Motivation to Improve Work through Learning: A Conceptual Model

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This study aims to enhance our current understanding of the transfer of training by proposing a conceptual model that supports the mediating role of motivation to improve work through learning about the relationship between social support and the transfer of training. The examination of motivation to improve work through motivation to improve work through a learning construct offers a holistic view pertaining to a learner's profile in a workplace setting, which emphasizes learning for the improvement of work performance. The proposed conceptual model is expected to benefit human resource development theory building, as well as field practitioners by emphasizing the motivational aspects crucial for successful transfer of training.

Keywords: Motivation, situated learning, organizational support, supervision, peer support, transfer of training, knowledge transfer, professional development

Introduction

Since performance improvement is the ultimate goal of all training programs (Baldwin, Ford & Blume, 2009; Kontoghiorghes, 2004; Lancester, Di Milia & Cameron, 2013), it is critical for a trainee to possess the ability to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA) learned from a training in his or her job environment. Unfortunately, even when training is carefully planned and implemented, it is considered as a failure if trainees are incapable of transferring new KSA to their job (Cheng & Hampson, 2007). In fact, training is only successful when trainees effectively transfer what they have learned from training to their job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). In basic terms, the transfer of training is regarded as a trainee's ability to transfer what he or she has learned during his or her training back to the workplace (Baldwin et al., 2009; Holton, 2005; Switzer, Nagy & Mullins, 2005).

While performance improvement is sought after by every organization, most of the training and development programs failed to produce and sustain the trainee intention to learn and the ability to transfer KSA to the workplace (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford & Weissbein, 1997; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Subedi, 2004). It is estimated that only 62 percent of the

trainees transfer what they have learned immediately after a training, 44 percent after six months, and 34 percent after one year (Saks, 2002; Saks & Belcourt, 2006). Clearly, a large amount of training expenditure is wasted due to the meager transfer of training (Cheng & Hampson, 2007). Hence, for decades, researchers and practitioners have been attempting to identify the significant factors that could facilitate or inhibit the transfer of training.

Traditionally, the majority of studies paid sole attention on the design and the delivery of the training programs (Baldwin et al., 2009). However, growing research has shown that individual and situational factors play salient roles in predicting the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Chiaburu, 2010; Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000; Festner & Gruber, 2008; Seyler, Holton, Bates, Burnett & Carvalho 1998). Situational factors, such as social support emanating from the management, supervisor, and peers, are capable to facilitate a successful transfer of new KSA to the daily job tasks (Chiaburu, 2010; Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Merriam & Leahy, 2005; Pham, Segers & Gijselaers, 2013). Despite the fact that social support has been recognized as an important factor that may enhance motivation and transfer of training, research in this area is characterized by inconsistent findings (Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010; Cheng & Hampson, 2007; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005), lack of empirical studies, and insufficient understanding of the constructs (Bates, Holton, Seyler & Carvalho, 2000; Chiaburu, 2010; Van den Bossche, Segers & Jansen, 2010).

The effort to improve the understanding of the transfer of training reveals that motivation to learn (Ismail, Bongogoh & Segaran, 2008; Switzer et al., 2005) and/or motivation to transfer (Nijman, Nijhof, Wognum & Veldkamp, 2006) play significant roles in linking the relationship between social support and the transfer of training. Motivation to learn is described as a trainee's enthusiasm to learn the contents of the training programs (Ayres, 2005; Colquitt et al., 2000; Noe, 1986), whereas motivation to transfer refers to their enthusiasm to use what has been learned in their job environment (Holton, 2005; Seyler et al., 1998).

These findings significantly advance our understanding of the fact that trainee motivation has a profound role in cultivating the transfer of training. However, extant meta-analytic work and integrative reviews (e.g. Baldwin et al., 2009; Blume et al., 2010; Cheng & Hampson, 2007; Cheng & Ho, 2001; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Subedi, 2004) asserted that more work is needed to advance our current knowledge about the transfer of training.

In literature, there is an issue on how the motivational construct has been traditionally conceptualized in the context of training. In the context of human resource development (HRD), many researchers have the tendency to conceptualize motivation solely as a learner's motivation to learn the training contents (e.g. Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Colquitt et al., 2000). The

traditional concept is somewhat narrow, because it does not acknowledge the fact that motivation in HRD involves the motivation to transfer new KSA to their job environment (Holton & Baldwin, 2003; Holton, 2005; Naquin & Holton, 2002). In other words, a successful transfer of training is not only concerned about the trainees' motivation to learn in training, but also involves their motivation to improve their job in a workplace context.

Although researchers have now acknowledged the importance of motivation to transfer, in addition to motivation to learn, the majority of studies have failed to investigate both types of motivation as an integrated construct (Battistelli, 2008; Holton, 2005; Machin & Fogarty, 2004; Naquin & Holton, 2002). The exploration of motivation to learn and motivation to transfer as separate constructs is undeniably important. However, some researchers have raised the question, whether examining the motivation to learn and the motivation to transfer as separate constructs reflects the reality of a trainee motivation to attend training in a workplace setting. This is due to the fact that in the workplace, the majority, if not all, trainees attend training with the focal aim to improve their work performance. To achieve improved work performance, trainees must have the tendency to feel motivated to learn the training materials and to perform what has been learned during the training in daily job tasks. Hence, the integration of both the motivation to learn and the motivation to transfer, namely the motivation to improve work through learning (MTIWL) (Holton, 2005) is more accurate in reflecting the profile of learners in the context of a workplace than simple motivation to learn and/or motivation to transfer constructs.

This paper, therefore, attempts to explore MTIWL as a mediating mechanism that links social support and the transfer of training. Holton and Baldwin (2003) maintained that '[MTIWL] construct is potentially a more powerful motivational construct, because it incorporates both dimensions of motivation critical to achieving transfer outcomes.' (p. 20). MTIWL is a better construct to explain the transfer of training mainly due to its recognition of complex human motivation in training and work situations. Due to the incorporation of MTIWL construct that reflects the nature of trainee motivation in both learning, as well as in the implementation of training to improve work performance, it may advance our current understanding of the learner's motivation that significantly facilitates the effects of social support on the transfer of training.

Literature Review

The Concept of MTIWL

Generally, in the transfer of training studies, motivation has been measured in terms of trainee motivation to acquire new KSA from training programs (Baldwin et al., 2009; Holton, 2005). In order to ensure positive transfer

of training, it is crucial for a trainee to possess the motivation to learn the training contents and also possess the motivation to apply new learning in the job environment (Axtell, Maitlis & Yearta, 1997; Chiaburu & Lindsay, 2008; Kontoghiorghes, 2001, 2002, 2004; Pham et al., 2010).

MTIWL incorporates the elements of two basic motivational constructs in HRD with a necessity to facilitate the transfer of training, namely motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. Acknowledging the importance of both motivation to learn and motivation to transfer in the framework of the transfer of training, Naquin and Holton (2002, p. 358) argue that 'it is the combined motivational influences that will influence desired training outcomes.' The notion of MTIWL is robust because it completely captures the key elements of motivation that are important for the transfer of training; therefore, this view is generally well agreed upon by researchers. For example, Nikandrou, Brinia and Bereri (2009, p. 267) argue that 'in cases where there was great motivation to learn, but lack of motivation to transfer, no training transfer at work took place.' Their statement indicates that motivation in both training and work situations are equally useful to invoke the trainee desires in the learning and transfer processes.

Despite the facade that MTIWL merely combines two dimensions of motivation (i.e. motivation to learn and motivation to transfer) in an additive method (Holton, 2005; Naquin & Holton, 2002), it is a more holistic approach towards measuring learner motivation and it is likely that this higher-order construct has more significant effect on the transfer of training than a single motivation to learn or motivation to transfer construct. This is because 'persons entering a learning situation with high levels of MTIWL are likely to have greater motivation to engage in work relevant learning experiences offered with strong transfer designs that emphasize practice and job application than persons with high levels of simple [motivation to learn]' (Holton, 2005, p. 48).

As previously mentioned, research on MTIWL is relatively scant due to the lack of attention to this construct. Indeed, many empirical studies continue to divide the motivation construct in terms of trainee motivation to learn in the context of training and motivation to transfer training to their job. Naquin and Holton's (2002) study was the first to examine MTIWL and its antecedents. Extroversion, positive affectivity, and work commitment directly affected MTIWL, whereas conscientiousness and agreeableness influenced MTIWL via work commitment. Nonetheless, their study focused on determining the dispositional factors affecting MTIWL without attempting to examine MTIWL as a valid mediator that links social support and the transfer of training.

In recent years, the burgeoning literature supports the importance of work environment factors in cultivating motivation to learn, motivation to

transfer, and transfer of training (Chiaburu, 2010; Grossman & Salas, 2011; Lancester et al., 2013; Lim & Morris, 2006; Switzer et al., 2005). Also, studies of best practices in the transfer of training suggest that support originating from the organization, supervisor, and peers emerged as the central practice that encouraged positive transfer of training (Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Hutchins, 2009). Such findings reasoned the need to explore the role of MTIWL in the relationship between social support and the transfer of training.

The Mediating Role of MTIWL and the Relationship between Perceived Organizational Support (POS) and the Transfer of Training

POS, as the term suggests, is closely associated with a person's general view regarding the degree to which an organization supports his or her welfare as an employee (Chen, Eisenberger, Johnson, Sucharski & Aselage, 2009). Employees also perceive organizational support as a form of their organization's commitment to them (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson & Sowa, 1986). Drawing on the notion of organizational support theory, an employee forms a general belief of the extent to which an organization appreciates his or her contributions and concerns about his or her well-being. This belief is formed in order to meet the socio-emotional needs and to evaluate the benefits of elevated work effort (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Based upon the assumption of social reciprocity, employees tend to develop an obligation in the form of concern about their organization's welfare when they perceived support from their organization (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). Employees' concern about the welfare could manifest itself in terms of loyalty and assistance to aid the organization in reaching its goals.

The assumptions of social exchange theory may hold true in the context of training. When sufficient support is provided by an organization, a trainee is likely to feel motivated to get involved in acquiring new KSA and later transfer them to the workplace. This might result in better performance and, as a consequence, helps the organization to reach its goals (Battistelli, 2008; Chiaburu, Van Dam & Hutchins, 2010). As noted earlier, this is based upon the principle that employees tend to reciprocate with positive attitudes if they perceive that their organization values their well-being.

There are a few empirical studies that directly examine the construct of MTIWL in the past. For example, Veeraya and Sasi (2011) found social exchange process to be a valid predictor of MTIWL. Using structural equation modeling analysis, they found perceived justice and POS significantly affected work-related attitude, which in turn led to the enhancement of MTIWL among private hospital employees. Ascher's (2012) quantitative study found that transfer of training was a valid outcome of MTIWL.

Most of the previous empirical studies, however, separately examined the concept of motivation in the form of motivation to learn and/or motivation to transfer. Recently, a study by Lee, Lee, Lee and Park (2014) found that the motivation to transfer was a significant mediator that linked the effects of POS on the transfer of training. Trainees in a low performer group had a higher motivation to integrate new KSA in their job environment than the high performer group when they perceived their organization supported their learning. Such perception was due to the trainees' assumption that their organization valued the process and responsibility of employee development.

Empirical work by Battistelli (2008) examined three aspects of motivation as the outcomes of POS, namely (1) motivation to obtain professional skills; (2) motivation to apply new knowledge acquired from training in the job environment; and (3) motivation to undergo training for the purpose of increasing social status and company standing. The extent to which an organization provided support in the context of training resulted in the motivation of trainees to implement new KSA from training and boosted their motivation to apply the KSA when they returned to work. The conclusion of the study was that trainee motivation in learning training materials and motivation to apply training significantly contributed to the perception of the transfer of training.

In a longitudinal analysis by Chiaburu et al. (2010), they revealed that motivation to transfer was predicted by social support originating from the organization. The study discovered that POS served as a predictor of motivation to transfer and the actual transfer of training. In other words, when trainees perceived their organization as caring, they had greater motivation to use what they have learned from the training in their job environment. Further analysis revealed that motivation to transfer acted as the mediating variable that linked POS and supervisor support to the transfer of training. Similar findings were argued by Chiaburu (2010).

Nikandrou et al.'s (2009) qualitative study, which used in-depth interviews to uncover the underlying processes of the transfer of training, found evidence of the effects of organizational climate on the transfer of training, by means of both motivation to learn training materials and motivation to apply training in their job. The results of the study found discouraging transfer among the participants. Participants commented that, for example, their organization did not care about their ability to apply training in order to achieve performance improvement. Thus, the lack of caring from the organization affected the trainees' motivation to learn, as well as their motivation to apply their training in their job environment. Towards the end, the majority of participants stated that there was no performance improvement following the training. The essence of the findings demonstrated the

pressing necessity of perceived support from the organization, as well as high motivation to learn and motivation to transfer among the trainees if transfer of training is anticipated.

Based upon the theory of organizational support and previous empirical studies, the authors formulate the following proposition:

P1 *MTIWL will significantly mediate the relationship between POS and the transfer of training.*

The Mediating Role of MTIWL in the Relationship between Supervisor Support and the Transfer of Training

Supervisor support has been widely regarded as a key work environmental variable affecting the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Lancester et al., 2013; Nijman et al., 2006) and it is critical in creating a transfer friendly climate (Axtell et al., 1997). Since supervisor support is a multi-dimensional construct (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Ford & Weissbein, 1997; Grossman & Salas, 2011), examining it would generate a significantly differing conceptualization (Nijman, 2004). For instance, support originating from a supervisor is often regarded as the reinforcement of training in the workplace (Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000), whereas others defined it as supervisory behavior congruent to the objective of the training program (Xiao, 1996).

The notion of motivational theory that acknowledges the importance of cognitive process of motivation can be used to describe the association between supervisor support and transfer of training. In essence, Vroom's expectancy theory argues that a person is motivated to perform a task if he or she believes that a specific action will generate good performance and, in return, lead to desired outcomes (Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Based upon the assumption of this theory, a trainee will be motivated to learn the training contents and apply the learned materials when he or she recognizes that such action might bring positive performance outcomes (Noe, 1986). Encouragement from the supervisor in terms of clarification of the benefits and advantages of attending a particular training may motivate the trainees to learn new KSA from training and consequently motivate them to apply what they have learned from the training in their job environment (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Nijman et al., 2006; Switzer et al., 2005).

Bandura's social learning theory offers some insights into trainee motivation in training programs. The core of social learning theory lies in the notion of self-efficacy and outcome expectations (Zimmerman, 2000). The term self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief about his or her ability to successfully perform a task (Burke & Hutchins, 2008), while outcome expectations refer to the desired outcomes as a result of performance (Ban-

dura, 1993). To strengthen self-efficacy, a person needs to attain success (enactive mastery), while training programs must be designed to assist him or her to overcome failure (vicarious experience) (Tucker & McCarthy, 2001). It is also vital for the person to observe others that have mastered the KSA (modeling); furthermore, the person should be verbally encouraged to let him or her exert more effort in training programs (verbal persuasion) (Tucker & McCarthy, 2001).

In this instance, the extent to which supervisors support subordinates through rewards, encouragement to attend and apply training, provision of guidance to apply training and knowledge-sharing on how to apply training is likely to increase their subordinates' self-efficacy (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd & Kudisch, 1995). In turn, employees with high self-efficacy in acquiring new KSA are motivated to be trained and incorporate what has been learned in their daily work routines (Lee et al., 2014).

The transfer of training literature dominantly suggests that supervisor support is one of the most important stakeholders in an organization that affects trainee motivation and the transfer of training (Blume et al., 2010; Colquitt et al., 2000; Ford & Weissbein, 1997; Foxon, 1993). Nonetheless, certain studies (e.g. Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons & Kavanagh, 2007) found no significant relationship between the supervisor support and the transfer of training. The mixed findings are the result of diversity in the conceptualization of supervisor support in the literature (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010; Cheng & Ho, 2001). It is worth noting, from a practical standpoint, that supervisor support has an irregular and interspersed character with active discussions only before and after training and periodic checks of progress (Chiaburu, 2010; Chiaburu et al., 2010). Consequently, the nature of these practices may weaken the effects of the supervisor support on the transfer of training.

Also, the way in which the supervisor support influences the transfer of training is unclear (Nijman, 2004). That is, despite the fact that most of the previous studies examined the direct effects of supervisor support on the transfer of training (e.g. Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006), a substantial number of studies posited that the relationship between supervisor support and the transfer of training is mediated by the motivation to learn and/or the motivation to transfer training to the job environment. The inclusion of motivation construct as a mediator linking supervisor support and transfer of training has produced significant and positive results. Employing social exchange theory, Scaduto, Lindsay and Chiaburu (2008) found that supervisor support was critical for skills transfer, maintenance and generalization of training. Motivation to learn, along with outcome expectancy, mediated such relationships.

A number of studies found supervisor support, in terms of encouragement to attend training and to apply new learning in the job environment, significantly promotes motivation in training, leading to the transfer of training. In studies conducted by Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005) and Switzer et al. (2005), the extent to which supervisors encouraged trainees to attend training programs, aided the trainees to apply the training in their job environment, gave sufficient time to the trainees to apply KSA in their job, and invoked their motivation to learn led to the trainees' ability to apply, adapt, and reproduce what they have learned during training in their daily work tasks. Adequate opportunities to apply training in terms of the provision of materials and opportunity to practice new learning in their work assignments had been proven to exert strong effects on the motivation and transfer of training (Nijman et al., 2006; Pham et al., 2013).

Longitudinal studies suggest that supervisor support is not only a strong predictor of trainee motivation and transfer of training immediately after training, but across different points in time. Axtell et al. (1997) examined long-term transfer of training based on non-managerial, technical employees from a multi-national organization who attended one of six training courses targeted at developing workplace interpersonal skills. In relation to their work environment, supervisor support and motivation to transfer were positively correlated with the transfer of training one month and a year after the training. It was concluded that support from the managers enhanced trainees' motivation to transfer training to their job environment. In turn, motivation to transfer acted as the main predictor of short and long-term transfer of training.

Kontoghiorghes (2004) expanded the traditional transfer of training model by postulating that, aside from an immediate learning environment, non-training work environment factors (e.g. socio-technical system design, job design, quality management, and continuous learning environment) had significant effects on motivation to learn and motivation to transfer training. Positive learning transfer climate (e.g. supervisor and peer support) was the strongest predictor of transfer of training and job performance through motivation to learn and motivation to transfer training to the job.

Qualitative studies generally support the findings that derived from the quantitative studies described above. Lancester et al. (2013), Nikandrou et al. (2009), Lim and Johnson (2002), and Lim (2000) measured the effects of supervisor support on trainee motivation and the transfer of training by employing a series of interviews to gain a better comprehension on these relationships. The results advocated that the most significant predictor that influenced the transfer of training was the provision of support from the supervisor before, during, and after training. They maintained that most trainees had a greater motivation to learn and motivation to transfer, as well

as positive transfer of training only when they reported having supervisors who openly discussed the training and provided sufficient training feedback.

Since many of the previous studies found significant correlation between supervisor support and transfer of training via motivation to learn and/or motivation to transfer, it is possible that the findings will also hold true for MTIWL construct. Considering satisfactory support from the literature, the authors propose the following proposition:

P2 *MTIWL will significantly mediate the relationship between supervisor support and the transfer of training.*

The Mediating Role of MTIWL on the Relationship between Peer Support and the Transfer of Training

Another stakeholder in an organization that can influence transfer of training is a person's peer. In most cases, peer, or often called co-worker, suggests any person who works along with an employee in an organization. It includes superiors and subordinates. Nonetheless, the term co-worker is more often associated with the person who has an identical rank with an employee in an organization. An individual has peers who are associates in social and job interactions (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Flatter organizational structure and the increase in the practices of team-based work dramatically elevated the importance and frequencies of lateral interactions between employees and their peers (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004). In this situation, employees are encouraged to work collaboratively and to network with peers (Cromwell & Kolb, 2004).

Not surprisingly, peer relationships are usually overlooked due to the nature of most early management theories that dismissed the elements of lateral relationships in management practices (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). Weber's bureaucratic theory and Fayol's administrative theory emphasized the fundamentals of hierarchical and authoritarian qualities in management and, at the same time, proposed that effective communication can only be achieved with downward and formal practices through supervisors. The Hawthorne studies marked the shift of perception towards the importance of peers in the workplace. The Hawthorne studies showed that peers played a major role in impacting employee's intrinsic motivation and job performance.

Unlike an organization or a supervisor that has authority and serves as a superior, an employee has an equal status with his or her co-workers. Also, because of the constant and greater presence of peers as opposed to management and supervisors in almost every organization, an employee is likely to interact more frequently with his or her co-workers (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008). The nature of this status makes the relationship between

an employee and his or her peers more proximal than the relationship with the management and supervisors (Chiaburu, 2010; Chiaburu et al., 2010). Due to a more proximal relationship than the management and supervisors, peers provide critical functions for an employee in mentoring, information exchange, and social support (Bates et al., 2000; Facteau et al., 1995). First, in mentoring programs, peers act as mentors that could provide valuable work advices and information in order to accomplish necessary tasks. Second, the function of peers in information exchange is largely related to the discussion of work-related information or personal problems. Third, support from peers is a powerful source to reduce uncertainty and stress, which can improve employee and organizational well-being (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008).

In the domain of training, a trainee can benefit from having supportive peers. In order to ensure the transfer of training, it is important for a trainee to receive encouragement, opportunities, and endorsement from peers in his or her implementation of training in their job environment. Further, peer networking and information sharing about training contents greatly enhances the transfer of training (Hawley & Barnard, 2005). Because of the continuous flow of information and encouragement, support originating from peers has been postulated to exert stronger influence on the training outcomes than the one coming from the organization or supervisors (Chiaburu, 2010).

As noted earlier, the concept of social learning theory argues that self-efficacy and outcome expectations play important roles in cultivating a person's motivation to perform a task. In a training situation, a trainee, who observes his or her peers performing a task, is likely to believe that he or she is capable of performing a similar task. This belief can be reinforced when the trainee notices that his or her peers successfully perform the task. Positive feedback acquired from the peers can also enhance self-efficacy. High self-efficacy may increase trainee's effort and persistence, which cultivates the motivation for KSA acquisition and the motivation to apply training in their job environment (Colquitt et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2014).

Although Van den Bossche et al.'s (2010) study of 35 academic employees in the Netherlands failed to confirm the hypothesis that argued peer feedback to have a stronger effect on the transfer of training than supervisor feedback; further analysis found that the frequency and helpfulness of feedback emanating from peers was associated with greater motivation to transfer and transfer of training than that coming from supervisors. A similar study by Hawley and Barnard (2005) found that peer networking and information sharing about training contents greatly enhanced the transfer of training.

Furthermore, a study by Chiaburu and Marinova (2005) confirmed that

the extent of peer support was indeed a stronger predictor of the transfer of training than supervisor support. Peer support, in the form of encouragement to apply training to their job, is significantly related to both motivation to learn and skill transfer. Such findings were attributed to trainee reliance on team-level support from co-workers for training outcomes. The outcome of the study provided strong grounds to Bates et al.'s (2000) argument that peer support is more important to invoke training motivation and transfer of training in certain work situations.

Other empirical studies showed that peers acted as important source of support to trainees, similar to that coming from supervisors. Ayres' (2005) study suggested significant effect of peer support on trainee motivation to attend and learn from training, which in turn led to positive transfer of training. Trainees, who perceived that their peers were helpful in the application of new learning, encouraged them to apply the training, appreciated their effort to transfer new learning, and understood they need more time to apply training in their job were reported having greater motivation to learn in training programs than those who did not receive such support. As a result, the trainees believed that they had the ability to practice what they have learned from training back in the workplace.

Comparable findings were established by Facteau et al. (1995). Trainees who reported having ample support from their peers had high levels of motivation to attend and learn from training programs, which in turn led to an elevated transfer of training. Hence, the conclusion was that the relationship between peer support and transfer of training was indirectly influenced by the motivation to learn KSA from training programs.

From a practitioner's perspective, there is growing recognition that peer support has important impact on the level of training outcomes. Studies of best practices related to the transfer of training (e.g. Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Hutchins, 2009) appeared to endorse the contributions of peer support in successful transfer of training. In this sense, practitioners commented that peer support, particularly the reinforcement of the implementation of training in the job environment and the ability of the trainees to learn effectively from peers through a variety of means contributed to positive transfer of training.

Based on the literature, the authors propose the following proposition:

P3 *MTIWL will significantly mediate the relationship between peer support and the transfer of training.*

Conceptual Model

The following conceptual model is built based on relevant theories and empirical evidence that supported the notion that MTIWL may mediate the
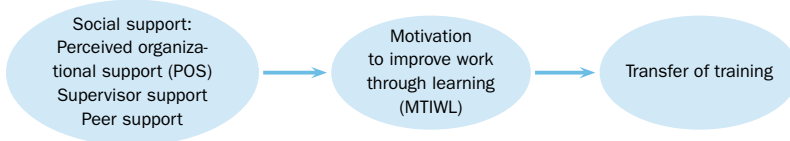
Figure 1 Conceptual Model

relationship between social support and transfer of training. Social support, in terms of POS, supervisor support, and peer support may increase trainee motivation to learn training contents and motivation to perform in the job environment what has been learned during the training. As a result, it might lead to successful integration of KSA learned during training in the job environment.

Discussion

This conceptual paper examines the mediating role of MTIWL on the relationship between social support and transfer of training. It attempts to fill the gaps in the literature by examining motivation to learn and motivation to transfer as an integrated construct consistent with the recommendations from several researchers (e.g. Naquin & Holton, 2002; Holton, 2005). This integrated construct of motivation, namely MTIWL (Holton, 2005), is likely to replicate a realistic trainee motivation in workplace situations that is not only concerned about learning, but also about the motivation to improve work performance.

As such, this conceptual paper has several theoretical and practical implications. MTIWL acknowledges two important dimensions of motivation critical for successful transfer of training, namely the motivation to learn from training and the motivation to apply the skills obtained through training in the job environment. Without a doubt, a trainee with strong MTIWL can transfer training much more effectively than those with simple motivation to learn, because the trainee is motivated to engage in learning and enthused to incorporate training in the workplace settings. As a result, the proposed conceptual model contributes to the theory development of HRD by extending the current knowledge on MTIWL as a potential intervening variable that is crucial in linking social support with the transfer of training.

Moreover, by investigating MTIWL as a potential mediator, linking the relationship between social support and transfer of training, it may rectify the inadequacies in the literature pertaining to inconsistent findings. The construct of MTIWL could identify the profile of trainees who possess the necessary motivation for learning and for transfer to occur in the workplace. MTIWL can be enhanced with the use of emotional and instrumental

support emanating from the organization, supervisor, and peers. The conceptual model depicts such interactions, which would assist researchers to acknowledge and comprehend the realistic processes of the transfer of training.

From a practical perspective, human resource managers could benefit from the proposed conceptual model. This paper sends a clear message pertaining to the importance of motivation in learning and application of KSA for performance improvement. Human resource managers should acknowledge the central role of trainee motivation in achieving positive transfer of training. Without motivation to train and motivation to improve work, it is unlikely that training can be transferred to the job environment effectively even though the trainees might have the necessary capabilities.

Trainees who possess strong MTIWL are expected to demand a different type of training experience; consequently, they need different learning support structures (Holton, 2005). Therefore, human resource managers should work together with the supervisors and training managers to identify the training needs of these trainees. Training programs should be designed with clear objectives and emphasize the practicality of learned KSA in the job environment. Subsequently, it would attract trainees with strong motivation to participate and benefit from such training programs.

Also, it is critical for the practitioners to recognize that the support from the organization, supervisor, and peers has differential effects on the trainee motivation and the transfer of training. Since MTIWL is important, careful intervention should be tailored for each level of support to ensure the trainees are motivated in learning and performing trained KSA in the workplace. The core intervention that can be performed is by improving the ability of the stakeholders (i.e. organization, supervisors, and peers) in the provision of encouragement for the trainees to participate in the learning process, as well as guidance on how to incorporate new learning to improve work performance.

Limitations and Future Research

The conceptual model has some limitations. The conceptual model focuses on work environmental factors and the elements of motivation important for successful transfer of training. However, other factors, such as training design, individual characteristics, and workplace dynamics are not included as part of the transfer of training system. Research is warranted to develop a systemic transfer of training model that accurately reflects the dynamics of the actual workplace settings.

Although research instruments measuring motivation to learn and motivation to transfer have been established by previous researchers, the validity of the instrument specifically designed to measure MTIWL is yet to

be fully established. The only known validity test of MTIWL was conducted by Naquin and Holton (2002), who found that the construct has initial content, criterion, and construct validity. It is unknown, however, whether such validity of the research instrument can be achieved in differential research settings. Hence, more studies on MTIWL are required to address the issue by developing either new or by refining existing research instrument specifically to measure MTIWL construct.

Conclusion

This conceptual paper advocates the need to examine motivation in terms of trainee motivation to improve work performance by means of learning in the context of training programs. This is consistent with the view of many influential scholars (e.g. Holton, 2005; Holton & Baldwin, 2003; Naquin & Holton, 2002) that advocate the critical value of motivation to enhance work performance via learning. Based on the review of previous empirical work, it is more than likely that MTIWL will emerge as an important mediator that thoroughly explains the relationship between social support and the transfer of training.

Although MTIWL has been conceptualized more than a decade ago, there is a pressing lack of empirical studies that focus on this construct. As a result, not many empirical findings that can lend full support of MTIWL as a mediator that links the relationship between social support and the transfer of training. Hence, more empirical work should be conducted via future research. This can be performed by identifying possible antecedents and outcomes of MTIWL. This paper intends to spur more research on MTIWL that could significantly contribute to HRD theory building and practice.

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