Social Support, Computer Self-Efficacy, Transfer Motivation and ERP Training Transfer

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ABSTRACT

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) system has been acknowledged as a major driver of seamless and integrated operations. Implementing ERP is a challenging task, requiring configuration, migration from legacy systems. Therefore, the successful assimilation of ERP within an organisation requires building the requisite skills and knowledge to support both the implementation and post-implementation challenges. This study investigates the relationships among supervisor support, computer self-efficacy, transfer motivation and training transfer in an enterprise system environment. The sequential mediating effects of computer self-efficacy and transfer motivation was assessed in this study. Data collected from 170 users who previously attended an ERP system training program were analysed in this study using the SPSS version 24 and Hayes Macro Process. Findings from the analysis revealed direct relationships among the variables, and the full mediation effects influence of computer self-efficacy and transfer motivation in the relationship between supervisory support and training transfer.

KEYWORDS

Computer Self-Efficacy, Enterprise Resource Planning System (ERPS), Supervisor Support, Training Transfer, Transfer Motivation

INTRODUCTION

End-user training is a systematic acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes required for improved job performance in the workplace. End-user training is widely accepted as a practical approach for updating end-user knowledge (Rowold, 2007; Umble et al., 2003); and a pervasive method for enhancing individuals’ performance (Arthur et al., 2003). Generally, training may infer a planned learning action targeted at improving high-performance work-related skills, knowledge and attitudes. Training is required in all facets of endeavours, especially, in information system terrain which is highly characterised by disruption of work activities (Bradley and Lee, 2007). Training helps
to minimise disruption in the work process, and assists end-users to gain some confidence. Because of this, training is considered an important success factor in information (IS) and enterprise systems (ES) deployment (Bedard et al., 2003; Marler et al., 2006).

More importantly, the training phase is crucial in the ES implementation. The training phase is where end-users learn the relevant skills that are required in use of an ES (Chien and Hu, 2009; Marler et al., 2006). While ES packages are promising in meeting the needs of an organisation, the complex nature of the package may often affect end-user acceptance behaviour, subsequent limited utilisation of the package and failure of the implementation (Yi and Davis, 2003; Marler et al., 2006). Though training improves end-users’ task performance, this may also depend on whether end-users adequately apply the knowledge and training experience in work episodes. Training transfer connotes the application or use of skills and knowledge in a task-environment and it signposts whether learning has taken place or not.

The effectiveness of a training programme is contingent by the level of transfer or use of the gained knowledge in task roles. Transfer leads to meaningful job improvement when end-users translate achievements from training in a task-environment. The intricate nature of the ERP software demands a critical mass of knowledge in its mastery and use (Umble et al., 2003). However, using phases of vendor-provided training helps to address skill gaps and assimilation barriers during implementation (Calvert and Seddon, 2006). Based on the above, the context of ERP and IS training fits the dimension of hard skills (Laker and Powell, 2011) which are proficiency and performance based. However, IS research have shown little concern for this ubiquitous IS implementation and assimilation mechanism.

Evidence from prior studies indicate limited studies on this issue in the IS/ES environments (Arasanmi et al., 2017; Arasanmi, in press). Consequently, this current study extends our knowledge on this pertinent issue by examining the impact of social support as well as provide a more comprehensive understanding of the mechanism of end-users transfer of ERP training. The objectives of this study are to analyse the relationship between supervisor support and training transfer. The study also analyse the sequential mediation of computer self-efficacy and transfer motivation in the relationship between social support and training transfer in an ERP post training context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

Social exchange theory (Blau, 1964) maintain that social exchange increases job performance. Social exchange theory (SET) illuminates the relational interdependence and interaction exchanges that occur in a work setting especially in environments where one’s action is conditional upon the actions of others in the work space. It is usual to develop exchange in any social environment, hence, social exchange grows between managers and subordinates (Bishop et al., 2005).

In the training contexts, social exchange involves reinforcement and contingent reciprocal exchanges among performers in an interdependent context. Support emanating from organisational contexts connotes environmental favourability which stimulates high performance related behaviours including the transfer of learning behaviours back to the job (Noe, 1986; Colquitt et al., 2013). In line with the notions of reciprocity and social exchange, end-user are compelled to exchange and return the benevolences from their managers with discretionary and extraordinary job performances. Reasonably, this study maintains that end-users who are lavished with some favours and cares from their managers are more likely to reciprocate the favours with superior transfer performance in an ERP task environment. These reciprocated attitudes from the end-users are a way of helping in achieving organisational goals and ploughing back the massive financial investment into the ES implementation. Drawing on SET, this investigation proposes that social support reinforces knowledge transfer in an ERP post-training context, since social exchange embed exchange and interchange which involves an exchange of favour/help and a commitment to reciprocate.
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