use.

Use Multiple Evaluation Methods: To get a comprehensive view of your training program's effectiveness, it is recommended that you use multiple evaluation methods. These can include surveys, observation, and performance appraisals.

- Collect Data from Multiple Sources: To ensure the validity and reliability of your evaluation, it is important to collect data from multiple sources, such as trainees, supervisors, and coworkers.
- Use a Standardized Evaluation Tool: To ensure consistency and comparability of results, it is recommended to use a standardized evaluation tool that has been validated and tested.
- Use the Results to Make Informed Decisions: The results of the evaluation should be used to make informed decisions about future training, such as identifying areas of improvement, modifying the training program, or discontinuing ineffective training programs.

Training evaluation helps organizations discover training gaps and opportunities for their employees. The training evaluation process boosts employee morale, helps improve overall work quality, and is essential to overall training effectiveness (Snehnath Neendoor, 2023).

Soft skills training is critical to success in today’s workplace, and assessing it is essential for both employees and organizations. Evaluating soft skills alongside technical skills helps managers identify areas for improvement and provide feedback and coaching to develop well-rounded employees. This approach benefits individual employees and contributes to a positive workplace culture that values collaboration, communication, and continuous learning. Organizations can foster a positive work environment by prioritizing soft skills training assessments in performance reviews, increase employee engagement and retention, and ultimately achieve their business goals.

CHAPTER III:

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview of the Research Problem

Former research shows that soft skill training is vital to a business organization's success, especially in today's challenging market. Research also shows how an individual's behavior, personality, and mindset play a significant role in decision-making, interaction, and engagement. However, there is a gap in academic research that integrates these areas, which can lead to more engaged employees, more effective training, and increased performance.

Redford (2007) states that the ROI of soft skills training is difficult to measure, but it is possible and beneficial. He argues that measuring the ROI of soft skills training is feasible when a cost-benefit assessment is conducted before training begins, when the training solution is aligned with core business needs, when an ongoing skills audit is conducted, and when clear training objectives and key performance indicators are identified. In their case study of assertiveness training, Platt (2008) and colleagues successfully calculated ROI for a client by conducting a thorough training needs analysis and refining assertiveness into observable and measurable skills (e.g., active listening, goal setting, praise, and reprimanding). They then identified trackable outcomes that aligned with departmental and organizational goals (e.g., increased productivity rates, decreased absenteeism and error rates, etc.). Furthermore, the consultants tracked the identified outcomes. They used a control group (another branch of the client company) that did not receive training to compare with the trained group of employees. Finally, they presented a financial analysis to the client two years after the training was conducted.

Evaluating tangible results of soft skills training yields concrete evidence about how worthwhile the training is. However, at the same time, it is highly time-consuming, costly, and requires access to organizational data. McLean and Moss's (2003) article provides more evidence of this notion about applying all four criteria of Kirkpatrick's framework in evaluating a national leadership development program. The researchers concluded that despite adequate funding, resources, and expertise, they most succeeded in determining participants' reactions to or satisfaction with the program. They suggested that applying all four levels of Kirkpatrick's model seems appropriate for a large and relatively expensive program but may be hard to justify for small or less expensive training programs (Piyawan et al., 2016).

3.2 Operationalization of Theoretical Constructs

We know that establishing the nomological validity of an operationalizing construct is important, reflecting the extent to which a construct predicts and measures the accuracy of a well-established theoretical model. Simply operationalizing a construct is the relationship between theoretical constructs by measuring the variables corresponding to those constructs and examining the statistical correlations among the variables. In this study, the theory is that personality preferences for a training method positively influence training engagement. The constructs are three training models: e-learning, blended learning, traditional lecture style, and employee personality. This will be operationalized by recording and measuring training effectiveness through tests, engagement questionnaires, demographic questionnaires, unstructured interviews, observations, and open-ended questions.

According to Williams (2007), the main approaches to conducting research are qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method. Typically, when the researcher is looking fornumerical data, they select the quantitative approach, whereas the qualitative approach isused when textural data is required. The mixed method is when research is needed for numeric and textural data (Williams, 2007).

This research will use a mixed-method approach to collect numeric and textural data, as Williams (2007) stated. The quantitative data will be used to establish and validate a relationship between the variables, specifically whether training preference based on personality is linked to increased engagement. The data will be gained through the self-administered closed-ended questionnaires, which will be delivered before and after training and broken down into three main types: lecture style,integrative style, and e-learning, and finally, three open-ended questions, unstructured interviews, and observation will be used to collect qualitative data to allow for a better view of the whole picture being told by the quantitative data gathered and help betteranswer the research questions.

The data in this research will use descriptive and inferential statistics. First, descriptive statistics will describe the participant characteristics, and then inferential statistics will be conducted to make generalizations about the population. In addition, one of the inferential tools used is a two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Finally, after the examination, the data will be graphically represented.

3.3 Research Purpose and Questions

Purposes

A training evaluation is an in-depth assessment to determine whether a project or program has achieved its objectives or not. Managers and trainers must consider it before training has occurred. The information gained from the training design process is valuable for evaluating the training. The evaluation process should begin with determining training needs. It helps to identify what knowledge, skills, behavior, or other learned capabilities are needed. The evaluation also helps identify where training is expected to impact. The evaluation results encourage all stakeholders in the training process, including managers, employees, and trainers, to design or choose the training that helps the organization meet its business strategy and helps managers and employees meet their goals.

Why is training evaluation important?

1. To understand achievements or their lack: An assessment helps evaluate the learning during or at the end of an instructional journey by comparing it against some standard or benchmark. It allows the learners to be actively involved in their education and helps them identify goals to move them forward. It also helps the instructors refine their instruction plans.
2. In improving accountability: Evaluations not only keep learners interested in the curriculum but can also provide instructional designers with information on the effectiveness of the course, potential learning gaps, and learning outcomes.
3. In generating knowledge: Evaluation is crucial for improving knowledge, skills, and understanding and is a significant factor in motivating learning. The information allows for better communication, which is essential for public relations. It demonstrates the progress and success of the program overall (Learning Everest, 2024).

The questions of this research are according to Donald Kirkpatrick's Four Levels:

Research Question One

For Level One - Reaction, the question is, "How did the participants feel about the training program?" It refers to the reaction of participants towards the training program. The evaluation at this level measures how the learners react to the training. This level is often measured with attitude questionnaires that are passed out after most training classes. Kirkpatrick (1996) wrote, *"Reaction may best be considered as how well the trainees liked a particular training program*." However, the less relevant the learning package is to a learner, the more effort must be put into the design and presentation.

Research Question Two

For Level Two-Learning, the question is "To what extent did participants improve knowledge and skills and change attitudes as a result of the training program?" or **"**How much change in attitude and improvement in knowledge and skill is due to training? This is the extent to which participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and increase skills due to participating in the learning process. Measuring the learning that takes place in a training program is important to validate the learning objectives. Evaluating the learning that has taken place typically focuses on questions such as: What knowledge was acquired? What skills were developed or enhanced? What attitudes were changed?

Research Question Three

For Level Three - Behavior, the question is, "To what extent did participants change their behavior back in the workplace as a result of the training program?" Or "How much change in the behavior of the participants (in their workplace) is due to training?". This evaluation involves testing the students' capabilities to perform learned skills while on the job rather than in the classroom. It determines if the correct performance is now occurring by answering the question, "Do people use their newly acquired learnings on the job?" It is important to measure performance because the primary purpose of training is to improve results by having the students learn new skills and knowledge and then actually applying them to the job. Learning new skills and knowledge is no good to an organization unless the participants use them in their work activities. Since level-three measurements must take place after the learners have returned to their jobs, the actual Level-three measurements will typically involve someone closely involved with the learner, such as a supervisor/teacher.

Research Question Four

For Level Four - Results, the question is "What organizations' benefits resulted from the training?" or "What kind of benefits to the organization were due to training?" It measures the training program's effectiveness: "What impact has the training achieved?" Impact informs you of the *return* the organization receives from the training. Decision-makers prefer this. As we move from level one to level four, the evaluation process becomes more difficult and time-consuming. However, the higher levels provide information that is of increasingly significant value. The first three levels give you information for improving the learning package. While the fourth level gives you the returns for investing in the learning process (Kirkpatrick, 2008).

3.4 Research Design

According to Torres (2005), the questionnaire is probably the most common form of evaluating training programs. Questionnaires to evaluate the reactions of training participants can be developed through the five steps:

Step 1: Determine what we want to find out

Step 2: Select the type(s) of questions

Step 3: Design the questionnaire

Step 4: Pretest the questionnaire

Step 5: Finalize the questionnaire

Step 1: Determine what we want to find out

The first step in questionnaire design is to determine the information we would like to collect. This largely depends on the evaluation's purposes. The following are some common types of information we may want to ask participants.

- Contents: Was the content appropriate?
- Materials: Were the materials useful?
- Teaching method: Was the teaching method appropriate?
- Trainer/Facilitator: Was the trainer/facilitator effective?
- Motivation to learn: Were you motivated to learn the contents?
- Program relevance: Was the program relevant to your needs?
- Level of understanding: Did you understand the contents?
- Time: Was the time and length of the program appropriate?
- Length: Was the program length appropriate?
- Facilities: Were the training facilities appropriate?
- Overall evaluation: What is your overall rating of the program?
- Planned improvements: How will you apply what you have learned?

Questions are developed later, but it might be useful to develop this information in outline form so that related questions can be grouped.

Step 2: Select the type(s) of questions

The second step in questionnaire design is to select the type(s) of questions. Questions that might be asked in a questionnaire can be classified into two major categories: open-ended and close-ended.

Open-ended questions have an unlimited answer. The question is followed by a blank space for response. Open-ended questions allow participants to express their thoughts. They produce a variety of answersand are more difficult to analyze.

On the other hand, **close-ended questions** ask respondents to select one or multiple responses from the list.

Step 3: Design the questionnaire

The third step in questionnaire design is to develop the questions based on the **types of questions** planned and the **types of information** needed.

Good Questions

Good questions are simple, short, specific, and straightforward in order to avoid confusing respondents, or leading respondents to a desired response.

Well-designed Questionnaires

Well-designed questionnaires are easy to understand and answer to encourage respondents to complete the questionnaires and also make few mistakes when doing so.

Step 4: Pretest the questionnaire

The fourth step in questionnaire design is to test the questions. It is ideal if the prepared questions can be tested on a sample group of participants. If this is not feasible, they can be tested on a group of people at approximately the same job level as the participants.

The following are some of the points to be checked when pre-testing the questionnaire.

- Does he/she understand all the questions?
- Does he/she have any difficulty in answeringthe questions?
- Do all close-ended questions have an answer applicable to each respondent?
- Are the skip patterns followed correctly?
- Does any part of the questionnaire suggest bias on your part?
- Does the questionnaire create a positive impression to motivate peopleto respond?

Step 5: Finalize the questionnaire

Check the pretest result in Step 4 and finalize the questionnaire forms.

For sample questionnaire forms, please refer to Appendix 1.

This research will be broken down into ten main parts:

1. Construct and prepare the questionnaires and surveys that will be used for collecting the data.
2. Plan and prepare the training sessions that will be the foundation of the research.
3. Assemble a pilot study group, have the members sign the voluntary participation forms, and run the pilot study. The aim will be to find and reduce errors in the surveys and training used in the primary research and gained from pilot group feedback. Then the final objective will be to find a model that best fits the data.
4. Select the participants who will be asked if they would like to participate in the study through random sampling.
5. Explain the study's objective and have participants sign the voluntary consent forms.

6. Break the participants into manageable training groups and have the participants fill in the inventory survey, demographic questionnaire, and engagement level questionnaire.
7. Conduct the three training sessions and have participants fill in the training evaluation survey at the end of each session.
8. Once all training is complete, have the participants fill out the engagement level questionnaire again.
9. Begin data cleaning, structuring, analysis, and modeling.
10. The final stage will be to document the findings, finalize the dissertation and present the results to the companies involved in the research (Torres, R. T., et al. 2005)..

The Pilot Study

To conduct this study, a survey instrument was used to collect primary data. This instrument was a standardized and well-structured questionnaire used to collect primary data and information from the employees of Mina Catering Vietnam. Immediately after its design, the instrument was tested and proved to be reliable.

A pilot test of the survey questionnaire was conducted to obtain an initial assessment of the instrument's validity. The questionnaires were distributed to 10 employees for pilot testing to collect primary data; the results of the pilot study demonstrated the questionnaire's internal reliability, and therefore, this questionnaire was used throughout the study to collect primary data from employees.

As recommended by Lackey et al. (1997), the study should include a small pilot study to look for methodological flaws. In this pilot study, all the main components, such as the instrument, instructions, and data recording form, should be included, and participants who are assured of confidentiality and anonymity should be included.

By conducting a pilot study, flaws can be found without the large investment of time or money to find and try to fix them, which can happen on a much larger scale in a main study. However, because a pilot study is much smaller than a main study, it may not reveal all the flaws. Additionally, because the participants in the pilot study should not be included in the main study, this may reduce the potential population for the pivotal study. However, knowing these disadvantages, a pilot study should be conducted if the researcher is not experienced with the tools and methods being used with a particular population. Conversely, if the researcher is experienced, a pilot study may not be necessary (Lackey et al., 1998).

The population of this pilot study were ten volunteer participants drawn from the Mina 5 branch who attended the MBB 2-2023 course scheduled on 4 Saturdays from October 07 to October 28, 2023. They were asked if they wanted to participate and then filled out a volunteer and confidentiality agreement form. Participants were then provided with the same instruments and questionnaires that will be used in the main study. First, the pilot study participants received a demographic, course feedback, and skills acquisition survey. During a meeting, they were instructed and explained how and when to perform these tasks. At the end of the course, they filled out a course evaluation and assessment questionnaire and took a mini-skills test, all of which were the same instruments and procedures as the main study.

This mixed-method research will use two training topics on one branch of Mina Catering. As previously stated, two training topics will be discussed, one in a lecture and one in an integrative style. Descriptive and inferential statistics will both be used in this research. This will be accomplished by gathering and running statistical analysis collected from the questionnaires and quizzes, describing the findings, and outlining the trends that can be seen. Applying the same training methods and procedures among four branches and conducting inferential statistics will allow the outcomes to be generalizable to the overall population and replicated by other researchers.

Before the training, participants will fill out a questionnaire. This will then be filled out again at the end of the training. The purpose of doing this once before the training is to get a baseline engagement level and, ultimately, to gather data on any potential change in the participant engagement levels. Before the start of training, the participants will also fillout a demographic questionnaire to gather details such as age, education level, gender, and marital status, allowing the collection of participants' general characteristics and potential patterns. Finally, the participants will also fill out the

After each training course, the group will take a quiz on the material taught to establish training retention. The participants will then fill out a training evaluation questionnaire similar to the evaluation training questionnaire done by Kirkpatrick and Craig (1970). This will provide valuable data on the participant's feelings about the training method delivery and structure. In addition, the training effect survey will be used to help validate the findings gathered from the engagement level surveys. Additionally, observations and unstructured interviews will be conducted during and directly after the three training programs to collect qualitative data. Finally, the participants will answer three open-ended questions focused on the training session preference, why they liked a particular style more than another, and if they felt that preference would lead to them participating and enjoying training more.

Before the research volunteers fill out the questionnaires, a small test group of participants from the business who are not included in the primary research will be used for a pilot study group. The attendants in the pilot and main study will be given the questionnaires and participate in one of the three training sessions for instruction of the survey. The purpose is to ensure that the questionnaires are easy to fill out accurately, are error-free, and produce the results needed, coding procedures are tested for uploading onto the software, and the best fitting model is used.

The research study used a mixed method. Participants were given the demographic questionnaires. The first training was the theory and practice approach course, where the participants completed a course evaluation and end-of-course quiz. Observations were noted during this training, and practical activities were conducted upon completion. Also, as mentioned, unstructured questions, observations, and unstructured and informal meetings were conducted during and between each course. The total time from start to finish for the participant's involvement in the study was four weeks, with one week between each of the three courses and one week between the last course and the final questionnaires.

The managers of participants were asked to give feedback on the performance of participants 3 months after the course finished. Effective performance forms the backbone of a successful training course. A critical element of this process is the provision of feedback during performance reviews, which directly influences an employee's productivity, job satisfaction, and professional growth. Specific and personal feedback plays a pivotal role in this scenario. It assists in clearly displaying what an employee is doing well and where they can improve, fostering a culture of continuous learning and development.

3.5 Population and Sample

We used the Mina Better Behavior (MBB) training course as an evaluation sample. This is a self-organized soft skills training program. This program's MBB 1-2024 course is scheduled on 4 Saturdays from January 06 to January 27, 2024. The evaluation took place at Minh Nam Trades & Service Limited Company under the brand name Mina Catering which is a pioneer of the Catering industry in VietNam, specializing in providing comprehensive and optimized solutions for the needs of the collective food service and beverages for the schools, offices, organizations and enterprises in various industries in Vietnam.

The business is currently experiencing exponential growth and needs staff /leaders who can adapt to this dynamic environment and meet both the needs of employees and the demands of the business environment. The program was established to support the employees /functional heads of the company and to assist them in developing both as individuals and as team leaders capable of leading the business into the future. Mina Restaurant, one of the branches of the company, located in Quang Trung Software City, 15 miles Southwest of Ho Chi Minh City center, was chosen as the site for the pilot program

This soft skill training course aims to empower employees with effective communication skills to create a thriving workplace. Without good communication skills in the workplace, co-workers will experience frustration, poor performance, missed opportunities, and team conflict. The company organized this program and has since experienced a happier work environment where people feel valued. The Mina Better Behavior training program will help the staff listen more actively, build more positive relationships, and communicate with each other clearly and respectfully.

To take it a step further, specifically for a manager, building good communication skills has profound short—and long-term benefits for the organization. An effective communicator can motivate their team to get more done with better results and fewer misunderstandings.

3.6 Participation selection

Pilot Study Group

As well as the research participants, ten members not included in the primary study will be selected as a pilot study team, as mentioned earlier. This test team will be chosen from Mina 5. These members were selected because they either did nothave the time to be involved in the primary study or were part of the members teaching thetraining courses to be run in the primary research. Also, four members were chosen to provide enough data to test the tools and statistical model while not using too many test members, limiting the primary study's available participants.

The surveys will be administered to these ten participants, followed by the engagement level questionnaire, course evaluation survey, and a small skill test. Due to the time constraints and availability of the test team, the pilot study team will not be included in the lecture-based training or integrative training.

A pilot test of the survey questionnaire was conducted to get the initial assessment of the validity of this instrument. The questionnaires were distributed among 10 employees for the pilot test in order to collect the primary data; the results of the pilot study proved the internal reliability of the questionnaire, and therefore, this questionnaire was used throughout the study for the collection of the primary data from the employees of the organization.

The purpose of using this team is to test the accuracy, legibility, and ease of use of the surveys and the statistical model intended to be used in the primary study. In addition, by performing this pilot study, potential errors and complications can be workedout before conducting the primary research, ensuring accuracy and reducing the time required to fix the mistakes in the leading study group while also understanding that this pilot study may not eliminate all errors. Junyong (2017) stated obtaining high-quality research outcomes is paramount. To accomplish this, analyzing and performing a pilot study before the main study can be very beneficial. Furthermore, by conducting a pilot study, researchers become better aware of procedures used for the primary research and make changes or corrections, which aids them in selecting the most optimal methods for answering the research questions in the main study.

Main Study Group

According to the information gathered from the Mina Better Behavior (MBB) program organizer, the total Mina Catering population in 4 chosen branches was 143 employees. The MBB 1-2024 course is scheduled on 4 Saturdays from January 06 to January 27, 2024. It planned to recruit 54 participants in 4 branches: 15 in Mina 1, 16 in Mina 2, 11 in Mina 3, and 12 in Mina 4, which is 38% total population. The number registered for the course is 49, which is 34% of the total population. After the first training session, three more members dropped out of the study due to time constraints, bringing the population down to 46 members, the total remaining 46 were reached out to see who was interested in volunteering to participate in the research study, dropping the research participantssample size to 32%.

3.7 Instrumentation

In this research, the instruments used to collect the participant data will be structured questionnaires, observations, and references to company data. As stated by Bird (2009), questionnaires give the ability to have all the data in the same format, which means that all the questions are asked of the whole population of participants in the same way, making the collected data comparable within the data set. Questionnaires are also great in social sciences and are a well-established tool as they givethe ability to collect data on participant characteristics, behavior, attitudes, beliefs, and reasons for actions taken specifically to the research topic being investigated (Bird, 2009). Furthermore, according to Geer (1988), open-ended questions measure participants' attitudes rather than just their ability to articulate a response.

In the case of this research, the questionnaires are purposely structured to gain the best insights and baseline. For example, a demographic survey will be structured similarly to the guidelines explained in the research conducted by Hughes, Camden, and Yangchen (2016). In their study, they explained the importance of using updated demographic questions, which they felt were necessary for ethical and professional reasons, to ensure inclusion and help advance diversity in research, and for research integrity reasons. They also stated that demographic questions must be included in almost every social science research to accurately describe the sample (Hughes et al., 2016).

The Likert style's advantage is its simplicity and versatility. It also strikes a compromise between offering enough choice to the respondent and making things manageable (Johns, 2010). Johns (2010) also noted that research confirms that surveys with answers less than five or above seven become significantly less accurate.

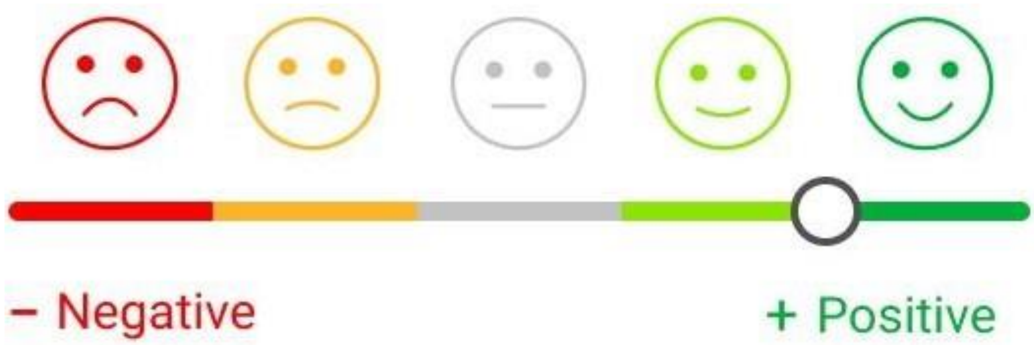
After all the training, the participants will do another questionnaire. The aim and reason for conducting a second is to report any changes in engagement that may have been gained from thetraining. This research instrument, along with the training evaluation form, open-ended questions, observations, and unstructured interviews, will provide feedback from the participants on the training structure, delivery, and preference for each type of training. The results will then help verify if the participant's personality style based on the inventory questionnaire aligns with their preferences.

Likert Scale

A Likert Scale is a psychometric scale commonly used in research using questionnaires. It’s the most widely used approach to scaling responses in survey research. Although there are other types, it is often used interchangeably with *rating scales*. The scale is named after its inventor, psychologist Rensis Likert.

A Likert Scale measures attitudes or opinions on a range of levels. It is widely used in surveys to gauge respondent sentiment. Likert items typically present a statement and ask respondents to rate their level of agreement or disagreement. Responses are usually on a scale ranging from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree.” Researchers often analyze Likert Scale data to understand trends or patterns in attitudes within a population.

Figure 3: 5-point Likert scale



5-point Likert Scale

The 5-point Likert scale in survey research shines when measuring attitudes, opinions, or behaviors. Participants express their agreement/disagreement on a 5-point scale, often worded as "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," with a neutral center option. This structured approach enables researchers to quantify subjective feedback, providing insights into the strength of sentiments. Its straightforwardness and adaptability render it widely favored for assessing diverse perspectives, whether in evaluating customer satisfaction or understanding employee perceptions. Let us look at how you can conduct a 5-point Likert scale analysis.

Likert Scales offer a structured way to gather subjective data. Researchers assign numerical values to responses, facilitating quantitative analysis. However, interpretation requires caution, as responses may be influenced by various factors.

Despite limitations, Likert Scales remain popular due to their simplicity and versatility in capturing diverse viewpoints.

A Likert Scale provides a systematic approach to measure attitudes or opinions. Its straightforward design facilitates data collection and analysis, making it a valuable research and survey methodology tool.

Understanding its principles and application can enhance the effectiveness of gathering and interpreting subjective data (ChartExpo Content Team, 2024).

Write Effective Likert Scale Survey Questions.

Honestly, getting people to commit to a decision is like pulling teeth. However, with a Likert scale, you can make your survey enticing and easy to respond to. Follow these best practices for using the Likert scale:

1. Keep it Clear and Concise

When crafting Likert scale questions, clarity is key. Use simple language that is easy for respondents to understand. Keep the question brief and concise, avoiding any unnecessary jargon or complex terminology. For example, instead of asking, "To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement provided?" opt for a more straightforward approach like, "Please indicate how much you agree with the following statement."

2. Avoid Double-Barreled Questions

Double-barreled questions can confuse respondents and lead to inaccurate data. These questions address multiple issues but only allow for a single response. To avoid this, focus on one specific topic per question. For example, instead of asking, "Do you find the website easy to navigate and visually appealing?" separate it into two questions: "Do you find the website easy to navigate?" and "Do you find the website visually appealing?"

3. Pilot Test Your Questions

Before administering your survey, pilot test your Likert scale questions with a small group of individuals to identify any potential issues or areas for improvement. Pay attention to how respondents interpret and respond to the questions, and make adjustments as necessary to ensure clarity and accuracy. Remember to pretest the survey with a small sample of respondents to identify any issues with wording, clarity, or comprehensibility. Respondents are presented with statements or questions and are asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement. Each option is assigned a numerical value, which can then be analyzed to understand people's perspectives on the topic.

Different Types of Likert Scales

Likert scales vary in the number of response options they offer, such as 3-point, 5-point, 7-point, or even 10-point scales. The choice of scale depends on the complexity of the topic and the level of detail needed in the responses. Examples of Likert scales with different numbers of response options:

- 3-point Likert scale:
    - Agree
    - Neutral
    - Disagree
- 5-point Likert scale:
    - Strongly Agree
    - Agree
    - Neutral

    - Disagree
    - Strongly Disagree
- 7-point Likert scale:
    - Strongly Approve
    - Approve
    - Somewhat Approve
    - Neutral
    - Somewhat Disapprove
    - Disapprove
    - Strongly Disapprove

Create a Likert Scale

To create a Likert scale, start by defining the statements or questions you want to ask. Then, determine the number of response options and their labels. Ensure that the scale is balanced and captures the full range of opinions. Likert scale labels are the descriptors associated with each response option, such as “Strongly Disagree” or “Strongly Agree.” These labels help respondents understand the meaning of each option.

5 Point Likert Scale Analysis and Interpretation

The 5-Point Likert Scale Analysis method in the above example is easy to understand. Your respondents should actively participate in it. The logical step after that is to conduct a 5-point Likert scale interpretation. We will apply the “Mode” method to deepen our grasp of interpreting a 5-point Likert scale analysis.

Steps in 5-point Likert Scale Interpretation

Follow the instructions carefully to accomplish your 5-point Likert scale interpretation. You must allocate numbers on your scale from 1 to 5. Depending on your ranking, you can set 1 as “very poor” and 5 as “excellent.” Next, create a table with your findings. You can use headings on both axes to label your table.

Ensure your ratings are on the opposite side of the table from your survey questions’ axis. This will help make your Likert scale scoring and interpretation more straightforward. Next, indicate how many times each rating appears. When you calculate the average rating, you can obtain the highest occurring number. You can accomplish your 5-point Likert scale range interpretation with the logical steps. We have thus far discussed point scales and the characteristics of the 5-point scale. We have also learned more about Likert scale scoring and interpretation. What 5-point scale is appropriate for our survey and Likert data? In the blog’s next section, we shall decide which one of the 5-point Likert scale examples is best for our Likert survey.

5-point Rating Scale Examples and Use Cases

Various five-point Likert rating examples exist, which include:

- 5-point scales that measure the frequency.
- 5-point scales that measure the satisfaction rate
- 5-point scales that measure agreement.
- 5-point scales that measure importance, likelihood, and quality.

A *5-point Likert scale scoring that measures satisfaction* will appear:

Were you satisfied with the appetizer we served at the event?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

One of the *5-point rating scale examples that measures agreement* will appear as shown.

Q: It was easy to locate the venue of the event.

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

We hope that you are still following so far.

Let us see one of the *5-point rating scale examples that measure quality*, as shown below.

Q: How was the room service quality at the hotel?

- Very poor
- Poor
- Average

- Good
- Excellent

All these examples comprise what is a 5-point rating scale. We are attempting to sample viewpoints from various people using the 5-point rating scale examples to gather helpful information. You can learn more about your respondents' thoughts by asking them to rate things on a 5-point scale. This will assist you in determining the best course of action for your company's needs. Understanding what your clients are thinking is crucial for business success. It will assist you to improve when providing your services.

It is essential to ask inquiries to understand what thoughts your customers have. You will get the answers you need from the clients. Interpreting the data using a 5-point Likert scale will assist you in taking appropriate action. The responses you gather from the respondents will provide the information you need for your 5-point Likert scale interpretation.

The following will summarize your example of using a Likert scale to analyze the survey data:

- Based on your statistics, what were the respondents' responses?
- Try to identify the majority opinion.
- Undertaking the necessary measures.

Always remember that conducting a 5-point Likert Scale analysis is similar to resolving a complex mathematical problem. When you look at the example of the Likert scale data analysis we provided above, try to visualize sampling the opinions of approximately 500 employees or 1000 consumers. Ensure accuracy in your five-point Likert Scale analysis. It can require a lot of effort and focus. As a businessperson, performing a Likert scale analysis attempts to save you time and energy.

You will have a ton of information on your desk once you have 1000 consumers to interview for responses. Unfortunately, you can lose attention, and your data analysis will not have accomplished its goal. In such a case, you must find a way to carry out the three 5-point Likert scale analysis steps quickly.

Let us examine the pros and cons of a 5-point rating scale.

Advantages of Using 5-Point Likert Scale Analysis

The 5-point Likert scale is not just another survey tool. It offers a powerful set of benefits for researchers and survey designers. Here is a closer look:

- **Nuanced Responses:** Unlike yes/no choices, the 5-point scale lets people express their true feelings. They can say they strongly agree, slightly disagree or fall somewhere in between, giving a richer understanding of their views.
- **Simplicity for Participants:** The scale is simple to understand, making it perfect for participants with no survey experience. This reduces confusion and leads to more reliable data.
- **Improved Response Rates:** The ease of answering questions with a Likert scale can encourage people to complete the entire survey, boosting response rates.
- **Quantitative Analysis:** Likert scale answers turn into numbers for easy analysis, helping researchers find patterns and average responses.
- **Comparison Across Studies:** Since the Likert scale is a widely used tool, studies employing it can be easily compared, fostering a broader understanding of a topic.

Disadvantages of Using 5-Point Likert Scale Analysis

Despite its numerous advantages, it is essential to recognize the limitations of the 5-point Likert scale. Here are some drawbacks to consider:

- **Limited Nuance:** While offering more options than yes/no, a 5-point scale might not capture the full spectrum of opinions. People might feel their views fall between two points.
- **Social Desirability Bias:** Individuals might select responses they deem socially acceptable, rather than conveying their authentic emotions.
- **Accuracy Alert:** The secret to reliable data from your Likert scale lies in clear, unbiased wording for both questions and answer choices. Ambiguous phrasing leads to misunderstandings and skewed results.
- **Wording Issues:** Crystal clear questions and answer choices are essential for accurate data in Likert scale surveys. Fuzzy wording can cause people to misinterpret the questions.

Wrap Up

Likert scale surveys are used in various fields, including psychology, market research, and customer satisfaction studies. They provide valuable insights into people's attitudes, preferences, and behaviors. The Likert Scale gives you a simple way to understand complex opinions. It turns feelings into numbers we can study. The options from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" show us the shades of human thought.

Likert Scales are everywhere. They help in business, health, and even personal growth. They make the silent voices loud and clear. We discover truths that guide us forward when we ask the right questions. However, it is not just about asking. It is about listening. Every tick on a scale tells a story. It is our job to piece these stories together. To find patterns. To see beyond the numbers.

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

Data collected in social science is done in several different ways. For example, in a quantitative research method, data is typically collected in one of two ways. First are through experiments or quasi-experiments, which are used because they usually involve a research design that allows strong but casual inferences. The second method is through surveys using a structured questionnaire which is an excellent tool as it typically consists of collecting data on a large number of variables from a large and representative sample of participants (Hox & Boeije, 2005). These techniques use either primary data, original data collected for the research, or secondary data, collected from past research (Hox & Boeije, 2005).

In a qualitative research method, structured and semi-structured interviews are the most frequently used tools (Harris & Brown, 2010). Qualitative research seeks to understand how people experience different events, places, and processes. Interviews can be used to explain and interpret quantitative research results and provide exploratory data that are later developed by quantitative research (Curran et al., 2014). As McGuirk and O'Neill (2016) describe, open-ended questionnaires are another qualitative tool used in human geography. They can provide insights into social trends, processes, values, attitudes, and interpretations. These open-ended questionnaires are a more practical research tool as they can be cost-effective, such as online distributed surveys, reducing paper costs and waste.

In mixed-method research, combinations of qualitative and quantitative tools are used. In social science research, no single data collection methodis ideal because each method has strengths and weaknesses. Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in research design and data collection should be considered whenever possible because it improves the validity and reliability of the resulting data (Abowitz & Toole, 2010).

In most cases, the data will be displayed in overall group findings rather than as one specific participant. In addition, for the open-ended questions, the particular participants will not be shown, which will aid in maintaining high confidentiality. Also,in line with these steps to keep confidentiality, the same attention will be taken to changing industry or company-specific terms, which, if not changed, could help identify a specific company.

Before commencing the full-scale research study, ten members of Mina 5 will complete a pilot study, which will not be a part of the full-scale research. Pilot studies are a crucial element of a good study design, but conducting a pilot study does not guarantee success in the main study; it does, though, increase the likelihoodof success (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). The pilot group will receive the same questionnaires as the full-scale study participants. This group, similar to the primary study group, will all be volunteers, fill out a volunteer form, and the same attention to confidentiality used in the primary study groupwill be used in this group

One of the primary advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it can provide information about where the research project could fail. For example, it can show what potential research protocol areas are not being followed. As stated by Teijlingen and Hundley(2001), if the selected research methods and instruments are inappropriate or too complicated to effectively and accurately run and display the data, which can be shown through overfitting and underfitting the data to a model, thus providing unreliable information. However, some limitations must be considered, and work must be done to limit them. One limitation is that a pilot study does not guarantee success in full-scale research. For example, suppose the pilot study data is included in the main full-scale study. In that case, it can contaminate the data results, another example is when the pilot study participants are included in the full-scale study, but new data is collected from them (Teijlingen & Hundley, 2001). Therefore, to help reduce potential limitations, the data collected and participants will not be included in the full-scale study. The primary purpose of the pilot study in this research will be to test the surveys, data collection procedure, and statistical model intended to be used, as well as make corrections or changes as needed to gain the best insights for the study.

3.9 Data Analysis

Employing the ideas presented so far will allow you to gather a robust data set containing both quantitative and qualitative items. The next step is to analyze the data and take appropriate action. If you are following the recommendations, you already realize that you do not want to wait until after the program is complete to gather data and then wait further to analyze it and see what happens. Instead, you want to gather and analyze data along the way so that instead of measuring what happened, you can influence what happens and maximize current and future program results.

As you begin to amass a sizable data set during implementation, keep in mind the program's goals and the plan set at the beginning. Be discerning as to which data are useful to you and will create credibility in the eyes of your stakeholders. A key data analysis concept to remember is the “signal-to-noise ratio.” Imagine people huddled around an old Victrola radio in the 1940s to hear the voice of Franklin Roosevelt or Winston Churchill. Picture a dad with his ear to the speaker, gently moving the dial to get the clearest signal with the least possible background noise and static. In our current information age, the signal-to-noise ratio is high because there is such easy access to a large amount of evaluation data, mostly at Levels 1 and 2. The key is to filter out the noise, the data that are neither useful to you nor important to your stakeholders, so that you are left with just the signal. These data assist you in making good decisions and showing the value of the initiative to your stakeholders.

Three Key Data Analysis Questions

As you gather formative and summative data during program implementation, ask and get answers to these three key questions:

1. Does . . . meet expectations?
2. If not, why not?
3. If so, why?

Does . . . Meet Expectations?

The first question to ask is, “Does the level of... meet expectations?” This question can and should be asked when evaluating the data collected at each of the four levels (Table 12-1).

The range of acceptable expectations is largely determined by the training department for Levels 1 and 2. By definition, critical behaviors are expected to be performed consistently for Level 3. Expectations for program outcomes in the form of leading indicators, shown in Level 4, should have been defined during the program planning phase, and they are unique to each program.

Organizations that wish to benchmark to determine whether their performance is acceptable can consider internal benchmarking and competing against themselves for continual improvement. It is also possible that specific target metrics cannot realistically be determined upfront. In that case, it would be prudent to make an educated guess and then use some pilot data to fine-tune expectations.

There is no need to make this complicated. For each level, you simply ask yourself if the data you collected indicates that you have or have not met the requirements for each component.

If Not, Why Not?

As the program progresses and you analyze related data, it is likely that the outcomes for at least one component will not meet the expectations. If they do not, you need to identify and correct the issue before the targeted results are jeopardized. Data analysis resources should be focused on Levels 3 and 4, much the same way that overall program resources should be allocated to favor these more important levels. However, this process also works well for Levels 1 and 2.

Data Analysis During a Training Program

Streamline analysis at Levels 1 and 2 by having trainers conduct analysis formatively as they teach the program. For example, they can mentally assess if the level of interaction during the program meets their expectations based on their experience. If it doesn't, they can conduct a pulse check, in which they stop teaching momentarily and ask the class open-ended questions to determine if there is something inhibiting participation. For example, "I see some confused looks out there. What thoughts do you have?"

Level 1: Reaction

Does participant engagement during the program meet expectations?

Does the relevance of the program to participant job responsibilities meet expectations?

Does participant satisfaction with the program meet expectations?

Level 2: Learning

Does participant knowledge obtained/demonstrated during the program meet expectations?

Does participant skill demonstrated during the program meet expectations?

Does the participant's attitude about performing new skills on the job meet expectations?

Does participant confidence to apply knowledge and skills on the job meet expectations?

Does the participant's commitment to applying knowledge and skills on the job meet expectations?

Level 3: Behavior

Does the performance of (insert critical behavior) on the job meet expectations?

Does the level of on-the-job learning meet expectations? Required Drivers

Does the quality and amount of performance monitoring meet expectations?

Does reinforcement of critical behaviors meet expectations?

Does encouragement to perform critical behaviors meet expectations?

Does the alignment of reward systems and performance of critical behaviors meet expectations?

Level 4: Results

Does the movement of (insert leading indicator) meet expectations?

Does the movement of (insert desired outcomes) meet expectations?

Data Analysis After the Training Program

After training, the data analysis process continues and becomes arguably more critical as on-the-job performance is monitored for acceptable levels. When monitoring Level 3, it is uncommon for a single variable to cause substandard performance. As a learning and performance consultant, at this stage, you can help uncover workplace performance barriers and participate in creating solutions.

This underscores the importance of creating a good post-training plan; if you do not have monitoring methods lined up in advance, getting and responding to the data will be awkward or even impossible. Here are a few examples of how to identify possible root causes of substandard data.

Depending upon the culture in your organization, being a learning and performance consultant may require some courage. Some stakeholders may be less than enthusiastic to hear your bad news as you share that the implementation is off track, even if you have suggestions to get it back on target. Some managers or supervisors may tell you to "go back to where you belong."

When Wendy worked for a large corporation, a sales manager once asked her what she was doing, poking around trying to get sales statistics from a sales rep. This is not uncommon, and if your organization does not already have a culture of business partnership, it will likely happen to you, too.

It is important to remember that your job is to first seek the truth through assessment and analysis. Then, you need to speak the truth about the suspected root causes and recommend interventions to remedy the situation. In the long run, truth leads to trust.

Linda Hainlen, a former training director for a large healthcare organization, reported that her team gained the most respect from stakeholders when they shared the identified barriers to implementation and what they did to resolve them. She said that if all she did were paint a picture that everything was perfect, they would not really believe that was the case and would not trust her as much.

Timely, proactive data analysis and response maximize program outcomes because issues are revealed and addressed when there is still time to fix them. There is much less value in measuring and reporting what happened after an initiative is over; this only serves to document the program outcomes and, in the best case, generate ideas to enhance future initiatives.

If So, Why?

Ideally, when you probe to find out if various program outcomes are meeting expectations, sometimes the answer will be “yes.” If this is the case, study these pockets of success to see if they can be propagated, expanded, publicized, or celebrated.

Propagating Positive Findings From the Training Program

The instructor may experience an enthusiastic, engaged participant group during the training program. If so, it might be appropriate to say, “All of a sudden the room seems to have come to life. Would you kindly share where you think that might have come from?”

The training department can review these Levels 1 and 2 findings to continually improve the quality of future programs. As a bonus, little or no time from training participants and business stakeholders is required for this analysis at Levels 1 and 2.

Propagating Positive Findings on the Job

Sometimes, program success is linked directly to certain training graduates who perform better than others on the job. We call these individuals Bright Lights because they embody success and inspire and lead the way for others. Identify these Bright Lights, capture what they do that is successful, and then identify" what factors have contributed to their success."

Much like with barriers to implementation, successful implementation is typically the result of multiple success factors, rather than just one. When you are trying to capture these success factors, do not rely on surveys alone. Surveys may indicate where to begin looking for success factors, but ultimately, to get a complete picture, you will need to talk to training graduates, their supervisors, and possibly their peers and customers.

Once these success factors have been identified, you may be able to add them to a learning and performance architecture as items that tend to drive success in your organization. This package can then both predict and maximize future mission-critical program outcomes (Kirkpatrick D. L. 1959).

3.10 Research Design Limitations

Training and performance improvement practitioners wanting to evaluate their success have struggled for decades with the seemingly intractable issue that "other factors" are always at work with training. In a sales training program, for example, we might see an increase in sales or not. How do we know whether the training led to increased sales or not? Maybe it was some other factor, such as a change in the market, a new incentive to sell more, or something else. Training alone does not produce results. Several non-training factors always enable or impede successful results from the training. Supervisory support, incentives, opportunities to try out learning, and the timing of the training, to name a few, are examples of the sorts of non-training or performance system factors that determine whether and how well training works to improve performance.

Using the Success Case Method to Drive Performance and Results

A corollary of this reality is that when training works or does not work, non-training factors most often account for more of the success or failure than features and elements of the training intervention or program itself.

This second reality of training evaluation strongly suggests that most—potentially 80 percent or more — of the failures of training to achieve results are not caused by flawed training interventions but rather by contextual and performance system factors that were not aligned with or were otherwise at odds with the intended performance outcomes of the training. Thus, when we evaluate "training" impact, we are most often, in reality, evaluating an organization's performance management system. This fact is nothing new. We have known for years that the major reason for the failure of training to achieve impact is that training readiness and performance support factors were never adequately developed or implemented. Most evaluation models and methods have attempted to cope with this reality by trying to isolate the training-related causes.

In common practice, this reality is often dealt with by avoiding and evaluating only the training itself, asking whether it appeared useful in the eyes of participants, and sometimes going so far as to measure whether people learned anything. However, going beyond this to measure the application of learning has typically not been very productive. First, surveys of learning applications produce discouraging results, showing predictably that most trainees have not used or sustained use of their learning. Second, when we discover that most trainees are not using their learning in sustained performance, there is little we can do with this information because trying to improve the rate of application by improving the training program itself will not yield concomitant improvements in applying learning on the job. On the other hand, the SCM does not attempt to “parcel out” or otherwise isolate the training-related causes or make any training-specific causal claims (Kirkpatrick D. L. 1959).

3.11 Conclusion

Do not wait until after a program is complete to gather data, and then wait further to analyze it and see what happens. Instead, you want to gather and analyze data along the way so that instead of measuring what happened, you can influence what happens and maximize current and future program results.

As you begin to amass a sizable data set during implementation, be discerning which data are useful to you and will create credibility in the eyes of your stakeholders.

First, compare current data to predetermined expectations. If data indicate that ex-expectations are not being met, search for the causes of the problems, address, and correct them, and get the program back on track. If outcomes are meeting expectations, communicate early successes to keep everyone motivated toward the ultimate goal, and consider how to leverage success factors in future programs.

Systematic data analysis and response will increase the success of the current program and provide the tools to maximize the outcomes of all future mission-critical initiatives.

CHAPTER IV:

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, a complete methodology breakdown was done, including the research design, data collection instruments, research purpose, validation procedures, and the importance of this research. This chapter contains significant findings of this research study, which consist of the findings in the pilot study, demographics, and results of the primary study as the answers to the research questions.

4.2 Findings from the Pilot Study

Demographic profile of respondents

This sample respondent group consists of ten volunteers chosen from the Mina 5 branch that attended Mina Better Behavior in October 2023 (MBB 2-2023), with educational backgrounds and a mix of gender, age, marital status, and years of service. Vietnamese people are not open about marriage and gender and the company's HR department also asked us to keep the personal questions simple and not delve into private life questions. Usually, the attendants only want to answer that they are single or married. Other marital statuses are often answered dishonestly, so the researcher only gave them 3 options: single, married, and other statuses. Gender has only 3 options: male, female, and others. The group includes four males and six females, five of them aged 18–30, three aged 31–45, and 2 above 45. All members had secondary high school education; two had two years of college, and three had bachelor's degrees. Four of them were married, six were still single, and none were in another relationship. Six had under 5 years of service when two were 6-15 and two above 15. Table 1 below shows the demographic breakdown of ten members who participated in the pilot study.

Training Evaluation of Pilot Study Group

Table 1 - Demographic profile of respondents - Pilot Study

Demographic Attribute		No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	4	9%
	Female	6	13%
	Others	0	
	Total	10	
Age	18 - 30	5	11%
	31 - 45	3	7%
	Above 45	2	4%
	Total	10	
Education	High School D.	5	11%
	Undergraduate D.	2	4%
	Graduate D.	3	7%
	Total	10	
Marital	Single	4	9%
	Married	6	13%
	Other	0	0%
	Total	10	
Years of service	< 5	6	13%
	6 – 15	2	4%
	> 15	2	4%
	Total	10	

Reaction

Answers to the question given to the attendants: “How do you feel about the courses and trainers?” Respondents generally agreed that all the trainers had effectively delivered the training. As shown in Table 2, the respondents assessed the trainers against Content, Facilitator Style, and Average Skill Gained criteria. The findings showed that the mean scores for Content and Facilitator were rated very highly (i.e., above 3.9 on the 5-point Likert scale), suggesting that respondents were very satisfied with the content of the modules, the trainers’ style of facilitating, and the overall effectiveness. The findings also showed that the mean scores for Average Skill Gained were 4.16 (**83,20** %). The higher-rated trainer was Trainer A, who delivered the topic, Communication. Meanwhile, the lowest-rated trainer was Trainer B. Regarding the Average Skills Gained criteria, the findings showed that most respondents gained more knowledge from trainers A, which was 4.21 (84,10%) compared to Trainer B 4.12 (82,30%).

Table 2 -Results from the trainees’ feedback on trainers form

Number of trainees		10			
Pilot Study				1-5 points	
	Trainer	**Content**	**Facilitator**	**Aver. Skill gained**	**Percentage**
Communication	Trainer A	4,36	4,05	4,21	84,10%
Teamwork	Trainer B	3,91	4,32	4,12	82,30%
	Over All	8,27	8,37	8,32	**83,20%**

Answers to the question: “How would you describe your staff progress in the course objectives?”

Table 3 shows the respondents' reactions to the MBB 2-2023. Among the three criteria, the findings showed that the mean score on a 5-point Likert scale for the Overall Assessment criteria was 4.02, followed by Course Structure, 4.03, Learning Initiatives, 3.95, and General Administration, 4.08.

Table 3 - Results from the trainee feedback form
Pilot study

Criteria		**Item**	**Rating**	**Mean Score**
Course Structure	1	The course objectives were clearly communicated	4,1	**4,03**
	2	The course objectives were met	4,3	
	3	The duration of the course was good	3,9	
	4	The topics covered in this course were suitable in the current context	3,8	
Learning Initiatives	1	The pre-course materials helped me in the preparation for the course	3,9	**3,95**
	2	The pre-course engagement session was effective in preparation for the course	3,8	
	3	The learner development plan would help me prepare to apply the knowledge and skills to the workplace.	4,2	
	4	This course includes the learning activities (exercise, mind map, group presentation, case studies, etc.)	3,9	
General Administration	1	The course registration process was easy	3,8	**4,08**
	2	The classroom setting (e.g., flipcharts, stationeries, class layout, etc.) was suitable for this course	4,1	
	3	The facilities (e.g., accommodation, Wi-Fi, printers, laptops, etc) available in the course were good	4,3	
	4	The food served was delightful	3,9	

5	Overall organization of the event was efficient	4,3
Overall Assessment	**Satisfaction with this course**	**4,02**

Learning

Table 4 shows the scores of the pre-test and post-test of Mina participants. The post-test scores were compared with the pre-test scores to capture the percentage of learning gained. The findings showed that almost all pre-test scores (mean scores of 77.74%) improved after the participants completed the training (mean scores of 39.60%). This means that almost all participants have achieved a positive knowledge gain (mean scores of 38.13%) from the Mina Better Behaviour program. For professional reasons, pre-tests and post-tests are conducted by trainers. The researcher just observes and gets results from the course organizers.

Table 4 - Results of pre-test and post-test (Pilot Study)

Name	Post-Test Score (%)	Pre-Test Score (%)	% Gain
Trainee 01	71	42	29
Trainee 02	78	22	56
Trainee 03	80	42	38
Trainee 04	82	36	46
Trainee 05	78	49	29
Trainee 06	82	49	33
Trainee 07	78	35	43
Trainee 08	85	55	30
Trainee 09	78	18	60
Trainee 10	74	42	32
Mean Scores	**78,6**	**39**	**39,60**

Behavior

The main question: *"To what extent did participants change their behavior back in the workplace place a result of the training program?". The question for the attendants' managers*

"How would you describe your staff's progress in the course objectives?"

The answer to this question is from supervisors' feedback on a given form.

Table 5 shows the trainee's progress according to supervisors' feedback in four levels: None, Some Progress, Significant Progress, and Completed Development Target.

Table 5 - Supervisor comments on the Course Objectives			Pilot Study
Respondent		**How would you describe your staff's progress in the course objectives?**	Other Comments
Employee 1		None	
		Some Progress	
	√	Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 2		None	
		Some Progress	
	√	Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 3	√	None	√
		Some Progress	
		Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 4		None	
	√	Some Progress	
		Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 5		None	
	√	Some Progress	
		Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 6		None	
		Some Progress	
	√	Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 7		None	
	√	Some Progress	
		Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	
Employee 8		None	
		Some Progress	
		Significant Progress	
	√	Completed development target	
Employee 9		None	
		Some Progress	
	√	Significant Progress	√
		Completed development target	
Employee 10		None	
		Some Progress	
	√	Significant Progress	
		Completed development target	

Summary of the pilot study

Although this pilot study group was small, the benefits of the group were that it was useful in cleaning up the instruments before the main study group received them, receiving excellent feedback on the length of the training sessions, and good feedback on the delivery methods used. Feedback on length was important in ensuring that members could complete the training and limit time away from their daily work. All of the pilot study group's feedback was considered, and changes were made. The pilot study was also beneficial in managing participant data and strategizing on how best to address this, which would have been much more difficult for the main study group with significantly more data points. So, in summary, the pilot study group was beneficial in similar ways to those mentioned in Lackey et al.'s (1997) study.

The pilot study for this study was beneficial. However, it had limitations due to its size, such as the inability to test descriptive and inferential statistical models effectively. Therefore, a suggestion for other researchers is to work towards having a minimum of ten participants in the pilot study. This number will allow you to test statistical analysis models more effectively, but only if this does not compromise the main study group by reducing the number of potential participants, as mentioned in the work of Lackey et al. (1997). Therefore, as Lackey et al. (1997) recommended, keeping the available members in the main study group is more beneficial than pulling them into the pilot group.

A pilot test of the survey questionnaire was conducted to obtain an initial assessment of the instrument's validity. The questionnaires were distributed to 10 employees for pilot testing to collect primary data; the pilot study's results demonstrated the questionnaire's internal reliability of the questionnaire, and therefore, this questionnaire was used throughout the study to collect primary data from employees of the organization. With that said, the main purpose of the pilot study was to identify any potential errors in the instruments being used and to receive feedback on how the participants in the pilot study found the process so that errors could be corrected before proceeding with the main study. The pilot study was successful as participants pointed out several small details they noticed in the surveys, such as corrections and descriptions of the surveys and feedback on items that could be made easier for members to use. This process involves identifying missing questions in the survey.

For pre-testing the questions. Feedback from participants indicated that the questions were feasible, but some participants had difficulty understanding or answering the questions. Based on this feedback, we changed the questions to be clearer and create a positive impression to motivate participants to answer. Three questions from the pilot study were changed for the main study:

- "How do you evaluate the courses?" changed to "How do you grade the topics of the training courses and its trainers?
- "How would you describe your staff progress in the course objectives?" changed to "What is your comment for your staff progress to meet the course objectives?"
- "How do you evaluate the items of the course criteria?" changed to "How do you rate the items of the course criteria?"

Applying these changes facilitated the data collection procedure in the main study.

4.3 Demographic Profile of Participants in the Main Study

The findings in Table 6 showed that gender distribution was higher for females, with

27participants (58%). On the other hand, 19 male participants, or 42% of the total participants, were present.

The participants' social generation showed that 48% were in Generation Z, 39% were Millennials, and only 13% were Generation X.

Of those participants, 18 were high school graduates (2nd or 3rd grade), 15 were vocational school graduates (from 1-3 years of college), and 13 were university graduates.

Among them, 20 were married, 24 were single, and 2 were in a relationship or common law.

In terms of years of service, 25 of the participants had less than 5 years of service (54%%), 13 from 6 to 15 (28%), and 8 (17%) had more than 15 years of service years with Mina Catering.

Table 6 - Demographic profile of participants

Demographic Attribute		No. of Participants	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	19	42%
	Female	27	58%
	Others	1	0 %
	Total	46	
Age	Gen Z (18-27)	22	48%
	Millennial (28-43)	18	39%
	Gen X (> 45)	6	13%
	Total	46	
Education	High School D.	18	39%
	Undergraduate D.	15	33%

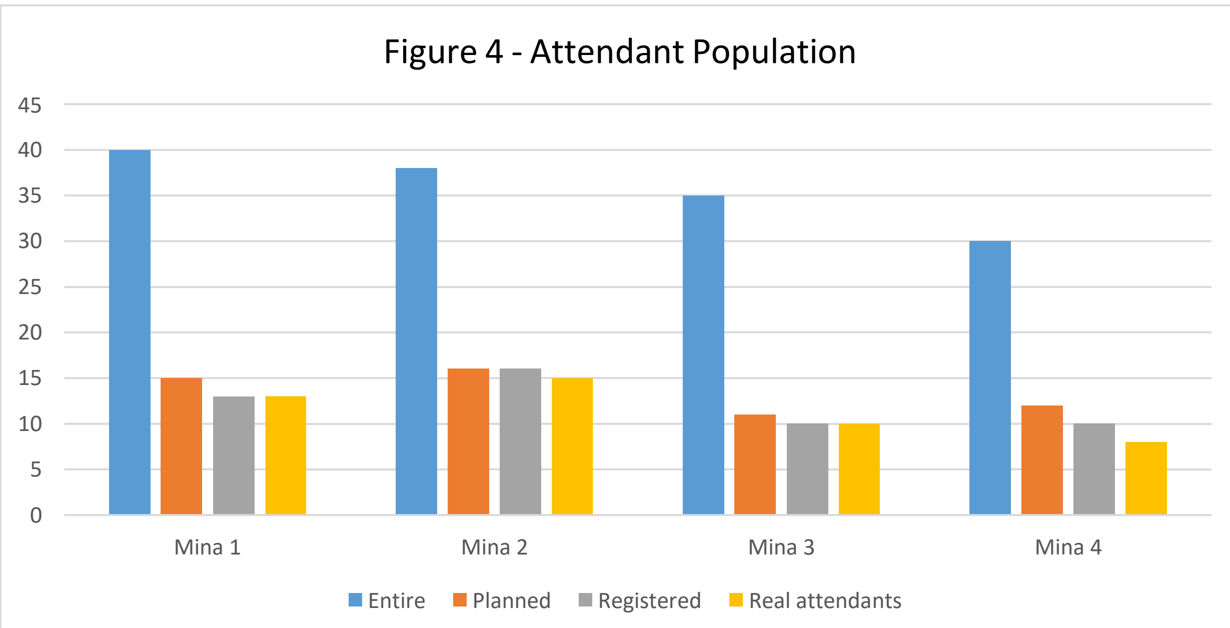
	Graduate D.	13	28%
	Total	46	
Marital	Single	20	43%
	Married	24	52%
	Other	2	4%
	Total	46	
Years of service	< 5	25	54%
	6 – 15	13	28%
	> 15	8	17%
	Total	46	

Attendant Population

Table 7 shows the number and percentage of invited participants out of the total. According to the information gathered from the Mina Better Behavior (MBB) organizer, the total of Mina Catering population in 4 chosen branches was 143 employees. The MBB 1-2024 course is scheduled on 4 Saturdays from January 06 to January 27, 2024. It planned to recruit 54 participants in 4 branches: 15 in Mina 1, 16 in Mina 2, 11 in Mina 3, and 12 in Mina 4, which is 38% total population. The number registered for the course is 49, which is 34% of the total population. After the first training session, three more members dropped out of the study due to time constraints, bringing the population down to 46 members, the total remaining 46 were reached out to see who was interested in volunteering to participate in the research study, dropping the research participantssample size to 32%.

Table 7 - Attendant Population

		Mina 1	Mina 2	Mina 3	Mina 4	Total
Entire	Number	40	38	35	30	143
	Percentage	28%	27%	24%	21%	100%
Planned	Number	15	16	11	12	54
	Percentage	10%	11%	8%	8%	38%
Registered	Number	13	16	10	10	49
	Percentage	9%	11%	7%	7%	34%
Real attendants	Number	13	15	10	8	46
	Percentage	9%	10%	7%	6%	32%



Number of times participants have participated.

The data gathered and presented in Table 8 show the number and percentage of the participants had participated in the Mina training program. A further 2 percent of the participants had participated in training three times and above, 15 percent declared that they had taken part in the training on two occasions, however, and finally, 80 percent of the participants participated in the training course for the first time they joined the company.

Table 8 **-** Number of times respondents have participated in MBB

NUMBER OF TIMES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
One (1st time)	37	80%
Two times	7	15%
Three times and above	2	4%
Total	46	100%

Source: *field survey, 2024*

4.4 Research Question One

"How did participants feel about the training program?"

Answering the question: "How do you grade the topics of the training courses and its trainers?", respondents agreed that all trainers had effectively delivered the training. As shown in Table 9, the respondents assessed the trainers against Content, Facilitator Style, and Average Skill Gained criteria. In general, considering two courses in the training program, the findings showed that the mean scores for Content and Facilitator were rated very highly (i.e. above 3.7 on the 5-point Likert scale), suggesting that respondents were very satisfied with the content of the modules, the trainers' style of facilitating and the overall effectiveness. The findings also showed that the mean scores for Average Skill Gained were 4.16 (82,10 %). The higher-rated trainer was Trainer A, who delivered the Basic Communication topic. Meanwhile, the lowest rated trainer was trainers B. Regarding the Average skills Gained criteria, the findings showed that most respondents gained more knowledge from Trainer A 4.14 (82,70%) compared to Trainer B 4.08 (81,50%).

Table 9 -Results from the trainees' feedback on trainers form

Main Study		
Number of courses	2	
Number of trainees	2	1-5 points

Courses Trainer		**Content**	**Facilitator**	**Aver. Skill gained**	**Percentage**
Basic Communication		4,25	4,02	4,14	82,70%
Teamwork Communication		3,80	4,35	4,08	81,50%
	Over All	8,05	8,37	4,16	**82,10%**

The relevance of the program to participants

For the question to attendants, "How do you rate the items of course criteria?"

Table 10 shows the respondents' reactions to the Mina Better Behavior they attended in October 2023. Among the three criteria, the findings showed that the mean score on a 5-point Likert scale for the Overall Assessment criteria was 3.92, followed by Course Structure, 3.81, Learning Initiatives, 3.96, and General Administration, 3.99.

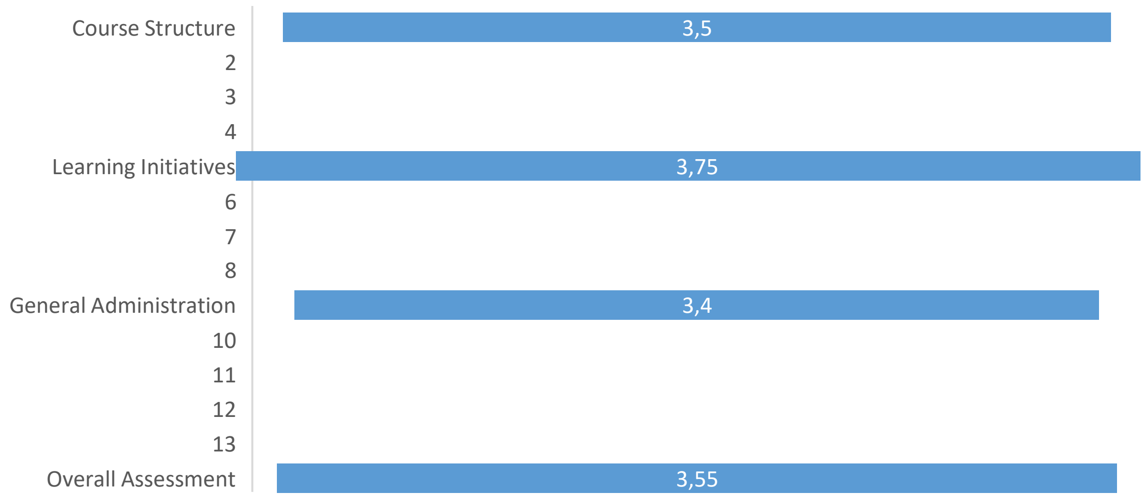
Table 10 - Results from the trainees' feedback form

Main study

Criteria		**Item**	**Rating**	**Mean Score**
1- Course Structure	1	The course objectives were clearly communicated.	4.41	**3.81**
	2	The course objectives were met	3.52	
	3	The duration of the course was good	3.44	
	4	The topics covered in this course were suitable in the current context	3.87	
2- Learning Initiatives	1	The pre-course e-learning materials helped me in the preparation for the course	4.13	**3.96**
	2	The pre-course engagement session was effective in preparation for the course	3.73	
	3	The learner development plan would help me prepare to apply the knowledge and skills to the workplace, help me to reinforce my learning	3.56	
	4	This course includes the learning activities (exercise, mind map, group presentation, case studies, etc.)	4.42	
3- General Administration	1	The course registration process was easy	4.39	**3.99**
	2	The classroom setting (e.g., flipcharts, stationeries, class layout, etc.) was suitable for this course	3.82	
	3	The facilities (e.g., accommodation, Wi-Fi, printers, laptops, etc.) available in the course were good	4.11	
	4	The food served was delightful	3.72	
	5	**Assessment**		
Overall				

Overall, the organization of the event was	efficient	91	
	3 **Satisfaction with this course**		**3.92**

Figure 5 - Results from the trainees' feedback form



4.3 Research Question 2

“To what extent did participants improve knowledge and skills and change attitudes as a result of the training program?”

The pre-test survey was administered at the start of any training course, and the post-test was administered a week after the final training course was completed. For professional reasons, trainers conduct the pre-test and post-test. The researcher observes and gets results from the course organizers.

Table 11 shows the scores of the pre-test and post-test of Mina participants. The post-test scores were compared with the pre-test scores to capture the percentage of learning gained. The findings showed that almost all pre-test scores (mean scores of 77.74%) improved after the participants completed the training (mean scores of 39.61%). This means that almost all participants have achieved a positive knowledge gain (mean scores of 38.13%) from the Mina Better Behaviour program.

Table 11 - Results of pre-test and post-test

Name	Post-Test Score (%)	Pre-Test Score (%)	% Gain
Trainee 1	85	52	33
Trainee 2	90	43	47
Trainee 3	74	41	33
Trainee 4	89	34	55
Trainee 5	67	33	34
Trainee 6	85	46	39
Trainee 7	78	53	25
Trainee 8	89	52	37
Trainee 9	89	46	43
Trainee 10	74	42	32
Trainee 11	93	34	59
Trainee 12	56	31	25
Trainee 13	78	23	55
Trainee 14	71	40	31
Trainee 15	78	20	58
Trainee 16	80	40	40
Trainee 17	82	34	48
Trainee 18	78	47	31
Trainee 19	82	47	35
Trainee 20	78	33	45
Trainee 21	85	53	32
Trainee 22	78	16	62
Trainee 23	74	40	34
Trainee 24	67	34	33
Trainee 25	70	42	28
Trainee 26	78	20	58
Trainee 27	85	46	39
Trainee 28	85	42	43
Trainee 29	78	47	31
Trainee 30	73	43	30
Trainee 31	81	50	31
Trainee 32	78	43	35
Trainee 33	74	40	34
Trainee 34	63	34	29
Trainee 35	63	31	32
Trainee 36	73	46	27
Trainee 37	93	53	40
Trainee 38	78	31	47
Trainee 39	77	46	31
Trainee 40	71	42	29
Trainee 41	81	43	38
Trainee 42	56	30	26
Trainee 43	77	46	31
Trainee 44	78	38	40
Trainee 45	74	43	31

Trainee 46	80	32	48
Overall	**77.74**	**39.61**	**38,13%**

The results in Table 12 summaries the responses of the sampled employees regarding the contribution and improvements or otherwise that the training program have had on their job performance. The training program is evaluated by the the participants themselves.” The results in table 5 showed that 59 percent considered the training program very beneficial to them in terms of their job performance. Also, 35 percent showed that the training program were beneficial. Conversely, 7 percent of the trainees did not find the training beneficial.

Table 12 **-** Benefit of the training attended in terms of improvement on job performance

RESPONSE	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Not Beneficial	3	7%
Beneficial	16	35%
Very Beneficial	27	59%
Total	46	100%

Source: *field survey, 2024*

4.5 Research Question 3

“To what extent did participants change their behaviour back in the workplace place as a result of the training program?” The extent to which participants change their behaviour back in the workplace as a result of the training program is evaluated by the participants themselves and by the supervisor's feedback. The question concerns whether the performance of participants on the job meets the learner development plan.

The managers' question is: **"What is your comment on your staff's progress in the course objectives?"**

Table 13 shows that 3 participants, which means 7 percent of the supervisors' reports, found the trainee progress None. Ten participants, which means 22 percent, found Some Progress. Twenty-four participants, 52 percent, found Significant Progress. Nine participants, 20 percent, found Completed Development Target.

For separated Units, Mina 1 had 1 participant, which means 7% found None. Four participants, which means 27%, found Some Progress. Eight participants, 53%, found Significant Progress. Two participants, 13%, found Completed Development Target.

For separated Units, Mina 2 has 0 participants, which means 0% found None. Two participants, which means 18%, found Some Progress. Five participants, 45%, found Significant Progress. Four participants, 36%, found Completed Development Target.

For separated Units, Mina 3 has 1 participant, which means 11% found None. Two participants, which means 22%, found Some Progress. Five participants, 56%, found Significant Progress. And 1 participant, 11%, found a Completed Development Target.

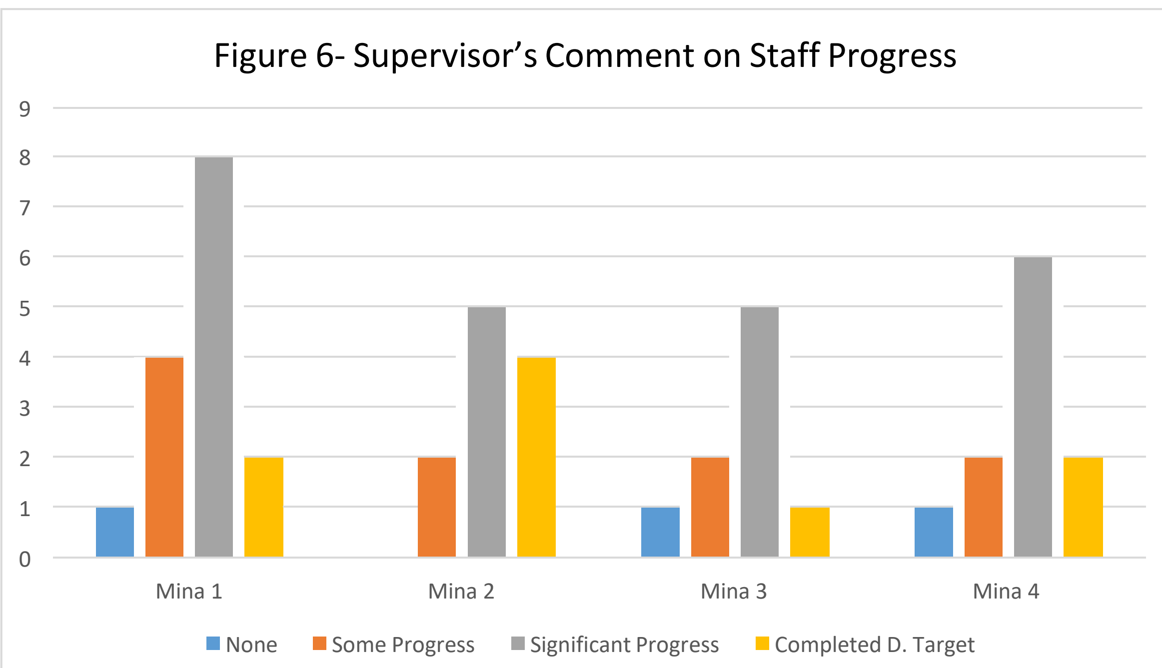
For separated Units, Mina 4 has 1 participant, which means 9% found None. Two participants, which means 18%, found Some Progress. Six participants, 55%, found Significant Progress. Two participants, 18%, found Completed Course Target.

Table 13 - Results from the learner development plan reports

Supervisor's Comment on Staff Progress

Number and percentage of participants

Branches	**Mina 1**		**Mina 2**		**Mina 3**		**Mina 4**		**Total**	
Comments	№	**%**	№	**%**	№	**%**	№	**%**	№	**%**
None	1	7%	0	0%	1	11%	1	9%	3	7%
Some Progress	4	27%	2	18%	2	22%	2	18%	10	22%
Significant Progress	8	53%	5	45%	5	56%	6	55%	24	52%
Completed D. target	2	13%	4	36%	1	11%	2	18%	9	20%
	15		11		9		11		46	



Interview With Managers

Answer to the question: “How would you describe your staff progress in the course objectives?” we received comment answers from managers like these:

- For the one that has “No progress”: “Ba has no progress. He utters the most unkind words to clients. I would suggest you get him more training on communication.”
- For the one that has “Some progress”: “Lanh has some progress in communication, with more smiles and greetings. But he is still at loggerheads with other team members.”
- For the one that has “Significant progress”: “Tam is a great team player now, she does not make decisions independently without carrying other employees along.”
- For the one that has “Completed Course Target”: “Minh consistently demonstrates a strong commitment to learning and self-improvement. His proactive approach to skill development has had a noticeable impact on the team’s overall capabilities. I recommend encouraging Minh to pursue additional professional development opportunities to broaden his skill set and contribute even more effectively to the team.”
- One more that has “Completed Course Target”: “Oanh is a reliable team player who consistently meets targets. Her commitment to quality work and ability to adapt to changing priorities make her a valuable asset to the team. I recommend considering Oanh for cross-functional training to expand her knowledge base and prepare her for a more diverse set of responsibilities.”

Table 14 of the research study revealed that 87 percent of the participants found the training program worthwhile, 2 percent did not, and 11 percent were undecided.

Table 14 - Effectiveness of Training Programmes

ATTRIBUTE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Worthwhile	40	87%
Not worthwhile	1	2%
Undecided	5	11%
Total	46	100%

Source: *field survey, 2024*

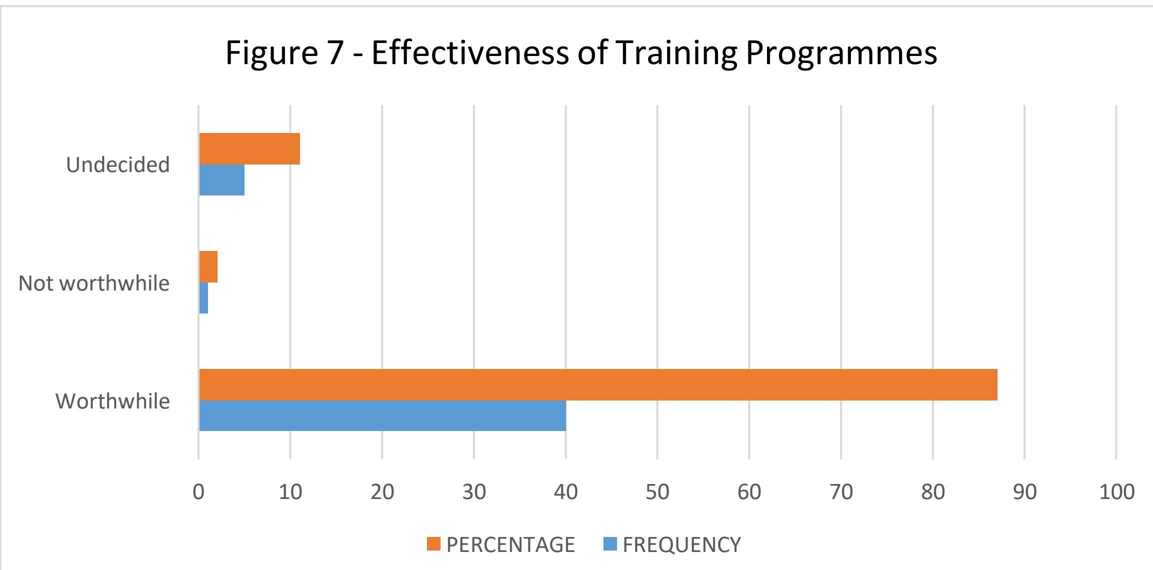


Table 6: Impact of Training & Development on employee **performance**

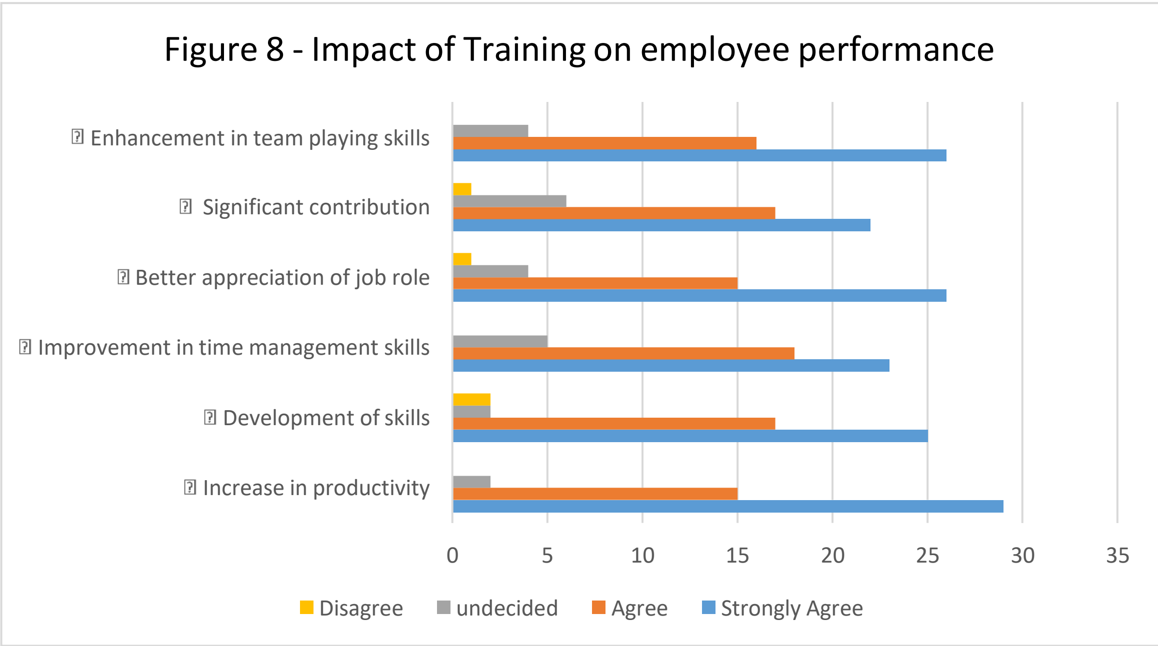
- Responses in Table 6 above show that the largest number of participants, 29%, strongly agreed, and 15 agreed that the training they acquired from the program has had an impact on their job performance. A smaller number of employees, representing 0%, did not agree that the training program they have had a positive impact on their job performance. 2 percent of the participants were, however, undecided as to whether or not the training program they had attended has had any impact on their job performance.

- Again, 25% of participants strongly agreed and 17% agreed that the training program that they attended had helped them to develop the requisite skills for the job. 2% of them, however, disagreed with this, and a further 2% were undecided.
- Subsequently, 23% and 18% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that they are better able to manage their time as a result of the training program organised for them. None of the participants disagreed with this and only 5% of them were undecided.
- It appears that a good number of the participants, 26% and 15%, are better able to appreciate their job roles as a result of the training program organised for them. Only of them disagreed with this and 4% of them were undecided.
- 22% and 17% of the participants strongly agreed and agreed that they had made significant contributions to the achievements of the company objectives. Only 1% disagreed with this and 6% of them were undecided.
- At last, 26% and 16% of the participants confirmed that they had become better team players as a result of the training program that they had participated in; none of them disagreed with this, and 4% of them were undecided.

Table 15 **-** Impact of Training on employee performance

Statement/Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree
· Increase in productivity	29	15	2	0
· Development of skills	25	17	2	2
· Improvement in time management skills	23	18	5	0
· Better appreciation of job role	26	15	4	1
· Significant contribution to the achievement of the company's objective	22	17	6	1
· Enhancement in team playing skills	26	16	4	0

Source: *field survey, 2024*



4.6 Research Question 4

"What organizations' benefits resulted from the training?"

After training, the data analysis process continues and becomes arguably more critical as on-the-job performance is monitored for acceptable levels. When monitoring Level 3, it is uncommon for a single variable to cause substandard performance. As a learning and performance consultant, at this stage, you can help uncover workplace performance barriers and participate in creating solutions.

Enterprise sales environments are complex and demanding, especially today. Well-trained staff are more adept at closing deals and generating revenue. Enterprise soft skills training programs help staff communicate value, handle objections, and negotiate effectively, which translates to higher sales revenue.

Pre-Training and Post-Training sales revenue report is the important information to assess the results of the training course.

Table 16, Pre-Training sales revenue report, shows that monthly sales revenue remained almost stable from February to June. Mina 1 increased slightly with +3.21%, Mina 2 decreased -0.27%, Mina 3 increased +0.58%, and Mina 4 increased 0.95%. The total sales revenue of the four branches increased at a negligible level at +1.24%. The fluctuation by month of the four branches between -0.48% and +1.01% is a normal change in sales revenue.

Table 16 - Results from 6 months of Sales Revenue in 2023

Months **Sales Revenue of 4 branches, Unit: Vnd 1,000**

2023	**Mina 1**	**Mina 2**	**Mina 3**	**Mina 4**	**Total**
January	**2,462**	**2,215**	**1,563**	**1,682**	**7,922**
February	2,471	2,201	1,553	1,699	7,924
	0.37%	-0.63%	-0.64%	1.01%	0.03%
March	2,460	2,193	1,601	1,750	8,004
	-0.45%	-0.36%	3.09%	3.00%	1.01%
April	2,498	2,218	1,595	1,721	8,032
	1.54%	1.14%	0.00%	-1.66%	0.35%
May	2,520	2,241	1,564	1,734	8,059
	0.88%	1.04%	-1.94%	0.76%	0.34%
June	**2,541**	**2,209**	**1,572**	**1,698**	**8,020**
	0.83%	-1.43%	0.51%	-2.08%	-0.48%
June/January	**3.21%**	**-0.27%**	**0.58%**	**0.95%**	**1.24%**

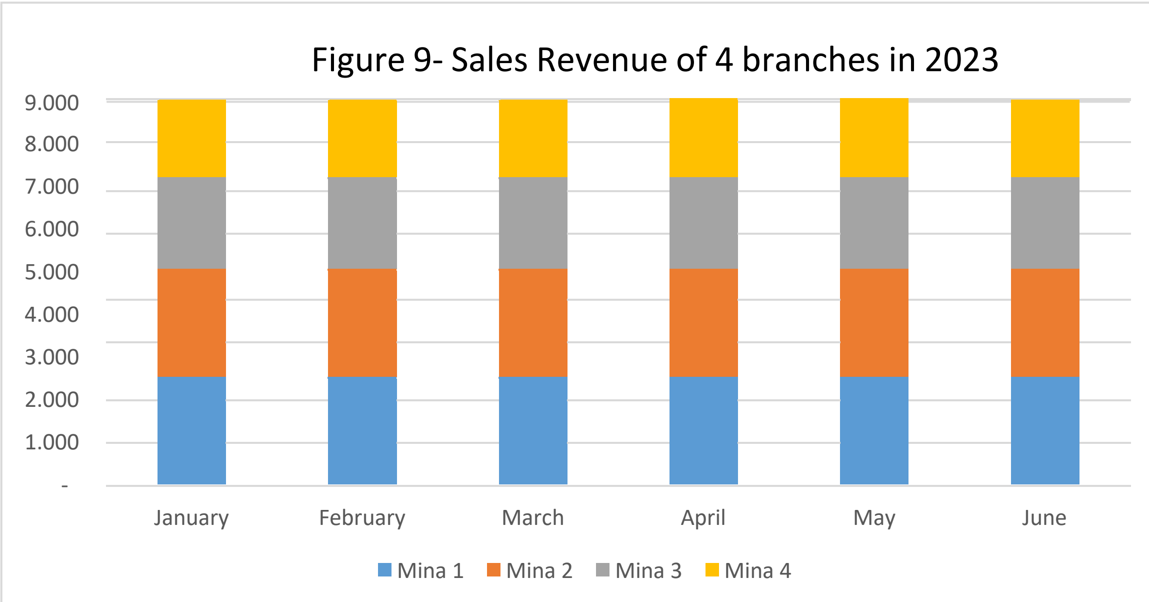


Figure 9- Sales Revenue of 4 branches in 2023

The training course began in the middle of December 2023 and finished in the middle of January 2024. The course participants have changed their behavior in job performance along with their training activities. These changes have positive results on the company's sales revenue in 4 branches.

Table 16, Pre-Training sales revenue report, shows that monthly sales revenue remained almost stable from February to June. The total sales revenue of the four branches increased at a negligible level of +1.24%. The fluctuation by month of the four branches between -0.48% and +1.01% is a normal change in sales revenue.

After the soft skills training program finished, as we see in Table 17, Post-Training sales revenue report, the sales volume of the 4 branches increased by month from January to June.

Table 17, **Post-Training sales revenue report,** shows that the monthly sales revenue increased gradually by month from February to June:

Mina 1: 26.23%, at least 0.77 %, and at most 6.91%.

Mina 2: 13.48%, at least 0.36 %, and at most 4.99%.

Mina 3: 22.32%, at least 2.04 %, and at most 9.28%.

Mina 4: 19.89%. at least 1.51 %, and at most 6.36%.

The total of 4 branches is 20.67%, at least 3.25%, and at most 6.36%.

Table 17 - Results from 6 months of Sales Revenue in 2024

Months **Sales Revenue of 4 branches, Unit: Vnd 1,000**

	Mina 1	**Mina 2**	**Mina 3**	**Mina 4**	**Total**
January	**2,551**	**2,144**	**1,555**	**1,689**	**7,939**
February	2,572	2,235	1,605	1,785	8,197
	0.82%	4.24%	3.22%	5.68%	3.25%
March	2,665	2,243	1,754	1,812	8,474
	3.62%	0.36%	9.28%	1.51%	3.38%
April	2,989	2,355	1,795	1,874	9,013
	12.16%	4.99%	2.34%	3.42%	6.36%
May	3,012	2,374	1,864	1,904	9,154
	0.77%	0.81%	3.84%	1.60%	1.56%
June	**3,220**	**2,433**	**1,902**	**2,025**	**9,580**
	6.91%	2.49%	2.04%	6.36%	4.65%
June/January	**26.23%**	**13.48%**	**22.32%**	**19.89%**	**20.67%**

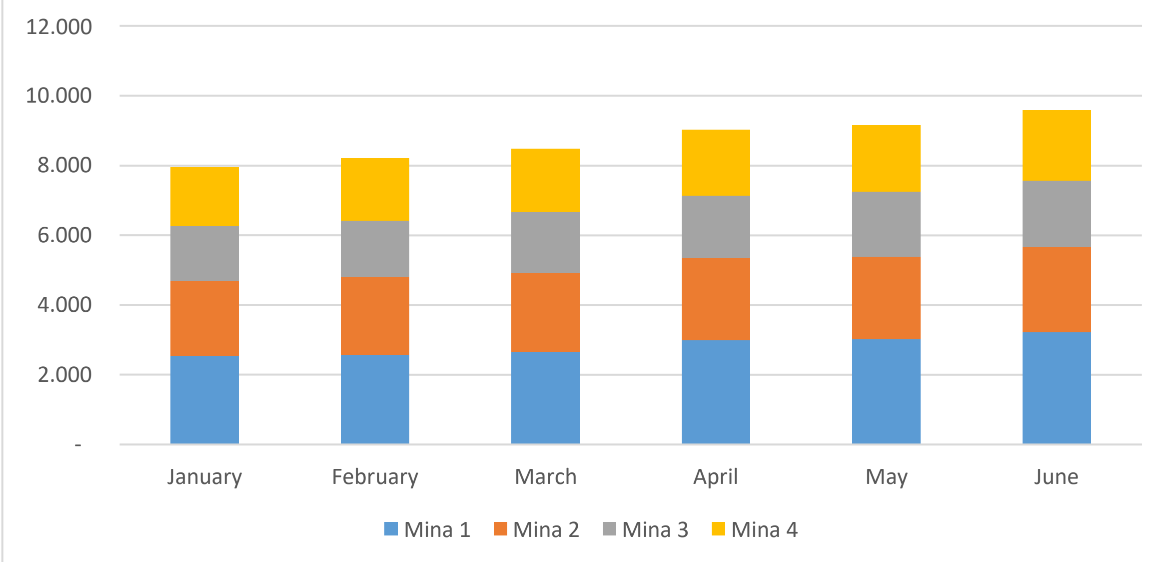


Figure 10 - Sales Revenue of 4 branches in 2024

CHAPTER V:

DISCUSSION

The previous chapter provides an analysis of the gathered group data. This group data was then combined, analyzed, and run through inferential statistics to establish if the findings could be inferred in the general population. A combination of qualitative and quantitative data was gathered for this mixed-method study. The tools used were unstructured interviews, observations, open-ended questions, and structured close-ended questionnaires following the 5-point Likert scale. The reason for using a mixed method, as discussed earlier, was to provide a broad complete picture of the participants and be able to use that to back up the quantitative data gathered and understand it in more detail. In this chapter, an in-depth discussion of the results along with the limitations of this study and suggested future research will be written as well as this chapter will answer and explain the research questions.

The main objective of this study is to contribute to the research and literature on organizational behavior. This study evaluates if structuring training in catering businesses to employee preference based on their personality would result in increased engagement and effectiveness. This analysis is being accomplished using the findings and recommendations of other researchers who have studied workplace engagement and training method effectiveness, which is detailed in the literature review section.

In this current chapter, the research data will show an in-depth discussion and critical evaluation of the research findings, their significance, and their purpose. This chapter will be broken down into four separate stages. The first stage will be the details and findings from the Pilot study group, and this will then be followed by the participant findings from four branches of Mina Catering Company to give the overall participant findings for the study which will provide all the details required to answer the research questions.

As part of this research study, an extensive literature review was used to assist and support this research's findings regarding engagement, training, and employee performance. This study then aims to add new data and discoveries about the effect training preference has on retaining information, training initiation, and employee engagement, and finally, answer the research questions and accomplish the objectives.This research will then bridge the gap using this new information and data backed by the extensive current literature on engagement, training, performance, and personality. Therefore, this chapter provides the significance of the study through the data analysis and results. It also shows and explains the known limitations, making suggestions for improvements and explaining what directions future research.

The following five sections in this chapter will summarize the discussions based on the significant findings mentioned in the last chapter, aim to answer the research questions and explain how the objectives were achieved.

5.1 Demographic profile

The demographic profile is important in research because it provides valuable information about the characteristics of a specific population or group. Understanding the demographic profile allows researchers to analyze the association between certain variables and outcomes. Demographic profiles can also influence academic performance. Although in this study, we have not yet used demographics to evaluate the effectiveness of the training program, demographic factors, such as age, sex, and educational qualification, can affect HR managers' staff assignment. Furthermore, demographic profile helps decision-makers and policymakers understand population distribution by age and sex. Overall, a demographic profile provides insights into the characteristics and behaviors of a specific population, which is essential for conducting research and developing effective strategies and policies.

The other findings show that age and education impact employees' performance. The findings also revealed that age and department impact employee absenteeism. Again, the result shows that age, education, and tenure influence employees' output. However, some demographic factors have no relationship with employees' performance, absenteeism, or output. Time constraints, assumptions about the underlying theory, and the unwillingness of respondents to give out information were all limitations. SME owners and managers must not overlook these elements, as they affect employees' performance and cause them to miss work and output levels. It is thought that paying attention to an employee's age group, level of education, the department they work in, what transpired there, and years of experience will go a long way in assisting them in performing to a satisfactory level and increasing their performance.

The demographic profile findings showed that Mina has tried to bridge the knowledge and skill gap over the past years by organizing employee training programs. The study results imply that Mina desires to gain a competitive advantage in the catering industry by training its human resources. The results corroborate the assertion by Kreitner (1995) that an organization that desires to gain a competitive edge in its respective industry needs, among other things, effective and extensive training of its human resources. Again, it seeks to confirm the assertion of Cascio (1989) and Cole (2002), to the effect that training benefits organsiations and individuals by boosting employees' confidence, ensuring a much reduced cost of production, and facilitating more appropriate management styles.

5.2 Discussion of Research Question One

How did the participants feel about the training program? The question concerns their satisfaction with it.

Multiple tools were used to answer this question concerning the robustness of the research methodology. The survey questionnaires, which were developed based on the training management literature, the interviews, the pilot study, and the survey questionnaires, have met the acceptable standard of validity and reliability analysis. Hence, this may lead to the production of accurate and reliable findings.

An inventory questionnaire was completed before and after all the courses were completed. In addition, an open-ended questionnaire about training preference and personal development frequency, end-of-course evaluations, and knowledge tests were completed at the end of each trainingcourse. Unstructured interviews were also conducted, and participants' observations were made while participating in the lecture-based and collaborative training method.

The findings showed that the respondents were happy and enjoyed the overall Mina Better Behavior, the course structure, the learning initiatives, and the administration. They agreed that the course objectives were communicated and the topics covered were suitable in the current context. Furthermore, they were satisfied with the learning activities provided, such as exercises, mind maps, group presentations, case studies, and role plays, and they believed that these activities helped them gain the skills better. They also agreed that the training provider helped them in the preparation for the course as well as to prepare the application of the knowledge and skills to the workplace by providing the pre-course learning materials. This finding has supported earlier research on the effectiveness of training and development for Mina employees, suggesting that training had a positive impact on preparing the employees to be more effective in their work, increasing their interpersonal abilities, teamwork, job confidence, and work motivation. The findings of this study also found that respondents were happy with the course registration process, food, facilities, and classroom setting. They commented that the course registration process was easy, the food served was delightful, the facilities provided were in good condition, and the classroom setting was suitable for the course. This finding is in line with findings by Giangreco et al. (2010); Sitzmann et al. (2008); and De Meuse et al. (2007).

5.3 Discussion of Research Question Two

"To what extent did participants improve knowledge and skills and change attitudes due to the training program?"

Evaluation on this level measures how participants change attitudes, improve knowledge, and/or increase skills due to attending the training program. The learning evaluation requires some type of post-testing to ascertain what skills were learned during the training, and the post-testing is only valid when combined with pre-testing. Measuring the learning that takes place in a training program is important to validate the learning objectives. Evaluating the learning that has taken place typically focuses on such questions as; What knowledge was acquired? What skills were developed or enhanced? What attitudes were changed? The best way to check learning is using "Pre/Post Assessment.

The results shown in Table 09 indicate that the attendants have acquired the knowledge and skills required by the two training program topics, Basic Communication and Teamwork. The training course organizer conducts pre- and post-tests.

The results in Table 10 indicate that most participants have demonstrated the skills obtained during the program, their attitude about performing these skills meets the training course requirements, and they are confident about performing new skills on the job.

The results in Table 12 summarize the responses of the sampled employees regarding the contribution and improvements or otherwise that the training program has had on their job performance. The results in Table 12 showed that 70 percent considered the training program very beneficial to them in terms of their job performance. Also, 26 percent showed that the training program was beneficial. Conversely, 4 percent of the trainees did not find the training beneficial.

The results in Table 13 revealed that the training program implemented by the company was very beneficial in improving employee’s job performance. The above results are supported by Breadwell and Holden (1995), who argued that one of the important principles of training is that its contents must be relevant to the task performed by the participants. Training is a learning process that involves acquiring knowledge, skills, rules, and concepts or changing attitudes and behaviors to enhance the performance of employees. One of the key benefits of training is that it improves an individual's knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies (Armstrong, 2006). Similarly, Marchington and Wilkinson (2008) also found that training enhances the capacity and competencies of the human resource of an organization for effective organizational performance and success.

The findings of this study also demonstrate that motivation to learn does act as a partial mediating variable in the relationship between supervisor's role and job performance in the organizational sample. In the organizational context, supervisors have provided adequate support (e.g., encourage employees to attend training programs and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills that they gain from training programs in their jobs) and used good communication practices (e.g., provide feedback, encourage discussion and openly deliver information on training) when dealing with training programs. Most employees perceive that such a supervisor's role has increased their learning motivation. When employees' motivation to learn increases, this may lead to higher job performance in the organization.

5.4 Discussion of Research Question Three

"To what extent did participants change their behaviour back in the workplace place as a result of the training program?"

After training, the data analysis process continues and becomes arguably more critical as on-the-job performance is monitored for acceptable levels. When monitoring Level 3, it is uncommon for a single variable to cause substandard performance. As a learning and performance consultant, at this stage, you can help uncover workplace performance barriers and participate in creating solutions.

Managers often say that one of the major disappointments of training programs their employees attend is that they return to the job and do not apply what they have learned in the classroom. There are many reasons depending on the program and organization applied. However, according to the results of the research program, especially from participants' and supervisors' feedback, the reason is:

- the training program has not yet provided enough opportunities to apply the skills learned through practical, hands-on activities,

- and some participants cannot focus in the classroom due to frequent interruptions for work assignments.

Ensuring that behavior change occurs from the training programs and that the participant can immediately apply what they are learning back on the job is not easy. It certainly takes some careful pre-work and significant planning. We would like to discuss some additional options to ensure the training program will change behavior back on the job:

- Ensure that the participant and his/her immediate manager schedule time to discuss the course the participant attended, the skills and knowledge gained from the course, and how the participant will apply those skills and knowledge back on the job.
- Ensure that supervisors support the training program by providing uninterrupted time for participants to attend and covering their workload when out of the office, reducing worries about work piling up. In addition, ensure that supervisors provide time for participants to engage in any pre- or post-work assignments.
- A learning impact map will facilitate management support and align program expectations. This support and engagement are necessary to change behavior. This map creates a direct line of sight between individual behavior and organizational goals. It aligns learning objectives with expected behavior changes.

Interviewing with managers directly provides several benefits. Firstly, it allows researchers to connect with empirical reality and gain rich insights into behavior and performance improvements. Interviews with key managers can provide valuable information that is not easily obtained through other data collection methods, such as surveys or secondary data sources. Additionally, interviews allow researchers to tap into the knowledge and expertise of the individuals within organizations who are most directly responsible for the topic under study. Furthermore, interviews with managers can help researchers understand their employees' behavior and performance. Overall, interviewing managers directly can enhance the quality and depth of research findings

Interviews with the managers in this research confirm their comments on the form and insights into the issues. Their recommendations also help the HR department assign staff and the training department make appropriate changes and improvements for the next training courses.

Most companies strive for a good organizational culture, but it's not as easy as having chats at the water cooler or a monthly pizza party. Company culture involves making your team members feel heard and empowered to do their best work while offering them work-life balance and an overall enjoyable work environment. To build culture, encourage camaraderie and teamwork in the workplace. Spending time with one another can help build this bond and, in turn, improve working relationships and the culture around the office **(**Gina Abudi**,** 2010).

Table 10 of this study demonstrates that motivation to learn is a partial mediating variable in the relationship between the supervisor's role and job performance in the organizational sample. In the organizational context, supervisors have provided adequate support (e.g., encourage employees to attend training programs and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills that they gain from training programs in their jobs) and used good communication practices (e.g., provide feedback, encourage discussion and openly deliver information on training) when dealing with training programs. The majority of the employees perceive that such supervisors' role have increased their motivation to learn. When employees' motivation to learn increases this may lead to higher job performance in the organization.

Table 14 of the research study revealed that 78 percent of the participants found the training program worthwhile, while 12 percent did not find it worthwhile. The remaining 10 percent were undecided. 78 percent of participants who found the training sessions worthwhile indicated that they would recommend such training programs to their peers. 11 percent of the participants mentioned that they may not recommend the training program to their peers or colleagues, while 10 percent were indifferent. The above results in the study are supported by Tenant (2002), who stated that for training to be effective, the knowledge and skills learned during training must be transferred to the job. Also, Sleeze 1993) asserted that determining training effectiveness helps to define whether the training has been effectively transferred on the job. This was emphasised by Reynolds (2004) that it is important to assess training effectiveness and that training effectiveness should be tied in with actual work performance.

However, to stimulate and encourage the application of learned skills, incentives must be available to encourage these trainees to adopt the newly learned skills, knowledge, and attitude (Marchington, 2008). Furthermore, the organisation's climate must be supportive and conducive to the eventual transfer of knowledge and skills (John, 2005).

The analysis above established the following: Mina employees have access to various training packages that seek to improve their performance on the job since a greater number of participants have participated in one form of training or another. In terms of how beneficial Mina training has been to the participants, the analysis established that training programs are relevant, worthwhile, and effective.

5.5 Discussion of Research Question Four

"What organizations' benefits resulted from the training?"

The previous researches show that when you proactively nurture soft skills within your organization, you can benefit from Increased revenue, enhanced productivity, higher employee retention rates, better internal mobility, improved employee well-being, and workplace culture. Due to limited resources, this study only focuses on the revenue growth factor, which is the company's owner's biggest concern. Also, the research does not have support from the company to compare the financial cost of the training course to the financial result of the company after the training course. So, let us take a closer look at the business value of soft skill development now. The biggest concern of the company's investors is sales growth after the soft skills training program because the sales revenue affects the return on investment.

Table 16, pre-training sales revenue report, shows that the monthly sales revenue remained almost stable from February to June. The total of 4 branches' sales revenue increased to a negligible level of +1.24%. The fluctuation by month of the four branches is between -0.48% and +1.01% is a normal change in sales revenue. After the soft skills training program finished, as we see in Table 17, the post-training sales revenue report, the sales volume of the 4 branches increased by month from January to June.

It indicates the impact of employees' soft skills on revenue and that the employee's behavior affects customer service quality. Unlike other aspects of a business, customer experience (CX) can simultaneously improve brand loyalty, customer satisfaction, traffic, and sales. That is even more realistic given that today, customers have higher standards for customer experience than ever.

Sales revenue reports help evaluate the company's performance regarding its ability to sell products and services. A strong track record of positive sales growth can indicate that the company's operations are healthy and that it can generate more profits and return on investment. The sales growth rate measures the rate at which the company's sales are increasing or decreasing compared to previous periods and can be expressed as an absolute value or percentage. This metric compares performance between different time frames, such as month-to-month, quarter-to-quarter, or year-to-year.

A business's sales growth rate can be used to benchmark current performance against past performance, providing invaluable insight into how well the company is performing compared to previous periods. Positive sales growth indicates financial strength, and it can give companies the push they need to expand their operations and build upon their success. When analyzing sales growth, the rate of increase is just as important as the result. Positive growth in sales also indicates customer satisfaction and loyalty. Negative sales growth indicates a decline in goods or services sold over time. Negative sales growth can indicate several issues; it could signal an economic downturn, increased competition from other businesses, an inadequate marketing strategy, or poor customer service. The importance and value of soft skills training cannot be denied considering the results from the company sales. Soft skills training is essential for companies looking to increase revenue and achieve business goals.

CHAPTER VI:

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

Training evaluation systematically analyzes training programs to ensure they are delivered effectively and efficiently. It identifies training gaps and even discovers opportunities for improving training programs.

By collecting feedback, trainers and human resource professionals can assess whether training programs can achieve their intended outcome and whether the training materials and resources align with or meet company and industry standards.

Companies' survival depends on maximizing sales revenue and profits. According to Osborne and Hammoud (2017), finding ways to engage employees is vital to helping reduce turnover, increase retention, help employees feel appreciated, improve overall employee performance, and increase sales revenue. Training is one of those primary areas that helps increase competency and make employees feel valued and involved. Soft skill training is not only a significant factor in attaining an organization's goals and objectives but has also been shown to be effective in improving the performance of employees.

This research confirms the finding from Lee et al. (2000) that training based on individual preferences and characteristics helps improve engagement, behavior, and training initiation. In addition, the participants in this study unanimously stated they would prefer more focused training and would be more likely to enjoy and engage in the activity. This results in increased effectiveness of the training being conducted, increased job satisfaction, and improved feeling of being involved, which participants in the study also noted. This finding is part of the complete package shown to increase engagement and performance, as outlined in the research conducted by Kahn (1990).

6.2 Implications

Personality plays a significant role in our daily interactions, as documented by Ma (2005). So, it only makes sense that employee personality should be considered when implementing training initiatives to ensure the most effective training. If training is conducted more frequently and employees enjoy it, they will be more willing to take on the activity, engage in it, and retain more information. Therefore, this training initiative will result in a more engaged, satisfied workforce that is trained effectively to do their jobs. This result leads to higher performance, increased sales revenues, and reduced employee turnover, which helps businesses reduce rehiring costs. In addition, employee better behavior helps the company stay profitable and provides employee job satisfaction, which increases their family's quality of life, and directly impacts the local economy in which the businessis located.

Bakker (2008) conducted a qualitative study on the manifestation of engagement. The study concluded that organizational behavior approaches must be considered in pursuing employee happiness, health, and engagement and that a positive relationship exists between engagement and performance.

The research results in this study provide medium businesses with the data and techniques needed to help increase employee engagement and job satisfaction, which is shown to increase profitability and reduce hiring costs. While the study is focused on a medium Catering business in Vietnam, the results could be generalized to other companies within Vietnam and nearby countries. The results also build on the literature focused on soft skills, including basic communication and teamwork, and create a robust beneficial foundation for a business to increase employee job satisfaction and success.

The results of this study provide strong evidence and tools that business leaders could use to help ensure that training is effective and to help increase employee capacity. The results also encourage them to recognize the value of behavior and its impact on our daily lives and decisions. Therefore, using and considering employee engagement strategies andtraining initiatives is beneficial and vital. Leaders must be committed to their continual implementation for them to be influential.

This study aimed to provide tools business leaders could use to improve employee behavior. The tools also aim to increase job satisfaction, training effectiveness, and business potential success.

6.3 Recommendations for Future Research

Further research with a broader population and larger sample size would be recommended. It would also benefit the study to be conducted across Vietnam's nearby countries to gain insight into different nationalities and see if the findings are similar. It would also be interesting to see the discovery if the study timeline was increased and the number of courses conducted on each group was also increased.

This study focused on a medium catering business, and it would be recommended that this study be conducted on industries outside of catering. Future research on large and larger corporations would also be recommended, where the potential impact would be even more significant.

The businesses included in this study have been informed that the findings will be distributed to them and presented with recommendations based on the results. The research in this study also intends to link to this study on social media and publish itfor others to utilize.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

This study took into account the importance of using a mixed-method approach. A mixed-method approach increases the strength and reduces the research's weaknesses, which can happen if using just a qualitative or quantitative approach. However, it added a limitation in doing so: the significantly increased time required, the limitation of broadening the research participants pool without substantially increasing the time needed, and the need for more sophisticated analysis tools necessary to analyze the collected data effectively.

Another limitation is that the study did not include more qualitative data, such as data that could have been gained from formal interviews. Research that uses a good blend of quantitative and qualitative methods could contain richer data because the quantitative analysis does not explain why or how something happens, which can be gained from qualitative research. While this is a limitation with no other study looking at this particular area and the risk of adding too much, resulting in poor or incomplete research, it is felt this is the best way to accomplish this research effectively.

This research also revolved around the participants' availability while at workand the study's time limits, which limited the time that could be taken for research data gathering and training. Of course, this is a limitation, but ensuring ethical standards and that all participants participate voluntarily is of the utmost importance in ensuring this study is conducted effectively and ethically, as this is the most critical part of almost any study.

The timeline for this study, continued repetitive training, and being a leader in each of these companies were also research limitations. The study could be run over an extended period with multiple courses to gain the best results.

The research does not have support from the company to compare the financial cost of the training course to the company's financial result after the training course. A cost-benefit analysis (CBA) compares a decision's projected costs and benefits to determine feasibility. Businesses can determine whether a decision is worthwhile by summing up the potential rewards expected from an action and subtracting the associated costs. If the benefits outweigh the costs, the decision is likely worthwhile for the business. A cost-benefit analysis does not always involve concrete numbers or measurements. Consultants or analysts, for example, could create models to assign a dollar value to intangible factors, such as the benefits and costs of living. A cost-benefit analysis measures the benefits of a decision or action by subtracting the associated costs. It involves measurable financial metrics such as revenue earned or costs saved from pursuing a project. The analysis can also consider intangible benefits and costs, like employee morale and customer satisfaction. More complex analyses may include sensitivity analysis, discounting cash flows, and what-if scenarios for various options. Generally, the project favors a company if the benefits outweigh the costs.

Finally, there is a lack of previous research in the specific area of this research paper. Typically prior studies provide a foundation for the research being investigated, and further research is used to build upon that primary research. Still, that lack of previous research is why this research is essential. Due to the lack of foundational studies, this research focused on the highly studied areas tightly linked to this topic: training, engagement, personality, and performance. This lack of foundational studies is also why this research study uses quantitative and qualitative data to gain the most data and participant insight, providing a solid base for further research. As mentioned in the literature review, other researchers acknowledged the research gap and recommended further studies, and this research paper will be the first step in filling that gap. Still, it is also highly recommended that further research be done.

6.5 Conclusion

While many factors affect someone's engagement level, some primary ones have been identified as having the most influence. These are clear and open communication, diversity, honesty, transparency, a learning culture, fair pay, recognition, and the tools and skills to complete the task and challenging tasks. Further work and continual concentrationmust be applied to maintain and improve engagement. This study better explains how personality characteristics and training influence engagement.

Our research study was conducted with a mixed-method approach to provide the best in-depth understanding of the research findings while also having the ability to gain personalinsights from the participants used in this research study. This tenure and experience provided in-depth industry and company-specific knowledge and trust with the participants in this research, giving them the ability to provide the best possible results. In addition, all four branches of the catering business in this research are continually and actively working on improving. They are open to new ideas, as they understand their longevity andsuccess depend on this.

This research found that management needs to focus on their staff's individual reactions, behavior, and performance when implementing training programs because these characteristics influence all actions people perform. Human resources within businesses have used behavior to enhance and promote initiatives for years, but this study also shows the importance of adding them to training implementation. This study found that training outcomes, job satisfaction, and engagement were all influenced by behavior and that business personnel would enjoy and be more involved in training focused on their preferences. This focus also showed an increase in engagement level. So, this study adds to the knowledge base and helps provide business leaders with another tool that can be used to increase job satisfaction and engagement. It was also noted that business leaders must consider their members' attention span when conducting training courses during meetings. It was recorded and observed that the average attention span for lecture-based and presented information was thirty minutes or less. So to ensure training effectiveness, this is another factor that should be considered.

A workforce that is satisfied with their job has the tools and skills to accomplish it and is engaged, as shown through many studies, some of which are in thisstudy to have high performance and low retention issues. This study does not aim to provide a ‘golden key’ to increase engagement. A ‘golden key’ likely does not exist because people are complex, and no one person is the same as another, so specific tools may work better on one person than what they do on another. Still, this study provides one more critical area that business leaders should focus on along with the other engagement initiatives they already use.

While this research concentrated on a medium Vietnamese business, the results fit and add to the current global literature. This study also adds to the current research studies that show that increased job satisfaction and engagement will increase revenue through higher performance and decrease expenses through having a higher output. Still, for this positive trend to continue, business leaders must commit to continual improvement and implementation of engagement initiatives, which this study provides another area to focus on. This commitment to engagement initiatives would offer a satisfied, hard-working workforce and a successful business that feeds the local economy.

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APPENDIX A

PARTICIPANT INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Mina Catering Training Team Members,

My name is Le Thanh Liem; I was previously a company member. I am currently working on completing a doctoral degree on the topic “Impact Of Soft Skills Training on A Catering Company In Vietnam”. Knowing that Mina is presently proceeding with a soft skill training program for the staff, I would like to ask your permission and cooperation to perform my research study on this training program. The project is focused on increasing training effectiveness.

Your participation would be greatly appreciated, but it is entirely voluntary. This research study aims to gather data through questionnaires and quizzes conducted before and after three training sessions. The training team would organize the training on what they felt was most beneficial. Your involvement would include participating in the regular Saturday training, filling out simple questionnaires, and completing a quiz after each training session. The questionnaires are simple multiple-choice format and should take only five to 10 minutes to fill out, and instructions on how to fill them out will be on the top of each of the four questionnaires and explained by myself.

The surveys you will be asked to fill out are a demographic, engagement level, behavior, and training evaluation survey. After each training session, the attendants will fill out a training evaluation survey and complete a quiz. Once you have completed all three training sessions, you will be asked to do another engagement-level questionnaire. The data collected will then be analyzed and graphically represented to show if there is an increase in engagement based on training method preference. I appreciate your time and the teams and aim to make the process as easy as possible.

This research must follow strict ethics and confidentiality standards set by the ethics board. As part of this, I am putting steps in place to help prevent information from leading back to any of the participants involved. This includes, excluding the team name and specific location, using your team number, not your name (and adding a digit to each). Also, the data displayed in the research paper will accumulate data from multiple participants, not just one specific participant. In addition, I hold personal info and password protection, which is encrypted; no other person will be given access to this information. Finally, as well as part of the ethics I must follow, I will not be discussing your personal data that is gathered with anyone.

Once the training and research are complete, I will present and explain the overall results to the Executive Team. Again, no personal individual information will be shared.

I will be available to answer questions in person at the AGM meeting and throughout the training sessions, but please feel free to contact me with any urgent personal questions or concerns you may have, and I will reach out to you as quickly as possible.

Please reach out to me using my email address liem5587@yahoo.com

Thank you for your help and support in being involved in this research project.

Regards,

Le Thanh Liêm

APPENDIX B

SURVEY COVER LETTER

Impact of Soft Skills Training on A Catering Company In Vietnam

Dear Participant,

This research study aims to gather data through questionnaires before and after the three training sessions. The collected data will then be analyzed and graphically represented to show whether engagement increases based on training method preference.

I would appreciate your taking the time to complete these questionnaires. They are simple multiple-choice formats and should take only five to ten minutes to complete. Instructions on how to complete each questionnaire will be at the top of each. After completing the three training seminars, the attendants will be asked to fill in two of the four a second time.

(Your identity is completely confidential)

Thank you for your help and support in being involved in this research project

Regards,

Le Thanh Liêm

Doctoral Student

Contact number: 090 –384 –2915

Email: liem5587@yahoo.com

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT

Informed Consent Form

Research project title:

Impact of Soft Skills Training on A Catering Company In Vietnam

Research investigator:

Le Thanh Liêm

Participant:

Your participation in this research and filling out the questionnaires is voluntary. We do not anticipate any risks associated with your participation, but you have the right to stop or withdraw from the research at any time.

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of the above research project and participate in the questionnaires. This consent form is necessary for us to ensure that you understand the purpose of your involvement and that you agree to the conditions of your participation. Would you therefore read the accompanying information sheet and then sign this form to certify that you approve the following:

•the results of the questionnaires will be analyzed by (Le Thanh Liem) as research investigator

•access to the filled questionnaire will be limited to (Le Thanh Liem) and academic colleagues and researchers with whom he might collaborate as part of the research process

•any abstracts provided through academic publications or other scholarly means will be anonymised so that you cannot be identified, and we will take care to ensure that other information that could identify you is not disclosed

•any variation of the conditions above will only occur with your further explicit approval

All or part of the content may be used;

•In academic papers, policy papers or news articles

•On our website and in other media that we may produce such as spoken presentations

•On other feedback events

•In an archive of the project as noted above By signing this form I agree that;

1. I am voluntarily taking part in this project. I understand that I don't have to take part, and I can stop the interview at any time;
2. I have read the Information sheet;
3. I don't expect to receive any benefit or payment for my participation;
4. I have been able to ask any questions I might have, and I understand that I am free to contact the researcher with any questions I may have in the future.

Contact Information

-Researcher: Le Thanh Liêm

-Address: 226/20 Lê Văn Sỹ, P. 1, Tân Bình, Tphcm. Tel:090-384-2915

-Email: liem5587@yahoo.com

If you are worried about this research, or if you are concerned about how it is being conducted, you can contact SSBM by email at contact@ssbm.ch

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRES

Training Evaluation Survey

1) How do you grade the topics of the training courses and their trainers?

Form …

Pls, fill in 1 to 5 on a 5-point Likert scale.

Courses	**Trainer**	**Content**	**Facilitator**
Communication	Trainer A		
Teamwork	Trainer B		

2) How would you describe your staff's progress in the course objectives?

Form 3: Trainee feedback
Pls, fill in 1 to 5 on a 5-point Likert scale.

Criteria		**Item**	**Rating**
Course Structure	1	The course objectives were clearly communicated	
	2	The course objectives were met.	
	3	The duration of the course was good.	
	4	The topics covered in this course were suitable in the current context.	
Learning Initiatives	1	The pre-course e-learning materials helped me prepare for the course.	
	2	The pre-course engagement session was effective in preparation for the course.	
	3	The learner development plan helped me prepare to apply the knowledge and skills I had acquired to the workplace and reinforce my learning.	
	4	In this course, the learning activities (exercise, mind map, group presentation, case studies, etc.) are varied and engaging.	
	1	The course registration process was easy	

General Administration	2	The classroom setting (e.g., flipcharts, stationeries, class layout, etc.) was suitable for this course.
	3	The facilities (e.g., accommodation, Wi-Fi, printers, laptops, etc.) available in the course were good
	4	The food served was delightful.
	5	Overall organisation of the event was efficient.

4) What is your comment on your staff's progress in meeting the course objectives?

Form	Pls fill in 1 to 5 on a 5-point Likert scale	
Mina 1		
Respondent	**Comments**	Appropriation
Employee 1	None	
	Some Progress	
	Significant Progress	
	Completed development target	
Employee 2	None	
	Some Progress	
	Significant Progress	
	Completed development target	
Employee 3	None	
	Some Progress	
	Significant Progress	
	Completed development target	
Employee …	…	

5) Benefit of the training attended in terms of improvement in job performance

Do you think the training program is beneficial for improving job performance?

- Not Beneficial
- Beneficial
- Very Beneficial

6) Effectiveness of Training Programmes (self-efficacy)

Do you think that the training program is worthwhile?

- Not Worthwhile
- Worthwhile
- Very Worthwhile

Demographic Survey Team member or employee number __________

Date ______________

1) What is your gender

a)Female

b)Male

c)Others

2) What is your age?

a) 18 to 30

b) 31 to 45

c) Above 45

4) What is the highest level of education you have completed?

a) Did not attend high school

b) Attended high school

c) Graduated from high school

d) Undergraduate degree

e) Graduate degree

5) Which of the following best describes your current relationship status?

a) Married

b) Single

c) Others