

# An Impact of Leadership Development Program on Training Transfer: The Roles of Training Motivation

**Noor Azmi M. Z.**\*

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional, Malaysia

**Azman I.**

Universiti Kebangsaan, Malaysia

**Norlaila Mazura M.**

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional, Malaysia

**Ahmad Azan R.**

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional, Malaysia

**Jessica Ong H. L.**

Universiti Pertahanan Nasional, Malaysia

## Abstract

This research is conducted to quantify the influence of training motivation on the relationship between leadership development program and training transfer using 412 usable questionnaires gathered from the Malaysian Army personnel. A structural equation modelling generated by the SmartPLS version 3.2.5 was employed to assess the validity and reliability of the instrument and then test the research hypotheses. The outcomes of path model analysis showed two important findings: firstly, the relationship between training motivation and course content significantly correlates with training transfer and secondly, the relationship between training motivation and instructors' roles is significantly correlated with training transfer. Statistically, the outcomes of hypotheses testing confirmed that training motivation acts as an important mediating variable in the relationship between leadership development program and training transfer in organisational samples.

**Keywords:** Leadership development program; Training motivation; Training transfer; Malaysian army.



CC BY: [Creative Commons Attribution License 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

## 1. Introduction

In the military context, leadership development program (LDP) is an individual-focused training process designed to develop leadership skills in the complex contemporary security environment (LDP, 2009; Metz, 2011). According to organisational development literature, LDP has two influential features: course content and instructors' roles (Azman I. *et al.*, 2016; Cox and Walsh, 2006; Fisker and Hausdorf, 2008; Hatfield *et al.*, 2011). Extended research in this area highlights that the ability of the management to properly implement LDP may induce positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes, especially training transfer (Azman I. *et al.*, 2016; Hatfield *et al.*, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2009). Interestingly, a thorough review of workplace training literature reveals that the effect of LDP on training transfer is indirectly affected by training motivation (Azman I. and Nurul, 2010; Mullen *et al.*, 2006; Tai, 2006). Scholars agreed that the ability of the management to design clear and relevant course content, and the ability of instructors to guide trainees in training programmes have motivated trainees to learn the latest knowledge, necessary skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. As a result, it may lead to an increased transfer of training in organisations (Azman I. *et al.*, 2016; Hatfield *et al.*, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2009).

## 2. Literature Review

Several recent studies investigated LDP using different samples such as Paul *et al.* (2009) on 883 samples representing the officer cadets in the US Military Academy; Hatfield *et al.* (2011) on 21,000 leaders at various levels in the United States Army, Azman M. Z. (2012) on 250 samples, consisting of members of the parachute troopers of the Malaysian Army; and Azman I. *et al.* (2016) in their study of 163 samples of various levels of leaders in the Malaysian Army. Findings of these studies demonstrated the ability of the management to properly design the course content, and the ability of instructors to teach and guide trainees which have strongly invoked the trainees' training motivation in learning necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. Consequently, it could also lead to greater training transfer in organisations (Azman M. Z., 2012; Azman I. *et al.*, 2016; Hatfield *et al.*, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2009).

The empirical studies support the notion of the motivation theory. Vroom (1964); Vroom (1973) expectancy theory posits that individuals will act if they understand the value of outcomes. The application of this theory in an

LDP model shows that the ability of the management to appropriately design clear and relevant course contents will enhance the trainees’ training motivation in learning necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, latest abilities and positive attitudes. Consequently, it may lead to greater training transfer in organisations. Besides that, the Wood and Bandura (1989) social learning theory states that learning process may increase the individuals’ belief in their abilities to perform tasks. The application of this theory in LDP shows that the ability of instructors to properly teach and guide trainees may increase the trainees’ training motivation in learning necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. As a result, it may lead to higher training transfer in organisations (Azman M. Z., 2012; Azman I. et al., 2016; Hatfield et al., 2011; Mullen et al., 2006; Paul et al., 2009). These empirical evidences is used as the basis to develop the hypotheses for this study. The hypotheses are: **H1**: Relationship between course content and training motivation positively impacts training transfer; and **H2**: Relationship between instructors’ roles and training motivation positively impacts training transfer.

### 3. Methodology

This research was engaged a quantitative method as a main procedure to gather data. The survey using convenience sampling techniques was employed to distribute self-administered questionnaires to 500 respondents at several infantry battalion and training establishment. Of the number, 412 usable questionnaires were returned to the researchers, yielding a response rate of 82.4 %. Further, the research’s statistical analysis was conducted using structural equation modelling generated by the SmartPLS version 3.2.5. The steps of analysing data are: (1) confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) will be conducted to ensure the reliability and validity (convergent and discriminant validity) of data; (2) the SmartPLS path model will be employed to test the hypothesized model by examining the path coefficients using standardised betas ( $\beta$ ) and t statistics. The value of  $\beta$  ( $t > 1.96$ ) shows the significant correlation between variables (Chin, 1998; Henseler et al., 2009); and, (3) the mediation analysis procedure in PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2017), will be executed to predict the role and effect of mediator in the relationship between independent and dependent variables.

### 4. Result

Table 1 shows the results of Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test to confirm the reliability and validity of data through item reliability, convergent and discriminant validity tests. All constructs had the values of average variance extracted (AVE) larger than 0.5, indicating that all constructs met the acceptable standard of convergent validity. Besides that, all constructs with the values of  $\sqrt{AVE}$  in diagonal were greater than the squared correlation with other constructs in off diagonal, proving that all constructs met the acceptable standard of discriminant validity. The loadings of variables greater than 0.7 are also considered adequate. The composite reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha had values greater than 0.8, indicating that the measurement scale used in this study has high internal consistency. In total, the reliability and validity of the measurement model met the criteria (Fornell and Larcker, 1981; Hair et al., 2017; Henseler et al., 2009).

Table-1. Results of Item Reliability, Convergent and Discriminant Validity

	No. of Items	Factor Loading	Composite Reliability	Cronbach’s Alpha	AVE	1	2	3	4
1. Course Content	6	0.811 0.851	0.934	0.915	0.702	<b>0.838</b>			
2. Instructors’ roles	6	0.785 0.856	0.932	0.913	0.696	0.710	<b>0.834</b>		
3. Training motivation	5	0.871 0.916	0.951	0.935	0.795	0.645	0.633	<b>0.892</b>	
4. Training Transfer	6	0.777 0.848	0.928	0.907	0.682	0.692	0.674	0.789	<b>0.826</b>

Note:  $\sqrt{AVE}$  shows in diagonal

Table 2 shows the details of the relationship between independent, mediator and dependent variables.

Table-2. Outcomes of Hypotheses Testing

	$\beta$	t Statistics	P Values	R <sup>2</sup>
Content -> Motivation	0.394	3.860	0.000	0.694
Content -> Transfer	0.220	3.522	0.000	
Instructor -> Motivation	0.353	3.632	0.000	
Instructor -> Transfer	0.180	2.938	0.003	
Motivation -> Transfer	0.533	8.988	0.000	

Note: Significant at \*t > 1.96; \*\*t > 2.58; \*\*\* t > 3.29

The outcomes of the SmartPLS path model analysis using the bootstrapping procedure show two important findings: (1) course content and training motivation are significantly correlated with training transfer; and (2) instructors’ roles and training motivation are significantly correlated with training transfer. Therefore, both H1 and H2 were supported. To explain the mediating effect of training motivation, the mediation analysis procedure as

suggested by Hair *et al.* (2017) was employed. Based on the procedure, the role of training motivation as a mediator in the relationship between IVs and DV is **complementary mediation – partial mediation** (Hair *et al.*, 2017) where the indirect effect and the direct effect are both significant and point in the same direction. In terms of the explanatory power, the quality of model predictions in the analysis can be demonstrated by the score of  $R^2$ . The inclusion of course content explained 69.4 percent of a variance in the training transfer. This result indicates that training motivation plays a substantial role in the hypothesised model.

This study confirms that training motivation acts as an important mediating variable in the relationship between LDP and training transfer in the studied organisation. In the context of this study, the management has planned and implemented LDP based on the broad policy and procedures set up by the stakeholder. According to the result, the majority of leaders perceived that the management has properly designed course contents according to the organisations' needs and expectations, and instructors have properly taught and guided trainees to learn necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. It may motivate trainees to transfer what they have learned when entering the workplace.

The findings of this study can be used as guidelines to upgrade the effectiveness of LDP in organisations. In order to achieve this objective, the management needs to emphasize on the following dimensions: firstly, update training content and methods so that they are relevant to their tasks. The implementation of this training program may increase the trainees' training motivation in learning necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes in the organisation. Secondly, improve the recruitment policies and procedures in order to select the appropriate employees to fulfil strategic positions such as curriculum designers, training administrators and instructors. Thirdly, strengthen the training recruitment policy and procedures in order to select the right candidates to attend training programs. Finally, upgrade training facilities and technologies in order to expose trainees to appropriate and current warfare devices and physical tools. If these suggestions are adopted, they may help employees to achieve the organisational training goals.

## 4. Conclusion

This research explains that training motivation acts as an important mediating variable in the relationship between LDP (i.e., course content and instructors' roles) and training transfer. Therefore, the current research and practice within the workplace training programme should consider training motivation as a key aspect of the LDP domain. This study further suggests that the ability of the management to properly design course content and the capability of instructors to appropriately teach and guide trainees will strongly motivate trainees to learn necessary knowledge, up-to-date skills, new abilities and positive attitudes. Consequently, it may induce subsequent positive attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (e.g., competency, performance, satisfaction, commitment, trust, and justice). Thus, these positive outcomes may encourage employees to sustain and achieve the organisational strategy and goals in an era of globalisation.

## Acknowledgement

The authors wish to thank the Ministry of Higher Education (Malaysian Government) for funding this research under the Research Acculturation Grant Scheme (RAGS/1/2015/SS02/UPNM/02/1).

## References

- Azman, I. and Nurul, I. I. (2010). Motivasi latihan sebagai pemboleh ubah penghubung antara program latihan dan keberkesanan latihan. *Jurnal Kemusiaan*, 8(2): 83-98.
- Azman, I., Noor, A., M. Z. and Nursaadatun, N., A. (2016). Program pembangunan kepimpinan meningkatkan pemindahan latihan dalam tentera darat Malaysia, Kajian empirikal. *Jurnal Pengurusan*, 46: 149-161.
- Azman, M. Z. (2012). Factors affecting the effectiveness of training transfer in the parachute infantry battalion. Master project report (unpublished). University of Malaya.
- Chin, W. W. (1998). *The partial least squares approach to structural equation modelling*. In Hoyle, R. H. *Statistical strategies for small sample research*. Sage Publication, Inc: California. 307–41.
- Cox, M. and Walsh, J. (2006). Leadership development and knowledge transfer. *Leadership Review*, 1(2): 120–36. Available: [www.csl.uoguelph.ca](http://www.csl.uoguelph.ca)
- Fisker, I. B. and Hausdorf, P. (2008). The impact of a leadership development program on increasing and sustaining social capital. *Leadership Review*, 2(2): 160–79. Available: [www.csl.uoguelph.ca](http://www.csl.uoguelph.ca)
- Fornell, C. and Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 18(1): 39–50.
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T., Ringle, C. M. and Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modelling, PLS-SEM*. 2nd edn: Sage Publication, Inc: Thousand Oaks, CA.
- Hatfield, J., Steele, J. P., Riley, R., Glaze, H. K. and Fallesen, J. J. (2011). *2010 Centre for Army Leadership Annual Survey of Army Leadership (CASAL): Army Education. Technical Report 2011-2. The Centre For Army Leadership, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas*.
- Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M. and Sinkovics, R. R. (2009). The use of the partial least squares path modeling in international marketing. *Advances in International Marketing*, 20(1): 277–319.
- LDP, H. (2009). *Headquarters*. Department of Army: Washington, DC.
- Metz, S. (2011). Junior leader professional development: who has the time? : Available: [www.strategicstudiesinstitute.com/mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubid](http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.com/mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubid)

- Mullen, T. R., Kroustalis, C., Meade, A. W. and Surface, E. A., 2006. "Assessing change in perceived organizational support due to training." In *The 21st Annual Conference of the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Dallas, TX*.
- Paul, T. B., Jarle, E., Bjorn, H. J., Jon, C. L. and Scott, A. S. (2009). Big five personality factors, Hardiness, And social judgment as predictors of leader performance *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 30(6): 498-521.
- Tai, W. T. (2006). Effects of training framing, General self-efficacy and training motivation on trainee's training effectiveness. *Personal Review*, 35(1): 51–65.
- Vroom, V. H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. John Wiley and Sons: New York.
- Vroom, V. H. (1973). A new look at managerial decision making. *Organizational Dynamics*, 1(4): 66–80.
- Wood, R. and Bandura, A. (1989). Social cognitive theory of organizational management. *The Academy of Management Review*, 14(13): 361–84.