THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANING INPUT FACTORS TO CREATE TRANSFER OF TRAINING OF HOTELS IN MANDALAY, MYANMAR

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ABSTRACT

The study mainly emphasizes transfer of training of employees in hotels located in Mandalay, Myanmar. The objectives are to analyze the effects of training input factors on motivation to transfer and transfer of training and the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training. The impact of Covid 19 pandemic created the operation of hotels to break down. The hotels fulfill some new employees to smoothly run the hotel. Training is the main requirement for employees and the hotels expect transfer of training of employees or the actual application of training outcomes. If employees do not apply the training, their performance level will not meet the performance standard. To prove the objectives of the study, primary data are collected from 143 non-managerial employees from three-star and above hotels in Mandalay. The respondents are selected by using two-stage sampling method. Structure questionnaire is used to collect primary data. Data collection period was in March, 2024. The results of the study prove that training input factors (trainee characteristics, training design and work environment) have significant effects on motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer is the full mediating variable for trainee characteristics and is the partial mediating variable for training design and is not the mediating variable for work environment. According to the study, training input factors play an essential role to have the effects on motivation to transfer and transfer of training.

Keywords*:* Training input factors, Motivation to transfer, Transfer of training, Myanmar

INTRODUCTION

The success of any manufacturing and service organization depends on the skillful and talented employees. Organizations find the better ways to improve knowledge, skills and abilities of their human resources and the effective management of human resources can achieve the goals and objectives of organizations. Human resource management (HRM) refers to the policies and practices to carry out the human resource aspects of a management position including human resource planning, job analysis, recruitment and selection, compensation, performance appraisal, training and development, and labor relations (Dessler, 2020). Mondy and Martocchio (2016) also defined human resource management as the use of individuals to achieve organizational objectives and all managers get things done through the efforts of others. Several human resource management practices including training are paid more attention by organizations. To attract and retain talented and skillful employees, organizations accepted that training is one of the tools practiced by organizations. Training refers to learning of job-related competencies, knowledge, skills, and behaviors and development refers to training as well as formal education, job experiences, relationship, and assessments of personality, skills, and abilities to prepare for future jobs or positions (Noe, 2017).

Although training programs are emphasized by organizations, transfer of training gained a weak focus. Without transfer of training or the actual application of training outcomes by employees, the wasteful training programs will be seen as results after training. Organizations should consider the means and factors to create transfer of training. The hotel industry in Myanmar implements several training programs after Covid 19 pandemic especially for new employees. To provide the excellent services to customers and to attract customers, employee performance is crucial. The employees are expected to use the trained skills and to improve their knowledge, skills and abilities and to provide the best services to customers. Transfer of training is influenced by several factors. According to Baldwin and Ford (1988), the emphasis on training input factors such as trainee characteristics, training design and work environment is sure for organizations to enhance transfer of training with the help of motivation to transfer. Thus, the importance of training input factors such as trainee characteristics, training design and work environment and the role of motivation to transfer are demanded in the present situation. The study mainly emphasizes training input factors, motivation to transfer and transfer of training of employees in three-star and above hotels located in Mandalay, Myanmar.

The objectives of the study are to analyze (1) the effect of training input factors (trainee characteristics, training design and work environment) on motivation to transfer (2) the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although several training programs are implemented by organizations, the benefits of training cannot be expected without transfer of training of employees. Training input factors such as trainee characteristics, training design and work environment and motivation to transfer are essential for employees to create transfer of training.

TRAINEE CHARACTERISTICS

The trainee characteristics are referred to the ability and readiness of the trainees to participate in the training program (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) and have desire to learn. Burke and Hutchins (2007) argued that trainee characteristics are one of the essential factors which can influence transfer of training. They concluded that the main characteristics that affect the transfer of training are

cognitive ability, self-efficacy, level of motivation, career variables and personality traits of the trainee (p.266). The trainees must have ability to effectively learn in training and to use the trained skills. Thus, the ability of the trainees should be evaluated before sending them to the training program.

H1a: Trainee characteristics have significant effect on motivation to transfer.
H1b: Trainee characteristics have significant effect on transfer of training.

TRAINING DESIGN

According to Noe (2010), training design is defined as the nature of the learning environment to be attractive training program in promoting transfer of training. Moreover, when training design is matched with jobs' requirement of employees, the successful transfer of training will occur (Velada et al., 2007). Salas and Cannon-Bowers (2001) defined training design as choosing the most appropriate and relevant contents, methods and techniques to deliver training, and to identify the training program, with the aim of helping trainees to make learning and transfer on the job. Training design includes training objectives, content, instructional method, the facilities provided in training and the effective ways to give timely feedback, etc. (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). The training design can attract employees to learn more and to use the skills in the real work environment.

H2a: Training design has significant effect on motivation to transfer.
H2b: Training design has significant effect on transfer of training.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

The effective work environment is one of the key elements for training effectiveness. According to the definition of Boswell et al. (2017), a supportive work environment is the climatic component that includes supervisory/peer support, obstacle, and prospect to apply learned behavior in the workplace. Kundu and Lata (2017) defined the supportive work environment as the effective support from supervisors, organization, and peers. The supportive work environment includes peer interaction, perceived climate, perceived organizational support and supervisory relationship (Yusliza et al., 2021). Moreover, the opportunities to use the trained skills in the real workplace and the positive and timely feedback are also expected by employees from their workplace.

H3a: Work environment has significant effect on motivation to transfer.
H3b: Work environment has significant effect on transfer of training.

MOTIVATION TO TRANSFER

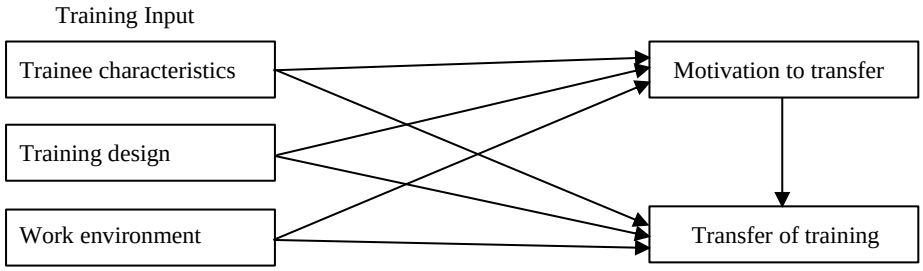
Motivation to transfer is the trainees' willingness to employ the learned knowledge, skills and attitudes at the real workplace (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Motivation to transfer is also defined as a desire of employees to effectively use the knowledge and skills learned in training programs on their job (Gegenfurtner, 2013). Transfer motivation is a key element in the training transfer process. It may be difficult to transfer learning effectively without motivation. Motivation to transfer is the trainee's desire to use the knowledge and skills learned in training programs to the job (Noe, 1986). Previous studies proved that employees will have no desire to apply the knowledge and skills without motivation (e.g., Bhatti et al., 2013; Bhutto & Tunio, 2017; Reinhold et al., 2018).

H4: Motivation to transfer mediates between training input factors and transfer of training.

TRANSFER OF TRAINING

The model of Baldwin and Ford (1988) revealed that there are three main factors that are essential for training transfer which are trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment. Transfer of training is defined as 'the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in the training context to the job' (Newstrom, 1984 cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988, p.63). Transfer of training is the effective and continuous application of their learned skills in training to their real jobs by trainees (Noe, 2017). Bates et al. (2012) explained transfer of training as applying the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) learned in particular training program at the workplace in which those KSAs are generalized and maintained on the job (p. 549). Basnet (2018) found that training design and work environment are significantly related to transfer of training in private airlines and banks of Nepal. Similarly, Rebecca and Sangarandeniya (2023) examined that there is a significant impact of the work environment and training design on transfer of training but there is no significant impact of trainee characteristics on transfer of training. Shahin and Soomro (2022) proved that the direct relationship between training factors (individual's characteristics, work environment and training design) and training transfer was significant in national and international NGOs. The study expects to have the significant and positive effects of training input factors on transfer of training through the mediating effect of motivation to transfer. The findings will provide the valuable suggestions to the hotels to emphasize more on training input factors and motivation to transfer to achieve the expected transfer of training from employees. Figure (1) shows the conceptual framework.

Figure 1: Conceptual framework



METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT AND KEY RESPONDENTS

This study focused on trainee characteristics, training design, work environment, motivation to transfer and transfer of training. The structured questionnaire with five-point Likert scale was mainly used to collect data. The two-stage sampling method was used to select the sample respondents. The first stage was to select the hotels. The study mainly focused on three-star and above hotels in Mandalay. There are 26 three-star and above hotels in Mandalay. Among them, four hotels were selected randomly. The second stage was selecting employees. 170 non-managerial level employees from the selected hotels were the respondents of the study. The demographic characteristics of respondents and the employee perception on training input factors, motivation to transfer and transfer of training were included in the questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to the employees from the selected hotels. 143 complete set of questionnaires were included in the final analysis of the study and the response rate is 84.11%. Descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to analyze the collected data. Regression analysis was used to analyze the effects of trainee characteristics, training design, work environment on motivation to transfer and transfer of training and to analyze the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training.

RESULTS

According to the demographic characteristics of respondents, male respondents were more than female respondents. The results related to the age of respondents showed that 26-33 years and 34-41 years are the two largest groups of respondents. Most of the respondents have bachelor degree and some gained master degree. The working experience of respondents with 6-8 years and 9 years and above represented as the two largest groups of respondents. According to Best (1977), the mean values of variables are interpreted to showed their agree level. The results of the respondent perception on variables (mean values), reliability and correlation of variables are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Means, reliability and correlation of variables

Variables	Mean	TC	TD	WE	MT	TOT	Items	Alpha
TC	3.91	-					8	0.891
TD	3.76	.727**	-				5	0.728
WE	3.87	.818**	.738**	-			6	0.830
MT	3.85	.752**	.746**	.771**	-		7	0.852
TOT	3.94	.681**	.724**	.650**	.823**	-	9	0.868

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)
TC = Trainee characteristics, TD = Training design, WE = Work environment, MT = Motivation to transfer, TOT = Transfer of training

The Alpha values of all variables gain the acceptable reliability level of more than 0.7 (Cronbach, 1951). According to mean values, the employees generally agree that the hotels provided the training input factors to motive them and to apply the trained skills. According to the results of multiple regression analysis, trainee characteristics, training design and work environment have positive and significant effects on motivation to transfer. Hypotheses 1a, 2a and 3a are accepted. Among these three variables, according to the standardized coefficient (beta) value, work environment has the most effect on motivation to transfer followed by training design and trainee characteristics. The work environment can motivate employees to learn more and to use their skills. Moreover, trainee characteristics and training design have positive and significant effects on transfer of training. Hypotheses 1b and 2b are accepted. Work environment has no significant effect on transfer of training. Hypothesis 3b was not accepted. Among the two significant variables, training design has more effect on transfer of training than trainee characteristics. Transfer of training is shaped by trainee characteristics and training design. Motivation to transfer has significant and positive effect on transfer of training.

To analyze the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors (trainee characteristics, training design and work environment) and transfer of training, according to Baron and Kenny (1986), by entering motivation to transfer in the model,

training design has still significant relationship with transfer of training ($\beta = 0.254$, $p < 0.01$), but trainee characteristics does not show the significant relationship with transfer of training ($\beta = 0.119$, $p > 0.05$). Based on the results of mediating effect of motivation to transfer, it is concluded that motivation to transfer partially mediates the relationship between training design and transfer of training and perfectly mediates the relationship between trainee characteristics and transfer of training. Trainee characteristics alone cannot create transfer of training of employees without motivation to transfer. Hypothesis 4 is partially accepted in this study. Training design can motivate employees and can promote the actual application of their trained skills. Thus, training design is essential to create both motivation to transfer and transfer of training. Training design is really effective for employees. Without the significant effect of work environment on transfer of training, the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between work environment and transfer of training is not necessary to analyze. The results of mediation analysis are shown in Table (2).

Table 2: Results of mediation analysis

Variables	Dependent variables			Interpretation
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	
	MT	TOT	TOT	
Trainee characteristics	$\beta = 0.248^{***}$	$\beta = 0.279^{***}$	ns	Perfect mediation
Training design	$\beta = 0.322^{***}$	$\beta = 0.462^{***}$	$\beta = 0.254^{***}$	Partial mediation
Work environment	$\beta = 0.330^{***}$	ns	ns	No mediation
Mediator				
Motivation to transfer			$\beta = 0.646^{***}$	Significance essential for mediation

Note: MT = Motivation to transfer; TOT = Transfer of training; ns = Not significant
Dependent Variable: Transfer of training
Source: Survey data (March, 2024)

CONCLUSION

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The application of training outcomes by employees is the challenge for the hotels. To overcome this issue, the hotels emphasize transfer of training with the help of training input factors (trainee characteristics, training design and work environment) and motivation to transfer. Several factors can create transfer of training. In this study, the three training input factors and motivation to transfer are focused to prove their effects on transfer of training. The perception or mean values on training input factors, motivation to transfer and transfer of training showed the agree level of employees as shown in table (1). Generally, the employees accepted that training input factors and motivation to transfer are presented in their workplace to create transfer of training. The employees agreed that their characteristics to learn in training and their behavior to use the learning outcomes are essential for them. The importance of training design and work environment are accepted by employees. These two factors can also attract them to contribute their effort in applying the trained skills.

According to the correlation results, the three training input factors have positive correlation with both motivation to transfer and transfer of training. The more the training input factors are provided by the hotels as a favorable condition for employees, the more the motivation to transfer and transfer of training will be achieved. Among the three factors, work environment can motivate employees to apply their skills than other two factors. The pleasant and comfortable workplace with high job security after Covid 19 is the expectation of employees and can motivate them to work. On the other hand, training design can create more transfer of training than other two factors. Training methods, training facilities and the knowledgeable trainers can attract them to transfer their skills after training. Moreover, motivation to transfer has positive correlation with transfer of training. Motivation to transfer can create the high level of transfer of training of employees.

The regression analysis results revealed that there are significant and positive effects of trainee characteristics, training design and work environment on motivation to transfer. Among the significant variables, work environment has the most effect on motivation to transfer and training design and trainee characteristics are the second and third significant factors for motivation to transfer. All training input factors play an essential role in motivating employees to apply their skills. Trainee characteristics and training design have significant and positive effects on transfer of training. Training design has more effect on transfer of training than trainee characteristics. The effective and attractive training design and the ability and behavior of employees to learn in training are the factors to promote transfer of training. On the other hand, work environment is not essential to have the significant effect on transfer of training.

In testing the mediating effect, motivation to transfer perfectly mediated between trainee characteristics and transfer of training. It means that motivation to transfer fully contributed to achieve transfer of training for trainee characteristics. It can be concluded that trainee characteristics alone cannot shape transfer of training without motivation to transfer. Thus, the ability and positive behavior of employees are needed to be motivated to enhance their ability to apply the skills. Motivation to transfer partially mediated between training design and transfer of training. The effective training design can motivation employees to learn more in training and to apply successfully in the workplace. Training design is important in promoting both motivation to transfer and transfer of training. For the hotels, training design must fix with the needs of employees. The attractive training design can motivate employees and can upgrade their actual application. Because of the insignificant effect of work environment on transfer of training

in the results of the present study, it is not necessary to analyze the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between work environment and transfer of training. Previous empirical studies proved the effect of work environment on transfer of training with the mediating effect of motivation to transfer. The weakness of work environment is the area to be reviewed by the hotel because an attractive work environment can motivate employees to apply the trained skills at work.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The successful transfer of training can help the hotels in Mandalay. In the present condition, the hotels offer several training programs for employees to fit the job requirements. The hotels highly expect the effective application of training outcomes or transfer of training because training is the investment for the hotels. The return or benefits from training can enhance the overall performance of hotels. This study mainly focused on training input factors, motivation to transfer and transfer of training. The employee perception on training input factors and motivation to transfer to apply the trained skills was explored. The hotels should retain the good perception of employees and should review the present training input factors to be the better condition for employees.

The hotels should continuously provide the attractive training input factors such as the means to upgrade ability and positive behavior of employees, the review of training design to learn more and to gain new knowledge and skills and the creation of happy work environment with the support of supervisors and peers and the opportunities to use the skills. The supportive work environment has the most effect on motivation to transfer. The hotels should be sure that the skills of managers and supervisors can create supportive work environment. The requirements of employees should be fulfilled by timely feedback and support. Trainee characteristics and training design have significant effects on transfer of training. The hotels should retain present ability and behavior of employees and the training design should promote employees to have more desire to attend and learn. On the other hand, work environment has no effect on transfer of training. The hotels should try to remedy the weak condition of work environment such as the weakness of supervisors and peers to support them in using the trained skills of employees and the little or no opportunity in the workplace to apply their skills.

The study proved the significant effect of motivation to transfer on transfer of training. Because of motivation, the employees actually applied their skills. The motivated conditions should be offered by the hotels to their employees. The mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training was also analyzed. Trainee characteristics such as ability and behavior only cannot create transfer of training directly without motivation to transfer. The employees fully expect motivation from their hotels to combine with their ability and behavior to achieve transfer of training. Motivation to transfer plays an essential mediating role for trainee characteristics to enhance transfer of training. Motivation to transfer is the partial mediator between training design and transfer of training. The hotel can expect transfer of training by creating the meaningful training design such as the provision of required training facilities, the skillful trainers, the suitable training methods and training period. The hotels should revisit the value placed on work environment and transfer of training with the help of motivation to transfer because motivation to transfer is not a mediator for work environment and transfer of training.

The important implications for human resource managers of the hotels, policy makers, and practitioners of the hotels and for researchers are explored in this study. Firstly, it is interesting to note that there are positive effects of training input factors on motivation to transfer and the positive effects of trainee characteristics and training design on transfer of training. The findings suggest that the hotels should emphasize training input factors and motivation to transfer to enhance the application of training outcomes by employees. The hotels can attain benefits from training investment. Secondly, the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between trainee characteristics, training design and transfer of training. The responsible persons of the hotels should pay more attention on motivation to transfer which can support transfer of training as the mediator. Without motivation to transfer, the hotels cannot yield transfer of training as expected. Finally, human resource department of the hotel should consider all of the training input factors and motivation to transfer before, during and after training and focus on providing the transfer of training to align with the strategic directions of the hotels.

The limitations of the study should be focused by further research to broaden the knowledge related to transfer of training. As one limitation, the hotels located in Mandalay were the scope of the study. Other areas and other service organizations should be analyzed. The three training input factors were analyzed to prove their effects on motivation to transfer and transfer of training. The specific factors of each variable such as ability, training methods, supervisor and peer support, opportunity to use, motivation to learn, etc., that influence transfer of training are needed to be examined by further studies. Finally, the respondents are non-managerial level employees. The perception of managerial level employees will differ from non-managerial level. Further studies should explore the perception of different levels on the variables in other organizations.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE STUDY

There are two main contributions in this study. As the first contribution, the study explored the effect of training input factors (trainee characteristics, training design and work environment) on motivation to transfer and transfer of training. By exploring the significant effects of training input factors on motivation to transfer, the perfect mediating effect of motivation to transfer between trainee characteristics and transfer of training and the partial mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training design and transfer of training, the hotels gain the knowledge of the importance of training input factors and motivation to transfer to fulfill their expectation of transfer of training of employees after costly training programs. The responsible persons and HR managers of the hotels will have proper ideas to select employees with ability and behavior to attend and learn in training and to learn more for their improvement, to design the training programs to be effective for employees and to create work environment with supports from supervisors and peers and the opportunities to use their trained skills in the workplace.

The second contribution is the exploration of the effects of training input factors on transfer of training with the mediating effect of motivation to transfer based on hotels in Mandalay, Myanmar. Because of the significant mediating effect of motivation to transfer, the hotels can understand more about the important role of motivation to transfer and can arrange the motivated conditions for employees. Furthermore, there is no previous study that applies the proposed conceptual framework and analyzes the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training of hotels in Mandalay, Myanmar. The research gap is fulfilled by examining the mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training input factors and transfer of training in the hotels.

CONCLUSION

The study explored the present condition of training input factors of the hotels based on the perception of employees and the effects of these factors on motivation to transfer and transfer of training in the hotels in Mandalay, Myanmar. According to their perception, employees showed the agree level on the variables. Although the positive correlation between training input factors, motivation to transfer and transfer of training, the regression analysis results proved the significant effects of trainee characteristics and training design on transfer of training. Work environment has no significant effect on transfer of training. The study also proved the perfect mediating effect of motivation to transfer between trainee characteristics and transfer of training and the partial mediating effect of motivation to transfer between training design and transfer of training. Motivation to transfer created by the hotels brings several benefits for both employees and hotels in promoting transfer of training or the actual application of training outcomes by employees. Additionally, the trainee characteristics and training design are the factors to be emphasized more by the hotels to yield motivation to transfer and transfer of training. The weakness of work environment is the area to be reviewed by the hotels and to remedy the weak condition to become the attractive environment for employees and to apply their knowledge and skills.

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