

The Mediating Effect of Motivation in Between Training Dimensions and Job Performance

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to examine the relationship of training factors towards job performance among Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) and mediated by motivation. This study was undertaken to examine the relationship between training content, training delivery and training environment towards job performance and mediated by motivation. From a total of 129 questionnaires distributed, 125 questionnaires were received, yielding a response rate of 97%. The participants involved in this study are Engineering Other Rank personnel who completed the Technician Industry Application Training (TIAT) program in June 2020. The demographic data of the respondents represent a descriptive statistical analysis, and the findings of the study hypotheses represent inferential statistical analysis. The findings indicated there exists a significant relationship between training content, training delivery, and training environment to job performance with 69.8 percent. These components also contribute 74.1 percent towards motivation. It was further found that motivation fully mediates training content, training delivery, and training environment towards job performance with $\beta=0.224$, $t = 2.270$, $p = 0.023$.

Keywords: Training Content, Training Delivery, Training Environment, Motivation, Job Performance, Royal Malaysian Navy

Introduction

Training is identified as continuing education in all organizations, regardless of their size or core business and it is conducted with the ultimate objective of enhancing the performance of the employees (Saeed et al., 2017). For employees to expand their knowledge base and increase their competency level, an organization must offer training. The landscape of American Navy training program applied a model from Kirkpatrick's theory which is level three to explore the correlation between trainee response, reaction, and job performance (Martocchio, 2019). The military appears to be an organization that always nurtures education critical thought, learning, and adaptive leadership. It also promotes power, hegemony, and society through teaching (Alberto et al., 2019).

Royal Malaysian Navy (RMN) is one of the three forces in the Malaysian Armed Forces (MAF) who is responsible in ensuring the country's sovereignty are well secured and protects it from all types of threats. Training aspect is always a priority in MAF. RMN constantly emphasizes the importance of training to enhance the knowledge, skills, and attitude of its personnel based on RMN Training System (RMNTS) Book Vol. 1 to 5. According to RMN 15 to 5 Transformation (2018) program, the navy personnel are one of the key elements that require change and transformation, the objective is to enhance RMN's performance through the development of human capital by providing high quality education, training, and experience. However, despite of the pivotal concern on constant training content, training delivery, and training environment to support RMN's personnel change and transformation, MAF is yet to evaluate other factors that can stimulate change and transformation towards job performance. As the nature of job performance of RMN's personnel is different with other profession, the factor that can strengthen the relationship between training dimensions and job performance may be different. Hence, this study is motivated to investigate motivation as the mediating factor in between training dimensions and job performance which is sparsely studied in the context of RMN personnel.

Technician Industry Application Training (TIAT) program was introduced and implemented into RMN's training with the purpose to enhance and develop Engineering Other Rank competency. This program is the second On-The-Job Training (OJT) in the Engineering Other Rank, and they are required to complete their first OJT (either at the base unit or ship) before commencing the program. The program is conducted with the collaboration between RMN and Boustead Naval Shipyard (BNS). During the program, Engineering Other Rank will have the opportunity to participate and experience the actual technical situations such as shipbuilding and ship repair activities which includes the construction of new ships or ship docking for maintenance. This program is expected to increase their competency level and contribute to their job performance. After a few series of TIAT program, the program seems to equip Engineering Other Rank with sufficient knowledge and skill in handling technical equipment. Skills and knowledge can be optimized by sharing them with other participants' and instructors' experiences (Saeed et al., 2017). They should be able to transfer the knowledge acquired from TIAT program into practice in their actual job function and ultimately contribute to job performance (Saeed et al., 2017).

Literature Review

Relationship between Training Content and Job Performance

The relationship between the factors of training and employee performance is incredibly important. Training programs should relate to the employees' performance (Kanapathipillai & Azam, 2020). It was found that training content inspires and increases employees' performance (Adula et al., 2023; Mahmud et al., 2019). TIAT program that is provided by HQNETC and executed by the KDP, is fully recovered with all practices and knowledge pertaining to maintenance on ship equipment. According to Hajjar et al (2018), training module similarities have a positive impact on successful training. The training content and requirements are specified and driven by the target organization to consider its effectiveness. Therefore, a training program must have specific and achievable goals for the training to be successful. Clear goals provide guidance for trainers to develop training content and determination of criteria by which it can improve job performance. It indicates that the training content and requirements are specified driven by the target organization to consider

its effectiveness. In this context, the corporation also plays a vital role in endorsing the training program to boost the ability of the trainees to learn.

Relationship between Training Delivery and Job Performance

Training delivery is very important to bring effectiveness to the organization. The trainer is responsible for conducting, facilitating and make training interesting for the trainees. According to Saeed et al (2017), the instructor is connected to a successful response positively and greatly. A study by Nizam et al (2018) indicated that there is a positive correlation between training quality and employee success. Hence, organizational training as an active method of learning that transforms behaviors, skills, and the capacity of workers will enhance job performance. Employees with experience in both learning and transformation while progressing in their job show better job performance (Manashvi, 2020). Trainers through their continuous support and guidance to the trainees in terms of delivering the appropriate skills and knowledge, giving them the opportunities to stand out, and facilitating and directing them can result in job performance. Their transformational behaviour can also influence training transfer (Creon & Schermuly, 2021). Therefore, Training delivery is much related to the relationship between the trainer and the trainees. As stated by Swanson et al (2020), if the relationship is good, the trainees will feel comfortable and secure in an environment that has a positive correlation with their trainer and thus be able to focus on the training better. A strong exchange between trainees and trainers shall be in terms of continuous assistance, two-way communication to obtain responses, encouragement, tools, and training to improve skills among the trainees. Even, as a responsible trainer, besides concentrating on the delivery process, one should take steps to follow up and keep track of the training process. The step shall be in a structured format for the trainer to monitor the performance (Mahmud et al., 2019). In general, soft skills and the training methodology pursued planned job results. The training methodology (time spaced learning) would affect the transfer of soft competencies learned to their careers which often improve their performance (Ibrahim et al., 2017).

Relationship between Training Environment and Job Performance

Job performance can be badly affected by the poor environment caused by poor layout, noise, and negative atmosphere. This circumstance contributed to the emotional destruction that led to increased levels of stress. A productive working environment has been shown to be an indicator of change in training (Lourenco & Ferreira, 2019). A training environment is described as training facilities of learning practices and accommodating infrastructure. According to Saeed et al (2017), there are positive signs between the training environment and job performance. Any dimension of training is expected to be translated and applied at the workplace. This is one of the core reasons behind the training objective to increase job performance (Yaqoot et al., 2017). According to Mahmud et al (2019), the training facilities provided to employees would enhance their performance. This study confirmed a substantial and positive relationship between the training environment and job performance. Selecting a proper and suitable training location is very important where employees can reach the center conveniently and regularly (Mahmud et al., 2019). In the context of TIAT program, the training is conducted in an environment that involves maintenance and technical work at the workshop or ship under repair. it is considered workplace learning and trainees are expected to gain trainees skills and knowledge.

Relationship between Motivation and Job Performance

Motivation is the energy that energizes and drives a person's work towards a target. It is recognized as a big challenge and an efficient component of work success, and a must to direct workers to vital targets (Ghaffari et al., 2017). Several studies have shown empirically that motivational factors are very positive in improving employee performance (Ghaffari et al., 2020; Manalo & Apat, 2021; Niati et al., 2021). Kodwani & Prashar (2019) in their research found that motivation aided by training may increase job performance. Employees will have a positive feeling about job accomplishments which increases career growth opportunities. In reality, trainees can have various preferences of outcomes subsequent to participation in an on-the-job training program. High motivation levels are valued through any outcome related to training. So, any efforts invested by the organization in the training are expected to lead to increasing job performance. It is also important to know that having a highly motivated workforce is one important factor contributing to employee performance, for instance productivity (Ayofe et al., 2021). Study by Zainol et al (2022) indicated that learning motivations had an influence on job performance. Motivation resulting from learning experience of good content, learning strategies and immersive technology prototypes can support training as a crucial effort toward job performance for current and future employees (Alfiyana, 2019).

The Mediating Effect of Motivation in between Training and Job Performance

Motivation was found as a mediating variable between system training factors and training transfer (Chahar et. al., 2021). Training transfer is normally measured by the ability to transfer learning to the workplace. Motivation refers to path, strength, persistence of learning-oriented behavior (Kodwani & Prashar, 2019). It is very important to be motivated in the training process. This is where trainees show their enthusiasm to the training program conducted with them. Previous studies conducted by Sahoo & Mishra (2019) stated that motivation is important to the transition of training and encourages and facilitates the real transfer of training across different fields and contexts. It means motivation is crucial for the trainees to transfer their learning from training to their job performance. Hence, motivation can be described as the ability of trainees to make use of the experience and know-how gained while they were on the job. The motivation of transition can link to learner preparation and thus help facilitate transfer of training which reflect job performance. Meanwhile. Kim et al (2019), describe motivation for learning as a desire for learning and accepting training, taking control to the level which skill and abilities obtained are conveyed to the job site. In other words, a confident trainee should be able to retain and apply the experience and skills he or she learned after a training course is finished (Al-Swidi & Al Yahya, 2017). Therefore, preparation and motivation are the main components of the transition of instruction. People who want to read, love studying and thus get natural benefits from the training procedure (Sahoo & Mishra, 2019). The ability of the trainee is influenced by motivational elements in learning and attending training sessions. It functions as an internal generating force that controls work (Pollitt & Old, 2017). In this study, perceived better performance, career-related, valued added, feeling happy and more confident are motivation elements to transfer learning from training to job performance. Since motivation will influence the reputation of training (Saeed et al., 2017), training should be designed in a way that can motivate employees to transfer or reflect their learning to their job performance.

Methodology

A quantitative approach was applied in this study. The questionnaire was adapted from sources such as from (Taan & Alkhanaizi, 2018; Khaled, 2016; Hye et al., 2017). The participants involved in this study are the Engineering Other Rank who completed the TIAT program in June 2020. Other Rank refers to navy personnel with positions such as Junior Able Rate, Able Rate, Leading Rate, Petty Officer, Chief Petty Officer, Warrant Officer Class II and Warrant Officer Class I.

The questionnaire was divided into four sections. Section A collected the demographic information of the targeted respondents. This section has a total of 7 items such as race, gender and highest qualification to name a few. Statements related to training content, training delivery and training environment are in Section B. Section C emphasizes statements related to motivation as the mediating variable. Section D has statements pertaining to job performance. Each variable of interest has 5 statements. All statements in this questionnaire are based on a 5-Point Likert Scale with values ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.

From a total of 129 questionnaires distributed, only 125 questionnaires were successfully returned, yielding a response rate of 92 percent. The demographic data of the respondents represent descriptive statistical analysis, and the findings of the research hypotheses represent inferential statistical analysis.

Through the use of the SmartPLS3 software, this particular study applies the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) methodology (Ringle et al., 2015). The goal of this modelling approach is to validate and assess the theoretical model. An approach with two steps was used to evaluate the suggested model. Testing the measurement model came first, then using SmartPLS, the structural model was assessed (Hair et al., 2013). The bootstrapping approach was later used, as advised by Hair, Sarstedt, Pieper, and Ringle (2012).

Results and Discussion

The loadings from the results, Cronbach's alpha, with the average variance extracted and composite reliability were assessed to ensure that the assessment items were valid and reliable. All loadings were higher than 0.708, AVEs were higher than 0.5 and CRs were higher than 0.7 indicating that all measurements are valid and reliable (Hair et al., 2022). Discriminant validity was tested using HTMT criterion that Hanseler et. al (2015) recommended. If HTMT ratios are lower than $HTMT_{0.85}$, then the conclusion can be made that all measures were discriminant. As shown in the Table 1 all the ratios were below the cut-off value of 0.85, therefore the measures are distinct.

Contribution of the Study

It is expected that the findings of this study can contribute to the literature on the mediating effect of motivation in strengthening the relationship of training content, training delivery, training environment and job performance. It provides useful insights to the practitioners including policy makers to include motivation as an important factor for training to be more effective which in turn increases job performance.

Table 1

Factor Loading, Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for Reflective Construct

Construct	Items	Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	CR	AVE
Training Content	TC1	0.926	0.962	0.970	0.867
	TC2	0.928			
	TC3	0.933			
	TC4	0.938			
	TC5	0.930			
Training Delivery	TD1	0.908	0.939	0.954	0.804
	TD2	0.844			
	TD3	0.922			
	TD4	0.909			
	TD5	0.899			
Training Environment	TE1	0.903	0.941	0.954	0.808
	TE2	0.888			
	TE3	0.891			
	TE4	0.906			
	TE5	0.907			
Motivation	M1	0.906	0.950	0.961	0.833
	M2	0.901			
	M3	0.932			
	M4	0.903			
	M5	0.921			
Job Performance	JP1	0.879	0.938	0.953	0.802
	JP2	0.867			
	JP3	0.908			
	JP4	0.925			
	JP5	0.897			

Table 2

Discriminant validity (HTMT Ratios)

	JP	Mov	TC	TD
JP	-			
Mov	0.849	-		
TC	0.818	0.844	-	
TD	0.764	0.786	0.826	-
TE	0.833	0.846	0.841	0.805

The present study used blindfolding procedure to obtain predictive relevance (Q^2) value. When predictive relevance (Q^2) values are larger than zero for a certain endogenous latent variable, it indicates that the path model's predictive relevance for that construct. Table presents the results of predictive relevance. The results of predictive relevance (Q^2) value indicated that all path models had predictive relevance for all endogenous constructs. Based on Hair *et al* (2014) a threshold value of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 were considered as small, medium, and large. The predictive relevance (Q^2) value for path model TC \rightarrow Mov, TC \rightarrow Mov and TE \rightarrow Mov is 0.600 which considered as large. The (Q^2) value for path model Mov \rightarrow JP, TC \rightarrow JP, TE \rightarrow JP and TE \rightarrow JP is 0.545 which also considered as large. Training content (TC) was found to be statistically significant on motivation (Mov) with medium effect size (f^2) value of 0.213 at t-value of 4.023 ($p < 0.05$). Motivation is statistically significant towards job performance (JP) with medium effect size (f^2) value of 0.154 at t-value of 2.557 ($p < 0.05$). The path TC \rightarrow JP and TE \rightarrow JP is significant except TD \rightarrow JP which is not statistically significant,

nevertheless TC and TE showed small effect size towards job satisfaction. Table 3.0 summarized the overall assessment of the structural model for this study.

Table 3

Summary of Path Coefficient, T-statistics, Conclusion, Effect Size, Coefficient of Determination, and Predictive Relevance of Structural Model

	β	T Stat	P Values	Conclusion	f Square	R Square	Q ²
TC -> Mov	0.529	4.023	0.001	Supported	0.213 (medium)	0.741 (substantial)	0.600 (large)
TD -> Mov	0.115	1.079	0.280	Not supported	0.014 (small)		
TE -> Mov	0.251	1.687	0.092	Not supported	0.034 (small)		
Mov -> JP	0.423	2.557	0.011	Supported	0.154 (medium)	0.698 (substantial)	0.545 (large)
TC -> JP	0.365	2.209	0.027	Supported	0.011 (small)		
TD -> JP	0.159	1.803	0.071	Not supported	0.011 (small)		
TE -> JP	0.321	2.126	0.034	Supported	0.021 (small)		

Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was performed to assess the mediating role of motivation on the linkage between TC and JP. The results (Table 4.0) revealed that the total effect of TC on JP was significant (H1: $\beta = 0.365$, $t = 2.209$, $p = 0.027$). With the inclusion of the mediating variable (Motivation), the impact of TC on JP became insignificant ($\beta = 0.141$, $t = 0.802$, $p = 0.423$). The indirect effect of TC on JP through MOV was found significant ($\beta = 0.224$, $t = 2.270$, $p = 0.023$). This shows that the relationship between TC and JP is fully mediated by motivation.

Table 4

Result of total effect

Total Effects			
	β	T Stat	P Values
TC -> JP	0.365	2.209	0.027
TE -> JP	0.321	2.126	0.034
TD -> JP	0.159	1.803	0.071

Table 5

Results of direct and indirect effects

Direct Effects				Indirect Effects							
										BCCI	
	β	T Stat	P Values		β	Mean	Std Dev	T Stat	P Values	Lower	Upper
TC -> JP	0.141	0.802	0.423	TC -> Mov -> JP	0.224	0.221	0.099	2.270	0.023	0.059	0.452
TE -> JP	0.215	1.780	0.075	TE -> Mov -> JP	0.106	0.105	0.080	1.325	0.185	-0.002	0.326
TD -> JP	0.110	1.301	0.193	TD -> Mov -> JP	0.049	0.060	0.058	0.838	0.402	-0.022	0.204

Conclusion

It can be concluded that training content and training environment posit a positive relationship towards job performance. Motivation positively impacts job performance and is a meaningful construct and a central pillar at the workplace. Motivation as a mediator significantly mediate training content and job performance. Motivation can influence how engaged and attentive employees are during training. When employees are motivated to learn and see the value in the training content, they are more likely to actively participate and absorb the information being presented. There exists no impact of training delivery towards job performance. The competence and the expertise of the trainer or facilitator delivering the training can greatly influence how well the material is presented, understood, and applied by learners. When training is directly relevant to employees' job tasks and aligned with organizational goal, they are more likely to see the value in a training and apply it effectively on the job.

Limitation and Recommendation of the Study

This study was specifically conducted at the Royal Malaysian Navy base in Lumut, Perak, Malaysia. It was relatively short-term focus, and it may assess immediate post-training outcomes but not consider the long-term effects of training on job performance. The discourse of the study is that there are challenges in implementing a competency strategy which could be the rationale for the Navy People not internalizing a concrete element in their career path.

In the interest of future studies, it recommended to expand the nature of this study to other Navy training centres in the country. It is further recommended that future studies to embark on qualitative approach as it will allow to explore and gain a deeper understanding of complex phenomena, behaviours, attitudes, and experiences.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare. All co-authors have seen and agree with the contents of the manuscript and there is no financial interest to report. We certify that the submission is original work and is not under review at any other publication.

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