



Transfer of Training among Graduates of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Institution in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Transfer of training is one of the areas that become a main concern for most Human Resource managers. As it involves high costs, organizations attempt to make utmost benefits of any training programs participated by their employees. Similarly with the educational institutions, especially those that offer technical education whose aim is to enhance skills among participants. Moreover, the main objective of the educational institutions is to equip students with a better knowledge so that they will make a wise decision and participate in economic development. Based on such premises, this study was conducted to determine the relationship among transfer design, self-efficacy, performance feedback and transfer of training. Besides, this study also intended to determine the employability rate among graduates of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institution. A set of questionnaires was administered to graduates who attended convocation at their institution in 2013. With a respond rate of 51%, the findings indicate that there was a significant relationship between the studied variables. However, only two of these variables explained transfer of training of these graduates. The paper also discussed the implications of this research towards the institutions especially in the higher learning institutions that focused on vocational training and entrepreneurship education. This study contributes to the understanding of transfer of training of technical institutions graduates.

Key Words: Employability, Performance feedback, Self-efficacy, Training design

1. INTRODUCTION

Transfer of training is important as it is one of the means to deliver the information learned through training into practice. Basically, it enables the trainees to implement knowledge gained from the training to solve problems or to make decision in the real situation. Most studies on transfer of training have discussed on the factors that influence its effectiveness. These studies have commonly identified three main areas which are trainees' characteristics, training design and work environment (Baldwin & Ford, 1998; Grossman & Salas, 2001; Hunter-Johnson, 2013).

Most of the studies on transfer of training have focused on employees using work place setting. This is due to the fact that organizations have spent high investment in training programs for their employees. The situation is similar with the educational institutions. Governments have made much investment in providing good educational programs and hope that the graduates will contribute to the economic development of the country. However, several studies have also mentioned that universities do not offer programs which match the market needs. As such, knowledge gained is presumed not to be transferred to the working environment.

Currently most developed countries face serious problems regarding the number of technical graduates. Without these graduates, the ability to move on as an industrialized country is dampening. Most studies on transfer of training among students were concentrated on entrepreneurship education and their performance. Surprisingly, there are limited studies that focused on transfer of training among TVET students to the workplace environment. Thus, this study was conducted to investigate on the training design, performance feedback, and self-efficacy received by students of TVET is transferred to their current workplace.

In addition, Malaysian data shows that 75% from 227,415 students in 2015 are able to find employment within six months after graduation (Danial Rahman, NST 2016). However, the appropriate skills that will benefit these graduates are still ambiguous. Research by Fatima Suleman (2016) suggests that employers do not find consensus on the necessary skills that benefited the graduates in their career. They are still being plagued by different perceptions on graduates' performance. Hence, in order to shed light on this situation, this study will also determine the employability rates of the TVET graduates.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Overview of TVET in Malaysia

TVET has received an enormous attentions among educators around the world as this area provides benefits to the development of a country. The focus of TVET is to provide education and training that are

specific to the industry which enables the students of TVET to become a professional manpower in a specific trade. Educators in this area believed that, the transformation of TVET system must be in line with the global trends (Majumdar, 2011), the growth in knowledge economy and align with global labor mobility (10th Malaysian Plan, EPU). Among some important issues that had been highlighted were the mismatched between types of training offered by the institution and market needs thus lead to the issues of employability (Leong, 2011; Majumdar, 2011). There is also a called to integrate the entrepreneurial skills to the curriculum in order to foster the participation of TVET graduates in the labor market (Majumdar, 2011). In Malaysia, TVET is offered to students after they have completed their secondary education. The government aimed that 75% of TVET graduates from institution must be employed within six months of their graduation and some of these graduates will participate the labor markets as entrepreneurs (Idris, 2011). Hence, the government urges the TVET intuitions to carefully design their courses (training) in order to ensure that graduates have the required skills, that match the skills needed for the local industries (Idris, 2011).

2.1 Transfer of Training

Training transfer has become an important measurement to ensure the effectiveness of training (Bhatti, Battour, Sundram & Othman, 2013) as the outcome will assist the employees and organizations performance improvement. According to Holton, Bates, Seyler and Carvalho (1997), transfer training is the degree to which trainees apply knowledge, skills, behaviour and attitude they gained in training to their job. The main objective of training activities is to increase the employees' productivity and keeps employees up-to-date with the required knowledge, skills and abilities. Therefore, this objective is only achievable when the employees are able to transfer the learned skills that impact firms gradually. In addition, the organizations may get benefits if the trainees were able to maximize the transfer of training to the workplace. However, Kaur (2010) argued that trainees transfer less than 25% of their learned skills to their workplace. Previously, several factors are found to influence the transfer of training. Those factors are training design, self-efficacy, performance feedback and supervisor support (Bhatti *et al.*, 2013; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007). However, evidences from various researchers have reported that such transfers have not taken place, effectively.

2.2 Training Design

As global competition is happening continuously, organizations invest a huge amount of money in developing human resource to improve employees' knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes. Studies found

that transfer design facilitates the optimization of the transfer of training in the workplace (Bhatti *et al.*, 2013; Kaur, 2010). The effectiveness of training is crucial to determine employee improvement and organizational performance (Kaur, 2010). In this regard, training design play important factor to determine whether the knowledge and abilities acquired takes place. Kaur (2010) believed that the training design and the specific method used should be trainee-centered which is more interactive. In addition, designing specific issues involving focus group is also effective. However, it is suggested that training design, content and instructional strategies must be aligned to the transfer training objective.

2.3 Performance Feedback

Feedback is regarded as providing information relating to the trainees' performance in order to evaluate the training effectiveness (Marjoleine, Frans & Dongen, 2013). The aim of getting feedback on performance is to foster employees learning and development that can enhance individual performance (Regina, Andrea & Ellinger, 2013). It is undeniable that in order to maintain high quality of performance and work life, gathering effective performance feedback is a useful input in training evaluation (Milton & Jacqueline, 2011). Therefore, developing an organizational culture promoting performance feedback is a compulsory. Milton and Jacqueline (2011) emphasizes that performance feedback should be aligned with organizational goals by linking to divisional goals, comes together with individual outcomes or performance expectation. In this regard, performance feedback must be communicated and rewarded across all managerial and non-managerial levels (Milton & Jacqueline, 2010). For both individuals and teams, characteristics of effective feedback must be tied to the worker's performance goals and the feedback is almost accurate assessment based on non-personal evaluation.

2.4 Self-efficacy

The concept of self-efficacy derived from the Social Learning Theory whereby people (trainee) learn by observing other people (trainer) who they believe to be knowledgeable and have credibility (Kaur, 2010). From individual context, self-efficacy may affect the outcome of training of transfer, whereby trainee has a belief on self-ability that he or she is may succeed in acquiring new knowledge. Prior to have a confidence level, a trainee should be able to learn, practice how to transfer and the most important is understand the learned skills to be implemented in the workplace (Kaur, 2010). In the past, researchers found that self-efficacy is strongly related to transfer of training (Ford, Smith, Weissbein, Gully and Sales 1998; Velada *et al.*, 2007; Kaur, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

This is a cross-sectional study on the factors that explained the transfer of training among graduates from technical and vocational institution in Malaysia. This section will highlight on data collection procedure, measurement, pre-analysis data and data analysis techniques.

Data were collected during convocation ceremony for the batch of July 2010. Sampling frame was derived from the graduation list by using simple random sampling technique. The measurement consists of 14 items represents transfer of training, training design, performance feedback and self-efficacy. This measurement was adapted from Holton, Bates and Ruona (2000) that used 5-point Likert Scale ranging from '1' as strongly disagree to '5' as strongly agree. From a total of 250 questionnaires distributed, only 127 questionnaires (50.8%) were returned and qualified for further analysis.

Data were examined and coded into Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Pre-analysis data found there was no missing data, data appeared to be normal and free from multicollinearity issue. In order to achieve the objectives of this study, data were analysed further by using SPSS through descriptive analysis, correlation and multiple regression.

4. RESULTS

This section will discuss about the results of this study. The results from data analysis are exhibited in several tables namely, profiles of respondents, factor and descriptive analysis, inter-correlation between variables, and model summary and coefficient.

Table 1 presents profile of respondents in this study. Majority of respondents were male (80%), 66% of respondents are between 18 to 20 years old years old, majority of respondents graduated with Certificate in Automotive Technology (21%), and majority of respondents acquired less than RM1000 (62%) income per month. The results also revealed that 76% of respondents were employed while 24% of them become entrepreneurs. Hence, it can be seen that 89% of respondents get a job or became entrepreneurs in less than one year after graduation.

Table 1 Profile of Respondents (n=127)

No	Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1	Gender		
	Male	101	80
	Female	26	20
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>
2	Age		
	18 to 20	84	66
	21 to 23	40	32
	More than 23	3	2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>
3	Courses		
	CAE – Certificate in Agricultural Engineering	14	11
	CAT – Certificate in Automotive Technology	26	21
	CCS – Certificate in Computer System	14	11
	CEE – Certificate in Electrical Engineering	21	17
	CFD – Certificate in Fashion Design	13	10
	CMM – Certificate in Manufacturing & Engineering (Machining)	10	8
	CPD - Certificate in Manufacturing & Engineering (Product Design)	4	3
	CSM – Certificate of System Multimedia	1	1
	CTD – Certificate in Manufacturing & Engineering (Tool & Design)	4	3
	CWE – Certificate in Welding Engineering	13	10
	DKK – Diploma in Welding Engineering	6	5
	SEE – System Electrical Engineering	1	1
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>
4	Income		
	Less than RM1000	79	62
	RM1001 – RM2000	42	33
	RM2001 – RM3000	4	3
	More than RM3000	2	2
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>
5	Types of Employment		
	Employed	97	76
	Self-employed (Entrepreneur)	30	24
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>
6	Duration of Employment (After Graduating)		
	Less than 1 year	113	89
	More than 1 year	14	11
	<i>Total</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100</i>

Before further analysis was done, Factor analysis and Cronbach alpha was conducted to ascertain the validity and reliability of the questionnaires. In Table 2, the authors reported the result for factorial analysis and descriptive analysis for all factors. The result in the table exhibits that the value for Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure of Sampling Adequacy is 0.869 which suggest sufficient inter correlations, while the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity appears as significant (Chi square= 1245.542, $p = .000$). A factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted to validate whether the respondents perceived the constructs as distinct from one factor to another factor. The result indicates a four factor solution with eigenvalues greater than 1.0. The coefficient matrix was checked for consistent patterns of variability between the variables. Items with loading of less than 0.5 and those with cross loading were deleted. The values for correlation coefficients were examined to detect multicollinearity problem. As all of the correlation coefficients is significant and the values recorded were smaller than 0.9, the measurement was free from multicollinearity problem.

The result indicates that each factor is a one-dimensional factor and each of them was factorially distinct from one factor to another. Four factors (later will be referred as variables) that emerged from the original measurement are Transfer of Training (Factor1), Training Design (Factor 2), Performance Feedback (Factor 3), and Self-efficacy (Factor 4). Alpha values for all factors are reported higher than 0.76 which indicates the instrument is reliable. Mean reported as above a mid-point of 5-point Likert Scale, ranging from 4.03 to 4.07 and standard deviation ranging from 0.51 to 0.61 respectively.

Table 2 Factor Analysis and Descriptive Analysis

No	Factors (Variables)	Factor Loading	Reliability	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Transfer of Training		0.82	4.07	0.51
	TOT1	0.700			
	TOT2	0.790			
	TOT3	0.696			
	SS3	0.611			
	SS4	0.625			
2	Training Design		0.81	4.04	0.56
	TD1	0.802			
	TD2	0.703			
	TD3	0.733			
	TD4	0.664			
3	Performance Feedback		0.79	4.06	0.55
	PF1	0.813			
	PF2	0.866			
	PF3	0.567			

4	Self-efficacy		0.77	4.03	0.61
	SE3	0.798			
	SE4	0.700			

A Pearson correlation test was conducted in order to determine the relationship among transfer of training, training design, performance feedback and self-efficacy. Table 3 exhibits the inter-correlation values between variables. The Pearson's r values show positive significance correlation for all variables with the value of r ranging from 0.34 to 0.59 and significance at $p < 0.01$.

Table 3 Correlation between Variables

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
(1) Transfer of Training	1			
(2) Training Design	0.59**	1		
(3) Performance Feedback	0.34**	0.34**	1	
(4) Self-efficacy	0.58**	0.57**	0.36**	1

** $p < 0.01$

Further, a multiple regression analysis was used to test if transfer design, performance feedback and self-efficacy significantly predicted the transfer of training. The results of the regression indicated the three variables were able to explained 43% of the variance in transfer of training. The results further explained transfer design ($\beta=0.37$, $p = 0.00$) and self-efficacy ($\beta= 0.33$, $p = 0.00$) were significance to transfer of training. The detail of information as presents in Table 4.

Table 4 Model Summary and Coefficient

Factors	Beta	t-Value	Sig
Constant		3.77	.000
Transfer Design	.37	4.51	.000
Performance Feedback	.09	1.28	.203
Self-efficacy	.33	3.998	.000
R-Square	.44		
Adjusted R-Square	.43		
Sig. F-Change	.00		
Durbin-Watson	2.15		

Dependent Variable: Transfer of Training

6. DISCUSSION

This study attempts to achieve several objectives. First, it attempts to determine the explanatory power of training design, performance feedback and self-efficacy in transfer of training. The results indicate

that there is a significant relationship between these variables. The significance relationship between training design and performance was supported by previous studies whereby Ahmad Nizam Mohd Yusoff (2012), Bhatti (2013), Raja Suzana Raja Kassim and Shariffah Ali (2011) and Velade *et al.* (2007) have discovered a similar relationship. Training design helps in assisting trainees learn the module effectively. It consists of contents and approaches used to deliver the information to the trainee, in this situation, the students. As discovered by Shaw and Fairhutst (2008), most students of Gen Y expect their education has a high relevancy with their training received. They prefer doing the job rather than listen to the instructions. Therefore, they recommend the educators to develop learning experience that fit with the expectation of the workplace to enable effective transfer. Moreover, it has been suggested that training is only successful when a trainee is able to improve their performance through a constant feedback. As mentioned by Garavan and O'Conneido (1994), an evaluation that focuses on the learning outcome is one of the main aspects in ensuring successful entrepreneurship training. However, this study found that performance feedback was not significant in explaining transfer of training. As this study was focusing on the transfer of training received by the graduates from their institution, the tendency of young graduates to receive further feedback from their institution is slim.

In terms of the relationship between self-efficacy and transfer of training, several studies suggested trainees' characteristics will enhance the transfer of training (Abdul Rahim Zumrah & Stephen Boyle, 2015). Individual characteristic consists of individual motivation, personality related and ability related (Ahmad Nizam Mohd Yusoff, 2012). Studies by Sariri, Bakouros and Petridou (2009), Zheng Li and Yang Liu (2011) have also discovered similar findings on the relationship between self-efficacy and transfer of training. Zheng and Yang (2011) argues that self-efficacy helps students "to master their destiny" as it acts as a self-oriented achievement. Those with higher educational level, are more critical and innovative (Sarri *et.al*, 2010). Therefore, they are able to influence their future undertakings. Similarly, Muhammad Awais Bhatti, Sharrifah Ali, Mohd Faizal Mohd Isa and Mohamed Mohamed Battour (2014) and Lew, Bujang, Chelliah and Sim (2016) also agree that high transfer performance is more apparent among those who have a high self-efficacy. The findings of this study also indicate that 43% of transfer design and self-efficacy explain transfer of training for the TVET graduates while the other 57% is contributed by the other factors. Studies by Cromwell and Kolb (2004) and Hunter-Johnson (2013) suggest that one of the motivations which encourage transfer of training is the ability to use the knowledge. Besides, several factors such as supportive environment and family background are amongst other factors that are able to explain the situation. Several researchers have discovered these as the other important issue in transfer of training.

Meanwhile, this study also intended to determine the employability of TVET graduates. The results revealed that graduates from this institution achieved the target aimed by Malaysian government in terms of employability and some of their graduates venture into business. Clearly, this result approved the action taken by Malaysian government to rationalize the training design by reviewing the courses' offering to match between the graduates' skills and the skills required by the industries. Moreover, Delmar and Davidson (2000) have proposed that most entrepreneurs are those who enrol in vocational and technical background during their study years. The high mobility rate among these graduates shows that the training and education received by them enhance the entrepreneurship abilities among them (Bahrdwaj, 2013). As compared to traditional university that have put less focus on the industry (Garavan & O'Conneide, 1994), TVET institutions attempt to equip students on the skills which are required by the market (Connor & Shaw, 2008). Hence, educators must continually assess the learning outcomes to improve students' performance which will eventually foster economic development. Nowadays the stress is on entrepreneurship education; yet Piperopolous (2012) discovered that students' motivation to engage as an entrepreneurs reduce as they progress throughout the university levels. Hence, the educators must plan and strategize their programmes to sustain students' interest in entrepreneurship.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study is among the early study that elaborates on the understanding associated with transfer of training among TVET graduates. The main motive of conducting this study is to know the progress of TVET graduates so that the weaknesses can be improved. However, there are several limitations of this study whereby it does not cover the representatives from all TVET institutions and it was administered during the convocation ceremony. Therefore, future research might consider enlarging the scope of the study.

Moreover, Alagaraja and Kotamraju (2013) suggest that there is a different objective of TVET education to the developing and developed countries. In a developing country, such as Malaysia, the main purpose of TVET is for individual development. As time progress, slowly, it will improve economic and social position. Therefore further research is recommended to compare between the different contexts of the developed and developing countries in order to gauge on the situation. As this study indicates the success of TVET education in promoting entrepreneurial skills, it is highly recommended as a venue for young people to improve their economy and social position.

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