

THE ROLE OF KEY FACTORS OF TRAINING TRANSFER ON EMPLOYEE'S JOB PERFORMANCE: A REVIEW

Ibrahim Bin Zahari

Tareq Fayeq Obaid

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

Abstract

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. By improving their employee's skills at work environment, organizations can act as successful and highly compete within the domain of their courses of action. Not all employees are same in their working capacities and they have different modes of behavior regardless of the rewards. In order to judge the work performance of employee, the most common management practices employed, all over the world, is performance assessment. This research aims at investigating the impact of training transfer on job performance and how they correlate with each other within the context of Higher Education organizations in Palestine. Employees only seem to use knowledge, skills and attitudes from corporate training programs to a very limited extent at their workplaces. It has often been argued that training factors has a significant role in improving the performance, and what is the role of training transfer on the relationship, unfortunately, within Palestinian context there are ambiguity in previous research, thus the study recommend for future research to investigate the relationship between pre-training factors, training transfer and performance in Palestine within educational context.

Keywords: Pre-Training factors, training transfer, performance, Palestine and Higher Education Institution.

Introduction

Continuing education must strengthen a broad range of critical competencies and skills if we are to ensure the further development and effectiveness of the job performance. However, many researchers argue that performance on job is a multidimensional construct that measured by work attitude like satisfaction and commitment (Kalyani, 2006; Armstrong, 2009).

Employees are the one the critical strategic asset in any organization. By improving their employees' skills at work environment, organizations can act as successful and highly compete within the domain of their courses of action. According to McLean and McLean (2001, p. 322) "human resource development is any process or activity that, either initially or over the long term, has the potential to develop adults' work-based knowledge, expertise, productivity, and satisfaction for the benefit of community, nation, or ultimately the whole of humanity".

Not all employees are same in their working capacities and they have different modes of behavior regardless of the rewards. In order to judge the work performance of employee, the most common management practices employed, all over the world, is performance assessment. Within the large organization, performance appraisal system is exercised by more than 90%, whereas annual performance appraisal is employed in 75 % of medium size organizations (Ingraham and Jacobson, 2001). However, in an era of globalization, many

organizations have remodeled their paradigms from traditional job-based training to achieve organizational strategy and goals (Abdullah, Baroto , Ismail and Tat, 2011).

The statistics from the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education and the United Nations shows an outstanding increase in the enrollment rate among the Palestinian youths. The enrollment rate of students' increased by 94% from 1993 to 2011; where the estimated number of students attending HEI in 1993 was 22,750 it rose into 213.973 in 2011 (Koni , A, Zainal, K and Ibrahim, 2012). The Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education came into existence in 1994 and Higher Education was legalized by law which grants every citizen the right to pursue higher education, "set the legal status of its institutions, and provided the legal framework for its organization and management" (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011). According to Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research report (2002) Palestinian National Authority, Palestinian HE institutions suffer from a serious shortage of funds to support their educational programs. They must seek stop gap funding to meet even the most basic of expenses. Most Palestinian universities run chronic deficits that average more than 10 percent of their total budgets. Almost all Palestinian universities have been forced to use their Staff Provident Funds (pensions) to cover their financial deficits.

The Palestinian Higher Education system is comprised of 49 accredited post-secondary education institutions distributed between the West Bank and Gaza Strip; 34 of those are located in the West Bank and range between traditional universities; university colleges, community colleges and an open university. According to Ministry of Higher Education Report (2011), these institutions employ 14,667 staff members between academic teaching staff, academic administrative staff and academic researcher staff (around 7476).

This study is importance in this era of public sector, especially now that Palestine needs to measure Higher Education performance and its impact on economic development. Educational development in Palestine is a unique, rich, and challenging experience. It's unique because it is one of the very few places in the world. Herby, Ministry Higher Education built from scratch, rich because of the eagerness and motivation of the Palestinians to learn, challenging because Palestine is not yet an independent country and is witnessing conflict on a daily basis (Al Subu, 2009). Therefore, the study, therefore, seeks to explore possible strategies for evaluating training and development programs in higher education, particularly academic staff and administration personnel. The current research aims to review the related literature regarding the relationship among pre training transfer and job performance and the mediating role of training transfer.

Literature Review

Job Performance

Performance measurement is a fundamental building block of total quality management (TQM) and a total quality organization. Historically, organizations have always measured performance in some way through the financial performance, be this success by profit or failure through liquidation (Violet and Josiah, 2012). However, traditional performance measures, based on cost accounting information, provide little to support organizations on their quality journey, because they do not map process performance and improvements seen by the customer. In a successful total quality organization, performance will be measured by the improvements seen by the customer as well as by the results delivered to other stakeholders, such as the shareholders (Gupta, 2012). In this study job performance refers to actions and behaviors of an employee that contribute to the goals of the organization (Campbell, 1990).

Although, employee's performance is important to gauge his work level in his working environment but it is very subjective to assess him with these types of attributes. As identified by Connolly and Viswesvaran (2000), very few studies have been conducted to develop a generalized theory to assess the performance. It was supposed that the level of

performance varies from job to job. Therefore, job performance may be measured by using number of performance indicators.

Performance during a job can be measured while considering the output or through examination of proper implementation of processes and procedure (Awadh and Wan Ismail, 2012). In some cases job performance assessment is very easy because performance objectives and goals are vibrant whereas, the jobs for which the goals and objectives are not clear are difficult to assess or measure the performance. However, to manage and evaluate individuals' job performance in an organizational setting is the most challenging task and applied problems in the organization.

Although measurement problems and a debate about the sustainability of technology productivity growth remain, there is now a growing consensus that IT does have positive effects on labor and total factor productivity (Brynjolfsson and Hitt 2003). Communications technology can also have a positive impact on the relationships between stakeholders such employees, suppliers and customers. This can be done by improving the linkages of response times to questions, comments and concerns. It is expected from the technology to help computerize activities that will help reduce the overloaded employees.

In an age when human capital is being recognized both inside and outside the realm of the HR, mainstreaming sustainability competencies will enable professionals to hone their skills as well as prepare for the business and organizational challenges that have yet to be defined (Kola Olusanya, 2013). Many organizations spend much money on training, believing that training will improve their employees' performance and hence the firm's productivity (Yamnill and McLean, 2001).

Researchers have adopted various perspectives for studying performance. Sonnentag and Frese (2002) argued that on the most general level one can differentiate between three different perspectives: (1) an individual differences perspective which searches for individual characteristics (e.g., general mental ability, personality) as sources for variation in performance, (2) a situational perspective which focuses on situational aspects as facilitators and impediments for performance, and (3) a performance regulation perspective which describes the performance process.

The individual differences perspective focuses on performance differences between individuals and seeks to identify the underlying factors. The core question to be answered by this perspective is: Which individuals perform best. In addition, the situational perspective refers to factors in the individuals' environment which stimulate and support or hinder performance. The core question to be answered is: In which situations do individuals perform best? The situational perspective encompasses approaches which focus on workplace factors but also specific motivational approaches which follow for example from expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Also, Sonnentag and Frese (2002) continue to mention that the performance regulation perspective takes a different look at individual performance and is less interested in person or situational predictors of performance. Rather, this perspective focuses on the performance process itself and conceptualizes it as an action process. It addresses as its core questions: 'How does the performance process look like?.'

Pre Training Factors

Kontoghiorghes (2002) confirmed that to achieve successful training transfer to the workplace, the training program must be relevant to the job. Also, Nikandrou et al. (2009) the planning of the training program is very important for its total success and therefore for training transfer at work as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills.

There have been several attempts to study transfer of training at the individual level. They identify many characteristics for the trainee such as the motivation of the person to learn and transfer the skills to his work and commitment (Kontoghiorghes, 2002). Research has

shown that the characteristics of the trainee's personality directly affect the training process and training transfer (Warr et al., 1999).

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, and Hutchins, 2007). 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.

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.

Ricketta (2002) pointed out that the organizational commitment has proven to a considerable effect on almost all the organizational behaviors such as performance. Several scholars showed a positive association between organizational commitment and training transfer.

Training Transfer

Transfer of training can be defined as the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training on the job and subsequent maintenance of them over a certain period of time. The term training transfer is described as trainees effectively and continually applying the knowledge, skills, behaviors and cognitive strategies to the workplace (Noe, 2005). There are two levels of training transfer described by Noe, generalization training and maintenance training. Also, Barnard et al. (2001) stated that there are different forms of training transfer.

Positive transfer is regarded as the extent to which trainees have acquired knowledge and skills and attitudes. Conversely, negative is the extent to which undesired effects occurs after following a course. In this study the focus will be the positive training transfer. Positive transfer of training concerns the effective and continuing application, by trainees to their jobs, of the knowledge and skills gained in training (Broad and Newstrom, 1992). Transfer of training should thus be considered essential for training programmes to be effective and efficient, and intended return on investments in training programmes will only be achieved to the extent that training is transferred (Nijman et al., 2006). In measuring training transfer through evaluation, Garavaglia (1993) considers the following aspects:

You can choose from many methods for measuring transfer of training. Each needs to focus on the training outcome, which usually must be changed behavior. One method for measuring changed behavior is obtain reports from supervisors. Supervisors are in excellent positions to provide data about trainees' strengths and weaknesses. Also, supervisors can report changes in the duties and tasks trainees perform on the job. Requesting information from supervisor or get them involved in the process, and the data they provide tend to be relevant.

Transfer of training is an important concern for training researchers and practitioners because it is estimated that only a small percentage of the training actually results in transfer to the job (Baldwin and Ford, 1988). Wexley and Latham (2002) suggest that about 40 percent of content is transferred immediately following training. However, the transference falls to 25 percent after six months and 15 percent after one year. This suggests that as time passes, trainees are unable to retain and use the information gained in the training programme. Furthermore, this indicates that much of the time and money invested in training is never fully realized.

For some two decades, researchers have noted the dismal rate of transfer in organizations in what has become known as the "transfer problem" and have continued to

report that only about 10% of learning transfers to the job (Fitzpatrick, 2001). Saks and Belcourt (2006) suggest that the transfer problem has improved somewhat beyond the 10% figure. Saks and Belcourt found that 62% of employees apply what they learn in training immediately after attending a training program. However, after six months, only 44% apply the training material, and after one year, only a third (or 34%) still using what they have learned in training on the job. Thus, while transfer of training is much better than 10%, there remains an obvious decay or relapse of training as early as six months following training.

Gaps in the literature

Review of the literature has revealed that no sufficient studies have been conducted on training transfer in developing countries. Moreover, majority of the research work has been done in the field of job performance especially with reference to the U.S.A. and the U.K in which it is concluded that the training transfer is the important factor of employee's attitudes towards the job that are expected to be affected by perceived refinement (Ozer and Gunluk, 2010).

Unlike previous studies that consider these factors collectively , the current study to establish the individual association between pre training factors and its impact on training transfer , in turn , to investigate the relationship between training transfer and job performance.

Theories of Training Transfer

According to Holton (1996), one cause of failure to transfer is that training design rarely provides for transfer of learning. It is therefore important to understand the theories that achieve transfer.

Expectancy Theory

The theory suggests that job performance (P) is the result of the interaction of two components, force (F) and ability (A), with ability representing the potential for performing some task. Vroom (1964) defined expectancy as a momentary belief concerning the likelihood that a particular act will precede a particular outcome. Vroom's original presentation of expectancy theory placed it in the mainstream of contemporary motivation theory (Moorhead and Griffin, 1992).

According to this theory, trainees leave training programs with different levels of motivation to use their learning on the job (Yamnill and McLean, 2001). However, Holton (1996) argued that influences on transfer motivation fall into four categories, namely, intervention fulfillment, learning outcomes, job attitudes, and expected utility.

Goal-Setting Theory

Goal-setting theory suggests two cognitive determinants of behavior: intentions and values. Intentions are viewed as the immediate precursors of human action. The second cognitive process manifests itself in the choice or acceptance of intentions and subsequent commitment to those goals (Locke, 1968).

Equity Theory

Equity theory is based on the simple premise that people want to be treated fairly (Adams, 1963; cited by Yamnill and McLean, 2001). The theory defines equity as the belief that employees are being treated fairly in relation to others and inequity as the belief that employees are being treated unfairly in relation to others. Vroom (1964) recognized that individuals seek equity in their jobs; thus, job satisfaction reflects the extent to which rewards received match the rewards the employee believes should be received.

Contingency Theory of Organization

Training is one of the most frequently utilized human resource development interventions Scaduto et al. (2008). According to Burke and Baldwin (1999), there is much evidence suggesting that a considerable part of organizations' investment in training does not result in optimal transfer. Consequently, the last three decades have witnessed a new trend in the study of organizational phenomena.

This trend is associated with the argument that the internal functioning of work organizations must be consistent with the demands of organizational tasks, technology or external environment among others. Cannel (2004) asserted that this approach led to the development of Contingency Theory of Organizations.

Identical Elements Theory

Thorndike and Woodworth (1901) proposed the theory of identical elements. According to the theory, transfer is improved by increasing the degree of correspondence among the training setting stimuli, responses, and conditions and those related factors operative in the performance setting.

Principles Theory

The principles theory suggests that training should focus on the general principles necessary to learn a task so that the learner can apply them to solve problems in the transfer environment (Goldstein, 1986; Yamnill and McLean (2001).

Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to review the existing body of literature on training transfer. To achieve these objectives the literature were reviewed. In addition, some other important constructs were identified and their relationship verified to provide justification of including them in empirical study. Finally, the gaps was identified and a proposed model was described which will be recommended for future research to test it.

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