

Relationship between Selected Factors on Barriers of Transfer of Training towards the Effectiveness of the Training Program.

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the relationship between selected factors on barriers of transfer of training towards the effective of training program. There are five independent variables being studied, which are learning organization, trainee motivation, training environment, management support and peer support. The dependent variable refers to the effectiveness of training program. Convenience sampling and questionnaire was used to collect the data which involving 100 respondents as a sample of the study. Four out of five barriers of transfer (learning organization, trainee motivation, training environment and peer support) were found significantly related to training effectiveness. Training environment found to affect training effectiveness the most. This research is important to overcome barriers of transfer of training in the work place. The organization may use the outcome of the study to improve the conditions, environment and facilities of the training program so that the training program is effective in the future. It is recommended that future researchers may include larger sample and study different variables when conducting their research in the related field.

Keywords: barriers of transfer, effectives training, transfer of training

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Training can be defined as the systematic designed activities to improve trainees knowledge, skills, understanding and / or motivation that is related to the job (Goestch & Davis, 2003). There are many organizations often spend or invest lots of money on training their employees. For example, IBM Canada who employed 12,000 employees spent more than \$36 millions annually just for training their employees (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999, p. 1 2). Owing to this respect, organizations often expect a return in their investment by hoping their employees can apply back what they have learned to the job.

Leap and Crino (1993) stated that training is able to accomplish organizational goals. When organizational goals and training objective are being achieved, it is beneficial both the organization and employees. As to the organization, training is imperative in increasing productivity and quality. When the quality and quantity of the product or services have increased, it will increase the organizations profits as well. As to the employees, training is able to develop and enhance their knowledge skills as well as their work performance. According to Ibrahim Mamat (2001, p.35), a training program is considered effective when the behavior of the trainees changed after they return to their workplace upon completing the training program. Once employees' behavior has changed positively after they had attended the training program, their work performance will improve as well. It means employees' work performance will improve only if trainees are able to apply what they have learned back to the workplace. However, if the employees were unable to transfer what they have been taught during the training session, it would be a loss both to the organization and the employees as well.

However, some training program failed because the trainees are unable to relate their knowledge skills or abilities on the job. According to Ibrahim Mamat (2001, p.35), trainees often encounter problems in adopting the knowledge they acquired when they returned to their workplace. This situation indicates the existence of barriers that obstruct trainee's ability to use the knowledge or skills. The situation becomes more serious when trainers or managers abandon whatever obstacles of transfer of training. In solving this problem, it is the responsibility of the trainers and managers as well as the trainees to understand whatever impediments of training transfer and to overcome this problem as soon as possible.

By understanding the barriers of training transfer, it can improve a particular training program. Training developer and provider should take into consideration on the barriers of training transfer in designing a training program. Training effectiveness will contribute to the work performance by indicating some symptoms of performance improvement According to Rothwell and Kazanas (1994, p. 399), training can improve job performance by improving individual abilities, stimulating motivation, matching individual ability to activity requirements and matching the individual to contextual requirements. The research organization of this study is in semi-government electrical agency in Sarawak. Furthermore this research is relatively important because it will assist the trainers as well as the management level to rearrange a particular training program for their trainees. As for the trainees, they will have a better work performance and training transfer. Besides this, by doing so, it will definitely assist trainers and the management in terms of reducing their time and financial wastage as much as possible.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEMS

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Framework will be used in this research. Kirkpatrick framework of evaluation argues that there is four levels in assessing the effectiveness of training program that are reaction, learning, behavior and results. According to Reeves (1994), Kirkpatrick's evaluation framework evaluates the participant's basic reaction of the training to its organizational impacts. However, in this study, the researcher only emphasizes the first level of this model, which is the reaction level. This is so because valuable information obtained at this level will help the trainer in facilitating the training program more effectively (Blanchard & Thacker, 1999).

Wexley and Latham (2002, p. 28) mentioned, reaction level measures how well the trainees like the program including training content, trainer, training methods used, training environment and other item. In other words, it measures how trainees react towards a particular training program. The purpose of evaluating the training at this level is to alter and improve training program in the future.

The effectiveness of a training program will be determined by trainee's perception towards the training program. Desimone, Werner and Harris (2002, p.23 1) argued, the major concentration of the reaction level is on the trainee's perceptions towards a particular training program and its effectiveness. Many trainees are forced to attend the training regardless of their willingness towards the training. They have to participate in the training although they are unwilling to do so. Subsequently, their negative reaction will break the training program. However, if trainees show positive reaction towards the training, they are motivated to learn. This is true because Banchard and Thacker (1999) had once mentioned that the favorable reactions are imperative in certain motivation to learn. Thus, it determines the effectiveness and success of the training. Since this agency has its own training center and often provides training to its employees, managers expect something in return by hoping the trainees are able to apply the knowledge and skills learned in the training back to the job. However, when trainees are failed to do so, it indicates that something had obstructed their ability to apply knowledge and skills on the job. Therefore, in order to organize an effective training program and to assist the employees to have training transfer, it is crucial to know how their employees react and feel about the training as well as the barriers that impede their ability to transfer.

In relation to this, managers must take employee's reaction and feedback about the training into serious considerations when designing a training program. Besides this, in organization studied, the training evaluation gives more attention on the items, which are related to the training design such as the training content, training facilities and equipments, trainers and so on. They rarely focus on other items such as management support, peer support, trainee motivation and such in which these items consist of certain degrees of influence in ensuring the effectiveness of the training program. Hence, these situations attract the researcher's attention to conduct this study in this organization.

OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

This research is aim to identify the relationship of the trainees' perception on selected barriers of transfer of training towards the effectiveness of the training program. A specific objective of this study is to

examine relationship between selected factors barriers of transfer of training towards the effectiveness of the training program. In this study, null hypothesis is used because it is the starting point for the investigation and as below;

Ho1 There is no significant relationship between learning organizations with training effectiveness.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between trainee motivations with training effectiveness.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between training environments with training effectiveness.

Ho4 There is no significant relationship between management supports with training effectiveness.

Ho5: There is no significant relationship between peer supports with training effectiveness.

Ho6: There is no dominant barrier of transfer of training that affect the training effectiveness.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this research, quantitative research is utilized in which questionnaire is used to collect the data. Of the advantages of using survey research is because it is a prompt, effective and flexible way to acquire the information or data needed for this study. Besides this, it is less time consuming compare to other research design and become the best methods to give answer for these research objectives. However, one of the disadvantages of survey research is respondent' integrity in answering the questions. Thus survey research can be justified as the best-known research method used by most of the researcher (Burgess, 1993).

By using questionnaire to collect data, it enables the researcher to collect data immediately from the respondents right after each training program has been conducted. The survey research design in this research, involves a group of trainees who will be given questionnaires to be filled. Trainees would have to state their feeling, preferences, opinion and reaction towards the training program. In this study population of the study is refer to all the trainees that attend any training [program from specific dated chosen by the researcher. The number of sample to be identified in this study was chosen based on the formula propose by Luck, Taylor and Robin (cited in Ting, 2001). Although the sample obtained from these formula only 65 trainees the researcher decides to conduct 100 questionnaires in the selected organization.

The research instrument to be used in this study is modified from previous questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises closed-ended questions both in English as well as Malay language. His to help the respondent to understand the questionnaire better when they are answering the questionnaire. The instrument was piloted. The main reason pilot test conducted is to determine the reliability of the questionnaire. Pilot test is used to know whether the research instrument is able to present consistent results every time is used. Pilot test also important to ensure the sample are really understood the questions stated in the questionnaire clearly. Cronbach Alpha is used to check the consistency of the questionnaire. In this study the cronbach alpha chosen was at 0.70. All variables involves are fulfill with this requirement.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Barriers of Transfer of Training affect Training Effectiveness

The Pearson Correlation was utilized in testing the predetermined null hypotheses in this study. The function of this statistic analysis seeks to identify the relationships between the barriers of transfer of training (learning organization, trainee motivation, training environment, management support and peer support) with training effectiveness.

Hypothesis Ho1: There is no significant relationship between learning organization with training effectiveness.

Table 1 shows the results of the hypothesis testing. Base on the testing result, this hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between learning organization and training effectiveness. This is because it is significant at P, 038, which is less than the significant level of 0.05. This implies that the relationship between learning organization and training effectiveness is glistered as a positive relationship. This is based on the p value of 0.238.

Table 1: Correlation analysis results of the learning organizational and training effectiveness

Independent variable	r	p
Learning organization	0.238(*)	0.038

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed)

Although there is a positive relationship between the two variables, the strength of the relationship is considered as a weak relationship based on the value. The table below shows the result of the correlation analysis.

Hypothesis Ho2: There is no significant relationship between trainee motivations with training effectiveness.

This hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between trainee motivation and training effectiveness. This is because it is significant at P 0.001, which is less than the significant level of 0.01. This implies that the relationship between trainee motivation and training effectiveness is registered as a positive relationship. This is because the r-value shown below is 0.378. Although there is a positive relationship between the variables, the strength of the relationship is considered as a weak relationship based on the r-value. The table below shows the result of the correlation analysis.

Table 2 Correlation Analysis Results of the Trainee Motivation and Training Effectiveness

Independent variable	r	p
Trainee motivation	0.378(**)	0.001

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

Hypothesis Ho3: There is no significant relationship between training environments with training effectiveness.

This hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between training environment and training effectiveness. This is because it is significant at P = 0.000, which is less than the significant level of 0.01. This implies that the relationship between training environment and training effectiveness is registered as a positive relationship. This is based on the r-value of 0.399. Although there is a positive relationship between the variables, it is discovered that the strength of the relationship is weak. The table below shows the result of the correlation analysis.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis Results of the Training Environment and Training Effectiveness

Independent variable	r	p
Training environment	0.399(**)	0.000

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

Hypothesis Ho4: There is no significant relationship between management supports with training effectiveness.

This hypothesis is accepted. There is no relationship between management support and training effectiveness. This is because it is not significant at P, 0.414, which is more than the significant level of 0.05. This implies that the relationship between management support and training effectiveness is registered as a positive relationship. This is based on the r-value of 0.095. Although there is a positive relationship between the variables, it is discovered that the strength of the relationship is negligible to very weak. The table below shows the result of the correlation analysis.

Table 4: Correlation Analysis Results of the Management Support and Training Effectiveness

Independent variable	r	p
Management support	0.095	0.414

Hypothesis Ho5: There is no significant relationship between peer supports with training effectiveness.

This hypothesis is rejected. There is a relationship between peer support and training effectiveness. This is because it is significant at P 0.012, which is less than the significant level of 0.05. This implies that the relationship between peer support and training effectiveness is registered as a positive relationship. This is based on the r-value of 0.287. Although there is a positive relationship between the variables, it is discovered that the strength of the relationship is weak. The table below shows the result of the correlation analysis.

Table 5: Correlation Analysis Results of the Peer Support and Training Effectiveness

Independent variable	r	p
Peer support	0.287(*)	0.012

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2- tailed)

The Most Dominant Barrier of Transfer of Training That Influence Training Effectiveness

Regression Analysis was utilized in testing the predetermined null hypotheses. The function of this statistical analysis seeks to identify the most dominant barrier of transfer of training that influence training effectiveness. This method is used in answering the specific objective number 6 hypothesis

No.6: There is no dominant factors barrier of transfer of training that affects the training effectiveness.

This hypothesis is rejected. The most dominant harrier of transfer of training that affects the training effectiveness is training environment. This is because from the table below, the R Square for training environment consists of 15.9% while from the Beta value for training environment is 0.399. Thus, this hypothesis is rejected. The table below shows the result of the regression analysis.

Table 6: Regression Analysis Result of The Most Dominant Barrier o transfer of Training That Affect

Most Dominant factor	R square	Beta
Training environment	0.159	0.399

DISCUSSION

Relationship between learning organization with training effectiveness

In this section, the major concern will focus on the discussion of hypotheses testing. Theories, past research as well as some literature will be utilized to support the argument stated. Ho1 stated that there is no significant relationship between learning organizations with training effectiveness. This hypothesis is rejected after the result of Pearson Correlation shows a significant relationship between these two variables. According to Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999), an organizational culture that encourages continuous employee improvement and growth will have a positive impact on transfer of training. This situation shows that if an organization is a learning organization, they are likely to provide various training opportunities to its employees in the hope that they can enhance their knowledge and skills.

Besides this, the Principle Theory can be used to support this finding. According to Goldstein (1986), the Principle Theory concentrates on learning the fundamental principles necessary to solve a task. An organization expects the trainees to learn the fundamental elements of a particular subject so that they can apply it back to the job context. In this case, a training program is considered effective and successful program trainees are able to apply the fundamental elements of a task learned from the training program back to the job. Hargreaves and Jarvis (2000) mentioned that an organization must be a learning organization if they want to improve their product and services, retaining and developing their workforce so that their employees are highly skilled, innovative and motivated workforce. As such, it encourages the trainees to transfer the skills and knowledge to the job setting after attending a particular training program. Consequently, it will improve individual performance as also as organizational performance.

Relationship between trainee motivations with training effectiveness

Ho2 stated that there is no significant relationship between trainee motivations with training effectiveness. This hypothesis is rejected with a significant value of 0.001, which is less than the significant level at 0.01. It shows that there is a significant relationship between these two variables. According to Facticeau *et al.* cited in Cromwell and Kolb (2004), motivation before a particular training program will ensure positive transfer of training. If positive transfer of training occurs. The training program is effective, trainees will have low motivation if they attend the training program upon the instructions of their immediate superior. However, this is not the case if the trainees are willing to attend the training program. According to Hicks and Klimoski (1987), trainees who are willing to attend a particular training program are highly motivated to learn something (cited in Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). Thus, the chances to have a positive transfer of training are higher compared to the trainees who are forced to attend the training program. This situation indicates that the chances for a training program to be effective are also higher. According to Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999), the perceived importance of training not only affects the motivation to learn but also the motivation to apply the newly acquired skills and knowledge. If an employee considers the training is irrelevant to his actual job performance, he will dedicate less time and effort in learning as well as applying the newly acquired skills and knowledge to the job setting. In this case, it affects the effectiveness of the training program.

Relationship between training environment with training effectiveness

Ho3 assumed that there is no significant relationship between training environments with training effectiveness. This hypothesis is rejected as the Pearson Correlation showed a different picture. Training environment is crucial in promoting positive transfer of training and hence, ensures the effectiveness of training program to occur. Based on the Identical Elements Theory proposed by Hornlike and Woodworth (cited in Desimone *et al.*, 2002), the more similar the training environment and performance situation, the more likely the transfer of training will occur. It can be done in two ways; one is through adjusting the physical environment so that it is more similar with the working environment. This is known as physical fidelity. Another way depends on how the trainees attach similar meanings to both the training and performance situation, which is referring to as psychological fidelity (Desimone *et.al.* 2002). It is believed that with the combination of physical fidelity and psychological fidelity, trainees will have a bigger opportunity to apply knowledge and skills learned during training back to the job.

According to Peters *et. al.*, (1980), training environment has a greater influence either to promote or inhibit a trainee's ability to relate knowledge and skills back on the job. When trainees are able to apply new acquired skills and knowledge to the job context, the training program is considered effective and successful. In the case of trainees are unable to apply know ledge and skills, their often used training environment as one of the excuse that cause the failure of transfer of training. In order to achieve positive transfer, the training prouder must apply and practice the Identical Elements Theory in the real training program. This is because the Identical Elements Theory contributes and affect directly to the effectiveness of the training program.

Relationship between management supports with training effectiveness

Ho4 stated that there is no significant relationship between management supports with training effectiveness. This hypothesis is accepted which means there is no relationship between these two variables. However, this finding is contradict with the previous research done by Huezynski and Lewis (1980), they found out that managerial support was significantly related to transfer of training. This is because when trainees received support from their immediate superiors, they might feel that their effort is appreciated. Thus, trainees will be more motivated to change their behavior by applying the knowledge and skills back to the job. When transfer of training occurs, it ensures the effectiveness of the training program.

Many researchers have stated that management support plays a ital role in determining transfer of training and training effectiveness. For instance, Wesley and Baldwin (1986) did mentioned before that supervisory support may occur prior to the training in the form of encouragement to attend the training (cited in Elangovan & Karakowsky. 1999). After that, Desimone *et.al* (2002) further added up that in order to

increase transfer of training, supervisory support is in greater needs in terms of encouragement to attend training, goal setting, reinforcement and behavior modeling. This situation indicates that management or supervisory support will determine the effectiveness of training program.

Relationship between peer supports with training effectiveness

Ho5 stated that there is no significant relationship between peer support and training effectiveness. This hypothesis is rejected because the significant value showed is 0.012, which is less than the significant level of 0.05. This situation shows that there is a relationship between these two variables. This is concurrent with the research done by Pea's cited in Cromwell and Kolb (2004). In this particular research, the findings showed there is a connection between coworkers support with transfer of training. In order to determine the training effectiveness, peers have the influence either to promote or impede the trainees' ability to transfer the knowledge and skills back to the job. According to Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999) training effectiveness depends on the conformity to the group norms. Individual productivity and performance will be affected if the group norms dictate low standard of productivity. However, group norms not only affect individual productivity and performance but also the trainees' ability to learn new skills and knowledge and the motivation to apply it back to the job.

Most dominant barrier of transfer of training that affects the training effectiveness

Ho6 stated that there is no dominant barrier of transfer of training that affects the training effectiveness. However, this hypothesis is rejected after the regression analysis shows the most dominant barrier of transfer of training is training environment with the beta value 0.399 and R Square value 0.159. According to Desimone *et al.* (2002), a comfortable training environment is essential in assisting trainees to learn new skills and knowledge. This is because trainees cannot fully concentrate during the training when the environment is not comfortable and full of distractions. This situation will definitely impede the learning process and it affects the effectiveness of the training program.

CONCLUSION

From the hypotheses testing, it was found that training environment has the strongest influence on training effectiveness. This is evident with the Beta value of 0.399. This finding corresponds with the notion hold by Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999). They had once mentioned that the difference between the training context and the "applied" context would significantly restrict the effect the transfer of trained skills. This is undeniable because a trainee who learn new knowledge and skills during the training program does not mean he is able to apply the knowledge and skills back to the job site if the training environment is not match with the working environment. Here, the physical field it play an imperative role in transferring the knowledge and skills. As such, the training program should be designed to match the training context as closely as possible to the working environment in order to promote positive transfer of training. It is hoped that the existence of this study is able to overcome the barriers of transfer of training that affect the effectiveness of the training program, by improving the conditions, environment and facilities of the training program so that it is in line with the training objectives. In addition, the outcome of this research can be used as a guideline in conducting similar research in the future. In addition, this study is beneficial for the future researcher as well. Future researcher can utilize this study as a reference in conducting their research in the related field.

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