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Transfer of Training: An effective tool of knowledge application

Abstract

Training alone is not adequate to increase organisational effectiveness, as not all knowledge acquired from the training is implemented correctly in the workplace. To implement training effectiveness, acquired knowledge should be transferred to the workplace. This study intends to understand and describe how expatriate faculty members perceive the Supervisor's support behaviours for an effective transfer of training during three stages (i.e. before, during and after training) in the context of UAE HE sector. A qualitative interpretivist approach was adopted, and the data was generated from 21 expatriate faculty members in three higher education institutions through semi-structured interviews. The findings had contributed to the knowledge concerning transfer of training, particularly, in the UAE's higher education (HE) sector by proposing a framework which for the first time identifies the types of supervisors' supportive behaviours that foster transfer of training among faculty members in each phase of training—thereby increasing the knowledge application and training effectiveness in the UAE private HE sector.

Keywords: Transfer of Training, Supervisor Support, Expatriate Faculty Members, UAE, HE Sector

1. Introduction

In a highly competitive environment in today's business world, organisations are investing billions of dollars each year in Training (Govaerts et al., 2017a) to improve the competencies of their employees (Blume et al., 2010; Govaerts and Dochy, 2014; Dirani, 2017). However, for training to be useful, it needs to be transferred back to the

workplace (Govaerts and Dochy, 2014; Ghosh et al., 2015). Transfer of Training refers to the ability to which individuals efficiently and continually apply the Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSAs) gained from a training program to their workplace (Nijman et al. 2006; Zumrah and Boyle, 2015).

Transfer of training literature has identified different factors that affect transfer, namely, trainee characteristics, training design and work environment factors (Grossman and Salas, 2011; Ghosh et al., 2015). Among these factors, the least understood set of factors in facilitating training transfer are those in the work environment, particularly, supervisor support (Lancaster et al., 2013; Govaerts et al., 2017b). A little attention has been given to the supervisor support within training transfer literature, especially concerning developing countries (Zahari and Obaid, 2014; Ng, 2015; Singh 2017). To the best of the researchers' knowledge, there is a research absence with regards to the supervisor support behaviours for transfer of training in the UAE literature, especially in the HE sector. Given the fact that researchers and practitioners might not be able to generalise the findings of these studies in the context of other countries (Ling and Yusof, 2017), the first contribution of this research is to fill a gap in the literature by contributing to the knowledge concerning training transfer and focusing on the particularly under-studied role of the supervisor support as an environmental factor in the UAE's higher education (HE) sector.

Despite the existence of a common assumption that supervisors' support has a positive influence on training transfer (Ng, 2015) there is inconsistency in research findings concerning the impact of supervisor support behaviours in the training transfer (Nijman et al. 2006; Ghosh et al., 2015; Ng, 2015; Govaerts et al., 2017a). For instance, some studies like Baldwin & Ford (1988), Lim and Johnson (2002), Hawley and Barnard (2005) and Blume et al. (2010) have considered Supervisor's support as an

essential factor for training transfer, while other studies such as Enos et al. (2003), Velada et al. (2007) and Ng (2013) have pointed out that supervisor support is not useful and vital to transfer. This inconsistency makes it difficult for institutions to determine the most critical factors for transfer (Grossman and Salas, 2011). A possible cause behind these inconsistent findings might be the lack of a shared understanding of the Supervisor's levels of support across training stages. Therefore, further research is prompted by researchers to recognise and classify the kind of supervisor support that trainees need at each stage of Training (Grossman and Salas, 2011; Bhatti et al., 2014; Govaerts et al., 2017b). Thus, the second contribution of this study is to propose a framework that for the first time identifies the types of supervisors' supportive behaviours that foster training transfer among faculty members in each phase of training in the UAE' HE sector.

Another limitation in the literature concerning supervisor support and transfer of training is that research has mostly used quantitative methods (Lancaster et al., 2013; Govaerts and Dochy, 2014), consequently does not provide adequate detail about the supervisors' support behaviours that trainees consider significant to support them to transfer. Therefore, the third contribution of this study is to fill part of this gap in the literature and contribute to the useful body of knowledge in this area, by providing rich qualitative data on the role of Supervisor (Head of Academic Department) in training transfer in the UAE's HE sector. This study seeks to answer to the following research question: Which perceived Supervisor's behaviours before, during and after training affect the expatriate faculty members' transfer of training in the context of UAE's private HE sector?

2. Background of the study

UAE is an Arabic country located on the south-eastern side of the Arabian Gulf. After the discovery of oil in the Arab Gulf States including UAE, significant efforts were made by these counties in using their wealth to attract universal human capital aiming to expand their economies beyond oil by generating new industries (Ewers, 2013). This is because they believed that it was merely impossible to build robust, stable and sustained economies by depending exclusively on oil or gas revenues, as they are non-renewable resources (Haak-Saheem, 2016). Thus, one of the nine pillars that architecture Abu Dhabi's (the capital of UAE) 2030 economic vision is to create a sustainable knowledge-based economy (Aswad et al., 2011).

A growing body of research has pointed out that for Arabian Gulf countries to succeed in their transition to knowledge-based economies, they must utilise their total human capital (Kumar & Van Welsum, 2013). However, UAE suffers from population imbalance, in which the UAE nationals form a minority in their country (Mansour, 2015). The majority of UAE's workforce consists of expatriates, and consequently, the rapid development in UAE's economy mainly depends on the knowledge of expatriates (Aswad et al., 2011). For instance, The UAE heavily depends on expatriate faculty members (Chapman et al., 2014). The Ministry of Education (MoE) declared that national faculty members represent only about 5% of the total full-time academics in the UAE's licensed HE institutions (UAE HE factbook, 2013/2014). Thus, the current study is focusing on full-time expatriate academics, as they represent the vast majority of academics in the UAE HE sector (Schoepp, 2011).

As UAE is seeking to reduce its dependence on oil revenues and transition to the knowledge economy, the HE sector is a vital element in achieving this national goal (Chapman et al., 2014). In this regard, it is essential to highlight the role of UAE

government, represented in the Commission for Academic Accreditation (CAA), in building a strong knowledge-based economy, through providing a high-quality education system. There is a continuous endeavour from the MoE in UAE to develop its educational institutions, programs, quality of education available to students. For example, section four of the CAA standards has entirely stressed upon the faculty and staff professional development, in which it clearly states that each institution must: *"provide faculty development activities that support teaching, research, and scholarship; and allocates an adequate budget to support the professional development of its faculty and professional staff, and provide evidence that funds are used for that purpose"* (Commission for Academic Accreditation, 2011, page 15). Based on the above standards, it can be inferred that the MoE has laid bare the extreme importance of training in faculty development and consequently, its positive effect on the quality of students and research output.

On the other hand, it is also essential for HEIs to invest in their faculty members' training and development due to its significant impact on their performance and profitability (Govaerts et al., 2017b). As the private HE marketplace in UAE is overcrowded and competitive by having over than 40 international providers (Wilkins, 2010), HEIs need to develop and adopt effective strategies that offer them a competitive advantage, such as investing more in their human resources. Especially that the CAA standards emphasised all private HEIs fulfil specific physical structure and technology requirements to obtain a license, which in turn minimises the differences among private HEIs. Thus, developing faculty members' capabilities is one of their competitive advantages. Based on the above reasoning, it is essential to promote training transference among faculty members as it will increase training effectiveness and consequently maximise the return on such investment.

2.1. Transfer of Training

Transfer of Training is one of the critical elements of training effectiveness (Baldwin et al., 2017), in which former researchers such as Baldwin & Ford (1988), Scaduto et al. (2008) and Govaerts and Dochy (2014) have confirmed that training programs are not going to positively influence the employees' job performance unless the newly gained competencies (KSAs) from training are being transferred to the workplace.

Despite the significance of training transfer for training effectiveness, there are high rates of transfer failure (Bhatti et al., 2014; Govaerts et al., 2017b), which means that the return on investment from training is still low. This has become known as the 'transfer problem' (Baldwin et al., 2017). The widespread failure of training transfer is still puzzling researchers and practitioners. Hence, the importance of this study stems from the need for further research on training transfer which is strongly required to obtain descriptive information and in-depth understanding on the factors influencing the transfer process, specifically supervisor support (Ng, 2015), and to fulfil the need of better understanding of the viable role of supervisor support behaviour in training transfer.

2.2. The Relationship between Supervisory Support and Training Transfer

Several theorists have been extensively acknowledged for their transfer of training models or integrative reviews on the linkage between supervisor support and transfer of training. As noted by Blume et al., (2010), the most frequently cited transfer of training model in the literature of transfer is the one offered by Baldwin and Ford (1988). Saks et al. (2014) declared that Baldwin and Ford's (1988) study had been cited over than 2000 times. Baldwin and Ford's (1988) main contributions were to qualitatively review

and critique most of transfer of training research executed at that time as well as to suggest directions for future research. Consequently, they identified the factors that affect training transfer, critical research gaps and created a model that encompasses the factors they perceived to affect training transfer. The researchers developed a model of training transfer process that consists of (1) training inputs, (2) training outcomes, and (3) the conditions of transfer. Training inputs include different factors perceived to affect transfer, directly or indirectly via training outputs. These factors contain trainee characteristics (e.g. ability, personality and motivation), training design (e.g. principles of learning and sequencing of training content), and work environment (e.g. supervisors' support and opportunities to use acquired knowledge and skills on the workplace). Training outcomes refer to the amount of learning gained during the training and retention of these materials after training. Finally, conditions of transfer express the generalisation of material learned in training as well as maintaining it over some time at the workplace.

On the relationship between the input factors and transfer, Baldwin and Ford (1988) had reviewed 63 empirical studies. Most of them emphasised developing the training programs' designs, as there was a scarcity of research on work environment factors and trainee characteristics. However, they acknowledged the essential influence of environmental factors, specifically supervisor support, on training transfer. Till date, there is a shortage of studies that directly set out to understand the role of the Supervisor (Ling and Yusof, 2017), and this has resulted in the literature that suffers from the scarcity of comprehensive frameworks that identify and understand the behaviours that are supportive throughout the overall process of Training (Govaerts et al., 2017b). Consequently, another contribution of this research study is to explore the evolution of the role of the Supervisor before, during and after the training. Such an

option will certainly help us depict the time-based dynamics of the role of the Supervisor in training transfer and improve our understanding of the evolution of this role through the training process.

Moreover, it is argued that insufficient evidence has been provided by previous studies in which human resource practitioners can use it as guidelines to improve their employees' training and development activities as well as to attain organisational goals (Baldwin et al., 2017). Thus, a further contribution of this research is business-oriented. Indeed, this study is expected to provide top executives with a set of recommendations on how to influence the supervisors' roles in stimulating training transfer in their organisations. This will be of particular interest in the context of the UAE HE sector where investment in human capital is considered as a major priority for government and institutions.

3. Methods

This study adopted a qualitative interpretivist approach to empirically investigate the employees' perspectives on the supervisor support behaviours' impact on training transfer. A qualitative approach gives the researchers room to effectively understand how individuals behave and interpret in a social context (Sekaran and Bougie, 2009). Although the influence of the work environment factors including the supervisors' role in transfer of training has been examined in several studies previously, most of these studies adopted a quantitative method (Lancaster et al., 2013). However, the qualitative approach is also appropriate for this topic. For instance, some distinguished academics in other parts of the world such as Hawley and Barnard (2005) in the USA, Nikandrou et al. (2009) in Greece and Lancaster et al. (2013) in Australia have adopted a qualitative approach to examine the issue of training transfer in these countries.

Although quantitative studies are dominating this field of study, it does not provide adequate detail about the behaviours that trainees consider significant in supporting them to transfer. Therefore, numerous researchers like Pham et al., (2013) and Lancaster et al., (2013) stressed on the need for qualitative measures, such as interviews, when investigating the influence of work environment factors (e.g. supervisor support) on training transfer. Thus, the current study is adopting qualitative interpretivist approach, to close this gap in the literature and contribute to the knowledge concerning training transfer in UAE, and to provide rich qualitative data by describing the supervisor behaviours that expatriate faculty members found it helpful or unhelpful to achieve training transfer.

In this regard, It is worth mentioning that the researchers considered some limitations and recommendations in previous studies. For example, with regards to the sample of the study, Lancaster et al. (2013) only obtained the employees' perspective to distinguish between the helpful and unhelpful supervisor behaviours to transfer of training. On the contrary, Broad (1982) evaluated the perspective of a group of HRD leaders on certain management activities that might support training transfer to the workplace. Thus, former researchers like Pham et al. (2013) and Maung and Chemsripong, (2014) urge future studies to remedy that deficiency and use multiple sources (such as customers, subordinates, and peers) while investigating the influence of work environment factors including supervisory support on training transfer. Therefore, in the current study, the researchers took into account the perspectives of both faculty members as well as their supervisors to form a better comprehensive understanding of such relationship.

This study uses a cross-sectional design, in which the data collection was accomplished by interviewing participants only once, after attending a specific training programme (e.g. Active learning training) to answer the research question. However, the type of training programme attended by faculty members is outside the scope of this study.

An in-depth; semi-structured interviews were conducted with 21 expatriate faculty members were interviewed (sixteen faculty members and five direct managers or supervisors) to collect the primary data from participants who had completed a training programme 3 to 12 months before the interviews. This time frame is acceptable for participants to attempt to transfer the newly learned knowledge and skills from training (Lancaster et al., 2013).

As detailed in table 1, the participants belonged to three different private HEIs situated in three different states (Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Dubai) of UAE. The researchers had purposefully selected participants who were relevant to the research question.

<INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE>

The data gathered in this study were analysed through thematic analysis with the help of NVIVO 11 software.

4. Findings

The qualitative data analysis process revealed three key themes. Each of these three themes is stated and described as a separate finding in the forthcoming sections.

4.1. Finding 1: Perceived Importance of Supervisor Support Behaviour

The first concern of thematic analysis of the study was to determine the perceptions of the respondents about the importance of supervisory support behaviour in transfer of training. Most of the study participants believe that supervisor support behaviours are essential for transfer of training, yet some of them reported that it is not the main factor to consider, as intrinsic motivation is proved to be more critical. For instance, participant 10 expressed her mind-sets in the following way

"Yeah absolutely... if people are supported by supervisors, by line managers, by management in undergoing training, the training is more likely to have a longer-lasting and better effect on transfer of training".

Although the majority of the participants (12 out of 16 faculty members) considered supervisor support to be an essential factor for transfer of training, some of those participants (3 out of 12) declared the importance that intrinsic motivation. Participant 2 said:

"Absolutely, it is significant, but it is not the sole factor, I believe that the most important factor that contributes to training transfer is the trainee himself when he is self-motivated and has a clear plan to his career, I think this will help in applying what is learned."

Furthermore, all five supervisors stressed the importance of their support towards their subordinates in transfer of training.

4.2. Finding 2: Participant's Experience of Supervisory Support Behaviour's Consistency Before, During and After Training

The research was inquired respondents to share their experiences about the consistency of supervisory support behaviour across the overall training process, i.e. before, during and after the training. Among the sixteen faculty members who participated in the

study, only eight faculty members expressed their satisfaction with the continued support received from their immediate supervisors throughout the training process. For example, participant nine shared his experience regarding supervisory support behaviour before training in a detailed manner:

"Supervisor calls and announce about the training that is going to take place So this kind of formal information is passed on, and informal interaction has also done before the training.... for these reasons we will have the training to help us go over these limitations."

The same participant (9) enhanced discussion about 'during the training supervisory support behaviour' as:

"Directly involved and generally very supportive and positive."

Further, he informed us about his experience of 'after training supervisory support behaviour' by concluding that:

"Usually the supervisor calls and discusses the outcomes of the training program, then he follows up with us in how we are going to implement this to perform better".

On the other hand, out of the remaining participants, four did not receive consistent support throughout the process, while the remaining four have expressed their disappointment at not getting the desired support from their supervisors throughout the whole training process. An example of inconsistent supervisory support came from participant 6 when she pointed towards marginal supervisory support 'before the training' in the form of communication through an email and continued the explanation by pointing towards a lack of 'during the training supervisory support': "Did nothing during training". She concluded the response by sharing remarks about 'after the training supervisory support' in the following manner:

"We have discussed whether what learned in active learning training will help us improve our teaching...we discussed the case study approach and its application in the teaching context".

4.3. Finding 3: Type of Supervisory Support Behaviours Before, During and After Training

The third theme emerged in this study was divided into three critical sub-themes namely before, during, and after training to provide a more vivid and detailed description of supervisor support behaviour required for each stage of the training process. This finding presents the participants' perception of the types of supervisor support behaviours needed throughout the training process. The below Tables 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the type of supportive behaviours offered by the supervisors, how many participants receive such support and time in which it was received.

<INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE>

From table 2 it can be understood that there are five different types of supervisors' support behaviours before attending the training sessions that were recognised to be distinguished from both perspectives the faculty members as well as their supervisors. These five types of behaviours construct the first sub-theme of the third theme of the study. The researcher grouped three behaviours under the category of 'meeting sessions' due to some shared characteristics among them. While the remaining two behaviours did not include any further sub-categories, yet, their level of significance varies depending on the number of times mentioned by study participants.

<INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE>

From table 3 it can be understood that there are eight different types of supervisors' support behaviours during the training session, which were reported based on the shared perceptions obtained from both the faculty members and their supervisors.

<INSERT TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE>

As it can be observed in Table 4, the thematic analysis of the data revealed five different types of supervisors' support behaviours which a supervisor can display after the training session to foster transfer of training. The next section will discuss and evaluate each of the above three mentioned findings.

5. Discussion

5.1. Finding 1: Perceived Importance of Supervisor Support Behaviour

There is a significant inconsistency in findings across previous studies attempted to examine the influence of supervisor support on training transfer, in which some investigators found a significant and robust relationship between the supervisors' role in training and transfer of training. In contrast, others found an insignificant relationship (Ghosh et al., 2015).

The current study aims to describe the impact of supervisor support behaviours on the training transfer in the UAE's HE sector. By adopting a qualitative approach to the research, it generated rich data on how the participants' perceived the supervisors' support behaviours influence transfer of training. The participants' perceptions have contributed to an in-depth understanding of how expatriate faculty members interpret the role of supervisors' support behaviours. It revealed that the faculty members' intentions towards transfer of training are substantially influenced by the level of

supervisors' support provided to them, particularly when those supervisors possess essential capabilities and leadership skills.

This finding is in accordance with the view shared by Grossman and Salas (2011) and Ghosh et al. (2015) who proposed that the level of support provided by a supervisor has a positive effect on transfer of training effectiveness. Similarly, this finding is also in line with the findings of some quantitative studies conducted in different contexts like the US (Scaduto et al., 2008) and Malaysia (Bhatti et al. 2014). Further, these findings based on the perceptions of the majority of the participants in the current study is also as per the findings of existing qualitative inquiries conducted in various contexts like Australia (Lancaster et al., 2013).

Although the majority of the current study participants acknowledged the critical role of supervisor support in training transfer, a few of the respondents also contradicted with this perception. Some existing studies have also reported similar findings which contradict the view of the majority of the participants that supervisor support behaviour may have a significant effect on transfer of training. For instance, in a recent quantitative study conducted in Malaysia, Ng (2013) found no significant effect of supervisor support on transfer of training. Likewise, other studies reporting no significant effect of supervisor support behaviour on training transfer such as (Nijman, et al., 2006; and Bates et al., 2007).

5.2. Finding 2: Participant's Experience of Supervisory Support Behaviour's Consistency Before, During and After Training

The researcher's attention was concentrated not only on understanding the impact of supervisor support behaviours on the training transfer in the UAE's HE sector, but also on exploring the consistency of providing such support throughout the training process.

The participants' responses about the consistency of supervisory support throughout the three phases of the training process were characterised by being non-unified. Although half of the faculty members participated in the study expressed their satisfaction of continued support received from their immediate supervisors throughout the training process, a quarter of the participated faculty members communicated their unfortunate for not receiving continued support from their immediate supervisors. The remaining quarter expressed their disappointment for not receiving any form of support throughout the entire process or within one of its phases. This finding points towards a serious concern for an effective transfer of training in terms of the consistency required from a supervisor to exhibit support behaviour which enhances transfer of training across all stages of the training process. This also signals a severe risk to the successful transfer of training among expatriate faculty members, as almost half of the faculty members participated in the study did not receive the desired continued support from their supervisors throughout the entire process. The existing literature provides robust evidence that acknowledged supervisors' support to be a crucial factor of work environment influencing transfer of Training (Baldwin and Ford, 1998; Baldwin et al., 2009). Thus lack of such support may hinder transfer of training as reported in various existing studies (Govaerts and Dochy, 2014).

5.3. Finding 3: Type of Supervisory Support Behaviours Before, During and After Training

Despite the inconsistency in previous research findings pertaining to the Supervisor's role on transfer of training, several researchers in Western and developed countries

have acknowledged through their investigation the significance of supervisors support behaviours in promoting transfer of training. Those supportive behaviours took different forms before (Govaerts and Dochy,2014), during (Lancaster et al., 2013) and after Training (Nijman et al., 2006). However, the thorough literature review conducted about the role of the Supervisor in fostering transfer of training demonstrated that those supportive behaviours perceived by trainees do not need to be the same in all countries or contexts. Hence, it is valuable to identify the specific types of supervisor support behaviours in different contexts, such as the UAE to enhance training effectiveness.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a research absence with regards to supervisor support behaviours for transfer of training in the UAE literature, especially in the HE sector. Thus, the gathered and analysed data contributed to transfer literature by highlighting various forms of supportive behaviours provided by supervisors throughout the training process (i.e. before, during and after the training). This study proposed a framework of supervisor support behaviours (see Figure 1), which for the first time identifies certain types of supervisors' supportive behaviours in each phase of training in the UAE's HE sector. The below framework of supervisor support behaviours (see Figure 1) demonstrates the final qualitative results for stakeholders' better understanding.

<INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE>

The research results have revealed that not all identified types of the supervisors' support behaviours are equally crucial for all faculty members' during each stage of the training process.

The findings demonstrated that feedback, discussion and encouragement were the three most common supervisor support behaviours across all three stages of the training session. In contrast, the remaining supervisor support behaviours belong to just one stage of the training process, as shown in Figure 1 and Tables 2, 3 and 4. Thus the forthcoming section will discuss the commonly reported behaviours within the three stages of training.

5.4. Common Supervisor Support Behaviours Before, During and After Training

5.4.1. Supervisor Encouragement

The supervisors encourage and motivate the faculty members before the training process by: first, inspiring them to attend the whole training programme to acquire the optimum amount of knowledge and skills that will help them to perform their work better; second, creating expectations about the relevance and utility of a training programme or the reward that faculty members may receive from God in return to their dedication and commitment to work, can enhance the chances of transfer of training; and finally, removing anticipated obstacles. This is in complete agreement with Baumgartel's et al., (1984) study which revealed that employees, who recognise the value that training outcomes will add to them are more likely to implement the newly acquired knowledge and skills obtained in training. The evidence found in the current study supports Liu and Smith's (2011) arguments that the supervisor support behaviours play a substantial role in motivating employees to attend training programs and implement its content. It further contributes to the body of knowledge pertaining to transfer by describing how supervisors can motivate and encourage expatriate faculty members before training.

The current finding of the study offer vital evidence that the Arab culture has influenced the private HE institutional culture and faculty members' behaviours and communication in UAE. Arab culture is highly influenced by Islam and Islamic values (Yousef, 2001). Islam is the religion that gives the most privilege and preference for the acquisition of knowledge. Various Quranic verses and Ahadith (record of the words of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) can be found in Islamic teachings easily. For instance, a typical example is a verse from Holy Quran in the form of a prayer that represents how Islam as a religion encourages knowledge-seeking among the Muslims: رَبِّ زِدْنِي عِلْمًا' means '*O my Lord! Advance me in Knowledge* [Surah Ta-Ha; 20:114]. They gathered and analysed data revealed that some supervisors had encouraged their faculty members, especially those who belong to Arabic or Muslim backgrounds, to participate in training programmes and transfer the newly learned KSAs after training by using different religious principles that aimed at learning, commitment and mastering work. Also, adopting such principles creates expectations in faculty members' minds about the great rewards they will receive from God in response to their dedication and commitment to work. For instance, a renowned hadith referred to the word 'beneficial knowledge' to encourage knowledge-seeking and knowledge transfer among the Muslims in the following manner: "When a man dies all his deeds come to an end except for three: an ongoing charity, beneficial knowledge and a righteous son who prays for him" (Narrated by Muslim, Book 13, Hadith 8)". According to the context of the study, a supervisor may encourage faculty members to earn greater rewards even after death by attending training sessions because knowledge acquisition will enable them to transfer the acquired knowledge to the students in the form of teaching, publishing and supervision. This is in accordance to the Islamic concept of '*Sadaqa Jariya* (a continuing charity)' which explains that the faculty members will remain

benefit from this knowledge-transfer and get rewards as long as people are still getting benefits from his knowledge such as the students may get jobs based on the transferred knowledge, the managers can benefit from the publications by implementing their recommendations to the work, and the researchers can build theory and knowledge based on their research publications.

This finding is in complete agreement with Furnham (2005), who argued that people could not separate business from Islamic rules and regulations in Islamic societies. Similarly, this finding is consistent with Mellahi's (2003) view, which emphasised that the Islamic values directly impact employees working life. For instance, he mentioned that in Islamic values, laziness is a vice and dedication to work is a virtue.

This finding is in line with the findings of a qualitative inquiry conducted by Lancaster et al. (2013) in Australia. However, the findings of the current study have highlighted an essential contextual difference as the classification of the sub-themes of encouragement identified in the current study does not match with the classification provided by Lancaster et al. (2013). The crucial distinction of the current study is that the encouragement as supervisor support behaviour, have different sub-themes of supportive behaviours as compared to themes identified by Lancaster et al. (2013). For instance, Lancaster et al. (2013) considered autonomy as part of the encouragement. However, this study has demonstrated autonomy as a critical attribute of a flexible work environment, as reported by our respondents. This difference in the study may be due to contextual factors as the current study is based on the participants from the academic industry of UAE as compared to the Lancaster study who obtained data from Energy Corporation in Australia. Since the academic sector is known for its unique

characteristics of higher autonomy; therefore, the researcher also found it more appropriate to classify autonomy as a part of the flexible work environment rather than the encouragement. Moreover, autonomy can be conceived as a part of supervisor support behaviour to ensure a flexible work environment for employees to practice training knowledge.

5.4.2 Supervisor Feedback

Another difference lies in the classification of feedback as a sub-theme of encouragement. Lancaster et al. (2013) reported feedback as an after training supervisor support behaviour under the caption of encouragement. However, the current study has found that feedback is something that cannot be restricted to the theme of encouragement and the stage of post-training process only. This study has demonstrated that feedback can be used as a supervisor support behaviour across three stages such that: 1) to enhance their readiness and preparedness of the trainees before the training; 2) during the training the feedback can be provided to the trainees regarding their experiences in practising the training contents, topic, 3) after the training the feedback can be provided by the Supervisor about the ways through which the trainees can transfer the learnt knowledge into practise using different ways.

Although the importance of supervisor support is stressed in empirical research, the particular role of feedback received slight attention in transfer of training (Bossche et al., 2010). The findings of the current study offer vital evidence on the importance of the Supervisor's feedback within the three stages of training in promoting transfer of training. This finding is in line with previous research results by Arco (2008) who recommended that both written and verbal feedback within the three phases (before, during and after training) increase employees' performance. Also, this finding confirms

Bossche et al.'s. (2010) earlier findings that supervisors' feedback has a positive effect on transfer of training, especially when this feedback is perceived as helpful by the trainees.

5.4.3. Supervisor Discussion

The discussion before, during and after the training took place with different intentions. For instance, the informal in-person discussion prior-training was much valued by study participant in the current study, as it allowed supervisors to clarify any doubts in the faculty members mind about the upcoming training, its objectives, relevance and usefulness to their roles. This is in complete agreement with Lim and Johnson's (2002) argument that "Without a strong match between the training content and the trainees' work roles, it is unlikely that transfer will occur." (p. 46). Besides, the discussion took place through the formal pre-training meetings of the Supervisor with the prospective trainee participants before the training had the potential to create work climates that possibly facilitated transfer of training afterwards.

Since supervisors (i.e. Head of Academic Department) are right in the middle between the faculty members and senior management (e.g. Deans and Provosts), in which they have a close working relationship with both: faculty members as their direct managers, and senior management as one of their essential tools in conveying and implementing the HE institutions' academic objectives and vision, supervisors possess a crucial role in communicating the goals and benefits of attending a given training.

Once supervisors successfully communicate the goals of such training to faculty members before attending the event, this prepares faculty members for what is expected from them during and after training and encourages them to transfer the newly learned knowledge and skills afterwards. This process or the change in

expatriate faculty members' behaviour can be explained through expectancy theory (Redmond, 2010). This finding is in complete agreement with Hunter-Johnson (2013) results which show that when trainees do not perceive the new knowledge and skills as something that would directly impact them, then most likely, they would not acquire the information. Subsequently, make it difficult for them to implement new knowledge and skills.

Moreover, the discussion during the training serves different intention like identifying the way to apply/practise the learnt knowledge after the completion of the training session.

Similarly, after training discussion of training transfer could build eagerness to integrate newly acquired knowledge and skills in the work context. Ng, (2015) presented similar reasoning in their study on the effect of supervisory practices on transfer of training through motivation to learn. However, the current study does not support (Govaerts et al., 2017a) recent research in this area, as they found that the pre-training information provided by supervisors about the relevance and benefits of training for the job have not any positive influence on employees' transfer of training.

Once again, this finding also offers vital evidence that the Arab culture has influenced the faculty members' behaviours and communication in UAE's private HE institutions. The collected data revealed that oral communication between faculty members and their supervisors in the forms of discussion or feedback throughout the training process was witnessed much often than other forms of written communication like emails. This finding confirms Khalil's (2016) argument that oral and face-to-face communication with direct and simultaneous feedback considered to be the primary way of social interaction among Arabs. Despite the data analyses offered vital evidence that the Arabic culture has influenced the institutional culture, faculty members'

behaviours and communication in the UAE HE sector, it is not the sole influencer, as other cultures have also influenced faculty members' behaviours and perceptions. The findings highlighted that there is a mixed influence of Arabic and non-Arabic (like western) cultures on the supervisor support behaviours for transfer of Training inside UAE's private HE institutions.

6. Conclusion

This study has contributed to the knowledge concerning transfer of training, by proposing a framework (see Figure 1), which for the first time identifies certain types of supervisors' supportive behaviours in each phase of training in the UAE's HE sector. Although the role of the Supervisor recognised to be a crucial work environment factor influencing transfer of training, it is still under-studied. Thus, this framework offers stakeholders a better understanding of the supervisor support behaviours in the transfer of the training process.

The findings of this study presented the faculty members' perspective regarding what they believe to be helpful for them in the training transfer. It highlighted the importance of the supervisor support towards increasing transfer of training among faculty members, which in turn could increase the knowledge application and training effectiveness, foster collaborative learning environments, and improve the quality of services in the UAE private HE institutions.

In terms of practical contributions, the results of this study can be used as a guideline by top executives in UAE's private HE institutions (e.g. HR Directors and Deans) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of training programs in their HE institutions. A key recommendation for top executives is to understand and foster the crucial role of supervisors' support in promoting transfer of training by fostering a

transfer climate, which may boost supervisors' support behaviours throughout the whole training process and consequently enhance faculty members' training transfer and training effectiveness. For instance, HR Directors should offer supervisors specific training sessions on how to support their faculty members before, during and post-training event (considering the identified supported behaviours in the current study), as well as the influence of cultures, particularly Arab culture on expatriate faculty members' social interactions, learning style and transfer of training. In parallel, Deans should empower supervisors (Head of Academic Department) to facilitate their endeavours in practising such supportive behaviours and consequently develop an appropriate work environment that fosters training transfer.

Despite the current study contributing to an in-depth understanding of the active role of supervisor support behaviour in promoting training transfer in UAE's HE sector, there is a need for future research in other organisations and industries within UAE. It is suggested to investigate transfer of training in terms of the proposed supervisor support behaviour framework. Furthermore, as the current study has focused on expatriate population, further research should focus on the local population. Besides, quantitative research adopting large populations should be considered to test the previous qualitative findings in new economic and social contexts.

This study has a few limitations that should be recognised. The first one is revolving around the methodology, in which the results are based upon relatively small sample size. However, qualitative research focuses on the depth over the breadth, and the researchers have stopped conducting new interviews when the collected data reached the saturation level, i.e. no additional valuable information were provided by participants (Saunders et al., 2012). Therefore, the results cannot be automatically generalised to employees belonging to other levels of education or sectors. A further

limitation is that the sample of the current study was not randomly selected; consequently, participants may not be representative of all expatriate faculty members. However, the researchers had purposefully selected participants who were relevant to the research question and could provide real-life experiences, and might not be selected through any other methods.

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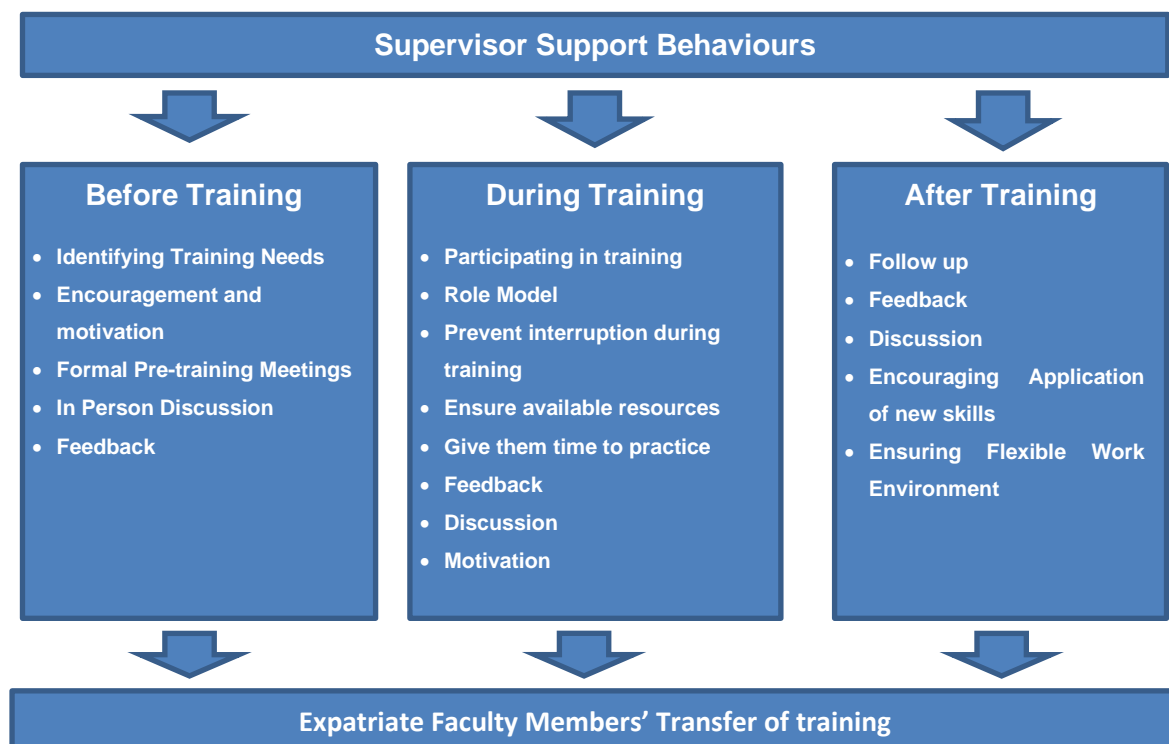
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FIGURE:

Figure 1:A Theoretical framework of Supervisor Support Behaviours



TABLES:

Table 1: Gender and Nationality of participants in each HE institution

HE Institutions	Gender		Nationality							
	Males	Females	India	Tunis	Jordan	Sudan	Egypt	USA	Ireland	South Africa
Institution 1	3	6	1	5	1	1	1	0	0	0
Institution 2	6	2	4	0	0	0	0	1	2	1
Institution 3	3	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0

Table 2: Supervisor support behaviours provided Before training

Type of supervisor support behaviours provided Before training	Number of faculty members received this behaviour	Number of supervisors offered this behaviour.	
Meeting Sessions	In Person Discussion	6	2
	Formal Pre-training Meetings	1	1
	Feedback	3	1
Identify Training Needs	1	2	
Encouragement and Motivation	7	2	

Table 3: Supervisor support behaviours provided During training

Type of supervisor support behaviours provided During training	Number of faculty members received this behaviour	Number of supervisors offered this behaviour	
Personal Involvement	Participating in training	8	2
	Role model	1	1
Supervisor Encouragement	Motivation	5	2
	Feedback	5	1
	Discussion	2	1
Facilitate learning and application	Prevent interruption during training	7	1
	Give them time to practice	1	3
	Ensure available resources, equipment, snakes	1	2

Table 4: Supervisor support behaviours provided After training

Type of supervisor support behaviours provided After training	Number of faculty members received this behaviour	Number of supervisors offered this behaviour.
Follow up	5	4
Feedback	8	2
Discussion	4	2
Encouraging application of new skills	3	1

Ensuring Flexible Work Environment	3	1
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