STUDY ON EMPLOYEES' PERSPECTIVES ON ONLINE AND OFFLINE TRAINING

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Abstract

Employee training is a critical component of workforce development, ensuring employees acquire necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively. This study explores employees' perspectives on online and offline training, focusing on workers in the manufacturing sector in Tamil Nadu. The research surveyed 60 employees, with 43.3% aged 20-30 years, 78.3% male, and 60% married. The study found that while online training was convenient and met expectations, offline training was perceived as more effective post-COVID-19 due to its interactive nature. Over half of respondents agreed that online training had more distractions, while many missed face-to-face interactions. However, offline training facilitated better communication, teamwork, and engagement, increasing motivation and knowledge retention. Online training materials were useful, but practical learning and doubt-clearing sessions were more effective in offline settings. The findings suggest that a hybrid training approach may be beneficial, balancing the advantages of both methods to enhance employee learning and performance.

Keywords: Employee training, online training, offline training, workforce development, knowledge retention, motivation, hybrid training, manufacturing sector, employee engagement, digital learning.

Introduction

Training is a vital component of employee development, equipping individuals with the necessary skills and knowledge to perform effectively. It is an ongoing process that enables organizations to stay competitive by adapting to new technologies and industry advancements. Companies increasingly recognize the strategic importance of continuous training, as it is more cost-effective to upskill existing employees than to hire new talent. With rapid digital transformation, the demand for employee training has intensified. PwC's survey of workers found that 53% of workers believe automation will reshape or eliminate their jobs, with 77% acknowledging the need for reskilling. Traditionally, offline training has been the dominant method, particularly in industries requiring specialized hard skills. However, the rise of online training platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and Stanford Online has revolutionized learning by providing flexible, cost-effective access to high-quality education.

This study explores employees' perspectives on online and offline training, analyzing their effectiveness in enhancing skills and workforce performance.

Research Objectives

- To do an analysis on the perspectives of employees on online training and offline training.
- To understand the demographic profile of respondents.
- To understand training effectiveness in online and offline modes.
- To analyse which mode of training (online or offline) results in effective knowledge transfer to the employees and keep the employees motivated throughout the learning process.

Review of Literature

Zaidan, Muslim Najeeb, et al.(1)- The study explores the influence of online and offline factors on employee productivity and performance in SME enterprises in Iraq. It found that digital tools, training, remote work, communication platforms, work environment, leadership, team dynamics, and physical conditions significantly influence performance.

Lim, Hyochang, Sang-Gun Lee, and KichanNam.(2)- Information technologies have boosted online training, offering diverse educational opportunities. This research investigates effective online training determinants and their impact on learning and transfer performance, demonstrating a positive relationship.

Collins, Catherine, DimitriosBuhalis, and Mike Peters.(3)- The study examines the use of information technology in small and medium-sized tourist enterprises (SMTEs) in the European hotel sector, revealing that they are not fully utilizing technology for training, inventory management, marketing, and internal business processes.

Arbaugh, J. B., et al.(4) - The paper reviews online and blended learning in management disciplines, highlighting progress in Organizational Behavior and Strategic Management, but suggests further research on topics like participant characteristics and international influence.

Gold, Sanford.(5) -The article explores the pedagogical role of teachers in online education, focusing on the transition from in-class to online learning. It investigates a two-week faculty development course, involving constructivist instructional methods and collaborative exercises. The study found that teachers' attitudes towards online instruction changed, viewing it as more participatory and interactive.

Zhang, Xiaojun, and ViswanathVenkatesh.(6)- By distinguishing between employees' online and offline workplace communication networks, this paper incorporates technology into social network theory to understand employees' job performance. Specifically, we conceptualize network ties as direct and indirect ties in both online and offline workplace communication networks, thus resulting in four distinct types of ties. We theorize that employees' ties in online and offline workplace communication networks are complementary resources that interact to influence their job performance. We found support for our model in afield study among 104 employees in a large telecommunication company. The paper concludes with theoretical and practical implications.

Szopiński, Tomasz, and KatarzynaBachnik.(7) - The paper explores how student engagement, travel time to the business school, and nationality influence their perception of the value of business school education. It analyzes the evaluation of online studies, frequency of participation, and future preferences for online or offline study. Results show that student engagement influences the current evaluation of online studying, while travel time to the school determines the preferred mode of study.

Chu, Tsai-Hsin, and Daniel Robey.(8) - This study investigates changes in learning and work practices after an online learning system was implemented in a Taiwanese hospital. It uses a temporal theory of human agency to explain the decline in use, highlighting the need for a more comprehensive understanding of human agency

Lase, Delipiter, et al.(9) - The study explores parents' perceptions and attitudes towards distance learning in Indonesia, focusing on elementary school students. Findings show that distance learning has increased economic, psychological, and social burdens, leading to a decline in children's learning motivation and cognitive abilities.

Pandeani, Ni Komang Niko, I. GustiNgurahAgungSuprastayasa, and LuhPutuKartini.(10) - Training is crucial for human resource development and is expensive. Online training offers flexibility and efficiency. Hotel X in Bali conducts online training, but most employees don't meet minimum hours. This research analyzes the training program using quantitative and qualitative methods. Results show the course, content, instructor, and relevance to the job are good, but many employees don't meet minimum hours.

Rasmitadila, Rasmitadila, et al.(11) - The study examines primary school teachers' perceptions of online learning in Indonesia's School from Home program during the COVID-19 pandemic, focusing on instructional strategies, challenges, support, and motivation.

Hui, Ray Tak-yin, Kuok Kei Law, and Sara Choi-Ping Lau (12) - The article explores how leaders use different coaching media, including face-to-face and e-coaching, to coach and regulate followers' behavior. A two-wave longitudinal field study of 114 Hong Kong employees found that guidance and facilitation coaching styles indirectly relate to adaptive performance, creativity, and emotional exhaustion, mediated by the choice of coaching medium. The study discusses theoretical and managerial implications.

Kashinath, K., and R. Raju.(13)- The study compares online and offline English language learning for students in Telangana schools. It explores students' perceptions of blended learning, revealing offline classroom learning is preferred. The research helps educators understand efficient learning practices, enhances collaborative student performance, and helps select appropriate technologies during pandemic crises. Obstacles faced in online learning include materials insufficiency and lack of interaction.

Wang, Changyu, et al.(14)- Little is known about when younger employees' intergenerational knowledge transfer (IGKT) – behaviors of acquiring knowledge from older employees – improves their innovative work behaviors (IWB), especially in hospitals. Taking into consideration the moderating roles of individual absorptive capacity (AC) and organization size, this study aims to develop a theoretical model to account for the associations of both online and offline IGKT with younger employees' IWB.

Agrawal, Vivek, Sucheta Agarwal, and Anand Mohan Agrawal.(15) - The purpose of this paper is to evaluate the employee's perception toward e-learning programs or services and to explore the attribute for improvements.

Ďurian, Jozef, Lukas Smerek, and Ivana Simockova.(16) - This study examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on employee training and development in companies. It compares data from 2018 to 2023, finding that the number of enterprises implementing training increased post-pandemic, positively impacting employee performance and satisfaction. The study found that online learning methods were most frequently used in both years, while offline learning methods were lower in Slovak companies.

Nurani, Gita Aulia, and Ya-Hui Lee.(17) - The study explores the characteristics of effective online learning programs for middle-aged employees and the benefits of online learning for their work-life capacities. It found that online learning for middle-aged employees should focus on practical skills, combine online tools and offline activities, have clear time limits, include multi generation, and have small numbers of participants. The benefits include knowledge refreshment, work-skill renewal, and growth mindset awareness.

Methodology

Field of Study

The study is conducted among employees working in manufacturing sector in Tamil Nadu. The respondents are from valves and TMT bars manufacturing companies. The respondents of the study are from three manufacturing companies (two valve manufacturing companies and one TMT bars manufacturing company). It is to be noted that no official permission was obtained during the data collection phase, but the collected data was kept confidential and respondents' privacy was protected.

Research Design

The design chosen for this study is descriptive. The term "descriptive research" refers to a methodology that details the characteristics of the variables being investigated. With this methodology, the emphasis is more on providing answers to 360 Degree feedback on "what" questions than "why" questions about the study topic.

Selection of Sample

- **Sample criteria**: Employees working in manufacturing sector in Tamil Nadu.
- **Sample Size**: The sample size of the study is 60.
- **Sampling Technique**: The research adopted the simple random sampling technique. Simple random sampling chooses a smaller group(the sample) from a larger group of all participants (the population). It is one of the most basic systematic sampling strategies for obtaining a random sample.

Tools for Data Collection

The tool used for data collection is Questionnaire (Google Forms). A questionnaire is are search tool that consists of a series of questions designed to gather information from respondents. The researcher has used a Five- Point Likert Scale. A Likert scale is a type of rating scale that measures respondents' attitudes, opinions, or beliefs regarding a specific topic or statement. The scale consists of a series of statements or questions that the respondent rates on a 5-point scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

The tool has eight dimensions, which are, demographic profile, employees' perspective towards online training, employees' perspectives towards offline training, training modes and effectiveness, effectiveness of training in online mode, effectiveness of training in offline mode, knowledge transfer and motivation of employees towards training.

Sources of Data

- **Primary Sources**

The sources for primary data for this study is collected with the help of Questionnaire from the respondents through Google forms.

- **Secondary Sources**

The sources for secondary data are collected with the help of journals, magazines, publications, articles from the review of literature.

Data Analysis and Interpretation
Chapter Overview

This chapter represents the analysis and interpretation of the data. The primary data collected from the respondents has been analysed and presented in this chapter. The responses were collected using Likert Five- Point Rating Scale, where 1 denotes Strongly Agree, 2 denotes Agree, 3 denotes Neutral, 4 denotes Disagree and 5 denotes Strongly Disagree.

### Section 4.1-Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Age	Frequency (n=60)	Percent %
20 - 30	26	43.33
31 - 40	24	40
41 - 50	07	11.67
51 & above	03	5
Total	**60**	**100**

FREQUENCY (n=60)

■ 20 - 30 ■ 31 - 40 ■ 41 - 50 ■ 51 & above
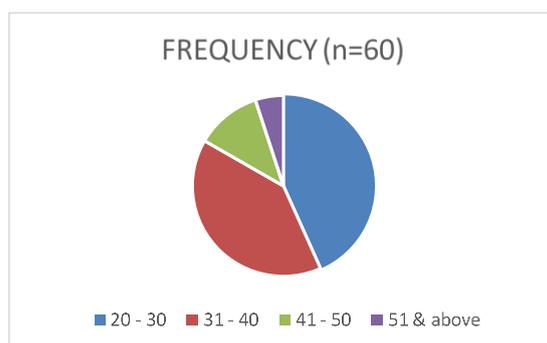
- Majority of respondents are between 20-30 years old.
- Majority are male, with 78.3% being male and 21.6% female.
- Majority are married, with 60.5% being married and 40% being single.
- Majority have completed a postgraduate degree, with 48.3% having completed it and 35.5% having an undergraduate degree.
- Majority have 5-10 years of work experience.

Section 4.2 Distribution of Respondents by Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency (n=60)	Percent %
Undergraduate	21	35
Postgraduate	29	48.33
Diploma	07	11.67
Others	03	5
Total	**60**	**100**
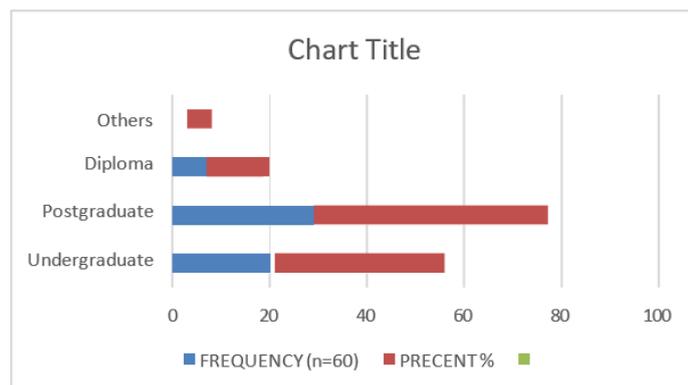
From the above table, it can be inferred that a little less than half (48.3%) of the respondents have completed postgraduate degree and (35%) of the respondents have finished undergraduate degree. (11.67%) of the respondents have a degree in diploma. Majority of the respondents have a Postgraduate degree.

Section 4.3- Employees' Perspectives Towards Online Training

- Majority (43.3%) agree that online training meets their expectations.
- Majority (38.3%) prefer online training, while 35% disagree.
- Majority (41.7%) believe online training is more advantageous than offline training after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Majority (46.7%) take responsibility for their learning online.

S.No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	I never face technical problems during online training	3 (5)*	13 (21.7)*	13 (21.7)*	25 (41.7)*	6 (10)*	60 (100)*
2	I find it difficult to attend training through online mode.	4 (6.7)*	32 (53.3)*	16 (26.7)*	5 (8.3)*	3 (5)*	60 (100)*
3	I have a separate space where I can attend online training comfortably.	5 (8.3)*	21 (35)*	12 (20)*	20 (33.3)*	2 (3.3)*	60 (100)*
4	Online training technologies provide benefits over offline training to the learning process.	3 (5)*	24 (40)*	17 (28.3)*	16 (26.7)*	0 (0)*	60 (100)*
5	The online training materials are useful, accurate, and interesting.	3 (5)*	34 (56.7)*	161 (26.7)*	6 (10)*	1 (1.7)*	60 (100)*
6	Recorded training helps in saving time during the working hours.	8 (13.3)*	29 (48.3)*	12 (20)*	10 (16.7)*	1 (1.7)*	60 (100)*
7	Flexibility provided by an online environment is more than that of a traditional approach.	7 (11.7)*	39 (65)*	7 (11.7)*	7 (11.7)*	0 (0)*	60 (100)*

Section 4.4-Employees' Perspectives Towards Offline Training

- Majority (46.7%) prefer offline training, agree that it meets their expectations, is not boring, and they miss face-to-face contact.
- Majority (58.3%) believe offline training is not boring compared to online training.
- Majority (46.7% and 43.3%) agree that direct interaction will be more in offline training than online training.

S.No	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
1	Offline mode increases communication and social skills.	27 (45)*	25 (41.7)*	7 (11.7)*	1 (1.7)*	0 (0)*	60 (100)*
2	Pressure handling and life skills can be acquired only in offline mode.	19 (31.7)*	30 (50)*	7 (11.7)*	3 (5)*	1 (1.7)*	60 (100)*
3	During offline training employees are guided directly and is easier to understand compared to online mode.	16 (26.7)*	35 (58.3)*	6 (10)*	3 (5)*	0 (0)*	60 (100)*

Results

The study surveyed 43.3% of employees aged 20 -30 years, with 78.3% being male and 60% married. The majority had a postgraduate degree and 5-10 years of work experience. Employees' perspectives on online and offline training were mixed. Online training met expectations, while offline training met expectations and was more advantageous after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over half of respondents agreed that online training had more distractions than offline training. However, many missed face-to-face contact with fellow employees and trainers in online training. Offline training was also not boring and had more direct interaction.

Overall, 78.3% of respondents agreed that their company provided both online and offline training programs. They were satisfied with the communication tools used for online training. Over two-fifths of respondents did not face technical problems during online training, and some found it difficult to attend. Online training technologies provided benefits over offline training, and online training materials were useful, accurate, and interesting. Offline training increased communication and social skills, pressure handling, and life skills. It also provided more flexibility than traditional approaches. Knowledge transfer was more effective in offline training, with recorded lectures being useful and practical training being difficult. Doubt clearing sessions were also found to be useful and effective only in offline training.

Motivation towards training was higher in offline training, with 55% feeling isolated and unmotivated.

Half of respondents agreed that they would be more focused and attentive during offline training. Offline training also increased teamwork and collaboration among employees. Overall, the study highlights the importance of considering both online and offline training methods for employee satisfaction and effectiveness.

Suggestions

- Online training is more efficient for technical or software training, allowing role-playing and practice exercises.
- Offline training is more effective for team-building activities or soft-skills training.
- Engaging and interactive training methods, such as activities, role-playing games, group discussions, and case studies, promote active participation and enhance memory.
- Use of multimedia, such as audio, video, and animation, can improve learning.
- Gamification can make training more interesting and engaging, motivating learners to finish tasks and participate.
- Online training materials should be focused on learning objectives and provide practice opportunities.
- Online training should be accessible to all learners, including those with physical or visual impairments.
- Blended learning can combine the social contact and hands-on learning of offline training with the convenience and flexibility of online learning.

Conclusion

In conclusion, employees' perspectives on online and offline training vary and are influenced by a variety of factors. While online training is frequently recognized for it sease, accessibility, and cost-effectiveness, some employees may feel that it lacks social connection and hands-on learning chances. Offline training, on the other hand, is frequently valued for its personalised, interactive, and collaborative aspect, but it can be more time-consuming and expensive.

Ultimately, the effectiveness of training is determined by the quality of the content, the learners' participation, and the organization's support. As a result, when choosing on the ideal training strategy, companies must consider their employees' requirements and preferences, as well as the specific training goals

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