Impact of Professional Course on Management and Development on Performance of Class III Officers of Government of Nepal

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This article is an outcome of the study that was carried out to assess the impact of Professional Course on Management and Development (PCMD) on enhancing the knowledge and improving performance of Class III officers of the Government of Nepal. The study was carried out in seven places - Kathmandu valley, Kaski, Syangja, Tanahaun, Morang, Sunsari and Dhankuta. A total of 40 PCMD graduates, five supervisors, five co-workers/subordinates and 10 service receivers participated in the study. Although, the training was successful to enhance the conceptual understanding in trainees on the specified issues, a gap was observed between understanding and application of the knowledge and skills. Organizational environment, individual motivation and commitment, and lack of monitoring and supervision were major factors to restrict the application of skills learnt during the training. Despite the intention of employees to participate in the training for securing marks for promotion, at the end of the training, they acknowledged knowledge enrichment. Supervisors, co-workers/subordinates and service receivers found differences between trained and non-trained employees on their

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performance, commitment and behaviour. For increasing the effectiveness of the training participants suggested to review of the existing training policy, organizing follow-up and refresher training, improving quality of NASC resource persons, regularizing evaluation system, improving the organizational environment and encouraging trainees to develop a work plan at completion of training and linking it with the performance measures.

Background

The Government of Nepal (GoN) is providing training to its employees bearing the cost of resources involved in preparing and delivering the training, the cost of travel and lodging, and the cost of staff being away from the workplace, etc. To justify these costs, Government needs to feel that training opportunity that they are providing to their employee will make a difference in service delivery by improving their performance. Government needs to know that employees do not only acquire new knowledge, attitudes, and skills from the training but can also put them into practice. The desired long-term impact of training is to improve organizational performance and ultimately, to contribute to the goal of improving service delivery. Most of the training programmes are limited to classroom activities. Attempts of training evaluation are very few. Unless the impact of the training is evaluated at the workplace, its effectiveness and appropriateness are less known. Therefore, an assessment of training impact on the performance of the employees is required. This not only fulfils the existing gap on knowledge, but also helps evaluate its effectiveness and elucidates strategies for the improvements in service delivery. In this context, this study was designed to assess the impact of Professional Course on Management and Development (PCMD) organized by Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC) for class III officers of Government of Nepal (GoN) on knowledge enhancement and performance improvement.

Training has an immediate rationale with job performance. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2008) defines training as 'the process of learning

the skills that you need to do a job.' Training has to address the gap between existing and required knowledge and skills. Buckley and Caple (2009) define training as 'a planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge/skill/attitude through experience, to achieve effective performance in an activity or range of activities. Its purpose, in the work situation, is to enable an individual to acquire abilities in order that he or she can perform adequately a given task or job and realize their potential.' Buckley and Caple find the fundamental difference between education and training on major two aspects - process and effect. Training has more mechanistic process leading to specific, predictable and uniform effect whereas education is more organic and has a general, less predictable and variable effect. Therefore, training differs from education, sharing some common characteristics of process and effect.

Demand of training is generally based on needs required to perform the special task. Hence, it is required to enhance competency and skills of trainees on the identified needs. Trainings are categorically needs-based and designed to address the specific deficiency of the trainees. The success of the training depends on its ability to address the identified deficits of the trainees between existing and normative competency. Training is one of the important approaches of staff development for increasing performance. Therefore, training has become an important strategy to increase staff performance.

Rationale

The reason to evaluating training is to determine the effectiveness of such programme (Kirkpatrik & Kirkpatrik, 2006). Unless training is evaluated at work situation, it is always unknown whether the training has been a worthwhile investment. Generally, the evaluation culture is limited up to the learning level. Rarely trainings are evaluated at impact level. Unless evaluation culture is established at impact level, we do not know the real impact of training in work performance. In order to make necessary improvements in the training and make it more effective, needs-based and dynamic; evaluation at impact level is necessary. Training evaluation assists for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the training contents and methods, optimum utilization of the

organization resources (monetary and human), employee performance and organizational productivity (Mallett & Reinke, 2002). Kirkpatrik & Kirkpatrik (2006) point three major reasons for evaluation of training - a) worth of investment (budgetary justification) in relation to organizational objectives and goals, b) continuity of the programme, and c) collecting information for improving training.

Training relevancy is contextual. The content relevant in one situation may not deliver satisfaction in other contexts. Hence, it is necessary to know the changing work needs of the trainees in order to address them in the training contents. Impact evaluation, therefore, works as an important tool for assessing the changing needs of the prospective trainees.

This study was designed on three major grounds. First, it aimed at establishing training evaluation culture at the work situation after certain duration of the training completion. This could work as a mechanism of monitoring and evaluation of trainees. Second, it was required to understand effectiveness of training in relation to service delivery. This could be an evidence to establish (or sometimes contest) the relevancy of the training. Third, in order to address the management and development dynamics, timely improvement in training procedure and contents is required. This study supports by providing field-based (or trainee based) evidence to derive recommendations for designing improvement plans of the training. NASC can use the evidence to review, revise and improve the existing training system in order to increase effectiveness of the training. It also provides evidence-based data for the government to review and help revise their understanding regarding the usefulness and effectiveness of training policy and system.

Objective

On the basis of the above arguments, this study was designed with an overall objective of examining the impact of PCMD on the level of understanding and its implication in work performance for improved service delivery. The specific objectives were:

- to examine the level of understanding and application of contents covered by the PCMD at the post-training situation;
- to collect information for improving NASC forth coming training course; and
- to provide suggestions for NASC and GoN for increasing the effectiveness of training.

Theoretical framework

Impact of training can be measured at four levels - reaction, learning, behavior and results (Kirkpatrik & Kirkpatrik, 2006). The four levels consist:

Reaction: It measures the reaction of training events, usually through a survey during the training. It represents the trainees' satisfaction on particular event of training.

Learning: It measures the changes in attitudes, improvements in knowledge and skills as a result of attending training.

Behaviour: It measures on-the-job behaviour to see if training transfers into on-the-job skills. It is the change in behaviour that has occurred because the participant attended the training.

Results: It is the final result that occurred because participants attended the training. It is measured by the improvement in the service delivery. In other words, it is the achievement of organization's goals as the result of training.

Reaction and learning level impact is measured during or immediately after the training. In most of the trainings, the training management team measures the reaction and learning level changes in the trainees while the evaluation at the behaviour and results level is rare. Because behaviour and result level changes should be measured in the workplace. The training organizations are generally unable to establish the linkage up to the workplace. This study combines all four levels with more focus on the behaviour and result level.

Research design

This study employed an exploratory mixed method using quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques. For this purpose questionnaire, observation, in-depth interview and client-exit interview methods were used. The questionnaire was developed based on the training curriculum and administered through direct personal interview. A checklist was developed for in-depth interview with supervisor, co-workers/subordinates and clients.

Study area

The study covered three different areas. The Kathmandu valley being centrally located and constituting the largest number of government and corporate offices represented the central Nepal. The eastern part was represented by Morang, Sunsari and Dhankuta while Kaski, Tanahaun and Syangja represented western Nepal.

Sample size

The study population was the trainees who have completed the PCMD organized by NASC from 2006/07 to 2009/10. The available office record showed that during 2006/07 to 2009/10 a total of 278 trainees have completed the PCMD. The sample covered approximately 15 percent (equivalent to 40 trainees) of the total trainees.

In the total number of trainees, Kathmandu Valley (Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhakatapur) alone contributes around 70 percent. However, in order to maintain regional variation, Kathmandu received 50 percent (equivalent to 20 respondents) weight and rest was allocated equally to eastern and western Nepal. We used systematic sampling methods in order to identify respondents in Kathmandu valley and census method for other regions (see sample design).

Sample design

Sample design of trainees

The number of trainees outside the Kathmandu valley remained considerably low. Therefore a census was conducted to cover all the trainees meeting the inclusion criteria in those areas. For the case of Kathmandu valley systematic random sampling was applied. For this sampling frame was prepared from the trainee's record available in NASC considering their organization at the time they participated in the PCMD. Using a sampling interval of 1:10 a total of 20 trainees were selected. In case of unavailability of the indentified trainee (due to transfer or other unavoidable cause), it was replaced by another trainee in the same office meeting the selection criteria.

Sample design of supervisor, co-worker/subordinate and clients

A total of five supervisors, five co-workers/subordinates and 10 service receivers were interviewed. Supervisors were selected among those who have closely monitored and supervised the trainees. Another selection criterion was the workload. We selected trainee's supervisor from those offices where trainee's had more responsibility. Co-workers/subordinates were selected among those who have closely worked with the trainee for a considerable duration. Clients were interviewed among those who received service from the trainee. For this we selected frontline offices where the flow of service receivers was higher.

Ethical concern and methodological issues

Before administering the questionnaire, we sought an oral informed consent of participants. We ensured them the confidentiality of information and encouraged to provide real experiences.

One serious theoretical issue was the evaluation process. Theoretically, the process of self-evaluation of the self-implemented programme is not recommended. This might have researcher's biasness and there could be serious power imbalance between the researched and the researchers. Taking this

methodological issue into consideration, we used the following strategies to increase the reliability. First, the research team was fully oriented for reducing power imbalance. For which we attempted to convince and create favourable environment so that they could participate in the study voluntarily. Second, their anonymity and confidentiality of the information was ensured. Third, the research team was composed of newly recruited officers of NASC who were earlier not exposed with the respondents. This produced a conducive environment to the respondents for sharing their experiences. In order to maintain the privacy of the respondents their identity has been kept confidential and pseudo name has been used in this report.

Data analysis

We employed mixed method in data analysis. By mixed method we refer to combination of quantitative and qualitative approach. Quantitative data were managed by descriptive statistical tools (percentage, cross-tabulation and mean distribution) and inferential statistics (pair sample t test and correlation analysis). Qualitative data were used to support (clarify) the quantitative findings and highlighting experiences and perceptions of all types of respondents interviewed in this study.

Delimitations

This study has the following methodological and coverage limitations.

- This study does not represent all trainings provided by the NASC for class III officers of the GoN.
- Although the research team was cautious, the methodology adopted in this study does not fully control the impact of other trainings received by the trainees after completing PCMD.

Findings and discussion

Relevancy of PCMD

Major three aspects were covered under this topic. First, we asked the participants to recall any five topics in which they were trained during the PCMD. Unfortunately, only one participant could appropriately recall five topics. Many of them recalled two-three topics. Following it, we asked them about the relevancy of the training. By relevancy we mean that whether the training they received had connection with their job responsibilities. Credibly, none of the trainees said it was irrelevant. In fact, 37.5 percent said it was highly relevant and a clear majority said it was relevant (Table 1)

Table 1: Relevancy of the PCMD

Relevancy of PCMD	N	%
Relevant	25	62.5
Highly relevant	15	37.5
Fulfilment of expectation		
Not fulfilled	1	2.5
Partially fulfilled	25	62.5
Completely fulfilled	14	35.0
Total	**40**	**100.0**

Following the relevancy, we asked whether the PCMD fulfilled their expectation. Here, an important point as an 'open secret' is to reinstate the interest of trainees for attending the training. All trainees, unanimously, admitted that the major intention to attend training was to secure 'marks' for promotion rather than to update and learn the skills in contemporary management, governance and development aspects.

A participant from Kaski openly shared that a very few (or not at all) employees participate in the training with learning motive. In his own words:

> *To be honest, I participated in the training not with an intention of learning. I had two reasons to participate in the training. First, I needed marks for promotion. Second, I had some works in Kathmandu and Ministry. Yes, after participating in training I got an opportunity to update myself in many contemporary issues. But again I say learning was not primary intention because I never felt gap in my knowledge and work performance. I can claim based on the interaction with my cohort trainee, most of them have similar reasons. [Lok Bahadur, trainee, Kaski]*

We link this verbatim with their responses in relation to fulfilment of the expectation. This point demands cautious interpretation. If the expectation were something different than the objectives of the training, this is a serious issue on relevancy of training. Limiting the interpretation in Table 4, only one trainee reported that his/her expectation was not fulfilled, while a large majority (62.5%) reported partially fulfilled and other 35 percent reported it was completely fulfilled. If we agree that the expectation of the trainees were related to training contents, delivery and performance enhancement in relation to their job description, we have encouraging results that the PCMD was successful to address expectation.

> *The training was highly relevant. Contents were useful to our work performance. Honestly speaking, the training was higher than that of my expectation. I was highly satisfied with training.* [Ravi, trainee, Kathmandu]

In order to make a comparison of training's relevancy, we produced a bi-variate distribution between the relevancy of training and participation in other training after the PCMD. This would offer two additional highlights. First, it allows assessing the influence of other training in redefining relevancy of the PCMD. Second, it could be a rationale evaluation of the trainees in the context they have had opportunity to participate in other trainings. The results are displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Relevancy of the PCMD by participation in other training after the PCMD

Participation in other training after the PCMD	Relevancy		Total	
	Partially relevant (%)	**Highly relevant (%)**	**N**	**%**
Yes	30.8	69.2	13	100.0
No	77.8	22.2	27	100.0
Total	**62.5**	**37.5**	**40**	**100.0**
Correlation coefficient	0.455***			

*** significant at <0.01 level.

Although the reasons are not much clear, Table 2 helps to generate few important messages. There is significant positive relationship (r=0.455, p<0.01) between perceived relevancy of the PCMD and participation in other training after it. In other words, those who participated in other training after the PCMD are more likely to rate it (PCMD) highly relevant than those who did not participate. It is better to interpret this relationship in light of the type, nature and content of training they received after the PCMD. Since we did not have detail information on the training they received, we could only make some a few possible explanations. First is related to design of the course. The PCMD is designed through a comprehensive interaction with past trainees, senior government officials, potential trainees and NASC officials. This process has given a type of ownership to the trainees which they might have realized after participating in other training. Second, the PCMD is a multidisciplinary that accommodates major management, governance and development issues. This is particularly designed to address the need of the employees representing different work responsibilities. Very few training courses are designed in this model. Trainees may have

rationalized this particular strength after participating in other training. As a reflection they are more likely to report relevancy of the PCMD. Third, training methodology could be one more factor. Apart from the NASC resource persons, the government officials are the major resource persons in the PCMD. This might have generated an attachment with the resource persons.

However, the age of the trainee was found negatively correlated (r= -0.410, p<0.01) with the perceived relevancy of the training (Table 3). Younger trainees were more likely to report that the training was highly relevant against the higher age trainees.

Table 3: Relevancy of the PCMD by the age of the trainees

Age of the trainees	Relevancy		Total	
	Partially relevant (%)	Highly relevant (%)	N	%
40 years and less	40.0	60.0	15	100.0
41-50 years	70.0	30.0	20	100.0
51 years and above	100.0	0.0	5	100.0
Total	62.5	37.5	40	100.0
Correlation coefficient	-0.407***			

*** significant at <0.01 level.

There could be two general explanations of negative relationship between age and perception of relevancy. First, as Thorndike (1927, cited in Crawford, 2004) argues that the learning ability declines along with the increase in age. The theory of adult learning claims that different biological factors compounded by socio-cultural factors affect the ability of the individual to learn (Merraim, 2001). Although we exactly cannot

prescribe that ageing is the sole factor to reduce learning ability, it is apparent that age has some type of correlation with learning attitude. Second, the intention to participate in the training should be examined carefully. Higher age employees generally participate in the training with an objective of securing marks for promotion rather than to updating knowledge. In addition, higher age employees could have problematic relationship with their supervisor and they wanted to avoid routine job by taking a break from the casual work. A relevant expression supporting this argument was of Gopal [Sunsari].

> *I have been in this chair surrounded by the crowd since last five years. The only thing I do here is to look at their documents and put a signature. Can you guess where can I implement the skills learnt in the training? In fact, I had two intentions while participating in the training. First, I wanted to secure marks for the promotion. Second, I wanted to avoid this routine job for few days. I hardly remember what I learnt there because I could not concentrate on the training.*

If this statement holds true and applies to other higher aged employees, it is obvious that the relevancy of the training is limited and reduced to promotion. In this case, the contents and training modality may have less attraction to the trainees. It raises a critical question for NASC and concerned organizations to rethink the strategies for making the training more effective and worthy.

Enthusiasm for change after completion of the PCMD

Trainees were asked whether they were enthusiastic to bring changes in their workplace and performance when they graduated. This question was asked to understand their attention and commitment.

Because the first step of transferring learning into behavour is conditioned by the enthusiasm of bringing change in organization and work culture. We wanted to know whether the trainees were interested to implement the things they learnt during the training immediately after completion of the training. We begin this by citing experience of a trainee.

> *The 30 days I spent in the training reinforced and updated my knowledge on contemporary management and development issues. Although that did not bring completely new hope with us because many topics were introductory with little implication at behavioural level, I was interested to bring some changes in my work place and at my individual level. [Ram Prasad, trainee, Kathmandu]*

Table 4 displays the responses of participants about the interest of bringing change at organizational and individual level after completion of training. It is interesting to note that three-fifths of the participants were highly interested to bring changes in behaviour after completion of the training. If this figure were representative, we have encouraging responses. Except one participant, all showed their interest to bring changes after completion of the PCMD. The behaviour change theory supports that interest on a phenomenon leads to behaviour change (Makin & Cox, 2004). Makin and Cox further argue it is difficult to change attitude and even more difficult to change someone's personality. Behaviour can be changed using techniques that are relatively easy to learn and apply.

Table 4: Interest to change behaviour after the PCMD

Interest to change behaviour after the PCMD	N	%
Highly interested	24	60.0
Interested	15	37.5
Not so interested	1	2.5
Total	**40**	**100.0**

While discussing with the supervisors and co-workers/subordinates of the trainees about their interest immediately after returning the organization after completing the PCMD, they found the trainees were highly interested to apply the knowledge and skills they learned. However, their interest could not last longer. The problem was manifested by limited resources, unfavourable organizational environment and poor will power and commitment. They explained that the behaviour of the clients and political pressure they face have adverse effects to change their behaviour in the workplace.

Organizational environment

The organizational environment plays important role to promote, encourage and sustain the changes that employees would like to bring. There are examples how the unfavourable organization environment discourage the employees to initiate change and sustain it. It is also considered that organization itself is a driver for learning (Mackey & Livsey, 2006) and transforming the knowledge into practice. We tried to identify how favourable the trainees found their organizational environment for initiating the change in organizational and individual behaviour.

Table 5 displays the responses of the participants. Slightly higher than three-fourths of the trainees found favourable organizational environment against little less than a quarter reporting unfavourable organizational environment.

Table 5: Perception on organizational environment

Organizational environment	N	%
Highly favourable	4	10.0
Favourable	27	67.5
Not favourable	9	22.5
Total	**40**	**100.0**

Table 5 has some implied messages. First, on what basis trainees perceived the organizational environment was (un)favourable. Second, to claim organizational environment (un)favourable they must have initiated some changes. Considering the responses, we can make a general conclusion that the organizational environment did not play catalytic roles in resisting the change but it was one of the reasons to discourage the change. In other words, most of the trainees noticed favourable organizational environment for initiating the change. Deviating from this conclusion a trainee from Kaski produced a picture of organizational environment as:

> *I was selected in the training because I did not have considerable*
> *workload in the office. I was almost workless. Same thing happen*
> *after I returned from the training. If you ask me to show my work,*
> *I have nothing to show you. The only work I did in last one year*
> *was to put signature on approximately 40 letters. In fact, the work*
> *division is inequitable in bureaucracy. In some offices staff are*

> *overloaded and somewhere like this [He was indicating lack of*
> *responsibility]. How can I show my performance? [Raj, trainee,*
> *Kaski]*

There are some arguments we have to revisit. Kirkpatrik & Kirkpatrik, (2006) identify three issues. First, trainees cannot change their behaviour until they have an opportunity to do. Second, it is impossible to predict when a change in behaviour will occur. Even if opportunity exists, we cannot be sure when one initiates behaviour change. Third, organizational environment may not encourage trainees to initiate change.

Attempts to and restrictions in change

We specifically attempted to explore the changes that trainees have initiated after completion of the PCMD. Our measurement focused on the specific activities and the possible restriction. The indicators used were the following:

- Tried (or planned to do) but that was not practical in work situation.
- Tried (or planned to do) but supervisor did not support.
- Tried (or planned to do) but subordinates did not show interest (or support).
- Tried (or planned to do) but did not have enough time.
- Tried but did not work.
- Tried (or planned to do) but organizational environment was not favourable.
- Tried (or planned to do) but did not have enough resources.

Contrary to interest and organizational environment, a very few trainees recalled their attempts to behaviour change. It was interesting to note that the changes they enumerated were subjective, invisible and difficult to quantify. Only a negligible proportion could produce a

categorical example of the change they attempted to bring as an impact of the PCMD. The objective of the training was to facilitate trainees to improve their understanding on management and development issues and demonstrate the application by improving the service delivery. When we visited some organizations we noticed changed behaviour with some trainees who were working in frontline offices. We tried to triangulate the behaviour of trainees through discussion with their supervisors, co-worker/subordinate and clients. The discussion was on different aspects of trainee's behaviour. We start from an observation of a co-worker.

> *I had an opportunity work with him (trainee) since last two years. I worked with him before and after he participated in the training... One visible change that I have noticed after the training is in his behaviour of dealing with clients. Before the training he was reluctant to provide information to clients and usually used to avoid it. But now [after the training] he provides all the information what he can to the clients. His behaviour towards client is changed. [Amar, co-worker, Morang]*

The supervisors, co-workers/subordinate and service receivers commonly appreciated the differences between the trained and non-trained officers. They acknowledged that there were visible differences in behaviour, attitude, work performance and developing the inter-personal relationship. However, those observations varied in different offices and workplaces. In some of the cases, they criticized the office environment where the knowledge and skills they received during the training were inapplicable. An important implication was observed in the knowledge update. As a result many of them developed themselves as trainers. These observations of the respondents were verified from the interviews of the supervisors and co-workers.

The major differences between trained and non-trained officers were in the area of motivation and commitment to their work, work performance, behaviour in team work, respect to the clients, decision-making skills, attitude to the subordinates and knowledge to analyze the situation:

I have benefited from the training a lot... For example, I got an opportunity to update myself after a long period. The training was a wonderful venue for sharing our experiences. The mixed group provided us another opportunity to learn different organizations, their problems and efforts to solve. Although, I do not have things to show you the changes I made after training, I still claim I learnt many things from the training. It does not mean that I did not change after the training... The changes are invisible but important. I claim that I have changed my certain behaviours after the training and it has impact on the service delivery. [Shyam, trainee, Kathmandu]

Understanding and application

We conducted a detail study of understanding and application of the specific content covered in the recent PCMD. The purpose of this study was to identify the strengths of trainees in individual training content. For that we designed questionnaire in Likert Scale with five categories. We wanted to know whether there was change in understanding and application of particular issue because of the training. For that we developed the scale stating "changes experienced after the training in comparison to before the training".

In order to facilitate the analysis, the topics were grouped under the module. Each module contains certain number of topics. All together there were seven modules. We performed analysis at the module level. We

produced a summative average of changes (perception) in the understanding and application for each module separately. We used correlation and paired sample t test to derive the conclusion. Table 6 depicts the summative average of trainees' opinion.

Table 6: Mean scores of changes that trainees' perceived in understanding and application of training topics

Module	Understanding	Application
Module I: Managing self and interpersonal relationship	3.95	3.72
Module II: Managing staff performance	3.94	3.72
Module III: Managing office resources	3.61	3.71
Module IV: Public policy and governance	3.98	3.99
Module V: Development planning	4.01	3.60
Module VI: Project management	3.97	3.41
Module VII: Research methods and project works	4.08	4.05

Table 6 produces some important generalization. Higher mean score of understanding than the application allows us to conclude that the training has contributed to enhance the knowledge of trainees. The mean score value of understanding around 4 approves that the training was successful to bring changes to a larger extent. However, the mean score for different modules varies with 'research methods and project works' having the highest mean value (4.08), followed by 'development planning' (4.01) whereas the 'office resource management' has the lowest (3.61). Alike the understanding, in application also 'research methods and project works' ranks first with 4.05 mean value followed by public policy and governance (3.99). The reason for highest score in 'research methods and

project works' was the immediate practice during the fieldwork, report writing and presentation.

We further analyzed whether there was correlation between understanding and application. And we found significant correlation in majority of the modules. It is apparent from this analysis that better understanding is necessary for a better implementation. The correlation value of 0.574 (p<0.01), for example, between understanding and application of Module I, explains that trainees having higher level of understanding were more likely to apply what they have learnt (Table 7).

Table 7: Correlation matrix between understanding and application

Module	Correlation	Sig.
Module I: Managing self and interpersonal relationship	0.574	.000
Module II: Managing staff performance	0.183	.258
Module III: Managing office resources	0.106	.556
Module IV: Public policy and governance	0.213	.212
Module V: Development planning	0.362	.030
Module VI: Project management	0.677	.000
Module VII: Research methods and project works	0.351	.031

Table 7 reminds us to rethink on the importance of theoretical understanding. Better theoretical understanding encourages for application. Without understanding any issue properly, it is however difficult to apply. There were some methodological errors in Module II, III and IV. In these modules questions were more concentrated on theoretical understanding.

Our further interest was to examine the difference between understanding and application. We wanted to know whether there was

significant difference between the learning and application. For this we used paired sample t test. The results are displayed in Table 8.

The findings showed the significant differences in learning and application in Module I, II, V and VI. In other modules, the results are inconclusive or showed no difference. The highest gap was observed in the project management module, followed by the development planning and managing self and interpersonal relationship whereas the gap is narrow in the research methods and project works.

Table 8: Paired sample t test between understanding and application

Module	Mean difference	Std. error of mean	t	Sig.
Module I: Managing self and interpersonal relationship	0.224	0.059	3.81	0.000
Module II: Managing staff performance	0.220	0.108	2.03	0.049
Module III: Managing office resources	-0.100	0.158	-0.63	0.532
Module IV: Public policy and governance	0.090	0.122	0.73	0.470
Module V: Development planning	0.421	0.098	4.31	0.000
Module VI: Project management	0.563	0.094	5.97	0.000
Module VII: Research methods and project works	0.034	0.087	0.39	0.700

Table 8 helps us to draw major two conclusions. First, there is significant gap between learning and application as expected. This gap is obviously natural. Learning helps to apply but cannot dictate. Several other factors compound to restrict the application of knowledge. But if one has sound knowledge on any issue, it provides very favourable ground for applying and the trainees may initiate to apply at any time after the training. Second, the extent of gap depends on nature of the course content. Some contents are easy to understand but difficult to apply. For example, contents of project management and development planning are comfortable to understand. In other other hand, the application is dependent to many other policy, resource and responsibilities factors.

As discussed earlier, one possible explanation of narrow gap in research methods and project works is the immediate practice of the skills during fieldwork, report writing and presentation. In case of Module III there was a methodological issue as we have pointed out earlier. However, for other two modules we could not speculate any reasons why there was a narrow gap between understanding and application.

Observation of supervisor, co-worker/subordinate and service receivers towards trainees

The supervisors observed some visible differences between trained and non-trained employees. They noticed visible differences in behaviour, attitude, work performance and developing the inter-personal relationship. They found the trained employees clients friendly, having positive attitude, improved work performance and better inter-personal relationship. A supervisor from Kaski reported:

The main difference is observed in motivation because training is important for staff development. This leads to motivation in work.

> *They also have positive thinking. [Giving example of a trainee in*
> *his office] Trained employees are sincere, innovative (self*
> *motivated) and also cooperative. But we have to look at the*
> *working environment and role allocation as well. Despite having*
> *better knowledge and positive attitude the working environment*
> *and role allocation restricts to show visible output… But still I*
> *ensure you trained employees have better performance.* [Govinda,
> supervisor, Kaski]

We critically analyze this positive information and it was still difficult for us to find the changes as an impact of the PCMD. Therefore, we broadly can only argue that any training has at least some positive impact on the behaviour and performance of the trainee.

> *The major difference is in efficiency...for example, dealing with*
> *clients, capacity to analyze problems. [Referring to an employee*
> *who recently completed the PCMD] I found him reenergized,*
> *motivated and refreshed after the training... There are some*
> *changes in his work performance.* [Suresh, supervisor, Sunsari]

In the perception of co-workers/subordinates, the behaviour is the first indicator that distinguishes trained from non-trained officers. Trained officers are usually cooperative and motivated. They cautiously reported that personal characteristics play important to role for behaviour change. A single training is insufficient to bring drastic change. However, the discussion made a common conclusion that the difference between trained and non-trained officers can be observed on the following areas:

- motivation
- commitment to work
- work performance

- behaviour in team work
- respect to the clients
- decision-making skills
- attitude towards the subordinates
- knowledge to analyze the situation
- confidence level

Trainees were successful to demonstrate some changes in behaviour after the training. A subordinate shared his observation towards the trainee as:

> *I found some changes in his [referring to trainee] behaviour. After the training, he is more positive. His way of dealing with clients is positive. He respects clients and communicates effectively. His is self-motivated and can motivate the clients and satisfy them... His participation in the training has not only contributed in his personality development, it has also contributed to the office and we all junior staff. The changes he demonstrated after the training has encouraged us to learn many positive things. I claim that the training was worthy.* [Dinesh, subordinate, Morang]

The supervisors and co-workers/sub-ordinates stated that they found some positive changes in the motivation to work after the training. No doubt training is one of the means to motivate employee. Measuring motivation is subjective and interpretative.

> *Trained employees have higher confidence level. They can communicate effectively. They have patience and listening capacity. They show positive behaviour towards the people. However, only training is not sufficient for improving the ability of employees. They can learn from study as well.* [Hari, Supervisor, Tanahaun]

However, all trainees did not show positive change after the training. A subordinate shared his observation as:

> *He [referring to trainee] is little impatience and gets ager quickly. Decisions are made alone. He does not speak comfortably with us, especially with lower level staff.* [Suresh, subordinate, Dhankuta].

Overall impression and observation towards the PCMD

In addition to the content specific analysis, we tried to understand the overall impression and observation towards the PCMD. We were motivated by two basic reasons. First, we wanted to know how trainees observed the course structure, training delivery and other managerial activities of the training. Second, we wanted to know the area of improvement in order to make the training effective and more useful. For that we wanted to find out the gaps in training management.

The responses were mixed, as expected. Some trainees had positive experiences while others were negative and another group was constructive. This section highlights the major opinion. The observation of trainees was classified into three categories - i) training objectives, ii) training management (coordination and logistics), and ii) training delivery (selection and quality of resource person).

Training objectives

As we have highlighted earlier, the main intention of the trainees to participate in the PCMD was to secure marks for promotion and take leave from the usual routine job. This very reason has diminished their interest to learn and transform behaviour. Equally important is the responsibility of NASC. NASC (training coordination team) usually

inadequately clarified the objectives and limitations of the training contents and responsibilities of NASC to the trainees at the beginning of the training. Another important factor was the selection process of the trainees. The trainee's organization does not analyze the interest and need of trainee and also the compatibility with training programme. As a result, in one hand right person does not get training. In the other, the trained employees cannot make use of the training.

There were also experiences, although the trainees attend the PCMD for promotion intention, their objective gradually changed into learning.

> *Generally, we attend the training of Staff College with an intention of securing marks for promotion. It was similar for me. But when started taking classes my focus was changed. I started looking at the schedule and resource person person. I learnt many things. The training was above my expectation. Its application is up to me. We cannot blame Staff College for it… Given the attention in some improvements, still I claim it was one of the best trainings I ever attended.* [Deepak, trainee, Kathmandu].

There was no resentment with the experience of Deepak. Although employees attend training with other objective than learning, at the end of the training they have appreciating experience of learning.

> *Although the marks I have earned from the training have been utilized yet, I consider the training was successful. After the pre-service training it was my first training. When I attend the training, I felt refreshed and got opportunity to update myself. I learnt many skills useful for my personal life and organizational life.* [Ganesh, trainee, Kaski]

Training management: coordination and logistics

Almost all trainees were satisfied with the coordination and logistics arrangement during the training. The effort of the coordinating team was appreciated by most of the trainees. Some complaints were the late distribution of materials and poor canteen arrangement. One serious question they raised was the fear of examination and better scoring (at least first division) created by the coordination team. Their argument was that the fear reduced their ability to learn.

> *We were treated as a student. The coordinating team during the training put us in stress by creating a fear of first division... The principle of adult learning was not applied. I was disappointed. In a training course we were forced to learn like a student. [Ramesh, trainee, Kaski]*

Training delivery

Trainees had some reservations regarding training delivery. Major questions were related to selection and quality of resource persons, and quality of training materials. They had positive and admiring evaluation for a large majority of resource persons. But they were completely disappointed with some resource persons. Specially, their comments were directed towards some resource persons of NASC. They blamed that some of the NASC resource persons were never updated, materials were decade old, no newness in training methodology, and no significant difference in training and teaching. Another criticism was in time management. Most of the trainers, in trainees' observation, were unable to manage the time. They added that sessions were overloaded and more rhetoric.

> *I find almost all the topics relevant to our work nature. But the problem we felt was on the delivery. Delivery was more theoretical*

and rhetoric... Trainers of Staff College need to update themselves... The handouts distributed five years ago do not work all the time... Reading materials should be updated... The impression of Staff College is not encouraging... It is considered that the trainings are only for promotion. Very few trainees think of learning. Staff College has to improve this impression. [Dinesh, trainee, Tanahaun]

Conclusion

Evaluating effectiveness of training in the workplace offers many opportunities for the organization that is responsible for capacity building of the employees. It is essential to know the impact of training on trainees so that worth of investment on staff development can be accounted. Such impacts can be observed on knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitude. Improvement on these areas is expected to bring improvement in service delivery. Training evaluation also helps to identify the gaps in training needs and delivery. This article documents results of impact study of Professional Course on Management and Development organized by Nepal Administrative Staff College for capacity building of government officials. The evaluation discovers several facts that are useful for increasing the effectiveness and worth of the training. Trainings need to be job specific and designed to reduce deficiency that is essential for increasing productivity and meeting the organization need. If the training fails to address the job specific needs and it is motivated by other reasons than capacity development, it cannot produce the expected results. Training designed to reduce the gap between required and observed competency is best appreciated and acknowledged by the trainees.

The study results reinforce that NASC needs to pay attention in improving training quality by a) making the training relevant to job responsibilities,

b) enhancing the capacity of professional staff, c) establishing follow up mechanism and d) establishing evaluation culture in training methodology. The study also draws the attention of GoN for increasing efforts in staff development and to create the environment so that employee's can utilize their knowledge and skills. On top of that trainee's commitment to internalize change and perform accordingly is a prerequisite on which the success of training depends.

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