



## EXAMINING THE INFLUENCE OF SUPERVISORY SUPPORT ON TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS: EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE FROM SERVICE ORGANIZATION IN GWALIOR

**Richa Sharma**

UGC-NET senior Research Fellow,  
Jiwaji University, Gwalior M.p. (India)

**Pooja Sharma**

UGC-NET Senior Research Fellow,  
Jiwaji University, Gwalior M.p.(India)

### **Abstract**

This study attempted to identify the factors of organizational support that influence training transfer and examine the impact of such factors on transfer of training. Two variables were being examined in this study, supervisory support as an independent variable and training effectiveness as dependent variable. For this purpose data was collected from one hundred twenty five employees including supervisors and trainees from banking organization of Gwalior region. Questionnaires were distributed to employees and data was analyzed in the form of descriptive analysis, reliability and factor analysis. Linear regression was applied to examine the impact of factors on training effectiveness. The findings of the study suggested that supervisor support has a positive and significant impact on effectiveness of training. Employees were more likely to transfer their newly learnt skills and knowledge to the work place when supervisors supported them.

**Keywords:** Supervisor support, training, effectiveness of training and banking sector



## 1. Introduction

Organizations and HRD professionals realized the fact that if they want to increase the capabilities of their employees they need to invest in training activities. But it is important to assess the training program whether the training is effective or not. Because if they are investing in training activities and the results are not fruitful, the investment would be considered wasting of resources. With the rapid change in economy organizations have been investing in training activities to upgrade the knowledge and skills of their employees. Man power in developing country like India is the most significant resources and it is necessary to train and fully utilized by the organization. Training function requires time, energy and money. It's a critical investment in a strategy that leads to internal promotion, succession planning and employees development. Training provides an opportunity to employees to learn their job virtually and perform the task more competently. In an era of global competition, many organizations now have shifted their paradigms from traditional job-based training to organizational business strategies and cultures (MacNeil, 2004; Ellinger *et al.*, 2005 Ismail *et al.*, 2007). Under this approach, supervisors are empowered by an employer to design and administer training programs in order to develop skills and competencies in employees for future organizational development and change. So during the stage of designing training programs, supervisors work with the management team and other employees in establishing objectives, selecting suitable trainers, developing effective lesson plans, selecting program methods and techniques, preparing course materials, scheduling the program, as well as conducting training needs analyses (TNA) (Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Goleman, 2000; Nijman, 2004). In the administration of training programs, supervisors refer to the management team and experienced employees to ensure that the implementation of



training activities will achieve the set objectives (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Yamnill & McLean, 2001; DeSimone *et al.*, 2002;).

## 1.1 Training

It is an organization function helpful in contributing the efforts of human resource as an individual or a team and through the up gradation of essential skills and knowledge; it is helpful in achieving the objectives. Improvement of organisation performance is primarily through development of people as individuals, work groups. Thus, training and development of individuals as an employee of particular organization is a systematic process that intends to ensure that the organisation has capable employees to meet the challenges of its dynamic environment. The employee upgraded knowledge, new skills and attitudes are most essential qualities to improve performance in the organisation. Training is inevitable function of an organization as it develops the skills and knowledge of the employee and enables them to take up challenging tasks and meet the variations in changing business. Training builds up self-confidence, ensures the individual realize capable person and confident to do difficult task in the particular department. When any organization invests in updating the knowledge and skills of its employees and imparting educations programmes, the investment is returned in the form of efficient and productive work force of employees. Training and development programs may be focused on individual performance or team performance.

## 1.2 Supervisory support

Seyler et al., (1998) defined supervisor support as “the extent to which managers support and reinforce the use of learning on-the-job.” Scaduto et al., (2008) stated that the employee who has a good relationship with his or her supervisor stands a better chance of benefiting from the training, which will leads to positive and sound results both for individual and organization. Supervisor



support is an environmental factor of organization. This kind of support from supervisor not only encourage employees to effectively participate in training activities and transfer the learned skills at the workplace but also help organizations to achieve their strategic objectives. Nijman et al., (2006) defined the supervisor support as “the extent to which the supervisor behaves in a way that optimizes employees use on the job of the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in training”. For the effectiveness of training, supervisor support plays a vital role. Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) reported that support from the organization and supervisors are considered essential for training transfer and skills maintenance. Transfer of training is very important part in the training effectiveness criteria and it’s difficult to effectively transfer the training without supervisor support. Supervisory support is a multidimensional construct, which could include encouragement to attend, goal setting activities, reinforcement activities, and modelling of behaviours.

### 1.3 Training effectiveness

Training effectiveness is a function of trainee characteristics, training design and contextual factors. Training effectiveness refers to “the extent to which the training objectives are achieved”. (Tai, 2003). Training effectiveness is evaluated by measuring a number of training and transfer results. It basically deals with how trainees are applying newly acquired skills from training to the job or behaviour that is retained and applied in the workplace. There are various factors that influence the effectiveness of training provided to employees. These factors are categorized as individual factors such as locus of control and self-efficacy, motivational factors such as career and job attitudes, organizational commitment, decision/reaction to training, post training interventions and organizational or environmental factors such as supervisor and peer support, continuous learning culture. Supervisor-support is considered as key organizational factors that influence training



effectiveness. In general, training programmes are said to be effective when the objectives of the training are achieved. It is "the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in a training context to the job" (Baldwin and Ford, 1988).

## 2. Objectives of the study

1. To standardized a questionnaire for supervisory support and training effectiveness.
2. To identify factors underlying supervisory support and training effectiveness.
3. To study the impact of supervisory support on effectiveness of training program.

## 3. Review of literature

Tracey et al, (1995) reported that the encouragement from supervisor and co-workers and the use of trained skills on the job are the crucial components in the transfer environment. One of the important work environment factors that increase transfer of learning is supervisory support (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Merriam & Leahy, 2005).

Velada et al., (2007) conducted a study on the supervisor support and found that feedback from supervisor on newly learned skills have significant relationship with skills transfer. He further stated that feedback is an indication from management about how well an employee is performing on the job. Chiaburu and Tekleab, (2005) found that there is no relationship between supervisor support and skills transfer as they measured supervisor support in terms of "employee development", "practice new skills" and "constant reminder to apply skills". Ng et al. (2011) conducted a study among seven hundred and six employees in the East Malaysian city-based local governments and found that the ability of supervisors to allocate sufficient guidance and time to apply training resulted in positive transfer of learning. Result indicated that the ability of supervisors in encouraging employees to attend training and reinforcing the use of new learning in the workplace has been found significantly



predict transfer of training. (Facteau et al., 1995) measured supervisor support in terms of “supervisor tolerant of changes” and found that supervisor support positively relates to pre-training motivation. (Lim and Johnson, 2002) proposed three factors that were more closely related to the transfer of training, namely “discussion with supervisor to use new learning”, “supervisor’s involvement or familiarization with the training” and “receiving positive feedback from supervisor”. A recent meta-analysis done by Blume et al. (2010) involving eighty nine studies on training transfer suggested that supervisory support has a strong relationship with transfer of training. Further analysis confirmed that supervisor support had a stronger effect on the transfer of training than co worker support.

Colquitt et al. (2000) conducted a quantitative analysis on factors affecting transfer. They stated that the extent to which supervisors provided sufficient support had positively correlated with the employees’ ability to transfer what they learned from the job.

Festner and Gruber’s (2008) studied an occupational health and safety training program in Germany among one hundred thirty one employees who had attended a training program, found that work environment factors (i.e., supervisory support, peer support, working conditions, and general workplace affordance) were positively related with the degree to which employees’ apply new Knowledge, Skills and Attitude in the workplace. They further stated that supervisory support was found among the strongest factors in enhancing transfer of training. Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) examined the employees’ transfer behaviours learned from training to their job situations. For this purpose they conducted a study on a sample of one hundred two managers from fast-food franchises. Drawing on social learning theory, they investigated the organisational transfer climate and whether it affects the degree to which employees transfer the learning on the job. This study found organizational transfer climate (i.e., supervisory support) affected the extent to which employees



transfer what they have learned from training programs. Indeed, several studies posited the central role of co-workers in elevating positive training transfer. (Liebermann and Hoffmann, 2008) measured supervisor support in terms of supervisor interest in training and support for transfer and found no considerable influence on transfer motivation. Chiaburu (2010), conducted a quantitative study on four hundred forty respondents from one organization in the United States and found that co-workers' support was the strongest predictor of transfer of training and transfer maintenance. Statistical results demonstrated support from co-workers was more important than that coming from the organization and supervisors. It was believed that co-workers wielded a greater influence on transfer of training because of proximal relationship with employees, as opposed to the supervisors, which were more distal and diffused. Xiao (1996) conducted a quantitative study on transfer of training on a sample of one thousand twenty three women employees who were working in four electronic manufacturing companies at Shenzhen, China. He revealed that the support from supervisors was the most influential factor that correlated with transfer of training. They found the extent to which supervisors encouraged employees to apply newly learned knowledge from training on the job, significantly influenced employees' degree of training transfer. Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh (1995) conducted a quantitative analysis on five hundred five supermarket managers and revealed that social support was the strongest predictor of transfer of training. Particularly, supervisor support in the form of encouragement of independent and innovative thinking was found to facilitate the managers' ability to apply the supervisory skills learned from training back to the workplace.

#### 4. Rationale of the study

In this study, we conduct an unprecedented analysis of the specific effects of factors of organization such as peer and supervisor's support in effectively transferring the knowledge and capabilities. The contribution of this study is in its design, which allows for a more accurate assessment of variable effects and relationships.

## Hypothesis

$H_A$ : There is positive and significant impact of supervisory support on training effectiveness.

### Conceptual model

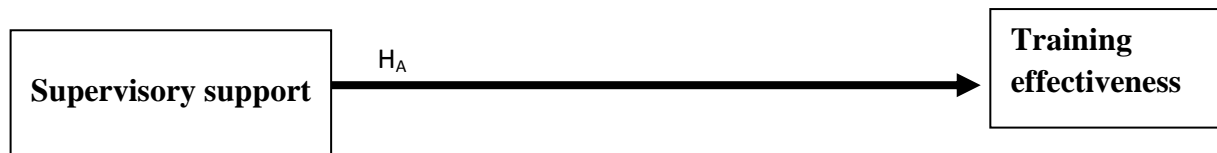


Fig. 1 shows relationship between variables

## 5. Research methodology

**5.1 Study and Sample:** The study was quantitative, in nature where survey method was used to collect the data. The population included employees of banking sector of Gwalior region. The data was collected from employees of banking industry, which includes Axis bank and ICICI bank. We took sample of one hundred twenty five employees.

**5.2 Collection of Data:** Data was collected through self administered questionnaire. The responses taken on the Likert type of 1 to 5 scales where 1 represents strongly disagree and 5 represents strongly agree.

**5.3 Tools Used for data Analysis:** Cronbach alpha was applied to assess reliability. To ensure construct validity exploratory factor analysis was employed. The relationship between the variables was established through Linear Regression.

## 6. Findings of the study:





**6.1 Reliability:** Cronbach's alpha was computed using SPSS scale reliability programme

**Table 1: Reliability analysis**

Factor	Cronbach's Alpha
Supervisory support	.773
Training effectiveness	.759

All the values of both the variables are greater than 0.7 so it could be used in this study.

## 6.2 Factor analysis

### 6.2.1 Factor analysis for supervisory support

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value for supervisory support measure was 0.739 indicating that the sample was adequate to consider the data as normally distributed. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was tested through Chi-Square value which was found to be 327.657 significant at 0% level of significance; indicating that the inter-item Correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and therefore the data collected on this measure was suitable for factor analysis.

**Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test for training**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.739
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	327.657
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

The Principle Component Analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization converged on three factors named as supervisor encouragement, guidance and communication.

### 6.2.2 Factor analysis for training effectiveness:



**Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test**

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.745
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	348.798
	Df	45
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy value for the effectiveness measure was 0.745 indicating that the sample was adequate to consider the data as normally distributed. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was tested through Chi-Square value which was found to be 348.798 significant at 0% level of significance; indicating that the inter-item Correlation matrix was not an identity matrix and therefore the data collected on this measure were suitable for factor analysis. The Principle Component Analysis with varimax rotation and Kaiser Normalization converged on three factors named as higher job performance, enhanced competency, and improved efficiency.

### 6.3 Linear Regression:

The regression table provides the result of constant, coefficient of determination, t-value. The model summary table indicates that the value for supervisory support explained 65.4% variance in training effectiveness as indicated by  $r^2$  value of 0.654.

**Table 4: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.802 <sup>a</sup>	.654	.653	7.35236	.653	345.828	1	195	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), supervisor support

b. Dependent Variable: Training Effectiveness



Table 5: coefficients

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	8.434	1.847		4.258	.000
	supervisor support	1.030	.053	.825	18.143	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Training effectiveness

## 6.4 Discussion

The Result of regression is indicated in the coefficient table indicates that value for supervisory support have significant relationship with training effectiveness having beta value of .825 which were significant at .000 level of significance as indicated by t-value of 18.143. This relationship is positive and significant as shown by small p value. Thus supporting  $H_a$ , that supervisory support has a positive impact on the effectiveness of training.

## 6.5 Implications

This study clearly proves that co workers play an important role in the transfer of training. Thus, it could spur more research on peer support for theoretical development of the existing training effectiveness model. From a practical standpoint, this study provides empirical evidence to the banking organization regarding the role of supervisors and peer support in enhancing transfer of training. So organization should allocate more attention in designing strategies to improve peer support. Supportive skills may be introduced in the hope to create a supportive work environment that could improve transfer of training.



## 6.6 Limitations

This study has some methodological limitations. Firstly, this study only measures employees' perception towards transfer of training. Data collected from a single source might be affected by factors associated with social desirability. Secondly, the sample size for this study is very low, so it is possible that the findings do not represent the population of this study. Thirdly, data collection on a one-time basis may limit our understanding on transfer of skills and knowledge, which occurs in varying period of times.

## 6.7 Future Research

Future research should employ a longitudinal design that measures transfer of training in varying times and focus on to design a collection technique that utilizes multiple sources of data collection. The number of samples should be increased by involving different groups of employees from various banking departments in order to provide more representative results. Future research can collect the data from multiple organizations to increase the generalizability of research findings.

## 6.8 Conclusion

This study found supervisory support significantly correlated with the level of training transfer. It contributes to the existing literature by providing important empirical evidence of consistent relationship between supervisory support and effectiveness of training from a developing country's perspective. The role of supervisors in administering training programs does not only provide financial and physical facility support, but they also have the capabilities to establish realistic and achievable learning expectations, encourage positive reinforcements, create a positive impetus for the training program, make employees feel comfortable to attend training.



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