

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR'S ROLE AND JOB PERFORMANCE IN THE WORKPLACE TRAINING PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study was conducted to measure the effect of the supervisor's role in training programs on job performance in a state library in Sarawak, Malaysia. A survey method was used to collect 91 usable items from employees who have worked in the studied organization. Exploratory factor analysis and confirmatory factor analysis were conducted to assess the survey questionnaire data and found that the measurement scales met the acceptable standards of validity and reliability analyses. Next, a stepwise regression analysis was used to test the research hypotheses and their results showed two important findings: first, supervisor support positively and significantly correlated with job performance. Second, supervisor communication positively and insignificantly correlated with job performance. Statistically, this result demonstrates that supervisor support can increase job performance, but supervisor communication cannot increase job performance. Further, this result confirms that supervisor's role acts as a partial predicting variable in the training program of the organizational sample.

Key words: Supervisor Role, Training, Job Performance, Public Sector

JEL classification: M12, M53, H75

1. Introduction

Supervisors are the first level of management where they are given major duties and responsibilities to form and lead work groups in organizations (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Noe 2008). They play an important role as an intermediary between management and operational employees. As an experienced leader, problem solver and role model at the group level, supervisors often work together with their employers to

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design, implement and monitor the organizational policies, procedures and plans, including training programs (Comstock, 1994; Robbins & DeCenzo, 2004; Ellinger et al., 2005). A training program is a crucial human capital development function where it focuses on developing overall employee competencies to overcome their daily work problems, and this may lead to higher organizational development and growth in future (DeSimone, Warner & Harris, 2002; MacNeil, 2004). The role of supervisors is different in contemporary and traditional management thought. Under a traditional management thought, supervisors are determines duties and responsibilities by their employers to identify the daily, routine and short-term employee deficiencies, as well as report such deficiencies to the top management for further action. The top management will then identify the training requirements and recommend particular types of training program to overcome such employee deficiencies (Pfeffer, 1998; Rodrigues & Gregory, 2005).

In an era of global competition, many employers have shifted their paradigms from traditional job-based training to support organizational business strategies and cultures (MacNeil, 2004; Ellinger et al., 2005; Ismail et al., 2007). Under this approach, supervisors are empowered by their employers to effectively design and administer training programs in order to develop useful competencies for future organizational development and change. At the stage of designing training programs, supervisors often work together in tandem with the management team and other employees in establishing appropriate objectives, selecting suitable trainers, developing effective lesson plans, selecting program methods and techniques, preparing course materials, scheduling the program, as well as conducting training needs analyses (Golemen, 2000; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Nijman, 2004). In the stage of training administration, supervisors usually refer to the management team and experienced employees to ensure that the implementation of training activities will achieve the desired objectives (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Yamnill & McLean, 2001; DeSimone et al., 2002;). For example, the role of supervisors in training administration does not only provide financial and physical facility supports, but they also have the capabilities to establish realistic and achievable learning expectations, encourage positive reinforcements, create a positive impetus for the training program, make employees feel comfortable to attend training, and improve and develop employees' competencies (Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Golemen, 2000).

The supervisor's role in training programs is often viewed as a critical organizational climate dimension where it may influence the effectiveness of training programs in an organization (Noe, 1986, 2008; Blanchard & Thackers, 2007). Many scholars like Facticeau et al. (1995), Chiaburu and Tekleab (2005), and Ismail et al. (2007) view that supervisor's role in training programs has two salient features: support and communication. Support is often related to a supervisor who provides encouragement and opportunities to improve employee performance in organizations (MacNeil, 2004; Noe, 2005). In a training context, supervisors often encourage and motivate trainees to attend training programs, help employees before, during and after training programs in terms of time, budgetary support and resources. Supervisors also play important roles in getting employees to be actively involved in decision-making, and guide trainees in applying the new competencies to accomplish organizational goals (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Nijman, 2004; Tai, 2006).

Furthermore, communication is often seen as supervisors express ideas or feelings while giving people information, as well as encourage exchanging and sharing ideas and up to date information between a person or a group through symbols, actions, written or spoken words (Lumsden & Lumsden, 1993; Harris et al., 2000). In a training program, supervisors

openly deliver information about the procedures, content, tasks and objectives of the training program, conducting discussion about tasks that should be learned, giving detailed explanations about the benefits of attending training programs and providing performance feedback (Harris et. al., 2000; Sisson, 2001).

Interestingly, extant research in this area highlights that the ability of supervisors to provide sufficient support and use of good communication styles in training programs may lead to higher level of employee job performance (Axtell, 1997; Ismail et al., 2008; Nijman, 2004; Tai, 2006). Job performance is generally seen as individual employees accomplishing their respective work goals, meeting their expectations, achieving job targets and/or accomplishing a benchmark set by their organizations (Eysenck, 1998; Maathis & Jackson, 2000; Bohlander et al., 2001). Within a training program framework, many scholars think that supervisor's role and job performance are distinct constructs, but highly interrelated. For example, within a training program perspective, the ability of supervisors to provide sufficient support (e.g. encouragement and guidance) and use communication openness in training management (e.g. feedback and discussion) will invoke their employees' motivation to perform a better job in organizations (Martocchio & Webster, 1992; Tsai & Tai, 2003; Blanchard & Thacker, 2007). Although the nature of this relationship is interesting, little is known about the predicting variable of supervisor's role in training management models (Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005; Ismail et al., 2007; Ismail et al., 2008; Tai, 2006). Hence, a thorough investigation about the nature of this relationship is imperative.

2. Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine two major relationships: first, to measure the relationship between supervisor support and job performance. Second, to measure the relationship between supervisor communication and job performance. Location of this study is a state library in Sarawak, Malaysia (STLSM). For confidential reasons, the name of the studied organization is kept anonymous.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Context of the study

STLSM was established to be a major information resource centre and as the hub of information services for the public and private sectors in Sarawak. This organization is also linked to other libraries, archives and information centres in Sarawak, Malaysia and overseas. In-depth interviews were conducted before and during a pilot study to understand the nature of training programs and its impact on individual attitudes and behaviours. Prior to carrying out the pilot study, an in-depth interview was conducted involving two experienced supporting administrative staff. During the pilot study, an in-depth interview was also done involving an assistant human resource manager, head of the training unit, and eight experienced supporting staff who worked in the organization.

Information gathered from the interviews shows that the training and development program is one of the important tasks of the Human Resource Division. All employees are entitled to attend soft and hard skills training programs through in-house training and external training companies to enhance employee soft skills and increase their capabilities to timely and accurately handle information services. However, in-house training is preferred

as it is more cost effective to conduct in-house training as compared to sending employees to attend external training. Due to the budget constraints, training of trainer approach is often used whereby several selected staff such as managers and supervisors are allowed to attend external training programs conducted by external bodies, such as the National Institute of Public Administration, public universities and Malaysian National Library. After attending such training programs, managers and supervisors are required to conduct formal and/or informal in-house training programs which may involve coaching, mentoring, seminar and/or workshop for their own staff. This approach is often practiced to create a positive learning culture, knowledge sharing and enhance competencies among staff.

A thorough investigation of the in-depth interview results showed that the ability of supervisors to provide material and moral support as well as to practice good communication styles (e.g., provide constructive feedback and open discussion) have invoked employees' motivation to perform job in the workplace. Although the nature of such relationships is interesting, little is known about the role of supervisor as a predicting variable in the training program model of the studied organization (Sieng, 2008).

3.2. Relationship between Supervisor's Role and Job Performance

Several recent studies have used an indirect effect model to examine training administration and found that effect of supervisor's role in training programs on job performance were indirectly affected by the motivation to learn. For example, several studies about supervisor's role in training programs based on a sample of 45 trainees in UK organizations (Axtell et al., 1997), and 100 technical employees in North Kuching City Hall, Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2008) generally showed that properly implemented supervisor's role in training programs had increased job performance in the workplace. Specifically, two surveys about supervisor communication in training programs were carried out based on a sample of 126 employees in Northern Taiwan Tai (2006), and 100 technical employees in North Kuching City Hall, Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2007). Meanwhile, three surveys about supervisor support in training programs were conducted based on a sample of 119 employees who attended training program in a large organization in USA (Chiaburu and Takleab, 2005), 179 trainees and 32 supervisors at certain US organizations (Nijman, 2004), and 100 technical employees in North Kuching City Hall, Malaysia (Ismail et al., 2007). The findings of these studies advocate that the willingness of supervisors to provide better explanations about the training plans and the ability of supervisors to properly provide training supports had been a major determinant of job performance in the organizations.

These studies are consistent with the notion of motivation to learn theories. First, Locke and Latham's (1990) goal setting theory postulates that goals direct individuals to perform a task. Application of this theory in training management shows that the ability of a supervisor to design training objectives that meet employees' needs and provide clear explanations about the procedures of attaining the goals may lead to higher job performance (Mathieu et al., 1992; Goldstein & Ford, 2002). Second, Wood and Bandura's (1989) social learning theory (SLT) reveals that self-efficacy reinforces individuals' performance. Application of this theory in training programs shows that the ability of a supervisor to encourage employees learning a proper technique and providing clear explanations about the procedures of attaining the goals may lead to an enhanced job performance (Brown et al., 2001; Goldstein & Ford, 2002).

Third, Adams' (1963 & 1965) equity theory states that fair or unfair treatment has a significant impact on individual's attitude and behavior. The application of this theory in

training management shows that employees who receive sufficient support from their supervisors while applying and attending training programs will perceive equity. If individuals feel that they are fairly treated and supported by their supervisors, this may lead to increased job performance (Mathieu et al., 1992; Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005).

Finally, Vrooms' (1964 & 1973) expectancy theory highlights that an individual will perform certain actions if he/she perceives such actions may bring valued outcomes. The application of this theory in training management shows that the ability of a supervisor to openly and honestly communicate the value of attending training programs and its importance of learning new competencies may lead to improved job performance (Cohen & Leventhal, 1990; Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990).

The above literature has been used as the platform and foundation to develop a conceptual framework for this study as shown in Figure 1.

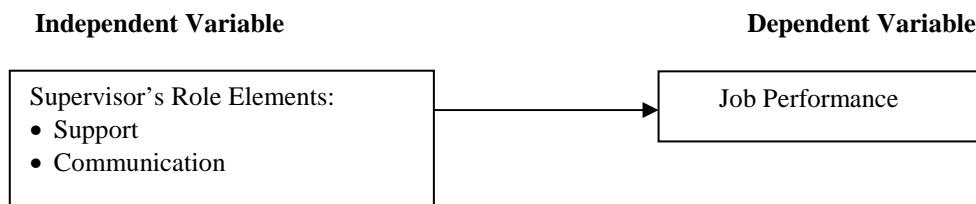


Figure no. 1: Relationship between supervisor's role in training programs and job performance

Based on the framework, it can be hypothesized that:

H1: There is a significant relationship between supervisor support and job performance

H2: *There is a significant relationship between supervisor communication and job performance*

4. Methodology

This study used a cross-sectional research design, which allowed the researchers to integrate training management literature, the in-depth interview, the pilot study and the actual survey as a main procedure to gather data for this study. The use of such methods may gather accurate and less biased data (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000). At the initial stage of this study, in-depth interviews were conducted before and during the pilot study. Before conducting the pilot study, an in-depth interview was conducted involving two experienced supporting administrative staff. Then during the pilot study, another in-depth interview was done involving an assistant human resource manager, head of Training Unit, and eight experienced supporting staff who work in the organization. They are selected based on purposive sampling where the employees have good knowledge and experience about the design and administration of training programs. Information gathered from such employees helped the researchers to understand the nature of supervisor's role and job performance features, as well as the relationship between such variables in the target organization. After transcribing, categorizing and comparing the information with relevant theoretical and empirical evidence, the triangulated outcomes were used as a guideline to develop the content of the survey questionnaire for the pilot study. Next, a session was initiated for discussing

the items in survey questionnaire with the above participants in order to verify the content and format of the questionnaire for the actual study. The back translation technique was used to translate the survey questionnaires in Malay and English; this may increase the validity and reliability of the instrument (Van Maanen, 1983; Wright, 1996).

4.1 Measures

The survey questionnaire consisted of three sections. Firstly, supervisor support had four items that were derived from the training research literature (Tsai & Tai, 2003; Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005; Tai, 2006; Ismail et al., 2007). Secondly, supervisor communication had five items that were derived from the transfer of training literature (Foxon, 1993; Xiao, 1996; Yamnill & McLean, 2001; Ismail et al., 2007). Thirdly, job performance had five items that were based on job performance literature (Lawler & Hall, 1970; Hvang et al., 2004). All the items used in the questionnaire were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (7). Demographic variables were used as the controlling variable because this study also focused on employees' attitude.

4.2. Unit of analysis and sampling

The researchers had obtained an official approval to conduct the study from the head of the target organization and also received advice from him about the procedures of conducting the survey in his organization. The targeted population for this study was 98 employees who have worked in the selected organization. After considering the organizational rules, a convenience sampling technique was used to distribute the questionnaire to all employees who willing to participate through the Human Resource office. Of the number, 91 usable copies of the questionnaire were returned to the researchers, yielding a response rate of 92.86 percent. The survey questions were answered by participants based on their consent and voluntary basis. The number of this sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique, showing that it may be analyzed using inferential statistics (Sekaran, 2000; Leedy & Ormrod, 2005).

4.3. Data analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 16.0 was used to analyse the data from the questionnaire. Firstly, exploratory factor analysis was used to assess the validity and reliability of measurement scales (Hair et al, 1998; Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Relying on the guidelines set up by these statisticians, a factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was first done for all the items that represented each research variable, and this was followed by other tests, that is, Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO), Bartlett's test of sphericity, eigenvalue, variance explained and Cronbach alpha. The value of factor analysis for all items that represent each research variable was 0.4 and more, indicating the items met the acceptable standard of validity analysis. All research variables have exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value of 0.6 and were significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity, showing that the measure of sampling adequacy for each variable was acceptable. All research variables had eigenvalues larger than 1, signifying that the variables met the acceptable standard of validity analysis (Hair et al, 1998). All research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70, indicating the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability analysis (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Variables that

meet the acceptable standard of validity and reliability analyses were used in testing the hypotheses.

Secondly, analysis of variance (ANOVA), Pearson correlation (r) analysis and descriptive statistics were conducted to analyze the constructs and the usefulness of the data set (Tabachnick et al., 2001; Yaacob, 2008). Finally, Stepwise regression analysis was utilized to test the mediating hypothesis because it can assess the magnitude of each independent variable, and vary the mediating variable in the relationship between many independent variables and one dependent variable (Baron & Kenny, 1986; Foster et al., 1998). According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating variable can be considered when it meets three conditions: first, the predictor variables are significantly correlated with the hypothesized mediator. Second, the predictor and mediator variables are all significantly correlated with the dependent variable. Third, a previously significant effect of predictor variables is reduced to non-significance or reduced in terms of effect size after the inclusion of mediator variables into the analysis (Wong et al., 1995). In this regression analysis, standardized coefficients (standardized beta) were used for all analyses (Jaccard et al., 1990).

5. Results

Table 1 shows that most of the respondent characteristics were male (51.6%), aged between 20 to 39 years old (80.3%), MCE/SPM holders (20.9%), employees who served between 2 to 3 (35.2%), staff who attended the training within working hours (43.4%), and employees who had learning experiences in technical skills (54.3%).

Table 1- Respondent characteristics (N=103)

Gender (%)	Education (%)	Type of Training (%)
Male = 51.6	Degree = 22	During official hours = 43.4
Female = 48.4	Diploma/STP = 15.4	Non-official hours = 21.8
	MCE/SPM = 20.9	Both = 34.8
Age (%)	Length of Service (%)	Learning Experience (%)
20-29 = 33	>1 year = 39.6	Technical skills = 54.3
30-39 = 47.3	2-3 years = 35.2	Non-technical/ = 32.5
40-49 = 16.5	4-5 years = 6.6	administrative skills
>49 = 3.3	>6 years = 18.7	Both = 13.2

Note: SRP/LCE/PMR: Sijil Rendah Pelajaran/Lower Certificate of Education/ Penilaian Menengah Rendah; SPM/MCE: Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia/ Malaysia Certificate of Education; STPM: Sijil Tinggi Pelajaran Malaysia

Table 2 and Table 3 show the results of the validity and reliability analyses for measurement scales. The original survey questionnaire consisted of 14 items, which related to four variables: support (4 items), communication (5 items), and job performance (5 items).

Table 2- Item Validity

Variable	Item	Component		
		1	2	3
Supervisor support	gives enough time for me to practice the skills that I have learned during training		.90	
	encourages me to attend training program		.92	
	cares about my needs to have knowledge and skills		.66	

		assists me to apply the knowledge and skills learned from the training	
Supervisor Communication		clearly explains the objective of attending training program	.76
		gives information regarding the training program	.76
		gives feedback regarding the way I apply the knowledge and skills learned from training program	.73
		provides feedback, instruction or performance appraisal clearly	.75
		praises me when I do my job well	.76
Job Performance		feels more confident upon attending training	.68
		Job outputs were more quality upon attending training	.85
		able to solve any work-related problems	.41
		able to work with minimum guidance and supervision	.51
		able to solve any work-related problems	.43

The factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was first carried out for all the variables. Then, the Kaiser-Mayer-Olkin Test (KMO) which is a measure of sampling adequacy was conducted for each variable and the results indicated that it was acceptable. Relying on Hair et al. (1998) guidelines, these statistical analyses showed that: (1) all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin's value of 0.6, (2) all research variables were significant in Bartlett's test of sphericity, (3) all research variables had eigenvalues larger than 1, and (4) the items for each research variable exceeded factor loadings of 0.40 (Hair et al., 1998). Besides that, all research variables exceeded the acceptable standard of reliability analysis of 0.70 (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). These statistical analyses confirm that the measurement scales met the acceptable standard of validity and reliability analyses as shown in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 3- The Results of Validity and Reliability Analysis for Measurement Scales

Measure	Items	Factor Loadings	KMO	Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Eigen value	Variance Explained (%)	Ex-	Cronbach Alpha (α)
Supervisor Support	4	.66 - .87	.76	87.57	2.33	58.30		.76
Supervisor Communication	5	.73 - .76	.60	104.37	2.37	7.49		.72
Job Performance	5	.41 - .85	.75	119.84	2.54	63.42		.79

The variance analysis, Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the research variables used in this study. Firstly, the analysis of variance techniques were used to compare the mean scores between two or more groups in the studied organization. In this case, independent samples t-tests were used to compare two different (independent) groups of people (i.e., gender) and ANOVA is used to compare three and more different (independent) groups of people (i.e., age) (Hair et al., 1998; Yaacob, 2008). Outcomes of one-way ANOVA showed that learning experience was found to have a sig-

nificant difference with supervisor support, which means that supervisor support was found to be differently perceived by learning difference.

Table 4 shows the results of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics. The mean values for the variables are from 3.2 to 3.6, signifying that the levels of supervisor's support, supervisor communication, motivation to learn and job performance ranging from moderately high (3) to highest level (7). The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable (supervisor support and supervisor communication) and the mediating variable (motivation to learn) and the dependent variable (job performance) were less than 0.90, indicating that the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair, et al., 1998).

Table 4: Pearson Correlation Analysis and Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Pearson Correlation Analysis		
			1	2	3
1. Supervisor Support	3.2	.41	1		
2. Supervisor Communication	3.4	.36	.50**	1	
3. Job Performance	3.3	.41	.45**	.43**	1

Note: Significant at $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$

Table 5 shows that demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, education, length of service, type of training and learning experience) were entered in Step 1 and then followed by entering independent variable (supervisor support and supervisor communication) in Step 2, and mediating variable (motivation to learn) in Step 3. An examination of multicollinearity in the coefficients table shows that the tolerance value for the relationship between the independent variable (supervisor support) and the dependent variable (i.e., job performance) was .77, and the relationship between supervisor communication and job performance was .86. These tolerance values were more than the established tolerance value of .20 (as a rule of thumb), indicating the variables were not affected by multicollinearity problems (Fox, 1991; Tabachnick et al., 2001).

Table 5 shows the results of stepwise regression analysis in the three steps. In step 1, the length of service was found to be a significant predictor of job performance, accounting for 14 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Step 2 showed that the supervisor support positively and significantly correlated with job performance ($\beta = .34$, $p < 0.01$), therefore H1 was supported. Conversely, supervisor communication positively and insignificantly correlated with job performance ($\beta = .17$, $p > 0.05$), therefore H2 was not supported. In terms of explanatory power, the inclusion of these two variables in Step 2 had explained 29 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. This result confirms that supervisor support does act as a predictor of job performance and supervisor communication does not act as a predictor of job performance in the studied organization.

Table 5: Result for Stepwise Regression Analysis

Variables	Dependent variable (Job performance)	
	1	2
<u>Controlling variables</u>		
Gender	-.16	-.12

Age	-.12	-.14
Education	.08	.05
Length of service	-.25*	-.11
Type of training	-.06	.02
Learning experience	-.20	.01
<u>Independent variables</u>		
Supervisor support		.34**
Supervisor communication		.17
R Square	.14	.29
Adjusted R square	.08	.22
R Square change	.14	.15
F	2.25*	4.20***
F change	2.25*	8.79***

Note: Significance at * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

6. Discussion and implications

The findings of this study demonstrate that supervisor support does act as a determinant of job performance and supervisor communication does not act as a determinant of job performance. This result confirms that supervisor's role is a partial predicting variable of job performance in the organizational sample. In the organizational context, supervisors have provided adequate support (e.g., encourage employees to attend training programs and apply newly acquired knowledge and skills that they gain from training programs in their jobs) and used good communication practices (e.g., provide feedback, encourage discussion and openly deliver information on training) when dealing with training programs. The majority of the employees perceive that supervisor support can lead to higher job performance in the organization.

This study provides significant impacts on three major aspects: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and contribution to the human resource development practitioners. In terms of theoretical contribution, this study reveals two important outcomes. Firstly, supervisor support has increased job performance. This finding is consistent with the studies by Gupta and Govindarajan (2000), Chiaburu and Takleab (2005) and Ismail et al. (2007). Secondly, supervisor communication has not increased job performance. A thorough review of the in-depth interview results shows that the result may be influenced by external factors. These are: first, not all employees attend training programs are motivated by their understanding about the significant of training programs. Second, employees have different cognitive, emotion and psychomotor abilities may affect their understanding and commitment in training programs. Third, supervisors have different knowledge and experiences in human skills, this will influence their treatment styles in handling training programs. These differences may affect employees' appreciation and acceptance of training programs. In sum, the findings of this study shows that the ability of supervisors to play their roles in training programs has been a partial predicting variable of job performance in the studied organization. This result has partially supported training research literature mostly published in western countries.

With respect to the robustness of the research methodology, the survey questionnaire are designed based on the training management literature, the in-depth interviews, the pilot study and the survey questionnaires have met the acceptable standard of validity and reliability analysis. Hence, this may lead to the production of accurate and reliable findings.

Regarding practical contributions, the findings of this study can be used as a guideline by HR managers to improve the design and administration of training programs. This objective may be achieved if the management implements several important suggestions: firstly, customize training contents and methods according to organizational needs and wants. For example, the content of training programs for management employees should impart advanced human skills that may help them to understand individuals' cognitive, emotion and psychomotor. In order to increase the capability of management employees, professional trainers should be hired to teach them properly implementing interpersonal communication skills, managing change, conflict and problem solving techniques in the workplace. Secondly, allow supervisors to be involved in higher level training committees so that they may clarify the needs and expectations of employees at the grass root level. Thus, it may help to establish appropriate training modules that can support organizational and human resource management's strategies and goals.

Thirdly, change in the human resource policies from hiring employees based on conforming to organization policies and procedures to hiring employees based on creativity and innovations. This new hiring perspective will help management to hire employees who possess higher levels of knowledge, experience and competencies. Their capabilities may be used to train operational employees in terms of attitude and working styles, as well as to handle employees' demands with better treatment like showing more respect, be honest and accountable. Finally, review compensation and benefits system for supervisors based on current organizational strategy and goals. For example, internal organizational changes will increase duties and responsibilities of supervisors, this may affect health, safety and stress at the workplace. These problems may be decreased if the type, level and/or amount of rewards (e.g., pay rate and pay rise) are increased according to supervisors' workloads and performance. If organizations heavily consider these suggestions, this may result in an increase in supervisors' motivation to support organizational strategy and goals.

7. Conclusion

The findings of this study confirm that supervisor's role has been a partial predicting variable of job performance in the studied organization. This result has partially supported training research literature mostly published in Western organizational settings. Therefore, current research and practice within training management models needs to consider supervisor's role as a vital aspect of the organizational training system where the ability of supervisors to provide sufficient support and implement good communication may lead to induced positive attitudinal and behavioral outcomes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment, trust, good working ethics and performance). Thus, these positive outcomes may direct employees to sustain and achieve organisational competitiveness in a global economy.

The conclusion drawn from the results of this study should consider the following limitations. Firstly, this study was a cross-sectional research design where the data were taken one time within the duration of this study. In this sense, this research design did not capture the developmental issues (e.g., intra-individual change and restrictions of making inference to participants) and/or causal connections between variables of interest. Secondly, this study only examined the relationship between latent variables (i.e., supervisor support, supervisor communication and job performance) and the conclusion drawn from this study does not specify the relationship between specific indicators for the independent variables and dependent variable. Thirdly, the outcomes of multiple regression analysis have focused on the

level of performance variation explained by the regression equations and it is also helpful to indicate the amount of dependent variable variation that is not explained (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). Although a substantial amount of variance in dependent measure explained by the significant predictors is identified, there are still a number of unexplained factors that can be incorporated to identify the causal relationship among variables and their relative explanatory power. Therefore, one should be cautious about generalising the statistical results of this study. Finally, the sample of this study only used employees in a single organization and they were chosen by using a convenient sampling technique. The nature of this sample may decrease the ability of generalizing the results of this research to other organisational settings.

The conceptual and methodological limitations of this study need to be considered when designing future research. Firstly, this study sets a foundation for research on relationships between supervisor's role in training programs and job performance. It has raised many questions as well as confirming initial propositions. A few research areas can be further explored as a result of this study. Secondly, the organisational and personal characteristics as a potential variable that can influence supervisor's role in training programs needs to be further explored. Using these organisational and personal characteristics may provide meaningful perspectives for understanding of how individual similarities and differences affect supervisor's role in training programs within an organisation. Thirdly, the cross-sectional research design has a number of shortcomings; therefore other research designs such as longitudinal studies should be used as a procedure for collecting data and describing the patterns of change and the direction and magnitude of causal relationships between variables of interest. Fourthly, the findings of this study rely very much on the sample taken from one organisational sector. To fully understand the effect of supervisor's role on job performance, more organisational sector need to be used in future study. Finally, other personal outcomes of perceive value such as transfer of competency, training motivation and training effectiveness should be considered in future research because they are given more attention in considerable service quality literature (Ismail et al., 2008; Tai, 2006; Tsai & Tai, 2003). The importance of these issues needs to be further explained in future research.

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