An Empirical study of the relationship between motivation to transfer and transfer of training

Raja Mumtaz Hussain
Iqra University Islamabad Pakistan

ABSTRACT

Purpose of this paper is to present an empirical study on relationship between motivation to training transfer and actual transfer of training on job. In this study we examined that how much motivation to training transfer contribute in successfully transferring to the work place, the knowledge, skill and abilities acquired during training. review highlighted transfer of training can be maximized through increasing motivation and enthusiasm in trainees to apply their knowledge and skill at their workplace. Data was collected from one of the top class universities of Pakistan, based in Islamabad. The targeted sample was non-teaching staff of university who has been receiving training relevant to their job. Impact of motivation to training transfer on training transfer was empirically examined and the study revealed that there was a significant positive relationship between two variables.

Keywords: Transfer of Training, Working Environment, Motivation to Transfer

Paper Type: Research paper

INTRODUCTION

Organizations in current era are compelled to focus on training and development to accomplish their organizational strategies, mission, and vision. Training is one of the critical Human Resource function. In current globally competitive age, to survive organizations have to constantly update and enhance the knowledge, skill and abilities of their employees. Training is a reciprocal activity which benefits both organization and employee. Organization is benefited through increase performance and productivity and employees are benefited through personal development, career advancement and reward and compensations. Two out of Deming’s 14 points for management related to training are cited here:

1. Institute training on the job. ” If people are inadequately trained, they will not all work the same way, and this will introduce variation.
2. “Institute a vigorous program of education and self – improvement for everyone.”

Organizations spent billions of dollars every year on training and development of the employees. This investment is made with the expectation to increase the performance of the employees and in result enhance the productivity of the organization (Seyler et al, 1998; Yannill and McLean, 2001 & Saks and Belcourt, 2006). Even after investment of this huge amount on training if trainee fails to implement his acquired knowledge at his workplace and does not improve his performance, the investment made on training is wasted. Such a situation is never acceptable to organizations that spent billions on training and development. Only USA spent over 130 billion dollar on training annually (Chiarubu et al 2010).

Problem Statement

Transfer of training has constantly been serious problem to organizations. Researchers calculated that only 10 % of learning in training is implemented on job. This finding presents a grave problem for organizations because training transfer is the key element through which training enhances the organizational performance level. It is therefore imperative for
organizations to design their training program in such a strategic way that improve the transfer of training (Saks and Belcourt, 2006). Our present model is developed on the basis of perception that despite spending billions of dollars on training and development organizational ROI on training is very limited. This article will investigate how motivation to transfer, plays its role in implementing training on workplace. Motivation to transfer refers to readiness of trainee to apply on job, the knowledge, skill and abilities he has learned from a training program. Motivation to transfer is influenced by three attribute supervisor support, perceived content validity and perceived organizational support.

Transfer of training means extent of implementation of learning acquired during training process at workplace and to maintain it for period of time. It can be described as the trainee’s desire to apply knowledge and skill attained during training program on the job (Yammill and McLean, 2001; Sofo, 2007).

**Objective of the Study**
Main purpose of this study is to present empirical evidence how motivation to transfer of knowledge, skill and abilities affect the transfer of these abilities to workplace. Furthermore the purpose of this study to provide an insight to the concepts of training transfers. In this study in next portion we will present literature review describing different elements that affect motivation to transfer and then we will examine how motivation to transfer enhances the transfer of training and in result improve employees’ performance. In subsequent paragraphs we will elaborate the methodology, statistical results followed by discussion, limitations, theoretical and practical contribution of study and finally recommendation for future research.

**Significance of Study**
Transfer of training is a fundamental issue which is associated with employee’s change as per the requirement of organization. When training makes difference to employees and organizational performance it must be ensured that training is definitely transferred to workplace (Yammill and McLean, 2001). Although too much has been written on training and organizations are focusing on training but very limited research is available on impact of training on job performance. In 2004, only 11% of the organizations participating in American Society of Training and Development Benchmarking Services, measured impact of training on employees and organizational performance (Sofo, 2007). The current study presented an insight and empirical analysis with reference to relationship between motivation to training transfer and actual transfer of training.

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

**Transfer of Training**
An emergent aspect of transfer of training to workplace is motivation to transfer. When an employee is motivated and enthusiastic to apply knowledge on workplace and enhances his performance, the training will be fruitful and effective (Chiaburu et al 2010). Trainees who believe to have support from both distal i. e. perceived organizational support (POS) and proximal i. e. supervisor support (SS) sources will be more confident to apply their knowledge and skill on their job and will be possessing high level of motivation to transfer.

Brown and McCracken (2009) demonstrated two important elements of training transfer; first maintain the learned knowledge for a period of time and second generalization of learned knowledge from training to workplace. They enforced that transfer of training is determined
by three contributors: trainees characteristics, training design factors and work environment. Researchers have identified many factors which affect training effectiveness. In this study we focused on two important factors (1) Learning Outcomes and (2) Transfer Climate to measure the effectiveness of training.

**Learning Outcomes**
Yamnill and Mclean (2001) developed their theories supporting transfer of training based on the model presented by Holton, (1996). They elaborated that expectancy as “every outcome is preceded by a particular act” or in other words every action has an outcome. According to this theory trainee will be more motivated if he believe that training will increase his performance and he will be better able to perform his job efficiently.

**Transfer Climate**
Organizational factors also influence the motivation to learn and motivation to transfer and researchers have identified the relationship between training transfer and organizational factors like training transfer climate (Nikandrou et al, 2009). Researchers have identified seven factors that harmonize the organizational climate to training transfer. These seven factors are: resistance to change, peer support, opportunities to use, supervisor support, personal negative outcomes, personal positive outcomes and supervisor sanction (Nijman et al, 2005)

**Motivation to Training Transfer**
Motivation to transfer is the deliberate intention and enthusiasm of trainee to use the knowledge, skill and abilities that he has acquired during training course, on his job. This intention is further enhanced by work support factors like scope of using KSA, peer and managers’ guidance, feedback and coaching system prevailing at workplace. In addition to above factors Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and Supervisor Support (SS) also considerably enhanced the motivation to transfer (Chiaburu et al 2010). Motivation to transfer is influenced by the perception of relevancy of training with job description and opportunities of using knowledge on job. Research on motivation to transfer designated that this is one of the key variable which predicts that how much training had been transferred to job (Nijman et al, 2005).

Grossman and Salas emphasized that motivation to transfer has strong relationship with training outcomes and introduced the concept of motivation to improve work through learning. They also identified motivation to transfer as one of the strongest predictor of transfer of training.

Bhatti and Kaur, (2010) presented the theoretical model of training transfer in which they identified many factors that affect the training effectiveness. These factors are: transfer design, perceive content validity, performance self-efficacy, evaluation of training and training transfer motivation. To ascertain the relationship between motivation to training transfer and transfer of training to job we focused on three most important factors which influence the motivation to transfer. These factors are supervisor support, perceived contents validity and perceived organizational support (Chiaburu et al 2010).

**Supervisor Support**
In training transfer perspective supervisor support can be described as providing subordinates (trainee) time for skill practice and aiding in implementation of skill. Supervisors are in best position to inspire and facilitate their subordinates to implement their knowledge at work
place which results in training transfer and increased performance. Supervisor Support certainly increases the motivation to transfer which exists at higher level than that of organizational support (Chiaburu et al 2010).

**Perceived Content Validity**
Perceived content validity is another factor that influences the training transfer. It can be defined as the perception of trainee that how much training contents and course design is relevant to his job description. If training contents and his job description are accurately matching, he will be more enthusiastic and motivated to apply to his job, the KSA learned from training. Research has found a significant correlation between content validity and motivation to training transfer (Bhatti and Kaur, 2010). Nijman et al, (2005) phrased the term contents validity as identical element and described that empirical outcomes backed the concept of matching of training contents and job description.

**Perceived Organizational Support**
Perceived Organizational Support (POS) can be defined as belief of employees that how much organization care about them and how much their contribution in development of organization is honored. POS boosts the self-worth of employees and that develop the perception that his employer value him. More organizational support is available to a trainee, more he will be motivated to apply his knowledge on job (Chiaburu et al 2010). An organizational climate that emphasize on performance orientation always gives due weightage to training and will provide employees opportunities to experiment and apply newly acquired knowledge and skill at job (Nikandrou et al, 2009). Yamnill and McLean, 2001 describe organization theory as organizational climate that support transfer of training. Seyler et al (1998) developed their model describing factors that affect motivation to transfer, but they concluded that only organizational commitment and transfer environment significantly affect the motivation to transfer.

Motivation to transfer is one of the fundamental components of training transfer course. Without this motivation it will be difficult to transfer the training successfully. Motivation to transfer can be defined as rigorous efforts by employee to apply the knowledge, skills and abilities learned during training, on his/her job (Bhatti and Kaur, 2010). This paper investigated that there is a direct and positive relationship between motivation and training transfer.

**H1 :** Motivation to transfer is positively related to transfer of training to workplace.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variables</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Motivation to Transfer</strong></td>
<td><strong>Transfer of Training to Workplace</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Supervisor Support</td>
<td>1. Learning Outcomes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived Content Validity</td>
<td>2. Transfer Climate</td>
</tr>
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<td>3. Perceived Org Support</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

50
METHODOLOGY
We conducted longitudinal field study in a large private sector university in Islamabad Pakistan. Targeted population was non-teaching staff of university who has been attending training to improve their knowledge, skill and abilities. Total number of non-teaching staff is 637. A total of 120 questionnaires were distributed among employees and response was 89 i.e.74 percent. Targeted sample was the employees who recently attended the training programs.

Transfer of training was assessed using six items from Xiao, 1996 related to the organizational factors and transfer of training and two modified items from Galanou & Priporas, 2009 related to training.

Motivation to Transfer was assessed by using a total of 19 items. Four items were taken from Eisenberger et al, 1986, nine items from Xiao, 1996 and six modified items from Galanou & Priporas, 2009.

A 5 point likert scale was used to obtain the response of employees.

Results

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.868</td>
<td>27</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>3.8196</td>
<td>.67882</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTT</td>
<td>3.6513</td>
<td>.55919</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TOT</th>
<th>MTT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOT</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>40.089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTT</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>.579**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sum of Squares and Cross-products</td>
<td>19.076</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Covariance</td>
<td>.222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Table 4. Model Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.579</td>
<td>.335</td>
<td>.328</td>
<td>.55853</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. Predictors: (Constant), MTT
b. Dependent Variable: TOT

Table 5. Measures of Association

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eta</th>
<th>Eta Squared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TOT * MTT</td>
<td>.955</td>
<td>.913</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To analyze the data we used Statistical Package for Social Sciences. First of all we checked the reliability of data and found Cronbach’s Alpha for the scale 0.868 which depict that data is significantly reliable.

Means, standard deviations and correlation are presented in Table 2 and 3. Independent variable “Motivation to Training Transfer (MTT)” consists of three facets supervisor support, perceived content validity and perceived organizational support. On the other hand dependent variable has been analyzed through its two facets learning outcomes and transfer climate. Consistent to our hypothesis that Motivation to Training Transfer has positive relationship to Training Transfer to workplace; the results show significant positive relationship i.e. Pearson Correlation = 0.579, p˂ 0.001.

Table 4 represent the results of simple linear regression where R = 0.579 and the Table 5 shows measures of association where Eta is 0.955.

All of the result support our hypothesis and prove significant positive relationship between independent variable “Motivation to Training Transfer and dependent variable “Transfer of Training”.

Discussion

Transfer of training to workplace had been continues problem for organizations that pursues maximization of training usefulness. The researcher has identified the factors at three levels i.e individual, training and organizational, effecting the training transfer. The proposed model of this paper revolved around the factors that influenced and contributes to the training effectiveness. The purpose of this paper is to highlight the effect of motivation to transfer on training effectiveness. Training can only be effective once trainee apply on job, the knowledge, skills and abilities which he has acquired during a training program. Researchers have described this phenomenon as transfer of training. Many factors like perceived organizational support, perceived content validity, Training self-efficacy, supervisor support, training design, transfer climate and motivation to transfer influence training transfer. These factors have different extent of influence on training effectiveness.
Consistent with Chiaburu et al (2010) recommendations we explored direct effect of motivation to transfer on training outcomes. In present study we examined effect of three factors: supervisor support, perceived content validity and perceived organizational support on motivation to training transfer. Supervisor support enhances the motivation of trainee to apply knowledge on workplace and its effect is far greater than that of organizational support. Perceived content validity is another factor that increases motivation. When trainee perceive that contents of training course or course outline is accurately matching to his job description, he will be more motivated to attend training program and transfer his knowledge on his job. Perceived Organizational support is another factor that motivates the trainee to transfer his knowledge to workplace and maintain this knowledge for period of time. Taking into consideration three factors that enhance motivation to training transfer we examined the relationship between training transfer and motivation to transfer. Transfer of training was examined with the help of two facets: learning outcomes and transfer climate.

Learning outcomes refer to the concept that performance of the employee will increase after attending a training program. Training increased the quality of work and employees participation in team and group work. Training helped the employees to accomplish their job better and faster. Another facet of training transfer which we examined was Transfer Climate. Availability of equipment, material, resources, support by managers, peers and colleagues and workplace environment assisted the employees to transfer training contents on their job (Xiao, 1996).

Consistent with the recommendation of Bhatti and Kaur (2010) we empirically tested the model of relationship between motivation to transfer and training transfer. Empirical results show a high degree of association between independent and dependent variable.

Limitations
Although validity of data and correctness of hypotheses was our main focus in this study, yet the data analysis above has some limitations. First we collected data from the respondents who were from varied hierarchical levels therefore response may not be consistent. Second we collected data from only one organization which may lower representation of the educational field therefore result’s generalization might be limited. Thirdly due to small sample size and one independent variable structural equation modeling was impossible therefore relationship between independent and dependent variable has been examined through simple regression analyses.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions
Despite above limitations this study contributed to the body of knowledge some new concept. Chiaburu et al, 2010 found support for relationship between motivation to transfer and training cognitions, perceived organizational support and supervisor support. They further found relationship between training cognition and training transfer, but did not established direct relationship between motivation to transfer and training transfer. In present study we examined the direct relationship between motivation to transfer and training transfer. We empirically tested the hypotheses and found significant positive relationship between these two variables i. e. Pearson Correlation = 0.579, p< 0.001. Despite theoretical contributions, the outcomes of this study have also essential practical implications for managers and trainers. Training can be made effective when managers and trainer focus on training design includes training contents, supervisor support at workplace enabling trainees to apply their knowledge and skill on their job, organizational support in shape of resources, peers guidance, opportunities to use skill. All these factors will motivate
trainees to apply their knowledge, skill and abilities on the job which will maximize the training transfer.

Direction for Future Research
In addition to organizational, supervisor and peer support, coworker support is also one of the important factors that help trainee to apply new knowledge to accomplish their assigned task in efficient and effective manner. Future research may be carried out to examine this relationship. Trainee personality is another important factor that has great impact on training transfer. Future research should focus on examining the impact of trainee personality on training transfer.

References


54

**Questionnaire used to measure the variables**

**Transfer of Training**


pp. 55-73

1. Using the new KSA has helped me improve my work.
2. I can accomplish my job tasks faster than before training.
3. The quality of my work has improved after using new KSA.
4. I can accomplish job tasks better by using new KSA.
5. There is adequate equipment for me to apply new KSA on my job.
6. I have discretion in selecting appropriate KSA to accomplish my task.


1. My Supervisor always motivates me to use knowledge and skill on training, to improve my job.
2. My work and the work of my colleagues are converged.
3. Members of my team co-operates effectively.

**Motivation to training**


pp. 55-73

1. My supervisor sets criteria for applying new KSA to my job.
2. My supervisors provide assistance when I have a problem trying out KSA.
3. My supervisor discusses how to apply KSA to job situations.
4. My supervisor informs me how well I accomplish tasks by using KSA.
5. My supervisor helps me set goals for applying new KSA to my job.
6. Using the new KSA has helped me improve my work.
7. I can accomplish my job tasks faster than before training.
8. The quality of my work has improved after using new KSA.
9. I can accomplish job tasks better by using new KSA.


1. My organizations take pride of my accomplishments.
2. My organizations really care about my wellbeing.
3 My organization value my contributions which do for its betterment.
4 My organization is willing to help me if I need a special favor.

1 After attending a training I feel confident to manage my job in a better way.
2 Training courses provides my special opportunities in my career growth.
3 Training courses provide me different helpful and perspective to change environment of my organization
4 Training courses better prepare me for leadership role in my organization.
5 After attending training I am better prepared to work in team and group.
6 Contents of training provided to me are accurately related to my job.