RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR’S ROLE AND TRANSFER OF COMPETENCY: DOES MOTIVATION TO LEARN ACT AS A MEDIATING ROLE?

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ACTS AS A MEDIATING ROLE?

By

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ABSTRACT

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR’S ROLE AND TRANSFER OF COMPETENCY: DOES MOTIVATION TO LEARN ACTS AS A MEDIATING ROLE?

Sofiah Bongogoh

This study was conducted to examine the mediating role of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency. Data were collected through in-depth interview and survey questionnaires. For the survey method, 100 usable questionnaires were collected from technical employees who have worked at the Technical Division, Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara, Sarawak (DBKU). The outcomes of stepwise regression analysis show that the inclusion of motivation to learn in the analysis had increased the effect of supervisor’s role (i.e., support and communication) on transfer of competency. This result demonstrates that motivation to learn does acts as a full mediating role in training management model of the organization. In addition, implications of this study to training management theory and practice, methodological and conceptual limitations, as well as directions for future research are elaborated.
ABSTRAK

HUBUNGAN ANTARA PERANAN PENYELIA DAN PEMINDAHAN KOMPETENSI: ADAKAH MOTIVASI UNTUK BELAJAR BERTINDAK SEBAGAI MEDIATOR?

Sofiah Bongogoh

Kajian ini adalah megkaji peranan motivasi untuk belajar sebagai mediator dalam perhubungan antara peranan penyelia dan pemindahan kompetensi. Data kajian ini dikumpul melalui kaedah temu bual dan borang soal selidik. Sejumlah 100 borang soal selidik telah berjaya dikumpulkan daripada pekerja teknikal yang berkhidmat di Bahagian Teknikal, Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara, Sarawak (DBKU). Keputusan pengujian hipotesis menggunakan analisis regresi stepwise menunjukkan bahawa apabila motivasi untuk belajar dimasukkan ke dalam analisis ia telah meningkatkan kesan peranan penyelia (sokongan dan komunikasi) terhadap pemindahan kompetensi. Hasil kajian ini mendapati bahawa motivasi untuk belajar bertindak sebagai mediator sepenuhnya dalam model program latihan di organisasi tempat kajian. Selain itu, Implikasi kajian terhadap teori, metodolgi, batasan-batasan kajian, kerangka konseptual dan cadangan untuk kajian akan datang dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter has eight sections. The first section will discuss on the background of the study. The second section will discuss on the statement of problem. In the third and fourth sections, the objectives of the study will be discussed and conceptual framework will be presented. The research hypotheses and the significance of the study are discussed in the fifth and sixth sections, while the seventh section will discuss on the definition of terms for the important variables. Finally, the conclusion is discussed in the last section.

1.1 Background of Study

Supervisors are often viewed as an experienced leader, problem solver and role model at the first level of organizational management (Pfeffer, 1998; How, 1994; Hucyzynski & Lewis, 1980; Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). They work closely with their employers to design, implement and monitor the organizational plans, policies, and business aspects, including training programs (Comstock, 1994; Robbins & DeCenzo, 2004; How, 1994). In management training, supervisors are given major responsibilities to design and administer the various
types of training plans for upgrading employees’ competencies (DeSimone et al., 2002; MacNeil, 2004; Simons et al., 1999). In the design of training programs, supervisors often act as a training designer, training planner, leader, coach, or mentor where they have to focus on setting objectives, selecting suitable trainers, developing lessons plans, selecting program methods and techniques, preparing materials, scheduling the program and conducting training need analysis (Desimone et al., 2002; Goleman, 2000; How, 1994). In the administration of training programs, supervisors act as a manager to ensure that the training activities are able to achieve its objectives (Adair, 1988; Desimone et al., 2002; Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; How, 1994). For examples, they monitor and execute follow-up actions to strengthen and support the retention of the newly learned competencies.

In line with the era of global competition, many organizations have introduced structural changes through creating horizontal work structures, simplifying work processes and establishing innovative teamwork (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2005; MacNeil, 2004). This change has shifted the traditional role of supervisors from just providing financial and budgeting support to establishing realistic learning expectations, encourage positive reinforcements, create a positive impetus for the training program, makes employees feel comfortable to attend training, and improve and develop employees’ competency (Golemen, 2000; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995). The new roles of supervisors include providing the training itself and facilitate learning problems via on-the job training, coaching, mentoring for newly appointed staff and orientation training for new employees (DeSimone et al., 2002; Mondy et al., 2002; Simons, Harris & Bone, 1999). If supervisors properly implement such roles, this may motivate employees to enhance organizational and employee performance (Rodrígues & Gregory, 2005; Mondy, Noe & Premeaux, 2002; Tsai & Tai, 2003; MacNeil, 2004).
1.2 Problem Statement

Early studies about training management have highlighted the duties and responsibilities of supervisors in the design and administration of training programs (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2005; Guerrero & Sire, 2001; Tsai & Tai, 2003). For example, in a traditional training management approach, supervisors are given responsibilities by employers to identify employee deficiencies which relate to daily performance problems (Pfeffer, 1998; Rodrígues & Gregory, 2005) and they are required to report the identified problems to the top management. The top management will be responsible to overcome such deficiencies in the design and administration of training programs (How, 1994; McMahon, 2001). In a contemporary management approach, training programs are designed and administered to support organizational strategy and goals. Under this approach, the role of supervisors is mostly focused on developing employees' competencies (e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes), ensuring accountability for training designs (e.g., determining the content of the training program and lesson plans) and enhancing involvement in training needs analysis (e.g., identify employee's competency problems (Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Golemen, 2000; Nijman, 2004). These findings have described the supervisor's role in training programs, but its impact on individual attitudes and behavior is less emphasized (Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005; Goldstein, 2000; Nijman, 2004; DeSimone et. al., 2002; Tsai & Tai, 2003).

Recent studies about training management reveal that the roles of supervisors may influence transfer of competency (Tsai & Tai, 2003; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Foxon, 1993). For example, support and communication in training and development programs are two important features of supervisor's role that may increase trainees' competencies (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes) (Tharenou, 1995; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995). These findings are consistent with the notion of Hersey and Blanchard's situational leadership theory, which reveals that involvement of supervisors (e.g., provide guidance and direction, support and
participation) in training and development program may upgrade trainees’ competency at the workplace.

Further research in this area reveals that the direction and/or strength of the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency are indirectly affected by motivation to learn (Nijman, 2004; Cromwell & Kolb, 2004; Chiaburu & Tekleab, 2005; Holton 1996). For example, supervisors who provide good support (e.g. encouragement and guidance) and practice good communication (e.g. feedback and discussion) with employees have increased employees’ motivation to learn, this may lead to increased transfer of competency (Facteau et. al., 1995; Tai, 2006; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995). These findings are consistent with the notion of Adams’ equity theory which reveals that fair treatment and Vroom’s expectancy theory (which reveals perceived valued outcomes) have motivated employees to increase their learning, this may lead to increased knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Yamnill & McLean, 2001). Although many studies have been done, little is known about the mediating role of motivation to learn in training management (Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005; Nijman, 2004; Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Therefore, further research needs to be carried out to examine this issue.

1.3 Research Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency.

The specific objectives of the study are:

a) To examine the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor support and transfer of competency.

b) To quantify the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor communication and transfer of competency.
1.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: relationship between supervisor’s role, motivation to learn and transfer of competency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independent Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisor’s Role</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1) Support</td>
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<td>2) Communication</td>
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<td><strong>Motivation to learn</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer of competency</strong></td>
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</table>

This framework shows that motivation to learn plays an important role as a mediator in the relationship between supervisor’s role (i.e., support and communication) and transfer of competency (i.e., knowledge, skills and attitudes). This framework guides the researcher to establish research hypotheses.

1.5 Research Hypotheses

This study will test two major hypotheses:

H1: Motivation to learn positively mediates the relationship between supervisor support and transfer of competency.

H2: Motivation to learn positively mediates the relationship between supervisor communication and transfer of competency.

1.6 Importance of the Study

The importance of this study is divided into three major areas: to the theory, to the research methodology and to the Human Resource practitioners.
1.6.1 Importance to the Theory

Existing theories have not highlighted the correlation between the supervisor's role in training program, motivation to learn and transfer of competency. For example, Hersey and Blanchard’s situational leadership theory failed to explain how supervisor's role in training programs may affect transfer of competency via motivation to learn. Therefore, this study is conducted to explain further such relations and is strongly supported by two major theories which are Adam’s equity theory and Vroom’s expectancy theory. The outcomes of this study can be used to strengthen existing theories in management training and development program.

1.6.2 Importance to the Research Methodology

This study will use literature findings, in-depth interview, pilot study and survey questionnaires as a main procedure to collect data from the studied organization. Such methods will determine the reliability and validity of data study and lead to the production of more accurate and less bias data.

1.6.3 Importance to the Human Resource Practitioner

Previous researches in this area have not sufficiently described the mediating role of motivation to learn in employees’ training program. With the findings of this study, human resource practitioners will better understand the mediating role of employees’ motivation to learn in training programs. Thus, they may improve training curriculum for staffs in the future. Besides that, it also helps managers and supervisors to change training policy and understand the roles as supervisor in training programs more deeply. Additionally, managers and supervisors may use the result of this study to enhance their roles in performance management as one of HRD intervention for employees’ performance problem in the organization.
1.7  Operational Definition of the Terms

1.7.1 Supervisor Support

A supervisor encourages trainees to attend training program, to participate in decision making, and guide trainees to apply competency learned in the workplace.

1.7.2 Supervisor Communication

A supervisor delivers information about training program, provides appropriate feedback, conducts discussion with trainees and provides explanations regarding the tasks to be learned.

1.7.3 Motivation to learn

The willingness of trainees to participate and get involve in learning new knowledge, skills and attitudes in order to increase their competencies in the workplace.

1.7.4 Transfer of competency

Trainees can apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes learned from training program to the workplace.

1.8 Conclusion

This chapter described the plan of this study and its importance to the theory, research methodology and to the HR practitioners. Chapter 2 would discuss the theoretical and empirical evidence that support the relationship between supervisor’s role in training programs, motivation to learn and transfer of competency.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of six sections. The first section explained the important elements of supervisor’s role in training programs. In the second and third sections the concepts of motivation to learn and transfer of competency will be discussed. The fourth and five sections discussed the theoretical and the empirical evidence in supporting the relationship between supervisor's role, motivation to learn and transfer of competency. Finally, conclusion is made in the last section.

2.1 Elements of Supervisor’s Role
2.1.1 Support

Supervisor support is often defined as the extent to which supervisor encourages and helps in a way that employees are able to use the knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in training to their jobs (Nijman, 2004). Supervisor support in the form of positive reinforcement and encouragement to employees before, during and after a training program may affect employees’ self-satisfaction, strengthens their commitment to participate in training activities and
motivate them to learn in training programs (Scermerhorn, Hunt & Osborn, 1991; How, 1994; Hornby, 2000). Elangovan and Karakowsky (1999) claimed that such supervisor supports should be practiced in order to achieve the objectives of the training programs.

Supervisor support in training programs also encompass of their involvement in making employees’ pre-training decisions which may result in influencing employees’ motivation to learn in training programs. Furthermore, a supervisor who motivates and encourages employees to attend training programs may increase employees’ level of motivation to learn and leads to employees’ willingness to apply the newly acquired knowledge and skills from the training into the job (Xiao, 1996; Baldwin & Magjuka, 1997; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995; Facteau et al., 1995).

Besides providing trainees facilities needed to assist competency transfer, supervisor support also includes giving employees opportunities to practice the newly learned KSAs and guides them to apply such competencies effectively at the workplace. Employees perceived that such continuously support from their supervisor significantly influence their motivation to attend future training programs (Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995 Machin & Treloar 2004; Nijman, 2004; Foxon, 1993).

Research on transfer of training acknowledges that the more employees perceive organization support (i.e. supervisors support) in training programs, the more the value is salient to them, thus they are more likely motivated to participate and learn in training and development activities (London & Mone, 1999).

2.1.2 Communication

Communication is often referred to as the activity of expressing ideas or feelings and the process of exchanging ideas and information between one person
and group through symbols, actions, written or spoken words in order to impart information and ideas effectively (Hornby, 2000; Andrew & Baird, 1992).

Effective communication is the most critical and important element in conducting training programs such as On-the-Job training, coaching and mentoring (Sisson, 2001; Trenholm & Jensen 1992; Rue and Byras, 2004). Supervisors must possess interpersonal communication skills because they are involved in delivering training procedures, training contents, the tasks and the objectives of the training programs. They also must have the ability to explain and communicate the valued outcomes of attending training programs and its importance of learning new competency. Interestingly, this may motivate employees to attend and to learn in training programs and this feeling may lead to increased transfer of competency because employees are more likely know what it is expected from the training program and the valued outcomes their would received (Tai, 2006; DeSimone et al., 2002; Foxon, 1993; Gibb, 2003; Baldwin & Magjuka, 1991).

Apart from that, the practice of communication openness in discussion between a supervisor and employees is an important mechanism to ensure that trainees’ motivation to learn will result in a positive impact on the transfer of competency (Lim & Johnson, 2002; Yeong, 2000). Communication openness involves supervisor to encourage employees to ask questions in discussion session and other training activities. Thus, it creates a favorable as well as encouraging training environment. Such environment influence employees’ motivation to involve in the learning session and discard trainees’ fear of learning new competency (Robbins & DeCenzo, 2004).

Supervisor communication also includes giving appropriate and constructive feedback to the employees. It is regarded as one of the most important strategies by which learning is improved. According to Machin (2002), the provision of appropriate and constructive feedback encouraged individual learner to develop self-regulatory skills that enhance their ability to generalize
their learning beyond the original task. As a result, it increases employees’ motivation to learn and the willingness of trainees to apply what have been learned during the training to the job (Martocchio & Webster, 1992; Lim & Johnson, 2002; Rodrígues & Gregory, 2005).

2.2 Motivation to learn

Motivation to learn is referred to as employees’ willingness to initiate in learning activities, continued to involve in learning tasks and committed to learn (Nijman, 2004). The components of motivation to learn includes curiosity, self-efficacy, attitude, need, competence and external motivators such as active participation and reinforcement (Frith, 1997). Employees’ motivation to learn has been regarded as one of the key influences on the transfer of competency (Foxon, 1993; Nijman, 2004; Machin & Treloar, 2004) and low level of employees’ motivation is a major factor of failure in transfer of training (Foxon, 1993).

In training program, motivation to learn influences the willingness of employees to attend training programs in the first place and also impacted their motivation to learn new competency (Machin & Treloar, 2004; Noe & Wilk, 1993). If employees have learning motivation, and at the same time facilitated by a supportive supervisor, they are more likely have the motivation to transfer newly learned knowledge and skills into their daily job.

The learning principles affirmed that trainees must be motivated to learn in order to achieve certain objectives in training programs (Junaidah, 2001; Elangovan & Karakowsky, 1999). Motivation is an individual and unique function therefore the trainer or the supervisor must understand well and know how to motivate them to attend and to learn in training programs (DeSimone, et al., 2002). For example, employees’ involvement in training session (e.g., discussion, questioning and practice session) may motivate them to learn and increase their level of competency when returning to their job. Additionally, supportive
behavior of the supervisor may serve a powerful motivational factor of the employees to learn and increased transfer of new competency.

### 2.3 Transfer of competency

The Oxford Advance Learner Dictionary defined transfer as the act of transferring something from one form to another while competency is one’s personal attributes, knowledge, experience, skills, and capability that enable people to perform successfully in their jobs by completing tasks effectively (Hornby, 2000; Wilson, 1999). Competencies (i.e. knowledge, skills, and attitudes) can be acquired through talent, experience, or from training and development program. Such competencies are required to accomplish any given task at work. Upon completing a training program, supervisor needs to ensure that trainees will successfully apply the competency learned in their jobs and generalized it across context.

Transfer of competencies is defined as the effective and continuing application of the skills and knowledge gained in a training program to the job environment (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). That is, when there is evidence of changed work behavior as a result of training interventions it shows that training has transferred. Transfer of competency reflects successful transfer of training which concern on “the degree to which trainees effectively apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes gained in a training program to the job” (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). As a result from attending training program, trainees can use the newly learned competencies to help them performing jobs better. Gradous (1991) stated that the only way the job can be performed is to use the skills and knowledge from training, and failure to apply the training results in an observable failure to perform.
2.4 Theoretical Evidence in Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor Role, Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

2.4.1 Equity Theory in Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor Support, Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

Adam’s (1963 & 1965) equity theory states that people want to be treated fairly in the workplace. Equity theory defines equity as the belief that employees are being treated fairly in relation to others. Perceived fair or unfair treatment has a significant impact on individual attitudes and behaviors.

Application of this theory in training management shows that employees who received fair support from their supervisors while applying and attending training programs would perceive equity. If individuals feel that they are fairly treated by their supervisors, this will invoke motivation to learn, which in turn, leads to increased transfer of competency (DeSimone, et al. 2003; Yamnill & McLean, 2001; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Baldwin, 1992). However, if employees who considered themselves not being involved in training activities and did not received equal supports from their supervisors will experience inequity. As a result, they may not be motivated to learn in training programs.

2.4.2 Expectancy Theory in Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor Communication, Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

Vroom’s (1964 & 1973) expectancy theory highlights that an individual will perform certain actions if he/she perceives such actions may bring valued outcomes. Application of this theory in training management shows that the ability of a supervisor to communicate the value of attending training programs and its importance of learning new competencies will increase employees’ motivation to learn (Farr & Middlebrooks, 1990; DeSimone, et al., 2003). Supervisors may positively influence learning motivation because it positively
impacts trainees’ expectancies and instrumentalities. For example, the immediate supervisor cues the implication of training participation through feedbacks and clear explanations about the benefit of the training. An individual who understands the values of attending training programs and the importance of learning new competency have motivated them to apply those newly learned competencies into their jobs effectively, maintained over time and generalized across contexts.

2.5 Empirical Evidence Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor’s Role, Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

2.5.1 Empirical Evidence Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor Support Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

Several researchers found that trainees with more supportive supervisors in training programs (such as encouraging trainees to attend training program and giving opportunity to apply the newly learned competencies) may increase employee motivation to learn and this resulted to higher transfer of competency (Cromwell and Kolb, 2004; Machin & Treloar, 2004; Foxon, 1993; Cohen, 1990).

Chiaburu and Takleab (2005) examined the relationship between supervisor support, training motivation and training effectiveness based on a sample of 119 employees who attended training program in a large organization in USA. The study found that trainees who receive support from their supervisor have high level of training motivation (i.e., motivation to learn) and this lead to influence trainees’ higher training maintenance (i.e., transfer of competency). Besides that, Nijman (2004) conducted a study about supervisor support in training program based on 179 trainees and 32 supervisors. This study found that supervisor support affect trainees’ motivation to learn and this have motivated trainees to transfer the competency learned from the training into the jobs.
2.5.2 Empirical Evidence in Supporting the Relationship between Supervisor Communication, Motivation to Learn and Transfer of Competency

A study conducted by Martocchio and Webster (1992) concerning the effect of supervisor’s feedback on performance in microcomputer software training indicated that trainees who received positive feedback resulted in higher learning motivation than those receiving negative feedback. As a result of such motivation to learn, the trainees were motivated to transfer newly acquired knowledge and skills back to their jobs and helped them in post-training computer anxiety. A similar result based on qualitative study done by Lim and Johnson (2002) who examined supervisor communication in training program found that positive feedback and discussion between supervisor and trainees on the use of newly learned competency have increased trainees’ motivation to learn. As a result, trainees are able to apply effectively the newly learned competency into their jobs.

Besides that, a longitudinal study conducted by Tai (2006), on the effect of supervisor training framing (i.e., supervisor communicate the importance and benefits of attending training programs to employees) based on 126 employees who entered a training program aiming at introduction of computer software operation and design. The result shows that when a supervisor had confirms the importance of supervisor training framing which predicts motivation to learn of employees subsequently affects their transfer motivation (i.e., transfer of competency).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter had discussed the roles of the supervisor in training programs which may influence employees’ training motivation and the application of the new competencies into the jobs. Such concepts were supported by theoretical
evidence as well as empirical evidence. Chapter 3 will discuss on the methodology used to study the issue proposed in this research study.
CHAPTER 3
METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into six sections. The first section discussed about the research design of this study. The second section explained the research location, population and sample. The third and fourth sections presented the measurement used and data collection techniques. In the fifth section data analysis techniques is discussed. Conclusion is discussed in the last section.

3.1 Research Design

This study used a cross-sectional research design in which it allowed the researcher to integrate training research literature, the in-depth interview, the pilot study and the actual survey as a main procedure to gather data. As advocated by many researchers, the use of such methods may gather accurate and less bias data (Cresswell, 1998; Davis, 1996; Sekaran, 2000) and it allows the researcher to create differences among variables being studied.
3.2 Research Location, Population and Sample

The target population of this study was technical employees from Technical Division at Dewan Bandaraya Kuching Utara, Sarawak (DBKU). The population of employees in that division is 195 technical employees out of 1300 employees who are working in the DBKU. The minimum size of sample for this study is determined by using a formula suggested by Luck, Taylor and Robin (1987).

The main advantages of random sampling are: (1) it can avoid bias in selecting a sample and (2) a sampling frame may identify the proper individuals to be selected and this may choose individuals easily and faster. Respondent was chosen from the number list on the paper where the number represents each individual. The purpose of doing this is to avoid prejudice or bias from respondents’ background on their achievement (Cresswell, 1998; Sekaran, 2000).

\[
S = \frac{So}{1 + So/N}
\]

\[
(z) \times p q
\]

\[
(e) (e)
\]

Where,

- **S** = Size of the sample
- **N** = Size of the population
- **P** = Population proportion or 0.5
- **q** = \((1-p)\) or 0.5
- **e** = the proposition of sampling error or 0.1
- **Z** = the standard score corresponding to a given confidence level at 1.625
Hence, So  = \frac{(1.625)(1.625) \times (0.5)(0.5)}{(0.1)(0.1)}
= 66

Thus, S  = \frac{66}{1 + (66/195)}
= 49

The minimum sample for this research is 49 respondents out of 195 technical employees at DBKU.

3.3 Measures

The survey questionnaire was used as a main measurement tool in this study. It has 4 sections. Firstly, supervisor support was measured by using 6 items that were modified from training research literature (Tsai & Tai, 2003; Tai, 2006; Chiaburu & Takleab, 2005; Yeong, 2000). Secondly, supervisor communication was measured by using 6 items that were modified from transfer of training literature (Foxon, 1993; Xiao, 1996; Yamnill & McLean, 2001; Preskill, n.d.). Thirdly, motivation to learn was measured by using 7 items that were modified from training program literature (Tsai & Tai, 2003; Tai, 2006; Rodríguez & Gregory, 2005; Foxon, 1993; Preskill, n.d.). Finally, transfer of competency was measured by using 6 items that were modified from transfer of training literature (Tsai & Tai, 2003; Tai, 2006; Rodríguez & Gregory, 2005; Axtell & Maitlis, 1997). The items used in the questionnaires were measured using a 7-item scale ranging from “strongly disagree” (1) to “strongly agree” (7). Demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, education level, position, length of service, types of training, and learning experience) were used as a controlling variable because this study focused on employee attitude. The back translation technique was used to
translate the survey questionnaires in Malay and English, this may increase the validity and reliability of the instrument (Van Maanen, 1983; Wright, 1996).

3.4 **Data Collection Technique**

Procedure of data collection was done in three phases: Phase 1: In-depth interview, Phase 2: Pilot study and Phase 3: Actual study.

3.4.1 **Phase 1: In-depth interview**

In the initial stage of this study, in-depth interview was conducted by involving 6 experienced employees namely the Assistant of Human Resource Manager, the Head of the Training Unit, two supervisors, and two senior officers of technical department. The in-depth interviewed was conducted in order to understand the roles of supervisor in training programs. Information gathered from the interviews was used to develop the content of the survey questionnaire for a pilot study.

3.4.2 **Phase 2: Pilot study**

A pilot study was done by distributing survey questionnaires to 4 employees: one supervisor and three technical employees who have worked in the organization. Besides that, a set of questionnaire was given to the management level (i.e., Assistant of Human Resource Manager and the Head of Training Unit). Information gathered via the interview method and pilot study was used to verify the content and format of survey questionnaires for an actual study.

3.4.3 **Phase 3: Actual Study**

After obtaining permission to conduct a survey from the studied organization, 150 questionnaires were distributed to technical employees through contact persons (e.g., the Head of Training Unit, assistant of HR manager, and supervisor). Of the total number, 100 usable questionnaires were returned to the researcher yielding a response rate of 67 percent. The survey questionnaires were
answered by participants based on voluntarily basis. The number of this sample exceeds the minimum sample of 30 participants as required by probability sampling technique. Therefore, the questionnaire data can be analysed by using inferential statistics (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005; Sekaran, 2000).

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

A Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 14.0 was used to analyze the questionnaire data. The purpose of using SPSS is to help in descriptive statistic analysis. Descriptive Statistic analysis involves data analysis by using mean value and standard deviation. It is said that it can make a clear picture regarding the data collected. Descriptive statistics and Pearson product moment are used to develop a correlational matrix table. The table consists of mean, standard deviation, and correlations between the same and different variables. The correlations provide further evidence of validity and reliability for measurement scales in research (Barclay, Higgins & Thompson, 1995; Cooper & Schindler, 2003; Hair et al., 1998).

3.5.1 Data Screening

The collected research data has been screened using descriptive statistic. The purpose of doing this is to identify the missing and outlier data that may affect the validity of the data. In the process, Skewness and Kurtosis test was used to examine the normality, linearity, and homosediscity (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). The univariate normality of the research variable is base on the standard of ±1 Skewness and ±2 Kurtosis (Hair et al, 1998).

3.5.2 Psychometric Assessments, Pearson Correlation Analysis and Univariate Analysis

Validity and reliability were used to assess the psychometric proprieties of the questionnaire data. Validity refers to the appropriateness and as a perfect representation of the variables the researcher intends to measure (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). It was used to determine whether the item used in this research
study is valid to be used or not. The validity test can be done by using the factor analysis in the SPSS. If the factor analysis for the validity analysis values of 0.4 or greater, the item use in the research are considered to have achieve the validity standard and thus lead to acceptable research findings (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 1998).

On the other hand, the reliability is the degree of consistency in which the measuring instrument measure whatever it is (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). After the dimensionality of instrument is verified, the internal consistency of the scales in the questionnaire should be checked by using Cronbach Alpha procedure (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). The reliability of the instrument is considered to be high if the alpha value is nearer to +1. Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) further explain that the alpha value should be at least 0.70 and preferably higher for research purposes. This statistical method relates to the degree to which measures are free from random error, thereby yielding consistent results for the analysis.

The relation that exists between two variables can be examined by using the Pearson Correlation ‘r’ (Mohd. Majid, 1993). The positive “r” value showing that the relation between two variables is positive while the negative “r” value refers to negative relation between two variables. The “r” value must be between positive one and negative one (-1 ≤ r ≤1). The closer the “r” values toward the value “r”, the stronger the relation between the two variables.

3.5.3 Testing Mediating Model

Pearson correlation analysis was unable to uncover the mediating role of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency. Therefore, stepwise regression analysis was used to test the mediating hypotheses.

According to Baron and Kenny (1986), the mediating variable can be determined when it meets three conditions: first, the predictor variables are
significantly correlated with the hypothesized mediator. Second, the predictor and mediator variables are all significantly correlated with the dependent variable. Third, a previously significant effect of predictor variables is reduced to non-significance or reduced in terms of effect size after the inclusion of mediator variables into the analysis (James, Mulaik & Brett, 1982; Wong, Hui & Law, 1995). In this regression analysis, standardized coefficients (standardized beta) were used for all analyses (Jacard, Turrisi & Wan, 1990).

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter provides an overview on how the methodology was used to study the research issue, how the data was collected, and analyzed. Chapter 4 will discuss on the result of this study.
CHAPTER 4
RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into eight sections. First section explained the respondent’s profile. The second and third sections discussed the result of in-depth interview and the data analysis. The fourth section presented the goodness of data and the analysis of Pearson correlation matrix is elaborated in the fifth section. The sixth section explained the outcome of the study by testing the mediating model. The discussion and implications of this study is discussed in the seventh section. Conclusion is presented in the last section.

4.1 The Result of In-Depth Interview

Table 1 presents the result of in-depth interview. The in-depth interview was conducted involving six experienced employees (i.e., the Assistant of HR Manager, the Head of Training Unit, two supervisors and two senior officers from Technical Division). The result of the interview reveals that supervisor plays various roles in the organization. In training program, supervisor provides support not only technical support (e.g., budgetary, materials, facilities) in training program but also gives encouragement, and practicing good interaction with various backgrounds of employees. These are to ensure that what was learned by
employees in training programs will be transferred effectively when back to their jobs.

A further investigation of the interview’s result reveals that motivation to learn have been a major factor that may influence the effect of supervisor’s role on transfer of competency. For example, the ability of supervisors to practice good communication (e.g., provide constructive feedback and open discussion) in training program has positively motivated employees’ motivation to learn which, in turn, lead to increased transfer of competency in the organization.

Table 1: Result of the in-depth Interview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Supervisor Support            | Supervisor:  
• encourages employees to attend training program  
• encourages employees to apply newly learned information from training program  
• provides enough time to the employees to practice the KSA learned from training to their daily jobs  
• gives support in terms of budgetary, facilities and equipment for the training |
| Supervisor Communication      | • arrangement of ‘feedback form’ which will be given to the trainees before and after the training has been implemented  
• provides feedback during the training  
• Implements open discussion with employees about their competency or performance problem. It may be use to motivate employees to use newly learned KSA  
• open discussion involve a two-way communication  
• give praise and constructive critics/feedback to employees |
| Motivation to Learn           | Employees are:  
• willing to exert considerable effort in the training program in order to improve KSA  
• willing to attend and participate in training course  
• willing to pay full attention during the training program  
• enthusiastic to learn new KSA |
| Transfer of Competency        | Employees are:  
• able to apply the KSAs learned in training program to their daily jobs  
• perform job better when they have successfully apply |
the newly learned skills and knowledge
- effectively and continuously apply the KSA gained in training program to the job environment
- employees’ KSA increase upon attending training program

4.2 Respondents’ Profile

In terms of sample profile, most respondents’ characteristics were male (92 percent), age between 30 to 39 years old (47 percent), technicians who held Malaysian Certificate of Education (45 percent), technicians who worked less than 5 years (33 percent), group leader and supervisor position (39 percent), technicians who attended training within working hour (64.0 percent) and technicians that had both technical and non-technical skills (41 percent). Table 2 shows the respondents’ profile.
Table 2: Respondents’ Profile in the Organization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Characteristics</th>
<th>Sub-Profile</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30-39</td>
<td>47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;49</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Diploma / STPM</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SPM</td>
<td>45.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LCE / SRP/ PMR</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>14.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Service</td>
<td>1-5 years</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6-10 years</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-20 years</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&gt; 20 years</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>Engineer/Planner</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader/Supervisor</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Technician</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Landscape /maintenance</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Architect</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Others</td>
<td>23.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>During official hour</td>
<td>64.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-official working hour</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Experience</td>
<td>Technical skills</td>
<td>27.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-technical skills</td>
<td>32.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>41.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=100

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

4.3 Data Screening Result

Table 3 shows the result for data filtering. There were 25 items that have been tested and the result showed that 24 items in Univariate Normality
Assumption for the questionnaire were normal and there was only one question with kurtosis value more than 2 & skweness value more than 1. The result indicated that there were no missing values in the survey questionnaires.

Table 3: Data Screening Result

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Skewness (±1)</th>
<th>Kurtosis (±2)</th>
<th>Univariate Normality Assumption</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support 3</td>
<td>-.808</td>
<td>1.031</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support 4</td>
<td>-.127</td>
<td>-.887</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support 5</td>
<td>-.477</td>
<td>.386</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support 6</td>
<td>-.912</td>
<td>1.581</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support 7</td>
<td>-.576</td>
<td>-.119</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support 8</td>
<td>-.729</td>
<td>1.040</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 1</td>
<td>-.870</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 2</td>
<td>-.702</td>
<td>.223</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 3</td>
<td>-.367</td>
<td>-.169</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 4</td>
<td>-.558</td>
<td>.814</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 5</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>-.664</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication 7</td>
<td>-.118</td>
<td>-.624</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 1</td>
<td>-.774</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 2</td>
<td>-.946</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 3</td>
<td>-.917</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 4</td>
<td>-.870</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 5</td>
<td>-.875</td>
<td>.839</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 6</td>
<td>-1.238</td>
<td>1.734</td>
<td>Not Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation 7</td>
<td>-.946</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 1</td>
<td>-.774</td>
<td>.051</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 2</td>
<td>-.946</td>
<td>.771</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 3</td>
<td>-.917</td>
<td>.777</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 4</td>
<td>-.870</td>
<td>.387</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 5</td>
<td>-0.875</td>
<td>0.839</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer 6</td>
<td>-1.238</td>
<td>1.734</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4 **Goodness of Data**

The survey questionnaires consist of 29 items, which are related to four variables: support (8 items), communication (8 items), motivation to learn (7 items) and transfer of competency (6 items). The factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation was done for all variables. Table 4.4 shows the results of factor analysis process in which it is condensed from 29 items to 25 items. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity were conducted for each variable.

The KMO score for support was 0.878, communication 0.840, motivation to learn 0.906 and transfer of competency 0.906. These variables were significant in Bartlett’s test of sphericity. All variables had Eigen values larger than 1, which support (4.692) with factor loadings in the range of 0.785 to 0.899, communication (4.259) with factor loadings in the range of 0.644 to 0.822, motivation to learn (5.454) with factor loadings in the range of 0.709 to 0.900 and transfer of competency (4.788) with factor loadings in the range of 0.804 to 0.962.

The items for each variable had factor loadings of 0.60 and above, indicating that it have met the acceptable standard of validity analysis (Hair, Anderson, Tatham & Black, 1998). The result of reliability analysis showed that support (alpha=0.944), communication (alpha=0.916), motivation to learn (0.952) and transfer of competency (0.948) had a value of Cronbach alpha of more than 0.63, indicating the variables met the acceptable standard of reliability analysis (Nunally & Bernstein, 1994). Table 4 presents the results of the analysis done on goodness of data.
Table 4: Goodness of Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor Loadings</th>
<th>KMO</th>
<th>Bartlett’s Test of Sphericity</th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>Variance Explained</th>
<th>Cronbach Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.785 to 0.899</td>
<td>0.878</td>
<td>$\chi^2=536.29$, p=.000</td>
<td>4.692</td>
<td>78.207</td>
<td>0.944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.644 to 0.822</td>
<td>0.840</td>
<td>$\chi^2=429.78$, p=.000</td>
<td>4.259</td>
<td>70.978</td>
<td>0.916</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to learn</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.709 to 0.900</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>$\chi^2=673.33$, p=.000</td>
<td>5.454</td>
<td>77.915</td>
<td>0.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of competency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0.804 to 0.962</td>
<td>0.906</td>
<td>$\chi^2=562.86$, p=.000</td>
<td>4.788</td>
<td>79.800</td>
<td>0.948</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5 Descriptive and Pearson Correlation Analysis

The means for the variables are from 5.51 to 6.13, signifying that the level of supervisor support, communication, motivation to learn, and transfer of competency are ranging from high (5) to highest (7). Supervisor’s role (i.e., support and communication) positively and significantly correlated with transfer of competency ($r=0.31$, p<0.01; $r=0.44$, p<0.01, respectively), indicate that these variables are important antecedents of transfer of competency. The correlation coefficients for the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., support and communication) and the mediating variable (i.e., motivation to learn), and the relationship between the independent variable (i.e., transfer of competency) were less than 0.90, indicating the data were not affected by serious collinearity problem (Hair et al., 1998). The measurement scales that had validity and reliability were used to test research hypotheses. The result of Pearson correlation analysis and descriptive statistics were shown in Table 5.
Table 5: Correlation Matrix Result for the Research Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>5.63</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>5.51</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>.73**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Learn</td>
<td>6.13</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer of Competency</td>
<td>5.94</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

N=100

4.6 Result of Testing Mediating Model

Pearson correlation analysis was unable to uncover the mediating role of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency. Stepwise regression analysis was undertaken to test the mediating hypotheses.

The results of Stepwise regression analysis were summarized in three steps. Step 1 showed that the respondent characteristics were found not to be significant predictor of transfer of competency, accounting for 5 percent of the variance in the dependent variable. Step 2 displayed that supervisor support positively but insignificantly correlated with transfer of competency (β=.01, p=.93) whereas communication is positively and significantly correlated with transfer of competency (β=.45, p=.001). These results demonstrate that the ability of supervisor to communicate the information about training programs to employees has been an important determinant of transfer of competency, accounting for 25 percent of the variance in the dependent variable.

The inclusion of motivation to learn in Step 3 of the process reveals that motivation to learn is a mediating variable for the supervisor’s role and transfer of competency relationship (β=.671, p=.000). Before the inclusion of motivation to learn into the analysis in Step 2, supervisor support (β=.01, p=.93) was found not to be significantly correlated with transfer of competency whereas supervisor
communication (β=.45, p=.001) was found to be significantly correlated with transfer of competency. As shown in Step 3 (after the inclusion of motivation to learn into the analysis), the previous significant relationship between supervisor support and transfer of competency has become non-significant (Step 3: β=.08, p=.42), while the previous significant relationship between supervisor communication and transfer of competency has become non-significant (Step 3: β=.09, p=.41). These results demonstrate that the strength of such relationship have increased, signaling the motivation to learn does act as a full mediator in the organization. The result of Stepwise regression analysis is shown in Table 6.
Table 6: Result for Stepwise Regression Analysis with Motivation to Learn as a Mediator and Transfer of Competency as Dependent Variable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Dependent Variable (Transfer of Competency)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Step 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled Variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length of Service</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Training</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of Learning</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>.45***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mediating Variable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation to Learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted R Square</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R Square Change</td>
<td>.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F ∆ R Square</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Level of Significance = *p<0.05; **p<0.01; ***p<0.001

4.7 Discussions and Implications

The findings of this study show that the effect of supervisor’s role on transfer of competency is indirectly affected by motivation to learn. In the DBKU sample, supervisors have provided proper support (such as encouraging employees to attend training program and applying the newly learned knowledge and skills) and practice good communication (such as giving feedback, discussion and deliver information on training) when dealing with training programs.

Employees perceived that their supervisors play active roles in training programs (as described in Table 4, mean value for supervisor support is 5.63 and the mean value of supervisor communication is 5.51). Employees perceived that such supervisor’s role had increased their motivation to learn (as described in
Table 4, mean value for motivation to learn is 6.13), and this may lead to increased transfer of competency in the DBKU sample.

This study provides significant impacts on three major aspects: theoretical contribution, robustness of research methodology, and practical contribution.

4.7.1 Implication to the Theory

In term of theoretical contribution, these findings show two important outcomes: firstly, motivation to learn is a mediating variable in the relationship between supervisor support and transfer of competency. This outcome is consistent with the studies done by DeSimone et al. (2002), Nijman (2004), and Chiaburu and Takleab (2005). Secondly, motivation to learn is a mediating variable in the relationship between supervisor communication and transfer of competency. This outcome is consistent with the studies done by Farr and Middlebrooks (1990), Lim and Johnson (2002), Brinkerhoff and Montesino (1995), Foxon (1993) and Tai (2006). In sum, the findings of this study have supported and broadened training research literature published in most Western countries. Thus, the notion of motivation to learn has been successfully applied within training management models of the studied organization.

4.7.2 Implication to Research Methodology

With respect to the robustness of research methodology, the data were gathered by using training management literature, in-depth interviews, pilot study and the survey questionnaires have exceeded an acceptable standard of validity and reliability analysis, thus can lead to the production of accurate findings.

4.7.3 Implication to the HR Practitioners

In terms of practical contributions, the findings of this study can be used as a guideline by the management to upgrade the effectiveness of training programs in organizations. Additionally, HR practitioners will have a better understanding
of the concepts of employees’ motivation to learn as well as the critical roles of supervisors in training programs. Thus, they may improve training curriculum for staff in the future. Besides that, it also helps the organizational training committee to improve the effectiveness of its training policy.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter have discussed about the result of data analysis and findings, the implication of this study to the theory, research methodology, and to HR practitioners. In sum, this study confirms that motivation to learn does act as a full mediator in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency in the studied organization. Chapter 5 will discuss about the summary of the overall chapters, limitations of the study as well as recommendations and conclusions.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the summary of all chapters. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section presents the research summary. The third and fourth sections discuss the limitations and recommendations. The final section presents the conclusion for this research study.

5.1 Research Summary

This study is divided into four main chapters. Each chapter discusses on different issues but interrelated to each other. The main objective of this study is to examine the mediating effect of motivation to learn in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency.

First chapter discussed about the background of study, objective of the study, statement of problem, conceptual framework, research hypothesis, operational definition and importance of the study.

Chapter two discussed the literature review for this research. This chapter explained the important elements of supervisor’s role in training programs and
presented the theoretical and empirical evidence in supporting the relationship between the independent variable, the mediator and the dependent variable. This chapter has proved that each variable in the research does have positive relationship.

Chapter three discussed about the research methodology used in the study. The findings of this study were meaningless unless supported by a reliable and suitable research methodology. This chapter explained the sampling technique used, the measurement, data collection techniques as well as data analysis used in this study. Qualitative (in-depth interview) and quantitative (survey questionnaire) research method was used to obtain a valid and consistent research result.

Chapter four discussed about the research findings obtained by using suitable data analysis. Data screening, validity and reliability test, correlation Pearson and stepwise regression analysis have been used to test the research hypothesis. The result of this study shows that motivation to learn does acts as a full mediator in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency. Additionally, discussions and implications towards the theory, research methodology and HR practitioners have been explained in this chapter.

Chapter five explained the summary of this research study. The limitations and recommendations to the HR practitioners of the organization and to future researchers were discussed in this chapter. The conclusion for this study confirms that motivation to learn acts as a full mediator in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency.

5.2 Limitation of Study

The conclusion drawn from the results of this study should consider the following limitations. Firstly, this study was a cross-sectional research design where the data were taken one time within the duration of this study. This research design did not capture the developmental issues such as intra-individual change
and restrictions of making inference to participants and/or causal connections between variables of interest.

Secondly, this study only examines the relationship between latent variables and the conclusion drawn from this study does not specify the relationship between specific indicators for the dependent variable, mediating variable and dependent variable. Thirdly, this study only focused on particular elements of the supervisor’s role and neglected other important factors (e.g., employee’s readiness, leadership styles of the supervisor and supervisors training framing) in the hypothesized model.

Fourthly other training outcomes (e.g., job satisfaction, job performance and job commitment) that are significant for organizations and employees are not discussed in this study. Fifthly, although a substantial amount of variance in dependent measured explained by the significant predictors is identified, there are still a number of unexplainable factors that can be incorporated to identify the causal relationship among variables and their relative explanatory power (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001). For that reason, one should be cautious about generalizing the statistical results of this study. Finally, the sample for this study was taken only from one department in the studied organization that allowed the researchers to gather data via survey questionnaires. The nature of this sample may increase the ability of generalizing the results of this study to other organizational settings.

5.3 Recommendations

The recommendations made by the researcher are divided into two parts. The first part is the recommendations for the organization while the second part will be the recommendations for future researchers.
5.3.1 Recommendations for the HR practitioners of the organization

To increase the effectiveness of the employees’ training programs, the management may consider these suggestions: firstly, supervisor’s role can be sharpened such as interpersonal communication, managing employee change and conflict management. These skills will increase supervisor’s capabilities in managing employees from various backgrounds in the organization. Secondly, supervisor’s role can be meaningful if they are involved in organizational training committees, this will give them opportunity to provide practical experiences for establishing the vision, mission, objectives and appropriate modules for training programs. Thirdly, supervisors may positively motivate employees to attend and apply competencies that they have learned from informal and formal training programs if top management hires employees that have appropriate qualifications and skills. Fourthly, supervisors can be motivated to increase their efforts in monitoring the development of employee competencies if they are provided better monetary incentives. These factors may positively motivate supervisors to support the organizational and departmental training strategy and goals. Finally, to raise employees’ motivation to learn, organization should also address the possible effects of environmental factors or transfer climate (e.g., top management, subordinate and peer support) towards employees’ motivation to learn. A considerable research training literature suggested that such factors can influence training motivation (i.e., motivation to learn) which in turn lead to transfer outcomes (Axtel, et. al, 1997; Facteau et al., 1995; Brinkerhoff & Montesino, 1995).

5.3.2 Recommendations for Future Researchers

The conceptual and methodology limitations of this study need to be considered when designing future research. Firstly, the organizational and personal characteristics as a potential variable that can influence the effectiveness of employees’ training needs to be further explored. If several organizational (type, ownership and size) and personal characteristics (e.g., gender, length of
service, education level and position) are used in research, this may provide meaningful perspectives for understanding the individual differences and similarities affect outcomes of training programs.

Secondly, the cross-sectional research design has a number of shortcomings. Therefore other research designs such as longitudinal studies should be used as a procedure for collecting data and describing the patterns of change and the direction and magnitude of causal relationships between variables of interest. Thirdly, the findings of this study may be improved if this study is done in more organisational sectors (e.g., Malaysian government link companies, small-medium enterprise, and successful local companies). Fourthly, as an extension of the motivation to learn, the theoretical construct of transfer climate (e.g., transfer of competency and job performance) need to be considered in future research because it has been widely recognized as an important link between supervisor support and training outcomes (DeSimone et. al., 2002; Goldstein & Ford, 2002; Nijman 2004; Nijman et. al., 2006).

Finally, future study should consider another practical implication that will generate different effect on employees’ motivation to learn in training program such as supervisors training framing, and training assignment because such variables have been given more attention in recent training research literature (Tsai & Tai, 2003, Tai, 2006; Machin & Treloar, 2004). The importance of these issues needs to be further explained in future research.

5.4 Conclusion

This study confirms that motivation to learn acts as a full mediator in the relationship between supervisor’s role and transfer of competency. This result has supported and extended training research literature published in Western countries. Therefore, current research and practice within training management models needs to consider motivation to learn as a critical aspect of training systems. The findings of this study further suggest that motivation to learn should
be seen as crucial aspects of organisational training system where increasing individuals’ motivation to learn may strongly induce positive subsequent personal outcomes such as satisfaction, performance, commitment and trust. Hence, these positive outcomes may lead employees to achieve and support both organisational and human resource management’s strategies and goals.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


McMahon, J. (2001). Supervisor’s role in training is critical. *A publication of the NC DSS Children’s Services Statewide Training Partnership*, 2(3)


Yeong, L.S. (2000). Relationship between supervisor-subordinate communication and organizational commitment in the Hotel industry in Kuching, Sarawak. Final Year Project, University Malaysia Sarawak, Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia.
APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire For the Research Study

QUESTIONNAIRE (BORANG SOAL SELIDIK)

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR’S ROLE AND TRANSFER OF COMPETENCY: DOES MOTIVATION TO LEARN ACTS AS A MEDIATING ROLE?

Dear Sir/Madam/Miss,

The objective of this survey is to obtain your view on the roles of supervisor towards transfer of competency. The information obtained from this survey will be kept confidential and will solely be used for academic purposes. This questionnaire consists of five (5) parts: Part A (Demography), Part B (Supervisor Support), Part C (Supervisor Communication) Part D (Motivation to Learn), and Part E (Transfer of Competency).

Please read the questions carefully before you answer. You are required to answer ALL questions in the questionnaire.

Thank you.

Sofiah Bongogoh
Human Resource Development Program
Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development
University Malaysia Sarawak
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak.
### Part A: Demographic Background

**Please tick (√) in the right answer.**
*Sila tandakan (√) kepada jawapan yang sesuai.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender:</th>
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<td>Male (Lelaki)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female (Perempuan)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Age:</th>
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<tr>
<td>20-29 years (tahun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
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<td>40-49</td>
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<td>&gt; 49</td>
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<tr>
<th>Level of Education:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ijazah Sarjana / Sarjana Muda</td>
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<td>Diploma / STPM</td>
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<td>SPM</td>
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<tr>
<td>LCE / SRP/ PMR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Others (lain-lain):</td>
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<tr>
<th>Length of Service:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 - 5 years (tahun)</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 - 15 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt; 16 years</td>
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</table>
### Types of training attended:
*Jenis Latihan yang telah dihadiri:*

| Training during official working hours / Latihan dalam waktu kerja rasmi |
| Training during non-official working hours / Latihan diluar waktu kerja rasmi |
| Training during official and non-official working hours / Menghadiri kedua-dua jenis latihan |

### Learning Experience:
*Pengalaman Pembelajaran:*

| Technical Skills / Kemahiran Teknikal |
| Non-technical/administrative skills / Kemahiran Bukan Teknikal / Mengurus |
| Both technical and non-technical skills / Kemahiran teknikal dan bukan teknikal |

### Position:
*Jawatan:*

| Engineer/ Planner Jurutera / Perancang |
| Group Leader/ Supervisor Ketua Kumpulan / Penyelia |
| Technician Juruteknik |
| Landscaper and maintenance workers/ Para Pekerja lanskap dan penyelanggraan |
| Architect Arkitek |

Others (*Lain-lain*) :___________________ (Please state / Sila nyatakan)
PART B – Supervisor Support

Please tick (√) the number that best describes the agreement.
Sila tandakan (√) pada nombor yang menunjukkan persetujuan anda bagi setiap pernyataan

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<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slightly Disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slightly Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agak Setuju</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
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</table>

In training context, my supervisor…
Dalam konteks latihan, penyelia saya...

1. gives enough time for me to practice the skills that I have learned during training
   Memberi masa yang secukupnya untuk mempraktikan kemahiran yang telah saya belajar semasa latihan.
   (b1)

2. encourage me to attend training program
   mendorong saya untuk menghadiri program latihan
   (b2)

3. cares about my needs to have knowledge and skills
   mengambil berat ke atas keperluan saya memiliki pengetahuan dan kemahiran.
   (b3)

4. motivates me due to my good performance after attending training
   memberi motivasi apabila saya menunjukkan prestasi yang baik selepas menjalani latihan
   (b4)

5. always give constructive criticism
   Sentiasa memberi kritikan membina kepada saya.
   (b5)

6. assist me to apply the knowledge and skills learned from the training
   Membantu saya dalam mengaplikasikan pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang saya perolehi daripada latihan.
   (b6)
APPENDIX 1: Questionnaire For the Research Study

7. allows me to try out news ways to accomplish a task
   Mengizinkan saya mencuba cara baru untuk
   melaksanakan sesuatu perkara
   (b7)

8. gives me a chance to apply the knowledge and skills
   learned from the training
   Memberi peluang kepada saya untuk mengaplikasikan
   pengetahuan and kemahiran yang diperolehi dari latihan
   (b8)

PART C – Supervisor Communication

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
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<td>Sangat Tidak setuju</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tidak setuju</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Slightly Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Slighty Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly Agree</td>
<td>Tidak setuju</td>
<td>Kurang Setuju</td>
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<td>Agak Setuju</td>
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<td>Sangat Setuju</td>
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<td>Agak Setuju</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strongly Setuju</td>
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</table>

In training context, my supervisor…
*Dalam konteks latihan, penyelia saya…*

9. clearly explains the objective of attending training program
   menerangkan dengan jelas tujuan menghadiri program latihan
   (c1)

10. gives information regarding the training program
    (Example: changes on date and venue)
    memberi maklumat baru mengenai latihan (contohnya:
    pertukaran tarikh dan tempat latihan dijalankan).
    (c2)

11. gives feedback regarding the way I apply the knowledge and skills learned from training program
    memberikan maklumbalas tentang cara saya mengaplikasikan kemahiran dan pengetahuan yang
    dipelajari semasa latihan.
    (c3)
12. provide feedback, instruction or performance appraisal clearly
   memberi maklumbalas arahan atau penilaian prestasi dengan jelas
   \[(c4)\]

13. Praise me when I do my job well
   Sentiasa memberi memuji apabila saya melakukan kerja dengan baik
   \[(c5)\]

14. encourage me to give my opinion regarding the job
   menggalakkan saya untuk memberikan pendapat berkaitan dengan kerja.
   \[(c6)\]

15. listens to my opinion regarding the needs of training program
   mendengar pendapat saya tentang keperluan latihan.
   \[(c7)\]

16. listens and discuss the training related problems
   mendengar dan berbincang masalah yang berkaitan dengan latihan.
   \[(c8)\]

### PART D- Motivation to Learn

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Slightly Disagree</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Slightly Agree</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sangat setuju</td>
<td>Tidak setuju</td>
<td>Kurang setuju</td>
<td>Setuju</td>
<td>Setuju</td>
<td>Setuju</td>
<td>Sangat setuju</td>
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</table>

I am...
Saya...

17. interested to learn new knowledge and skills in training
   minat mempelajari kemahiran dan pengetahuan baru dalam latihan
   \[(g1)\]
18. interested to attend training programs that is related to area of work. 

   minat menghadiri kursus latihan yang berkaitan bidang tugas.

   (g2)

19. gives full attention regarding the content of the training program. 

   memberi tumpuan sepenuhnya terhadap kandungan kursus.

   (g3)

20. prepared to give full concentration during training 

    Bersedia mengikuti latihan dengan penuh tumpuan.

   (g4)

21. the appropriateness of the training content with my job motivates me to learn. 

    kandungan kursus yang bersesuaian dengan kerja boleh memotivasikan saya untuk belajar

   (g5)

22. motivated to learn something new 

    bersemangat dalam mempelajari sesuatu yang baru

   (g6)

23. prepared to accept any task given by the manager or supervisor 

    bersedia menerima apa juga tugas yang diberikan oleh pengurus atau penyelia.

   (g7)
### PART E – Transfer of Competency

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree Sangat Tidak setuju</td>
<td>Disagree Tidak setuju</td>
<td>Slightly Disagree Kurang Setuju</td>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>Slightly Agree Agak Setuju</td>
<td>Agree Setuju</td>
<td>Strongly Agree Sangat Setuju</td>
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</table>

Upon attending the training program I am… 
*Selepas menghadiri program latihan Saya…*

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</table>
| 24. able to accomplish my work faster  
*dapat menyiapk* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h1) |
| 25. feel more confident upon attending training  
*merasa yakin selepas menghadiri latihan* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h2) |
| 26. the newly learned knowledge and skills increases my competencies  
*pengetahuan dan kemahiran baru dapat meningkatkan kemahiran, pengetahuan dan sikap.* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h3) |
| 27. able to apply the knowledge, skills and abilities in the workplace  
*dapat mengaplikasikan pengetahuan dan kemahiran dan kebolehan ditempat kerja* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h4) |
| 28. job outputs were more quality upon attending training  
*hasil kerja lebih berkualiti setelah menghadiri latihan.* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h5) |
| 29. able to solve any work-related problems  
*mampu menyelesaikan masalah berkaitan tugasan kerja* |   |   |   |   |   |   | (h6) |

**Note:**
*Coding items are shown in the parentheses.*
*Only the bold items were used in this study.*