

THE EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT FACTOR AS A MEDIATING ON THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING AMONG GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS IN THE STATE OF QATAR

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Abstract: This study investigates the factors that significantly affect the transfer of training among government organizations in the state of Qatar. Although millions are spent annually on training, there are evidences that show that the rate and level of transferring training to workplace is low. Therefore this study came to investigate the impact of the leadership style on transfer of training, and the role of social support as a mediating factor. To achieve the objective of this study, a quantitative approach was applied on a random sample of 381 employees from 4500 employees who work for the government agencies in Qatar. The questionnaire was composed of four parts, the demographics, transfer of training into work place (8 items), transactional and transformational leadership styles (18 items based on MLQ of Bass and Avolio) and finally social support (8 items) and supervisor support (7 items).

These items have been input into the (PCA) analysis. Eight items have been input into the (PCA) analysis, where Analysis using advanced techniques by AMOS and other software was conducted. The results showed that Transactional leadership style and Transformational leadership style has low direct impact on the transfer of training, whereas the indirect effect of leadership style on the transfer of training into the work place was much higher due to the mediation of the social support.

Keywords: Qatar, Transfer of Training, Leadership, Social Support.

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

This research is concerned more about the transfer of training into the workplace. It specifically investigates the impact of the leadership style on the training's transfer and the importance of social support as a mediating factor. This issue was selected to be investigated because the researcher found while reviewing literature that there are evidences that the rate and level of transferring training to workplace is low although millions are spent annually on training, which simply means that transfer training to workplace is limited, and employees rarely transfer skills and knowledge into workplace. For example Almannie (2015) and many other recent studies are all supporting the fact that transfer training to workplace is limited, and employees rarely transfer ability and expertise into workplace. Thus, this study has been proposed by the researcher because he believed that even though leadership style can impact transfer of training into work place, social support can magnify the size of such transfer. Therefore, in this sense, the main problem of this study can be formulated in the following leading question: what is the influence of the leadership style on training's transfer through the mediation of social support in government organizations in the State of Qatar?

In addition, Almannie (2015) concluded that trainees have many barriers and difficulties in their job when they are trying to apply the training. For instance, the author showed that more than 65% of trainees had restricted training's transfer to

the job because of the limited support from the supervisors/management. Also, the author showed that more than 55% of the trainees had challenges when they are trying to apply their training in the workplace. Furthermore, more than 45% of trainees admitted that they had an uncomfortable workplace environment such that they could not transfer what they had learned; and 72% of the trainees had a limited supervisors' cooperation; whereas 64% of the trainees had a limited coworkers' cooperation. Moreover, Burke & Baldwin, (1988) showed that only 40% of the learned skills and information can immediately transfer to the workplace; whereas 25% of the learned skills and information last for six months and only 15% of the learned skills and information last for one year. It shows that return on investment on training is limited and below expectations.

Given the large budgets and growing efforts allocated by the State of Qatar to train their staff to ensure that the impact of the training of its employees will be transferred to workplaces and reflected on the improvement of the overall performance of the organizations, it becomes very crucial to further comprehend the training's transfer in order to find ways that can reduce the losses of such transfer as well as improving the training programs. Therefore, what is required from this study is to help organizations make sure that the training has something in return on the performance of staff and it is not a waste of time, effort or money (Hawley & Barnard, 2005) Also, it is supposed to provide an environment that contributes to overcome the difficulties and promote the transformation of the impact of training to work.

The Institute conducts about 300 training courses a year, with about total number of participants reaching about 4,500 trainees. Its annual financial budget is about QR 15 million (about USD 4.5M). Therefore, the title and purpose of this dissertation is derived from the role of the Institute, which trains this large number of employees every year. However, there is no single study that has been carried out to help the transfer of training and show the trainees' performance in the workplace.

Broad (2005) defined the training is a process which has to be controlled in order to give return with minimum acceptable level on the time and resources, i.e., return on investment (ROI). Therefore, issues of transfer of training into the workplace have been investigated thoroughly in the human resource training and development researches. The concern of such efforts was to help organizations to build a supportive environment and work climate that eases the transfer of training. Hence, it was crucial to look into contributing factors to improve the training transfer. If actions are taken to build supportive working environment and organizational culture, and to enhance factors that affect training transfer, it will not only maximize transfer of training, but also maximize investment in training and return on investment in training. Simply, Chang (2013) concluded that if the organization needs to improve the ROI of the training, it should know the factors that influence the training's transfer and take corresponding actions.

2. HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

The growing research proposes that support that comes from the leadership has a significant role in promoting training transfer (Blume et al. 2010) reviewed 89 studies on training transfer found that leadership style and support is strongly related to transfer of training. Further analysis confirmed that as compared to peer support, leadership support had a stronger effect on the transfer of training. Colquitt et al. (2000), in their quantitative review on factors affecting training motivation and transfer outcomes based upon 106 articles published since 1975, found similar result. They suggested that the amount support provided by the leadership is highly correlated with the level of the employees' ability to transfer what they gained in the training. Other training transfer researches offer full support to the meta-analytic study (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). The training transfer success can be determined by the leadership encouragement to the employees to attend training and make them apply the new knowledge into their job.

However, though literature is rich with the investigation of the impact of either leadership style or social support on the transfer of training, no single study has investigated the impact leadership style, via the mediation of social support, on the transfer of training. Hence, and Based on the results gathered from the previous studies and their argumentations, it is reasonable to formulate the following hypothesis with regards to the mediation of the social support between the leadership style and transfer of training. Based on the questions and the objectives of thus this study, the researcher ended up in formulating the following seven hypotheses, which are as follows:

H1: Transactional leadership style has no direct effect on the transfer of training

This hypothesis was developed based on the literature review. For example, Zhang (2014) focused on the relationship between leadership style and employee engagement and willingness to transfer training into the workplace. He concluded

that the styles of leadership related to employee engagement and willingness to transfer training into the workplace are visionary and organic, but the styles that hinder engagement are classical and transactional. Moody (2012) discovered that employees of transformational leader, who were recognised and compensated, seemed to transfer the training better to the workplace as they believed in their leaders. Strom et al. (2014) revealed a positive relationship between both distributive and procedural justice and transfer of training into the workplace, and the relationship will be more apparent in employees with low transactional leadership as opposed to those with high transformational leadership.

H2: Transformational leadership style has direct effect on the transfer of training.

This hypothesis was developed based on the literature review. For example, Strom et al. (2014) found a positive relationship between both distributive and procedural justice and transfer of training into the workplace, and such a relationship would be more apparent among employees experiencing low transactional leadership. Lee (2004) concluded that transformational leadership is significantly correlated with transfer of training into the workplace.

This hypothesis was developed based on the literature review. For example, Zaleznik, Mintzberg, and Gosling (2003) believed that organizations require not just managers but also leaders. (Kinder, Hughes and Cooper, 2008) states that the behaviors of employees and organizational climate of an organization are greatly impacted by the behavior and style of leadership of the senior leaders who are with power and position, and their ability to be the role model for the employees

H3: Social support has direct effect on the transfer of training

This hypothesis was developed based on the literature review. For example, the burgeoning literature suggests that support emanating from the supervisors play an important function in promoting transfer of training (Blume et al. 2010) involving 89 studies on training transfer found that supervisory and peer support have strong relationships with transfer of training. Further analysis confirmed that supervisor support had a stronger effect on the transfer of training than peer support. Colquitt et al. (2000), in their quantitative review on factors affecting training motivation and transfer outcomes based upon 106 articles published since 1975, found similar result. The ability of supervisors in encouraging employees to attend training and reinforcing the use of new learning in the workplace has been found significantly predict transfer of training. This was demonstrated by Ng et al. (2011), which found the ability of supervisors to allocate sufficient guidance and time to apply training resulted in positive transfer of training among 706 employees in the East Malaysian city-based local governments. Festner and Gruber's (2008) study with 131 employees attended an occupational health and safety training program in Germany, found work environment factors (i.e., supervisory support, peer support, working conditions, and general workplace affordance) were strongly correlated with the degree to which employees' apply KSA in the workplace. Supervisory support was found among the strongest factors in enhancing transfer of training.

H4: Transactional leadership style has no indirect effect on the transfer of training

H5: Transformational leadership style has no indirect effect on the transfer of training.

H6: The influence of transactional leadership on the transfer of training in government organizations in the state of Qatar is mediated by Social support.

H7: The influence of Transformational leadership on the transfer of training in government organizations in the state of Qatar is mediated by Social support.

To support hypothesis H5 and H6, these hypothesis was based on literature that has highlighted an indirect effect of different factors on the transfer of training such as supervisor support on transfer. An example is Chiaburu et al. (2010) who conducted a longitudinal study of 111 trainees, where revealed how supervisor support has led to greater motivation to transfer, training self-efficacy and learning goal orientation in an indirect way which in turn enhanced training cognition. In fact our hypothesis was certainly overlooked in literature which ignored the potential role of social support as a mediator between the leadership styles on the transfer of training.

H8: The influence of transactional Transformational leadership on the Transformational in government organizations in the state of Qatar.

This hypothesis was based on a study conducted by Bass (1985) in Comparing transformational leadership with transactional leadership. In addition, this hypothesis was considered a response to what came in literature in confirming that transformational leadership-while ignoring any talk about transactional leadership- can influence followers share

values, which help promote change at both organizational and personal levels (Bass & Avolio, 1994 ; Jung & Avolio, 1999). More importantly, to defend what came in literature by claiming that those who work under transformational leadership style are very much expected to be willing to put extra effort into work performance, to be more confident and consequently, be better employees (Avolio, 1999).

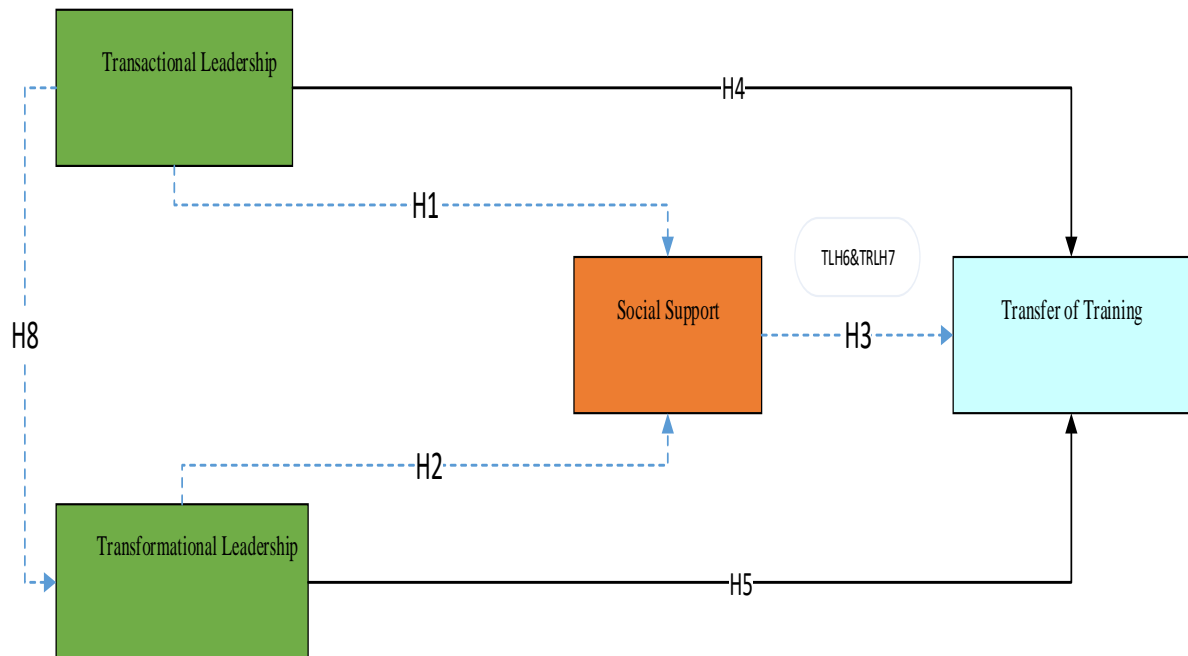


Figure 1: The Study Model

3. METHODOLOGY

Sample size is a vital importance with regard to statistical analysis. Luck and Rubin (1987) indicated that the more complex the analyses, the larger the sample required. As the size of the population is huge, simple random sample of employees, who work for the government agencies in Qatar will be selected. This study selected 381 companies from the Qatar to be participants. Data were acquired online (online questionnaires at (www.surveymshare.com)).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

H1: transactional leadership style has no direct effect on the transfer of training direct effect: Table 32 shows that the Standardized direct effect of transactional leadership style on the transfer of training is $-.276$, whereas Table 47-49 revealed that this direct effect on training is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than $.05$.

H2: transformational leadership style has no direct effect on the transfer of training

Direct effect: Table 32 shows that the Standardized direct effect of transformational leadership style on the transfer of training is $-.192$ whereas Tables 47-49 reveal that this direct effect on training is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than $.05$.

H3: leadership style has no direct effect on social support .

Table 32 and Tables 47-49 show that the direct effect of transactional leadership style on Coworker is $.025$ and that this direct effect is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is greater than $.05$. In addition, it shows that the effect of transformational on Coworker is $.227$ and is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than $.05$. Moreover the effect of transformational on Supervisor support was found to be $.237$ and significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than $.05$. Further, it was found that the effect of transactional on Supervisor is $.669$ and significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than $.05$

H4: Social support has no direct effect on the transfer of training

Table 32 and Tables 47-49 show that the direct effect of Coworker on training is .241 and is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than .05. In addition, Supervisor effect on training was found to be .649 and is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than .05

H5: transactional leadership style has no indirect effect on the transfer of training

Indirect effect: Table 37 shows that the Standardized indirect effect of transactional leadership style on the transfer of training is .440 whereas tables 50-52 reveal that this indirect effect on training is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than .05.

H6: transformational leadership style has no indirect effect on the transfer of training Indirect effect: Table 37 shows that the Standardized indirect effect of transformational leadership style on the transfer of training is .208 whereas tables 50-52 reveal that this indirect effect on training is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is less than .05.

H7: the total effect of transactional leadership is greater than that of the transformational leadership style on the transfer of training

Table 36 shows that the total effect of transactional leadership on the transfer of training is .164 whereas table 38-40 reveals that this total (direct and indirect) effect is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is greater than .05. Table 36 shows that the total effect of transformational leadership on the transfer of training is .017 whereas table 38-40 reveals that this total (direct and indirect) effect is significantly different from zero at the 0.05 level as p is greater than .05

5. SUMMARY

This paper presents the findings of our research study based on the statistical analysis conducted on the data. Also, it discusses the parameters of this study including the response rate, data preparation, data screening, missing data, and detection of outliers. Then, data validity as well as reliability will be tested using factor analysis. This is supported by the descriptive analysis, the findings of correlations of the study variables, and the regression results through using macro. Finally, the results of tested hypotheses were summarized.

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