

FROM BALDWIN TO BELL: FINDING THE FOOTSTEPS OF TRAINING TRANSFER.

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ABSTRACT

Training has long been associated with organizations and its performance. During last few decades, organizations have been concerned about the positive training transfer, the absence of which has led them to bear huge costs in lieu of training expenditure. This has driven the attention of scholars and researchers to explore the issues related to such trainings and propose solutions. Since decades, scholars have been proposing models and remedies, but the problem of transfer remains still. The present study is an attempt to investigate and synthesize the literature concerning training transfer problems and explore the gap in the existing literature. The research concludes that past studies and researches have focused mainly on four factors pertaining to training transfer (trainee characteristics, training design, motivation to transfer & work environment) while the significance of organizational culture and trainer's role have largely been ignored. The present study has also proposed a model which includes those rarely explored factors. The study is expected to contribute in the body of literature pertaining to the field of human resource, specifically training & development. The synthesis of the literature will help researchers, scholars, practitioners and trainers to comprehend the issue which may further lead to future research and emergence of sustainable solution for training transfer.

Keyword: HRD, training, training effectiveness, training transfer, transfer of training,

INTRODUCTION

The history of past three decades is replete with the facts that organizations have been spending billions of dollars on trainings, but the result of such trainings is discouraging (Coomwell & Kolb 2004). It goes without saying that training is considered an effective way of enhancing the skills and capabilities of employees within organizations. Training enhances the knowledge and skills of employees, enabling them to perform effectively at work. Training is tied closely with the integrated system of the performance and that performance is tied to the organizational strategies (Thacker & Blanchard 2004). The purpose of training is to enhance performance at the workplace. Real application and maintenance of Learning on the job provides improved performance and productivity (Blume, Ford, & Olenick 2017).

Scholars have explored problems and issues associated with such trainings. The issue of paramount concern is the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Salas & Bowers 2001). Several studies conducted in different countries across continents reveal that on average, 10 to 30 percent of training is transferred on job, while 70 to 90 percent knowledge, skills and abilities learned through trainings are not utilized. (Awoniyi, Griego, & Morgan 2002; Holton 1996; 2005; Tannenbaum & Yukl 1992).

Training transfer refers to the learning, generalization, and maintenance of trained skills, and behaviors from the training environment to the work environment (Baldwin & Ford 1988).

Problem statement

There is no denying the fact that training holds an important position in the field of human resources (Akaraborworn 2018; Barrie & Pace 1997) and is a significant tool to develop human talents, (Salas & Bowers 2001). It is a fundamental component for organizations and individuals to progress. At the same time, the poor results of trainings with regard to its application on the job, cannot be ignored as well. Studies show that trainings fail to bring desired outcomes in many organizations, resulting in poor organizational performance (Bell, et al., 2017; Fitzpatrick 2001; Seyler, et al., 1998). This is because the trained skills are not transferred on the job. Ten to thirty percent transfer of training happens in organizations (Coomwell & Kolb 2004; Fitzpatrick 2001; Holton 2012), resultantly, 70 to 90 % potential for improving performance is squandered. This has created a need to explore the topic once again by examining the existing literature.

Purpose and significance of the study

The present study aims at exploring the literature that discusses training transfer and the factors that hinder the transfer on the job. The research, thus, attempts to conduct the study through undergoing a literature review, which is one of the ways of an academic inquiry (Star, Russ-Eft, Braverman, & Levine 2016). The study is likely to contribute in the body of literature pertaining to HRD field. The synthesis of the literature will help researchers, scholars, practitioners and trainers to comprehend the issue and make remedial measures.

Research Questions

Following research questions have guided the study:

RQ 1: What are the factors mentioned in the literature that inhibit and hinder the training transfer at workplace?

RQ 2: Based on this literature available, what are the flaws that need to be covered?

RQ 3: What are HRD implications in the available literature?

METHODOLOGY

The present study is conducted by reviewing a synthesizing existing literature concerning training and training transfer. In this regard, research papers, journal articles, books and conference papers have been reviewed. The search criterion was using several keywords, which include, training, training transfer, transfer of training, leaning transfer, HRD, workplace training transfer, training outcomes, training effectiveness, training transfer factors. Various internet-based sources such as SAGE publications, google scholar, ScienceDirect, International Journal of training and development, European journal of training and development, Journal of industrial relations, Journal of management, Human resource development review, Human resource development international, Human resource development quarterly, Advances in developing human resources, were used to search the relevant articles, and material.

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