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PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS OF SALES MANAGERS IN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY: A STUDY**ZEB O. WATURUOCHA****PRINCIPAL CONSULTANT****CENTER FOR EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND LEADERSHIP (CELL)****#591/A, NORTH EAST, N.R. MOHALLA, MYSORE****ABSTRACT**

Pharmaceutical sales managers are hard-pressed to perform, not only to increase revenue but also to increase market share. Stiff competition, organisational issues, inter-departmental and inter-personal issues, demand to do more with less, achieve higher sales within less time frame, ensure higher margins in spite of cut-throat pricing competition, proliferating number of stakeholders and many channels to cover, put premium on their achievements. This situation reflects in the way of their communication with subordinates. Personal Effectiveness is a person's ability to engage his/her motivational power and cognitive capabilities to confront and address challenges and use real time opportunities as they present themselves. This study aims at scoring the personal effectiveness scores of pharmaceutical sales managers with a view to identifying the dominating category and to suggest methods and processes to enhance their personal effectiveness. The study administered the Personal Effective Scale developed by Uday Pareek to 135 sales managers of 4 pharmaceutical companies with large presence in India. The scale measures three categories of Personal Effectiveness – Self-disclosure, Openness to Feedback and Perceptiveness – and classifies the responses under 8 headings - Effective, Insensitive, Egocentric, Dogmatic, Secretive, Task-obsessed, Lonely empathic and Ineffective. The result according to the study is that only 16.3% are found to be 'effective' i.e. are making effective use of the three categories of Personal Effectiveness. On the other hand, 14% of respondents are found to be 'ineffective', i.e. not making effective use of any of the categories. We also noted that while 64% are high on self-disclosure and 57% are high on Openness to feedback, only 52% are high on Perceptiveness. While these findings (scores) do not vary significantly, we suggest that Pharma organisations take intentional steps towards helping its managers to increase their personal effective scores. We admit that the pressure to perform is high in this sector and that this pressure impacts the way feelings and concerns are expressed which in turn has direct impact on the receiver. We suggest that well-articulated behaviour training programme form part of the training of sales managers in the pharmaceutical industry, which is mostly dominated with skills and methods of selling.

KEYWORDS

openness to feedback, self-disclosure, perceptiveness, personal effectiveness.

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INTRODUCTION

The Pharmaceutical industry is hard-pressed with complex issues ranging from healthcare reforms, technological changes and innovations, government policies, globalisation, the patent cliff, downward trending economy, falling R&D budgets, etc. The fact is that these challenges seem to deepen every day with no signs of abatement. The assumption that investing and placing new emphasis on innovation will support effective adaptation to change and uncertainty in the industry does no longer seem valid. Pharmaceutical sales managers are hard-pressed to perform, not only to increase revenue but also to increase market share. The pressure to perform is not restricted to any particular industry but the bad news is that it will not nose-dive.

While lots of efforts and attention are made towards our physical and environmental health, there seem to be a neglect of our mental health. The pharma industry is one of the industries that invests a lot of money in training its field/sales force because they are the real face of the organisation and they are the financial and market generators for the company.

The demand is to do more with less, achieve higher sales within less time frame, ensure higher margins in spite of cut-throat pricing competition, proliferating number of stakeholders and many channels to cover. In addition, stiff competition, organisational issues, inter-departmental and inter-personal issues, even the relationship between the head office and offshore centres affect the effectiveness of the sales force. While the above is true of the external environment, our experience is that organisational effectiveness is majorly a function of personal effectiveness. We define Personal Effectiveness as when a person is the best of what he/she is by engaging his/her motivational power and cognitive capabilities to confront and address challenges and use real time opportunities as they present themselves.

It was in working with over 1300 employees of several pharma companies with about 80% of them being field sales managers, area managers, zonal managers or by whatever description, that my interest in understanding what's really going on in this industry aroused. Over a period of 2-3 years, I was able to work closely with a good number of workers from organisations that belong to the pharmaceutical industry. A major concern of the firms that initiated the process was 'attrition' and we were invited to intervene with a view to reducing attrition.

We commenced this work by organising two different workshops, one for each category of managers. After two such workshops, and listening to what each category had to say about the other, we risked bringing them together in one workshop. The result of this combined session was phenomenally revealing. Most importantly, the gossiping that happened in the categorised workshops did not happen in this combined meeting. As this combined workshop went on, we started observing the fall in the tone of voice of the senior managers while the voice of the junior managers seemed louder. This attracted our attention and on analysis, the question that came to mind was 'how do they relate to each other at the professional level' and 'how far is this relationship responsible for the way they perceive and treat each other and its impact on the result. People started saying things they always wanted to say and the process enabled them to experience the impact their way of communication had on others.

It was in this process that the idea to start measuring the Personal Effectiveness of these participants started developing. Self-awareness is the first component of personal effectiveness, in other words, if one would be effective, one has to become aware of one's own pattern of behaviour. There are several tools to measure personal effectiveness and self-awareness, however, our objective was to find out the pattern of behaviour and communication prevalent among these participants. What became apparent was that people were not aware of how their behaviour impacted the other person especially their subordinates. During the sessions also, we observed what and how people were talking to each other and the responses that followed during interactions. This prompted the idea of helping people to understand how they are being received by the others. The interest in this study generated in the first company enabled us to study the same in all other pharmaceutical companies that engaged our services during the same period.

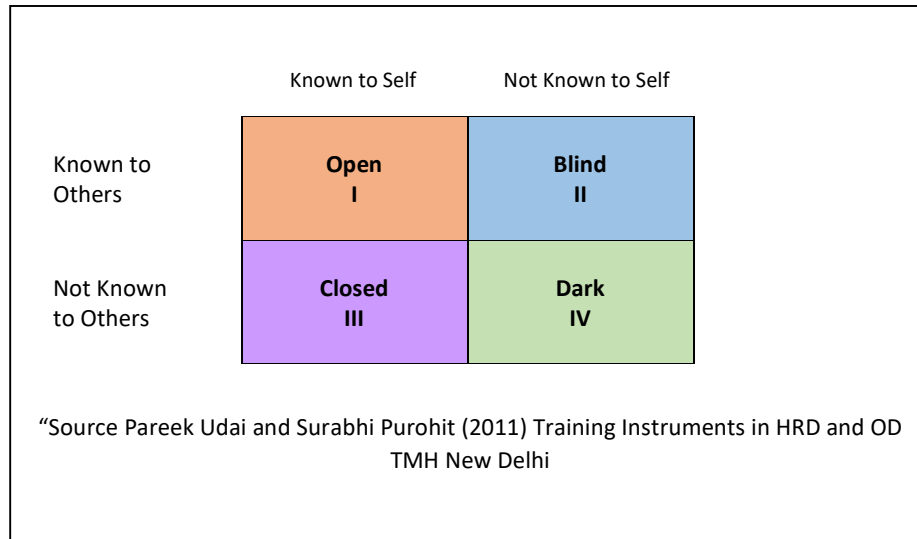
NEED FOR THE STUDY

Our experience in working with organisations has taught us to believe that among the leadership competencies, self-awareness, recognition and acceptance of diversity, compassion and sensitivity, balancing personal and professional challenges, problem solving, managing self and others, developing and maintaining good working relationships, effective communication, etc. are crucial. It is in this belief that this study was construed and carried out.

As the exercise involved what people know about themselves and what others experience about them in transaction, the Johari Window tool was found most appropriate for such an exercise. The Johari Window model is a simple and useful tool for illustrating and improving self-awareness, and mutual understanding between individuals within a group. The model was designed by American psychologists Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham in 1955, while researching group dynamics

at the University of California Los Angeles. The model has four windows (Fig 1) with the first one described as the Open Window indicating the importance of openness in personal effectiveness. Openness has two aspects: self-disclosure (sharing with others what they know about themselves and others know the same also) and the use of feedback (being open to understand what others think about them or how their behaviour impacts others). There is also perceptiveness or sensitivity to others' feelings and to non-verbal cues that are also important. (1)

FIG. 1



I. The **open window** is that part of the individual which is known to the individual and known to others also. The good thing about this window is that it is a ‘no friction zone’ because what the individual knows about himself are what people are telling him/her. For example, name, marital status, gender, native place, number of brothers and sisters, educational qualification, etc.

II. The **Blind Window** is that of an individual’s behaviour that impacts others favourably or unfavourably but the individual is not aware of it. This area, if handled well is also a zone of ‘no friction’. However, in most cases, what is conveyed back to the individual is a ‘judgment’ by way of feedback rather than the ‘impact’, the later pushes the individual to ‘defend’ or ‘justify’ through explanation.

III. The **Closed Window** represents the aspects of an individual’s behaviour which is known only to the individual but not known to others. It can be in the form of a hidden agenda, intention or something thing the individual keeps to him/herself. Interestingly, many reactions come from this area when anything that seem to connect with the hidden side of the individual is pointed out irrespective of the fact that the individual is not the point of reference.

IV. The **Dark Window** is the area of the individual that is either known to the individual nor to others. It is not an area that is not within the conscious control of the individual.

In this study, the model has been introduced as it is important for PE and each area increases in proportion to the decrease in other areas. For example, as the blind and closed areas decrease, the open area increases in the same proportion.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of this study are

1. To calculate the PE scores under the three categories of PE:

- i. Self-disclosure to know the extent of the individual’s ability to disclose some of the hidden items of the Closed Window (aka the Secret Window).
- ii. Openness to Feedback to understand the extent to which an individual is willing to listen to understand the impact of his/her behaviour on others or the extent to which the individual’s behaviour encourages other individuals to provide feedback.
- iii. Perceptiveness which represents the intuitive ability of an individual to be able to be sensitive when dealing with others.

2. To examine the PE of sales managers in the pharmaceutical industry with a view to identify which category of PE that is dominant and less dominant among them.

3. To suggest methods and processes to enhance the PE of pharma representatives.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this paper includes the administration of the Personal Effective Scale (PES) developed by Prof. Udai Pareek (2) of Blessed Memory to 175 participants of a multi-national pharma company who attended the behavioural training facilitated by the author between 2012-2015. A total of 135 responses were considered complete for the purpose of the study. The instrument has 15 questions (5 for each) of the 3 dimensions – Self-Disclosure, Openness to Feedback and Perceptiveness measured by the instrument. The reliability of the instrument is 0.90 according to Prof. Udai Pareek. Each participant worked independently and was encouraged to read the statement, understand and respond on a 5-point Likert scale as to the extent the statement applied to them. The responses were then categorised into 11 or less than 11 as ‘Low’ and scores above 11 were considered ‘high’.

Combining the scores for the three dimensions, each participant was categorised on eight categories, ranging from effective to ineffective. The eight categories are presented on Table 1 as follows:

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES OF PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

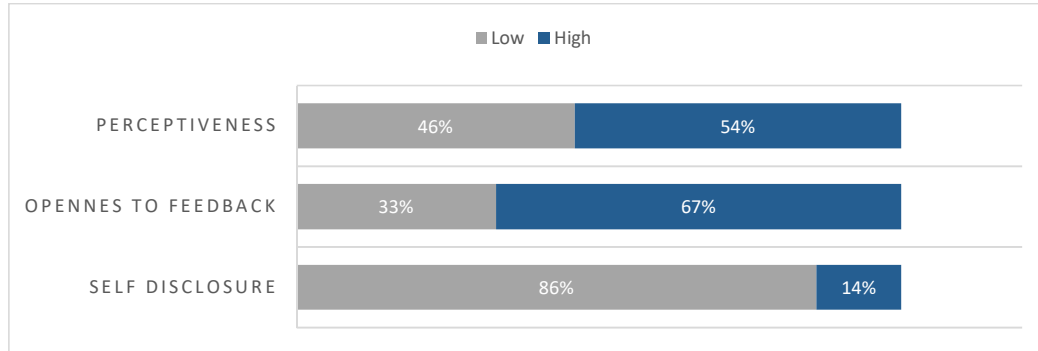
Category	Self-Disclosure	Openness to feedback	Perceptiveness
1 Effective	High	High	High
2 Insensitive	High	High	Low
3 Egocentric	High	Low	Low
4 Dogmatic	High	Low	High
5 Secretive	Low	High	High
6 Task-obsessed	Low	High	Low
7 Lonely Empathic	Low	Low	High
8 Ineffective	Low	Low	Low

The study employed Microsoft excel (MS 2007) for data analysis to determine the Mean, Standard Deviation with normal curve of each of the three dimensions in order to understand the Mean range for each category with 95% Confidence Interval (CI).

RESULT

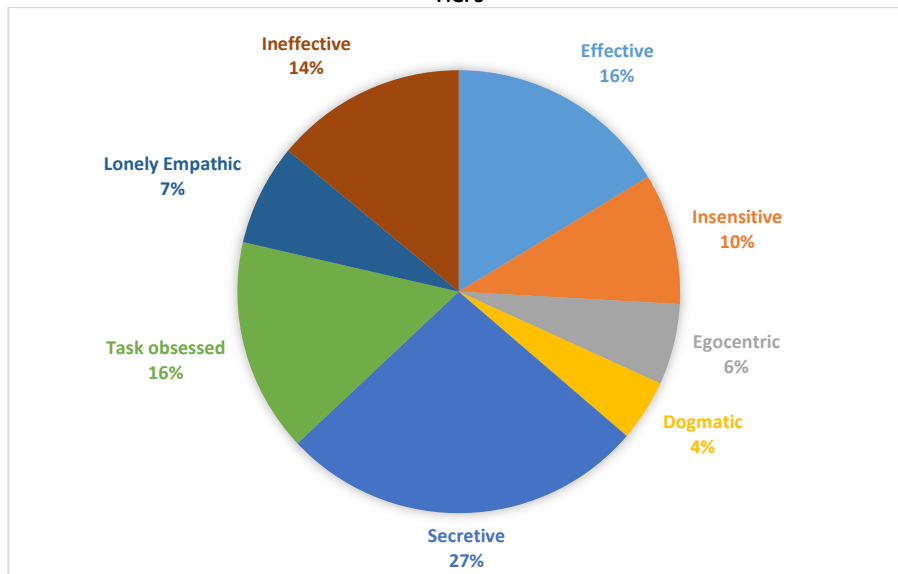
The result obtained from the analysis showed that 67% and 54% of the participants were ‘high’ on openness to feedback and perceptiveness respectively. On the other hand, only 14% of the respondents were ‘high’ on self-disclosure. This result is shown in Fig. 2 below:

FIG. 2: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THEIR SCORES <11 AND > 11 ON THE THREE DIMENSIONS OF PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS



Further tabulation and analysis of the data collected revealed that 27% of respondents were ‘secretive’ i.e. low self-disclosure with low perceptiveness (insensitivity), 16% were ‘effective’ i.e. high self-disclosure and high perceptiveness. While 14% were ‘ineffective’ i.e. low self-disclosure, low openness to feedback and low perceptiveness, 10% were ‘insensitive’ i.e. high on self-disclosure and openness to feedback but low in perceptiveness, and 7% were ‘lonely empathic’ i.e. low self-disclosure with low openness to feedback but high perceptiveness. Further, 6% were found to be ‘egocentric’ i.e. high self-disclosure, low openness to feedback and low perceptiveness and 4% were ‘dogmatic’ i.e. high self-disclosure, low openness to feedback and high perceptiveness.

FIG. 3



Percentage distribution of respondents by their PE Scores (N=135)

Attempts were made to understand the variations between ‘high and low’ scores, the average score for each dimension was calculated as shown in table 2 below. There was no significant variation in the high average score of Self-disclosure except for slight variation as observed for ‘insensitive.’ There is also no significant variation in the low average score of self-disclosure. There is also no significant variation in the high average score for openness except for ‘Task obsessed’ (13.29) and for ‘perceptiveness’ except for ‘dogmatic’ (12.16).

TABLE 2: PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF THE RESPONDENTS BY THEIR TYPE OF PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS (N=135) AND MEAN SCORE OF EACH GROUP IN THREE DIMENSIONS

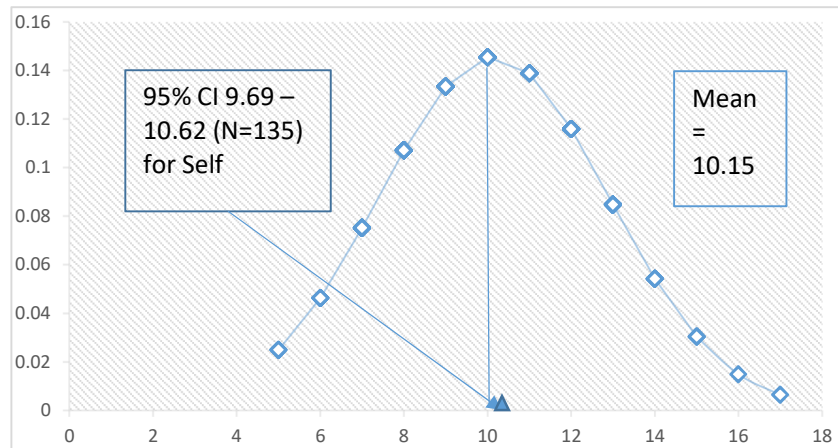
Category	%	Self-disclosure (Average)	Openness to feedback (Average)	Perceptiveness (Average)
Effective (n=22)	16.3	(High) 13.23	(High) 14.32	(High) 13.5
Insensitive (n=13)	9.6	(High) 12.69	(High) 13.92	(Low) 9.52
Egocentric (n=8)	5.9	(High) 13.38	(Low) 9.75	(Low) 9
Dogmatic (n=6)	4.5	(High) 13.56	(Low) 9.83	(High) 12.16
Secretive (n=36)	26.7	(Low) 8.08	(High) 14.06	(High) 13.61
Task obsessed (n=21)	15.6	(Low) 8.67	(High) 13.29	(Low) 9.24
Lonely Empathic (n=10)	7.4	(Low) 8.3	(Low) 9.4	(High) 13
Ineffective (n=19)	14	(Low) 9.6	(Low) 10.6	9.2
Total (135)	100			
Mean		10.16	12.52	11.51
SD		2.73	2.74	2.75
CI 95%		9.69 – 10.62	12.00 – 13.00	11.04 – 12.00

CALCULATING THE NORMS OF PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS

NORMS FOR SELF-DISCLOSURE

The mean score for self-disclosure is 10.16 with a standard deviation (SD) of ± 2.73 (Fig.) The mean score falls between 9.69 and 10.62 with 95 percent Confidence Interval (CI).

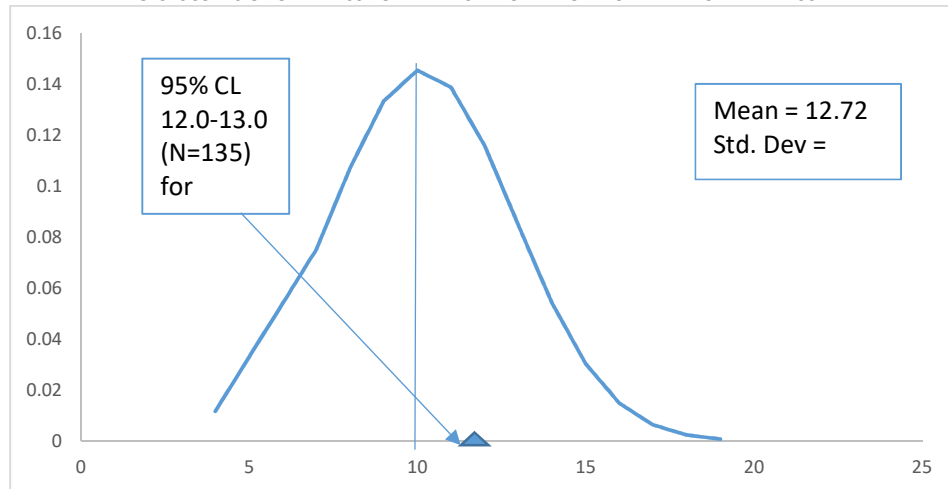
FIG. 4: SCORES OF SELF-DISCLOSURES PLOTTED ON NORMAL PROBABILITY CURVE



NORMS FOR OPENNESS TO FEEDBACK

The mean score of openness to feedback was found to be 12.72 with a standard deviation (SD) of ± 2.74 (Fig---). This mean score falls between 12.0-13.0.

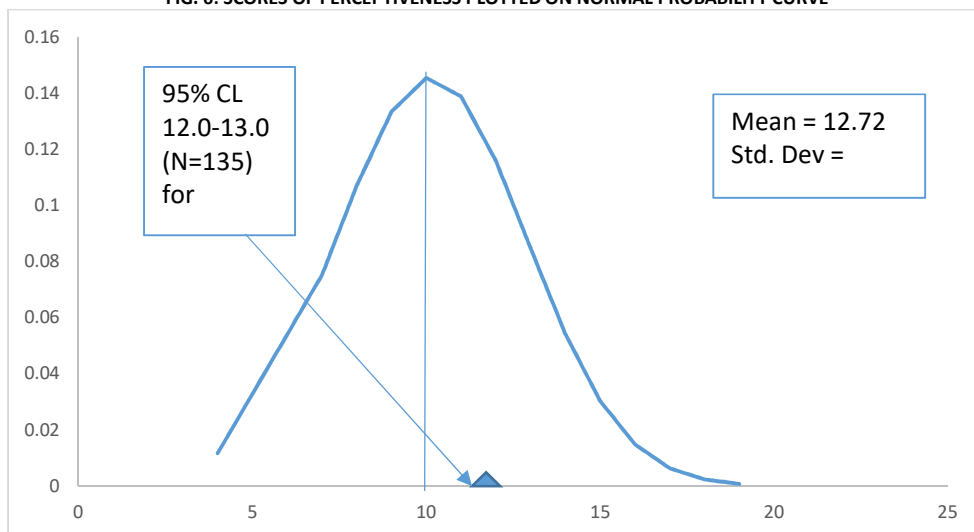
FIG. 5: SCORES OF OPENNESS TO FEEDBACK PLOTTED ON NORMAL PROBABILITY CURVE



NORMS FOR PERCEPTIVENESS

The mean score on perceptiveness is 11.51 with a standard deviation (SD) of ± 2.74 (Fig.----) The mean score falls between 11.04 – 12.00 with 95 percent Confidence Interval (CI).

FIG. 6: SCORES OF PERCEPTIVENESS PLOTTED ON NORMAL PROBABILITY CURVE



DISCUSSION

Personal effectiveness as used in the context of this survey means the ability of the individual to make judicious use of the three categories of self-disclosure, openness to feedback and perceptiveness in both personal and professional relationship. In the analysis of the result of this study, the most alarming revelation is the percentage of people in the study who are 'secretive' (27%) as a result of low scores in 'self-disclosure' of the instrument used for this purpose. An obvious reason for this, as I understand from my years of practice and using this instrument is that people misconstrue 'self-disclosure' as sharing their own secrets and the stories that they do not want others to know. Several times I have been confronted with the question of the possibility of sharing stories and feelings with people who are not familiar. How can one share bad feelings with one's boss except one wishes to risk one's job? Self-disclosure in relation to personal effectiveness is about sharing feelings or impact of other people's behaviour. It is not about personal history or incidents that happened in one's life unless such a story is used to establish the source or origin of certain behaviours that one became aware of. A familiar question during the sessions was about what the zonal or area sales managers do when they discover that it is not possible to meet the target set for the month. The reigning response would be anger and shouting which stretch the nerves and sometimes the reaction spills over to the family side. Agreeably, when the target is not delivered it is disappointing and causes anger but the shouting has not left any message with the sales person because he/she is also not happy. What he/she doesn't know is how this inability to deliver impacts the boss. When we went deeper into this discussion, we discovered that below the frustration, disappointment and anger is 'fear'. The fear of losing face, fear of losing position, fear of losing promotion or salary increase, etc. However, while shouting at the subordinate, these fears are not revealed in order not to show vulnerability. Self-disclosure means sharing how another person's behaviour or action impacts the other person. In the example of not meeting target above, sharing the fears and what is at risk for both the subordinate and the boss would be more powerful than shouting, naming and tagging.

A second area of concern is the percentage of people in the category of "Task Obsessed". The danger of task obsession is that the focus is on result rather than on the people who produce the result. While result is important, it is equally important to recognise that those who produce the result have personal lives to live, life that is full of challenges ranging from personal to professional. This is not to say that monitoring or tracking is a poor supervision approach but that the way it is done can result to the opposite of what is intended. Obviously, monitoring with care produces more result than monitoring as a call of duty. In interaction with some of the participants, the general impression is that the bosses don't even want to know let alone hearing of some of the challenges that came in the way of achieving goals for the month. There is also dissatisfaction coming from the attitude of 'managing because I am a manager' even when it is not required. Coupled with this category is 'insensitivity' (10%) resulting from low level of perception. As a result of these, as many as 14% of the participants were categorised as 'ineffective'.

The result of this study exposes the need for pharma companies to blend their sales training with behavioural training such as sensitivity training, giving feedback, leadership, communication skills and other such skills.

CONCLUSION

The important revelation of this analysis is that pharma companies focus their behaviour training on increasing the ability of their sales executives and representatives on 'self-disclosure' and 'perceptiveness'.

According to Boyatzis (3), In a work context **Personal Effectiveness** is often conceived as a set of competences, capabilities or qualities, e.g.

- Concern with impact
- Diagnostic use of concepts
- Efficiency orientation
- Proactivity
- Conceptualisation
- Self-confidence

There is therefore no doubt that employers that invest in training and developing their managers to ensure they exhibit the behaviours that manage stress at work will also reap benefits in terms of reduced conflict and staff turnover, as well as increased motivation and commitment"

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