Relationship between Managers' Support and Training Application with Motivation to Learn as Mediator

Nur Izzaty Mohamad[1], Azman Ismail[2], Azmawaty Mohamad Nor[3]

[1,2]**National University of Malaysia, Malaysia**
[3]**University of Malaya, Malaysia**
E-mail: [1]nurizzaty_mohamad@yahoo.com, [2]azisma12@ukm.edu.my,
[3]azy_mn@um.edu.my

[*)]**Corresponding Author**

Abstract
This study aims to assess the association between managers' support, motivation to learn, and training application. The survey method utilizes to collect data from employees at Central Government Agencies in Putrajaya, Malaysia. The SmartPLS was employed to evaluate the quality of survey questionnaire data and test the research hypotheses. SmartPLS path analysis model's findings displayed that managers' support affects training application by the mediation with motivation to learn. This finding provides essential recommendations that practitioners may use to understand different motivations to learn and formulate a training master plan that may inspire employees to maintain and accomplish their organizations' strategies and goals in times of global competition and economic uncertainty.

Keywords:
manager's support, motivation to learn, training application

Introduction

In a globalized world, many futurists predict that mobility of goods, services, capital, and labor are significant variables that create unpredictable mega changes, such as knowledge-based economy, international joint-venture agreements, planned cross border business, industrial revolution 4.0 (Gegenfurtner et al., 2020; Laudicina et al., 2019). To cope with such changes, organizations have to pay more attention to improving human resource management functions, particularly training programs.. This function perceives as a strategic weapon in upholding and increasing an organization's performance and competitiveness in the new world order (Laudicina et al., 2019; Roblek et al., 2018; Karp, 2020). The approach to training management differs according to different organizational development stages. In an early stage of organizational development, training programs are viewed as a simple personal function, such as informal, routine, and ad-hoc activities to improve and manage day-to-day workloads, task performance, and organizational tactical plan objectives (Ismail et al., 2016; Roblek et al., 2018). Although such practices are essential, they do not offer much help in maintaining and upgrading employee performance in achieving long-term organizational objectives (Gegenfurtner et al., 2020; Turner & Baker, 2017; Roblek et al., 2018).

The training program usually recognizes a critical human resource management function where it may use to accomplish organizations' goals and approaches in facing worldwide competition (Lee et al., 2017; Turner & Baker, 2017; Roblek et al., 2018). Under this new perspective, on the job (e.g., attending residency certification courses, in-service training) and off the job (e.g., attending conferences overseas), training objectives, content, methods, and procedures properly design to develop essential employees' knowledge. Thus, enhancing employee's skills, emotional and cognitive abilities, and competencies needed in the 21st century (Hughes et al., 2018; Rantatalo et al., 2018). Implementation of such training designs may lead to the sustaining of organizational strategic vision and missions in the current economy (El Hajjar & Alkhanaizi, 2018; Turner & Baker, 2017; Karp, 2020).

Many successful organizations are alert to training programs' significance, thus motivating them to allocate high budgets in accomplishing their objectives. For example, the US Bureau of Economic Analysis revealed that large organizations had increased 18% training budgets over five years. Whereas, the 2018 Training Industry Report disclosed that a total of USD 87.6 billion of training investment allocate to three types of expenditure, namely USD 11 billion for equipment and service expenditures (e.g., e-learning, accommodation), USD 29.6 billion for training expenditures (e.g., travel allowance) and USD 47 billion for training providers (e.g., internal staff, freelancers, suppliers) (Pontefract, 2019). These investments may help organizations maintain and enhance their competitive advantage and dominate stock markets in a global economy (Lee et al., 2017; Turner & Baker, 2017; Roblek et al., 2018).

An in-depth investigation of the recent literature about organizational training highlights that well-designed training programs will not support their aims if managers do not have sufficient competencies to provide practical support in organizations (Mohamad

et al., 2020; Turner & Baker, 2017). Managers' support is a leading edge of the job and off the job training programs in competitive organizations. This condition is viewed as such because it can (a) stimulate trainees to learn technical and interpersonal skills; (b) inspire trainees to be creative in using problem-solving techniques; (c) help trainees to identify current training needs and problems; (d) strengthen trainees' learning and guidance whether before, during and after training. These training benefits may motivate trainees to accomplish their strategic business visions and missions in the era of unpredictable economic conditions (Kim et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020).

According to Govaerts et al. (2017) and Kim et al. (2019), managers' support in training programs defines as the willingness of managers to practice emotional aid appropriately (e.g., encouragement, caring, and open-minded) and instrumental aid (e.g., provide training opportunities, training provisions, and attractive training locations) before, during and/or after training programs (Schindler & Bukholder, 2014; Govaerts et al., 2017; Karp, 2020).

As leading-edge training management, managers' support perceives as a remarkable innovation effort in dynamic organizations (Karp, 2020; Mohamad et al., 2020). Many training management studies advocate that managers' ability to implement emotional and instrumental aids in training programs properly may significantly impact employees' motivation to learn in organizations (Govaerts et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2019). In an organizational training viewpoint, motivation to learn is often seen as an important intrinsic motivation feature showing employees' desire and willingness to attend, involve, and acquire training content (Kanfer et al., 2017; Hee & Rhung, 2019). The capability of employees to master new knowledge, latest skills, up to date cognitive and emotional abilities, positive attitudes, and other current capabilities in training programs may stimulate them to solve daily work problems, improve daily performance, and accomplish organizational tactical and strategic plans (Ismail et al., 2019; Lee et al., 2017; Karp, 2020).

Undeniably, motivation to learn recognize as a leading edge in the administration of training programs (Govaerts et al., 2017; Mohamad et al., 2020). Some latest training management studies published in the 21st century have extended previous studies by discovering the role of motivation to learn as an essential mediating variable in the relationship between managers' support and training application (Kim et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020). From a training management perspectives, training application is normally seen as a critical element of training effect essential employees have a high desire to learn new competencies in training programs, and they have a high willingness to apply such competencies directly or indirectly to execute daily job operations in their organizations (Kim et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020; Mohamad et al., 2019).

Many researchers concur that within the field of training management, managers' support, motivation to learn, and training application are distinct, but interconnected concepts (Mohamad et al., 2020; Mohamad et al., 2019). For example, managers' ability to adequately provide emotional and instrumental aids in training programs will strongly invoke trainees' motivation to learn. As a result, this motivation may lead to a higher training application in organizations (Mohamad et al., 2020; Mohamad et al., 2019).

A plethora of studies on training management has looked into the direct effects model in understanding training application within the context of commercial and non-commercial organizations (Abdul Aziz, 2016; Ismail et al., 2019). These studies emphasized examining situational and employee characteristics explaining the influence on training application. It finds that employees have different abilities to transfer and apply the skills learned in the workplace. For example, 40 percent of the skills acquired during the training process are immediately transferred at work, 25 percent remain for six months, and only 15 percent for a year (Burke & Baldwin, 1999; Facteau et al., 1995). Present studies have highlighted the inconsistent related previous studies whereby an indirect effects model, particularly motivation to learn as a significant mediating variable in training management models, was neglected (Govaerts et al., 2017; Mohamad et al. 2020; Ismail et al., 2019). A consistent correlation between managers' support and training application was also not found (Chiaburu & Marinova, 2005; Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Mohamad et al., 2020). Hence, managerial support can have an indirect effect on training application through motivation to learn. Limited past empirical studies have highlighted the need to address the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between managers' support and training application.

This study aims to provide useful recommendations to management in designing and administering training programs in the public sector, as motivation to learn is an emerging issue (Kodwani & Prashar, 2019; Setti et al., 2015). Management may enhance employees' motivation to learn by providing the support that matches employees' needs and expectations (Afsar & Umrani, 2018; Seiberling & Kauffeld, 2017). Additionally, implementing a transformational oriented leadership style, such as participative decision making, autonomous, delegation, and empowerment in planning and implementing on the job and off the job training programs may lead to an improved motivation to learn (Afsar & Umrani, 2018; Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Karp, 2020).

Findings from present studies suggest that other specific aspects of training programs need to consider guiding employees to transfer what they have learned in training sessions when returning to their organizations (Ismail et al., 2019; Kodwani & Prashar, 2019). This condition may help management design training management based on behavioral science techniques, such as establishing realistic job goals, creating job-related training content, and increasing challenges by enlarging and enriching existing job and job rotation. This condition can enhance by introducing mentoring, coaching, and counseling by competent and talented employees (Kodwani & Prashar, 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020). The efforts may stimulate employees to impart the necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, latest cognitive and affective abilities, positive attitudes, and other capabilities consistent with difficult situations (e.g., industrial revolution 4.0, global business competition, and COVID-19 pandemic). These competencies will enhance employees' motivation to learn, achieving job targets, and solving daily issues at the workplace. As a result of the positive behaviors, organizational strategy and objectives are maintained and supported.

Although the relationship between managers' support, motivation to learn, and training application has extensively investigated, the effect size and nature of motivation

to learn as an essential mediating variable has not been adequately discussed in the context of this study (Mohamad et al., 2020; Mohamad et al., 2019). Many researchers debate that this situation may be due to several reasons: First, many earlier studies have much described the features of managers' support, such as conceptual definitions, aims, types, and importance of this concept in Malaysian Public Organizations (Nadeem & Ahmad, 2017; Mohamad et al., 2019). Second, numerous earlier studies have applied a descriptive approach to explain the internal nature of motivation to learn, especially conceptual definitions, dimensions, and significance of this construct in Malaysian Public Organizations. Conversely, public servants' mediating effect on learning has not been given enough attention in the organizational training research literature. Third, many previous studies have been conducted by government officers using an applied research method to design training programs and link their effect on specific public servant activities, such as digital work systems and logistic issues. This study paradigm has usually utilized simple descriptive and association methods to accomplish short-term objectives and solve immediate problems (Mohamad et al., 2019). Consequently, the findings of this study have only provided broad recommendations, and this may not offer much aids in helping practitioners to understand the complexity of motivation to learn the concept and formulate a training master plan to sustaining and supporting the Malaysian Public Organizations' vision and missions in times of the globalized and turbulent economy.

This research was undertaken at the Central Government Agencies in Putrajaya, Malaysia. Confidentiality of agencies is maintained. These central agencies are established to carry out planning and implementing government policies, assisting government planning in national development, monitoring government economic policies' performance, proposing new management methods, and planning national financial policies. In order to support these objectives, leadership of the government agencies has planned and implemented executive development programs to equip their managers with adequate knowledge and skills on supportive leadership style. This leadership approach helps managers understand the human skills and knowledge requirements and enhance their abilities to develop employee performance through systematic in-house training activities, such as coaching, mentoring, and counseling.

For instance, the Public Service Department (2019) reported managers' willingness to offer satisfactory support through instrumental aids and emotional aids in performing daily job have enhanced the motivation of employees to learn the latest skills, equipped with knowledge and effective behaviour. As a result, this positive change may help the organizations change positive job-related attitudes, particularly employees' readiness to apply competencies they received from training sessions into the office. However, the affiliation is attractive; the role of motivation to learn as a mediating variable has not been investigated in Central Government Agencies in Putrajaya Malaysia (Syed Ibrahim, 2007). Thus, there is an urgent need to investigate the nature of this relationship. This circumstance inspires the researchers to extend the literature by examining the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between managers' support and training application. The objectives of the present study are to examine three primary relationships:

First, is to examine the relationship between managers' support and training application. The second is to examine the relationship between managers' support and motivation to learn. Finally, examine the impact of motivation to learn in the relationship with managers' support and training application.

Method

This study employed a cross-sectional method to permit the researchers to accurate, relevant, and high-quality data using a survey questionnaire (Creswell, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). At the early stage of data collection, a survey questionnaire was drafted based on the training management literature. The survey questionnaire consisted of 3 sections: First, managers' support evaluates using eight items adapted from the management support in training program literature (Tharenou, 2001; Burke & Badwin, 1999; Chiaburu & Tekleab 2005). Managers' support consists of two dimensions, namely the psychological and physiological support. Second, motivation to learn examine by using five items adapted from the organizational learning literature (Machin & Treloar, 2004; Kim- Soon & Ahmad, 2012). The two study's objectives, namely the desire to learn and training benefit. Third, the training application evaluates by using six items adapted from the training transfer literature (Machin & Treloar, 2004; Ismail et al., 2015; Madagamage et al., 2014). Training g applications consist of three dimensions, the transfer of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Respondent characteristics are using as control variables due to the study's focus on attitudes of employees.

Employees in the sampled agencies are the unit of analysis. A purposive sampling technique is used to distribute 400 survey questionnaires to employees who work in various levels and categories within different organizations' departments. The random sampling was not applicable due to the need of maintaining employees' confidentiality. Hence, the purposive sampling technique was used. The researchers managed to collect only 300 (75%) usable questionnaires out of the 400 distributed. All questionnaires were answered after receiving consent from the employees and ensuring anonymity on the participants' part. Furthermore, Harman's Single Factor test, as suggested by Podsakoff et al. (2003), is used to detect bias responses in the questionnaires. The test indicated that the variance value was 49%, and this value was less than 50% (Podsakoff et al., 2003), indicating that the bias responses are not present in the survey questionnaire data.

SmartPLS was used to analyze survey questionnaire data based on the guidelines established by Hair et al. (2017). The data analysis procedure is: Firstly, confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to evaluate the validity and reliability of the research instrument. Secondly, standardized beta and t-value were used to test the research hypotheses. Thirdly, R^2 value was used to determine the overall research model's strength based on three key criteria: 0.26 strong, 0.13 moderate, and 0.02 small (Cohen, 1992). Fourthly, the f^2 value was employed to assess constructs' effect size based on three important criteria: 0.35 strong, 0.15 medium, and 0.02 small. Fifthly, the Q^2 value was utilized as a criterion to predict the overall strength of the research model. Six, to maintain root mean square

residual (SRMR) value is used as a measure model fit. Seventhly, the type of mediating effect was determined based on the guidelines established by Zhao et al. (2010). Finally, the Q2 value was employed to predict the overall performance of the research model (Evermann & Tate, 2016).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics and Sample Profiles (n=300)

Respondent Profile	Profile-sub	Frequency	Percentage
Age	< 28 years old	38	12.67
	28-23 years old	64	21.33
	34-39 years old	114	38.00
	40-45 years old	53	17.67
	> 45 years old	31	10.33
Gender	Male	89	29.67
	Female	211	7033.
Race	Malay	274	91.33
	Chinese	10	3.33
	India	10	3.33
	Others	6	2.00
Highest Education	Lower Secondary Assessment (PMR)	2	0.66
	Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM)/ Vocational Certificate/ Polytechnic Certificate	50	16.67
	Malaysian High School Certificate (STPM)/ Diploma/ Malaysian Higher Islamic Religious Certificated (STAM)	62	20.67
	Bachelor Degree	130	43.33
	Master's Degree	50	16.67
	Doctor of Philosophy (PHD)	6	2.00
Services Group	Management and Professional	181	60.33
	Supporting	119	39.67
Position Grade	JUSA and above	2	0.67
	54 to 56	14	4.67
	48 to 52	39	13.00
	41 to 44	98	32.67
	29 to 40	59	19.67
	19 to 26	79	26.33
	1 to18	9	3.00
Length of services	< 5 years	67	22.33
	6 -10 years	90	30.00
	11-15 years	91	30.33
	> 15 years	52	17.33

Results

Empirical Result

Table 1 shows that most respondents are between the age of 34 to 39 years old (38%), female employees (70.3%), Malay (91.3%), degree holders (43.3%), management and professional group (60.35), position grades were from 41 to 44 (32.7%), and length of services was between 11 years and five years (30.3%). Table 2 shows the results of reliability and convergent validity analyses. The outer loading values for the correlation between items and constructs were more than 0.70, and the values of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct were more than 0.50. Further, each construct's composite reliability was more than 0.70), meaning that the constructs have met the reliability and convergent validity standards.

Table 2. Results of Reliability and Convergent Validity Analyses

Constructs/ Variables	Outer Loading			AVE Values	Composite Reliability
	Managers' Support	Motivation to Learn	Training Application		
Manager's Support					
A1. encouragement to attend training programs	0.721			0.649	0.936
A2.concern about the need for skills in executing job	0.842				
A3. encourages acquirement of new skills	0.845				
A4. open in discussing training issues	0.837				
A5. encourages to improve on current skills	0.819				
A6.clearly explains the objectives of training program	0.773				
A7. provides information about the training program	0.807				
A8. suggests training programs that are interesting	0.791				
Motivation to Learn					
B1.motivated to learn skills in learning module		0.850		0.691	0.918
B2. interested to attend the training program being organized		0.856			
B3. gives full concentration on training module		0.781			
B4.increase the motivation to execute the tasks given		0.827			
B5. improve the current skill's quality		0.838			

Constructs/ Variables	Outer Loading			AVE Values	Composite Reliability
	Managers' Support	Motivation to Learn	Training Application		
Training Application					
C1. complete tasks within an efficient time frame			0.764	0.684	0.928
C2. adopt the skills being learned for organizational excellence			0.875		
C3. adjust the technical skills with changes in tasks			0.828		
C4. develop the decision-making skills that are work-related			0.851		
C5. able to enhance work-related comprehension			0.821		
C6. able to master the knowledge at work place effectively			0.819		

Note: In the bracket is the confidence interval values of 5% and 95%

Table 3 indicates the findings of discriminant validity. The Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values for each construct were less than 0.85, and the confidence interval values in the bracket for each construct were less than 1.0, showing that the constructs have fulfilled the convergent validity criteria.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity HTMT Analysis and HTMT Confidence Interval

Constructs/ Variables	Managers' Support	Motivation to Learn
Managers' Support		
Motivation to Learn	0.613 (0.457, 0.660)	
Training Application	0.642 (0.149, 0.303)	0.857 (0.564, 0.715)

Note: In the bracket is the confidence interval values of 5% and 95%

Table 4 indicates the findings of descriptive statistics and variance inflation factor (VIF). Each construct's mean value varies between 5.861 and 5.964, indicating that the echelons of managers' support, motivation to learn, and training application range from a high level (4) to a very high level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationships between a) independent variable (managers' support) and dependent variable (training application), b) independent variable (manager' support) and mediating variable (motivation to learn), and c) independent variable (manager's support), mediating variable (motivation to learn) and dependent variable (training application) have values of variance inflation factor lesser than 5.0, showing that all constructs are free from serious collinearity

problems. Overall, the result further indicates that all constructs have met the validity and reliability criteria.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics and Variance Inflation Factor Analysis

Constructs/ Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Managers' Support	5.861	0.654	1.463
Motivation to Learn	5.964	0.620	1.000
Training Application	5.905	0.591	1.463

Table 5 shows the results of testing research hypotheses for the direct effects model. First, managers' support has a significant relationship with the training application. Hence H1 is supported. Second, managers' support has a significant relationship with motivation to learn. Hence H2 is supported. These results indicate that training transfer and motivation to learn are affected by managers' support. The explanatory power, the entry of managers' support into the investigation, has contributed to about 31% in training application and motivation to learn. This result is greater than 26%, meaning that this research model has a substantial effect.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing Result H1 and H2

Hypothesis	Relationship	β Values	t Value	R^2 (%)	Result
H1	Managers' Support → Training Application	0.227	5.659	0.31	Supported
H2	Managers' Support → Motivation to Learn	0.044	12.802	0.31	Supported

Note: Significant level t> 1.96

Further, the effect size (f2) and predictive relevance (Q2) are evaluated. The effect size test finding shows that the f2 value for the relationship between managers' support and training application is 0.097, which is lower than 0.15, indicating that the effect of managers' support on training application is small. The f2 value for the relationship between managers' support and motivation to learn is 0.463, which is more than 0.35, depicting that the effect of managers' support on motivation to learn is substantial. Furthermore, the predictive relevant test result shows that managers' support has a Q2 value of 0.188, showing that the model has predictive relevance. Next, the model fit test results show that the estimated root mean square residual has a value of 0.06, which is smaller than 0.08, meaning that this model is suitable (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Table 6 shows the results of testing research suppositions for the indirect effect model. The relationship between managers' support, motivation to learn, and training application are significant. Hence H3 is supported. The findings indicated that motivation to learn acts as a significant mediating variable between managers' support and training

application. Next, the entry of managers' support and motivation to learn into the investigation has contributed 63% to training application, and this value is greater than 26%, meaning that this research model has a substantial impact.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Result H3

Hypothesis	Relationship	β Values	t Value	R^2 (%)	Result
H3	Managers' Support → Motivation to Learn → Training Application	0.025	5.213	0.63	Supported

Note: Significant level t> 1.96

Furthermore, the mediation effect size shows that motivation to learn is a partial mediating variable in the relationship between managers' support and training application. Moreover, effect size (f2) and predictive relevance (Q2) are also assessed. The effect size test's finding shows that the value of f2 for the relationship between motivation to learn and training application is 0.779, signifying that motivation to learn has a substantial effect on training application. Next, the predictive relevant test result displays the relationship between motivation to learn and training application having a Q2 value of 0.399, indicating that the model has predictive relevance. The model fit test outcomes show that the estimated root mean square residual value is 0.06, which is lower than 0.08, meaning that this is a suitable model. Further, the model performance prediction test is performed using PLS Predict. Table 7 shows that the sum of linear regression (LM) values is greater than the PLS-SEM root mean squared error (RMSE) value, meaning that this model has achieved a high power level of predictive (Shmueli et al., 2016).

Table 7. Predictive Analysis of PLS-Predict

No. of Item	PLS-SEM	LM RMSE	LM-PLS SEM	PLS SEM-LM
A1	0.764	0.771	0.007	-0.007
A2	0.721	0.725	0.004	-0.004
A3	0.669	0.669	0	0
A4	0.734	0.731	-0.003	0.003
A5	0.711	0.707	-0.004	0.004
A6	0.73	0.737	0.007	-0.007
A7	0.721	0.723	0.002	-0.002
A8	0.789	0.78	-0.009	0.009
B1	0.534	0.54	0.006	-0.006
B2	0.544	0.544	0	0
B3	0.537	0.54	0.003	-0.003
C1	0.552	0.555	0.003	-0.003
C2	0.606	0.613	0.007	-0.007
C3	0.552	0.559	0.007	-0.007

Note: PLS RMSE is the root squared error in the PLS model
LM is a linear regression in a linear model

Discussion

This study indicates that motivation to learn acts as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between managers' support and training application. In this study, most participants rate the stages of managers' support, learning motivation, and training application as high. This result explains that managers' capability to offer adequate emotional and instrumental aids can help employees attend training, thereby acquiring the necessary knowledge, latest skills, informed emotional and cognitive capabilities, positive attitudes, and present competencies. Consequently, this situation leads to a rise in training applications in organizations.

This research has three crucial contributions: theoretical contribution, the robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution. This study's results reveal three critical outcomes in terms of theoretical contributions: First, managers' support in training programs has enhanced training application. This outcome is consistent with the notion of Eisenberger et al., (1997) Organizational Support Theory. It explains that managers' ability to promote a high level of support (e.g., give more attention, appreciating, and fulfilling the social need) can enhance the employees' positive behaviors. Meanwhile, this theory is consistent with the Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio's, 1998), suggesting four important transformative leadership features. The managers' ability to support employees by giving encouragement, motivation, inspiration to accomplish things, and guidance; can affect the results of employees' behavior. The theory posits that its application in a training program is usually interpreted as managers' support. This notion has received support from past studies relating to organizational support (Ismail et al., 2016; Mohd Yusof, 2012).

The notion of this theory has received strong support from the training management research literature. For example, numerous previous studies conduct using a direct effects model in diverse organizational samples, such as perceptions of 160 employees of a government department in Shah Alam, Malaysia (Mohd Yusof, 2012), perceptions of 163 military personnel at a Peninsular Malaysia ground forces (Ismail et al. 2016), perception of 159 employees in various industries in India Chatterjee et al., (2018). These empirical studies reported that the ability of managers' to properly provide emotional aid and instrumental aid in planning and administering training programs had led to a more excellent training application in the respective organizations (Ismail et al. 2016; Mohd Yusof, 2012; Chatterjee et al., 2018; Mohamad et al., 2020).

Second, managers' support in training programs has enhanced motivation to learn. This outcome is consistent with the main idea of Blau (1964) Social Exchange Theory. This theory suggests that social relationship seeks to maximize the benefits and minimize the individual's costs in achieving life purpose. The theory also suggests that the main idea of social exchange is often interpreted as managers' support. This idea is backed by organizational support (Abdulkarim et al., 2009; Govaerts et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020).

The main idea of this theory has received strong support from the research papers in training management studies. For example, numerous past studies have been carried

out using a direct effects model in diverse organizational types, such as perceptions of 287 employees at the institute of public administration, Saudi Arabia (Abdulkarim et al., 2009), 111 trainees in Belgium (Govaerts et al., 2017) and 123 pharmaceutical employees in Peninsular Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2019), perceptions of 115 employees who work at various departments and divisions within an organization (Mohamad et al., 2020). These surveys indicated that the managers' ability to provide a regular emotional aid appropriately (e.g., stimulating, caring, open-minded) and instrumental aid (e.g., budget and location) in designing and administering training programs had been an essential antecedent of motivation to learn in the respective organizations (Abdulkarim et al., 2009; Govaerts et al., 2017; Ismail et al., 2019; Mohamad et al., 2020).

Third, the relationship between managers' support in training programs and motivation to learn has enhanced training application. This outcome has supported the spirit of Bandura's (1979) Social Learning Theory. This theory posits that learning is part of the mechanism of knowing and imitating the actions of other people. For example, individuals exposed to a positive environment will affect their motivation for learning, thus changing that person's behavior. This theory's application displays that the spirit of social learning is often translated as motivation to learn. The spirit of this theory has received strong supports from the research articles in training management research literature.

Limited further studies were conducted using an indirect model to examine the mediating role of motivation to learn between managers' support and training application. For example, Abdulkarim et al. (2009) show that managers' ability to encourage employees to provide sufficient emotional aid and instrumental aid had strongly upgraded employees' motivation to learn necessary knowledge, new skills, and effective behavior. As a result, this motivation may lead to a more significant training application. Additionally, Abdul Aziz (2016) found that managers' capability to offer satisfactory emotional aid and instrumental aid in training programs had powerfully invoked employees' motivation to learn new knowledge, latest skills, and positive behavior. As a result, this motivation may lead to a higher training application. Next, Reinhold et al. (2018) find that managers' ability to provide adequate emotional aid and instrumental aid had strongly invoked employees' motivation to learn.

Consequently, this may lead to a higher training application. Next, Mohamad et al. (2020) show that managers' capability to offer satisfactory emotional aid and instrumental aid in training programs had strongly invoked employees' motivation to learn new knowledge, latest skills, and positive behavior. Consequently, this may lead to a higher training application (Abdul Aziz, 2016; Reinhold et al., 2018; Mohamad et al., 2020).

Concerning the robustness of the research methodology, the survey questionnaire's measurement scale has met the standards of validity and reliability analyses. Thus, this achievement of accurate and reliable results is reproducible. Concerning the practical contribution, this study's findings can be used as essential guidelines by practitioners to enhance training programs in organizations. The first recommendation is based on the outcomes of importance-performance map analysis (IPMA) generated via SmartPLS. This outcome is used to identify the priority actions in solving organizational training

issues. Table 8 explains that motivation to learn is viewed as the most important (0.614) and highest performance (82.806). On the other hand, managers' support is viewed as the least important (0.207) and lowest performance (81.049). This result shows that managers' support should be given further attention to enhance training application in the studied organizations.

The second part of the recommendation is related to improving the methodological and conceptual constraints present in this study. First, training methods and content should be updated to support the current organizational strategy. To help employees understand and apply such training content, leaders need to encourage managers, executives, and supervisors to implement a managerial coaching technique. This training method treats managers as a coach where they cannot be egoistic with their rank status and too rigid with protocols, but need to facilitate and guide subordinates in acquiring and implementing professional knowledge, skills, and behavior to execute daily tasks responsibilities. Implementation of this training program may drive employees to meet their organizations' key performance indicators. Second, training assessment methods should appropriately design to measure employees' ability in using cognition, emotions, and/or psychomotor to meet daily job demands and accomplish tactical and strategic planning objectives. Third, performance-based pay should provide to the employees that can apply new competencies from training sessions to achieve yearly job targets (e.g., meet customer demands and save organizational cost).

Table 8. Importance-performance map analysis results (IPMA)

Construct	Training Application	
	Important (Total Impact)	Performances (Index Value)
Managers' Support	0.207	81.049
Motivation to Learn	0.614	82.806

Fourth, a supportive leadership style should be encouraged to change traditional job-oriented management to human-oriented management. This new management style will treat employees as valuable human capital where they often consult and involve in making training decisions. This management practice may stimulate employees to continuously learn new competencies to solve daily job problems, improve daily job performance, and support the organizational development agenda. Finally, recruitment and selection policies should be oriented to hire employees who have professional certificates, relevant knowledge and experience, good service records, and good personalities to take up important positions. Organizations may use such employees as coaches, mentors, and counselors to facilitate junior managers, executives, supervisors, and frontline employees to improve daily job performance, teamwork, honesty and compliance with organization rules, and commitment to stakeholders' vision and missions. If the recommendations are given attention, this may stimulate employees to support the organizational training objectives.

Conclusion

This research tested the conceptual framework developed according to the training management literature. The findings of testing the research hypotheses revealed that motivation to learn did act as an essential mediating variable in the relationship between managers' support and training application. These findings have expanded previous studies mostly published in Western and Asian countries. Therefore, extant research and practice in organizational training suggest that motivation to learn should consider as a crucial element in managers' support. Future studies proposing that managers' ability to regularly and adequately provide aids in performing daily tasks and responsibilities will enhance positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes should carry out. Therefore, the positive outcomes may lead to maintaining and enhancing organizational competitiveness and performance in global competition and unpredictability in the economy.

This study also presents numerous propositions to strengthen the future study. Firstly, some critical respondents' personal and service backgrounds should be considered in future studies as it may predict the similarities and differences of respondents' attitudes toward the relationship between variables of interest. Secondly, a comparative study should measure the relationship between interest variables in public and private organizations. Thirdly, a bigger sample size should take as it can better represent the population under study. Fourthly, specific dimensions of managers' support such as positive climate, peer interactions, and social conversation need to highlight as they are widely discussing in the organizational training literature. Fifthly, other training application features need to explore, such as training performance, training maintenance, and training generalization, should be given more attention as essential outcomes of the relationship between managers' support and motivation to learn in a knowledge based organization. Finally, other motivations to learn such as being proactive, readiness, and goal attainment should consider because they highly recognize as essential linking variables between managers' support and training application in dynamic organizations.

References

Abdul Aziz, S. F. (2016). Evaluating Training Effectiveness Using the Malaysian Sample: Tracing the Mediation Effect of Training Motivation Using SEM-AMOS. *International Journal of Economics and Financial Issues, 6*(S6), 94-100.

Abdulkarim, S. A., Musaed, A. F., & Abdulla M. A. (2009). An Empirical Examination of the Effects of Self-Efficacy, Supervisor Support and Motivation to Learn on Transfer Intention. *Management Decision, 47,* 1221-244.

Afsar, B., & Umrani, W. A. (2019). Transformational Leadership and Innovative Work Behavior. *European Journal of Innovation Management, 23*(3), 402-428.

Bandura, A. (1979). *Social Learning Theory.* Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Bass, B. M. (1998). *Transformational Leadership: Industrial, Military and Educational Impact.* New Jersey: Erlbaum

Blau P.M. (1964). *Exchange and Power in Social Life.* New Jersey: Transaction Publishers.

Burke, L.A., & Baldwin, T.T. (1999). Workforce Training Transfer: a Study of the Effect of Relapse Prevention Training and Transfer Climate. *Human Resource Management*, *38*(3), 227-242.

Chiaburu, D. S., & Tekleab, A.G. (2005). Individual and Contextual Influences on Multiple Dimensions of Training Effectiveness. *Journal of European Industrial Training*, *29*(8), 604-625.

Chiaburu, D.S., & Marinova, S.V. (2005). What Predicts Skill Transfer? An Exploratory Study of Goal Orientation, Training Self-efficacy and Organizational Supports. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *9*(2),110-23.

Chatterjee, A., Pereira, A. & Bates, R. 2018. Impact of Individual Perception of Organizational Culture on The Learning Transfer Environment. *International Journal of Training and Development*, *22*(1), 15–33

Cohen, J. (1992). A Power Primer. *Psychological Bulletin, 112*(1), 155-159.

Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 4th edition. California: SAGE Publications.

Eisenberger, R., Cummings, J., Armeli, S., & Lynch, P. (1997). Perceived Organizational Support, Discretionary Treatment, and Job Satisfaction. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82, 812-820

El Hajjar, S. T., & Alkhanaizi, M. S. (2018). Exploring the Factors that Affect Employee Training Effectiveness: A Case Study in Bahrain. *SAGE Open,* 8 (2), 1-12.

Evermann, J. & Tate, M. (2016). Assessing the Predictive Performance of Structural Equation Model Estimators. *Journal of Business Research*, *69*(10), 4565-4582.

Facteau, J., Dobbins, G., Russell, J., Ladd, R. & Kudisch, J. (1995). The Influence of General Perceptions of the Training Environment on Pretraining Motivation and Perceived Training Transfer. *Journal of Management*, *82*(21), 1-25

Gegenfurtner, A., Zitt, A., & Ebner, C. (2020). Evaluating Webinar-Based Training: A Mixed Methods Study of Trainee Reactions Toward Digital Web Conferencing. *International Journal of Training and Development, 24*(1), 5-21.

Govaerts, N., Kyndt, E., & Dochy, F. (2017). The Influence of Specific Supervisor Support Types on Transfer of Training: Examining the Mediating Effect of Training Retention. *Vocations and Learning, 11*(2), 265-288.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM).* 2nd Edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Inc.

Hee, O. C., & Rhung, L. X. (2019). Motivation and Employee Retention Among Millennials in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 9*(2), 876-884.

Hughes, A. M., Zajac, S., Spencer, J. M., & Salas, E. (2018). A Checklist for Facilitating Training Transfer in Organizations. *International Journal of Training and Development, 22*(4), 334-345. https://doi.org/10.1111/ijtd.12141.

Hu, L.T., & Bentler, P.M. (1999). Cut Off Criteria for fit indexes in covariance structure analysis: Conventional Criteria Versus New Alternatives. *Structural Equation Modeling: A Multidisciplinary Journal, 6*(1), 1-55.

Ismail, A., Foboy, N. A., Mohamad Nor, A., Abdullah, A. A., & Ismail, Y. (2019). Training Management as an Antecedent of Training Transfer**.** *Journal of Nusantara Studies, 4*(1), 136-158.

Ismail, A., Mohd Zainol, N. A. & Ahmad, N. N. (2016). Program Pembangunan Kepimpinan Meningkatkan Pemindahan Latihan dalam Tentera Darat Malaysia: Kajian Empirical (Leadership Development Program enhances the transfer of training in the Malaysian army: an empirical study). *Jurnal Pengurusan, 46,* 149-161.

Kanfer, R., Frese, M., & Johnson, R. E. (2017). Motivation Related to Work: A Century of Progress. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 102*(3), 338-355.

Karp, T. (2020). What Do We Really Mean by Good Leadership?. *The Journal of Values-Based Leadership*, *13*(1), Article 3. https://doi.org/10.22543/0733.131.1300.

Kim, E. J., Park, S., & Kang, H. S. (2019). Support, Training Readiness and Learning Motivation in Determining Intention to Transfer. *European Journal of Training and Development, 43*(3/4), 306-321. https://doi.org/10.1108/EJTD-08-2018-0075.

Kim-Soon, N., & Ahmad, N. (2012). Impact of Motivation to Learn on Perceived Training Transfer: Empirical Evidence from a Bank. *Proceedings International Conference of Technology Management, Business and Entrepreneurship,* 368-383.

Kodwani, A. D., & Prashar, S. (2019). Exploring the Influence of Pre-Training Factors on Training Effectiveness-Moderating Role of Trainees' Reaction: a Study in the Public Sector in India. *Human Resource Development International, 22*(3), 283–304.

Laudicina, P., Rickert McCaffrey, C., & Peterson, E. (2019). On Thin Ice: Global Economic Outlook 2019-2023. *Retrieved from: https://www.atkearney.com/web/global-business-policy-council/article/?/a/global-economic-outlook-2019-2023-on-thin-ice (accessed 13 April 2019)*

Lee, J. Y., Park, S., & Baker, R. (2017). The Moderating role of Top Management Support on Employees' Attitudes in Response to Human Resource Development Efforts. *Journal of Management & Organization*, *24*(3), 369-387.

Madagamage, G. T., Warnakulasooriya, B. N. F., & Wickramasuriya, H. V. A. (2014). Factors Influencing Motivation to Transfer Training: An Empirical Study of a Government Sector Training Program in Sri Lanka. *Tropical Agricultural Research*, *26*(1), 12-25.

Machin, M. A., & Treloar, C.A. (2004). Predictors of Motivation to Learn When Training is Mandatory. *Proceedings of the 39th Australian Psychological Society Annual Conference: Psychological Science in Action,* New South Wales, 153-253.

Mohd Yusof, A. N. (2012). The Relationship Training Transfer Between Training Characteristic, Training Design and Work Environment. *Human Resource Management Research*, *2*(2), 1-8.

Mohamad, N. I., Ismail, A. & Mohamad Nor, A. (2020). Effect of Managers' Support in Technology Based Training on Training Transfer. *International Journal on Emerging Technologies*, *11*(2), 985-990.

Mohamad, N. A., Ismail, A., & Mohd Shariff, M. N. (2019). Motivasi Pembelajaran Sebagai Pemboleh Ubah Pengantara Dalam Perhubungan antara Bimbingan

Penyelia dengan Motivasi Kerja (Learning Motivation as a Mediator Variable in the Relationship between Supervisor Guidance and Work Motivation). *International Journal of Management Studies, 26*(2), 99-124.

Nadeem, K., & Ahmad, A. (2017). Impact of Work Environment Factors on Employee Performance; Empirical Evidence from Manufacturing Industry of Lahore. *Journal of Managerial Sciences, 11*, 422-436.

Podsakoff, P. M, Mackenzie, S. B, Lee, J. Y. & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research. A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88*(5), 879-903.

Rantatalo, O., Sjöberg, D., & Karp, S. (2018). Supporting Roles in Live Simulations: How Observers and Confederates can Facilitate Learning. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training, 71*(3), 482–499.

Reinhold, S., Gegenfurtner, A., & Lewalter, D. (2018). Social Support and Motivation to Transfer as Predictors of Training Transfer: Testing Full and Partial Mediation Using Meta-analytic Structural Equation Modelling. *International Journal of Training and Development, 22*(1), 1-14.

Roblek, V. Erenda, I., & Meško, M. (2018). The Challenges of Sustainable Business Development, in The Post-Industrial Society in the First Half of the 21st Century. In Alfaro-Saiz, J., Gazzola, P., Herghiligiu, I. V., Kuhn, E., Kurucz, A., Nica, P., Pelau, C., & Rodriguez-Rodriguez, R (Eds). *Managerial Strategies for Business Sustainability During Turbulent Times*, 1-94. Hershey USA: IGI Global.

Schindler, L. A., & Bukholders, G. J. (2014). A Mixed Methods Examination of the Influence of Dimensions of Ssupport on Training Transfer. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, *10*(3), 293-310. https://doi.org/10.1177/1558689814557132.

Setti, I., Dordoni, P., Piccoli, B., Bellotto, M., & Argentero, P. (2015). Proactive Personality and Training Motivation Among Older Workers. *European Journal of Training and Development, 39*(8), 681-699.

Seiberling, C., & Kauffeld, S. (2017). Volition to Transfer: Mastering Obstacles in Training Transfer. *Personnel Review, 46*(4), 809-823

Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2016). *Research Methods for Business: a Skill Building Approach*. 7th Edition. United Kingdom: John Wiley & Sons.

Shmueli, G., Ray, S., & Velasquez Estrada, J.M. (2016). The Elephant in The Room: Evaluating the Predictive Performance of PLS Models. *Journal of Business Research, 69*(10), 4552-4564.

Syed Ibrahim. (2007). *Malaysia kita. Panduan dan Rujukan untuk Peperiksaan am Kerajaan (Our Malaysia. Guidelines and References for General Government Examinations)*. Kuala Lumpur: International Law Book Services.

Thareou, P. (2001). The Relationship of Training Motivation to Participation in Training and Development. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, 74*(5), 599-621.

Turner, J. R., & Baker, R. (2017). Pedagogy, Leadership, and Leadership Development. *Performance Improvement, 56*(59), 5-11.

Zhao, X., Lynch, J.G., & Chen, Q. (2010). Reconsidering Baron and Kenny: Myths and Truths About Mediation Analysis. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *37*(2), 197-206.