Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development

EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCES TRAINING TRANSFER. A STUDY DONE IN SEDC (SARAWAK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION), SARAWAK

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Bachelor of Science with Honours
(Human Resource Development)
2004

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This project is one of the requirements to complete the
Bachelors Degree in Human Resource Development

Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development
SARAWAK MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY (UNIMAS)
2004

This project titled "Employees' Perception on Factors Influencing Training Transfer. A Study done in SEDC (Sarawak Economic Development Corporation" was prepared by Nor Asyikin Binti Abdullah and was submitted to the Faculty of Cognitive Science and Human Development to fulfill the requirements of completing the Bachelors Degree in Human Resource Development.

Received to be checked by:

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(Prof. Madya William Hughes)

Date:

5/4/04.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

In completing this final year project, there were a lot of people who had helped me. Praise to God, for giving me patience and strength throughout the whole process.

I owe my greatest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof. Madya William Hughes. Without your guidance and help I would sure be off track and it would be impossible for me to have submitted my final year project. To Prof. Madya Dr. Peter Sogan, your compliments and critiques had made me learn a lot to perform better in completing this project. I thank you for your encouragement.

En. Abdul Hanni Bustaman, thank you for accepting me to carry my research in SEDC (Sarawak Economic Development Corporation). Thank you to the rest of the staffs that had given their co-operation and help. This includes all of the respondents.

To all of my fellow without the all of you I would have faced bigger complications in completing my final year project. Thank you for being there for me.

May God Bless the all of you. Thank you.

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EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION ON FACTORS THAT INFLUENCES TRAINING TRANSFER. A STUDY DONE IN SEDC (SARAWAK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION), SARAWAK

Nor Asyikin Binti Abdullah

The purpose of this study is to identify the employees' perception on factors that influences the training transfer of a Coaching and Counseling Skill course that had been held in June 2003 and April 2003. The factors being stated in this research includes immediate work environment, separation from the support of the trainer, organizational culture and discomfort with change. Besides that, this research aims to see if the perceptions made differ from the chosen demographic such as age, tenure, sex and the employees' level of education. A set of questionnaire consisting 5 main parts was used as the research instrument. Respondents for this study were those who had attended the Coaching and Counseling Skill course that was held in April 2003 and in June 2003. The total of the respondents equaled up to 43 of them. Some of the targeted employees had resigned or had been transferred to another state in the country. The feed back collected was then analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences 11.0 (SPSS 11.0). T-test analysis was used to analyze the chosen demographic. For the factors that were viewed to have an influence on training transfer, Pearson Correlation Analysis was used. The outcome of this study found the chosen demographic had no significant difference in the perception made by the employees. Yet, for all of the four factors had a positive significant difference. The immediate work environment and organizational culture were identified as the dominant factor influencing the training transfer. Thus, from the findings that had been collected and analyzed, suggestions and recommendations were made to the organization, human resource practitioner and for the future researchers were made. The recommendations were made to improve the training design and to maximize the training transfer of the employees to the workplace.

ABSTRAK

PERSEPSI PEKERJA ATAS FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG MEMPENGARUHI PEMINDAHAN LATIHAN. KAJIAN DI SEDC (SARAWAK ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION), SARAWAK

Nor Asyikin Binti Abdullah

Tujuan kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk mengenalpasti persepsi pekerja atas faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan dalam latihan Coaching and Counseling Skill *yang telah diadakan pada bualan Jun 2003 dan April 2003. Faktor-faktor yang telah digunakan dalam kajian ini termasuklah persekitaran tempat pekerjaan, budaya organisasi, berpisah dari bimbingan jurulatih dan ketidakselesaan dengan perubahan. Selain daripada itu, tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk memastikan sama ada terdapat kaitan yang wujud anatara persepsi yang dibuat oleh pekerja dengan faktor-faktor demografi seperti umur, tempoh berkhidmat, jantina dan tahap pendidikan pekerja. Borang soal selidik telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Borang soal selidik tersebut mengandungi lima bahagian utama. Responden bagi menyumpurnakan kajian ini adalah seramai 43 orang. Mereka semua dipilih kerana mereka telah menghadiri kursus yang telah dinayatakan di atas. Ada di anatara mereka yang telah mengahadiri kursus ini telah berhenti berkhidmat ataupun telah dipindah ke tempat lain. Dapatan kajian telah diuji menggunakan* Statistical Package for Social Sciences 11.0 (SPSS 11.0). *Pengujian T-test digunakan bagi menguji cirri-ciri demografi yang terpilih. Manakala pengujian analisis Pearson Correlation digunakan bagi menguji faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan. Dapatan kajian mengatakan bahawa ciri-ciri demografi yang diuji tidak mempunyai perbezaan yang signifikan ke atas persepsi pekerja. Manakala, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan dibuktikan mempunyai perbezaan yang signifikan. Faktor persekitaran tempat kerja dan budaya organisasi didapati factor dominan yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan. Daripada dapatan kajian yang diperoleh, beberapa cadangan telah dikemukakan bagi meningkatakan kualiti letihan dan memaksimumkan pemindahan latihan ke tempat kerja.*

Introduction to the Research

1.0   Introduction

Training seems to be an important element in every organization nowadays. The purpose of having training programs are to develop and motivate for a better performance among the employees. As cited by HR focus, 2001. P2, "training is our key issue. We survey our staff to find out areas of need & interest for training purposes. In this way we can present training that is relevant to employees"

The need to invest in training programs was seen to be almost not needed 10 years ago. Now, after realizing that the most important asset that an organization could have are competent workers, employers are willing to spend millions or even billions of ringgits to give training to their employees. As stated by Prof. Maimunah in her journal of words on work, she said that there is no limit to the amount that could be spent on training and the number of training ringgit per year or per employee is not as important as whether or not the training adds value to the organization.

Competency in workers is rarely to be natural in the employee. Skills, knowledge and attitude (KSA's) in employees have to be developed in order to gain competent employees. Bare in mind that the process to develop the employees' KSA's has to be a consistent and an on going process. Therefore, in other words, training would always be an essential need in organizations.

An area that is often overlooked, as new employees are eager to become contributing members of the team. Employees may therefore see the amount of time and effort, which an organization spends, on them to help them become competent as a strong indication of their importance to the organization. Conversely the lack of a strong training program can be from the employees perspective as an indication that the employee is not important enough to warrant any attention & effort from the organization.(Gob, 1999)

Yes, organizations are realizing the need to have training programs consistently. So, they spend billions for such programs. The first few years, they invest blindly to train their employees for all they know is that training is part of the employees need. Some even simply invest because other organizations are investing and they do not want to feel left behind. Then, as they calculate the amount they spend on training programs, they begin wondering about the output of such programs. It was then, evaluation tools became important. Employers were asking themselves the way that they could ensure that the investment of billion of ringgits was worth it and was not wasted.

This was when "training transfer" became an important issue. The KSA's that was suppose to be delivered in a training program should be able to be used and is used in the workplace after returning from the training program. If this does not happen, then the amount spent for the employee of the organization to participate in the training program was simply wasted.

Research has been done, and it is found that through good supervision and management the correcting of incorrect techniques or procedures should occur immediately to ensure the employee in question receives the necessary training (Adopted from Go et al, 1996, p215)

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The perception of whether a training transfer has occurred after a training program can be made by both the employers and the employees of the organization. The employers can evaluate the training transfer by monitoring the employees performance after attending a training program. Still, sometimes people only see what they want to see and this could be subject to biasness. It is important to avoid this from happening because it consists a lot of money.

Therefore, it is seen to be more relevant to focus on the employees' perception for if there is an improvement in their performance, it is only them that knows the cause of the improvement. The cause of improvement may not relate significantly to the training program that they had just attended. Therefore, they can determine whether they had learnt anything at the training program that they had used in their work place, which helped in improving their performances. To conclude everything, the participants of the training program may evaluate whether the training program was worth going to or whether it was just a waste of time and money.

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Therefore, this research will concentrate on the perception of the employees on whether transfer of training had occurred in a specific training program. The program chosen was a "Coaching & Counseling Skills" training program held in SEDC (Sarawak Economic Development Corporation). This, in a way would help the SEDC to see the relevance of factors that contributes to training transfer and could give an idea to them on how to enhance that specific training program in the future. Besides that, SEDC or other organization could innovate this research to determine other factors that contributes to training transfer for the other types of training program. The variables included in this research would be stated later.

1.1 The Background & The Scope of the Research

A research on the transfer of training obviously has been done before. For example in "Transfer of Training," by John Newstrom. Yet, this specific research is aiming at only one organization and at only one specific training program.

Of course, in any organizations there are more than one training program for different purposes. So, there will be people wondering on how and what basis was the decision to have chosen the specific training program was made upon.

Actually, besides simply doing this research as a final year project, it was felt necessary that a little contribution should be made to the organization that was willing to give co-operation throughout the whole process. Therefore, the specific

program chosen was a newly implemented training program which was yet to be evaluated by the organization. This was so that, the outcome of the research may be some sort of a useful information to the organization.

Besides having the training program to be newly implemented, the program must also be related in developing the employees KSA's related to the task that they are doing. This was because, if it was related then only it was possible for the transfer of training to happen.

1.2   The Problem Statement

Evaluating training programs can be done various ways. Some are done directly after the training session to get feedbacks from the participants on their view of the training program. That type of evaluation however may only be more useful for the trainers for from the evaluation they can learn their strength and weaknesses. The organization could use the information to see whether the training program was interesting or not. If it was interesting, then there is a higher possibility for transferability to happen.

What this research is concerned about was for the evaluation of the organization on the training program to whether the training program was useful to increase the productivity of the organization. Therefore, the most suitable thing to be

evaluated by the employers of the organization is the "transfer of training" among the employees after attending a specific training program.

Again, there will be no one else more suitable to be questioned about the specific training program if it not the people who went for the training themselves. These people are the employees, and this research is concerned 100% about what they have to say or in other words, what are their perception on the training and factors, which contributes to transferability at the workplace.

Factors which influences the training transfer has been stated earlier. From what has been stated, the most important question is to know how is it possible to evaluate which factor plays the major role in transfer of training? In doing this research, perception would be used to evaluate each factor and relate them to transfer of training. It may not necessary be accurate and can be applied to all organizations or in this case all types of training program. Yet, it would be valuable information for the organization being studied and the specific training program being evaluated.

1.3 The Objectives of the Research

In general, the objective is to analyze the perception of the employees on the factors which influences transfer of training on a training programs and to determine which factor contribute most to training transfer. Demography will be used to se if perceptions differ from one demography to the other. Demography that is used includes age, sex, tenure and level of education.

For the factors, there are four factors that are perceived to play a major role in training transfer. They are; immediate work environment, discomfort with change, organizational culture and separation from the support of the trainer. Each factor would be clearly defined later in this chapter. Of course there are other factors that also influences training transfer, but these are the only factors that would be paid attention to.

Where else, the specific goals of this research taking only the employees who had attended the specific training program as the main asset of this research, are:

i) to determine if there is any significant differences between the age of the employees with their perception on training transfer

ii) to determine if there is any significant differences between the sex of the employees with their perception on training transfer

iii) to determine if there is any significant differences between the tenure of the employees with their perception on training transfer

iv) to determine if there is any significant differences between the level of education of the employees with their perception on training transfer

v) to determine if there is any significant differences between the immediate work environment of the employees with their perception on training transfer

vi) to determine if there is any significant differences between the employees discomfort with change of the employees with their perception on training transfer

vii) to determine if there is any significant differences between the organizational culture of the employees with their perception on training transfer

viii) to determine if there is any significant differences between the separation from the trainer of the employees with their perception on training transfer

1.4 The Conceptual Framework of the Research

From the specific goals of this research, a conceptual framework can be made. This conceptual framework is made of the independent variables and the dependent variables.
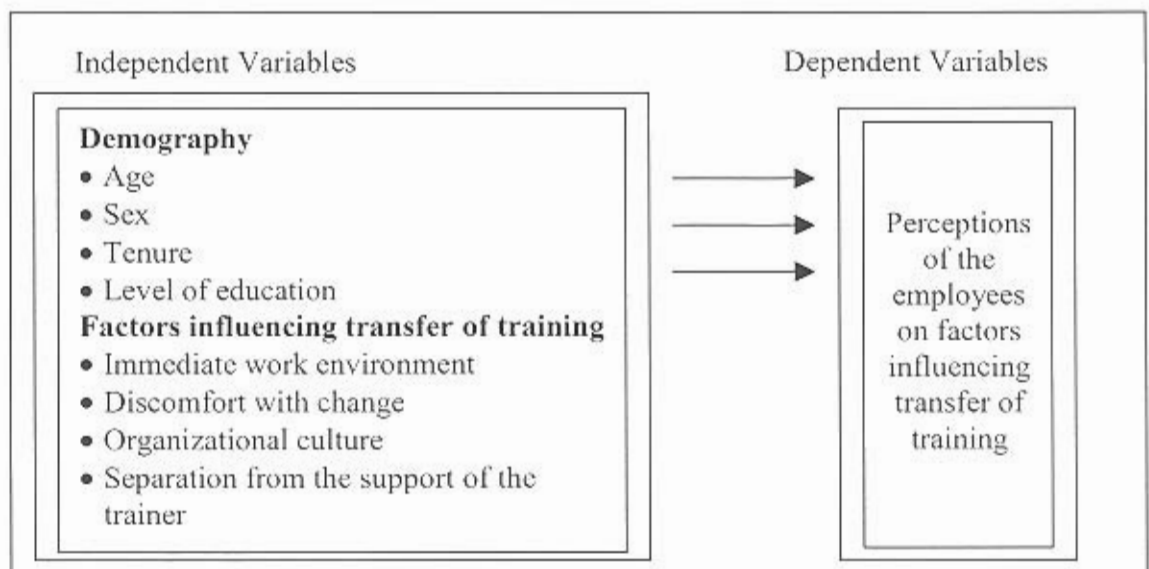

Figure 1: The Conceptual Framework

For the factors influencing transfer of training, they were determined by the past researchers taken from a variety of studies. This will be elaborated further in the following chapter.

1.5 Hypothesis

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 1

There are no significant differences between the age of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 2

There are no significant differences between the sexes of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 3

There are no significant differences between the tenure of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 4

There are no significant differences between the levels of education of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 5

There are no significant differences between the immediate work environments of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 6

There are no significant differences between the employees discomfort with change of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 7

There are no significant differences between the organizational cultures of the employees with their perception on training transfer

Null Hypothesis (Ho) 8

There are no significant differences between the separations from the trainer of the employees with their perception on training transfer

1.6   The Definition of Words and Phrase

1.6.1   Employees

Conceptual definition

An employee is anyone who has agreed to be employed, under a contract of service, to work for some form of payment. This can include wages, salary, commission and piece rates(Employment Relations Act 2000).

Operational definition

Employees in this research mainly relates to only those attended the specific training program chosen to be evaluated.

1.6.2 Perception

Conceptual definition

Bertrand Russell, in his lecture on "The Analysis of Mind" stated that perception can be defined as a mental occurrence has not sufficient connection with objects external to the brain to be regarded as an appearance of such objects, then its physical causation (if any) will have to be sought in the brain.

In other words, perception is an interpretation knowledge from the environment by an individual's knowledge of the object. Therefore, perceptions varies from one person to the other.

Operational definition

In this research, perception is the view and opinion of the employees on the transfer of training for a specific training program. The perceptions are based on the demography and the job/organization related factors that are stated under the dependent variables.

1.6.3 Training

Conceptual definition

Government Employees Training Act (GETA), defines training as the process of providing for and making available to an employee, and placing or enrolling the employee in, a planned, prepared, and coordinated program, course, curriculum, subject, system, or routine of instruction or education, in scientific, professional,

technical, mechanical, trade, clerical, fiscal, administrative, or other fields which will improve individual and organizational performance and assist in achieving the agency's mission and performance goals.

Operational definition

Mainly in the research, training focuses on a specific program that is to be evaluated through taking account the perceptions of the employees attending the program.

1.6.4 Transfer

Conceptual definition

The act of transferring/transporting something from one form to another is the definition given by the WordNet Dictionary on the word transfer. (http://www.hyperdictionary.com/dictionary/transfer)

Operational definition

Transfer in this research is defined to be the ability to apply a skill learned in the specific training program to the job of the employees.

1.6.5 Demography

Conceptual definition

Brainy Dictionary states the meaning of demography to be, "the study of races, as to births, marriages, mortality, health, etc."

Operational definition

There are only three demography that are being used in this research. They are age, the period of employment and the level of employees' education.

1.6.6 Job/organization related factors

Conceptual definition

Factors that are contributed or are connected directly or indirectly to the job or organization.

Operational definition

Are the factors that are stated such as the nature of the job and the organization's support in making training transfer for the specific training program possible.

1.6.7 Initial Reactions

Conceptual definition

Is what an individual or a group thinks about a certain something right after experiencing that something.

Operational definition

The perception of the individual attending the Coaching and Counseling course. The perceptions are shown through the questionnaires distributed by the organization after the course ended.

1.6.8   Immediate Work Environment

Conceptual definition

The surroundings of where a person is working.

Operational definition

Includes the supervisors of the employee, his/her work colleagues and the managers.

1.6.9   Discomfort with Change

Conceptual definition

Being uncomfortable with doing something differently.

Operational definition

Not feeling comfortable to apply what had been taught in the training program due to being used to the "usual" way of doing things.

1.6.10 Organizational Culture

Conceptual definition

The working norms of an organization, which is unique from one organization to the other.