



## EXPLORING WAYS ON ENHANCING TRANSFER OF TRAINING: A REVIEW OF TESTED THEORIES ON TRANSFER OF TRAINING

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<p><b>Received:</b> 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021 <b>Accepted:</b> 21<sup>st</sup> September 2021 <b>Published:</b> 27<sup>th</sup> October 2021</p>	<p>The primary goal for this article is reviewing tested theories/models of transfer of training in order to better understand the theories and develop strategies to improve transfer of training. The theories are (the transfer of training process; learning transfer system inventory; the systematic approach; the AMO theory). Any organization's primary priority is the performance of its human capital. Training is one of the primary goals to improve performance, and learning is useless unless it is applied to performance. Therefore, this review concentrated more on the AMO theory since it is a new insight that has recently been tested in the context of transfer of training. Additionally, the AMO theory can be applied to better understand the behavioral processes that occur between management and leadership activities and improvement of potential performance. This review can assist human resource development professionals and policymakers in determining and understanding theories and assessment methods in order to improve the positive performance of transfer of training. This information is necessary for the conduct of high-quality research that will result in the development of appropriate solutions to challenges associated with transfer of training.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> AMO theory, transfer of training theories, transfer of training, ability, motivation, opportunity</p>	

### INTRODUCTION

These days, boosting the efficiency of businesses is reliant on improving the efficiency of their human capital. Training, knowledge and skill expansion, as well as the development of desired behaviors, all contribute to improving the efficiency of human resources. Each year, organizations spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on employee training. The percentage of skills lost as a result of insufficient training transfer ranges between 66 (Saks & Belcourt, 2006) and 90 percent (Curry, Caplan, and Knuppel, 1994; Georgenson, 1982). The major impact point via which training can influence organizational-level results is the implementation of skills taught in training. Organizations make use of professional development to enhance the productivity of their employees and their financial well-being (Salas et al., 2012). As long as employees put their newly learned skills and knowledge to use in the workplace, this strategy will be effective (Hutchins, Burke & Berthelsen, 2010). The transfer of training has been the subject of extensive study in recent years from a variety of perspectives.

Transfer of training is a critical challenge when it comes to integrating individual change to organizational system requirements. Presently, we believe that an organization's competitiveness in a dynamic marketplace is crucial (Liebowitz & Beckman, 2020) and the success of organizations is achieved through individuals' involvement in organizational change (Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain, & Ali, 2018) as well as improvements in individuals' skills, knowledge, and task level through training (Rodriguez, & Walters, 2017).

### SIGNIFICANCE OF TRANSFER OF TRAINING

It has been acknowledged that transfer of training is an essential concept of learning that is related to both procedures and outcomes. It is also considered as a fundamental issue where an increase in its importance has been highlighted in education courses (Halpern & Hakel, 2003; Stover et al., 2015). Other research clearly stated that transfer of training is considered as the most important topic in psychology, then followed by education and management training programs due to numerous reasons (McDonald, Leberman & Doyle, 2012; Jones & Sallis, 2013).

Managers and employees definitely want the transfer of training to take place. However, what is learnt during training or at university may be hypothetical and different from real work environments. Therefore, coordinating learning with transfer of training to the job often fails (Haskell, 2001). Organizations always stress the importance of a return on investment (ROI) and reinforce ineffective training programs (Phillips & Phillips, 2016). As stated by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Russo, Bainbridge & Dunkel, 2013), investments in gaining knowledge are important to deal with economic decline. In 2010, around 66 percent of training events were sponsored by European companies. The results of these training events remain elusive. There is also limited awareness since organisations seldom evaluate the effect of transfer of training on human resource development (Beech & Leather, 2006). Consequently, it is very essential to understand the transfer of training and create an environment that encourages transfer of learning to gain a competitive advantage, enhance organisational outcomes and improve company performance. Therefore, the issue of transfer of training requires further in-depth studies.

### **TRANSFER OF TRAINING BARRIERS**

Some barriers that may hinder the process of transfer of training have been highlighted by previous research. Bhutto & Tunio (2017) specified some barriers and categorised them into five general types: lack of reinforcement at the workplace, unsupportive organisational culture and climate, lack of knowledge by managers or supervisors about the training content which employees have learned, lack of technology and necessary equipment support and finally, lack of training applicability at the workplace from the perspective of trainees. Clarke (2002) identified a number of barriers which may hinder trainees from implementing their newly acquired knowledge and skills learned from training programs. These barriers include heavy workloads, lack of resources, time pressures and factors related to lack of opportunities to transfer.

### **THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The effectiveness of human resource management is the top priority of any organization. The AMO theory can also be used to acquire a better understanding of the behavioral processes that occur when individual's management initiatives are implemented and prospective performance improvements are attained (Purcell et al., 2003). This model has a lot going for it, and as a result, intuitive acceptance is becoming increasingly accepted in the field human resource management (Boselie et al., 2005). The AMO theory divides numerous practices into three aspects of performance determinants and claims that the interaction of these factors can assist predict a wide range of performance outcomes. This theory stresses three factors which influence positive performance implementation: ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform (Kellner, Cafferkey, & Townsend, 2019). The HRM expert needs comprehend theories of evaluation and transfer performance in order to improve training transfer. It is challenging to conduct high-quality investigation that leads to effective solutions to training transfer problems without such knowledge. This article addressed theories and limitations of transfer of training/ transfer performance theories in order to obtain theories and conceptual frameworks needed to describe the three critical factors of AMO theory as recommended by AL-Mottahar & Pangil, (2021) and application of transfer of training to assist HRM partitioners in implementing strategies that help organizations reach a high level of performance. This article also addresses theories and limitations of transfer of training/transfer performance such as, the transfer of training process (Baldwin & Ford, 1988); learning transfer system inventory (LTSI) (Holton III et al., 2000); the systematic approach (Kontoghiorghes, 2004); and AMO theory (Appelbaum et al., 2000). this review addresses theories and limitations of transfer of training/transfer performance. Then ended with conclusions and recommendations.

### **TRANSFER OF TRAINING THEORIES AND MODELS**

Due to the importance of transfer of training, many theories and models have been previously tested to explain transfer of training. But there is still gap between the training and actual of performance and transfer of training. Therefore, several models have been created based on categories of tangible characteristics regarding transfer of training. These theories are better understood as models and frameworks. In this section, these models are highlighted under a simple approach of content analysis. Nonetheless, this section does not intend to review all the theories and models on transfer of training. These models are highlighted under a simple approach of content analysis. Table (1) presents a summary of some transfer of training theories/models with their categories, factors and features done by previous authors

**Table1:** Transfer of training theories/models

Content					
	Theories / Models	Source	Component/ Categories	Function of Components	Limitations
1	The Transfer of Training Process	(Baldwin & Ford, 1988)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training inputs</li> <li>• Training outputs</li> <li>• Conditions</li> </ul>	The outcome of training is influenced by trainee characteristics and work environment in a direct manner.	Complex and not applicable for certain regions
2	Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI)	(Holton III et al., 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Environment</li> </ul>	Elements have an influence on three levels of outcomes: learning, individual's performance and organisational outcomes.	Better used in the intervention stage and for planning purposes
3	The Systematic Approach	(Kontoghiorghes, 2004)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trainees</li> <li>• Training Design</li> <li>• Climate</li> </ul>	Combines the traditional approach of Baldwin & Ford (1988) and adds to it a systematic approach of Kontoghiorghes (2004) that consists of the direct and indirect impacts of the work environment	Difficult to measure and apply in workplaces
4	AMO Theory	First proposed by Bailey (1993)  Then Appelbaum et al., (2000) with HRM practice & high performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ability</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Opportunity</li> </ul>	The combination of these factors has an impact on the overall job performance for both individuals and organizational level	Can be applied in any environment

The first model, developed by Baldwin and Ford, is the transfer of training process model (1988). This is one of the oldest authors on the subject of training transfer, and it is a widely acknowledged model that has been utilized in many researches on training transfer (Blume et al., 2010). Many studies have investigated it (Burke & Hutchins, 2007; Blume et al., 2010; Grossman & Salas, 2011). This model has three key aspects: (i) training inputs, which include training design, trainee characteristics, and work environment; (ii) training outputs, which are classified by the amount of learning that occurs during training activities and the extent to which learners can practice what they learned immediately after completing the training; and (iii) training transfer conditions, which include maintenance and generalization. According to their findings, for transfer to occur, what was taught must be implemented, as well as a culture of keeping gained abilities over time until something different is discovered. The organizational climate has a significant impact on the utilization and maintenance of capabilities. However, if individuals recognize there is still no support for the change, the environment may cause them to revert to their previous work methods. These three components demonstrate the complexities of the phenomena of training transfer. Furthermore, this model includes training design, which is hard to measure in huge corporations, especially if they provide various forms of training, either externally and internally, which is challenging to assess.

The second model is the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI), it is a performance measure that identifies the factors that influence learning transfer. It is based on the theoretical framework of the human resources and development research and assessment model (Holton, 1996) and has attracted a considerable amount of research attention (Holton et al., 2000). The model assumes that learning outcomes are a combination of ability and motivation, along with environmental factors interacting at three response levels: learning, individual performance, and organizational performance. It is also being investigated whether motivational factors such as attitudes and personality have an impact on performance. This theory is better used in the intervention stage and for planning purposes.

The third model is the systemic approach model developed by Kontoghiorghes (2004). This model is a development of the earlier models developed by Kontoghiorghes (2002). A study by Kontoghiorghes (2004) examined two motivation constructs: motivation to learn and motivation to transfer, as well as their relative importance in the transfer of training. As part of his concept, he differentiates both socio-technical system design and quality management as components of the work environment, each of which is affected by a variety of factors that affect the total effects of both organisational and individual performance. Using this model, the systematic approach of Baldwin and Ford (1988) is combined with a systematic approach developed by Kontoghiorghes (2004), which considers both direct and indirect impacts of the work environment, including job design and quality management, as well as a variety of dimensions that contribute to overall work performance. This paradigm is impractical, difficult to measure, and challenging to apply in the workplace because it focuses on training design and numerous work environment elements.

Finally, the AMO theory was at first proposed by Bailey (1993) who recommended three important components that are necessary in every individual to ensure discretionary efforts. Individuals will perform well in their jobs only if they have proper capabilities with the right motivation and are given opportunities to perform in the workplace (Boxall, 2003; Raidén, Dainty & Neale, 2006; Boselie, 2010; Marin-Garcia et al., 2011; Choi, 2014). Then it got more attention and now widely accepted by Appelbaum et al. (2000) who explains the link between Human Resources Management (HRM) and performance from the perspective of the AMO model and the high-performance work system (HPWS).

The AMO abbreviation stands for (A) ability, (M) motivation and (O) opportunity to perform or practice. All of them work together to enhance an employee's performance (Kroon et al., 2013; Knies & Leisink, 2014; Claudia, 2015). This theory has been universally accepted for clarifying the relationship between HRM and performance since its development in the year 2000. Numerous articles have been published since then, extensively investigating the association between the AMO model and HRM performance (Ehrnrooth & Björkman, 2012; Marin-Garcia & Tomas, 2016, Alakrash & Razak, 2021b). Many scholars have considered the AMO theory as an important tool that is both comprehensive and useful.

The HRM discipline has had a strong challenge in implementing the early concept of the AMO theory. Conversely, a variety of interpretations of how AMO potentially actually works. According to other researchers, AMO may have a multiplier effect, meaning that each variable must occur, and performance will rise or fall in response to the movement of any of these variables (Siemsen et al., 2008). The problem with this expression is that the absence of one variable can't boost performance by a single variable. Alternatively, the link between variables could be positive, implying that each variable has a direct and independent effect, such as improving ability or boosting performance regardless of the other two factors motivation and opportunity to perform (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013, Alakrash & Razak, 2021b). The additive and multiplicative models were combined by Bos-Nehles et al. (2013), proposing that ability has a direct impact on performance, whereas motivation and opportunity can only enhance or reduce this effect. They highlight that context is a crucial factor to consider, as similar to other studies done by Kellner et al., (2016) that provided contradictory results, as an important component to consider. According to McDermott et al., (2017), all performance is context-dependent, and AMO should take this into account. In order to improve the AMO concept, the theory of AMO should be expressed as a more sophisticated paradigm, which is affected by contextual circumstances and does not have unchanging aspects (Kellner, Cafferkey & Townsend 2019).

Appelbaum et al. (2000) have become the main reference for the AMO framework in the HRM discipline, excluding citations to the history of the development of the AMO model and significant scholars (Blumberg and Pringle, 1982; Campbell et al., 1970; Vroom, 1964). The assumption is that HRM policies and procedures can be categorized into three factors that are ability, motivation, or opportunity that plays a critical role in enhancing the relationship of these factors to higher results of performance. These are all behaviors that concern the end result of any organization as a form of performance. which are presented by different scholars in different forms alternatively, such as performance, transfer performance, transfer of training, transfer of learning, learning transfer, etc.

These factors should be investigated from different aspects to understand the issue of transfer of training (Blume et al., 2010). This review focuses on the opportunity factor as the main aspect in the AMO theory to overcome the issues posed by previous scholars and to bridge the gap in earlier models. The opportunity to perform factors have not been addressed as a crucial factor that affects training transfer in previous theories that study transfer of training. They merely saw it as a part of the organizational culture. Furthermore, as AL-Mottahar & Pangil (2021) suggest, more research into the AMO theory in the field of HRM is needed, specifically training that improves high performance, because improving performance is one of the primary goals of training, and organizations cannot fully benefit from learning unless it is applied in a form of performance. The HRM consultant must understand theories of evaluation and transfer performance. Without this knowledge, it is difficult to undertake high-quality research that contributes to effective responses to transfer of training problems. Therefore, to access the theories and conceptual frameworks necessary to describe the three factors of AMO theory as recommended by AL-Mottahar & Pangil (2021), and to implement the transfer of training to enable scholars to develop strategies that assist organizations in achieving high levels of performance and transfer of training.

### CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

This review ends with a clarion call for a shift in our research paradigm of the factors that enhance transfer of training and transfer-relevant issues. For example, changes that occurs in organizations relevant to learning such as an increased emphasis on self-directed learning in the workplace (Ellingson & Noe 2017). As disused in previous research that training input changes are believed to have an impact on learning, retention, generalization, and maintenance. However, improving performance is one of the primaries aims of training and organizations cannot take full advantage of learning unless it is applied to performance.

Aside from that, Blume et al. (2010) found that the average time from training to transfer was 14 weeks, and that most research looked at the effectiveness of training transfer by comparing variables measured before and after training with the transfer measure. Although we are fully conscious that a great deal happens to a particular trainee between the time they complete training and the time we measure transfer, Ford, Baldwin, and Prasad (2018) pointed out that, while we are aware that a great deal happens to a particular trainee between the time they complete training and the time we measure transfer, we have not examined what occurs during that time. Therefore, additional research and debate are required to bridge the gap between all aspects of training transfer (theories, training, management, and individuals) considering the changes that take place for individuals as they gain relevant work experience that are meaningful to what they have learned and how those experiences actually effect factors such as ability and motivation to transfer their skills. Moreover, managers should be urged to develop clear performance targets so that employees know why they should be obliged to participate in specialized training and what their superiors expect of them once they have completed the training. The appropriate chances and assistance should be provided by managers in order to motivate their staff to perform at a high level, as well as the establishment of a transparent performance appraisal and compensation system. The management team has to provide workers with frequent updates on whether or not their performance is in line with management and organizational objectives.

All four sets of theories reviewed could help HRD professionals better understand the factors enhancing transfer of training, from exploring the factors that influence the transfer of training to enhance the use of appropriate strategies that leads to a future higher quality research. This review can benefit HRD practitioners and policymakers by assisting them in developing a critical awareness of how various factors of transfer of training theories makes and influence and change in performance. As a result, practical ways to improve training transfer or efficiency must take into account all of these factors from all previous theories.

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