The Relationship Between Workplace Spirituality and Transfer of Training

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Abstract: Nowadays, the demand of skilled workers in Malaysia has increased based on the increased automation and introduction to the latest technology for the Industrial Revolution 4.0. As a result, the organizations have to look into the ways to effectively engage their employees and utilize their full potential by enhancing positive transfer of training. However, review of literature revealed that so far, no study had been conducted between workplace spirituality towards transfer of training. The current study aims to investigate relationship between workplace spirituality and the transfer of training. To achieve the objectives of this study, a quantitative research design where the questionnaire will be used to address the problem. The study will use the whole population of the study from the employees involved in the "standard of procedure" training in one month at all X company branches in Malaysia to collect data using adapted questionnaire. Further, this data is statistically tested using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences for Windows Version (SPSS) version 25.0 for empirical investigations of the relationships between workplace spirituality and transfer of training. The expected findings of this study are the significant relationship between workplace spirituality dimensions and transfer of training. Results of the study imply that organizations should encourage employees to apply the importance of workplace spirituality in the employees so that they understand the concept of working properly in order to improve the organizational management function to encourage the betterment of the workforce.

Keywords: Workplace spirituality, transfer of training

1.   Introduction

Training is an important factor for development of the performance of employees and the productivities of all kinds' organizations. It is a continuous process for the improving the knowledge of employees to further develop their skills in doing their job as well as their behaviour, attitude, reaction to work and even the satisfaction with the job (Punia & Kant, 2013). Recognizing the importance of implementing training programs, there are organizations that are willing to spend a great deal on the development of their employees as a long-term investment strategy in creating a highly competitive organization. The same scenario also occurs in Malaysia. In 2016, the Malaysian Government has allocated RM3874 million for the development of education and training and the amount has increased to RM5904 million in 2017 (Economic Report 2016/2017). This proves that the government is committed to improving education and training development to the people. However, only a few reports of training assessment results show that effective training transfers are at an excellent level (Halbesleben, Cox & Hall, 2011; Nikandrou, Brinia & Bereri, 2009). This explains that most human resource training and development programs implemented by organizations or employers are ineffective and fail to transfer, supported by evidence of low levels of transfer of training (Renta-Davids, Jiménez-González, Fandos-Garrido & González-Soto, 2014; Pham, Segers & Gijselaers, 2010). The main problem of transfer of training where the employees are not able to apply their acquire skills appropriately in the workplace after attending formal training programmes. This is assumed that the participants often fail to transfer what they have learnt to the actual work routine (Tonhäuser & Büker, 2016).

Several authors have stated that only 10-20% of training content is optimally applied in the workplace (Kauffeld, Bates, Holton & Müller, 2008; Solga, 2005). It is also supported by Patterson (2009) where he found more than 80 percent of knowledge, skills and abilities from the training outcomes that has been learnt in training programs are not applied back into the actual workplace. Furthermore, according to the study of Tonhäuser and Büker (2016), 62% of training content is applied in the workplace right after attending a training, decreasing to 44% after six months and 34% after a year. The results may be differed regarding the transfer rates that will attributed to modifiable personal and situational determinants. Solely for this reason, it is very important to run an analysis of the determinants of transfer of training where they will prove which determinants significantly influence the success of learning transfer, whether it is positive or negative. Since then, it has been numerous reports in the current literature that training investment often does not succeed to get the expected outcome from the participants (Wen & Lin, 2014). To overcome these problems, positive relationships have been found between individual spirituality, workplace spirituality, and important psychological (individual) outcomes, such as life satisfaction and subjective wellbeing (Pashak & Laughter, 2012; Pagnini, Lunetta, Rossi, Banfi, Gorni, Cellotto & Corbo, 2011). In addition, there is also a significant relationship between spiritual beliefs and one's connection that will be a key factor in the creation of life meaning and purpose (Broad, 1997).

In Malaysia, the retail industry is one of the most important industries and contributes greatly to the country's economic growth. This sector has always contributed substantially in terms of its contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and the labour force rate involved in retail activities. This sector is formed from a combination of retailers, small businesses and wet markets. It is also a combination of supermarkets, unions and stores that sell certain equipment and are placed in a shopping mall in the municipality (Ali, Razak & Ahmad, 2010). Retail business is divided into small retail businesses (hawkers, distributors and retailers) and large retail businesses (supermarkets, hypermarkets, convenience stores and department stores). The retail industry in Malaysia continues to maintain its momentum, driven by economic and social developments and population growth. Key factors in the growth of retail industry are robust economic growth, rising population, growing youth segment, changing consumer trends, rising purchasing power and penetration of international players. According to the data of Global Retail Development Index (GRDI), Malaysia has secured top ten place since 2014 which are ninth place on 2014 and 2015 while third place on 2016 and 2017 (Ali, Razak & Ahmad, 2010). It is also stated by AT Kearney partner and head of South-East Asia, Soon Ghee Chua, where the firm's 2017 Global Retail Development Index (GRDI) had placed Malaysia behind China and India, driven by an influx of tourists, higher disposable income and government investments in infrastructure, all of which have provided a boost to the retail industry. However, there are many different categories involving retail business in our country such as food and sports' equipment. One of the most popular retail-based company in supplying sports' equipment is X Sports Sdn. Bhd.

As a result of the discussion above, the researcher found that transfer of training was an important issue in the success of a training effort. The ever-increasing competition in the business world nowadays has forced organizations to look into the ways to effectively engage their employees and utilize their full potential by enhancing positive transfer of training. One such way is workplace spirituality. The quest to finding out new and improved management concepts led researchers towards the area of workplace spirituality. Review of literature revealed that so far, no study had been conducted between workplace spirituality towards transfer of training, therefore, this study will be a first attempt to investigate the relationship between in the relationship between workplace spirituality and transfer of training among employees of X company.

1.1 Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are to examine the relationship between workplace spirituality and transfer of training among the employees in company X. This study aims specifically:

1. To identify the workplace spirituality and transfer of training level among employees at company X.
2. To evaluate the relationship between workplace spirituality and transfer of training among employees at company X.

1.2 Research Scope

This study is conducted to investigate the mediating effect of motivation to the relationship between workplace spirituality and the transfer of training. This study is conducted at all the branches of company X in quantitative way using questionnaire. All the staff involved in the "standard of operation" training in company X in the past three months will be the population in this study. This study will analyse the collected data using *Statistical Packages for Social Sciences for Windows Version* 25 (SPSS).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Transfer of Training

Transfer of training is described as "the application continued by learners to performance of jobs, individuals, community responsibilities of knowledge in learning activities" (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). In other words, transfer of training contributes to the transfer of knowledge, skills, behaviors and attitudes of the participants into their job setting after attending training. This requires an overall content of training to their work context and its perseverance over time to improve their job performance (Velada & Caetano, 2007; Mirivis, 1997). It is also has become a key criterion to evaluate the effectiveness of training programs (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). One the widely used model in this transfer process is Baldwin and Ford's Transfer of Training Model (1988). This model is pioneered by Baldwin and Ford, which is the basic model for measuring transfer of training. Testing of these transfers requires a clear understanding of what the transfer process is said to be and to identify factors affecting the transfer of training. Based on this model, there are three terms in the process of transfer of training i.e. training inputs, training outputs and training transfer conditions. Based on this model, the process of transfer of training takes place based on training input factor, training output and transfer conditions. Training input factors include three factors that influence the transfer of training i.e. trainer characteristics, training design and working environment. Output or training result is the amount of learning that occurs and the retention of the learning after the training. Transfer requirements refer to the generalization and preservation of all learning that has been learned in training after a certain period of time.

2.2 Workplace Spirituality

According to the concept of workplace spirituality, one of the ways of fulfilling individual's needs for meaning and purpose is by providing them a larger cause to work for where work becomes a means of finding oneself and contributing to the larger community (Mirvis, 1997). This notion of working for a higher cause propels employees to connect with themselves, others and humanity at large. Such work provides with meaning and purpose in life, gives enjoyment and energizes action (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000; Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). Research supports a favourable effect of workplace spirituality on employees' commitment, citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, wellbeing, retention and decision making (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003; Petchsawang & Duchon, 2009). Positivity at workplace enhances employees' self-esteem, reduces stress and strengthens their psychological wellbeing (Altaf & Awan, 2011), which in turn affects individual and organizational performance Jurkiewicz & Giacalone (2004). Although workplace spirituality includes many dimensions, the researcher has chosen to discuss the three of them which are meaningful work, community at work, positive organizational purpose that is commonly used definition by Mirvis (1997) in this study.

2.2.1 Meaningful Work

Steger, Dik, & Duffy (2012) has defined meaningful work as "work that is both significant and positive in valence (meaningfulness)." As such, employees who believe their work is meaningful report greater well-being (Steger, Dik & Duffy, 2012), perceive their work as more central and important (Arnold, Turner, Barling, Kelloway & McKee, 2007), place higher value on work (Harpaz & Fu, 2002); and report greater job satisfaction (Harpaz & Fu, 2002). According to the empirical research nowadays, work is often an essential source of meaning in life (Kamdron, 2005). Steger, Dik & Duffy (2012) also suggested that meaningful work might help people to have a deep understanding about themselves and also the world around them, facilitating their personal growth; in return, this facet helps to capture the broader life context of people's work. In fact, the organizational researchers have recognized people derive meaning from their work long time ago, and this meaning plays a crucial role in workers' attitudes and behaviors (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000).

2.2.2 Community At Work

Community at work means interconnectedness, which is an important element of workplace spirituality. An important dimension of workplace spirituality is having deep relationships with others (Ashmos & Duchon, 2000). This dimension focuses on individual behavior at the group level and focuses on the interaction of workers with co-workers. According to Neal & Bennett (2003), community at work involves mental, emotional and spiritual relationships between employees within an organization. This establishes the deep feeling of connectedness between individuals, the support, freedom of expression and forgiveness. Community at work is characterized by the feeling of connecting with colleagues, employees supporting each other, and connecting to common goals (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003).

2.2.3 Positive Organizational Purpose

According to the study by Ashmos & Duchon (2000) positive organizational purpose shows the extent to which employees perceive that their organization is having a positive purpose with regards to society and employees. When they accept that their organization is having such a purpose that they also have the feeling that they can serve a noble cause and can make a positive difference to others. This can be termed as "calling" which fulfils the higher order spiritual needs of an employee (Duchon & Plowman, 2005). Positive organizational goals include the concept that employees are willing to work in organizations with the goal of not only being a good company, but becoming an organization that has ethics or integrity and contributes more than ordinary companies, i.e. the welfare of employees, customers and society. Positive organizational goals are characterized by feelings connected with organizational goals, identifying with the mission and organizational values, and the organization's attention to employees (Milliman, Czaplewski & Ferguson, 2003). Therefore, the present study takes up three features of workplace spirituality which are as follows; meaningful in work is consistent with the study of Ashmos & Duchon (2000) means what is vital, stimulating and delightful about work. The second aspect is also consistent with the study conducted by Ashmos & Duchon (2000) which is community at work reveals the degree or level to which workers feel that they are part of their working community, where personal growth can be experienced, employees feel that they are valued for as an individuals and they have feeling of working together. Third aspect is positive organizational purpose is consistent with the study by Duchon & Plowman (2005) where it shows the extent to which workers see their organization is having some purpose that is positive in nature with regard to employees, society etc.

3. Research Framework

The framework of this study is adopted and adapted from a model of transfer of training process by Baldwin & Ford. Based on the objectives and constraints of the study, the research model is developed by the researcher as a guide to this study to see the relationship between each selected variable.
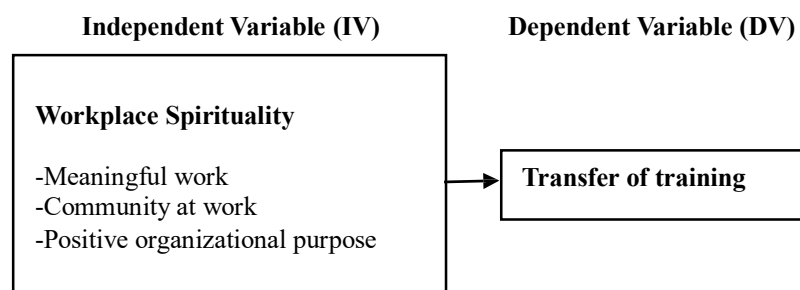

Figure 3.1 - Conceptual framework

> H1: There is a significant relationship between workplace spirituality and transfer of training
> H2: There is a significant relationship between meaningful work and transfer of training
> H3: There is a significant relationship between community at work and transfer of training
> H4: There is a significant relationship between positive organizational purpose and transfer of training

4. Research Methodology

This part discusses the methodology that has been used to carry out the study.

4.1 Research Design

This study using quantitative research to collect data from the quantity of respondent will be quantified and result will be analysed. The collected data will be analysed by using statistical analysis. Quantitative research is been using in this study based on collecting data using survey questionnaire. The purpose using survey questionnaire to collect the data is to find the relationship between workplaces spirituality and transfer of training among employees at company X.

4.2   Population and Sample

According to Yount (2006), the population of the study is the entire subject of the study. Meanwhile, according to Md Shah (2002), the study population is a large group of individuals or objects that have always been the main focus of scientific inquiry. Then this data and information will be analysed once collected. While in this study, the whole population of the respondents will be involved in the past three months of "standard operation" training is used in this study as the number of participants in that training is only 100. Therefore, in this present study decided to use all the staff involved in the training to get the whole picture about the transfer of training among the participants.
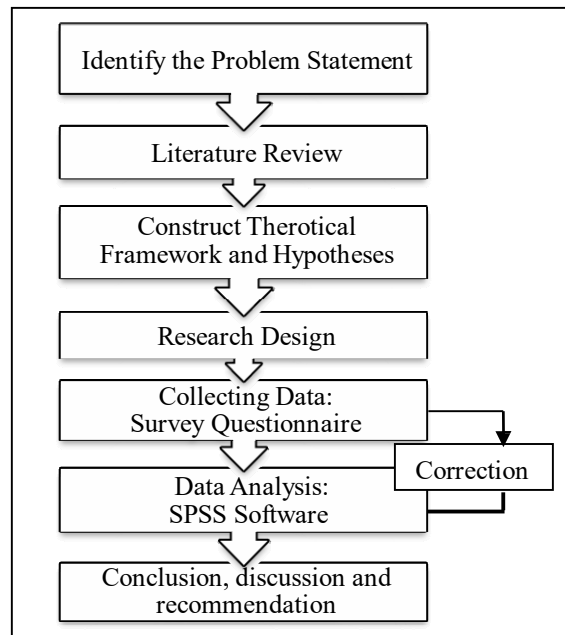
4.3   Research Process

Figure 4.1 - Process of research

4.4   Research Instrument

The following sections in this study will be explained the instruments (tools) that is used to evaluate the dependent and independent variables. In quantitative research, the tools assess the attitudes, beliefs and responses of the respondents. For the purpose of this study, the form of questioning was used as an instrument of study to study three dimensions of workplace spirituality (meaningful work, community at work and positive organizational purpose), motivation and transfer of training. Gillham (2007), stated that the question of is one of the methods to collect information or answers to the problem of the study by way of continuing or not continuing. The items have adapted by previous researchers and adopted according to the compatibility of the respondents to study the independent, dependent and mediating variables. Workplace spirituality is independent variable and transfer of training is dependent variable.

Table 4.1 - Research instrument

Variable	Variable factors	Item	Source
Workplace Spirituality	Meaningful work	7	Ashmos and Duchon (2000)
	Sense of community	9	Ashmos and Duchon (2000)
	Positive organizational purpose	4	Duchon and Plowman (2005)
Transfer of	Knowledge, skill, attitudes, other characteristics	1 6	Xiao (1996)
Overall		**3**	

4.4.1   Part A: Demography

In this questionnaire, Section A contained the demographic or background questions of the respondents. Among the demographic questions will be asked are gender, age, level of education and work experience among employees in company X.

4.4.2   Part B: Workplace Spirituality

Workplace spirituality is divided into three dimensions (Meaningful work, Sense of community and Positive organizational purpose) which was measured using questionnaire that developed by Ashmos and Duchon (2000) for meaningful work and sense of community while positive organizational purpose items developed by Duchon and Plowman (2005). The total of items are 20 items. A 6-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from 6 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), was used for each item.

4.4.3   Part C: Transfer of Training

Transfer of training will be measured using sixteen items developed by Xiao (1996) based on the knowledge, skill, attitudes, other characteristics (KSAOCs) and the training module of 'standard of operation' from company X training team. A 6-point Likert-type response scale, ranging from 6 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree), was used for each item.

4.4.4   6-point Likert-type Response Scale

In this study, the 6-point Likert-type response scale will be used for the research instrument. The researcher has decided to use Likert's scale 6 points based on three reasons of the past research conducted by Chomeya (2010) about the quality of psychology test. According to the study, the reliability values of Likert's scale 6 points are higher than the Likert's scale 5 points. In order to get a reliable result, the researcher will use Likert's scale 6 points. Besides that, Chomeya (2010) has suggested the use of Likert's scale 6 points instead of Likert's scale 5 points if the researcher want to reduce the deviation to be the least or reduce the risks which might be happened from the deviation of personal decision making. Lastly, since this research has several variables, the Likert's scale 6 points is more appropriate to use because it will make the test as a whole and this will not burden the respondents while the reliability is acceptable according to the standard of psychology test.

4.5   Data Analysis

Statistical Package for Social Science Version 25 (SPSS) will be used to analyse the data obtained from the survey. These data will be analysed to measure whether the objective of the study can be achieved or not. This study will use descriptive statistical methods and inferential statistics to test the objectives of the study.

4.5.1   Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics are terms that refer to data analysis that helps describe, demonstrate or summarize data in meaningful conditions (Awang, 2013). It is intended to present numerical facts that reveal world issues and can be understood by anyone even though they do not have background related to the statistical field. These statistics provide an easy summary of the data and methods of measurement. It also describes various types of data in a way that is easy to understand, useful and convincing. Statistic presentation can be illustrated through charts, tables, graphs and simple statistical measurements such as mean, mode and median (Awang, 2013). In summary, descriptive statistics include collection, classification, presentation and data analysis to give a clear picture of a situation (Willemse, 2004). Respondents' demographics are analysed using descriptive statistics such as gender, age, education level and experience. The frequency and percentage of each respondent's demographic will be analysed. Besides that, this method is also used to answer the first objective of this study which to measure the workplace spirituality level among employees at company X, and to investigate the transfer of training level among employees at company X. The mean value of the score is derived from the frequency and percentage value of each statement in the questionnaire. Table 4.2 below shows the Mean Score Range table to measure the level. The formula for the mean calculation is as follows.

Table 4.2 - Mean score range (JAKIM, 2017)

Mean Score Range	Level
4.75 – 6.00	Very High
3.50 – 4.74	High
2.24 – 3.49	Moderate
1.00 – 2.24	Low

4.5.2   Inferential Statistics

Inferential statistics is the decision-making process of population characteristics based on sample information (Awang, 2013). The goal is to look for a general pattern of large groupings by studying smaller groups in the hope that results will be extended to larger groups (Awang, 2013). To achieve the second objective of this study which is 1) to measure the relationship between workplace spirituality and transfer of training among employees at Al-Ikhsan Sports, the Pearson correlation method is used. According to Gregory (2014), the coefficient of correlation is to state the level of linear relationship between the two sets of scores obtained from the same individuals. The value of the coefficient of collation ranges from the value -1.00 to +1.00. The approximate value of +1.00 or -1.00 is said to have a strong or strong relationship between the two variables. While positive and negative symbols determine the direction or direction of the relationship (Gregory, 2014). Table 3.3 below shows "Rule of Thumb of Correlation".

Table 3.3 - Correlation coefficient value (Guilford, 1956)

Correlation Coefficient	Strength of correlation
0.0-0.2	Very low
0.2-0.4	Low
0.4-0.7	Moderate
0.7-0.9	High
0.9-1.00	Very high

5.   Conclusion

Earlier studies revealed deeper knowledge on workplace spirituality that leads to transfer of training. Further, it shows that adoption from a model of transfer process by Baldwin & Ford (1988) to encourage employees to apply the importance of workplace spirituality so that they understand the concept of working properly in order to improve the training effectiveness in an organization. This study provides an insight into the concept of workplace spirituality by examining its effect on the transfer of training. Three dimensions of workplace spirituality which are meaning at work, community at work and positive organizational purpose have been take into account for discovering workplace spirituality relationship with transfer of training. Furthermore, this study will help to increase the awareness of employees in X company about workplace spirituality will be increased. This is important to ensure the positive transfer of knowledge of employees from training place to the workplace. In addition, this study will help the employees to understand themselves and what their needs to contribute to the organization.

Acknowledgement

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