

## Factors Influencing Training Effectiveness among Employees: A Case of Sigma Sdn Bhd

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### Abstract

Training is essential for any organisation to prevent any faults or rework that may cost the company. Training effectiveness can be motivated by internal and external factors. Thus, the study has two-fold objectives: 1) to determine the relationship between peer support, supervisory support, and self-efficacy towards training effectiveness; and 2) to examine the main factor that influences training effectiveness among the employees of Sigma Sdn Bhd. To achieve the objectives, the researchers adopted a quantitative method with the sample of 285 employees of Sigma Sdn Bhd. The sampling technique used was proportionate stratified random sampling. The researchers ran correlation and multiple regression analyses in order to achieve the research objectives. The research findings show that supervisory support, peer support, and self-efficacy have a significant relationship with the dependent variable. Besides, supervisory support is the most influential factor affecting training effectiveness. The research is beneficial to the company, Sigma Sdn Bhd, and other manufacturing companies.

The results will help the company to improve their performance and decision-making on the company's training programme. They can encourage employees to attend training programmes organised by the human resource department of the company. The company will optimise the utilisation of all resources for its training programmes in the future.

**Keywords:** Training Effectiveness, Rework, Supervisory Support, Peer Support, Self-Efficacy

### **Introduction**

Training and Development is one of the key functions of Human Resources Management. Most organisations look forward to the Training and Development as an integral part of improving employee performance. Generally, training can be defined as changing the attitudes, skills, and knowledge or improving the quality of performance of the employees (Juneja, 2018). For training to be more effective, the top management needs to perform some analyses to identify the training programmes that are suitable for the employees. The success of the training programmes can be evaluated using the end results of the training. It consists of work abilities, skills, and knowledge that are applied by the trainees or employees after coming back from the training programme (Ikramina & Gustomo, 2014). Besides, some employees perceive training as a reward from the employer, as it shows the commitment of the employer in ensuring that the employees perform better in their jobs (Juneja, 2018).

In 2016, the U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics found that companies with less than 500 employees only gave 12 minutes of training to their employees. Furthermore, only six minutes of training was given to 100 to 500 employees. It can be seen that employees need more time to learn new skills and knowledge. Apart from that, researchers from Middlesex University found that 74% of 4,300 workers felt that they were not achieving their full potential in their career due to the lack of training (Gutierrez, 2016). They also felt that they did not have any opportunity to develop their skills. Surprisingly, only 12% of the trainees apply the new skills and knowledge that they learn during the training programme in their real working life.

In Malaysia, according to the data obtained from Malaysia Productivity Corporation, labour productivity increased by 3.3% in 2015, but it will be challenging for the upcoming years due to the lack of skilled workers. Currently, only 28% of the 14.76 million workforce in Malaysia are considered skilled workers (Talent Corp, 2018). The Labour Force Survey (LFS) conducted by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) found that the number of trained employees decreased from 93% in 2014 to 84% in 2015. Employees need more training to increase the productivity of the company as well as to improve themselves (Human Resource Online, 2015; Talent Corp, 2018). In the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016–2020), skilled workers are projected to increase to 35% of the workforce in 2020. Existing industries will be encouraged to increase the value chain by investing in activities that can build up the skilled labour force. Labour productivity is also targeted to increase at 3.7% per annum by the end of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan, compared to 2.3% in the Tenth Plan.

The manufacturing industry is one of the industries that particularly need trained or skilled workers. Sigma Sdn Bhd is a Japanese electrical company that has been operating in southern Malaysia since 1990. The company focuses on producing and marketing liquid crystal display (LCD) worldwide. Assembling electrical parts in an LCD is a challenging task, and it has to be done manually. From January to June 2018, the company incurred nearly RM150,000 on

rework sessions, as workers from other job functions were roped in to assist with the rework. According to Okechukwu et al. (2015), rework can be defined as a process performed in the organisation to reconfirm the originality of the requirement. In other words, it can be defined as a correction that needs to be undertaken by the organisation. It is a necessary activity and can be urgent, but it requires a lot of time and effort from the employees. The rework session involves additional time and more employees to re-do the tasks. Surprisingly, some employees have to do the rework without possessing the right skills. It proves that training is the most important part for all employees after recruitment.

From the literature review, training can be effective when there is support from all parties related to the employees, including friends, the management, and most importantly, from the employees themselves. While the relationship of supervisory support and peer support with training effectiveness have been widely discussed (Jayawardana & Prasanna, 2008; Khalid, Eldadak, & Puteh, 2017), there is lack of research on self-efficacy and training effectiveness (Giran, Amin, & Halim, 2014). Moreover, fewer studies discuss the three factors simultaneously (Zhang, 2015). Thus, the research aims: 1) to determine the relationship between peer support, supervisory support, and self-efficacy towards training effectiveness; and 2) to examine the main factor that influences training effectiveness among the employees of Sigma Sdn Bhd.

## **Literature Review**

### **A. Training Effectiveness**

According to Siengthai, Boonkrob, and Siengthai (2016), many factors influence training effectiveness. The factors include the participant's skill, knowledge, and abilities. The training instructor and training methods are also factors that might affect training effectiveness. In addition, training effectiveness can be influenced by external and internal factors. The external factors can be the employer and colleague, while internal factors can be from the inner-self of the employee (Sanjeevkumar & Yanan, 2011). The training activities plan should be based on the needs analysis that will help the organisation to achieve its goals. According to Khalid, Eldadak, and Puteh (2017), training effectiveness is evidence of the performance measurement for the level of productivity in the organisation.

Training effectiveness also refers to which training objectives have been achieved or need to be achieved. In general, training effectiveness measures the training programmes that have been organised and the outcomes from the training that is whether there is an increase or a decrease in the training effectiveness (Wankhede & Gujarathi, 2014). Moreover, Tsai (2015) emphasised that training effectiveness can help the organisation to determine whether the training programme of the organisation is effective or not. Through the training programmes, a company or organisation will gain more benefits including improving the performance of the company itself.

### **B. Supervisory Support**

The role of supervisory support in each department will affect the supervisor-subordinate and employer-employee relationships. Among the roles of the supervisor are to motivate employees to attend training and to support them to learn new skills during each training session. According to Jayawardana and Prasanna (2008), the supervisor is important in enhancing the effectiveness of training because the supervisor has a direct relationship with

all employees in the department and is the one that evaluates the performance of employees after attending any training session. When the subordinates perceive that their supervisors support the training and give opportunity to the employees to perform and develop new knowledge, they will be more likely to use the trained skills and more excited to join training programmes organised inside or outside the organisation in the future (Manju & Suresh, 2018; Nijman et al., 2006).

The supervisor needs to identify the training programmes that are suitable for the department as well as which employee should go for what training. The supervisor needs to know the level of capabilities of each employee under his/her supervision (Sharma & Sharma, 2016). Other than that, providing time and creating a positive work environment are also important for supporting the employees to attend the training (Shariff & Al-Makhadmah, 2012). The supervisor should possess good qualities and a good leadership style to motivate the employees to attend the training and practise the skills that the employees have learnt from each training session. Some of the employees tend to apply new skills and knowledge more often when they get recognition or reward from the top management or organisation, so the supervisor has to take action to reward the employees in terms of monetary or career reward for the trained employees (Profijt, 2015).

### **C. Peer Support**

According to Aminudin, Bhaiyan, and Muhammad (2016), peer support is one of the factors that affect training effectiveness. Peer support is needed when the job needs interaction as well as when the job needs or implements work teams. Peer support can be defined as support by the other employees or colleagues to optimise the skills that have been obtained from the training at the real job. Support from peers has a positive relationship with motivation and also affects training effectiveness. It is found that peers have a big influence on the motivation of the employees to attend training in teams (Bhatti & Kaur, 2018). Reinforcement and support from peers can provide trainees with the excitement to use the new skills on the job, and they could probably teach their peers the skills that they have learnt from the training (Zhang, 2015).

Peer support can increase training effectiveness, leading to greater performance achievement of the employees and better productivity of the organisation itself. Peer encouragement to apply the new skills is positively related to the motivation of the employees at the department level as well as helps the organisation to achieve their goals (Bhatti & Kaur, 2018). Martin (2010) found that support from peers can help employees to improve their self-efficacy by always getting positive feedbacks from peers and coaching them with the new skills and knowledge. Furthermore, skill transfer can be developed through the sharing of ideas and communication among employees.

### **D. Self-Efficacy**

According to Madagamage et al. (2014), self-efficacy is the capability of the employees to organise and execute courses of actions on the skills and knowledge. It is not only about the skills but also the judgement of what they can do with the skills that they gained from the training. Self-efficacy is one of the factors that influence training effectiveness among employees. In the research, self-efficacy is the only factor intrinsically driven from one's inner-self. The individuals who have the highest self-efficacy are more likely to participate in training

programmes because they have increased cognitive engagement and are ready to develop new skills and knowledge. According to Khalid, Eldadak, and Puteh (2017), self-efficacy is the most influential factor that affects training effectiveness among employees. This is because self-efficacy is a behaviour that should be acquired by all employees during the training to achieve the goals of the organisation and maintain the productivity as well as the brand image of the company itself.

To be successful, employees need to have intention to come to the training session and learn new knowledge which sincere from his inner-self. Employees need to have the motivation to be productive after the training programme. A good working environment will help the employees to increase and improve self-efficacy in their behaviour. It can be concluded that personal behaviour and working condition help the trainees to identify and believe in their capabilities and competencies (Giran, Amin, & Halim, 2014). Another research stated that individuals who have low self-efficacy are less likely to adapt to a new situation. A high self-efficacy person is likely to view himself/herself as a person that has the right to get an extrinsic reward from the training programme and has an opportunity to apply the skills and knowledge (Switzer, Nagy, & Mullins, 2005). It is very important for the employees to have high self-efficacy because with self-efficacy, they will have the confidence to perform all their duties in the company and have high interest to learn new skills, which they will apply at the workplace. It can be concluded that self-efficacy has an impact on training effectiveness among employees in the organisation.

**Theoretical Framework**

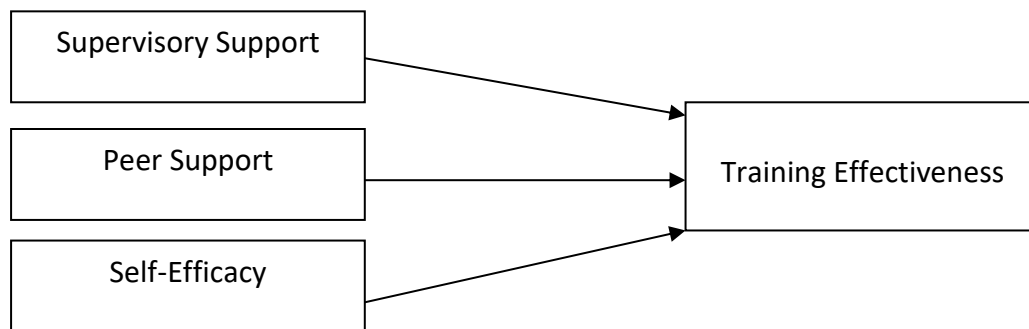


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework of the Study

In Figure 1, the dependent variable is training effectiveness while the independent variables are supervisory support, peer support, and self-efficacy. The independent variables are the factors influencing the dependent variable, which is training effectiveness at Sigma Sdn Bhd.

**Research Methodology**

The researchers adopted the quantitative method for the research. The survey questionnaire was used for collecting the data. The researchers selected a sample of 285 out of 1090 employees of Sigma Sdn Bhd. The sample size was calculated using the table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). In selecting the sample, the researchers used stratified random sampling in order to generalise the findings to all departments in the company. Table 1 shows the calculation performed in the sampling procedure. In developing the research instrument, which is the questionnaire, the researchers had adopted and adapted from past research.

However, there has been no research investigating all three variables in one study. Table 2 shows the sources used in developing the survey questionnaire.

Table 1  
*Calculation of Proportionate Stratified Random Sampling*

Department	Number of elements	Number of subjects in the sample (26% of the elements)
Production SMT	250	65
Production PWB	320	83
Production Final	450	117
Purchasing	30	8
Accounting	20	6
Human Resources & General Affairs	20	6
TOTAL	1090	285

Table 2  
*Sources of Questionnaire*

Variable	Number of Items in Questionnaire	Sources of Questionnaire
Training Effectiveness	5	Lin and Shariff (2008)
Self-Efficacy	5	Madagamage et al. (2014)
Supervisory Support	5	Zhang (2015), Madagamage et al. (2014)
Peer Support	5	Profijt (2015) and Zhang (2015)
Demographic Profile	4	By researcher

### Findings

To answer the research questions as well as in achieving the research objectives, the researchers utilised the IBM-SPSS 23.0 software for data analysis. Table 3 shows the demographic profile of the respondents. Most of the workers were female (66.5%), and most of them were married (87.3%). In terms of age, 48.1% of the employees were in the age range of 40–49 years old. As Sigma Sdn Bhd is a manufacturing company, 92.3% of the employees were from the production department, including 90 employees from the production department that handled the finishing or final products. Finally, the largest proportion of the employees had worked for more than ten years at Sigma Sdn Bhd, which is 112 employees (43.1%).

Table 3

*Demographic Profile of the Respondents*

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>	260	100
1. Male	87	33.5
2. Female	173	66.5
<b>Marital Status</b>	260	100
1. Single	33	12.7
2. Married	227	87.3
<b>Age</b>	260	100
1. 18 to 19 years old	5	1.9
2. 20 to 29 years old	23	8.8
3. 30 to 39 years old	44	16.9
4. 40 to 49 years old	125	48.1
5. 50 to 59 years old	63	24.3
<b>Department</b>	260	100
1. Prod.Smt	65	25.0
2. Prod.Pwb	85	32.7
3. Prod.Final	90	34.6
4. Purchasing	8	3.1
5. Accounting	6	2.3
6. Human Resources & General Affairs	6	2.3
<b>Experience</b>	260	100
1. Less than 1 year	27	10.4
2. 1–3 years	14	5.4
3. 4–6 years	38	14.6
4. 7–9 years	69	26.5
5. more than 10 years	112	43.1

Table 4 shows the results of the Cronbach's alpha reliability test for all variables, which are peer support, supervisory support, self-efficacy, and training effectiveness. The highest Cronbach's alpha was for self-efficacy at .724, followed by training effectiveness (.723), peer support (.713), and supervisory support (.709). Based on Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the test shows that all variables are good and reliable.

Table 4

*Cronbach's Alpha for the Reliability Test*

Variables	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Peer Support	5	0.713
Supervisory Support	5	0.709
Self-Efficacy	5	0.724
Training Effectiveness	5	0.723

The researchers used correlation analysis to answer the first research question. Table 5 displays the results of the Pearson Correlation Analysis, which shows that first, peer support

has  $r = .307$  and  $p < .05$ . It means that there is a positive, weak, and significant association between peer support and training effectiveness ( $r = .307, p < .05$ ). For supervisory support, it is significant at  $r = .816$  and  $p < .05$ . It means that there is a positive, strong, and significant association between supervisory support and training effectiveness ( $r = .816, p < .05$ ). For the last independent variable, namely self-efficacy, it is significant at  $r = .750$ . There is a positive, moderate, and significant association between self-efficacy and training effectiveness ( $r = .750, p < .05$ ).

Table 5

*Pearson Correlation Analysis*

	Peer Support	Supervisory Support	Self-Efficacy	Training Effectiveness
Peer Support	1	.187**	.272**	.307**
Sig (two-tailed)		.002	.000	.000
N	260	260	260	260
Supervisory Support	.187**	1	.553**	.816**
Sig (two-tailed)	.002		.000	.000
N	260	260	260	260
Self-Efficacy	.272**	.553**	1	.750**
Sig (two-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
N	260	260	260	260
Training Effectiveness	.307**	.816**	.750**	1
Sig (two-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
N	260	260	260	260

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

Finally, the researchers ran the multiple regression analysis to answer the second research question. Table 6 shows that the  $R$  square value is .802, which means 80.2% of the variance in training effectiveness is explained by the three independent variables, namely supervisory support, peer support, and self-efficacy. The remaining 19.8% is unexplained and might be explained by other variables out of the study scope. The model is statistically significant ( $F = 345.545, p < .05$ ).

Table 6

*Multiple Regression Analysis (Model Summary)*

Model	$R$	$R$ Square	Adjusted $R$ Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.896 <sup>a</sup>	.802	.800	.23746

Table 7 shows the values of the coefficients for the multiple regression analysis. From the coefficients table below, all the independent variables, namely peer support, supervisory support, and self-efficacy have an influence on the dependent variable, which is training effectiveness. Peer support has a positive influence on training effectiveness, meaning that

when peer support increases by 1 unit, training effectiveness will increase by 0.088 unit ( $\beta = .088, p < .05$ ). Supervisory support has a positive influence on training effectiveness. It means that when supervisory support increases by 1 unit, training effectiveness will increase by 0.574 unit ( $\beta = .574, p < .05$ ). For self-efficacy, it has a positive influence on training effectiveness, which means when self-efficacy increases by 1 unit, training effectiveness will increase by 0.409 unit ( $\beta = .409, p < .05$ ).

Table 7

*Multiple Regression Analysis (Coefficients)*

	Model	Unstandardised Coefficients		Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.451	.128		3.518	.001
	Peer Support	.074	.024	.088	3.053	.003
	Supervisory Support	.511	.030	.574	17.169	.000
	Self-efficacy	.336	.028	.409	11.975	.000

In conclusion, the regression equation that can be used to predict the training effectiveness at Sigma Sdn Bhd is as follows:

$$\text{Training Effectiveness} = 0.451 + (0.088 \times \text{Peer Support}) + (0.574 \times \text{Supervisory Support}) + (0.409 \times \text{Self-efficacy})$$

**Discussion and Conclusion**

From the findings, it is proven that there is a relationship between peer support, supervisory support, and self-efficacy with training effectiveness. Peer support has been found to be a necessary factor for increasing the effectiveness of training, in line with Sanjeevkumar and Yanan (2011). Feedbacks from the peers are important for the employees when they are trying to use the new skills and knowledge. Good peers are the colleagues who are open to learning from the trained employees. This step will ease the transfer of training skills in an organisation. Friendship and teamwork among peers will make the employees learn from each other and decrease the turnover rate in the company. A harmonious and helpful environment will help to encourage the employees to attend more training sessions and compete with each other in a healthy and positive way.

The supervisor is as important as the peers, playing his role in increasing training effectiveness. The result of the study shows that supervisor support has a strong relationship with training effectiveness, and it is the most influential factor in affecting training effectiveness in a company. The finding is parallel with previous research by Abdullah et al. (2011) and Ling et al. (2011). A good supervisor places a high priority on coaching and mentoring each employee. A supervisor has to delegate suitable tasks to the employees according to their capacity and capabilities. If the employees are not on par with the colleagues, the supervisor has to send the former to training. Supervisors must always determine the ways to develop an understanding of the skill level of each employee; he has to put the right person at the right place and at the right time. Effective training occurs along with supervisor assistance in helping the employees to solve and face their problems. The

supervisor also needs to provide feedback regarding the trainees' progress on the new skills and knowledge on the job. There must be a rotation for attending training for all employees so that no one will be left out nor too advanced than their colleagues.

Just like the two external factors, the intrinsic factor of self-efficacy is also proven to affect training effectiveness. The result is consistent with the previous studies by Sharma and Sharma (2016) and Giran, Amin, and Halim (2014). Self-efficacy refers to what employees believe about themselves. It influences the goals that employees choose for themselves. When the employees have high self-efficacy, they tend to attend the training programmes. They will also have more knowledge and skills compared to the person that has low self-efficacy. Instilling high self-efficacy in each employee is imperative. Self-efficacy also influences learning and efforts of the employees. High self-efficacy employees will work hard to learn how to perform new tasks because they are more confident of achieving success. The company has to create a workplace environment that promotes high self-efficacy among employees and increases the employees' involvement with their work. Experiencing successes that build in the ability to perform is one of the effective ways to increase self-efficacy. Rewards and positive feedbacks also encourage self-confidence among the employees. Other than that, allowing them to work on tasks that they excel in will give them the opportunity to try on new tasks that are more advanced and challenging.

For future studies, the researchers propose that the same study is applied to other contexts or other industries. Future research could also consider other variables that might explain the training effectiveness in a company. Lastly, future research could adopt the qualitative methodology to obtain in-depth understanding of the training effectiveness phenomenon.

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