

Chapter 3

Constructing a Unified Framework and a Causal Model of Occupational Satisfaction, Trainee Reactions, Perception of Learning, and Perceived Training Transfer

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ABSTRACT

This chapter introduces the framework and causal model of occupational satisfaction, trainee reactions, perception of learning, and perceived training transfer. It argues that dimensions of occupational satisfaction, trainee reactions, and perception of learning have mediated positive effect on perceived training transfer. Perception of learning positively mediates the relationships between occupational satisfaction and perceived training transfer and between trainee reactions and perceived training transfer. Furthermore, the author hopes that understanding the theoretical constructs of occupational satisfaction, trainee reactions, perception of learning, and perceived training transfer through the use of the framework and causal model will not only inform researchers of a better design for studying occupational satisfaction, trainee reactions, perception of learning, and perceived training transfer, but also assist in the understanding of intricate relationships between different factors.

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INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, scholars and practitioners recognized that human capital is a critical source of organizational competitive advantage (Appelbaum et al., 2000; Benson et al., 2006; Pfeffer, 1998). Organizations often invest their resources in training and development in order to enhance organizational and employee performance (Burke & Hutchins, 2008). Furthermore, developing employee competencies is considered one of the core components of high performance work practices that can leverage the value of human capital (Becker & Huselid, 2006; Combs et al., 2006; Lawler et al., 1998). Training enables employees to learn and develop (Richey, 2000) and to achieve positive changes in their on-job behavior (Garvin et al., 2008). Employees must be able to adapt quickly to frequent changes in their work environment (Shrivastava, 1983) which requires a constant improvement of knowledge, development of new skills and adaptation of their habits. Companies acknowledge that training improves employee performance and productivity and represents a tool for managing risks related to new products, markets and technologies (Shrivastava, 1983). Some scholars identified transfer of training as the critical point through which training influences organizational effectiveness (Kozlowski et al., 2000). Organizations spend an immense amount of time and money on training in order to facilitate employees' learning of job-related competencies (Cascio, 2000). Emphasis has also been placed on effective training and specifically on transfer of training as a strategy for competitive advantage (Buhler, 2002; Dougherty, 2004; Velada et al., 2007). The turbulent environment has increased emphasis on transfer of training as organizations are forced to curb corporate expenditures, improve performance, and be held accountable for results (Harris Mulvaney et al., 2006). Many organizations have expressed concerns over the added value of training programs and the return on investment

from training (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Smith-Jentsch et al., 2001).

Transfer of training to the job may be a critical factor impacting a return on investment for training, and that lack of transfer is one of the most important issues facing organizations (Holton & Baldwin, 2000). Bates (2001) stated that participation in learning, training, and other developmental activities is an important strategy used for employee and organizational growth. Many researchers believed that training is a tool for learning, and learning leads to improvements in performance (Gephart et al., 1996). Furthermore, training and education is a valuable tool toward developing a learning organization (Wick & Leon, 1993); and may even be the first step on the road to learning organization development (Appelbaum & Goransson, 1997). Academicians adopt one of the basic principles of learning through action, defining the learner's participation and involvement in all stages of process (Boud & Walker, 1990; Jarvis, 2006; Knowles, 1984). The important individual learning activities can be stimulated by feedback as well as social learning activities such as discussions with colleagues (Mulder, 2013). The same principle has also been directed at learning in the working world, turning the learner much more active in the development of labor skills and abilities (Beckett, 1999; Billet, 1999). In recent years, organizations have been investing in training activities. In order to benefit from their investments in training, organizations need their workers to apply what they have learned to the job setting (Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001).

Transfer of training is an important concern for training researchers and practitioners because it is estimated that only a small percentage of training actually results in transfer to the job (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Transfer of training continues to concern organizations (Burke, 2001; Ford & Weissbein, 1997; Machin, 2002). Reports indicated that only about 10% of what is learned in training is applied on the job (Fitzpatrick, 2001). This finding presents a serious problem

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