

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING PROGRAMS AMONG CO-OPERATIVE MEMBERS IN SARAWAK

Azra Alhafidz Azmi

Jati Kasuma

Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Sarawak

Yusman Yacob

Co-operative College of Malaysia (Sarawak)

ABSTRACT

This study focused on the effectiveness of training programs among members of co-operative in Sarawak. The study framework used Kirkpatrick's Model in which employees' reaction, learning, behavior, results and transfer of training will be examined. The study also examined the transfer of training in the context after being trained and to explore the training effectiveness by looking at how the transfer of training is applied. A survey was conducted in the Co-operative College of Malaysia Sarawak Branch Campus in year 2013 where a total of 351 questionnaires were distributed in order to evaluate the training effectiveness, factors and relationship between factors that affect training effectiveness. With the returned questionnaires of 299, the result shows at the reaction level, most of the respondents were satisfied with the training programs. This reflects the appreciation of training from the participants. At the learning level, majority of the respondents learned the skills taught. It is stated that the respondents use the new skills on the job at the behavior level. At the outcome level, the findings revealed that the training program was productive and cost effective to measure the change in the result of the organization. Overall, only 41.6 percent of the independent variables explained the impact to the training effectiveness. The highest beta value indicates that learning is the strongest factor among the others in relation to training effectiveness. This study will help related parties in the Co-operative sector to have a better understanding in measuring the effectiveness of training programs conducted and to identify what are the areas they can improve for the future development of the co-operative in the country.

Keywords: *Training Effectiveness, Co-operative Members, Sarawak*

INTRODUCTION

Training and development has become crucial attention of the organization nowadays. A good training will create a great asset in terms of human resource to the organization. Through training and development, the organization can compete with competitors. According to Cheng and Ho (2001), however, stated that training and development is an expensive investment. One of the oft cited reasons for considering training and development as an unnecessary and expensive expenditure is that most of the organizations are unsure of the contributions of training and development towards the organization's overall performance due to lack of evaluation (Bramley and Kitson, 1994).

Training evaluation can be defined as a systematic collection of descriptive and judgmental information necessary to make effective training decisions related to the selection, adoption, value and modification of various instructional activities (Werner and De Simone, 2006). This definition mentions both descriptive and summative information which are available and equally present in any given training and development intervention. According to Merwin (1992), training evaluation is the means used to determine the worth or value of the training. It is a process of assessing the results or outcomes of training. It determines the significance of the training including to what extent and how well the training met the individual or organizational needs. Every training program must be evaluated since there is no alternative way of ensuring that investments on training are worthwhile without doing evaluation.

Without evaluation, the organization would not know whether the participants are getting inputs from the training program. Evaluation is a difficult process to implement but it must be attempted in order to improve the standard and effectiveness of the programs being offered (Aminuddin, 1997). It must occur throughout the training programs in order to achieve training goals. The experts of training evaluation believed that the evaluation is not just another element of the training program but must be incorporated within any training process in order to examine the effectiveness of the training program (Kirkpatrick, 1998). As such, training evaluation cannot be ignored.

Effective training will indicate not only finding out whether the training was being well done but also to identify what has been achieved and whether it was worthwhile for the organization to be sponsoring it (Bramley, 1997). Therefore, to ensure the training is effective, the HR and training literatures stress that the organizations need to adopt a systematic approach to training which often includes identifying needs, planning, delivery and evaluation.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Malaysia placed a lot of emphasis on the development of human resource in the co-operative sector. Through various training programs and education that has been conducted, Co-operative College of Malaysia (CCM) as a co-operative training institution is not only conveying the knowledge to the co-operative members' but is also responsible to improve their intellectual and ability in managing their organization better. This is in line with the objectives of CCM as a co-operative training provider to create knowledgeable and skillful co-operative community in the country.

The increase in number of co-operatives over the years may reflect the growing acceptance of this sector among the public. As more members are joining co-operatives, the effort to manage the co-operative should be given attention by the management of the co-operative. The changing nature of the co-operatives requires capability of the employees and managers to revisit types of knowledge and skills they require in the future. According to Sanchez (2002), this represents competencies of the co-operatives such that all intellectual abilities possessed by employees as well as their capacity to learn and acquire knowledge is geared towards effectiveness of the sector.

The participants who attended training programs conducted by the CCM come from various levels, backgrounds and positions. Constraints occur when the training programs they attended do not fit their task requirements. For example, members of Board Directors of the co-operatives are required by government regulation to attend management courses and on the other hand they delegate the responsibility to their ordinary members. The most important aspect for the training program to be effective, relevant and meeting the objectives, is the proper selection of participant attending the training program. For example, different level of participants will need different level of training program.

Government intervention has brought lots of benefit to the co-operative members. In order to enhance this sector, the government encourages the public to be involved in the co-operative sector. But then, there is a problem which will affect the future growth of the co-operative itself, where the quality of co-operative members has increased and the co-operative performance has decreased. The Malaysia National Co-operative Policy has set a target that the co-operative sector will contribute 5 percent to the Gross Domestic Products of the country in year 2013 (SKM, 2007). However, the government could not achieve it if the co-operative members were still not concerned with the future direction of the movement. According to Das (2007), Co-operative institutions were treated as if these were part and parcel of the administrative set up of the government. Government interference thus became an essential element in the

working of the institutions. As a result, people's enthusiasm for the movement did not grow. Even today it is often deemed that the co-operative societies are imposed upon the people. This does bring an increase in the membership of the societies. But the spirit of cooperation cannot fully implemented in these circumstances. Neither its growth took place according to any plan nor did it become a people's movement. It just grew very slowly and that too haphazardly. The co-operative became a state driven institution.

As a dynamic institution, Co-operative College of Malaysia feels that research needs to be carried out in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programs that have been conducted. This is a very crucial task knowing the impact of the training program towards enhancing human resource in the co-operative sector.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

This research generally is to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs and to measure the perception towards the effectiveness of training programs that have been provided by Co-operative College of Malaysia (CCM) Sarawak Branch Campus. To be more specific the objectives of the research are:

RO1: To evaluate the effectiveness of the training programs that have been conducted by Co-operative College of Malaysia

RO2: To evaluate factors that will affect the training effectiveness and the relationship between the factors and training effectiveness.

SCOPE OF STUDY

The scope of this study involves co-operative members' attending courses provided by Co-operative College of Malaysia (CCM) Sarawak Branch Campus in the year 2013.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Importance of Training

In Malaysia, the importance of training and development is seen through various policies implemented by the government and the large amount of money invested. In relation to the public sector, the government policy is to provide a minimum of seven days training per year for every employee as cited in the Public Service Department Service Circular, 2005. It happens that training and development in Malaysia's civil service take place as an event. In order to create a positive value from the training and development in the organization, it must be elevated to a high status, and measured on its effectiveness.

Training can be defined as a systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that should result in improved performance of the trainee (Aamodt, 2007). Training involved large amount of cash to the organization. Some organizations can no longer afford to provide training that has not been evaluated for its contribution to the organization's strategic goals and mission and its effectiveness and use on the job to the development of the organization: giving employees the knowledge and skills they need to perform their jobs effectively (Noeand, 1986). In order to initiate an effective training, organizations need to look at the training and development system and it must be aligned with the strategy of the organization and at what is being done to make sure that the training and development activities produce positive impact to the organization.

Reaction

Employee reactions to training are the most frequently collected data for assessing training effectiveness. Despite their popularity, the use of trainee reactions for evaluation purpose is often criticized because of lack of evidence that trainee reactions are related to trainee learning, knowledge acquisition and retention, and skill behavior demonstration or to broader organizational outcomes (Swanso, 2001).

Learning

Learning is where the participant knows how to use the knowledge that they gain from the training program. As conceptualized here, learning is a cognitive process referring to the acquisition of knowledge. Learning maybe manifested in the amount of knowledge acquired, or in the structure of the knowledge acquired (Goldsmith, Johnson, et. al, 1991). Learning does not imply that the trainee can perform a task differently, but simply that he/she has acquired knowledge with which to perform a task differently. The cognitive psychology and learning literatures have delineated different aspects of the learning process, including the acquisition of declarative knowledge, procedural knowledge, and conditional knowledge (Anderson, 1985). These may be assessed at the learning level of training effectiveness by constructing knowledge tests, or they may be assessed as part of behavior change. Kyllonen and Shute (1989), presented taxonomy of learning skills that may be of value in considering the types of learning that can be measured.

Behavior

Trainees' attitudes may affect the effectiveness of training. Attitudes are likely to be influenced by participant's experience of training and in turn affect trainee's perspectives about the evaluation of training (Rigg, 1989:57). Noe (1986), argues, the attitudes, interests, values, and expectations of trainees may enhance the effectiveness of training. He also suggests that if we are to have an understanding of how to enhance the likelihood that participation in training program will lead to behavior change and performance improvement, it is important to determine specific individual characteristics that affect training effectiveness. In his training effectiveness model, he identifies participants' attitudes concerning their jobs and careers and their perception of the work environment may have an effect on training outcomes. Testing this model, Noe and

Schmitt (1986), found that participants were more motivated to learn and transfer their skills to the work environment when they were highly involved in their jobs. The findings from Santos and Stuart's (2003), case study also provide strong empirical support for Noe's (1986) contention that employee will transfer skills and knowledge to the workplace if training is associated with rewards. Nonetheless, they pointed out that the applicability and usefulness of Noe's model remains underdeveloped although the logic behind it is clear. Indeed, empirical investigations of personality, motivational and environmental factors impact on training effectiveness remain limited (Baldwin and Ford, 1988).

Result

Result refers to quantifiable changes in related outcomes as a result of trainees' behavioral changes. For example, a trainee could return to his/her job and perform a particular machining task differently (Transfer Behaviors), resulting in reduced waste (Results). However, it is possible that behavioral changes may not yield changes in results, or may yield undesirable changes in results. According to Kirkpatrick (1976), other examples of results are reduced grievances, increased quantity, reduced turnover (also noted by Horrigan, 1979), and reduced costs. Safety may be either behavior or a result, depending upon how it is measured. Reber and Wallin (1984), used safety as a measure of behavior change by observing and recording the incidence of specific safety behaviors. Alternatively, an examination of increases or decreases in the number of accidents would be a safety measure that corresponds to the Results criterion of training effectiveness.

What is implied by Kirkpatrick's Results category is that the appropriate results have been identified, and that the results are in fact related to Organizational Effectiveness. We want to make this assumption more explicit, since it has implications for the conclusions that are drawn regarding training effectiveness. If training is designed to be consistent with, and support the attainment of, organizational results, and these results are actually important to organizational effectiveness, then improvement in organization-level variables as a function of training can be expected.

Transfer of Training

Training transfer generally refers to the use of trained knowledge and skills back on the job. Baldwin and Magjuka (1998), mentioned that for transfer to occur, "learned behavior must be generalized to the job context and maintained over a period of time on the job". Meanwhile, Saks and Haccoun, 2007 view training transfer as the generalization of knowledge and skills learned in training on the job and the maintenance of acquired knowledge and skills over time.

According to the transfer of training framework by Saks and Haccoun (2007), the transfer of training activities could be segregated into three phases which is before, during, and after training to facilitate and improve the transfer of training. However, for the purpose of this study, only transfer of training after training is being applied. In this case, the management must ensure

that trainees have immediate and frequent opportunities to practice and apply what they learn in training on the job. The management should also encourage and reinforce trainees' application of new skills on the job. There are many other things that managers do to facilitate transfer such as develop an action plan with trainees for transfer and show support by reducing job pressures and workload, arrange practice sessions, publicize transfer successes, give promotional preference to employees who have received training and transfer, and evaluate employees' use of trained skills on the job (Wexley and Baldwin, 1986).

Training Effectiveness

In this dynamic and ever changing environment, organizations both public and private must create an awareness on the importance of employees' learning and development skills. This indicates that putting investment in the employees training program can bring employers a favorable return in the future but rarely the benefit analysis of this expenditure being assessed. A study suggests that most of the training and development activities were implemented on blind faith with only the hope that they will resist (Arthur, Bennett, Edens & Bell, 2003); According to Broad and Newstrom (1992); Robinson and Robinson (1989), seldom the training programs rigorously being evaluated to determine their effect on the behavior or job performance of the participants. One of the more optimistic estimates suggests that no more than 15 percent of learning transfers to the job (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004). Other studies of transfer rates find they typically average only in the 10 to 40 percent range (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Burke and Hutchins, 2007; Fitzpatrick, 2001; Ford and Kozlowski, 1997). Therefore, it is important to explore methods to encourage transfer of learning in order to achieve greater training impact on human resource practices. Previous studies (Mayfield, 2011) suggested that training effectiveness is a good predictor of employee job behavior. This association suggests that when employee have been trained in a training program, the training effectiveness is likely to be followed by job behavior (Pelham, 2009). Previous studies also suggest that demographic variables such as age, education background, and experience were related to training impact in some studies (Devins, Johnson and Sutherland, 2004).

RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The framework is based on Kirkpatrick's model, in which employees' reaction, learning, behavior, results and transfer of training will be examined. The second part of the study will examine the transfer of training but only in the context of after training and to explore the effectiveness of the training by looking at how the transfer of training being applied after training. The final part of the study will examine other factors that can influence the effectiveness of training and development.

Bassi et al (1996), discovered that 96% of companies surveyed used some form of the Kirkpatrick framework to evaluate training and development programs.

Conceptual Framework

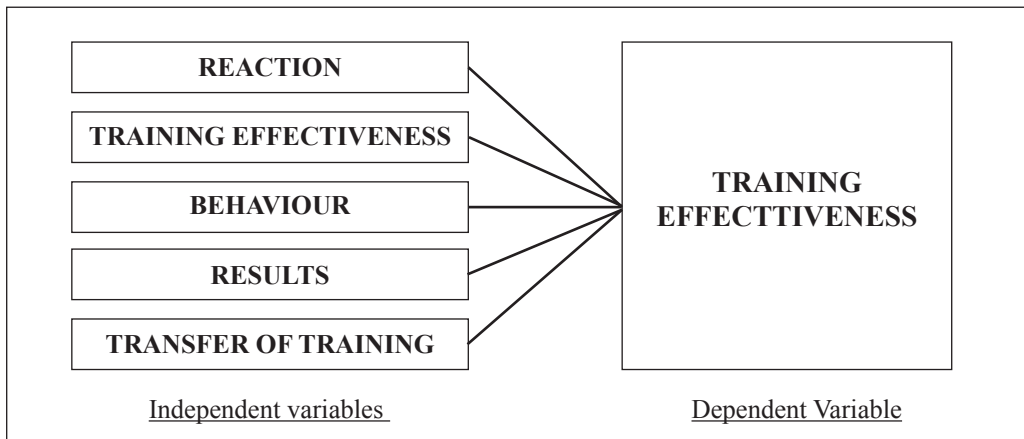


Figure 1: Research Framework partly adopted from D. Kirkpatrick Model (1982)

The first level is the reaction level in which the reactions of the trainees are understood to mean the way in which they perceive and subjectively evaluate the relevance and quality of training. It attempts to answer questions regarding the participants' perceptions – Did they like it? Was the material relevant to their work? This type of evaluation is often called a “smiley sheet”. According to Kirkpatrick, every programs should at least be evaluated at this level to provide improvement of the training program.

Learning can be described as the extent to which the attitudes of the participants change, their knowledge increases or their skills are broadened as a consequence of the training. This is a second level of evaluation of learning behavior whereby evaluation is intended to measure the progress made in terms of knowledge, skills or attitudes. In other words, evaluation tests the participants to see whether new skills have been acquired. At this point, evaluation can relate to the method used to transfer the knowledge, skills and attitudes.

A third evaluation level is the changes in job behavior or performance. This involves studying the change in job behavior which takes place as a result of the training. Evaluating at this level attempts to answer the question – Are the newly acquired skills, knowledge, or attitude being used in the everyday environment of the learner? At this point, evaluation sees whether tasks are performed differently before and after the training.

Level four evaluation attempts to assess training in terms of organizational results. At this point, evaluation checks how the results were evaluated at the end of the training initiatives. An evaluation of the results therefore measures the progress made at the organizational level.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this study is based on a survey questionnaire adopted from previous studies. The questionnaire consists of four parts namely demographic profile, training evaluation on reaction, learning, behavior, and result, evaluation on transfer of training, evaluation on training effectiveness and open ended questions. Five points Likert scales were used as a measurement for the respondents with scoring of 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The questionnaire was prepared in both English and Malay language. Simple random sampling was used to collect data among participants who had attended training programs conducted by Co-operative College of Malaysia (CCM) in Sarawak. The data collected consisting of those attended selected training programs in 2013. The sampling method of Krejcie and Morgan (1970), was applied and the table helps to simplify the sample size by providing the table that ensured as accurate sampling size decision methods.

Questionnaire was distributed to a sample size of 351 respondents; however only 299 respondents provided valid returns. Sekaran (2000), agrees with Roscoe (1975), that for most studies, a sample size between 30 and 500 would be sufficient. Data was then analyzed using SPSS with frequency, reliability, regression and correlation used to interpret the demographic, evaluation on the training effectiveness, factors that affect the training effectiveness and the relationship between factors that affect the training effectiveness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.1: Demographic Profile

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE			FREQUENCY	%
1.	Gender	Male	128	42.8
		Female	171	57.2
2.	Marital Status	Single	107	35.8
		Married	179	59.9
		Divorce	12	4.0
		Separated	1	0.3
3.	Races	Malay	182	60.9
		Iban	22	7.4
		Chinese	33	11.0
		Melanau	21	7.0
		Bidayuh	30	10.0
		Orang Ulu	6	2.0
		Others	5	1.7

4.	Age	18-25 years	56	18.7
		26-35 years	90	30.1
		36-45 years	55	18.4
		45 and above	97	32.4
5.	Education Background	Lower Secondary	14	4.7
		LCE/SRP/PMR	33	11.0
		MCE/SPM/SPMV	102	34.1
		STPM/Diploma	50	16.7
		Bachelor Degree	56	18.7
		Master	38	12.7
		Others	6	2.0

From the Table 1.1, 42.8 percent of the respondents were male and 57.2 percent were female. Majority of the respondents were Malay with percentage of 60.9 percent while the second highest were Chinese 11 percent, 10 percent of the respondents were Bidayuh and 7.4 percent were Iban, Melanau, Orang Ulu and others with the score of 7 percent, 2 percent and 1.7 percent respectively. The average age of the respondents ranged from 45 and above (32.4%), followed by 36-45 years old (18.4%), 26-35 years (30.1%) and 18-25 years (18.7%). In terms of education, majority of the respondents are SPM holders with the percentage of 34.1 percent while the second highest of percentage representing the Bachelor Degree holders (18.7%), 16.7 percent STPM holders, 12.7 percent Master holders, PMR, Lower Secondary and others with the score 11 percent, 4.7 percent and 2 percent respectively.

Table 1.2: Perception After Attending the Program

Perception After Attending the Program		Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	This program is really worth for me	4.27	.620
2.	This program directly relate with my job in the cooperation.	4.04	.708
3.	This program is enough to help me to accomplish a job in the organization.	4.01	.693
4.	Teaching method is suitable.	4.15	.521
5.	I feel satisfied with the overall training program.	4.23	.530
6.	I will recommend this training program to the other.	4.21	.597

The effectiveness of the training programs were evaluated from the perception of respondents after they have attended the training programs in year 2013. This involves 12 training programs selected from month of April until June 2013. From the Table 1.2. Respondents mostly prefer the training programs and found that they were really worth for them to undergo the programs with the highest mean score of 4.27. The mean score of 4.23 indicates that the respondents were satisfied with overall training programs. The perception of the respondents showed that they will

recommend the training programs to others and the teaching methods used were suitable which resulted mean score of 4.21 and 4.15 respectively. They also feel that the training programs are related to their job task which represented by mean score 4.04.

Table 1.3: Facilitator Evaluation

Facilitator Evaluation		Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I was satisfied with the instructor’s fluency and presentation	4.32	.530
2.	The facilitator was knowledgeable about the topic.	4.40	.543
3.	The facilitator established a friendly relationship with trainees	4.41	.552
4.	The facilitator eager to answer the trainee’s questions.	4.41	.552

For the facilitator evaluation in Table 1.3, respondents found the facilitator has established friendly relationship with trainees and the facilitator were eager to answer the trainee’s questions with the highest mean score which is 4.41. Second highest mean score is 4.23 where respondents found facilitators were knowledgeable about the topic. The lowest mean score is 4.32 which they feel satisfied with the instructor’s fluency and presentation.

Table 1.4: Factor Affects Training Effectiveness

Factors	Average Mean Score
Reaction	4.08
Learning	4.195
Behavior	3.965
Result	3.63
Transfer of training	2.28

Learning has been found to be the most significant factor that affects the training effectiveness conducted by Co-operative College of Malaysia with the average mean score of 4.195. Second highest factor is Reaction with 4.08. For the behavior and result, the mean scores are 3.965 and 3.63 respectively while the least influencing training effectiveness is the transfer of training with mean score 2.28. Since all the scores are above 3, these indicate that the items or factors listed are between neutral and reaching agree and for the transfer of training is more to disagree.

Table 1.5: Correlation Analysis between Factors

		reaction	learning	behavior	result	tot
Reaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.712**	.656**	.514**	-.204**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	299	299	299	299	297
Learning	Pearson Correlation	.712**	1	.645**	.523**	-.133*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.022
	N	299	299	299	299	297
Behavior	Pearson Correlation	.656**	.645**	1	.595**	-.131*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.023
	N	299	299	299	299	297
Result	Pearson Correlation	.514**	.523**	.595**	1	-.110
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.058
	N	299	299	299	299	297
Transfer Of Training	Pearson Correlation	-.204**	-.133*	-.131*	-.110	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022	.023	.058	
	N	297	297	297	297	297

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
Dependent Variable: Training Effectiveness

By using the Kirkpatrick’s model, there are positive correlation between each variable with the highest is reaction and learning with 0.712. We can conclude that the relationship between the variables were strong. The factor on transfer of training between all the variables has a negative correlation with the lowest mean score -0.204. The transfer of training has a negative relationship between all the variables as most of the respondents are disagree with the factors that can distract the ability of them to transfer the training. It has been supported by previous research by (Noordin N, 2006).

Table 1.6: Regression Analysis

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.645 ^a	.416	.404	.31388
a. Predictors: (Constant), tot, result, learning, behavior, reaction				
b. Dependent: Training Effectiveness				

From the Table 1.6, the value of R-square = 0.416 means that the variables could explain 41.6 percent of variances in the training effectiveness. The other 58.4 percent is effect by other factors. It is been supported by other research where it explained on the other factors that influence the effectiveness of the training and development in the organization. One of them has been identified by Haywood (1992), is the human resource policy.

Table 1.7: Relationship between Variable

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.564	.248		6.312	.000
	reaction	.076	.068	.079	1.122	.263
	learning	.290	.060	.329	4.819	.000
	behavior	.124	.063	.137	1.965	.051
	result	.166	.042	.233	3.905	.000
	tot	-.005	.034	-.007	-.148	.882

a. Dependent Variable: effective

According to Sekaran (2006), the significant below of $p < 0.05$ is generally accepted conventional level in social science research. Based on the unstandardized coefficients from table 1.7 Learning represents the highest beta value of 0.290 followed by Result and Behavior with 0.166 and 0.124 respectively.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the evaluation framework and transfer of training elements in relation to the effectiveness of training and development in the co-operative sector. The demographic profile of the respondents indicated, majority of them were male, Malay and aged between 26-35 years. In terms of educational background, most of them SPM holder.

The findings revealed that most of the respondents were satisfied with the training programs and found it was really worth for them. They also will strongly recommend the training program to others and feel that the teaching methods were suitable. It shows that the appreciation of training by participants, thus gaining insight into the usefulness of training and progress of learning process. Apart from that, the respondents found that the facilitators has a strong friendly relationship with the trainees which resulted highest mean score.

As learning was found to be the most significant factor that affected the training effectiveness, this indicate that the participant knows how to use the knowledge they acquire from the training program. Second highest factor is reaction, followed by behaviour and result no doubt were important factors that contribute towards training effectiveness. But, the transfer of training among them resulted a low mean score which means the respondents were disagree the factors that can distract the ability of them to transfer the training. It can be concluded here, as overall, only 41.6 percent of the independent variables explained the impact to the training effectiveness. The highest beta value indicates that learning is the strongest factor among the others in relation to training effectiveness.

As training and education is important element to enhance the organizational effectiveness, related parties such as Co-operative Commission of Malaysia, Co-operative College of Malaysia, Angkasa (Apex Co-operative Body) and the movement itself must work hand in hand to provide lots of beneficial and more impactful design training programs. This will ensure that a skillful and knowledgeable co-operative community can be established for the future growth of the country.

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