CHAPTER – III

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3. Research Methodology

A term “Research Methodology” is something every researcher around the world must have worked upon to get the true understanding of the procedures and protocols through which his / her research will pass. In general terms, Research means search of knowledge, knowing the known in a more scientific and organized manner. Redman and Mory defines research as a “systematized effort to gain new knowledge.” The Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English says that research is “a careful investigation or inquiry especially through search for new facts in any branch of knowledge.” Research is, for the purpose of advancement a novel contribution to the existing reserve of knowledge. It is search for knowledge via goal-oriented objective, systematic & scientific methods of finding solution or a new dimension to a subject. The main purpose of research is to explore the unknown dimensions, the unknown facts about the subject.

3.1 Need and Significance of the Study

We have seen that the above-mentioned studies have been of utmost importance in lubricants sector since in this sector where in we have realized that training and managing is the backbone of the B2B business. Though most of the studies have been carried out in textile, electronics, healthcare and other Hi-technology products sectors but almost none we were able to track for lubricants sector across PAN India. So that’s why we thought of doing the same on Lubricants sector which is governing the whole world economies.

In this study we will be focusing on Effectiveness of Training & Development Programmes for B2B Sales force in Lubricant Industry spread across the Lubricant sector of PAN India. In the above-mentioned context here in we will be discussing about the comparison of Public, Private and Multi-National Lubricant companies which are operational across PAN India and are identified for the study, based on their brand visibility and largest turnover have been taken as finite population. Here in the sample unit taken is FLM (front line managers) across B2B (business to business) of Lubricants sector.
Finally, the need of this study can be summarized as:

- For the organizational viability and transformation process the organization must train its employee to impart specific skills & knowledge to contribute to the organizational efficiency and cope up with the changing environment.
- For contribution to the Nation at wide for “Make in India” campaign as mentioned above via best trained B2B sales professionals of lubricants sector which have been grossly neglected.
- For the organizational complexity which occurs because of the increased mechanization & automation manufacturing the products & by-products or dealing in services of diversified lines extension of operations to various regions & overseas countries. This creates a complex problem & this situation calls for training in the skills of coordination, integration, & adaptability to the requirement of growth, diversification & expansion.
- Training is necessary when existing employees are promoted to higher level in the organization or when there is some new job due to transfer. It becomes mandatory to equip the old employees with the new techniques, technology & advanced disciplines.
- It is necessary for maintaining human relationships besides maintaining sound industrial B2B relations & also to deal with the human problems.

3.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the present study are as follows:

1) To identify the factors affecting the training needs of public, private & multi-national companies.
2) To study the training programmes and methods in relation to the training needs of the managers.
3) To study the perception of B2B sales force of the companies under study towards training programs run by the companies.
4) To evaluate the effectiveness of training and development programs in the companies under study.
5) To evaluate the influence of training programmes on sales force performance.
3.3 Hypothesis

- Ho\textsubscript{1}: There is no significant difference in the factors affecting the training needs of public, private & multi-national companies.
- Ho\textsubscript{2}: There is no significant difference in the training programmes & methods of public, private & multi-national companies.
- Ho\textsubscript{3}: There is no significant difference in the perception of B2B sales force of the companies under study towards training programs run by the companies.
- Ho\textsubscript{4}: There is no significant influence of the training programmes on sales force performance.

3.4 Scope of Study

- Geographical Area-PAN India
- Sectors: -Public, Private, Foreign / MNC’s
- Period-Present
- Respondents type/level-B2B FLMs-Sales Engineers, Assistant Managers, Deputy Managers & Area Managers
- Functional-B2B

3.5 Research Design

The suitable research design used for this research is exploratory which finally leads to descriptive research design since it is based on mail surveys i.e. questionnaire & personal interviews of B2B sales force- FLM’s across lubricant sector companies. So, exploring the facts and figures first about the factors affecting, preferred training methods, perception average score, effectiveness assessment and lastly impact of the training programmes on sales force performance and then analyzing & describing the findings of the study. This study is an evaluative and diagnostic attempt to discover empirically the nature of relationship between performance appraisal and training & development within the extensively drawn domain of the problem of the question.

The first step in my study is to identify the factors affecting the training needs of public, private & multi-national companies, to study the training programmes and methods of training in relation to the training needs of the managers, to study their perception towards training and development programmes, to evaluate the
effectiveness of training & development programmes in the companies under study and finally to evaluate the impact of training programmes on sales force performance. We have used both primary and secondary data as both were quite essential for this type of study. Primary data is collected via surveys/questionnaire and personal interview from PAN India front line sales managers across lubricant sector(public, private and multinational companies’), whereas secondary data we have collected from various human resource management handbooks, lubricants related books and sales & marketing textbooks, national & international journals, various lubricants company’s official data available in public domain, researchers thesis, dissertations and lastly from various website & articles.

3.6 Sample Design

A sample design was used to collect the responses from the respondents. It consists of the following steps:

3.6.1 Sample Size

A total of 450 questionnaires have been distributed to 450 Front line manager (5 companies from all 3 blocks-Public, Private & MNC’s are identified for the study with 4 block offices (North-East-West-South) across India with 5-8 FLM’s in each of the 4-regions, so 100-150 respondents from each block are identified under the study). Out of 450 identified actual valid respondents were 317 which are considered for the analysis.

3.6.2 Sample Unit

B2B FLM’s (Front line managers working at different levels like Sales Engineers, Segment Managers, Business Managers, Area Managers and Regional Manager are the concerned sample unit working in different sectors (Public, Private and MNC) of selected lubricant companies stationed at strategic locations of North-East-West-South regions of India.

3.6.3 Sampling Technique

The sampling technique used for this study was Two-Stage Judgmental sampling technique. In the first stage the companies were identified and in second stage the Front-Line Managers were selected for the responses. Criteria of selection of both
companies and respondents was, out of the total population about five(5) companies from each of the three(3) lubricant sectors were finalized with the turnover over & above 100crores plus and secondly 5-8 Front Line managers stationed at each of the four regions (4 block offices (N-E-W-S) across PAN India were selected.

3.7 Data Collection

The Data collection was done from both primary and secondary sources:

Secondary data was used to understand the various aspects of training and development programmes effectiveness across selected organizations of lubricants sector. Data was collected from various textbooks, magazines, articles, thesis, research papers and websites to satisfy the need of our objectives. Though secondary data is always helpful in answering some of the research problems with the data collected by the researchers in the old studies, for the issues that remain unaddressed, primary data is collected.

Primary Data was collected through structured questionnaire/schedule from Business to Business front line managers of different lubricant sectors (Public, Private and MNC) across PAN India. Questionnaire was developed on a five-point Likert scale with “strongly disagree” as 1 and “strongly agree” as 5 and multiple-choice questions based on training programmes and methods and demographic profile of the respondents.

3.8 Tools & Techniques used

Statistical tools used were: Statistical package: SPSS Software. Since much research has not been carried out in the field of lubricants sector B2B sales force training and development, for this purpose we designed our own scale which was a combination of Multiple choice and 5-pointer Likert scale. The validity and reliability of the scales were checked by using Cronbach’s Alpha technique. This tool was the measure of internal consistency and tells reliability of the questionnaire. To analyze the factors effecting training needs, EFA (Exploratory factor analysis), CFA (Confirmatory factor analysis) and One-way ANOVA was used. The statistical tools such as Crosstab were used to analyze the training programmes and methods. Additionally, Crosstab, Two-way ANOVA & One-way ANOVA were applied to check the perception, effectiveness assessment and influence of the training programmes on
sales force performance. Procedure for Analysis was administering questionnaire to all the employees and then analyzing the rating of employees using the statistical tool (SPSS software) -simple frequency test(mean & standard deviation) and correlation and finally interpretation of analyzed information was done.

3.9 Limitation of the Study

Though every research has its own merits and demerits. Few limitations of the present study are:

- The findings of this study are based on data collected from B2B front line sales managers other downstream business B2C segment i.e. Retail segment with larger sample size is not covered under this study due to time and money constraint.
- Demographic variables like gender, educational qualifications, work experience and age specific and their relationship with T&D programmes effectiveness assessment is not drawn due to sales profile of B2B managers.
- Current research was effectiveness assessment of training and development programmes from front line sales managers of B2B segment which is at an employee level wherein Organizational level is not drawn due to limited time and money power.
- Current study has been based on 100 crore plus turnover companies, larger horizon cumulating to more companies from each sector are not drawn.