

A STUDY OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN TRAINING ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING MOTIVATION

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Abstract. *This study focused on measuring the correlation between training administration and training motivation using self-administered questionnaires obtained from employees working in a military based health organization in Malaysia. The stepwise regression analysis was employed to attain the research objectives. The results showed three important findings: Firstly, support significantly correlated with training motivation. Secondly, assignment insignificantly correlated with training motivation. Thirdly, delivery significantly correlated with training motivation. Statistically, our empirical findings demonstrate that support and delivery were found to be the important predictors of training motivation while assignment was not an important predictor of training motivation in the organizational sample. In addition, discussion, implications and conclusion are also elaborated.*

Keywords: training administration, support, assignment, delivery, training motivation, Malaysia

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1. Introduction

Training is often viewed as a strategic human resource development and management issue in an organisation (Noe, 2010). In the workplace, the various types of on the job and off the job training programs are planned and implemented by employers to enhance employees' knowledge, skills, abilities (KSAs) and positive attitude in order to support the organizational goals, expectations and needs (Vodde, 2012). In managing training programs, human resource administrators will often work together with line managers to create appropriate training programs and improve the content and methods of training programs. After getting approval from top management, human resource administrators will jointly coordinate with line managers to implement the various types of training for the benefits of the organization and the employees (Maimunah, 2008; Noe et al., 2009; Vodde, 2012). Traditionally, human resource administrators design many types of training programs to develop basic skills and apply them in order to overcome immediate job problems and increase daily job performance. This training approach is suitable to organizations that operate in less competitive environments and market stability (Noe, 2010; Noe et al., 2009). In an era of global competition, most human resource administrators have shifted their paradigms from a traditional based training to achieve organizational strategy and goals (DeSimone et al., 2002; Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Noe, 2010). Under this strategic approach, a traditional based training is viewed as not adequate for enabling employees to cope with current organizational changes (Blanchard and Thacker, 2004). In order to sustain organizational competitiveness, human resource administrators have taken proactive actions to focus on improving intangible assets and human capital such as impart new competencies, change negative attitudes, match knowledge and skills according to organization needs, prepare employees to face new challenges, adapt with sophisticated technologies, do a continuous improvements and promote organizational learning (Blanchard and Thacker, 2004; Noe, 2010). If these training programs are to be properly administered this will help employees to upgrade their capabilities in terms of cognitive, affective, psychomotor and good moral values. Hence, it may lead employees to maintain and support the organizational strategy and goals (Noe, 2010; Nijman et al., 2006).

According to a recent organizational training literature, effective training administration usually consists of three essential dimensions: support, assignment and delivery (Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Saks and Belcourt, 2006; Nijman et al., 2006). Support is generally defined as administering great encouragement to employees to attend training programs, help employees before, during and after the training programs in terms of time, budget and resources, involve employees in decision-making, and guide trainees in applying competencies that they have learned when entering the workplace (DeSimone et al., 2002; Nijman et al., 2006; Noe, 2010; Roşca, 2010). Besides, assignment is broadly viewed as administering and implementing mandatory and voluntary instructions to ensure employees attend the training programs. Mandatory assignment is often related to this as employees who have no choice or compulsory to attend training programs that are assigned to them. This assignment decision is usually implemented by administrators because they feel that employees must attend the training

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programs to meet organizational and job goals. On the other hand, voluntary assignment is frequently referred to employees who have choices whether they want to attend or not training programs that are assigned to them (Machin and Treloar, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Delivery is normally viewed as hardware and software tools and methods that are employed by instructors to deliver learning activities and track employee progressions during training programs after they return to their organizations (Hall, 2005; Noe, 2010; Sussman, 2005).

Unexpectedly, a recent study about workplace learning revealed that the capability of administrators to properly plan and implement training programs may induce positive individual outcomes, especially training motivation (DeSimone et al., 2002; Noe, 2010). Training motivation is generally defined as individuals who have high inner desires that strongly encourage them to attend and learn necessary knowledge, up to date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes in training programs (Analoui, 1999; Machin and Treloar, 2004; Noe, 2010). Within the workplace training model, many scholars think that support, assignment, delivery and training motivation are distinct, but strongly interrelated constructs. For example, the ability of management to adequately provide support, appropriately giving assignments and correctly selecting delivery modes may motivate employees to attend and learn in the workplace training programs (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Forgy, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003).

Even though the nature of this relationship is important, little is known about the administrator's role as a predicting variable in the workplace training research literature (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Forgy, 2004). Many scholars argue that the predicting variable of training administration is given less attention in previous studies because they have discussed about the characteristics of training administration, and have given more focus on a simple correlation analysis as a mean to assess the relationship between training administration and individual outcomes, as well as less emphasizes on the effect size and nature of the relationship between training administration and individual outcomes in training program models. As a result, findings from these studies have not provided adequate empirical evidence and this may not help practitioners to plan effective action plans in enhancing the effectiveness of their organizational training programs (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Forgy, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Thus, this situation motivates the researchers to further investigate the nature of this relationship and to fill the research gap of available literatures.

2. Training administration and training motivation

There are three major objectives of this study taken to overcome the literature gap of previous studies. The first objective is to investigate the relationship between support and training motivation. The second purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between assignment and training motivation. Finally, this study aims to identify the relationship between delivery and training motivation.

Although there is an existence of plethora of studies conducted to examine the relationship between training administration and training motivation in different context of organizational workplace, only limited literatures are available that

employed an indirect effects model to investigate training administration based on different samples, such as perceptions of 184 employees belonging to 18 banks who attended government-sponsored training programs in Northern Taiwan (Tsai and Tai, 2003), perceptions of 137 trainees from Queensland Police Service in Australia (Machin and Fogarty, 2004), and perceptions of 100 participants from the non-UK sites of the aircraft manufacturer Airbus (Chaloner, 2006), and perceptions of 898 physicians from 323 clinics in Romania (Brătianu et al., 2013). Outcomes from these surveys reported three important findings: first, the readiness of administrators to provide adequate support (e.g., encouragement and materials) had been major determinants of training motivation in the organizations (Brătianu et al., 2013; Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Roşca, 2010; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Second, the readiness of administrators to implement appropriate assignments (e.g. voluntary and mandatory) had been major determinants of training motivation in the organizations (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Third, the readiness of administrators to select the right delivery modes (e.g. teaching aids and methods) had been major determinants of training motivation in the organizations (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003).

These studies are consistent with the notion of motivation theory. For example, Baldwin and Ford's (1988) transfer theory explains that helping is an essential factor that motivates employees to learn and apply what they have learned in the workplace. Besides, Adams's (1963) equity theory posits that fair treatment is a major factor that motivates an individual to perform tasks. Moreover, Locke and Latham's (1990) goal setting theory highlights that clarity of goals may guide an individual to perform job. Application of these theories in a training administration model shows that support, assignment and delivery are viewed as consistent with human motivational concept, such as helping, fair treatment and clarity of goals. For instance, the willingness of administrators to adequately provide moral and material support, appropriately implement mandatory and voluntary assignments, and rightly select delivery modes may lead to increased trainees' motivation to attend and learn necessary knowledge, up to date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes in the workplace training programs (Chaloner, 2006; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Tsai and Tai, 2003).

3. Conceptual framework and research hypothesis

The available literature has been utilized as foundation to develop a conceptual framework for this study as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

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Based on the framework, it seems reasonable to assume that the willingness of supervisors to properly implement support and assignment in training programs will influence military based health organization employees as this practice influences Western employees. Motivation theories further suggest that if military based health organization employees perceived that their supervisors can adequately provide moral and material support, appropriately implement mandatory and voluntary assignments, and precisely select delivery modes, this situation may lead to an enhanced trainees' motivation in the workplace. Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between support and training motivation.

Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between assignment and training motivation.

Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between delivery and training motivation.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

This study used a cross-sectional research design that allowed the researchers to combine the training administration literature, the in-depth interview, the pilot study and the actual survey as a main procedure to obtain data for this study. Using such multiple methods curb the inadequacy of single method and help improving the ability to gather accurate data, decrease bias data and increase quality of data being collected (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran and Bougie, 2011). Many researchers in this domain believed that the use of such method assists in enhancing the quality of the research as it was found to be consistent in generating division among the variables under investigation. The context of this study is a military based health organization in Malaysia. In order to avoid intrusiveness, the name of this organization is kept anonymous. At the initial stage of data collection, the in-depth interviews were conducted involving four administrators, 3 medical officers and 4 allied health officers. They are selected based on purposive sampling where the employees have working experience from 4 to 19 years and showed good knowledge about the management of training programs in their organizations. The information gathered from this interview method helped the researchers to understand the role of training administrators, training motivation characteristics, and relationship between such variables in the studied organizations. This information was transcribed, categorized, formed themes and compared with the relevant training administration research literature (Mohd Mursyid et al., 2010; Patton, 1990; Merriam, 1998). Next, the triangulated outcomes were used as a guideline to develop the content and format of the survey questionnaires for this study. A backup translation technique was used to translate the survey questionnaires into English and Malay languages in order to increase the validity and reliability of research findings (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran and Bougie, 2011).

4.2. Measures

The survey questionnaire used in this study had two sections. Firstly, the variable support had 4 items, the variable assignment had 3 items and the variable delivery had 7 items that were adapted from training administration literature (Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Noe, 2010; Tsai and Tai, 2003). Finally, the variable training motivation was measured using 3 items that were modified from training motivation literature (Goldstein and Ford, 2002; Machin and Fogarty, 2004; Noe, 2010; Rodrigues and Gregory, 2005; Tsai and Tai, 2003; Tai, 2006). All items used in the questionnaires were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree/dissatisfied” (1) to “strongly agree/satisfied” (7). Demographic variables were used as controlling variables because this research focused on employee attitudes.

4.3. Sample

The population of this study is covering all employees who are working in a military based health organization. The researchers had obtained an official approval to conduct the study from the head of the organization and also received advice from him about the procedures of conducting the survey in that particular organization. Despite the permission granted to the researchers to conduct this study, the list and information details of employees were not given to the researchers because of confidentiality reason. This situation could not enable the researchers to select respondents randomly for this study (Sekaran and Bougie, 2011). Considering the constraints of the organization’s rules and regulations, as well as the duration of study and budget, the survey questionnaires were distributed using a convenient sampling technique to 200 employees in the organization. From the number, 113 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding 56.5 percent of the response rate. The survey questionnaires were answered by participants based on their consent and a voluntary basis. The number of this sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique, showing that it may be analyzed using inferential statistics (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran and Bougie, 2011).

5. Data Analysis

The following procedure was performed to analyze the questionnaire data and thus test the research hypotheses. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was employed to assess the validity and reliability of the research instrument (Coakes and Steed, 2002; Hair et al., 2010; Nunally and Bernstein, 1994). Secondly, Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were conducted to determine the collinearity problem and estimate the validity and reliability of research constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Finally, stepwise regression analysis was used to quantify the magnitude and direction of the relationship between several independent variables and one dependent variable in the hypothesized model (Berenson and Levine, 1992; Foster

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et al., 1998). In this regression analysis, standardized coefficients (standardized beta) were used for all analyses.

5.1. Sample profile

Table 1 shows that majority of respondents were males (54.9%), ages between 26 and 30 years old (44.2%), married employees (82.3%), allied health science staff (43.4%), SPM/MCE holders (64.6%), and employees who worked from 6 to 10 years (34.5%).

Table 1

Respondent Characteristics (n=113)

Respondent	Sub Profile	Percentage
Gender	Male	54.9
	Female	45.1
Age	<18	16.8
	26 – 30	44.2
	31 – 35	19.5
	>36	19.5
Marital status	Single	17.7
	Married	82.3
Position	Doctors	21.2
	Administration staff	35.4
	Allied health science	43.4
Education	Degree and above	23.0
	Diploma	1.80
	STPM/HSC	5.30
	SPM/MCE	64.6
	PMR/SRP/LCE	5.30
Length of Service	Below 5 years	23.0
	6 – 10 years	34.5
	11 – 15 years	15.0
	16 – 21 years	10.6
	22 years and above	16.8

Note: SPM/MCE – Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/ Malaysia Certificate of Education, STPM/HSC – Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia/ Higher School Certificate, PMR/SRP/LCE – Penilaian Menengah Rendah/Sijil Rendah Pelajaran/Lower School Certificate.

5.2. Validity and reliability analyses

Table 2 shows the results of validity and reliability of the measurement scale. A factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was performed for 19 items which refer to three variables: support (4 items), assignment (3 items), delivery (7 items), and training motivation (5 items). Next, the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO), a measure of sampling adequacy, was conducted for each variable. The validity and reliability analyses were conducted based on the procedures established by Nunally and Berstein (1994) and Hair et al. (2010). Relying on this guideline, the statistical analyses showed that (1) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin’s value of

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0.6, (2) all research variables were found to be significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity, (3) all research variables had eigenvalues larger than 1 and had variance explained more than 0.45, (4) the items for each research variable exceeded factor loadings of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010) and (5) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 (Nunnally and Bernstein, 1994). The statistical results reveal the fact that the measurement scale used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses as shown in Table 2.

Table 2

The results of validity and reliability of the measurement scale

Variable	No. of Items	Factor Loading	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Eigenvalue	Variance Explained	Cronbach Alpha
Support	4	.66 to .89	.75	265.57	2.91	72.74	.86
Assignment	3	.68 to .92	.73	529.64	2.81	93.67	.96
Delivery	7	.66 to .85	.74	828.78	5.12	73.10	.94
Training Motivation	5	.63 to .93	.80	383.41	3.56	71.23	.90

5.3. Analysis of the Constructs

Table 3 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. The means of all variables are from 5.7 to 6.1, signifying that the levels of support, assignment, delivery and training motivation ranging from high (4.0) to highest level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variables (i.e., support, assignment and delivery) and the dependent variable (i.e. training motivation) were less than 0.90, indicating the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, these statistical results provide further evidence of validity and reliability for the measurement scales used in this research. In addition, preliminary analysis was performed to ensure non-violation of the assumptions of normality, homogeneity and linearity.

Table 3

Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation Coefficients (r)			
			1	2	3	4
1. Support	5.8	.95	1			
2. Assignment	5.7	1.1	.35**	1		
3. Delivery	6.0	.66	.63**	.16	1	
4. Training Motivation	6.1	.56	.42**	.24**	.48**	1

Note: Significant at **p < 0.01.

5.4. Outcomes of testing hypotheses 1, 2 and 3

Table 4 shows the results of testing hypotheses using a stepwise regression analysis. It shows that demographic variables were entered in Step 1 and then followed by entering independent variable (i.e. support, assignment and delivery) in Step 2. Training motivation was used as the dependent variable. An examination of multicollinearity in the coefficients table shows that the tolerance value for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e. support, assignment and delivery) and the dependent variable (i.e. training motivation) were 0.94, 0.85, and 0.55, respectively. These tolerance values were more than the established tolerance value of 0.20 (as a rule of thumb), indicating the variables were not affected by multicollinearity problems (Fox, 1991).

Table 4

The results of the stepwise regression analysis

Variable	Dependent Variable (Training Motivation)	
	Step 1	Step 2
<u>Controlling Variable</u>		
Gender	-.10	-.15
Age	.34*	.30
Marital Status	-.12	-.09
Position	-.06	-.06
Education	.02	.03
Length of Service	-.03	-.15
<u>Independent Variable</u>		
Support		.20*
Assignment		.13
Delivery		.41***
R Square	.12	.37
Adjusted R Square	.07	.31
R Square Change	.12	.25
F	2.33*	6.66***
F Change	2.33*	13.65***

Note: Significant at *p < 0.05; **p < 0.01; ***p < 0.001.

Further, in Table 4, the results of regression analysis were summarized in two steps. In Step 1, among the demographic variables included, only age was found to be a significant predictor of training motivation ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < 0.05$). The inclusion of demographic variables in this step had explained 12 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Step 2 showed that support and delivery were found to be significant predictors of training motivation ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.05$; $\beta = 0.41$, $p < 0.001$) respectively. Therefore, it can be translated that the statistical findings of independent variables support and delivery are positively and significantly correlated with training motivation, hence, H1 and H3 were supported. On the other hand, assignment was

found to be not a significant predictor of training motivation ($\beta = 0.13$, $p > 0.05$), therefore, H3 was not supported. In addition, the inclusion of training administration dimensions in this step (Step 2) had explained 37% of the variance in dependent variable. In short, the results confirm that support and delivery do act as important predictors of training motivation, but assignment does not act as an important predictor of training motivation in the studied organizations.

6. Discussion and implications

The findings of this study confirm that support and delivery act as important predictors of training motivation, and assignment does not act as an important antecedent of training motivation in the studied organization. Considering the context of this study, it was found that administrators have planned and implemented training programs based on the standard operating procedures (SOP) in order to motivate employees attending and learning necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes in training programs. According to the interviewed participants, levels of support, delivery and training motivation were high. This situation indicates the readiness of administrators to provide adequate support and selecting appropriate delivery modes are critical for the increased employees' motivation to attend and learn in training programs.

The implications of this study can be divided into three categories: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study highlights two important findings: first, administrators provide adequate support and select delivery modes are important predictors of training motivation in the studied organization. Despite the fact that the context of this study is different from those studies conducted in Western countries, the results of this study are found to be consistent with studies of Tsai and Tai (2003), Machin and Fogarty (2004) and Chaloner (2006). Second, administrators giving assignments have not been an important predictor of training motivation in the studied organization. Information gathered from the in-depth interview results showed that this result may be affected by external factors. First, the inability of administrators to provide adequate time in order to explain and discuss face to face with employees before assigning training programs to them. Second, the various employee backgrounds have different assessments and values in judging the benefits of training programs that are assigned to them. These factors may decrease the effect of administrators' assignments on training motivation in the studied organizations.

With respect to the robustness of research methodology, the survey questionnaire used in this study has met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. These aspects of this research have resulted and showed the way to the production of accurate and reliable findings. In terms of practical contributions, the findings of this study can be used to improve the administration of training programs in organizations. As a result, the training programs will lead to develop the

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employees' career as well as enhancing their pro-active and positive attitude in regards to the psychological support of the organizations. In order to achieve these objectives, administrators need to give more focus on the following dimensions: firstly, theories and practices in transformational leadership need to be exposed to training administrators. Secondly, up to date training content and methods need to be offered for all employees. Thirdly, capable and talented instructors need to be selected for conducting training programs. Fourthly, improve the selection procedures in order to choose the suitable employees to attend the suitable training programs. Fifthly, training programs need to be conducted at suitable places in order to avoid disturbances. Sixthly, training programs should be varied and designed according to the employees' needs and preferences to cater different dimensions of sustainable leadership capabilities in which they are lacking. Finally, give a priority to recruit employees who have good personalities besides considering their academic qualifications and previous working experiences to fulfil important positions. If these suggestions are heavily considered this may motivate employees to achieve the goals of organizational training program.

7. Conclusions

This study used a conceptual framework that was developed based on the workplace training research literature. The results of exploratory analysis confirmed that the measurement scale used in this study met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. Further, the outcomes of stepwise regression analysis showed that support and delivery did act as important determinants of training motivation in the studied organization. This result has also supported and extended training administration literature mostly published in Western countries. On the other hand, assignment did not act as an important determinant of training motivation in the studied organization. According to the information obtained from the in-depth interview results showed that this finding may be affected by the inability of administrators to provide adequate time in order to explain and discuss face to face with employees before assigning training programs to them. Besides, the various employee backgrounds have different assessments and values in judging the benefits of training programs that are assigned to them. Therefore, current research and practice within the workplace training model needs to consider support, assignment and delivery as critical factors in the training administration domain. This study further suggests that the capability of administrators to provide adequate support, giving appropriate assignments and select proper delivery modes will strongly increase employee motivation to attend and learn in training programs. As a result, it may lead to maintaining and achieving health organizational strategic missions.

8. Limitations and suggestions for further research

The findings of this study revealing the fact that training programs can be exploited as an effective tool for identifying the responsible predicting variables that support the individual advancement of employees in the organization. The cross-sectional method that was used as the key procedure for the period of this study did not allow the researcher to take into account some critical developmental issues. For example, the change of intra-individual participants and control of making inference to participants and/or causal connections between variables of interest were not addressed in this study. Besides, one of the challenges faced by the researchers is that they had to translate the survey instrument into the Malay language to expedite the collection of smooth and accurate data during the period of this study.

This research focused mainly on collecting self-reported data which takes into account the only perspectives of employees. Therefore, this study suggests conducting future research by taking into consideration the perspectives of other employees within the organization in an attempt to curtail the shortcomings of self-reported data. Further, this study considered only one variable; therefore, further research can be carried out to shed light on the relationship between training administration and training motivation by giving concentration on alternative outcome variables. Such as, job commitment, performance of employee etc. which may reveal some other dimensions that are critical to an organization's success.

The results of this study could be valuable to the organizations seeking development through conducting training programs. The study findings can be replicated and generalized to organizations operating under different context and struggling to improve the work environment. As a final point, this study recommends to conduct an in-depth qualitative study to give good reason for the relevance of the findings of this study as well as when specific variables are matters for an investigation.

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