

## Factors Influencing Training Effectiveness: Evidence from Public Sector in Bahrain

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**Abstract:** The objective of this study is to explore problems faced by training programmes implemented at the public sector in Bahrain. Key issues discussed are related to training and development. The significance of the training cannot be ignored in delivering the needed knowledge and capabilities. Therefore, the training should be effective enough to attain these objectives. This study evaluates in accordance with vocational training a number of contextual factors discovered to have an influence in a different combination with other previously examined effective factors. It explores the relationship between them. It also identifies types of relation between the training effectiveness and the contextual factors. The framework of this study is established according to the Kirkpatrick training model. This model consists of four levels measuring training effectiveness namely reaction, learning, behavior, and result. Instrument utilized in this study was a 122 item questionnaire combined to respond to 2 hypotheses. The questionnaire was prepared and distributed among the targeted respondents. It is revealed that contextual factors namely training environment, and trainee motivation have positive impact on the programmes conducted in the public sector. This study provides critical input and contribution to literatures related to training in the public sector in Bahrain.

**Keywords:** Training effectiveness; training environment; trainee motivation; training factors

**JEL Classification:** H40; M53

### 1. Introduction

Training and its effectiveness has been currently a topic of attention and concern no matter what was the type of organization or its activity's nature. Organizations have understood the training importance and the significant role it plays in enhancing the

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job performance, and employee's efficiency. It also provides the organization with the ability to survive, especially with the hard competition nowadays. Training is the ideal approach for preparing employees with certain skills or giving them the ability to fill the gaps in their performance (Shree, 2017). For illustration, new computerized systems might need workers to be trained on the way to deal and work with those systems. Otherwise, the workers will lack the knowledge and understating of making appropriate use of them. Overall, training is a typical process to accommodate employees with new skills or improve their knowledge to a higher stage. It is well understood that training can be employed to empower manpower to alter the organizational or country's culture and productivity or service quality. Additionally, training can remedy to a great extent if not completely deficiencies related to job performance or problems. Training can serve as an immediate treatment or solution to the organizational requirements and a fast performance enhancer. It has a strong effect on the existing performance level. The main aim of training is the improvement or correction of any performance deficiencies. Training like anything else needs to have clearly indicated logical goals to be successful (Denby, 2010). These goals will set the proper frame for the training contents and define the benchmark to achieve the planned targets of training. It is very important to be realistic and not to expect overstated goals. Unrealistic goal anticipation ensures failure because it is simply unreachable. Training needs specifying and targeting the areas that needs improvement. Widening the training scope will interfere with its usefulness. Therefore, it should be focused (Denby, 2010). Training is effected by many factors such as the managerial support, peer encouragement, adequate resources and consequences for training application on the job field (Sanjeevkumar & Yanan, 2011). Although, there are other elements which were found to affect the positive results of the training such as the participants, training material, organizations, and trainer, this study is limited only to the training environment, and trainee motivation representing the independent variables as proposed by previous literatures, that may encourage to a higher degree the training effectiveness (Almakhadmah, 2012; Lin, 2012; Homklin, Takahashi, & Techakanont, 2013; Massenber, Spurk, & Kauffeld, 2015).

## **2. Literature Review**

Researchers have argued that employees' training can help increase the feeling of belonging and feeling of responsibility. The more training provided, the more benefits for the employees, the further enhanced skills and capabilities, and the more advantages reflected back to the organization (Terrana et al., 2016). Training advantages is not only limited to improvement in the occupational skillfulness, but also improvements in awareness and appreciation of the employee, and an affirmative mental and behavior characteristics of the employee.

Another importance of the training is that it gives the adaptation possibility to the competitiveness characteristic and market rapid changes. Training is a stored force to retain the liveliness of business. Organization's concurrence is the toughest kind of competitions. Training is clearly becoming an essential human investment. Developed countries pay much attention to mentality innovation and creativity and not only to equipment or technology. Developed countries take every advantage of the available and possible workers' development opportunities. Studies have confirmed that training is the main source of achieving employee development and expertise, with first class training that fulfils its aim to develop a first class service or product as a result of the developed performance. Therefore, the organization can maintain an insuperable position in the community (Sanjeevkumar & Yanan, 2012).

### **2.1. Training Effectiveness**

Training has been defined as the trainee's behavioral influential process (Ghosh, Joshi, Satyawadi, Mukherjee, & Ranjan, 2011). It is a tool that allows the organization to survive and causes its persistence. The benefit of it is not limited to the organization, but to the employees as well by accommodating them with the expertise needed to meet the modern advancement in the work fields (Ahmed et al., 2010). It forms one of the methods to save the organization's investments. This is clearly valid in the event that new capabilities gained were applied in the work environment (Griffin, 2011).

In the past, people used to believe that the traditional education from the primary school to the college level was sufficient, unaware that training is mandatory for the development of employees of any level in the organization. It is also necessary for improving the quality of life. The public sectors are the organizations that control the development process and level of services in the Kingdom of Bahrain. That means equipping its staff with better skills and knowledge will be positively reflected in the society. It will act like training the developers which will yield a further developed output. According to Griffin (2010), the role of the government is to find a solution for the challenges faced to eliminate the gaps in the workforce skills to be able to follow up with the global economy. Lately, the ultimate goal of the development professionals and customers is to provide a method towards achieving the required results. They keep their acting and thinking within their limited experience of training which usually lacks the necessary farsighted vision of the business (O'Connor & Little, 2012).

After the consideration of the importance of training, another important factor is associated with it. As with everything that is surrounding us, time and money will not be spent on something that is useless and ineffective. Training effectiveness is another factor to be taken into consideration by people in charge of setting the organization's development plans. Training effectiveness is the relationship between the input variables, output variables and the process or transfer factor. According to

Bimpitsos & Petridou (2012) a successful systematic approach is a result of frequent evaluation and previous testing. This function integrates many different evidences to improve the learning and training activities. It requires the involvement of three parties, the assessment tool, the training/evaluation participants, and the party tracking this process, studying and using the results to improve them continuously.

## **2.2. Training Environment**

Training environment is all about the condition or surrounding of the medium the training programme takes place in. It involves sound clarity and level, correct lighting such as the color/strength, active needed hardware and devices such as computers, site arrangement like U type table arrangement or groups or site arrangement such as the parking, and other training resources (Sanjeevkumar & Yanan, 2011). The learning environment is a link between the learning and the area created for this purpose. It covers the design, the structure, the contents, the control and the way of using these premises in favor of the learning. There is a lack of studies about the influence of the environment on the effectiveness of the training to cover the importance of the surrounding factors such as the lighting source (artificial, or natural from sunlight), brightness, color, angle of it, sound clarity, level, echo, and other sources of noise (Shabha & Gaines, 2013). It is one of the key factors responsible of the successful implementation of the training programmes. It is being measured based on the reaction of the trainees in level 1 in Kirkpatrick's evaluation model, in addition to other factors like (presentation methodology, trainer, material/handouts, and training audio-visuals). An unsatisfactorily prepared training environment has a distractive impact on the intake of the participants (Lendahls & Oscarsson, 2017). It is also one of the factors to establish the training programme and has been found to influence the effectiveness and the learning outcomes positively (Chukwu, 2016).

Quality in training programmes is what all the organizations are planning to reach. Quality in training requires quality in all the aspects related to the programme including the setup of the venue. A portion of the instructional activity of the programme can reflect the quality level from the point of view of a convenient learning environment, classroom convenience, organization of chairs, reachable water, toilet, fresh air etc., (Niwaz, Asad, & Muhammad, 2011). The training environment was found to have a significant correlation in addition to influencing the training effectiveness in any organization. It was also found to have a functional control over the expected results of trainees. On the other hand, an effective relationship was detected between the training environment and the work environment as IVs (independent variables) with the training effectiveness as a DV (dependent variable). It is critical to determine every factor that may contribute the outcomes in the stage of setting the objective to raise the probability of the success of the programme (Sanjeevkumar & Yanan, 2012).

### **2.3. Trainee Motivation**

Keeping the employees motivated is the simplest way to reach the competitive edge, raise the rating, and profitability. Motivation is critical because it is a sort of involvement, recognition and a reward to the human resources, which is fundamental for any organization. Motivation yields satisfaction which is influenced by remuneration and recognition. Motivation is an internal generating force that controls our work (Pollitt & Oldfield, 2017).

According to Aziz & Ahmad (2011), there are six factors that increase the trainee motivation. This is very useful for the human resource (HR) and training professionals to setup a successful training. The first factor is to give the interested trainee the option to choose. Because the training will be very beneficial for both parties, the employee and the organization, it is very important to ensure of the interest of the employee to attend that specific training programme. This is attained by either making the option available for them, or by their involvement in the determination of the training. The second factor is the reputation of the training which will also influence the motivation. This can be derived from previous records related to certain training to get an observation and information about the training from the point of view of the contents and material, venue and facilities, trainer, trainer style, and the general background about the training. The third factor is the design of the training, which consists of principles like the relationship of the training contents to the job, expected reward or type of rewards available in the organization, training method applied, as well as honoring and appreciation by the firm. Fourth, trainees should find the training as a way to simplify or improve their capability to look after their form of work. Fifth, the training should fulfil their future's vision toward getting better opportunities and a better position. Finally, the training should also satisfy the trainees' needs. For example, to be distinguished by increasing their knowledge and skills or to obtain a better income. Training is a tool for any organizations' plans to enhance its functionality, because of the effect it has on the workforce potential, performance, level of skills and effectiveness. Training practitioners say it is difficult to measure the real effectiveness of the training because there are many other factors playing important roles in the personnel performance, in addition to the deliverable subject, such as supervision (social factor), trainee expectation from the programme, training aids (training environment) and other factors that has a deep impact on the effectiveness of the training and the motivation of the trainees. A good source for measuring the training effectiveness in the public sector is from the trainee's level of self-efficacy and motivation (Yanson & Johnson, 2016).

Motivation is connected with other essential factors to form an appropriate environment for training transfer to reach the effectiveness and the aim of the training. For example, suitable training facilities will motivate the employees' to attend and make the learning actually happen. Otherwise, their negative feeling will

not be limited to the training itself, but to the organization in general and to the HR or training department specifically (Kirkpatrick, 1975).

### 3. Conceptual Framework

The framework of the study is shown in Figure 1. It presents the theoretical components of the traditional framework and illustrates the relationship between the independent variables with the dependent variable. In this study training effectiveness is the dependent variable. The independent variables are the training environment and trainee motivation. Independent variables are the factors that have influence into the effectiveness of training. Processing of data collected is by using quantitative method. Trainee's gathered data forms the base for the training effectiveness different levels analysis.

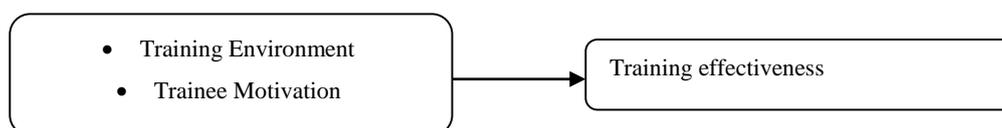


Figure 1. Research Framework of the Study

#### 3.1. Hypotheses

Since there were studies indicating a positive and a significant relationship between training environment, trainee motivation and training effectiveness, while other studies presented conflicting results, it brings the need for more research in this subject. The aim of the study is to investigate this relationship between these factors in the public sector in the kingdom of Bahrain. Accordingly, and based on the framework of the study the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1. There is a positive relationship between training environment and training effectiveness.

H2. There is a positive relationship between trainee motivation and training effectiveness.

### 4. Method

Comparing the appropriateness between the measuring methods with the line of reasoning, quantitative survey type with Likert five points is the rating scale utilized that was found to be more suited for this research. Survey was found to be a useful tool for the examination of the variables' relationship to verify the hypotheses, in addition for giving a probability to collect a large number of data from a large measure of respondents. At first pilot test is conducted to confirm the reliability of

the instrument. Thirty questionnaires were requested to be filled by easiest reachable employees in the public sector. Cronbach's Alpha obtained values were 0.839 for training environment, 0.877 for trainee motivation, and 0.884 for training effectiveness.

As stated by (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970), 382 employees is the equivalent size of sample for an employees' number of population of 56,988 in the public sector. At least three months should pass after participating into the training was preserved as a criteria (Kirkpatrick, 1970). The target respondents were supervisors and clerks only. Taking into account the results of the assessment process of the factors involved, cross-sectional survey form of design was decided on to be used in addition to the quantitative method. Eleven items investigated the coefficient of influence into reaction, seven items for the learning, twelve items for the behavior, and six for the results. A total of Thirty two items were prepared to form a measuring instrument for the dependent variable. The second section of the questionnaire assessed the relationship between the training environment and trainee motivation. Six items measured the trainee motivation of the respondents. Nine items measured the training environment The Statistical Package employed for data analyses is SPSS version 23. While the third section of the questionnaire assessed the demographic analysis of the respondent.

Although, frequent attempts were made to get the entire questionnaires back, only 155 were brought back. This is according to several reasons like 60% of the targeted respondents refused to participate. Other respondents were found not to participate in any training courses in the specified period. Other respondents ignored to responded or return back the questionnaire even with the frequent tries from the researcher. In addition 27 questioners were neglected because of unsuitably filled and accordingly deleted. The reason behind the small number of participation rate is because of the discourage research culture Arabian countries are known for (Gelaidan, 2012).

The questionnaire was also translated to Arabic language with the help of bilingual experts from the English Language Center in the University of Bahrain to increase the possibility of obtaining a clearer and precise response from a questionnaire that is conducted in an Arabic country.

#### **4.1. Measurement of Items Virtuous**

The questionnaire's items employed are extracted from other relative studies. They were examined and adopted to suit the nature of the study. The items for every training factors and the training effectiveness measured to assess the participants' response using five point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Eight items measured the training environment influence on the effectiveness of training programme obtained from (Yanan, 2011). The Cronbach's reliability test for the previous items was 0.839. Trainee motivation was assessed by

five items (Green, 2002). The Cronbach's reliability test for these items yielded a value of 0.877.

The training effectiveness sub levels (reaction, behavior, learning, and result) are measured by thirty four items adopted from other related studies. The respondents' reaction is perceived by eleven items scales. Another three items were adopted from Al-Eisa, Furayyan, & Alhemoud (2009). Another item adopted from Barcala (2000). Another item constructed by Wilson (2000). Finally, the last one was from Lin (2012). The obtained value for the Cronbach alpha was 0.910.

To perceive the respondents' obtained learning seven items were adopted according to the following arrangements: Two items were from Al-Eisa et al. (2009), another one is from Tai (2006), one item obtained from Price (2001), three more were constructed by (Bin Lin, 2012). The obtained Cronbach alpha scale is 0.807.

To perceive the respondents' behavior change from the training ten questions were obtained from Lin (2012) and categorized under the training effectiveness. Two of them are from Barcala (2000), another two are obtained from Price (2001). 3 items are from Tai (2006), 2 items for (Wilson, 2000), an item for Barcala (2000), an item for Price, (2001) and the final one is from Pau (2001). The Cronbach alpha value was 0.880.

For the purpose to measure the return on investment (result), a number of seven items obtained from previous studies. Five of them were extracted from Barker (1997), and the additional one is obtained from Tai (2006), and another item was obtained from Lin (2012). The resulted Cronbach alpha was 0.939. It is identified that all the items accomplished the validity requirements.

## 5. Results

Computation of Cronbach's alpha displays the degree of participants' agreement toward every factor. Higher scores mean higher reliability, with extant ranges between 0 and 1. Most of the recorded dimensions represent a high level reliability. In particular, values obtained were above the cut-off 0.07 value as stated by (Pallant, 2002). The values for both the training environment and the trainee motivation were 0.850 (within acceptable limits and above 0.7). The dependent variable training effectiveness revealed an acceptable value of 0.960.

In accordance to examine the relationship between the independent variables (training environment, trainee motivation) and the dependent variable (training effectiveness) a statistics summary is performed in this section, starting by identifying the results of the descriptive statistics and analyzing the independent and dependent variables relationship. After that multiple regression analysis is conducted to measure the contribution level of the training environment and trainee motivation

into the training effectiveness. Items' reliability of the survey is checked statistically by a theoretical assessment conducted in an Arabic country.

**5.1. Descriptive Results**

Referring to the descriptive statistics obtained data, which show that the larger number of the participants was males (58.6%). Females were only 41.4%. This does not support the idea which states that females are usually forming the larger employees' rate in the organizational culture. And referring to the age of the respondents, which show the following: 20-29 (14.8%), 30-39 (54.7%), 40-49 (19.5), and 50 or more (10.9%). This indicates that most of the respondents appear to be in the middle age. This is the most productive age for long years to come. They are far away from retirement. This supports the positive idea to maximize and get most performance of this category considering them to be the typical workforce for this sector. And in term of participants' experience, the following are the indicated information: Under 5 years (12.5%), 6-10 (30.5%), 11-15 (26.6%), 16-20 (8.6%), 21 or more were only (21.9%). It shows that most of the respondents' characteristics are considered to be beginners in the practical life. They are newly introduced to their jobs, lack the experience to shape their characteristics and behavior and will form a good category to react positively to the training. Training for sure will improve their performance from now on.

**5.2. Correlation**

Based on the generated outcomes from the variables analysis, it was found that an inter-item correlation of high value exists between all the dimensions. Appendix A displays the results of the correlation between training environment, trainee motivation and training effectiveness. It is revealed that training environment and trainee motivation are positively correlated to training effectiveness. These correlations confirm the study's hypotheses H1, and H2 to have a positive relationship between training environment, trainee motivation, and training effectiveness.

**Table A. Correlation results**

	<b>Training Environment</b>	<b>Trainee Motivation</b>	<b>Training Effectiveness</b>
<b>Training Environment</b>	1		
<b>Trainee Motivation</b>	.291**	1	
<b>Training Effectiveness</b>	.398**	.587**	1

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

**5.3. Regression Analysis**

Appendix B reveals the outcomes of the multiple regression analysis to which the

training environment and the trainee motivation variables affect training effectiveness. These outcomes show that training environment and trainee motivation together contributed to training effectiveness by a variance of .401 (40.1%). It revealed that 40.1% of the variance in training effectiveness can be accounted by the individual variables dimensions. The trainee motivation has the larger influence on training effectiveness having a beta value of .515 over the influence of training environment which accounted for a beta value of .248.

**Table B. Correlation results**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Beta</b>	<b>T-ratio</b>	<b>Sig. t</b>
Training Environment	.248	3.232	.002
Trainee Motivation	.515	6.705	.000
<b>R Square</b>	<b>.401</b>		
<b>F</b>	<b>37.150</b>		
<b>Sig.</b>	<b>.000</b>		
<b>Durbin-Watson</b>	<b>1.968</b>		

N=114 \*p<.05 \*\* p<.01

## 5. Discussion

The concluded findings in this study clarify the positive significant relationship from training environment into training effectiveness. They match other previous studies' findings like the one by Shabha & Gaines (2013) stating the positive relationship between the training environment and the training effectiveness. While the governmental organizations suffer from shortage in other factors related to training effectiveness such as promotions or rewards to encourage employee's performance enhancements, brings the necessity to bring attention to different available training performance boosters subjects like the training environment and the trainee motivation. These organizations need to focus more into similar factors for the reason of a rapid development pressure from the current more complicated nature of work.

Arguably, the results in this study verify previous studies which confirm that well prepared and equipped training environment can enhance the trainee's reception of the new knowledge and intention to learn from the training. Trainee's enhanced learning performance is connected and influenced by the trainer ability to prepare a suitable training environment and employee to a high degree the training process equipment's and simulators exists in that environment. The organization and the trainer can affect the degree of learning obtainable by employment of the supportive medium and encouraging atmosphere. This in turn maximizes the organizations productivity and allows it's distinguishing. Plentiful advantages to all the parties involved; the staff, the management the clients or beneficiaries and the organization

can be achieved using such approach. This statement confirms antecedent studies that viewed training environment as having an affirmative relationship with training effectiveness such as Diamantidis & Chatzoglou (2012), and Sanjeevkumar & Yanan (2012).

The above stated justifications in theory support the previously mentioned literatures reviewed supporting the importance of the training environment to create motivation inside the trainee facilitating the training's purpose. Even with the influence level of the other training process related factors, the above mentioned training factors antecedents can have lower or higher influence degree into the training effectiveness in comparison with other factors which has also been confirmed in the outcomes of the study. It was revealed in this study that the trainee motivation was the higher effective factor compared with the other argued factor. The training environment is still effective, but it is the least effective factor.

Finally, the results also show that there is a significant positive statistical relationship between the training effectiveness and trainee motivation. This supports hypotheses H2. This indicates the important role played by this factor and represents an essential practice for being one of the effective factors regardless of the population or nature of the organization. Thus, trainee motivation forms a supportive party to the public sector. However, in any status, organization is required to give much of important awareness to encourage employments of any employees' motivation enhancers such as post training rewards, because the better the encouragement the employee get, the more effectiveness will be reflected to the organization and gain from training. Therefore, when investing or establishing for a good motivation strategy for the advantages of training, it will be a successful training first of all which in turn helps the organization to jump into a higher profession stage.

## **6. Conclusion**

The outcomes of this study studied the impact of training contextual factors on the training effectiveness by collecting primary data from employees in the public sector. Sample employees consist of clerks and supervisors to explore the dimensions' significance of the training factors placed under focus in this study. The accomplished results showed that training factors have a significant effect in the training performance. Accordingly, it verifies for the training specialists to pay attention to these important factors. This helps them to achieve competitive benefits. Other essential concerns are not researched on this study. More research is required to broaden the subject's area. Although with the existing boundaries in this study and possibility for more expansion, its findings' importances are still visible. An example of those boundaries is the limited participants' number forming the studies sample. This works against generalize the findings. This indicates the importance for

more studies to increase the sample's size, and to explore other areas and factors such as the training material, trainer, and social support.

Moreover, these findings can also benefit any other organization without limiting the sector. They can also be used to evaluate the same programme in other countries, or a local different sort of training programmes. It is also important to indicate that in the course of inspecting and searching concerning literatures on training effectiveness and the related factors, most of the literature studies focused factors take place in the training venue such as the training material and the trainer style. Factors take place outside the training venue did not get the appropriate attention such as the social support. In addition to that, the majority of previous studies were conducted in either western or Asian countries.

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