



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**PERCEPTION TOWARDS FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSFER OF
TRAINING: A CASE STUDY IN KOMAG USA (MALAYSIA) SDN.
(SARAWAK OPERATION), KUCHING**

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**Kota Samarahan
2007**

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by

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This project is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a
Bachelor of Science with Honours
(Human Resource Development)

Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak

2007

This project entitled Perception towards Factors Influencing Transfer of Training: A Case Study in Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation), Kuching was prepared by Wong Lee Lee and submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development in partial fulfillment of the requirements to obtain a Bachelor of Science with Honours (Human Resource Development)

Received for examination by:

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Grade

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First of all I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to my supervisor, Encik Mohammad Nur Azhar b. Mazlan for his support, patience and invaluable advice. Besides that, I would also like to thank Dr. Tan Kock Wah for helping me in the data analysis. A special note of thanks also goes to all the staff of Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development for their kind assistance.

My sincere appreciation also goes to all the technical staff of Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation) who participated in this research, not forgetting Encik Dolhardhi and Puan Intan Angie Jemijo in Human Resource Department.

To the most important people in my life, my father Mr. Wong Seng Chiong, my mother Mrs. Siew Leh Sung, my sisters Wong Ngo Ing, Wong Chai Ing and Wong Siu Ing for their understanding and moral support, for without them I would not have the strength and courage to complete this project.

Not forgetting all my friends who assisted me in this project especially Leong Jau, Peck Eng, Yien Ping, Nyuk King and Bong for their moral support and Reuben for teaching me to use Adobe Illustrator.

Last but not least, to all my friends in UNIMAS whom I have the privilege and pleasure of knowing. Thank you for the friendship and the unforgettable memories which I would treasure always.

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ABSTRACT

PERCEPTION TOWARDS FACTORS INFLUENCING TRANSFER OF TRAINING: A CASE STUDY IN KOMAG USA (MALAYSIA) SDN. (SARAWAK OPERATION), KUCHING

Wong Lee Lee

The purpose of this study is to identify the various factors influencing transfer of training in Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation), Kuching. This study also aims to determine the dominant factors influencing transfer of training. A set of questionnaire was used as the research instrument and was distributed to 161 respondents. The respondents in this study consisted of all the technical staff who had attended the Team Communication Training in Komag. The feedback collected was then analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 14.0 (SPSS 14.0). Pearson Correlation Analysis was used to find out the significant relationship between transfer of training and transfer factors such as motivation to transfer, training design and transfer climate. The Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis was used to determine the dominant factors influencing transfer of training. The outcome of this study shows that all the transfer factors studied in this research were found to have a positive significant relationship with transfer of training. Motivation to transfer and training design were identified as the dominant factors influencing transfer of training. Thus, based on the findings of this study, suggestions are made on how to improve the trainees' motivation to transfer and training design to facilitate transfer of training.

ABSTRAK

PERSEPSI TERHADAP FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PEMINDAHAN LATIHAN DI KOMAG USA (MALAYSIA) SDN. (SARAWAK OPERATION), KUCHING

Wong Lee Lee

Kajian ini dijalankan bagi mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan di Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation), Kuching. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk menentukan faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan. Instrument kajian ini adalah borang soal selidik yang diedarkan kepada 161 responden. Responden kajian ini terdiri daripada semua pelatih yang telah menghadiri Latihan Team Communication di Komag. Dapatan kajian dianalisa dengan menggunakan Statistical Package for Social Sciences 14.0 (SPSS 14.0). Korelasi Pearson digunakan untuk mengkaji hubungan signifikan antara faktor pemindahan latihan seperti motivasi untuk pemindahan, reka bentuk latihan dan keadaan pemindahan. Analisis Stepwise Multiple Regression pula digunakan bagi menentukan faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kesemua faktor pemindahan yang dikaji dalam kajian ini didapati mempunyai hubungan signifikan yang positif dengan pemindahan latihan. Motivasi untuk pemindahan dan reka bentuk latihan pula dikenalpasti sebagai faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan. Oleh itu, berdasarkan dapatan kajian ini, beberapa cadangan dikemukakan bagi meningkatkan pemindahan latihan.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

People believe that a competitive and successful organisation is achieved through its employees (Pfeffer, 1994). Therefore, organisations nowadays are willing to invest large amounts of money annually to train and develop its employees' knowledge and skills for future needs. The New Economy Index (2002) showed that USA corporate training has been spent around \$58.6 billion per year since 1988 (London and Flannery, 2003). According to Holton, Ruona, and Leimbach (1998), the total training expenditures could easily reach \$200 billion or more annually including the inclusion of indirect cost, informal on-the-job training, and costs incurred by small organisations.

According to Campbell and Kuncel (2001), training is a planned intervention that is designed to enhance individual job performance. Therefore, training is one of the strategic planning and development for the organisation to develop its employees to become more competitive and multi-tasking. After attending

training, the employees are expected to apply the learned knowledge and skills to the workplace as transfer of training is a core issue with respect to linking employees change to the requirements of the organisation system (Yamnil and McLean, 2001). The purpose of training is to enhance job performance. The skills and behaviours learned and practiced during training have to be transferred to the workplace, maintained over time and the employees are able to generalize across contexts (Holton and Baldwin, 2003). Therefore, the employees are expected to improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) after attending the training programs and also able to retain and apply learned KSA to their jobs in very wide work contexts.

1.1 Background of the Organisation

Komag is the world's leading independent supplier of thin-film disks, the primary high-capacity storage medium for digital data. Komag leverages the combination of its world-class U.S. research and development center and Malaysian manufacturing operations at Johor Bahru and Penang to produce disks which meet the high-volume, stringent quality, low cost and demanding technology needs. The mission of Komag is "Leadership through innovation, Growth through continuous improvement".

In 1996, Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation) was first set up in Sarawak which is located at Sama Jaya Free Industrial Zone, Kuching to balance capacity growth with its customer demand. One of the key elements of Komag's strategy is to improve manufacturing efficiency while reducing production costs. Therefore, training and development for its employees are very important to achieve its strategy.

The training programs conducted in Komag USA (Malaysia) Sdn. (Sarawak Operation) are designed by the staff of its Training Department which include Operation training and Corporate training. This study focuses its attention on the Team Communication (Team Com) Training which would be conducted once per quarter to all the technical staff. The Team Communication Training is an in-class training conducted by the internal facilitators to deliver new information and procedures regarding the changes on the specifications due to the changes of the requirements from customers. In July 2006, Team Communication or also known as Business Unit Communication Training had been conducted for the technical staff.

1.2 Statement of Problem

According to Yamnill and McLean (2001), many organisations spend a lot of money on training, believing that training will increase their employees' knowledge and skills which improve their performance and hence the firm's quality and productivity. However, is the training really effective enough whereby the employees can transfer the knowledge and skills that they gained in the training into their workplace and will the investments in training provide maximum returns? Several studies have shown that transfer of KSA in training which are applied to the workplace have been shown to be somewhat limited. London and Flannery (2004) stated that less than 10-20 percent of the training is actually transferred directly to the workplace. Besides, Broad and Newstrom (1992) have estimated that over 80 percent of the employees who undergo training were unable to practice the knowledge and skills learned in training into their working environment. Baldwin (1988) and Brethower (2001) noted that some trainees are able to apply learned KSA during training immediately to the workplace, however they are unable to sustain long term changes in work

practice.

A few studies have been done overseas regarding the transfer of training at the management level and technical level. However, there are not many studies done in Kuching, Sarawak which show the dominant factors that influence the trainees to apply the knowledge and skills learned at training to their jobs. Therefore, this study will attempt to explore possible variables related to the transfer of training in Komag, Kuching especially the supervisors. Specifically, this study is designed to answer this question:

What relationship exists between selected factors to transfer of training?

1.3 Research Objectives

General Objectives

The main purpose of this study was to identify the various factors that might influence transfer of training among the technical staff in Komag, Kuching.

Specific Objectives

Specifically, the objectives of this study are:

- a) To identify the level of training transfer of training.
- b) To determine the relationship between motivation to transfer and transfer of training.
- c) To determine the relationship between training design and transfer of training.
- d) To determine the relationship between transfer climate and transfer of training.

- e) To determine the dominant factors influencing transfer of training.

1.4 Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

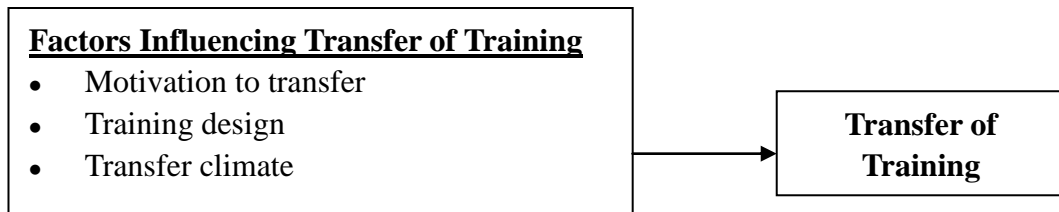


Figure 1

1.5 Hypotheses

Based on the study objectives, the following null hypotheses are formulated.

- Ho1 : There is no significant relationship between motivation to transfer and transfer of training.
- Ho2 : There is no significant relationship between training design and transfer of training.
- Ho3 : There is no significant relationship between transfer climate and transfer of training.
- Ho4 : There is no significant dominant factor influencing transfer of training.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The role of trainees in organisations is one of the aspects which will determine the competency of the organization. Problems such as trainees being unable to apply the skills they learned during training to the workplace may

decrease the competency of the trainees. Therefore, by having a better understanding of the various factors that would influence transfer of training among the trainees is very important for those who are involved in the field of human resource training and development.

One of the important contributions of the study is that, the organisation would be able to identify the factors that would increase the likelihood for trainees to apply what they have learned during training to the workplace. By understanding those factors, the organisation would be able to take up steps to modify and improve training programs to assist trainees to maximize the transfer of newly learned knowledge, skills and attitudes to the workplace. This will increase the effectiveness of training and produce a knowledgeable and skillful workforce who is able to perform better and increase their productivity in the future.

1.7 Definition of Terms

The conceptual definitions for the important terms used in this paper will be given operational definitions to match the context of this paper.

1.7.1 Transfer of Training

Wexley and Latham (1991) defined transfer of training as the degree to which trainees transfer the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in the training setting to their job. According to Cascio (1995), there are three types of transfer of training, which are positive transfer, zero transfer and negative transfer. Positive transfer occurs when the training results in a higher level of performance. Zero transfer occurs when the training brings no change in job performance while negative transfer brings a lower level of performance.

Transfer of training in this study will refer to the perception of respondents towards the level of application of skills and knowledge which they learned from the training setting to the workplace. Positive transfer means the training results in a higher level of performance where the trainees are able to apply learned knowledge to their workplace. Meanwhile, zero transfer means that the training does not bring any changes in the trainees' job performance. Finally, negative transfer means the training results in a lower level of performance among the trainees.

1.7.2 Motivation to Transfer

According to Noe and Schmitt (1986), motivation to transfer refers to the trainees' desire to use the knowledge and skills which they mastered in the training to their job. There are several factors that can motivate trainees' desire to transfer learned knowledge and skills to workplace such as self-efficacy, self-expectancy (Wang and Wentling, 2001), goal-setting (Yamnill and McLean, 2001; Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005; Brown, 2005) and so on.

In this study, the motivation to transfer refers to the perception of respondents towards their own motivation in setting their own goals to transfer learned skills and knowledge to their job.

1.7.3 Training Design

Training design refers to the principles of learning and training content which is able to provide opportunities for the trainees to practice the training in a job content or they may be taught on how to apply their knowledge on the job (Holton, 1996).

In this study, training design refers to the perception of the respondents towards the principles of learning, sequencing and relevance of training contents with their job.

1.7.4 Transfer Climate

Transfer climate refers to a “sense of imperative” (cited in Holton, Bates, Seyler, and Carvalho, 1997) which arises from the perception of a person regarding his or her working environment (Yamhill and McLean, 2001). According to Yamhill and McLean (2001), transfer climate influences the extent to which a person can use learned knowledge, skills and attitudes on his or her job. In addition, Pidd (2004) stated that transfer climate are the situations and consequences in the workplace that would inhibit or facilitate and encourage the transfer of specific training to the job situations (Rouiller and Goldstein, 1993) such as influence from supervisors, peer attitudes toward training, organisational policies and practices support training (Burke and Baldwin, 1999).

Transfer climate in this study will refer to the perception of respondents towards their working environment (peers and supervisors support) which will influence them to transfer learned skills and knowledge to their workplace.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of this study is that it only covers one training program in an organisation in Kuching. Therefore, the findings might not be an accurate representation of all organisations in Sarawak. Moreover, different types of training might be influenced by different factors in transfer of training. For example, factors such as trainers, training methods, materials, and training

environment could also influence the types of training transfer.

Besides, the respondents for this study is only limited to the technical staff in the organisation. Therefore, this study concentrates more on knowledge training transfer in the organisation as the training program is in-class training that presented facts and information to the trainees. Finally, this study only covers three variables which would possibly affect transfer of training.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of related literature. Besides that, it also presents the factors of transfer of training such as motivation to transfer, transfer design, and transfer climate and its related theories. By reviewing and comparing between previous study and this study, it will help to ensure high validity and reliability of this study.

2.1 Transfer of Training

Frequent changes in nature and content of work have influenced organisational choice of human development. One of the most frequent human resource development interventions is training (Chiaburu and Tekleab, 2005). Training in an organisation refers to a learning process which is planned to change attitude, increase knowledge and skills of the employees to ensure that their performance can be upgraded (Ibrahim, 2001). Therefore, trainees are expected to

be able to practice and transfer learned knowledge, skills and attitudes during training to their workplace, maintain it overtime and generalize across contexts (Holton and Baldwin, 2003).

Based on Broad and Newstrom (1992), transfer of training is the effective and continuing application of the knowledge and skills gained in training setting by the trainees to their jobs (both on and off the job). While according to Baldwin and Ford (1988), training transfer is the ability or capacity of the trainees to take the knowledge and skills that they received from the training setting and utilize them to their work practice.

This shows that transfer of training is a continuous application of learned knowledge and skills by the trainees from training setting to their job, also being able to maintain it overtime as a habit and generalize it to other contexts in the organisation.

2.2 Factors Influencing Transfer of Training

There are many factors which would influence the transfer of training that was identified by past research such as personal locus of control, job involvement, personal involvement (Noe, 1986), individual differences (Gist, Bavetta, and Stevens, 1990), training content (Baldwin and Ford, 1988; Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Hawley and Barnard, 2005), organisational context and culture (Kowalski and Salas, 1997) and so forth. All these can be categorized into three main factors which are trainee characteristics, training design and work environment (Baldwin and Ford, 1988).

2.2.1 Motivation to Transfer

According to Baldwin and Ford (1988), trainee characteristics include the trainee's abilities, personal characteristics and motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer refers to the trainees' desire to use the knowledge and skills which they mastered in the training to their jobs (Noe and Schmitt, 1986).

Yamnill and McLean (2001) stated that behavioural change will likely occur for trainees who learn the material presented in training and desire to apply that new knowledge or skills to work activities. There are studies done on motivation to transfer training to performance (Machin and Fogarty, 1997; Yamnill and McLean, 2001) which stated that motivation to transfer influenced the effectiveness of training transfer hence increasing employees' performance. Motivation to transfer will take into consideration the trainee's ability, willingness to transfer, and goal-setting.

A study of a management development program was done by Wexley and Nemeroff (1975) for the hospital administrators. The study found that the group which assigned performance goals was significantly better at applying learned knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs) than a control group that no goals were assigned. Wexley and Baldwin (1986) also identified that participative goal setting after attending training brings larger levels of maintenance behaviour.

Latham and Seijts (1999), noted that trainees who are motivated to set their own goals is also an effective transfer of training intervention. Gist, et al. (1990) have conducted several transfer studies involving goal setting and they have found out that self management training, including self-monitoring of progress and goal setting significantly resulted in superior transfer of skill generalization to other job

contexts. In addition, simulation and laboratory research has shown that implementing goal setting after training significantly increases trainees' performance and self-efficacy (Latham and Seijts, 1999; Seijts and Latham, 2001). This is because trainees set their own goals that would allow them to experience achievement in achieving those goals and motivate them to transfer learned knowledge, skills and attitudes to their job.

2.2.2 Training Design

Holton (1996) stated that one cause of failure for the trainee to transfer is that the training design rarely provides for transfer of learning. Training design refers to the principle of learning and training content that takes into consideration the training objective, meaningful material, and sequencing of the training content.

Cognitive learning may occur well during training, but trainees 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 (Yamnill and McLean, 2001). According to Hawley and Barnard (2005), training programs are often designed and delivered without connecting the training back to the working environment. Besides, Goldstein and Ford (2002) have identified that design of training content is significantly influencing the transfer of training.

According to Newstrom (1992), the trainees' perceptions of the impracticality of the training program and irrelevance of the training program are one of the top five barriers to transfer. The trainees believe that training programs are impractical or irrelevant to their needs and that proposed changes would cause them undue discomfort or extra effort. Besides, the trainees also perceived that the training programs were poorly designed or delivered which would influence them