

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BREACH OF PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT AND TRANSFER OF TRAINING IN THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS TRAINING IN THE CIVIL DEFENCE DEPARTMENT OF MALAYSIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This study identifies the relationship between psychological contract breaches (PCBs) and the influence of training transfer. Limited studies have been conducted on the relationship between PCB and transfer of training. A total of 425 respondents from Malaysia Civil Defense Department in Bangi, Selangor, Malaysia who attended a disaster preparedness training (March – May 2015) were selected as a sample of this study. This study uses a quantitative method and Robinson and Marinsson's (2000) questionnaire. The majority of respondents believed that PCB can influence their ability to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the training to their workplace.*

**Keywords:** *psychological contract breach, transfer of training*

## Introduction

Psychological contract breach (PCB) happens between the employer and employees when the employer breaches the employment contract. Most of the issues are related to salary and promotion. Employees

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constantly encounter problems in training and development (Coyle, 2008). This problem interferes with an employee's credibility and commitment in performing his or her job. Lack of training results in the inability of an employee to utilize his or her skills and knowledge at a high level, which may affect organizational performance. The question posed is whether an employee can perform the transfer of training if no training has been provided.

Existing studies did not explore the relationship between PCB and transfer of training. Given this gap in research, the present study mainly aims to identify the factor that may influence transfer of training among staff in the public sector. The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between PCB and transfer of training.

### **Transfer of Training**

Transfer of training can help employees enhance their skills, attitudes, and knowledge and gain training experience that they can apply to their workplace. Organizations and individuals must be given the opportunity to improve their performance. The significance of transfer must be clarified to individuals and organizations to inspire them to focus, gain, and transfer what they learned from training.

Transfer of training is the process of transferring new knowledge, skills, and attitude for effective work performance. According to Lim and Nowell (2014), knowledge gained from training must be applied in the workplace. Clardy (2006) stated that positive transfer of training is "the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training context to the job." The importance of transfer is shown in the ability of individuals to apply what they have learned to their jobs. Transfer can leave positive effects on their work. A positive transfer can enhance their job performance. Therefore, positive transfer of training is important for individuals and organizations.

Several factors affect transfer of training. These factors affect the ability of trainees to transfer learned knowledge and skills from the training setting to their workplace. Three factors can affect an employee's transfer of training. The first factor is trainee characteristics, which involve an employee's

motivation, self-efficacy, and ability. The second factor is training design, which includes creating a learning environment, applying theories of transfer, and using self-management strategies. The last factor is work environment, which encompasses the climate for transfer, supervisor and peer support, and opportunity to perform.

### **Psychological Contract Breach (PCB)**

PCB is one of the factors that influence transfer of training. PCB involves two aspects, namely, employer and employee. PCB is a powerful means of understanding and explaining employment relationship (Conway & Briner, 2005, 2009). PCB can be defined as an organization's failure to meet its promise (Morrison & Robinson, 1997) and demonstrates negative effects on almost all work-related outcomes (Zhao, Wayne, & Glibkowski, 2007). Recruiters and organizations commonly promise the following obligations to applicants: promotion and advancement, high pay, pay based on current level of performance, training, long-term job security, career development, and sufficient power and responsibility (empowerment) (Lester, 2001).

Kickul and Lester (2001) identify training as a category of psychological contract to respect the need of training for modernity and service, continuing professional training, opportunities for personal growth, and career guidance.

According to Phuong (2012), the main reasons for the issues involving Vietnamese workers are lack of work motivation, low pay, boring jobs, and lack of career perspectives. Annual turnover rate ranged from 12% to 15% (Navigos, 2009). Reasons for quitting were related to pay, lack of trust and support from supervisors, unfair working environment, and lack of training (Phuong, 2012).

### **Research Methodology**

This research adopted a quantitative approach. The population of this study consists of staff who have attended the Disaster Preparedness Training (March – May 2015) at the training unit of Malaysia Civil Defense Department in Bangi, Selangor. Sets of questionnaires were distributed to 425 staff members.

This study used purposive random technique to select the sample. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), this technique, which focuses on a specific target, is the best approach that has been applied in previous transfer of training studies (Holton, Chen & Naquin, 2003; Velada, Caetano, Bates & Holton, 2009).

The questionnaire used in this research consisted of closed-ended questions in Malay languages. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section 1 collected demographic data of respondents, which cover gender, age, work experience, and educational level. Section 2 probed on the respondents' level of transfer of training in the workplace. Section 3 focused on PCB.

## **Measures**

### **Transfer of Training**

Transfer of training is measured using the six items developed by Xiao (1996). The six items are applicable for measuring transfer of training in the context of Asian countries (Xiao 1996). This instrument was used in previous studies and yielded a reliability of 0.83 in Scaduto, Lindsay, and Chiaburu (2008). The items of transfer of training were measured using a six-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 for strongly disagree and 5 for strongly agree). Table 1 shows that the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of this scale is 0.84, which illustrates the reliability of this measure.

### **Psychological Contract Breach (PCB)**

This study used a five-item scale to measure PCB; the scale was introduced by Robinson and Morrison's (2000). A sample item states: "Almost all the promises made by my employer during recruitment have been kept so far" (reverse scored). The Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of the resulting scale in our sample is 0.85, which indicates a high degree of internal consistency.

## Findings and Discussion

### Demographic Background of Respondents

The majority of respondents of this study were within the age group of 21–30 years, which accounts for 22 (52.4%) of the total sample. This group is followed by the age group below 20 years and 31–40 years. Both age groups account for 108 (25.5%) and 67 (15.8%) respondents, respectively. Majority of the respondents were females at 57.1%, which is followed males at 42.7%. A total of 325 (76.7%) respondents have had working experience from 0–5 years. This group is followed by 52 (12.3%) and 17 (4%) respondents who have been in the service for 5–10 years and 11–20 years, respectively. Only 37 (8.7%) of the respondents have attended nine or more training sessions. Respondents who have earned Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/O' Level Equivalent were 216 (50.9%). A total of 108 (25.5%) respondents have completed an academic diploma, and 94 (22.2%) respondents have earned an academic degree.

### Reliability and Validity of Analyses

Table 1 shows the goodness of data for this study. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test (KMO), which is a measure of sampling adequacy, was applied on each variable. The results are acceptable. The statistical results showed that (1) the acceptable standard of KMO's value for all research variables exceeded 0.6; (2) the eigenvalue exceeded 1 for all research variables; (3) the factor loadings of the items for each research variable exceeded 0.40; and (4) the standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 for all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard. The value of factor analysis for all items that represent each research variable was approximately 0.4, which indicates that the items met the acceptable standard of validity analysis.

Table 1: Goodness of Data

Variable	Item	Factor Loading	KMO	Barlett Test of Sphericity	Eiganvalue	Cronbach Alpha
Transfer of Training	6	0.657-0.828	0.837	1011.479 $p = 0.000$	3.421	0.843
Psychological Contract Breach	3	0.850-0.891	0.722	539.282 $p = 0.000$	2.295	0.845

### Relationship between Psychological Contract Breach (PCB) and Transfer of Training

Table 2 shows that transfer of training and PCB has a strong correlation. This finding is indicated in the significant value is .000, which is less than .05. PCB significantly affected employees in the process of transferring knowledge, abilities, and skills. The employer failed to meet the promise of training and development to employees. Some employees lacked training or they lack interest in applying training knowledge and skills to the workplace.

Table 2: Correlation between Studied Variables

Independent Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig. (p)
Transfer of Training	4.06	0.743	0.000
Psychological Contract Breach	3.64	0.681	0.000

Hemdi, Hanafiah and Tamalee (2013) conducted studies on the factors that influence the feelings of hotel employees. They found that HR dimension had the most significant and positive effect on psychological contract. Training and development had the strongest positive effects on psychological contract fulfillment. Therefore, hotel employees reciprocate with positive work behaviors when they highly perceive that their organizations have provided them with extensive training programs to enable them to do their jobs and when they are satisfied with the training opportunities given to them.

## Conclusion

A strong correlation exists between transfer of training and PCB. This finding implies that most trainees can apply knowledge and skills gained from training to the workplace if they are satisfied with how the organization fulfills what they have been promised. Employees are highly satisfied with the organization that provides them with extensive training programs to enable them to perform their jobs and add value to their skills and knowledge.

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