



THE MEDIATING OF TRAINING TRANSFER BETWEEN PRE TRAINING FACTORS AND JOB PERFORMANCE

Dr. Tareq Fayeq Obaid

Dr. Zainon M.S

Dr. Bilal Mohammad Eneizan

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kalsom Abd. Wahab

Graduate Business School, Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Kajang, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: bilalmomane@gmail.com

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the pre-training factors relationship with the job performance with the mediating effect of training transfer. One of the most critical challenges facing the developing countries is the training and development of its people, employees are the one the critical strategic asset in any organization. It has often been argued that pre-training factors has a significant role in improving the employee job performance, and what is the role of training transfer as mediator on the relationship, unfortunately, within Palestine context there are ambiguity in previous research. In order to judge the work performance of employee, the most common management practices employed, all over the world, is performance assessment. Thus this study has analyzed the pre-training factors; training design, trainee characteristics, work environment and organizational commitment relationship with training transfer and job performance of academic staffs in Palestinian higher educational institute. In this study 300 academic staffs from different universities in Palestine were taken as a sample and has found the positive association of training design, trainee characteristics and work environment with training transfer and job performance significantly. However, organizational commitment was not associate with the training transfer and job performance.

Keywords: Pre-Training factors, Training Transfer, Job performance, Higher Education, Middle-east.

Introduction

The dynamics of global competition and technological innovations are applying on business is more important than the past to make it to learn and adapt companies to increase the organizational performance (Tan, 2006). Whether it is private or public, employees in an organization are the critical strategic assets. An organization might act successfully and remain highly competitive within their domain if they continuously improve their employee's skills and knowledge.

The skills or expertise and performance of an employee in the workplace are key important factors to the organization to become successful. Yamnill (2001) stated that numerous organizations around the world spending a vast amount of money to train the employee, and believing that training will increase the performance of employees and improve the productivity of firms. Priem & Butler (2001) asserted that investing in human capital resulted value to firms such as firm performance can be increased and consequently a firm can enhance sustainable competitive advantage over its competitors. Organizations are endeavoring to expand frequently invest in professional development to escalation its employee job performance (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). Thus, organizations invest in training and development to its employees to improve productivity and protect their human capital (Kola-Olusanya, 2013; Lepak & Snell, 1999). One way to improve and support professional development is training method.

In recent studies it has found that In fact, typical estimates of skills lost due to poor transfer of training range from 66% to 90% (Sookhai & Budworth, 2010). In addition, only 21 percent of interested organizations assess the level of transfer of training of their employees (Lim & Nowell, 2014). Frequently associated when the employees can use what they have learned at the workplace (Bouzguenda, 2014). Due to huge investment organizations thus suffers if the employees are not able to transfer the learned skills and knowledge. The reason behind the lack of transfer from the training this paper aims to investigate the pre-training factors and the role of training transfer to enhance job performance of employees.

Literature Review

Job Performance

Many definitions of job performance in previous studies have been anticipated (Campbell, 1990; Murphy, 1989). Job performance can be denoted to measurable actions, behavior and outcomes of an employee engage in and work towards to achieve his own goal or task that are linked with and contribute to organizational goals. Several studies has been confirmed and evidence that training can increase the productivity of an individual and also found a positive impact on the productivity of individuals which in turns increase organizational performance (Dumas & Hanchane, 2010; Mohammed Turab, & Casimir, 2015; Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008). The benefits of training for individuals include up-dated skills and knowledge, and improved effectiveness to the job and increase their performance (Nikandrou, Brinia, & Bereri, 2009).

Transfer of Training

The transfer of training defined in previous studies as the degree to which trainees can apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in training to his/her own job context (Blume, Ford, Baldwin, & Huang, 2010; Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001). Transfer can take place when an employee's learned behavior from the training is generalized to his own job setting and sustained over a period of time (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010; Brinkerhoff & Apking, 2001; Wexley & Latham, 1981).

Burke and Hutchins (2008) findings suggested that work climate impact was (49%), the trainer's role 48%, and design and delivery interventions of training was impact of 46%, and learner characteristics impact was 2%. Furthermore, Burke and Hutchins (2008) found in that study the role of supervisors implied (25%) and the trainees (23%) had implied significantly over the training during (48%), after (32%), and before (12%).

Pre Training Factors

Trainee Characteristics

According to Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Holton (1996), trainee characteristics such as cognitive ability, self-efficacy, and transfer motivation, perceived utility/value, and the profession as a trainee career is important to consider training transfer research. Thinking, ideas, and conclusions of mental functions of an individual about any given task are considered as cognitive ability (Hale, 2002). However, Baldwin and Ford (1988) Argued that understanding the impact of the training venue, the training transfer is not based on a trainee's understanding (Blume et al., 2010).

Training Design

Training is a critical part of training effectiveness and also give effect to learn an assessment of knowledge acquired, skills improved, or attitudes changed and design of a training for improvement is the main focus (Bouzguenda, 2014; Robin & Cheramie, 2010; Saks, & Belcourt, 2006). According to Bates (2005) training material should have reasonable content with the work of the training material, and said to be relevant.

Work Environment

Work environment impacts on training transfer and it plays an important role in training transfer (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). A training program might implemented with an excellent design and delivery strategy but lacking of an appropriate environment that supports trained tasks then it can be considered the training program has little value or outcome (Grossman & Salas, 2011).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment considered as a kind of emotional and psychical attachment to the organization (Mahdi, Mohd, & Almsafir, 2014). Organizational commitment is one of the most frequently examined forms of psychological attachment and an effective link to the organization with encouraging decisions to work and remain committed to continue work with the organization (Porter, Steers & Mowday, 1974). Many organizations striving to increase employee loyalty towards organizations (Morrow, 2011). Rapidly growing the importance of training, using training as a competitive tool to compete with their rivals. Regarding the training and training transfer which have a positive impact on employee and organizational goals and employees should be committed toward organization to give input from the training to enhance organizational goal.

Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis

This study adapted training transfer model from Baldwin and Ford (1988) study. A well-known framework for the transfer problem put forward by Baldwin and Ford (1988) posited that transfer is a function of three factors, namely, trainee characteristic (or individual factors), work environment (or environmental factors) and training design factors (or situational factors). The extant literature on training transfer has very little value to practitioners to maximize positive transfer. According to their suggestion, early empirical research studying the effects of individuals' factors (e.g. trainee ability, personality, and motivation) on transfer of training are very few. Uma, and Susan (2012) reviewed the extant literature argued that the factors affect the training can be learnt under the following: trainee characteristics, intentions to transfer and reactions. Training design and delivery mechanisms. Work environment, and situational and organizational factors. This study thus investigated how pre-training factors effect training transfer and job performance.

Figure 1 represented the adapted model of this study.

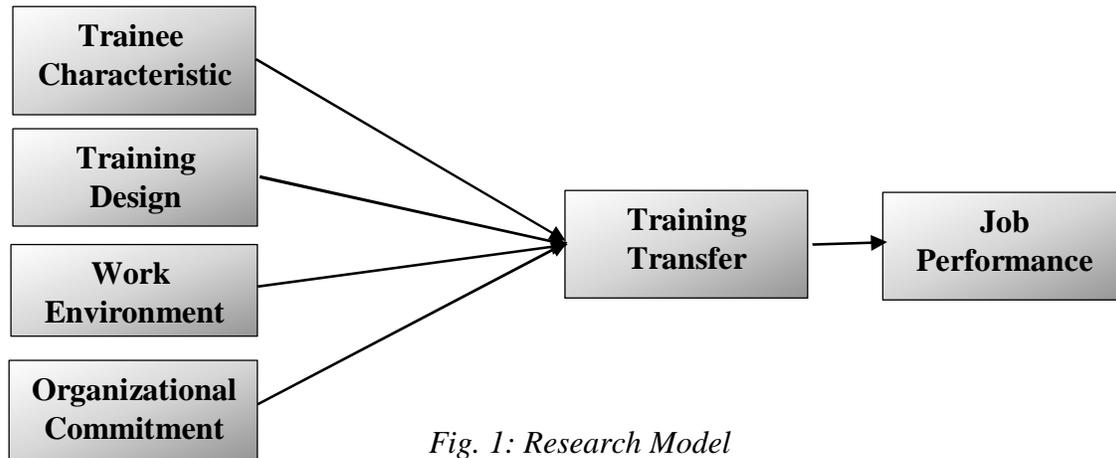


Fig. 1: Research Model

Training Design

According to Kontoghiorghes (2002) successful training transfer can take place within an organization if the training program relevant to the job of an employee. Success of a training program, Nikandrou et al. (2009) suggested that planning of the training program is very important and therefore for training transfer at work as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills (Gauld & Miller, 2004). From this discussion this study intend to test the following hypothesis:

H1: There is a positive relationship between training design and job performance when training transfer mediate the relationship.

Trainee Characteristics

There have been several attempts to study transfer of training at the individual level. It is widely accepted that trainee characteristics play a powerful role in the transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Some argue that such characteristics account for the bulk of variability in training outcomes (van der Klink et al., 2001). Previous research found that the characteristics of the trainee's personality directly affect the training process and training transfer (Warr et al., 1999). Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H2: There is a positive relationship between trainee characteristics and job performance when training transfer mediate the relationship.

Work environment variables have only received increased attention in the last two decades, much to the literature's detriment since this group of variables is significantly influential for enhancing transfer (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). The effectiveness of a training program is largely dependent on the trainees' ability to use their newly acquired competencies on the job (Salas et al., 2006). Thus it is important to determine whether or not trainee's exhibit learned behaviors once they return to the work setting (Grossman & Salas, 2011). If the work environment does not provide a means to support the transfer of new knowledge, this knowledge will soon be forgotten by the trainee and become irrelevant. Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H3: There is a positive relationship between work environment and job performance when training transfer mediate the relationship.

In the work of aforementioned researchers, commitment has been considered as the one of the most important aspects to recognize on the job behaviors of an employee. There are limited number of studies have been conducted to explore different perspectives of organizational commitment. Most of these studies have mainly concern with the attitudinal perspective. It was found that this perspective is one of the highly mentioned variables between behavioral approaches. The more presence of employee commitment occurs, the more job performance, organizational citizenship behavior, organizational productivity, discretionary effort, continuance commitments, levels of psychological climate, and customer service will be enhanced (Christian et al., 2011; Bakker & Leiter, 2010; Rich et al., 2010). Therefore, the following hypothesis is suggested:

H4: There is a positive relationship between work environment and job performance when training transfer mediate the relationship.

Method

As the study being quantitative in nature, a sample was selected from the larger population of employees in higher education using purposive sampling. The data were collected from academic staffs of higher education in Palestine, particularly public universities. This study adapted several scales from past studied to measure the constructs. For instance, job performance measure was evaluated by a scale developed by Pearce and Porter (1986), and used by Hochwarter et al. (1999). Training transfer by Xiao (1996). A total of 331 staffs from higher educational institutes in Palestine had been participated in this research. After collecting back the questionnaire, a total of 300 usable questionnaire were used in this analysis.

Result

Following the two-stage model-building process for applying structural equation modeling (SEM) (Hair et al., 1998; Hoyle & Panter, 1995; Jöreskog & Sörbom, 1996), the data analysis is conducted in two steps: first, using confirmatory factor analysis, and second, analyzing the hypotheses with structural equation models. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) seeks to determine if the number of factors and the loadings of measured (indicator) variables on them conform to what is expected on the basis of pre-established theory.

CFA Model for Pre-Training Factors was made up of 25 items to measure for four first-order constructs namely: Training Design, Trainee characteristics, Work Environment, Organizational Commitment, training transfer and Job performance. As shown in Table the AVE was above .15 1 off 0.5 for all items and parcel indicators as suggested by Nunnally & Bernstein, 199-the cut4, ranged from 0.550 to 0.684. The composite reliability values exceeded the recommended value of 0.6 for all constructs as recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1988), ranging from 0.836 to 0.908. The Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.837 to 0.907 which were above the threshold of 0.7 as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994). Result of CFA has been presented in Table 1.

Table1: CFA for Study Variables

Variables	Reliability	AVE	CR
Training Design	0.862	0.561	0.864
Trainee characteristics	0.854	0.542	0.855
Work Environment	0.837	0.505	0.836
Organizational Commitment	0.844	0.522	0.845
Training Transfer	0.886	0.563	0.885
Job Performance	0.907	0.586	0.908

An examination of goodness-of-fit indices indicates that the research structural adequately fitted the data: $\chi^2 = 271.028$, $df = 163$, $p=0.000$, $GFI = 0.926$, $AGFI = 0.885$, $CFI = 0.971$, $TLI = 0.959$, $IFI = 0.972$, $RMSEA = 0.047$ and $\chi^2/df = 1.663$. Structural model has been presented in the Figure 1 and in Table 2 result has been presented.

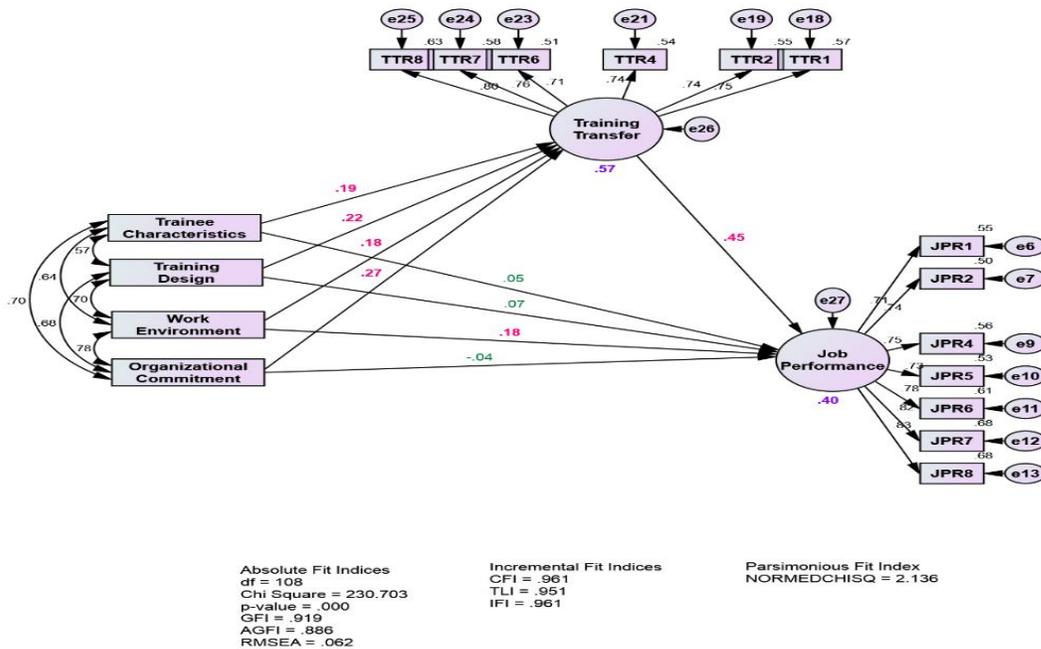


Figure 1: Structural Model of the study

To test the hypothesis mediation analysis was used through to determine the indirect effect of pre-training factors; Training Design (TDE), Trainee characteristics (TCH), Work Environment (WEN), Organizational Commitment (OCO), as independent variables with the Job Performance (JPR) as dependent variable and Training transfer as mediating variable. The result has revealed that there was a significant relationship between Pre-Training Factors and Job Performance (JPR) in the absence of Training Transfer (TTR), with the standardized total effect of 0.39 and the P-value of 0.001. Thus, the total effect of Pre-Training Factors as IV on Job Performance (JPR) as DV without the inclusion of Training Transfer (TTR) as M was statistically significant at 0.01 level.

This relation was still significant even after inclusion Training Transfer (TTR) into the model, with the standardized direct effect of 0.25 and the P-value of 0.05. Thus, the direct effect of Pre-Training Factors as IV on Job Performance (JPR) as DV with the inclusion of Training Transfer (TTR) as M was statistically significant at 0.05 level. Training design with the training transfer effect employee job performance, it means that training design is one of the important factor for training transfer which in turn can enhance the employee performance (0.13*). As result shows that transfer of training mediate fully the relationship between training design and job performance. This result also has demonstrated that trainee characteristics and job performance are related through the training transfer (0.12*). Work-environment has significant effect on Job performance with the mediation effect of training transfer (0.16*). However, our result has demonstrated that the relationship of organizational commitment and job performance through the mediation effect of training transfer is not significant.

Table 2: Direct and Indirect Effect of Study Variables

	TDE	TCH	WEN	OCO
Total Effect of IV on DV without M (path a)	.12*	.10	.23*	.01
Direct Effect of IV on DV with M (path a')	0.07	0.05	.17**	-0.06
Indirect Effect of IV on DV through M (path bc)	.05*	.04*	.06*	.07**
Effect of IV on M (path b)	.13*	.12*	.16*	.19*
Effect of M on DV (path c)	.36**	.36**	.36**	.36**
Mediation Effect	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Degree of Mediation	Full	Full	Partial	---

**Contribution is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed); **. Contribution is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Note: TDE= training design, TCH= trainee characteristics, WEN= work environment, OCO=organizational commitment, DV= job performance, M = Training Transfer

Discussion and Conclusion

This study was designed to investigate the indirect relationships of pre-training factors (training design, trainee characteristics, work environment, organizational commitment) variables for transfer of training to enhance the job performance of employee. The results of this study indicate that the four pre training factors are not related to job performance with the mediating effect of transfer of training.

Design of training is an important factor of training transfer and has a significant influence on learning and, ultimately improve the trainee's performance. This study has found the positive association of training design, training transfer and job performance among academic staffs in higher education institutes in Palestine. Previous research had found that training design associate with the transfer of training (Keith & Frese, 2008; Taylor et al., 2005).

Findings revealed that first hypothesis of this study has significantly supported where a positive relationship between trainee characteristics and job performance exist when training transfer mediate the relationship. This findings in line with the previous study by Gegenfurtner, Festner, Gallenberger, Lehtinen, and Gruber (2009) found that trainee's attitude towards the training

content can predict the motivation to use the content in the workplace. Most all of trainees attending were selected by their command to attend these training programs based on their motivation to do and perform the job. Moreover, Tziner et al. (2007) found that the the trainee's intention to transfer training, experience and learning style are all considered as significant prerequisites of successful training transfer. Foxon (1993) stated that trainee's transfer intention is related to the likelihood that he/she performs positively after training.

Work environment is found significant to transfer training and enhance job performance. Result shows that training transfer has significant mediation effect between work environment and job performance. Trainees with a promising attitude toward their organization and workplace can gain more than those with a negative attitude (Goldstein, 1986)

In this study it has found that relationship of organizational commitment and job performance with the mediation effect of training transfer is not significant. Previous studies also found organizational commitment and training transfer not related, but in some studies found the significant relationship between them (Facteau, 1995; Tesluk et al., 1995) Training transfer depends on other factors as well. Commitment of employee towards organization to transfer the learned knowledge and improve the performance very much depend on organizational support such as supervisor's support. Supervisor support is a crucial variable that impacts training, implementation intention and training transfer (Ford et al., 1992; Huczynski & Lewis, 1980). According to Ford et al. (1992), supervisor's support contributes to the employees' willingness to transfer obtained skills following the training completed. Literature reveals various situational, contextual and trainee variables that influence the complex transfer process (Laker, 1990).

The role of training for the improvement of employee's skills and knowledge, and performance has long been acknowledged, in academic staffs in Palestine were exposed to training to acquire technical and instructional knowledge, skills and attitudes to carry out their tasks at their respective workplaces. Performance in the organizations can be geared up by training, this notion is held by a number of researchers among whom are Hill and Lent (2006), Satterfield and Hughes (2007), Kraiger (2002), Arthur et al. (2003). In their studies made it clear that training showed an overall positive effect on job-related behaviors or performance.

There are several studies had been conducted for understanding training transfer factors, however, this study extends the understanding of pre-training factors of the training transfer and job performance on the academic staff of higher education institutions in Palestine in the Middle East and in the overall education industry in general.

An important theoretical contribution of this study is that it found support for a modified version of the Training transfer model with the pre-training factors and job performance. A Middle eastern countries like Palestine in where it has found pre training transfer factors such as organizational commitment is not significant factor of job performance while employee intent to transfer the learned knowledge. Although previous studies have utilized and found a positive significant effect of organizational commitment and training transfer.

Findings of this study is not without limitation. Sample of this study was drawn only for academic staffs of Palestinian higher education institutes. Result could be more generalized if sample was drawn from academic and management staffs in higher education institutes. Moreover, other training transfer related variables can be be used in future to determine the job performance of academic staffs in Palestine higher education institutes.as organizational commitment is not significant, it could be related to other training transfer factors such as supervisor support or motivation to enhance job performance attitude towards training transfer.

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