

# **The Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on the Transfer of Training Outcomes to the Workplace**

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*Transfer of training refers to the consistent application of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are learned from training to the workplace. The success of transfer of training is influenced by many factors including the work environment. However, to date the influence of the social exchange factor in the workplace, known as perceived organizational support, on transfer of training has not been adequately explored. This study has been conducted to address this gap. Specifically, this study explores the moderating effect of perceived organizational support on the relationship between learning and transfer of training. The data of this study has been collected from two sources, the employees and their supervisors through surveys. The data was analyzed using structural equation modeling approach. The findings reveal that perceived organizational support has an important role as a predictor to transfer of training but not as a moderator as proposed in this study.*

**Field of Research:** Perceived organizational support, Learning, Transfer of training, Public sector, Malaysia.

## **1. Introduction**

One important factor that influences the success of transfer of training outcomes to the workplace is the employees' learning level following the training. Learning is defined as the extent to which employees change their attitudes, improve their knowledge and increase their skills as a result of attending training (Kirkpatrick 1994).

The association between learning and transfer of training has been empirically supported by a number of studies conducted among various level of employees and organizations (Ford et al. 1998; Leach & Liu 2004; Liebermann & Hoffmann 2008; Nijman et al. 2006; Ramirez 2000; Rouiller & Goldstein 1993; Tracey et al. 2001; Tziner et al. 2007; Xiao 1996). These studies found that employees who gain new knowledge, skills and attitudes concerning particular training content positively apply the learned knowledge, skills and attitudes on the job, following their training.

A number of other studies, however, have found limited success in empirically demonstrating the relationship between learning and transfer of training.

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For example, a longitudinal study by Warr and colleagues (1999) found the correlation between learning and transfer of training was small. A similar result was found in a Meta analysis study by Alliger and colleagues (1997). In addition, the magnitude of relationship between learning and transfer of training was found to be lower than that of Alliger and colleagues (1997) in a study by Tan and colleagues (2003). Based on these facts, scholars have called for research that examines potential moderators of the relationship between learning and transfer of training (Aguinis & Kraiger 2009; Tan et al. 2003).

Reviews of transfer of training literature reveal that relatively few studies have examined the factors that may moderate the relationship between learning and transfer of training. One study did, however test the role of supervisor support, peer support and organizational continuous learning culture as moderating factors on the association between learning and transfer of training. The results of the study showed that no moderating effects were found. The study found those factors were directly related to transfer of training outcomes to the workplace (Tracey et al. 1995). Due to the paucity of research on this issue, this study has been conducted to fill this gap by testing the moderating effect of perceived organizational support (POS) in the relationship between learning and transfer of training. POS is defined as the employees' general belief that their work organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being (Eisenberger et al. 1986; Rhoades & Eisenberger 2002).

By studying POS as a moderator of the relationship between learning and transfer of training, this study aims to make three contributions. First, this study adds to the small number of studies examining moderators of the learning and transfer of training relationship (Tracey et al. 1995). Researchers have noted that studying the moderating factors that could strengthen the association between learning and transfer of training is an important research direction (Aguinis & Kraiger 2009; Tan et al. 2003). Second, this study extends the literature by examining the effect of POS on transfer of training. This is an important issue to further discuss because recent researchers such as Chiaburu, Dam and Hutchins (2010) argue there is still limited understanding of the effect of POS on the success of transfer of training outcomes to the workplace. To date, the literature has mainly explored the effects of POS on employee work attitudes and behaviors (Jawahar & Carr 2007; Lavelle et al. 2009) and its moderating effects on the relationship between organizational practices and employee work attitude and behavior (Erdogan & Enders 2007; Marler et al. 2009). This study adds to the discussion by investigating the moderating role of POS on the relationship between learning and transfer of training. Third, this study discusses transfer of training in public sector organizations in a non-Western context. Generally, prior studies have been conducted mostly in private sector organizations (Clarke 2002; Schumaker 2004) based in the United States (Klink et al. 2001; Velada et al. 2007). This study extends the understanding of transfer of training in Malaysia's public sector organizations, since the discussion on this issue in this context is still limited in the literature (Baharim 2008).

The next section discusses selected literature on the learning—transfer of training relationship and POS as a moderator of the learning—transfer of training relationship. The third section discusses the research methodology used. The results are presented

in the fourth section and the paper concludes with a discussion of the findings, practical implications, limitations of the study and suggestions for future research.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Learning - Transfer of Training Relationship

Organizational training researchers have consistently suggested that learning might have a direct and positive effect on the transfer of training (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Goldstein & Ford 2002; Thayer & Teachout 1995). Other researchers in the training field also posit that learning is a prerequisite for transfer of training to occur in the workplace (Brown & McCracken 2009; Pineda 2010). The previous indications would suggest that if employees gain new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training, they are more likely to apply those training outcomes to their work context. This assumption has been supported by a number of empirical studies conducted in various organizations such as education institutions (Ford et al. 1998), the insurance industry (Leach & Liu 2004), banking sector (Liebermann & Hoffmann 2008), advanced technology organizations (Nijman et al. 2006), a driving center (Ramirez 2000), a restaurant (Rouiller & Goldstein 1993), hotels (Tracey et al. 2001), an industrial power company (Tziner et al. 2007) and the electronics industry (Xiao 1996).

There are three reasons why learning has a positive impact on transfer of training. Firstly, by gaining new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training, employees are provided with broader, deeper knowledge and more tools for problem-solving (Garavaglia 1993). As a consequence, the employees will apply the new learned knowledge, skills and attitudes on their job if they believe the application of those training outcomes can help them to solve a problem related to their job and also will help them to perform their job more efficiently and effectively. Second, gaining new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training should enhance the employees' ability to use various cognitive and behavioral tactics or strategies to apply their training outcomes to their job even in less supportive work environments (Roberson et al. 2009). Third, by gaining new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training the employees' intention to practice the new learned knowledge, skills and attitudes to their workplace should increase (Liebermann & Hoffmann, 2008; Nijman et al. 2006).

Despite the many studies that have found a significant relationship between learning and transfer of training, a number of studies report limited success in empirically demonstrating the relationship between learning and transfer of training (Alliger et al. 1997; Tan et al. 2003; Warr et al. 1999). A recent Meta analytical study indicated that learning has a small and moderate effect on transfer of training after considering the effect of the same source of data and same measurement context of data (Blume et al. 2010). Based on these findings, it can be argued that an improvement of employees' knowledge, skills and attitudes does not necessarily guarantee the transfer of these training outcomes in the workplace (Frisque & Kolb 2008). It is likely that there are potential moderating factors that may enhance the association between learning and transfer of training outcomes (Aguinis & Kraiger 2009; Tan et al. 2003). This study

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posits that POS may moderate the relationship between learning and transfer of training, as discussed in the following section.

### 2.2 POS as a Moderator of the Learning - Transfer of Training Relationship

Goldstein and Ford (2002) have suggested that work environment characteristics may influence the relationship between learning and transfer of training. This notion has been supported by other researchers. For example, Tannenbaum, Cannon-Bowers, Salas and Mathieu (1993) posit that transfer of training is a function of training performance moderated by organizational characteristics such as resource availability. Other researchers such as Arthur and colleagues (2003) have also proposed that the low effect of learning on transfer behavior in their Meta analysis study might be influenced by work environment factors. Accordingly, researchers such as Aguinis and Kraiger (2009) and Tan and colleagues (2003) have urged further research to extend the existing literature by investigating the moderating effect of work environment factors on the association between learning and transfer of training.

This study proposes that the social exchange in the workplace known as POS will moderate the relationship between learning and transfer of training. Research shows that employees are willing to expend more effort to fulfill both their own needs and the organization's goals when they receive positive support from the organization. For example, Marler and colleagues (2009) found those employees with high POS were more sensitive to their manager's expectations which subsequently enhanced their desire to use the new technology implemented by the organization. In addition, research shows that high levels of POS can create a feeling of obligation among the employees to return their employers' commitment by engaging in behaviors that support organizational goals. For example, Jawahar and Carr (2007) in their study found that when employees perceive high levels of support from their organization, where even the less conscientious individuals feel obligated to and respond in kind toward the organization through contextual performance. Similarly, Lynch and colleagues (1999) found that wary employees, who generally appear to reduce their willingness to work hard at their jobs, showed greater in-role and extra-role performance with high POS. Moreover, POS enhances employees' beliefs and trust (Tremblay et al. 2010), commitment (Leveson et al. 2010) and loyalty to the organization (Coyle-Shapiro & Conway 2005). All these positive behaviors are expected to encourage employees to put greater effort into gaining new knowledge, skills and attitudes during training, which will subsequently enhance their ability to produce a more positive transfer of training to their workplace. Therefore, it is expected when employees have high POS, learning will have a stronger positive effect on transfer of training. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed:

*Hypothesis:* Perceived organizational support has a moderating effect on the relationship between learning and transfer of training, specifically the association will be stronger with greater support from the organization.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample

The sample for this study consists of 222 public sector employees in Malaysia, who participated in a financial training course organized by National Institute of Public Administration (INTAN) in 2009 and 2010, along with their supervisors. The list of the employees was accessed from the INTAN database system after receiving their approval. INTAN is a training centre that provides employees of Malaysian public sectors with various types of training.

Among the employees surveyed, 68 per cent (N = 151) were female and 32 per cent (N = 71) were male. The average age was 34 years old. The majority, 68.5 per cent (N = 152) have worked in public sector organizations between 1 and 9 years, and the remaining 31.5 per cent (N = 70) have worked in public sector organizations more than 10 years. Among the supervisors, 51.4 per cent (N = 114) were female and 48.6 per cent (N = 108) were male. The average age was 41 years old. In terms of work experience, 38.7 per cent (N = 86) of them have worked in public sector organizations between 1 and 9 years, and the remaining 61.3 per cent (N = 136) having 10 years or more experience in the public sector.

#### 3.2 Procedures

The data of this study was collected from the respondents (the employees and their supervisors) through survey. The questionnaire was designed in English and translated into the Malaysian national language. To ensure the accuracy of translation, the surveys were translated by a professional translator of the Malaysian Translation Institute (*Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia*). This institute was established by the Malaysian government to deal with matters relating to translation at all levels. The use of the translated version increased the readability among the respondents (Bates & Khasawneh 2005) and also increased the likelihood that the instrument would operate in this new target culture similarly to the original culture in which it was developed (Velada et al. 2009).

The employee questionnaire contained questions relating to both learning and POS. It is argued that the employees are credible persons to provide data on learning because they are the individuals who went through the training and know exactly the improvement they achieved as a result of the training (Phillips 1997). They also are the best source of information to measure POS (Bal et al. 2010). The employees' supervisors' questionnaire contained questions of transfer of training. According to researchers, the supervisor is the best sources of data to measure transfer of training (Arthur et al. 2003; Phillips 1997). Collecting transfer of training data from an employee's supervisor can validate the transfer result (Axtell et al. 1997) and can decrease the potential of common method variance (Blume et al. 2010; Burke & Hutchins 2007).

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The surveys were anonymous and were delivered personally to the respondents as the respondents were located in a local area and the researcher had obtained approval to meet them (Cavana et al. 2001; Sekaran & Bougie 2010). Evidence from previous studies indicates that this method produces higher response rates when it is applied in the context of this type of study (Tay 2008). A brief description of the study was presented to the respondents including the study aims and background. In addition, the issue of anonymity, confidentiality and voluntary participation was highlighted. This approach has been found useful to clarify any doubt among respondents to the questionnaire and subsequently motivate them to be more open and honest in their answers (Sekaran & Bougie 2010). The respondents were reminded that they can withdraw from the study at any time without the need to give any explanation. Respondents completed the survey and returned them in a sealed envelope to ensure anonymity and confidentiality (Liao 2011). The researcher was at the respective department throughout the process of distributing and collecting the surveys.

### **3.3 Measures**

#### **3.3.1 Learning**

Learning is measured based on the employees' perceptions of the improvement of knowledge, skills and attitudes they gain as a result of a training event they have attended, using four items adopted from Curry (1997). An example of such an item is 'As a result of the training, I substantially increased my knowledge on the topic'. This measurement has been empirically used in previous studies and had reliability of 0.84 in the study of Curry and colleagues (2005) and 0.83 in the study of Curry and colleagues (2010).

#### **3.3.2 POS**

POS is measured using eight items based on a short version of the survey of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al. 1997). An example of these items is 'My organization cares about my opinions'. This short version of POS has been recommended and applied by recent studies, which show high internal reliability; 0.99 in the study by Suazo and Stone-Romero (2011) and 0.86 in the study by Liao (2011).

#### **3.3.3 Transfer of Training (TOT)**

Transfer of training is measured using six items developed by Xiao (1996). An example is 'He/she can accomplish the job tasks better by using new knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired from the training course'. This measurement has been used in recent studies and yielded reliability of 0.83 in the study of Scaduto and colleagues (2008) and 0.76 in the study of Chiaburu and colleagues (2010).

## 4. Analysis Result

### 4.1 Measurement Result

The three measures (learning, POS and TOT) were tested together in one measurement model to verify the relationship between the indicators of different constructs (Cheng 2001; Hair et al. 2010). The assessment of the measurement model is based on the model fit and the construct's validity (convergent and discriminant validity). The model fit is assessed through multiple fit indexes, which are based on values of  $\chi^2/df$ , CFI, RMSEA and SRMR, as recommended by recent researchers (Hair et al. 2010; Williams et al. 2009). A well-fitting model will have the  $\chi^2/df$  smaller than 2, CFI values that are 0.95 or higher, RMSEA value below 0.08 and SRMR value less than 0.10 (Hair et al. 2010; Williams et al. 2009). The construct convergent validity is examined based on three criteria; (1) the loading estimates are statistically significant, (2) the loading estimate should be at least 0.50 to be regarded as a good item, and (3) the result of the average variance extracted (AVE) should equal or exceed 50 percent (Hair et al. 2010). The construct discriminant validity is examined by comparing the square root of AVE estimates for each construct with the interconstruct correlations with that factor. The discriminant validity is confirmed if the square roots of AVE estimates are greater than the corresponding interconstruct correlations estimates (Hair et al. 2010).

According to the results of the confirmatory factor analysis, two items from POS were dropped due to insignificant loading estimates and the loading estimates below 0.50. Two items of TOT were specified as a free parameter due to content overlap between the two items. The final measurement model fit indices yielded acceptable results ( $\chi^2/df$ , = 1.419; CFI = 0.978; RMSEA = 0.044; SRMR = 0.042).

Moreover, as shown in Table 1, factor loadings of the measurement indicators ranged from 0.611 to 0.865. The indicators of each construct also showed good efficacy to measure the constructs, with AVE exceeding 0.50 and the composite reliability achieving acceptable values, above 0.70 (Hair et al. 2010). All indicators also are statistically significant.

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**Table 1: Standardized Measurement Coefficients Resulting From CFA**

	Learning	Perceived Organizational Support	Transfer of training
Composite reliability	0.86	0.88	0.91
Average variance extracted	0.60	0.54	0.63
<i>Item abbreviation</i>			
L1	0.729		
L2	0.828		
L3	0.730		
L4	0.809		
POS1		0.684	
POS2		0.742	
POS3		0.844	
POS4		0.824	
POS5		0.611	
POS8		0.684	
TOT1			0.750
TOT2			0.775
TOT3			0.777
TOT4			0.824
TOT5			0.865
TOT6			0.753

Notes: N = 222,  $\chi^2=141.857$ ,  $df=100$ ,  $p<0.04$ ,  $\chi^2/df=1.419$ ,  $CFI=0.978$ ,  $RMSEA=0.044$ ,  $SRMR=0.042$ . All are significant ( $p<0.001$ ).

Furthermore, Table 2 shows that the square root of AVE of each construct exceeds the coefficient representing its correlation with other constructs, indicating discriminant validity (Hair et al. 2010). For example, the square root AVE of the learning construct (0.775) exceeds the intercorrelation between transfer of training and learning (0.227). In addition, Table 2 shows the correlation matrix and descriptive statistics for the research variables in the model. The variable means (*M*) range from 5.36 to 6.04, while the standard deviations (*SD*) for the variables range from 0.59 to 0.72. The table 2 also shows all the correlations between the constructs are positive. The values of the correlation range from 0.227 to 0.363. All correlations were lower than 0.90 suggesting less probability of multicollinearity (Tabachnick & Fidell 2007).

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviation and Correlation Matrix**

<i>Variable</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>L</i>	<i>POS</i>	<i>TOT</i>
L	6.04	0.59	<b>0.775</b>		
POS	5.36	0.72	0.363**	<b>0.735</b>	
TOT	5.90	0.64	0.227**	0.236**	<b>0.792</b>

Notes: L = learning; POS = perceived organizational support; TOT = transfer of training. The square root of AVE value mark with bold. \*\* =  $p<0.01$



4.2 Test of the Model and Research Hypothesis

The procedure used by Ping (1995) was used for testing the study hypothesis. This procedure has been recognized as an adequate procedure to analyze continuous moderator variables in SEM (Williams et al. 2003). The procedure has also been argued as a straightforward approach to the analysis of moderator effects, which recovers parameter values well (Cortina et al. 2001) and has been applied by recent researchers (Lee & Peccei 2007; Seo & Barrett 2007; Zhou & Poppo 2010).

As demonstrated in Table 3, all the fit indices suggest a reasonable fit between the model and the data.

**Table 3: Structural model Goodness-of-Fit Statistics**

Fit Indices	Value
Chi-square $\chi^2$ ( <i>p</i> -value)	150.596 ( <i>p</i> <0.010)
Degree of freedom ( <i>df</i> )	113
Normed Chi-square ( $\chi^2/df$ )	1.333
Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA)	0.039
Comparative fit index (CFI)	0.980
Standardized root mean residual (SRMR)	0.041

As the structural model of this study manifested a relatively good fit of the data, the proposed hypothesis was tested (Schumacker & Lomax 1996). Table 4 presents the estimated unstandardized and standardized structural path estimates. This study proposed POS would moderate relationships between learning and transfer of training. The result however shows that the effect of the interaction between POS and learning on transfer of training was not statistically significant (coefficient= -0.080, Critical Ratio=1.534), and did not provide support for the hypothesis. The result did show that learning (coefficient= +0.165, Critical Ratio=1.990, *p*<0.05) and POS (coefficient= +0.194, Critical Ratio=2.343, *p*<0.05) have a positive and significant effect on transfer of training. The following section 5.0 will provide detail discussion of the results.

**Table 4: Structural Parameter Estimates for Structural Model**

Path	Unstandardized Parameter Estimate	Standard Error	Critical Ratio	Standardized Parameter Estimate
L ---> TOT	0.180	0.090	1.990	0.165
POS ---> TOT	0.175	0.075	2.343	0.194
plpos ---> TOT	-0.041	0.027	-1.534	-0.080

Notes: L= learning; POS= perceived organizational support; TOT= transfer of training; plpos = L X POS. The significant level of factor loading is based on the value of Critical Ratio (CR). The minimum critical ratio value of 1.960 is required for the factor loading to be significant (Byrne 2010).

## 5. Findings and Discussion

This study proposed that POS would moderate the relationship between learning and transfer of training. This study argued that the relationship between learning and transfer of training would be stronger with greater support the employees received from their organization, in terms of the organization thinking highly of their contribution and promoting their welfare.

However, this was not supported through the analysis. One possible explanation could be the employees of public sector organizations in Malaysia regard the support from the organization as the key factor, rather than as a supplementary factor that influences them to transfer the training outcomes to their workplace. This is based on the analysis result that shows POS having the same role with learning as a significant predictor to transfer of training. This result suggests employees who have positive perceptions that their organization values their contribution and cares about their well-being, positively applied the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they learned in training to their workplace following the training. This is consistent with the cultural orientation of the Malaysian people where people are interdependent within their groups, which in this case is their organization (Merriam & Mohamad 2000). This means any action taken by the organization could affect the attitude and behavior of the people inside the organization. Previous studies in similar contexts to this study have revealed the attitude of the organization's agents, such as supervisors, is an important factor that enhances the employee's motivation to transfer what they have learned in training, to their job (Baharim 2008).

The significant result between POS and transfer of training is an important finding that has not been empirically determined previously in the training literature. This extends research by Chiaburu and colleagues (2010) who found a positive relationship between POS and employee self-efficacy and motivation to transfer. It is also in support of the social exchange approach, where employees who perceive the support from their organization feel an obligation to engage with behavior that benefits the organization (Eisenberger et al. 2001) and also are willing to expand more effort to fulfill their needs and organizational goals (Marler et al. 2009). Such feelings or attitudes facilitate employees' to return their employers' training investment by applying the training outcomes on their job to achieve better performance. Additionally, the result of this study suggests that learning is positively related to transfer of training, which is consistent with previous research that indicated employees who learned and gained new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training they have attended are able to transfer the training outcomes to their workplace (e.g., Liebermann & Hoffmann 2008; Nijman et al. 2006; Tziner et al. 2007). This finding provides additional empirical evidence to the literature and the use of a sample drawn from the Malaysian public sector organizations provides cross-validation of past empirical findings related to the positive effect of learning on transfer of training that previously related mostly to Western private sector settings.

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The other possible explanation related to the insignificant result of the moderating effect of POS on the learning—transfer of training relationship is that there might be other work environment factors that influence the transfer of training outcomes to the workplace, given the specific context of this study. An example of such factors is the opportunity for transfer that is provided by the organization and the support from the employee's supervisor (Goldstein & Ford 2002). When employees perceive that they will get the opportunity and the support from their supervisor to apply the new learned knowledge, skills and attitudes on their job, they may be more motivated to learn and to master the learning content and hence demonstrate positive transfer of training. Another factor that might influence the transfer of training outcomes to the workplace in the public sector organizations is the presence of a continuous learning culture (Tracey et al. 1995). An employee who works in an organizational culture that encourages employees to be involved in decision making processes and provides positive reinforcement when they apply the new learned knowledge and skills is more likely to gain better knowledge and skills from the learning intervention they attended than an employee who works in an organization that lacks a learning culture.

### **6. Implication of the Study**

The key managerial implications of this study include the fact that organizations should not only concentrate on planning, organizing and providing budgets for employee training, but should also demonstrate value for the employees themselves, especially their contribution, and care about their well-being. Such values and caring can be shown by considering the employees' opinions, supporting the employees' career goals, considering the employee's welfare as both a human and as an employee and provide support or help to the employees when they face a problem. This should result in better training outcomes and improve the return on training investment that the organization has made. The result of this study has demonstrated that the support from the organization (e.g., valuing employees' contribution and taking care of their well being) plays an essential role in the success of transfer of training outcomes in the workplace. In regard to the training practice, organizations need to ensure that the employee gains new knowledge and skills from a particular training they have attended whether it is organized by the organization or external organizations. This can be practically implemented through organizations ensuring that the training program provided to employees is relevant and related to their current job description and/or future job development, and it is facilitated by trainers who are knowledgeable experts and experienced in a particular training content. The result of this study suggests that the knowledge and skills gained from training has an essential contribution, which positively influence employees to transfer the training outcomes on their job.

Further, in terms of theoretical contributions, this study provides empirical evidence for the first time, of the direct effect of POS on transfer of training, particularly in the Malaysian public sector context. A positive and significant relationship is reported, which suggests that when organizations value employee contributions and take care of their well being, it will directly affect employee effectiveness in transferring the training outcomes to the workplace. The result supports the importance of POS in producing

positive work behavior and performance (Lavelle et al. 2009; Tremblay et al. 2010; Coyle-Shapiro & Conway 2005).

### 7. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Study

The first limitation of this study is the fact that the data was collected at one point of time, applying a cross-sectional design. Some researchers argued the data that were gathered at one point of time can make it difficult to draw inferences of causality (Dysvik & Kuvass 2008). Therefore, it is necessary for future research to validate the current findings in a longitudinal study. Longitudinal design is argued to be more appropriate than cross sectional ones for causal inferences, based on pre-existing theory and empirical data (Chiaburu et al. 2010).

In addition, this study applies a quantitative research design; the data were collected through a questionnaire survey. Future study should consider collecting deeper qualitative data from the respondents. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods would provide an opportunity for more in depth and richer explanation of why employees transfer the training outcomes to the workplace (Brown et al. 2011).

There is also limited generalization of the findings of this study beyond the current organization where this study was conducted. The data of this study were collected from public sector organizations in Malaysia. Thus, future studies could replicate the proposed model in other types of organizations such as private sector organizations using different training courses. Previous studies have presented evidence that the factors associated with transfer of training differ significantly between the public and private sectors and across training types (Chen et al. 2006; Holton et al. 2003). By testing the variables in different settings such as private sectors, a more consistent view of their functions on transfer of training could be obtained (Cheng & Ho 2001).

Finally, this study only investigated the moderating role of POS on the relationship between learning and transfer of training. Future study may examine other potential moderating factors that could influence the relationship. One possible factor that could be tested is how accountability for transfer of training, i.e. the degree to which the organization, culture and/ or management expects learners to use trained knowledge and skills on the job and holds them responsible for doing so (Burke & Saks 2009), affects the transfer process following the learning intervention. This organizational factor could have a significant role in solving the transfer problem in organizations (Burke & Saks 2009) but its role in the transfer process still lacks empirical evidence in the literature. Another factor that can be tested is the role of leader-member exchange (LMX), which refers to the extent the leaders form unique relationships with each of their subordinates (Graen & Uhl-Bein 1995). Although a moderating ability of LMX has been justified in the literature (Erdogan et al. 2004), the moderating effect of this factor on transfer of training following the learning intervention is still lacking evidence in the literature.

## 8. Conclusion

This study provides essential knowledge and enhances our understanding of the relationship between learning, POS and transfer of training in the non-Western context, specifically in the public sector organizations in Malaysia, a Southeast Asia developing country. This study provides empirical evidence for the importance of POS, as well as learning, to the success of transfer of training outcomes in the workplace. Specifically, this study demonstrated that when employees perceive that their organization highly values their contribution and cares about their well being, this general perception can influence employees to apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes that learned in training to their workplace. This study also found those employees who perceived that they have gained and learned new knowledge, skills and attitudes from the training they have attended, are able to apply the new knowledge, skills and attitudes to their workplace following the training. Although the finding is limited to the context of public sector organizations in Malaysia, it can be a reference to other organizations and assist them to maximize the outcomes from the training investment they make in their employees.

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