

## Technology Based Learning and Employee Engagement: A Critical Link

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**Abstract:** Training has become immensely important for smooth functioning of modern organizations. Training results in learning and involves knowledge acquisition, improvement of skills, talents and abilities. Training also helps organizations gain competitive edge by aiding in the retention of employees. There are multiple ways of conducting training and disseminating knowledge. The most commonly used methodologies are lecture method, talks, discussions, in-basket, business games, role playing, case study, sensitivity training, conferences and seminars, programmed instructions, computer-based training, exercises, projects, simulations and games, remote telecommunication live teaching, distance learning etc. Besides these methods of training it has now become imperative for organizations to adopt and implement technology-based learning (TBL) as an answer to sweeping global changes, cost reductions and work-life balance. With this objective in mind this study has been undertaken in Cyient Limited, Bangalore. In this research paper, an attempt is made to understand the implementation and effectiveness of Technology-Based learning in Cyient Limited and their impact on employee performance.

**Keywords:** Cost-Reductions, Employee Engagement, Employee Performance, Globalization, Technology Based Learning

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### 1. Introduction

Training has become immensely important for smooth functioning of modern organizations. Organizations often compete on competencies: the core sets of knowledge and expertise that give them an edge over their competitors (Kwon, 2009; Lawler & Worley, 2006). Training plays a critical role in improving and strengthening these competencies and in this way help the organizations to effectively achieve their goals. Training results in learning and involves knowledge acquisition, improvement of skills, talents and abilities. Training helps employees understand where they are and where they will be after some point of time. They are required to adapt to the myriad of changes facing organizations and thus continuous training becomes essential to maintain and update their capabilities.

Training also helps organizations gain competitive edge by aiding in the retention of employees. Primary reason why many individuals leave organizations is lack of training and development opportunities. Employers that invest in training and developing their employees do so as part of retention efforts.

Training enables the management to face the pressures of changing environment, results in an increase of quantity and quality of output, leads to job satisfaction and higher morale of the employees, enables the enterprise to face competition from rival organizations and instructs the workers towards better job adjustment thus reducing the rate of labour turnover and absenteeism.

It has been perceived by many that during financial crises training in organizations is first hit by cost cuts however number of organizations have now realized that investment in training is an investment in human capital that will benefit the organization in the long run.

In order for an organization to enjoy the returns on training investment, the training itself must be approached systematically following certain steps beginning with identification of training needs, followed by the design and development of an appropriate training to serve those needs, the implementation of training according to the predetermined plan and finally the evaluation of training programme to determine whether original needs have been achieved. Execution of these steps is believed to ensure training effectiveness. (Blanchard and Thacker, 2003; Goldstein and Ford, 2002; and Noe, 2005).

### **Methods of Training**

There are multiple ways of conducting training and disseminating knowledge. The most commonly used methodologies are lecture method, talks, discussions, in-basket, business games, role playing, case study, sensitivity training, conferences and seminars, programmed instructions, computer-based training, exercises, projects, simulations and games, remote telecommunication live teaching, distance learning etc. These methods are grouped into two categories i.e. Informational and experiential.

**Informational Methods:** These methods primarily use one-way communication to transmit the knowledge to the learners. Eg: talks, lecture methods, audiovisuals, independent study and programmed instruction.

**Experiential Methods:** In experiential method learners get the opportunity to interact with the faculty which is different from academic learning. Experiential learning is the process of learning from direct experience. This is highly suited to the acquisition of practical skills, where trial and error and the opportunity to practice practical techniques related to real tasks is essential. In many countries, experiential learning is integral to vocational education. This method of learning is focused on the communicative relationship and exchange of information between the faculty and learner. On-the-job training, games and simulation, equipment simulators, case study and analysis, role playing, behavioural modeling, T-group training are some of the examples of experiential methods.

Besides these methods of training it has now become imperative for organizations to adopt and implement technology-based learning (TBL) as an answer to sweeping global changes, cost reductions and work-life balance.

Globalization, economic conditions, advancement in technology and work-life balance have combined together to create a business scenario that requires innovative, flexible and convenient training solutions in organizations.

### **Factors Influencing Technology-Based Learning**

#### **Globalization**

For organizations operating globally centralized, classroom training is not an efficient and effective way to conduct training to a global workforce also it can become an extremely expensive affair. TBL enables organizations to deliver training to employees anytime and anywhere across the globe. It also facilitates organizations with global workforce to do away many of the costs associated with classroom training and deliver just-in-time learning to their employees.

#### **Cost-Reduction**

In today's dynamic scenario all organizations are expected to be learning organizations so that they can gain a competitive edge but simultaneously they face tremendous pressure to reduce costs and increase shareholder value. The human resource personnel are expected to do more with less. In training field this renders into increasing an organization's development activities while at the same time reducing training expenditures. Technology-based learning can help organizations respond to this problem. Although technology-based learning leads to increased upfront costs (e.g., development, software/hardware) but it also helps firms reduce variable costs

associated with classroom learning. Thus technology can facilitate organizations to reduce variable costs on training and increase their returns on investment.

#### **Work-life Concerns**

Research by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) concluded that one of the employment trends anticipated to have the greatest impact on the workplace is the increased demand for flexible work schedules from employees (Schramm and Burke, 2004). The reasons for this being more women are working and breakdown of joint families. Flexible work schedules help employees manage their professional and personal lives conveniently and also reduces employee turnover in organizations. Technology-based learning facilitates employees to complete training offsite and at their own convenience.

#### **Advancement in Technology**

Recent advances in technology have made technology-based learning a perfect alternative to the traditional classroom training. This capability, combined with the fact that the media which support these advanced technologies has become more cost-efficient, reliable, and accessible and therefore has led organizations to utilize technology-based learning to respond to their employee development needs.

#### **Technology-Based Learning (TBL)**

To cope with competitive and technological changes more organizations are recognizing that technology based learning is critical to future organizational success. Technology-based learning

covers a wide variety of applications such as web and computer based training and virtual classrooms. It includes training through internet, intranets and extranets, audiotape, videotape, satellite broadcasts, DVD and

CD-ROM. TBL makes it possible to provide drill and practice, problem solving, simulation and certain other forms of individualized tutorial instruction in a way that is more engaging for learners than traditional classroom instruction. It is also economical for employers to administer TBL because often it can be delivered directly via employees PCs. It allows firms to bring training to employees rather than vice-versa, which is generally more efficient and cost-effective. It also allows employees to search through a virtual sea of information in order to customize their own learning in their own time and space.

TBL has numerous advantages in comparison to face-to-face learning:

- Learning can happen anytime, anywhere.
- Learning is self-paced.
- Training is interactive.
- Employees do not have to wait for a scheduled training session.
- Record keeping is facilitated.
- Training can be cost effective

The growing importance of TBL in organizations along with its numerous advantages has motivated me to take this topic for study.

## 2. Literature Survey

1. A study by Kong (2009) reflected that male employees have higher scores over female on the dimension of vigor and absorption while female employees gain more scores than male on the dimension of dedication.

2. Another study by Psychometrics Canada Ltd. (2010) conducted on HR professionals working in business, government, consulting, education and non-profit Canadian organizations revealed that male and female respondents had a nearly identical distribution of their rating of engagement. It was found that 58.5% males and 55.8% females are highly engaged employees in organizations.

3. A study conducted by Coetzee & M. de Villiers (2010) in a South African Financial Institution to examine the relationship between employees' sources of job stress, work engagement and career orientations and how they differ indicated a significant relationship between the participants sources of job stress, levels of work engagement and career orientations. Significant differences regarding these variables were also detected between males and females, blacks and whites, temporary and permanently employed participants and various age groups.

4. A study by Kandulpati, Manchala (2011) to examine the current degree of employee engagement in Retailing Industry in Hyderabad concluded there is a significant difference between the degree of employee engagement by gender and retail formats in Hyderabad.

5. Another study by Marlow, Research, Blessing White (2012) on point difference between percentage of men and women engaged/disengaged in various countries revealed that Indian men are substantially more likely to be engaged (11 points) and significantly less likely to be disengaged (8pts) than their female counterparts.

6. A study by Ariani, Dorothea and Wahyu (2013) in Service Industries in Yogyakarta, Indonesia tested the relationship between Employee Engagement, Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) and Counterproductive Work Behaviour. The study revealed that gender affects OCB and CWB but not employee engagement.

7. A recent research by Human Capital Institute & Achievers (2013) indicated that today's most engaged employees are males who are 50 years or older and have been with an organization for at least 15 years.

8. A study by Ravikumar (2013) on Employee engagement in Manufacturing MSMEs in India concluded that male or female employee having more than 10 years of total work experience irrespective of age and level of management enjoy more level of employee engagement than employee male or female having less than 5 years of total work experience irrespective of age and level of management.

## 3. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are:

- To understand the importance of TBL in Cyient Ltd.
- To study the significance of blended learning in Cyient Ltd.
- To comprehend the level in the organization at which TBL is most suitable.
- To know how effectiveness of TBL is measured in an organization.
- To understand the impact of TBL on employee performance.

Keeping these objectives in view the research is undertaken in CYIENT Ltd., Cyient (formerly Infotech Enterprises) is an Indian company focused on engineering, networks and operations. The company features

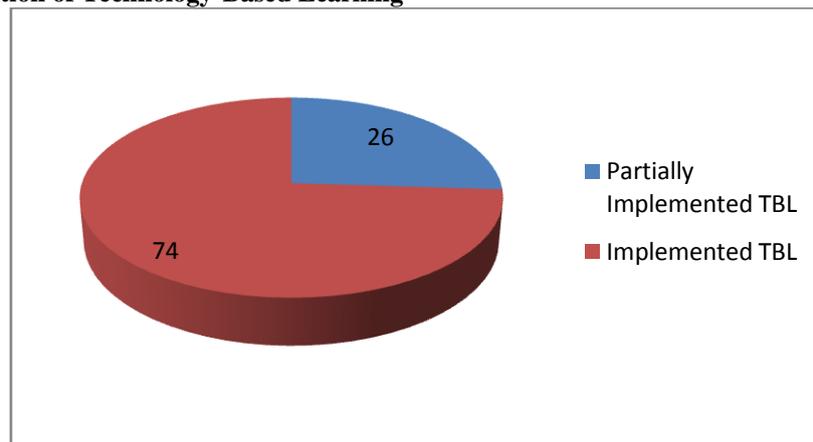
among the top 30 outsourcing companies in the world. On 7 May 2014, Cyient Limited, formerly known as Infotech Enterprises Limited officially announced its new name based on approval from a shareholders' vote. In this study the sample size consists of 30 respondents. Questionnaire is used as tool of data collection. Both closed-ended and open-ended questions are administered to employees of CYIENT Ltd. Sampling unit for the study was Executives, Team Leaders and Project Leaders of CYIENT Limited.

#### 4. Limitations of the Study

- The study is confined to CYIENT Limited.
- The study is conducted with the assumption that the information given by the respondents are all correct.
- Interactions with employees were limited because of their busy work schedule.

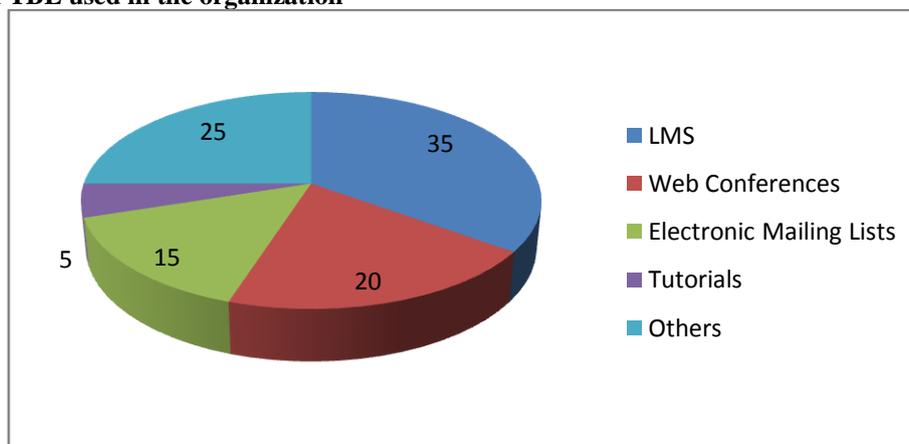
#### 5. Analysis and Interpretation of Data

##### 5.1 Implementation of Technology-Based Learning



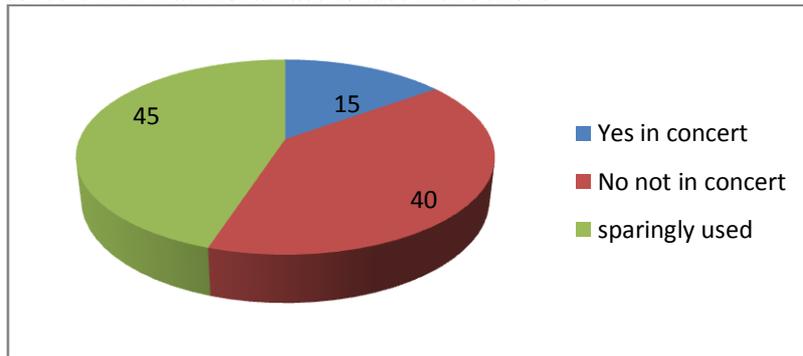
Interpretation: In Cyient Ltd. 74% of employees expressed that TBL has been implemented in their organization whereas 26% said it has been implemented partially in their organization.

##### 5.2 Tools of TBL used in the organization



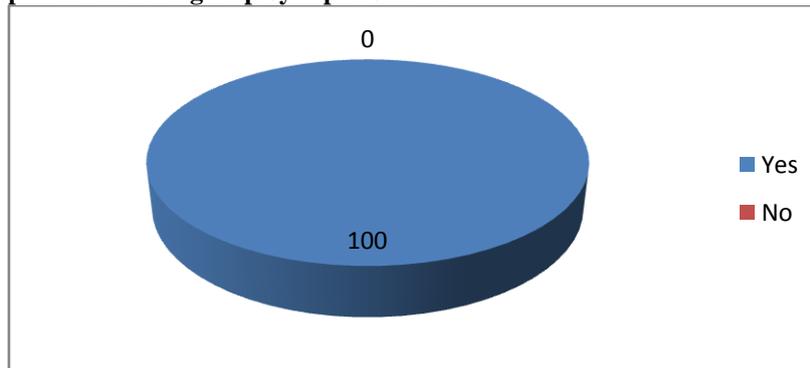
Interpretation: Maximum employees (35%) said that Learning Management System (LMS) is one of the tools of TBL in their organization.

**5.3 TBL used in concert with traditional face to face instructions**



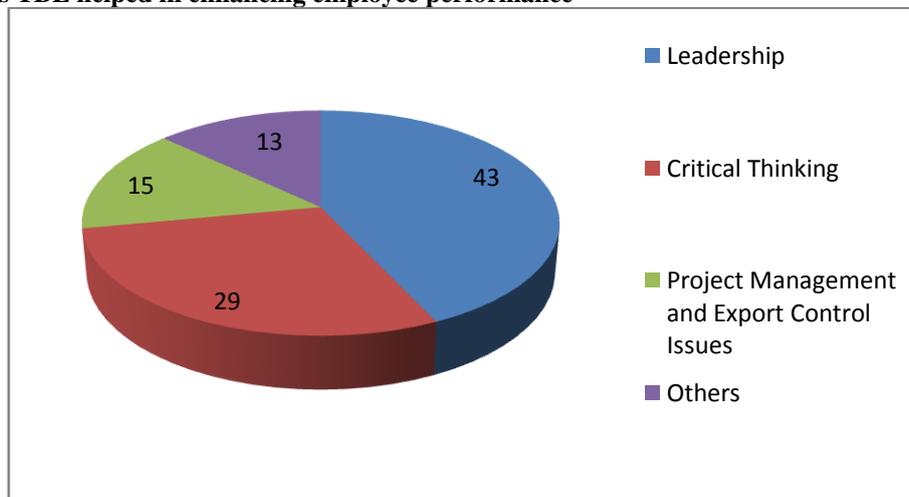
Interpretation: Maximum number of employees responded that TBL is not being used in concert with traditional face to face instructions.

**5.4 Has TBL helped in enhancing employee performance?**



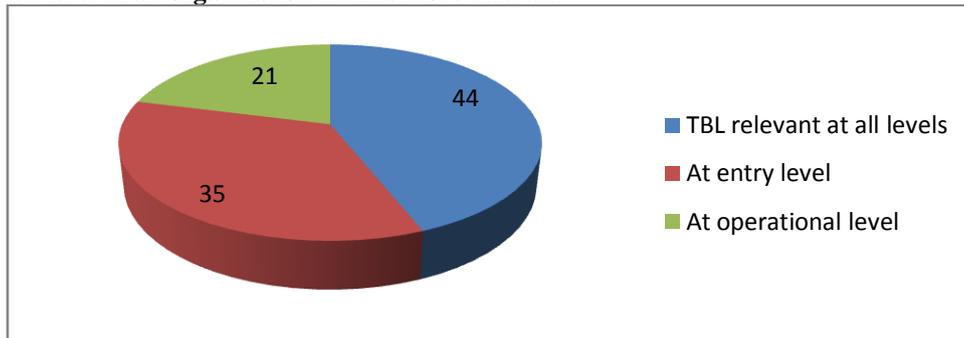
Interpretation: All the respondents (100%) are of the opinion that TBL has helped in enhancing employee performance

**5.5 How has TBL helped in enhancing employee performance**



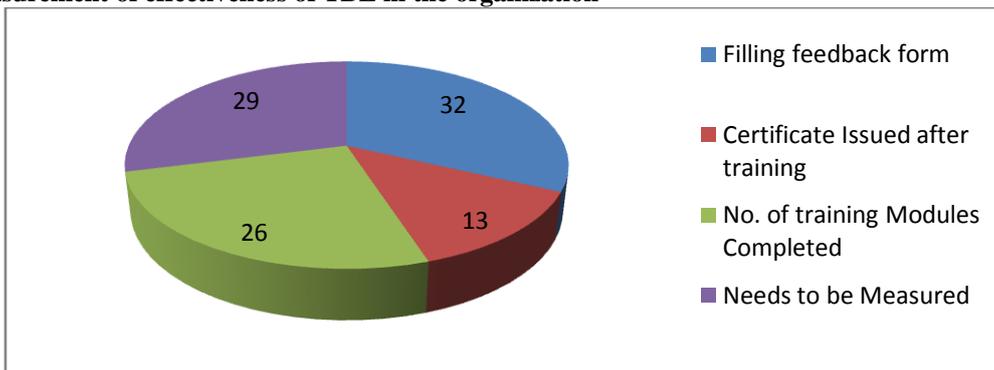
Interpretation: Majority of employees responded (43%) that it helped them in developing their leadership skills and 29% said it improved their critical thinking whereas 15% expressed that it helped them in dealing with Project Management and Export Control issues.

**5.6 At which level in an organization TBL is more relevant**



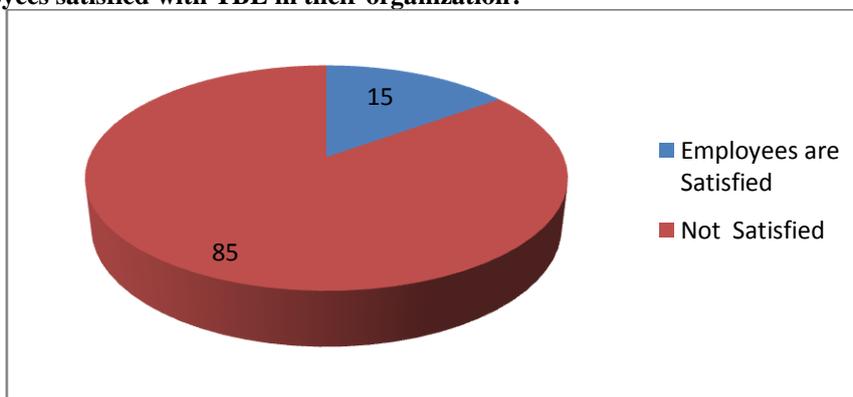
Interpretation: 44% of the employees responded that TBL is relevant at all levels 35% said that it is relevant at entry level and 21% at operational level.

**5.7 Measurement of effectiveness of TBL in the organization**



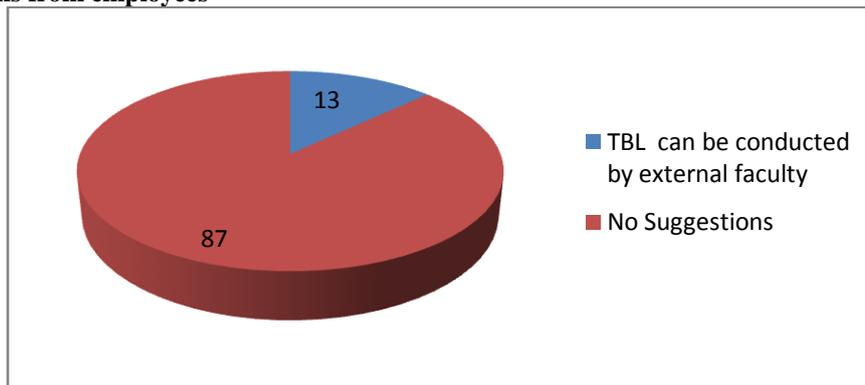
Interpretation:32% of respondents expressed that effectiveness of TBL in the organization is measured through filling feedback form 13% said that certificate issued after training 26% said that effectiveness is measured through number of training modules completed and 29% said it still need to be measured.

**5.8 Are employees satisfied with TBL in their organization?**



Interpretation: Majority of employees said that they are satisfied with TBL in their organization and 15% said that they are not satisfied.

### 5.9 Suggestions from employees



Interpretation: Majority of employees (87%) gave no suggestions and 13% said that TBL can be conducted through external faculty.

### 6. Findings

- 74% of the employees have responded that TBL has been implemented in Cyient Technologies Limited.
- LMS is the most commonly used method of TBL as revealed by the responses of 35% of the respondents.
- 45% employees expressed that TBL is sparingly used with traditional face to face instructions and 40% employees responded by expressing that there is no blended learning.
- All employees agreed that it helps in enhancing employee performance by developing leadership skills, improving critical thinking and able to better manage project management and export control issues.
- Majority of employees agreed that TBL should be implemented at all levels.
- Filling feedback form and number of training modules completed is used to measure effectiveness of TBL on employees.
- 85% of employees are satisfied with TBL in their organization
- 87% of the employees preferred not to give any suggestions pertaining to TBL in their organization.

### 7. Conclusion

Many firms including Cyient Ltd have drifted from classroom training to Technology-based Learning over a period of time. Although this shift in training has resulted in cost-savings and numerous other benefits for the organization it has also offered the potential to revolutionize training effectiveness by making training better targeted and more learner centered and personalized. TBL has resulted in improving employee performance in organizations. Companies that have realized this potential are now better positioned to leverage their human capital for sustained competitive advantage and growth.

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