06 - Human Resource Management
Competitive Session

The Challenges in Business Process Improvement Training Transfer: An Inductive Exploration from the Australian Context

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ABSTRACT

This paper is about the issues in Business Process Improvement (BPI) training transfer. There is ongoing training provided for BPIs. However, industry reports and research shows that the number of implementation failures in BPI have been substantial and the problem still remains unsolved. This paper places special emphasis on the transfer of BPI training. An exploratory and inductive approach was taken where the findings indicate various issues around eight main themes, the main being that of resistance. Our research 1) unearths the issues around BPI training transfer; 2) informs BPI training literature on the importance of understanding the issues around BPI training transfer and; 3) informs the practice on ways of overcoming the issues related to BPI training transfer.

Keywords

Training transfer, Business Process Improvement, Resistance

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1. INTRODUCTION

Every year organizations around the world spend millions of dollars on training activities. This is done in order to change the behaviors of employees within organizations and to facilitate them to perform well in their current job roles. But, unsettling questions continue to be raised about the return on investment (zu Knyphausen-Aufseß, Smukalla, & Abt, 2009) of such training. Such costly trainings are also conducted to facilitate Business Process Management (BPM) and Business Process Improvement (BPI) initiatives. BPM is an organizational wide "*integrated system for managing business performance by managing end-to-end business processes*" (Rosemann & vom Brocke, 2015, p. 4). BPI on the other hand is a systematic approach focused on the improvement of individual processes (Harrington, 1991). BPM offers a broader organization-wide context where processes are managed as connected entities interacting together (rather than in isolation) engaged in organization wide efficiency lead by process-centric thinking. BPI on the other hand, has a narrower scope where the focus is on improvements to individual processes, which is merely a part of BPM. Both BPM and BPIs brings about change and the need for training employees to embrace such change is recognized as vital.

We focus on Business Process Improvement (BPI) training in this research. BPI training is about training people from all levels of an organization in process management activities and 'process thinking'. BPI training is often related to the process improvement lifecycle; the journey from the identification of process issues, to analysis of current status, design of improvements, implementation and, continuous and sustained improvements. BPI training is a major contributor to the success or failure, and sustainability of both BPI and Business Process Management (BPM). It is an important organizational training initiative because it involves the investment of valuable financial, human, information and other resources.

Large investments are made for Business Process Management (BPM) trainings across the globe as almost 80% of organizations around the world have implemented at least one Business Process Improvement (BPI) initiative (Towers & Schurter, 2005). The escalating level of investment made in

training and the accompanying expectations of that investment enhancing firm performance have combined to create greater urgency in the search for evidence and mechanisms to improve the transfer of training (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010).

Training transfer is the *degree to which trainees apply to their jobs the knowledge, skills, bahaviours, and attitudes they gained in training* (Holton, Bates, Seyler, & Cavalho, 1997, p.96). Training transfer has been identified as nearly as important as training itself (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). This is because only 10% of all training-related expenditures actually result in the transfer of recently acquired skills and knowledge back to the job (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; zu Knyphausen-Aufseß et al., 2009). Practitioners usually adopt a trial and error approach to manage training transfer, which can be costly and time-consuming and cannot deliver a desirable result (Cheng & Ho, 2001).

To date, BPI training transfer has not been explored empirically. This research examines BPI training transfer, and specifically examines the issues around training transfer. The driving research question is *"What are the challenges in BPI training transfer"?* In-depth interviews with 12 Business Process Management/ Improvement trainers and training decision makers from 08 organizations was performed and analyzed.

We provide two central contributions. First we present an empirically developed understanding of training transfer in a context of BPI, contributing to an understanding of the wider problem of training transfer and thereby providing an empirically grounded basis for further theorizing around the concept of training transfer. Second, our work informs the practice, specifically BPM practitioners on how best to respond to the issues which will arise in the transfer of training and on how best to overcome such issues.

We proceed as follows. The next section presents a discussion of relevant literature of BPM training, followed by training transfer literature, and details of the method that was taken in conducting the study. The next section presents the interpretation and findings of the study followed by the discussion, implications and the conclusions.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. BPI Training

A systematic literature review was conducted to understand the current status of literature on training in the domain of BPM[1]. Of an initial search of 90 papers, 64 papers, published between 1994 and 2015 were filtered and reviewed based on their relevance to answer the research question; *What has BPM literature mentioned of training people for BPM?* Of such 64 papers, only 4 papers had a primary focus on BPM training which clearly indicated the dearth of literature in the area. Eight main themes around BPM training were identified through the analysis of these 64 papers. They were; the importance of training, the types of training, the formats of training, the training roles, the recipients of training, the phases of training, the effectiveness of training and the issues of training. Upon further analysis of the issues of BPM training, the issues depicted in Figure 1 were identified,

Insert Figure 1 about here

Of the issues depicted above, the authors were interested in the transfer of BPM training to the workplace and hence the decision of exploring further into this by conducting a review on training transfer (see Section 2.2) and by way of an empirical study (see Section 4) on BPI training transfer.

2.2. Literature Review on Training Transfer

2.2.1. Definition of training transfer

As per Yamnill and McLean (2001), training is considered to be useless if it cannot be translated to performance. It is therefore important to understand how to support the transfer of training in organizations. According to Burke and Hutchins (2007), training transfer generally refers to the use of trained knowledge and skills back on the job. Holton, Bates, Seyfer, and Carvalho (1997) believe that it is the degree to which trainees apply to their jobs the knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes they gain in training. Baldwin and Ford (1988) complement the definition of training transfer emphasizing the need for the learned behaviour to be generalized to the real job context and

[1] This review is documented as a standalone manuscript, which is not referenced here (to abide by the blinded review process requirements). A summary overview is presented here, as this review aided in the contextualisation of the work presented in this paper.

maintained over a period of time on the job. Ford and Weissbein (1997) identifies transfer to be a complex, gradually emerging process taking place before, during and after training

2.2.2. The transfer problem

There is common belief in the training field that only a small amount of what is taught in a training program is actually transferred to the job - only 10% of what is trained is transferred (Ford, Yelon, & Billington, 2011) . J Kevin Ford and Weissbein (1997) observe that much of what is trained fails to be applied to the work setting and that it is a concern for organizational training. Although guidelines for measuring behavioural change are present, transfer is given scant attention (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Training professionals should consider multiple transfer strategies in combination (Blume et al., 2010). Blume et al. (2010) also say that the challenge is not how to build a bigger and more influential transfer support system; it is how to make transfer a more integral part of the existing organizational climate.

2.2.3. The model of training transfer

The most frequently cited model of training transfer is the one presented by Baldwin and Ford in 1988 (Blume et al., 2010). This is shown in Figure 2.

Insert Figure 2 about here

There also have been a few expansions and additions to their model. Yelon and Ford (1999) presented a model that goes beyond that of the Baldwin and Ford (1988) model by including two dimensions - the nature of the task performed (from closed to open) and the degree of autonomy (from highly supervised to completely autonomous). Yelon, Sheppard, Sleight, and ford (2004) came up with a model of the decision-making process leading to intention to transfer. The study of best practices of training transfer by Burke and Hutchins (2008) focused on the transfer influences of learner characteristics, trainer characteristics, design and development, and work environment; time period as before, during and after transfer; and the third transfer factor as stakeholder support as trainee, trainer, supervisor, peer and organization. Though several authors have tried to extend the

work of Baldwin and Ford (1988), it is clear that there is more to be explored and valid contributions to be in the area of training transfer.

2.2.4. The measurement of training transfer

Several measures have been used in studies to measure training transfer; such as learning and short term retention, self-reports of intentions to use trained knowledge and skills, supervisory and peer ratings, self-ratings, objective measures such as faster performance, the use of trained strategies, and the increased accuracy of performance (Ford and Weissbein,1997). Burke and Hutchins (2008) observe that the measurement of training transfer can be impacted by the time lag that exists between the training and the measurement of training transfer; based on who reports regarding the transfer, that is whether it is self or non-self; and based on whether it is the use of the training that is measured vs the effectiveness of training that is measured. Blume et al. (2010) discusses the use vs effectiveness measurement of training and say that transfer has typically been measured as either the use of a trained skill or the effectiveness in performing the trained skill. They recommend using both use and effectiveness measures obtained from trainees and others. Barnett and Ceci (2002) suggest that depending on what is being trained, it is more or less difficult and costly to attempt to measure transfer in a valid and reasonable way.

2.2.5. The gaps in training transfer literature

There is little research that sheds light on the dynamic nature of the transfer process (Kim, 2004). Bates (2003) say that we know little about the complexity of factors and processes that work together to facilitate or inhibit training transfer. As per Baldwin and Ford (1988), the limited number and the fragmented nature of the studies examining transfer are disturbing. Burke and Baldwin (1999) recognize that the understanding of real transfer issues is incomplete. Most existing authors have stopped at the point of identifying, describing, or measuring factors that may influence transfer without investigating how those factors might be effectively changed or managed (Holton & Baldwin, 2003). Due to all these reasons, it is important to look at the training transfer problem from a more holistic view point to capture the dynamism involved with the concept.

3. The Exploratory Study Design

12 in-depth interviews were conducted with BPM trainers and training decision makers for this study. We now briefly discuss important elements of data collection and analysis. The Appendixes provide more details on the data collection (Appendix 1), and coding (Appendix 2). Appendix 3 is the interview guide that was used for the interviews.

3.1. Selection of respondents for the study

Convenience sampling was used involving the selection of the most accessible respondents. It was ensured that the chosen participants were industry representatives from organizations which have implemented at least one BPI initiative and have conducted at least one BPI training programme for its employees. The respondents included, BPM trainers (internal to the organization), and employees at the top, middle or operational levels of an organization who have been involved in BPM training-related decision making. Further details of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

3.2. Data collection Methods

An interview guide (see appendix 3) was used for data collection which took a qualitative form and in-depth interviews with relevant stakeholders were utilized. The nature of the interviews was much more open-ended (Yin, 2009). A recording device was used during the interviews with prior permission from the interviewees. Two interviews were conducted via skype. The researcher felt a saturation of data at the latter stages of data collection (observed by the 8th interview conducted), indicating that data collection was sufficient for the analysis.

3.4. Data analysis Methods and Coding

NVivo 10 tool support was used in the transcribing and analyzing of data. The technique of thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was undertaken in analyzing the data. Coding took the form of a data

driven inductive analysis and took the form of in-vivo coding[2]. This was done by examining the data again and again and identifying key words and phrases relevant to the research that were shared by the interviewees. Table 2 shows examples of the 196 in-vivo codes that emerged in the analysis.

Insert Table 2 about here

Content in these 196 in-vivo codes were re-read twice to confirm their accuracy. These 196 in-vivo codes were then iteratively deduced using Axial coding techniques where eight broader themes were identified. Content in the individual codes and content within the emerging themes (cluster of codes) were re-evaluated for accuracy/reasonableness for being clustered in such a manner by the researcher.

4. Results

The findings under the eight themes identified will be discussed in the sections below.

4.1. Resistance

A clearly emerging theme from the data was resistance experienced by the BPM professionals/the trainers or the BPM training decision makers with regard to the BPI trainings which has an impact on the transfer of training (see Figure 3 and 4). There were different reasons and responses for this. This is illustrated in Table 3 with more details.

Insert Table 3 about here

The other seven themes that emerged from the data were communications, other organizational factors, politics, measurement and monitoring, individual factors, resources, and macro environmental factors.

4.2. Communications

The importance of asking the **right questions** in making the stakeholders realize the importance of the need to change and thereby the training transfer was explained. The use of **color, visual aid and fact sheets** in communications were also emphasised by the respondents. **Information sessions** in the form of interactive workshops are conducted to give general awareness on BPM/BPI. The care in the use of **language** was emphasised by many respondents. Some organizations used different

[2] In-vivo coding is the coding technique of "*assigning a label to a section of data, such as an interview transcript, using a word or short phrase taken from that section of the data*" (King, 2008).

terminology such as Business Process Transformation (Respondent A and L) and Business Process Discipline (Respondent H) rather than BPM or BPI. Keeping all forms of communication **simple and easy to understand** was emphasised by Respondents A, B, D, and L in ensuring high levels of training transfer**.**

4.3. Other organizational factors

Priorities of organizations affect the degree to which BPM/BPI training is emphasised on. **Organizational climate** is another factor that has an impact on the training for BPM/BPI initiatives. It was mentioned that when there is talk of financial difficulties that organizations face, no one within the organization has an aptitude to engage in BPM/BPI initiatives. The level of **organizational maturity** has an impact on the nature of training and the impact that training can have on BPM/BPI initiatives. A lot of BPM professionals and trainers aimed very high in the trainings where a lot of the operational stakeholders could not grasp the trainings at that level (Respondents A, J, K, D, G, and I). The **relationships maintained with other departments** of the organization such as the IT Department were mentioned as important to ensure training transfer. When the initiative comes as one that is **not mandatory** within the organization, trainings done on behalf of such initiatives tend to be taken lightly by the employees. The **time in between the training and the actual implementation** or start dates of the BPM/BPI initiative also has an impact on the degree to which the training is applied back on the job. **Lack of support and sponsorship** from various stakeholders such as the top management and the managers at the operations which will be affected by the BPM/BPI initiative for which the training is done is viewed to have a negative impact on the outcomes of training as per Respondent A, J, I, K, L, E, G, and H. The fact that there is no guarantee within the organization that the **next phases** of the BPM/BPI initiative will be implemented is also seen as a problem to sell the trainings around them to those at the operational levels. The **inward focus of BPM teams** within organizations was also seen as an issue in training employees. **Geographical dispersion** of business units, operations, or branches of organizations is a challenge for effective training for BPM/BPI initiatives. **Changes in the top positions** or people critical to the BPI initiative too were believed to have an impact on the trainings done for these initiatives.

4.4. Politics

Respondent G shared an incident where the senior manager in charge on the business line in which the BPI was to take place exerted influence on the BPM team who ran the training and came up with improved processes together with the employees in the business line in **fear** that the way in which the process has been run all this long would be **exposed** and that it would badly reflect on him. With increased **insecurities** as one is up in the hierarchy, and when one has built **empires** around him/her comes the need to look intelligent and the **fear to admit that they do not know** as per Respondent B. A lot of employees try to look good to their bosses and **manipulate information** for their own benefit, which might have an impact on the training and specifically in the transfer of training. Some managers in the business lines thought that they would **lose control and power** over their business lines and thereby used various political tactics to ensure their control over the business line which has impact on the amount of training transfer that occurs. A lot of employees do not agree with transferring the training as they **need to reverse the decisions** already made by them with regard to the business lines and thereby at times manipulate data or information which can have an impact on the BPI training. A lot of organizations **rewarded employees for being opportunistic and not open**. Respondent J shared instances where business line managers sent their **favourites** or employees who were the **least noisy** to the training as a tactic of being political. They believed that such employees will not be able to contribute to the training transfer efforts well enough after the training, so that the business line could then carry on the work in the usual fashion to his or her liking.

4.5. Measurement and monitoring

The lack of measurement of actual implementation and the **lack of accountability** for people to implement what they have learnt during the trainings was also seen as an issue in the transfer of training. Since post training activities are not measured, employees who undergo the training are not motivated to actually implement such training. The need for **internal control mechanisms** to ensure that what has been trained on is really implemented was also stressed. The importance of having Key Performance indicators (KPIs) associated to what is trained on was also seen as important.

A lot of Australian organizations are not very **mature** with BPM/BPI initiatives and therefore measurement of the implications of BPM/BPI training done is not done. The **outcomes of BPM/BPI initiatives themselves are not obvious** and therefore pose difficulty in measuring and monitoring the impact of BPM/BPI training.

4.6. Individual factors

Other personality factors such as **openness** and **willingness to change** were also seen as important. **Age** can be a barrier that hinders training and its application back on the job. Sometimes, the training content was not transferred back on to the jobs or operations because some did not like to be trained on specific things and how their jobs should be done by those younger or junior to them, which indicated **old school mentality** or **generational issues**.

4.7. Resources

The lack of dedicated resources for BPM/ BPI trainings was mentioned by the respondents. Problems in allocating the **financial resources** were also seen as a problem where sometimes a majority of the funds were allocated for process mapping where there were limited funds for training or the ultimate training transfer of the initiative. Gaining support from the executives in terms of resources was also seen as a challenge. The amount of **time** that the stakeholders for the BPM/BPI initiatives have to spend on the trainings is also a challenge. With time constraints, there was a tendency for stakeholders to place less priority on BPI/BPM training and the transfer of it. Some organizations also had less of **human resources** to run and facilitate BPI/BPM trainings.

4.8. Macro environment factors

Changes in governments tend to bring about changes to the operations and priorities of their organizations which may have an impact on the nature of BPM/BPI initiatives that they then have to handle which in turn can have an impact on what trainings they conduct or do not conduct. Sometimes when change happens BPM/BPI initiatives are forgotten altogether and the effort that they put into training people no longer is important or needs to be applied.

Regulations and **change in legislation** was a factor that sometimes necessitated the implementation of BPM/BPI initiatives. Trainings were easy to conduct and well received by the stakeholders if it is mandatory to be implemented. In such cases the training transfer too tended to be positive. The degree of training and the level at which it is done was also determined by the level of **national productivity**. Going for sophisticated methods of training for BPM/BPI in countries like Australia was seen as useless because such levels of sophistication are not facilitated by the operations to be implemented or practised in the organization as in Europe where BPM is more mature or in the USA where national productivity levels are higher.

5. Discussion

A lot of the trainings in Australian organizations for BPM were targeted at facilitating the implementation of a BPI initiative rather than at the organizational wide practice of BPM (see Section 1 for definitions of BPM and BPI). Through the interviews, it was clear that the trainings took various forms from workshops to informal discussions to technical in-class trainings and on-the-job trainings, interviews, quizzes, train the trainer sessions and the like. The type of the training was largely dependent on the context of the organization and the nature of the BPI initiative.

Two groups of stakeholders were visible; one, being those who were sponsor the initiative which normally included the top management of the organization who wants the BPI initiative implemented and the BPM professionals who might work in a team within the organization who conducts and organizes various trainings on behalf of these initiatives and plays a facilitative role. The other group is seen as the individuals at whom the trainings are directed and who are from the business lines and will be affected by the BPI initiative.

Through the interview data analysed through the Matrix Query feature available in NVivo, clear patterns could be observed among the seven key themes and a quantification of it was possible which helped in identifying the main issue/issues that emerge from the data. This is presented in Figure 3 and Figure 4 which illustrates the number of times that the issue was being mentioned during the 12 interviews.

Insert Figure 3 about here

Insert Figure 4 about here

When analysing the data within the factor of resistance, it emerged that resistance had the greatest impact on training transfer. The interview data clearly highlighted two main aspects, 1) all the issues categorised under the eight main themes had the largest bearing on the transfer of training and 2) of the issues mentioned resistance was the most prominent issue faced. Further analysis of the findings reveal that these resistive behaviours occur as the business line employees prefer stability in their job roles over the change that BPI initiatives bring about. This in turn affects the degree to which they apply the learnings from the trainings back into the BPI initiative. This can be seen as a tension of change and stability between these two groups. The BPM professions or the champions of these BPI initiatives advocate change whereas the business lines prefer stability. This is illustrated in Figure 5 below,

Insert Figure 5 about here

It could also be seen that the two different groups of BPM stakeholders adopted different tactics of coercion, control, coordination, collaboration and politics to deal with this situation.

6. Limitations of the Study

Though these eight themes were being analysed in isolation, there can be a lot of interrelationships which need further analysis and exploration (eg: resistance and politics). This needs to be taken into consideration in the next phases of research. There are issues with respondent triangulation as only BPM/BPI training decision makers and trainers were interviewed for data collection, where interesting insights could have been obtained from the perspective of BPI trainees and employees within the business lines. Also the respondents were sourced from Brisbane (10 respondents) and Canberra (2 respondents) which may not reflect the views of BPM professionals in other parts of Australia or the world at large.

7. Implications

This study provides initial understanding about the tensions of change-stability which will arise in the transfer of training. This would thereby enhance the current knowledge on the wider problem of training transfer as it has not been explored from this perspective before. An analysis of training

transfer within a BPI environment will also be a novel contribution to the field of BPM. It would contribute towards both the disciplines. These insights can assist BPM professionals to make training and training transfer of BPM/BPI initiatives more effective.

8. Conclusions

In this study, we contribute to a deeper understanding on training transfer of BPI initiatives. It provides empirical evidence on the issues around BPI training transfer. These findings assist an understanding about the resistance that occurs among different stakeholder groups within a BPI environment and the different responses that they demonstrate which needs further exploration into. While our study provides unique actionable contributions, we still regard its findings as nascent. We have provided some pieces to the puzzle of BPI training transfer, but the puzzle is far from solved.

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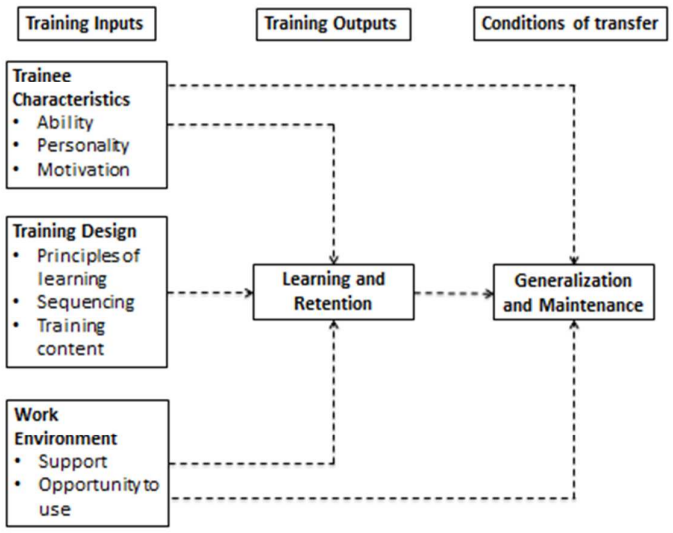
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Figures

Figure 1: Issues related to BPM/BPI training as per the Structured Literature Review



Figure 2: A model of the training transfer process



Source: Baldwin and Ford (1988)

Figure 3: Number of respondents who mentioned each factor to be an issue

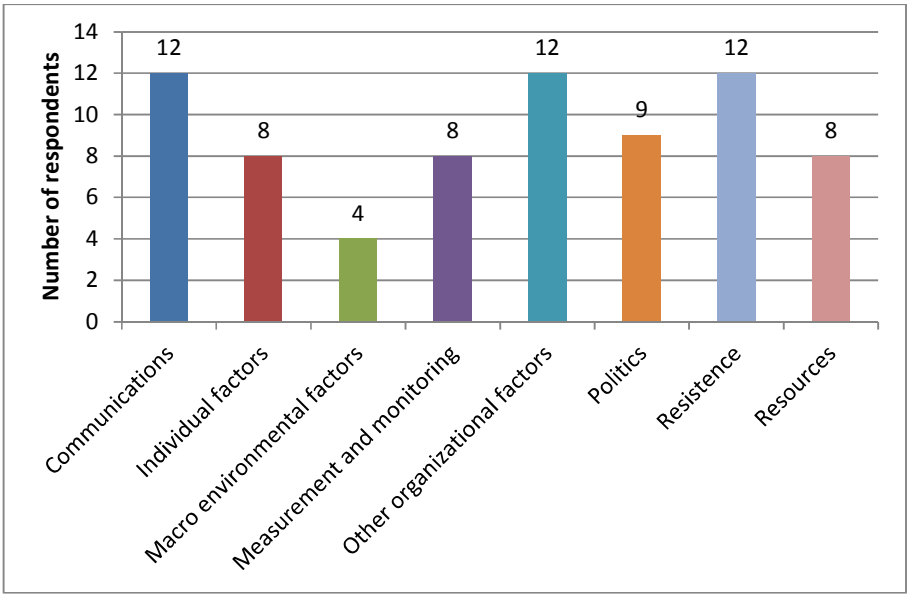


Figure 4: Frequency of the issues being mentioned

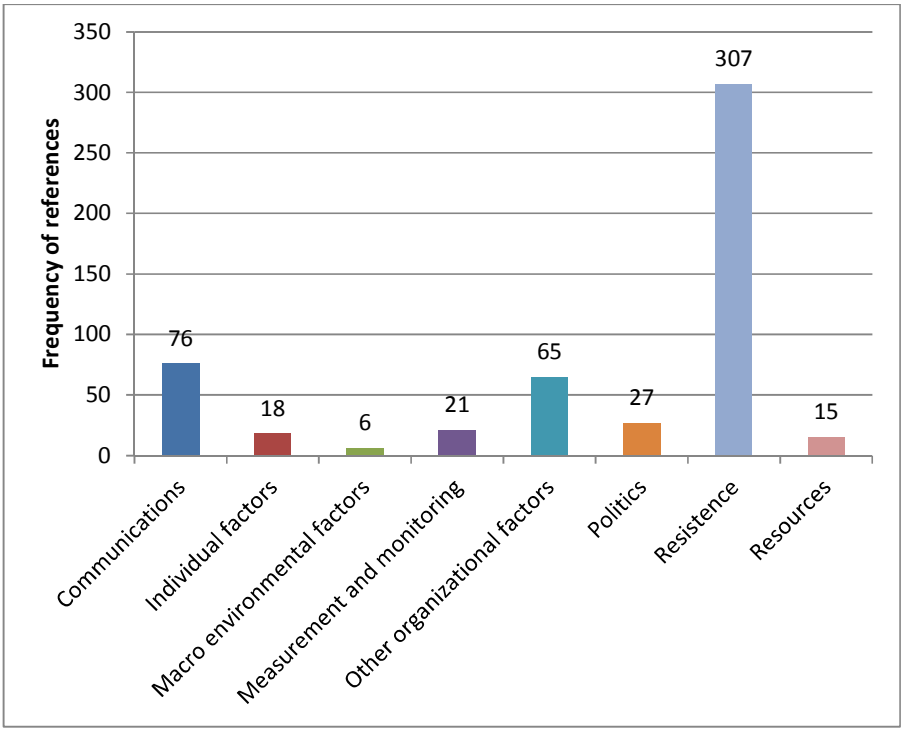
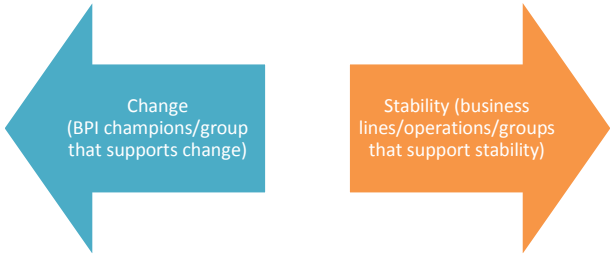


Figure 5: The observed tension in BPI training transfer



Tables

Table 1 - Details of the respondents and interviews held

Interviewee name	Role of the respondent	Details of respondent	Time taken for the interview
Respondent A	BPM training decision maker	Has worked as a BPM consultant for two large BPM projects in the public sector	1 hour 30 minutes and 43 seconds
Respondent B[3]	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Has worked as a trainer at a bank, and then in BPM at two private banks. Currently works in BPM for a private bank	54 minutes and 36 seconds
Respondent C[4]	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Works in BPM for a large public organization	45 minutes and 03 seconds
Respondent D	BPM trainer	Has worked a as a business analyst in BPM for many private sector organizations. Currently works as a BPM consultant for a large public sector organization	32 minutes and 02 seconds
Respondent E	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Works in BPM for a large public organization	30 minutes and 45 seconds
Respondent F	BPM trainer and BPM training	Has worked for BPM in process improvement in an	59 minutes and 27 seconds

[3] Respondent "B" and "G" are from the same organization
[4] Respondent "C", "D" and "E" are from the same organization

	decision maker	organization in tertiary education sector and is currently in BPM at a private bank	
Respondent G	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Has worked for a number of organizations in the US, Australia, Japan and India as a BPM consultant. Currently works for BPM at a bank	54 minutes and 43 seconds
Respondent H	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Is a six sigma black belt. Has worked in process improvement for 3 private sector organizations	57 minutes and 48 seconds
Respondent I	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Works for BPM in a large public sector organization	1 hour 17 minutes and 38 seconds
Respondent J	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Has initially been in IT and then in BPM for two private sector organizations.	1 hour 43 minutes and 59 seconds
Respondent K	BPM trainer and BPM training decision maker	Has worked as a BPM consultant for many BPI initiatives in the public sector	1 hour 16 minutes and 36 seconds
Respondent L	BPM training decision maker	Works for BPM in a private bank	46 minutes and 55 seconds

Table 2 - Examples of In-vivo codes

Examples of in-vivo codes	**Sample quotes**
Old school mentality	"the biggest thing that I found in this org that we work is that there is a lot of *old school mentality*, and it's also this generational thing, I'm not the youngest person, but we have quite a diverse age group working, it is very much of people, it is the way I've worked all this long, so why should I even contemplate improving what I do, because it's the way it's done" (Respondent I)
Politics	"when you are engaging with them directly you don't see it that much, when you turn your back, that's when the *politics* happens" (Respondent J)
Piggyback	"don't even use the word BPM, *piggyback* until it is already done" (Respondent J)
Self-interests	"Yes, absolutely, and their own *self-interest* were partly, when I think about the one who did not want a process manager, he had a very strong belief, but I did not understand this for a very long time until somebody just happened to say to me that it's because of this (laughs), he had a strong belief that managers should manage, there shouldn't be someone else managing process improvement" (Respondent A)
Rewarded for hiding stuff	"there is a threshold that most Australian organizations are below, where managers are actually *rewarded for hiding stuff*" (Respondent J)
Maturity	"so that's what you will find in Australian organizations, and really low *maturity*, so when you come in and talk of process improvement , optimization and management and standardization, you are one or two levels above where you are operating at,, and

	most people do not understand" (Respondent J)
Fact sheets	"we have done a *fact sheet* around BPM" (Respondent I)

Table 3: Details around the theme of Resistance

Theme/Sub theme	Sample supporting quotes
Trainee reactions to BPI trainings	
too busy	*Most people would go, "errr, NO!! Sorry I'm busy that day doing my work because there is more work than all of us can do. We are very very busy. We can't afford the time to do that* (Respondent J)
waste of their time	*They also think it's a waste of time. "Why should I spend my time sitting with you to document what I do every single day? I know what I do every single day"* (Respondent I)
various excuses	*We have a lot of people who say, "ahh, I've got a meeting" and off they go, and you're missing the basic information and sometimes it's almost like they don't take it seriously* (Respondent C)

Possible reasons for resistance	
Fear of losing one's job	*People are threatened by the idea of talking about what work they do because they think it's going to result in them losing their job* (Respondent J). *A lot of middle managers look at BPM and go, "ohh, you are coming to tell me what I'm doing wrong and then you are either going to fire me or fire half of my staff* (Respondent H).
Loss of autonomy	*It did not so much threaten their job but I think it threatened how they saw themselves in their job, you know, like they had autonomy and now they are being told that they were doing things one way, there is no longer that autonomy and it can make people feel like they don't have autonomy* (Respondent A).
difficulty in communicating the value	*One of the biggest challenges is trying to show value. The value thing is often underestimated and it's hard to show it in a cost benefit analysis. The reduction of risk, operational risk, that's really hard to quantify* (Respondent G).
disagreements between groups	*Disagreements between groups that work in an interdependent manner can also pose challenges during training specially ones that are run as workshops* (Respondent A)
need to break their habits	*It's slightly breaking the habits of what they used to do because if somebody has been doing a job for five years or 10 or 20 or 30 or even a year, and if that's how they have actually, you know, they structure their day, its' very difficult for them to change* (Respondent B).
Lack of understanding	*They need to have the broader understanding of what is BPM, what is the benefit, how it links to the org chart, capabilities, systems, roles. But they might not know that there is a whole bigger picture to it so sometimes a bit of understanding is important* (Respondent D).

silo thinking	*Sometimes because they don't understand the wider view of things that work,, they are very concentrated on their processes* (Respondent C). *They look at it from a very single minded perspective rather than a holistic perspective. The resistance was because everybody viewed this as an issue from their perspective, so a business area is going to be impacted. Nobody viewed it from the organization's perspective* (Respondent F)
Tactics used to overcome resistance	

Creating awareness	*We probably spend the first two hours discussing what BPM is, what the theory behind it is, where it came from, what's the purpose of undertaking it in the department? How we do it and why we are in existence* (Respondent C).
provision of evidence	*A lot of people go about improving processes and training for such with no real evidence base that the current process doesn't work and that it doesn't deliver and no real evidence base that what they are suggesting or what they are proposing is going to be any better* (Respondent K). *We have to come up with a business case. How much benefit is it actually attached to it? If it's in their own self-interest and if there is a benefit attached to it, it might be ok, but then if it is not it's very difficult to make it happen* (Respondent L).
Communicating the **benefits**	*It is important to show them how they do their current business, and then if this was the change that was to be implemented then how would that impact their business, and what would be the benefit to them* (Respondent F).
communication of **design principles**	*We would actually show them the design principles which were attached to the customer outcomes that we wanted to achieve at the beginning of the meeting and make sure that they remember what they were and then make sure everything is tied back to that* (Respondent L).
Communicating the **employer's right**	*Sometimes you have to just say well, you know, that's a nice attitude to have but you also have to accept that your employer has a right to actually change the process. They have a right to do things differently and you are just going to have to learn to deal with that* (Respondent K).
collaborative approach	*Get the right people in the room, usually just walk the process, draw the picture and before you finish it people are going "oh my god I can't believe we are doing it like this this is so obvious to us now"* (Respondent J).

own it	*they take it back to the jobs and drive the implementation because they are the ones that have actually come up with the ideas (Respondent K)*
sharing the ideas and the problems	*We never lost that connection, so every two weeks we had a group meeting with a team of people who were embedded in the business. They shared their challenges in the business and we shared our challenges on the project. We got ideas coming from both sides and we really had a good communication* (Respondent L).
allowing the business people and the trainees to make the important decisions	*There were no decisions on our own. They were always involved* (Respondent L).
learning together	*We guide people to find it out themselves* (Respondent B)
Supporting the business lines	*When you roll something new out it takes a bit of time, but we did have a lot of sessions that we offered to the business prior to running it live to get everybody ready to go. That really helped* (Respondent L).
Follow up	*We had quality checks post implementation to make sure that the people were applying what they have learnt in working on the new system* (Respondent L)
formally document	*We formally document what has been recommended at the trainings or the workshops and share it with the trainees and the employees of the business lines* (Respondent I)
mandating	*mandating the use of tools after tool training specially for the larger BPI initiatives would be a good way to make sure the learnings form the training are actually used by the trainees* (Respondent C)
assignment of roles	*the assignment of roles such as change managers for the BPI initiatives will ensure that the training is transferred back on the job because the change*

	manager for the initiative will have the responsibility to make sure that the training does actually happen (Respondent L)
Setting meaningful goals	*Setting meaningful goals to the trainees at the very beginning of the trainings and relating them to the BPI initiative was seen as important* (Respondent L)
importance of **selling** the initiative	*My experience has been the least directly that you sell BPM, the easier it is to sell, the more directly that you sell BPM, the harder it is* (Respondent J). *I'm sometimes bit of like a salesman. "This is the best thing of all times, this is awesome"* (Respondent I).
Listening well	*it is important for the trainers and the training decision makers to understand why people might resist or not apply what they learnt in the training before, during and after the training and address them* (Respondent K)
train for incremental changes	*need for quick small implementation to make people see the change and then be enthusiastic toward it* (Respondent A)
Continued **support and engagement** of the trainers	*It is important to engage people in that journey and help them understand what they should be doing on a continual basis* (Respondent A). *You go and implement it, if you need a hand, come and speak, we are happy to help* (Respondent I).
reassurance and a safe environment	*The fact that mistakes will be accepted during the training transfer process by the trainees ought to be communicated to the trainees* (Respondent G) *They also need to feel safe and not threatened at all* (Respondent B).

Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Further details on data collection

Approximately 30 individuals from the Queensland Chapter of the BPM Roundtable (a community of practice group of BPM professionals) who had close collaborations with the researcher's university and research group were contacted for potential participation for this exploratory study through the co-authors' network. They were all BPM professionals involved in BPM training or training decision making. Any shortfall from the number of participants expected for this study was sourced through the technique of snowball sampling (Suri, 2011), where information was sought from the respondents about details of other "information-rich cases" (in this case, individuals who have done BPM training or have been engaged in BPM training decision making) in the field. Potential participants who were introduced in such a manner were contacted for participation in the study.

The organizations that the participants represented were both from the public and private sectors. Effort was also made to ensure that the organizations represent different industries. Such diversity in the organizations gave the researcher a broader understanding of the differences that contextual factors of the organizations can potentially pose of the issues of BPM/BPI training and thereby greater ability to generalize. The respondents were selected based on availability for discussion where they were in a position to spend at least 40-60 minutes in an interview with the researcher.

Appendix 2 – Details on coding

High level coding guidelines were derived before the actual coding started to set the ground rules of coding (Bandara, Furtmuller, Gorbacheva, Miskon, & Beekhuyzen, 2015) and included aspects such as follows:

- Coding was done using the most relevant text fragments
- Labels of codes were done using in-vivo coding
- The same content can be coded under several categories/nodes[5]

[5] A node holds all the data coded under a certain category (Bandara, 2006).

- The thoughts that emerge during the process will be captured manually in the form of notes (which will be stored as annotations and memos within NVivo)

While reading the interview transcripts, whenever a phrase/word that was deemed appropriate to become a node was recognized, it was in-vivo coded. Any other relevant text/excerpts that further reading came across which has similar meaning or association to any already existing node were placed in such codes/nodes. This resulted in 196 initial in-vivo codes. Content in these codes were re-read twice for better understanding and accuracy for assigning such text into the particular code. These 196 codes were then iteratively deduced to many different clusters, through inter-coder corroborations with the second coder, where eight broader themes were identified in a meaningful way. Content in the individual codes and content within the emerging themes (cluster of codes) were re-evaluated for accuracy/reasonableness for being clustered in such a manner firstly by the first author, which was later verified by the second author to ensure inter-coder reliability. Though NVivo helped immensely in the transparency, completeness, presentation, and reliability (Bandara et al., 2015) of this review, the synthesis and interpretation had to be done with care and involved a lot of iterative and time consuming manual interpretive analysis.

Appendix 3 – Interview guide

Interview Questions Guide
1. What sort of process improvement initiatives has taken place at your organization?
2. How have people been involved in them? *Prompt:* what levels of people *Prompt:* their role in the improvement initiatives
3. What have been the positives and negatives around people *Prompt:* What has been their reaction *Prompt:* Their degree of enthusiasm

4. How did you benefit for the positive involvement of people
5. How was the organization affected by the negative reaction from people?
6. What has been the involvement of the Human Resource Management department in BPM/BPI initiatives?
7. Have you conducted any training on BPM?
8. What sorts of trainings were done?
9. How did you decide on the competencies that people should be trained on?
10. Who conducted these trainings?
11. What is your evaluation of the trainings provided?
12. What would you think as issues with regard to training people on BPM?