

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS AND TRAINING TRANSFER IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR ORGANISATIONS IN LAGOS, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The anticipated return on investment in training can only be achieved to the extent that skills learnt during training are transferred on the job. The significant time and money spent on training and development (T&D) do not always translate into positive outcomes in terms of productivity and financial gain. The purpose of the study was to assess factors that may have a significant influence on the transfer of training in an organisation. Using civil servants drawn from Lagos State of Nigeria, the results show that environmental factors are effective in influencing training transfer in the workplace. Moreover, finding indicates that the total variance explained by work environment as a model was 6%, with the supervisor's support variable recording the highest beta value.

Keywords: training, development, learning, work environment, performance, learning transfer

1. Introduction

The significant time and money spent on training and development (T&D) do not always translate into better work performance and the extent of the applicability of the learning has not been examined extensively. Organisations are not overly concerned with learning; their main concern is learning to enhance performance. The ability employees to transfer learning on job performance depends on the availability of opportunities to utilise the skills and knowledge learnt (Aguinis & Kraiger 2009). Therefore, if transfer of learning is stimulated, practised and reflected on, it becomes easy to achieve (Leberman et al. 2006). According to Dabielson and Wiggenhom (2003, cited in Peterson 2005), training is important only to the point that it adds more to job

performance than the provision of any other scarce resource. The high costs of T&D have influenced the desire to understand the factors that encourage or hinder the utilisation of knowledge in the workplace setting; continual technological changes necessitate ongoing T&D initiatives (Pervival et al. 2013). Therefore, understanding the factors that influence transfer of knowledge on the job will encourage the utilisation of skills and knowledge, which leads to positive outcomes for both the organisation and individual employees (Egan, Yang, & Barlett, 2004). The anticipated return on investment in training can only be achieved to the extent that training is transferred on the job (Nijman, Nijhof, Wognum, & Veldkamp, 2006; Velada et al. 2007; Chiaburu, & Lindsay 2008). The purpose of

evaluating these organisation or work environmental transfer factors is to enable organisations to understand possible or already known transfer setbacks and formulate interventions to enhance training transfer on the future (Holton et al. 2007). Training transfer can be hindered, or improved by, organisational culture and systematic factors such as work habits, organisational climate, and peers support toward employees using the new skills or learning on the job (Shoobridge 2003). Transfer of training is an important factor in enhancing performance and achieving a competitive advantage and therefore requires urgent attention (Weldy 2009).

Nigeria is a West African country that covers over 923,768 sq. km on the west coastline of the continent, and is located along the lines of longitude 30E – 160E and latitude 40N – 140N (Federal Government of Nigeria FGN, 2010; Akanji & Bankole, 2007). It is the most populous country in Africa and the 7th most populous in the world with a population growth rate of 2.55% (World Bank, CIA World Factbook).

The Nigerian government has made series of efforts to improve the skills, knowledge and capacity of the nation's labour force for the benefit of organizations and to promote economic development (Bukar, & Mwajim, 2012). Generally, the aim of T&D is to upgrade employees' skills and compensate for deficits in the educational system of Nigeria. It also aims to improve task performance and assist employees to cope with the demands of their jobs. Employee T&D emphasizes on producing workforces with suitable job competences, confidence and determination to facilitate the development of their organisations (Alani & Isola, 2009). However, government functionaries' acknowledgement of the importance of T&D, as articulated in white papers and different reform measures, T&D in the Nigerian public service has not yielded the desired results (Okotoni & Erero, 2005; Yakubu, Kamba, 2011, p. 45). It is important to note that the inadequate

emphasis on workers transferring their learning to workplace job performance in the Nigerian public and private sectors is the result of a lack of understanding of the concept.

The type of training methods commonly used in Nigerian skill development programmes include inductions, understudy assignment, job rotation, mentoring, coaching, workshops, in-house, and at local training institutions (Ajidahun, 2007). Other methods not commonly use in Nigeria are mainly the technological based training methods which include e-learning, audio-visual and computer based reality simulation platforms.

1.1. Why organisation embanks of training and development

There are many reasons why organisations go into training and development of their workers. Not many companies today have sufficient supply of capabilities or skills, even the few organisation that seem to have enough, gap still exists. Talents, skills and knowledge are increasingly rare resources which should be sourced and effectively managed (Wellins, Smith, and Erker (2009).

And many professional bodies today want members to show evidence that they are in touch with the latest developments and technologies. As a result employees are putting pressure on their organisations or employers to comply with such requirements. Organisations engage in training to enhance the skills and competencies of their employees to prepare themselves for other responsibilities in their current and future roles in the organisation and to enable their workers to maintain the membership if their professional body.

The demand for continue learning and development as come about as result of increasingly demands for continuous quality improvement, and this has led to the demand that all workers, researchers,

supervisors, and academic staff must show that they are up-to-date on the new techniques, knowledge and developments related to their jobs, and be intensely conscious of the constantly changing tertiary education settings (Barrett, 2008).

The study on the views of what IBM managers think on top factors that will impact on their business. The managers view skill and knowledge as a top factor that will drive their business growth in the next couple of years and impact on performance (IBM, 2013). Company leaders have discovered that best performing organisation are the ones that receive constant training that are essential to them. For instance in a recent IBM Smarter employees study which looked at best performing organisations and worst performing organisations found that best performing organisation are receiving training that they need (IBM, 2013).

In a fast changing business world, companies has to run fast too to meet up with challenges. Technological changes are impacting on the way in which jobs were carried out. Therefore, for companies to be up-to-date with the changes workers must be trained to learn the new techniques to use the new technology. Strategic advantage to the companies come mainly from the company's core competences which they developed through updating the skills of their workers. Furthermore, new hires need training in order to make them competent for their new jobs (Sharma and Kurukshetra, 1989).

A common reason why organisations engaged in training and development is to increase performance of the individual and organisational performance by developing workers capability. Best performing organisations invest in training more than those who don't (Stuart, 2015). Organisations have realised that knowledge and skills is a speedily become source of value creation.

Workers expectation are changing, they are becoming more devoted to their profession than to their companies. They are very interested in the development in their personal careers. Employees are gradually having more interest in challenging and meaningful tasks. Therefore, organisations are placing greater emphasis on skills development to enable them achieve employees achieve their ambition (Wellins, et al. 2009).

1.2. Problem of the study

Although huge efforts and finance are committed to T&D interventions in public organisations in Nigeria and indeed around the world, much about training transfer is not well understood (Martin, 2010) and this leads to poor learning transfer on the job due to lack of efficient management of T&D programmes. Employees' capability to get the job done does not guarantee that it will be done. There is considerable evidence that a sizeable portion of an organisation's investment in training is not productive because of some environmental factors that militate against it (Burke & Baldwin 1999; Swartz 2002; Capps & Capps 2005; Ylvisaker et al. 2006). Workers appear to use little of the skills and knowledge they acquire through training in their workplaces (Nijman et al. 2010). Studies have shown that only 10 to 15% of staff learning is transferred on the job (Baldwin & Ford 1988; Cromwell & Kolb 2004; Kontoghiorghes 2004; Saks & Belcourt 2006; Coates 2007, Abdullah & Suring 2011). Although there are discrepancies in the average success rate of training transfer, Saks and Belcourt (2006) report up to 40% failure to transfer learning immediately after training. However efficient the T&D intervention was, if what is learnt is not transferred to relevant job performance or is not maintained over time, the training has failed. It is debatable whether enough skills and knowledge acquired during training are applied onto the job performance.

1.3. Objective of the study

The key research objective of this study was to find out whether the work environmental factors as model can influence transfer of learning on the job. Second objective of the study was to ascertain the environmental factor/s that made the highest impact on training transfer on the job. Specific dimensions of work environmental factors included in the study are; peer support, supervisors' support, resistance to change, supervisors' opposition, performance coaching positive and performance coaching negative.

1.4. Background of the study

The study took place in the Nigerian Railway Corporation (NRC) headquarters in Lagos state Nigeria. Railway transport has suffered from decades of neglect which resulted in inadequate maintenance and the deterioration of the system. These adversely affected the performance of NRC. The present poor condition of the NRC has led to moribund traffic and diminishing capacity to serve its customers (FGN, 2010). For instance as at 1964 NRC carried a total of 11, 288, 000 passengers and 2, 960,000 freights as compare to 2011, it carried mere 3,493, 443 passengers and a total of 341,396 freights, a big increase from 2010. The moribund nature of the NRC which affected passengers and freight capacity also affected the workforce. As at 1980s, NRC employed about 33,000 employees, in 2011 this had shrunk to a mere 6000 employees (Aderibigbe & Adurokiya, 2011).

As at 2013 NRC has a total workforce of 6,322, which is made up of 3,330 junior and 3,992 senior staff members, of which 4,021 and 2,301 are technical and administrative employees, respectively (NRC, 2010). One thousand three hundred and twenty eight (1,328) of these employees are based in Lagos (the location of this study), of which 878 are administrative staff and 450 are technical staff. Eight hundred and eleven (811) are junior staff and 517 are senior staff. In an effort to turn around the poor state of the Nigerian railway system to enable it participate fully in economic development of the nation and the transport system; all the major stations are been rehabilitated and five contracts have been awarded for refurbishing wagon and coach facilities. Training workshops in Enugu, Zaria, Kafanchan and Lagos are also undergoing rehabilitation (Esan, 2010, p.3; Madza, 2002, p. 7).

Both the federal and NRC authorities acknowledged the importance of efficient human resources to enhance the corporation's performance. They also acknowledged that competent human resources are also vital for the planning and performance (Khadijat, 2005). Like other business undertakings, the success of the NRC will depend on the quality and quantity of the employees available to develop and implement its strategic business objective. The government has acknowledged that improving the efficiency of railway transport will depend on T&D of its employees to create a new effective management system (FGN, 2010). They also recognizes the serious shortage of knowledge and capacity challenges and the importance of an adequate manpower pool to confront future challenges. Consequently the NRC has adopted T&D as a core strategy to cope with ever-increasing competitive pressure and demands for efficiency and better services. In collaboration with General Electric in 2010 Nigeria Railway Corporation was able to train mechanical/electrical staff in Nigeria.

46 YEARS PERFORMANCE PROFILE		
YEAR	PASSENGER	FREIGHT
1964	11,288,000	2,960,000
1974	4,288,000	1,098,000
1984	15,000,000	1,182,000
1994	784,802	106,000
2004	1,751,159	62,575
2006	798,802	41,495
2007	1,478,700	36,758
2008	1,996,324	47,409
2009	1,285,080	52,489
2010	1,514,215	141,247
2011	3,493,443	341,396

Figure 1 Source: NRC Management (2012), used with permission

Frankieszer Peacock International organized a two-month training programme on basic computer skills at the railway premises. The training included Computer Appreciation, Microsoft Word and Excel, Corel Draw and the Internet (Esan, 2010, p. 39). Training and development chances are now readily available for every employee irrespective of his/her rank or position in the Corporation (Nwachukwu, 2011).

1.1. Theoretical background

Reinforcement theory can be employed to describe why some employees effectively transfer their learning on the job while others do not. In other words, some T&D interventions yield results, while others do not. Reinforcement theory emphasises that people are motivated to perform or not perform (positive/negative reinforcement) due to past outcomes of a similar exercise. Trainees will be willing to learn and transfer learning only if they trust that their efforts will lead to positive outcomes such as acknowledgement and rewards; if not, the opposite will be the case.

The same is true of social learning theory, which emphasises that behaviour that is rewarded tends to be repeated and is adopted by the observer. Skinner's theory (1938) posits that outcomes that are positive are repeated, while those behaviours that lead to negative outcomes are not repeated. If past T&D did not lead to the acquisition of skills and knowledge, which in turn leads to improved trainees' job performance, financial reward or promotion for those who took part in the training and were able to transfer their new competences on the job, employees may be unwilling to take part in training intervention programmes or apply their new learning in their jobs. Even if they are willing to be trained, they may not be keen to transfer their learning on the job; hence, a lack of transfer of training. The extent to which the application and non-application of new skills is rewarded or punished in an

organisation could influence their transfer. Therefore, trainers need to establish what outcomes employees find most attractive or unattractive in order to be able to inspire them to learn new knowledge and transform their behaviours.

Social exchange theory by Hormans (1958) posits that people enter into a relationship with the aim of making the best use of the benefits they will obtain (Cook & Rice, 2003, p. 54; Devan, 2006; Dysvik & Kuvas, 2008). The relationship between social exchange theory and training transfer on the job can be explained in this way. Employers provide training as an opportunity for employees to acquire new skills and knowledge and grow in their career of choice and most importantly be productive in the organisation. Employees, on the other hand, endeavour to apply their skills and knowledge in performing their daily tasks as a way of returning favour to the management; hence the transfer of training in the organisation (Dysvik & Kuvas, 2008). Thus, a give-and-take formal obligation between employer and employees is moderated by the expectations of both parties in relation to training opportunities offered to the employees by the management. Therefore, providing training for employees may be regarded as a social exchange between the employees and the authorities. This process starts when an organisation signals its readiness to accommodate its employees' interests by offering T&D opportunities. Employees reciprocate by making sure that they applied their competencies on their job to ensure that the organisations objectives and goals are met. Numerous studies have shown that employees regard a T&D opportunity as sign that their organisation desires to enter into a social exchange with them (Newman et al., 2011).

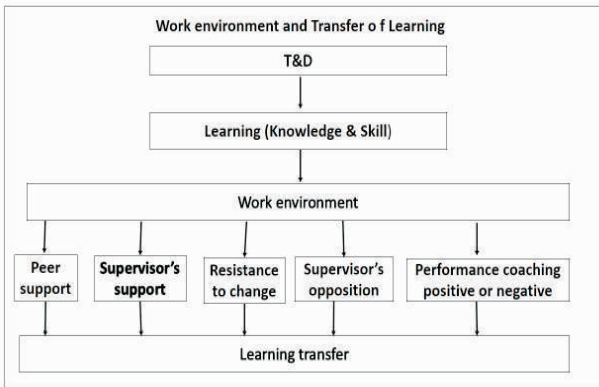


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework of the study was modified based on the work of Bates 2008

In this paper, we draw upon the work of Holton (1996) HRD Evaluation Research and Measurement Model. He pointed out that organizations that desire to do well in a competitive marketplace will undoubtedly depend on learning and that all barriers to the continuous development of knowledge and new ideas should be eradicated. Employees expect that attending training programmes will enable them to acquire skills. They believe that these new skills will enable them to perform better in their jobs, which will lead to pleasant consequences like an increase in salary. Those who believe in the above assumptions will put more effort into the training itself and are more likely to transfer their new skills and knowledge in the execution of their daily tasks. The conceptual model of this study was based partly on the Holton (1996) HRD Evaluation Research and Measurement Model and Holton III (1998) and Bates's (2008) Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) Measuring model, as well as the author's research findings. The framework aims to demonstrate an understanding of how consideration of some organizational factors in the workplace can influence individuals transferring their new skills and knowledge onto their work. Furthermore, the framework was structured, designed and analysed to develop an understanding of the activities and interrelationship between T&D and factors that influence the transfer of training in an organisation.

Therefore, in this study we looked at some of these factors like, peer support, supervisor's support and opposition, resistance to change, performance coaching positive or negative and find out which one is capable of influence learning transfer and which is the most influence of the factors mentioned above.

Literature review

1.1. Factors influencing the effectiveness of Training transfer

Training transfer refers to the extent to which skills and knowledge learnt are transferred from one context to another; it is the effective application of competencies gained by employees during training to their job performance (Cromwell & Kolb 2004; Yamnill & Mclean 2005; Leberman et al. 2006). There are many factors that may affect learning transfer; these may include mismatch of job and skills, too much workload, lack requisite materials etc. Training need analysis (TNA) is very important in trying to avoid the issues of mismatch between job and skill and ensure that skill and knowledge gained during training are transferred to the workplace. Skills and knowledge gained in training can be applied to daily tasks performance only when it is guided by the results of TNA. The importance is that repeating what is a trainees had already known can be boring for them and may hinder learning and transfer of learning. TNA identifies the shortfalls in the skills and knowledge of works that deter them from attaining a certain level of proficiency (Husain, 20011). One of the major cause of failure of trainees transferring skills to work is as result of non-alignment between training objectives and organisational objectives (Kunder, 2000). Thus, training needs of the organisation should be influenced by its business goals and objectives which will in turn influenced its intended business strategy (Whenua 2009, p. 36). Training initiatives that are not aligned with an organisation's strategic direction will result

in a low rate of learning transfer. Another important factor that impact on T&D effectiveness is training evaluation. The primary purpose of evaluation should be to determine the impact of T&D on employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes and how it has impacted individual performance on the job, employees' job satisfaction and the general performance of the business (Wilson, 2005; Meyer, 2007). The lack of alignment of training objective with the organisation objective, the lack of TNA may lead to mismatch between job and skill and lack of monitoring and evaluation will limit the opportunities for trainees and their managers to ensure that learning transfer takes place.

1.2. Work environment and Training transfer

Some researchers have postulated that the state of trainees, especially their motivation and the organisational climate influences the transfer of training (Nga et al. 2010). If training results in enhanced knowledge and relevant skills, workers' job performance will likely improve, as the skills learnt in training are transferred to the job (Tharenou et al. 2007). No matter how motivated employees were before and after training, they may not be able to transfer what they have learnt if environmental obstacles exist in the organisation. Other factors include time constraints; employees may not have enough time to put what they have learnt in training into practice. But for this study we consider in a special way how work environment affects learning transfer.

Work environment in this case comprises of supervisors and peer supports, resistance to change in the organisation, and performance coaching both negative and negative feedback (Bates, 2008). The workplace situation plays a key role in the transfer process, because this is where employees will make use of their new learning. The organisational climate is very influential in determining whether new

skills will be transferred to the work setting or not (Egan et al. 2004). A good working environment provides occasions to apply new skills and cues to remind employees about the skills learnt (Liebermann & Hoffmann 2008). Work environment here refers to "a perceptual medium through which culture and other work environment factors influence job attitude and behaviour" (Bates and Khasawneh 2005). It includes members' perceptions and relationships that affect job performance in a given organisation (Hatala & Fleming 2007). The work done by Profijt; Endedijk & Beverborg (2015) among the managers of cleaning agency shows that workplace environment can influence training transfer. However, the Ashridge Business School (2010) study found work environment to be a weak predictor and facilitator of transfer of training. As Bates and Khasawneh (2005) note, the workplace climate is not restricted to the work environment, but refers to how employees and employers respond to it. Hence we look at factors like supervisors' support or opposition, resistance to change, peer support, and performance coaching outcome negative or positive. Tonhauser and Buker, (2016) in their systematic and comprehensive analysis of the recent empirical studies regarding the factors that influence learning transfer in the context of vocational training initiatives found a positive correlation between learning transfer and work environment. And they found that transfer climate or work environment contributed about 54% of the variation in training transfer success. Furthermore they found that social support (peer support) is the most important of all the variables in learning transfer success.

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between work environment and perceived training transfer.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between work environment and perceived training transfer.

1.2.1. Supervisors' support/opposition and training transfer

Some of the most important work environmental factors in this context include supervisor/manager support or encouragement, opposition, and resistance to change. Learning transfer does not occur automatically; managers have to make effort for it to happen. There is therefore a need for a supportive environment for learning to be transferred. For example, employees need support from their supervisor/manager and colleagues for them to apply their new skills and knowledge into their job performance. Some studies (Sibthorp et al. 2011, Nikandrou et al. 2009), and Leberman et al. (2006) among others, established that the organisational environment influences training transfer. Supervisor support comprises the clarification of performance expectations after training and "setting realistic goals based on the training" (Holton et al. 2007). It also includes working closely with employees to solve any problems they encounter when they are applying learning on the job. Supervisor support has been found to correlate positively with transfer of training to enhance employees' job performance or success (Govindarajulu 2009). The above results was made possible because supervisors that signal that new skills should be applied as and when due will invariably promote learning transfer. An unsupportive supervisor, on the other hand, can simply ignore or discourage the application of the new skills. Okereke and Igboke (2011) found that a supervisor's positive support of the use of the new knowledge gained in training promotes transfer of knowledge by up to 92%. The work carried out by Hunter-Johnson (2013) in which he studied law enforcement officers' perception about factors that hinder learning transfer in Bahamas. He found that supervisors or managers do not support transfer of training.

The opportunity to transfer skills learnt to the work situation is partly dependent on the immediate supervisor support, who can either promote or hinder transfer of learning (Tannenbaum & Yukl 1992; Holton et al. 2000; Kirwan & Birchal 2006; Haslinda & Mahyuddin 2009; Abozed et al. 2010; Nga et al. 2010). Leimbach and Maringka (2010) found that the effect of training can be improved by up to 186% if all of the learning transfer methods are effectively controlled. Raliphada, Coetzee, & Ukpere (2014) in their study to identify factors that affect learning transfer in the South African Public Service discovered that organizational factors such as supervisor and management role play an important part in the ability of the employees to transfer learning into the workplace. The study carried out by Hawley and Barnard, 2007 among HRD professionals in the nuclear power industry indicates that a lack of manager support or opposition may negatively impact on learning transfer in the workplace.

Furthermore positive outcomes result when the attitudes of authorities such as supervisors exert positive influence on the freedom of their subordinates to use their new skills for their job practices. *When supervisors are well disposed towards training, they will encourage the use of new knowledge; however, if their attitude is negative, chances are that they will not encourage their subordinates to apply the knowledge acquired on the job (Cromwell & Kolb 2004). Therefore, the effect of T&D on job performance will depend on the attitude of the supervisor towards the training content and the trainees themselves.* Newman et al. (2011), Young (2007) and Noe et al. (1990, cited in Young 2007) support the argument that the attitude of supervisors, opportunity to use skills and openness to change are essential factors that influence learning transfer. *Furthermore, the supervisor's feedback, encouragement and involvement (McSherry & Taylor 1994; Ismail et al. 2010) during and after training*

programmes (Ismaila et al. 2009) significantly add to transfer of training (Awoniyi et al. 2002; Saks & Belcourt 2006; Abozed et al. 2010a; Everatt 2010). Reinhold, Gegenfurtner, & Lewalter, (2018) investigated if work environment which was conceptualized in four dimensions namely, supervisor support, peer support, supervisor opposition and coaching had any relationship to learning transfer. The combination of the factors resulted in a better model fit. Peer support was the strongest predictor of motivation to transfer, and supervisors' coaching was the strongest predictor of training transfer. However, Van den Bossche et al. (2010) confirm that the ability of supervisors' feedback to influence positive transfer is a function of how appropriate it is and when it takes place. It has also been suggested that managers' support is far more important in encouraging learning transfer than a well-crafted development plan (Machin & Forgarty 2003). On the other hand, a lack of supervisor support hinders transfer of learning. *Employees who are identified as more competent are given more tasks and receive more support from their supervisors. Consequently, they perform better than employees with less supportive supervisors. Moreover, employees will make an effort to transfer the skills and knowledge learnt during T&D in the workplace if they are aware that their supervisors will evaluate the impact of training on their performance after the training programme.*

Hypothesis

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between supervisors' support and perceived training transfer.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between supervisors' support and perceived training transfer.

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between supervisors' opposition and perceived training transfer.

H1: There is a statistically significant

relationship between supervisors' opposition and perceived training transfer.

Peer support and training transfer

Employees or work groups that receive extensive support (*either from a work team, supervisor or top management*) are more likely to transfer learning than those who did not receive support, and can perform more complex tasks; this partly depends on how well such support is maintained over time (Cromwell & Kolb 2004; Scaduto et al. 2008). Brown and McCracken (2009), Perryer and McShane (2008) and Lim and Johnson (2002) found lack of time and an unsupportive culture to be the most common barriers to learning transfer. Peer support is another factor that has the potential to hinder or facilitate learning transfer (Cromwell & Kolb 2004). The study carried out by Hawley and Barnard, (2007) among HRD professionals in the nuclear power industry indicates that peer support could be a significant work environment factor positively influence learning transfer. Van den Bossche et al. (2010) found that peer feedback have similar effects on training transfer. *Colleagues' support enhances training transfer through feedback, encouragement, sharing thoughts and guidance (Martin 2010). Martin (2010) found that employees who received higher levels of support from their peers were able to apply their new knowledge and skills on the job to a greater extent than those who did not receive such support. This is because peer support has the potential to alleviate the consequences of other negative organisational environmental factors.* Performance coaching encourages people to borrow ideas from successful, experienced people at the workplace whom they trust. Constructive feedback from colleagues helps people to reflect on what has worked and what did not and what they should do differently. Van den Bossche et al. (2010) indicate that the quality and quantity of feedback and its usefulness correlate with the degree of learning

transfer in an organisation. The work by Harry (2010) in which he investigated the interaction of workplace environment and peer support on the transfer of learning in a corporate field setting indicates that peer support can influence learning transfer even in the presence of a few negative factors militating against learning transfer.

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between peer support and perceived training transfer.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between peer support and perceived training transfer.

Resistance to change and training transfer

Resistance to change define as “the extent to which prevailing group norms are perceived by individuals to resist or discourage the use of skills and knowledge acquired in training”. My colleague in the workplace would say, “we have been doing it like this and we have been succeeding”. One of the key factors to resistance to change is non alignment of training objectives with organisational strategic objectives. Lack of clarity regarding training objectives hinders learning transfer. Also lack of understanding of the purpose of training and drive from some senior managers can lead to resistance to training and use learning on the job (Stuart, 2015). Resistance to change can be influence by fear of the unknown, for instance supervisors or managers may be afraid that if employees apply their new skill into the job and performance better than before the training their importance may be reduced and their place in the organisation can be taken easily by young employees with up to date knowledge and skills. Training and development impacts on pattern of work prior to training programme. In many occasions managers do not know what change would take place after training and that causes apprehension among them, hence

resistance to change. Without taking the above precaution employees may not be able to use their new skills and knowledge on the job. To enable change to take place, change agents must endeavour to build trust, create a clear vision of what is to come, ensure a strong and reliable implementation and constant feedback (Armstrong, 2011). Raliphada, Coetzee, & Ukpere (2014) in their study to identify factors that affect learning transfer in the South African Public Service indicate that resistance to change may be attributed to anxiety related to high levels of job losses and joblessness around the world. Resistance to change is one of the workplace environmental factors that influence the transfer of learning in an organisation. Resistance to change depends on the level of opposition to change, willingness to invest energy in change and the level of support provided to employees who use the methods learnt in training (Holton & Bates 2008). Training initiatives change employees' expectations of themselves and the organisation. Therefore, the organisation needs to be prepared for such changes in expectations, in order to realise employees' capabilities (Leberman et al. 2006). Personality traits such as rigidity may prompt a person to resist change in an organisation; this is also true for supervisors and managers. Employees or work teams who are highly dependent on their superiors or colleagues for performance feedback may be more hesitant to use their new skills than those who are less reliant on others for inspiration. Therefore prior to training period managers or change agents should endeavour to create a sense of urgency and establish what will happen after the training initiatives, through meetings, discussion and reflections. Training initiatives need to demonstrate evidence of providing solution to specific need of the organisation. Finally “collaboration with managers and business leaders is essential in order to understand

organisational needs, facilitate the effective transfer of learning and ensure that learning is driving business results” (Stuart, 2015, p.34).

Hypothesis

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between resistance to change and perceived intention to training transfer on the job.

H1: There is a statistically significant relationship between resistance to change and perceived training transfer on the job

Performance outcome positive or negative and training transfer

Another organisational factor that influences training transfer is performance coaching outcomes positive. Performance coaching outcomes positive consist of the prospect of career progression in the organisation, improved personal job satisfaction, becoming more productive, improved work effectiveness and an increase in remuneration (Holton & Bates 2008). Employees attend training for many different reasons, including expectations that training will positively affect their career, income etc. Employees who expect returns after training are likely to use their newly acquired skills (Daffron & North 2005, cited in Alawneh 2008).

Hypothesis

H0: There is no statistically significant relationship between performance coaching outcomes positive and perceived training transfer on the job.

H₁: There is a statistically significant relationship between performance coaching outcomes positive and perceived training transfer on the job.

2. Research Methodology

According to Limpanitgul (2009, p. 68) “methodology is a body of knowledge that enables researchers to explain and analyse methods” In any research study one of the

essential tasks is the selection of the specific research design to be used. Therefore, in order to answer the research question of this study, the most appropriate methodology was sought.

This study is a cross sectional study of the Nigeria Railway Corporation. The data were collected took over two months. The target population was 1, 328 employees of the Nigerian Railway Corporation in Lagos zone. The sampling frame was the list of all Nigerian Railway Corporation employees that undergone training recently. A total of 297 employees were sampled in order to obtain a 95% confidence level for this study according to Sekaran & Bougie, (2010, p. 295).

The population was divided into mutually exclusive groups of junior and senior staff and administrative and technical staff respectively. A simple random sample was drawn from each stratum. The respondents were randomly selected after initially assigning each name a unique number. This provided a total of 297 respondents who had attended training programmes aimed at improving service quality and productivity in Nigerian Railway Corporation in Lagos.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher also made use of questionnaires to collect data from the NRC employees. The questionnaire was distributed with the help of contact persons in Lagos. The collection of the questionnaire took approximately two months. Considerable time was spent administering the questionnaire and seeking out those who might claim to have not received any training in recent times. The sampling frame was just over a thousand employees in Ebutte Mater in Lagos State who underwent training in the previous year. The study was able to achieve a 100% response rate because participants were stratified into distinctive groups and were randomly selected. The number of participants was manually

generated using Morris's (2003) random number table portrayed in Saunders et al. (2007).

3. Data presentation and analysis of results

3.1. Descriptive statistics

The mean, standard deviation, variance and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient scores were obtained as recorded in the table below. A Cronbach's alpha value of the variables used for this study were 0.7 or higher indicates a high degree of inter-correlation among the items and confirms that the items relate to a common construct (Sekaran & Bougie 2009). The table below indicates that peer and supervisor support were high; this an indication that majority of the employees receive support both from their supervisors and their colleagues. The result also shows that majority of employees thought that there will be positive outcomes if they apply their new skills and knowledge on the job.

Table 1: Training transfer factors

	Descriptive statistics						Alpha
	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. deviation	Variance	
Resistance to change	297	1.67	5.00	2.6479	0.64107	0.411	0.72
Peer support	297	1.00	5.00	3.8238	0.81004	0.656	0.84
Supervisor support	295	1.00	5.00	3.4610	0.77414	0.599	0.80
Supervisor opposition	297	1.00	5.00	2.5174	0.95023	0.903	0.79
Performance outcomes – positive	297	1.00	5.00	3.4714	1.02229	1.045	0.83
Performance outcomes – negative	297	1.00	5.00	3.0842	.86474	.748	0.75
Valid N (list-wise)	295						

1.1.1. Work environment factors

The perceived strengths in work environment factors need to be worked on, as many of these factors are weak catalysts or even barriers to learning transfer. The score on transfer design (3.9) was high, which suggests that most of the employees perceived that the training programme was designed in such a way that it gave employees the ability to apply learning to their tasks. Put differently, the training was designed in such a way that the examples, methods, exercises and activities demonstrated how to use the new skills and knowledge on the job. This factor can therefore be regarded as a catalyst for transfer. The application of new

competencies on the job is a function of how closely the examples, methods, exercises and activities used during the training are similar to those employees use in the workplace. Although this factor is a catalyst, its rating needs to be higher. This study has made an important discovery that is contrary to what is found in the literature, where it was suggested that outdated syllabi, teaching equipment, teaching methods and assessment methods have led to the inefficiencies in the Nigerian education system and to skills shortages (Duze 2010; Bukar & Mwajim 2012). The majority of the employees felt that the methods, exercises and activities used during training were similar to the ones they use in the workplace.

Peer support was also rated high (3.8) by the employees, many of whom indicated that they received support and encouragement from their colleagues to use their new skills and knowledge. This factor can be regarded as a catalyst (although the score should be higher), because peer support has been rated one of the factors that influence transfer of training in an organisation. Employees in an organisation where colleagues are antagonistic about using new learning may be discouraged from using their new capabilities acquired during training on the job.

The performance coaching score (3.48) was just above average, indicating that a good number of employees felt they received productive feedback from managers and their work team when they applied their new skills. Performance coaching, whether formal or informal, has the potential to influence employees to use their new skills. Positive contributions from the work team can rejuvenate and reinvigorate an individual to use his/her learning to improve job performance. When this happens, the chances are that the skills and knowledge learnt can be properly utilised. This factor can be regarded as a weak catalyst; the score should be much

higher than 3.48. The fairly low score may be due to the fact that government work environments are more departmental-based; employees are managed by their heads of department and there is not much team work.

Supervisor support also rated just about average (3.46), which indicates that a number of employees perceived that their supervisor clarified performance expectations after training and also identified opportunities to apply new learning and set realistic goals based on the training. The supervisors also assisted in rectifying problems encountered when applying the new knowledge and skills and provided feedback when the employees adequately applied their new abilities. Successful learning transfer depends greatly on the attitude of the supervisor. If a supervisor is proactive and supportive, employees will be able to use their new abilities. On the other hand, if the supervisor is unsupportive, the initial enthusiasm with which the employees returned from the training disappears. Therefore, little or no transfer will occur. This is a very important factor in the sense that the supervisor works constantly with the employees; he/she therefore has significant influence on whether or not employees utilise the skills and knowledge they learnt during training. This factor can be regarded as a very weak catalyst; the score needs to be above 4.0 for meaningful transfer of knowledge to take place.

The performance outcomes – negative score of (3.08) is about average, suggesting that many of the employees do not perceive that there will be any negative consequences if they do not use their training on their job. As with the score for performance outcomes – positive, the mean score indicates that the organisational reward scheme may not be associated with training transfer; employees do not think that any punishment will come their way if they do not use their new skills and knowledge in

the workplace. As noted earlier, this relates to the reward system adopted by government-owned organisations that is based on length of service. If this is the norm, many employees may not be enthusiastic about using their skills; therefore little transfer will take place. Therefore, this factor can be regarded as a hindrance; the score needs to be above 4.0 for meaningful transfer of knowledge to take place.

The means score for resistance to change (2.64) was high; it needs to be very low to allow transfer to occur. The score suggests that a good number of the employees do not want change to happen. This factor is a barrier to learning transfer. The willingness of work teams or groups to devote their energy to making change happen and the degree of support provided to those who use the techniques learnt in training will determine whether transfer of training occurs or not. The more energy individuals or teams devote to change and the more they support one another, the more likely it is that the new skills and knowledge will be transferred on the job.

The perception score on supervisor opposition (2.51) was high; this score should be very low to allow transfer of learning to occur. This indicates that half of the employees have experienced opposition from their manager or supervisor when using new skills and knowledge acquired from training. It also indicates that their supervisors did not offer help in identifying opportunities to use the capabilities learnt during training and did not provide feedback when employees successfully apply learning on the job. This factor will definitely affect transfer of learning negatively in the organisation if not corrected. It is a barrier to transfer of learning in the public service. When a supervisor refuses to encourage the use of new skills and knowledge, employees' enthusiasm to use learning weakens; therefore, few skills and little knowledge will be transferred. This study

has illustrated that supervisor and peer support in the public service should be looked into by the management. This findings of this study therefore support past work in the field that attributed the serious capacity gaps in the civil service to delays in establishing systematic T&D programmes, lack of training needs identification and lack of commitment to update employees' skills (Goke 2006). Furthermore, some organisations only half-heartedly embrace T&D, implementing it only on a very small scale when absolutely necessary (Akanji & Bankole 2007). It is important to point out that the lack of adequate emphasis on employee development in Nigerian organisations in both the public and the private sectors was a result of a lack of understanding of the concept (Omodia 2009). This finding supports Okoh's (2002) assertion that some organisations in

Nigeria engage in training simply to comply with statutory requirements (Dumas et al. 2010).

1.2. Learning transfer and training transfer

1.2.1. Work environment and training transfer

Pearson correlation was conducted to determine the relationship between work environment factors and training transfer. The work environment transfer factors include supervisor support, supervisor opposition, peer support, performance outcomes – positive, performance outcomes – negative, performance coaching and resistance to change. Standard multiple regression was used to determine the extent to which the work environment as a model will predict learning transfer to job performance. The results were presented below.

Table 2 Work environment and performance

		training transfer
Supervisor Support	Pearson correlation	0.001
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.982
	N	287
Performance Coaching	Pearson correlation	0.059
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.314
	N	289
Supervisor opposition	Pearson correlation	-0.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001
	N	289
Peer Support	Pearson correlation	0.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.441
	N	289
Resistance to change	Pearson correlation	-0.045
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.449
	N	289
Performance outcomes – positive	Pearson correlation	0.043
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.467
	N	289
Performance outcomes – negative	Pearson correlation	-0.100
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.090
	N	289
training transfer	Pearson correlation	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	
	N	289

Work environment variables

Model summary ^b				
Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	Std. error of the estimate
1	0.252 ^a	0.064	0.040	0.442582
a. Predictors: (constant), performance outcomes – positive, resistance to change, performance coaching, performance outcomes – negative, supervisor support, supervisor opposition, peer support				
b. Dependent variable: training transfer				

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardised coefficients		Standardised coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	3.846	0.172		22.407	0.000
	Supervisor support	-0.018	0.043	-0.031	-0.425	0.671
	Performance coaching	0.052	0.036	0.100	1.431	0.154
	Supervisor opposition	-0.112	0.034	-0.237	-3.307	0.001
	Performance outcomes – negative	-0.040	0.037	-0.078	-1.100	0.272
	Resistance to change	0.023	0.036	0.047	0.642	0.521
	Peer support	0.021	0.045	0.037	0.462	0.645
	Performance outcomes – positive	0.035	0.032	0.080	1.113	0.267
a. Dependent variable: training transfer						

The work environment transfer factors include supervisor support, supervisor opposition, peer support, performance outcomes – positive, performance outcomes – negative, performance coaching and resistance to change. The main objective here is to discuss the extent to which these factors can predict intention to transfer learning and to determine the factor that is the highest predictor of intention to transfer learning in the public service.

Standard multiple regression was used to determine the extent to which the work environment as a model will predict learning transfer to job performance. The result of the standard multiple regression suggests that the model explains 6% of

learning transfer to job performance. This result indicates that the workplace environment scales can only predict 6% of training transfer in the workplace. The supervisor opposition variable made the strongest significant unique contribution (beta = -0.23, p = 0.001) to explaining transfer of learning to job performance, when the variance explained by the other variables in the model was controlled for. The other variables made negligible contributions, with performance coaching making the second-highest unique contribution (beta = 0.10, p = 0.15). The result of this model is lower than the results obtained in the literature, where the transfer of learning has been estimated to range between 10 and 15%. The result

suggests that 94% of transfer to job performance can be predicted by other variables not considered in this model.

It is equally important to note that the transfer rate for this study is less learning compared with previous studies, where the transfer rate stood around 10% (Cromwell & Kolb 2004; Kontoghiorghe 2004; Coates 2007; Abdullah & Suring 2011). However, Leimbach and Maringka (2010) found that the effect of training can be improved by up to 186% if all of the learning transfer methods are effectively applied. Only a few factors in this study significantly influenced training transfer in the organisation; this indicates that the effectiveness of training transfer systems may differ according to organisational type and types of training; this assertion was supported by the work of Van Zolingen and Gulen (2007).

1. Discussion of the results

The findings of this study suggest that factors that influence training transfer may be contextual. In the previous study these were found to influence training transfer by a much smaller margin than was discovered in this study. The training transfer factors in the organisation under study were found to be effectively managed and can be used for the future management of training transfer in the organisation. This study has highlighted another important discovery in that, in contrast to the findings of other studies, the majority of the participants indicated that what they learnt in training is relevant to their work requirements and that they had the opportunity to use their learning on the job. Therefore, the nation-wide call for renewal of employees' in-service T&D to increase capacity building (Erukora 2003) may be beginning to take shape. Therefore, training exercises in the country need to be intensified further. Many Nigerian organisations do not have enough information about what should be included in or excluded from training programmes

that are usually designed by public institutions outside of the organisation sponsoring the training. A common complaint among trainees was that they were not properly prepared for the training; when this happens, it becomes very difficult for learning to occur. Therefore, it is essential to note that it is always important for trainees to be well prepared to know the importance of transferring their learning on the job.

Finally, the responses of the employees regarding the state of learning transfer factors demonstrated hope for the organisation. The peer support mean score was reasonably strong. However, supervisor support were weak and supervisor opposition was high; this needs to be very low if learning transfer is to take place. Many a time supervisors resist changes because they are afraid of their position and do anything to maintain it. Resistance to change was high and needs to be low; that may have contributed to the reason why environmental factors have made insignificant contribution to the training transfer in this study.

Conclusion and recommendations for future research

Organisations need to establish what outcomes employees find most attractive or unattractive in order to be able to inspire them to learn new knowledge and transform their behaviours. The literature has revealed that work environmental factors promote training transfer in organisations. However, it is not always easy for an organisation to figure out exactly which factors are the most important for learning transfer. Nonetheless, work environment have been found to be the most consistent factors that are associated with learning transfer. Although for this study the seven variables that made up of the model (environmental factors) made a small but significant contribution to transfer of training on the job, they predicted only 6% of training

transfer in the organisation. The result suggests that 94% of training transfer on the job performance can be predicted by other variables not considered in this model. The research of this study is an indication that there is a need for further research to determine these other factors that might contribute to training transfer in the organisation. It is strongly recommended therefore that further research be conducted to determine other factors in the organisations not discussed in this study that may promote training transfer. Some of these factors may include but not limited to, motivational factors, trainees' characteristic factors, and ability factors.

According to the result obtained in this study, the supervisor opposition variable made the strongest significant unique contribution (beta = -0.23, p = 0.001) to explaining training transfer on the job performance, when the variance explained by the other variables in the model was controlled for. The result is an indication that supervisor' opposition can have detrimental consequences to training transfer on the job. Therefore study should be done to determine the reasons why supervisor oppose the use of new skills and knowledge acquired from training and its effect on training transfer, this will most likely influence positively on training transfer in the organisation.

In this study only the environmental factors were considered, but it has been established by Leimbach and Maringka (2010) who found that the effect of training transfer can be improved by up to 186% if all of the learning transfer factors are effectively applied. Therefore we also strongly recommend that further research be carried out applying all these training transfer factors in one study: e.g. work environment factors, motivational factors, trainees' characteristic factors, and ability factors.

This study was a case study carried out among the employees of the NRC. Future

research on this topic should consider a much wider scope to include other organisations in different parts of Nigeria. Because result obtain using many organisations will be more reliable and can be generalised.

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