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ESSENTIAL FACTORS FOR TRAINING TRANSFER: A STUDY OF PHARMACEUTICAL REPRESENTATIVES IN LUCKNOW AREA

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ABSTRACT

Through the study it is the endeavour of the researcher to bring to the fore the factors responsible for training transfer among the medical representatives in Lucknow area. For the purpose of the study a survey was conducted among the medical representatives with 203 participants. For the purpose of the study important factors acting in the work environment that impact training was identified through a literature review and their role in training transfer was analysed there from.

KEYWORDS

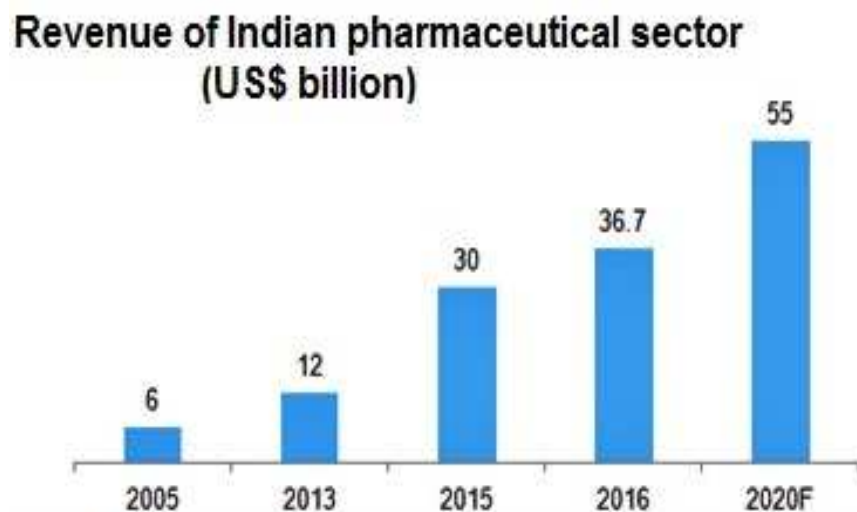
characteristics, factors, study, training, transfer.

INTRODUCTION

The pharmaceutical industry produces, sells and promotes drugs used as panacea for various ailments. Pharmaceutical companies are allowed to deal in generic or brand medication and medical equipments. The pharmaceutical industry discovers, develops, formulates and sells medicines. The organized sector of India's pharmaceutical industry consists of 250 to 300 companies, which account for 70 percent of products on the market, with the top 10 firms representing around 30 percent. However, the total sector is estimated at nearly 20,000 businesses, some of which are extremely small. Approximately 75 percent of India's demand for medicines is met by local manufacturing. In 2013, the pharmaceutical industry had a workforce of about 4, 50,000. This included researchers, scientists, doctors and project managers. (Source* the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation).

Indian pharmaceutical industry is facing a considerable change in its aims, objectives, parameters of growth in changing scenario on account of globalization at the corporate level merger, acquisition phases are taking place. Newer developments cropping on account of new innovation are made alongside each other, intrinsic life style, health care and health consciousness and caution have risen to such unimaginable heights as never before. An attempt is required to focus on issue of development of HR practices in pharmaceutical industries. In the times of globalization, free economy, disinvestment policy, privatization of public sector a flexible thinking is needed to deal with the human resource issues arising in this fast growing sector.

CHART 1

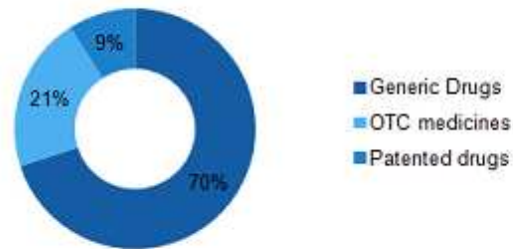


Source: Department of Pharmaceuticals, PwC, McKinsey, TechSci Research
 Notes: F - Forecast, CAGR - Compound Annual Growth Rate

The sector can be sub-divided into generic drugs, over the counter drugs and patent drugs.

FIG. 2

Revenue share of Indian pharmaceutical sub-segments in 2015 (%)



Source: Business Monitor International, FCCI Indian Pharma Summit 2014-15, TechSci Research

Pharmaceutical products are difficult to manufacture, requiring sophisticated machinery and processes to meet the exacting standards laid down by regulatory authorities. However, the customer will not buy the product for this reason alone. As with any other product, the purchase is affected only when the customer believes the product will be of some use to him. Thus, as is the case with marketing in general, pharmaceutical marketing is aimed at fulfilling the customers' needs. Pharmaceutical marketing is the last element of an information continuum, where research concepts are transformed into practical therapeutic tools and where information is progressively layered and made more useful to the health care system. Thus, transfer of information to physicians through marketing is a crucial element of pharmaceutical innovation. By providing an informed choice of carefully characterized agents, marketing assists physicians in matching drug therapy to individual patient needs. Pharmaceutical marketing is presently the most organized and comprehensive information system for updating physicians about the availability, safety, efficacy, hazards, and techniques of using medicines.

TRAININGS AND PHARMACEUTICAL MARKETING

It is eminent that selling is a vibrant occupation, and salespersons need to upgrade their knowledge about products and services constantly to be a successful. This is essential for a sector like pharmaceutical where the cost intensive procedure of drug development is offset by the efforts of marketers' ability to promote the drug. This makes the task of salesmen in the pharmaceutical sector is tougher when compared to their counterparts in other industries. When sales representatives join pharmaceutical companies, they undergo intensive pharmaceutical sales classroom training sessions, where they are trained aggressively by doctors and medical sales managers. Once this sales training is complete, they go out to the market and work in the field. There are the five types of training that are covered in the exhaustive sales training curriculum.

1. **Anatomy & Physiology** – This comprises a thorough training on the human anatomy and physiology – the functions of the various organs, the different parts of the organs, and what happens if they function abnormally. This training is usually conducted by doctors.
2. **Diseases** - The various diseases for which the company offers medicines, their symptoms and future drugs.
3. **Drugs** - The drugs available for a particular disease. How does the drug help cure the disease? Its indications and contra-indications. This training is given by a pharmaceutical specialist.
4. **Sales Process** - Once sales representatives complete their medical training, the next step is a through process training on how to work with doctors, how to break the ice and open the conversation, how to introduce the drugs, and how to promote the drug and company. This training usually covers soft skills needed to make a sale and is delivered by a senior sales trainer.
5. **Handling Objections** - Finally, sales representatives are trained on how to handle the doctors' objections. How to reply in a dignified way without being harsh to the doctors.

Getting the employees with entry level job related talent is one of the issues concerning the industry. The issue assumes significance as companies are spending more time on training entry-level talent to make them job ready. This has been more pronounced in sectors such as pharmaceuticals have also started facing a dearth of talent even as they chalk out their expansion plans. With no real solution in sight, companies are left with no option but to invest large sums in training. This investment in training has an impact only if the training transfers into work performance of the employees. Over the years many factors have been identified as contributing towards the transfer of training by training researchers such as Ford, Baldwin, Holton et al.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Literatures related to the transfer of training and work environment reviewed are presented below in order to understand the related knowledge on the training transfer.

TRAINING

Cherrington (1991) differentiated training, development and education. Training is the acquisition of specific skills or knowledge, development is the improving of the intellectual or emotional abilities needed to do better job and education is something more general that attempts to provide student with general knowledge that can applied in many different settings. Training also can be defined as a planned learning experience for the acquisition of new knowledge, attitudes or skills (David, 1997; Campbell; 1970; Goldstein, 1980).

TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Transfer of training is the application of learned knowledge, skills and attitudes to the job and subsequent maintenance over time (Cheng & Ho 2001) for the purposes of improving the job performance (Velada & Caetano 2007). Geilen (cited in Van der Klink, Gielen, and Nauta 2001) identified three dimensions of transfer: the direction; the level of complexity; and the distance.

FACTORS AFFECTING TRAINING TRANSFER

Baldwin and Ford (1988) identified three categories of influences on training transfer;

1. individual characteristics,
2. training design factors and
3. organisational factors

A review of literature has demonstrated that research exploring the relationship between organisational, or the transfer system, factors and training transfer has been investigated less frequently than training design or individual characteristics (Valada et al. 2007; Saks & Belcourt, 2006; Chen, Holton & Bates 2006). The transfer system refers to all the person, training, and organisational related factors that have the potential to influence transfer of learning to job performance (Holton, Bates and Rouna, 2000). The complex events such as outcomes of a training intervention cannot be understood by analysing them in isolation because learned skills at the individual level are embedded in a wider context. Noe (2000) suggests that an understanding of organisational factors affecting transfer will

make a greater contribution to HRD practitioners wishing to optimise the effectiveness of training and development programmes. Holton et al. (2000) stated that an understanding of what constitutes an organizational transfer climate is unclear and there is no clear consensus on the network of factors affecting transfer of learning in the workplace. This is evident from the different explanations of the work environment. Lim and Johnson (2002) however, stated the work environment factors can be separated into two subcategories:

1. Factors that relate to the work
2. Factors related to people

NEED OF THE STUDY

A lot of financial investment has been going into training of medical representatives but not many researchers have tried to explore the factors that aid the training transfer and explore which factors are important for training transfer.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There are various existing work environment factors for medical representatives in Lucknow to identify the hierarchal importance of these in training transfer.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the work environment factors affecting training transfer.
2. To find which work environment factors impact training transfer of medical representatives working in pharmaceutical companies in Lucknow the most.
3. To find out which work environment factors impact the training transfer of medical representatives working in pharmaceutical companies in Lucknow the most.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Source of data:** The study is based on primary and secondary data. The main source of primary data is the medical representatives working in the pharmaceutical companies in Lucknow. The data was collected by administering a structured questionnaire. Secondary data was collected through journals, magazines, company reports etc.
- **Sample design:** Random sampling technique was adopted to select the samples from the study organizations
- **Sample size:** The sample size consists of 203 participants. Having work experience in the field ranging from 0 to 5 years and who have undergone different trainings in their respective organisations.
- **Method of scoring:** Five point Likert rating scale was used in the questionnaire where in the following numbers represent the respective descriptions. 5. strongly disagree 4. disagree 3. neutral 2. agree 1. strongly agree
- **Method of data analysis:** The impact of the work environment factors such as: Employee characteristics, academic qualification, supervisor support and peer support were rated by the participants using the survey instrument and the scores were entered into a regression model to study their impact on training transfer also rated by the respondents in the same survey.

These scores were then entered into a hierarchical regression model in order to study the impact of these work environment factors on changes they can bring about in training transfer.

DATA ANALYSIS

Model: Using training transfer as dependent variable and the work environment factors (Employee characteristics, academic qualification, supervisor support and peer support) as predictors.

In analysis we tried to study the effect of all the independent factors namely employee characteristics, academic qualification, supervisory climate and peer support through hierarchical regression analysis in order to study their relative effect on training transfer. The order of entering the independent variable into the model was based upon their order of recording in the survey.

TABLE 1: HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION MODEL ON TRAINING TRANSFER

Independent Variable	R Square	R square change	Beta Weight
<u>Step 1</u> Employee Characteristics	0.014	0.014	0.119
<u>Step 2</u> Employee Characteristics Academic qualification Supervisor support	0.20	0.005	0.118 -0.033 -0.067
<u>Step 3</u> Employee Characteristics Academic qualification Supervisor support Peer support	0.041	0.021	0.117 -0.018 -0.038 -0.148

Source: Data collected from survey of Medical Representatives in Lucknow

- Variance inflation factor (VIF) values for all predictors were well below a cut-off value of 10, indicating no violation of the multi -co linearity assumption (Pallant, 2005).
- In the above table we can see that employee characteristics can explain 1.4 % change in training transfer when entered first.
- In the second step when we add academic qualification and supervisory support as predictors for training transfer together the three are able to explain 2 % variance
- In the third step when we enter peer support to the model the predictors explain 4.1 % variance in the training transfer.
- The beta weight (standardised regression coefficient) for employee characteristics in the first step was 0.119.
- The beta weight (standardised regression coefficient) in the second step on adding academic qualifications and supervisory support is changed to 0.118, -0.033 and -0.067 respectively
- The beta weight (standardised regression coefficient) in the third step upon adding peer support was 0.117,-0.018,-0.038 and -0.148 for all the independent variables respectively

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

- From this table we can see that employee characteristics explain the major part of variability in training transfer alone and also have a positive influence over it.
- As we added the predictors the r change in the second step was only 0.5 % while beta weights for all other predictors was negative meaning that as there is an increase in these predictors there will be a decrease in training transfer.
- Thus employee characteristics are the most important variable to predict training transfer.

CONCLUSION

This study adds to the existing training transfer research by creating further understanding of work environment factors like employee characteristics, academic qualification, peer support and supervisor support that influence actual transfer of learning from a formal training setting to the workplace. In addition, the pharmaceutical companies will be able to use this study to enhance its continuous transfer of training efforts. The results of the study may also provide additional insight on transfer as a multi-dimensional process. Many organizations, human resource personnel and trainers are struggling with issues like the accurately identifying factors that encourage and inhibit transfer as they develop their own programs with the vital goal of increasing organizational performance. Many groups, such as educators, and trainers, dealing with transfer of training issues may find the results of this study helpful.

LIMITATIONS

1. Due to numerous work environment factors existing for the pharmaceutical employees only a few could be considered for the purpose of our study
2. This study relied on self-ratings, it could be argued that the results obtained with these ratings are misleading

SUGGESTIONS AND SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. An in-depth study is required as to why the training fails to be transferred to the workplace for which the organisations need to do some introspection and conduct a research within to discover the possible reasons for this phenomenon.
2. There is a need to do a comparative study after various training sessions to see how much has been learnt.
3. There is a scope for study into training transfer with a 360 degree feedback method to see the changes in performance of employees after a certain time lag.

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DATA SOURCES

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