**SUPERVISORS’ ROLES IN TRAINING PROGRAM CULTURE, TRAINING INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

Nur Izzaty Mohamad\(^A\), Ishak Abd Rahman\(^B\)

**ARTICLE INFO**

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<td><strong>Received</strong> 28 December 2022</td>
<td><strong>Purpose:</strong> This study examines the mediating role of training intrinsic motivation in the relationship between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer in the Malaysian public sector. Thus, the research question is, “what is the effect of the supervisors’ roles in training program culture, training intrinsic motivation on knowledge transfer in the public sector context?”</td>
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<td><strong>Accepted</strong> 28 February 2023</td>
<td><strong>Theoretical framework:</strong> The framework of the study is adopted from the attributes of (1) leadership, (2) social learning, (3) beliefs and (4) employee performance. This framework aims to provide an understanding of how these variables affect the supervisors’ roles in training program culture, intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer.</td>
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<td>Keywords:</td>
<td><strong>Design/methodology/approach:</strong> A cross-sectional study was used to collect 544 survey questionnaires from employees at different divisions/departments in the Malaysian public sector. The SmartPLS is utilized to evaluate the quality of the study’s instrument and subsequently test the study’s hypotheses.</td>
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<td>Supervisors Roles; Training Programs; Intrinsic Motivation; Knowledge Transfer.</td>
<td><strong>Findings:</strong> The structural equation modelling test indicated that knowledge transfer is affected by supervisors’ roles in training program culture. Hence, the effect of supervisors’ roles in the administration of training programs on knowledge transfer is mediated by training intrinsic motivation. This finding will benefit supervisors, managers and operation employees, as well as studies related to training intrinsic motivation in dynamic organizations.</td>
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<td><strong>Research:</strong> In the theoretical context, this study confirmed that the training’s intrinsic motivation is an effective mediating variable in the relationship between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer. Meanwhile, in the managerial implication, supervisors should provide direction and assistance to subordinates and practice open communication to help them enhance performance. A communication technique relevant to the work environment will help employees increase knowledge transfer and public sector performance in the future.</td>
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<td><strong>Originality/value:</strong> This study is to refine the role of supervisors and create a culture of effective training in public sector culture. These findings should be considered by the public sector in the context of training programs.</td>
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SUPERVISORES' PAPEIS NA CULTURA DO PROGRAMA DE TREINAMENTO, TREINAMENTO DA MOTIVAÇÃO INTRÍNSECA E TRANSFERÊNCIA DE CONHECIMENTO: UM ESTUDO EMPÍRICO

RESUMO

Objetivo: Este estudo examina o papel mediador da motivação intrínseca do treinamento na relação entre o papel dos supervisores na cultura do programa de treinamento e a transferência de conhecimento no setor público malaio. Assim, a questão da pesquisa é: "qual é o efeito do papel dos supervisores na cultura do programa de treinamento, treinando a motivação intrínseca na transferência de conhecimento no contexto do setor público"?

Estrutura teórica: A estrutura do estudo é adotada a partir dos atributos de (1) liderança, (2) aprendizagem social, (3) crenças e (4) desempenho dos funcionários. Esta estrutura visa proporcionar uma compreensão de como estas variáveis afetam o papel dos supervisores nas diferentes divisões/departamentos do setor público e na transferência de conhecimento.

Design/metodologia/abordagem: Um estudo transversal foi utilizado para coletar 544 questionários de pesquisa de funcionários de diferentes divisões/departamentos do setor público malaio. O SmartPLS é utilizado para avaliar a qualidade do instrumento do estudo e posteriormente testar as hipóteses do estudo.

Conclusões: O teste de modelagem da equação estrutural indicou que a transferência de conhecimento é afetada pelo papel dos supervisores na cultura do programa de treinamento. Portanto, o efeito do papel dos supervisores na administração dos programas de treinamento na transferência de conhecimento é mediado pela motivação intrínseca do treinamento. Esta descoberta beneficiará supervisores, gerentes e funcionários da operação, assim como estudos relacionados ao treinamento da motivação intrínseca em organizações dinâmicas.

Pesquisa: No contexto teórico, este estudo confirmou que a motivação intrínseca do treinamento é uma variável mediadora eficaz na relação entre as funções dos supervisores na cultura dos programas de treinamento e a transferência de conhecimento. Enquanto isso, na implicação gerencial, os supervisores devem fornecer direção e assistência aos subordinados e praticar uma comunicação aberta para ajudá-los a melhorar o desempenho. Uma técnica de comunicação relevante para o ambiente de trabalho ajudará os funcionários a aumentar a transferência de conhecimento e o desempenho do setor público no futuro.

Originalidade/valor: Este estudo visa refinar o papel dos supervisores e criar uma cultura de treinamento eficaz na cultura do setor público. Estas descobertas devem ser consideradas pelo setor público no contexto de programas de treinamento.


SUPERVISORES EL PAPEL DE LOS SUPERVISORES EN LA CULTURA DEL PROGRAMA DE FORMACIÓN, LA MOTIVACIÓN INTRÍNSECA Y LA TRANSFERENCIA DE CONOCIMIENTOS: UN ESTUDIO EMPÍRICO

RESUMEN

Propósito: Este estudio examina el papel mediador de la motivación intrínseca a la formación en la relación entre las funciones de los supervisores en la cultura del programa de formación y la transferencia de conocimientos en el sector público malasio. Así, la pregunta de investigación es: “¿cuál es el efecto de los roles de los supervisores en la cultura del programa de formación, la motivación intrínseca de formación en la transferencia de conocimientos en el contexto del sector público?”

Marco teórico: El marco del estudio se adopta a partir de los atributos de (1) liderazgo, (2) aprendizaje social, (3) creencias y (4) rendimiento de los empleados. Este marco pretende proporcionar una comprensión de cómo estas variables afectan al papel de los supervisores en la cultura del programa de formación, la motivación intrínseca y la transferencia de conocimientos.

 Diseño/metodología/enfoque: Se utilizó un estudio transversal para recoger 544 cuestionarios de empleados de diferentes divisiones/departamentos del sector público malasio. Se utiliza el SmartPLS para evaluar la calidad del instrumento de estudio y, posteriormente, poner a prueba las hipótesis del estudio.

Resultados: La prueba de modelización de ecuaciones estructurales indicó que la transferencia de conocimientos se ve afectada por las funciones de los supervisores en la cultura del programa de formación. Por lo tanto, el efecto de las funciones de los supervisores en la administración de los programas de formación sobre la transferencia de conocimientos está mediado por la motivación intrínseca a la formación. Este hallazgo beneficiará a supervisores, gerentes y empleados operativos, así como a los estudios relacionados con la motivación intrínseca a la formación en organizaciones dinámicas.

Investigación: En el contexto teórico, este estudio confirma que la motivación intrínseca de la formación es una variable mediadora eficaz en la relación entre el papel de los supervisores en la cultura del programa de formación
y la transferencia de conocimientos. En cuanto a la implicación gerencial, los supervisores deben proporcionar dirección y asistencia a los subordinados y practicar una comunicación abierta para ayudarles a mejorar su rendimiento. Una técnica de comunicación adaptada al entorno laboral ayudará a los empleados a aumentar la transferencia de conocimientos y el rendimiento del sector público en el futuro.

**Originalidad/valor:** Este estudio sirve para perfeccionar el papel de los supervisores y crear una cultura de formación eficaz en la cultura del sector público. Estas conclusiones deberían ser tenidas en cuenta por el sector público en el contexto de los programas de formación.

**Palabras clave:** Roles de los Supervisores, Programas de Formación, Motivación Intrínseca, Transferencia de Conocimientos.

**INTRODUCTION**

Public organizations are sector bodies responsible for assisting, controlling, implementing, and coordinating the main objectives of national administration to develop a sustainable, efficient and highly competitive public administration system in Malaysia (Public Service Department Official Portal, 2022; Official Portal of Ministry of Finance Malaysia, 2022). Based on the control of the Human Resource Training Policy of Public Organizations outlined in the 6-Year Number Service Circular (2005), various types of internal and external training have been implemented (Service Circular No. 6, 2005). The basic objective of this training is to provide a planned training method, increase productivity efficiently and effectively to achieve sustainable national economic growth, add value to career management, improve task performance, build employee talent, and realize organizational objectives (Husain & Brahim, 2006; Rohman & Sabri, 2017).

Training has recently become a critical theme in personnel organizational environments in Public Sector. In 2022, many organizations will prioritize culture through Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in their training programs through transformational leadership development. Most prior research emphasizes that to achieve organizational objectives, it is appropriate to focus on strategic alignment of leadership support (supervisors) and positive cultures (norms, values, and beliefs). From a training perspective, supervisors are often given opportunities to plan and handle the culture of training programs, which includes determining the training goals, selecting appropriate coaches, developing lesson plans, selecting program methods and techniques, preparing materials and program schedules, as well as conducting training needs analysis (Msuya & Kumar, 2022). Supervisors implement the training programs based on the leaders’ planning and managers’ instructions to maintain and improve the competitiveness and productivity of their organizations (Palomino, Valdivia & García, 2022; Kumpikaitė-Valiūniénė et al., 2022). Today, the role of a supervisor in training program culture has been considered a notable change in management and an innovative approach implemented...
Mohamad, N. I., Rahman, I. A. (2023)
Supervisors’ Roles in Training Program Culture, Training Intrinsic Motivation and Knowledge Transfer: an Empirical Study

in dynamic organizations (Karp & Tom, 2020; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor (2020a). It is seen as such because it can (a) stimulate trainees to learn technical and interpersonal skills, (b) inspire trainees to be creative in using problem-solving techniques, (c) help trainees to identify current training needs and problems, (d) strengthen trainee learning and guidance either before, during and after training. As a result, the training program can encourage trainees to achieve a strategic business vision and mission in an economic era that is difficult to predict (Kim, Park & Kang, 2019; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2020a).

Recent organizational learning studies highlighted that the role of supervisors is a critical element in developing a comprehensive training culture. According to Park, Kang, and Kim (2018) and Tahiry and Ekmekcioglu (2022), supervisory elements have two dimensions: direct communication and training feedback. Direct communication is frequently related to the ability of the supervisor to deliver information related to the training framework, discuss work methods, provide advice and guidance, and share task techniques before, during, and after the training session. Meanwhile, training feedback begins with the supervisor identifying the latest training needs and is followed by assessing the participants’ reactions, learning, behavior change and reporting the results to stakeholders using various techniques, such as interviews, survey forms and suggestion boxes (El Hajjar & Alkhanaizi 2018; Park, Kang & Kim, 2018). This process will provide accurate and reliable information, in which supervisors can report employees’ latest job performance, inform employees’ strengths and weaknesses, and provide constructive insights (Park, Kang & Kim, 2018; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). Therefore, the supervisors’ roles as assistants to managers are vital in ensuring that employees follow training instructions and policies. In addition, the supervisors are also frequently given the opportunity to plan and operate training programs, which includes determining training goals, selecting appropriate trainers, developing lesson plans, selecting program methods and techniques, preparing program materials and schedules, and analysis of training requirements (Johlke & Duhan, 2000; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022; Amoo & Adam, 2022).

A growing body of literature suggests that supervisor’s attention to training programs can have a positive impact on organizational reputation through positive effects on training intrinsic motivation. For examples, implementing a mentoring program that helps employees through a professional coaching approach and helps employees improve the quality of transferable learning (such as current knowledge, new skills, ability to adapt to changing tasks, and valuable experience) (Service Circular No 8, 2010). In the meantime, the strategy for the executive services group is to implement a coaching program designed to increase intrinsic motivation training to learn to manage and carry out tasks. This strategy can improve the
cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of employees to complete and complete tasks more efficiently and effectively (Service Circular Number 8, 2010). Besides that, this mechanism to increase intrinsic motivation training in performing daily tasks). This situation also promotes the improvement of positive employee behavior, which is knowledge transfer (such as efficiently generating expertise, creating an excellent and innovative work culture, having the necessary skills for the current task, developing a positive attitude, and adapting knowledge to the situation) (Husain & Brahim, 2006; Husain Rohman, 2008 & Sabri, 2017). Positive behavior can help improve the efficiency of supervisors and help employees to make the national development agenda a successful success, as well as form a democratic and proactive leadership based on the principle of freedom (Service Circular No. 6 Year, 2005).

Interestingly, previous training impact in public sector contexts studies claim that supervisors’ ability to perform their role appropriately in the organizational cultures in training programs can significantly impact training intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer. In public sector, perspective, this situation also encourages the improvement of positive employee behavior, which is knowledge transfer (such as efficiently generating expertise, creating an excellent and innovative work culture, possessing the skills required for the task, developing a positive attitude, and adapting knowledge to the current situation) (Hussain & Brahim, 2004; Hussain, 2008; Abdul Rohman, Zaharuddin, & Sabri, 2017). Hence, the importance of the supervisor’s role in creating an effective training culture cannot be denied in various organizations (Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Amoo & Adam, 2022). Although this relationship has been extensively examined, the effect size and nature of training intrinsic motivation as a vital mediating variable has been largely ignored in the workplace training cultures research literature (Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2020b; Rahman, Uddin & Dey, 2021; Andoh, Mensah & Owusu, 2022). To address these gaps, many researchers argue that this condition may be influenced by several reasons. First, most previous studies discussed the findings of a general and easy-to-expect hypothesis, which is that supervisors’ ability to regularly manage training programs in a training program culture can increase knowledge transfer and training intrinsic motivation in general perspective. Second, previous studies have emphasized the internal properties of training intrinsic motivation (e.g., conceptual discussion about disconfirmation definitions, purpose, dimensions, and importance of this construct in public and private organizations). Third, many past empirical studies have utilized a direct effect model which only focuses on the association between the independent variable and the dependent variable.
Recognizing the lack of previous studies, the researcher conducted an in-depth review of the literature to provide an idea for developing an intervening research model based on an empirical perspective as a new approach to evaluate the effectiveness of supervisors’ roles in training program culture in a turbulent and difficult-to-predict era of globalization. For example, supervisors’ roles in training program culture, training intrinsic motivation, and knowledge transfer are based on the recommendations of previous researchers who demonstrated the importance of training intrinsic motivation in the training management model. Several studies of training management published in the twenty-first century found that supervisors’ roles in training program culture can increase training intrinsic motivation and, as a result, positive behavior, particularly in relation to knowledge transfer. According to Naquin and Holton’s Improve Work Through Learning model (Naquin & Holton, 2002), employees with high motivation and stronger desires and efforts to join, engage, and acquire new competencies in training development programs may result in increased positive behavior in organizations.

This study aims to fill a gap in empirical research concerning the relationship between the supervisors’ roles in training program culture, training intrinsic motivation, and knowledge transfer. This study also contributes to the expansion of previous researchers’ literature review of supervisors’ roles in training program culture. The following sections are the structure of this paper: research objectives, literature review, hypothesis development, methodology, discussion, implications, future recommendations, and conclusions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concepts of Supervisors’ Roles in Training Program Culture

Govaerts et al. (2017) and Kim, Park and Kang (2019) mention that the concepts of supervisors’ roles in training program culture have two important elements: direct communication and training feedback (Amoo & Adam, 2022; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022; Msuya & Kumar, 2022). Supervisors’ direct communication is frequently seen as a crucial part of organizational training management comprising two keywords: supervisor and communication. Supervisors generally refer to middle officers who have responsibility from their employers to plan, organize, lead and control operational workers to meet their organization’s objectives and strategies. At the same time, direct communication is typically viewed as individuals who transfer information to other individuals through a specific method to jointly understand the information (Amoo & Adam, 2022; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). In the context
of training management, direct communication is generally defined as an openness, honest, caring and trustworthy supervisor in communicating information about the goals of the training program, the advantages of the program, the appropriate knowledge to be acquired (process, content and tasks), the appropriate skills to acquire and the resolution of interpersonal barriers before, during and/or after following the training program (Yaghi, 2020; Lee, 2022).

In training management, feedback is frequently defined as the supervisor’s ability to report on the most recent work performance, provide positive feedback, and convey ideas for improvement (Amoo & Adam, 2022; Msuya & Kumar, 2022; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). Both types of coaching are critical in motivating employees to meet and maintain annual work goals. In addition, recent studies suggest that the ability of supervisors to practise direct communication and training feedback in training programs’ organizational cultures can be a significant antecedent to training intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer in competitive firms (Lee, 2022; Amoo & Adam, 2022; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022).

The Concepts of Training Intrinsic Motivation in Training Program Culture

Intrinsic training motivation is an important component of training program culture. Intrinsic training motivation is generally considered as an individual with a high desire, exact passion and deep interest to attend training to attain certain objectives in a career and organization (Lees & Dhanpat, 2021; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Chow & Yeh, 2022). This illustrates that the internal motivation of training attempts to develop attitudes and enhance skills and new knowledge in addition to being influenced by the supervisor’s role in building a balanced training culture (Chow & Yeh, 2022; Lees & Dhanpat, 2021). There is evidence that high intrinsic training motivation leads to a strong desire to overcome motivational barriers that discourage individuals from participating in training programs to increase positive behavior (Kim, Park & Kang, 2019; Lees & Dhanpat, 2021). Therefore, intrinsic training motivation is frequently interpreted as an important result between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer in the context of training management.

The Concepts of Knowledge Transfer in Training Program Culture

Knowledge transfer is a crucial component of the effectiveness of a training program, which comprises of two main elements: transfer and knowledge. A transfer is often defined as the individual’s capacity to grasp knowledge obtained in training program sessions and transfer those skills into organizational duties. On the other hand, knowledge is described as a high level
of understanding possessed by persons relating to duties at work. According to Argote, Guo, Park & Hahl (2022), Blume et al. (2017), and Kim, Park & Kang (2019) defined knowledge as systematically expanding understanding and information obtained from multiple sources and perspectives to help improve organizational performance.

Most management scholars believe that knowledge transfer involving aspects of learning, skills and trained behavior is important to be included in organizational training program activities to help employees identify, manage and complete tasks based on the benefits of training offered (Blume et al., 2017; Argote, Guo, Park & Hahl, 2022; Kim, Park & Kang, 2019; Maham Fatima & Ahmed Siddiqui, 2020). For example, management’s ability to organize training programs that can focus on work methods, task-solving techniques, strategies for mastering the latest skills and procedures for applying new skills can improve the transfer of employee knowledge and achieve organizational goals quickly and effectively (Blume et al., 2017; Kim, Park & Kang, 2019). Hence, efficiency employees are evaluated based on their capacity to use all knowledge, skills and behaviors or interests and advantages communicated in a task.

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

Relationship Between Supervisors’ Roles in Training Program Culture and Training Intrinsic Motivation

Transformational Leadership theory is congruent with the effect of supervisory roles on training programme culture on training intrinsic motivation (Bass, 1998). In organizational culture and psychology, this theory focuses on the concept of leadership transformation between leaders and followers. According to this theory, transformational leadership has four levels: individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and idealized influence. First, leaders must be able to meet the needs of their followers by acting as mentors (such as providing empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance). Second, leaders need to be willing to take risks in order to stimulate positive thinking by encouraging followers’ creativity in task management to be intellectually stimulated. Third, leaders must be able to provide motivation and inspiration (i.e., leaders give inspiration to followers to achieve future goals). Fourth, idealized power (i.e., the leader becomes a model and gives feedback in practising ethical behavior for followers to emulate). Finally, in the training program context, the willingness of leaders to practice direct communication (i.e., providing empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance) and training feedback (i.e., providing suggestions for improvement) in this relationship could strongly
enhance employees’ positive actions. The application of this theory in supervisors’ roles in training program culture shows that the notion of leaders’ favorable treatment is often interpreted as supervisors’ direct communication and training feedback.

Many previous studies have found that supervisors’ roles in training program culture impact training intrinsic motivation. For example, the perceptions of 300 employees at Central Government Agencies in Putrajaya, Malaysia (Mohamad, Ismail, & Mohamad Nor, 2021), perceptions of 190 employees from public TVET colleges in Gauteng, South Africa (Amoo & Adam, 2022), and 193 full-time employees working in private health-care institutions in Ankara, Turkey (Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). The findings suggest that the ability of supervisors to implement direct communication (e.g., guidance and effective non-verbal and verbal communication) and training feedback (e.g., fair assessment and participation in activities) in training program environment sessions was found to be a significant determinant of employees’ intrinsic motivation in the different organizations, (Amoo & Adam, 2022; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022). As a result, the hypotheses are as follows:

H1: Direct communication is positively related to the training intrinsic motivation of employees
H2: Training feedback is positively related to the training intrinsic motivation of employees

Relationship Between Training Intrinsic Motivation and Knowledge Transfer

Social Learning theory, in line with training intrinsic motivation, can be defined as influencing knowledge transfer (Bandura, 1979). This theory explains how individuals can increase their motivation to produce positive behavior through conditioning and cognitive theory, which takes into account psychological influences such as attention and memory. According to this theory, psychological influences are usually translated as training intrinsic motivation. Numerous studies advocate the effect of training intrinsic motivation on knowledge transfer. For example, the perceptions of 395 employees in the Fire-Rescue Department (Ithnin, Ismail, Daud & Tharima, 2022), the perceptions of 389 employees from a state-owned power transmission organization in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), the perceptions of 300 staff at Central Government Agencies in Putrajaya, Malaysia (Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021), the perceptions of 227 teachers in secondary schools in the Midwest of the USA (Kim, Park & Kang, 2019), the perceptions of 3112 staff within various industries based in South Africa, Southern Africa and the United States of America (Lees & Dhanpat, 2021) and the
perceptions of 288 respondents in Public Institutes of Higher Learning in Malaysia (Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021).

The results from these studies reported that the ability of an employee to execute the training intrinsic motivation (e.g., attending the organized training program, giving close attention and being motivated to gain new knowledge and skills) in training program culture is an important predictor of knowledge transfer in the respective organizations (Kim, Park & Kang, 2019; Lees & Dhanpat, 2021; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021). Thus, the hypothesis established is as follows:

H3: Training intrinsic motivation is positively related to knowledge transfer

**Relationship Between Supervisors’ Roles in Training Program Culture, Training Intrinsic Motivation and Knowledge Transfer**

Mediating of training intrinsic motivation between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer is consistent with the essence of Naquin and Holton’s Improve Work Through Learning Model (Naquin & Holton, 2002). According to this theory, motivation is a critical component in this construct that is activated by employees who have greater desires and efforts to join, engage, acquire, and master new competencies in training programs. This motivation process may result in improved organizational behavior. In the training context, the individuals’ motivation leads to a determination to master all knowledge and skills due to their abilities to observe a situation and how their thinking can analyze the situation efficiently and effectively to produce positive actions. The application of this theory in training program culture shows that the notion of Improve Work Through Learning model is usually translated as training intrinsic motivation (Shaheen & Soomro, 2022; Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021). The role of this variable as an important mediating variable between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer has received substantial consideration from the training management literature (Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021).

Some recent studies acknowledged that the effect of supervisors’ roles in training program culture on knowledge transfer is indirectly affected by training intrinsic motivation. For example, the latest surveys conducted on different types of organizations, such as the perceptions of 288 employees in Public Institutes of Higher Learning in Malaysia (Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021), the perception of 389 employees from a state-owned power transmission organization in Odisha, India (Sahoo & Mishra, 2022), the perception 395 employees in Fire-Rescue Department (Ithnin, Ismail, Daud & Tharima, 2022), perceptions of
300 employees at the Malaysian Central Government Agencies (Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021), and the perceptions of 253 NGOs located in Karachi-based agencies of the United Nations (Shaheen & Soomro, 2022). Results from these surveys showed that the ability of supervisors to execute direct communication (e.g., acted in a way that was consistent and supportive) and training feedback (e.g., method suggestion, report recent performance and positive outlook in performance) in the management of on-the-job training and off-the-job training programs had powerfully invoked employees’ training intrinsic motivation. Consequently, this motivation could lead to more extensive employee knowledge transfer in the respective organizations (Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021; Shaheen & Soomro, 2022). Thus, the hypotheses established are as follows:

H4: Relationship between direct communication and knowledge transfer is mediated by training intrinsic motivation

H5: Relationship between training feedback and knowledge transfer is mediated by training intrinsic motivation

The literature was utilized to develop the research model. Figure 1 shows that direct communication and training feedback are the independent variables. While the training intrinsic motivation is the mediating variable, and knowledge transfer is the dependent variable. Therefore, the effect of supervisors’ direct communication and training feedback on knowledge transfer is mediated by training intrinsic motivation.

**Figure 1. Research Model**

![Figure 1. Research Model](image)

**METHOD**

**Procedure**

A cross-sectional method was used as a method of collecting data from survey questionnaires. This strategy helps researchers gather relevant and accurate data, reduce bias and improve data quality (Creswell, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). First, literature related to
organizational training management was used to construct the questionnaire items. The questionnaire items were then retranslated from English to Malay and back to English to check for consistency and clarity (Wright, 1996). In the translation process, the researcher engaged the support of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia’s lecturer in English and Malay Languages in the area of human resource development. This translation procedure can verify the study questions’ accuracy, authenticity and dependability, and it can be utilized in the subsequent analytic process. Following that, the actual study’s questionnaire items were formatted.

**Sample**

The sample for this study comprised employees who serve in various positions as public servants. Purposeful sampling strategies were utilized to distribute 600 printed questionnaires to employees in various departments and units. The researcher used this sampling technique because the human resource management was not able to provide a list of registered personnel in compliance with organizational policies and safeguarding the organization’s reputation. This constraint did not allow the researcher to employ the random approach in selecting the study sample. A total of 544 (90.66%) useable surveys were answered and returned.

**Instruments**

The survey questionnaire was divided into four sections. First, six items of direct communication were modified based on a literature review of training program development (Burke & Badwin, 1999; Tharenou, 2001). Second, five items in the training feedback were modified based on the literature review of training program development (Burke & Badwin, 1999; Tharenou, 2001). Third, five items adapted from the training management literature were used to assess training intrinsic motivation (Burke & Badwin, 1999; Tharenou, 2001). Fourth, knowledge transfer was assessed using five items adapted from a review of the literature on organizational behavior (Wallace, Chernatony & Buil, 2011; Podsakoff, Ahearne & MacKenzie, 1997). All of these items were scored on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree/very dissatisfied) to 7 (strongly agree/very satisfied). The scale range was chosen to produce neutral feedback while improving reliability (Lewis, 1993; Cox, 1980). Meanwhile, because previous theories and empirical studies related to research objectives, research framework, and hypothesis development did not provide strong support for their role as predictor variables, the demographic items were used as control variables. As a result, this survey investigated research issues based on general employees’ perceptions.
DATA ANALYSIS

Demographic Description

Most respondents participated based on the agreement of the organization and the employees’ agreement. There was no element of coercion, and confidentiality was assured. The majority of respondents were between the age of 34 and 39 (38.8%), married (70.6%), female (68.2%), support services (55.5%), grades 19-26 (34.6%), permanent services (98.7%) and their salary ranges between RM 2000-RM2999 (25.6%).

Instrument Validity and Reliability Analysis

Table 1 illustrates the convergent validity tests measured based on outer loading values, mean-variance extract values (AVE) and composite reliability. For the correlation between items and constructs, the recorded outer loading values are greater than 0.70. In comparison, the AVE value is greater than 0.50 (Hair et al. 2017). Next, the composite reliability value records a value greater than 0.70. This means that the study constructs are able to meet the level of convergent validity standards suggested by Hair et al. (2017).

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<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Outer Loading</th>
<th>Composite Reliability</th>
<th>Average Variance Extracted (AVE)</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
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<td><strong>Direct Communication</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td>0.969</td>
<td>0.838</td>
<td>0.961</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2</td>
<td>0.921</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3</td>
<td>0.921</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4</td>
<td>0.931</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6</td>
<td>0.913</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Feedback</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>0.866</td>
<td>0.957</td>
<td>0.817</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>0.927</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>0.892</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B4</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B5</td>
<td>0.908</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training Intrinsic Motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>0.925</td>
<td>0.962</td>
<td>0.834</td>
<td>0.950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>0.937</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>0.910</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>0.893</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge Transfer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D1</td>
<td>0.911</td>
<td>0.967</td>
<td>0.854</td>
<td>0.957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D2</td>
<td>0.933</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D3</td>
<td>0.929</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D4</td>
<td>0.923</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2 demonstrates the discriminant validity test based on the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) analysis. According to this analysis, each construct has a value of less than 0.85. This means that all the constructs can achieve the level of discriminatory validity suggested by Hair et al. (2017).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Direct Communication</th>
<th>Feedback</th>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Communication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Feedback</td>
<td>0.900</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.642</td>
<td>0.677</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td>0.650</td>
<td>0.709</td>
<td>0.788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The variance inflation factor (VIF) and descriptive construct analysis are shown in Table 3. First, the correlation coefficients between the independent variables (direct communication and training feedback), mediating variable (intrinsic motivation), and dependent variable (knowledge transfer) have a VIF value of less than 5.0 (Hair et al., 2017), confirming that no serious collinearity issues exist. Next, the mean value ranges from 5.636 to 5.925, suggesting that the constructs of direct communication, training feedback, intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer are at a high (5) and very high level, respectively (6). Overall, the findings confirmed that all constructs met the criteria for validity and reliability.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructs</th>
<th>Intrinsic Motivation</th>
<th>Knowledge Transfer</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Communication</td>
<td>3.714</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.636</td>
<td>0.881</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Feedback</td>
<td>3.714</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.663</td>
<td>0.860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.000</td>
<td>5.923</td>
<td>0.728</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.925</td>
<td>0.753</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 presents the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) analysis and direct hypothesis testing. The SRMR value is 0.080, less than 0.10 or 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), indicating that the direct model used in this study is suitable and a good fit reflective model. Next, the results of direct hypotheses testing yield three important findings. First, direct communication significantly correlates with intrinsic motivation (β = 0.239; t = 2.736). Therefore, H1 is supported. Second, training feedback has a significant relationship with intrinsic motivation (β = 0.439; t = 4.896), H2 supported. Third, intrinsic motivation has a significant relationship with knowledge transfer (β = 0.752; t = 25.455), H3 supported.
Following that, the $R^2$ values yield two major findings. First, direct communication, training feedback, and intrinsic motivation have each contributed 43%. Second, intrinsic motivation has contributed 56% to knowledge transfer. These values are greater than 26%, indicating that this research model has a significant impact (Cohen, 1992).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>$R^2$</th>
<th>B Value</th>
<th>T Statistics</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H1: Direct Communication → Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.239</td>
<td>2.736</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H2: Training Feedback → Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.439</td>
<td>4.896</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H3: Intrinsic Motivation → Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.752</td>
<td>25.455</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The effect size ($f^2$) and predictive relevance ($Q^2$) were assessed. First, the $f^2$ test analysis shows that the value of the relationship between direct communication and intrinsic motivation is 0.027. These values are smaller than 0.15, indicating that the effect of direct communication on intrinsic motivation has a small effect size (Cohen, 1992). Second, the relationship between training feedback and intrinsic motivation is 0.385. These values are higher than 0.35, indicating that the effect of training feedback on intrinsic motivation has a substantial effect size (Cohen, 1992). Third, the value of the relationship between intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer is 1.305. These values are higher than 0.35, indicating that the effect of intrinsic motivation on knowledge transfer has a substantial effect size (Cohen, 1992). Furthermore, the $Q^2$ analysis reports that the (a) relationship between direct communication, training feedback and intrinsic motivation has a $Q^2$ value of 0.353, and (b) intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer have a value of 0.480. All these values are larger than zero, meaning that all the constructs in this study have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017).

Table 5 presents the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) analysis and indirect hypothesis testing. The value of SRMR is 0.08, less than 0.10 or 0.08 (Hu & Bentler, 1999), indicating that the indirect model used in this study is suitable and a good fit reflective model. Next, the results of indirect hypotheses testing yielded two important findings. First, there is a significant relationship between direct communication and intrinsic motivation with knowledge transfer ($\beta = 0.331; t = 8.214$). Therefore, H4 is supported. Second, the relationship between training feedback and intrinsic motivation significantly relates to knowledge transfer ($\beta = 0.180; t = 8.672$). Hence, H4 is supported. Next, the values of $R^2$ yield two important findings. First, direct communication, training feedback, and intrinsic motivation each contribute 43%. Second, intrinsic motivation has contributed 56% to knowledge transfer. These
values are greater than 26%, indicating that this research model has a significant impact (Cohen, 1992).

Table 5. Results of testing the mediating model

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>SRMR</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>B Value</th>
<th>T Statistics</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H4: Direct Communication → Intrinsic Motivation → Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td>0.080</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.331</td>
<td>8.214</td>
<td>Supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H5: Training feedback → Intrinsic Motivation → Knowledge Transfer</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>0.180</td>
<td>8.672</td>
<td>Supported</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Next, the effect size ($f^2$) and predictive relevance ($Q^2$) are evaluated. First, the $f^2$ test analysis shows that the value of the relationship between direct communication and intrinsic motivation is 0.027. These values are smaller than 0.15, indicating that the effect of direct communication on intrinsic motivation has a small effect size (Cohen, 1992). Second, the relationship between training feedback and intrinsic motivation has the value of 0.385. These values are higher than 0.35, indicating that the effect of training feedback on intrinsic motivation has a substantial effect size (Cohen, 1992). Third, the value of the relationship between intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer is 1.305. These values are higher than 0.35, indicating that the effect of intrinsic motivation on knowledge transfer has a substantial effect size (Cohen, 1992). Furthermore, the $Q^2$ analysis reports that the (a) relationship between direct communication, training feedback and intrinsic motivation has a $Q^2$ value of 0.353, and (b) intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer have a value of 0.480. All these values are larger than zero, meaning that all the constructs in this study have predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2017). Finally, the results of the predictive performance test ($Q^2$-predict) show that the $Q^2$-predict values for all items in the PLS-SEM (0.621 to 0.671) and LM RMSE (0.631 to 0.665) are bigger than zero, illustrating the prediction errors are distributed symmetrically. Most PLS-SEM values (-0.002 to 0.007) have lower prediction errors than LM RMSE values (-0.002 to 0.010), indicating that this model has a medium predictive power (Shmueli et al., 2019).

The importance and performance matrix analysis is presented in Table 6 (IPMA). According to the analysis, intrinsic motivation has the highest importance of 0.558 and a performance value of 82.028. On the other hand, direct communication has the lowest importance value of 0.038 and the lowest performance value of 77.246. As a result, these results confirm that the direct communication construct should be given the most significant emphasis to assist practitioners in improving organizational training management practices (Ringle & Sarstedt, 2016).


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Knowledge Transfer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Importance (Total Effect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Communication</td>
<td>0.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Feedback</td>
<td>0.257</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Intrinsic Motivation</td>
<td>0.558</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

This study’s findings supported all the research hypotheses for the direct effects and mediating models. This study’s findings highlight three significant findings. First, direct communication and training feedback are important predictors of intrinsic motivation. This finding is consistent with the Transformational Leadership Theory concept (Bass, 1998). According to this theory, transformational leadership has several levels: the leader has the ability to meet the needs of his followers by acting as a mentor, the leader is willing to accept risks, can stimulate his followers’ thinking to build positive creativity, can provide motivation and inspiration to achieve future goals and is able to improve motivation and inspiration of followers to achieve vision and mission. In the context of training programs, leaders’ willingness to practice direct communication with employees (i.e., empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance) and training feedback (i.e., providing suggestions for improvement) in this relationship can increase positive employee behavior, especially transfer knowledge (Amoo & Adam, 2022; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Tahiry & Ekmekcioglu, 2022).

Second, there is a positive correlation between training intrinsic motivation and knowledge transfer. This finding is in line with the essence of Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1979). This theory explains how individuals can increase their motivation to produce positive behavior using conditioning and cognitive theory. This theory suggests that psychological influences such as motivation, attention and encouragement can increase the individual’s desire to improve positive behavior. In the context of training programs, employees with high intrinsic training motivation can positively affect employees’ behavior. For example, high intrinsic training motivation will be able to increase positive employees behavior by transferring the knowledge gained from the training session to the task (Kim, Park & Kang, 2019; Lees & Dhanpat, 2021; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021; Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021).

Third, training intrinsic motivation acts as an important mediating variable between direct communication, training feedback and knowledge transfer. This finding is consistent with the essence of Naquin and Holton’s Improve Work Through Learning Model (Naquin &
Holton, 2002). According to this theory, motivation is a critical component in this construct, and it is activated by employees who have greater desires and efforts to join, engage, acquire, and master new competencies in training programs. This motivation process may result in improved organizational behavior. The notion of this theory is strongly supported by previous studies, which revealed that leaders’ willingness to practice direct communication with employees (i.e., empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance) and training feedback (i.e., providing suggestions for improvement) in executing daily jobs strongly invoke employees’ intrinsic training motivation. As a result, this motivation may lead to higher employee knowledge transfer. The findings of this study improved our understanding of intrinsic training motivation as an effective mediating variable in the relationship between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer within the organizational sample’s training management models. As a result, this study complements and expands on previous research, mostly published in Western and Asian countries (Ramlan, Zainol & Tajuddin, 2021; Mohamad, Ismail & Mohamad Nor, 2021).

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

Concerning theoretical implications, this study’s outcomes confirm that training intrinsic motivation has mediated the effect of supervisory roles on knowledge transfer. This outcome is consistent with the notion of Transformational Leadership Theory (Bass, 1998). According to this theory, transformational leadership has four levels. First, leaders must be able to meet the needs of their followers by acting as mentors (such as providing empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance). Second, leaders need to be willing to take risks in order to stimulate positive thinking by encouraging followers’ creativity in task management to be intellectually stimulated. Third, leaders must be able to provide motivation and inspiration (i.e., leaders give inspiration to followers to achieve future goals). Fourth, idealized power (i.e., the leader becomes a model and gives feedback in practising ethical behavior for followers to emulate). Finally, in the training program context, the willingness of leaders to practice direct communication (i.e., providing empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance) and training feedback (i.e., providing suggestions for improvement) in this relationship could strongly enhance employees’ positive actions. This theory suggests that effective Transformational Leadership will significantly drive employees to gain valuable competencies. Consequently, this drive may result in more extraordinarily beneficial individual activities, such as knowledge transfer. In this study, the ability of supervisors to practice motivation and communication properly will enhance training intrinsic
motivation. Consequently, this training intrinsic motivation may increase knowledge transfer in organisations.

**MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The IPMA results (see Table 7) show that direct communication is a major management challenge that should be overcome in the organization. To attain this purpose, organizations should give more attention to the following issues: First, supervisors need to practice a non-defensive kind of communication. This method is one of the most effective strategies for supervisors to improve communication. For example, supervisors should provide direction and assistance to subordinates and practise open communication to help them enhance performance. A communication technique relevant to the work environment will help employees increase job satisfaction and organizational performance in the future. Second, supervisors need strong verbal and written communication abilities. For example, if the supervisor has vital information to share with an employee, evaluate how best to deliver that message and remain flexible if an alternative technique is required (e.g., ask questions and invite comments from the employee) (e.g., ask questions and welcome feedback from the employee). Third, a supervisor should hold 15-minute daily meetings with their teams. During this hour, the entire group will discuss work objectives, issues, progress on improvements and new ideas for improvement, as well as a positive mentality shift. Finally, listening is half of the communication process. Proactive supervisors can help employees understand the words being communicated and interpret the definitions behind those words. Supervisors need to be willing to listen, understand and avoid making negative conclusions. This condition will allow talented individuals to improve their positive attitude, which may motivate them to sustain and enhance their organizations’ performance in the future.

**LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

There are certain limitations to the conceptual and methodological elements of this study. First, the cross-sectional study design was only able to describe the respondents’ perceptions in general regarding the pattern of relationships between study variables such as dependent variables (supervisors’ roles in training program culture), mediating variables (training intrinsic motivation) and independent variables (knowledge transfer). Second, this study did not measure the exact dimensions of the study’s variables. Third, this study only made a comparison between the direct effect model and the indirect effect model. Fourth, the sample of this study was solely tested in the Malaysian public sector. Fifth, the data acquired using
purposive sampling did not manage respondents’ biases. These constraints may restrict the generalizability of the study findings to different organizations. The current study makes some recommendations for future research. To begin, future studies should consider specific important demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as age, marital status, support services, grades, and salary. This may explain the similarities and differences in the respondents’ perspectives on the study’s issues. Second, if researchers want to examine the efficacy of the hypothetical models between subsamples, a longitudinal study should be explored in future research. Third, future research should include both the public and private sectors to improve the effectiveness of the study framework. Fourth, because previous research has demonstrated their importance in both commercial and non-commercial organizations, additional aspects of training intrinsic motivation, such as motivation to transfer, should be addressed. Finally, specific components of knowledge transfer, skills transfer, and training transfer that provide useful benefits to the organization should be prioritized because they have been widely recognized in previous studies as essential outcomes of the correlation between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and training intrinsic motivation. If these proposals are carefully considered, future research may be enhanced.

CONCLUSION

This study tests a conceptual framework based on workplace training literature, and the instrument used passed the validity and reliability tests. The mediating model’s findings confirm that training intrinsic motivation acts as an effective mediating variable in the relationship between supervisors’ roles in training program culture and knowledge transfer. This finding is consistent with and broadens previous studies, which were mostly conducted in Western and Asian countries. As a result, current workplace training research and practice must consider training intrinsic motivation as a key component in supervisors’ roles in the culture of training programs. This study also suggests that supervisors’ ability to properly practice direct communication (empathy and support, open communication, respect and guidance) and training feedback (i.e., providing suggestions for improvement, performance evaluation) in carrying out daily tasks will strongly invoke employees’ intrinsic training motivation. As a result, this motivation may result in increased employee knowledge transfer. As a result of these positive outcomes, the organizational strategies and goals could be better maintained and supported. Furthermore, this study suggests that intrinsic training motivation should be included. Finally, these findings support the notion that the roles of supervisors in training program culture can aid in increasing intrinsic training motivation. Consequently, this incentive can aid in
preserving and enhancing organizational competitiveness and performance in a world undergoing rapid change.

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