

## **ENHANCING TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH THE TRANSFER OF TRAINING MODEL: INSIGHTS FROM INTERNSHIPS IN PENANG’S HOTEL INDUSTRY**

**Joesri Mohamad Saber**

*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
joesr630@uitm.edu.my*

**Azlan Salim**

*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
azlan808@uitm.edu.my*

**Fadhlina Mahat**

*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
fadhlina563@uitm.edu.my*

**Mohd Zool Fadli Ibrahim**

*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
zoolfadli@uitm.edu.my*

**Khairul Hidayat Rezo**

*Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Pulau  
Pinang, Kampus Permatang Pauh, Pulau Pinang, Malaysia  
khairul077@uitm.edu.my*

### **ABSTRACT**

*The hospitality industry in Penang is a crucial driver of Malaysia's economy, but rapid growth and post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery have exposed significant workforce challenges, particularly in meeting staffing demands. Internships have become a practical solution to address these gaps, yet the effectiveness of training application in real-world settings still needs to be explored. Using the Transfer of Training (TOT) model as a framework to understand the factors influencing training transfer among hospitality interns in Penang, this research examines how trainee characteristics, training program design, and the work environment contribute to successful training transfer. A structured questionnaire survey of 240 hospitality trainees was implemented. The findings highlight that trainee motivation and readiness are crucial for applying learned skills. A supportive work environment, characterized by feedback and encouragement, further enhances this process. Additionally, well-structured and relevant training programs significantly improve skills transfer into practice. The study underscores the importance of creating tailored training programs and fostering a supportive workplace culture to help interns*

*effectively bridge the gap between academic learning and industry needs. These findings offer actionable strategies for improving workforce readiness and strengthening the hospitality sector in Penang.*

**Keywords:** *Training Transfer, Hospitality Internships, Transfer of Training Model (TOT), Workforce Development*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The hospitality sector in Penang is not just a vital contributor to the high rate of economic development in Malaysia, but also a beacon of hope for the future. Evidenced by its ability to attract scores of local and foreign visitors to the island, Penang's hospitality sector is a testament to the state's potential. Famous for its distinctive cultural mix, dynamic gastronomical offerings and breathtaking scenery, Penang has recently achieved significant growth in its tourism and hospitality sector. The expansion has brought about an escalating demand for hospitality services, which has pressured the labour force to offer the best services in many accommodation modes (Ghaderi et al., 2012). Despite the challenges, the potential of Penang's hospitality sector remains high, and with the right strategies, it can overcome the current obstacles and thrive in the post-COVID-19 era.

As Malaysia reopened its borders, tourism demand surged, but the industry needed help with workforce availability to meet these growing needs. The workforce shortfall, estimated at between 8,000 to 10,000 positions, has had a direct impact on the operational efficiency and the guest experience in high-demand areas, including Batu Ferringhi, where hotel bookings have risen to almost 90 per cent (New Straits Times, 2022; Ramli, 2022). Such a shortage is not only an operational concern, but also a hurdle in Penang's post-pandemic economic recovery as the industry's capability to supply sufficient services remains constrained, which thus prevents the region from tapping its full tourism potential (Penang Institute, 2023).

To bridge this gap, the Malaysian hotel industry has gradually involved interning students in hospitality programs as an immediate solution to their staffing demands. This not only helps to fill the workforce gap but also plays a crucial role in enhancing the skills of future hospitality professionals. Simultaneously, it enables the hospitality student to obtain hands-on experience (Yildirim et al., 2023). Interns, often temporary, do much to help keep the quality and continuity of hotel service. Additionally, their involvement provides an opportunity to train the interns hands-on, which will boost their skills and the industry (Mohammed, 2018). The study proposes the Transfer of Training (TOT) model to define the factors involved in applying skills acquired during training to a practical natural hotel environment. TOT is based on effectively transferring workplace training content into a practical application for interns to realize and optimize operational efficiency (El-Said et al., 2020).

This research, therefore, focuses on three main objectives aimed at enhancing the transfer of training within the hotel industry in Penang. First, it investigates how trainee characteristics—such as motivation, attitude, and learning style—influence skills transfer. By understanding these individual characteristics, training programs can be customised to meet each intern's needs better, helping them build confidence and reach their full potential. Second, the study examines how training programs are designed. For training to truly work, it needs to reflect the actual demands of hotel operations. A well-structured training program that aligns with workplace needs is crucial for equipping interns with skills that can be readily applied to hotel operations. Third, the research explores the role of the work environment, including supervisor support, feedback, and overall workplace culture, in facilitating the smooth transfer of skills. A supportive work environment enables interns to implement their training

effectively, enhancing their organisational contribution.

By addressing these areas, the study aims to identify effective strategies for training and managing interns within the hotel sector, which can contribute to workforce stability and professionalism in Penang's hospitality industry. The research findings could inform improvements in training programs, focusing on maximising interns' readiness to meet real-world challenges and making them valuable assets during their internship period. Through a strategic approach to training, Penang's hotel industry addresses current staffing challenges and develops a skilled and adaptable workforce for the future. These findings could pave the way for more robust training programs, better-prepared interns, and a more resilient hospitality sector in the years to come.

In the final analysis, this research is fundamentally concerned about service and management. Specifically, how its improvements starting with internship could go a long way to improving and upgrading what is essentially a service industry that is the hospitality industry.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Overview on internships of hotel industry in Penang and Malaysia**

The hospitality industry in Penang and Malaysia represents a vibrant sector that attracts domestic and international visitors. Interns play an essential role in this setting, profoundly influencing workforce dynamics, service excellence, and customer satisfaction. Their unique contributions—such as fresh perspectives, adaptability, and eagerness to learn—are yet to be thoroughly examined (Collins & Pearlman, 2023; Mensah et al., 2020). While various studies examined topics such as corporate environmentalism, stakeholder importance, and service quality (Wangechi et al., 2020), the specific and unique contribution of interns is still not adequately explored, if at all.

An excess of student internships within the hospitality realm affords students the unique opportunity to acquire practical experience while translating theoretical principles learned in academia into tangible practice. Specifically, in Malaysia, particularly in Penang, internships are not just essential, but the role of interns in workforce development is crucial, particularly in acquiring operational, interpersonal, and problem-solving competencies (Ruslan et al., 2020). Meanwhile, however, the ineffectiveness of internship programs is exacerbated by conditions such as excessive working hours, insufficient budgetary allowances, and employer exploitation, particularly in the wake of the recent Movement Control Order (MCO) implemented due to COVID-19 (Yildirim et al., 2023). Research indicates that well-structured mentorship and customized internship programs effectively address the challenges and fulfil the evolving needs of the industry (Soffi & Mohamad, 2021).

Collaboration among academic institutions, tourism destinations, and the hospitality industry is not just important, it is imperative for cultivating a resilient and future-ready workforce capable of enduring industry challenges. Studies of the collaboration emphasize the evolving roles of interns within the labour market and offer insights into potential strategies for augmenting their influence within the Malaysian hospitality sector.

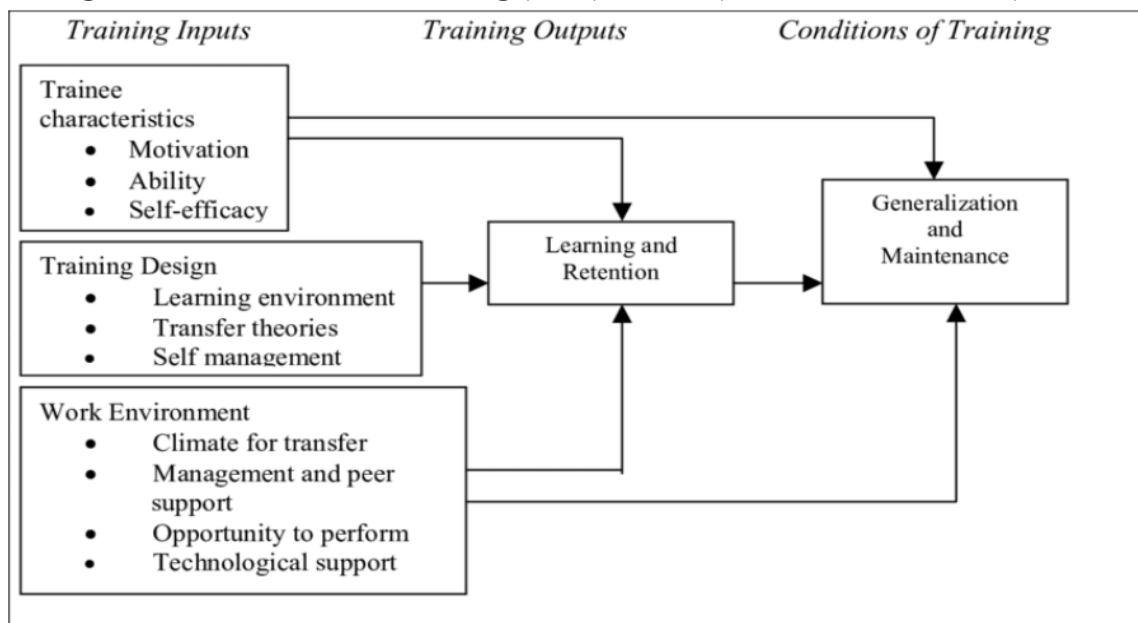
### **Overview on Transfer of Training (TOT) Model**

Training transfer is the degree to which the knowledge and skills learned through training are applied to the professional role. Rooted in Baldwin and Ford's (1988) training transfer model, it reflects the outcomes of three critical factors: The influence of training design, individual characteristics, and work environment. The influence of training design refers to the effectiveness of the training program in imparting knowledge and skills. Individual

characteristics encompass the personal traits and motivations of trainees that affect their ability to apply the training. The work environment includes factors such as support from supervisors and peers, resource availability, and the opportunity for practice.

A significant framework for understanding the application of knowledge and skill gained in training in real-world work settings and their effect on individual and organisational performance is the Transfer of Training (TOT) model (see figure 1). In recent years, the TOT model has been used in some studies to assess training transfer and to emphasise its importance to industries which rely on skill-based roles such as hospitality (Yaqub et al., 2021; Nguyen & Thi, 2020; Bhat et al., 2022). These studies demonstrate that support from the workplace (e.g., supervisors, peers), as related to motivation and practice, is essential to effective training transfer.

**Figure 1: The Transfer of Training (TOT) Model: (Baldwin & Ford, 1988)**



Training design, as highlighted by Mdhlalose (2022b), remains central to skill transfer. Content relevance and practical exercises have been shown to improve retention and usability. A structured, realistic training program aligned with job tasks significantly boosts transfer rates. For dynamic industries seeking to maximize their training investment, the TOT model is particularly relevant. The working environment, including feedback, support, and resource availability, also plays a significant role in skill application on the job. These findings empower industries to recognize the relevance of the TOT model in terms of optimal training practices, employee performance, and organisational effectiveness.

The TOT model has also been applied in various contexts, such as management training interventions (Yaqub et al., 2021), hotels, public and private universities (Sharif et al., 2022), and the healthcare sector (Zumrah et al., 2020). These studies have contributed to understanding training transfer and its implications for organizational effectiveness, service quality, and employee performance. Overall, the TOT model is a valuable framework for understanding the training transfer process and its impact on various organizational and professional outcomes.

### Training Transfer

Internship outcomes are primarily concerned with training transfer, which is the ability of interns to apply their acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes in professional settings. As an outcome measure, training transfer evaluates how well training design, individual

characteristics, and the work environment influence training effectiveness. It is a critical indicator of how internships bridge academic learning with real-world implementation (Zehr & Korte, 2020).

Research demonstrates that practical internships promote training transfer by aligning theoretical knowledge with hands-on task training. For instance, internships designed with task-relevant, hands-on capabilities significantly enhance trainees' ability to apply their learning (Piovani et al., 2021). In addition, training transfer depends heavily on supportive work environments, which include constructive feedback, clear expectations, and resources that empower interns to excel and innovate (Dixit & Sinha, 2022).

The most significant part of training transfer is ensuring that organizations benefit from practical skill application while preparing interns for career readiness. Measuring training transfer is essential for generating actionable insights into program effectiveness and refining strategies to improve outcomes at both individual and organizational levels (Mabeba et al., 2023).

### **Trainee Characteristics**

Knowledge of how individual trainee characteristics affect the transfer of training is essential to maximizing the value of training programs and helping train talent development for a wide range of industries, including hospitality. There has been considerable research on this relationship in recent years, contributing considerable knowledge to learner readiness, motivation, and supervisor support. Using a moderated mediation model, Ragini and Ghosh (2022) explored the role of learner readiness in driving training transfer in which motivation to transfer mediated the relationship between learner readiness and training transfer, moderated by supervisor support. Their findings showed that trainees' readiness and willingness to learn are critical to practical training application and that supportive supervision is vital to the process. Furthermore, Mdhlalose (2022a) offers a thorough review of training transfer, which stresses the work environment, among other factors such as trainee attitude. Results showed that facilitating successful training transfer is linked to positive trainee characteristics (i.e., openness to learning and adaptability) and a supportive organizational climate.

Additionally, Yang et al. (2020) studied the effect of trainee attitudes on training transfer using a multiple case study. It was found that trainees' learning outcomes and using acquired knowledge and skills in the workplace are directly related to trainee affective, cognitive and behavioural attitudes. The study also suggested best practices in training design that would cultivate positive trainee attitudes and foster more effective transfer.

Studies on the transfer of training is a multifaceted, dynamic area of study of trainee characteristics and the trainee. Knowledge of how trainee characteristics affect the transfer of training and intentions to remain in the organization is also necessary for organizations to help make their training programs a better fit for the particular training needs and aspirations of individual trainees so that they will develop professionally to the benefit of their career and the organization as well.

### **Training Design**

The design of training programs has been significantly shaped by research, which has helped people apply the skills and knowledge they learn during their professional roles. In recent years, studies have given a lot of insights on how to improve training effectiveness for organisations and employees.

Lockhart et al. (2022) examined the relation of training design components to motivation, work environment, and learning transfer. A well-planned training program helps employees take what they have learned and use it in their workplace if it is supportive. This demonstrates just how critical it is for training programmes to make it simpler for staff to

incorporate what they have learned in the training into everyday situations. Dixit and Sinha (2022) demonstrated the application of training in the workplace using the tools and methods available. Their result stressed the need for practical methods of facilitating employees to apply their learning, including hands-on activities and follow-up support. This turns into the apparent importance of implementing practice strategies in program training and providing actionable instruments to employees.

The Association for Talent Development (2022) has outlined four crucial elements for effective training design: specific goals, related content, practice opportunities, and a plan for what to do with the learning. These steps not only ensure a connection between learning and job performance but also assure better results for the organisation and thus increments to the level of confidence these strategies give. Ford et al. (2018) reviewed how training design can improve training success. Training programs should match what the company needs and what employees expect. This makes it much more likely that the employee will remember and use what they have learned, leading to better, more productive outcomes. Investigating the relationship between training design and the transfer of training is a critical area of study, with real implications for talent development, organisational effectiveness, and career intentions. Knowing how training design impacts training transfer will help organisations design training programs to enhance skill development, knowledge retention and organisational performance.

### **Working Environment**

The work environment is essential for predicting training effectiveness in workplace performance and organizational success. Research consistently demonstrates that workplace conditions significantly impact the retention of knowledge, the application of skills and overall training results.

Hughes et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis and found a strong positive relationship between supportive work environments (i.e., supported by peers, supervisors, and organizations) and successful training transfer. The findings suggest that peer and supervisor support is critical in sustaining the knowledge and skills acquired through training beyond the short term. Sarfraz et al. (2021) also found that giving employees the chance to use the skills they have just learned and that organizational practices that support fairness and organizational justice increase the transfer of training into the workplace. Mdhlalose (2022a) further expanded on these insights with a systematic review, highlighting the crucial role of collaborative peer relationships and proactive supervisory support in providing the foundation for training success. The study underscored the need to recognize workplace factors that enhance positive training results and the importance of teamwork in achieving training goals.

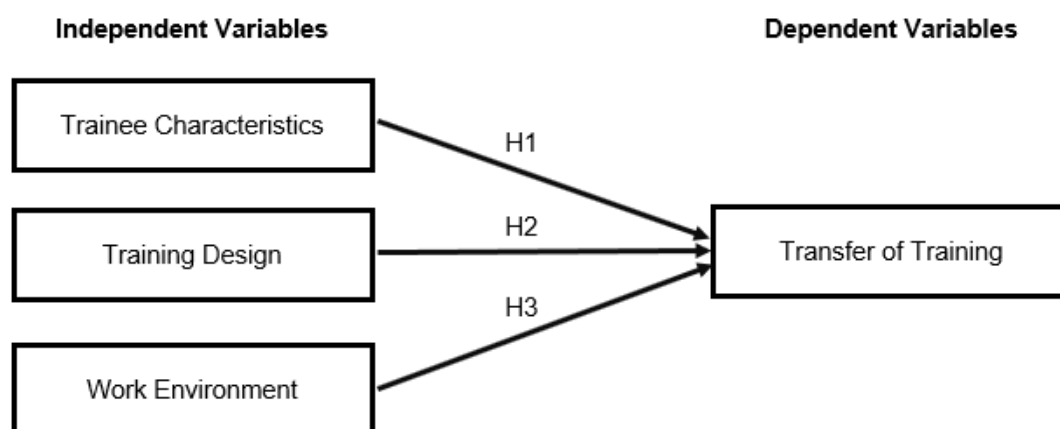
Additionally, Suhaimy et al. (2022) investigated the impact of apprenticeships and found that well-designed training programs and supportive environments are essential to the practical application of knowledge and skills. Besides, workplace opportunities and motivational factors also play significant roles. Nafukho et al. (2022) point out the role of training design and work environment factors, including variability of tasks and employee autonomy, in linking motivation to effective training transfer. These findings suggest that skills-engaging training content and empowering work conditions not only support better integration of skills into daily tasks but also underscore the significant impact of motivation on training effectiveness.

Finally, training success depends on the work environment, which affects how knowledge and skills are applied in the organizational contexts. Organizations can improve knowledge retention, facilitate skill development, and achieve better performance by creating a supportive workplace culture and matching training programs with real-world demands.

## Study Framework

The framework for this study is firmly grounded in the Transfer of Training (TOT) model, a theoretical framework that provides a comprehensive understanding of how training translates into applicable skills in professional settings. The TOT model, as depicted in Figure 2, underscores the interactions of trainee characteristics, training design, and the working environment in determining the success of skill transfer. This model, developed by Hughes et al. (2020) and Velada et al. (2007), is a key concept in this research for understanding the dynamics of training and skill application in the hotel industry.

**Figure 2: Study framework**



In Penang's hotel industry, trainee characteristics such as motivation, adaptability, and self-efficacy are critical to skills application. Motivated trainees are more engaged with training content and better equipped to apply their learning in practical scenarios, while adaptability helps them handle dynamic workplace challenges (Sarfrac et al., 2021). Additionally, individuals with high intrinsic motivation and confidence exhibit improved knowledge retention and are more likely to translate their training into effective workplace performance (Mdhlalose, 2022a).

The design of training programs is another essential element of the TOT model. Effective training design ensures that content is structured and tailored to align with organizational goals and job-specific needs, thus maximizing skill transfer (Nafukho et al., 2022). Features such as practical tasks, realistic scenarios, and clear learning objectives allow trainees to directly apply their knowledge and skills to workplace operations (Suhaimy et al., 2022).

A supportive working environment is fundamental for successful training transfer. Managerial encouragement, constructive feedback, and a positive organizational culture enable employees, including those in entry-level positions commonly referred to as 'interns', to apply their training effectively in real-world settings (Hughes et al., 2020). Research indicates that workplaces fostering collaboration and support are more likely to facilitate the seamless transfer of learned skills (Mdhlalose, 2022a).

By integrating these variables, the TOT framework offers a holistic approach to understanding how trainee characteristics, training design, and working environments interact to influence the effectiveness of training transfer. In Penang's competitive hotel industry, this framework enhances interns' abilities to contribute while supporting workforce development. The insights gained from this framework ensure that the industry remains competitive in

Malaysia's thriving tourism sector (Nafukho et al., 2022) and inspire and motivate industry professionals to strive for operational excellence. This structure presents a clear and logical progression of ideas, ensuring readability while highlighting the study's critical components of the TOT model. Thus, the hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1:

H1: Trainee characteristics significantly influence the transfer of training in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis 2:

H2: Training design significantly affects the transfer of training in the hotel industry.

Hypothesis 3:

H3: Work environment has a significant positive effect on the transfer of training in the hotel industry.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This study utilized a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the effects of trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment on the transfer of training in Penang's hotel industry. The Transfer of Training (TOT) model served as the theoretical framework in guiding the selection of variables and their interrelationships.

### **Sampling Technique**

This study employed a convenience sampling method to recruit participants. Convenience sampling is widely used in hospitality research due to its practicality and efficiency in accessing participants who are readily available and willing to participate (Etikan et al., 2016). A total of 240 hospitality trainees were selected from various hotels in Penang based on their availability and engagement in structured training programs. Convenience sampling is also particularly useful in industry-specific studies where the researcher has direct access to a targeted group, as was the case with trainees involved in formalized internships. While this method may limit generalizability, it provides focused insights into the specific context of Penang's hotel industry.

### **Research Instrument**

The questionnaire measured four constructs: trainee characteristics, training design, work environment, and training transfer. It consisted of five sections: demographic information and four sections using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). Trainee characteristics were assessed with eight items measuring motivation and readiness. Training design included eight items evaluating relevance and structure. The work environment was measured with nine items focusing on organizational support and feedback. Training transfer was assessed with three items capturing the application of training in workplace tasks. This questionnaire instrument ensured comprehensive coverage of the study's objectives.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to hospitality trainees engaged in internship programs across Penang's hotel industry. The questionnaire, designed to measure



trainee characteristics, training design, work environment, and training transfer, was administered physically and digitally, ensuring accessibility for all participants. Trainees were given clear instructions on completing the questionnaire, and sufficient time was provided to ensure thoughtful responses. Researchers emphasized the voluntary nature of participation and guaranteed confidentiality to encourage honest and accurate feedback. The data collection process was completed over a two-month period, capturing a comprehensive dataset for analysis.

### **Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents to assess the reliability of the questionnaire, and the results are presented in Table 1. Cronbach’s alpha was used to evaluate internal consistency across the four constructs. Trainee characteristics (8 items) achieved a reliability score of 0.900, indicating excellent consistency. Training design (8 items) recorded 0.879, while work environment (9 items) scored 0.782, both demonstrating acceptable reliability. Training transfer (3 items) reported a reliability score of 0.797. These results confirm the instrument's reliability for measuring the constructs, providing confidence in its suitability for the main study.

**Table 1: Pilot Test - Reliability Analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Trainee Characteristics	0.900	8
Training Design	0.879	8
Work Environment	0.782	9
Training Transfer	0.797	3

### **Data Analysis**

Data were analyzed using SPSS version 29. Descriptive statistics summarized respondent demographics and item-level responses. Pearson correlation was applied to assess relationships among variables, while multiple regression analysis tested the hypotheses and identified the relative influence of the independent variables on training transfer.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Participants provided informed consent before participating in the study. Confidentiality was ensured by anonymizing responses and securely storing data to prevent unauthorized access. The data were used exclusively for academic purposes and handled in compliance with ethical research standards. Participants were informed about the study's objectives, their voluntary participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. These measures ensured the protection of participants' rights and adherence to ethical guidelines throughout the research process.

## **RESULTS**

### **Descriptive Statistics of Demographic Profile**

Table 2 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of the 240 respondents. The sample consists of 55% male and 45% female participants. Most respondents are aged 20–25 years (45%), with 27.5% under 20 years and over 25 years each. In terms of educational background, 65% of respondents hold a diploma, while 35% have a bachelor's degree. The duration of internships varied, with the majority lasting between 3 and 12 months. Specifically, 24.2% of internships lasted 3 to 6 months, 20.8% lasted 6 to 9 months, and 22.1% lasted 9 to 12 months.

months. Only 21.3% lasted less than 3 months, and 11.7% lasted more than 12 months.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	132	55.0
	Female	108	45.0
Age	Less than 20 years old	66	27.5
	20–25 years old	108	45.0
	More than 25 years old	66	27.5
Educational Background	Diploma	156	65.0
	Bachelor’s Degree	84	35.0
Duration of Internship	Less than 3 months	51	21.3
	3–6 months	58	24.2
	6–9 months	50	20.8
	9–12 months	53	22.1
	More than 12 months	28	11.7

### Descriptive Statistics of Trainee Characteristics

Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for trainee characteristics, emphasizing respondents' readiness and confidence in applying training. The highest-rated item, "My previous education has adequately prepared me for this internship" ( $M = 4.71$ ,  $SD = 0.489$ ), underscores the effectiveness of prior education in equipping trainees. Similarly, "I felt prepared to learn and apply new skills at the beginning of my internship" ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.539$ ) highlights strong initial preparedness. Proactive behaviors, such as seeking feedback ( $M = 4.42$ ,  $SD = 0.756$ ) and adapting approaches ( $M = 4.66$ ,  $SD = 0.533$ ), were also highly rated. The lowest-rated item, "I believe the skills gained from training are valuable for my career" ( $M = 4.10$ ,  $SD = 0.927$ ), indicates moderate perceptions of career relevance.

**Table 3: Item Statistics for Trainee Characteristics**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am motivated to apply what I have learned in training to my internship tasks.	4.20	.859
I feel confident in my ability to transfer the skills learned during training to my work.	4.32	.854
I actively seek feedback to improve my performance.	4.42	.756
I believe the skills gained from training are valuable for my career.	4.10	.927
I am enthusiastic about learning new skills during my internship.	4.13	.849
I am willing to adapt my approach if it helps me perform better at work.	4.66	.533
I felt prepared to learn and apply new skills at the beginning of my internship.	4.67	.539
My previous education has adequately prepared me for this internship.	4.71	.489

### Descriptive Statistics of Training Design

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for items measuring perceptions of training design. Respondents rated the relevance of training as particularly high, with the item "The training provided was directly relevant to the tasks I performed during my internship", receiving the highest score ( $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 0.565$ ). Hands-on activities were also well-rated ( $M = 4.22$ ,  $SD = 0.815$ ), indicating the importance of practical learning. Items related to the clarity of objectives ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 0.917$ ) and the structure of training sessions ( $M = 3.95$ ,  $SD = 0.888$ ) received comparatively lower ratings, suggesting areas for improvement. The lowest-rated

item, "I have had opportunities to apply what I learned in training directly to my work tasks" (M = 3.68, SD = 1.113), points to challenges in the direct application of training.

**Table 4: Item Statistics for Training Design**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
The training provided was directly relevant to the tasks I perform during my internship.	4.63	.565
The training sessions included practical examples that helped me understand my job better.	4.42	.692
The training covered skills and knowledge that are essential for my internship role.	4.05	.892
The training was well-structured, making it easy for me to follow.	3.95	.888
The training objectives were clearly explained at the beginning.	3.97	.917
I found the training materials and resources helpful in understanding my job role.	4.02	.919
The training included hands-on activities that allowed me to practice skills relevant to my internship.	4.22	.815
I have had opportunities to apply what I learned in training directly to my work tasks.	3.68	1.113

### Descriptive Statistics of Work Environment

Table 5 provides descriptive statistics for items assessing the work environment. Respondents highlighted the importance of constructive feedback, with the highest-rated item being "I receive constructive feedback on how well I apply my training" (M = 4.48, SD = 0.653). The value of feedback in skill improvement is further evidenced by "The feedback I receive motivates me to continue improving my skills" (M = 4.33, SD = 0.734). Supportive colleagues and access to resources were also rated positively (M = 4.20, SD = 0.777; M = 4.19, SD = 0.855). However, respondents felt less comfortable seeking guidance from colleagues or supervisors (M = 3.90, SD = 0.969), indicating a potential area for organizational improvement.

**Table 5: Item Statistics for Work Environment**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
My supervisor provides regular feedback that helps me improve my performance.	4.21	.867
My colleagues are supportive and willing to help me apply my training.	4.20	.777
I feel comfortable seeking guidance from my supervisor or colleagues when needed.	3.90	.969
The work environment encourages me to apply the skills I learned in training.	4.02	.831
I have access to the resources (e.g., tools, materials) needed to perform my tasks effectively.	4.19	.855
The organization values interns and recognizes our contributions to the team.	4.28	.820
I receive constructive feedback on how well I apply my training.	4.48	.653
My efforts to apply training in my tasks are acknowledged by my supervisor or team.	4.25	.840
The feedback I receive motivates me to continue improving my skills.	4.33	.734

### Descriptive Statistics of Training Transfer

Table 6 presents descriptive statistics for items assessing training transfer. Respondents rated highly their ability to apply learned knowledge and skills, as evidenced by the item "My training has helped me improve my overall job performance" (M = 4.71, SD = 0.489), which received the highest score. The ability to make a positive contribution to their team by applying training was also highly rated (M = 4.63, SD = 0.565). The item "I am able to successfully apply the knowledge and skills gained from training to my tasks" also achieved a

strong rating ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = 0.539$ ). These results indicate a positive perception of training transfer among respondents.

**Table 6: Item Statistics for Training Transfer**

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am able to successfully apply the knowledge and skills gained from training to my tasks.	4.67	.539
My training has helped me improve my overall job performance.	4.71	.489
I feel that I am making a positive contribution to my team by applying my training.	4.63	.565

## Correlation Analysis

**Table 7: Correlation Matrix for Trainee Characteristics, Training Design, Work Environment, and Training Transfer**

Variables	Trainee Characteristics	Training Design	Work Environment	Training Transfer
Trainee Characteristics	1	.723**	.414**	.760**
Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001	<.001	<.001
N	240	240	240	240
Training Design	.723**	1	.469**	.718**
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001		<.001	<.001
N	240	240	240	240
Work Environment	.414**	.469**	1	.627**
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001		<.001
N	240	240	240	240
Training Transfer	.760**	.718**	.627**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	<.001	<.001	
N	240	240	240	240

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The table presents Pearson correlation coefficients, significance levels (p-values), and sample sizes (N) for the relationships among the study variables.

Table 7 illustrates the correlation matrix for the study variables. All correlations are statistically significant at the 0.01 level, indicating robust relationships among the constructs. Trainee characteristics show the strongest correlation with training transfer ( $r = .760$ ,  $p < .001$ ), highlighting the critical role of individual attributes in applying training. Training design also exhibits a strong correlation with training transfer ( $r = .718$ ,  $p < .001$ ), emphasizing the importance of well-structured and relevant training. The work environment is moderately correlated with training transfer ( $r = .627$ ,  $p < .001$ ), suggesting that a supportive workplace enhances training outcomes. Inter-variable correlations, such as between trainee characteristics and training design ( $r = .723$ ,  $p < .001$ ), indicate the interconnectedness of these predictors. These findings collectively validate the significance of the studied factors in fostering effective training transfer.

## Multiple Regression Analysis

**Table 8: Model Summary for Training Transfer Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
.25934	.720	202.437	3	236	<.001	1.896

a. Predictors: (Constant), Work\_Environment, Trainee\_Characteristics, Training\_Design

b. Dependent Variable: Training\_Transfer

Table 8 provides an overview of the regression model predicting training transfer. The R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.720 indicates that 72% of the variance in training transfer is explained by the predictors: work environment, trainee characteristics, and training design. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> (0.717) confirms the model's robustness when adjusted for the number of predictors. The standard error of the estimate (0.25934) demonstrates the accuracy of the predictions. The model's statistical significance is highlighted by the F-change value of 202.437 with  $p < .001$ , confirming the predictors' combined ability to explain a significant portion of the variance. The Durbin-Watson statistic (1.896) suggests no substantial autocorrelation in the residuals.

**Table 9: ANOVA for Training Transfer**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 (Regression)	40.847	3	13.616	202.437	<.001
Residual	15.873	236	.067		
Total	56.720	239			

a. Dependent Variable: Training Transfer

b. Predictors: (Constant), Work Environment, Trainee Characteristics, Training Design

Table 9 evaluates the overall significance of the regression model. The regression sum of squares (40.847) compared to the residual sum of squares (15.873) indicates that the model explains a substantial proportion of the variance. The mean square for the regression (13.616) results in an F-statistic of 202.437 ( $p < .001$ ), indicating the model as a whole is highly significant. These findings reinforce the relevance of the selected predictors in explaining training transfer.

**Table 10: Coefficients for Training Transfer**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients (Beta)	t	Sig.
1 (Constant)	.613	.163		3.764	<.001
Trainee Characteristics	.385	.043	.452	9.003	<.001
Training Design	.182	.040	.237	4.581	<.001
Work Environment	.324	.039	.329	8.380	<.001

a. Dependent Variable: Training Transfer

Table 10 presents the regression coefficients for predicting training transfer, highlighting the contributions of each predictor. The unstandardized coefficients (B) represent the change in

training transfer for a one-unit increase in the predictor, while the standardized coefficients ( $\beta$ ) indicate the relative strength of each predictor. The constant ( $B = .613, p < .001$ ) reflects the baseline training transfer when all predictors are zero.

Among the predictors, Trainee Characteristics ( $B = .385, \beta = .452, p < .001$ ) has the strongest influence on training transfer, demonstrating the importance of individual readiness and motivation. Training Design ( $B = .182, \beta = .237, p < .001$ ) significantly predicts training transfer, emphasizing the value of structured and practical training programs. Work Environment ( $B = .324, \beta = .329, p < .001$ ) also contributes significantly, highlighting the role of supportive organizational factors, such as feedback and resources, in enhancing training application.

The standardized coefficients confirm that Trainee Characteristics has the largest impact, followed by Work Environment and Training Design. These findings underscore the interplay of individual, training-related, and environmental factors in predicting successful training transfer.

## DISCUSSION

This study investigates the role of trainee characteristics, training design, and the work environment in influencing the transfer of training among interns in Penang's hotel industry. Using the Transfer of Training (TOT) model, the results demonstrate significant relationships between all the independent variables and the dependent variable of training transfer.

The analysis reveals that trainee characteristics significantly predict training transfer ( $B=0.385, \beta=0.452, p<0.001$ ). This finding highlights the importance of individual attributes such as motivation, readiness, and confidence in applying training to workplace tasks. The results align with prior studies. For example, the study by Ragini and Ghosh (2022) underscored the role of intrinsic motivation in enhancing skill application. Similarly, Yang et al. (2020) reported that personal adaptability and a proactive approach are critical for successful training transfer. These findings affirm the pivotal role of trainees' personal attributes in determining training effectiveness.

Training design also significantly contributes to training transfer ( $B=0.182, \beta=0.237, p<0.001$ ). Structured, practical, and relevant training programs that align with job tasks are shown to enhance the application of learned skills. This outcome echoes the findings of Lockhart et al. (2022), who emphasized that training programs designed with clear objectives and hands-on activities improve retention and usability. Ford et al. (2018) similarly noted that job-relevant training content significantly boosts training transfer rates. The results reinforce the critical role of well-designed training programs in achieving positive transfer outcomes.

The work environment is another significant predictor of training transfer ( $B=0.324, \beta=0.329, p<0.001$ ). Supportive factors, such as managerial feedback, recognition, and access to resources, create an enabling environment for trainees to implement learned skills. These findings are consistent with Hughes et al. (2020) and Mdhlalose (2022a), who identified workplace support as a key enabler of training transfer. Additionally, Sarfraz et al. (2021) highlighted that collaborative and resourceful environments significantly enhance trainees' ability to apply their training.

Overall, the TOT model explained 72% of the variance in training transfer ( $R^2=0.720$ ), demonstrating the strong combined impact of the predictors. These results validate the model and corroborate previous findings (Yaqub et al., 2021; Nguyen & Thi, 2020) on the interplay among individual, training-related, and environmental factors in fostering successful training transfer.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study explored the roles of trainee characteristics, training design, and the work environment in influencing the transfer of training within Penang's hotel industry, applying the Transfer of Training (TOT) model as the theoretical framework. The findings reveal that all three factors significantly contribute to the effective transfer of training, underscoring their importance in enhancing workplace performance and skill application.

Trainee characteristics, such as motivation, readiness, and adaptability, emerged as the most influential predictor of training transfer. This supports existing literature emphasizing that individual attributes are crucial for successfully applying training to real-world tasks. Similarly, training design plays a vital role, with structured, practical, and job-relevant programs significantly enhancing the applicability of learned skills. These findings align with prior studies that highlight the necessity of aligning training content with organizational needs and job-specific requirements.

The work environment was also found to significantly impact training transfer, mainly through managerial feedback, recognition, and resource availability. These factors foster a supportive organizational culture, enabling trainees to utilize their acquired skills effectively. The combined predictors explained 72% of the variance in training transfer, reaffirming the comprehensive applicability of the TOT model in the hospitality sector.

This study extends the application of the TOT model to the hotel industry, particularly its internships. It highlights the nuanced roles of personal, training, and environmental factors, providing empirical evidence that enriches the understanding of training transfer mechanisms. The findings offer a basis for future research to explore sector-specific interventions and cross-cultural comparisons.

From an industrial perspective, the study offers actionable insights for enhancing training effectiveness in the hospitality sector. By identifying key factors influencing training transfer, hotel management can design tailored training programs, foster a supportive work environment, and target trainee selection criteria to optimize outcomes. These strategies are essential for workforce development and competitive service quality in the dynamic hospitality market.

In conclusion, this study bridges theoretical and practical gaps, offering valuable guidance for improving training practices in both academic and industrial settings. The success of the training for interns will go a long way to contributing to the development of a high quality service undertaken by what is essentially a service industry that is the hospitality industry.

## **Limitations of the Study**

One limitation of the study is the reliance on self-reported data for that may introduce response bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of findings. Another is that the cross-sectional design limits the ability to establish causality between the variables. Further, the study's sole focus on Penang's hotel industry may restrict the generalizability of findings to other regions or sectors. Lastly, the study needs to account for the long-term impact of training, which may evolve.

## **Recommendations for Future Research**

Future research should adopt longitudinal designs to examine the long-term effects of training transfer. Expanding the scope to other regions or industries would improve the generalizability of findings. Cross-cultural studies could explore how organizational and cultural contexts influence training outcomes. Furthermore, future studies could investigate the role of emerging

technologies, such as virtual reality and e-learning, in enhancing training transfer within the hospitality industry and other service-oriented sectors.

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