

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

Training refers to the development of "new knowledge and skills that are expected to be used immediately upon (or within a short time after) arrival or return to the work place" (Broad and Newstrom, 1992; p. 5). The basic goals of training are to improve the performance of the employees to fill present positions, to prepare and help the employees to fill more responsible positions in the future and to satisfy both the needs of the organisations and of the individuals. Although training is regarded as an expensive investment to any organisations, it has been recognised as one of the most effective strategies for organisations to update employees' knowledge and skills (Rowold, 2007) and their job attitudes (e.g., job commitment, job satisfaction, teamwork) (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009; Baldwin, et al., 2009). Moreover, training also provides employees with the opportunity to learn new knowledge and skills that are necessary for surviving in an ever-changing work environment and for mobility in their profession (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990). In addition, training supplies the means for dealing with deficits in the supply of trained employees (Goldstein and Gilliam, 1990), and improve the organization performance (Aguinis and Kraiger, 2009; Baldwin, et al., 2009). For example, Aragon and colleagues (2003) examine the relationship between training and organisational performance by distributing a survey to 457 small and medium-size businesses in the United Kingdom, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, and Finland. Organisational performance was operationalized as (1) effectiveness (i.e., employee involvement, human resource indicators, work engagement and quality), and (2) profitability (i.e., sales volume, benefits before

interest and taxes, and a ratio of benefit before taxes/sales). Results indicated that some kinds of training activities, including on-the-job training and training inside the organisation using in-house trainers, were positively related to most dimensions of effectiveness and profitability.

If organisations are to benefit from their training program investment, they need to make sure that their employees have to apply what they have learned in the training program in their work (known as the transfer of training.). For instance, transfer of training can be defined as the application of knowledge, skills and attitudes learned from training on the job and its subsequent maintenance over a certain period of time (Xiao, 1996). Transfer of training however remains a difficult and often frustrating challenge for any organisations (Chiaburu, et al., 2010). For instance, in one previous study conducted by Saks and Belcourt (2006), they have reported that just 62 percent of trainees had applied the new acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes immediately after training was completed. However, this percentage dropped to 44 percent after 6 months and continued to decrease to 34 percent after only one year. One more study of 56 learners indicated that the learners' transfer performance fell within three weeks after the training programme was completed (Vermeulen and Admiraal, 2009). Consequently, there is a critical need to understand the factors that affect the transfer of training outcomes to the work place. Hence, an adequate understanding on this issue can provide an essential benefit to the organisations.

Previous researchers have identified the factors that can influence the transfer of training outcomes to the workplace, in which these factors can be classified into two categories. First, the factors that are related to trainee (employee) characteristics such

as motivation to learn (Noe, 1986), self-efficacy (Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008; Tharanganie, 2013) and job satisfaction (Egan, et al., 2004). Second, the factors that are related to trainee (employee) work environment including the support from supervisor (Bates et al., 2000; Brinkerhoff and Montesino, 1995; Colquitt et al., 2000; Tracey and Tews, 2005), the support from peer (Chiaburu and Marinova, 2005), opportunity to perform the training outcomes in the workplace (Goldstein, 1986; Wexley and Latham, 1991) and organisational learning culture (Egan, Yang and Bartlett, 2004).

Another important factor that influences the transfer of training outcomes in the workplace is motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer is defined as the trained employee's intention to use the recently acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes mastered in the training session back to the workplace (Seyler et al., 1998). Moreover, motivation to transfer is regarded as a major element in transfer of the training process. It might be difficult to apply the learning on the job effectively without motivation. In other words, if trainees leave the training programme with full intention to transfer the training outcomes at the end of the training programme, they will be able to use the recently acquired knowledge and skills at their workplace. As Baldwin and Ford (1988) argue, in order to apply the acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes, trainees must have motivation to transfer the training outcomes. Apart from that, other researchers also stated that according to Noe and Schmitt (1986) and Salas and Cannon-Bowers (2001), motivation to transfer can force trainee (employee) to make a personal effort and to change attitudes towards certain issues, as well as to take actions to shift outcomes.

1.2 Problem statement

In order to be more independent and self-sufficient, Libya as a developing nation has undertaken many development plans, aimed at developing each side of life (economic, social and political). For example, Libya has recently paid more attention to administration reform and reviewing the structures of public-sector organisations, simplified the work procedures, and sending a lot of people abroad in order to gain knowledge, skills and positive attitudes towards their organisations. In addition, the Libyan government has established the Libyan International for Training and Development centre in order to enhance the public sector's performance. Billions of dollars have been investing for training employees in the public sector in order to improve their performance. However, as to date, there has not been no comprehensive research conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of training organised by the Libyan International for Training and Development Centre. Such research is very important to provide empirical evidence about the impact of the training to the public sector employee in Libya.

One of the criteria to measure whether a particular training programme has met its objective is through transfer of training. In other words, a particular training is considered successful if the trainee is able to apply the knowledge and skills learned in training at workplace. In ensuring the trainee applies the training outcomes in the workplace, the trainee should have motivation to apply the trained knowledge and skills (known as motivation to transfer) in the end of training programme. For instance, Kirwan and Birchall (2006) have argued that motivation to transfer is the most critical precondition for the trainees to use the training content at workplace.

This perception has been supported by previous studies who found motivation to transfer as an important factor that predicts the success of transfer of training in the workplace (e.g., Axtell et al., 1997; Burke and Hutchins, 2007; Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008, Liebermann and Hoffmann, 2008). These studies further claim that employees would not use the recently acquired knowledge and skills on their jobs, unless they are motivated to transfer training outcomes.

Meanwhile, review of the literature has revealed that the focus of research in the area of motivation to transfer is to identify the factors that influence it. As a result, many factors that influence motivation to transfer have been identified as the factors that are related to trainee (employee) characteristics. Examples of trainee characteristics factors that have influenced on motivation to transfer are including self-efficacy (Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008), motivation to learn (Noe, 1986; Tharanganie, 2013) and job satisfaction (Egan, Yang and Bartlett, 2004). Second, the factors are related to training design such as content relevance (Lim and Morris, 2006; Rodriguez and Gregory, 2005). Third, the factors are related to trainee (employee) work environment, which include the opportunity to perform the training outcomes in the workplace (Goldstein, 1986; Wexley and Latham, 1991) and organisational learning culture (Egan, Yang and Bartlett, 2004).

Although all the above factors have been empirically justified in previous studies, the factors have been tested separately in different contexts and using different types of employees. As to date, there is still lack of studies conducted to examine the impact of all these factors simultaneously. Thus, this study is conducted to fill this gap. By testing all these factors in a specific context and sample, a more adequate conclusion

related to the factors that influence motivation to transfer can be generated, especially in the context of Libya.

Research in the field of motivation to transfer also examines the impact of motivation to transfer, especially on employees. However, this area of research has received lack of empirical evidence. Till date, only few studies have been conducted on this issue and found a positive impact of motivation to transfer on employees' flexibility, productivity and eagerness to work (Blandy et al., 2000; Lane et al., 2001; Lyles and Salk, 2007; Heathfield, 2009). Another potential impact of motivation to transfer is it can improve employee engagement in the workplace (Kontoghiorghes, 2002). However, such argument has not been empirically justified in the literature. Therefore, this study will examine the effect of motivation to transfer on work engagement. This effort is important to enhance our understanding about the significant of motivation to transfer on employee and organization.

In addition, previous studies of motivation to transfer have mostly been conducted in the private organisations that are based in the Western country context (e.g., Chiaburu and Lindsay, 2008; Tharanganie, 2013). Besides, research related to this issue is still scarce in the context of public organisation in Arabic countries, particularly in the Libyan context, which have different cultures and work systems compared to organisations in the Western countries. Culture has been found to be one of the most important predictors bearing on efforts to transfer recently knowledge and skills to the work place. According to Noe (1986), employees' behaviours, interests, values, and expectations can have an effect on training effectiveness.

1.3 Research question

- 1- What employee characteristic factors influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya?
- 2- What work environment factors influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya?
- 3- What training design factors influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya?
- 4- What the specific national culture that has influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya?
- 5- Does motivation to transfer have a positive impact on employee work engagement in public sector organizations in Libya?
- 6- Does motivation to transfer mediate the relationship between employee characteristic factors, work environment factors, training design factors, national culture factors and work engagement?

1.4 Research objective

- 1- To examine the employee characteristic factors that influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya.
- 2- To examine the work environment factors that influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya.
- 3- To determine the training design factors that influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya.
- 4- To identify the specific national culture factors that influence motivation to transfer in public sector organizations in Libya.

- 5- To examine the impact of motivation to transfer on employee work engagement in public sector organizations in Libya.
- 6- To examine the mediate effect of motivation to transfer in the relationship between employee characteristic factors, work environment factors, training design factors, national culture factors and work engagement.

1.5 Scope of the study

This study is conducted to identify the factors that influence motivation to transfer the training outcomes in public sector organisations in Libya. The factors include in this study are categorised into four categories. First, employee characteristic factors such as motivation to learn , self-efficacy and job satisfaction. Second, training design factor which refers to content relevance. Third, work environment factors which include the opportunity to perform and organisational learning culture. Fourth the national culture, which refers to power distance.

Apart from that, this study also is conducted to examine the impact of motivation to transfer the training outcomes on employees' work attitude. The employees' work attitude in this study refers to work engagement, which is defined as a positive, fulfilling, job-related state of mind which is characterised by dedication, absorption and vigour (Schaufeli et al., 2002: p. 74).

In addition, the respondents of this study are limited to employees of public sector organizations in Libya, who participated in the training organized by the Libyan International for Training and Development Centre in Libya.

1.6 The significance of study

First, the government of Libya has established the Libyan International for Training and Development centre to provide trainings to public sector employees in the country. Furthermore, the Libyan government has spent billion dollars to organize various training programs in this institute. However, there is still lack of research conducted to assess the effectiveness of training programs given to public sector employees by this institute. Thus, this study is conducted to address this issue. Although this study only focuses on the issue of ‘motivation to transfer’, this indicator has been recognized as one of the elements that can determine whether the training programme is success or otherwise (Kirwan and Birchall, 2006).

Second, this study provides a more comprehensive understanding about the factors that influence motivation to transfer the training outcomes in the workplace. Unlike most of the previous studies which prefer to examine the factors separately in different contexts, the conceptual framework of this study is unique because it includes various factors which can be categorised into four categories; employee characteristics, work environment, training design and national culture. By testing all these factors together in a specific context, a more adequate conclusion can be generated in regards to the factors that influence motivation to transfer the training outcomes in the workplace of that particular context.

Third, this study extends the literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between motivation to transfer the training outcomes and employee work engagement. Such relationship has yet to be tested by the researchers in this field, as

previous studies only examined the relationship between motivation to transfer and employee job performance (Lyles and Salk, 2007; Heathfield, 2009)

Fourth, researches related to motivation to transfer mostly have been conducted in private organisations in the Western context (e.g. Nikandrou, et al., 2009). As a result, the understanding about this issue in other contexts such as the public sector organisations in Libya is limited. This study provides empirical evidence about the factors that influence motivation to transfer the training outcomes in public sector organisations in Libya. In addition, this study also provides empirical evidence on the impact of motivation to transfer the training outcomes on employee work attitude (employee work engagement) in this context.

1.7 Definition of variables

Motivation to transfer

Motivation to transfer refers to the trainee's desire to use the acquired knowledge and skills in the training program to the work place (Noe, 1986: 743)

Motivation to learn

Motivation to learn is defined as a particular desire of a learner to learn the content of the training (Noe and Schmitt, 1986).

Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual's faith that trainees can perform specific tasks and behaviours (Salas and Cannon, 2001).

Job satisfaction

An employee's affective reactions and feeling about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which employees like or dislike their jobs (Spector, 1997).

Opportunity to perform

Opportunity to perform is defined as the extent to which trainees are provided with or actively obtains work experiences relevant to the task for which he or she was trained (Ford et al., 1992)

Organizational learning culture

A culture that supports the acquisition of information, the distribution and sharing of learning, and it reinforces and supports continuous learning and its application to organizational improvement (Bates and Khasawneh, 2005).

Content relevance

Content relevance is described as to which extent the training contexts and the actual work environment context are similar.

Power Distance

A measurement of the personal power or impact between a manager and a subordinate as perceived by the subordinate (Hofstede, 1991: p.71).

Work engagement

A positive fulfilling job-related state of mind which is characterized by dedication, absorption and vigour (Schaufeli et al., 2002: p. 74).

1.8 Theses outline

Chapter 1 provides a discussion about the background of this study. The chapter explains the problem statement of this study, followed by the research questions, research objectives, the scope and the significance of the study. Finally, the chapter describes the conceptual definition of each variable that include the conceptual framework of this study.

Chapter 2 highlights a discussion about the literature review of this study. The chapter begin with an introduction to the concept of motivation to transfer. Then, the chapter explains about the significance of motivation to transfer and the factors that influence motivation to transfer. Following this, the chapter explains about the impact of motivation to transfer and finally, the chapter provides a brief explanation about the conceptual framework of this study.

This paper continues with Chapter 3 which provides a discussion about the methodological aspect of this study including the research design, the population and the sample of this study, the data collection method and procedure and the research instrument used in this study. Finally, the chapter describes the method and procedure of analysing the data of this study.

Chapter 4 discusses the data analysis results based on the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2.

Finally, Chapter 5 outlines the findings from Chapter 4. Following this, the chapter provides a discussion about the limitations of this study as well as the suggestions for future studies.

