

# Human Resources Management in the Pandemic Age: Hr Practices and the Impact on Employee Motivation

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## ABSTRACT

*Human resources management is vital to the development of human capital and ensuring the increased productivity from employees. The sustainability of employees' productivity has presented huge challenges to HR departments in establishing morale and motivation among staff, who are dealing with pressures of working from home and parenting. Hence, this study investigates on the influence of training and development, career development and working environment on employee motivation. A total of 136 employees from private organizations were selected to fill out a survey. This data was gathered and analysed through the Partial Least Square (PLS) method. The findings indicate that training and development and career development have no significant impact on employees' motivation whereas working environment significantly influences the motivation of staff. These results show that employers should prioritize ways to improve and address working environment concerns in order to evolve with the present shift in working norms.*

**Keywords:** *Training and Development, Career Development, Working Environment, Human Resource Practices*

## 1.0 Introduction

The sustainability of human capital is consistently aligned with the human capital training and development programs, policies, and practices in the organization. The important to sustain the human capital is to resolve any issues of work flow, staff composition, and human resource management. Most of the organization has struggle to sustain their human capital to confront with the changes of the working environment and competitive with the rival (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Hence, the roles of Human Resource Management are critical to ensure that the human capital are competent and flexible to adapt with the challenges. One of the significant human resource management roles is being responsible in providing training, development and maintaining healthy working conditions. The adequate of training and healthy working conditions could encourage the employee motivation to give their commitment and contribute to high work productivity as the outcomes (Ali and Anwar, 2021).

Most of the studies related to the employee motivation found that when employees' feelings are fulfilled, they will be motivated to carry out their duties. As a result, an employee's performance is heavily impacted by their motivation levels, and it would be wise for organizations to maintain these motivation levels in their workforce. According to Farhad, Mohammad Reza, Mostafa, Ghorban, & Somayeh (2011), motivation is a mental process which can be broken down into the elements of stimulation, route and finally the choice of actions which aim towards the accomplishment of a goal. Motivational tools or programs are vital to organizational success. The presence and fulfilment of motivational tools will drive employees to carry out their duties effectively. Referring to Alsuwaidi, Alshurideh, Al Kurdi, & Salloum (2021), the effectiveness of a rewards-based system in improving employee motivation concluded that the more appealing the reward, the greater the level of employees motivation. However, the obstacle of poor training and development provided in their organizations cause a frustration and dissatisfaction that will affect employee's performance. When the employee sees that there is a failure or inadequacy in training and development, they will become demotivated and dissatisfied. Similarly, the potential for career development at the firm is a strong factor in ensuring employee commitment. An effective human resources manager should clarify and encourage the employee's plans for their future within the organization. Additionally, a conducive working environment is also vital in offering encouragement and positivity in order to help employees reach organizational goals (Awan & Tahir, 2015). Working conditions are crucial in improving and maintaining employee motivation. A negative working environment will induce stress, frustration and demotivation. Thus, the current

study aims to predict the significance of the human resources practices of training and development, career development, working environment and the impact of these factors upon the employee motivation of 136 private sector workers.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Training and Development**

Training involves various programs or courses intended to provide participants with specific skills, knowledge and capabilities that will help them successfully execute their job scope. Comprehensive training can contribute to enhanced worker performance, and guide an employee towards accomplishing individual objectives. According to Sousa and Rocha (2019), training is the growth of skills, knowledge and approaches which ensures that a person can execute a task with efficiency and effectiveness. Training not only helps develop the capacity of new employees, but also to polish and improve those of senior workers. Hamed and Anwar (2018) also support the influence of training significant on employee's motivation. Training offered by the organization can include education on soft skills as well. The need for training sessions may differ according to the requirements of a particular employee or the wider changes occurring in the market. Following a training program, the employee's performance can be evaluated in order to see the extent to which their work has improved. Additionally, training can lead towards promotions and rewards for employees (Abdullah & Anwar, 2021). Training and development are significant elements in helping a company reach its goals. Sharma and Shirsath (2014) prove that a positive relationship exists between training and motivation among bank employees in Kayseri, Turkey. Gullu, Sahin and Kiziloglu (2018) also state that there is a significant influence on employee's motivation and training of employees in the banking sector at Kayseri in Turkey. The results of the study indicate that training and development courses have a positive influence on employee motivation among workers in banking. Literature strongly supports the connection between employee motivation and training. As such, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: Training programs have a significant influence on employee's motivation.

### **2.2 Career Development**

Career development is the progress of an employee from basic worker to upper-level positions while navigating personal development and leisure with

the intention of growth for the future (Armstrong, 2009). In other words, career development is the evolution process of an employee as they progress through the organization, gaining more knowledge and getting higher in ranks. Research by Pillay, Dawood and Karodia (2015) indicates that career development has a significant connection to employee motivation. Companies must take career development and motivation into account when considering the future sustainability and performance of the firm as a whole. Strong employee motivation can also provide a company with competitive advantage. Armstrong posits that simply the availability of avenues and resources for learning and professional development can improve workers' motivation levels.

When an organization neglects the importance of opportunities for career development, this can compromise employee motivation and performance. If organizations provide the means to learn new skills, knowledge and technologies that will contribute to enhanced performance and potential promotions, employees will feel appreciated and consequently show stronger motivation. A lack of avenues for career development will be reflected in poor motivation and performance among employees. Career development capacity in a company can enhance a worker's vital skills and knowledge, allowing the organization to not only attract high-performing employees but also ensure that these workers are retained. According to Obeidat, Alrowwad, Alshurideh, Masadeh, & Abuhashesh (2021), employee motivation and career development has significant relationship towards employee's motivation in any company, no matter its location, sector or size. The research results showed that the bulk of workers in the refinery sector agree that potential career advancement contributes to their motivation. However, promotions must be offered wisely by the firm, prioritizing employees who are dedicated, motivated, effectively managed and consistently upgrading their skills. The literature supports career development as a key factor in employee motivation. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Career development has a significant influence on an employee's motivation.

## **2.3 Working Environment**

A conducive and comfortable work environment is vital in improving and maintaining employee morale, increasing their commitment and productivity. When at the workplace, the employee can find motivation when they are given a sense of purpose and fulfilment in carrying out their tasks. Access to the necessary supplies, clean working areas, functioning amenities and other resources will help

workers deliver strong performances. In addition, Appel-Meulenbroek, Steps, Wenmaekers, and Arentze, (2021) state that negative working environments, which can include poor hygiene, bad ventilation, noise pollution and lack of basic supplies can cause anxiety and frustration among employees, thus decreasing motivation and productivity. It is important for organizations to understand that income is not the only motivating factor for employees. The working environment itself is crucial in inspiring employees to perform well. Bushiri (2014) asserts that there is a strong relationship between employee performance and working environment, adding that organizations which show concern for the comfort and accessibility of the workspace can enhance job performance among their workers. Nakpodia (2011) discovers that a good working environment has significant relationship with the employee's motivation when the employees feel that all accommodations and supplies, they need to carry out their duties have been made available. According to Ajala (2012), the work environment has significant to employee satisfaction, as each firm offers a different experience and environment. Organizations must fully grasp how the working environment influences employee performance, overall productivity and even the company's competitive capacity. A positive and conducive working environment will enhance employee motivation along with their performance and productivity. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 3: Working environment has a significant influence on an employee's motivation.

### **3.0 Research Methodology**

A quantitative study was carried out to explore the factors which impact employee motivation in small group of 250 of employees from the private organizations within the Klang Valley. According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970), the estimated of sample size was 150 and the return rate was 100 per cent completed. The data was then analysed through the Partial Least Square method, or PLS. The majority of research which employ PLS attempt to discover the causal relationship that exists between constructs and also predict factors which significantly impact the variables. For the purpose of this study, purposive sampling technique used to the targets with a specific subset of persons, as all study participants are chosen based on their profile. To employ the purposive sample technique, this study conducts a straightforward sampling procedure. If the individuals in the sample do not meet a certain profile, the sample will be discarded during the sampling procedure. Furthermore, the two stages of analysis in PLS are the structural model and the measurement model. The measurement model functions to analyse the constructs

for discriminant validity and convergent validity. In this stage, every indicator is tested on composite reliability, factor loading and values of average variance extracted. This is done in order to determine the existence of discriminant problems among constructs. Next, bootstrapping analysis is applied to test the hypotheses and assess the path coefficient. The obtained p- values and t- values reveal the significance of results and thus validate the hypotheses. PLS is also carried out in order to determine the extent of a construct's relevance within the model.

The items for measurement were derived from past literature. The eight items of training and development were adapted from Masood (2010). The six items for working environment were adapted from Bushiri (2014), while the six items of career development were derived from Mark and Nzulwa (2018). Finally, the five items of employee motivation were adapted from Warr, Cook and Wall (1979). All items were tested according to the 5-point Likert scale, where 1= strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3= neutral, 4= agree, and 5= strongly agree. Table 1 shows the items used in this study.

**Table 1: Item Measurement**

Item Coding	Statements	References
TD1	Our organization conducts extensive training and development programs for employees.	Masood (2010)
TD2	Employees at each job usually go through training and development programs every year.	
TD3	Training needs are identified through a formal performance appraisal mechanism.	
TD4	There are formal training programs to teach new employees the skills they need.	
TD5	Training and development helped reduce employee turnover in an organization.	
TD6	Training and development have resulted in high motivation in the organization.	
TD7	Training and development helped to improve work efficiency	
TD8	Training and development have resulted in higher productivity and financial returns for the organization.	

CD1	I have a personal career plan that I review every year with specific action plans, steps and timelines.	Mark, & Nzulwa, (2018)
CD2	The organization provides career advisory services that determine competencies and interests of its employee.	
CD3	The organization has in place a career development plan for their employee	
CD4	The organization has both internal and external programs that develop its future employee positions.	
CD5	The organization offers excellent opportunities for promotion of employees after training.	
CD6	The chance for me to advance my career in an organization is very high.	
WE1	Office building space influences you to stay in the office comfortably.	Bushiri, (2014)
WE2	A good relationship with fellow workers influences your motivation.	
WE3	I have a good relationship with my supervisor	
WE4	Feedback received from my supervisor/superior influences my motivation.	
WE5	Job security in the organization affects the motivation to complete the task.	
WE6	The hygiene maintenance in the organization affects my comfort in the office.	
M1	I have a sense of personal satisfaction when I do this job well.	Warr, Cook, & Wall, (1979)
M2	My opinion of myself goes down when I do this job poorly.	
M3	I feel unhappy when my work is not up to my usual standard	
M4	I try to think of ways of doing my job effectively	
M5	I like to look back on the day's work with a sense of a job well done.	

## 4.0 Findings and Discussion

The analysis of demographics factors revealed, 24.3 percent of the respondents were male, while 75.7 percent were female. This is derived from a total number of 136 respondents. Employees aged between 21 to 25 years old were the highest age group to respond with 52 individuals, followed by 50 employees in the 26 to 30 age group. Respondents aged 31 to 40 years old numbered 30 people. The smallest age-based respondent groups are those between 41 to 45, and those under 20 years of age, recording 2 respondents per category. The majority of employees who responded hold non-executive positions in their organizations, at 64 percent or 87 persons. Respondents in executive positions tallied at 45 persons, or 33.1

percent, while respondents in managerial positions numbered only 4 individuals or 2.7 percent. Further details indicate that 53 individuals out of 136 respondents have held their current jobs for 1-3 years, followed by 32 persons who have worked for 3 to 6 years. The remaining respondents make up the smallest group of employees with under 6 months of experience.

#### 4.1 Measurement Model

The measurement model analysis is applied in order to investigate the convergent validity, including the average variance extracted (AVE), indicator loadings and composite reliability (CR). Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2014) recommend an indicator loading of more than 0.5, where a value less than 0.5 means the indicator should be removed. Table 2 shows the four items of career development that were eliminated, CD2, CD3, CD4 and CD5 which exhibit lower factor loading values. Additionally, 1 item under motivation is deleted, which is M5. Several items were also removed from training development and working environment, namely TD1, WE3, and WE4. Then, the composite reliability (CR) and average variance extracted (AVE) were assessed. As suggested by Hair et al., (2014), the AVE values must exceed 0.5, and the CR value must be greater than 0.7. The findings indicated that career development (CR=0.73, AVE=0.579), motivation (CR=0.819, AVE=0.532), training and development (CR=0.86, AVE=0.556), and working environment (CR=0.806, AVE=0.515) were reliable and applicable constructs to this study.

**Table 2: Measurement Model**

Constructs	Item Coding	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
Career Development	CD1	0.859	0.73	0.579
	CD6	0.649		
Motivation	M1	0.767	0.819	0.532
	M2	0.68		
	M3	0.771		
	M4	0.695		
Training and development	TD2	0.522	0.86	0.556
	TD3	0.785		
	TD4	0.821		
	TD5	0.774		
	TD6	0.787		



Working Environment	WE1	0.66	0.806	0.515
	WE2	0.55		
	WE5	0.807		
	WE6	0.819		

Following convergent validity, the discriminant validity was tested. It was evaluated by examining the correlations between possibly overlapping constructs, according to guidelines set out by Fornell and Larcker (1981). As shown in Table 3, this study shows that the square root of AVE values is greater in all cases compared to the off-diagonal elements in their corresponding row and column. This indicates that the necessary discriminant validity has been reached. In total, the measurement model established satisfactory convergent validity and discriminant validity.

**Table 3: Discriminant Validity**

Constructs	1	2	3	4
1.Career Development	<b>0.761</b>			
2.Motivation	0.257	<b>0.729</b>		
3.Training	0.395	0.331	<b>0.746</b>	
4.Working Environment	0.219	0.616	0.365	<b>0.718</b>

## 4.2 Assessment of Structural Model

The primary evaluation in the structural model is the R2 values, which assess the coefficient of determination along with the path coefficients and the extent of their significance (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt & Ringle, 2019). For this study, the results reveal the R2 value to be 0.401, indicating that 40.1 % of the variance in employee motivation can be explained by the constructs of training and development, career and development and working environment. The path coefficients of the structural model were measured through bootstrap analysis, with z resampling of 500 carried out to measure the statistical significance of the path coefficients. These values are laid out in Table 4. The results revealed the values of training and development ( $\beta = 0.099$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ) and career and development ( $\beta = 0.086$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). In contrast, the result of the work environment ( $\beta = 0.563$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) was statistically significant in its influence towards employee motivation. The effect size of the work environment was larger, at  $f^2$  was 0.455, as suggested by Cohen (1988). Thus, H1 and H2 were not supported while H3 was supported.

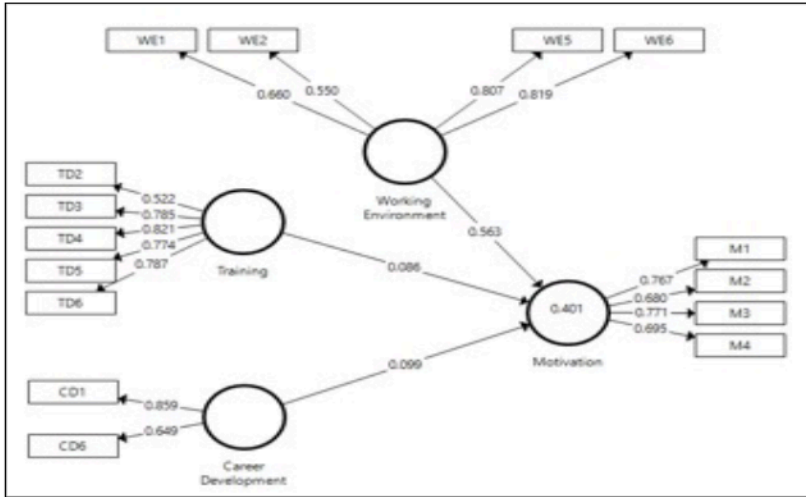


Figure 1: Measurement Model

Additionally, predictive relevance analysis was carried out through the technique of predictive sample reuse, also referred to as the Stone-Geisser’s Q<sup>2</sup>, which can be applied as a condition for predictive relevance along with examining the magnitude of the R<sup>2</sup> (Ramayah, Ling, Taghizadeh, & Rahman, 2016). Based on the blindfolding procedure and the assumption that Q<sup>2</sup> values should be greater than zero, the results indicate that training and development, career and development and working environment show predictive relevance for the employee’s motivation (Hair et al., 2011). Therefore, the Q<sup>2</sup> of employee’s motivation (0.198) verifies that the research model has excellent predictive relevance.

Table 4: Structural Model

Path Coefficient	Beta values	SE	t-Values	P Values	F Square	2.50%	97.50%	Result
Career Development -> Employees' Motivation	0.099	0.078	1.269	0.206	0.014	-0.071	0.233	H1: Not Supported
Training -> Employees' Motivation	0.086	0.085	1.019	0.309	0.01	-0.075	0.277	H2: Not Supported
Working Environment -> Employees' Motivation	0.563	0.069	8.213	0	0.455	0.386	0.666	H3: Supported

## **5.0 Conclusion and Implication**

The purpose of this study was to examine the human resource practices, specifically training and development, career development, and work environment, and to predict the effect on the motivation levels of 136 private sector employees. The findings indicate that while the work environment has a substantial impact on employee motivation, training and development and career development do not. The consequences of these findings strongly recommend that human resource management departments must employ effective and appropriate techniques that boost employee motivation through the conditions of their work environments. To accommodate today's changing work environments, it is critical for firms to promote employee motivation in order to guarantee that employees feel valued and safe. Employees in a motivated work environment understand what is expected of them. Employees' objectives should be consistent with the company's strategic plan. As a result, it is anticipated that a more stimulating work atmosphere will stimulate employees and increase employee engagement. Employees can contribute to their employers' success by their dedication, engagement, and productivity.

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