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## **Most Admired Training Transfer Enterprise Model in Agribusiness and Agro-technology industry: a conceptual paper**

Raja Suzana Raja Kasim<sup>a\*</sup>, Adnan Omar<sup>b</sup>, Sharrifah Ali<sup>c</sup>, Zulazli Hashim<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup>*Global Entrepreneurship Research & Innovation Center, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan*

<sup>b,c</sup>*Universiti Teknologi MARA*

<sup>d</sup>*Universiti Malaysia Kelantan*

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### **Abstract**

The recognition of training as an important development of human resource in implementing the quality of its human capital needs is no longer a new issue. However, despite several attempts trying to improve the success of training transfer onto the job, majority of the employees attending training had indicated that they had less successfully transferred the knowledge, skills and attitudes they have learnt and even further minimal change in behavior in their job-related performance. In this paper, the qualitative and quantitative investigation was conducted to examine the extent of training transfer knowledge activities (in compiling, gathering, collating and synthesising the employees experience, knowledge, skills and abilities) among executives at selected agribusiness and agro-technology based organizations. Final knowledge on training transfer performance and program were further formulated with feedback from training transfer expert. This paper contributes to the alternate model in favour of innovative and sustainable governance of a holistic agribusiness policy framework.

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\*Raja Suzana Raja Kasim. Tel.: +0-603-8992-3019; fax: 0-603-8890-22 53.  
E-mail address: [rajasuzana@umk.edu.my](mailto:rajasuzana@umk.edu.my)

## 1. Introduction

Changes in the workplace such as increases in technology and the increased influence and competition from international markets have led organization to rely increasingly on their ability to train employees on an ongoing basis to maintain the necessary levels of knowledge, skills and performance (Goldsten & Ford 2002). In today's global economy, the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to maintain a competitive advantage are growing and changing (Arguinis & Kraiger 2009). As the nature of work changes, employees are increasingly expected to develop a wide, mutable set of skills that are essential to the success of their organizations. Training can be defined as a systematic acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes that together lead to improved performance in a specific environment (Salas et al. 2006). This encompasses what employees need to know, what they need to do and what they need to feel in order to successfully perform their jobs. Employee training and development (TAD), is a systematic approach to learning and development to improve individual, team and organizational effectiveness (Arguinis & Kraiger 2009), it is regarded as one of the most widespread human resource (HR) practices (Tracey & Tews 2005).

### 1.1. Definition

At its most basic level, training can be thought of as the planned and systematic activities designed to promote the acquisition of knowledge (i.e., need to know), skills (i.e. need to do) and attitudes (i.e., need to feel). Effective training takes place when trainees are intentionally provided with pedagogically sound opportunities to learn targeted knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) through instruction, demonstration, practice, and time diagnostic feedback about their performance (Salas & Cannon-Bowers 2001). The goal of training is to create sustainable changes in behavior and cognition so that individuals possess the competencies they need to perform a job. Training has been regarded as a complex process that moves from pre-training experiences, to learning and the acquisition of cognitive knowledge and skills, to the capability to apply – or transfer – new learning to job-related tasks, and eventually to the transfer of learning to job tasks and activities beyond those that were initially targeted by the training.

### 1.2. Statement of problem

All too often training was seen as remote, a break from work and not necessarily applicable to the job at hand. One-day and a week-long course were the favoured options as this meant staff were not away from the job for too much time. The importance on transfer of training as critical factors for improving performance and gaining in a competitive advantage necessitate that both areas be further investigated. Any relationship between training inputs and transfer of training could lead to performance improvements and maximize the benefits gained and enable organizations to remain competitive in the face of global competition, a constantly changing environment and unstable economic conditions. Thus, a clear understanding of the factors which influence trainee's use of their learned skills and knowledge on the job would be valuable in determining trainee's motivating factors to use knowledge and skills so that the organization is benefited (Wahidin, 2007; Ford, Quinones, Sego & Sorra, 1992; Bersin, 2006; Rasli, 2005; Baharim, 2008).

### 1.3. Research Questions

- What are the best practices of training transfer issues in agribusiness products?
- To what extent sustainability of training transfer exist at selected agribusiness institutions?
- What type of model could be formulated in matters relating to most admirable training transfer enterprise in agribusiness sector?

## 2. Methodology

This research is based on the review of eight peer reviewed articles that focused on the best practices of training transfer. Three articles described the models that were developed to enhance the concept of training transfer. These models were geared to formulate models that are relevant to respond to the issues and needs of training transfer in agribusiness sector. These models are reported by Goldstein and Ford (2002), Holton (2005) and Kirkpatrick (1998).

## 3. Findings

The limited evidence of transfer is particularly alarming given the budgets devoted to training. Kauffeld and Lehmann-Willenbrock (2010) reported that organizations invest considerable sums of money in human resource development and it is imperative for organizations facing global competition continuously to improve employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes. In line with the local perspectives, the government benefits associated with transfer of training as identified by the Ministry of Human Resources. Secondly, it involves the recognition of training as an important development of human resource in implementing the quality of its human capital needs. Thirdly, there are better and up-to-date choices of training to be allocated since training serves as a distinguished indicator in the development of Malaysian human capital.

An aspect of training continues to be an important element in developing a quality human capital both in the agenda of Tenth Malaysia Plan and the Second National Mission in enhancing the country's knowledge and innovative capacity of the workforce. In line with the above concern, ultimately, an important aspect related to the development of human capital in Malaysia is the transfer of training value on-the-job. It is the government policy to provide a minimum of seven training days per year for each employee in a public sector and public institutions of higher learning (Public Service Department Circular, 2005) (as cited in Haslinda & Mahyuddin, 2009). As for the selected agribusiness institutions, it is the policy of the institution to ensure its employees attend training and development in their core areas. This level of expenditure clearly reflects a changed perspective on the value of training interventions. With high investments in and allocation of resources in training, the need for justifying training effectiveness and documenting that employees can transfer and use the skills learnt to their work environment has accelerated (Nikandrou et al., 2009).

## 4. Models of Most Admired Training Transfers Enterprise

The subsequent section briefly describes the variables to be examined. The variables are represented in the framework shown in Figure 1. In meeting these objectives, a theoretical framework which also serves as a research framework of these relationships has been developed as below:

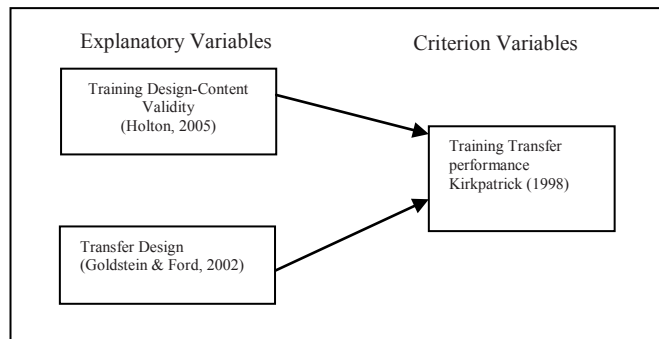


Figure 1: Research Framework

#### 4.1. Discussion

From these three models, selected agribusiness and Agro-technology institutions can pursue effective training transfer performance if the aspect of content validity and its transfer design is addressed accordingly. In this paper, the focus is limited only to these two aspects. In the training design and its associated issues on transfer design and content validity will be further examined. As noted by Holton (1996) and Holton (2005), one cause of failure to transfer is that training design rarely provides for transfer of learning. Even though, cognitive learning may well occur, but program participants may not have an opportunity to practice the training in a job context or may not be taught how to apply their knowledge on the job.

In response to training design, Brinkerhoff (1995) claimed it as one of the most important influences on training transfer and one cause factor of failure to transfer training is that training design rarely provides for transfer to take place (Holton, 1996). Thus, the relevance of the course has been seen as an especially important area of training design (Holton, 1996) and if the course is irrelevant, then individuals are unlikely to use the skills when they return to work, irrespective of trainee and work environment characteristics which are present. They further suggest that training design, content and instructional strategies must be related to the objective of transfer, i.e. whether it is near or far transfer, for learning transfer to be realized. Near transfer is more likely to occur when trainers emphasize the practical relevance of the training (Kirkpatrick 1998), whereas far transfer indicates that the learned knowledge is applied in dissimilar working situations.

#### 5. Conclusions

This paper is analyzed from the perspective of the low training transfer activities among employees at selected agribusiness and Agro-technology institutions. Without greater insight into the complex relationships between training inputs and the application of learned KSAs in the workplace, the scenario of employee's transfer problems will continue to be an obstacle to these organizations which seek superior performance. Hence, it is crucial for the management to gain an insight of the problems and

undertake effective measures to improve the records in modelling this training transfer programs which in turn affect performance outcomes.

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