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Moving Up Trainees' Motivation for Using On-job Training: Relationship between Leaders' Support and Trainees' Motivation for Learning

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Abstract

Research Aims: This study examined the relationship between leaders' support and trainees' learning outcomes and the relationship between leaders' support, trainees' motivation for learning, and trainees' motivation for using on-job training.
Design/Methodology/Approach: A cross-sectional research design was employed to collect 226 self-report questionnaires from employees at military healthcare organisations in Peninsular Malaysia. The SmartPLS was used to assess the quality of the measurement model and test the structural model.
Research Findings: This study confirmed that trainees' motivation for learning is an essential mediating construct in the relationship between leaders' support and trainees' motivation for using on-job training.
Theoretical Contribution/Originality: This study disclosed that trainees' motivation for learning can indirectly affect the relationship between leaders' support and trainee's motivation to use on-job training. This outcome was consistent with and extended the prior studies conducted in Southeast Asia and other countries.

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Managerial Implication in the South East Asian Context: The findings can help leaders understand the multidimensional perspectives of trainees' motivation for learning construct and the importance of leaders and members at various hierarchical levels to maintain and enhance their organisational performance and competitiveness in 21st-century globalisation and uncertainty economy.
Research Limitations & Implications: Methodological and conceptual constraints must be considered to improve future studies.

Keywords: Leaders' Support, Motivation for Learning, Motivation for Using On-Job Training, SmartPLS, Military Healthcare Organisations

INTRODUCTION

Visionary leaders are often responsive and willing to invest in training to maintain and upgrade their organisations' sustainability (Haffar et al., 2023). Training has been well recognised as a fundamental function of managing personnel, whereby line and human resource managers will often work together to plan the formal and informal learning methods and content. This learning plan is useful to nurture and thrive talented employees in meeting, maintaining, and upgrading their organisations' competitiveness and performance in the 21st century of the global economy (Arnold et al., 2023; Mohamad et al., 2023; Nino, 2023).

A sedulous examination of human resource development literature published within the last three decades has acknowledged that the effectiveness of workplace training has been affected by two essential antecedents, namely personal variables, such as self-efficacy, values, learning orientation (Sahoo & Mishra, 2019), gender, age, work experience (Rahman & Sahu, 2022); and environmental variables, such as training administration (El Hajjar & Alkhanaizi, 2018), and digital training (Al-kharabsheh et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there is little evidence of research conducted to examine the precise impact of leaders' support on workplace training (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022). Herein lies the particular strength of this study, which squarely addresses the issue. According to reports on leader-member relationships, leaders consist of three major levels: the top management (e.g., senior manager), middle management (e.g., manager), and low management (e.g., supervisor). Their support is considered a crucial driving force of workplace training performance, irrespective of whether the programme is well-planned or not (Aryee et al., 2023; Ithnin et al., 2022).

Effective leaders often take proactive initiatives to offer two primary types of support, namely tangible and intangible support (Aryee et al., 2023). This support is beneficial to achieve workplace training objectives by facilitating trainees to acquire and master the necessary knowledge, latest

skills, positive personal attributes, and other recent competencies (e.g., artificial intelligence skills and cross-culture communication) that suit the requirements of their organisation employees, and tasks (Rahman & Sahu, 2022). This effort may transform trainees' negative attitudes and behaviour (Luu et al., 2020) by upgrading their motivation for learning (ML) (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022) and motivation for using on-job training (Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019; Yaqub et al., 2020).

A systematic review of the global organisational training reports published in the 21st century disclosed that the connection between leaders' support and ML may lead to higher motivation for implementing on-job training (Ismail et al., 2010; Ithnin et al., 2022). From the perspective of organisational psychology, ML is usually viewed as a complex learning process that occurs between training providers and trainees in executing strategic and tactical planning goals (Schunk et al., 2014). This support will strongly invoke trainees' extrinsic motivation by demonstrating their deep interest, satisfaction, enjoyment, and engagement with the training activities (e.g., Kotera et al., 2023; Sharif et al., 2023). In consequence, learning motivation may result in increasing motivation for using on-job training (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022; Sharif et al., 2023).

Though the connection between learning and motivation has been widely researched, the mediating effect of size and the nature of ML are lightly reported in the literature (Ithnin et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2018). It is important to investigate this information gap. Some researchers have variantly claimed that the learning-motivation linkage may be affected by several factors. A plenitude of past studies has highlighted the characteristics of support given by leaders to explain the diverse variables involved in both public and private organisations (Hatmaker & Hassan, 2023; Mohamad et al., 2023). These included general and specific meanings, purposes, types, benefits, and challenges.

Additionally, many earlier studies have developed hypotheses based on a direct effects framework, within which a simple association between an independent construct and a dependent construct was evaluated, such as between leaders' support and ML (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), between leaders' support and motivation for using on-job training (Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019; Yaqub et al., 2020), and between ML and motivation for using on-job training (El-Said et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2018). A behavioural statistical method (e.g., bivariate, dispersion, and descriptive analyses) was mostly adopted to assess the study framework. However, the assessment can only evaluate the strengths and characteristics of the association between the study constructs. Conversely, the mediating effect of size and nature of ML were largely neglected in model testing (El-Said et al., 2020; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022; Tai & Hsu, 2023).

Many practitioners have also expressed their concerns about the applicability of the study outcomes in overcoming management problems in the workplace. They perceived that these studies paid more attention to discussing different employees' characteristics on particular training issues (e.g., training content and training motivation) that suit certain organisations (e.g., Agarwal et al., 2023; Mohamad et al., 2023). They are mainly focused on verifying certain training and education theories or models (e.g., Technology Acceptance Model and Kirkpatrick's evaluation model) mainly from the academic viewpoint (e.g., Alshahrani et al., 2023; Khan et al., 2023), and in accessing diverse instructional design techniques. The studies, however, paid little attention to the essential role of leaders' support in diverse organisations within the same and/or different regions (e.g. Yenkimaleki et al., 2023). The inconsistency resulted in incomprehensive understanding among practitioners regarding multidimensional paradigms of learning motivation construct and in establishing training measurement and development methods (Kim et al., 2018; Ithnin et al., 2022).

The literature review supports that training is important for the effectiveness of employee performance and that the limited study on the role of leaders' support and ML should be addressed. This study accordingly posited a few questions designed to identify the information gaps following the review. First, which dimensions of leaders' support may influence motivation for using on-job training? Second, does leaders' support influence ML? Third, does leaders' support influence motivation for using on-job training? Lastly, does ML mediate the correlation between leaders' support and motivation for using on-job training? This research, therefore, aimed at assessing three primary relationships. The first was to evaluate the relationship between leaders' support and ML. The second was to evaluate the relationship between leaders' support and motivation for using on-job training. The third aim was to assess the relationship between ML and motivation for using on-job training. In addition, the study aimed to assess the mediating role of ML between leaders' support and motivation for using on-job training.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Trainees' Motivation for Using On-job Training

Motivation for using on-job training is a crucial performance indicator in far training transfer studies (Tai & Hsu, 2023). This refers to a trainee's anticipated efforts to use knowledge, skills, and behaviour learned in a real setting (Noe & Schmitt, 1986). It emphasises that a trainee's achievement orientation, self-regulation, conscientiousness, job ambition, and intrinsic motivation have increased his/her willingness to engage in a particular objective through adopting the latest skills, new knowledge, up-to-date affective and cognitive abilities, and other

current capabilities (e.g., digital technologies). Collectively, these would enhance his/her job performance in the workplace (Sanusi et al., 2018; Tai & Hsu, 2023). Recent studies on workplace training recommended that motivation for using on-job training are significant results of ML (El-Said et al., 2020; Tai & Hsu, 2023), leaders' support (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Xing et al., 2023), and the correlation between leaders' support and ML (Kim et al., 2018; Ithnin et al., 2022).

Leaders' Support

A leader's support is an important example of the positive side of leadership behaviour (Qiang et al., 2023) and the quality relationship of leader-member exchange (Lan et al., 2023). It consists of two main components: tangible support and intangible support. Tangible support is generally defined as various types of material or instrumental aid provided by leaders through bestowing resources (Hatmaker & Hassan, 2023), giving training and development opportunities to improve employees' prospects (Mwaisaka et al., 2019), changing employees' mindset with new knowledge to increase productivity and work efficiency levels, adopting communication openness with ingroup and outgroup members to disseminate the organisation's message, and allocating adequate budget to complete projects on time (Jansen et al., 2016). Intangible support is broadly defined as aid given by leaders providing various kinds of moral or emotional support through giving acceptance, consideration, and concern for the feelings and needs of employees in workgroups or outgroups (Hatmaker & Hassan, 2023), meeting the preferences and needs of subordinates (Banai & Reisel, 2007), and appreciating the accomplishments of staff members (Meierhans et al., 2008).

In the context of workplace training, diverse forms of tangible support are often implemented by leaders through coaching employees to impart new skills and performance, aiding to remove difficulties in using new knowledge and skills learned, recognising new staff efforts in transferring skills relevant to their jobs, and providing positive performance feedback) (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019; Martins et al., 2019; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022; Xing et al., 2023). Further studies have established that leaders' support in training programs provides an important prerequisite to ML (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022) and MTJ (Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019; Yaqub et al., 2020).

Trainees' Motivation for Learning

Motivation is a force and a process that induces individuals to act in response to their needs and/or wants (Jan & Maulida, 2022). Human motivation is developed based on three common features, namely direction (i.e., a person wants to achieve a particular aim), intensity (i.e., a

person has to strive to reach his/her aim), and persistence (i.e., a person needs a certain period of time to maintain his/her initiative). Relationships between these features can regulate a person to perform his/her objectives (Borah, 2021). In the context of workplace training, ML is constituted from the association between internal factors of trainees, factors that are controlled by trainees, and their environmental and circumstantial conditions (Kotera et al., 2023). Association between such factors will strongly invoke motivation for using on-job training through expressing their sense of self (e.g., values and attitudes), showing their engagement with learning (e.g., sense of control and efficacy), and their willingness to exert effort to achieve particular learning goals (Kotera et al., 2023).

Recent meta-analyses of ML show that employees are normally stimulated by internal forces (e.g., psychological needs, satisfaction, and enjoyment) and/or external forces (e.g., rewards and management) to value the benefits of attending formal and/or informal learning activities. They are also stimulated to put a greater effort into acquiring relevant knowledge, the latest skills, new affective and cognitive abilities and other current abilities (e.g., digital technologies) (Afsar & Umrami, 2020).

Tangible Support is Positively Correlated with Motivation for Using On-job Training

Numerous studies on the association between tangible support and motivation for using on-job training were examined in diverse organisational types and functions. These studies have involved 123 employees at a military-based health organisation in Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2015), 210 employees at the University of Murcia in Spain (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019), 213 managers of rural banks in Central Java, Indonesia (Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019), 389 employees at a state-owned power transmission organisation in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), and l37,397 full-time faculty members of public and private universities in Islamabad, Lahore and Faisalabad (Sharif et al., 2023). The findings showed that effective leaders consistently implemented various styles of tangible support by delivering training information and inspiring interactive group discussions, using gamification-based and flipped-classroom methods in teaching, guiding trainees in practising expertise, and facilitating trainees in applying learned skills at work. They were also adept at determining adequate rewards to identify efforts by new employees in applying skills to their current work and providing useful responses as critical prerequisites to motivation for using on-job training in various organisations (Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019; Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019; Ismail et al., 2015; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022). Thus, the hypothesis is established as follows:

H_1: Tangible support is positively correlated with motivation for using on-job training.

Intangible Support is Positively Correlated with Motivation for Using On-job Training

Numerous earlier studies similarly examined the correlation between intangible support and motivation for using on-job training in commercial and non-commercial organisations. The studies involved 111 employees in an organisation located in Mid-Atlantic region of the United States (Chiaburu et al., 2010), 123 employees at a military-based health organisation in Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2015), 156 employees at an Indian public manufacturing organisation (Yaqub et al., 2020), 389 employees from a state-owned power transmission organisation in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), and 137,397 full-time academic members of public and private universities in Islamabad, Lahore and Faisalabad (Sharif et al., 2023). These surveys showed that effective leaders frequently practised many styles of intangible support. These included setting employee targets and rewards, disseminating training information and stimulating various flexible teaching and learning methods, motivating trainees to apply acquired skills and giving feedback, encouraging trainees to apply knowledge to their work, showing interest in what they learn in training, and building good cooperation prior to and after the completion of training programs. As a whole, these served as vital enhancers of motivation for using on-job training in diverse organisations (Ismail et al., 2015; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022; Yaqub et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypothesis is posited as follows:

H_2: Intangible support is positively correlated with motivation for using on-job training.

Tangible Support is Positively Correlated with Motivation for Learning

Many prior studies on the relationship between tangible support and ML were conducted in diverse organisational types and functions. These have involved 48 curriculum developers and ten interviewees at an educational organisation in the US (Schindler & Burkholder, 2016), 210 employees at the University of Murcia in Spain (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019), 2,411 employees at a large public Brazilian bank (Martins et al., 2019), 389 employees at a state-owned power transmission organisation in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), 370 employees in the United States, 302 hospital nurses in China (Xing et al., 2023), and l37,397 full-time academic members of private and public universities in Islamabad, Lahore and Faisalabad (Sharif et al., 2023).

These surveys reported that effective leaders usually provided different types of tangible support by explaining positive feedback on employee performance. This included devoting extra time to developing employees' career goals, guiding employees to achieve these goals, coaching, and improving their skills and performance. Educators were subsequently assisted in using new teaching techniques to deliver the necessary information for the effective use of new

skills learned, removing constraints in using these new skills, applying material resources to facilitate their implementation in the workplace, recognising efforts in transferring such skills and providing salient feedback. These endeavours are important determinants of ML. Thus, the hypothesis is established as follows:

H_3: Tangible support is positively correlated with ML

Intangible Support is Positively Correlated with Motivation for Learning

Some past studies have also evaluated the linkage between intangible support and ML in organisations of various sizes and core businesses. These studies were conducted in the USA and involved 207 assigned trainees at Indiana University (Baldwin et al., 1991), 48 curriculum developers, and ten interviewees at an educational organisation (Schindler & Burkholder, 2016). Other studies also included 389 employees at a state-owned power transmission organisation in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), 558 rural primary school teachers in Rivers state, Nigeria (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023), and l37,397 full-time academic members of private and public universities in Islamabad, Lahore and Faisalabad (Sharif et al., 2023).

These studies established that effective leaders normally executed various types of intangible support. The leaders were attentive to the trainees by permitting them to choose training programs, paying attention to their needs, sharing tips for developing career success, showing interest in trainees' training, building good cooperation before and after the training programs, focusing on developing trainees' morale to work and inspiring trainees to upgrade knowledge had been significant predictors of trainees' motivation to undertake new skills, behaviour, and knowledge in the different organisations (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Baldwin et al., 1991; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022). Accordingly, a hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H_4: Intangible support is positively correlated with ML.

Trainees' Motivation for Learning and Trainees' Motivation for Using On-job Training

There were several theories developed regarding trainees' ML and their use of on-job training. The Social Learning Theory by Bandura (1986) described a connection between learners' motivation to acquire novel capabilities via vicarious experiences (e.g., role models) and their continuous professional development. The Transfer of Training Model (Baldwin & Ford, 1988) showed an association between learners' internal human intention and their motivation to use on-job training. The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) explained a link between learners' behaviour intention and their behaviour change. The Constructivist Learning

Theory (Garmston & Wellman, 1994) posited a connection between learners' motivation to study skills and knowledge through personal experiences and continuous professional development. The Transfer of Learning Model (Holton, 2005) posited a relationship between learners' learning behaviour and their positive actions. The Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017) displayed a correlation between learners' intrinsic ML and meeting their basic psychological needs. The application of these theories in various training programs indicated that the notion of learners' motivation, their internal human intention, behaviour intention, learning behaviour, and their intrinsic motivation was often translated as ML. This concept has been supported by reviews on workplace training (El-Said et al., 2020; Kim et al., 2018).

Studies on workplace training were conducted in both private and public organisations. These were reported to have involved 91 employees at a state library in East Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2010), 216 teachers in secondary schools in the USA (Kim et al., 2018), 302 hotel employees in the Sultanate of Oman (El-Said et al., 2020), and 239 trainees from a technological institute in northern Taiwan (Tai & Hsu, 2023). The studies revealed that the capability of trainees to learn up-to-date skills, behaviour, and knowledge in formal and informal training methods could strongly enhance motivation for using on-job training in the different categories of organisations (El-Said et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2018; Tai & Hsu, 2023). Accordingly, the following hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H_5: Motivation for learning is positively correlated with motivation for using on-job training.

Trainees' Motivation for Learning as a Mediator

Naquin and Holton (2002) explained that trainees with high ML displayed stronger curiosity, effort, and desire to attend, participate, and learn the latest knowledge, skills, and behaviour in training sessions. Limited surveys were conducted with diverse organisational samples involving 216 teachers in secondary schools in the USA (Kim et al., 2018), staff in Malaysian government agencies (Mohamad et al., 2020), and 395 employees at the Malaysian Fire-Rescue Departments (Ithnin et al., 2022). The study demonstrated the capability of leaders to practice various kinds of tangible support (e.g., providing facilitation, empowerment, budget, resources, and sufficient time to practice the competencies during training, assist in applying the learned competencies, as well as practising communication openness). Thus, the following hypothesis was formulated as follows:

H_6: The relationship between tangible support and motivation for using on-job training is mediated by ML.

The learning level may contribute to higher positive attitudes and behaviour in trainees. This illustrates the relationship between the mediating role of motivation and learning as supported by workplace training research (Ithnin et al., 2022; Mohamad et al., 2020). A limited number of surveys were also conducted by Ithnin et al. (2022), Kim et al. (2018), and Mohamad et al. (2020). They demonstrated that trainees were highly driven to improve their abilities according to the leaders' capacity to provide a variety of intangible forms of support (such as encouragement, care, advice, and feedback) in both traditional and online training modes. Consequently, this learning process might lead to better motivation in the use of on-job training in the respective companies (Ithnin et al., 2022). The appropriate hypothesis was thus formulated as follows:

H_7: The relationship between intangible support and motivation for using on-job training is mediated by ML.

To recapitulate the literature review, a study framework was depicted in Figure 1.

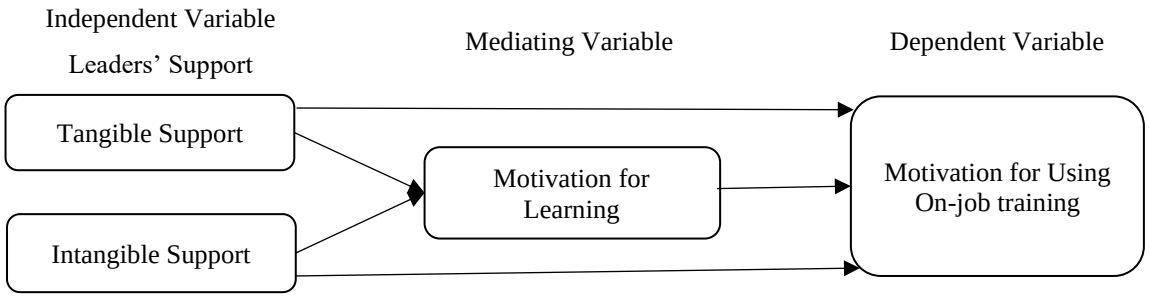

Figure 1. Study Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

In accordance with the research objective, this study adopted a quantitative and cross-sectional research approach, which was used to study all identified constructs using a quantitative questionnaire (Struwig & Stead, 2013). A cross-sectional research design was employed as the main procedure to ensure that the collection of study data was relevant, less biased, and of high quality.

Sampling Techniques and Sample

Data were collected using the non-probability purposive sampling technique. The study was conducted in military healthcare organisations in Peninsular Malaysia (MHOPM) through the internal training department. The units of analysis comprised individuals from top management

of the organisations who had taken proactive actions to improve structural and attitudinal changes. In order to estimate the minimum sample, the G*power (power analysis software) was used, as proposed by Hair et al. (2016), Kline (2015), and Sarstedt et al. (2022). The configuration for G*Power was predetermined with the following parameters to obtain the minimum sample size (Faul et al., 2007, 2009; Hair et al., 2016): minimum power (1-β) (0.85), effect of size (f^2), level of significance (α) (0.05) and number of predictors (2). The minimum sample for this study comprised 76 respondents.

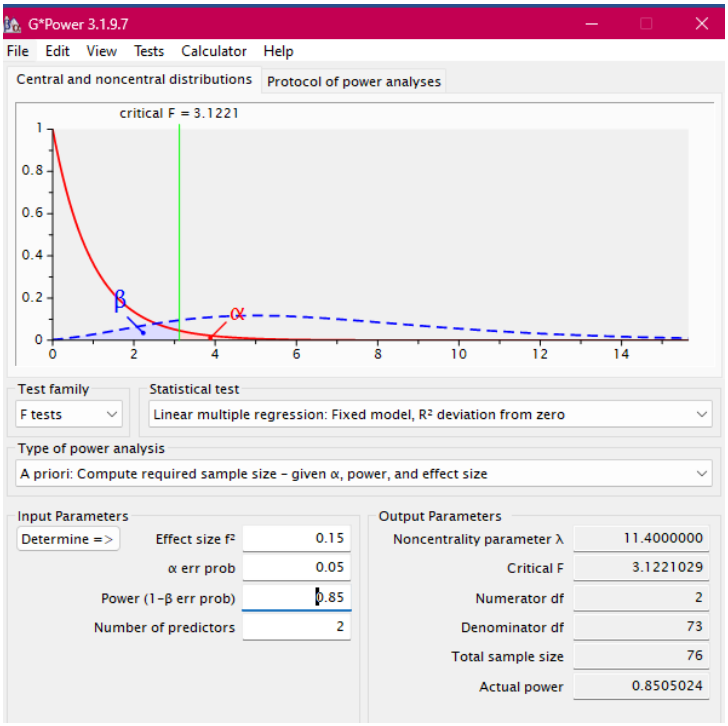

Figure 2: G*power analysis

Variable Measurement

The survey questionnaire consisted of three parts: First, the leaders' support, which comprised two dimensions, tangible support and intangible support, had four items adapted from workplace training support literature (Chiaburu et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2018; Yaqub et al., 2020). Second, ML adapted six items from past studies on training motivation (Baldwin et al., 1991; Ismail et al., 2010; Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019). The third and final part comprised motivation for using on-job training with six items adapted from training transfer literature (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Dewayani & Ferdinand, 2019; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022). The items were quantified using a seven-point Likert scale, starting from "strongly disagree/dissatisfied" (1) to "strongly agree/satisfied" (7).

Respondent's Profile

A total of 500 Self-report questionnaires were distributed to all categories of medical employees at hospitals, clinics, and medical training centres within the organisations. There were only 226 (45.2%) completed and valid questionnaires returned to the researchers. The sufficiency of the number of samples was determined using the rule of thumb (Hair et al., 2017). The biggest number of formative items in the structural model should be at least ten times, and the outer loadings for all items in the measurement models should be more than 0.70. In this study, the biggest number of formative indicators in the structural model was represented by leaders' support. The number of items for this contract exceeded the minimum sample (80 respondents) as determined by the rule of thumb. Most participants were female (55.8%), in the age group of 18 and 25 years old (36.3%), married employees (67.3%), Malaysian Certificate Education holders (72.1%), low-rank officers (92.5%), personnel who worked at the hospital (80.5%), and hardworking experience between 11 and 12 years (28.8%).

Common Method Variance

The SPSS program was first used to remove items that had missing values, straight line findings, outliers, and Kurtosis and Skewness values bigger than +/-2.0 (Hair et al., 2017). Next, the degree of response bias in the sample was evaluated using Harman's single-factor test (Podsakoff et al., 2003). This outcome indicated that a single factor for all items had a variance percentage of 40.268, which was lower than 50% of the variance, revealing that the study sample did not have response bias. This achievement satisfied the rules for testing the study framework.

Data Analysis

Data from the survey were analysed using the SmartPLS according to Hair et al.'s (2017) rule. This package can assess reflective and formative research models consisting of many latent constructs, small and large sample sizes, and non-normal data distribution (Hair et al., 2017). Prior to the data analysis, a measurement model analysis was performed to assess the validity and reliability of the study instruments (Henseler et al., 2009). Next, a structural model analysis was run to test the direct effect and mediating models. The model testing indicated that significant hypotheses were valid when the t-value was significant ($t > 1.97$). The strength of the study framework was assessed based on three types of R^2 values: 0.26 strong, 0.13 moderate, and 0.02 weak (Cohen, 1988). The appropriateness of model fit is estimated when a standardised root mean square residual value (SRMR) is less than 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999). The effect of size was measured based on three types of f^2 values: 0.35 strong, 0.15 medium,

and 0.02 small. The blindfolding predicts that the level of predictive accuracy was fulfilled if a Q^2 value is greater than zero (Hair et al., 2017).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Measurement Model

The PLS algorithm was utilised to determine the validity and reliability of the study instrument. Table 1 shows that all the constructs of the study have outer loadings of more than 0.70 (Henseler et al., 2009), and the average variance extracted (AVE) values exceed 0.5 (Hair et al., 2017), indicating that they have satisfied the convergent validity criteria. All constructs in the study have composite reliability (CR) values of more than 0.8 (Hair et al., 2017), signifying a high internal consistency.

Table 1. Convergent validity and composite reliability

Construct	Loading	AVE	CR
TS		0.721	0.912
Advise me on courses that I need to attend	0.816		
Identify the courses that suit with my work	0.930		
Giving me enough time to make preparation to attend training	0.836		
Providing me financial support to further studies	0.809		
IS		0.799	0.941
Encourage to use necessary knowledge	0.879		
Encourage to use up-to-date skills	0.805		
Encourage to use positive attitudes	0.937		
Encourage to use new working styles	0.948		
ML		0.718	0.939
I can do the time-management properly	0.879		
I want to practice positive attitudes	0.805		
I am ready to attend courses to increase job-performance	0.937		
I am ready to attend courses to promotion	0.948		
I am ready to attend courses to develop critical thinking	0.883		
I will study hard to learn critical thinking techniques	0.844		
MTJ		0.721	0.939
I can use what I have learnt in carry out my duties	0.814		
I need assistance to apply what I have learned while carry out work tasks	0.863		
I can share my knowledge with the colleagues to increase the effectiveness of team works.	0.877		
I can share my knowledge with the colleagues to build a good relationship	0.889		
I can use my knowledge to increase my proficiency	0.833		
I can use my skills to increase my competencies	0.815		

Note: Tangible support (TS); Intangible support (IS); Trainees' motivation for learning (ML); Trainees' motivation for using on-job training (MTJ)

Table 2 shows that all the study constructs have the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT) values smaller than 0.85 and the confidence interval values in parentheses smaller than 1.0 (Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009), indicating discriminant validity standards, satisfied.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

Construct	HTMT	
	ML	MTJ
ML	0.368 (0.106, 0.346)	0.402 (0.211, 0.391)
MTJ	0.185 (0.447, 0.022)	0.239 (0.208, 0.575)

Note: Trainees' motivation for learning (ML); Trainees' motivation for using on-job training (MTJ)

Table 3 shows that means for the research constructs between 5.8352 and 6.4233, indicating that the levels of participants' perceptions about TS, IS, ML, and MTJ range from high (4) to highest level (7). The variance inflation factor values for the association between the study constructs are smaller than 5.0, showing that the data are not adversely affected by collinearity problems (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 3. Variance inflation factor and descriptive statistics

Construct	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor	
			ML	MTJ
1.TS	5.8352	.79596	1.263	
2. IS	6.0310	.55591	1.263	
3. ML	6.4233	.31233		1.000
4. MTJ	6.0369	.42324		

Note: Tangible support (TS); Intangible support (IS); Trainees' motivation for learning (ML); Trainees' motivation for using on-job training (MTJ)

Structural Model

Bootstrapping, blindfolding, PLS-Predict, and Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA) are used to determine model fit, effect size, size of mediating effect, predictive relevance, and a critical management problem in this study. First, the SRMR value is 0.09, which is less than 0.10 (Hair et al., 2017), showing a good fit model. Second, the effect size test indicates that the correlation between tangible support and the trainee's ML (f2 value = 0.042) is more than 0.02 and less than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), displaying a weak effect of tangible support on the trainee's ML. The relationship between tangible support and motivation for using on-job training (f^2 value = 0.135) is more than 0.02 and less than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), displaying a weak effect of intangible support on motivation for using on-job training. The relationship between intangible support and ML (f^2 value = 0.078) is larger than 0.02 and smaller than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), displaying a weak effect of intangible support on ML. The correlation between intangible support and motivation for using on-job training (f^2 value = 0.046) is more than 0.02 and less than 0.15 (Hair et al., 2017), displaying that intangible support had a weak effect on motivation for using on-job training. The relationship between ML and motivation for using on-job training (f^2 value = 0.421) exceeded 0.35 (Hair et al., 2017), which indicated that ML produced a strong effect on motivation for using on-job training. Third, the size of the mediating effect indicated that the hypothesised model was a partial mediating effect (Zhao et

al., 2010). Lastly, the blindfolding test proved that ML (Q^2 value = 0.148) and motivation for using on-job training (Q^2 value = 0.247) were higher than zero, thus showing that the study constructs have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 4 displays that the Q^2-predicted values for all items in the PLS-SEM (0.017 to 0.214) were bigger than zero, indicating that the prediction errors were not normally distributed and the distribution was not highly non-symmetric. Hence, we based our predictive power assessment on the RMSE. All PLS-SEM values showed higher prediction errors than LM RMSE values, which indicated the model's high predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019).

Table 4. Predictive performance

Items	PLS-SEM	LM RMSE	PLS-SEM – LM RMSE	LM RMSE – PLS-SEM
F3	0.263	0.243	0.02	-0.02
F5.1	0.382	0.378	0.004	-0.004
F8	0.405	0.377	0.028	-0.028
F4	0.448	0.399	0.049	-0.049
F5.2	0.483	0.472	0.011	-0.011
F5.3	0.450	0.417	0.033	-0.033
G6.2	0.506	0.475	0.031	-0.031
G6.1	0.554	0.551	0.003	-0.003
G9	0.453	0.445	0.008	-0.008
G8	0.389	0.387	0.002	-0.002
G7	0.453	0.444	0.009	-0.009
G4	0.474	0.469	0.005	-0.005
G5	0.523	0.514	0.009	-0.009

Table 5 shows that 23% of the variance of ML was due to both tangible support and intangible support. The variance was more than 0.13 but less than 0.26 (Cohen, 1988), displaying that the model had a moderate effect. About 14% of the variance was attributed to motivation for using on-job training with contribution from tangible support and intangible support. The result also indicated that the model has a moderate effect. About 32% of the variance of motivation for using on-job training was contributed by ML. With a variance exceeding 0.26 (Cohen, 1988), the model exerted a large effect. Further, the results of hypothesis testing display four essential outcomes: First, H_1 (Beta = 0.202; t = 3.374) and H_2 (Beta = 0.349; t = 7.901) were supported. The finding indicated that tangible support and intangible support were vital determinants of ML. Second, H_3 (Beta = 0.305; t = 3.249) and H_4 (Beta = 0.390; t = 4.583) were also supported. The findings showed that tangible support and intangible support were significant predictors of motivation for using on-job training. Third, H_5 (Beta = 0.575; t = 13.728) was supported. This result indicated that ML was a vital enhancer of motivation for using on-job training. Finally, H_6 (Beta = 0.360; t = 6.935) and H_7 (Beta = 0.436; t = 9.295) were also supported, thus showing

that the effect of tangible support and intangible support on motivation for using on-job training was positively mediated by ML.

Table 5. Results of testing the research hypotheses

Hypothesis	Beta	t - statistics	R^2	Decision
H_1: TS → ML	0.202	3.374	0.226	Moderate Effect
H_2: IS → ML	0.349	7.901		
H_3: TS → MTJ	0.305	3.249	0.138	Moderate Effect
H_4: IS → MTJ	0.390	4.583		
H_5: ML → MTJ	0.575	13.728	0.328	Large Effect
H_6: TS → ML → MTJ	0.360	6.935	0.315	Large Effect
H_7: IS → ML → MTJ	0.436	9.295		

Note: Significant value at t > 1.97, Tangible support (TS); Intangible support (IS); Trainees' motivation for learning (ML); Trainees' motivation for using on-job training (MTJ)

Finally, the IPMA test established that leaders' support showed the highest performance (68.407), followed by motivation for using on-job training (52.356) and ML (50.328). This test result thus suggests that practitioners should give ML more attention in order to improve the effectiveness of training programs.

Discussions

On-job training stands as a cornerstone for professional development and organisational growth. This study elucidated the intricate dynamics between leadership support, trainees' ML, and the consequential impact on the utilisation of on-job training. Through empirical investigation, it sheds light on the pivotal role played by leaders in fostering an environment conducive to learning and subsequent practical application within work settings.

The findings unequivocally confirm a significant relationship between leaders' support and the motivation of trainees for learning. Effective leadership, characterised by guidance, encouragement, and resource allocation, emerges as a catalyst in shaping the motivation levels of trainees. The support provided by leaders not only influences the willingness of trainees to engage in learning activities but also cultivates a sense of purpose and enthusiasm.

Of paramount importance is the identification of trainees' ML as a pivotal mediating factor. It acts as a bridge, elucidating the path through which leadership support transmutes into the utilisation of acquired on-job training. The study accentuates how the motivation instilled in trainees, as a direct consequence of leadership support, fuels the application of learned skills, knowledge, and strategies in their work responsibilities.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS IN THE SOUTH EAST ASIAN CONTEXT

The IPMA outcomes have identified that ML is a crucial management problem that must be resolved in Southeast Asian organisations, especially in MHOPM. The low performance level of ML may indirectly decrease the influence of leaders' support on motivation for using on-job training. This issue should be carefully handled to enhance the effectiveness of workplace training management. It is important for top management to pay more attention to the following aspects: communication openness should be encouraged to disseminate training information to all employees before, during, and after implementing training programs. For example, administrators need to disseminate information about training programs' objectives, course content, methods, and application procedures to all civil servants. This communication will increase public servants' understanding of the advantages of each course and may inspire them to choose the right ones to improve their career paths. Next, human-oriented leadership should be promoted to develop and strengthen the quality of relationships between managers and employees in executing daily jobs. For example, administrators need to implement favourable treatments, such as allowing employees to ask questions, provide input, discuss and share experiences, and be involved in making decisions on training programs. This leadership style may increase civil servants' interest in learning new technologies and behaviour competencies and thus motivate them to improve daily job performance.

Additionally, a properly executed training needs assessment to ensure that training content and methods meet the latest needs of the organisation, task, and personnel. For example, the involvement of internal and external subject matter experts in designing training programs will inspire civil servants to perform core and non-core tasks effectively.

In furtherance, sophisticated digital technologies that are consistent with the fourth industrial revolution should be widely used to manage training programs. For example, online training methods will allow civil servants to choose their own learning schedules, take courses that they want, plan flexible times to complete assignments and courses, communicate, participate, and collaborate with classmates, pursue academic credentials to advance career opportunities, get faster feedback from trainers, and repeat access to course materials. This training method may induce trainees to learn new competencies easily to achieve job goals. Finally, human resource development experts should be hired to lead and manage training and development departments. They have adequate expertise to mentor, coach, and counsel junior management and frontline staff to practice innovative work behaviour and satisfy customers' demands. This effort may stimulate employees to support their stakeholders' goals. If these suggestions are attended to, the rate of

investment can be achieved by motivating civil servants to realise their organisations' vision and missions in the 21st century of global transformation and uncertain economy.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study has acknowledged three essential results: First, leaders' support has enhanced positive trainee outcomes. The outcome is consistent with the notion of Perceived Organizational Support Theory (Eisenberger et al., 2001), Equity Theory (Adams, 1965), Leader-Member Exchange Theory (Dansereau et al., 1975), Transfer of Training Model (Baldwin & Ford, 1988), Goal Setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 1990), and Transformational and Transactional Leadership Theory (Bass & Avolio, 1994). These agreements should suggest that various support types provided by leaders in managing work functions (e.g., training programs) may upgrade employees' motivation to learn and apply up-to-date competencies to achieve job objectives.

These theories have received strong support from previous empirical studies published in South East Asian and other countries, which reveal that effective leaders' support consists of two salient dimensions: Tangible support (i.e., material or instrumental aid) and intangible support (i.e., moral or emotional aid) (Aryee et al., 2023; Hatmaker & Hassan, 2023). The ability of leaders to provide tangible support and intangible support has been significant predictors of ML, and the essence of the theory is supported by past reviews in the area of training in the workplace (Gómez-Carrasco et al., 2019; Martins et al., 2019; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), and motivation for using on-job training (Abiodun-Oyebanji & Anditung, 2023; Baldwin et al., 1991; Sahoo & Mishra, 2022).

Second, ML has upgraded motivation for using on-job training. The result also supported the principal meaning of Social Learning Theory (Bandura,1986), Training Model (Baldwin & Ford, 1988), Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), Constructivist Learning Theory (Garmston & Wellman, 1994), Transfer of Learning Model (Holton, 2005), and Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2017), which reveal that learners with high learning motivation are willing to acquire and master new competencies through various learning methods. Such learning may strongly invoke their motivation to change their behaviour. These theories have received strong support from previous empirical studies published in South East Asian and other countries, which disclose that ML is developed based on the association between two learning sources, namely extrinsic motivation (i.e., trainees' external stimulus, e.g., environmental and contextual factors) and intrinsic motivation (i.e., trainees' internal stimulus or inner forces) (Sharif et al., 2023). The principal meaning of such theories was backed up by a plethora of empirical evidence proving that

trainees who have learned new competencies and attained present capabilities are highly motivated during on-job training (El-Said et al., 2020; Ismail et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2018).

Third, ML has mediated the relationship between leaders' support and motivation for using on-job training. This result has also been supported by the principal meaning of Naquin and Holton's (2002) Motivation to Improve Work through Learning Model, which posits that trainees with high learning motivation have strong curiosity, desires, and efforts to attend, participate, and acquire the latest technical and human skills from experts (e.g., coaches, mentors, counsellors, and management team) who can help them to reach job objectives. The principal meaning of this theory is consistent with prior studies on workplace training in South East Asian and other countries, which shed light on the significant mediating role of ML in the workplace. It discloses that leaders who practice tangible support (e.g., implementing facilitation, empowerment, and communication openness, and allocating budget, resources, and enough time to trainees practice competencies during training, as well as aiding trainees to apply the learned competencies) and IS (e.g., providing encouragement, caring, advice, and feedback) in face-to-face and online training modes and online training methods will strongly invoke ML, which in turn may lead to higher motivation for using on-job training in organisations (Ismail et al., 2010; Ithnin et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2018). In sum, this study has increased our understanding that ML does act as an effective mediating role in the training management models of the examined organisations and is consistent with and broadened past studies mostly conducted in Southeast Asia.

Limitation

The study on the relationships among leadership support, trainees' motivation, and on-job learning outcomes across military healthcare companies in Peninsular Malaysia provides significant insights. Nevertheless, the study's design and scope possess certain inherent limitations, which require an in-depth and detailed evaluation of the findings.

The use of a sample consisting of only 226 respondents from military healthcare organisations in a specific geographical area is a limitation in terms of sample representation and size. Although the sample size provides useful insights, its limited representation may impede the generalizability of the findings. The tendency of greater uniformity within such a limited sample size may not completely capture the varied populations and jobs present between these companies. Hence, the study's results may be limited in representativeness, which may thus constrain a comprehensive understanding of the numerous viewpoints scattered among a broader population between these organisations.

In addition, the cross-sectional design of the study, despite its brief overview of the relationships between leadership support, trainees' motivation, and on-job learning outcomes, is unable to capture the dynamic changes in these factors over time. This constraint hinders the study's ability to monitor the dynamic changes or patterns in these interactions. A longitudinal method would have been more appropriate for elucidating the temporal complexities, providing a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of how these factors develop and interact over time.

Further, the incorporation of self-reported measures involves a subjective element in reporting, hence posing a challenge to the quality and dependability of the data. Subjective interpretations and variances in respondents' understanding or perception of factors, such as leadership support or motivation, may add biases to the reported data. The presence of these inherent biases could potentially affect the strength and reliability of the conclusions derived from the study.

Also, the study has not considered the impact of wider organisational dynamics on the identified connections. Although the investigation examines the relationship between leadership support, trainees' motivation, and on-job learning outcomes, it does not explicitly consider issues such as organisational culture, resource allocation, or specific training approaches. By taking into account these organisational variables, the observed relationships in the study could be greatly enhanced, thereby providing a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the study's conclusions.

Finally, the study does not consider external factors that may affect the relationship between leadership support, trainees' motivation, and their implementation of training in the workplace. Factors such as changes in policies, leadership changes, or economic fluctuations were not taken into consideration. The study's findings may have been influenced or moderated by external circumstances that were outside its scope, which nevertheless could have affected the observed outcomes.

CONCLUSION

The study elucidated the direct effect and mediating models developed from past research surveyed in the literature on workplace training. The psychometric properties of the measurement model were verified. Results from the structural equation modelling indicated that ML and motivation for using on-job training are the outcomes of tangible support and intangible support given by leaders. Hence, ML positively mediates the effect of tangible support and intangible support on motivation for using on-job training in MHOPM. This finding supported and extended earlier studies reported in workplace training literature coming from mostly Southeast Asian countries.

This study proposed that research and practice in the Southeast Asian context should incorporate ML as a key force in the training management domain. The capability of leaders to provide support, design, and administer training programs will strongly upgrade positive employee outcomes (e.g., engagement, commitment, innovative behaviour, ethical behaviour, and service performance). The positive behaviour fostered among employees should, in turn, lead to improved organisational performance, survival, and competitiveness in the era of globalisation.

Despite the effort to discover the drivers and outcomes of trainees' ML in MHOPM, the conclusions from the study should be cautiously accepted due to some conceptual and methodological constraints. Firstly, the cross-sectional research design only described the general perceptions of participants on the correlation between latent constructs. Secondly, the study only evaluated the association between latent independent constructs and a latent dependent variable. Thirdly, the study was conducted in only one military organisation sector. Finally, a purposive sampling plan may not gather sufficient data to represent the study population, thus reducing the study's representativeness.

This study proposed several recommendations to strengthen future research. Firstly, some important characteristics of participants such as gender, age, education, and marital status, should be examined further to understand the similarities and differences in their perceptions of the study model. Secondly, diverse types of health organisations should be studied further to enhance comprehension of how participants' similarities and differences affect leaders' support of training programs. Thirdly, a longitudinal study may be used in future research if we wish to identify the patterns of change and the direction and extent of causal relationships among the study constructs over a period of time. Fourthly, the effect of the size of the study constructs can be clearly identified if future research makes a comparison between different types of health organisations. Fifthly, other specific elements of leaders' support that need further investigation, such as communication, participation, and reward, have been widely recognised as significant predictors of trainee outcomes. Sixthly, a larger sample size should be used to increase the representativeness of the population under study. Lastly, other components of trainee outcomes, such as job performance, maintenance, generalisation, and organisational commitment, should also be considered, as their roles are often emphasised in various workplace training literature.

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