

A Study to Understand the Effectiveness of Online v/s Offline Training Mode on Employee Performance

Dr. Shilpa Wadhwa

Associate Professor, I Business Institute

Email ID:

Ms. Shivani Sahay

PGDM Student, I Business Institute

Email ID:

Abstract

Training is the core part of every organization as it provides the basic learning and guidance orientation to the new joiners and upskilling to reskilling competency to meet the upcoming expectations of work. During the last two years, the mode of training has shifted more from offline to online mode due to the pandemic restrictions. So, this research paper aims to explore how much difference training can create when conducted in different modes and the use of technology to facilitate training effectiveness. The use of quantitative and qualitative analysis using structured questionnaires and informal group interaction was adopted for the study. The findings and the outcome concluded that the effectiveness of online and offline modes depends on numerous variables like the ability of the trainer, the level of trainees, the content of the training, the applicability of training to work, etc. The study also found that technology emerged as the greatest gift to training in terms of time, cost, reach, scale, comfort, effort, and effectiveness. The outcome of the study will be highly beneficial for the other organizations to grow in this changing organizational setup.

Keywords: Training, Modes of training, Employee performance, Effectiveness

1. INTRODUCTION

Training is essential at all work levels and for every individual in the workforce of an organization. Staying updated with rapidly evolving technologies, ideas, processes and the overall work environment is a crucial, and significant part of the training process. Training is the process of making others help and understand various skills, processes, and techniques to reskill and upskill in an organization. Every organization develops and launches various programs for their employees to continuously prepare them for future requirements. Investing in training can represent a substantial expense for any business. Nevertheless, numerous employers are willing to bear these costs with the anticipation that their employees will contribute to the overall success of the business and so consider this as an investment. As training requires the allocation of time, effort, and financial resources for an organization, meticulous consideration is given to the design of each training program. In the 21st century, training is intertwined with technology, providing the capability to deliver training at any time and from any location. However, the question arises: Does the flexibility offered by online delivery formats match the efficiency of the traditional offline training experience? As the trend toward online intensifies, it urges the need to understand the overall efficiency of online training versus offline training. The results of this study will provide certain facts and information that will help other organizations to make better decisions in the future.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Training is a process through which employees enhance and cultivate their efficiency. It involves acquiring specialized knowledge essential for the execution of specific job responsibilities. Dale S. Beach defined training as "Training is the organized procedure by which people learn knowledge and Improve skill for a definite purpose." In the words of Edwin B. Flippo, "Training is the act of increasing the knowledge and skill of an employee for doing a particular job." Training constitutes a learning encounter with the potential to instigate positive transformations and achieve the organizational objectives as intended.

Enhancing the workforce's capabilities to fulfill organizational objectives is a pivotal aspect of training. Within human resource management, training plays a vital role in building the capacity and capability of employees or the organization to meet

performance standards. Across all sectors, training holds significant importance as it boosts the efficiency and effectiveness of both individuals and the organization. The primary goal is to improve the capabilities of employees, fostering increased expertise and superior performance grounded in their skills and competencies. Workplace training is essential since it imparts the necessary understanding of responsibilities and duties to employees. Within the realm of human resource management, training holds a critical role, focusing on developing the capacity and capability of both employees and the organization to meet established performance standards. Training is a process and it is the most pervasive method to enhance the productivity of individuals and communicate organizational goals to personnel (Ekaterini & Constantinos Vasilios, 2009). It also supports that investing in training employees on decision-making, teamwork, problem-solving, and interpersonal relations has an impact on an organization's level of growth as well as employee performance (Rohan & Madhumita, 2012).

A crucial aspect of Human Resource Management is the implementation of training programs, which positively influence the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of workers, leading to elevated job performance. This performance ultimately contributes to a supreme level of organizational performance (Guest, 1997). Training is the only way of identifying the desired needs of employees and their competency level which improves their performance to achieve organizational goals. (Farooq.M & Aslam.M.K., 2011).

2.1 Training and Organisational Performance

According to a study by Harrison (2000), learning through training influences the organization's performance by greater employee performance and it is the key factor in achieving the corporate goals. The way of implementing a training program will provide the solution to cover performance issues such as filling the gap between the standard and actual performance of employees in an effective way (Swart et al, 2005). The efficacy of a training program directly influences the adaptability of employees, contributing not only to improved job performance but also to enhancing their knowledge, skills, and attitude for future roles. The competency level of employees developed through the training programs enables them to implement the job efficiently and competitively achieve firm objectives (Wright & Geory, 2001).

Training contributes to the comprehensive improvement of an organization's performance through various avenues such as the development of soft skills, personality enhancement, fostering interpersonal relationships, problem-solving techniques, quality improvement initiatives, time management skills, goal setting, and effective workplace communication, among others. Employee performance, achieved through training, refers to immediate improvements in the knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out job-related work, and hence achieve more employee commitment towards the organizational goals (Huselid, 1995; Ichniowski et al., 1997). The success of a training program pivots on the attainment of desired results by the organization. Consequently, evaluating the effectiveness of the training program on employee performance is crucial. Such evaluations not only benefit the training providers but also the employees, ultimately impacting the company's bottom line positively.

Modes of Training

An effective training strategy acknowledges that there is no one-size-fits-all method. However, amidst the multitude of options, the task of identifying and choosing the most suitable training method for your employees can be quite daunting.

- **Online Training Mode**

Online training has emerged as a highly acknowledged solution to effectively address the challenge of employee training. It encompasses various formats such as eLearning courses, webinars, videos, and more, providing flexibility in presenting and assessing information. The diverse options within online training cater to different learning styles and immediate needs of employees. Additionally, the convenience of learning on the go is a significant advantage offered by online training programs. It also takes into account, time, cost effort, geographical location, flexibility, convenience etc

- **Offline Training Mode**

Traditional offline training is typically conducted by a qualified facilitator in a physical venue, either on-site or off-site. During these sessions, groups of employees engage in activities such as reviewing presentation slides, participating in case study assessments, or exploring information on company policy issues.

The benefit of offline training lies in its capacity to impart substantial knowledge to a group of employees simultaneously. However, the drawbacks are numerous, including the expenses associated with renting venues, travel, and catering, making this training method financially burdensome

2.2 Impact of Pandemic on Training Mode

The pandemic has ushered in transformative shifts in training methodologies. Remote work and online training have emerged as a novel trend to tackle unique, challenging-to-replace, and operationally crucial aspects of the business. Online/Virtual training was not a mandated practice in the regular system of training in most organizations (Krishnan, 2020). This practice was infrequent, typically occurring based on mutual requirements between the organization and individuals. The onset of the coronavirus crisis led to the minimization of in-person training, giving rise to new opportunities for online training, and ultimately benefiting employees in the workplace.

3. Research Methodology

The objectives of this study encompass a comprehensive exploration of various employee training methods, an investigation into the imperative need and transition from traditional offline training to the online format, and an examination of the impact of training on employee performance. To achieve these objectives, a robust research methodology has been devised.

In terms of sampling design, both primary and secondary data collection methods will be employed. Primary data will be gathered through surveys and questionnaires, facilitating direct insights from individuals within the organization. The secondary data collection will involve an in-depth analysis of industry profiles, journals, and reports available on relevant websites.

The data analysis process will be conducted with precision using Microsoft Excel, ensuring thorough validation of the collected information. Structured questionnaires will be employed for quantitative data, while informal interactions will provide qualitative insights. Additionally, suitable tables and graphs will be utilized to present the major findings, providing a clear and organized representation of the study's outcomes. This methodological approach aims to offer a holistic understanding of

employee training methods, the transition to online training, and the effectiveness of training on employee performance.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Mode of training: Because of the pandemic situation many companies are still conducting many of their works via online mode. As per the study by Dhawan in 2020 stated that amidst the pandemic, online learning is no longer an option but a necessity. Online learning has emerged as a victor in enhancing the quality of online learning and almost everyone transitioned to using online mode to get updated with the required skill needed for it. And are any ways an easy and a fast way to connect with all the people. And 20% is because many trainers have started giving offline training as well. As they prefer offline training more (Figure 1).

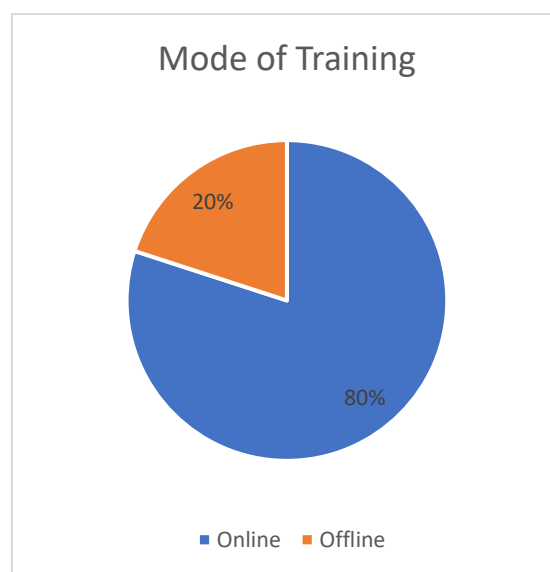


Figure 1: Mode of Training
(Source: Author's own)

4.2 Training Mode Preference: Due to the serious outbreak of this global pandemic and a shocking stage for all nations and organizations across the world, people were mentally and emotionally not prepared to shift to new ways of working and were hesitant to leave offline and shift to online. So initially most employees (except the IT Industry) with at least an experience of 15+ years were in favour of offline training. They were not that comfortable with the new

technological ways because of the very long traditional practice of giving and getting training offline. Many individuals were in favour of online training, especially from the IT Industry where they were already using online mode as they thought of it as the more convenient and easily accessible way to connect with the team or the trainers any time anywhere. These Technology experts provided an easy transition from offline to online with their organizations and across other industries like marketing, finance, etc (Carey, 2020). (Figure 2).

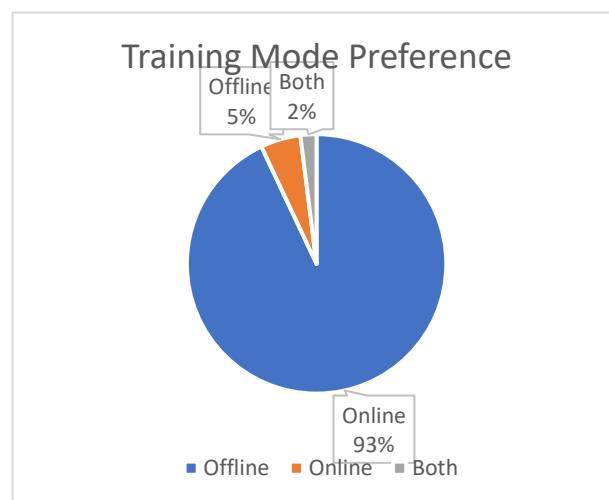


Figure 2: Training Mode Preference
(Source: Author's own)



Figure 3: Training Program Effectiveness
(Source: Author's own)

4.3 Training program effectiveness: The above data in Figure 3, it indicates that the employees are getting the benefit of the training sessions in their job performance as the trainers providing training sessions are experts in their domain as per the responses of the employees. The training content also seems to be apt to meet the job requirements, especially for entry-level employees. The learnings of the training are found to be very useful in employee performance. The study by Dhawan 2020 highlights that Utilizing online learning methods provides the flexibility to tailor our procedures and processes according to the learners' requirements. A plethora of online tools are accessible, contributing to the establishment of an effective and efficient learning environment. In times of crisis, educators can employ a blend of audio, videos, and text to engage with students, preserving a human touch in their lectures. This approach fosters a collaborative and interactive learning atmosphere, enabling students to offer immediate feedback, pose questions, and engage in an engaging and informative manner.

4.4 Training and employee performance: Some employees don't believe in the effectiveness of online training. And so, thinks that it negatively impacts employees' performance and productivity. Parkes et al. (2014) mentioned the difficulties and problems associated with modern technology range from downloading errors, issues with installation, login problems, network problems with audio and video, and so on. Some employees feel that understanding technology and their willingness to learn completely depends on themselves. If they are open to learning then they can easily through the online training and can implement them to achieve better results (Figure 4).

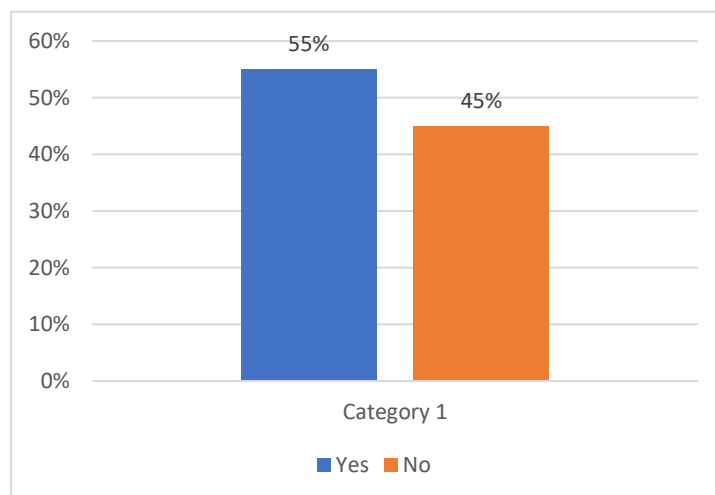


Figure:4 Training and Employee Performance
(Source: Author's own)

4.5 Limitations of offline training: As per the responses recorded, many people have issues with traveling and how much cost they have to bear while traveling or in the overall process of training. Not only the cost and time but also the coordination and follow-ups which are done to make the training programs successful also become quite hectic and even stressful sometimes. Online training presents a myriad of challenges, encompassing concerns related to learners, educators, and content development. Crafting content that not only meets the requisite standards but also effectively engages the trainee poses a considerable challenge (Kebritchi et al., 2017). The quality of online training programs is a substantial hurdle, exacerbated by the absence of standardized benchmarks for quality, quality control protocols, and the creation and delivery of online resources and content.

4.6 Advantages of offline training: As per all the responses recorded, most people think that offline training is advantageous because of the physical interaction rather than the virtual presence which creates a huge impact. And people get a chance to clear all their doubts and understand things in a better way without any interruptions. Online Learning, Remote Working, and e-collaborations exploded during the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis (Favale et al., 2020). Traditionally, people have shown a reluctance to embrace new learning methods. However, the ongoing crisis catalyzes a transformative phase in online learning, encouraging individuals to explore the positive aspects of e-learning

technologies. This juncture presents a promising opportunity to unveil remarkable innovations and advancements in the digital realm of education.

4.7 Online Mode of Training Culture: The given data (Figure 5), clearly shows that age also plays an important factor. People of young age are more comfortable with the online training sessions and are even readily learning and implementing it. As they are already adapted to it. However middle-aged people are not that much comfortable with this virtual shift. And even are not even comfortable with online learning as they are not able to focus and cope with the upgradation.

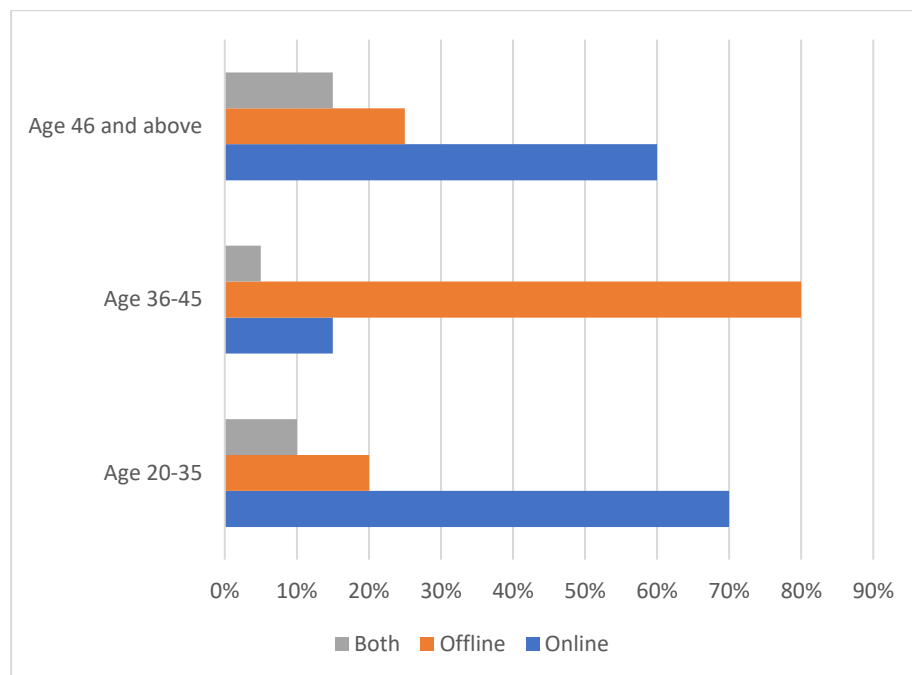


Figure :5 Online Mode of Training Culture

(Source: Author's own)

5. DISCUSSIONS

Major Findings based on quantitative and qualitative findings of the study are as follows:

The impact of training appears to be more significant for individuals who are technologically adept and comfortable with online training methods. However, there exists a specific demographic, primarily of a certain age group, that remains skeptical about virtual training. Their preference for traditional training methods, rooted in familiarity, makes them resistant to transitioning to online modes.

The effectiveness of training is contingent on the participant's willingness to engage with the chosen mode. Whether it is online or offline, participants can derive value from the training if they pay attention. The trainers' commitment to maintaining the quality of information remains consistent, irrespective of the mode of delivery.

Correctly implemented and administered, online training has proven its potential to outperform traditional in-person training. The continual advancement of technology has

further amplified the advantages of online training, emphasizing the importance of leveraging cutting-edge software to optimize the overall effectiveness of online training programs.

While online training has been adopted more out of necessity than preference, it has demonstrated substantial potential in significantly reducing overall training duration without compromising learning efficacy. The most effective approach involves a strategic blend of online training with in-person elements, aiming to enhance overall effectiveness and promote greater satisfaction among employees.

The assessment of implementing online training should be made considering the following factors:

- a. the size of the company and the number of people that will be impacted,
- b. a cost-benefit analysis that takes into account potential costs compared to learning outcomes
- c. The type of job requirements and timelines to accomplish it
- d. The impact of the outcome on business results

6. CONCLUSION

Employees are recognized as a rare, non-replicable, and invaluable asset for a firm, with the success or failure of any business hinging significantly on their performance. Distinguishing this, organizations are inclined to invest in training programs for employee development. Effective training is deemed a pivotal factor in enhancing performance, elevating both employee and firm competency. It serves to bridge the disparity between the expected and actual performance, addressing the gap between desired and current employee performance. The inclination towards online learning is on the rise, primarily attributed to the convenience and flexibility it provides. We have found sufficient evidence to indicate that training via online has increased during the pandemic period but it can never replace the benefits of offline training, still, the future lies in the combination of both. It is certain that now online training will be adopted by most organizations due to the advent of technology and cost-saving benefits, better monitoring. In the future, it will be important to quantify

the benefits of such training with business results and take advantage of economies of scale to grow and develop business prospects.

6.1 Limitations of the Study

The current study faces several limitations that should be considered in the interpretation of its findings. Firstly, the sample size is relatively small and confined to a specific group of employees, potentially limiting the generalizability of the results. Additionally, there is a possibility of bias in the information provided by the respondents, influencing the overall reliability of the data. The statistical analysis conducted is descriptive in nature due to constraints in both data availability and time, limiting the depth of quantitative insights. Lastly, capturing and quantifying the effectiveness of training on employee performance poses a challenge, introducing a level of difficulty in drawing definitive conclusions from the study's outcomes. These limitations underscore the need for cautious interpretation and consideration of the study's scope and constraints.

References

1. Carey K. (2020). Is everybody ready for the big migration to online college? Actually, no. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com>
2. Dhawan Shivangi. (2020). Online learning: A Panacea in the time of covid-19 crisis. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, Vol – 49(1), pp 5-22.
3. Ekaterini Galancu, Constantinos-Vasilios Priporas (2009): “A model for evaluating the effectiveness of middle managers” training courses: Evidence from a major banking organization in Greece”. *International Journal of Training and Development*, pp 221-245.
4. Favale T., Soro F., Trevisan M., Drago I., Mellia M. (2020). Campus traffic and e-Learning during COVID-19 pandemic. *Computer Networks*, 176, 107290.
5. Farooq, M. & Aslam M.K. (2011), Impact of Training and Feedback on Employee Performance, *Far East Journal of Psychology and Business*. 5(1).

6. Guest, D E (1997) Human resource management and performance; a review of the research agenda, *The International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 8 (3), 263–76
7. Harrison, R. (2000), *Employee Development*, Beekman Publishing, Silver Lakes, Pretoria.
8. Huselid, M.A. (1995), “The impact of human resource management practices on turnover, productivity and corporate financial performance”, *Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 38 No. 3, pp. 635-72.
9. Ichniowski, C., Shaw, K. and Prennushi, G. (1997), “The effects of human resource management practices on productivity: a study of steel finishing lines”, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 87 No. 3, pp. 291-313
10. Kebritchi M., Lipschuetz A., Santiago L. (2017). Issues and challenges for teaching successful online courses in higher education. *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, 46(1), 4–29.
11. Krishnan, L.R.K. (2020). Pandemic: A Case Study of Online Teaching across Various Participant Groups in the Indian Context, *Journal of the International Academy for Case Studies*, 26(6)
12. Parkes M., Stein S., Reading C. (2014). Student preparedness for university e-learning environments. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 25, 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2014.10.002>
13. Rohan, S & Madhumita, M. (2012): “Impact of Training Practice on Employee Productivity: A Comparative Study”. *Interscience Management Review (IMR)* ISSN: 2231-1513 Volume-2, Issue-2, 2012.
14. Swart, J., Mann, C., Brown, S. and Price, A. (2005), *Human Resource Development: Strategy and Tactics*, Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann Publications, Oxford
15. Wright, P. and Geroy, D.G. (2001), “Changing the mindset: the training myth and the need for word-class performance”, *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, Vol. 12 No. 4, pp. 586-600.