



## Role of Online Training Content in Enhancing Job Motivation

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**ABSTRACT:** Online training content is a form of innovative training program where it may help to upgrade employees' knowledge, skills and proactive behavior in times of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and economic turbulent. Some of the challenges management face to adapt online training content included how to identify employees' needs, define training priorities, fulfill employee expectations, provide latest training materials, plan relevant training topics and how to identify sophisticated electronic media to attract employee's participation in daily operation. Recent published studies show that a well-designed online training will not be able to support its objective if online training content is not appropriately planned and implemented in organizations. Although the relationship has widely been examined, the role of online training content as an essential antecedent is not sufficiently discussed in the online training studies. Therefore, this research is done to evaluate the online training content and job motivation. Survey questionnaires were distributed to employees at regulatory federal government agencies in Malaysia. The hypothesis testing using SmartPLS showed that the ability of management to properly design online training objective and courses relevant to the job can lead to higher job motivation in organizations. This outcome can be used as significant recommendations by practitioners to understand different perspectives of online training content construct and formulate a proper online learning and teaching guidelines to maintain and enhance their organizations' competitive advantage and performance in difficult times.

**Keywords:** Online training content, job motivation and SmartPLS.

**Abbreviations:** COVID-19, Coronavirus Disease 2019; MCO, Movement Controlled Orders; VIF, Variance Inflation Factor; AVE, Average Variance Extracted; HTMT, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Successful organizations have extensively used online training as a vital learning tool in times of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and economic turbulence [1, 2]. This dangerous disease began in Wuhan, Hubei Province, People's Republic of China in late December 2019 and had quickly spread to other countries [1, 2]. As of 1 April 2020, about 900,000 cases of COVID-19 were registered worldwide with more than 44,000 deaths. The World Health Organization (WHO) has officially confirmed that COVID-19 is a significant pandemic threat originating from animal flu virus that infects almost 150 nations. The disease is increasingly spreading across countries such as Japan, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia, as well as Europe and North America. All countries in the world are currently taking proactive actions such as lockdowns and movement controlled orders (MCO) to protect and control the pandemic of COVID-19. This pandemic disease has been a major determinant of world economic turbulence [1, 2].

The implementation of such orders has caused commercial and non-commercial organizations to close their operations. In facing this challenge, sophisticated digital technologies (e.g., integration of website and wireless technology) have widely been used by organizations to handle critical management functions, particularly online training program. For effective online training programs, human resource managers have quickly set up an online training committee that involves important members, such as line managers, adult learning experts, instructional technology experts, information, communication and technology experts, representatives of worker union, as well as professional consultants [2, 3]. Online training committee will normally carry out three major roles [3]: First, identify employees' needs (e.g., define training priorities, identify employee expectations and evaluate the forms of training to be incorporated into online training). Second, empower human resource managers to administer the training programs (e.g., select and determine the right type of training, provide latest training materials, plan relevant training topics, use sophisticated electronic

media) to attract employee participation. Finally, use well-designed evaluation methods (e.g., participant reactions, knowledge accomplishment and return on investment) to assess the effectiveness of training program (e.g., training design, resource utilization and results achieved after and during training).

Online training is broadly explained as the interaction between trainers and trainees using electronic media to gain new knowledge and learn skills, latest affective and cognitive abilities, positive attitudes and other capabilities relevant with the organizations' requirements [4, 5]. Online training can be implemented in several forms, such as computer based training online learning, e-learning, web-based training (e.g., computer or web-based training, CDs, DVDs and videos). This form of training is dependent upon internet connectivity to promote interactive learning activities between trainers and trainees, where they can be conducted anytime, anywhere. For example, trainees can watch the video, use the keyboard or touch screen to answer questions, give feedback to how they would act in particular conditions or identify the steps that they would take to overcome a problem, collaborate with other trainees through discussion boards, wikis, blogs and hyperlink for additional resources, access knowledge and expert systems on an as-needed basis, and choose the type of media (print, sound, video) to upgrade the effectiveness of the learning environment [4, 5, 6].

Previous studies support that well-designed online training programs can help to meet organization and employee's objectives [4, 5]. For example, the application of online training programs in organizations of public and private sectors has provided many benefits: (a) stimulate trainees to learn technical and interpersonal skills; (b) inspire trainees to be creative in using problem solving techniques; (c) help trainees to identify current training needs and problems; (d) strengthen trainees' learning and guidance whether before, during and after training; (e) involve generation x and millennial generation; (f) link trainees to legitimate sources (e.g., articles and webinars); (g) delivery of training to dispersed geographical areas; (h) link trainees to other content, experts, and peers, practice, feedback, objectives, assessment and other positive features of the training programs. These training benefits may motivate trainees to accomplish their strategic business visions and missions in the era of unpredictable economic condition [4-7].

A review of the present literature pertaining to technology related training shows that a well-designed online training program will not be able to support its objectives if the management does not implement effective online training content [5, 8, 9, 10]. Effective online training content consists of two salient characteristics, namely training objective, and relevant to the job [11-13]. From online training perspective, training objective is normally defined as purposes determined by organizations for the training conducted to improve employees' affective, cognitive and psychomotor. For example, affective based objective refers to receiving, responding and valuing of system that controls behavior for employee's attentiveness. An organization plans and implements training methods and content that suit with employees' job. Relevant to

the job refers to training programs that impart current knowledge, skills and positive attitudes suitable with employees' job demands. For example, job duties and responsibilities, educational qualifications and comprehensive knowledge. The ability of an organization to appropriately administer such training methods may improve employees' career well-being and organizational effectiveness [4, 11].

Online training content is seen as a practical professional development instrument in today's organizations [4, 14]. Some latest research findings published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century disclosed that the ability of the management to appropriately deliver training content via online systems may have an influential impact on trainee outcomes, especially job motivation [4, 12]. From organizational behavior perspective, job motivation is usually defined as, trainees being inspired by instructional characteristics (e.g., desire and need) and extrinsic characteristics (e.g., being aware of job results) that inspire them to perform normal tasks (e.g., job descriptions assigned by job title) and beyond normal tasks (e.g., help coworkers to complete daily tasks) [10, 15]. Although the relationship has been extensively studied, the role of online training content as an antecedent is still inadequately discussed in organizational training literature [4, 5, 16].

Some researchers claim that this situation is due to several reasons: First, many past studies have generally explained the characteristics of technology related training, and neglected to emphasize on the diverse paradigms of online training content (e.g. conceptual principles, types, dimensions and significance of online training content). Second, numerous previous studies have used a simple direct effects model to evaluate determinants of technology related training and its outcomes, while antecedents of online training content and its consequences have insufficiently been explained in the organizational training literature. For example, many direct effects models have been employed to evaluate the following correlations: a) perceptions of employees with different backgrounds towards various forms of technology related training; and b) correlation between technologies related training and trainee's general attitudes and behavior [4, 5, 10, 15].

The direct effects model is often tested using a simple statistical tool (e.g., descriptive statistics and bivariate statistics). The results of this statistical test are only able to highlight on the nature of the correlation between two constructs and the degree of strength between two constructs [17-20]. On the other hand, the results of the statistical test are not capable in measuring the nature and effect size of online training content as an influential antecedent in the technology related training research literature [4, 5, 16]. As a result, the study's approach has provided many general findings. This may not provide adequate help to the practitioners in understanding the diverse perspectives of online training content construct and in setting up online training strategic action plans to maintain and accomplish the vision and missions of knowledge based organization during this difficult time.

This study explores online training programs applied within regulatory government agencies in Malaysia. These agencies have taken the advantages from the multimedia super corridor capabilities to offer online

training programs to their staff who work across this country. This training is a practical solution to enhance organizational learning within the era of movement control orders (MCO) to isolate the source of the COVID-19 outbreak and decrease the number of cases [2]. As a person-centered learning style, this training has been implemented through several methods, namely Online-Items, E-Learning and E-Training. This learning methods use a well-designed training contents developed by internal expert and professional training consultants to attract, retain and motivate employees to support the organizations' vision and missions.

A careful observation about the application of such training programs shows that it may strongly invoke employees' motivation to perform their jobs better. For example, employees' job motivation are implemented through buddy system, coaching and e-mentoring [21]. Even though the nature of this relationship is imperative, the role of online training content as an essential antecedent in the agencies has not been extensively explored. With little empirical evidence, it prompts the researchers to extend the literature by assessing the relationship between online training content and job motivation. The advantages of this online training purposed on this study depends on training objectives (e.g., improve employees' affective, cognitive and psychomotor) and relevant to job (e.g., knowledge, skills and positive behavior that suit with employees' core job). This training content is taught through synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (unreal time) learning methods to upgrade the competency of employees in reducing mistakes, decreasing malpractices, applying new problem solving skills and supporting the future growth of organization [21].

Specifically, this study examines two primary relationships: First, to examine the relationship between training objectives and job motivation. Second, to examine the relationship between relevant to job and job motivation. Hence, this paper is structured to discuss five significant aspects: Literature review, methodology, findings, discussion and conclusion

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

**The Relationship between Training Objective and Job Motivation.** The influence of training objectives in enhancing job motivation is consistent with the spirit of Path Goal Theory [22]. This theory suggests that goals will guide employees to remove barriers and perform the right behavior (e.g., solution methods, process of acquiring knowledge, and understanding through thought, experience, and the senses) in achieving their targets and solution and exposing them to good work ethic. The use of this theory in a technology related training explains that job goal is normally translated as training objective. This idea has supported the research papers in technology related training.

For example, results from the studies by [17-19] showed that well-planned online training objectives (e.g. training need identification, content preparedness and familiarity) lead to a trainees' higher job motivation in the respective organizational contexts. Thus, the hypothesis is established as follows:

H1: Training objective has a positive relationship with job motivation

**The Relationship Between Relevant to the Job and Job Motivation.** Role of relevant to job in upgrading job motivation is consistent with the idea of Expectancy Theory [23]. This theory emphasizes that individuals who clearly understand the value of the outcomes may act positively. The application of this theory in a training management explains that valuable outcome is often translated as relevant to job. This idea is consistent with the research papers in technology related training.

For example, outcomes from the studies by [11, 24] displayed that online training content relevant to employees' job (e.g., suitability, adequacy and disclosure new) leads to higher job motivation in different organizational settings. Thus, the hypothesis tested is:

H2: Relevance to the job has a positive relationship with job motivation.

## III. METHODOLOGY

**Research Design.** This research is carried out at regulatory government agencies in Malaysia. The actual name of the organization is kept anonymous for confidential reasons. At the initial stage of data collection, a self-report questionnaire was drafted based on the online training management literature. In addition, a back-translation technique was used to translate the survey questionnaire into English and Malay as a way to enhance the quality of the research results [25].

**Sample.** A purposive sampling method was used to distribute 300 survey questionnaires to employees who work in the accounting, management, information and communications technology (ICT) and human resource management departments within the studied organizations. This sampling method was chosen because the agency heads had not given a detailed list of employees. Therefore, the researcher could not use the random technique to pick participants for this study. From the total number, 250 (83.3 per cent) usable survey questionnaires were returned to the researchers. Participants involved in this study had given their consent and volunteered.

**Measures.** The survey questionnaire consists of two parts: Firstly, training objectives had 5 items and relevant to the job had 5 items adapted from the online training research literature [26-28]. Finally, job motivation had 6 items adapted from the online training related training motivation research literature [29, 30]. All the items were assessed using a Likert-scale of 7 items ranging from "strongly disagreeable/unsatisfied" (1) to "strongly agreed/satisfied" (7). Participant characteristics were employed as control variables because this study focused on employee attitudes.

## IV. RESULTS

**Descriptive Statistics.** The majority of participants were females (68.4.1%), aged 34 to 39 years old (35.6%), Malay (90.8%), management and professional group (61.2%), position grades 41 to 44 (32.4%) and degree holders (43.2%).

**Confirmatory Factor Analysis.** Table 1 demonstrates the convergent validity result. The correlation between the items and the constructs has outer loadings above 0.70 and item reliability values are more than 0.50 [31].

Meanwhile, each construct has an AVE value greater than 0.50 [31]. This result shows that these constructs meet the standards of convergent validity. Conversely,

the values of composite reliability for each research construct exceeded 0.80 [31], indicating that these constructs have high internal consistency.

**Table 1: Convergent Validity Test.**

Constructs	Outer Loading > 0.70			Item Reliability > 0.50	AVE > 0.50	Composite Reliability > 0.5
	1	2	3			
Training Objective	0.816			0.741	0.939	0.754
	-			-		
Relevant to the Job	0.880			0.774	0.930	0.727
		0.796		0.663		
Job Motivation		-		-	0.925	0.673
		0.888	0.774	0.788		
			-	0.599		
			0.868	0.753		

Table 2 indicates the discriminant validity test. For each construct, the value of the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) is less than 0.85 and the confident interval bias in parentheses for each construct is less than the value of 1, which indicates that the construct of the analysis has achieved the discriminant validity criteria [31].

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity Test.**

Constructs	Training Objective	Relevant to the Job
Training Objective		
Relevant to the Job	0.846	
Job Motivation	0.549 (0.390, 0.624)	0.634 (0.484, 0.660)

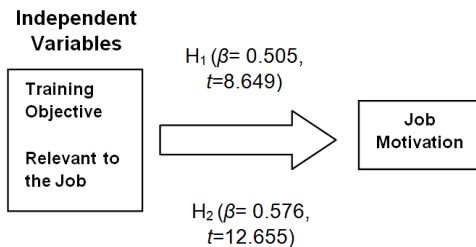
**Note:** In parentheses the confidence interval values are 2.5% and 97.5%

Table 3 shows the basic statistics and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The mean value for each study construct ranged from 5.745 to 5.972, meaning that training objective, relevant to the job and job motivation are among the high (5) and very high (7). Conversely, the association between a) training objective and job motivation and b) relevant to the job and job motivation have VIF values of less than 5.0 [31], showing that all constructs are free from severe collinearity problems.

**Table 3: Basic of Statistical Analysis and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF).**

Constructs	Mean	Standard Deviation	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)
Training Objective	5.745	0.71	2.468
Relevant to the Job	5.815	0.649	2.468
Job Motivation	5.972	0.606	

**Structural Model Analysis.** The findings of the hypothesis testing using the SmartPLS software route analysis model are summarized in Fig. 1. These test results indicate two important findings: first, there is a strong support for training objective with job motivation ( $\beta = 0.505$ ,  $t = 8.649$ ), H1 is supported. Second, there is a strong support for relevant to the job with job motivation ( $\beta = 0.576$ ,  $t = 12.655$ ), H2 is supported.



**Note:** Significance level  $t > 1.96$ .

**Fig. 1. Hypothesis Testing.**

In contrast, the rate of change in the independent variable (training objective) is 0.25 to dependent variable (job motivation). This value of  $R^2$  is less than 0.26, meaning that this model has a moderate effect [32]. Meanwhile, the rate of change in the independent variable (relevant to the job) is 0.33 to dependent variable (job motivation). This value of  $R^2$  is more than 0.26, meaning that this model has a substantial effect [32].

Next, the effect size and predictive relevance of  $f^2$  value of training objective on job motivation is 0.34. This value is greater than 0.15, meaning that training objective has a medium effect size [32]. Meanwhile, the  $f^2$  value of relevant to the job on job motivation is 0.49, this value is larger than 0.35, meaning that this model has substantial effect size on this model [32]. In addition, predictive relevance testing shows a  $Q^2$  value of 0.155 for training objective and 0.205 for relevant to the job. In view that these figures are higher than zero, the model has predictive relevance [31].

## V. DISCUSSION

The findings of this research show that the online training content is a major predictor of job motivation. Most respondents thought that the levels of training objective, relevant to the job and job motivation are high. This situation explains that the ability of management to properly design training objective and courses relevant to the job can lead to higher job motivation in organizations. This research provides three major important implications, namely theoretical consequences, methodological implications and practical contributions. For the theoretical consequences, the findings of this analysis are consistent with Path Goal Theory [22] and Expectancy Theory [23], which suggest that individuals who clearly



understand the value of outcomes and goals can remove roadblocks and stay in the right path to achieve their needs and expectations. The principal ideas of these theories are firmly endorsed by [17-19, 11, 24]. In terms of methodological implications, the questionnaire used in this study has satisfactorily fulfilled the validity and reliability requirements. This may lead to precise and reliable outcomes. Next, for the practical contributions, this study's outcomes can be used by the practitioners to enhance the effectiveness of online training content. The first proposed improvement is made based on the importance and performance matrix analysis (IPMA) test [33]. This test may identify priority actions to improve the effectiveness of online training content. Table 4 explains that the construct relevant to the job is the most important (value 0.433) and performed the best in contributing to job motivation (value 80.321). On the other hand, the training objective construct is considered as the lowest of importance (value 0.123) and has lowest of performance in contributing to job motivation (79.169). This construct should be given the priority in improving online training objective in the organizations.

**Table 4: Importance and Performance Matrix Analysis (IPMA).**

Constructs	Job Motivation	
	Importance	Performance
	(Total Effect)	(Index Values)
Training Objective	0.123	79.169
Relevant to the Job	0.433	80.321

Management should pay more attention to the following aspects. First, determine training objectives to upgrade the competency of employees' affective (e.g., emotional intelligence), cognitive (e.g., brain power) and psychomotor (hand on skills in using technology) to handle challenging tasks. Second, set up training objectives to handle tactical objective (e.g., upgrade employee performance to decrease mistakes and malpractices, as well as solve present job requirements) and strategic objective (e.g., develop new knowledge, skills and positive attitudes consistent with organizational growth) to support their organizations' vision and missions. Third, simplify training objectives to help employees choose suitable courses that may improve their career well-being. Fourth, upgrade the capability of information, communication and technology infrastructures to provide conducive learning environment. This may inspire trainees to master technical and human skills from training sessions and apply them to achieve job goals. If these suggestions are considered, this may encourage employees to support their online training objectives

## VI. LIMITATION

Some conceptual and methodological constraints existed. First, survey questionnaire data were gathered only once within the period of this study and they only reveal the respondents' attitudes towards the association between the variables of interest. Second, the association between the elements of the independent variables and dependent variables is not

evaluated. Third, this study was done at the regulatory government agencies in Malaysia. Fourth, survey questionnaire data collected using purposive sampling plan cannot control respondents' answers. Thus, this constraints may lessen the ability to generalize this study's findings to various organizational contexts.

## VII. CONCLUSION

This research shows that online training content (i.e., training objective and relevant to the job) is an essential determinant for job motivation. This result also confirmed and extended the most recent studies published in Western and Asian countries. Thus, this research suggests that the application of well-planned online training content will strongly induce positive work related attitudes (e.g., satisfaction, commitment and prosocial behavior). Thus, these positive attitudes can also lead to maintaining and enhancing organizational performance in global competition and uncertain times.

## VIII. FUTURESCOPE

This research provides some important ideas to improve future research. Firstly, several important organizational features (e.g. division and online training facilities) and employee features (e.g., gender, age, education, position and length of service) should be discussed further, where these characteristics may provide useful insights for understanding how particular similarities and differences affect the effectiveness of online training programs [34]. Secondly, an alternative research design, namely longitudinal analysis, may be considered if future study wants to identify the magnitude of cause-effect relationships among interest variables. Thirdly, to fully comprehend the effect of online training content on job motivation, a comparison between two or more organizational types should be considered in the future. Fourthly, more attention should be given to other online training content elements, such as interactivity, attractiveness and reliability because they are widely acknowledged as significant links between online training programs and other kinds of trainee outcomes, such as satisfaction and innovative behavior. Fifth, sample size should be increased to represent population features, thus, making generalization of outcomes more probable. Finally, other features of online training program, such as trainers, modules and facilities support should be advanced as their functions are frequently debated in considerable online training research literature. The above suggestions must be further explored by future studies.

**Conflict of Interest.** No.

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