Determinants of Perceived Training Transfer

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Abstract
Organisational literature suggests that training is an area of exponential growth (Goldstein, 1986, 1991, 1993; Quinones & Ehrenstein, 1997). Despite this, and a high level of expenditure on training, the application of learnt skills on the job is low (Curry, Caplan, Knupple, 1994). The deficit between investment in training and the ‘generalisation’ of trained skills to the job has been referred to as the ‘training transfer problem’ (Michalak, 1981). Research has identified a range of aspects in the work environment, trainee, and training design that can influence transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). This study attempts to assess these influences on the effectiveness of an in-house training intervention. Guided by Holton’s (1996) ‘Evaluative Research & Measurement Model’, a quasi-experimental design was used to confirm influences of ‘intervening conditions’ on perceived training transfer. Intervening conditions included Learner Readiness, Performance Self-Efficacy, Motivation to Transfer, Transfer Effort, Performance – Outcomes Expectations, Feedback/Performance Coaching, Supervisory Support, Supervisory Sanction, Peer Support, Resistance, Personal Outcomes – Positive/Negative, Opportunity to Use Learning, Personal Capacity for Transfer, Perceived Content Validity, and Transfer Design. Analysis of employee perceptions indicated that training resulted in a perceived change in work place practices for those who had participated in training. Regression results evidenced the influence of the intervening conditions on perceived training transfer. Of the 16 intervening conditions in Holton’s (1996) model, only Transfer Effort – Performance Expectations, Feedback/Performance Coaching, Supervisory Support, Resistance, Perceived Content Validity, and Transfer Design impacted on perceived training transfer significantly. Findings are discussed in the context of design, sampling, statistics, and limitations; recommendations for training practitioners and organisations, as well as suggestions for future researchers are outlined.
Dedication

I would like to dedicate this Master's to the memory of the siblings I never knew, Kim Gilvray, and Jeannette Saunders.

I also dedicate this thesis to the women of my family for all the hardships they have endured.
Acknowledgements

Obtain access to a population in the organisational context requires dedication and careful negotiation. The researcher needs to be aware that in order to obtain an organisational sample, the investigation must in some way bring benefit to the organisation, particularly those of the private sector. Once a population is obtained, research in the organisational context demands both patience and compromise. Throughout the research process one needs to be in constant contact with the organisation to ensure smooth and proper delivery and administration of instrumentation to participants'. These difficulties were eased with the belief and support of two members of the ANZ banking Group to which I am grateful: Vic Hewson (former ANZ HR Manager), and Alma McNicole (current ANZ HR Manager).

During the process of research, analysis and reporting I sought and received the advice of my primary and secondary supervisor, Dr. Gus Habermann and Dr. Sarah Leberman. Whilst Dr. Habermann gave valued guidance on matters of scale development, empirical research, and statistical analysis, Dr. Leberman provided sound advice on matters of research within training and the organisational context. Dr. Leberman furnished a valued qualitative counterbalance to Dr. Habermann’s more quantitative perspective. During the write-up, both supervisors provided prompt and accurate editorial feedback, which lifted the final report to its present level.

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