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The Relationship Between Motivation To Transfer, Training Design, Transfer Climate and Transfer of Training

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***Abstract*—The purpose of this study was to identify the relationship between the selected factors namely motivation to transfer, training design and transfer climate that influence transfer of training. 120 respondents from Sarawak Chief Minister Department, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia who had attended the Leadership Course were selected as a sample of this study. A set of questionnaire was used as a research instrument. From the Pearson correlation analysis, the outcome of this study revealed that all the studied variables were found to have a significant relationship with transfer of training. Majority of the respondents perceived the level of training transfer positively, thus, indicated that they are able to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the training to their workplace.**

Keywords-motivation to transfer; training design; transfer climate; transfer of training

I. INTRODUCTION

Virtually all modern organizations accept that a well-trained workforce is a critical success factor. Training and development is actually an expensive investment for most organizations. It is fair to say that employers aim to ensure that investments in training provide maximum returns. Therefore, organizations nowadays are willing to invest large amount of money annually to train and develop its employees' skills and knowledge for future needs.

The creation of a learning organization is a goal that all supervisors should strive for. The transfer of knowledge helps to ensure a growing capital of most valuable resource, the employees. Through training and educating employees, employer is motivating their workplace performance and it helps a lot in employee transition. Providing sufficient training shows that employer care about his employee's personal development and this in turn reflects on the organization and its development.

Many organizations spend a lot of money on training, believing that training will increase their employees' knowledge and skills which improve their performance and hence the firm's quality and productivity [1]. Unfortunately, the extent to which transfer of skills learned in training are applied to the workplace have been shown to be somewhat limited [1]. Hence, is the training really effective enough whereby the employees can transfer the knowledge and skills that they gained in the training into their workplace and will the investment in training provide maximum returns? Essentially, less than 10-20 percent of the training is transferred directly to the workplace [2]. Besides, some trainees are able to apply learned KSAs during training immediately to the workplace; however they are unable to sustain long term changes in work practices [1]; [3].

The main purpose of this study is to identify the selected factors that might influence transfer of training among the staff in public sector. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to determine the relationship between motivation to transfer, training design, transfer climate, and transfer of training.

II. TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Frequent changes in nature and content of work have influenced organizational choice of human development. One of the most frequent human resource development interventions is training [4]. Training in an organization refers to a learning process which is planned to change attitude, increase knowledge and skills of the employees to ensure that their performance can be upgraded [5]. Therefore, trainees are expected to be able to practice and transfer learned knowledge, skills and attitudes during training to their workplace, maintain it overtime and generalize across contexts [4].

Transfer of training is the effective and continuing application of the knowledge and skills gained in training setting by the trainees to their job; both on and off the job [6]. In addition, it is also defined as the ability or capacity of the trainees to take the knowledge and skills that they received from the training setting and utilize them to their work practice [1].

There are three main factors that might affect employee's transfer of training [7]. The first main factor is trainee characteristics which involve employee's motivation and ability. The second factor is training design which includes creating a learning environment, apply theories of transfer and use self-management strategies. Lastly is work environment which encompasses the climate for transfer, management and peer support, opportunity to perform and technological support.

In the practitioners' perspectives, transfer is viewed as a training product or outcome. This also assumes that such an outcome can be identified and measured. Nevertheless, can we measure how much it has transferred? Some current

practices suggest that this is extremely hard to measure, especially in intellectual skills training [7]. There is no a clarify scale to show how transfer can be identified because the degree and time of application such skills will vary each person [7]. It is very complicated to determine whether transferred has occurred.

Therefore, transfer is better conceptualized as a process with various stages through which transfer can be tracked [7]. The training transfer model is illustrated in Figure 1.

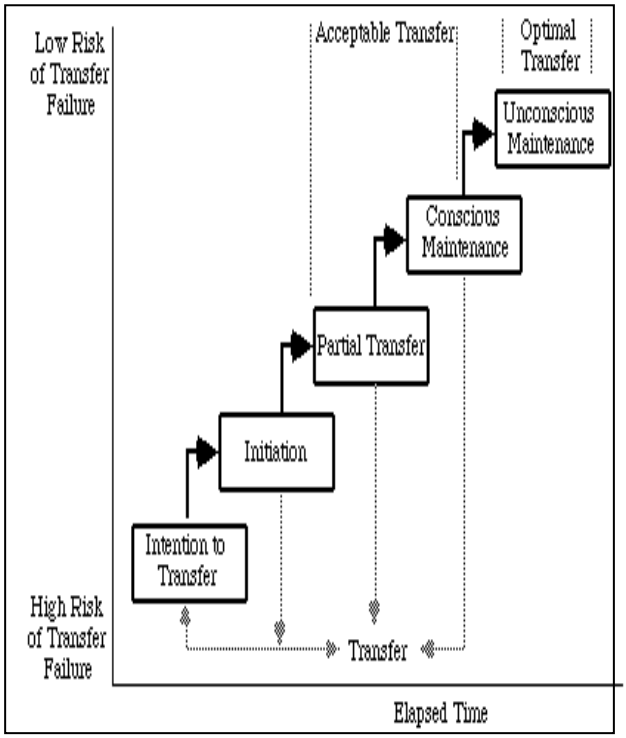

Figure 1. Stages of the transfer process

The model above reflects what actually happens as learners try out some of the skills, practice them, discontinue their use, or fail to use the skills. Each stage is a precondition for the following one, and until the final stage is reached, the learner may slip back to pre-training behavior resulting in transfer failure. The risk of transfer failure is greatest in the early stages. The stages of the transfer process are as follows:

Transfer Intention

This is the end-of-course motivation of the trainees to apply what they have learned in the work environment. If trainees leave the training with low level of transfer intention, it is unlikely that they will show a high degree of transfer on the job a few months later.

Transfer Initiation

Initiation refers to the attempts to apply any aspect of the learning in the work environment [7]. Attempts to utilize the training may be discontinued for some of reasons, both personal and organizational.

Partial Transfer

This occurs when only some skills are transferred and others are not because of lack of opportunity, lack of confidence, failure to master the skills in training, low motivation and others.

Conscious Maintenance

Conscious maintenance refers to maintain the application of the learning to the job over a period of time, so that job performance is permanently enhanced [8].

Unconscious Maintenance

Unconscious maintenance occurs when trainees apply their skills and knowledge consciously and have integrated them completely into their work routines. At this stage, transfer of training is considered successful. This shows that transfer of training is a continuous application of learned knowledge and skills by the trainees from training setting to their job. Also being able to maintain it overtime as a habit and generalized it to other contexts in the organization.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research was a quantitative research. The population of this study consists of all the staff in the Sarawak Chief Minister's Department, Kuching, Sarawak, Malaysia. The population of this study is all 160 staff that had attended the Leadership Course. A total of 160 sets of questionnaires were distributed to all the staff and only 120 sets of questionnaires were returned back.

In this study, the stratified random sampling method was used. This mean that the sampling design can have a more precise estimation of the population mean compared to a simple random design of the same size. It may also be beneficial to look at each subpopulation. Since the Sarawak Chief Minister's Department have eight units, this method is suitable for this study's purpose.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions in both English and Malay languages, and have five sections (A, B, C, D and E). Section A was intended to collect demographic data of the respondents covering gender, age, length of services and educational level. Section B probed the respondents' perception towards transfer of training (negative transfer, zero transfer and positive transfer of training) in the workplace. Section C focused on motivation to transfer (goal setting). Section D investigated the training design (training content and sequence of content). Section E studied on transfer climate which includes the peer and supervisor support.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Demographic Background of Respondents

Majority of the respondents of this study were belonged to the age group of 31-40 years which accounts for 58 (48.3%) of the total sample. This followed by the age group 21-30 years and 41-50 years, where both age group shared the same amount of 31 (25.8%) out of the total sample. Majority of the respondents were male comprise 43.3% and followed by 56.7% of female. 41 (34.2%) respondents have been in service from 0-5 years. This followed by 35 (29.2%) and 31 (25.8%) respondents who were in the service length of 6-10 years and 16-20 years respectively. There were only 13 (10.8%) respondents serving in the length of 11-15 years. The majority of the respondents who possessed the Diploma

academic qualification were 60 (50%). This followed by 33 (27.5%) respondents who possessed Degree academic qualification, while 27 (22.5%) respondents had a STPM.

B. The Realibility and Validity of Analyses

Table I shows the goodness of data for this study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (KMO) which is a measure of sampling adequacy was conducted for each variable and the results indicated that it was acceptable. The statistical results showed that (1) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value of 0.6, and were significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity, (2) all research variables had eigenvalue larger than 1, (3) the items for each research variable exceeded factor loadings of 0.40 [9] and (4) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 [10]. The value of factor analysis for all items representing each research variable was 0.6 and more, indicating that the items met the acceptable standard of validity analysis.

TABLE I. GOODNESS OF DATA

Variable	Item	Factor Loadings	KMO	Bartlett Test of Sphericity	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
Transfer of Training	5	0.823-0.939	0.714	349.656 p = 0.000	3.190	84.043	0.855
Motivation to Transfer	5	0.603-0.952	0.604	381.053 p = 0.000	3.054	83.676	0.839
Training Design	5	0.703-0.871	0.708	341.393 p = 0.000	3.178	83.155	0.855
Transfer Climate	5	0.797-0.848	0.714	418.666 p = 0.000	3.413	85.582	0.884

C. Respondents' Perception Towards Level of Transfer

Respondents' perception towards level of transfer of training was classified as negative transfer, zero transfer and positive transfer. The classification is shown in the Figure 2 below.

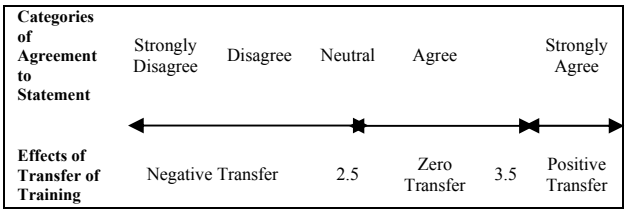

Figure 2. Transformation of Statement Choices into Effects of Transfer of Training.

Perception of negative transfer refers to the category "Strongly Disagree" and "Disagree" while perception of positive transfer refers to "Agree" and "Strongly Agree". Perception of zero transfer refers to category "Neutral". The highest score that can be attained by the respondents in this section was 25 (in agreement with all the 5 statements) and the lowest was 5 (in disagreement with all the 5 statements). If the respondents answer all the 5 statements in 3 (neutral), then the total score would be 15. Therefore, respondents with the score in between 5 to 11 have perception of negative transfer and those with the score of in between 19 to 25 have perception of positive transfer while score of 12 to 18 was perception of zero transfer.

The distribution of respondents' scores on perception towards level of transfer of training is shown in Table II. The minimum score obtained by the respondents was 13 and the maximum score was 25. From the table, none of the respondents obtained scores from 5-11 while 41 (34.17%) of the respondents obtained score category of 12 to 18. Majority 79 (65.83%) of the respondents obtained score in between 19 to 25.

TABLE II. PERCEPTION TOWARDS LEVEL OF TRANSFER OF TRAINING

Training Transfer	Score Category	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Negative transfer	5 to 11	0	0
Zero transfer	12 to 18	41	34.17
Positive transfer	19 to 25	79	65.83
	Total	120	100

Range: Minimum = 13; Maximum = 25

Thus, majority of the respondents perceived the level of training transfer positively. This indicated that majority of the trainees in Sarawak Chief Minister Office are able to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the training to their workplace.

D. Relationship Between Motivation To Transfer, Trainng Design, Transfer Climate and Transfer of Training

TABLE III. CORRELATION BETWEEN STUDIED VARIABLES

Independent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson (r)	Sig. (p)	Relation Between Variable
Motivation to transfer	3.55	0.594	0.583**	0.000	Moderate Strong
Training design	3.69	0.635	0.527**	0.000	Moderate Strong
Transfer climate	3.71	0.668	0.586**	0.000	Moderate Strong

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As shown in Table III, there were significant relationship between all the studied variables namely motivation to transfer ($r=0.583$, $p<0.01$), training design ($r=0.527$, $p<0.01$), transfer climate ($r=0.586$, $p<0.01$) and transfer of training.

Behavioral change will likely occur for trainees who learn the material presented in training and desire to apply that new knowledge or skills to work activities [1]. There are studies done on motivation to transfer training to performance which stated that motivation to transfer influenced the effectiveness of training transfer, hence

increasing employee's performance [1]; [2]. Motivation to transfer will take into consideration the trainee's ability, willingness to transfer and goal-setting.

A study of a management development program who was done by Wexley and Nemeroff (1975) for the hospital administrators found that the group which assigned performance goals was significantly better at applying learned knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) than a control group that no goals were assigned [1]. Wexley and Baldwin (1986) also identified that participative goal setting after attending training brings larger levels of maintenance behavior [11].

Trainees who are motivated to set their own goals will produce an effective transfer of training intervention [12]. Several transfer studies have been conducted involving goal setting and it was found out that self management training, including self-monitoring of progress and goal setting significantly resulted in superior transfer of skill generalization to other job context [2]. In addition, simulation and laboratory research has shown that implementing goal setting after training significantly increase trainees' performance and self-efficacy [12]. This is because trainees that set their own goals that would allow them to experience achievement in achieving those goals and motivate them to transfer learned knowledge, skills and attitudes to their job.

Training design refers to the principle of learning and training content that take into consideration the training objective, meaningful material and sequencing of the training content. One cause of failure for trainee to transfer is that the training design rarely provides for transfer of learning.

Cognitive learning may occur well during training, but trainees may not have an opportunity to practice the training in a job context or may not be taught how to apply their own knowledge on the job [1]. Training programs are often designed and delivered without connecting the training back to the working environment [11]. Besides, Goldstein and Ford (2002) have identified that design of training content is significantly influencing the transfer of training [3].

According to Newstrom (1992), the trainees' perceptions of the impracticality of the training program and irrelevance of the training program are one of the top five barriers to transfer [13]. The trainees believe that training programs are impractical or irrelevant to their needs and that proposed changes would cause undue discomfort or extra effort. Besides, the trainees also perceived that the training program were poorly designed or delivered which would influence them to learn and transfer knowledge and skills to their job.

Post training environment like the workplace plays a very important role in determining the degree to which the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired in training are transferred to the work setting [14]. Ford and Weissbein (1997) have identified a range of workplace environment factors which can influence the transfer of training, include the transfer climate [14]. Transfer climate can have a powerful influence on the likelihood of transfer of training for newly acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes to the job [14].

Ilgen and Klein (1998) noted that transfer of training is influenced by cognitive perspectives and also the "socialization practices" of the organization [2]. Studies on working environment which have been found to influence transfer of training are such as group membership, behaviors of supervisor; also known as social cues [1], organizational context and culture [2], organizational intervention which influenced supports of the learner, learning event and transfer [4]. Therefore, transfer climate can be classified into three categories which are organizational climate, task support and social support [15]. Jones and James (1979) defined organizational climate as the perceived structures, values, systems and qualities in a particular organization [14]. While task support refers to the availability of job-related information, tools, materials, resources and required services and assist from others [15]. Social support is the encouragement by management or supervisors, peers and trainers [15].

V. CONCLUSION

Overall, the majority of the respondents (65.83%) in this study perceived the level of training transfer positively. This implies that most of the trainees are able to apply the knowledge and skills gained from the training to the workplace. This research found that all of the transfer factors (motivation to transfer, training design and transfer climate) have positive and statistically significant relationship with the transfer of training.

The issues of transfer of training are increasingly becoming important to training designers, trainers, Human Resource managers and trainees. This is because understanding of the various factors affecting transfer of training would ensure that trainees are able to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the training setting continuously to their workplace. Besides that, the Human Resource Development (HRD) departments in various organizations have a heavy responsibility in training, educating and developing a workforce to adapt to the dynamic environmental changes and hence contribute effectively to their organization. This is also due to the growing awareness in many organizations on the advantage of blending HRD strategies with the business strategies to ensure its competitiveness in the new era of globalization. Thus, it is hoped that this study would beneficial those involved in the field of Human Resource Development.

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