



**Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development**

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINEE CHARACTERISTICS AND  
TRANSFER OF TRAINING**

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**Bachelor of Science with Honours  
(Human Resource Development)**

**2020**

Grade: **A**

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Final Year Project Report

Masters

PhD

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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINEE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRANSFER  
OF TRAINING**

**TAN KAILING**

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This project is submitted  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for a  
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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES .....	vi
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
ABSTRACT.....	viii-ix
ABSTRAK.....	x-xi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1-12
1.0 Background of Study .....	1-2
1.1 Problem Statement.....	3-6
1.2 Research Objective .....	6
1.2.1 General Objectives.....	6
1.2.2 Specific Objectives .....	6
1.3 Research Hypotheses .....	6
1.4 Conceptual Framework.....	7
1.5 Significance of Study.....	8
1.6 Limitations of Study .....	8-9
1.7 Definition of Terms.....	9-11
1.7.1 Transfer of Training.....	9
1.7.2 Trainee Characteristics.....	9-10
1.7.3 Trainee Cognitive Ability .....	10
1.7.4 Trainee Motivation.....	10
1.7.5 Trainee Self-Efficacy .....	11
1.7.6 Trainee Ability in Using ICT.....	11
1.8 Summary.....	11
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	12-28
2.0 Introduction.....	12
2.1 Research Context .....	12-20
2.1.1 Transfer of Training.....	12-14
2.1.2 Trainee Characteristics.....	14-15
2.1.3 Trainee Cognitive Ability .....	15-16
2.1.4 Trainee Motivation.....	16-17
2.1.5 Trainee Self-Efficacy .....	17-19

2.1.6 Trainee Ability in Using ICT .....	19-20
2.2 Theory Related to the Study .....	20-22
2.2.1 Model Transfer of Training by Baldwin & Ford (1988).....	20-22
2.3 Past Similar Findings .....	22-28
2.3.1 Relationship between Trainee Cognitive Ability and Transfer of Training .....	22-23
2.3.2 Relationship between Trainee Motivation and Transfer of Training.....	23-24
2.3.3 Relationship between Trainee Self-Efficacy and Transfer of Training .....	25-26
2.3.4 Relationship between Trainee Ability in Using ICT and Transfer of Training.....	26-28
2.4 Summary .....	28
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY .....	29-40
3.0 Introduction.....	29
3.1 Research Design.....	29-30
3.2 Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure.....	30-31
3.3 Research Instrument.....	31-33
3.4 Pilot Study.....	33-34
3.5 Validity and Reliability.....	34-35
3.6 Ethics of the Study .....	35-36
3.7 Data Collection Procedure .....	36-37
3.8 Data Analysis Procedure.....	38-39
3.9 Summary .....	40
CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS .....	41-52
4.0 Introduction.....	41
4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents .....	41-43
4.2 Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test.....	43-44
4.3 Reliability Analysis for Actual Data.....	45
4.4 Results for Hypothesis Testing .....	46-50
4.4.1 Spearman Analysis.....	46-48
4.4.2 Multiple Regression .....	48-50
4.5 Summary of Findings.....	51-52
4.6 Conclusion .....	52

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS/ RECOMMENDATION .....	53-63
5.0 Introduction.....	53
5.1 Research Summary .....	53-54
5.2 Discussions .....	55-59
5.2.1 Relationship between Trainee Cognitive Ability and Transfer of Training .....	55-56
5.2.2 Relationship between Trainee Motivation and Transfer of Training.....	56
5.2.3 Relationship between Trainee Self-Efficacy and Transfer of Training .....	56-57
5.2.4 Relationship between Trainee Ability in using ICT and Transfer of Training.....	57-58
5.2.5 Dominant Trainee Characteristics.....	59-60
5.3 Model Transfer of Training by Baldwin & Ford (1988) .....	60
5.4 Limitations of Study .....	61
5.5 Implications and Recommendation.....	61-64
5.5.1 Organization.....	61-62
5.5.2 Human Resource Practitioner .....	62
5.5.3 Future Research .....	63
5.6 Conclusion .....	63-64
REFERENCES .....	xii-xxi
APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRES .....	xxii-xxx
APPENDIX B CONSENT LETTER.....	xxxii-xxxvi

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Research Instrument .....	32
Table 2 Five-point Likert Scale .....	33
Table 3 Pilot Test Result.....	34
Table 4 Coefficient of Correlation .....	35
Table 5 Spearman Correlation .....	39
Table 6 Summarized of Demographic Information of Respondents .....	43
Table 7 Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test.....	44
Table 8 Reliability Analysis for Actual Study .....	45
Table 9 Correlation between Trainee Cognitive Ability and Transfer of Training .....	46
Table 10 Correlation between Trainee Motivation and Transfer of Training .....	47
Table 11 Correlation between Trainee Self-Efficacy and Transfer of Training .....	47
Table 12 Correlation between Trainee Ability in using ICT and Transfer of Training .....	48
Table 13 Model Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis.....	49
Table 14 ANOVA of Multiple Regression Analysis.....	49
Table 15 Coefficient of Multiple Regression Analysis.....	50
Table 16 Summary of Findings.....	51-52

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1 Conceptual framework .....7  
Figure 2 Data collection procedure.....37

## **ABSTRACT**

### **THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAINEE CHARACTERISTICS AND TRANSFER OF TRAINING**

TAN KAILING

Currently, there are still lack of studies between trainee characteristics and transfer of training, most of the past studies are focus on work environment and top management support with transfer of training. So, this study aims to determine the relationship between trainee characteristics (trainee cognitive ability, trainee motivation, trainee self-efficacy and trainee ability in using ICT) and transfer of training. Past researches focused on different factors that will influence transfer of training and in other industry. The theory use in this study is Model Transfer of Training by Baldwin and Ford (1988). A survey methodology was used in this research. This research involves the utilization of questionnaire which was administered among 99 employees working in the selected organization. This study was conducted in 6 selected construction organizations located in Kuching, Sarawak. The relationship between trainee characteristics and transfer of training was analyzed by using Spearman Correlation Analysis. The dominant factor that affects transfer of training were identified by using Multiple Regression Analysis. All the results revealed that there is a significant relationship between trainee characteristics (trainee cognitive ability, motivation, self-efficacy and ability in using ICT) and transfer of training. The result also revealed that the dominant factor that affects transfer of training is trainee ability in using ICT. Hence, from this research the organization can implement some specific training to employees to improve their trainee characteristics and have a better transfer of training to workplace.

*Keywords:* trainee characteristics, transfer of training, cognitive ability, motivation, self-efficacy, ability in using ICT, Model of Transfer of Training

## **ABSTRAK**

### **HUBUNGAN ANTARA CIRI PELATIH DAN PEMINDAHAN LATIHAN**

TAN KAILING

Pada masa ini, masih ada kekurangan kajian antara ciri-ciri pelatih dan pertukaran latihan, kebanyakan kajian masa lalu adalah fokus pada persekitaran kerja dan sokongan pengurusan atasan dengan pemindahan latihan. Jadi, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui hubungan antara ciri pelatih (kemampuan kognitif pelatih, motivasi pelatih, efikasi sendiri pelatih dan kemampuan pelatih dalam menggunakan ICT) dan pemindahan latihan. Penyelidikan yang lalu menumpukan pada faktor yang berbeza yang akan mempengaruhi pertukaran latihan dan industri lain. Penggunaan teori dalam kajian ini adalah Model Transfer of Training oleh Baldwin dan Ford (1988). Metodologi tinjauan digunakan dalam penyelidikan ini. Penyelidikan ini melibatkan penggunaan soal selidik yang dikendalikan di antara 99 pekerja yang bekerja di organisasi yang dipilih. Kajian ini dilakukan di 6 organisasi pembinaan terpilih yang terletak di Kuching, Sarawak. Hubungan antara ciri pelatih dan pertukaran latihan dianalisis dengan menggunakan Spearman Correlation Analisis. Faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi pertukaran latihan dikenal pasti dengan menggunakan Analisis Regresi Berganda. Semua hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang signifikan antara ciri pelatih (kemampuan kognitif pelatih, motivasi pelatih, efikasi sendiri pelatih dan kemampuan pelatih dalam menggunakan ICT) dan pertukaran latihan. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa faktor dominan yang mempengaruhi pemindahan latihan adalah kemampuan pelatih dalam menggunakan ICT. Oleh itu, dari penyelidikan ini organisasi dapat melaksanakan beberapa latihan khusus kepada pekerja untuk meningkatkan ciri-ciri pelatih mereka dan melakukan pemindahan latihan yang lebih baik di tempat kerja.

*Kata kunci:* ciri-ciri pelatih, pemindahan latihan, kemampuan kognitif, motivasi, keberkesanan diri, kemampuan dalam menggunakan ICT, Model Transfer of Training.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Background of Study**

Nowadays, training is very important for a developing organization. Training is a way to help the organization become more competitive in this era. Besides, training prepares in the organization for the purpose of increase organization performance and also employees' career development. Many HRD practitioners are aware that training is important, but when training is conducted do the trainees really learn something from the training and transfer into job situation? Transfer of training is about the trainee able to perform better after attend a training program. They know how to use the new knowledge in the actual working environment. According to Beer, Finnström and Schrader (2016), many American companies spent a lot of money in conducting training sessions and education program for their employee. However they are not getting back the investment with a good result and also did not lead their organization to have a better performance. Recently, to enhance the transfer of training, Rivière, Jaffrelot, Jouquan, and Chiniara (2019) suggested a strategy which is let the training program go with cognitive apprenticeship style, which means use the authentic learning context to enhance the transfer process, and this approach is the trainer is there to guide the trainee and follow the appropriate way in developing their skills which is similar environment with the workplace.

According to Grossman and Salas (2011) in an aggressive competitive economy environment, training is the foundation concern of an organization. This is because performance of an organization will rely on learning, training and developing of their employee. After attend training program, so that employee can learn from the program and have the opportunities to develop themselves in order to prepare themselves also for future more competitive environment.

Besides, Gross and Salas (2011) also stated that in other country like US, many organizations spent over billion dollars invest training and development their employee. So in this way can see many organization is very look into the importance of training, so transfer of training is also important. This is because when training program is organized but after trainee attend still cannot transfer the new acquired knowledge or skill to job situation this is waste of time, money and effort of an organization.

Training program is useless if the performance of the organization did not increase. When the trainee acquired the new knowledge or skills under a condition which is not consistent with the condition during actual work, the transfer of training will not maintain for long period and it is hard for employee to do so in such inconsistent situation (Yamnill & McLean, 2001).

Furthermore, many organization have spent a huge amount of money in training to increase the job related competency of their employees and in the end the transfer of the training is less and does not reach the desired performance (Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007). Many organizations have meet the same problem as they concern about the return of such huge investment. So, transfer the training to workplace is very important in the sight of an organization. Besides, transfer of training is linked closely with the change of the trainee after training program and the requirement system in an organization. So that organization believe that trainee after attend to training program they must have a change in individual or organization performance. Furthermore, training system also will affect the outcome of transfer so currently the training system problem can be reduce by using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) such as solve the problem from long distance training effectiveness by using ICT, trainee can more portable to get training and in a suitable environment (Unwin, 2005).

## 1.1 Problem Statement

Training program is getting more concern in this dynamic era. Beer et al. (2016) mentioned that a lot of organization have invest the money into training and education for their employee to enhance knowledge, skills and ability to prepare for future competitive situation but the result was not good and this means the employee does not transfer the learning context to workplace.

Recently, most of the researchers is concern about training design, work environment and supervisor support towards transfer of training and very less focus on trainee characteristics. So recently there still have gap between trainee characteristics and transfer of training. According to Suleiman, Dassanayake and Othman (2016) mentioned that there are three variables that will influence in the transfer of training. First is training design. The second variable is trainee characteristics which include employee ability, motivation of transfer, self-efficacy toward oneself and others personality. Third variable is about work environment, but in their research, they just only choose few trainee characteristics (organizational commitment, job involvement) and work environment (supervisor support, peer support) to test. So there are still missing some other trainee characteristics in this research. However, I also found that trainee characteristics such as trainee cognitive ability, motivation of trainee, self-efficacy and ability in using ICT, are also less focus by other researchers recently. Therefore, in this research I will focus on trainee cognitive ability, motivation of trainee, self-efficacy and ability in using ICT these four variables.

According to Tonhäuser and Bükler (2016) cognitive ability have most strong effect towards transfer of training but however it also said that cognitive ability of a trainee is a highly complicated issue which not yet been examined in more details. Besides, it also stated that there

are still ambiguity in different aspect of cognitive ability towards the transfer of training process. For example, cognitive ability is not a substance that can be control by organization, is about the perception that inside the trainee, thus it is not easily expressed. Therefore, this research will concern about the perception, what the trainee think and believe in themselves (cognitive ability) and the relationship towards transfer of training. In addition, Awais, Ali, Isa and Battour (2014) mentioned that trainee may have the ability to understand their role in organization and the goal they need to achieve. This is because when the trainee have the cognitive ability about their role and target they need to hit, they will aware about the training is important and need to pay full attention when attend training. This will also affect the cognitive ability of them towards transfer the training.

Next, according to Fouarge, Schils and De Grip (2013) trainees with low-education have the low willingness to go for training compared to higher-educated trainees. This situation will lead to less motivation to transfer the training by the lower-educated trainees, become less effective and investment by the company cannot get improvement. Motivation of trainee is important in transfer of training and motivation of trainee can be boost by attend different type of training. Furthermore, trainee nowadays also may be demotivated by their supervisor or higher level management. According to Lancaster, Di Milia and Cameron (2013) trainee or employee demotivated by their higher level management, because when they attempt to transfer the new knowledge to work routine but they did not show support, uncaring towards their contribute, and show uninterested to their implementation of new knowledge. Thus, this situation will make trainee not motivated to use new acquired knowledge to workplace.

Furthermore, self-efficacy of senior employee is higher compared to the younger workers. According to Cowman and McCarthy (2016) younger employee which have less

experience in the work condition will have the low self-efficacy compare to the senior employee. This result means senior employee have higher self-efficacy in order to help them more easily to acquire the learning context from training and can overcome the difficult situation then transfer the training to workplace. So younger trainee who have low self-efficacy will affect the transfer of training process. Besides, self-efficacy also indirectly influences transfer of training such as the level of trainability, retain the training context and ability to fix the knowledge into work environment. In addition, Punia and Kant (2013) also stated that general self-efficacy of the trainee will have some mediate effect towards training motivation and training framing which this will affect the level of transfer of training too. However, Wen and Lin (2014) conclude that self-efficacy is positively related to motivation to learn, not just only mediate effect like statement of Punia and Kant (2013). Which the self-efficacy will affect the motivation to learn, and motivation to learn is direct influence the result of training transfer mediate by motivation to transfer. So, means that if the trainee have higher self-efficacy they will have higher motivation to learn, and increase the level of transfer of training.

Lastly, in this current situation, many organization have introduced new technology to workplace, this is because new technology really help organization to increase productivity and bring a lot of convenient to employees. Besides, to bring in the new technology, there must have a changing organization's system, so employees in the organization need to know how to handle and deal with the new technology. So the employees need to attend some training program to increase the ability of using new technology in organization system. However, currently not many employees are able to participate actively in training program that use new technology like ICT and this will affect the transfer of training. This is because the employees lacked of skills and the structure of using new technology. (Casalino, Ciarlo, De Marco & Gatti, 2012).

Therefore, this study will identify the relationship between trainee ability in using ICT and transfer of training.

## **1.2 Research Objectives**

### **1.2.1 General Objectives**

To examine the relationship between trainee characteristics and transfer of training.

### **1.2.2 Specific Objectives**

- To identify the relationship between trainee cognitive ability and the transfer of training.
- To identify the relationship between motivation of trainee and the transfer of training.
- To identify the relationship between self-efficacy of trainee and transfer of training.
- To identify the relationship between trainee ability in using ICT and transfer of training.
- To identify the dominant factor among trainee characteristics that influence transfer of training.

## **1.3 Research Hypotheses**

H<sub>a1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between trainee cognitive ability and transfer of training.

H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between trainee motivation and transfer of training.

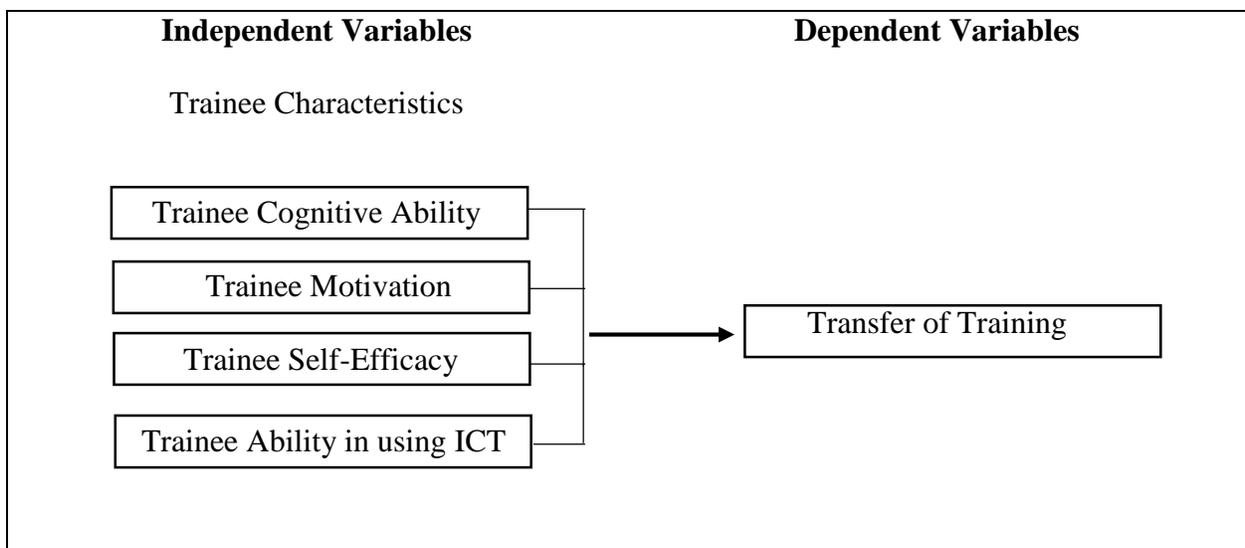
H<sub>a3</sub>: There is a significant relationship between trainee self-efficacy and transfer of training.

H<sub>a4</sub>: There is a significant relationship between trainee ability in using ICT and transfer of training.

H<sub>a5</sub>: There is a dominant factor in trainee characteristics that influence transfer of training.

## 1.4 Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework is adapted from three sources. The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between trainee characteristics and transfer of training. Figure 1 shows the independent variables and dependent variable that select to use in this study. There are four independent variables under trainee characteristics which are trainee cognitive ability, trainee motivation, trainee self-efficacy and trainee ability in using ICT. While dependent variable is transfer of training.



Sources: Adapted from Baldwin, T. T., & Ford, J. K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel psychology*, 41(1), 63-105.; Elangovan, A. R.; Karakowsky, L. (1999). The role of trainee and environmental factors in transfer of training: An exploratory framework. *Leadership & Organization Development Journal*, 20(5), 268-276.; Mavrikios, D., Papakostas, N., Mourtzis, D., & Chryssolouris, G. (2013). On industrial learning and training for the factories of the future: a conceptual, cognitive and technology framework. *Journal of Intelligent Manufacturing*, 24(3), 473-485.

Figure 1. Conceptual framework

## **1.5 Significance of Study**

The topic in this research can help to enrich current literature in specific trainee characteristics such as trainee cognitive ability, motivation, self-efficacy and ability in using ICT in which factors can really affect the result of transfer training. Besides, this research can also help employee and organization to understand better which elements in trainee characteristics influences transfer of training especially for construction industry, which is the context of this study.

In addition, HRD practitioners can also use the result of this research to better aware the factors in trainee characteristics that will influence transfer of training and arrange the training program that really suit for the trainees according to their characteristics. HRD practitioners can also design the training program to help the trainee to improve their cognitive ability, motivation self-efficacy and ability in using ICT. Besides, HRD practitioners can know the dominant factor and get improve that focus on this factor.

Employee and organization both can gain an insight about the factors that influence the most and implementing better way to decrease the effect in transfer of training. Besides, organization can also arrange their employee to attend some specific training that can help to increase the specific trainee characteristics that bring influence to transfer of training. Lastly, if the transfer of training getting better the performance of the organization will increase too and help in return of investment in training.

## **1.6 Limitations of Study**

In this research there are a few of limitations. First of all, although there are many factors that influence transfer of training but in this research will only focus on trainee characteristics

which include cognitive ability, motivation, self-efficacy and ability in using ICT, the other factors such as work environment and training design or others will not being use in this study. This is because in current research less researchers focus on these four factors. So, I choose this four factors for my research.

In addition, this research is limited to one industry only which is construction industry in Kuching, Sarawak only. So, the results obtained may not be generalized to other industry and other construction industries in Malaysia. As in current literature, less researchers do transfer of training study in construction industry, so I decided to choose construction industry for my research.

## **1.7 Definition of Terms**

### **1.7.1 Transfer of Training**

#### **Conceptual Definition:**

Transfer of training is after the training session, the retention and application of knowledge, skills, attitudes that learn from the training place to the working environment (Subedi, 2004).

#### **Operational Definition:**

In this study, transfer of training is defined as how much trainees can apply the new acquired knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes gained in training and transfer to their jobs.

### **1.7.2 Trainee Characteristics**

#### **Conceptual Definition:**

According to Gielen (1996) trainee characteristics is the personality factors which include ability, self-efficacy, learning style, job involvement and perception of relevance.

#### **Operational Definition:**