Employees’ Participation in Non-Mandatory Training and its Future Research Direction- Literature Review

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ABSTRACT
The importance of non-mandatory training is rapidly growing across the globe to raise it to a level near to that of compulsory training. While considering the literature in non-mandatory training participation, there is a limited researches and no proper theorization. Hence through the structured literature review, this paper intent to identify the factors which influence the employees’ participation in non-mandatory training program through that identify the theoretical gaps and giving suggestions for future research.

Keywords— Non-mandatory training, Adult learning, training participation

I. INTRODUCTION

Training is an organization’s most important human resource development strategy to facilitate, provide, and enhance the employees’ capabilities to perform their respective jobs (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). Furthermore, Barney (2002) states that organizational training activities are recognized as being very effective in providing a competitive advantage through their impact on employees’ productivity, achieved by improving employees’ skills and performance and through inducing positive behavioral changes. Therefore, if the individual’s competencies are to be successfully connected to the organizational performance, then employees must be motivated by some means to pursue continuous skills development activities. As to exactly how this could be achieved can prove to be a key aspect in influencing effectiveness of training programs within an organization (Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

Training is defined as a learning process that involves the acquisition of knowledge, sharpening of skills, understanding of concepts and rules, as well as changing of attitudes and behaviors to enhance the performance of employees (Shah, 2012). A fundamental aspect in the implementation of a training program relates to the nature of trainee attendance, specifically, whether such attendance is mandatory (compulsory) or non-mandatory (voluntary).

In organizations, competencies can be developed through mandatory and non-mandatory training activities (Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Noe, 2005; Wexley & Latham, 2002). Non-mandatory training is growing in popularity rapidly across the globe mainly because the responsibility for the learning process is increasingly being placed on the individual (Renaud et al., 2006). Further, Renaud et al. state that in Canada, in response to the new deregulated environment, many banks have chosen a combined training approach. They developed their internal training programs and concurrently facilitated access to non-mandatory training by forming partnerships with colleges and universities as well as the Canadian Bankers Association. With the growing use of distance and online learning, offering non-mandatory training has become more cost effective and easier to accomplish, especially for larger companies with employees stationed around the world (Sweeney & Martindale, 2012).

Apart from that, from the individual employee’s perspective, there is evidence of a growing interest in “lifelong learning,” often accompanied by the perception that individuals should accept greater responsibility for their own development (e.g., Rosow & Zager, 1988). These learning activities may have no immediate relevance to the person’s current job but are advocated to increase self-confidence, interest in new ideas, and enthusiasm for additional learning and to enhance employability and long term career success (Corney, 1995). Further, non-mandatory training may be considered to be the more desirable alternative as Machin and his colleagues have noted that as employees have no choice but to attend training that is mandatory, this may result in lower levels of motivation to learn (Machin et al., 2004).
**Definition of Non-mandatory training**

Many scholars have defined non-mandatory training and mandatory training from different perspectives; for example, Renaud et al. (2006) (p. 667) define “mandatory or internal training as employer-provided training or facilitation of training and non-mandatory or external training as the demand for training or training that an employee can undertake without the employer’s approval.” Apart from that, Sweeney et al. (2012) (p. 2) define “non-mandatory training as any training opportunity that is not required (not compulsory) as part of employees’ continued successful employment within an organization.” Further, Cloutier et al. (2008) (p. 269) define “voluntary training as any type of structured learning, linked to the career, taken on the employee’s own time and which does not require the employer’s approval (e.g., a credited undergraduate course on finance).” In other words, voluntary vocational training refers exclusively to external voluntary training activities. This type of training activity differs from internal non-mandatory training (e.g., a seminar on stress management) as well as from internal or external mandatory training (e.g., a training program on negotiating a contract), which are both training activities organized and paid for by the employer and where the employee usually takes part during working hours. Therefore, in this paper the non-mandatory training is defined as “any type of structured learning, linked to the career, taken on the employees’ own decision and which is not forced by the employer, irrespective of whether it is organized and paid for or not paid for by the employer or by external parties.”

II. METHODOLOGY

Papers selected for inclusion in this review 71 published articles in leading academic journals specialising in training and development, education, applied psychology, and human resource development. Each article analyse by the means of theoretical and empirical and subsequently according to the contents including personal/individual factors and organizational/job related factors. Although articles were classified as either theoretical or empirical, categories occurring within each of these perspectives were not considered mutually exclusive; it was therefore possible for one article to be assigned to multiple categories.

III. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION OF EMPLOYEES’ PARTICIPATE IN NON-MANDATORY TRAININGS

Mathieu and Martineau (1997) suggested that the simultaneous use of multiple theoretical approaches should prove useful for research and practice in the area of training and development. From this perspective, Colquitt et al. (2000) pointed out that training participation theory is directly linked with adult learning theory (Cross, 1981; Houle, 1961; Knowles, 1968) and expectancy theory of motivation (Vroom, 1964).

**Adult learning theory**

In 1968, Malcolm Knowles, a pioneer in this field proposed "a new label and a new technology" (p. 351) to deal with adult learning to distinguish it from pre-adult learning. The European concept of andragogy, which he defined as "the art and science of helping adults learn," was contrasted with pedagogy, “the art and science of helping children learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43).

The theory of andragogy contends that adults should be taught differently from children because their learning processes are drastically different (Birzer, 2004; Cartor, 1990; Cross, 1981; Knowles, 1975, 1980, 1984; Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). As mentioned above, Knowles summarized six key assumptions about adult learners, which form the foundation of adult learning. Those assumptions are as follows: Self-concept: As a person matures, his/her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality to one who is self-directed. Adults tend to resist situations in which they feel that others are imposing their wills on them. Experience: As a person matures, he/she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes a resource for learning. Adults tend to come into adult education with a vast amount of prior experiences compared to children. If those prior experiences can be used, they become the richest resource available. Readiness to learn: As a person matures, his/her readiness to learn becomes oriented to the development task of his/her social roles. Readiness to learn is dependent on an appreciation of the relevancy of the topic to the student. Orientation to learn: As a person matures, his/her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his/her orientation towards learning shifts from one of subject centeredness to one of problem-centeredness. Adults are motivated to learn to the extent to which they perceive that the knowledge that they are acquiring will help them perform a task or solve a problem they may be faced with in real life. Motivation to learn: Internal motivation may act as the key as a person matures. Although adults feel the pressure of external events, they are mostly driven by internal motivation and the desire for self-esteem and goal attainment. The need to know: Adults need to know the reason for learning something. In adult learning, the first task of the teacher is to help the learner become aware of the need to know. When adults undertake to learn something they deem valuable, they will be willing to invest a considerable amount of resources, such as time and energy (Forrest III & Peterson, 2006; Kidd, 1973; Knowles, 1984; Knowles et al., 1998; Lindeman, 1926; Ozuah, 2005; Thompson & Deis, 2004).
Knowles based this assumption about learner readiness on his observations that adults often experienced situations that triggered a need to learn something new. Specific events that forced change in one’s life such as a birth, divorce, or loss of a job would often prompt the need for new knowledge (Knowles, 1984). As a result, adult learners want to know why they need to know something before they learn it (Atherton, 2003). Knowles recommended using a model of competencies reflecting both personal and organizational needs so that learners could correctly identify their needs (Knowles, 1980).

**Expectancy theory of motivation**

Expectancy Value Theory has been used to understand motivations underlying individuals’ behaviors. Focus has been placed on intent, as the immediate precursor to a particular behavior. This theory proposes that if one can determine the elements that impact intention, then one can more accurately predict whether an individual will engage in a particular behavior. Likewise, it proposes that by changing an individual’s perceptions of potential outcomes, one can alter the individual’s intent. The basis of the theory is that “individuals choose behaviors based on the outcomes they expect and the values they ascribe to those expected outcomes” (Borders, Earleywine, & Huey, 2004, p. 539). The level of one’s willingness to engage in a particular behavior is dependent on, a) the extent to which the individual believes a consequence will follow, and b) the value the individual places on the consequence (Mazis, Ahtola, & Kippel, 1975). The more attractive a particular outcome is to the individual, the more likely the person will engage in the behavior. Similarly, as the number of positive outcomes increase, the motivation to engage in that behavior will increase.

From the perspective of participation in educational activities, Cross (1981) states that Victor Vroom’s (1964) expectancy-valence theory contains a large cognitive element: people’s decision and intention to participate in education as determined by the combined effect of their expectation regarding the pros and cons of participation, and the perceived probability of personal success in the educational activity.

Apart from that, in the context of the training field, Vroom’s (1964) expectancy theory model is applied to the motivation in terms of a function of three variables. Firstly, expectancy is the individual’s beliefs regarding the probability that the commitment and the investment in training can lead him to learn or gain skills; for example, the belief that by engaging in a training activity a person can improve his/her knowledge and skills. Secondly, instrumentality is the perception of a relationship between performance in the training and the outcomes that can be obtained; for example, to believe that through the training one can improve his/her job performance or career position. And thirdly, valence is the assessment of the attractiveness and desirability of the results that can be obtained by the training; for example, the degree to which the improvement of one’s skills, job performance, and career advancement are important for the individual. Further, in the context of voluntary training participation, it is totally dependent on the employees’ decision for participation. In that context, employees will carefully conduct the analysis; whether the training is relevant to them from the perspective of personal benefits, career benefits, as well as job related benefits. At the same time, the training content, its design, quality of training, objectives, and providers are playing major roles in the context of employees’ selection for participation in voluntary training programs.

**IV. EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE OF DETERMINANTS OF EMPLOYEES’ PARTICIPATION IN NON-MANDATORY TRAININGS**

Based on the literature review on non-mandatory training studies, it was noted that certain factors determine the employees’ participation in non-mandatory trainings. Those factors can be divided into personal related factors; age, gender, educational qualifications, self-efficacy and organizational or job related factors; hierarchical position, organizational tenure and employment status (Reaund, Lakhdari & Morin, 2004, 2006, 2008; Noe & Wilk, 1993).

**Personal factors**

**Age**

The age of the individual employee considered to be of substantial in predicting training participation. Ben-Porath (1967) demonstrates that a reduced need for further education of the older workers will decrease the training participation. Furthermore, the longer an employee has worked, the more human capital should have been acquired, leading to a decrease in the marginal utility of further training. In addition, the older employees become, the less time they have available to gain the benefits from additional training, making the costs for training exceed the benefits.

Further as per the Ben-Porath (1967), scholars stated older workers tend to be less motivated to participate in training than younger workers (Maurer, Weiss, & Barbeite, 2003; Tharenou, 1997). This motivation leads to a negative correlation between age and participation in non-mandatory training (Reaund, Lakhdari & Morin, 2004). The research also shows that individuals over 50 years of age have a lower probability of participating in non-mandatory training. However, it is recognized that employers expend more training resources to train those who already have a higher level of education (Frazis, Gittleman, & Joyce, 2000). In addition to that Cloutier, Reaund, Morin (2004) evident that age is negatively related with participation in non-mandatory trainings. This suggests that as an employee is ageing, the
probability of participating in non-mandatory training decreases. Therefore from this past researchers it is illustrates that there is a negative relationship between age and non-mandatory training programs.

**Gender**

Although in early theories such as Ben-Porath and Becker the influence of gender on training was not taken into account, it has become an important factor for the estimate of training participation. Because of an increasing percentage of women in the workforce following the early works of economists on training, the gender aspect has to be taken into consideration. Green (1993) defines the different treatment of workers caused by their sex as ‘market discrimination’. This kind of discrimination occurs when male and female employees have an unequal chance to access training, keeping all other influences constant. This also refers to the same level of existing human capital through prior training and education.

In addition to Green (1993), empirical results from Veum (1993) show that in general males tend to engage in further training activities much more frequently than women. Renaud et al. (2004) explained the observation of this gender effect by the segmentation market theory. This theory predicts that women ‘would be confined to occupations and industries where technological change is not very significant’. Men would therefore rather be concentrated in occupations that require a higher ability to adapt to changes and also require more knowledge (Renaud et al., 2004).

When looking for a relationship between gender and willingness to participate in non-mandatory training, the secondary factors associated with gender become important. The research shows that women with children and spouses are less likely to participate in training (Tharenou, 1997). The primary reason for this is that time constraints lead to working less and/or not being able to dedicate more time for training. Women with spouses and children also received less support from employers for training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008; Pocock & Skinner, 2012). This finding could hold true for men or women with time constraints brought about by family and spousal responsibilities. These gender-related issues are thus influenced more by societal pressures than with direct gender differences. This finding is confirmed by more recent research that documents women participating in training at higher levels, and for different reasons. Over time, participation in non-mandatory training by women has increased, and gender has become less of a factor (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004). The researchers suggest that this change has occurred because of gender equality changes in the workforce, and that the original disparity arose from a greater percentage of women occupying lower-tier jobs (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004).

A study of managers showed that women participate in non-mandatory training more often than men, and if women are not offered mandatory training, they are twice as likely to participate in non-mandatory training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008). Researchers also found that this increased participation in non-mandatory training helps fill a training void brought about by systemic discrimination in terms of mandatory training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2006). Interestingly, male managers, regardless of age, generally do not perceive participating in non-mandatory training to be beneficial (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008). This creates a paradox for organizations, because the more mandatory training they offer, the less likely employees will be to participate in any non-mandatory training opportunities. These results also highlight potential discrimination issues that can arise when subsets of employees receive a disproportionate amount of mandatory training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008).

**Educational qualification**

However, individual unchangeable factors, such as gender and age are not the sole influence on the probability that employees will engage in further development activities. According to Becker’s human capital model (1962) the theory should predict that employees with lower levels of education benefit more from further training than those with a higher level of initial education. These higher marginal benefits are caused by the assumption that the increase of output and performance is higher for less educated workers than for higher.

Contrary to this observation the studies of Green (1993), Baker and Wooden (1992) and Belzil and Hansen (2002) found that the more educated the employees are, the more they participate in further training. A traditional and theoretical explanation by Mincer (1994) is that employees with a higher initial level of education have already shown their aptitude and willingness to participate successfully in further training.

In the context of the non-mandatory training, scholars identified a negative correlation exists between education level and participation in non-mandatory training (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004). With regard to mandatory training, researchers have also concluded that more educated employees tend to receive more training from their employers (Altonji, Spletzer, 1991; Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004). There are a variety of reasons for this. Often, more educated employees are viewed as more capable of being successfully trained (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004).

In the case of non-mandatory training, some employers may perceive that employees with less education would be more interested in training programs because they have the most to gain from participation (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004). This also relates to the findings of Cloutier, Renaud and Morin, (2008), which found that employees will fill spaces in mandatory training with non-mandatory training. On the other hand, workers with higher levels of education tend to need less training,
though they receive more mandatory training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008), which shows that workers will not have a training void to fill if there are adequate levels of mandatory training.

**Family responsibility**

Based on the theories that each individual has to allocate the available time to different activities, the influence of additional family responsibilities can potentially impact the allocation of time to other activities such as training. The need to allocate the optimal share of time to both job and family might result in stress and a conflict of the different roles of an individual (Mark, 1977). Being stressed about allocating time between these two roles might inhibit the individual’s willingness to participate in training, which would mean to increase the share of non-family time. This conflict between job and family can be even increased with the existence of children (Lorech et al., 1989).

The existence of children affects men and women differently in theory. Due to traditional role models, women tend to be more likely to have a bigger share of family responsibility than men (Aryee, 1992), decreasing the time available to invest into further education and job progression. Supporting this approach Tharenou (1997) explains the lower number of women participating in training by the observation that in a partnership women are much more committed to family-caring responsibilities than to paid labor. This observation might explain why women participate less in training activities when they are married and have younger children to care for, but it does not provide a general framework for the impact of spouses or children on both genders in general.

**Self-efficacy**

Studies have shown that a employee’s self-efficacy, or one’s belief that one can handle challenging situations, influences one’s attitude towards training. An employee with high self-efficacy is more likely to take personal responsibility for his or her development as employee (Noe & Wilk, 1993; Sweeney & Martindale, 2012).

Self-efficacy also influences intentions and behaviours. Employees with higher self-efficacy are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to use non-mandatory training for self-development (Maurer, Weiss & Barbeite, 2003). Extrinsic factors such as increased compensation or recognition are also important motivators (Maurer, Weiss & Barbeite, 2003).

**Organizational/job related factors**

**Hierarchical position**

A direct correlation can be seen between the educational level of an employee and the hierarchical position within the company. Higher positions within a company’s hierarchical structure require the existence of certain qualifications. These qualifications are expressed in the level of education. One explanation for this relationship could be that training provides the employee with a position-related advantage over other employees at the same job level. This advantage becomes increasingly important when moving up the hierarchy of positions within a company (Renaud et al., 2004). Generally the intensity of training and the importance for job-related development increases with higher positions. Based on this relationship it becomes more important for employees with higher hierarchical positions to engage in training and also be provided with training opportunities.

In a study which compares the differences in received training between employees in management and non-management positions, Keys and Wolfe (1988) found evidence supporting the theory that higher hierarchical level workers are more frequently trained than their lower coworkers. In revising the literature on managerial training they found indicators that non-managers are less often trained than managers (Keys and Wolfe, 1988). Support and an explanation for this higher training can be found in Wexley and Baldwin (1986), who described the high need for specifically trained managers.

Managers receive more training than non-managers (Renaud, Lakhdari, & Morin, 2004; Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008). Since managerial positions often require advanced degrees, managers have often received extensive formal education in their filed. These two factors combine to create a smaller gap for managers between the training needs and the mandatory training that is offered (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008). There is also evidence that as employees receive training, they are more likely to enter into higher paying positions, and are also less likely to find themselves sliding back into lower wage positions (Pavlopoulos, Muffels & Vermunt, 2009). Lower-wage employees feel less supported than higher-wage employees when it comes to training (Pocock & Skinner, 2012). Lower-wage employees also indicate that they participate in training often at the request of employers, and that job security is perceived as the primary benefit (Pocock & Skinner, 2012). Also, non-mandatory training can cause strain on a worker’s time and resources when it is not integrated into work processes. These work-life strains caused by training increase with low-wage workers in a way that is not seen in higher wage workers (Pocock & Skinner, 2012; Sweeney & Martindale, 2012). Lower paid workers have also been found to show less interest in participating in training (Pocock & Skinner, 2012).

**Organizational tenure**

In order to understand the influence of organizational tenure on the participation behavior of employees the human capital theory suggests that employed workers tend to have a higher motivation to be trained. This perspective suggests that workers with lower organizational tenure are motivated by the prospect of achieving higher positions by increasing their stock of human capital (Maurer et al., 2002). This steep learning curve within the first year of employment observed in a firm operating mainly in the service sector (Shaw and Lazear, 2008) shows that training participation is relatively...
high in the beginning of an individual’s career within the same company.

This high motivation to participate in training can decrease with more work experience within the same company. Models based on this behavior predict a negative influence of organizational tenure on training participation at a certain point (Albert et al., 2010 and Tgangavelu et al., 2011), where the participant’s job does not require additional training, resembling a saturation similar to Ben-Porath’s human capital model. At this point of saturation the employee is more likely to maintain his human capital and reap the benefits from past training than to engage in new training involving opportunity costs. Based on this behavior a non-linear relationship between the training probability and organizational tenure can be expected (Renaud et al., 2004).

Renaud, Lakhdari & Morin in 2004 found, a positive correlation between organizational tenure and participation in non-mandatory training, but the relationship occurs with decreasing probability, meaning that the longer an employee stays with a company, the more likely they are to participate in non-mandatory training, but the correlation becomes weaker over time. The decreasing probability may be related to the age of the worker, which will be discussed in that section. Another study that examined gender, organizational tenure, and participation in non-mandatory training showed that there is no relationship between tenure and participation in non-mandatory training for men. For women, there was a weak, but significant positive correlation between years of service and participation in non-mandatory training (Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008).

Employment status

According to human capital theory the likelihood of an employee to invest in further training depends on the expected benefits of the training. Part-time workers invest less in additional training because of lower expected benefit from the activity. Simultaneously employers invest less in employees that would just partially benefit from the new skills acquired due to less working hours per week in part time employment (Nelen, 2012).

In a study by Greenhalgh and Mavrotas (1996) no differences regarding gender could be found, both men and women who were employed part time had a significantly lower participation rate than their fulltime counterparts. For part time workers the probability of engaging in training increases when their specific contractual hours increase (Maximiano and Oosterbeek, 2007). This reduces the gap between fulltime and part time workers in terms of working hours and increases the willingness to invest in further development for both the employee and the firm.

Another theory providing an explanation is that many part time workers have time constraints. If these existing time constraints motivate an employee to choose a part time job rather than a full time job (Greenhaus et al., 1989), it is very likely that due to this time constraint the available time for further training is also limited. This limitation would lead to a lower probability for part time workers to participate in off the job and non-mandatory training. Confirming this assumption a significant and negative correlation between time constraints and learning motivation for employees was found (Birdi et al., 1997).

V SHORT COMING OF EXISTING THEORIES

Even if their studies have shed some light on the factors that influence employee participation in non-mandatory training, there is still a need for further research in this area. In the international context, only the demographic (Cloutier, Renaud, Morin, 2004; Cloutier, Renaud & Morin, 2008; Leuven & Oosterbeek, 1999; Puchner, 1995; Ronald et al., 2006; Sweeney & Martindale, 2012), and limited individual factors (Maurer, Pierce, & Shore, 2002; Noe et al., 1997; Puchner, 1995; Sweeney & Martindale, 2012) were considered to be the causes of the non-mandatory participation problem, while organizational factors and job/career related variables that also contributed to the employees’ training participation were surprisingly, rarely mentioned (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000).

Apart from that, according to Maurer and Tarulli (1994), an important consideration in fostering participation in voluntary learning and development activities by employees is the extent to which the organization provides an environment that facilitates continuous learning. Thus, the employees’ positive perception of the organization’s policies and a supportive environment are facilitative, along with the value the company attaches to employee learning. Even though organizational support plays a critical role in the non-mandatory training participation context, scholars state that some studies have shown that characteristics of the work environment and job-related variables may also influence an individual's motivation to learn or participate (e.g. Baldwin, Magjuka, & Loher, 1991; Hicks & Klimoski, 1987). At the same time, Maurer (2003) states that both support at work, and a supportive non-work (domestic) situation might also be a key to employees’ personal development behavior.

Further, research has suggested that two aspects of the work environment - social support and situational constraints - influence employees' attitudes and participation in personal development activities (e.g. Kozlowski & Hults, 1987). By communicating to employees that development activities are valuable experiences that help employees to develop their skills, managers and peers can exert a positive influence on employees' learning attitudes, and their perceptions regarding the benefits that can accrue from participation in development activities, besides enabling them to
understand their own skill strengths and weaknesses (Leibowitz, Farren, & Kaye, 1986). Maurer et al. (1994) found that supervisor supportiveness in the work environment, and the extent to which employees valued same, strongly influenced their interest in the work they performed and intention to participate in development activities in future. The more employees valued the supportiveness, the greater was their commitment to work and self-development goals and a distinct relationship could be observed between these two aspects. London (1986) as cited in Maurer et al. (1994) suggested that supervisors can play an important role in employee development by fostering subordinates’ career motivation, assisting growth, supporting career planning and development activities as well as encouraging deeper involvement in work (as cited in Noe, Noe, & Bachhuber, 1990). Even though work environment support is considered to be a crucial factor in the context of continuous learning and development activities, it has not received sufficient attention in the non-mandatory training literature.

At the same time, training attributes are considered as being influential factors on training motivation in the training literature. Previous researchers indicated that these training attributes affected almost all forms of training motivation, such as pre-training motivation, motivation to learn, motivation to transfer, and post-training motivation (Axtell, Maitlis, & Yearta, 1997; Clark, Dobbins, & Ladd, 1993; Nikandrou, Brinia, & Bereri, 2009; Noe & Schmitt 1986; Tsai & Tai, 2003). Though the training attributes are considered as critical factors in training motivation and participation in the context of mandatory training, they have not received much attention in the context of non-mandatory training programs.

Therefore with this regards of organizational support or work support and training attributes in the context of the non-mandatory training, there are currently no literature that delves into this topic in depth.

VI. IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Adding to the employees’ participation in non-mandatory training literature the components needed such as personal, job, organizational, career related variables and cultural background and motivation effect (Cross, 1981), this paper suggest the gaps relying on employees’ participation in non-mandatory training literature and suggest the organizational, career and job related variables should be studied by the future researchers.

More specifically, this paper supports the theoretical literature (e.g. Aryee, 1992; Leuven & Oosterbeek, 1999; Puchner, 1995; Ronald et al., 2006; Sweeney & Martindale, 2012) that suggest the importance of demographic factors on employees’ participate in non-mandatory trainings. This paper extends the work of Colquitt et al. (2000) and Maurer’s (2002) work by demonstrating that employees’ participation in non-mandatory training does rely on demographic factors alone, but also on organizational support - the main important factor, which influences participation in non-mandatory trainings through individual as well as training related variables.

While considering the practical applicability of this study, Sweeney and Martindale (2012) emphasize that non-mandatory training is typically a part of the companies’ strategy to improve employees’ knowledge, skills, and job performance. Therefore, non-mandatory training is most important because organizations dedicate significant resources to non-mandatory training, and those finite resources must be utilized as effectively as possible. Organizations expending resources on training programs want their employees to learn and grow by participating in learning and development opportunities, and they need to know how to design and promote non-mandatory training so that employee participation increases. Hence, if the factors that influence non-mandatory training participation are better understood by organizations, then solutions can be implemented to address non-participation. From this framework, by examining the organizational support, individual capabilities and characteristics, needs and motivations, and other training related attributes of employees in organizations, it may be possible to increase participation in non-mandatory training programs.

VII. CONCLUSION

This paper explores the factors influence on employees’ participation in non-mandatory trainings through the structured literature review. In the context of participation in voluntary training programs there has been limited theoretical research and although scholars have found some influence of demographic and personality factors, they rarely focus on job/career variables and organizational variables (Baldwin, Magiuka, & Loher, 1991, Colquitt et al., 2000; Hicks & Klimoski, 1987). Therefore, this paper turns the spotlight on organizational support, training attributes and job/career variables, which is a totally ignored variable in the context of employees’ participation in non-mandatory trainings.

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