Factors contributing to quality of training and effecting employee job satisfaction.

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Keywords
Training quality, dimensions of training quality, SERVQUAL, employee job satisfaction, Pakistan.

Abstract

Companies spend millions of dollar to train their employee, as continuous learning and development are key elements for creating sustained competitive advantage. To be successful, consistent training is needed to cope with the external dynamic environment. The aim of this study was to explore and examine those attributes of training which accounts for training quality. In this research two studies have been conducted using exploratory analysis to assess the construct validity of factors affecting the quality of training in any organization. For conceptual development the SERVQUAL model of Parasuraman et al. (1988) has been considered. In study one, data from 217 respondents was collected through convenience sampling from the business organizations employees in Pakistan. This study found that there were seven quality aspects of training, which should be considered during the employee training planning and then in its implementation. These quality aspects were training objectives, training content and training techniques, training time management, trainer's personality characteristics, training amenities and training feedback. In study two, data from 118 respondents was collected through the same channel. This regression analysis revealed that out these seven-quality dimensions of training, five quality dimensions were able to enhance the employee job satisfaction. These dimensions were training objectives, training content, training techniques*, trainer's personality characteristics and training amenities. These training quality factors will assist the department of training & development which are intended to plan for employee training with quality assurance.*

Introduction

Training is one of the key factors of the quality management. Many quality gurus (Deming, 1986; Crosby, 1979; Juran, 1979) have highlighted the importance of training for enhancing the employees' skills, knowledge and abilities which are needed for achieving quality management outcomes.

The rapid environmental change in the markets has made many businesses increasingly aware of the importance of a high-caliber work force in an organization's effort to attain its goals (Ooi, 2009). The role of human resource practices has always been striven for employee skills and behaviours enhancement so that in the times of obligation these skills, knowledge and abilities could adjust in pursuing the competitive advantage (Ahmed et al., 2010; Legnick-Hall *et al*, 2009; Wright & Snell, 1998). Organizations can improve employees' performance by undertaking comprehensive attention to quality of training and developmental activities. The importance of training quality in the employee job satisfaction and reaching the quality goals has been widely acknowledged because it provides an opportunity to reform employees about

the quality goals by providing them necessary skills and knowledge. Investment in the training area of HRM is responsible for improving the employee's motivation (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008), commitment (Meyer & Allen, 1991), employee job satisfaction (Mak & Sockel, 2001), job-related stress (Acton & Golden, 2003), employee work involvement (Brown, Reich & Stern, 1993) and overall organizational production (Bartel, 1994, Huselid, 1995).

The aim of this research paper was to explore and examine those dimensions of training which accounts for training quality. To achieve this purpose, firstly, previous literature was searched through for all the concerning variables or factors influencing the quality of training based on the Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry (1988) SERVQUAL model. Secondly, for identifying each dimension clearly exploratory factor analysis was used and then results were examined to identify those factors, which truly contribute to quality of training. Lastly, the impact of these quality dimensions of training on the employee job satisfaction was tested. It was intended to verify how much individual quality dimension could able to predict the employee job satisfaction.

Literature Review

Training is a continuous process committed to bring continuous improvement in the organizational performance (Pischke, 2001). Continuous training activity highlights the importance of dealing with the change. Change can be in the form of internal or external forces. Training provides the platform for developing the understanding of the new business strategy, its requirements, new tools and new ways of performing work (Kassicieh &Yourstone, 1998). Training as a continuous process consists of inputs as trainers, amenities, training materials and aids etc., process as including all procedures for achieving the predefined training objectives, and finally output in the form of trained personnel (Odiorne, 1970).

Several studies have pointed out key quality elements for effective training theoretically. Table 1 is presenting the summary. Training objectives, training methods and training material have been considered as most important factors affecting the quality of training (Pike, 2003; Mitchell, 1998). Different training methods should be used during the training and in accordance with the nature of a job. There are three types of training method, structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Most commonly unstructured type is used. It includes lectures, buzz groups, small groups, demonstrations, role-plays, computer assisted training etc. different combinations of these techniques could be used in accordance to the training needs and to make the training sessions an interesting and impactive event (Rae, 2000).

Rae (2001) and Mitchell (1998) advocated the role of trainer in making the learning effective or ineffective. They suggested that a trainer should undertake a role of leader. A leader who could plan and follow it. The major role of trainer is to plan and design the training programmes and follow them to achieve the training objectives. One trainer should be good speaker as well as good listener. He should be well knowledgeable and able to retain the training session alive till end. Pike (2003) highlighted the importance of time management in conducting the different activates during training. He considered the importance of time management in starting and ending the training session, time provision to attendee's question. Whereas, Mitchell (1998) also added training breaks and training feedback/evaluation as important affairs for time allocation. He also elaborated the importance of surrounding, training locations and convenience in reaching it. These all facilities are able of make the atmosphere

attractive and also enhance the learning process. Different dimensions of training enhance the quality of training make it most effective for employee satisfaction and for other employee performance measures.

Table 1. Dimensions of training quality across the theoretical studies

		Training /Learning objectives	Trainer's Characteristics	Training methods	Training contents	Training time management	Frequency of training	Training amenities	Training feedback	Training evaluation
1.	Alberta_Quality management for first aid training workshop 2009	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓
2.	Pike, R. (2003)	✓		✓	✓	✓				
3.	Aragon, et. Al. (2003)			✓		✓	✓			✓
4.	Acton &Golden (2003)	✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	
5.	Motwani, J. (1994)		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
6.	Mitchell, G. (1998)	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	
7.	Kassicich & Yourstone (1998)			✓	✓					

Claus Moller, one of the quality gurus, suggested individualistic approach to incorporate the quality measures throughout an organization. This individualistic approach in the Moller's quality theory (1987) stressed upon the training and educational aspect of the human resource. Training plays its role in achieving one of the most important quality aspects of Moller's 12 golden quality rules, which was "controlling employees' stress" for bringing up their best skills, knowledge and abilities for enhancing employees' job satisfaction. Stress free employees avoid errors (Crosby, 1979), perform tasks more effectively, utilize resources well, and enhance employee job satisfaction (Siebern-Thomas, 2005). Training assists the employees to develop better understanding with work and technology; hence proper implementation of effective training methods and tools helps the employees to increase their level of job satisfaction and performance (Acton & Golden, 2003).

Training has been linked to improve self-esteem, reduce turnover, better product and service consistency, higher satisfaction, reduce business costs, the use of new technology, greater ability to meet the needs of a target market, improve attitude, more teamwork, greater job satisfaction, and greater organizational commitment (Samuel and Chipunza, 2009). According to the research study conducted by Chiang, Back and Canter (2005) on the relationships between training quality, job satisfaction and intention to stay in hotel industry. They concluded that training quality was positively correlated with employee job satisfaction. This employee job satisfaction then led to the intention to stay in the hotel industry. Similarly, Siebern-Thomas (2005) analyzed 13 countries of European Community Household Panel (ECHP) 1994-2001 and

found that employee job satisfaction had shown increasing trends where there was a conduction of workplace training.

This study has focused on employees' perception of quality training and the effect of quality training on the employee job satisfaction in the service industry of Pakistan. Perceived service quality is believed to be an abstract construct (Chiang, et al., 2005). Parasuraman et al. (1988) defined perceived quality of a construct as the gap or difference between expectations and actual quality. "Perceptions" are defined as judgments of the service organization's performance. "Expectations" are desired performance levels, which reflect an attribute's importance to a person (Chiang *et. al.,* 2005). Parasuraman et al., (1988) developed the SERVQUAL Scale, to measure service quality along five dimensions: reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. In the context of training quality, the dimensions of SERVQUAL, 'Responsiveness' is explained as the willingness of trainers to help employees and to look after that if organization provide prompt training. 'Assurance' as knowledge and courtesy of trainers, their ability to inspire the trust and confidence of trainees. 'Empathy' as whether organization and trainers care about trainees/employees and meet employees' needs. 'Tangibility' as assessed physical equipment, materials of training which service industry use, and professionalism of the trainers and finally, 'Reliability' as Organizations' ability to perform training dependably and accurately (Chiang, et al., 2005).

Based on theoretical literature of training and service quality, some key training dimensions and service quality dimensions of Parasuraman et al., (1988) were selected and tested in study one. Then the impact of quality training on the employees' job satisfaction was tested in study two. To achieve this aim, first several items were developed for measuring each quality dimensions of training then exploratory factor analysis was used for purifying and identifying them clearly.

Research Methodology

Sample and procedure for scale development

Target population consisted of all those employees of service industry who have undergone some sort of training and could distinguish between quality and non-quality attributes of training. As it was not possible to reach all service providing firms due to geographical dispersion so it was decided to use convenience-sampling method to obtain the study sample. Data was collected through survey research method. The questionnaires that were used in survey research method consisted of two parts. First part was based on the personal information and second part consisted of training constructs.

The two main reasons for selecting service industry were, firstly, that the employees were usually in frequent contact with customers and required a great deal of behavior manipulation for proper dealing and achieving the firm's goal in strategic manners.

Secondly, customer is a part or agent in the service delivery process whereas in manufacturing sector customer is an end user. So training plays a very critical role for achieving the organizational goals in service providing firms and the quality of training is essentially needed to deliver a quality service to customers.

The initial constructs of training quality consisted of 32-items. These items were developed on the foundation of Parasuraman et al. (1988) model of SERVQUAL. The service quality dimension of '***reliability***' consisted of items: The training objectives for each topic should be identified, clearly stated and followed, sufficient information on the objectives of the training course should be provided before training session, the training course should cover the topics that trainee needs to learn about, the objectives of the training should be achieved, this training is worthwhile and should be conducted on a regular basis, the training material should be relevant to job, Trainee should be able to apply much of the training material/knowledge to his/her job, Trainee should get most of the questions answered during the training, the material distributed during the training should be helpful in understanding what the speakers are presenting, and the material should be presented in an interesting way. '***Responsiveness***' consisted of items: Different training methods should be offered during training sessions, different training methods should be relevant to the nature of job, the language used in the training sessions should easy to understand, each training session should start and end in time, the training sessions should allow sufficient time to talk informally with other participants, and adequate time should be provided for attendee questions. '***Empathy***' consisted of items: Organization should be interested to evaluate the effectiveness of training, organization should be interested to get the employees feedback on training, time should be provided for breaks and meals/refreshment, Enough time should be given for feedback from the participants, and provided time should be enough for carrying out the activities. '***Assurance***' consisted of items: Trainers should state the objectives clearly, trainers should keep the session alive and interesting, trainers should communicate well, trainers should use audio/ visual aids professionally, trainers should exhibit a friendly and helpful attitude, trainers should deliver knowledge of subject matter, and trainers should be interested and addressed attendees concerns. Finally, '***Tangibility***' consisted of items: The meeting room and related facilities should provide a comfortable setting for the training, the location for the training should be convenient and easy to find, the quality refreshment should be offered during training sessions, and the general atmosphere during the course should enhance the learning process. Each item under these quality aspects were measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1, 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= indifferent, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree (Tan, Wong, Lam, Ooi & Chee-Yew, 2010).

Study One

The process of developing instruments for measuring the quality of training was started by going through previous literature available on training and quality aspects of training. The main objective while studying and selecting the quality aspects of training was to generate those items that could capture the true essence of construct. Initially, 250 questionnaires were distributed with the assurance that respondents could understand all questions. Out of 250 questionnaires, 221 questionnaires were returned Out of these 221 returned questionnaires, 4 questionnaires were with incomplete responses so these were discarded. 217 questionnaires were eligible for this study. So, acceptable response rate was 86%.

Next, the data was fed in the SPSS for the exploratory factor analysis. Before running the factor analysis, its adequacy was checked by KMO (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin) and Bartlett's test. The results of both were satisfactory. The value of KMO was 0.713 in table 2. This suggested that the data was suitable for principal component analysis. Whereas Bartlett's test was significant that confirmed the sufficient correlation among the items (Field, 2000). These two tests provided the

support for the validity of instrument (Liu et al., 2009) and allowed moving further to modify the instrument. Exploratory factor analysis was done using principal component analysis (Pohlmann, 2004). As the number of item were more than 30 and the generated communalities were more than 0.6 for most of the items, so here suggested difference between factor analysis and principal component analysis was failed (Field, 2000; Guadagnoli & Velicer, 1988). Then the extracted factors from principal component analysis were further examined by Varimax rotation. Table 3 presents the results.

Table 2: Result of KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.713
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2558.733
	Df	496
	Sig.	.000

Table 3 contains only those items that had factor loadings more than 0.4. Those items, which were not pure or not loaded properly on one factor, were deleted. 32-items of quality of training were loaded on 10 factors. These 10 factors were extracted because they were having eigenvalues greater than 1. After the rotation their Eigen values were 3.158, 2.830, 2.816, 2.790, 1.898, 1.863, 1.762, 1.732, 1.362 and 1.249.

In the rotated component matrix (table3) unclear items were removed. QT9 and QT24 had similar loading on more than one factor so they were deleted. QT21 and QT17 were the only items remained with significant loading on their respective factors so they were also removed. QT31 was also the only significant item value on one factor and whereas QT3 was insignificant, so both of these were removed. So 6-items (QT21, QT9, QT 24, QT17, QT31 and QT3) out 0f 32-item were removed.

The remaining 26 items were properly and clearly loaded on seven factors. Table 4 represents the summary of exploratory factor analysis. The seven factors with their respective items were then analyzed for identifying the quality aspect it contained for training. The name of quality aspects of training were changed according to the items it contained. In this way, the name of all seven factors were: trainer's characteristics including QT22, QT23, QT26, QT27 and QT28, training techniques including QT13, QT14, QT15, and QT25, training time management including QT5, QT16, QT18, QT19, and QT20, training content including QT6, QT7, QT8, and QT10, training amenities including QT29, QT30, and QT32, training objectives including QT1, QT2, and QT4,and training feedback including QT11 and QT12. The rotated cumulative variance of these factors was 53.5%.

The reliability analysis (Cronbach alpha) of each factor shows satisfactory results. According to George and Mallery (2003) the rules of thumb for Cronbach alphas are: "_> .9 – Excellent, _ > .8 – Good, _ > .7 – Acceptable, _ > .6 – Questionable, _ > .5 – Poor, and _ < .5 – Unacceptable" (p. 231). An acceptable criterion for Cronbach alpha was 0.7.
The Cronbach alpha of all quality factors of trainings was greater than 0.7. The Cronbach alpha of trainer's characteristics was 0.836, training techniques was 0.838, training time management

was 0.771, training content was 0.83, training amenities was 0.723, training objective was 0.711 and training feedback was 0.787. Table 4 represents summary. The items contained in each quality dimension of training are presented in appendix.

Table 3: Results of exploratory factor analysis Matrix[a] of the original scale

	Factors									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
QT28	.900									
QT27	.841									
QT24	.770									
QT29	.667									
QT23	.663									
QT16		.853								
QT26		.805								
QT14		.790								
QT13		.737								
QT20			.783							
QT17			.706							
QT5			.699							
QT19			.690							
QT21										
QT10				.883						
QT8				.855						
QT6				.730						
QT7				.657						
QT31					.848					
QT30					.788					
QT33										
QT2						.820				
QT1						.811				
QT4						.625				
QT22							.815			
QT9							.636		.422	
QT25										.426
QT12								.856		
QT11								.846		
QT18									.752	
QT32										.622
QT3										-.383

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 15 iterations.

Note: six items were removed.

Table 4: Summary of exploratory factor analysis results and Cronbach alphas.

Quality Factors	Items	Factor loading	Cronbach Alpha	Eigen value	Cumulative Variance %
Trainer's Characteristic	QT22 QT23 QT26 QT27 QT28	.663 .770 .841 .900 .667	0.836	3.158	9.87
Training Techniques	QT13 QT14 QT15 QT25	.737 .790 .853 .805	0.838	2.830	18.714
Time Management	QT5 QT16 QT18 QT19 QT20	.699 .706 .690 .783 .520	0.771	2.816	27.52
Training Content	QT6 QT7 QT8 QT10	.730 .657 .855 .883	0.833	2.790	36.233
Training Amenities	QT29 QT30 QT32	.788 .848 .595	0.723	1.898	42.165
Training Objectives	QT1 QT2 QT4	.811 .820 .625	0.711	1.863	47.986
Training Feedback	QT11 QT12	.846 .856	0.787	1.762	53.492

Study Two

The purpose of this study was to develop an instrument to measure how quality of training was related to employee job satisfaction in organizations. Seven quality dimensions of training were identified through exploratory factor analysis in study one. Study two was conducted to check the impact of training quality on the employee job satisfaction. This study has also highlighted those quality dimensions of effective training, which could able to produce and predict more employee job satisfaction.

150 questionnaires were again distributed to same target population through the same channel. Out 150 questionnaires, 118 were returned and in useable form. So the response rate was 78.6%. Questionnaires contained those aspects of training, which were identified in study one. Those were trainer's characteristics, training techniques, training time management, training content, training amenities, training objective and training feedback. These quality dimensions of training contained only those items that were having factor loading more than 0.4. Four employee job satisfaction questions were taken from the study of (Mak & Sockel, 2001). The questions were 1). All in all, I am satisfied with my job. 2). In general, I like working here. 3).

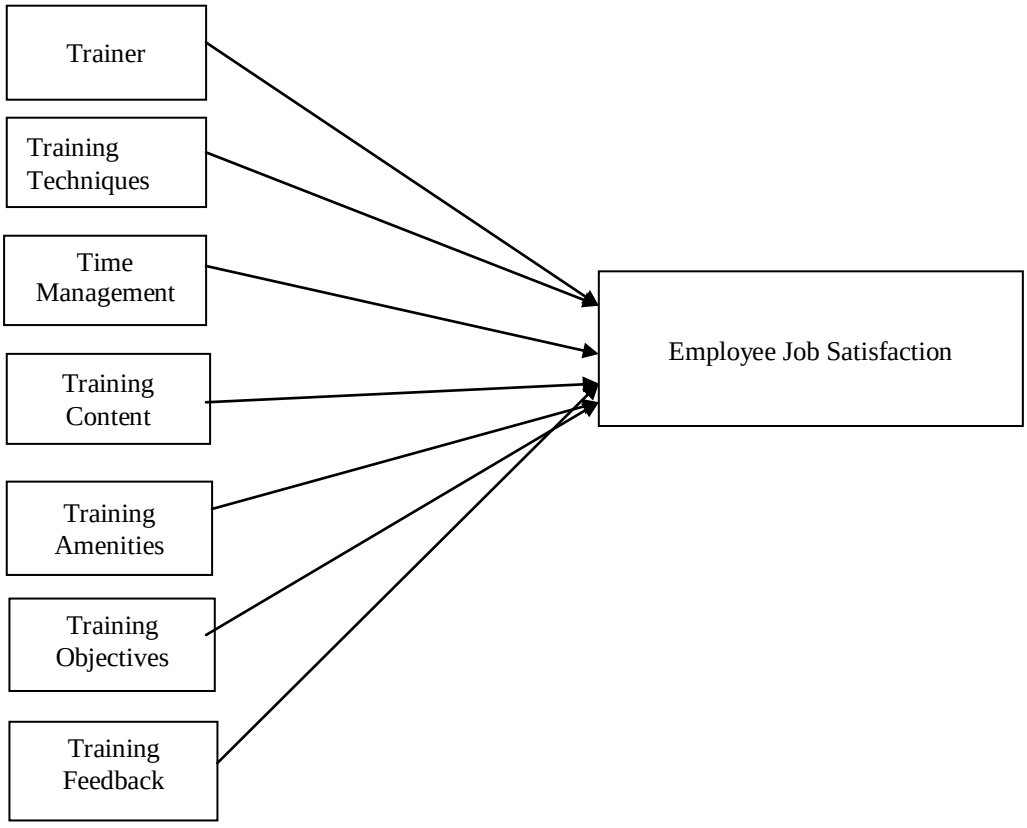
I will probably not be looking for a job outside of current job. 4). I seldom think about quitting. The overall Cronbach alpha was 0.89. Each item in employee job satisfaction construct was measured on 5-point Likert scale ranging from 5 to 1, 5= strongly agree, 4= agree, 3= indifferent, 2= disagree and 1= strongly disagree.

Hypotheses Testing

Based on the quality dimensions identified in study one, following hypotheses were redeveloped.

H1: Trainer's characteristics in training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H2: Techniques of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H3: Time management of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H4: Content of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H5: Amenities of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H6: Objective of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction.
H7: Feedback of training significantly effects the employee job satisfaction**.**

Figure 1. Graphical presentation of hypothesized relationships



To test and verify the relationship between quality dimensions of training and employee job satisfaction, multiple regression analysis through SPSS 16 software was used. Multiple regression analysis is statistical technique, which analyse the linear relationship between a dependent variable and multiple independent variables. The R^2 (.216, $p < 0.05$) shows that overall the seven quality dimensions of training were able to explain 21.6% of variation in the

employee job satisfaction. Whereas the F statistics ($F = 3.33$, $p < 0.01$) showed significant results. Table 5 represents the regression model results of employee job satisfaction. $F = 3.33$ was a compared value of the amount of variation in the employee job satisfaction explained by the quality (dimensions) of training to the unexplained variation or error variance. The value of F was significant and indicating that employee job satisfaction had more explained value than error variance (Hair, et al., 2003).

Table 5. Regression model results of employee job satisfaction[b].

***R*[a]**	**.465**
***R*²**	**.216***
***R*[b]**	**3.330****

a. Predictors: (Constant), training feedback, training objectives, trainer_chara, training amenities, time_Mgt, training content, training methods, b. Dependent Variable: Emp_job_sat

N = 118, ****p* **< 0.01,** **p* **< 0.05**

Table 6. Regression coefficients results of employee job satisfaction[b]

Independent variables	**B**	**t**	**Sig.**
(Constant)	5.183	5.923	.000
Trainer Characteristics	.282	3.492	.000
Training Techniques	.293	1.85	.000
Time Management	.058	.950	.344
Training Content	.313	2.214	. 002
Training amenities	.139	2.136	.004
Training Objectives	.223	3.258	.000
Training Feedback	.045	.742	.459

b. Dependent Variable: Emp_job_sat

Table 6 represents regression coefficients results of employee job satisfaction. This beta value indicated the importance of each independent variable in predicting the employee job satisfaction. Whereas the t values showed that regression coefficient B was different enough from 0 to be statistically significant. Results showed that training feedback ($B = 0.045$, $t = 0.742$) and training time management ($B = 0.058$, $t = 0.95$) were not significantly able to predict the employee job satisfaction. This means toward employee job satisfaction these quality dimensions did not play considerable roles. So H3 and H7 were rejected. Other training quality dimensions were considerably able to predict the employee job satisfaction. Based on the B values, the sequence of other quality dimensions of training for predicting employee job

satisfaction was training content (.313), training Techniques (.293), trainer's characteristics (.282), training objectives (.223), and training amenities (.139). H1, H2, H4, H5 and H6 were supported.

Findings and Conclusion

The objective of this research paper was to explore and examine those dimensions of training which accounts for training quality. Then check the impact of these quality dimensions of training on the employee job satisfaction. This study identified seven quality dimensions of training, which were trainer's characteristics, training techniques, training time management, training content, training amenities, training objective and training feedback. From these dimensions five were clearly able to enhance the employee job satisfaction. These five dimensions were trainer's characteristics, training methods, training content, training amenities, and training objective. Hence, H1, H2, H4, H5 and H6 were supported. H3 and H7 were rejected.

Overall in the regression model, these quality dimensions of training were able to explain 21.6% of variation in the employee job satisfaction.

The findings of this study suggested that different dimension of training quality were able to influence the employee job satisfaction differently. The most important quality dimension of training for predicting employee job satisfaction was training content (B = .313), it means that the relevancy of training content to the job requirements and employee's understanding and application of training material/knowledge to his/her job contributed mainly in predicting the employee job satisfaction. Then, on second, comes training techniques (B=.293). Different training methods should be used in accordance with the job requirements. While conducting the training through different methods, the ease of language and its understanding by trainee enhance the job satisfaction. Third important quality dimension for predicting the employee job satisfaction was trainer's characteristics (B=.282). The trainer should be good speaker as well as good listener. He should be well knowledgeable and able to retain the training session alive till end. Then fourth important training quality dimension was training objectives (.223), the clearly stated and prior knowledge of training objectives enhance the job satisfaction. The least important but able to predict job satisfaction was training amenities (B=.139).

The findings of this research study are significant for all those organizations that are interested to make their trainings qualitative and produce most skillful and knowledgeable employees for competitive advantage. The relative importance of training quality dimensions could able to create employee job satisfaction.

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APPENDIX

Items	Labels
QT1.	The training objectives for each topic should be identified, clearly stated and followed.
QT2.	Sufficient information on the objectives of the training course should be provided before training session.
QT3.	The training course should cover the topics that trainee needs to learn about.
QT4.	The objectives of the training should be achieved
QT5.	This training is worthwhile and should be conducted on a regular basis
QT6.	The training material should be relevant to job.
QT7.	Trainee should be able to apply much of the training material/knowledge to his/her job.
QT8.	Trainee should get most of the questions answered during the training
QT9.	The material distributed during the training should be helpful in understanding what the speakers are presenting.
QT10.	The material should be presented in an interesting way.
QT11.	Organization should be interested to evaluate the effectiveness of training.
QT12.	Organization should be interested to get the employees feedback on training.
QT13.	Different training methods should be offered during training sessions.
QT14.	Different training methods should be relevant to the nature of job.
QT15.	The language used in the training sessions should easy to understand.
QT16.	Each training session should start and end in time.
QT17.	The training sessions should allow sufficient time to talk informally with other participants.
QT18.	Adequate time should be provided for attendee questions
QT19.	Time should be provided for breaks and meals/refreshment.
QT20.	Enough time should be given for feedback from the participants.
QT21.	Trainer's provided time should be enough for carrying out the activities.
QT22.	Trainers should state the objectives clearly.
QT23.	Trainers should keep the session alive and interesting.
QT24.	Trainers should communicate well.
QT25.	Trainers should use audio/ visual aids professionally.
QT26.	Trainers should exhibit a friendly and helpful attitude.
QT27.	Trainers should deliver knowledge of subject matter.
QT28.	Trainers should be interested and addressed attendees concerns
QT29.	The meeting room and related facilities should provide a comfortable setting for the training.
QT30.	The location for the training should be convenient and easy to find.
QT31.	The quality refreshment should be offered during training sessions.
QT32.	The general atmosphere during the course should enhance the learning process.