

Training Professionals: Their Profile, Career & Viewpoints

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This study analyses the profile of training professionals and presents their viewpoints on the emerging trends in training. The information collected from 185 training professionals, by administering a questionnaire, has formed the basis for the analysis. The predominant role of these professionally qualified trainers is to manage learning programs. Career-wise, they are satisfied. Their nature of work, learning opportunities, compensation and rewards, and career advancement opportunities are at par with any other professionals in their respective organizations. They believe that linking learning to performance, closing skill gaps, and frontline leadership will have the most influence on talent development.

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Introduction

Training function in corporate organizations underwent radical changes from offering apprenticeship training to contributing to business success. While more corporate senior teams recognize the bottom-line business impact of training, the identity of training is getting somewhat bifurcated by blurred roles, responsibilities and titles. Today, the training professional is often called a learning and development professional, or performance consultant, among many other titles (Oakes, 2014). The role of training profession involves working in partnership with managers to solve performance problems in a range of new ways, as well as enable and support the continuous performance improvement (Hart, 2014). There is evidence indicating that organizations that invest more in training, will show better financial results in terms of higher net sales per employee and gross profits per employee (Bassi & McMurrer, 2007). Training professionals who are responsible for this function need to have professional background and

competencies to meet the changing expectations of industry. The present study makes an attempt to examine the profile of training professionals in India in terms of their background, career and their viewpoint on emerging trends in training and development. This paper reviews briefly the training function in India based on the existing literature. This is followed by the details of the present study and its findings.

Training Function in India

Training as a formal corporate activity started in India when Apprentices Act, 1961 came into operation. Simultaneously, employee and managerial training was taking place to enhance the knowledge and skills of employees by nominating them to various internal and external programs. But training was not given due importance in many organizations (Srinivasan, 1980). Lack of seriousness on the part of trainees, lack of discussion with superiors on different expectations from training are major problems that created negative perception about training in India (Srinivasam & Virmani, 1977). A gap is identified between the managerial training needs of the organizations as perceived by the training institutions and as it exists in reality (Virmani & Seth, 1985). It is observed that one-third of the organizations established separate training departments manned by professionally trained managers. However, in two-thirds of the organizations, training professionals did not possess professional qualification for training functions. Most organizations assessed training needs through ap-

praisal reports. More than two-thirds organizations had formal induction training for new hires, organized in-company training programs, and sponsored many more managers than supervisors and workers to external training programs (Saiyadain, 1987). But training of workers in public sector enterprises was given a low priority (Sodhi & Kohli, 1987). Gradually many organizations have started training and development activities with generous allocation of budgets. Provision for adequate facilities for general education and technical training has been identified as one of the dimensions of organizational climate in India (Sharma, 1987). However, the extent of management training in India is low and there are structural differences between organizations that provide training to their managers and those that do not. This depended on the level of a manager, the size of the organization, and the ownership structure of the organization. A vast majority of managers, particularly at junior level, working in small and owner-managed organizations, are likely to miss out on training opportunities and the resulting benefit (Sharma, 1992).

There are structural differences between organizations that provide training to their managers and those that do not.

But recent studies showed a change of direction for training function in India. Training has come out of its dormant stage to the boardroom discussions (Lynton and Pareek, 2000). It has

evolved and matured to a substantial degree (Rao, Rao & Yadav, 2001). Training professionals are helping the top management in generating quality awareness among employees (Palo & Padhi, 2005). Indian MNCs/global firms are focusing on organizational learning, which largely gets reflected through training activities and has a positive correlation with organizational performance (Khandekar & Sharma, 2006). It is found that linking training to strategic direction of the organization, systematic evaluation processes that measure the success of training, application of technology in training, systematic needs assessment and partnership of line and training professionals in training, are the top five training trends in India (Srimannarayana, 2006). Training function is predominately structured as an integral part of human resource department though some organizations have separate training departments with one training staff member for every 250 employees. The popular methods of needs assessment are performance appraisal and business goals of the organizations. However, training needs assessment, to some extent, and nominations for training programs, to a large extent, are taking place in a casual manner. Subsequently, organizations could not assess the effectiveness of training programs (Srimannarayana, 2010). Traditional measures such as feedback of the participants on the training programs, number of employees trained, training costs, and number of training days are the more popular measures of training than the impact measures such as transfer of training, performance improvements, and cost and benefit analysis

Service companies have an edge over manufacturing companies in terms of importance and performance of training.

(Srimannarayana, 2011). Indian origin organizations fall short in terms of importance given and performance of training function compared to multinational companies. Further, it is found that service companies have an edge over manufacturing companies in terms of importance and performance of training (Sharma, 2014). The service sector is better in creating a perception of positive training transfer climate than manufacturing and IT sectors (Srimannarayana, 2016).

The Present Study

The aim of the present study is to analyse the professional profile of training professionals and to describe their viewpoint on emerging trends in training and development. A questionnaire was created to collect the information. This was divided into two parts. Part one consisted of questions relating to the profile of training professionals, and their perception on their career related aspects. The scale created by Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990) was used to assess career satisfaction of the training professionals. The confidence level of training professionals was assessed using the *Talent Development Executive Confidence Index (TDXCI)*, created by Association of Talent Development (ATD). Part two consisted of questions pertaining to emerging trends

in training and development replicating from the study of ATD on global trends in talent development (2015). The questionnaire was administered among the training professionals with a minimum of two years of experience in the training profession. 185 usable filled in questionnaires were considered for the analysis. The data was analysed qualitatively and quantitatively, using methods such as frequency distribution, percentages and mean scores.

Nearly half of the respondents belonged to the service sector, covering architecture, audit and accounting firms, banking, business services, consultancy firms, e-commerce companies, educational institutes, financial services, healthcare, hospitality, infrastructure, insurance, logistics and supply chain companies, media, outsourcing HR and training, real estate, retail, telecommunications, and travel businesses (Table 1). 30.81% of the sampled training professionals worked in manufacturing sector representing automobile, cement, construction, consumer goods, electronics, electrical, medical device manufacturing, oil and gas, pharmaceutical, steel, and textile companies. The remaining 20.54% worked for IT and IT-enabled services. Ownership-wise, an overwhelming majority (89.73%) of the respondent training professionals worked for privately owned companies. Only 6.49% of the respondents represented government owned companies and the remaining 3.78% represented joint ventures. A single largest group (40%) of the respondents represented foreign multinational companies; 21.08% belonged to Indian

multinational companies and 38.92% of them worked for local Indian companies. On an average, these organizations employed 5530 employees with a minimum of 250 and maximum of 20,000 employees.

Table 1 The Sample Distribution

<i>Nature of Business</i>	Frequency	%
Manufacturing	57	30.81
Services	90	48.65
IT/ITES	38	20.54
Ownership		
Joint ventures	7	3.78
Public sector	12	6.49
Private sector	166	89.73
Geographic Orientation		
Foreign multinational companies	74	40.00
Indian multinational companies	39	21.08
Local Indian companies	72	38.92

Profile of Training Professionals

The respondents' education, age, gender, professional background, their present roles and responsibilities, their membership in professional bodies, their confidence levels, and professionalism were considered to draw the profile of the training professionals.

Education, Gender and Age: A majority (68.65%) of the respondent training professionals were post-graduates with a professional qualification (Table 2). All of them had a degree or diploma in management/ human resource management/ psychology/social work/ training and development. About 29.19% of the respondents had graduate qualifications in arts/commerce/engineering/science/hotel management. Interestingly, the remaining 2.16%

of them had doctoral qualifications. Gender-wise, a majority (62.16%) of the respondent training professionals were men. A majority (58.38%) of the respondents

were in the age group of 35 years and above. The average age of the respondents was 36.2 years with the minimum age of 27 years and the maximum age of 57 years.

Table 2 Education, Gender & Age

<i>Education</i>	Frequency	%
Graduation	54	29.19
Post-graduation with professional qualification	127	68.65
Doctoral	4	2.16
<i>Gender</i>		
Female	70	37.84
Male	115	62.16
<i>Age</i>		
Below 35 years	77	41.62
35 years & above	108	58.38

Professional Background

The respondent training professionals began their career in different fields such as human resource management (35.14%) (Table 3), operations/production (20.54%), training and development (14.59%), sales/marketing (13.51%), IT services (10.81), administration (3.78%), teaching profession (1.08%), and finance/accounting (0.54%). When it came to level in which they began their career, there were variations. It is found that a single largest group (45.41%) of the respondent training professionals started their career at an executive level; 30.81% of them began their career at a clerical level and 22.70% starting work at a supervisory level. With respect to their entry into the training profession also, the study found variations. Only 14.59% of the respondents of the study entered into the training profession directly. They started their career in this profession and continued in the same. Over one-third of the respondents got

into training profession by way of transfer or job rotation. It is significant to note that about 30% of the respondents joined in the training profession by way of a career shift from other professions, and in some cases, from other organizations by their choice. The remaining over one-fifth of the respondents took this profession when they were promoted by their respective organizations with a position in the training function. Their experience in the training profession ranged from two to twenty years with an average of 8.9 years. A single largest group (45.95%) of them had an experience of six to 10 years; 23.78% had five years and below experience in training; 21.62% of them had 10 to 15 years of training experience. In addition to the training experiences, an overwhelming majority (85.41%) of the respondent training professionals had experience in other than training function prior to their joining in the training function. This ranged from one to 23 years with an average

Table 3 Professional Background

<i>Field in which career began</i>	Frequency	%
Administration	7	3.78
Production/operations	38	20.54
Finance /accounting	1	0.54
Sales/marketing	25	13.51
IT services	20	10.81
Human resource management	65	35.14
Training and development	27	14.59
Teaching	2	1.08
<i>Level in which career began</i>		
Clerical	57	30.81
Supervisory	42	22.70
Executive	84	45.41
Teaching	2	1.08
<i>Mode of entry into training</i>		
Direct entry into training	27	14.59
Career shift	54	29.19
Promotion	40	21.62
Transfer/job rotation	64	34.59
<i>Experience in training</i>		
5 and below years	44	23.78
6 to 10 years	85	45.95
10 to 15 years	40	21.62
16 years and above	16	8.65
<i>Experience in other than training</i>		
Yes	158	85.41
No	27	14.59
<i>Membership in professional bodies</i>		
Yes	38	20.54
No	147	79.46

An overwhelming majority (85.41%) of the respondent training professionals had experience in other than training function prior to their joining in the training function.

of 6.09 years of experience. With regard to their association it is observed

that only about one-fifth of the respondent training professionals were members of professional bodies such as National HRD Network, Indian Society for Training and Development etc.

Roles & Responsibilities

The respondent training professionals were designated with different titles based on their organizational practices and level. They included Executive (Human Resources), Executive (Learning & Development), Senior Executive (Training & Development), Assistant Manager (L&D), Deputy Manager (L&D), Learning Manager, Training Manager, Program Manager, Manager (HR), Manager (T&D), Manager (L&D), Corporate Trainer, Sales Trainer, Senior Manager (L&D), Senior Training Manager, Consultant, Senior Consultant, Head-L&D, Head-Capability Development, Performance Development Coordinator, Talent Development Consultant, Talent Transformation Consultant, Talent Manager, Assistant General Manager (L&D), Deputy General Manager (L&D), General Manager (L&D), Vice-President (L&D) and Chief Learning Officer.

They were distributed among junior (8.11%), middle (64.32%), and senior management (27.57%) levels (Table 4). Their predominant role was managing learning programs in their respective organizations. However, they also performed training designer and delivery roles. Another interesting role of training professionals was auditing learning function. This is concerned with evaluating

the effectiveness of training programs.

Table 4 Training Professionals' Levels & Their Roles

<i>Level</i>	Frequency	%
Junior	15	8.11
Middle	119	64.32
Senior	51	27.57
<i>Present role</i>		
Managing learning programs	149	80.54*
Training designer	31	16.76
Training delivery	43	23.24
Learning auditing	4	2.16

*Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options

The training professionals of the study were asked to state their duties and responsibilities. The outcome of the content analysis of the answers is presented below:

1. Identify training and development needs of employees
2. Create learning strategy that is aligned to business strategy and performance
3. Partner with heads to support the ongoing talent development initiatives
4. Create comprehensive talent development portfolio with focus on competency development, and optimization of training costs
5. Create a training calendar
6. Identify suitable external agencies which can provide some specialized programs
7. Prepare training budgets
8. Plan various internal and external training programs
9. Coordinate with various line managers for training nominations
10. Enroll employees for various internal and external training programs
11. Coordinate with various external training suppliers
12. Develop training content in their areas of expertise
13. Design training programs in their areas of expertise
14. Help functional managers in designing programs
15. Conduct programs for new hires
16. Conduct programs in their areas of expertise such as soft skills, leadership development, and train-the-trainer
17. Organize outbound programs
18. Manage their own training professionals
19. Manage training infrastructure
20. Monitor training programs
21. Collate training feedback and sharing with all concerned
22. Assess impact of the programs and cost-benefit analysis
23. Coordinate performance appraisals
24. Facilitate organizational development
25. Undertake change management initiatives

- 26. Create career and succession planning
- 27. Manage knowledge
- 28. Involve in coaching and mentoring
- 29. Report information to management information system

It could be seen from the above list of duties and responsibilities of training professionals, these professionals have expanded their roles to various HRD initiatives such as career and succession planning, organizational development and knowledge management.

The Confidence Index

The confidence level of training professionals is assessed using the *Talent Development Executive Confidence Index (TDXCI)*. It is an assessment of talent development executives’ short-term expectations for the health of the talent development function in organizations (ATD, 2016). It is a composite score given by training professionals based on their confidence level on four key factors such as the perception on their ability to meet talent development needs, the impact of learning on corporate performance, the perception of the value of learning within their organizations and the availability of resources

needed to meet learning needs. It is measured on a 100-point scale, in which a higher index score reflects a more optimistic outlook for the talent development function in organizations, and a lower index score reflects greater negativity. An index score of more than 50 indicates more positive than negative responses (ATD, 2016). It could be seen from Table 5 that, the respondent training professionals had an optimistic outlook for their function as the composite score of TDXCI is calculated as 75.22. Their perception of the ability to meet the organizations’ learning needs was very good. Their perception on the availability of resources needed was relatively lower.

Their perception of the ability to meet the organizations’ learning needs was very good.

The views of training professionals about professionalism in training function were taken into account. A majority (65.95%) of the training professionals rated professionalism of training professionals as ‘fair’ (Table 6). Nearly one-third of them gave ‘high’ rating. A small percentage (1.62%) of training professionals considered that training was seriously lacking professionalism. Overall, it is observed that training pro-

Table 5 The Talent Development Executive Confidence Index (TDXCI)

<i>TDXCI Items</i>	Points (Average)
The ability of L&D executives to meet organizations’ learning needs	80.15
The impact of learning on corporate performance	76.06
The perception of value of learning within organizations	72.58
The availability of resources needed to meet learning needs	72.09
Composite score	75.22

professionals considered training as a separate profession which requires specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors to perform their roles effectively.

Table 6 Professionalism

Professionalism	Frequency	%
High	60	32.43
Fair	122	65.95
Seriously lacking	3	1.62

Training as a Career

Nature of work: As presented in Table 7, over three-fourth of the respondent training professionals felt that their nature of work in terms of challenges and contribution to the organizational goals was at par with other professionals in their respective organizations. It is significant to note that 14% of the respondents considered that their work was better than that of others. The remaining respondents felt that their work ‘could be better’. Overall, it can be stated that the training professionals were happy with the nature of work in terms of its challenge, and their contribution to achieve organizational goals.

Personal Development: Being a responsible function, training professionals should model personal development for

Table 7 Nature of Work

Nature of work	Frequency	%
At par with other professionals	145	78.38
Better than other professionals	26	14.05
Could be better	14	7.57

Formal training delivered by external experts (72.97%) and internal experts (62.70%) were the major methods of professional development for training professionals.

others in their respective organizations. According to ASTD competency study (Bemthal et al, 2004), this is one of the competencies of training professionals. Actively identifying new areas of one’s own learning, taking advantage of learning opportunities and applying newly gained knowledge and skills on the job constitute modeling personal development. An inquiry was made in this study to find out development resources available for training professionals. It is evident from Table 8 that formal training delivered by external experts (72.97%) and internal experts (62.70%) were the major methods of professional development for training professionals. The methods of coaching and mentoring were available for nearly half of the respondent training professionals. Nearly one-third of the respondents used on-the-job rotations for their professional development. The other resources available for some of the respondent training professionals were sponsorship for certification programs, payment for professional conferences registration fee, membership fee in professional associations, and payment for self-development materials such as books, journal subscriptions and software.

Satisfaction with Personal Development: The respondent training professionals were asked to rate the resources

Table 8 Personal Development Resources

<i>Resources</i>	Frequency	%*
Formal training delivered by external experts	135	72.97
Formal training delivered by internal experts	116	62.70
Mentoring & coaching	87	47.03
On-the-job-rotations	56	30.27
Sponsoring certificate courses	55	29.73
Payment for conference registration fee	55	29.73
Payment for membership in professional associations	47	25.41
Pay for self-development material	41	22.16

*Percentages do not total 100 due to multiple response options

made available by their respective organizations for them for their learning and development. Over three-fourths of the respondent training professionals considered that the learning and development opportunities available for them were at par with those of other professionals (Table 9). Nearly one-tenth of them viewed that they had better opportunities for professional growth than other professionals in their organizations. Another over one-tenth of them opined that the opportunities 'could be better' than other professionals. But overall it can be stated that the respondent training professionals were happy with the development opportunities available to them.

Table 9 Professional Development

<i>Professional development</i>	Frequency	%
At par with other professionals	145	78.38
Better than other professionals	17	9.19
Could be better	23	12.43

Compensation & Rewards: It is observed that three-fourth of respondent training professionals considered that the package of compensation and rewards

offered to them by their respective organizations was at par with their counterparts (Table 10). A small group of them rated their package as 'better' than those of others. However, over one-fifth of them felt that the package could be better than those of other professionals. By and large, it may be inferred that the training professionals were happy with their package.

Table 10 Compensation and Rewards

<i>Compensation and rewards</i>	Frequency	%
At par other professionals	138	74.59
Better than other professionals	8	4.32
Could be better	39	21.08

Career Advancement: Over three-fifths of the respondents considered that the opportunities for their career advancement were at par with those of other professionals in their respective organizations (Table 11). Nearly one-tenth of them viewed that their situation was better than of others. However, over one-fourth of the respondents expressed that their career advancement opportunities could be better than of other pro-

professionals. Overall, it can be stated that the career advancement opportunities of training professionals were comparable with those of other professionals in their organizations.

Table 11 Career Advancement

<i>Career advancement opportunities</i>	Frequency	%
At par other professionals	120	64.86
Better than other professionals	15	8.11
Could be better	50	27.03

Career Satisfaction: In addition to comparative perception on career advancement opportunities of training pro-

professionals, this study made an attempt to assess the career satisfaction of training professionals in absolute terms on a five-item scale, 5 being 'strongly agree' and 1 being 'strongly disagree'. This scale was created by Greenhaus, Parasuraman and Wormley (1990). Only 95 respondents gave usable responses for this aspect of the study. It is evident from Table 12 that, overall the respondents were satisfied with their careers. Comparatively speaking, they were more satisfied with the success they achieved so far in their career, and less satisfied with the progress they made towards meeting their goals for income.

Table 12 Career Satisfaction

<i>Career satisfaction items</i>	Mean
Satisfied with the success achieved in my career	4.10
Satisfied with the progress toward meeting my overall career goals	3.95
Satisfied with the progress toward meeting my goals for income	3.79
Satisfied with the progress toward meeting my goals for advancement	3.89
Satisfied with the progress toward meeting my goals for the development of new skills	3.79
Overall	3.90

Trends in Training & Development

Advances in technology, internet capability and software applications, growing adoption of mobile devices for learning, a culture of connectivity and information sharing, increased ability to collect and use 'big data', shifting demographics in the workforce, increasing globalization, and economic volatility and uncertainty are driving changes for training and development professionals (Arneson et al, 2013). In this context, an attempt was made in this study to find out the viewpoint of training professionals on the emerging trends in training and development.

The Most Influential Trending Topics: The respondents of the present study were asked to identify the trending topics, which would have the most influence in the next three years. According to the respondents, linking learning to performance, closing skill gaps, frontline leadership, innovation and informal and social learning are the most influential trending topics. These are followed by mobile learning, big data and virtual leadership. According to ATD research (2015) linking learning to performance, closing gaps, and frontline leadership are the top three most influential topics of talent development in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus the findings of this study are consistent with ATD research (2015).

The Biggest Challenges for Talent Development: The respondents were asked to identify the biggest challenges for training and development in the next three years. They placed building a culture that supports talent development initiatives, building leadership pipeline, and knowledge transfer as the top three challenges. Leveraging technology for learning and enlisting senior management and executive support for talent development initiatives are in the fourth and fifth places respectively. ATD research (2015) identified building a culture that supports talent development initiatives as the biggest challenge in the Asia-Pacific region. This is followed by building leadership pipeline, and knowledge transfer. Hence the findings of the present study on the challenges are consistent with the ATD research.

Training delivery, managing learning programs, and knowledge management are the top three focus areas for the next three years.

The Focus Areas: The respondents were asked to identify the focus areas of talent development for their organizations in the next three years on a five-point scale, 5 being 'very high extent' and 1 being 'not at all'. The mean scores on these items indicated that training delivery, managing learning programs, and knowledge management are the top three focus areas for the next three years. Instructional design and performance improvement secured the least positions in this study. But, according to ATD research (2015) performance management, training delivery and managing learning

programs are the focus areas in the Asia-Pacific region. Thus the findings of the present study on the focus areas of talent development differed with the findings of ATD research (2015).

Learning Content Areas: When asked to select the most important areas of learning content relevant to their respective organizations, the respondent training professionals selected managerial and supervisory content, profession-specific or industry-specific content and interpersonal skills training content as the top most important learning content areas. Executive development content secured the fourth position. However, the finding of ATD research (2015) suggested that managerial and supervisory, interpersonal skills and executive development are the top most learning content areas for the Asia-Pacific. Thus, there is some variation on this aspect between these two studies.

Delivery Methods: The respondent training professionals were asked to rate the extent of formal learning delivery methods used in their organizations on a five-point scale. It is observed from the mean scores pertaining to these items that live, instructed-led real classroom is the mostly used method of training delivery. This is followed by live, instructed-led virtual classroom and self-paced online (networked). It is important to note here that in addition to traditional live, instructed-led real classroom method, there is a wide choice of methods such as self-paced online (networked) method, self-paced non-networked computer based method, mobile technology, print

material, and video tapes available for the organizations-Many of the organizations started using them at varied levels.

Limitations of Training Effectiveness

Training is a staff function, which enables the organization to enhance its performance by imparting required knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes to the employees. The success of this function depends on the cooperation of its stakeholders including top management. Therefore, the respondent training professionals were asked to identify the barriers that limit their training effectiveness. The responses are presented in Table 15. It is observed that the major limitations for training professionals to perform their responsibilities effectively were managerial (62.70%) and non-managerial (56.76%) employees' perception on training professionals and their support for training activities. Nearly one-fourths of the respondents felt that training budget was a constraint for training effectiveness. This is followed by available headcount in the training department (16.22%) and CEO's support (3.78%). A small percentage (3.24%) of the respondents were candid enough to admit that indifference on the part of training professionals and lack of competencies to collaborate with functional managers were the limiting factors of their effectiveness.

Nearly one-fourths of the respondents felt that training budget was a constraint for training effectiveness.

Summary & Conclusion

Unlike in the past, now professionally qualified people enter into the training profession, either at supervisory level or executive level. In addition to direct entry into the training profession, the study identified different other modes of entry such as transfer from generalist HR role to specialist role of training, promotion and a career shift from other management fields (e.g. operations, sales, and IT services) to the training field by desire. This experience provides exposure of other fields of management that enable the training professionals to understand the business realities and practical problems in the other management fields. Subsequently, they can better perform their roles. The predominant role of these professionals is managing learning programs. They undertake all responsibilities in training from needs assessment to measuring training effectiveness and reporting. They believe that training is a separate profession which requires specialized knowledge, skills, attitudes, values and behaviors to perform their roles effectively and they are confident of their ability to meet their organizations' learning needs.

With respect to their training career, they believe that their nature of work, learning and development opportunities, compensation and rewards and career advancement are, by and large, at par with those of other professional groups. They have access to various professional development resources which enable them to demonstrate personal development to other professionals in their respective organizations. They are satis-

Table 15 What Limits the Training Effectiveness?

<i>Limiting Factors</i>	Frequency	%*
Available budget	45	24.32
Available headcount in training department	30	16.22
Managerial/executive employees' perception and their support	116	62.70
CEO's perception and support	7	3.78
Non-managerial employees' perception and support	105	56.76
Other factors	6	3.24

*Percentages do not total 100 due to multiple response options

fied with the success they achieved in their career so far. They are happy with meeting their overall career goals.

As far as training trends are concerned, they believe that linking learning to performance, closing skill gaps, and frontline leadership will have the most influence on talent development in the next three years. Building a culture that supports talent development initiatives, building leadership pipeline, and knowledge transfer are the top three challenges for them in the next three years. The most important focus areas for them are: training delivery, managing learning programs, and knowledge management. According to them managerial and supervisory, profession-specific or industry-specific content and interpersonal skills are the most important content areas of learning in their organizations.

The training professionals believe that there are some barriers for making training effective. Managerial and non-managerial employees' perception and their support for training initiatives are the major bottlenecks for them to effectively fulfill their training responsibilities. However, if the training professionals master the required foundational compe-

tencies, business skills, global mindset, personal skills, and technical literacy as suggested by Arneson et al (2013), they can overcome these problems and make a significant contribution to the success of their organizations.

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