

BASIC ISSUES IN EVALUATION OF TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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Abstract. Evaluation is mainly carried out to avoid any fiscal educational programmes irresponsibility so as to enhance educational quality output. Since evaluation requires the process of carrying out investigation into success progress or otherwise of an existing practice procedure in an organisation, it becomes very necessary for all educational managers/leaders to know what evaluation is, why it is very important and how it can be properly carried out so as to achieve desired goals and objectives. This paper therefore, focuses on the concept, types, aims, models and guiding principles of evaluation.

Keywords: evaluation, training, education, models and organisation

Introduction

The concern of any organisation or stakeholder about training individual employee is whether the outcome justifies the investments made or not. As long as training is seen to be a critical instrument in the search for improved performance, the more the need to continually evaluate the training programmes. It is all about our endeavour to set out to discover all that we can, or use or about

how effective we are. Training, according to Jain (2014), could be described as the attainment of knowledge, skills, and competencies as an outcome of the teaching of occupational or practical skills and knowledge that transmit to precise valuable competencies. As indicated by Al-Yahya & Norsiah (2013), training is portrayed as the way of providing training of whatever sort that meets the necessity of trainee that display deficiency of that ability and knowledge.

According to Haddock (2015), an important consideration in the in the viability of training is the degree at which the trainee is able to make use of the knowledge and aptitudes or skills acquired into practice in their place of work. Ordinarily, good training programmes should be launched with recognition of training needs and should also end with the appraisal of the training (Gopal, 2008; Farjad, 2012) attested that the effectiveness of training (an organisation can ascertain whether the training is effective or not from the information they gathered) could only be determined by the evaluation of such training.

In the words of Edwards (1999), what kind of control and the how, why, where, when and with whom, are guided in the first instance by the concept of the heart of the term evaluation to value. Because values are the heart of evaluation, they are activities that may attract controversy and disagreement, particularly where they are underlying conflicts of interest in the world of work. Different stakeholders in any evaluative exercise will be looking for a different 'spin' on the process and on the outcomes. This 'spin' may be one that protects their investment, or their image. It may be one that helps them to take a problem that had not been tackled by other means. Methods of evaluation are therefore sometimes deployed to help stakeholder make better decision. They are also deployed to justify decision or course of action already taken. According to Al-Mughairi (2018), evaluation should be an on-going activity that needs to be inculcated into any training programme. For any training activities to be effective, every organisation needs to design an evaluation scheme that must be continuous in nature.

Concept of evaluation and training evaluation

Evaluation encompasses all activities undertaken to support instructors, mentors and trainees choose what part of educating and learning structure and technique worked and what did not, what ought to be kept and what changed. The purpose is to arrive at a judgment about the intrinsic value and worthwhile of an approach to learning.

According to Jain (2014), evaluation quantifies the degree at which training programmes, procedures, or tools accomplish the reason for which they were intended. As indicated by Topno (2012), Evaluation helps to see the connection between the proposed intended and accomplished targets and to look at how a training programme has accomplished the goals expected. According to him, evaluation is the methodical compilations of facts for deciding how to effectiveness use the accessible training resources for the organizational goals to be accomplished. According to Al-Mughairi (2018), evaluation ought to be an on-going action that should be instilled into any training programme. Vijay et al. (2012) portrayed evaluation as the systematic collection of information as indicated by a predetermined arrangement or technique to guarantee that the data is fitting and helpful. Ogunsaju (2004) after Dean stated that we evaluate in order to assess our past action and learn from it, prepare for new plans and action by asking the following questions: (i) where do we want to get to; (ii) what is our starting point; (iii) which routes are available for us; (iv) what problems have we; (v) have we reached our relationship; (vi) was the route we took the best one; (vii) could we do better next time.

This shows that evaluation starts with lucid recognition of the expected outcomes of a training programme. Evaluation is important in light of the fact that it assists with surveying the effectiveness and achievement of a training programme (Topno, 2012). According to Choudhury & Sharma (2019), evaluation of training means the act of judging whether the action to be assessed is beneficial in terms of the set criteria. They likewise characterize evaluation as

the logical gathering of information that describes how best the provided training resources are used for the attainment of the organizational benefits. Evaluation of training programme is all part of the control process of training that is conducted to assess the viability and the result-impact the exercise has on the trainee. According to Patterson (2015), training evaluation is performed to set aside cash, to help organizations decide what to do with their training programmes, and because of increased pressure on organizations to legitimize the use of the training programmes. Haddock (2015) evaluating training helps us to stay humble to the unpredictability of human learning and behavioural change and to share what we learn across our organisations and within the sector. According to Choudhury & Sharma (2019), the significant components of training evaluation are: *feedback*: connecting training outcomes to objectives that can be used for quality control; *control*: connecting training activities to organizational activities and to reflect on the effectiveness of the cost incurred; *research*: examining the correlation among learning, training and transfer of training to the job requirement; *intervention*: the outcomes of the evaluation control the context in which it occurs.

Prior to concluding how to monitor and evaluate a training intervention, it is worth asking: is it worth doing? Why are we doing it? Who is driving it? What type of training programme are we evaluating? (Haddock, 2015).

Evaluation of training effectiveness is significant because it helps to make decisions related to the continuation of training, improvements in training and allocation of training resources, the closer the training outcomes are to the training objectives the more effective the training will be (Devi & Shaik, 2012). According to Topno (2012), distinct objectives can be accomplished during the life of a training programme as a result of training evaluation. Training evaluation ensures that trainees are capable to put into practice the skills learnt in their respective place of work (Nagar, 2009).

Types of evaluation

There are three main types of evaluation: - formative, summative and diagnostic.

Formative evaluation

This is an ongoing type of evaluation. Normally it's should be built in right from the planning stage of a programme. Formative evaluation provides necessary guidance for programme development and its implementation, it is all about to identify and define programme goals and objectives, provides quality control and monitor progress.

Summative evaluation

The focus of summative evaluation is on the overall effectiveness of the project. It provides the criteria with which to judge the relevance, suitability and sustainability or otherwise of the project that has been in operation for a long time in terms of the relationship between project goal and resources allocation. Summative evaluation helps trainer to gathers data in a planned and systematic way about what the trainees have learned over an instructional period in order to draw references about their achievement, and to provide report that reflects each trainee's learning.

Diagnostic evaluation

This type of evaluation is useful before a new educational programme concerning curriculum review is undertaken. It is also relevant in the teaching learning situations, giving room for teachers to have detailed information on level of attainment of learners and their difficulties in learning before the commencement of a new learning programme.

Aims of evaluating a training programme

According to Topno (2012), there are several reasons for evaluating a training programme. Some of the aims of evaluating a training programme evaluation include: (a) to evaluate whether the goals of the training programme are met or not; (b) to inspect the viability of each components of the training programme (e.g., contents, training aids, facilities and environment, programme schedule, presentation style, the instructor etc.); (c) to assess whether the training programme justifies the cost; (d) to figure out who (number and type of potential participants) should take part in future programme; (e) to assess which trainees picked up the most or the least from specific programmes; (f) to achieve practical insight that will assist with planning, create, and convey more effective future programmes; (g) to conform to policy guidelines and documentation of training endeavours; (h) to examine the degree of transfer of learning i.e. the extent to which a trainees applies to his/her job; (i) to check if the training programme is in connection with the needs the trainees.

The way we set about finding answer to these questions the data we expect and what we do with them, will depend solely upon our purpose of evaluation. Such purpose, among other things, may include: (1) to provide support from individual development; (2) to develop competence in classroom management thereby promoting instructional growth; (3) to know the direction to be followed in providing assistance to graduating students who intend to further their education or secure job; (4) to meet the societal expectation in terms of raising the school academic standard; (5) to integrate the school with the commodity.

The reasons for evaluating programmes can be illustrated diagrammatically (Fig. 1).

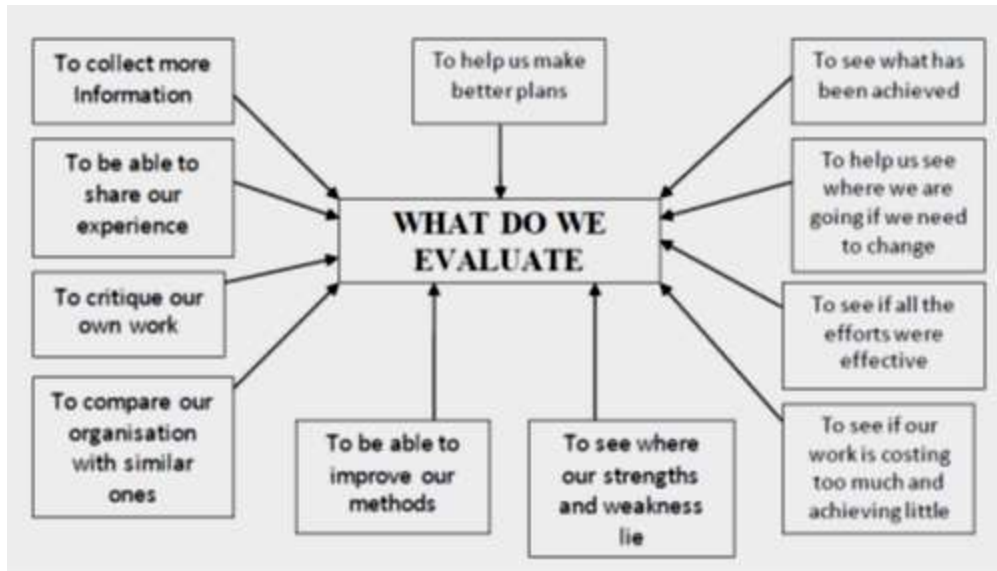


Figure 1. Evaluation of organization (Onabanjo, 2006)

Evaluation models

There are several training evaluation models and every one of these has their own merits and demerits which are decided by such a significant number of environmental conditions. Landers & Callan (2012) grouped training evaluation models into three types, they are: process models, hierarchical models, and mediational models. The clarification of this classification according to Landers & Callan (2012) are as follows: *Process models*: These emphasizes on the roles of the training designer and portrayed significant elements of the decision-making process (e.g., a model that link organizational goals pre-training with evaluative goals post-training); *Hierarchical models*: These structures on the outcomes as a series of interrelated measurement targets within trainees (e.g., a model that posit that training outcomes of interest can be described as knowledge, skill, or affect); *Mediational models*: These are models that propose series of causal connection between trainee characteristics and organizational objectives; it often incorporates the elements of both process models and hierarchical models.

Since we are dealing with human decision-making system, which belongs to the class of goal-seeking system or process model, it is highly necessary to discuss the two evaluation models that are found useful to this paper in this 21st century. They are: Decision-Making Models by Soumelis (1971) and CIRO Model of Evaluation by Warr et al. (1970).

The decision-making model

This model is divided into four vital components: objective, criteria, analysis/synthesis and evaluation (Fig. 2).

Objectives: These guide the behaviour of the system, which strives to attain them through its output (decision / acts). The objectives are either set by the system or prescribed by its supra-system. The setting of objectives depends on the degree of the systems autonomy and environmental information.

Analysis/Synthesis: This is the stage whereby alternative courses of action, through which system is supposed to attain its objectives, are generated. The academic qualification of candidates for admission is taken into consideration. Also to be decided are the qualifications of teaching and administrative personnel and the teaching materials (courses books) to be used in order to produce the required manpower for the level concerned.

Evaluative Criteria: These are set independently of the specific alternatives and are stated in parameters which furnish directly measurements on the results of an alternative courses of action, vis-à-vis the objectives of the system. The criteria to use are listed in this stage as stated below: (i) academic performance of students on the programme; (ii) performance of the teaching personnel; (iii) adequacy of the reading materials (course books); (iv) job performance of the graduates of the programme.

Evaluation: This is the stage whereby the eventual and / or actual results of a specific course of action are assessed. It is to detect any deficiency in order to make necessary adjustment(s). The set objectives and the analysis/synthesis

are studied to know where amendments could be effected, or total overhaul of the programme is necessary. The assessment is done against the evaluative criteria.

The output of the system, which is actually the output of the evaluation subsystem, could either be “yes go” or “no-stop” signal, followed by all necessary explanation information as to the success or failure of the anticipated or actual act. In case “yes-go” signal, the decision is taken or the next act is being considered for execution. While in case of “no-stop” signal, information is feedback to both the synthesis/analysis subsystem and the objective subsystem. In this manner, the evaluation process contributes to the learning of the system.

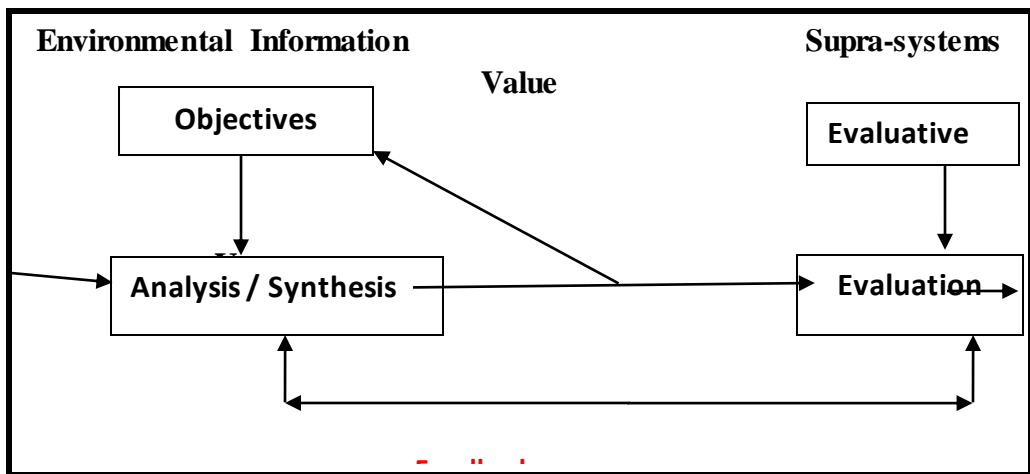


Figure 2. Decision-Making Model (Soumelis, 1971)

Another model which has gained wide popularity in evaluation is ‘CIRO Model of Evaluation’, carried out at four different levels, namely, Context, Inputs, Reactions and Outcomes. This model was originally developed by Warr et. al (1978).

Level 1: The context of training. This involves: (i) examining the expectation and perception of stakeholders; (ii) examining whether the training needs were accurately identified; (iii) putting the specific training events in the wider context of other training activities; (iv) establishing whether the trainers enjoyed the confidence of the trainers and whether the latter are comfortable with the level and focus of the training.

Level 2: The inputs of training. This involves: (v) establishing the adequacy of the resource base and its costs; (vi) considering the choice and effectiveness of the training learning methods and techniques; (vii) identifying the numbers who successfully completed the programme compared with those who started and draw appropriate inferences; (viii) establishing whether the trainers were perceived to be 'credible' as far as the trainers were concerned; (ix) establishing where the psychological and emotional climate of learning was appropriate.

Level 3: The reactions of the training experience. This involves: (x) looking at the reactions of trainees to the content and method of training; (xi) establishing the reaction of other stakeholders, particularly line managers to the early 'results' of the training programme; (xii) discussing the views and observations of the trainers.

Level 4: The outcomes of the training; this involves: (xiii) establishing whether expectations for the results were met; (xiv) identifying whether all or certain of the learning objectives were met; (xv) establishing which stakeholders and objectives were met; (xvi) findings out what were the 'end of course' feelings about the training.

Guiding principles of evaluation

For effective evaluation, certain principles which give a good sense of direction to the evaluator must be properly developed. According to Twersky & Lindblom (2012), there are seven principles of evaluating training programme which are worthy of consideration: (1) The evaluation must have a clear purpose: Most evaluation is designed according to the actions and decisions conceive in the mind. This often makes the anticipated information needs from evaluation to be tailored around its usefulness. The aims of the training programme being evaluated must be identified so that assessment of the extent to which the objectives are being achieved can be measured; (2) Evaluation is fundamentally a learning process. The strategic process involved in evaluation is actually a learning process ranging from planning, implementation, data collection and use of results, are basis for learning and adaptation; (3) Evaluation is a key part of strategy development. To build an effective evaluative process, critical thinking on how to articulate the key assumptions and logical (or illogical) connections in a theory of change and how to establishes a starting point for any evaluation questions and a proposal for answering them in a practical and meaningful sequence must be stated; (4) The part to evaluate must be strategically stated. The evaluation should take a broad view of the programmes being evaluated. Each programme should be seen as a whole even when aspects of the programme are being evaluated. The aspect of the training programme to evaluate must be specifically mentioned, for easy funding decision, easy learning process and corrections where necessary and for easy identification of the expected benefits from the evaluation. The training programme strength and weakness should be taken into account in making and decision about the programme; (5) Choose appropriate methods of measurement. The best methods of measurement that will best reveal the relevancy, beauty and strength of the evaluation design and reduce bias should be considered. Instruments that will be effective in the collection of data must be designed to obtain useful information for decision-mak-

ing; (6) Communicate the intentions to evaluate and the findings to the stakeholders. There is need to inform the stakeholders about the intention to evaluate and to communicate the findings as well to the stakeholders for others to learn from the training programme successes and failures. All stakeholders in the training programme must be personally dedicated and they must be made to see the inevitability for the evaluation process; (7) Reflect on the results and generate implications for policy or practice. There is need to recognize the value in combining the insights from evaluation results with the wisdom from one's own experiences. All stakeholders should be allowed to reflect and contribute to how the results of the evaluation can generate implications for policy and practice.

Ogunsajo (2004), after Neagley & Evans, suggested that some measures need to be taken into consideration so as to accomplish the guiding principles of evaluation. Evaluation should: (a) have as its objective a long-range diagnosis for locating strengths and weaknesses and stimulating improvement; (b) be based upon a philosophy of education that is cognizant of the present needs and that anticipates the future needs of the child and society, as they relate to the community, states, nations and the world; (c) be a continuous process and its ultimate value depends upon the extent to which it contributes to the improvement of educational offerings; (d) be comprehensive so that relationships among the values phases of the educational enterprises may be studied. A partial evaluation is undesirable unless it is conducted as part of a planned sequence ending in a total evaluation; (e) evaluation procedures should be conducted in a democratic manner. Representatives of Boards of education, parents Teachers associations and other lay groups should be involved in addition to school personnel and pupils; (f) evaluation should be conducted in a scientific and professional manner and all conclusions should be based on facts; (g) in term of scope, evaluation programmes should keep within the limits of the available personnel, funds, time and other resources; (h) evaluation should recognise and attempt to measure all the possible outcomes of the educational programme.

Conclusion

Evaluation is a vital ingredient needed for the quality enhancement of an organisation. There are many reasons for carrying out evaluation. One of them is to assist the stakeholders in looking into the act and learning from it to receive feedback regarding success or otherwise, that is, regular appraisal points out areas of success, failure areas of improvement as well as actions to be taken.

Evaluation of educational programmes is imperative so as to justify the huge investment in terms of funds, human and material resources expended. It is equally important to evaluate to ensure that each stage of programme is completed within the stipulated time. Furthermore, it helps to perform the managerial function of 'reporting', without which information feedback will not be available.

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