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***Research paper***



# Motivating Training Transfer Among UITM Academic Staff at the Institute of Leadership and Development

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**Abstract**

Previous empirical studies have highlighted the failure of training transfer among employees, regardless of job sectors. Thus, this study examined the associations between employee readiness, training design, work environment and transfer of training among the academic staff of UiTM. This study also aimed to determine if transfer motivation mediates the associations between employee readiness, training design, work environment and training transfer. A quantitative and questionnaire survey method was employed in this study. A total of 258 academic staff of UiTM as participants of training courses at Institute of Leadership and Development (ILD), UiTM were selected and notified through e-mail to participate in an online survey. 238 responses were received and found usable for the final analysis. The results found that among the employee readiness, design of training and work environment factor, abilities, supervisor's role, error management, and opportunity to use had significant and positive relationships with transfer of training Moreover, the study confirmed the intervening effects of transfer motivation on the relationships between opportunity to use, error management and training transfer. Overall, the study had successfully developed a model of training transfer for UiTM's academic staff which was influenced by abilities, supervisor's role, error management, and opportunity to use.

***Keywords***: *Training transfer; employee readiness; training design; work environment; transfer motivation.*

## 1. Introduction

Academic profession is central to higher education because successful academic institutions rely on qualified, dedicated, and well-paid academic staff [1]. In every community, academicians play various roles: they teach, conduct research, and provide services to their universities and communities. They are considered "experts" in their area of specialisation and are often called upon to contribute their expertise to government agencies and the industries. On the contrary, there are many complaints regarding the quality of teaching given by academicians to students in the classroom. In [2] found that poor teaching skills by some of the University's academic staff were responsible for the declining academic performance recorded among graduate students. Furthermore, they are the positive motivator for graduate attributes, in which described as the qualities, abilities and considerations a university community agrees its students would appropriately progress during their time at the institution and, accordingly, shape the impact they are capable to make to their profession and as a citizen [3].

Established in 1956, UiTM was ranked in the 651 – 700 for the world university rankings in 2014 with an overall score of 21.19 by [4]. Although this position improved from 701- 750 for year 2013, the performance of UiTM reflects fluctuation due to its position in the range of 651 – 700 in 2011 and also 2012. By year 2018 and 2020, UiTM aimed to be among the top 500 and 300 world universities respectively. The measures of world university rankings are determined based on the employer's reputation, academic reputation, citations per faculty, faculty students and international students. In domestic standing, UiTM is positioned as the 7th. It is essential for UiTM to find ways that can influence the organisation to higher performance levels. One of the ways is to effectively utilise its academic staff by transferring the learned skills effectively

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Training transfer

The most effective at work is learning from everyday opportunities [5]. This learning will become beneficial if it is utilised by workers in their routine activities. As such, in [6] termed training transfer as trainees successfully and constantly manipulating what they have acquired in training to their jobs. This includes the generalisation of training and maintenance of learned material. The abilities of learners to use the attained learning from training courses to their workplaces are related with generalisation, while the maintenance of the learned material requires employees to continually use their acquired learning from training over time. Other researchers [7, 8] also denoted training transfer as the extent to which learners are able to use the skills, attitudes and knowledge acquired during any human resource development (HRD) intervention into the job context.

### 2.2. Employee readiness

In [9] stressed that employee readiness factor must be taken into consideration by organisation in warranting that the employees attend the training. This is because of the pace of change that has primarily increased with the increasing challenges, such as communication, competition, general instability, mergers, reengineering, technology and development. Thus, it demands proper handling of situation because human participation can contribute un-

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certainties and opaqueness. Involvement in training will make sure that the employees acquire as learning will take place anywhere, including in training [10]. Therefore, all learning activities must be supported by each of organisations in general. It also requires support for the knowledge needed, either for current or future employment as expected by employees. Accordingly, it can be hypothesised that:

$H_1$a) Attitude has a significant relationship with training transfer.

$H_1$b) Organisational commitment has a significant relationship with training transfer.

$H_1$c) Abilities has a significant relationship with training transfer

$H_1$d) Motivation to learn has a significant relationship with training transfer

### 2.3. Training design

According to [11], human error becomes a significant factor leading to incidents and accidents at the workplace, hence supporting insight that human errors must be well communicated to employees. Moreover, they believed that this training-related strategy has proven to effectively promote transfer of training. Following [12], they urged that mandatory basis of training assignment may be most likely to influence the motivation to learn as they believed that compulsory training is always viewed by employees as beneficial for their excellence in skills and performance. In addition, in [13] provided insight that different employees may need different emphasis on training designs though we often hear that all employees will learn in the same way. This assumption tends to ignore the individual's differences. Therefore, this study assumes that:

$H_1$e) Error management has a significant relationship with training transfer

$H_1$f) Perceived importance has a significant relationship with training transfer

### 2.4. Work environment

Perceived organisational support or perceived supervisory support have been named by many studies about its associations which may not portray the actual determinants of transfer of training. This is contrary to [14] as they proposed to think more for work environment factors on conceptual meaning and operation. Factors should also consider its relevance to the training program. In an earlier study by [15], they observed out of 52 stores, 505 supermarket managers are trained with training climate, continuous learning culture and supervisory skills, which are directly associated with training transfer. Other studies [16, 17] have identified an important role of supervisory support as work – environment variable that can encourage the employees to learn new skills, behaviour and knowledge, and later to apply, as well as to maintain it over time. Extending prior findings to a managerial training, it can be proposed that:

$H_1$g) Supervisor's role has a significant relationship with training transfer

$H_1$h) Opportunity to use has a significant relationship with training transfer

### 2.5. Transfer motivation

In order to transfer learning effectively, it may not be easy without having transfer motivation or training transfer [18]. As claimed important for the training transfer, [19] defined transfer motivation as the learners' need to employ the skills, knowledge and abilities obtained from training courses on the job. It serves by way of a critical factor in motivating training transfer [20]. They highlighted that without transfer motivation, trainees will not use and maintain the newly-acquired skills. Indeed, trainees with higher level of motivation to transfer will encourage and influence them to process the inputs from learning activities either formally or informally to the specific job contexts. Therefore, building from previous studies, it can be hypothesised that:

$H_2$a) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between attitude and training transfer.

$H_2$b) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between organisational commitment and training transfer.

$H_2$c) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between ability and training transfer

$H_2$d) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between motivation to learn and training transfer.

$H_2$e) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between error management and training transfer.

$H_2$f) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between perceived importance and training transfer.

$H_2$g) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between supervisor's role and training transfer.

$H_2$h) Motivation to transfer is a mediator for the relationship between opportunity to use and training transfer.

## 3. Methodology

The analysis unit of this study is at individual level. Respondents of this study are the academic staff of UiTM who attended four different types of training related to teaching and learning, and research in 2017. The purpose of this study is to identify the determinants of training transfer among the academic staff as well as to observe the intervening role of transfer motivation between the determinants of transfer and training transfer. 258 questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents with a total of 238 questionnaires were accepted and found usable for this analysis, which explains the rate of response of 92%. In testing the goodness of measures, all the items measuring a particular construct loaded highly on that construct and loaded lower on the other constructs, thereby verifying the validity of construct with a cutoff value for loadings at 0.7 as significant [21]. Meanwhile, all value for loadings, composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) are above the cutoff values which require CR values to surpass the recommended value of 0.70 [22] and AVE values need to be greater than 0.50 in order to validate the use of the construct [23, 21]. The square correlations for each construct are lower than the AVE by the indicators measuring constructs, demonstrating satisfactory discriminant validity. In total, the measurement model demonstrated adequate convergent validity and discriminant validity. For the reliability analysis, the loadings and alpha values with all alpha values are above 0.7 as suggested by [21, 24]. The CR values also ranged from 0.924 to 0.970. Interpreted like a Cronbach's alpha for internal consistency reliability estimate, a CR of 0.70 or greater is considered acceptable [23, 21].

For the hypotheses testing, path analysis was used to test the hypotheses generated. Figure 1 and Table 1 show the results The $R^2$ for the main model is 0.767, demonstrating that 76.7 percent of the variance in the extent of training transfer can be clarified by attitudes, organisational commitment, abilities, motivation to learn, error management, perceived importance, supervisor's role, opportunity to use and transfer motivation.

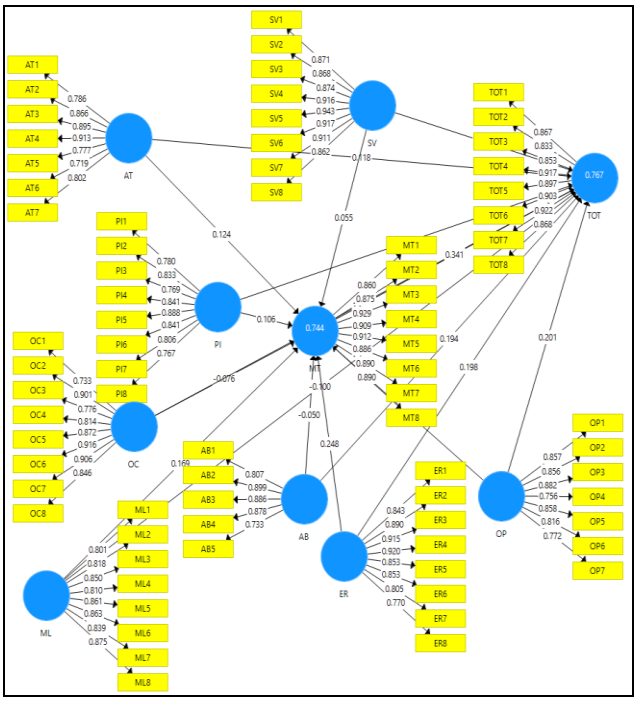


**Fig. 1:** Results of the path analysis

The $R^2$ for transfer motivation was found to be 0.744, indicating that attitudes, organisational commitment, abilities, motivation to learn, error management, perceived importance, supervisor's role and opportunity to use can account for 74% of variance in transfer motivation.

**Table 1:** Indirect Effects of Transfer motivation on Training transfer

| xogenous Variables | Endogenous Variables | Path Coefficient (β) | T- Stat.[a] | P-Values |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AT | TOT | 0.042 | 1.717 | 0.086 |
| OC | TOT | -0.026 | 0.959 | 0.338 |
| AB | TOT | -0.017 | 0.552 | 0.581 |
| ML | TOT | 0.058 | 1.85 | 0.064 |
| ER | TOT | 0.085 | 2.575 | 0.01 |
| PI | TOT | 0.036 | 1.263 | 0.207 |
| SV | TOT | 0.019 | 0.962 | 0.336 |
| OP | TOT | 0.146 | 3.244 | 0.001 |

[a] t-statistics > 1.96 are significant at $p < 0.05$ (two-tailed).

## 4. Results and discussion

This study revealed the significant relationships between ability, error management, supervisor's role and opportunity to use have and training transfer among academic staff of UiTM. These findings indicate that ability, error management, supervisor's role and opportunity to use are the factors that would contribute towards enhancing training transfer directly. Findings also revealed that opportunity to use has the strongest direct impact on training transfer compared to ability, error management and supervisor's role.

In mediating test, the results revealed that transfer motivation serves as a mediator for the relationships between error management, opportunity to use and training transfer with complementary effects or partial mediation were established for both relationships. These findings indicate that error management and opportunity to use would impact training transfer directly or indirectly through transfer motivation. However, no mediation effect was established for the relationships between attitudes, organisational commitment, abilities, motivation to learn, perceived importance, supervisor's role and training transfer. Attitudes, motivation to learn, organisational commitment and perceived importance were found to not having both direct and indirect impact on training transfer. Similarly, abilities and supervisor's role were found to not influencing training transfer indirectly through transfer motivation although both relationships have direct effects on training transfer.

## 5. Conclusion

This study is a novel exertion in determining the relationships between employee readiness (attitude, organisational commitment, abilities and motivation to learn), training design (error management and perceived importance), work environment (supervisor's role and opportunity to use) and training transfer. In addition, transfer motivation was employed as a mediating variable for the relationships. Therefore, ability, error management, supervisor's role and opportunity to use were determined as important factors for the training transfer among academic staff of UiTM. In addition, transfer motivation is crucial regarding the indirect effects for the relationships between error management and opportunity to use on training transfer.

## 6. Limitations

While this research has demonstrated that several variables have significant direct and indirect impacts on training transfer among academic staff of UiTM, there are several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, cross-sectional manner was carried out at one point of time for this study for data collection. Although numerous studies have used this manner, the short period of study may not be adequate to observe the practice of utilising and maintaining the skills or knowledge obtained from the training programs among academic staff of UiTM.

Second, this study employed qualitative research methods and the survey questionnaire was the only instrument used for data collection. Perhaps future research should use qualitative method or triangulation to corroborate the findings of this study.

Third, the subjects of study were limited to UiTM and the findings could not be generalised to other public universities in Malaysia. UiTM is categorised as a Teaching University rather than as a Research University. Thus, this research findings are limited to the context of UiTM.

Furthermore, the study relied solely on self-report from ILD participants, and this method may be biased because it borrows respondents' subjective responses about their perceptions of ILD training courses whose perceptions are likely to be biased.

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