Supervision and Training: A Review and Future Research Suggestions
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Introduction

- Countless researchers have focused on developing evidence-based training packages:
  - Teach staff to implement behavior change plans with fidelity
  - Identify best practices for supervisors

- The purpose of the present study was to review the literature on:
  - Supervision
  - Training

Methods

- Identified supervision articles using general keywords:
  - Supervis*, AND Train*, AND Behavior Analysis

- Identified training articles using general keywords:
  - Staff*, Train*, AND Behavior Analysis

- Our search generated 125 supervision and training articles from various peer-reviewed journals (e.g., Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders)

- We omitted 53 articles based on exclusionary criteria

  - Criteria:
    - Parents, counselors, industrial staff, individuals with developmental disabilities, and hospital patients as participants
    - Non-empirical studies
    - Non-peer reviewed journals

- We reviewed a total of 72 articles

  - Supervision = 24
  - Training = 48

- We examined the reference sections of the 24 supervision articles
  - Selected articles between 1980 and 2012
  - Kept same exclusionary criteria described above
  - Selected article if authors stated in the method section that they were evaluating “supervision” or “supervisory variables”
  - Generated 6 more supervision articles (i.e., total of 30)

- We examined the reference sections of the 48 training articles
  - Selected articles between 1980 and 2012
  - Kept same exclusionary criteria described above
  - Selected article if authors stated their objective as “training” or “teaching” staff
  - Generated 14 more training articles (i.e., total of 62)

Results

- We divided the supervision literature (N = 30) into two overarching categories:
  - Survey-based studies (N = 13)
  - Experimental studies (N = 16)
    - Overlap (N = 9)

Survey-Based

- We examined all articles to review the questions used by the authors to assess staff perceptions of training procedures and supervisors

  - Acceptability of training
  - Perceived supervisory support

  - Examples:
    - “I liked the methods used to teach me behavior management skills” (Kissel et al., 1983)
    - Scale ranged from 1 to 5 (e.g., 1 = disliked very much, 5 = liked very much)
  - “The change to functional activities has made your job more or less difficult” (Parsons et al., 1987)
    - Scale ranged from 1 to 5 (e.g., 1 = considerably more difficult, 5 = considerably less difficult)

- Results

  - Out of the 13 studies, in 92% (i.e., total of 11 studies) authors found that the majority of staff self-reported that supervision and training was:
    - Acceptable
    - Effective

Experimental Studies

- Authors focused primarily on variables that influence:
  - Maintaining staff performance
  - Effective supervision

- We examined the authors’ methods sections and identified key supervisory skills:
  - Performance feedback
  - Prompting
  - Performance monitoring
  - Use of training procedures (e.g., instruction, pyramidal staff training)
  - Other (e.g., specific task analysis corresponding to job descriptions)

Summary & Discussion

- Compared with supervision articles, many more experimental training articles have been published
- In supervision articles that used self-reports, most authors found high acceptability of supervision methods
- The most widely measured variable in the supervision literature is performance feedback
- More experimental studies on supervisory variables are needed
- In the training literature, BST resulted in best outcomes
- Variability in the literature in regards to mode of delivery and most effective component warrants:
  - Component analyses delineating most effective components (Ward-Homer & Sturmey, 2012)
  - Parametric analysis to determine most effective mode of delivery

Training

- We found multiple studies used behavioral skills training (BST) to teach:
  - Discrete-Trial Teaching
  - Preference Assessments
  - Token Economies
  - Prompting

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Components</th>
<th>N = 62</th>
<th># of articles</th>
<th>% of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Instructions</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>97%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeling</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Components</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: More than one component could be coded for individual studies

- We further examined each individual component to look at the different modes of delivery (e.g., video modeling)
- Reviewed studies and noted the mode the authors used

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>N = 60</th>
<th>% of articles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecture</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Task Analysis</td>
<td>10%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>58%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Written</td>
<td>45%</td>
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Table 3

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<th>% of articles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>55%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenter</td>
<td>45%</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rehearsal</th>
<th>N = 34</th>
<th>% of articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experimenter</td>
<td>29%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trainees</td>
<td>47%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Client</td>
<td>26%</td>
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Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>N = 47</th>
<th>% of articles</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Immediate</td>
<td>66%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>After session</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Selected References