CHAPTER -1

INTRODUCTION

This introductory chapter aims to provide a brief overview of this thesis. This chapter begins with an introduction of the topic (section 1.1) followed by a research gap (section 1.2), research questions (section 1.3), research objectives (section 1.4) and significance of the study (section 1.5). A separate section introduces each chapter (thesis outline) to facilitate an overview of the thesis (section 1.6). A short summary concludes chapter 1. The next chapter will focus on industry profile.

1.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE TOPIC

The increased recognition of human capital as one of the most critical organizational assets in establishing and maintaining a competitive advantage has encouraged much organization to invest considerable resources in training. Globalization, technological advancements, and talent wars in recruiting and retaining high performers are among the other major reasons that forced organizations to leverage training (Branham, 2005; Michaels, Handfield-Jones and Axelrod, 2001). In the last four decades, training and development have received considerable attention from both practitioners and researchers (Salas and Cannon-Bowers, 2001). Considering the huge investment in training, enhancing the effectiveness has become a concern of both the practitioner and the researcher. As training transfer contributes significantly to training effectiveness, the current research chooses to focus the role of training transfer in effective management of training.

Training transfer is the applications of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training. For transfer to occur in the workplace, “learned behavior must be generalized to the job context and maintained over a period of time on the job” (Baldwin and Ford, 1988, p. 63). Based on a survey of training professionals, Saks (2002) found that about 40% of trainees fail to transfer immediately after training,
70% falter in transfer 1 year after the training, and finally, just 50% of training investments result into improvements at organizational or individual level. In the current economic reality, this sort of return on investment is not acceptable to most managers.

Traditionally, the most talked about factors influencing transfer include learner variables, intervention design, and the work environment or climate (Muduli and Raval, 2018; Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Ford and Weissbein, 1997; Salas, Prince, Bowers, Stout, Oser, and Cannon-Bowers, 1999). More recently, Burke and Hutchins (2008) established additional antecedents to transfer in their conceptual model, namely trainer characteristics (e.g., trainer knowledge and experience), along with evaluation. The need to recognize the mechanism that mediates between contextual features and training transfer has been a pressing research interest among several researchers (Kozlowski and Farr, 1988).

A fair amount of the support for organizational transfer practices is limited to case studies and/or conceptual articles. Researchers and practitioners across different disciplines, and especially in HRD, have identified a more fluid exchange of thoughts between empirical and applied investigation (Ford, 1997; Blickensderfer, 1997; Huint and Saks, 2003; Kuchinke, 2004; Salas and Cannon-Bowers). Researchers have been encouraged to make findings easier for managers to understand, to partner with practitioners on applied research, and to align research pursuits with pressing firm needs (Berger, Kehrhahn, and Summerville, 2004; Montesino, 2002).

Burke, Hutchins (2007) suggests that future Training Transfer research should consider empirically linking workplace needs analyses processes, active learning methods, simple transfer interventions (e.g., action planning), and performance support technologies to transfer outcomes. The researchers believed that providing these tests would ground anecdotal and potentially faddish best practices with scientifically verifiable results, thus providing evidence to guide training design. The result of the research can be viewed as important from this perspective Emerging transfer research has allowed for a more systemic view of the transfer process than
previously recognized. As transfer models developed into more wide-ranging and robust, researchers must consider how to best capture and assess multiple factors impacting transfer. Some of the researchers used mixed methods to confine data related to transfer and Johnson, 2002). The pairing of qualitative methods such as focus groups, fieldwork, and interviews with quantitative methods allows social science researchers to study cultural and social phenomena and triangulate data from an interpretive approach while providing alternative sources for data and theory generation.

1.2 RESEARCH GAP

Researchers and organizations have long recognized the ‘transfer problem’ (Michalak, 1981). Baldwin and Ford (1988) had undertaken a comprehensive review of the existing literature in the field of training transfer. A critical analysis of the same provided by the researchers and suggested directions for future research. After this review, an explosion of both, conceptual and empirical research has been found. Most of the studies amongst these aimed to link training and workplace performance. (Burke and Hutchins, 2007; Hutchins and Burke, 2007). Numerous empirical studies, reviews and, meta-analyses have yielded information regarding the transfer of training. However, the vast database sometimes leads to inconsistent findings, and hence, makes it difficult for organizations to pinpoint exactly which factors are most critical for transfer. (Baldwin, Ford, and Blume, 2009; Blume, Ford, Baldwin and Huang, 2010; Burke and Hutchins, 2007; Cheng and Hampson, 2008; Cheng and Ho, 2001; Merriam and Leahy, 2005).

Burke and Hutchins (2007) made an integrative review and recognized factors that influence training transfer, and used the extant literature to assess the strength of each relationship described. Additionally, clashing outcomes of the research often let downed researchers and training practitioners’, despite the ‘proliferation of transfer-related studies in the past several decades’ (Cheng and Hampson, 2008). Furthermore, Blume et al., (2010, p. 1089) described the transfer literature as having ‘remained characterized by mixed findings and lack of empirical synthesis’.
Some authors (e.g. Baldwin and Ford, 1988) have recommended that early empirical research undertaking the effects of trainees’ characteristics and work context on the transfer of training are very few. Noe and Schmitt (1986) stated that trainees’ motivation and work environment might help explain another 15-20 percent of the variance. In recent times, more studies have been made to elucidate individual and environmental impacts on the transfer process and outcomes where some of them have shown high value relatively. Their practical values warrant close scrutiny.

Although several studies have been conducted to understand the transfer of the training process, conceptual models for understanding this process are limited. Kavanagh et al., (1998) developed a multi-level multistage process to help in understanding the complexities of the transfer of the training process. Specifically, he suggested that training transfer was influenced by several variables at different levels of analysis, including individual, training design and organization). To date, the extant literature (e.g. Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Holton, 2005; Tracey et al., 1995) recognized three key determinants influence training transfer, i.e. training design or facilitating factors, individual or learner traits as well as work environment or transfer climate. We have tried to fill up this gap by considering all these factors, i.e. work context, transfer design and individual characteristics.

Along with the factors that influence training transfer process, transfer motivation is one of the most effective variables that play a vital role in training transfer process. Steers and Porter (1975) investigated that transfer motivation influenced interest of the trainees about the program. On the same line by Tabassi, et al., (2012) about the relationship between training transfer and motivation that training and motivation can sustain or increase employees' current productivity. Motivation can influence the willingness of an employee to follow the training program, to exert more energy toward the program and to transfer what they learn onto the job. Bumpass (1990) described attitude and motivation of trainees are one of the most influencing factors that affect training transfer development. Tsai and Tai, (2003) also discussed the motivation that employees had more training motivation when they were appointed to attend the training program by management than when they made their choice freely. Still, there is conceptual overlap among the definitions of training motivation
(Fraccaroli, 2007). Indeed, training motivation is conceptualized on one hand based on phenomenological descriptions and on the other hand, training motivation is conceptualized based on potential behavioral implications. In this context, very few studies addressed motivation as direct or mediating variable for training transfer. We have taken this into account and tried to measure the role of transfer motivation as mediating and direct factor in the process of training transfer.

It was found from our review of literature that most of the research on training transfer was carried out in the UK, the USA, and Europe (Fester and Gruber, 2008; Massenberg, Spurk, and Kauffeld, 2015; Pham, Segers, and Gijselaers, 2013). Few studies have been reported in Asia (Lim and Johnson, 2002). Specifically, from India, a small number of studies have been found by Banerjee, Manju and Suresh, 2013; Gupta, and Bates, 2016; Chatterjee, Pereira, and Bates, 2018. These studies are pertaining to a different context than life insurance sector. This study thus became important in the process of developing indigenous theory. In addition, we found no research on the Indian insurance sector, one of the largest sectors in India. Further, some have been critical of the methods used for studying human resource practices as being biased and, therefore, limiting the scope of generalization (Guest, 2011; Wright, 2001; Wright and Boswell, 2002). Due to these limitations, there has been a call for alternative methodologies, such as case studies (Guest, 2011; Muduli, 2015, and Simón, 2007). We addressed this gap by exploring factors that contribute to training transfer and further examined their relationship.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The research has been conducted considering the following questions:

1. Do the work context factors significantly influence training transfer?
2. Do the training design factors significantly influence training transfer?
3. Do the individual characteristics significantly influence training transfer?
4. Does motivation mediate the relationship between work context and training transfer?
5. Does motivation mediate the relationship between training design and training transfer?
6. Does motivation mediate the relationship between individual characteristics and training transfer?

7. Does motivation significantly influence the process of training transfer?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The chief objective of the study is to investigate the facilitators and barriers of training transfer in the Indian insurance industry. An extensive literature has been reviewed and antecedents to training transfer such as work context, transfer motivation, transfer design and individual characteristics have been identified. While work context, transfer design, and individual characteristics have been proposed as independent variables affecting training transfer (dependent variable), transfer motivation is proposed as a mediating variable which may mediate the relationship between independent and dependent variable.

Details of the study objectives are as follows:

1. To determine and investigate the effect of work context factors on training transfer.
   a. To investigate the effect of supervisor support as a work context factor on training transfer.
   b. To examine the effect of peer support as a work context factor on training transfer.
   c. To investigate the effect of opportunity to use as a work context factor on training transfer.
   d. To investigate the effect of performance coaching as a work context factor on training transfer.

2. To determine and investigate the effect of transfer design on training transfer.

3. To determine and investigate the effect of individual characteristics on training transfer.
   a. To investigate the role of performance self efficacy on training transfer.
   b. To examine the effect of Openness to change on training transfer.
   c. To investigate the effect of Learner readiness on training transfer.

4. To investigate the relationship between training motivation and training transfer.
To investigate mediating role of transfer motivation between work context and training transfer.

To investigate mediating role of transfer motivation between Transfer design and training transfer.

To investigate mediating role of transfer motivation between individual characteristics and training transfer.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Traditionally, the most talked about factors influencing transfer include trainee variables, intervention design, and the work environment or climate (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Ford and Weissbein, 1997; Salas et al., 1999). Burke and Hutchins (2008) established additional antecedents to transfer in their conceptual model, namely trainer characteristics (e.g., trainer knowledge and experience), along with evaluation. The need to recognize the mechanism that mediates between contextual factors has been a pressing research interest among several researchers (Kozlowski and Farr, 1988).

A fair amount of the support for organizational transfer practices is limited to case studies and/or conceptual articles. It has been long called for an extra fluid exchange of ideas between empirical and applied inquiry by practitioners and researchers across disciplines, and specifically in HRD (Ford, 1997; Huint and Saks, 2003; Kuchinke, 2004; Salas et al., 1997). Researchers have been encouraged to make findings easier for managers to understand, to partner with practitioners on applied research, and to align research pursuits with pressing firm needs (Berger, Kehrhahn, and Summerville, 2004; Montesino, 2002).

Burke, Hutchins (2007) proposed that future empirical research in the area of training transfer should consider relationship between workplace needs analyses processes, active learning methods and training transfer interventions (e.g., action planning), and performance support technologies to transfer outcomes. The researchers believed that providing these tests would ground anecdotal and potentially faddish best practices with scientifically verifiable results, thus providing
evidence to guide training design. The result of the research can be viewed as important from this perspective.

Emerging transfer research has allowed for a more systemic view of the transfer process than previously recognized. As the models of training transfer become more robust and comprehensive, researchers have to consider how to best capture and evaluate various factors influencing the process of training transfer. To confine data related to training transfer mixed methods are used by researchers (Lim and Johnson, 2002). The pairing of qualitative methods such as focus groups, fieldwork, and interviews with quantitative methods allows social science researchers to study cultural and social phenomena and triangulate data from an interpretive approach while providing alternative sources for data and theory generation.

We found that very little research in the field training transfer has been conducted in the Indian context. Therefore, we believe that this study is unique in that it identifies the cross-relationships and effect of the multi domain transfer variables on training transfer, and addresses training transfer issues from an Indian context data from the insurance industry.

1.6 THESIS OUTLINE

The present study is divided into seven chapters, which are outlined here below:

Chapter 1 an introductory chapter contains the introduction to the topic, the research gap, research questions, objectives of the study, the significance of the research and thesis outline.

Chapter 2 deals with Industry Profile. It provides insight into service sector, importance of service sector in India, and life insurance of India - its stages, life insurance industry structure in India, issues, and challenges in Indian life insurance sector.
Chapter 3 outlines the hypothesis and review of literature. This chapter includes the review of literature regarding the training transfer followed by hypothesis under the study.

Chapter 4: Research methodology underlines nature and scope, objective, hypothesis, construct development, measures, an instrument used, sampling methodology used in this dissertation followed by reliability and validity of measures.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and findings provide analysis and interpretation of the primary data collected with the help of a research questionnaire. It uses various relevant statistical techniques and employs appropriate parametric tests for the purpose of analysis and interpretation.

Chapter 6: Findings, Discussion and Implications of the study gives the findings and, managerial as well as theoretical implications based on the analysis carried out and points out the variations, if any, from the literature. Besides, it also gives concrete suggestions and directions for future research.

Chapter 7: Limitations and Conclusions cover the overall conclusion of the analysis. It describes the limitations that the study has and the future prospects on the same line of research.

Chapter summary

This chapter of the study has provided an overview of the thesis. The chapter began with the introduction to the topic. The background information explicitly specifies the research gap of the study. Research gap has been identified based on the literature. The research questions, research objectives and significance of the research clearly signify the importance of this research and are discussed in this chapter. This chapter has also provided an outline of the chapters. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical background.