

# **Trainees' perceptions of transfer of training in New Zealand corporate environments**

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

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I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Jin Guan

30 May, 2012

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## **Abstract**

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With increasing emphasis of the value of human capital, companies worldwide have invested large amounts of expenditures in training. New Zealand is of no exception, especially for big corporates in most popular industries. However, training results have turned out to be not effective or have not reached the expectation by many companies. Thus, transfer of training (i.e. whether trainee has applied what he or she has learnt in the training back to the workplace) has become the key of training effectiveness. In contrast to studies which took an organizational perspective, this study has taken the trainee's perspective to examine what factors including how they affect trainees' transfer of training.

The study aims to explore trainees' perception of transfer of training in the New Zealand corporate environment. The research question is: what factors do trainees perceive affect their transfer of training in the workplace and how do those factors affect their transfer in practice. The question is answered by using semi-structured interviews of 10 participants who have attended training programs offered by the corporates of various corporations in some of the most popular industries in New Zealand. The data collected from the interviews were displayed, compared and contrasted, and then categorized into groups by using data management method.

The analysis found that there are similarities and differences between past literature and findings from this study based on the three categories of trainee characteristics, training design and delivery, and work environment. The study found that factors of trainee characteristics such as training motivation, perceived job, and career utility are related to transfer of training. There are several motivation sources that drive trainees to be motivated. Personal learning style and trainees' perceptions of training are relevant factors as well. In the category of training design and delivery, trainees hold different views towards hard skill training and soft skill training as they have different level of content relevance. Factors such as option for attendance, trainer quality, pre-training determinants and post-training determinants were found to be related to transfer of training in different levels. In the final section, factors of work environment have strong influence to transfer of training to most participants in the research. Peer support, supervisor/manager support, opportunity to use the



skills and continuous learning culture of the organization are all relevant to transfer of training which are in line with the last research. There are also some divergent views from individual participants that work environment do not have influence on them. All these findings provide theoretical implications for future research and meanwhile provide practical implications for HRD practitioners and managers.

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# Chapter One: Introduction

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## 1.1. Research Background

The shift in the global market towards a more competitive environment makes the companies increasingly value their competitive assets such as human capital. Employees are valued as human capital because people's knowledge and skills are inherent in the people themselves which cannot be separated in a way they can be separated from their financial or physical assets (Becker, 1962). To develop human capital, today's companies, especially those multinational corporations, have invested large amount of money and time in training (Ford, Kozlowski, Kraiger, Salas, & Teachout, 1997; Meyer & Marsick, 2003; Noe, 1986). Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) define training as "a systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, and attitudes that results in improved performance in another environment" (p.34). The definition shows that the result that training about to achieve is to improve performance in another environment outside the training classroom. This "another environment" mentioned mainly refers to work environment in this context.

The importance of corporate training can be interpreted in both individual and corporate aspects. It is considered to be beneficial to both individual employees and companies. For employees, training provides them the opportunity to gain new knowledge and skill so as to meet the needs of the new Information Age and keep up with the pace of fast-changing business world. Training also benefits employees in regards with wage growth, adult learning, and career development. On the other hand, employers consider providing training to employees is a way to up-skill employees, to retain employees, and to improve performance and communication (Rodriguez & Gregory, 2005). That is why various organizations have putting so much effort and amount of investment in delivering and developing training program. The objectives of most training programs can be stated in terms of results such as "reduced turnover, reduced costs, improved efficiency, reduction in grievances, increase in quality and quantity of production, or improved morale, which, it is hoped, will lead to some of the previously stated results" (Kirkpatrick, 1967, p. 105)

As a way for developing human capital and retaining existing employees, training usually comes in three basic functions for ordinary employees in general, besides the higher level management. First, it functions to let the newly employed employees to be familiar with the organization's goals, policies, structures, and products or service. Second, it updates employees' skills and knowledge once a new policy or new system is implemented. Third, it functions to improve the quality or effectiveness of job performance. If training is seen as a solution for performance improvement, whether the training has been conducted effectively and what affects its effectiveness of transfer are very crucial for both scholars and practitioners.

It is worthwhile to clarify the difference between "training" and "development" in this context. Though in the realm of HRD, the concepts of training and development are inter-related in some way, the dissertation focuses more on training and trainees' perception of training. It is generally defined as a "planned and systematic effort to modify or develop knowledge, skills and attitudes through learning experiences, to achieve effective performance in an activity or a range of activities"(Garavan, 1997, p. 41). In contrast to education, training has a focus on the jobs, and is completed in a shorter period of time and tends to emphasize outcomes. Training, overall, varies depending on the company. Development, on the other hand, focuses more on the individual person. Development is not confined to classroom, formal education or training, it occurs in all situations by "expending individual potential through conscious or unconscious learning process" (Garavan, 1997, p. 42). Development is what training contributes to.

#### **1.1.1. Training inefficiency**

Wexley and Latham (2002) consider that effective training has the potential to increase knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) and to enable employees to leverage their KSAs for improving the individual performance, thus enhancing the organization profits (Becker & Huselid, 1998, as cited in Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010). In the US, companies spent more than \$50 billion annually on formal training (Dolezalek, 2004). In addition, corporate training expenditure is expanding worldwide.

However, there is always disparity between the ideal theory and the reality. Employers perceived that training could directly lead to the performance improvement, but the results did not really coincide with what employers have expected. Large amounts of expenditure have been invested in training programs in either corporate or public areas, but the true yield of the expenditure has been questioned by organizations (Burke & Hutchins, 2007).

Research has shown that training does not result in change of behavior or improvement of job performance unless the newly acquired the skills and competencies are transferred into the workplace (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). Thus, it is important to discuss and explore the antecedents and consequence of transfer of training process. In the early 1980s, it was estimated that only 10 percent of training results in behavioral change (Georgenson, 1982). Moreover, a survey has shown that about 40 per cent of trainees fail to transfer the knowledge and skills immediately after the training, and only around 50 per cent of training investment have yield in performance improvement (Saks, 2002). Goldstein (1986) concluded in the research that much of the training conducted in organizations fail to transfer to the work setting and offers little value to trainers in maximizing positive transfer. The problem of training inefficiencies and difficulties in transfer of the training program has bothered the Human Resource Development (HRD) and companies' practitioners for long time. The bad performance in return on investment make the companies start to focus their attention on evaluation of transfer of training and to find out what the factors are that lead to effective transfer.

#### **1.1.2. Importance of transfer of training from trainees' perspective**

Transfer of training is a crucial part of training effectiveness, which composes of learning, transfer, generalization and maintenance (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). As one of the major training outcome, transfer of training has been well examined and researched as well as the learning factors. Transfer refers to a trainee's application to the job of what is learned in a training program. Detailed definition of transfer of training is presented and discussed in the literature review. Learning is of little use in the corporates unless it is transfer to the workplace to improve performance (Holton, Bates, Seyler & Carvalho, 1997).

For some people, mastering all the theories do not necessarily lead to the application of the knowledge and skills. Kirkpatrick (1967) suggested that people who 1). have intention to improve; 2). recognize their own weaknesses. 3). work in permissive climate; 4). have some help from someone who is interested and skilled; and 5). have an opportunity to try out the new ideas, will continue to apply their newly-acquired knowledge and skills. (p.98). Thus, individual difference is crucial in the effectiveness of transfer of training.

Based on the examination of earlier studies (Newstrom, 1984; Wexley & Latham, 1981), Baldwin and Ford (1988) developed a conceptual framework categorizing the three general groups of factors that might affect transfer of training. Since then, there have been vast numbers of studies in this area exploring the relationships between various factors and transfer of training.

There has been a trend that trainees in the training have taken a more and more important role in effectiveness of training transfer. The early 90s has witnessed a shift of research focus from training and training design to diverse trainee characteristics and work environment factors (Fecteau et al., 1995; Ford & Kraiger, 1995; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Tracey, Tannenbaum, & Kavanagh, 1995). Furthermore, studies in the recent several years have demonstrated that the role of trainee in transfer of training has been increasingly valued. Trainees are valued not only because their own motivation and characteristics are the major factors affecting transfer of training, but also because their perceptions of training and transfer of training have played an important role in transfer of training as well. More studies began to emphasize and explore trainees' perceptions in-depth using research qualitative (Nikandrou, Brinia & Bereri, 2009; Rodriguez & Gregory, 2005) compared with earlier research examining the measurements of various relationships between factors (Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas, 1992; Quinones, 1995; Saks, 2002). In our study, we value the importance of trainees' perceptions of transfer of training and taking the trend of exploring trainees' perceptions of what factors including how affect transfer of training.

## **1.2. Research significance**

There are three things that make this dissertation significant. Firstly, it focuses on the ordinary middle to lower level employees' perceptions of the training programs that they attended, and their understanding of transfer of training. Secondly, little attention has been placed on the short-term training program such as 3-day or one day program provided by the corporates, while a large of number of research has been conducted based on programs of longer time period. Thirdly, this is an empirical research based in the New Zealand context where participants work from several most popular industries, allowing an insight into the NZ context.

## **1.3. Research objectives and questions**

There are three aims that this research is trying to achieve. First of all, the research aims to explore trainees' perceptions of training program and what factors they think affect their transfer of training. Secondly, it aims to examine the consistencies between what has been studied in the past research and the findings of this dissertation. Last but not least, the research aims to explore the relevant factors which has not been explored or studied in the past research but are considered as important factors by trainees, which leads to the future research opportunities. The research question developed in order to achieve the research aim is:

*What factors do trainees perceive affect their transfer of training in the workplace and how do those factors affect their transfer in practice.*

## **1.4. Research outline**

**Chapter Two** introduces a comprehensive literature review starting with the explanation of a training evaluation model and a fundamental transfer of training model. Then, a brief history of transfer of training is introduced with the explanation and discussion of three main research streams in transfer of training: (1) the relevant theoretical models of transfer of training regarding the complex relationships among factors; (2) Past literature which explored the relationships between predictor factors from three major categories as trainee characteristics, training design and delivery and work environment and their relationships with transfer of training; (3) The recent

empirical studies or case study conducted from a wide range of countries besides the previous research done by US, UK and Canada. The three streams of research are discussed in detail. The research gap from these streams lead to these research objectives and questions.

**Chapter Three** introduces the methodology for the dissertation. The chapter is guided by a framework explaining the theoretical philosophy, research question domain, and data collection process and data analysis and coding methods. First, a comparison and contrast of the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods is presented to explain the choice of a qualitative research method in this study, with the discussion of the underlying philosophy. Second, research questions are re-stated and valid interview questions are built based on the research questions and objectives. Then, advantages of using an interview to collect data are presented and reasons and criteria of choosing the right participants are discussed. Third data coding process and analysis is discussed in order to get the most useful data for findings.

**Chapter Four** presents, summarizes and discusses the research findings from the data. The basic demographics of the research participants are presented to show who they are and what training programs they have attended. Thus, the findings are categorized into three groups according to factors of trainee characteristics, training design and delivery, and work environment. The discussion of the findings for each category follows three steps: (1) Presentation of the data; (2) Summary of the data and organizing it into actual findings; (3) Examining the consistencies and inconsistencies of the findings with the results from the past literature. Some additional findings or issues is presented and discussed in the end.

**Chapter Five** concludes with a summary of the findings developed from the data analysis in the previous chapter, highlighting the key similarities and differences of the findings from this study with the previous studies in the literature. Some key factors which affect transfer of training strongly perceived by trainees' are identified, and exploration of the in-depth findings are highlighted. It also brings out the research implication for both HRD theoretical concepts and managerial implications. Limitations of the studies are discussed and future research implications are discussed as well.

## Chapter Two: Literature Review

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### 2.1. Introduction

This literature review examines the research of transfer of training and training effectiveness in the past two decades. The objective of this review is to identify the key conceptual frameworks of transfer of training and to discuss what factors affect transfer of training that has been explored in the past. The review also aims to give the reader an overview of the research history of transfer of training and to clarify the complex relationship between transfer of training variables and training effectiveness.

The literature review was selected to provide an in-depth analysis of the most influential research in the area of transfer of training. It starts off with the explanation of training effectiveness evaluation and major training evaluation models. Definitions of transfer of training are introduced along with the most fundamental framework of transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Then the key conceptual frameworks are introduced and discussed to explain the relationships between various individual and contextual factors and transfer of training outcomes. With the classification of all the relevant transfer of training factors into three major categories (i.e. trainee characteristics, training structure and design, and work environment), the review goes on to discuss the various studies concerning the relationships between relevant factors and transfer of training outcome. The complex relationships will be examined and discussed with two approaches in mind: what factors from the three major categories affect trainees' motivation to learn and to transfer; and what factors from the three categories directly affect the transfer of training outcomes. By clarifying the relevant relationships in the past research, research gaps will be identified and discussed leading to the future research opportunities. Specific attention was given to the sources that emphasize trainee's perception influencing transfer of training. In the end, recent trends in the transfer of training area such as increasing amount of research from countries all around the world besides UK and US, cultural factors and increasing exploratory qualitative research focusing on trainee's perspective are discussed.



## **2.2. Training evaluation**

The area of training evaluation lacks in-depth research and sufficient evaluation models. It may be attributed to the fact that organizations have diverse contextual factors which is difficult to identify and measure. Thus, it is difficult to categorize and generalize to form a training evaluation model for all (Kontoghiorghes, 2001). The most popular and most widely used one till now is Kirkpatrick's training effectiveness model. In this section, we introduce two important training effectiveness evaluation model, which are Kirkpatrick's (1967) four-level taxonomy training effectiveness model and Holton (1996) training evaluation model.

### **2.2.1. Kirkpatrick's training effectiveness model**

Due to the unsatisfactory training outcomes in the past research, Kirkpatrick's (1967) has laid the foundation for examining training effectiveness. Having acknowledged that evaluation means determination of the effectiveness of a training program, Kirkpatrick (1967) built a four-level training evaluation model to examine the effectiveness of training program. The four-level taxonomy are: first, reaction (eg. how trainees feel about the program); second, learning (eg. what trainees have learnt); third, behavior (eg. whether the trainees have transferred what they've learnt to the job); and last, result (eg. Whether the training has achieved its training objectives, what are the tangible results). A test of the four indicators altogether can show whether the training has been conducted effectively or not. The model has been widely use to examine training effectiveness since then and still being very popular for corporates these days. In 1996, Philips has added another level to Kirkpatrick's (1967) four-level taxonomy and called it "the ultimate level", which explored and developed the way of calculating return on investment (ROI).

Though Kirkpatrick's (1967) includes four levels, not all of them received the same the attention (Cheng & Hampson, 2008). Moreover, not all the four levels have been equally examined while examining training effectiveness. The first two levels (reactions and learning) have been measured much more often than the other two levels (change of behavior and results) by companies since the latter two levels are more much harder to measure than the first two levels. Among the latter two levels, companies tend to measure the third level (change of behavior) than the fourth level (Blanchard, Thacker,

& Way, 2000). The reason why caused this phenomenon is that the HRD practitioners in the corporates may not be willing to find out the actual results from the training evaluation if the results shows the training is not worthy of the cost or the training is totally ineffective.

### **2.2.2. Holton's training evaluation model**

Compared to early Kirkpatrick (1967) training evaluation model, Holton (1996) built a basic conceptual evaluation of training, which has a strong emphasis on individual performance. Furthermore, Holton (1996) has criticized Kirkpatrick's (1967) model that it has not diagnosed the in-depth constructs between predictors and outcomes.

There are some difference between Kikpatrick's model and Holton's model. The first difference of Holton's model and Kirkpatrick's model is the identification of reactions as a primary outcome. The second difference is that individual performance is used instead of behaviour because it is a broader construct and a more appropriate description of HRD objectives. The third difference between the two models is the inclusion of primary and secondary influence on outcomes (Yamnill and McLean, 2001)

Knowing the importance of training effectiveness and importance of transfer of training by introducing the two training effectiveness models above, we will discuss the definition of transfer of training and several most widely cited and used transfer of training model in the next section with the most fundamental Baldwin and Ford (1988) transfer of training model as it highlights the basic theoretical framework of the study.

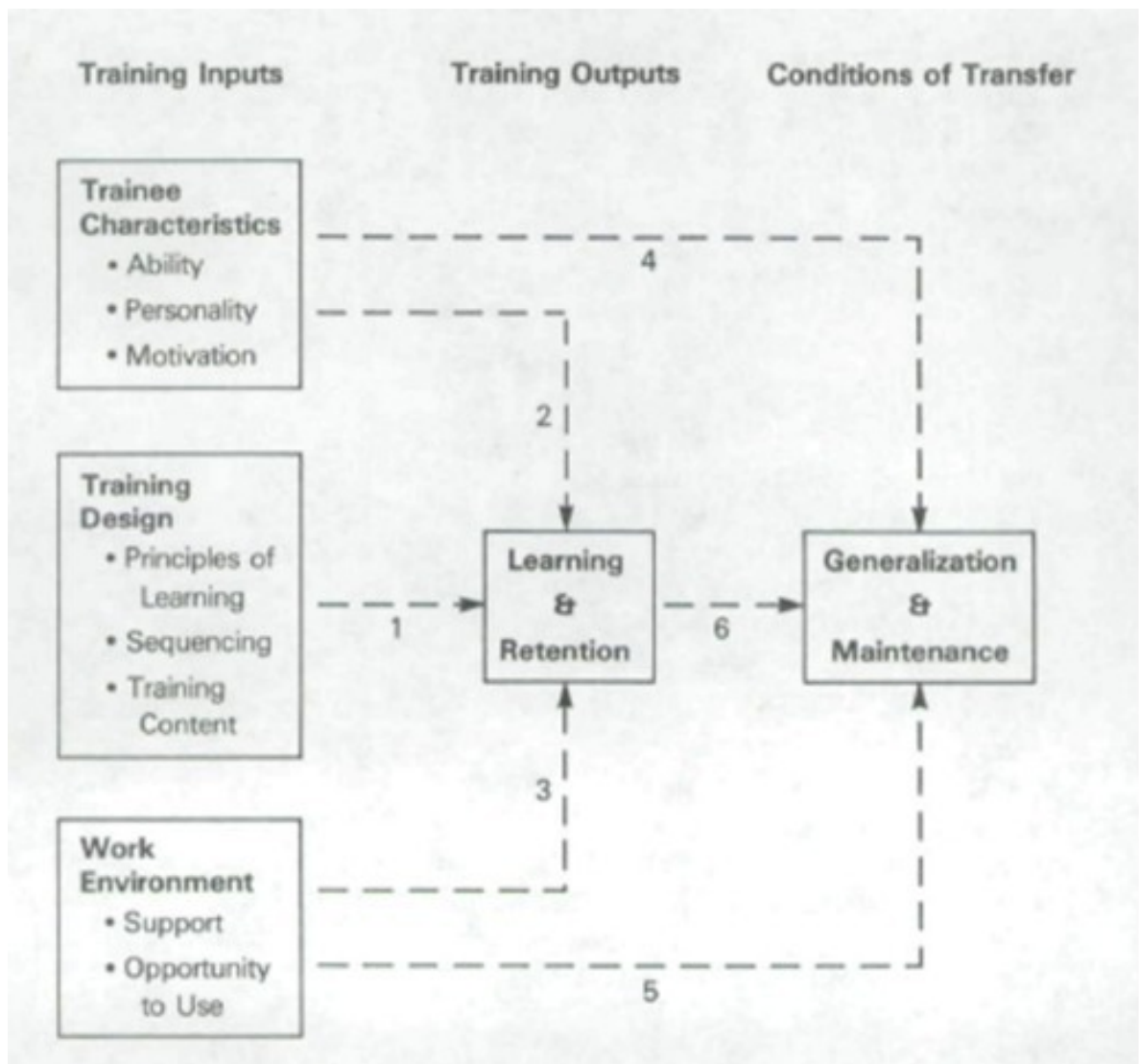
### **2.3. Definition of transfer of training**

Transfer of training has been a core issue for human resource development (HRD) researchers and practitioners. As we have explained the discussed the Kirkpatrick (1967) training evaluation model, we could see that transfer of training plays a crucial part in training effectiveness since it is consistent with the level three of evaluation, that is, the behavior change after the training (i.e. whether the trainee has applied the skills or knowledge back to the workplace). Research in the past decade has demonstrated that transfer of training is complex and involves multiple factors and influences (Noe &

Schmitt, 1986; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000; Blume et al, 2010). Transfer of training is defined as “the extent to which trainees effectively and continually apply what they have learnt in training (knowledge, skills, behaviours, cognitive strategies) to their jobs (Broad and Newstrom, 1992). The definition emphasizes the maintenance trait of transfer of training. Furthermore, in the later transfer of training literature, the definition is supported and revised by Ford and Weissbein (1997), defining transfer of training as “the application, generalizability and maintenance of newly acquired knowledge and skills”. Transfer of training is a complex process that involves multiple variables (Clarke, 2002).

Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) transfer of training model (see Figure 1) laid the foundation for the later uprising research and is the most cited model. Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) model has filled in the research gap that no previous framework had been developed and their model has made the new chapter on building a conceptual framework for transfer of training. The model categorizes the factors affecting transfer of training under three categories: (1) training input (including trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment); (2) training outputs (acquisition of knowledge and skills during training), and (3) conditions of transfer (generalization of knowledge and skills acquired in training to the job and the maintenance of that learning over time on the job).

Figure 1: Baldwin and Ford (1988) transfer of training model



(Baldwin & Ford, 1988)

Baldwin and Ford's model asserts that the effectiveness of a training intervention is contingent upon many variables. The training input consists of three groups of factors as trainee characteristics, training design and work environment. Each group has a series of factors. Baldwin and Ford (1988) proposed that all the training input factors affect learning and retention; and then directly or indirectly affect skill generalization and maintenance (Blume et al, 2010; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Their research highlights the importance of training input and examined the relationships between factors of training input and transfer of training outcome.

Baldwin & Ford's (1988) model has shown two condition of practice of transfer of training, generalization and maintenance. Maintenance is viewed as the trainee would keep the knowledge and skills for a certain period of time after the training finishes. It is important to look at the "maintenance" of the knowledge and skills since people could easily lose the knowledge and skills if they do not use them. That's one of the main reason why time and money invested in the training hardly pay back. Generalization of the new knowledge and skills means that the employee would apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills to a range of different situations outside of the training program, either in the daily work of the workplace or elsewhere in life (Adams, 1987; Nikandrou, Brinia & Bereri, 2009).

## **2.4. Brief history of transfer of training research**

The research history of transfer of training dates back to 70s and 80s. Though there are complex research streams and constructs in the field, there are three streams of the studies on transfer of training in the past two decades.

### **2.4.1. From 70s to late 80s**

Most studies (e.g. Bandura, 1982; Baumgartel, Reynolds & Pathan, 1984; Newstrom, 1984) explored relevant factors and measurements which mostly focus on training design and made effort on building systematic conceptual frameworks.

The earlier contribution of this research field were Kirkpatrick's four-level taxonomy training evaluation model and Baldwin and Ford's (1988) transfer of training model. Most research conducted in the 70s and 80s were mainly taken the view of organizations, while little attention was emphasized from the trainees' perspective. Hicks and Klimoski (1987) have pioneered the transfer of training research taken a perspective from the trainees' expectations, attitudes and decisions in selecting the training programs.

#### **2.4.2. From 90s to 2000**

During this period, a large number of research keep on exploring factors and measurements, with an increasing focus on individual characteristics, work environment. Trainee's perception started to be valued.

Research in the late 90s has focused on how work environment affect transfer of training with an emphasis on transfer climate. Research streams on identifying and examining the transfer of training factors can be categorized into two groups. One area includes the research which explores what transfer of training is and those explore what are the factors affect it. The other research area involves the measurement of relevant transfer factors (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000).

There are a series of recent studies focusing on trainee and work environment characteristics and their impacts on transfer (Baldwin, Ford, & Blume, 2009; Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Cheng & Hampson, 2008; Cheng & Ho, 2001; Yamnill & McLean, 2001).

#### **2.4.3. 2000 onwards**

Into the new millennium, there is an uprising of a series of empirical studies in order to test and to confirm the findings from the past research or to explore some missing factors affecting transfer of training which have not been explored in the past. Empirical studies from a wide range of countries besides US and UK and across a wide range of industries.

In the recent years, the development of research of transfer of training are mainly falls into two areas. One area is the increasing number of empirical research with diverse situational or cultural contexts to test and validate the relationships between various factors in the past research; whereas the other area is more exploratory studies in identifying the new factors that affect transfer of which has not been explored in the past and examine its measurement (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005), although it turns out that not many new variables were explored and identified after 2000. There is an increasing popularity to focus on trainee's perception by qualitative research. The later critics has suggested that more empirical to test the validation has yet to be developed on the basis of what affects transfer of training and the relevance between variables.

In sum, Burke and Baldwin (1999) criticized that although the research of this field has developed from focus on mostly training design to relevant factors that affect motivation to transfer; proceeding from early stage of fragmented studies to the recent stage of integrated model of development, our understanding of real transfer issues is incomplete.

## **2.5. Key theoretical frameworks**

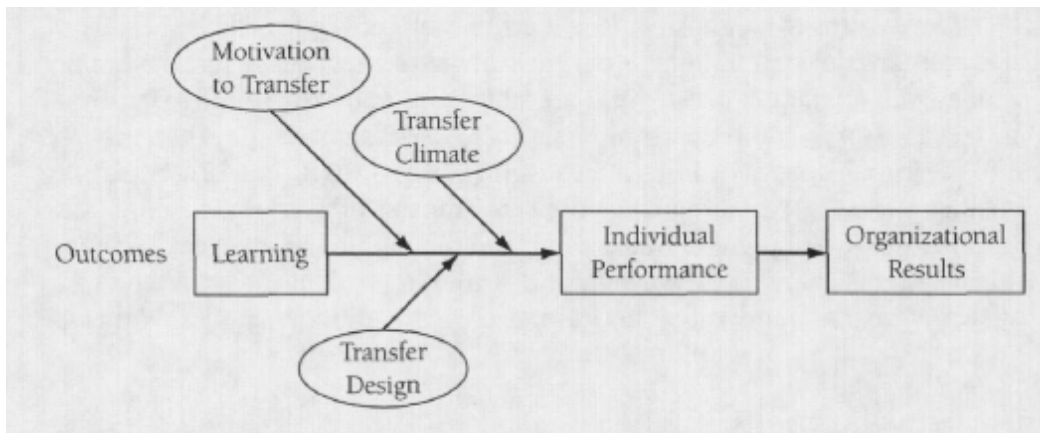
With the knowledge of brief history and research streams of transfer of training in the past literature, there are several theoretical models need to be discussed and explained. Based on Baldwin & Ford (1988) transfer of training model, a series of models have been built regarding the exploration of new relevant factors of transfer of training and more complex relationships (Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd & Kudish, 1995; Holton, 1996; Holton, Bates & Ruona, 2000; Kontoghiorghes, 2004; Mathieu, Tannenbaum & Salas, 1992).

Among all these theoretical frameworks, two of the conceptual frameworks need to be discussed. One is Holton's (2000) training evaluation model, while the other is Kontoghiorghes (2004) systematic model of transfer of training. Based on Baldwin and Ford (1988) model of transfer of training, both of these models diagnose the convergence of relevant factors and their relationships with transfer of training by using empirical studies to examine the validation. However, there are some differences between these two models discussed below.

### **2.5.1. Holton et al. (2000) LTSI**

Based on the research of 1616 participants from a wide range of organizations, Holton, Bates and Ruona (2000) has developed a learning transfer system inventory LTSI synthesizing both what affect training transfer and the measurement of transfer factors. It was developed from Holton (1996) model of factors affecting transfer of training (see Figure 2), which identified that motivation to transfer, transfer design and transfer climate affect the relationship between learning and individual performance.

Figure 2: Holton's factors affecting transfer of training

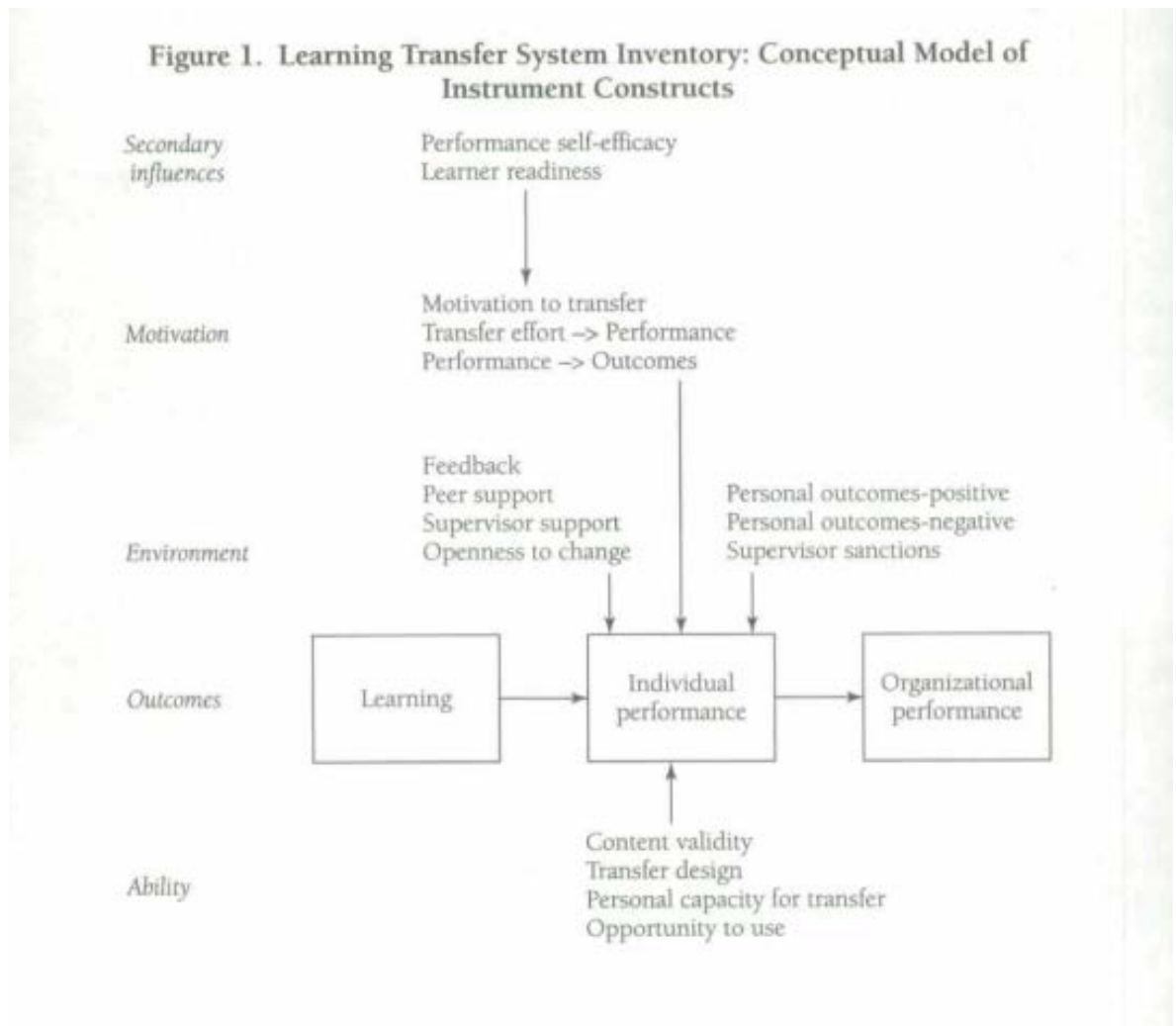


(Holton, 1996)

Based on the above theoretical model, Holton et al. (2000) identified sixteen most relevant transfer system constructs in their LTSI under the categories of motivation to transfer, transfer design and transfer climate. In the model (see Figure 3), factors of motivation (i.e. motivation to transfer, transfer effort leading to outcomes), ability (i.e. content validity, transfer design, personal capacity, and opportunity to use) and environment (i.e. feedback, peer/supervisor support, openness to change) affect the relationship between learning and individual performance.



Figure 3: Learning Transfer System Inventory



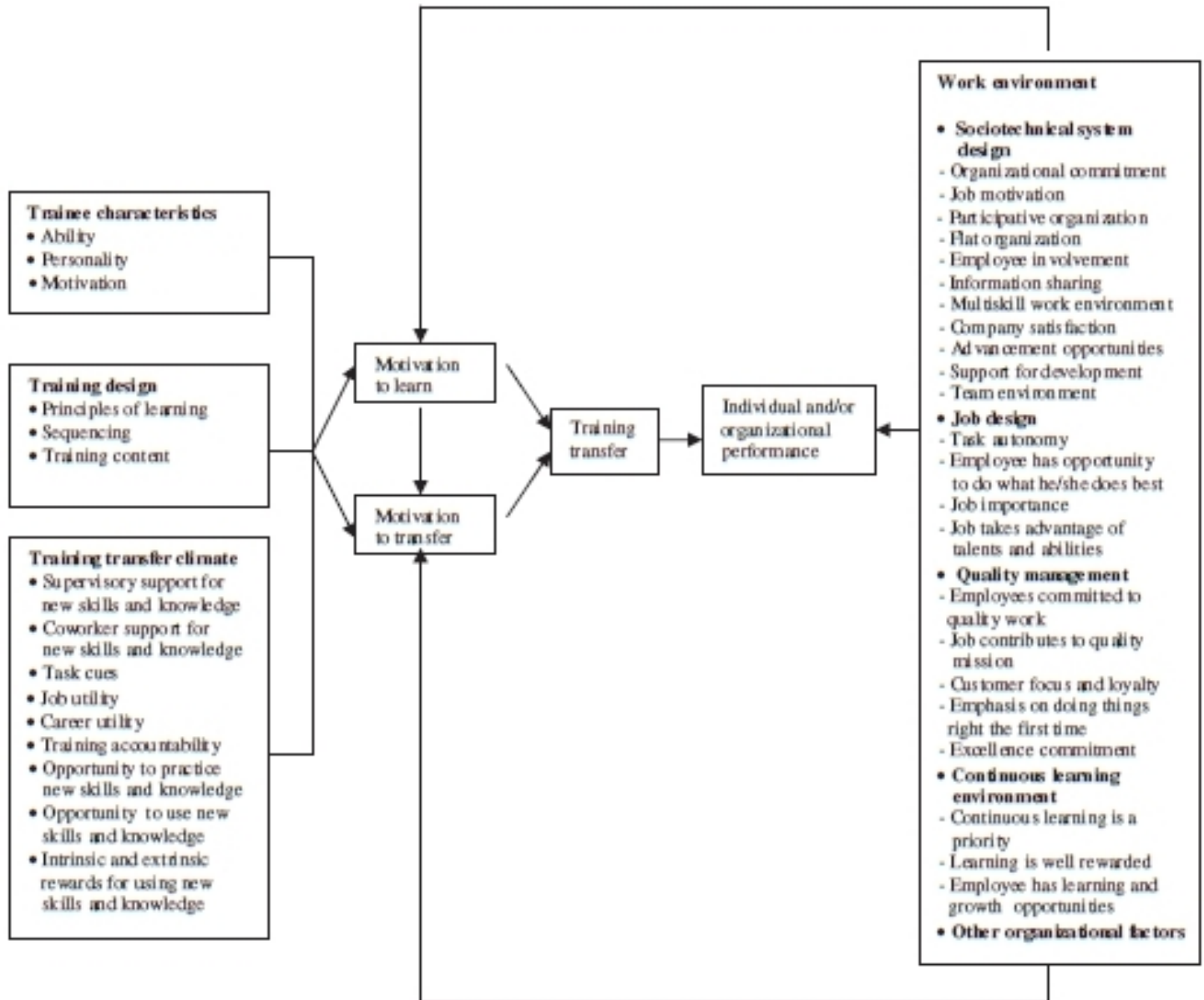
(Holton et al., 2000)

They have identified and incorporated some new constructs which has been under-researched in the past literature, such as performance self-efficacy (Gist, 1986), expectancy-related constructs (transfer effort-performance and performance-outcomes), personal capacity for transfer, feedback-performance coaching, learner readiness (Knowles, Holton, and Swanson, 1998) and general motivation to transfer (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000). Another point to note is that Holton (2000) identified the relationship between secondary influence such as trainee self-efficacy and trainee motivation. In all, the relationships between the factors have been examined by using past theoretical and empirical findings.

### **2.5.2. Kontoghiorghes (2004) systematic framework**

There are three points that need to be focused on while comparing Kontoghiorghes' model (2004) (see Figure 4) with Holton et al. (2000) model (Figure 3). First, Kontoghiorghes keep the motivation (i.e. motivation to learn and motivation to transfer) as the core and mediating factors linking the predicting individual and situational constructs. Holton, Bates and Ruona (2000) identified motivation as a predictor factor leading to transfer of training and individual performance. They considered secondary influences such as trainee self-efficacy affects motivation to transfer. Kontoghiorghes (2004), however, take transfer of training outcome as distal outcome, while taking motivation to learn and motivation to transfer as proximal outcome. Second, Kontoghiorghes (2004) spilt the environmental factors into transfer climate factors and work environment factors, both of which directly affect trainee motivation to learn and to transfer. However, work environment factors also directly affect individual performance. Three, Holton et al. (2000) did not distinguish between motivation to learn and motivation to transfer; while Kontoghiorghes (2004) took a further step, dividing training motivation into motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. not only distinguish between motivation to learn and to transfer. Moreover, he also identified a relationship between motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. He believes that motivation to learn leads to motivation to transfer.

Figure 4:Kontoghiorghes (2004) systematic model of transfer of training



(Kontoghiorghes, 2004)

Kontoghiorghes' (2004) model is used as guideline for explanation and discussion the various complex constructs and relationships between variables that I would like to unfold in the later literature review, in order to compare the consistencies between trainee's perception about factors and transfer of training and what has been studied in the past. Holton et al. (2000) model is presented in comparison with Kontoghiorghes' (2004) to illustrate various constructs in the field. It is also presented to show that different researchers have different constructs and positions of motivation. Detailed constructs between predictor factors from three categories and training motivation and transfer of training will be explored and discussed in the later literature review.

In this section, I presented Holton (2000) Learning Transfer System Inventory which is developed based on his factors affecting transfer of training model (1996) and Kontoghiorghies (2004) systematic model of transfer of training. Both of these two models were developed on the basis of Baldwin and Ford (1988) transfer of training model. Both have shown the relationships between various factors and transfer of training outcomes. Differences between the models were highlighted as well. Whilst Holton (2000) LTSI has listed sixteen relevant factors, Kontoghiorghies (2004) model emphasized the more complex and comprehensive relationships between factors. Moreover, while Holton (2000) just take training motivation as one factor under trainee characteristics, Kontoghiorghies (2004) has taken motivation to learn and motivation to transfer as a mediator linking predictor factors and training outcomes. In the next section, we will the relationships of various factors and transfer of training outcomes with the categorization of factors of trainee characteristics, training design and delivery and work environment respectively.

## **2.6. Factors of Trainee characteristics**

Identifying the factors of individual trainee characteristics affecting effectiveness of transfer of training and how the factors affect training transfer is an crucial part of understanding how trainees think about the those relevant factors. A large number of researches have focused on relevant factors and constructs based on Baldwin and Ford's (1988) model in the 90s. Popular variables of trainee characteristics or individual variables which have been identified and examined in the past research are cognitive ability, self-efficacy, locus of control, motivation, perceived job utility and career utility, etc (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al., 2010; Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Cheng & Ho, 2001; Colquitt et al., 2001; Holton et al., 2000)

In this section, to make the explanation and discussion between variables clear and easy, variables of trainee characteristics can be divided into two groups. One is psychological and ability related factors (i.e. cognitive ability, personality, self-efficacy, and locus of control), while the other is motivation related (i.e. motivation, perceived utility and career utility).

### **2.6.1. Training Motivation**

Motivation is a very crucial factor that drives people's decision and behaviour. It is a psychological process that gives human behaviour a purpose or direction (Kreitner, 1995, in Blackburn, 2009, p. 15). As a key factor in the research area of transfer of training, training motivation was under-researched in the 80s, but there was an uprising of research in the training motivation area starting in the early 90s and has still been a very popular factor (Colquitt et al., 2000; Holton, 1996; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992).

The definitions of motivation vary depending on the contextual situations. For the purpose of this dissertation, the term motivation is defined as a desire or purpose that drives individuals to accomplish a personal or organizational goal (Blackburn, 2009, p.15). Based on the study of Kanfer (1991), Colquitt, LePine and Noe (2000) training motivation is defined as "the direction, intensity, and persistence of learning-directed behaviour in training contexts" (p.678).Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992) define training motivation in the same way, emphasizing the intensity and persistence of efforts. These

definitions all highlight the importance of motivation in predicting individual's behaviour in training.

### 1. Distinction of training motivation

*Training motivation and motivation to transfer* --- Trainee's motivation in training in some literature is divided into two parts, motivation to learn and motivation to transfer (Kontoghiorghes, 2004), while in others they just use training motivation. For example, in Holton et al. (2000) LTSI, motivation to transfer is a major predictor factor that affects transfer of training (see Figure 3). However, in Kontoghiorghes (2004), both motivation to learn and motivation to transfer are the key factors linking the relationship between various predictor factors and transfer of training outcomes. Plus, they proposed that motivation to learn leads to motivation to transfer. Motivation to transfer is described as trainees' desire to use the knowledge and skills mastered in the training program on the job (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Behavioral change will likely to occur for trainees who learn the material presented in training and desire to apply that new knowledge or skills to work activities. Based on their empirical study, Axtell, Maitlis, & Yearta claim (1997) that motivation to transfer is a significant predictor of positive transfer, while most of the studies have focused on examining motivation to transfer as an outcome variable that is affected by motivation to learn (Kontoghiorghes, 2004)

*Training motivation and Pre-training motivation* ---- In some studies, pre-training motivation is used instead of training motivation since they believe pre-training motivation is the most influential one among the period before, during, and after training (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005). Fecteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, and Kudish (1995) proposed the positive relationship between pre-training motivation and transfer of training. Chiaburu and Marinova (2005) have identified the relationships between training factors and the pre-training motivation. Based on their research using 186 employees from one work organization, they identified three factors have strong connection with pre-training motivation. They found that peer support, mastery-approach goal orientation and training self-efficacy have strongly related to pre-training motivation. Moreover, peer support could directly affect skill transfer, while mastery-approach goal orientation and training self-efficacy have indirect influence on skill transfer. Pre-training motivation itself is a direct factor affecting skill transfer. On the

other hand, factors such as supervisor support could have negative effect on skill transfer.

## 2. Relevant constructs of motivation

The research of motivation in the area of transfer of training can be divided into three categories. The first category is research about the direct relationship between motivation and transfer of training (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Noe & Schmitt, 1986; Trefz, 1991). The second category is about the relationships between predictor factors such as personality and locus of control and motivation (Axtell et al., 1997; Bandura, 1982; Fecteau et al., 1995; Gist, 1989). It has been increasingly recognized that training motivation can be influenced by both individual and situational characteristics (Mathieu & Martineau, 1997; Noe, 1986). The third category is about the relationship between other factors and transfer of training with motivation as moderating factor (Holton et al., 2000; Kontoghiorghes, 2004; Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005).

*Category 1: training motivation and transfer of training outcome ----* There is lots of literature that examined the relationship between training motivation and transfer of training outcome in the past decade. Chiaburu and Marinova (2005) suggested a positive relationship between pre-training motivation and skill acquisition. Noe and Schmitt (1986) noted a relationship between pre-training motivation and training outcomes, which are also supported by subsequent empirical research as Fecteau et al., 1995; Mathieu et al., 1992; Tracey et al., 2001)

*Category 2: individual factors, situational factors and training motivation ----* Various individual factors such as locus of control and self-efficacy have influence on training motivation, while various situational factors such as social support and transfer climate have influence on training motivation as well. Various constructs will be discussed below in detail while discussing each factor.

*Category 3: training motivation as a mediating factor ----* In Holton's (1996) model (Figure 2), "motivation to transfer" is one of the three key factors influencing the transfer of training along with transfer climate and transfer design. In Holton's LTSTI (2000) (Figure 3), motivation to transfer is a factor that directly affects "individual

performance” along with environment and ability. In Holton’s revised LTSI (2005), motivation to transfer has received more attention and has occupied more emphasis. In comparison between the Holton’s LTSI model (2000) and Holton’s revised LTSI (2005), there are more complex connections with “motivation to transfer”. Holton has developed “secondary influences” in the revised LTSI model to include personality traits, job attitudes and personal self-efficacy and learner readiness, which have directly influence on “motivation to improve work through learning”. Moreover, another motivation, “expected utility/return on investment”, also affect the “motivation to improve work through learning” in the model. In Kontoghiorghes’ (2004) (See Figure 4) conceptual framework of traditional learning transfer research, “motivation to learn” and “motivation to transfer” are the centre of the training transfer process. They are affected by trainee characteristics, training design, and training transfer climate and in turn, affect training transfer. Moreover, motivation to learn also affects motivation to transfer. Kontoghiorghes has developed a new model based on this traditional conceptual framework, with “work environment” influencing on both “motivation to learn” and “motivation to transfer”. The detailed relationships between predictor factors and the training outcome with motivations as a mediating factor would be discussed below with each individual factors.

### **2.6.2. Perceived job and career utility**

Perceived job and career utility are perception-oriented trainee characteristics. Both share the similar influence on trainees. Perceived job utility is more inclined to focus on the job itself, whilst the perceived career utility is more about trainee’s perception of transfer of training in career development and career exploration.

#### **1. Perceived job utility**

Perceived job utility refers to how trainee thinks the training is useful for the job that they are doing. More precisely, Clark, Dobbins and Ladd (1993) defined job utility as “the perceived usefulness of the training course to facilitate goals associated with



current job, such as increased productivity, reduced errors or better problem solving skills” (p. 294).

A series of research have been done suggesting the positive relationships between perceived job utility and transfer of training (Axtell et al., 1997; Baumgartel, Reynolds & Pathan, 1984; Clark et al., 1993). Clark et al. (1993) has examined that job utility is a significant predictor of training motivation. Thus, job utility predicts both the training motivation and transfer of training. The more the trainee thinks the training is useful for the job that he or she is doing, the more he or she is likely to learn it and apply it back to the work. The finding is also supported by Lim and Morris (2006) study of 181 Korean employees who completed a 3-day short term program. They found that that trainee’s immediate training needs affect significantly their perceived transfer of training. However, some studies have not found the significance relationship between job utility and training motivation or transfer of training. For example, Ruona et al. (2002) reported that learner reaction and predicted learning transfer, but as the predictor that has the least power.

In which case that trainee would value the job-related usefulness of a training program? There are several factors that affect trainee perceive job utility. First, decision involvement has been explored to be highly relevant to job utility (Clark et al., 1993). If the trainee is involved in a training program, the more effort that he or she put in the training input, the more he or she would perceive the training is useful for the current job.

Second, decision-maker credibility affects trainee’s perception of job utility. The decision-maker refers to supervisor or manager. It means that company should make efforts to ensure that supervisor or manager is aware of the training information so that he or she could better match the training to proper job requirement (Clark et al., 1993). It is beneficial to both organization and employees. Taking this step not only assist the transfer of training and to improve performance, but also helps employee to reach their career goals.

Third, according to Kontoghioghes (2004) and Colquitt et al. (2000) that transfer climate has strong influence on trainee characteristics; anticipated supervisor manager's feedback has an influence on trainee's job utility. The trainee has to believe that manager or supervisor would give valid feedback to support the transfer of training. If not, trainee's perception of job utility is degraded and that demotivates the transfer of training.

## 2. Perceived career utility

Career utility is "perceived usefulness of training for attainment of career goals, such as getting a raise or a promotion, or taking a more fulfilling job" (Clark et al., 1993, p.294). The influence of perceived career utility on trainee's transfer of training works the similar way as perceived job utility. Career utility is examined to be a significant predictor for training motivation (Clark et al., 1993).

Similar to job utility, the factors that affected job utility which has been discussed above, also affect career utility. Since job utility and career utility are related, decision involvement, decision-maker credibility, and anticipated supervisor transfer climate also affect career utility.

Apart from the similarities, there are some differences. Perceived career utility is more related to career planning and career exploration. Career planning means the planning that trainees created to develop their career or specific plans for achieving their goals. Career exploration refers to "the degree of career values and skill-assessment activity" (Burke & Hutchins, 2008, p. 270). Studies have shown that there is a correlation of .30 for career planning and transfer of training. For career exploration, the correlation is 0.22 (Colquitt et al. 2000). Thus, the theoretical findings show that perceived career utility by trainees are strongly related to transfer of training. Besides, the empirical studies have also shown the positive relationships. Based on their empirical studies, Clark et al. (1993) and Nikandrou et al. (2009) have found that high

career utility perceived by the trainees relates to their motivation. Moreover, Fecteau et al. (1995) also found the positive relationships between career exploration and transfer as well as career planning and transfer. Thus, it shows that if the training is perceived as useful for the career, the trainee is more motivated to transfer.

### **2.6.3. Psychological and ability oriented characteristics**

#### **1. cognitive ability**

The relationship between cognitive ability as a crucial part of individual characteristics and the effectiveness of learning has always been a popular in the psychology of learning area prior to the form of systematic conceptual framework developed by Baldwin and Ford (1988). The reason why cognitive ability has been a key factor affecting transfer of training and has been well-researched is that people's capacity in processing the absorbing information indicate individual learning outcome. Thus, differences of individual in cognitive ability indicate the individual difference in learning (Jensen, 1998, as cited in Colquitt et al., 2000).

There were numerous researches investigating the role of cognitive ability in predicting individual difference in learning and performance between cognitive ability and transfer of training (Ghiselli, 1966; Hunter, 1986). Hunter (1986) has suggested that large amount of research has showed a positive relationship between cognitive ability and transfer of training. Kanfer and Ackerman (1989) have supported the view that cognitive ability exerts influence on trainee performance due to its effect on attentional resource capacity. Trainee's ability of transfer of training is reflected in their level of ability to identify the situation where they could apply and generalize the skills and knowledge into their daily work.

Most studies of cognitive ability and transfer of training were developed in the 80s or earlier. The more recent work, Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999) have identified two aspects of individual's ability towards transfer of training, which are knowledge acquisition and situation identification. And they found that ability to transfer of

training is positively related to the level of knowledge acquisition from the training and the trainee's expertise in identifying situations requiring the new skills.

## 2. Personality

Like cognitive ability, personality has also been a key indicator for job performance and training outcome (Herold, Davis, Fedor, & Parsons, 2002; Kanfer & Ackerman, 1989; Silver, Mitchell, & Gist, 1995). As Burke and Hutchins (2007) put it, "certain personality constructs are consistently predictive of important job-related criteria" (p. 268). In the context of transfer of training, personality is also a key predictor for training motivation and transfer of training outcome as part of trainee characteristics (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Barrick & Mount, 1993; Machin & Fogarty, 2004; ). Some of the personality traits have positive effect on transfer, while some others would exert negative influence on transfer.

It is necessary to explain the "Big Five" personality indicators while discussing the relationship between training motivation and transfer of training. The five-factor taxonomy, also known as the "Big Five" factors (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & Costa, 1985; Norman, 1963, as cited in Barrick & Mount, 1993) are:

(a). Extraversion (e.g., sociable, talkative, and assertive); (b). Agreeableness (e.g., good-natured, cooperative, and trusting); (c). Conscientiousness (e.g., responsible, dependable, persistent, and achievement oriented); (d) Emotional Stability (viewed from the negative pole; tense, insecure, and nervous) (e) Openness to Experience (e.g., imaginative, artistically sensitive, and intellectual).

Among the Five personality factors, conscientiousness and extroversion are examined to be the most related factors to transfer behaviour (Ackerman et al., 1995; Barrick & Mount, 1993; Silver et al., 1995). Conscientiousness, which refers to individual's level of responsibility, persistence, achievement and dependability, is found to be a valid predictor for all trainees regardless of their occupational groups and job types, according to the examination by the research conducted by Barrick and Mount (1991) and Hough et al. (1990). Individuals with higher level of conscientiousness have greater motivation in the training and are more confident in their ability to learn and to transfer. However, some other scholars opposed the view and suggested that conscientiousness

does not have impact on all the training outcomes. Furthermore, they believe that the positive relationship between conscientiousness and transfer of training to some extent depends on moderating factors.

Some other studies have pointed out that the relationship between conscientiousness and transfer of training can be further studied and explored (Herold, et al., 2002). The components of conscientiousness such as persistence (i.e. preserve to learn and to transfer) and sense of achievement (i.e. desire to achieve certain training goal or outcome) are more influential factors than the others. These factors can be explored and studied separately in detail. Desire to achievement can also be counted as a source for training motivation, which is another crucial factor for effective transfer of training (Cheng & Ho, 2001, Colquitt et al., 2000). Extroversion, another key personality factor, also influences trainee's motivation to improve the work performance through learning and application.

Compared with conscientiousness and extroversion, emotional stability and openness to experience received less attention and measured to have rather lower correlation with transfer training. Anxiety, as one negative factor of emotional stability, has been measured and proved to produce negative relationship with training outcomes (Colquitt et al., 2000). It demotivates trainee's intention to transfer (Webster & Martocchio, 1993). The research has also shown if the individual is more likely to feel negative emotions towards things, he or she tend to less likely to transfer (Machin & Fogarty, 2004). On the contrary, trainees with high level of positive affectivity (i.e. dispositional tendency to have positive feelings towards things) have higher level of motivation to transfer (Naquin & Holton, 2002). Research has shown that since individuals have higher positive affectivity have better ability in focusing on training tasks and lower level of mental distraction, thus leading to the better performance in learning and transfer (Naquin & Holton, 2002). Thus, among all the aspects of personality, conscientiousness and extraversion are significantly related to job performance.

### 3. Self- efficacy

The research of the relationship between self-efficacy and transfer of training has been quite popular starting in the late 80s. Self-efficacy is defined as "people's judgements of

their capabilities to organise and execute courses of action required attaining designated types of performance” (Bandura, 1982, p. 391). Individual with higher level of self-efficacy, which makes him believe that he has the ability to do things, is considered to have higher motivation to transfer. Quinone (1995) suggests that self-efficacy is positively related to pre-training motivation. Other studies have shown that self-efficacy also has positive influence on transfer of training outcome (Gist, 1989; Gist et al., 1989). Furthermore, the influence of self-efficacy permeates throughout the whole training process. It also positively related to post-training behaviours and the maintenance of skills (Gist, 1989; Mathieu et al., 1992; Gist & Stevens, 1990; Tannenbaum et al., 1991)

#### 4. Locus of control

Locus of control is “the extent to which an individual is apt to make internal or external attributions regarding work outcomes” (Noe and Schmitt, 1986, as cited in Trefz, 1991, p. 18). It is an inherent personality. It means that to what extent that individual perceives whether they have the confidence in charge of destiny such as success or failure.

Locus of control divides into internal control and external control. People who have an internal locus of control tend to believe that they have the confidence and ability to be in charge the event in his or her life, while those to have external locus of control are more likely to believe that the life was controlled by external forces rather than themselves. The difference of having an internal locus of control and an external locus of control is the “belief about whether the outcomes of our actions are contingent on what we do (internal control orientation) or on events outside our personal control (external control orientation).” (Zimbardo, 1985, p. 275)

People has high internal locus of control have better control of their own behavior and believe that the efforts would result in outcome. Moreover, people with high internal locus of control are more likely to influence other than those with high external locus of control. Trefz (1991) points out that locus of control area stable personality traits that may affect individual motivation and ability to learn. His research found that 81 % of the trainee managers in his research have shown internal locus of control. His study has validities some of the earlier research which examined the relationship between locus of

control and effectiveness of transfer of training. For example, the finding of the research conducted by Baumgartel, Reynolds, and Pathan (1984) has supported the concept that locus of control is significantly related to individuals effort in applying the knowledge and skills. This finding was also supported and validated by Silver et al. (1995).

Though locus of control is a predictor factor that affects transfer of transfer, trainee himself usually could not examine his level of locus of control or how his locus of control would affect his efforts in application and transfer of training. Since it is a stable personality trait, it is hard to be changed by the situational and contextual factors.

In Sum, the four psychological and ability-oriented trainee characteristics have related to transfer of training and to some extent, are significant factors predicting transfer effectiveness. However, this category of ability and psychological related factors are not closely related to my research questions since they are inherent ability and traits which are hard to change in a short-period of time although these are very important factors in the constructs of transfer of training. Moreover, since the research aims to find out trainees' perception on transfer of training and the various factors affecting transfer outcome, it focus on their opinions towards the training and relevant factors rather than focus on their own inherent traits.

## **2.7. Factors of Training design and delivery**

The second category of transfer of training factors is training design and delivery. Some of the studies have emphasized on the training design and training content (Driskell, Willis & Copper, 1992; Arthur, Bennett, Edens & Bell, 2003). Baldwin and Ford (1988) have stressed the importance of training design in their fundamental work and identified some design issues such as sequencing and the relevance of training content (p. 68). Training design includes creating a learning environment, applying theories to transfer and using self-management strategies to enhance learning retention (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume et al, 2010; Holton et al, 2000; Velada et al, 2007; Huint & Saks, 2003; Gaudine & Saks, 2004)

Factors of training design and structure includes content relevance, trainee's choice of attendance, role of trainer, pre-training and post-training determinants, and training materials (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Holton, 1995; Holton, 2000; Blume et al., 2010 ). A good combination of these factors leads to effective transfer of training.

### **2.7.1. Content relevance**

Based on the concept of identical elements proposed by Baldwin & Ford (1988) as one of the four design principles, content relevance is a key factor of training design and delivery that affect transfer of training. Good training requires that design of the training is consistent with what is required to do in the transfer setting (Thorndike & Woodworth, 1901, as cited in Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Thus, to conduct an effective training, the training program must be relevant to the job (Axtell et al., 1997; Kontoghiorghes, 2002; Rouiller& Goldstein, 1993).

Identical elements theory which was proposed by Thorndike and Woodworth (1901) laid the theoretical foundation for content relevance, which is one of the mostly important and most research factor of training design and delivery (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Yamnill and McLean (2001) believe that “if the task is identical in both training and transfer, trainees are simply practicing the final task during training and there should be high positive transfer”. Moreover, the other underlying theory of content



relevance is principle theory proposed by Goldstein (1986). It suggests that training should focus on general principles which can be generalized and applied to various contexts.

Transfer can be divided into far transfer and near transfer depending on the content relevance between what is learnt in the training and what is expected to apply in the workplace (Laker, 1990). Near transfer refers to the application of the learning to the situation where it is similar to which the initial learning has taken place, while the far transfer means that it is not so similar to the initial learning events.

Yamhill and McLean (2001) suggest that identical element theory influences the acquisition of near transfer, while principles theory explains the far transfer. Furthermore, achieving near transfer should be the objectives of short-term skill training program which require trainee can immediately apply the skills into work. It also works more effectively on technical training (Laker, 1990), because the technical training focus on more specified behaviors and procedures which can be applied directly to trainee's current job. The more specific skills that the training contains, the more successful the new transfer is (Clark & Voogel, 1985).

Far transfer, on the other hand, is more suitable to be the objectives of generalized skills which can be practiced in various contexts. The more the trainee practices the skills in different contexts, the more successful the far transfer is (Goldstein, 1986). Far transfer is usually achieved for soft skill training programs or management development program which requires high level of soft-skills.

Some other studies imply that the content of the training program would be effective if it emphasize both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills (Gauld & Miller, 2004). Moreover, if the trainee understands the underlying principles and concepts of the skills, he or she is more likely to transfer. Even though there is close content relevance; the

transfer may not occur or will not be effective if the trainee does not understand the relationship between training content and work practice (Bates et al., 1997)

### **2.7.2. Mandatory or voluntary**

Option to attend training is a relevant factor in transfer delivery. Big corporates offer a wide range of training program, some of which are mandatory while others are voluntary. Whether the training program is mandatory or voluntary will affect the trainee's motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. Research has shown that if the training program is voluntary, employees have more pre-training motivation and post-training motivation to use the knowledge they gained in the training program (Tharenou, 2001).

On the other side, Fecteau et al. (1995) and Hansen (2001) have suggest that if the training is compliance, which means that it is to some extent mandated by the corporates, trainees' motivation would decrease. Baldwin, Magjuka and Loher (1991) have taken a slight different perspective. Rather than discussing the positive or negative relationships between voluntarism/compliance and transfer of training motivation, they believe that if the trainee is willing to attend the training program, there is a positive motivation regardless of whether the program is mandatory or voluntary. In this sense, they take the initiative to take the training program provided by the company, thus they are more likely to learn and use the knowledge and skills. Nikandrou et al. (2009) have supported this view with their empirical study.

### **2.7.3. Role of Trainer**

Trainer is the key of training program since it is the trainer who delivers the information to the trainees. Corporates pay large amounts of expenditure on hiring qualified and skilled trainers to convey training program. Qualified trainer should possess certain characteristics. Gauld and Miller (2004) propose that qualified trainer should possess two essential characteristics, which are reliability and effectiveness. The trainer himself must be reliable to build trustful relationship with trainees and he has to be effective in conducting the program and in delivering the information. Role of trainer quality has

been under researched since trainer has been seen as a part of the training design and delivery rather than an important stakeholder of the transfer of training process.

#### **2.7.4. Pre-training activities**

##### **1. Pre-training needs analysis and assessment**

Burke and Hutchins (2008) suggest that appropriate pre-training needs analysis can be useful for transfer of training. However, they claimed that there is a shortage of empirical studies linking pre-training needs assessment to transfer outcome. There are some studies in the past demonstrating the importance of pre-training needs assessment and some studies providing the conceptual support. However, there is not many studies that have examined the relationship between pre-training needs assessment and transfer of training. The low percentage of studies in this area cannot show the corporates are using needs analysis as a predictor for transfer of training.

However, trainees seem to value the importance of pre-training needs analysis more than the corporates. Hicks and Klimoski (1987) suggest that certain pre-training conditions are relevant to the training outcomes, based on their research focusing trainee attitudes towards training. They indicate that trainees are more inclined to transfer when they are informed of the content and relevant information of the training program in the pre-training period. Baldwin and Magjuka (1991) have supported this view with their empirical studies from which the data collected from 193 trainees in an engineering group. From trainee's perspective, those who receive the realistic and relevant training preview are more likely to believe that the training is appropriate for them to take. Thus, they showed more commitment to the training program (Hick & Klimoski, 1987)

##### **2. Pre-training planning and goal setting**

Pre-training planning is very important for the training success and for effective transfer (Nikandrou et al., 2009). Mager (1997, cited in Burke & Hutchins, 2008) suggested that “explicated communicated objectives can inform learners of the desired performance, the conditions under which the performance will be expected to occur on the job, and

the criterion of acceptable performance to maximize transfer” (p. 273). Setting goals can regulate the trainee’s behavior and attitudes and lead his or her action to achieve the goals. It can also motivate the individual to develop relevant strategies to for goal attainment.

There are a certain number of studies supporting the positive relationship between pre-training goal setting and training transfer. Wexley and Nemeroff (1975) found that trainees who assigned goals after a management development program achieved better application results and learning results. Cohen (1990) also supported this point that a trainee who set goals in the pre-training period has higher level of motivation when actually entered training. Lee and Pucil (1998) found significant relationships between the importance of training goals and perceived transfer of training. Kraiger, Salas, and Cannon-Bowers (1995) found that transfer turns out to be more effective if the trainee have set goals in the pre-training period.

## **2.8. Factors of work environment**

Influences of work environment on transfer of training started to receive attention in the early 90s. Work environment in general has strong relationship with transfer of training (Cheng & Hampson, 2008). The previous literature have also discussed influence of factors of work environment in two approaches: the influences of work environment on the proximal factor of training motivation and the influences work environment on the distal factor of transfer of training outcome (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Burke, Holly & Hutchins, 2008; Cohen, 1990; Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Facticeau, et al., 1995; Tracey, et al., 1995; ).

Different studies include diverse factors under the category of work environment. Some believe that those factors of work environment include social support (e.g. peer support, manager or supervisor support and subordinate support) and transfer climate (e.g. opportunities to use the knowledge and skills, organizational culture and continuous learning culture within the organization) (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Meanwhile, some studies combine social support under the category of transfer climate (Holton et al., 1997). There are also studies indicating the transfer climate is about trainee's perception of the psychological cues. Thus, transfer climate is a special factor in work environment.

In addition, some other studies have explored relevant factors outside social support and transfer climate. Based on empirical studies, Baldwin and Magjuka (1991) found three major aspects of work environment that influences trainee intentions to apply. First, they found that when trainees receive relevant information about the training program, they are more motivated to transfer. Second, trainees have higher intentions to transfer if they feel they have accountability for learning. Third, when perceived training as mandatory, trainees have higher motivation to transfer the skills and knowledge.

In this section, we will first discuss transfer climate after discussing the relationship between transfer of training and work environment factors in general. Later, relevant

work environment factors such as peer and manager support, opportunity to perform and organizational continuous learning culture, will be discussed.

### **2.8.1. Organizational Transfer climate**

Transfer climate refers to the “situations and consequences in the corporates that might inhibit or facilitate the use of what has been learnt in training back on the job” (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993, cited by Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Schneider (1990) suggests that transfer climate is more about trainee’s perception of the organizational contexts. Thus, in this case, transfer climate can be interpreted as trainees’ perception of various work environment factors such as social support and opportunity to use the skills and knowledge. Taken a slightly different view, Holton et al. (1997) noted that work environment can affect transfer of training through the transfer climate. They suggested that transfer climate is a mediating factor that links between organizational contexts and individual’s attitude toward the job the behaviour on the job (p. 96).

People interpreted transfer climate differently. It is not the work environment per se. Some interpreted it as a “psychologically meaningful description of the work environment” (James and Jones, 1976), while others see it as the “interpretative or perceptual medium through which the work environment affects job attitudes and behaviours”.

Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) examined the relationship between organizational transfer climate and transfer of training and found positive relationship between two. The relationships between transfer climate and training outcomes have come in two approaches. One approach is that transfer climate directly relates to training outcome (Lim & Morris, 2006; Mathieu et al., 1992; Tracey et al., 1995), while the other approach is that transfer climate functions as a moderator factor between individual and situational factors and training outcome (Burke & Baldwin, 1999).

The previous studies have shown that transfer climate has positive relationship with individual's ability and motivation to transfer (Huczynski & Lewis, 1980; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Tracey, Tannenbaum & Kavanaugh, 1995). It is found that trainee with positive perception of transfer climate is more likely to transfer the skills to the job than those who holds negative perception, according to Rickman-Hirsch's (2001) research based on a customer service skill training. Work environment as moderating effects of the relationship between post-training intervention and transfer of training. It is generally accepted in the training literature that training motivation can be influenced by both individual and situational characteristics (Noe, 1986; Tannenbaum and Yukl, 1992). Research also suggests that situational factors play an important role in influencing individual behaviour (Colquitt et al., 2000) as factors of transfer climate would affect various individual factors like training motivation (Hawley & Barnard, 2005). Empirical studies have supported the relationship between transfer climate and transfer outcome. Roullier and Goldstein (1993) supported the positive relationship between positive climates the transfer of training based on their study of transfer of managerial skills in the fast food industry. Meanwhile, Tracey et al. (1995) found that a positive organizational climate predicted the extent to which employees used trained skills on the job.

However, although there were studies indicating the positive relationships between organizational transfer climate and transfer of training, there were not many studies about what transfer climate really consists of (Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Regarding this research gap, Holton et al. (1997) have developed a conceptual framework exploring the operationalization of transfer climate constructs and what transfer climate consists of. They assumed two general types of workplace cues that might affect transfer of training. The two workplaces cues were situational cues (i.e. the cues that provide trainees with opportunity to perform back to the job) and consequence cues (i.e. the consequences that trainees encountered when they have been apply the skills and knowledge to the job). The construct of situational cues include goal cues, social cues, task cues and self-control cues. Consequences cues consist of positive feedback from the stakeholders, negative feedback, punishment and no feedback. Based on their research, Holton et al. (1997) found that these factors which can be included in transfer climate constructs, which are supervisor support, opportunity to use, peer support,

supervisor sanction and personal outcomes. Moreover, Holton et al. (1997) criticized Roullier and Goldstein's (1993) finding that transfer climate is perceived by trainees only by psychological cues such as goal cues and social cues. From their research, they found that transfer of climate is perceived by trainees also by organizational cues such as supervisor, peer, and self.

### **2.8.2. Manager / supervisor support**

Russ-Eft (2002) defined supervisor support as “providing reinforcement for learning on the job including setting goals with trainees, modelling training behaviours, and providing positive reinforcement for the use of new skills”. Earlier studies as Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Tannenbaum and Yukl (1992) have highlighted the influences of supervisory support on transfer of training. In the following decades till now, there are quite a lot past literature supports the positive relationship between manager/supervisor support with transfer of training outcome (Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005). Clarke (2002) considers the support from the managers as the most consistent factor explaining the relationship between the work environment and transfer.

In the pre-training environment, managers or supervisors play important role as well. Trainees with more supportive supervisors would have stronger beliefs that the training is useful (Cohen, 1990; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Some Supervisors and managers require trainee to write a report, fill in a survey or have an assessment after the training program to assist the effective transfer of training. It motivates the employees to be better prepared for the training and to apply what they have learnt. Supervisor/manager's support can assist or stimulate employee's confidence to learn new skills as well as use their ability to transfer the skills back to the job. Some studies have shown that supervisory behavior and support is the most importance work environment factor that affects transfer of training more than other relevant factors (Xiao, 1996). Some other studies show that supervisory support has the equal influence as peer support (Faction et al., 1995). Thus, all these studies have shown that supervisor support is closely related to training motivation to learn and to transfer as well as the transfer outcome.



Past research have shown that manager's supportive behaviours includes “ discussing new learning, participating in training, providing encouragement, and coaching to trainees about the use of new knowledge and skills on the job as salient contributors to positive transfer” (Burke & Hutchins, 2008; McSherry & Taylor, 1994; Smith-Jentsch, Salas, & Brannick, 2001).

In addition, some studies focus on manager/supervisor's participation in the training as part of support. Baldwin et al. (2000) define supervisor support as active participation, which suggested that supervisors and managers should do more than just notifying the importance of learning and transfer, but also actively involved in participation. This would set a good role model for the trainees. Examples of managers' support with active participation include setting learning and practice goals, assisting in the actual transfer and providing positive feedback. This kind of support has strong influence on trainees, as Cohen (1990) found that trainees with more supportive supervisors entered training with more positive attitudes towards the value of training.

The other reason that managers/supervisors should be involved in the training is that trainees are more motivated or more precisely, pushed to learn and to transfer under the pressure if management is involved in the training. When trainees are aware that their managers will conduct some follow up activities to assist or “test” their training outcomes, it is reported that trainees have stronger intention to transfer (Baldwin & Magjuka, 1991). Thus, concerning manager's support could lead to improved transfer of training, studies like Birdi et al. (1997) linked manager support to increased job learning, increased planning, and increased development.

### **2.8.3. Peer support**

Holton et al. (1997) and Russ-Eft (2002) define “peer support in transfer climate as the extent to which peers support the use of learning on the job”. Similar to manager support as another aspect of social support, peer support include setting learning goals,

giving assistance, or offering positive feedback. Previously, attention was mainly focused on importance of supervisor support and training transfer. With the increases in the use of teamwork on the job, attention to the importance of peer support on training transfer was emphasized these days. For example, Klink et al. (2001) discuss the importance of peer support due to the increased use of self-directed teams in many organizations.

Peer support is usually considered as a crucial part of social support along with the supervisor/manager support. Chiaburu and Marinova (2005) suggested in their study that peer support emerged as having the only significant relationship with skill transfer in the modelled relationships. Hawley and Barnard (2005) have conducted an empirical study on relationship between work environment and transfer of training, from which data was collected from HRD professionals in the nuclear power industry using interviews. The study supported that peer support influence positive transfer as an important work environment factor and that a lack of manager support may negatively impact transfer. Besides, Fecteau et al. (1995) supported that peer support has positively relates to the effectiveness of transfer of training.

Taken a different angle, Roullier and Goldstein (1993) concluded that the work environment including behaviour of colleagues was a stronger predictor of training transfer than the trainee's actual learning outcomes at the end of the training program. Bates et al. (2000) found that peer support was a significant predictor of training transfer.

Alternatively, some other literature has taken a different focus on the collective resistance to transfer of training. The effect of peer influence also show its significance regarding the aspect of group resistance to introducing new learning from training. Hastings, Sheckley, and Nichols (1995) showed that collective behaviour of work group has a strong influence on transfer of training, If the work group has strong resistance to change, it would affect individual transfer of training motivation and behaviour. This case to some extent shows that strong influence of peer effect.

#### **2.8.4. Opportunity to use**

Opportunity to use or to perform the training skills and knowledge is regarded as a very important transfer climate construct (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Wexley & Latham, 2002). Past research has explored and examined the relationships between opportunity to use and transfer of training and mostly showed positive relationships (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Lim & Morris, 2006). Clarke (2002) noted that lack of opportunity to use the skills and knowledge back on the job is the highest impediment to successful training.

There were limited literatures of the constructs of opportunity to use. It might be because opportunity to use the training skills relate to social support as supervisor and peer support and organizational opportunity. For example, Ford and Quinones (1992) obtained differently opportunities to perform trained tasks and these differences were related to supervisory attitudes.

Research has shown that skills and knowledge need to be applied and practiced immediately after training finishes. Otherwise, it is easy to lose the skills after a while. Thus, it is important to have proper opportunity to practice and to transfer immediately after the training. In general, research on training effectiveness has not taken opportunity to perform as an important factor, but there were few studies that explored the relationship between opportunity to perform and training effectiveness in-depth.

#### **2.8.5. Organizational continuous learning culture**

As discussed above in transfer climate, organizational continuous learning culture can be classified under transfer climate, since it is a perceived factor by trainees that would affect trainees' motivation or affect transfer of training outcome. Here organizational continuous learning culture is discussed in detail. It can be viewed as organizational learning climate, which relates to "individual perceptions of organizational characteristics and attribute" (Cooke & Rousseau, 1988, p.249). In some way, climate is

a reflection of culture although if precisely described, climate refers to what of an organization while culture describes the why (Kopelman, Brief & Guzzo, 1990). Thus, organizational learning culture and transfer climate are related. Senge (1990) has described a company with continuous learning culture as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together” (p.3).

There are several elements that an organizational culture consists of. Rousseau (1990) identified five layers of organizational culture: artifacts, patterns of behaviour, behavioural norms, values and fundamental assumptions. Artifacts refer to organizational symbols which provide the most salient feature of a culture (Schein, 1990). In the transfer of training context, the training itself provided by the organization is a form of artifact. Patterns of behaviour are “observable activities such as decision making, communication, and new employee socialization that reflect underlying beliefs, values, and assumptions” (Rousseau, 1990). Thus, pattern of behaviour is a manifestation of organizational culture of the collective behaviour of training activities and learning behaviour of trainees. Behavioural norms are “the beliefs of organizational members that guides action” (Rousseau, 1990). Effectiveness transfer of training needs the employees to support training and know the importance of training under same behavioural norms. However, sometimes, even if the trainees support training in general, the transfer may turn out ineffective if there is conflict between purpose and cultural norms. Bunch (2007) has suggested that training success depends on the beliefs of various including organizational leaders, supervisors, trainees, HRD manager and training facilitators. The similar cultural norms and behaviour patterns shared by these people in the organization collectively would lead to training success. Besides the above three aspects of organizational cultural, values and assumptions might be the more important factors. Organizational shared values are very important aspects that affect the effectiveness of HRM practice in the organization (Rousseau, 1990). Conflicting values would inhibit the success of training. According to Rousseau (1990), organizational values “shape the overall perception of training as an expense or an investment. Therefore, organizational culture is related to training effectiveness in various aspects.

Several empirical studies in the previous literature have supported the relationship between organizational continuous learning culture and transfer of training. For example, Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005) has supported the positive relationship between two by conducting an empirical research among 119 employees who attended the same training program examining the individual and contextual dimensions of influences on training effectiveness. In addition, Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh (1995) studied transfer of training of 104 supermarket managers of a supermarket chain. Measured the organizational transfer climate, and also developed a continuous-learning work environment, they found that transfer climate and a continuous learning culture aggregated at the group level predicted individual manager's transfer behaviour.

Blume et al. (2010) examined the relationships between work environment and transfer of training and found positive relationship. Weldy (2009) suggested that a positive relationship indicating that learning organization are more likely to create environment to assist employee's transfer of training. Linking between individual learning and organizational learning, any relationship between learning organization and transfer of training could lead to performance improvement and maximized the benefits. Thus, researchers and scholars stressed the need and importance for organization to operate as learning organization where the environment is provided for the employee to learn continuously thus achieving continuous improvements (Marquardt, 1996)

## **2.9. Other factors and recent trends**

It was not until the recent decade, there is an uprising of empirical research in transfer of training area. On the contrary, the building of Baldwin and Ford's (1988) transfer of training model was built on the empirical studies in the past. Thus, the empirical studies that have been done to identify the constructs and to examine the measurements of the constructs were there all along for the past two decades research history. However, as discussed above, there is an uprising of empirical studies in the recent decade after 2000.

These empirical researches have some differences from the empirical studies which have been done before.

First, there are an increasing number of studies digging into the in-depth perception of trainees' by using qualitative research method or a combination of qualitative and quantitative research method, compared with vast number of empirical studies to examine the measurements by using quantitative survey in the past. For example, Nikandrou et al. (2009) have done a qualitative empirical analysis on trainee perception of transfer of training. In contrast to past quantitative empirical research, they had a deep insight of trainee transfer of training motivation and relevant relationships.

Second, as situational factors that affect transfer of training have been researched vastly since 90s, the recent empirical research tend to see more and more studies focusing on one particular industry and detailed case studies. For example, Hawley & Barnard (2005) have studied the influence of work environment characteristics such as peer support and supervisory support based on their case study focusing on a nuclear power industry. It was conducted in a qualitative way doing interview with HRD professionals, in order to have rich perception information from participants' view. Another example is also a qualitative research

Third, in the earlier research history of transfer of training, most studies have been done in the US and UK, since there is large number of "big corporations" or multinational corporations in the US and UK, which offer their employees a wide range of training program to improve performance and to retain employees. In the past decade, with the development of the knowledge based and service driven economy, people's way of working has changed dramatically and we also witnessed the development of more emergent economies. There have been an increasing number of big multinational corporations raised from countries outside of US and UK, while more multinational corporations broke into diverse markets. With this trend, there is an rising number of research of transfer of training has been generated in various countries outside UK and US, such as Canada, China, Germany, Pakistan, Korean and Bhutan. It adds a touch of

diversity of cultural backgrounds to the area of transfer of training, though cultural difference in transfer is not the core issue of this dissertation.

Examples are research about job and career attitudes on learning motivation and transfer of a MBA management program in Hong Kong (Cheng & Ho, 2001); empirical analysis of trainee perception of transfer of training conducted in Greece (Nikanbrou et al. 2009); a Cross-cultural constructs of LTSI of corporates in Taiwan (Chin, 2003); an integrative review of motivation to transfer conducted in Germany (Gegenfurtner, Veermans, Festner & Gruber, 2009); and a study conducted to examine the immediate training needs affecting learning transfer with 181 Korean employees based on a 3 days training program (Lim & Morris, 2006), etc. Since there is few researches have been developed in this area in New Zealand, it is useful to have a look at transfer of training effectiveness in NZ corporate environment.

New Zealand business has ranked 23<sup>rd</sup> place for global competitiveness in 2006, with high scores on basic requirements for business, including corruption-free institution, good education systems and ease of beginning a new business and rather poor scores in employment law, wasteful government spending, tax, quality of electricity supply and the brain drain (Business New Zealand, 2006).

Due to the brain drain problem and skill shortage in New Zealand, New Zealand business are spending greater amounts to upskill their staff. According to the Skills and Training survey run by Business New Zealand and the Industry Training Federation in 2007, employers spent a median of 2.5 per cent of their payroll on training, up from 2.0 per cent in the 2003 results (Business New Zealand, 2008). Brain drain and skill shortage has forced New Zealand businesses to rethink and upgrade their efforts around employee training and development, in order to upskill their workforce and to improve the work performance.

## **2.10. Summary**

This chapter has explained and discussed various relationships among predictor factors and transfer of training outcomes built on the three basic categories of trainee characteristics, training design and delivery and work environment. The relationships between variables are complex. The chapter finish with the discussion of current trend in transfer of training such as increasing focus on trainee's perception using qualitative research and prosperity of research worldwide besides UK and US in the earlier stage of 80s and 90s. The current trends also reinforce the significance and purpose of this study. In the next chapter, methodology of the study will be explained and discussed in detail.



## Chapter Three: Methodology

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### 3.1. Introduction

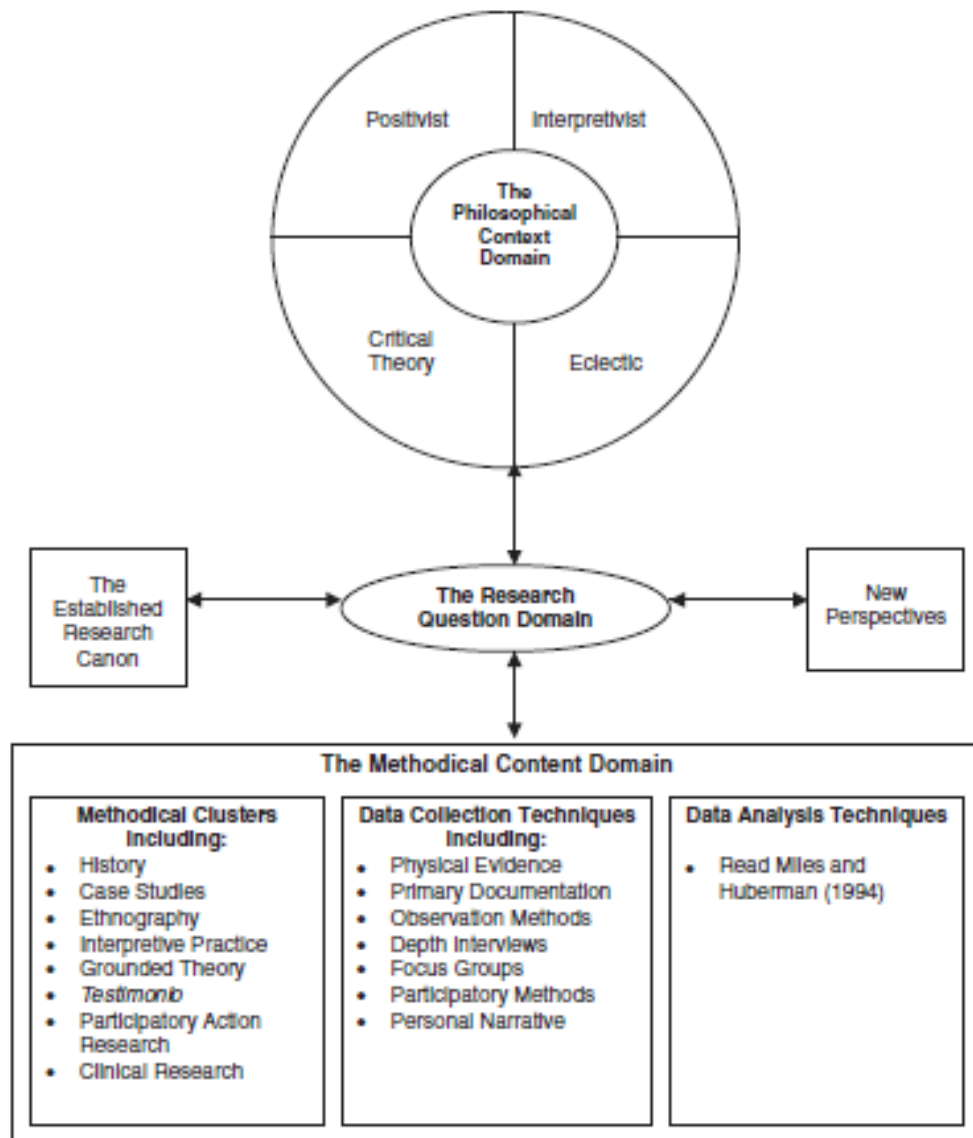
This chapter describes the research methodology, research design, description of participants, data collection procedures, and data coding and analysis. To begin with, a diagram is presented to guide and to clarify the procedures of the research. Following this, philosophical justification is given for the reason of choosing qualitative research method by taking an interpretivist view. Then, A description of the research topic and the research purpose is re-stated. After that, semi-structured interview is stated for data collection with clarification of advantages of using semi-structured interview. Criteria for choosing the appropriate participants for the research are presented. Participants were provided information sheet and asked to sign consent form before they joined the research. Interview process is presented. The ethics of the research was approved by the AUT Ethics Committee (AUTEC) to ensure that participants' rights and privacy were well protected and respected (see Appendix). After the data collection, Huberman and Miles' (1994) data management analysis is used to categorize, analyse and interpret the data that was collected from the interviews.

Since the research purpose is to find out the trainees' perception of what factors affecting transfer of training and the relevant relationships between variables, qualitative research method is used to conduct this research. It is because qualitative research method could get in-depth understanding and views from the participants. A qualitative research paradigm (see Figure 5) is used here to guide the conduct of the research.

The reason why this paradigm is used is that it guides the most fundamental values and beliefs regarding the nature of reality. Thus, it is the most appropriate way to explore this reality of trainees' perception in this context (Guba, 1990,). According to this qualitative research paradigm, three principle territories need to be followed: the philosophical context domain, the research question domain and a methodical content domain. The sequence and structure of these three principle territories are illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 5:

### A Canonical Development Framework for Choosing Qualitative Research Methods



(Hindle, 2004, p. 591)

Following the three steps, the interpretivist stance will be discussed and justified for the dissertation, and research questions for the dissertation will be re-stated in this chapter. Then, it moves to the methodical content domain which consists of semi-structured in-depth interview as the data collection method and data management and analysis method as the data analysis method.

### **3.2 Qualitative research philosophy**

As mentioned above, the purpose of the research is to explore the trainees' perception of the corporate training programs and to identify what factors they perceive that affect transfer of training. To explore the individual's perception about transfer of training in-depth, qualitative research method is the appropriate way since qualitative research is more concerned with words rather than numbers for data collection and data analysis used in the quantitative research method (Bryman & Bell, 2007). Moreover, comparing between qualitative research and quantitative research method, qualitative research tends to capture the individual point of view as well as securing rich and detailed description (Becker, 1993, in Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). By asking questions in the interview, researchers could receive more value-added information, which implies in-depth meaning for further discussion (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). In contrast, quantitative studies emphasize the measurement and analysis of causal relationships between variables, not process.

The philosophical justification of using qualitative research method can be discussed in three aspects. First, an inductive view is used to link theory and research problem. Second, an epistemological interpretive position is taken when examining the research data collected from the participants. Third, a constructionist ontological position is taken when examining the data collected from participants regarding their experience in attending the training programs.

First, an inductive view is applied in the dissertation. Inductive research follows the process of research question, data collection and analysis, interpretation of the data, and finally the generation of new theory. This dissertation does not aim to generate new theory after the data interpretation but rather to focus on participants' perception. The inductive view is a good guide for conducting the process.

Second, an epistemological interpretive position is taken as the philosophical underlying. Epistemology refers to "what is regarded as appropriate knowledge about the social world" (Bryman& Bell, 2007). It explains a person's way of knowing and interpreting

the world. Interpretivism refers to “the epistemological view that people have their individual differences and these differences between people should be respected”. Interpretivist view emphasizes the individual difference based on the diversity of the contexts. It coincides with research purpose to explore and examine the different individual’s perception on transfer of training and relevant factors after they attended training programs.

Moreover, Interpretivist epistemologists believe that “social reality is not conceived as out there waiting to be discovered and measured, but rather is relational and subjective, produced during the research process. The researcher is not assumed to be value-neutral and objective, but rather an active participant, along with the research subjects” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.15). Individuals have their own interpretation of the reality constructed through social interaction. In the dissertation it is beneficial to hear different people’s opinions regarding the job they are doing and diverse social background.

Third, aligning with the interpretivist stance for qualitative research, a constructionist ontological position is taken regarding the outcomes of interaction between the participants and those training programs discussed by the participants. Ontology deals with the nature of existence. Ontological issues are to do with the view that the social world is regarded as something external to social actors or as something that people are in the process of fashioning. For this research, taking a constructionist ontological perspective is to explore trainees’ feelings and experience of the training programs and their perceived behaviour change.

Comparing with quantitative research, interpretive research is more concerned with “adding to the substantive body of knowledge in a given subject area” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p.15). Also, the interpretive approach often seeks to construct theory and meaning “through the relationship between the researchers and those were researched.” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.15). It is exactly what the research would like to explore, that is, to explore the in-depth contexts and rich information of the source and factors that affect transfer of training.

Quantitative implies an emphasis on processes and meanings that are measured in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. However, qualitative researchers “stress the

socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry”(Denzin& Lincoln, 1994, p. 4). The past literature of transfer of training, especially in the category which emphasizes the identification and measurement of transfer factors, has been mostly taken in quantitative research methods so as to find out the correlation relationships. Quantitative research method is more appropriate for examining the validities and for measuring correlations between variables. But it lacks in-depth insight of the diverse contexts of different training programs and the complexity of trainee characteristics. In order to know what and how the factors in depth, qualitative research is used to dig into sources that lead to the complex individual and situational factors into account with an interpretivist stance.

In sum, concerning with the research purpose to explore trainees’ perception of transfer of training and relevant factors, qualitative research method is more justifiable. As Bryman and Bell (2007) posit that “Quantitative and qualitative research constitute different approaches to social investigation and carry with them important epistemological and ontological considerations” (p. 35).

### **3.3 Research question:**

*What factors do trainees perceive affect their transfer of training in the workplace and how do those factors affect their transfer in practice.*

### **3.4. Data collection**

#### **3.4.1. Semi-structured interviews**

This qualitative research of transfer of training uses semi-structured interview to collect data. A semi-structured interview provides a framework with a set of categories to be tested from the literature, which is similar to a structured interview. However, it allows the interview to be flexible and enable the interview to have interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewee has more flexibility to respond to the question, whereas the interviewer also has the flexibility to probe the questions in-depth regarding the response from the interviewees.

According to Bryman and Bell (2007), the greatest advantage of using semi-structured interview is its flexibility. It is not as well structured as structured interview, which has no flexibility. Structured interview use the same research questions and sequence for all the interviewees, whereas semi-structured interview could be tailored or re-organized research on-site depending on the flow of the interview. A set interview guide is used to lead the interview preventing it gone off-track, while at the same time allowing the participant to answer the questions freely. There are some limitations of using interview for data collection. First of all, the relationship between what participants say they do and what they actually may not be always very strong (Foddy, 1993). In some cases, participants' behaviour cannot always be congruent with their attitudes. Second, participants' attitudes, beliefs, and opinions are often quite unstable. For example, they may not agree with the teaching style of the trainer, thus negatively affect their transfer of training, but found out the advantage of the teaching style later on. Third, sometimes, different wording of the responses by the participants may lead to different interpretation by the researcher (Foddy, 1993). These limitations of using interview for data collection may affect the validity of the research results and findings.

#### **3.4.2. Building interview questions:**

Based on the purpose of the research and the research questions above, a list of interview questions are prepared for the semi-structured interview. Since the answer to earlier questions can affect participant's answers to later questions, organizing the sequence of interview question guide is very important (Foddy, 1993). The research questions were built on the assumption relationships between predictor factors (under the categories of trainee characteristics, training design and structure and work environment) and training motivation and outcome. Since the interview is semi-structured interview, an interview guide is built as the backbone of the interview rather than a rigid interview question list as used in the structured in interview.

Interview question guide:

1. What are the training programs that you have attended during your period in the company?
2. How do you think factors related to training design and structure (such as pre-

training assessment and goals) seems to be related to your training transfer?

Do you think the factors of design and structure would affect your transfer of training?

3. How do you think your perception towards training (such as motivation and perceived job utility) seem to be related to your training transfer?

What specific individual factors can be identified that have the greatest impact on transfer?

4. How do you think the work environment factors (such as peer and manager support) seem to be related to your training transfer?

What specific work environment factors can be identified that have the greatest impact on transfer?

### **3.4.3. Interview participants selection**

Since the research is focused on trainees' perception of training and factors affecting their training transfer rather than the comparison of a particular training program, the needed participants for the interview do not necessarily have to be the ones who attend the same training program. The researcher used the personal contacts and social network to seek the participants.

The participants were chosen on the basis of relevance to the topic of this study. The research aims to get detailed contextual information about trainee's perception of transfer of training and factors affect training effectiveness based on the training programs that they have attended. The inclusion criteria were as follows:

1. Corporate environment (especially from various service industries such as banking, retail trade, Airline, hospitality, or service related positions)
2. New entrants or lower to medium level ordinary employees
3. Have attended training programs offered by the corporates (including both "hard" skills and "soft" skills)

The participants were selected through the personal network. Apart from the above criterion, there are some similarities of the selected participants. They preferably work in the various disciplines in the service sectors, rather than the first or secondary sectors.

The reason is that most big corporates from service sectors provides both hard skill and soft skill training to employees of all levels, which most of them work as knowledge worker and valued as human capital. According to Statistics New Zealand,

“Training in the services sector may require increased attention to technology skills, as many service sector jobs now require the use of computers. Even entry-level retail jobs make use of computer technology for inventory and sales, and the ability to use these machines is critical. Additionally, customer-service skills are a crucial training need in many service industry jobs; thus, this type of training is likely to increase in value in service jobs”

Table 1 shows the categorization of primary, goods-producing and service sectors of New Zealand. As we can see that the service sector ranges across retail trade, hospitality, finance and business services, and personal and other community services. These are the industries where the most participants of this research work in.

**Table 1: Sector composition of New Zealand**

<b>Sector composition<sup>(1)</sup></b>		
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Goods-producing</b>	<b>Service</b>
Agriculture	Manufacturing	Wholesale trade
Forestry and fishing	Electricity, gas, and water, supply	Retail trade
Mining	Construction	Accommodation, cafes, and restaurants
		Transport and storage
		Communication services
		Finance and insurance
		Property services <sup>(2)</sup>



		Business services <sup>(2)</sup>
		Cultural and recreational services <sup>(2)</sup>
		Personal and other community services <sup>(2)</sup>
1. Based on the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification 1996 (ANZSIC96).		
2. Included from March 1996 onwards in the productivity services series.		

(Statistics New Zealand, no date)

Potential participants have been chosen from the pool of people who meet the above three basic criteria. The researcher used personal contacts and networking getting the contacts. The process started with sending the participants initial letter. If they are interested in the research project, then a participant information sheet for more detailed information and a consent form is provided to participant via emails. Once the researcher receives the consent form signed by the potential participant, interview time and place is arranged between the researcher and the participant.

#### **3.4.4. Interview Process**

There were ten interviews taken in the research. Each interview was taken in the similar process. First, the entire selected potential interviewees received an initial letter. Once they expressed interest in the research, the researcher would send out the Participant Information letter to give the participants a more detailed understanding of the research purpose, process and also rights between the researcher and participants. After this, a consent letter was sent to the participants via email, once the participants confirmed participation in the research. Any doubts or confusion about the interview content or process was answered by the researcher via email or phone.

The time and location of the interview was discussed between the researcher and the participant, with the convenience to suit the participant. During the interview, the rights between the researcher and the participants were re-stated by the researcher. Then, the

researcher would ask the participant to sign the consent form. Privacy of the participants was protected. The research would explain some of the technical jargon to the participants, in case there is confusion in the interview. An audio recorder was used for tracking the information of the whole interview.

After the interview, the researcher was sent an appreciation letter via email to express thanks for participating in the research. There were some follow-up questions via email to sort out the confusion depending on individual interview and any need to clarify the participants' responses to the questions or statements.

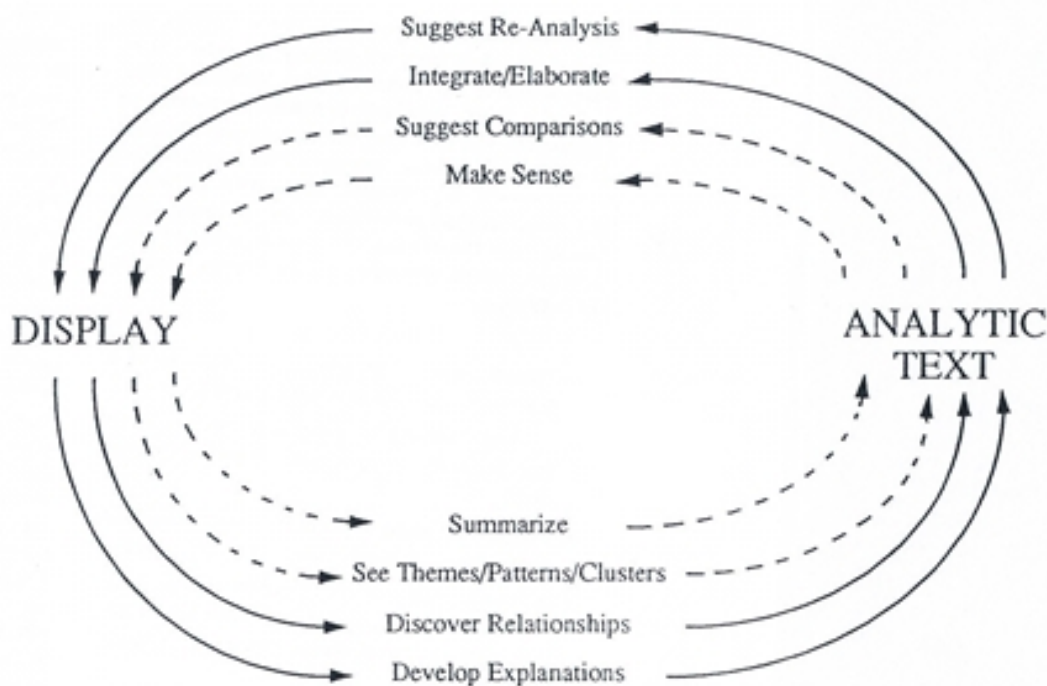
### **3.5.Data Analysis**

After data collection, Huberman and Miles (1994) data management analysis method was applied for data analysis. Rich and detailed information was generated by each individual participant. Their diverse interpretations of transfer of training along with what factors affect transfer of training shows the individual's interpretation of the transfer of training.

The data management analysis had three components: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Firstly, data reduction happens in the pre-interview period when the researcher needs to choose a conceptual framework to set the boundaries for getting the data from the interviews. Secondly, the researcher need to display the data to get the most useful and important data for the groupings and analysis. Thirdly, the final conclusion drawing involves the researcher in the interpretation (i.e. drawing meanings from displayed data.) The tactics for display and management of the data ranges from “the typical and wide use of comparison/contrast, noting of patterns and themes, clustering, and use of metaphors to confirmatory tactics such as triangulation, looking for negative cases, following up surprises and checking results with respondents” (Huberman & Miles, 1994). It is a multiple and iterative set of tactics combined. Since there are multi-factors and multi-relationships between factors and transfer of training, the data analysis process will follow the tactics such as comparison and contrast of the useful data, noting of patterns and themes as well as looking for negative cases and following up with extra relevant issue or new factors that have yet to be explored.

Data analysis method in Huberman and Miles' (1994) data management and analysis methods divides into within-case analysis and cross-case analysis. Since the research was built on the interview data from 10 participants from diverse industries who attend different short-term corporate training program. A cross-case data analysis method was taken for the research data analysis. For within-case analysis, two level of understanding was generated: description and explanation. The raw data needs to be described in order to figure out what is going on. Explanation provides "requested information, justifying an action, giving reasons, supporting a claim, or making a causal statement" (Huberman& Miles, 1994, p. 432). The process of data display for description and explanation is illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 6: Interaction between display and analytic text

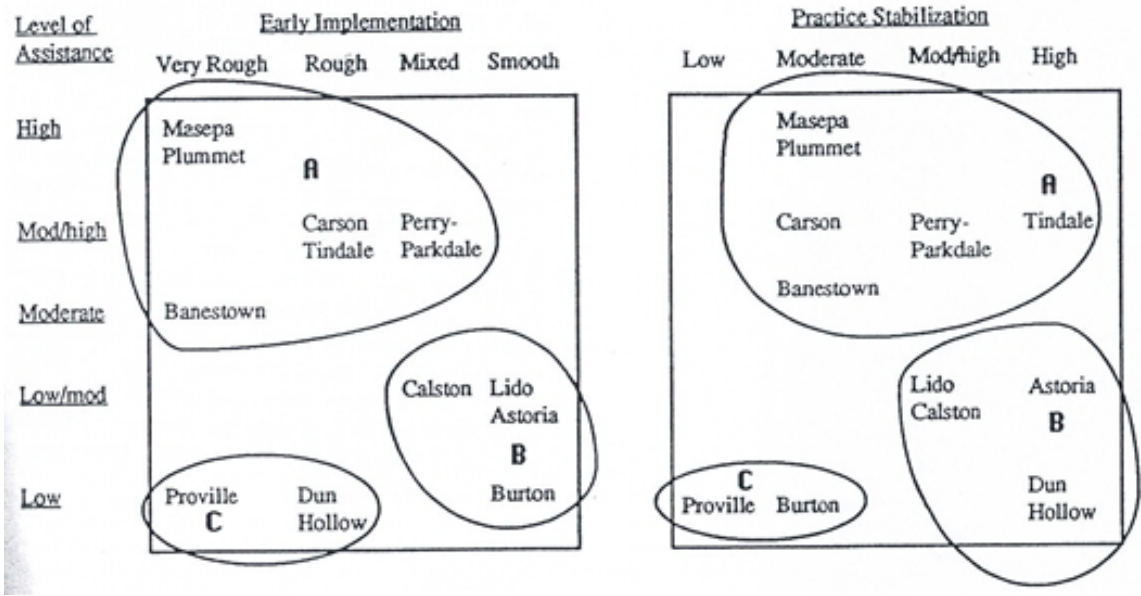


(Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

The within-case data analysis or single-case data analysis method is a circular and repetitive process going between display and analytic text through constant descriptive and explaining actions.

There were 10 participants for the research all together who come from different corporates of diverse service industries and each participant's training experience can be

interpreted as a single-case analysis. Thus, it is a cross-case data analysis which needs to proceed with multiple case data generated from several sources. Cross-case data analysis is built based on single-case analysis. Each individual interview with one particular trainee would grant the researcher the perception of different factors affecting transfer of training, which can be regarded as source for one case study. Within one case, trainee has particular training program that he or she has attended. Perceptions of various factors were formed, which were the qualitative data source. With several interviews in hand, a multi-case data source was built. Each case has responses to the similar questions asked by the researcher. An easier way to manage vast multi-case analysis is to divide into ten single-case analysis and then to group and synthesize the different and contrasts between variables. An example of cross-case data analysis (see Figure 7) is presented by Huberman and Miles (1994) to show the logic behind the analysis. Figure 7: Example of cross-case data analysis



(Denzin& Lincoln, 1994)

The data analysis for this dissertation would use the similar grouping method for the data. For example, Figure 7 presents one form of how data is managed and analysed by using this method. Two groups of data are displayed in the figure under the categories of “early implementation” and “practice stabilization”. The data is distributed with level of difficulties and level of stabilization. They are related to the level of assistance. The various relationships between level of assistance and level of difficulties and level of

stabilization are grouped with the circles shown in the figure to compare the similarities and differences.

The use of the Figure 7 is to show one form of data management and analysis. Meanwhile, the figure also demonstrated that this analysis method is a very versatile method. It can be taken in many diverse forms to analyse the data under one depending on the research questions and data source.

To illustrate the complex relationship between transfer of training predictors and outcomes perceived by the participants, data collected from the interviews are about to managed and displayed in the following figures.

Table 2: Data grouping of 10 trainees' perception on trainee characteristics

<b>Perceptions on Trainee characteristics</b>	Trainee 1	Trainee 2	Trainee 3	Trainee 4	Trainee 5	Trainee 6	Trainee 7	Trainee 8	Trainee 9	Trainee 10
A: expectation	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
B: Perceived Training motivation	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
C: Perceived job/career utility C	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
D: Other factors	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10

Table 3: Data grouping of 10 trainees' perception on training design and delivery

<b>Perception on training design and delivery</b>	Trainee 1	Trainee 2	Trainee 3	Trainee 4	Trainee 5	Trainee 6	Trainee 7	Trainee 8	Trainee 9	Trainee 10
A: Content relevance	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
B: Option to attendance	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
C: Trainer quality	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10

D:Pre-training determinants	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10
E:Post-training determinants	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5	E6	E7	E8	E9	E10

Table 4: Data grouping of 10 trainees' perception on work environment

Perception on work environment	Trainee 1	Trainee 2	Trainee 3	Trainee 4	Trainee 5	Trainee 6	Trainee 7	Trainee 8	Trainee 9	Trainee 10
A:manager/supervisor support	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10
B:peer support	B1	B2	B3	B4	B5	B6	B7	B8	B9	B10
C:Opportunity to use	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10
D:Organizational learning culture	D1	D2	D3	D4	D5	D6	D7	D8	D9	D10

For each of the relationships, individual participant may have or may not have the same view. The patterns and themes may be explored from the comparison and contrast and clustering. For this dissertation, each of participant's opinion of each individual factor would be displayed (i.e. motivation, perceived job utility, trainer quality, content relevance, etc.), and then diverse opinion of each individual factor will be compared and contrasted, thus putting into these groups to synthesize. In the three figures, we can see that trainees' perceptions of factors affecting transfer of training are displayed in the individual figure respectively. In each of the figure, factors are categorized as A, B, C, D, etc. Each trainee's perception on different factors were displayed as A1, B1, C1. For example, trainee 1's perception on the factor of training motivation can be symbolized as B1. Various views on one factor are grouped together, in order to compare and contrast. It is need to be noted that not all the symbols include data. Individual trainee might have perception on factor A, but does not have perception on factor B, given that

they have attended different training program and have different emphasis on the important factors. After the data has been grouped managed in the systematic way, they can be analysed to see the similarities and differences between different trainees.

### **3.6. Summary**

By using Hindle's (2004) qualitative research method process as a guide, this chapter has explained the philosophical underlying of using qualitative research method over quantitative research method for the research of transfer of training. After re-stating the research questions, data collection method such as using semi-structured interview has been presented and the reason why using semi-structured interview has been discussed as well. An interview question guide has been provided to lead the conduct of the interview. Participant selection criteria have been discussed in order to get the potential appropriate participants for the research. In the end, Huberman & Miles' (2004) data management analysis method has been introduced to analyse the data collected from the interview. The chosen participants will be given basic information about what industries they work in and what training programs that they have attended in the start of next chapter. The next chapter will also present the results and findings generated from the interview data. Comparison and contrast of the findings with the past literature will also be discussed.

## **Chapter Four: Findings and Discussions**

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### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter presents the results from interviews conducted with the ten participants from various service industries. Basic demographic details are presented along with a table to illustrate the training programs that the participants have attended. The training programs offered by the corporates varies across disciplines since trainees work in different industries, but can be generally categorized into hard-skill oriented and soft-skill oriented training programs. Since the core of the dissertation is to explore trainee's perception of factors affecting effective transfer of training, it was not necessarily to focus on one particular training program. By using data management and analysis method, the results are managed, organized and analysed into three categories, according to the factors of trainee characteristics, transfer design and delivery, and work environment.

### **4.2. Participant Demographics**

The research focuses on the divergence and convergence of individual perception of transfer of training regarding the training programs that they have attended offered by corporates. The ten participants for the research were selected to meet the criteria. The criteria were:

1. They work in large corporates
2. They have attended certain short-term training program provided by the organizations that they worked in.
3. The participants are mostly ordinary employees from various departments of various companies.
4. The training programs that they have attended combines both hard skills and soft skill training
5. The industries that they work in ranges from the most popular and competitive service industries in New Zealand such as retail trade, hospitality and banking industry.



While meeting the same criteria, there are some basic similarities and differences on participant demographics that can be categorized. The demographics of the participants include age, gender, education level and years of staying in the organization.

Chart 1:

**Age:**

21-25	2
26-03	4
31-35	3
36-40	1

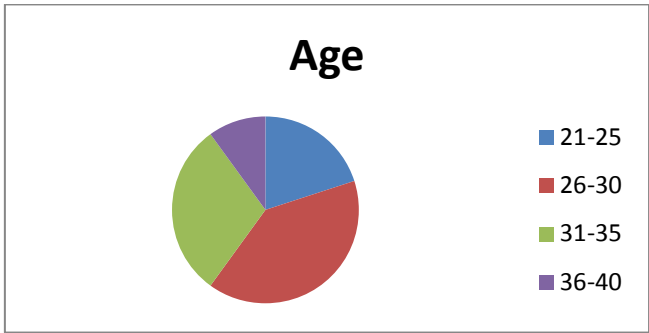


Chart 2:

**Gender:**

Male	5
Female	5

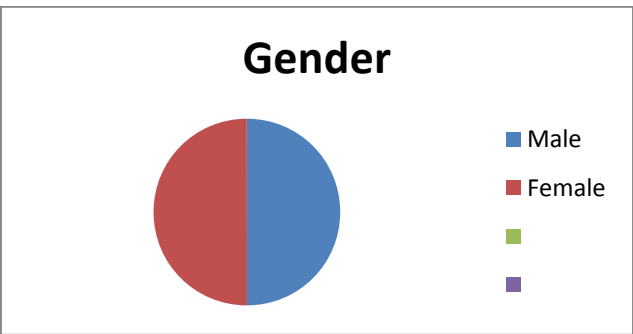


Chart 3:

<b>Education:</b>	Bachelor’s degree	5
	Postgraduate diploma/Honour’s degree	2
	Master’s degree	3

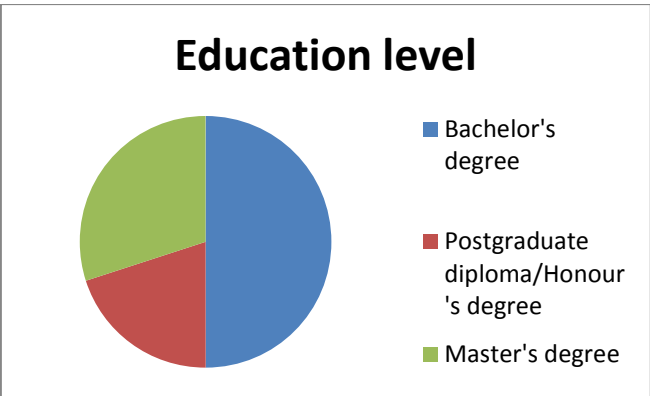
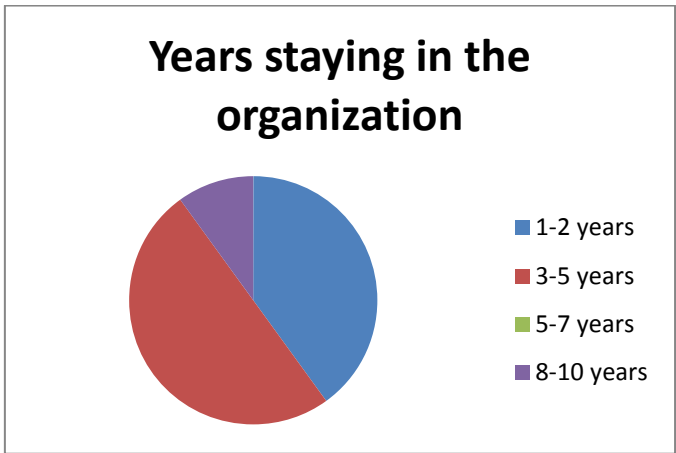


Chart 4:

**Years of working in the organization:**

1-2 years	4
3-5 years	5
5-7 years	0
8-10 years	1
10 years+	0



Therefore, from the above demographics charts, we can see that most participants' age ranges from 21-35 year's old, who were educated knowledge workers with Bachelor's qualification or above. There are five male and five female. Most of them have not worked in the current organization for more than five years.

The chosen participants for the research have all reached the criterion for recruiting participants which was discussed in the previous chapter. They were required to work in corporate environment, preferably in big corporation which provides both hard skills and soft skill training programs to their employees at all levels. Table 5 listed the training program that the participants have attended and the industries in which the participants work. There are ten interviewees who participated in the research.

Two things need to be noted in the table. Firstly, the ten participants work in a wide range of industries such as banking, financial service, hospitality, airline, dairy industry and retail trade. These are the industries that have lots of big formalized corporations which have invested in the various training program to up-skill their employees. The second thing to be noted in the table is the training program that the participants have attended. There are hard-skill training programs such as financial modelling that C attended as a financial advisor, Excel training program that R attended as HR practitioner in a retail trade company, corporate banking seminar that D attended as an internal accountant of a multinational bank. Besides, there are also soft skill training programs such as negotiation training program and presentation skill training that M attended as a data warehouse consultant, customer service training that E attended as an air hostess and A as an waiter in a restaurant. The distinction of perceptions of soft skill training and hard skill training will be discussed in the later text.

Table 5: training programs attended by participants from various industries

<b>Trainees</b>	<b>Hard-skill training programs</b>	<b>Soft-skill training programs</b>
M: (Financial consulting)	1. Visualization technique 2. Data modeling 3. Data Quality	1. Negotiation 2. Presentation skills 3. Feedback skills 4. Listening skills

C (public organization)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Financial modeling</li> <li>2. Financial system</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Presentation skills</li> <li>2. Developing spontaneous talk while thinking</li> </ol>
T (Dairy industry)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Preventing work injuries</li> <li>2. Safety in work</li> <li>3. dealing fire hazard</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Building team work skill</li> <li>2. Company culture and history</li> </ol>
R (Retail Trade)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using Excel skills</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Motivation training</li> <li>2. Team work building</li> </ol>
A (Hospitality)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Use of system</li> <li>2. Food and beverage knowledge</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Company induction</li> <li>2. Customer service</li> </ol>
D (Banking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Corporate banking seminar</li> <li>2. Borrower rating</li> <li>3. Internal work, forms and application</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communication skills</li> </ol>
E (Airline)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Safety and emergency procedures</li> <li>2. Medical response procedures</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer service</li> <li>2. Resource management</li> </ol>
F (Hospitality)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Auditing process</li> <li>2. Front desk tasks</li> <li>3. Get familiarized of the facilities</li> <li>4. Use of system</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer service</li> <li>2. Company induction</li> <li>3. Company policies</li> </ol>
W (Dairy industry)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of supply chain system</li> <li>2. Use of system transaction</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Company culture and history</li> <li>2. Job responsibility</li> </ol>
S (Banking)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Technical program</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Customer service</li> <li>2. Active listening</li> <li>3. leadership</li> </ol>

### **4.3. Trainees' perceptions on trainee characteristics**

In this section, we will discuss the findings of participants' perceptions of factors of individual characteristics and their influences on transfer of training outcomes. The findings of this section start with the factor of trainee readiness/expectation, training motivation and perceived job and career utility. Training motivation is the major part of this section. Exploring the source of trainee training motivation, there are both intrinsic and extrinsic components. Thus, when discussing training motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic source for transfer will be discussed separately. Intrinsic components includes personal interest in learning new things, personal interest in doing the job, and personal interest in developing new skills, whereas extrinsic components includes peer support and peer pressure.

#### **4.3.1. Findings of Trainees' readiness/expectation**

It was quite surprising to find out that almost all the participants said that they did not have any strong or specific expectation before the training program started. Only one trainee out of ten expressed high expectation and had clear goal for the training. Among the others, five of them said that their only expectation was to learn the skills and knowledge which was required for the job and to do the job well. Examples are:

*F: Learn the job so you can do it well. No particular specified goals. Just to learn the tasks so that you can do it well.*

*R: My expectation is to learn a lot, to get as much information as possible, to be more knowledgeable, at the end of the day, you want to know what you have learnt from the training*

When asked how they perceived the relationship between trainee's expectation and readiness with transfer of training, three participants suggested that if the actual quality of the training program exceeds the trainee's initial expectation, he or she is more motivated to learn and to transfer. Examples are:

*S: The training structured really well, really really well done....actually it over my expectation cuz I usually very sceptical of training...it was very interactive, the trainer was good, the information would well delivered.....I really enjoyed it..... I definitely feel motivated after the training*

*M: I think from my experience of all the courses that I've been in, this one was probably more than I expected.....I definitely feel inspired and motivated*

*E: I think it was actually above my expectation. The actual training itself, it was up to my expectations or even above. They were very thorough, they could always explain. Each one of us knew exactly what we need to do, knew how to use our equipment.*

Trainee readiness/expectation is a secondary factor that influences training motivation among Holton et al. (2000) sixteen learning transfer factors. If the trainee has certain level of expectation in the pre-training motivation and is prepared to learn and to transfer, he or she is more likely to be motivated to transfer. However, in the real contexts, trainees acknowledged that they did not really have any strong or specific pre-training expectations besides the will to learn things and to do the job well. Moreover, they do not really have any preparation for the training. Baldwin and Magjuka (1991) also found that before the training those trainees with expectation of some follow-up activities or assessment when the training finish has higher motivation to transfer the knowledge and skills back to work. However, in this study, trainees did not show strong expectation of follow-up activities and assessment.

One participant claimed that she doesn't really have any expectation since she did not receive a lot of information about it before the training. The only thing was that she heard about it from the colleagues, but this had nothing to do with the transfer. One said that if the trainee's pre-training expectation is consistent with the company's expectation, it helps the transfer. It is consistent with the finding in the past literature that good reputation of the training increases the pre-training motivation (Facteau et al., 1995). As trainee has not received much information about the training during the pre-training period, it does not have good training reputation, thus there is no added pre-training motivation for the trainee.

#### **4.3.2. Findings on training motivation**

Contrary to distinguishing the motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, pre-training motivation and all the relevant complex correlations, trainees in the real world do not tell motivation to transfer from motivation to learn.

*Trainee does not distinguish motivation to learn and motivation to transfer -----* In the past literature, motivation to learn and motivation to transfer are two concepts with differences. However, when participants' were actually asked about their view towards motivation to learn and motivation to transfer separately, they mixed the concepts and did not distinguish between two. Almost all the trainees from the interview did not distinguish between two behaviours based on their past action. In most cases, they tended to talk about the motivation to learn rather than the motivation to transfer. Thus, while discussing the relationship between training motivation (including both motivation to learn and motivation to transfer) and the transfer of training outcomes, two factors are put in the same paragraph to be discussed.

The finding that trainees do not distinguish motivation to learn and motivation to transfer in the real world contexts is not consistent with the past literature. As discussed above in the literature review, researchers spent lots of effort trying to find out the relationships among predictor factors, motivation to learn, motivation to transfer and transfer outcomes (Holton, 1996; Kontoghioghes, 2004; Seyler et al., 1998). Axtell et al. (1997) suggest that motivation to transfer is a direct and significant predictor of training outcome, while other researchers believe that motivation to transfer an outcome which is influenced by predictor factors such as motivation to learn, self-efficacy, and relevant transfer climate factors (Machin & Fogarty, 2004; Ruona, Leimbach, Holton & Bates, 2002). However, in the real training contexts, trainee's perception of training motivation does not distinguish between two and does not relates to complex correlations between variables.

##### **1. Trainees do value the significance and influence of motivation**

Consistent with the literature, trainees value the importance of training motivation. All the participants acknowledged the importance of trainee motivation in transfer of

training and believe in the positive relationship between trainee motivation and transfer of training outcome. Some of them consider trainee's personal motivation to learn and to transfer is the most crucial factors regardless of all the factors from trainee characteristics, training design itself and work environment they work in. Examples are:

*C: Whether you into what you do, that depends on just two things—one is how badly you want to apply that during your work, and secondly is how closely your training relates to your work.*

*S: I don't think the motivation comes from the training itself. Personally my motivation is to achieve something and to get acknowledgement from the manager or the colleagues. I don't think the training program itself is enough to motivate me*

It can be interpreted that their perceptions of the relationship between motivation and transfer of training coincide with the importance and position in some of the theoretical frameworks in the past literature (Kontoghiorghes, 2004)

## 2. Intrinsic and extrinsic components of motivation

Digging into the drives of training motivation in-depth, it is found that most trainees believe intrinsic components of motivation are the most crucial drives, while some considered that extrinsic components of motivation such as peer support and peer pressure lead to motivation to learn and to transfer. The intrinsic components of motivation are personal interest in learning new things, personal interest in doing the job (i.e. job commitment), personal interest in developing new skills (career commitment).

Learning new things--- the results have shown that personal motivation to learn new things is a definite motivation. Personal motivation to keep learning and push yourself out of your comfort learn motivates people to learn and also to apply the skills and knowledge afterwards. For example:

*M: I think learning new things is always exciting. The bit that I don't enjoy as much ...Say for example for the presentation course you are expected to prepare a*



*presentation and present after the course or during the course. It pushes you out of your comfort zone. I may not enjoy it at that point in time but I think it's a part of the process to get over your own ego and be able to push yourself out of your comfort zone and do something that you learn new.*

*C: I guess the personal motivation is the most important thing, I've got this eagerness to learn the new things, since I was aware of lack of knowledge for doing the job better, I have the motivation out of sense of achievement.....before I went, I already have some skills in that area, but not quite enough. And then, when I looked at the brochures they sent, all these things are what I interested in.*

Personal interest in the job---- the results show that genuine personal interest in doing the job is the major source of motivation. Almost all the participants support this view. In some sense, it can be interpreted as personal job commitment. Someone has committed “true passion” for the job and for the industry. They believe that a person without interest in doing the job has lower level of transfer of training motivation. Those who raised the factor of job commitment consider that job commitment is positively related to training motivation. Examples are:

*F: I have some co-workers; I don't think they are interested in the job, they just doing this job because they need this job, maybe. When they have received these training, they don't learn as quick as other people who are interested, I can tell that from what they do normally after the training, if you call this the application of the skills and knowledge. For those who are interested in the job, they are highly motivated to learn*

*E: My genuine interest in the job can be another factor to motivate me to apply the skills and knowledge. There is a difference between people who just need a job and who like this job. I personally like to do this job. So definitely my own personal interest in it..... The industry has its own system of working, which fascinates me to know. Out of my natural curiosity, my desires to know the things that are happening in this industry*

R: *If you genuinely interested in developing yourself, you will ask yourself these questions. If you just attend these training programs just for the heck of it, it is just a waste of time. So it is really important what kind of training program you go to, so you know exactly what you need to learn. At the end of the training program, when you sit with your manager for performance appraisal, you can actually tell your manager how the training has help you to develop as individual and how it help you perform better for your job.”*

From trainee's perception, their genuine interesting in doing the job itself is another very important intrinsic motivation factor. It is consistent with the study that supported the positive relationship between job commitment, job involvement and transfer of training. Mathieu et al. (1992) have proofed this relationship by their empirical studies.

Personal interest in developing new skills --- Participants responses indicate that interest in career development is a source for motivation. To grow within the organization in the coming several years, it is helpful to attend those training programs. Examples are:

F: *I practiced to do my job good, of course. Another thing that drives me.....en, I need to grow inside this organization. I think this motivation help you to learn what they teach you quicker.*

R: *It's difficult to say on a day-to-day basis, If you think about it, if you need to develop as a person, you need to constantly engage and do the activities, that will make you a better person from time to time. If you are good at doing sth, that's good. How can you do it better? You need to constantly keep yourself updated.*

D: *In order to get promoted and grow, it is beneficial to attend those training programs, to learn the requirement skills and keep myself updated. It is also a way that makes your manager know that I've gone through these trainings all the way up, and I got the skills.....to show him that I am ready*

Factors of training design and delivery have not been mentioned by the participants while they were asked particular question of training motivation. No one think the training design, content or delivery is the major motivation for them to learn and to

transfer, although they acknowledge those factors affect transfer of training, when were asked certain questions about training design and structure.

Intrinsic components of motivation are the crucial source for training motivation. However, some response also acknowledged the importance of extrinsic components as source for training motivation.

Extrinsic components (peer support/pressure) ---- Three of the participants mentioned the influence of transfer climate on the motivation to learn and to transfer, especially peer support. One participant considered that peer pressure and competitive work environment was the main drive that motivates her to learn and to transfer so that she could improve her performance and keep knowledge and skill updated. One believes that it is the colleagues' support and encouragement that makes her feel motivated and more confident in applying the skills and knowledge from the training program. One claimed that since he noticed what he lacks from the colleagues, he decided to take the training program. Extrinsic component as post-training measurements or assessment is also a motivation to transfer. However, there's one participant particularly stated that it is her own interest in the job that motivates her, while peer support has nothing to do with transfer. Examples are:

*M: I think working in a consulting company can be quite challenging and there would be peer pressure, some kind of peer pressures, knowing that you...there are certain expectations that you need to fulfil. I think at a personal level and at a career level you want to do well and I think this is the driver of people..... And you are bound to be exposed to a client environment, in which there will be no colleagues to support you so there is a strong motivation to learn what you have in-house and be able to do well at a client site. I think that is one of the biggest motivators for all of us; to learn as much in the course and be able to apply as much as possible at the client site.*

*W: The support from the colleagues is very important. I was very lucky as I have got very supportive colleagues, which motivates me to apply the knowledge back to the work, because I need to do better work.*

*C: because I saw other financial modellers, the other people, did the similar jobs; I saw they use all those things, all those functions, to develop their models. At that time, I only had a number of them evolved, so I thought, oh, these things are good.*

*W: And the company has some measurement, they would know whether you are doing your job or not, whether you apply the knowledge to your job or not.*

This finding is consistent with the findings from the past literature that work environment and organizational transfer climate have effect on trainee's motivation to learn and motivation to transfer (Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993; Gegenfurtner, Veermans, Festner, & Gruber, 2009; Hawley & Barnard, 2005)

#### **4.3.3. Findings of perceived job utility**

All the participants state that if they perceive the training is useful for doing the current job or for performance improvement, the transfer is more likely to happen and is more effective. Some believe that if the training is useful for building soft skills such as presentation skills. As one said, *“being able to present to a group of managers or present to a group of people in a big room; the presentation skills are invaluable.”* Some participants believe that to know what to do in the job and to do it well in the job is the main motivation to transfer. As one put it, *“My only motivation to learn and to transfer the skills is to do my job good,*

One participant said that although the training was not directly related, she has the motivation to learn and to apply because she thought that the skills taught is very useful, which could be generalized to apply in other business contexts. Hard skill training is highly considered useful for doing the job, while soft skill turns out not so useful. However, soft skills training can be easily generalized into other contexts, which is good. Examples are:

*E: think the greatest motivating factor is that if I am using and I need these skills then I want to learn, I mean, I want to learn skills that may come useful,*

*C: Whether you into what you do, that depends on just two things—one is how badly you want to apply that during your work, and secondly is how closely your training relates to your work.*

A: very related factor, however, if the program is not done well, it would have negative factor

*C: Financial modelling, especially. Because I do a lot of modelling a lot, and I imagine that in the future I will do a lot of that too.*

#### **4.3.4. Findings of perceived career utility**

*M: I think the soft skills – the consulting skills ones – definitely helps with my personal development as well. For example, negotiation can be buying a house or buying a car. It doesn't necessarily have to be a business setting so that definitely helps with knowing how to negotiate. Presentation, again, it can be anything. You can be presenting outside of work as well. It just helps my confidence at a personal level to speak.*

*M: Giving feedback and listening are also very good skills to have I guess from a – I don't know – I'm just thinking from my own family background, from my Chinese background, we don't often provide feedback. I think everyone sees it as critique but I think being able to learn how to give constructive feedback helps not only with the working relationship with my colleagues but I think at a personal level that you can apply some of those skills to provide constructive feedback and not seem like you're targeting someone at a personal level.*

Several participants raised the importance of perceived career utility that may affect transfer of training. If the trainee is aware of career development and career exploration, especially for one who likes to grow in the same company, he or she is more motivated to learn and to transfer the learned skills. In some cases, awareness of

career development is accompanied by participant's awareness of self-development. One participant noted that since she was not thinking of pursuing a further step in the same company, she thought that the impact of career development did not affect her. Examples are:

*M: I think at a personal level and at a career level you want to do well and I think this is the driver of people*

*F: the hotel has a corporate office, you can work your way up. My personal goal is to work my way up to the corporate office.....because I consider my current job as a stepping stone, to use the stepping stone, I need to know how to do my job, so I consider the training is useful, although not directly useful for the job i want to do in the end, which is to work in the finance department in the corporate environment, but if you consider it as a stepping stone, it is useful in this case."*

*R: You can take those skills that you've learned, if you join another organization, you could also apply that, so that will be a win-win situation for you as well. For example, like this excel workshop, it not just can be applied to one organization, other organization can also use that. The knowledge is transferrable. So if you join another company, you have extra skills, such as this excel skills you learnt from the training program, it can add your competitive advantage. The training can help the organization on the one side, but you can also see how the training will help you personally down the line. You got to be a bit talented, a bit smart. You could take advantage of it if the company provide you the chance to study. Organizations today want to know what training and developments that you've been down from the previous organization, what you've learnt from the previous organization. Once they know what kind of the training you've already taken, they can save the cost of training you the same thing for saving the cost, the other reason is that they can send you to further training to learn more skills in order to become a better employee based on what you've learnt and what you've already acquired.*

*E: Even through it is opposed to be relevant closely to the job, it does not work and does not affect trainee's motivation to apply if is not properly conducted.*

*S: does not think career pursuit motivate the application since she is not want to stay in the same organization cuz not promotion opportunity. So the more practical, broader sense of skills attracts me more.*

#### **4.3.5. Findings on other trainee characteristics factors**

There are two other factors which have not been raised in the interview questions by the researcher, but raised by the participants' in their responses during the interviews. These factors also seems to exert impact on effectiveness of transfer of training. One factor is trainee's personal learning style and the other is trainees' perception or attitudes towards training.

##### **1. Personal learning style**

Personal learning style is a motivator for individual to transfer such as learning by doing. One believe that she's got this personal learning style that to practice and use the skills and knowledge right after the training by actively seeking for opportunities is a major motivator for her.

*C: yeah, it's all about repeating, learning is all about repeating. If you have the change to apply what you just learnt, you'll be able to acquire it. sometimes some people like to do a roller-coaster ride because they enjoy that process of being challenged...I enjoy that as well; ...So there's a lot of unknown but being able to prepare and apply what you've learnt in your course ...and actually you can do it at the end of the process; I think you get the kind of satisfaction that you get from.*

*E: but I preferred the practical aspects because it sort of solidifies your knowledge. It is all good to listen to the teacher to understand, but for me, my personal learning style is, If I don't use something, If you don't use it, you lose it. Once you learned something for a few times, for a while, if you don't do it for a few months, you will still remember that, but if you know something for the first time, even if it makes sense, like we had manual like this thick, and we had to know everything,*

*Once you learned something for a few times, for a while, if you don't do it for a few months, you will still remember that, but if you know something for the first time,*

*even if it makes sense, like we had manual like this thick, and we had to know everything, if you never use it or practice it after several month, it is hard for you pick it up again.*

*I think the greatest motivating factor is that if I am using and I need these skills then I want to learn, I mean, I want to learn skills that may come useful, but I think the best way for me, my learning is that if I continuously use something, then it gets knock down on my brain, then I know I am doing it and why I am doing it. But sometimes, if you don't use something, you can forget about it. So I think the regular update is a good way to keep me reminded.”*

Some participants believe that the biggest motivation to learn and motivation to transfer is from their own belief and value of learning and their own learning style “if you learn something and do not use it, you would quickly forget it”. Work environment does not affect her motivation to learn and motivation to transfer at all, but her personal learning motivation and the motivation to practice what she has learnt is the greatest drive. There were two or three participants who expressed the same learning motivation and transfer motivation. This finding is in line with Blackburn’s (2009) findings that different trainees have different learning styles, which may affect their training outcomes. It is suggested that different learning styles should be considered when delivered the training and be incorporated in the transfer period.

## **2. Trainee’s perception of training as mediating factor of transfer of training**

There are some participants expressed strong positive attitudes towards training, whilst some have not shown strong attitudes towards training. Those who have positive attitudes towards transfer of training are more likely to have higher motivation to transfer. One participant believes that she definitely learnt something from the training, even though the content was not brand-new things, it is still a good reminder. Once she feels that she enjoys the training, she feel having more willingness to use the skills and knowledge.

This finding is in line with the findings from Rodriguez and Gregory’s (2005) qualitative research on student employees’ perception towards training. They also found that perception and attitudes toward training play a role in the training outcome. The



participants who have showed more positive attitudes toward training and regarded it as useful and necessary and relevant to the job. They are more motivated to result in effective training outcome. They believe that transfer of training is mediated by student workers' perceptions of trainee characteristics, work environment, and training design (Rodriguez & Gregory, 2005).

#### **4.4. Trainees' perceptions on training design and delivery**

In this section, findings from trainees' perception on training design and delivery are discussed respectively starting with content relevance combining the discussion of hard skills versus soft skills. The following will discuss the findings from factor of option to attendance, trainer quality, pre-training determinants and post-training determinants.

##### **4.4.1. Content relevance (Hard skills vs. Soft skills)**

The chosen trainees for the research are employees from various service industries such as retail trade, banking and financial service, and airline service and hospitality industry. The organizations that they work provide them the opportunity to attend a wide range of skills including both soft skills and hard skills.

##### **1. Content relevance relates to transfer of training**

According to the responses, all the trainees acknowledge the importance of content relevance to transfer of training. Some claim that content relevance motivates the transfer of training. One believe that the training is useful because it relates so close to what he needs to do in the work. It is said that the content relevance is more important than having a good trainer.

*E: whether you into what you do, that depends on just two things—one is how badly you want to apply that during your work, and secondly is how closely your training relates to your work.*

*C: I think one of the reasons that one is useful is because it relates so close to what you do. But the other trainings, the presentation and “think on your feet”, they are good, but they are about soft skills. More or less, you develop your soft skills in*

*your work, in your daily life rather than in a one day or two day training session. But for these system skills, you do learn a lot in those trainings.*

*C: The most important factor would be how close related your work is to the training. If it's remotely not related, having a good facilitator is not going to help. If the training is targeted well, then you can almost guarantee that a lot of the skills you acquired will be used in your work. It's not the facilitators. The student need to realize from the outside that it's a process, a long process, which you need to apply skills, it's not just one or two days training. Immediately after training, you need to have a plan, like what I learnt and how would I apply those things. Otherwise, you will forget it in two days.-*

## 2. Content relevance is different between hard skill and soft skill training

The level of content relevance depends on the programs that the participant has taken. When talking about transfer of training, they have different views towards hard skill training programs and soft skill training program. They consider hard skill and technical skills are more related to the job, while soft skills are indirectly relevant to the job.

Most participants consider “hard skills” such as machine operation, computer protocols, safety standards, financial procedures and sales administration (Coates, 2006) are more practical and easier to transfer. They believe that they have applied the skills to the job, particularly the “hard skills” since they just need to follow the procedures which have been taught in the training program. The hard skills which consist of technical or administrative procedures are easy to observe, quantify and measure. They are also easy to train, “because most of the time the skill sets are brand new to the learner and no unlearning is involved”. (Coates, 2006, p.1)

However, on the other side, the soft skills such as “communicating, listening, engaging in dialogue, giving feedback, cooperating as a team member, solving problems, contributing in meetings and resolving conflict” (Coates, 2006). They have to do with how people relate to each other. Some participants believe that soft skills are something that they have already learnt and used all along the time. The soft skills learnt in the training program do not offer brand new knowledge or skills, but just take it as a good

reminder. Moreover, Soft skills are hard to observe, quantify and measure. For example, the skill of giving feedback only used between colleagues but can also be generalized to use between clients. The generalizability of soft skills motivates her to apply the skills and knowledge.

*I mean between the work environments but it doesn't limit just to the internal. So it can be with your clients; for example, not only for giving feedback but also for receiving feedback. So what kinds of attitudes that you should hold when someone is providing you with feedback; I think it's easier to take it at a personal level so being able to know what sort of attitude that you should hold when someone is giving you feedback is also beneficial.*

*F: soft skills such as customer service are not brand new skills that learn from the training, but rather a common sense and a good reinforce.*

*C: yeah, when I was doing presentation, I have eye contact with a lot of people, although I did it subconsciously, I was still doing it.*

*C: oh, it's not technical. Communication is a kind of software, you just know. It's even more important to a technical work that you need to tell your audience what you are doing, what you have done. It's about how you tell them, how you explain to them.*

*M: the presentation skill one, they are good, but they are about soft skills. More or less, you develop your soft skills in your work, in your daily life rather than in a one day or two day training session. But for these system skills, you do learn a lot in those trainings.*

3. Hard skill is easier to transfer directly, while soft skill can be generalized  
Hard skill training is easier to transfer, while soft skill training is rather contextual based and hard to measure. Moreover, generalizability makes soft skill easy to transfer. Hard skill is easy to transfer because it is practical and easy to measure. One believes that learnt skills and knowledge can be generalized to the other areas. People skills are needed for everyday life as much as they are needed for work. For example, customer

service training program may not be directly relevant to the job that she is doing on everyday basis, but the skill can be generalized to be applied in other discipline, as the skill to deal with customer that she can apply to the internal contacts as well. In this case, she is willing to learn and to apply wherever there is an opportunity, as she said,

*“Although I am not selling products directly, but it is important for me to think customer is a broad sense and put them first”*

In sum, the finding from trainees that content relevant relates to transfer of training is in line with the past literature (Axtell et al., 1997; Kontoghiorghes, 2002; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). The results from the different perception of hard skill training and soft skill training are also in line with the past literature to some extent. Near transfer is more often occurred in short-term technical specific training which is easier to transfer. On the contrary, far transfer occurs in soft skills training which is hard to transfer but can be generalized into various contexts (Clark & Voogel, 1985; Goldstein, 1986; Yamnill and McLean, 2001)

#### **4.4.2. Voluntary vs. mandatory**

When asked whether the training programs offered by corporates were voluntary or mandatory, the responses varied between participants. For new entrants, it is compulsory to attend certain training programs in order to get them familiarize with the companies policies, culture and job-required skills. The more experienced employees are more likely to take training program voluntarily. Most participants indicate that most of the training program that they attended can be called voluntarily compliance. It means that they are informed by the managers to attend certain training program which is supposed to be voluntary, but in the end, they still go to attend the training out of various reasons. Examples are:

*M: I was asked by my manager that “would you like to attend the course, which is coming up, which you haven’t done yet? Would you want to go?” I have no reason not to go.*

*C: .For the presentation skill's one, well, you are expected to go. Well, you can say, I don't want to go, but you need to give your reason. So, nobody would reject.....and plus, it beneficial.*

One participant admitted that it was peer pressure; one says he has no reason to refuse to go; one says it is because “manager suggest it so she could not refuse to go, especially it was conducted overseas, quite an experience for me”. Moreover, for some organizations, employees have the option to choose which training and when they would like to attend, but they have to attend certain amount of training programs each year.

When trainees were asked whether they think option to attendance has impact on their transfer of training behavior, most of them hold the view that whether it is voluntary or mandatory is not that important for the transfer of training behavior, although they would prefer they have a choice to attend the training. The finding is similar to Tharenou (2001) that there is a positive relationship between voluntarism and transfer of training. One believes that if the training program is considered useful, nobody would reject to attend the training, whether it is voluntary or mandatory. However, one participant suggests that regardless of option for voluntary attendance, the company should choose the right person for the appropriate program, otherwise,

*“it eats up the working time. If in this case, employee is sent to a compulsory program and he hates it, which might hinder his motivation for application the knowledge and skills”*

For those training program that participants took the initiatives to attend, they claimed that they have the inner motivation thus it motivates them to learn and to transfer. As one said,

*that those who volunteered to attend the training course have more motivation to learn and to transfer because they have such eagerness to learn certain knowledge or skills.*

One believe that he lacks certain knowledge thus he needs skill-updating; one think the skills learnt from the voluntary program is useful; the other one think the voluntary training program would help her future career development, which is the motivator. But whether it is mandatory or voluntary, it does not have a strong tie with transfer of training. Examples are:

*S: However, she thinks that although some of the programs are compulsory, it does not mean they are not good. In some way, they are really useful because you can the useful skills from those training.*

For those responses from whom took the initiative to attend voluntary training programs, their views are consistent with the research (Baldwin et al., 1991; Nikandrou et al., 2009) that once trainee decides to attend the program, there is a positive relationship with transfer of training. Abdul-Aziz and Ahmad (2011) believe option to voluntary attendance stimulates individual training motivation. However, the findings from the interview have shown that it does not directly motivate trainee to transfer.

#### **4.4.3. Trainer quality**

##### **1. Perception about influence of trainer**

Most participants consider trainer quality is a very important factor in the training program. They believe that trainer quality is a factor of motivation what motivates their transfer. One participant, who has got on-the-job training, felt that the trainer is very important factor for transfer.

*C: And I think I've been to the negotiation and the presentation course, which was delivered by the same person, which is of very high quality and I think she did make an impact to all of us while we were on the course.*

*F: I think the person who trained you is a very important factor. That's the most important factor in the transfer of the skills. I felt that my co-worker, who taught me the skills on-the-job, he taught me really well, because of that, I know exactly what I need to do in my job and I think I do it well..... Some people just don't have the natural ability to explain things. But my co-worker who taught me on*

*the job, they were really good at explaining things, so I learned things very quickly.*

*R: there was a manger from outside that came in to give some real-life examples of how we got motivated, and how we perform and do better. He narrated several stories as well as advises some of the books to read, to boost our motivation, which i think is pretty good*

## 2. What are the good qualities?

Participants expect trainer to be professional, knowledgeable, communicate well with the trainee. They are also expected to have good teaching skills and good at engaging all the participants involved. Most participants think that having a good trainer positively relates to effective transfer of training. However, participants have different standards towards a “good trainer” and value diverse traits of the trainer. Examples are:

*She was fantastic, charismatic, funny, professional, being honest, cannot imagine a good training program without a good trainer (S)*

*Definitely her experience in the area is impressive. I think she was a sales representative or manager before becoming a trainer so she was very assertive, very driving person; her attitude towards the course and her passion about what she was trying to deliver and her willingness to help I guess.”*

*W: It was a very interesting two-day’s training. The teacher was very focused, and explained things really well.yeah, they are very experienced, and just could explain things very clearly. They also give you chance to ask questions. I guess all of them do. All of them would give you chance to answer, to ask questions, but the difference is, not all of them can answer the questions so helpfully. That will depend a lot on their own experiences, the ability of them handling questions, or following questions to the other guys, if they can do that well, which would work too. So I guess these two guys, this one is knowledgeable, so he is able to answer everything; and this one, he is knowledgeable too, and he has a lot of experiences, because he had done a lot of trainings before.*

*R: The people who trained us are very approachable, they can really explain, they can answer our questions. I would expect that they could have a few years' experience behind them, because sometimes we are dealing with some abnormal situations, it's really good to learn from someone who owes insight, something that they've learnt on the job, anything that they train the people*

*R: It is very important that the trainer is skilled, very good at what he is going to talk about. And he should be able to answer each of the questions that people asked*

### 3. Negative impacts

There are some negative comments from the participants on the trainer. Some criticized that the trainer was not so skilled, professional and experienced. Participants also think an unskilled trainer would demotivate the trainee with inconsistencies of what is expected and what actually happens. It would finally exact negative impacts on the training outcome and transfer of training. If the trainer does not connect with the trainees in the class, it demotivates trainees to attend the training and thus affect transfer. Examples are:

*C: I think the trainer at that point in time was not skilled enough or not experienced enough compared to some of the consultants that are already on the course. I think our expectation was a bit more but I think the whole course was based on fictitious examples rather than dealing with real-life examples and found the course under-delivered I guess.... I think I came into the course with the expectation that I would gain more of the tools after the course but in fact after the course I didn't feel that I have learned more from the course over the duration of the course...*

*R: If the trainer does not reach the standard, one thing is you waste your time; the other thing is you are not benefiting from the training.*

*R: The thing that I don't like about the training is that the trainer keeps on talking by himself. That does not connect with the class. Then there is a gap of the class.*



*The trainer has to understand the level of the class. If they don't understand these things, then there is no point of attending the training course. People will just sit down wasting their time and then he will be wasting his time as well. That leads to a loss-loss situation. It is important for the trainer to check the enthusiasm of the class to see whether they are interested in the class. He needs to bring some humor, some interaction, some experience to the class."*

Moreover, trainees believe that trainers have different specialties, thus it is important for the right trainer to do the right course. One participant who has attend a training about work place safety felt that the trainer might be skilled as a professional trainer, but he doubted that the trainer has any qualification in workplace safety and medical aids. The suspicion of trainer's profession in this area inhibits his transfer of the knowledge.

Only one or two participant claimed that trainer quality does not exert impact on their transfer of training. They believe that trainer quality might be important in training, but concerning with transfer, it does not have a direct impact. As she said, *"In terms of how you translate your training to your work, I don't think the facilitator made such a big role in that"*.

#### **4. 4.4. Pre-Training assessment**

The responses have shown that not all the training had pre-training assessments. Most were called up to attend the training programs by the managers to attend the programs without any formal assessment. Just one or two said that they have the pre-training assessment, which could be taken the form of task analysis. Those who have the pre-training needs assessment and analysis thought it helps them to know clearly what is expected to learn in the program, which helps the learning. Examples are:

*E: there are certain elements that they look for when they recruit you.....The assessment will be the actual recruitment. They would assess different capabilities they are looking for. But it was not expected that you would have to have any understanding or knowledge of what they are going to train up to do what is required of you on the job."*

*R: The way that it works is that not everybody can attend all the program. There is certain specific training only for certain band level. So you look into the learning and development calendar, to see whether you are qualify for this training program.*

*R: So there is a pre-training assessment, to check why I need to attend this training and how much it will help you. One, I was weak; two, I want to learn; Third, I can apply. If I know my job clearly, it will make my work easier and my life easier. It can also speed up my work. The pre-assessment gives you an understanding of the training program and how you can benefit from it.*

*R: Given the hectic pace of my workplace, employee rarely have the time to think about whether they really want to go to the training program, it depends a lot on the managers. So I think having a pre-training assessment is good for the training.*

Some participants who have the pre-training expectation from the organizations claimed that if they got the chance to involve in the pre-training planning, it would has positive impact on transfer of training. There is a negative case presented by the participant that the training is not so effective due to the miscommunication of the goals between the trainees and the trainer. Example is:

*C: that one wasn't that good, I mean in terms of the usefulness. Because I don't think the lecturer, or the facilitator, of that training is fully understood what we wanted. It is supposed to be targeted to different audience. Maybe it was partly our fault too. When we communicate what we want to learnt to her, because this system is totally new, and nobody knows what we are going to do with it.*

Participants thought that the corporates need to assess the learner's skills and readiness before the training. If the learner's skills exceeds the content of the training program or the trainee has already acquired the skills, then there is a relapse of the training content. As one participant claimed that due to her accounting background, it is no use for the manager to send her overseas to attend a training program teaching very basic

accounting knowledge and skills. As she already acquired those skills and knowledge, she thought it was a waste of time for her and a waste of money for the company.

However, some think that pre-training assessment would exert negative impact on transfer of training. One claimed that she does not like pre-training assessment and thought that it might decrease trainee's motivation to learn and to transfer if the assessment has shown that trainee is unqualified or under stress.

The fact that most corporates do not use proper pre-training assessment or needs assessment from the responses has demonstrated the lack of research in this area. It is in line with Burke and Hutchins' (2008) view that not many corporate take pre-training needs assessment as the precursor of training outcome. However, from trainees' response, they value pre-training assessment and think it is useful for the actual learning and transfer, which in line with Hicks and Klimoski (1987) study. Moreover, the decision involvement in the pre-training communication with the trainer which could benefit the effective transfer of training, coincides with Clark et al. (1993) finding that decision involvement has been highly relevant to job utility thus relates to transfer of training. If the trainee is involved in a training program, the more effort that he or she put in the training input, the more he or she would perceive the training is useful for the current job.

#### **4.4.5. Pre-training expectations/ Goals**

Most participants claimed that they did not have any exact learning goals from the manager or the trainer. And they do not set any goals for the training program. Some think that the goal for the training program is to learn what is expected to do in the job, as one put it,

*F: Learn the job so you can do it well. No particular specified goals. Just to learn the tasks so that you can do it well."*

*C: well, I'm not sure what they expected, maybe they told me, but I just can't remember. I think all of them told me their goals before the training started, like*

*what you expected to achieve and learn after the course, where you are going to take away. I guess mostly, it's consistent, because these are very straight forward trainings. I mean the goal of these trainings, just by its name. You know what it's about—presentation, is just about improving your skills to present your ideas clearly and effectively; “think on your feet”, think very quickly—so I don't think there's going to be any misunderstanding between the trainee and the trainers in terms of what you expect to achieve. You know what you need to learn.*

For others, some claimed that there are proper goals set for them in the start of the training program. However, they did not comment on whether it influence the final transfer outcome. Examples are:

*E: for each of the section we learnt, they have the key goals, for example, the evacuation drill, the cabin preparation drill, and emergency decent, things that you knew you gonna cover. They did tell you that what you need to learn, because that's obviously the thing you gonna be tested.*

Contrary to the vast literature supporting the positive relationship between pre-training goals and expectation, the response from the trainees do not show strong relationship between goal setting and training outcome.

#### **4.4.6. Post-Training determinants**

Some participants said that they have post-training assessment to examine what they have learnt from the training and how effective the training was.

*M: We also do what we call post-implementation review, so after a project is finished the team usually sits down and discusses what went wrong, what went well; how we can do things better..... it's led by our manager but we have these reviews for every project; after every project. But I think after finishing the course, I was in a better position to be in those kinds of meetings and provide feedback or receive feedback.*

The response varies. Some consider post-training assessment or performance appraisal can be a motivation to learn and to transfer. They think it is related to performance appraisal thus pushes the trainee to learn and to transfer. As one put it,

*E: Have to pass the post-training test so that you could operate. It affects the motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. It also affects the transfer of training, need to practice a lot in the training period.*

*R: It works both ways. It is required that every employee need to attend at least three training out of the twenty training program allocated to you in order to qualify for the performance appraisal. It is to show the development has been done.”*

One thinks that post-training assessment should be beneficial to trainees by providing them useful feedback for future transfer.

*R: Give feedbacks to the trainees are very important, very critical at the end of the workshop. If he does not give feedback to the trainees, trainees wouldn't know where to improve.*

While someone think it is beneficial to transfer, some others do not think in the same way. Some thought that either pre-training assessment or post-training assessment does not affect the transfer. As one said,

*E: Not the assessment itself. For me personally make no impact. The assessment I personally think is just a formality that they need to do their part, which is to show that we have attained the certain level of understanding, so I don't think the training assessment after the training helps transfer.*

The past literature have researched and examined the post-training activities have mostly focused on the post-training transfer environment and stakeholder support such as peer and supervisor support. Few have examined the post-training assessment influences on transfer of training. Since the response from the participants varies, there is need to explore in this area with various corporate contexts.

## **4.5. Trainees' perceptions on work environment**

In this section, trainees' perception of manager/ supervisor support, peer support, opportunity to use the skills and knowledge, and organizational continuous-learning culture will be analysed and grouped respectively.

### **4.5.1. Manager/Supervisor support**

Most participants agree that manager or supervisor have influence on their transfer of training. Managers/ supervisors support and opportunity to use or opportunity to apply is related since in most case it is the manager or the supervisor give the trainee opportunity to use the skills and knowledge. Examples are:

*E: supervisor support does help in some cases. Especially Financial modelling. Because I do a lot of modelling a lot, which assigned by the manager and I imagine that in the future I will do a lot of that too*

#### **1. Manager should be aware of training content**

Some participants suggest that the manager should be aware of the training content. If the manager could be aware of what the trainee has learnt or supposed to learn from the training program, he or she would better assist the transfer of training and try to provide opportunity for trainee to apply and practice the skills. Examples are:

*M: The managers are well aware of the content. They know what they courses entail and usually they would try and provide...say for example for a technical skill one, if they know that say for example you have done the data quality course, they will try and put you in a project, which has something to do with data quality so you can use what you've learned. I think not only does it help the consultant at a personal level; it helps the business to have someone who has actually done the course and this builds the strength of the company.*

*D: I don't want the manager to attend the training with me, but I would prefer the manager knows the content of the program*

*R: Ideally, the manager should attend these training programs so that they have an idea of what's going on in the program, and then to send the right person to the right training program, because they would know how the training program will help the individual. The person who has gone to the training, might or might not come back with the skills or knowledge that he supposed to know, if the manager knows the content of the training program, he might identify whether this person has learnt from the training or not.*

That participants would like their manager to be aware of the training content is in line with the findings from Clark et al (1993). It means that company should make efforts to ensure that supervisor or manager is aware of the training information so that he or she could better match the training to proper job requirement (Clark et al., 1993). It also relates to Baldwin et al. (2000) suggestions that manager should not only state the importance of learning but also actively participate in the transfer of training involving actively in goal setting, and providing feedbacks.

## **2. Feedback is a very important factor**

Participants believe feedbacks from the managers are very useful for the transfer. But in the real world context, they do not quite often receive feedback from the managers after the training finishes. One participant claimed that he is not sure whether the feedback from manager would motivate me to apply in the future, but it tells me which has been done good, and which needs to be improved. As he said,

*E: he basically, after the presentation I gave, he would have some feedback, but whether it relates to the transfer that you mentioned, I don't know. He just gave me a feedback—Ok, well done, I like this and this, these areas you could prove—just a general feedback on the presentation you give.*

One participant said there is no verbal feedback from the co-worker although he thought that feedback is very important for improvement. As he said,

*F: Maybe it's because we are on the same level, they don't consider themselves as mentor, that's why they did not really give any feedback. But I think feedback is very important, it helps you to improve. The only feedback that I've got is from the manager"*

One participant also claimed that feedback is valid and genuine, but need to consider the appropriateness of feedback and possibility to change the behavior. Something can be improved with the training, while something is hard to change even with long-term training, let alone the short-term training.

*E: because some things you can improve, and some you can't. For example, if he asks, just an example, not necessary true, if he ask you to speak quickly, or speak more slowly, it's not necessarily that you can change, for you speak like that for the past 30 years, and sometimes it's just a personal style. I don't think it need to change, not that much.*

*They guide and motivate the employees to attend those training programs. At the end of the day, if the manager knows two or three of the team member would go for the training program, it will make the training more effective, more productive, hence makes the team perform better. The role of the manager is not just sending the team members to sit for the training, but have to think from his point of view how these team members would benefit from the training and how they would help me to do better. The employees need to understand why they are attending for the training program and it is the manager's role to let them understand this point. The manager needs to guide the employees why the program is beneficial to them. It is important that the manager himself should attend the training program in the first place, so that he could know the content of the training and tell the team members that this training program is good, to let them know that I've attended the training program and that's what I can do, and also if you attend the program, that's what you can do.*

The finding that manager/supervisor support is relevant to transfer of training is in line with the literature which explored the relationships between manager/supervisor support and transfer of training (Facteau et al., 1995). The components of consequence cues of Rouiller and Goldstein (1993) definition of transfer climate construct are worthy to be



noted. The various responses concerning manager feedback were similar to components in consequences cue which are positive feedback, negative feedback, punishment and no feedback. It has to note that given the fact that many trainee did not receive proper feedback from the managers to encourage their learning, no feedback to some extent inhibit transfer of training. The finding has shown that most participants welcome feedback from the managers.

#### **4.5.2. Peer support**

Responses have shown that most participants consider peer support has positive influence on their transfer of training. Some claim that they learnt a lot of knowledge and skills while working with colleagues. They are not only a source to support the transfer of training, but also source of learning. One participant received on-the-job training to learn from his co-worker. He thought it was good because it is good to learn from someone else and he can always learn new things from others. Another participant found that she has got strong support from her team and the team support is the most important factor that affects her transfer of training. Examples are:

*W: The thing is, the market knowledge is kind of you get from your team. They gave me the overview picture of the market, the market case, what kind of order I will be doing, for example, in the whole course, they may give me everything, I might only need, to say, half of them, based on what market I was doing.*

*W: We have different teams, looking after different market. Those individual markets all have its very unique market knowledge, so those kind of knowledge I don't think I get it from the training course, I got those knowledge from my own team course, with all the new "bees", means the people who just joined the company.*

*F: I was assigned to the co-worker to learn from him. The official on-the-job training period was for two weeks, but you always learn something new because you work closely with someone. Of course you can always ask questions for your co-worker."*

1. Peer support is a relevant factor

Most responses have shown that peer support could have influence on individual's transfer of training. Similar to manager/supervisor support factor, Most trainees believe that peers support have influence on their transfer of training. Examples are:

*I think the colleagues are usually very supportive so they will also be less intimidating to present...for example, to my colleagues than to present at a client site. So what we usually do is if we need to present or do a client presentation, the workmates are more than happy to sit in and listen to your first presentation and provide you with feedback and then you can go about and do your presentation at the client site. So the environment is very supportive.*

2. Peer support is also a source of motivation for individual to learn and to transfer

Some participants claim that colleagues are role models who let him be aware of what he lacks and what he needs to learn. It is a source of motivation, which motivates him to learn and to apply what he has learnt so that to catch up with the colleagues. Examples are:

*C: I thought these, cause I saw other financial modelers, the other people, did the similar jobs; I saw they use all those things, all those functions, to develop their models*

3. peer support has no influence on transfer of training

However, only one or two stated that colleagues have no influence on his transfer of training. Their view their personal learning style or motivation is the major source of transfer drive, regardless of supervisors' feedback or encouragement.

*E: Peers do not really talk much about the training they attended and what they have learnt.*

*E: For me the application of knowledge and skills, I won't say what my peer has said will affect me. For me, it is either I am really interested, I really want the job, so I want to learn. And I am always a curious person, anything that appears to me interesting,*

*R: If I does not like the job or I does, the peers don't have any influence on me. For me, I am as the individual for the job. Even if others have done a shabby, I don't mind because I have my own expectation, my own expectation of the company, and I am trying to meet them, if not surpass them, irrespective of others' work if they do better or worse, I have my own goals.*

Some participants responded that colleagues have talked about the training programs after the training if they went to the same training together, which is good. But it is just chatting with no substantial help for transfer.

*E: we talk about that. Which one is good—which teacher is good; which one is funny; which one is absurd. Yeah, we talk about that; and it's useful not in generally, the next day after the training, we talk about that, and then we forget about it. It's just a chatting.*

*S: but in real environment we don't talk a lot about that. If there is stronger support, it would help transfer.*

#### 4. Feedback from the colleagues

Feedback from the colleagues has influence on transfer of training, which works in the similar way as supervisor/manager support.

*F: no verbal feedback from the co-worker although he thought that feedback is very important for improvement. As he said, "Maybe it's because we are on the same level, they don't consider themselves as mentor, that's why they did not really give any feedback. But I think feedback is very important, it helps you to improve. The only feedback that I've got is from the manager*

*E: Not really get feedback from them. Not often. Maybe from the beginning, you will be "buddied up" with a more experienced team member. They might tell you, but it also depends on people's character. Some people maybe very harsh, some might be very encouraging...Feedbacks are so useful, You don't get feedback unless your supervisor,.....but at the same time, I could a non crew*

*supervisor, someone at the same level as me, who has more experience, so that they could give me some useful tips, I would appreciate*

Some Interviewee contradict themselves in the interview. On one hand, they consider peer support has influence on their transfer of training; on the other hand, they said that peer support does not take a big part and there is no encouragement for applying the skills and knowledge from the peers.

*Not really get feedback from them. Not often. Maybe from the beginning, you will be “buddied up” with a more experienced team member. They might tell you, but it also depends on people’s character. Some people maybe very harsh, some might be very encouraging...Feedbacks are so useful, You don’t get feedback unless your supervisor,.....but at the same time, I could a non crew supervisor, someone at the same level as me, who has more experience, so that they could give me some useful tips, I would appreciate.*

#### **4.5.3. Opportunities to use the training skills**

Opportunity to use is considered as one of the most important work environment factor by the participant. Some consider it is one of the most important factors among all. One participant admitted that after the three-day soft-skill listening skill training program and the five-day technical-oriented data quality controlling program, she applied the listening skills and data quality controlling skills a lot because she needs to use these skills a lot of times regularly. As she said,

*“I was able to utilize what I learned fairly quickly when I’m on a project specific to these things. And as a consultant I listen to clients every single day so with that skill I was able to build on the skills that I learned on the course.”*

For some other program such as soft-skill ones, presentation skills and feedback skills and technical-oriented data modelling skills, she considered she applied less because

*“I do need to use it but not as often, so not on a day-to-day basis, so every now and then I will need those skills. At those points I probably need to refer to my materials to remember what I’ve learnt.”*

Several participants emphasized that because there are no opportunities to use the skills and knowledge learnt from the training program, they failed to transfer and forget in a period of time. Examples are:

*M: I didn’t have a chance to be...so for the technical one, I didn’t have a chance to go on another project, which has anything to do with visualisation technique at this stage. And the negotiation one is – I don’t do that every day so it’s more to do with sales and I don’t do a lot of pre-sales work so I don’t necessarily need to negotiate at that level.*

*S: leadership training does not have opportunity to apply, so cannot even remember the content*

*D: It cannot be transferred because there is no opportunity. Money laundering does not happen often so there is no opportunity to use.*

Opportunity to use the skills and knowledge cannot be separated from supervisor and peer support, because it is usually the supervisor or the colleagues who assign the tasks and set the goals for trainee to transfer. However, some participants also claim that trainees themselves should take the initiatives to seek the opportunity or talk to the manager concerning about the seeking the opportunity to transfer.

#### **4.5.4. Organizational Continuous learning culture**

Some participants believe the learning culture positively affect her application of skills and knowledge

*M: we do have usually a monthly catch-up or what we call ‘knowledge share’, so we share knowledge. So every month we have a topic or someone presents...someone in our team will present what they have learnt from a project*

*or from a course or from anything. So they encourage everyone to share and provide their inputs. ....And the learning culture is more around the courses that have been provided. So everyone knows that there are courses and there's always conversation about who is going to which course, when and we will discuss amongst ourselves whether the course was effective or how was the trainer etcetera, etcetera.*

*W: Every time when there is some updates, either system wise or knowledge wise, they give us the training. So the training course in the company is not like one-off training, then afterwards they don't take your view, they say bye-bye and then you have taken care of yourself. So every time there is any updates or there is an issue that they might think you need to learn, they provide training course to you.*

Participants claimed that the purpose of the training is consistent with the organizational culture of delivering best quality products and service to the customers and organizational learning culture of consistently up-skilling the employees. She admits that the organization which has a continuous learning culture would provide a good environment for employee's transfer of the training skills. She believed that company encourage learning and development

*"If you want extra training to extend your skills you can apply for training budgets"*

The positive relationship between individual transfers shown in the finding is in with Tracey, Tannenbaum and Kavanagh (1995) study of transfer of 104 supermarket managers of a supermarket chain. Measured the organizational transfer climate, also developed a continuous-learning work environment. They found that transfer climate and a continuous learning culture aggregated at the group level predicted individual manager's transfer behaviour. The findings from the responses are generally in line with the findings from past research.

#### **4.6. Summary**

By using the data management method, the data collected from the interviews were grouped into several subcategories under the three major categories of trainee characteristics, training design and delivery and work environment. Some significant findings were generated from the data concerning trainee's perspective.

In the section of trainee characteristics, trainees' perception of training motivation was firstly discussed. Trainees do not usually distinguish motivation to learn and motivation to transfer or pre-training motivation as many transfer of training studies indicate. Trainees do consider the importance of motivation in transfer of training and they claim that there are some intrinsic and extrinsic components that drive the training motivation. Besides, the other two perception-oriented, perceived job and career utility are considered by participants that are relevant to transfer of training. The findings have brought out two factors which were not initially include in the literature, but considered to be important in transfer, which are trainee's personal learning style and trainee's perception towards training.

In the section of training design and delivery, content relevance has been shown as important factor affect transfer of training. It directly relates to trainee's perception of training, whether it is relevant to some extent can be interpreted as whether it is useful. Hard skill training and soft skill training were perceived differently by trainees as they think hard skill training are more practical and easy to transfer, whilst soft skill training can be generalized into different contexts. Trainees do not think option to attendance has influence on transfer of training though they prefer the training is voluntary. Trainer quality is a very important factor considered by trainees. Unprofessional trainer would have negative impact on trainees. Pre-assessment is researched by the literature, but not so often used by corporate. Trainees believe it is also a factor for training motivation. Post-training assessment has been under-researched and need more research on this.

In the section of work environment, there are some important findings as well. The results from the interview shows that work environment factors have influence on trainee transfer of training and training effectiveness. It is consistent with the past literature (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Baldwin & Magjuka, 1991; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992). Manager/supervisor's support is important which can be explored in detail.

Trainees suggest that manager should be aware of the training content and provide valid feedback to assist transfer in the post-training period. Peer support has influence on transfer, in which cases it function as peer pressure. The findings have shown that opportunity to use and organizational continuous learning culture are also relevant to individual transfer of training.

In the next chapter, the findings from this chapter will be summarized again. Meanwhile, compare and construct of the findings and the previous literature will be discussed. Limitations of the study will be listed. Last but not least, theoretical implications and managerial implications will be discussed for future research opportunities and practical managerial practice in the corporates.



## **Chapter Five: Conclusions and implications**

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### **5.1. Introduction**

This dissertation has discussed and examined the past literature of transfer of training starting with the explanation of training evaluation, transfer of training definition, and key conceptual models such as Baldwin and Ford (1988) transfer of training model, Holton (1996) factors affecting transfer of training, Holton et al. (2000) Learning Transfer System Inventory, and Kontoghiorghes (2004) systematic conceptual model of transfer of training, which are fundamental and widely cited in the later literature. The dissertation has taken Kontoghiorghes (2004) systematic conceptual model as the guide to lead the discussion between various predictor factors and the transfer of training outcomes. Research streams were discussed and relationships between various predictor and mediating factors and transfer of training outcomes were also explained and discussed in detail in the literature review. The recent research trends of emphasis on trainees' perception and increasing studies from various countries concerning contextual diversity were mentioned.

The aims of the dissertation is to find out trainee's perception of what factors influence their transfer of training and to examine the consistencies and inconsistencies of the empirical studies with the past literature. Built on the research objectives, methodology of using qualitative semi-structured interviews to collect data was discussed. Data was analysed based on three basic categories of the factors and grouped. In the last Chapter, the research findings were displayed, analysed and discussed. In this Chapter, we will summarize the findings from the last chapter. Then, limitations of this study and theoretical and managerial implications along with future research opportunities will be discussed.

### **5.2. Summary of the findings**

#### **5.2.1. Findings of trainees' perception of trainee characteristics**

Most trainees believe that training motivation is one of the most important factors of transfer of training since some of them claimed that it is the trainee's own willingness to learn and to apply the skills and knowledge learnt from training program. This is in line

with findings that show positive relationship between training motivation and transfer of training.

Different from Kontoghiorghes (2004), trainees do not distinguish between motivation to learn and motivation to transfer as many studies have explored and discussed between these two. Digging into the drives of training motivation in-depth, it is found that most trainees believe intrinsic components of motivation are the most crucial drives, while some considered that extrinsic components of motivation such as peer support and peer pressure lead to motivation to learn and to transfer.

There are both intrinsic and extrinsic sources that influence trainees' motivation. There are three intrinsic factors. First, the results have shown that personal motivation to learn new things is a definite motivation. Second, genuine personal interest in doing the job is another major source of motivation. Third, interest in career development is a source for motivation. For the extrinsic sources, the influence of transfer climate on the motivation to learn and to transfer, especially peer support or peer pressure.

All the trainees state that if they perceive the training is useful for doing the current job or for performance improvement, the transfer is more likely to happen and is more effective. It is in line with the past literature. Trainees said that although the training was not directly related, she has the motivation to learn and to apply because she thought that the skills taught are very useful, which could be generalized to apply in other business contexts. Several trainees raised the importance of perceived career utility that may affect transfer of training. Overall, the findings from the category of trainee characteristics are in line with past literature that shows strong connection between relevant factors and transfer of training (Clark et al., 1993; Colquitt et al., 2000; Fecteau et al., 1995; Goldstein & Rouiller, 1993).

There are some other factors which trainees considered very important in transfer of training, but have not identified in the literature review. One is trainee's personal

learning style. This factor has not been researched by past literature which can be developed in the future. The other factor is trainees' perception of training as a mediating factor of transfer of training. It is in line with some the literature examining the trainee's job attitudes and transfer of training, but not yet identified by the literature review.

### **5.2.2. Findings of Training design and delivery factors**

The finding from Trainees that content relevant relates to transfer of training is in line with the past literature (Axtell et al., 1997; Kontoghiorghes, 2002; Rouiller & Goldstein, 1993). The results from the different perception of hard skill training and soft skill training are also in line with the past literature to some extent. Near transfer is more occurred in short-term technical specific training which is easier to transfer, while far transfer occurs in soft skills training which is hard to transfer but can be generalized into various contexts (Clark & Voogel, 1985; Goldstein, 1986; Yamnill & McLean, 2001)

When participants were asked whether they think option to attendance has impact on their transfer of training behaviour, most of them hold the view that whether it is voluntary or mandatory is not that important for the transfer of training behavior, although they would prefer they have a choice to attend the training or not.

Most trainees consider trainer quality is a very important factor in the training program. They believe that trainer quality is a factor of motivation what motivates their transfer. Trainees also think an unskilled trainer would demotivate the trainee with inconsistencies of what is expected and what actually happens. It would finally exact negative impacts on the training outcome and transfer of training.

There is a shortage of empirical studies linking pre-training needs assessment to transfer outcome. The fact that most corporates do not use proper pre-training assessment or needs assessment from the responses has demonstrated the lack of research in this area.

It is in line with Burke and Hutchins' (2008) view that not many corporate take pre-training needs assessment as the precursor of training outcome.

However, from trainees' responses, they value pre-training assessment and think it is useful for the actual learning and transfer, which in line with Hicks and Klimoski (1987) study. Moreover, the decision involvement in the pre-training communication with the trainer which could benefit the effective transfer of training, coincides with Clark et al. (1993) finding that decision involvement has been highly relevant to job utility thus relates to transfer of training. If the trainee is involved in a training program, the more effort that he or she put in the training input, the more he or she would perceive the training is useful for the current job.

Post-training assessment has not been researched vastly, but considered by trainee that it is a relevant factor. Some consider that the post-training assessments push them to learn and to transfer, which can be seen as a motivation.

There are some other issues raised by the trainees. One is that some found there are skill relapse of the training program, especially in some of the soft skill training programs. The other important factor is that the inconsistencies between what is expected and what actually happens in the training might be a factor that affects transfer of training.

### **5.2.3. Findings of work environment factors**

Trainees do not distinguish between transfer climate and work environment as the literature do. Most trainees agree that managers or supervisors have influence on their transfer of training. Some trainees suggest that the managers should be aware of the training content. If the managers could be aware of what the trainee has learnt or supposed to learn from the training program, they would better assist the transfer of training and try to provide opportunity for trainee to apply and practice the skills.

Trainees believe feedbacks from the managers are very useful for the transfer. However, according to the response of trainees, they do not quite often receive feedback from the managers after the training finishes.

Peer support as another social support factor besides manager/supervisor support, function in the same way as manager support. The finding has shown that peer support has influence on their transfer of training. In some cases, it is also a source of motivation for individual to learn and to transfer. Only a few consider peer support has no influence on their transfer.

For the factor of opportunity to use the skills and knowledge, trainees consider that managers/ supervisors support and opportunity to use or opportunity to apply is related since in most case it is the manager or the supervisor give the trainee opportunity to use the skills and knowledge.

Perceptions of organizational continuous-learning culture vary according to the situational context such as the industries and organizations that the trainees work in. Trainees believe positive continuous learning culture would affect their transfer of training. Nevertheless, it depends on the contextual situation which may result in different training outcomes

Overall, the findings of the relationship between work environment and transfer of training are in line with previous studies (Cheng & Ho, 2001; Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Tracey et al., 1995). The complex relationships among variables from the findings mostly supported those previous literatures. However, further in-depth studies about how and in which way that factors of work environment such as managers and colleagues and organizational learning culture would support individual transfer of training would be further explored.

### **5.3. Limitations**

There are several limitations of this dissertation. First of all, the findings from the research have a low level of generalizability. It is a common limitation for qualitative research with small sample. This dissertation has a sample of 10 participants from corporate environment of diverse industries in New Zealand. It ranges from retail trade, hospitality, airline service, banking and financial service, etc. Most of who works in the service industries or doing the job which is related to service. Since the data was collected from multiple cases with various training program, it is hard to compare and contrast on the detailed training method and training content of each training program. However, our purpose was to explore trainees' perception of various training factors that affect their transfer of training. Therefore, the methodology and research design was appropriate for this study.

Second, it might be a better idea to conduct a pre-training and post-training survey to examine their change of behaviour with the trainee's perception of transfer of training.

It is because transfer of training, according to Kirkpatrick (1967) training evaluation, it is more about the examination of the transfer behaviour, rather than the first cluster of its evaluation model, the reaction and feeling of the trainees. This can be further explored in the future research.

Third, there is a limitation on the literature sources that used to distinguish the target of lower to middle level employees from the manager level training. This study aims to focus on the perceptions of lower to middle level ordinary employees. Their perceptions on transfer of training are to some extent different from the manager level perception since they are from different angles. However, some previous literatures used in the dissertation are focus on the managers' perception due to the lack of transfer of training focusing on lower level employees in the past. Though they have different focus of perception by the trainees, the training programs share the similar structures and relationships between transfer factors. Thus, it is also necessary to study the training programs in the past literature even though it is based on manager level training program and focus on managers. Furthermore, it leaves space for further exploration of the training program of the lower to middle employees. Moreover, the limitation of lack of sufficient literature also occurs while encountering the focus of New Zealand focus. Since most of the existing literature is based on US and UK with only a few on Canada

and EU and Asian countries, perceptions on transfer of training focusing on New Zealand are seriously under researched. That is the reason why it is difficult to refer to the existing research in New Zealand. Although the training programs are different across different countries, it is still worthwhile to study the research done in other countries. It is because the trainees who contributed their views and participated in this research are mainly work in multinational corporates in New Zealand or big New Zealand corporates having business overseas. Those companies usually provide training programs within or outside New Zealand which share certain level of standardization. Therefore, though there is limitation on insufficient literature used for the NZ focus and lower level employees, it is still useful and worthwhile to study the existing literature.

## **5.4. Implications and future research**

The research findings have several implications for corporates and for future academic research.

### **5.4.1. Theoretical implication and future research**

Firstly, in this study, participants are aware of the importance of motivation in transfer of training. Moreover, the findings of intrinsic and extrinsic components that drive trainees' motivation to learn and to transfer have been explored. On one hand, it has reinforced the importance of individual motivation in the transfer of training as the previous studies has explored (Colquitt et al., 2000; Fecteau et al., 1995; Mathieu et al., 1992; Noe & Schmitt, 1986). On the other hand, the findings of intrinsic and extrinsic components that drives trainee motivation to transfer has explored in-depth source of the motivation, which has been rarely explored in the past. Thus, future studies can be explored more into what drive trainees' motivation to learn and motivation to transfer, as the findings of intrinsic and extrinsic components in the study.

Secondly, the findings from the category of training design and delivery have shown that pre-training activities such as pre-training assessment and post-training activities such as post-training assessment have been valued by trainees. They believe that appropriate pre-training and post-training activities would assist their transfer of training. The past literature have researched and examined the post-training activities have mostly focused on the post-training transfer environment and stakeholder support

such as peer and supervisor support. Few have examined the post-training assessment influences on transfer of training. Therefore, there is a lack of research in this area. Since the response from the participants varies, there is need to explore in this area with various corporate contexts. Future research can explore more in the aspect of pre-training assessment and post-training assessment.

Thirdly, the findings from the category of work environment have shown that trainees not only value the support from their managers and colleagues to assist them in their transfer of training, but also indicated that trainees are aware of how and in which contexts that managers and colleagues should help them in assisting and supporting their transfer of training. Though manager and peer support have been researched a lot in the previous studies, there were not many studies explored in-depth how and in which contexts that managers and colleagues could support individual's transfer of training. It has significant practical implications for the future research.

#### **5.4.2. Managerial implication and future research**

Besides the theoretical implications for future research opportunities, there are also several managerial implications generated from the dissertation. The managerial implications are applied in line with the theoretical implications based on the findings from three basic categories.

Firstly, manager should be aware that there are intrinsic and extrinsic components that drive trainees' motivation to learn and motivation to transfer. Be aware of that, managers could better assist trainees' transfer and know how to motivate them to transfer. Being aware of the different intrinsic and extrinsic needs, managers could know how to motivate employees to transfer what they have learnt from training to actual workplace, thus improving the performance.

Secondly, transfer activities as pre-training assessment and post-training assessment are crucial in assisting trainee's transfer and can affect their transfer motivation. Managers



should involve in these periods and provide opportunities for trainees to transfer. For example, managers should actively be involved in the pre-training and post-training activities to set goals and provide positive and constructive feedbacks to motivate trainees for their transfer.

Thirdly, manager should be aware of the training content, so that they could better assist the trainee's transfer of training. To assist trainee's effective transfer of training, manager are suggested to be aware of the training content, thus setting goals and providing feedbacks for the trainees. Knowing the content, managers could better in setting goals and know what kinds of opportunities are appropriate for particular trainees to practice transfer.

## **5.5. Conclusion**

This chapter has summarized the findings from the previous chapter according to the three basic categories. Meanwhile, the findings are generally compared to the previous literature and similarities and contrasts were re-stated. Limitations were discussed as the sample was too small to generalize. But the small pool of sample of participants from various industries who attended different training has shown the rich findings from trainees' perspective. Implications and future research opportunities were explored and discussed according to the findings from this study. Theoretically, deeper sources of training motivation from trainee perspectives, post-training and pre-training activities, and contextual situations of how work environment can assist transfer of training are future research opportunities to be explored. To align with these theoretical implications, managerial implications are also explored and discussed. The research area of transfer of training dates back to the 80s, which has a research history of over thirty year. Though various studies have explored diverse factors including how they affect transfer of training, there is still a long way to go to and many research gaps to fill for improving training effectiveness and work performance.

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# Participant Information Sheet



**Date Information Sheet Produced:**

July 2011

**Project Title**

Transfer of training in New Zealand corporate context: A look into the NZ corporate training programs to establish the factors that influence its effectiveness.

**An Invitation**

I would like to interview you as part of the source for my small research project in the area of training and development. My name is Jin Guan (Jess), a student who is doing Master degree of Business majoring in Human Resource Management at Auckland University of Technology. I am currently undertaking a small research project for my dissertation which leads to achieve a Master's degree. My research interests is to find out the effectiveness of transfer of training based on certain training program provided by a NZ corporate and to identify the relevant factors that influence the transfer of training. Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time prior to the completion of data collection.

**What is the purpose of this research?**

The purpose of the project is to examine the effectiveness of transfer of training based on NZ corporate which provide internal training program and to identify the key factors that influence the transfer of training by conducting a qualitative research method with semi-structured interviews with the corporate employees. The information from the interview will be used only for the thesis and any academic conference papers and journal articles that may arise from it. The completed thesis will be placed in the University Library and an electronic copy will be placed on the internet so that it is easily accessible to everyone.

**How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?**

You have been identified because you have been referred by your company as someone who has undergone a recent training programme who might be interested in participating in this project, or through the personal social networks of the researcher. You have been invited to participate in this research because you have been attended or are currently attending a corporate training program for your job role. You have been invited because we are interested in understanding your experiences in this training programme and how it might be transferred to your everyday work activities. We are particularly interested in your perceptions, motivations, and other relevant factors associated with transfer of training in the workplace.

**What will happen in this research?**

I would like to invite six to ten employees who have attended the in-house training program provided by the organization and ask them about their views and perceptions about the effectiveness of transfer of training into the real workplace concerning three key aspects identified by the previous literature, which are trainee characteristics, transfer design and work environment support. I anticipate that an interview will take about 40-60 minutes, depending on how much you wish to say. The research result will be derived from the interviewees' knowledge and views about the topic.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

There will be low ethical risks for the participants, thus there are low discomforts and risks. Since cultural diversity of the NZ workforce is concerned in the research, participants will be asked about cultural or gender related questions. But it is not the focus of the research.

We acknowledge that there might be questions that you may not feel comfortable answering. In this case, we will remind you that you may choose not to answer the question and your response will be kept confidential. In addition, you may have the choice to withdraw the interview at any time you like.

Interviews will examine the positive and the negative aspects of the transfer of training. This research will respect that some of the findings will be of sensitive nature. However, we acknowledge that there might be questions that you may not feel comfortable answering. In this case, we will remind you that you may choose not to answer the question or if you choose to do so, your response and details of your organisation and work will not be identified. In addition, you may have the choice to withdraw the interview at any time you like.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

To alleviate the discomforts and risks to minimum level, the participants could choose not to answer certain questions if they cause discomforts or risks. The interviewees will remain confidential during the research process or after. If there are any Maori

participants involved in the research, principles of “partnership, participation, and protection” will be followed to treat Maori participants with respect.

**What are the benefits?**

The benefit of the dissertation for me is to lead me to gain a Master’s degree from the university. Moreover, the research gives me an in-depth understanding of the corporate in-house training program and how it works to help individual and organization to improve the performance. The benefits for the interviewees are that their views and perceptions concerning the training program are heard, which could contribute to improving the effectiveness of transfer of training.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Unless you explicitly agree otherwise, your identity will be kept confidential - your name will not be used in my thesis or any papers or articles. The audio-recording of your interview and the transcript will be kept by me in my laptop with a password to get access for maximum six years after which I will destroy them. The data that collected from the interviews will just be used for my dissertation. No one else will have access to the recordings and transcripts.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There is no financial cost for the participants to participate in the research, It will cost each participant about 40-60mins for the interview

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You will be given about two weeks to consider taking part in this research. We will contact you after this period via emails or phone to ascertain your participation including giving you more information about this research if required.

**How do I agree to participate in this research?**

If you’re interested in my research project and are willing to participate, a consent form will be sent to you via email and you’re welcome to fill in the consent form and send it back to the researcher via email.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

The participants could be given the result/feedback of the research if required.

**Researcher Contact Details:**



*Jess Guan: Jessica\_gg123@hotmail.com*

**Project Supervisor Contact Details:**

*Marcus Ho: Marcus.ho@aut.ac.nz*

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date final ethics approval was granted*, AUTECH Reference number *type the reference number*.**

## Appendix 2: Consent Form



# Consent Form

For use when interviews are involved.

**Project title:** Transfer of training in New Zealand corporate context: A look into the NZ corporate training programs to establish the factors that influence the effectiveness.

**Project Supervisor:** Marcus Ho

**Researcher:** Jin Guan (Jess)

Please tick:

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that I may withdraw myself or any information that I have provided for this project at any time prior to completion of data collection, without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ If I withdraw, I understand that all relevant information including tapes and transcripts, or parts thereof, will be destroyed.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a copy of the report from the research (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's

signature:

.....

Participant's name:

.....

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on *type the date on which the final approval was granted* AUTECH Reference number *type the AUTECH reference number*** Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.

### Appendix 3: Ethics Approval from ATEC



## MEMORANDUM

*Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (ATEC)*

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To: MarcusHo  
From: **Dr Rosemary Godbold** Executive Secretary, ATEC  
Date: 7 October 2011  
Subject: Ethics Application Number 11/224 **Transfer of training in the New Zealand corporate context: A look into corporate training programs to establish the factors that influence its effectiveness.**

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Dear Marcus

Thank you for providing written evidence as requested. I am pleased to advise that it satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (ATEC) at their meeting on 22 August 2011 and I have approved your ethics application. This delegated approval is made in accordance with section 5.3.2.3 of ATEC's *Applying for Ethics Approval: Guidelines and Procedures* and is subject to endorsement at ATEC's meeting on 31 October 2011.

Your ethics application is approved for a period of three years until 7 October 2014.

I advise that as part of the ethics approval process, you are required to submit the following to ATEC:

- A brief annual progress report using form EA2, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. When necessary this form may also be used to request an extension of the approval at least one month prior to its expiry on 7 October 2014;
- A brief report on the status of the project using form EA3, which is available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/research-ethics/ethics>. This report is to be submitted either when the approval expires on 7 October 2014 or on completion of the project, whichever comes sooner;

It is a condition of approval that ATEC is notified of any adverse events or if the research does not commence. ATEC approval needs to be sought for any alteration to the research, including any alteration of or addition to any documents that are provided to participants. You are reminded that, as applicant, you are responsible for ensuring

that research undertaken under this approval occurs within the parameters outlined in the approved application.

Please note that AUTECH grants ethical approval only. If you require management approval from an institution or organisation for your research, then you will need to make the arrangements necessary to obtain this.

When communicating with us about this application, we ask that you use the application number and study title to enable us to provide you with prompt service. Should you have any further enquiries regarding this matter, you are welcome to contact me by email at [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz) or by telephone on 921 9999 at extension 6902.

On behalf of AUTECH and myself, I wish you success with your research and look forward to reading about it in your reports.

Yours sincerely

Dr Rosemary Godbold

**Executive Secretary**

**Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee**

Cc: Jin Guan [jessica\\_gg123@hotmail.com](mailto:jessica_gg123@hotmail.com)