

**IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF TRAINER-TRAINEE  
INTERACTION ON TRAINEE’S LEARNING:  
AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION**

A THESIS  
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
FELLOW PROGRAMME IN MANAGEMENT

*by*

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सिद्धिमूलं प्रबन्धनम्  
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IIM INDORE

**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT  
INDORE**

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## **ABSTRACT**

In order to sustain competitive advantage, organizations invest their time, effort and resources to develop their workforce through training (Zhang, Mayer, & Hwang, 2018). It is argued that training leads to learning of the workforce and thus, contributes to the human capital (Noe, Clarke & Klein, 2014) of the organization. The literature on learning during training has focused mostly on either the trainee's characteristics or the trainer's characteristics. For example, prior research demonstrated that trainees' ability (Van Iddekinge, Aguinis, Mackey, & DeOrtentiis, 2018), motivation (Bell, Tannenbaum, Ford, Noe, & Kraiger, 2017; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000) and self-efficacy (Switzer, Nagy, & Mullins, 2005) are crucial for the effectiveness of training. On the other hand, trainers' ability (Baumert et al., 2010), motivation (Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007) and self-efficacy (Guo, Justice, Sawyer, & Tompkins, 2011) were found to facilitate trainees' learning. Though studies have noted that the characteristics of both the trainee and the trainer (Mathieu, Tannenbaum, & Salas, 1992) are important predictors of trainees' learning, studies linking the characteristics of both the trainer and the trainee on trainees' learning are relatively scarce. This is important as training is a dyadic process (Harris, Chung, Hutchins & Chiaburu, 2014).

The present study is based on the 'Ability Motivation Opportunity' framework, the 'Attribution Model of Training' and revised HRD evaluation model which highlighted the importance of ability, motivation and self-efficacy in ensuring training effectiveness (Holton III, 2005). In the present study we examined the influence of ability, motivation and self-efficacy of both the trainer and the trainee on trainees' learning in a training program. In addition, a field experiment was conducted to investigate the impact of peer interaction among the trainees and its impact on trainees' learning.

The study was conducted among the postal service employees. Indian Postal network is spread across the country and is in the process of transformation from an age old traditional organization to a technologically advanced organization. This transformation is expected to bring about the speed, efficiency, improvement in quality of services offered by the Rural Postal Network in India. For success of this digital transformation, training of its employees on technological skills assumes a very crucial role. In the present study, we randomly selected 5 out of 17 postal divisions spread over 11 districts in the state of Telangana. 1458 trainees (village postmasters) and 94 trainers participated in our study. The training program was spread over 3 days. We captured respondents' ability, motivation and self-efficacy as our main study variables, and personality traits, beliefs, degree of choice, degree of familiarity, peer-interaction, social desirability and demographics as control variables. The findings of the study supported our hypotheses. In addition to our main study, we conducted a field experiment on a group of 180 trainees during their skill acquisition training programs. Results of the field experiment exhibited positive impact of peer interaction on trainees' learning. Implications of the study were discussed.

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