

# The Role of Design Factors in Influencing Training Transfer among Small Businesswomen

Norlina Mohamed Noor<sup>1</sup>, Raja Munirah Raja Mustapha<sup>2</sup>, Anas Tajudin<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Faculty of Business Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA (Perak), Malaysia

<sup>3</sup>Faculty of Business and Information Technology, Kolej Universiti Islam Sultan Azlan Shah, Perak

<sup>1</sup>norli517@perak.uitm.edu.my

<sup>2</sup>munirah@salam.uitm.edu.my

<sup>3</sup>anastajudin@kuisas.edu.my

**Abstract-** *The objective of this research is to investigate the effect of design factors which consist of training content, training delivery, trainer competency and opportunity to use on small businesswomen's goal setting activities. The instrument for this research is adapted and modified from the Training Transfer Model and Model for Excellence (American Society of Training and Development Competency Research). Four independent variables: training content, training delivery and trainer's competency and opportunity to use; and goal setting as dependent variable formed the framework for this research. Multiple regressions were used to investigate the relationship between design factors and goal setting. Findings from a survey of 246 small businesswomen attending training programs organized by government agencies showed that opportunity to use made the strongest contribution towards goal setting followed by training content, trainer's competency and training delivery. Awareness on the constraints or barriers in the design factors can assist the primary stakeholders (organizer and trainers) and human resource personnel in developing effective training programs. Thus, this alertness can help to create a fair situation for them to accomplish their training objectives. Finally it is also beneficial to the trainees to transfer the knowledge and skills to their own businesses.*

**Keywords-** *Human Resource; Goal Setting Activities; Opportunity to Use; Design Factor*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In order to meet the industry's requirement and contribute towards nation's economic growth, great emphasis on human resource development especially in developing human capital has become one of the main agenda for Malaysian government (Haslinda, 2009). Several plans have been made through a range of support mechanisms such as incentives and initiatives in investing in human capital. However, challenges in managing human resource in training and development still arise. For instance, the Malaysian government put great emphasis on human resource development in its 6<sup>th</sup> Malaysian Plan (1991). Expansion on educational and training through several incentives for private sectors to develop their human resources was introduced. This effort is continued in the 10th Malaysian Plan where special weight on skill training is focused. However, the outcome of the training in terms of its effectiveness is still difficult to achieve (Georgenson, 1982). In order to determine the effectiveness of the training to the extent where trainees are able to apply the knowledge and skills they gained from training to their job of which is defined as training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988), a proper training evaluation is needed. With that, researchers and practitioners need to work together.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Since the government is expected to see an increment of 37% from the contribution of SMEs (small medium sized enterprises) by year 2011 (SMECORP Official Website, 2009), steps need to be taken to ensure this target is achieved. One of the steps is to make certain that future and existing small business owner managers and entrepreneurs receive the right training programs. With that, they can pursue their intentions to create or expand their businesses to higher level which will directly contribute to the GNP of the country. As most of the researchers agree that training transfer is difficult and challenging to measure, some type of measurement must be implemented to prove that training has been effective. A review on literature showed that previous studies on training transfers have looked at individual, environment and technological aspects (Amran, 2005; Awoniyi, Griego, & Morgan, 2002; Bhatti & Kaur, 2009; Siti Fardaniah Abdul Aziz & Shamsuddin Ahmad, 2011). However, a variety of results on training transfer determinants which restrain or promote training transfer were detected. In addition, the majority of the studies (Abdulah & Mohd, 2008; Abozed, Melaine, & Saci, 2009; Doo H Lim, 2000; Doo Hun Lim & Morris, 2006) focused on office employees and very limited study on small businesswomen. Due to this limitation and considering that small businesswomen are also vital contributors in today's economy (McKay, 2001), this research attempts to investigate the effect of training design factors towards

their goal setting. It is hoped that this study will highlight the factors that are beneficial to small businesswomen as well as to the organizers and trainers.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Procedures**

The target population for this research is women attending basic business training programs organized by the government agencies in Kuala Lumpur and state of Selangor which are in Klang Valley. Klang Valley is chosen to be the location for this research because the majority of small and medium size enterprises are concentrated in central region: Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan and Selangor (31.1%) compared to Johor (10.4%) and the rest of the states except Perlis (10%) (Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2005). Therefore, women attending basic business training programs organized by MARA (Council of Trust for Bumiputera) under Ministry Rural and Regional Development, Department of Women Development (JPW) under the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development and INSKEN (National Institute of Entrepreneurs) under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), were selected to participate in this study. A short briefing on the objectives of the research was specified to the participants in terms of the confidentiality and consent for participating before circulating the questionnaire at the end of each training session,. A total of 400 questionnaires were personally distributed to the participants and 324 were returned representing 81 % response rate. Since the target respondents were women who own businesses, seventy six questionnaires were not answered as the participants did not have any businesses. Seventy eight questionnaires were considered incomplete as they contained more than one unanswered page. Out of 324 returned questionnaires, only 246 were complete and considered usable for data analysis. Out of 246 useable questionnaires the majority of the respondents (78%) have attended skill development training program whereas the balance (22%) have attended entrepreneurial skill training.

### **3.2 Measurement Instrument**

The instrument was adapted and modified from two models: Training Transfer Model by Baldwin and Ford (1988) and Model of Excellence by McLagan and Bedrick (1983) which also formed the framework for this research. To assess and capture the objectives of determining training transfer, four constructs for training transfer were chosen as independent variables: training content, training delivery, trainer competency and opportunity to use which formed the first section of the questionnaire. To assess the content of training that reflects the usefulness of the training, seven items were developed. Seven items were designed to evaluate the delivery method used during training through demonstration, guidance and activities that will provide opportunities to trainees to transfer. To capture the ability and competency of the trainer based on capabilities, qualifications and experiences when

conducting training, ten items were formulated. Seven items were designed to determine the presence or absence of the environmental barriers in their work environment. In order to investigate the relationship between training transfer and goal setting activities, one construct is developed for dependent variable: goal setting. Seven items were then constructed to measure the capability of the trainees in meeting their objectives to achieve their goal setting activities after attending training. All items for section 1 and 2 used Likert scale 1 to 5 whereby 1 is strongly disagree to 5 which is strongly agree.

## **3. ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **4.1 Descriptive Findings**

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 40 and below (66%) and above 40 (34%). As compared with other studies, the age of respondents for this research is similar to those full time or part time small business women who are between 35 and 50 years old. For the educational background, the majority of participants have secondary education (76%). The balance has tertiary education (21%) and other additional skills development certificates (3%). This descriptive tallies with the census statistic of small and medium size enterprises as reported by Normah (2006) where 86% of entrepreneurs in services and 95% in agriculture are holding SPM and below. The statistic was also similar with other studies on small businesswomen or entrepreneurs where majority of them earned secondary education (Idris Aida, 2008a; Idris Aida, 2008b; Salimah Mohamed Abdul Hassan, Syamsyul Samsudi, & Yuslizawati Mohd Yusoff, 2007; Sarri & Trihopoulou, 2004). However, there are also other studies, which showed that small businesswomen or women entrepreneurs do have high percentage in tertiary education (Azlini, 2006). Again this educational background is related to the businesses they have where those who have tertiary educational involved in more high risk businesses (Azlini, 2006; Teoh & Chong, 2007).

### **4.2 Testing of Hypotheses**

Since there are studies which empirically proved that respondents who have businesses came from family with business background (Salimah Mohamed Abdul Hassan et setting activities. In other words, having or not having family with business background does not contribute to achieving goal setting activities of small businesswomen after attending training. Further test was done in testing contribution of design factor towards goal setting. The result shows that design factor contributes about 56% of the variance in goal setting activities ( $R^2$  change =.564,  $F$  change (5, 237) = 61.30,  $p < 0.05$ ). It also proves that opportunity to use records the highest beta value ( $\beta=.299$ ,  $p < .05$ ) followed by training delivery ( $\beta=.218$ ,  $p < .05$ ), trainer competency ( $\beta=.204$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and training content ( $\beta=.196$ ,  $p < .05$ ). In summary it is confirmed that opportunity to use make the strongest unique contribution towards goal setting followed by training content, trainer

competency and training delivery which contributed 5%, 2%, 2% and 2% respectively towards goal setting activities of small businesswomen. Table 1 displays the result.

**Table 1: Multiple Regression Results on Design Factor In Influencing Goal Setting**

	Model 1 Std $\beta$	Model 2 Std $\beta$
Control Variable: Participants have family with business background	.006	.060
Model Variable: Training Content		.196*
Training Delivery		.218*
Trainer Competency		.204**
Opportunity to Use		.299**
R <sup>2</sup>	.000	.564
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	-.004	.555
F Change	.009	76.625
Significance F	.0926	.000
Durbin Watson		1.937

#### 4. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This research has achieved its objective in investigating the relationship between design factors (training content, training delivery and trainer competency) and opportunity to use towards goal setting activities of small business women. A strong evidence proved that opportunity to use was found to contribute the most in influencing goal setting activities of small businesswomen followed by training content, trainer competency and training delivery. Hence the outcome of this research does support other studies in training transfer issues (Festner & Gruber, 2008; Handy, 2008; Lim, 2000; Lim & Morris, 2006; Velada, Caetano, Michel, Lyons, & Kavanagh, 2007) where it statistically justifies that work environment such as support from management and opportunity to use in terms of providing the work environment which is conducive in allowing workers to implement or use the skills or knowledge from training to their jobs is essential. As highlighted by Handy (2008) two categories of work environment that can be classified as transfer factors are the work system and people related factors. For work system, the management has to make sure that the facilities or resources at the workplace are available to the workers in applying the new knowledge or skills from training. On the other hand, for people related factors, management also has to play their roles in sustaining the transfer process through encouragement, supports, guidance and willingness to change. This research has empirically proven that the main contributors in supporting the success of training transfer are design factors. Factors such as granting a positive conditions of work environment or opportunity to use that promotes training transfer, the contents that are applicable and related to the job and fulfills the needs of the trainees, variety methods used

when delivering the training and competent trainer in conducting the training are essential. However, thorough investigation should be done in identifying the support given by the management in enhancing training transfer such as before, during and after attending training as other studies showed that before, during and after training (Saks & Belcourt, 2006) and social support from management (Chiaburu, Dam, & Hutchins, 2010; Noe & Schmitt, 1986) also contribute to positive training transfer among trainees. More specifically this research has contributed to the body of knowledge in training transfer issues and support the theoretical literature on training transfer determinants (Holton, Bates, & Ruona, 2000; Holton, 1996) which emphasized on the importance of training factors (training content, training delivery, trainer competency and opportunity to use) in enhancing training transfer.

#### 6. REFERENCES

- [1] Abdullah, L., & Mohd, Y. (2008). Factors affecting the training effectiveness of semiconductor wafer fabrications companies in Malaysia. *16th Annual International Conference*. Chicago.
- [2] Abozed, M., Melaine, Y., & Saci, K. (2009). The Influence of Work Environmental Factors on Motivation to Transfer Management Training. *4th Annual Conference: Liverpool Conference on the Built Environment and Natural Environment*. Liverpool.
- [3] Aida, I. (2008). A profile of innovative women entrepreneurs. *International Business Research*, 1(2), 3-10.
- [4] Aida, I. (2008). Cultivating innovation through female leadership: The Malaysian perspective. *Asian Social Science*, 4(6), 3-10.
- [5] Amran, M. (2005). *IT Competencies and the Conditions for Training Effectiveness: A study on Malaysian University Clerical Workers*. Roskilde, Denmark: Roskilde University.
- [6] Awoniyi, E., Griego, O., & Morgan, G. (2002). Person environment fit and transfer of training. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 6(1), 25-35.
- [7] Azlini, H. (2006). *A comparison study of motivation factors driving male and female entrepreneurs in Kota Bharu, Kelantan*. PhD Thesis, Sintuk, Kedah.
- [8] Baldwin, & Ford, K. (1988). Transfer of training: A review and directions for future research. *Personnel Psychology*(41), 63-105.
- [9] Beauregard, A. (2007). Family influence on the career life cycle. In M. Ozbilgin, & A. Malach-Pines, *Career choice in management and entrepreneurship: A research companion* (pp. 101-126). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Press.
- [10] Bhatti, M., & Kaur, S. (2009). The role of individual and training design factors on training transfer. *Journal of European Industrial Training*(34), 656-672.
- [11] Chiaburu, D., Dam, K., & Hutchins, H. (2010). Social support in the workplace and training transfer: A longitudinal analysis. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 18(2), 187-200.

- [12] Department of Statistice Malaysia. (2005). *Census on Small and Medium Size Enterprises Participation in Commerce and Industry*. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- [13] Festner, D., & Gruber, H. (2008). Emerging perspective of learning through work. In S. Billet, C. Harteis, & A. Etalapelto, *Conditions of work environments in fostering transfer of training* (pp. 215-231). Rotterdam: Sense.
- [14] Georgenson, D. (1982). The problem of transfer calls for partnership. *Training and Development*, 75-78.
- [15] Handy, L. (2008). *The Importance of Work Environment Variable on the Transfer of Training*. California: North Carolina State University, Raleigh.
- [16] Haslinda, A. (2009). Major challenges the effective management of human resource training and development activities. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 2(8), 11-25.
- [17] Holton, Bates, R., & Ruona, W. (2000). Development of a generalized learning transfer system inventory. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 11(4), 330-360.
- [18] Holton, E. (1996). The flawed-four-level evaluation model. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 7(1), 5-21.
- [19] Lim, D. (2000). Training design factors influencing transfer of training to the workplace within an international context. *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 52(2), 243-258.
- [20] Lim, D., & Morris, M. (2006). Influence of trainee characteristics, instructional satisfaction, and organizational climate on perceived learning and training transfer. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 17(1), 85-115.
- [21] Malaysian Government. (1991). *6th Malaysian Plan 1991-1995*. Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Nasional Berhad.
- [22] McKay, R. (2001). Women entrepreneurs: Moving beyond family and flexibility. *International Journal of Entrepreneurial Behavior and Research*, 7(4), 148-165.
- [23] McLagan, P., & Bedrick, D. (1983). Models for excellence: The results of the ASTD training and development competency study. *Training and Development*, 37(6), 10-20.
- [24] Noe, R., & Schmitt, N. (1986). The influence of trainee attitudes on training effectiveness: Test of a model. *Personnel Psychology*, 39(3), 497-523.
- [25] Normah, M. (2006). SMEs: Building blocks for economic growth. *National Statistics Conference*.
- [26] Saks, A., & Belcourt, M. (2006). An investigation of training activities and transfer of training in organizations. *Human Resource Management*, 45(4), 629-648.
- [27] Salimah Mohamed, A., Syamsyul, S., & Yuslizawati, M. (2007). The journey of female SME's: Malaysia evidence. *4th SMEs In A Global Economy Conference*. Kuala Lumpur.
- [28] Sarri, K., & Trihopoulou, A. (2004). Female entrepreneurs' personal characteristics and motivation: A review of the Greek situation. *Women in Management Review*, 20(1), 24-36.

- [29] Siti Fardaniah, A., & Shamsuddin, A. (2011). Stimulating training motivation using the right training characteristics. *Industrial and Commercial Training*, 43(1), 53-61.
- [30] Teoh, W., & Chong, S. (2007). Theorising a framework of factors influencing performance of women entrepreneurs in Malaysia. *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability*, 3(2), 1-17.
- [31] Velada, R., Caetano, A., Michel, J., Lyons, B., & Kavanagh, M. (2007). The effect of training design, individual characteristics and work environment on transfer of training. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 11(4), 282-294.

### Author's Biography with Photo

**Norlina Mohamed Noor** was born in Alor Setar, Kedah on 23 May 1964. She graduated from University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1989 and 1997 with Degree and Master in Education with majoring in human resource development respectively. At present, she is studying at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia for her PhD in human resource management area and her special of interest is training and development. She is a senior lecturer from Faculty of Business Management (former Faculty of Office Management and Technology) with vast teaching experience in areas of business, management, computer and secretarial skills besides experience in management as well.



**Raja Munirah Raja Mustapha** is 55 years old and has been attached with UiTM since 1986. She has a PhD in Technical Education and has experience teaching administrative and general management courses. Her research interests include areas in organizational behavior and management. Currently, she is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business Management, UiTM.



**Anas Tajudin (PhD)** is a Senior Lecturer for Faculty of Management and Information Technology, Kolej Universiti Islam Sultan Azlan Shah, Perak, Malaysia. He studies at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (2013) and his PhD on human resource management. His research interest include training and development, business development, entrepreneurship and Islamic Finance.

