

The Relationship between Job Training and Job Satisfaction: A Case Study of Royal Malaysian Air Force Firefighters

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The knowledge and skills developed during training are essential to maintain safety at actual emergency scenes. Indirectly, this can lead to enhanced job satisfaction among employees due to self-confidence on their safety. Thus, this study examined the relationship between job training (on- and off-the-job training) with job satisfaction for employees of the Royal Malaysia Air Force. Normal training covers potential hazards that look into the necessary steps, skill and outlines to avoid injury when faced with actual situations, and the employees rely on initial and ongoing job training. 200 surveys were distributed to the Royal Malaysian Air Force firefighters. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the demographic profile of the respondents, while Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used for relationship variables. The results show that there was a significant relationship between on- and off-the-job training and job satisfaction. The Malaysian Air Force needs to enhance employees' training and development practices for on- and off-the-job training. With appropriate training, the employees felt secure, satisfied and motivated to work harder to their best level of performance.

Key words: *Training and development; off-the-job training; on-the-job training; job satisfaction.*

Introduction

An airplane in flight is a symphony of systems and subsystems (Delmar, 2011). The larger the aircraft, the more systems it requires. For example, the procurement of the new Airbus A400M for RMAF with the first delivery in 2016 and Airbus A380 for Malaysia Airlines created an urgency for the need of job training on the new system among RMAF firefighters. Furthermore, at a certain airfield, the firefighters need to be trained with various types of aircraft or helicopters as the aircrafts would land or depart from air fields such as Kuantan Air Base and Labuan Air Base. These locations are multiple-user airfields between military and civil flights.

Other than preparing for an aviation incident, they also need to be prepared with domestic fire incidents, which will put them under stressful conditions. These sophisticated systems pose a danger to first responders, especially as domestic fire cases increase during the dry season. With the rise of several new aviation companies and an increasing number of flights into and from certain destinations, there is an increased percentage in number of possibilities for an incident to happen. The disaster-response tactics also evolved continually from time to time as the airplane system becomes more sophisticated and the building of many new houses and shops increase the fire possibility. Training has become more important due to the increasing demands of the firefighting job in the event of a disaster which requires their expertise to handle the situation in an orderly manner (Hunter, 2004). New equipment is also coming into the inventory of the RMAF firefighters, such as the crash vehicle to meet the minimum requirement of the Airport Fire Rescue Service as set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) used across the world. At the same time, firefighters need to perform their duty as Armed Forces personnel 24/7.

Thus, the best preparation is to inform them how to use specific skills and improve their understanding through practice on how to use it (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016). Therefore, the RMAF Fire Station should provide sufficient training for firefighters (Hamlin & Stewart, 2011), especially regarding how to handle the new system with the new procedures available in their line of work. However, training alone is not enough if the personnel that serve RMAF do not feel satisfied with their job. Job dissatisfaction can cause certain problems such as job stress, poor overall morale, lack of productivity and employee turnover. Therefore, this study investigated in-depth the relationship between satisfaction and overall job satisfaction for the firefighters serving RMAF. This is to prove that staff training that is currently in use by the RMAF such as on- and off-the-job training has a positive significant relationship with job satisfaction if everything is done correctly.

Objectives

The research objectives that were identified are as follows:

1. To assess the relationship between on-the-job training and overall job satisfaction at the RMAF Fire Station.
2. To assess the relationship between off-the-job training and overall job satisfaction at the RMAF Fire Station.

Materials and Methods

Sampling

The sampling process focused on the technique of choosing a small group of respondents from a population to participate in the study to represent the whole group (Wanjohi, 2012). In this study's context, the sampling approach used was probability (stratified sampling procedure) and non-probability sampling with convenience sampling procedure (Uprichard, 2013). A sample of 200 respondents from the Royal Malaysian Air Force firefighters were selected. The sample comprised of all levels among the firefighters of RMAF. In this survey, the researcher chose stratified random sampling for data collection. Simple random sampling allowed the researcher to select the sample randomly from the sampling frame.

The stratified random procedure was used to identify the respondents in the target of population that was divided into management, supervisory and subordinates that made a total of three strata (Thompson, 2012; Monsef & Mehrjardi 2017). This method was appropriate to use, was accurate and easily accessible as the size of the sample itself was better with over a few hundred. Moreover, the geographical area of the respondents did not matter as the research utilised an online survey. The questionnaire was done online using Google form.

Data Analysis

The data needed to be analysed first before it could be interpreted into the desired results and were cleared for errors and omissions to ensure precision. The data was analysed using both multiple regression and descriptive method which covered the means, frequencies, bivariate analysis and analysis of variances. Cross tabulation was normally used in exploring the relationships among the various variables in the research.

Instruments

In this study, an online questionnaire was used to collect data from the targeted population. All targeted samples responded to the questionnaire and the data for this study were obtained essentially from primary sources. The researchers had identified the satisfaction of the firefighter personnel from different ranks and units in RMAF by requiring them to rank the 80 questions given on scale of 1 - 5. The aim of the questionnaire was to investigate the relationship between satisfaction with job training and overall job satisfaction. The questions

were simple and structured and designed to prevent uncertainty. The questionnaire was drawn to elicit information/data on job training and overall job satisfaction. The established questionnaire was adopted and adapted from Spector (1985).

Findings and Discussion

Demographic Profile

There were 200 male and female RMAF firefighter personnel who were the respondents. All of the filled questionnaires were received indicating a 100% response rate for this research. The highest frequency were from the ages of 31- 40 years old, which accounted for 111 or 55% of 200 respondents. The second highest was 39% from ages between 21 – 30 years. 5% respondents were aged between 41 – 50 years and the last (0.5%) was from ages 51 years and above. This analysis showed that the respondents were highly mature when answering the questions. Based on the analysis, the respondents were ranked OFFICER (12.5%), Pegawai Tak Tauliah Kanan (PTTK) (25.5%) and Pegawai Tak Tauliah Rendah (PTTR) (62%) respectively. This analysis was an indication of a slightly high PTTR composition from the firefighters in RMAF.

Table 1: The Rank

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	OFFICER	25	12.5	12.5	12.5
	PTTK	51	25.5	25.5	38.0
	PTTR	124	62.0	62.0	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

For the location, most of the respondents were from KTU, Alor Setar at 19.5%, followed by REJIMEN TUDM and PU LABUAN at 1.7% which were the lowest. In terms of the years of service, 26% indicated that they had been in service below 5 years, followed by 18.5% who were in service between 06 – 10 years, and 22% between 11 – 15 years. 27.5% were in service between 16 – 20 years, and the rest (6%) were in service for above 20 years.

For education background, the highest level of education was from SPM/PMR holders at 78%, followed by 10.5% of Diploma holders, 8.5% of Bachelor Degree holders, and 0.5% of Master/PhD holders. The last was 2.5% of respondents from other educational levels.

Table 2: Education Qualification

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent

Valid	PMR/SPM	156	78.0	78.0	78.0
	DIPLOMA	21	10.5	10.5	88.5
	IJAZAH	17	8.5	8.5	97.0
	MASTER/P HD	1	.5	.5	97.5
	OTHERS	5	2.5	2.5	100.0
	Total	200	100.0	100.0	

Married respondents were the highest at 74.5%, followed by 25% who were single, while 0.5% were 'others'. The majority were Malay at 89% of the total, followed by Chinese and Indian at 0.5% and 4% respectively, and other races at 6.5%. The analysis showed that the RMAF firefighters were mostly populated by the Malay. Over a third of the respondents (35.5%) attended five courses, followed by 26% who attended courses more than that. 14.5% attended four courses, while 8% attended three courses and below.

The Correlation between On-The-Job Training and Overall Job Satisfaction

The objective of the study was to assess the relationship between on-the-job training and overall job satisfaction at the RMAF Fire Station. The result indicated that $r = 0.507$, $p = 0.000$. Referring to Guildford's Rule of Thumb, $r = 0.507$, $p = 0.000$ indicated a moderately high correlation between both variables. This result showed that the first objective confirmed that there is a significant correlation between off-the job training and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis Ha1 was supported.

According to Ameenq-ul-Ameenq & Hanif, (2013), training which occurs while the employee is performing his or her job is called on-the-job training. This kind of training is designed to provide specialized skills and knowledge to employees in their work area (Ameenq-ul-Ameenq & Hanif, 2013; Mohammed & Dhawi 2017). During the above work, the skills and knowledge developed would be associated with the job requirements (Uma, 2013). Job instruction techniques, job rotation, work shifts, coaching training and apprenticeship training are common forms of on-the-job training methods (van der Klink & Streumer, 2002).

According to D. J. Smith, (2003), training is a designed module which requires learners to go through a series of steps in a chronological pattern. Barber (2004) posited that on-the-job training was a novelty and involved implicit skills. Training that led to greater innovation and tacit skills was investigated by (Acevedo, Cruces, Gertler, & Martinez, 2017). In this training, trainees were found to behave in a real or simulated fashion. They encouraged and stimulated learning through behaviour, which is the best method for skills development and attitude change (Acevedo et al., 2017)

The Correlation between Off-The-Job Training and Overall Job Satisfaction

The results from the data analysis indicated that $r = 0.514$, $p = 0.000$. Referring to Guildford's Rule of Thumb, $r = 0.507$, $p = 0.000$ indicated a moderately high correlation between both variables. This result showed and confirmed on that there is a significant correlation between off-the-job training and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, hypothesis Ha2 was supported.

Table 3: The Correlation Analysis for all variables.

		ON_JOB_TRAINING	OFF_JOB_TRAINING	JOB_SATISFACTION
ON_JOB_TRAINING	Pearson Correlation	1	.751**	.507**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	200	200	200
OFF_JOB_TRAINING	Pearson Correlation	.751**	1	.514**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	200	200	200
JOB_SATISFACTION	Pearson Correlation	.507**	.514**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	200	200	200
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

According to Ameer-ul-Ameer & Hanif, (2013), employees will be called for a training session to learn a new task. The training happens at a different environment and place out of the actual workplace, which is called off-the-job training. Based on Alipour, Salehi, & Yahyavi, (2009), normal and common methods used were lectures, computer-based training, games and simulations for off-the-job training. This is designed to meet the learning needs of a particular group relatively rather than an exact individual's needs (E. Smith, 2002).

The advantage of off-the-job training is that a broader variety of skills or qualifications can be acquired (Dessler, 2017).. The employee can also learn and receive their training from a specialist who is an expert so that the employees can be more confident when they start their job. The downfall of this training method is the cost as it is more expensive to cover the cost of transportation and accommodation. There is also a loss of working time and potential output as they are trained somewhere else. New employees may require some form of induction training before they can start working. Those who have acquired the new skills or additional qualification may also leave the current job looking for new jobs which offer better a working environment and benefits (Baird & Meshoulam, 1984).

Contribution of the Study

Job satisfaction is important for an employee to be loyal and work happily in an organization. Many factors determine the employees' tendency to sustain and maintain their work at the workplace.

Many studies made on the topic of job satisfaction revealed the factors that are related to the feelings of the employee (Spector, 1997; Aziz et al., 2019). Most organizations are aware that when their employees reach their satisfaction level of being an employee, indirectly, they will increase in productivity. The human resources' perspective is that that productive workers are satisfied workers (Latif, Ahmad, Muhammad, Ferdoos, & Naeem, 2013). Thus, the employee who is satisfied and gets more attention and care in their physical as well as social emotional needs will act differently to achieve organizational goals and become more productive and efficient (Spector, 1997).

The findings from this study offer a framework to the management team of RMAF Fire Station and other industries for them to increase competitiveness and productivity. There is a need to have and retain well-trained and motivated employees. The management of the RMAF Fire Station will benefit by introducing modern schemes for training and development and ensure that employees are able to meet the challenges of change of the current technology and in the future. This initiative may also be used by other organizations to enact their respective training policies. Thus, this will show that RMAF is concerned regarding the welfare of its personnel.

Conclusion

From the chronological data of strategic human resource management, job satisfaction studies among employees over the past few years reported that employee job satisfaction is influenced more by issues like job security and the opportunity to use skills and abilities (Hanaysha & Tahir, 2016; Mokuolu, 2018; Afthanorhan et al., 2019). Training is a managerial tool which enhances the firefighter's skill to cope with the current job environment that always needs them to be alert and ready. As a whole, this study sought to investigate the relationship between on- and off-the-job training towards overall job satisfaction using RMAF firefighters as a case study. The RMAF Fire Station needs to take action to correct its training activities including its policy to ensure the process involved is duly followed.

Through the findings of this research, we can conclude that there are significant relationships between on-the-job training and off-the-job training in terms of overall job satisfaction. However, the methods and implementation of on- and off-the-job training need to be improved under constant review by the appropriate party to ensure that job satisfaction can be maintained

or increased to subsequently motivate the staff to work harder (Argyle, 1989). It is important to ensure that RMAF firefighters are updated with the new skills and expertise suitable with the emergence of new technology in aviation year by year.

Implementing a new training methodology and using new equipment available in the market will help RMAF to offer a better training environment to the firefighters in preparing themselves to work better in the real working environment. The vision of RMAF to be a dominant air power with the mission to defend the national sovereignty, integrity and interest through effective use of air power, as well as the objective of the Air Force Next Generation in 2013 becoming a full spectrum air force during times of war or peace have shown that Malaysia is moving forward. Job satisfaction is considered one of the crucial elements in achieving those goals as motivated personnel contribute more readily to achieving goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Employees who comprehend the need for transformation in training and development should engage in formal education so that they are up-to-date with modern technological advances and advocate for themselves to acquire these skills (Oluwakemi Ayodeji, Michael, Tunde, & Mariam, 2011).

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