
The Relationship Between Satisfaction with Workplace Training and Overall Job Satisfaction

Steven W. Schmidt

Opportunities for training and development are paramount in decisions regarding employee career choices. Despite the importance, many research studies on job satisfaction do not address satisfaction with workplace training as an element of overall job satisfaction, and many job satisfaction survey instruments do not include a “satisfaction with workplace training” component. This study examined the relationship between satisfaction with employer-provided workplace training and overall job satisfaction of customer contact representatives. A significant relationship was found between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. Components of job training, including time spent in training, training methodologies, and content, were determined to be significant in their relationship to job training satisfaction, and trainees were significantly more satisfied with the training they received when the methodology employed was their preferred one. On the basis of these findings, conclusions were drawn and recommendations for researchers and practitioners in the field of HRD were made.

It is important that those in the profession of human resource development look at how their work affects the multiple stakeholders for whom they provide services. Those who have defined HRD concur; many definitions include a results or outcome component. As an example, the Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) defines the HRD profession as a multidisciplinary field that focuses on training, career development, and organizational development with the goal of improving processes and enhancing the learning and performance of individuals, organizations, communities, and society (AHRD Standards

on Ethics and Integrity, 1999). Watkins (1991) defines HRD as “the field of study and practice responsible for the fostering of a long-term, work-related learning capacity at the individual, group, and organizational level of organizations. [The] human resource developer works to enhance individuals’ capacity to learn, to help groups overcome barriers to learning, and to help organizations create a culture which promotes continuous learning” (p. 253).

To accomplish this task, HRD practitioners must look at how training and development programs affect those employees who participate in them. They must be aware of how employees feel about the training and development programs offered to them, and they must understand the components that make up job training satisfaction from the employee standpoint. Though not a sole perspective, it is important that HRD practitioners look at training and development programs this way, because this is the framework from which employees evaluate the organization’s training and development offerings.

Satisfaction with training and development is a major factor in decisions regarding people’s careers (Violino, 2001). It is a factor that prospective employees evaluate in the job-hunting process. It is cited in surveys as to why workers accept or decline jobs with certain employers and why employees leave one employer for another (“What Drives,” 2001). A sample of workplace surveys shows the importance of workplace training from a variety of perspectives. Ranstad’s 2001 North America Employment Review survey of twenty-six hundred American and Canadian employees found that 80 percent of respondents said receiving training that increases their skills and abilities was a key component of what they looked for in jobs (“What Drives,” 2001). Results of a 2000 survey of 271 network professionals conducted by Lucentcare showed that the most important factor in job satisfaction was the opportunity to learn new skills (Blum & Kaplan, 2000). A 2001 Network Computing survey of fourteen hundred information technology (IT) professionals found that IT employees felt educational and training opportunities were critical in their job (Violino, 2001). A survey of one thousand employees of Xerox’s European Business Service Centre found training and education were key priorities for staff (“Continuous Training,” 2001).

Likewise, a 2000 *Computerworld* survey of 575 IT professionals found that dissatisfied employees attributed their job dissatisfaction in part to inability to get the training they wanted (Melymuka, 2000). A study of nurses in the United Kingdom found that dissatisfaction with promotion and training opportunities had a stronger impact on job satisfaction than workload or pay (Shields & Ward, 2001).

Definitions and Review of Literature

These studies illustrate the importance of satisfaction with workplace training in an employee’s overall job experience. To better understand the concepts of job satisfaction and job training, however, it is important to define them.

Landy (1985) defined *job training* as “a set of planned activities on the part of an organization to increase the job knowledge and skills or to modify the attitudes and social behavior of its members in ways consistent with the goals of the organization and the requirements of the job” (p. 306). Training is systematic development of the knowledge, skills, and expertise required by a person to effectively perform a given task or job (Patrick, 2000).

Job satisfaction is defined as “how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like or dislike their jobs” (Spector, 1997, p. 2). Job satisfaction is typically measured in degrees and can be examined from multiple viewpoints using multiple constructs or categories. For instance, one can be satisfied with certain elements of a job, feel neutral about some, and be dissatisfied with others. Elements of a job can also have differing degrees of importance, which can cause those elements to be weighted differently in assessing overall job satisfaction (Spector, 1997). Thierry and Koopmann-lawma (1984) have several perspectives on job satisfaction. They posit that job satisfaction may be the result of a behavioral cycle reflecting the individual’s way of aiming at attractive outcomes. Job satisfaction may refer to the individual’s understanding of the degree of attractiveness of both positive and negative outcomes to be achieved or avoided in the future. Job satisfaction and dissatisfaction may have certain effects; for example, dissatisfaction may be associated with absenteeism, poor health, turnover, and complaints.

Definitions of job satisfaction (Spector, 1997) and job training (Landy, 1985; Patrick, 2000) can be synthesized to create the term *job training satisfaction*, defined as how people feel about aspects of the job training they receive. Job training satisfaction is the extent to which people like or dislike the set of planned activities organized to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to effectively perform a given task or job. Several points are critical in this definition. Made up of multiple constructs (similar to job satisfaction), job training satisfaction examines employees’ feelings about the job training they receive as a whole. It is not simply evaluation of a single course or training program. Second, job training satisfaction is a measure of the formal or planned (rather than informal or incidental) training activities offered by the organization.

How important are employee feelings about their organization’s training and development efforts? As evidenced by the surveys regarding workplace learning opportunities that I have noted, those feelings are important enough for employees to carry them into the workplace, important enough even to consider in career decisions. Researchers have come to similar conclusions. Bartlett (2001) found a positive relationship between workplace training and organizational commitment and recommended that human resource development professionals “adapt new research methods to demonstrate to organizational decision makers that training and development contributes to desired workplace attitudes . . . which may in turn influence behaviors such

as absenteeism and turnover” (p. 349). Mentoring programs, a form of training in which longer-term workers introduce newer workers to the organization and teach specific tasks, have been recommended to improve job satisfaction in older workers (Traut, Larson, & Fiemer, 2000). Similarly, train-the-trainer programs have been shown to have a positive effect on job satisfaction (Hatcher, 1999). In their study of new employee training, Tannenbaum and colleagues (1991) noted that “training can induce positive or negative impressions and attitudes [that] trainees carry with them into the workplace” (p. 767). Those attitudes were so important, Bartlett (2001) argued, that they could even be considered as outcomes of training. Rowden and Conine (2003) found that “a large part of the worker’s sense of job satisfaction can be attributed to workplace learning opportunities” (p. 463). Lowry, Simon, and Kimberley (2002) concluded that employees who received training scored significantly higher on job satisfaction surveys than those who had not. Conversely, Egan, Yang, and Bartlett (2004) found that turnover intention (an employee’s willingness to leave an organization) was negatively influenced by organizational learning culture and job satisfaction.

In summary, an organization’s training efforts have wide-reaching effects on employees and on the organization. Attitudes about training and development are not limited to the training situation. Rather, they are important pieces in the employee’s feelings about the job and the organization.

Despite this research, many job satisfaction research studies do not address job training satisfaction as an element of overall job satisfaction, and many job satisfaction survey instruments do not include a “satisfaction with workplace training” component. For example, Pollock, Whitbred, and Contractor’s study of public works employees (2000) measured job satisfaction as defined by an individual’s job characteristics and social environment on the job. Shapiro, Burkey, Dorman, and Welker’s study of attorneys (1996) measured job satisfaction using a six-factor scale, consisting of self-actualization, achievement/support, futility/avoidance, job-related affect, working conditions, and professional self-esteem constructs. Schwepker’s study of salespeople (2001) used a job satisfaction scale that included these constructs: the job, promotion and advancement, pay, supervisor, company policy and support, customers, and coworkers. Koustelios and Bagiatis (1997) studied job satisfaction in general laborers using a six-factor scale of satisfaction with working conditions, immediate supervisor, pay, the job itself, the organization, and opportunity for advancement.

There is a dearth of research on job training satisfaction in general. Nordhaug (1989), studying reward functions that are inherent in training, found that “the extent to which training actually contributes to generating individual rewards has, however, been virtually absent on the research agenda” (p. 374). Although considerable research has been conducted on organizational commitment, satisfaction, coaching, and employee development as individual or organizational outcomes, “very little research has been done on the

relationship between organizational commitment, employee development, satisfaction with employee development and coaching” (Tansky & Cohen, 2001, p. 287). Rowden and Conine (2003) also recommended additional research “. . . to further understand this apparently powerful link between workplace learning and job satisfaction. If this powerful link continues to surface in other sectors and larger companies, managers concerned with the level of job satisfaction among their employees may want to encourage more learning opportunities in the workplace” (p. 465).

Employees in the workplace are more mobile now than ever before, regularly changing employers, jobs, and even careers. The global economy of today makes ongoing learning throughout an employee’s career important. Employees must continue to learn and grow on the job simply as a requisite for continued employability. These types of changes all point to the importance of ongoing job training. Yet, as is the case with many elements of job satisfaction, job training satisfaction is not an all-or-nothing concept. Employees may be satisfied with some aspects of training programs and dissatisfied with others. It is important to not only examine job training satisfaction in a broad sense but also delve deeper into the components of training that may make up job training satisfaction. Doing so results in a clearer conceptual view of job training satisfaction and allows better understanding of the topic.

As training becomes more a part of an employee’s life, the relationship of training to job satisfaction becomes more prominent. As the workplace continues to evolve, employee satisfaction with on-the-job education permeates all aspects of overall job satisfaction.

This study examined the relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. It also investigated the concept of job training satisfaction, examining job training variables for possible relationships with job training satisfaction.

Method

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. It also examined several training-related variables for possible relationships with job training satisfaction. Specifically, it addressed these research questions:

1. What is the relationship between satisfaction with workplace training and overall job satisfaction?
2. What is the relationship among time spent in training, type of training, training methodology, and satisfaction with workplace training?
3. What are the effects on job training satisfaction when an employee’s preferred method of training is the methodology most often used in training that employee?

Sample

To answer the research questions, a sample of 552 customer and technical service employees in nine major organizations in the United States and Canada were given a job training and satisfaction survey. Included in this study were manufacturing, service, and technological organizations. Organizations chosen for this study employed customer service and technical service representatives who provided service and support to either end (retail) customers or wholesale customers.

Participating organizations were identified through their involvement in a benchmarking consortium in which the researcher's organization was a member. Benchmarking is a process in which organizations improve their own practices by identifying and using knowledge and best practices of other organizations. An important aspect of the benchmarking process is the obligation organizations have to supply information to requesting organizations in the consortium (Schmidt, 2004).

Instrumentation

The Job Training and Job Satisfaction Survey is a 55-item instrument developed to assess employee attitudes about aspects of the job and aspects of job training (Schmidt, 2004).

The job satisfaction aspects of this survey originate in part from Paul Spector's Job Satisfaction Survey (JSS; 1997). Spector's nine subscales measure satisfaction with pay, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards (performance-based rewards), operating procedures (required rules and procedures), coworkers, nature of work, and communication. There are four questions for each subscale.

The job training facets of this survey measure employee satisfaction with on-the-job training. The three subscales measure organizational support for training, employee feelings about training, and employee satisfaction with training. Specific questions in each of these subscales were developed by the researcher on the basis of learning organization assessments found in "The Learning Edge" (Wick & Leon, 1993). There are four questions for each subscale. The Job Training and Job Satisfaction Survey (JTJSS) contains five questions regarding training methodology, training content, and time spent in training. Also included are seven demographic questions, which address job tenure, age, gender, ethnicity, employment type (customer service representative or technical service representative), employee status (permanent or temporary or contract employee), and formal education level achieved.

A pilot study ($n = 118$) was conducted using the Job Training and Job Satisfaction Scale, and a confirmatory factor analysis was conducted. Inappropriate questions were deleted according to information collected in the pilot, and when combined with questions regarding job training the factor structure of Spector's original Job Satisfaction survey differed slightly from that of the original.

Table 1. Job Training Questionnaire Items and Factor Loadings

| Scale and Item | Factor | | |
|---|--------|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Satisfaction with training | | | |
| Training meets needs | .92 | | |
| Amount of training is satisfactory | .89 | | |
| Ability to use training content on job | .86 | | |
| Training applicability to job | .85 | | |
| Employee feelings about training | | | |
| Seeks out learning opportunities | | .81 | |
| Views job training as continuous endeavor | | .77 | |
| Proactive in seeking ways to improve | | .59 | |
| Learning goals established for present and future positions | | .48 | |
| Organizational support for training | | | |
| Learning is planned and purposeful | | | .45 |
| Department provides training opportunities | | | .43 |
| Interest in personal and professional development | | | .77 |
| Training is encouraged and rewarded | | | .75 |

Note: Item-to-factor loadings below .30 were suppressed.

A six-factor solution was obtained rather than the eight constructed by Spector. The original subscales of satisfaction with pay, promotion, and contingent rewards were combined to form a single subscale that was called Satisfaction with Opportunities and Rewards. Another subscale, Satisfaction with Communication, was removed entirely. The remainder of Spector's original subscales engendered a relatively clean factor structure with limited overlap between the scales.

In summary, the revised six subscales that make up overall job satisfaction on the JTJSS include an employee's level of satisfaction with (1) opportunities and rewards, including satisfaction with pay, pay raises, promotion opportunities and rewards—not necessarily monetary—given for good performance (there are twelve items on the instrument relating to this construct); (2) supervision, examining an employee's feelings about his or her immediate supervisor (this construct is measured using four items); and (3) four additional items, namely, fringe benefits, coworkers, the nature of the work performed by the employee, and operating conditions (including rules and procedures). Neither the job training questions nor the constructs were modified as a result of the pilot study.

Tables 1 and 2 contain information on questionnaire items and factor loading for the job training and job satisfaction components of this survey.

Reliability and Validity

To establish validity, a number of steps were taken. Experts in human resource development and in measurement were used to ensure content validity. They

Table 2. Job Satisfaction Questionnaire Items and Factor Loadings

| <i>Scale and Item</i> | <i>Factor</i> | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| | <i>1</i> | <i>2</i> | <i>3</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>5</i> | <i>6</i> |
| Opportunities and rewards | | | | | | |
| Chances for salary increase | .82 | | | | | |
| Chances for promotion | .75 | | | | | |
| Feeling that efforts are rewarded | .73 | | | | | |
| Appreciated by the organization based on salary | .71 | | | | | |
| Those who do well are promoted | .71 | | | | | |
| Paid fairly | .66 | | | | | |
| Frequency of raises | .61 | | | | | |
| Good job receives recognition | .61 | | | | | |
| Quantity of rewards | .60 | | | | | |
| Chances for promotion | .60 | | | | | |
| Ability to get ahead | .56 | | | | | |
| Work is appreciated | .51 | | | | | |
| Nature of the work | | | | | | |
| Enjoy work tasks | | .83 | | | | |
| Job is enjoyable | | .78 | | | | |
| Sense of pride in job | | .73 | | | | |
| Meaningful nature of job | | .71 | | | | |
| Supervision | | | | | | |
| Supervisor competence | | | .87 | | | |
| Supervisor fairness | | | .83 | | | |
| Supervisor interest in subordinates | | | .80 | | | |
| Like supervisor | | | .70 | | | |
| Benefits | | | | | | |
| Benefits we should have | | | | .76 | | |
| Satisfied with benefits received | | | | .71 | | |
| Benefits comparable to other organizations | | | | .69 | | |
| Benefits equitable | | | | .68 | | |
| Operating conditions | | | | | | |
| Amount of work | | | | | .86 | |
| Amount of paperwork | | | | | .81 | |
| Work rules and procedures | | | | | .67 | |
| Ease of effort | | | | | .42 | |
| Coworkers | | | | | | |
| Enjoy coworkers | | | | | | .71 |
| Enjoy people at work | | | | | | .69 |
| Amount of bickering and fighting | | | | | | .69 |

Note: Item-to-factor loadings below .30 were suppressed.

reviewed both constructs and individual questions and offered input to the researcher on each. To assess construct validity, a confirmatory factor analysis based on a pilot study ($n = 118$) was conducted. Reliability coefficients for the nine factors in the JTJSS range from .61 to .90.

Data from the pilot study were used to establish instrument reliability. On the basis of pilot study data, internal consistency of the two scales (job training and job satisfaction) was assessed. Cronbach's alpha was found to be .83 for the job training scale and .89 for the job satisfaction scale.

Data Collection Procedures

Prior to any data collection, the study was approved by the Institutional Review Board at the researcher's university. Nine organizations in the United States and Canada agreed to participate. Employees with Internet access at work were sent the survey link via e-mail. Those without Internet access were sent hard-copy versions of the survey. In total, 301 of the 552 employees invited to participate completed the survey, for an overall response rate of 55 percent. Response rate for the online survey was 43 percent; for the hard-copy survey, 67 percent.

Data Analysis

Survey data were entered into a database and analyzed using the statistical package SPSS. A simple regression analysis was used to examine question 1, and multiple regression was used to examine question 2. This method of data analysis is appropriate because of the variables examined. Pedhazur (1997) defines simple regression analysis as ". . . a method of analyzing the variability of a dependent variable by resorting to information available on an independent variable" (p. 3). Simple regression examines the changes in a dependent variable that are due to changes in an independent variable. Multiple regression examines changes in a dependent variable when more than one independent variable is involved. Assumptions made in this study were consistent with those of regression analysis in general. Namely, regression analysis assumes that the variables have normal distributions, are linear in nature, are reliable (using Chronbach alphas of .05 in this study), and are homoscedastic.

Chi-square analysis was used to examine question three. This method is appropriate in that it can be used to examine the significance of differences among proportions of items that fall into a number of categories (Ary, Jacobs, & Razavieh, 2002). Chi-square assumes that observations are independent, categories are mutually exclusive, and observations are measured as frequencies. Those assumptions were made regarding the data used in this study.

Results

Results of the data analysis on this study of job training and job satisfaction are presented in the next section.

Research Question One. The first research question examined the relationship between satisfaction with workplace training and overall job satisfaction. A regression equation examining satisfaction with workplace

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Job Satisfaction (n = 301)

| Variable | B | SE B | β |
|---------------------------|------|------|---------|
| Job training satisfaction | .699 | .040 | .732 |

Note: R-square = .55, $P < .05$

training (independent variable) and overall job satisfaction (dependent variable) was developed (see Table 3 for details). The relationship between the two variables was found to be significant, $t(1, 299) = 363.53$, $p < .001$. Pearson's correlation coefficient for the job training satisfaction ($M = 4.51$, $SD = .81$, $N = 301$) and overall job satisfaction ($M = 4.13$, $SD = .78$, $N = 301$) variables in this study indicated a high level of relationship between the two variables, $r(299) = .74$. The R-square value for this equation was .55, indicating that job training satisfaction accounts for 55 percent of the variance in overall job satisfaction.

Research Question Two. The second research question examined the relationship among time spent in training, type of training (or content), training methodology, and satisfaction with workplace training. Methodologies examined in this study included instructor-led classroom training, one-on-one training, online or computer-based training, job shadowing, and self-study or video-based training. Training content was subdivided into job-specific training, general business training, and personal development training.

To answer question two, a multiple regression equation was developed and was determined to be significant $F(7, 177) = 3.764$; $p = .001$. Because two of the three variables noted in this equation were categorical (training methodology most often received and type of training most often received) rather than continuous (number of days spent in training), the methodology and training type variables were dummy coded. Methodologies noted in the equation were compared to instructor-led training, and training types were compared to job-specific training. The equation also used standardized

Table 4. Summary of Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Job Training Satisfaction (n = 185)

| Variable | B | SE B | β |
|--|-------|------|---------|
| Training days | 9.667 | .004 | .181 |
| Method variable 1 (one-on-one training) | 9.451 | .216 | .032 |
| Method variable 2 (online or computer-based training) | .162 | .220 | .054 |
| Method variable 3 (job shadowing) | .174 | .245 | .052 |
| Method variable 4 (self-study) | -.467 | .150 | -.233 |
| Training type variable 1 (general business skill training) | .187 | .158 | .087 |
| Training type variable 2 (personal development training) | -.11 | .187 | -.046 |

Note: R-square = .13, $P < .05$. Method variables in the equation compared to instructor-led training and training type variables were compared to job-specific training.

coefficients. See Table 4 for details. The R-square value for this equation was .130, indicating that collectively, the independent variables explain 13 percent of the variance in job training satisfaction.

Table 5 is a summary of the relationship among job training satisfaction and training time, content, and methodology.

Research Question Three. Question three examined whether a match between an employee's preferred method of training and the method of training in which the employee most often participates made a difference in satisfaction with workplace training.

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the methodology used most often in the training they received. They were also asked to indicate the methodology they believed was most effective in helping them learn. Answers for these two questions were compared and coded as a match or nonmatch. If an employee most often received training using the methodology he or she believed was most effective for himself or herself, it was considered a match ($M = 4.71$, $SD = .78$, $N = 44$). A nonmatch was a situation in which an employee most often received training using a methodology other than the one he or she believed was most effective in helping him or her learn ($M = 4.4$, $SD = .75$, $N = 91$). A t-test was conducted ($N = 135$), and it was found that there were significant differences between satisfaction with job training when a respondent's preferred methodology was the one most often used in providing that respondent with job training, $t(133) = 2.229$, $p = .027$.

Respondents were then asked about their preferred methodology, or the one they believed was most effective in helping them learn. The Chi-square test for equal proportions was used to examine whether or not there was a method of training preferred by employees in the type of position studied. This analysis showed employees believed the instructor-led training and one-on-one training helped them learn most effectively, and that this preference was significant $\chi^2(4, N = 280) = 95.40$, $p = .00$. Instructor-led classroom training was followed in order of preference by one-on-one training, job shadowing, self-study or video-based training, and online or computer-based training. Table 6 is a summary of preferred training methodologies.

Respondents were then asked to rank on a scale of 1 to 5 the methodologies most frequently employed in the training they received (1 = methodology most often used; 5 = methodology least often used). Respondents could use each

Table 5. Summary of the Relationship Between Job Training Satisfaction and Training Time, Content, and Methodology (n = 185)

| Dependent Variable | | Independent Variable(s) | R-Square Value |
|---------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------|
| Job training satisfaction | + | Time spent in training | .13* |
| | + | Training methodology used | |
| | + | Course content | |

Note: * = significant relationship between variables ($p < .001$)

Table 6. Chi-Square Analysis of Methodology Most Preferred by Respondents (n = 280)

| <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Observed N</i> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Instructor-led classroom | 89 (56) |
| One-on-one | 88 (56) |
| Online or computer-based | 14 (56) |
| Job shadowing | 69 (56) |
| Self-study or video-based | 20 (56) |
| Total | 280 |

number 1 through 5 only once. It was found that there were significant differences in methodologies received, $\chi^2(4, N = 225) = 219.33, p = .00$, and that instructor-led training was by far the methodology most often used. Self-study was a distant second, followed by one-on-one training, online or computer-based training, and job shadowing. Table 7 is a summary of training methodologies most often received.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to examine whether or not there was a relationship between satisfaction with job training and overall job satisfaction. The study also examined three factors that may affect satisfaction with job training: methodology, type of training, and amount of time spent in training.

The study found a high correlation between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction among employees in customer contact positions. The results of this study concur with prior studies conducted on professional occupations (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Tansky & Cohen, 2001), suggesting that the relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction is similar for employees in a variety of occupational categories.

Given the significant relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction, a logical second step was to disseminate study results further and delve into the components of job training that may constitute job training satisfaction. Three variables examined in this study relating to the

Table 7. Chi-Square Analysis of Methodology Most Received by Respondents (n = 280)

| <i>Methodology</i> | <i>Observed N</i> |
|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Instructor-led | 131 (56) |
| One-on-one | 18 (56) |
| Online or computer-based | 17 (56) |
| Job shadowing | 14 (56) |
| Self-study or video-based | 45 (56) |
| Total | 280 |

job training experience were time spent in training, training methodology, and content. All three together were significant in their relationship with job training satisfaction.

When in training, it was important that the methodology used be one that employees believe effective in helping them learn. The methodology used in training had an effect on employee satisfaction with that training. Employees who received training using the training methodology they felt was most effective in helping them to learn (and, thereby, the method they most preferred) were significantly more satisfied with that training than employees who preferred a methodology other than the one that was used most often in their training.

There were differences between the training methodologies preferred by employees and those used in their training. Instructor-led training was the methodology most often received by respondents in training, as well as the methodology most preferred. However, the second and third choices in the most-preferred category, one-on-one training and job shadowing, were farther down the list of methodologies received most often. Self-study, including video-based training, and online or computer-based training were at the bottom of the most-preferred methodologies list, even though self-study or video-based training was the methodology respondents received the most after instructor-led training. In further categorizing the training methodologies already noted, one could argue that training methodologies most preferred by employees (instructor-led training, one-on-one training, and job shadowing) are fairly similar in that they involve a high degree of interaction between an instructor or coach and a student or students. It was found that the methodologies involving an instructor or coach were preferred significantly more than the more solitary methodologies (computer-based training, or self-study including video-based training). The presence of an instructor with whom to interact, question, and solve problems is important in training. Interaction with an instructor, coach, or experienced employee may also be important from an employee socialization standpoint (Nordhaug, 1989).

Discussion

The results of this study showed a strong positive relationship between job training satisfaction and overall job satisfaction. Findings concur with similar studies of job training and job satisfaction, which came to similar conclusions (Hatcher, 1999; Lowry et al., 2002; Traut et al., 2000). This may mean several things to employees, to organizations, and to researchers. Results of surveys noted in the introduction are a testament to the importance of job training in the minds of employees. This study confirms that employees value training and deem it a necessary part of the job. Examined on another level, those employed in customer contact positions are often motivated by the ability to please their customers. Satisfaction with job training may allow them to be

better able to do exactly that, which ties into both job satisfaction and ultimately customer satisfaction. In the end, job training benefits both the employee and the organization, which is in keeping with the mission of HRD professionals in “assisting individuals or organizations to improve their ability to develop themselves” (AHRD, 1999, p. II).

Organizations that offer effective job training may find they have better trained, more satisfied employees. Employees satisfied with job training are also more committed to their organizations (Bartlett, 2001; Tansky & Cohen, 2001), and employees who are satisfied in their jobs are more willing to accept organizational goals and values, more motivated (Jalajas & Bommer, 1999), more willing to exert effort in the workplace, and more likely to stay in an organization (Hatcher, 1999; Laschinger et al., 2001). These connections to the larger view of the organization are extremely important to HRD practitioners, because they show the powerful relationship between training at the employee level and overall organizational performance.

Time spent in training, training methodology, and content were found to be significantly related to job training satisfaction. This finding is important for HRD practitioners to consider when designing training programs, as well as for researchers examining components of job training satisfaction. Just as individual elements of job satisfaction can be examined, assessed, and potentially modified, so too can individual elements of job training satisfaction. This finding gives HRD practitioners and researchers a better understanding of the concept of job training satisfaction.

The training methodology preferred predominantly by employees in this study was instructor-led training. This was the methodology most often received by these employees as well. All methodologies involving face-to-face interaction with an instructor or coach were preferred significantly more than the solitary-type methodologies. This may be related to the nature of the occupation studied. People in customer or technical service positions are often employed in those occupations because they enjoy interacting with people. The importance of that interaction may transfer to the learning environment.

Limitations

Several limitations of this study are identified to help guide future research.

This study was conducted on employees in one particular occupation (customer and technical service employees working in call centers). Results may be limited to that type of occupation. Furthermore, this study employed the use of convenience sampling, which cannot be considered representative of the population. However, Wallen and Fraenkel (2001) note that in convenience sampling, “the researcher is obligated to describe the sample as thoroughly as possible with respect to variables pertinent to the study. Sometimes it is possible to show that the sample is very similar to the intended

population in certain ways. In this case, the researcher can argue that the sample is representative” (p. 139). Demographic questions were used to describe the sample as clearly as possible.

Because respondents had the option of completing this survey online, multiple responses may be an issue as well. Schonlau, Fricker, and Elliot (2001) note that surveys conducted on the Web are “uncontrolled” in that anyone who can find the survey can fill it out as many times as is desired. To prevent multiple responses from the same individual, each participant had to provide an individual e-mail address before accessing the survey. Each e-mail address could be used to access the survey only one time.

Location may have posed a threat to internal validity because respondents were asked their feelings about a variety of work-related issues while at work. As such, they may not have answered truthfully (or responded at all), especially if they felt their responses could affect them or their job in a negative way. Wallen and Fraenkel (2001) believe the best way to control a location threat is to keep the location at which surveys are completed constant. This is what was done in this study. As was already noted, the survey link was sent to customer and technical employees’ work e-mail addresses. Paper copies of the survey were also sent to the employees’ work site. Employees most likely completed this survey while at work.

Characteristics of the data collector may also have posed a threat to internal validity. This threat was controlled for through the process of electronically sending the survey link to participants. Data collection done through a standardized condition (in this case, electronically) lessens the threat to validity posed by characteristics of the data collector. Paper copies of the survey were available for employees to pick up, complete, and return anonymously. In both cases, respondents never saw the data collector in person. Use of employees from nine nonconnected organizations also lessened the threat of extraneous events affecting validity.

Implications for Human Resource Development

The results of this study have several implications for future research and practice in the field of human resource development. Satisfaction with job training should be considered as an aspect of overall job satisfaction, and HRD practitioners should consider job training satisfaction from the standpoint of the employee in developing and implementing training programs. HRD practitioners, through the training and development opportunities they offer, are influential in the overall job satisfaction of an organization’s employees. They are also influential in shaping workplace attitudes and employee commitment, which are important to the entire organization. These connections to the larger organizational picture are important for practitioners to remember. HRD practitioners interested in improving these variables in their own organizations should, in part, focus on job training as a way to do so.

In addition to examining job training satisfaction in a broad sense, it is important to delve further into the individual elements of job training satisfaction that contribute to overall satisfaction. Addressing specific aspects of a training program in order to improve trainee satisfaction concurs with the recommendations of other researchers as well (Lin et al., 2003). This study showed that employees assign differing values to aspects of job training. Rather than addressing job training satisfaction as an all-or-nothing concept, HRD practitioners interested in improving job training satisfaction may want to focus on individual aspects of job training, such as time spent in training, methodology, and content. When looking to improve job training satisfaction, it may be possible, and more efficient, to address specific training components rather than an entire training program.

The methodology used in training employees is important. Employees are more likely to be satisfied with training that is presented in the manner they believe is most effective in helping them learn. Employees in this study preferred training methodologies that involved face-to-face interaction with a trainer, mentor, or coach. This finding concurs with prior research by Rowden and Conine (2003), who note the importance of a training environment that allows talking, sharing information, and collaboration between or among trainees and the trainer, mentor, or coach.

Because of the far-reaching influence that HRD practitioners have in organizations, they should conduct a thorough investigation before making a decision regarding workplace training initiatives. They should consider the needs and priorities of all potential stakeholders, including the employees to be trained. Careful study of all aspects of a potential training and development program is important in determining what works best for the target audience and for the organization.

From a research perspective, satisfaction with job training should be considered an element of job satisfaction and be included as a construct in job satisfaction surveys. Researchers studying job training satisfaction should consider time, content, and methodology as constructs of job training satisfaction. Also to be considered is the significant difference in job training satisfaction when methodologies preferred by trainees are those employed in training.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2001) reports that the number of people involved in temporary employment arrangements is growing sharply. Future studies may focus on other occupations or professions, or on alternative employment situations such as outsourcing, temporary, or contract situations. Future research could also focus on the meaning of job training satisfaction as it pertains to employees, employers, and customers. For example, Steffen, Nystrom, and O'Connor (1996) found strong positive relationships between employees' level of organizational commitment and customers' perception of service quality. Researchers have concluded that job training satisfaction is related to organizational commitment as well (Bartlett, 2001).

A promising area for research examines how employees' attitudes about their own work can affect those customers with whom they interact.

References

- Academy of Human Resource Development. (1999). *Standards on ethics and integrity* (1st ed.). Darlene Russ-Eft (Ed). Baton Rouge, LA: AHRD.
- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Razavieh, A. (2002). *Introduction to research in education*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Thompson Learning.
- Bartlett, K. R. (2001). The relationship between training and organizational commitment: A study in the health care field. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(4), 335–352.
- Blum, R., & Kaplan, J. M. (2000, April 17). Network professionals' job satisfaction. *Lucent Technologies Network Care*.
- Continuous training is vital for job satisfaction. (2001, September 6). *Irish Jobs Column*. Retrieved September 26, 2003, from www.irishjobs.ie/advice/xerox.html
- Egan, T. M., Yang, B., & Bartlett, K. R. (2004). The effects of organizational learning culture and job satisfaction on motivation to transfer learning and turnover intention. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 15(3), 279–301.
- Ellinger, A. D., Ellinger, A. E., & Keller, S. B. (2003). Supervisory coaching behavior: Is there a payoff? In S. A. Lynham & T. M. Egan (Eds.), *AHRD 2003 Conference Proceedings 1* (pp. 443–450).
- Hatcher, T. (1999). How multiple interventions influenced employee turnover: A case study. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 10(4), 365–382.
- Jalajas, D. S., & Bommer, M. (1999). The influence of job motivation versus downsizing on individual behavior. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 10(4), 329–341.
- Koustelios, A. D., & Bagiatis, K. (1997). The employee satisfaction inventory (ESI): Development of a scale to measure satisfaction of Greek employees. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 57(3), 469–476.
- Landy, F. J. (1985). *Psychology of work behavior*. Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press.
- Laschinger, H. K. S., Finegan, J., & Shamian, J. (2001). The impact of workplace empowerment and organizational trust on staff nurses' work satisfaction and organizational commitment. *Health Care Management Review*, 26(3), 7–23.
- Lin, L., Yeh, S., Yang, L., Yang, L., Tseng, C., & Yeh, M. (2003). Satisfaction of nurse aides with pre-job training programs. *Journal of Nursing Research*, 11(2), 101–108.
- Lowry, D. S., Simon, A., & Kimberley, N. (2002). Toward improved employment relations practices of casual employees in the New South Wales registered clubs industry. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 13(1), 53–69.
- Melymuka, K. (2000, April 24). It's the opportunities, stupid. *Computerworld*.
- Nordhaug, O. (1989). Reward functions of personnel training. *Human Relations*, 42(5), 373–388.
- Patrick, J. (2000). Training. In N. Chmiel (Ed.), *Introduction to work and organizational psychology* (pp. 100–125). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Pedhazur, E. J. (1997). *Multiple regression in behavioral research. Explanation and prediction*. Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.
- Pollock, T. G., Whitbred, R. C., & Contractor, N. (2000). Social information processing and job characteristics. *Human Communication Research*, 26(2), 292–331.
- Rowden, R. W., & Conine Jr., C. T. (2003). The relationship between workplace learning and job satisfaction in U.S. small commercial banks. In S. A. Lynham & T. M. Egan (Eds.), *AHRD 2003 Conference Proceedings 1* (pp. 459–466).
- Schmidt, S. W. (2004). *The relationship between satisfaction with job training and overall job satisfaction*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.
- Schonlau, M., Fricker Jr., R. D., & Elliot, M. N. (2001). *Conducting research surveys via e-mail and the web*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

- Schwepker Jr., C. H. (2001). Ethical climate's relationship to job satisfaction, organizational commitment and turnover intention in the sales force. *Journal of Business Research*, 54(1), 39–52.
- Shapiro, J. P., Burkey, W. M., Dorman, R. L., & Welker, C. J. (1996). Job satisfaction and burnout in child abuse professionals: Measure development, factor analysis, and job characteristics. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 5, 21–38.
- Shields, M. A., & Ward, M. (2001). Improving nurse retention in the national health service in England: The impact of job satisfaction on intentions to quit. *Journal of Health Economics*, 20(5), 677–701.
- Spector, P. (1997). *Job satisfaction: Application, assessment, causes and consequences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Steffen, T. M., Nystrom, P. C., & O'Connor, S. J. (1996). Satisfaction with nursing homes. *Journal of Health Care Marketing*, 16(3), 34–38.
- Tannenbaum, S. I., Mathieu, J. E., Salas, E., & Cannon-Bowers, J. A., (1991). Meeting trainees' expectations: The influence of training fulfillment on the development of commitment, self-efficacy, and motivation. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 26(6), 759–769.
- Tansky, J. W., & Cohen, D. J. (2001). The relationship between organizational support, employee development, and organizational commitment: An empirical study. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 12(3), 285–300.
- Thierry, H. K., & Koopmann-Iawma, A. M. (1984). Motivation and satisfaction. In P. Drenth, H. Thierry, P. Willems, & C. deWolff (Eds.), *Handbook of work and organizational psychology* (pp. 131–175). New York: Wiley.
- Traut, C. A., Larsen, R., & Fiemer, S. H. (2000). Hanging on or fading out. *Public Personnel Management*, 29(3), 343.
- U.S. Bureau of Labor, Department of Labor Statistics. (2001). Working in the 21st century. Retrieved March 30, 2007, from <http://www.bls.gov/opub/working/home.htm>
- Violino, B. (2001, August 6). (Still) in the money. *Network Computing*, 12(16), 66.
- Wallen, N. E., & Fraenkel, J. R. (2001). *Educational research: A guide to the process*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Watkins, K. E. (1991). Many voices: Defining human resource development from different disciplines. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 41(4), 241–255.
- What Drives Employee Satisfaction? (2001, July). *Community Banker*, p. 42.
- Wick, C., & Leon, L. S. (1993). *The learning edge*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Steven W. Schmidt is an assistant professor of adult education at East Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina.

