

Testing the moderating effect of organisational identification on the relationship between goal orientation and training motivation

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ABSTRACT: This study focuses on the relationship between goal orientation and training motivation. Organisational identification was included as a moderator, and the moderator effect of the relationship between goal orientation and training motivation was tested. The results show that learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation had positive and negative effects on training motivation, respectively. Moreover, organisational identification had two moderator effects with learning goal orientation and performance goal orientation on training motivation.

INTRODUCTION

For enterprises facing the continually changing environment, allowing employees to gain additional professional skills from training is the fundamental approach for an organisation to increase its competitive advantage. However, even when companies make considerable efforts for employee training, the actual achieved effects often do not meet expectations. Numerous elements exist in conducting effective training [1].

Thus, if companies seek effective employee training, they must first understand the motivation behind an employee joining work training. A study showed that motivation can increase or decrease according to the personal and environmental effects of employees [2].

Goal orientation can be divided into learning-oriented and performance-oriented [3]. Employees who believe that additional knowledge and skills can be gained from training and that they can continue to improve their personal skills belong to the first category.

However, those that value the employment environment and performance results, care for whether people are noticing them, and view participation in training as them being less advantageous belong to the second category. Thus, the purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of goal orientation on training motivation, and to examine the moderating role of organisational identification in the relationship between goal orientation and training motivation.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

Goal Orientation

Dweck indicated that people who are learning-oriented apply effective learning tactics to refine learning efforts, whereas performance-oriented people are concerned with how others judge their performance, whether they have surpassed others and also of other people's negative opinions [4]. Thus, when performance-oriented employees face a highly difficult goal, they hold back and escape from the difficulty [3].

Van de Walle argued that learning-oriented employees improve personal skills from becoming comfortable with their environment and learning new skills [5]. Performance-oriented employees, in contrast, stress finding positive comments from others and preventing any negative criticisms from affecting their work. Hence, they devalue training as a representation of a lack of ability.

Training Motivation

Training motivation refers to a trainee's willingness to accept the subject content of training [1]. Researchers found that employee attitudes on training have a positive influence on training motivation [6]. When trainees believe training can improve working skills and they have a positive attitude, it increases their motivation for training. Learning-oriented learners and personal consciousness are clearly evidenced as being related to learning motivation. Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1-1: Learning goal orientation positively impacts training motivation.
- H1-2: Performance goal orientation negatively impacts training motivation.

Organisational Identification

Organisational identification refers to whether employees view themselves as part of the organisation and agree with the organisation's mission, goals and core values [7]. Thus, the formation of organisational identification is based more on the situation of how employees perceive aspects within an organisation. Past studies mostly considered organisational identification to be a variable that measures personal reasons against organisational identification.

Even fewer studies have detailed how organisational identification influences personal goal seeking and whether employee recognition in an organisation's culture and reputation increases or decreases employee motivation in attending educational training. Furthermore, Mathieu and Martineau reviewed various academic papers and concluded that influences of training motivation can be divided into personal reasons and environmental influence [8].

They also concluded that both personal reasons and environmental reasons must be included when measuring their influence on training motivations. Therefore, this study assumes organisational identification as an environmental influence and presents an in-depth discussion on whether personal goal-seeking can be influenced by organisational identification, thus influencing the motivation for attending trainings. Therefore, this study proposes the following hypotheses:

- H2-1: Organisational identification has a positive moderating effect on the relationship between training goal orientation and training motivation.
- H2-2: Organisational identification has a negative moderating effect on the relationship between performance goal orientation and training motivation.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

In total, 392 trainees in a non-profit organisation in central Taiwan served as participants. The companies assigned a sample of 82% to the training courses conducted by the organisation, with an average of time worked at 71.5 months, and an average age of 35.02 years.

Measurements

Organisational identification was assessed using six item measures adopted from the Mael and Ashforth study [9]. Internal consistency reliabilities for these scales were 0.72 in the current investigation. Goal orientation was assessed using 16 item measures adopted from the study by Button et al [3]. Learning and performance goal orientations were divided into two scales, each with eight items. Cronbach's α for these scales was 0.84 in the current investigation. A 15-item instrument developed by Noe and Wilk was used to measure training motivation [10]. Cronbach's α for this measurement was 0.78. All items used a 5-point Likert scale ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

RESULTS

Correlation of the Variables

Table 1 reported the means, standard deviations, internal consistency reliabilities, and inter-correlations of the study variables. A significantly negative correlation was found between age and performance goal orientation ($r = -0.102, p < 0.05$), but a significantly positive correlation emerged between age and learning goal orientation ($r = 0.186, p < 0.05$), as well as age and organisational identification.

These results seem to show that older employees from the plastics industry are less motivated in hoping to gain positive appraisal from others after completing their work. In comparison, younger workers with fewer skills and less experience hope to improve and, indeed, improve their work performance. In addition, the zero-order correlation between training motivation and learning goal orientation was found to be positively significant ($r = 0.236, p < 0.01$), but negatively significant between training motivation and performance goal orientation ($r = -0.160, p < 0.01$).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics and zero-order correlation of the study variables.

Variables	Mean	SD	Correlation							
			(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Age	35.02	7.978								
(2) Level of E	2.01	0.882	0.205**							
(3) Years of W	71.75	73.114	0.651**	0.320**						
(4) Types of T	0.18	0.383	0.042	0.072	0.047					
(5) OI	4.025	0.495	0.226**	-0.077	0.076	0.002	[0.719]			
(6) LGO	4.142	0.408	0.118*	-0.046	-0.007	0.056	0.467**	[0.843]		
(7) PGO	3.490	0.439	-0.102*	-0.047	-0.167**	-0.024	0.310**	0.236**	[0.750]	
(8) TM	3.910	0.340	0.042	-0.089	-0.071	0.082	0.343**	0.582**	-0.160**	[0.783]

Notes: Years of W = years of working experience in plastics industries; Level of E = Level of Education; Types of T = types of training; OI = Organisational Identification t; LGO = Learning goal orientation; PGO = Performance goal orientation; TM = Training Motivation; [] = Cronbach's α ; N = 0 301; * $p < 0.1$ ** $p < 0.05$ *** $p < 0.001$

Analysis of Main Effects and Moderating Effects

First, age, level of education, years of working and types of training were employed as the first level of control variables (as Model 1 in Table 2). Learning goal orientation (LGO) was added to the second level of Model 2. The coefficient of LGO was statistically significant ($\beta = 0.557, p < 0.000$). This result shows that learning-oriented learners have a positive influence in employee training motivations. In other words, when an employee's goal-seeking orientation is stronger, their willingness to join employee training is also higher. Thus, H1-1 is supported.

The interaction of LGO and organisational identification was added to the third level (as Model 3 in Table 2). The coefficient of this interaction effect was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.179, p < 0.05$). Including all the impact variables in Model 3, these variables and their interaction accounted for 34% ($R^2 = 0.34$) of the variance for training motivation.

As shown in Table 3, performance goal orientation (PGO) was added to the second level of Model 2. The coefficient of PGO was statistically significant ($\beta = -0.145, p < 0.001$). This result shows that performance-oriented learners have a negative influence on employee training motivation. In other words, when an employee's personal performance orientation is stronger, his or her motivation to participate in employee training is lower. Thus, H1-2 is supported. The interaction of PGO and organisational identification was added to the third level (as Model 3 in Table 3). The coefficient of this interaction effect was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.515, p < 0.000$). Including all the impact variables in Model 3, these variables and their interaction accounted for 13% ($R^2 = 0.13$) of the variance for training motivation. These results show that organisational identification can influence personal attitude toward training, thereby having employees who are more strongly motivated to attend training activities.

Table 2: Moderated linear hierarchical regressions (1).

Variables	(β)	Regression models of training motivation		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control variables				
Age		0.105	0.015	0.000
Level of E		-0.087	-0.051	-0.043
Years of W		-0.118	-0.066	-0.068
Types of T		0.080	0.053	0.055
Predict variables				
LGO			0.557***	0.414***
Interacting influence				
LGO \times OI				0.179*
R^2		0.025	0.329	0.340
R^2 change			0.304	0.011
F		2.275	34.509***	30.086***

* $p < 0.05$ ** $p < 0.01$ *** $p < 0.001$

Table 3: Moderated linear hierarchical regressions (2).

Variables	(β)	Regression models of training motivation		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Control variables				
Age		0.105	0.123	0.048
Level of E		-0.087	-0.088	-0.050
Years of W		-0.118	-0.106	-0.108
Types of T		0.080	0.081	0.078
Predict variables				
PGO			-.145**	-.286**
Interacting influence				
PGO \times OI				0.515***
R ²		0.025	0.044	0.131
R ² change			0.019	0.087
F		2.275	3.270**	8.814***

*p<0.05 **p<0.01 ***p<0.001

To further discuss the possible effects of these two interacting influences, these results are graphically shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2. First, the sample was divided into two groups of high and low, using the organisational identification median. Figure 1 shows the form of the joint relationship of the effects of training orientation and organisational identification on training motivation. Trainees, who highly identify with the organisation, irrespective of high or low learning orientation, have higher training motivation than their lower counterparts. The highest training motivation occurs when employees possess both high learning orientation and high organisational identification.

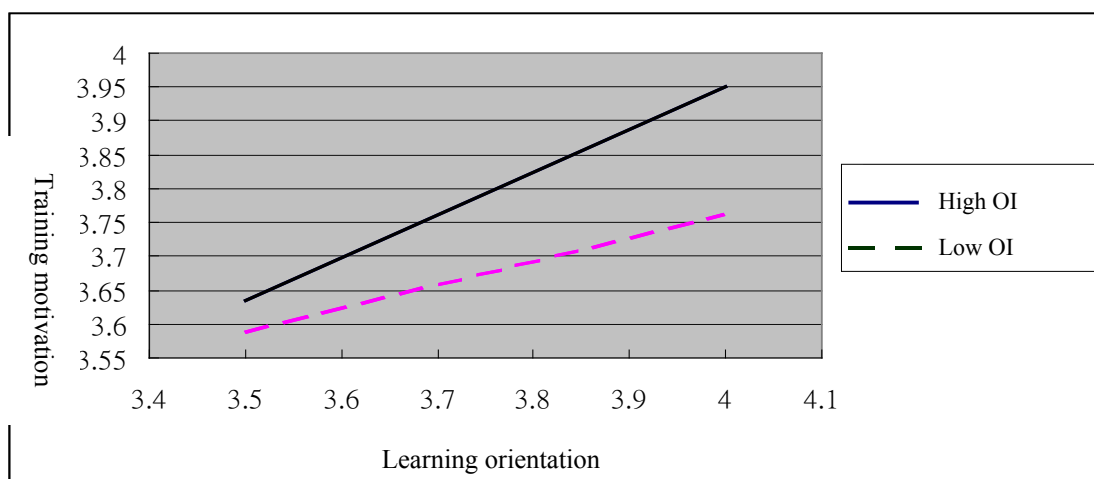


Figure 1: Moderating effect of organisational identification on learning-orientation and training motivation.

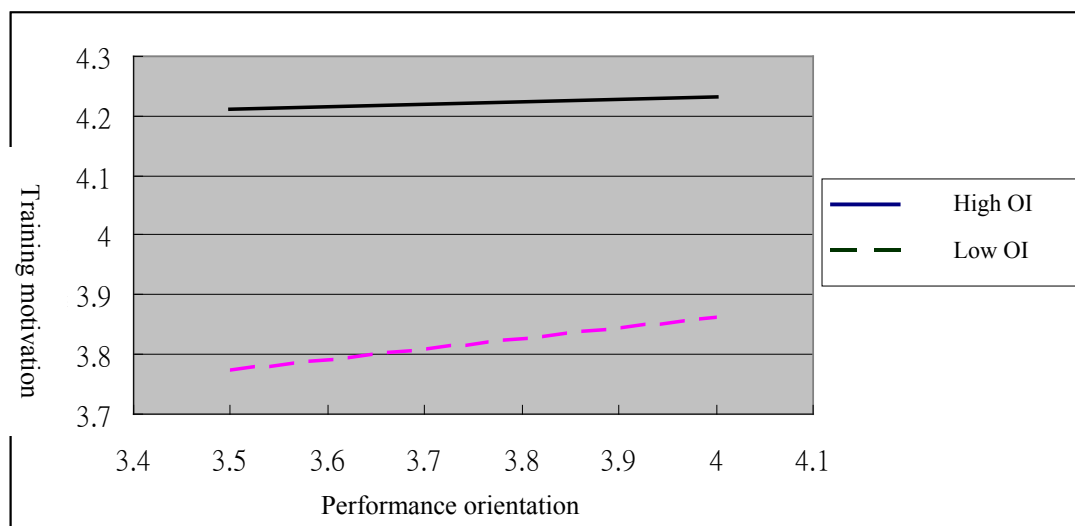


Figure 2: Moderating effect of organisational identification on performance-orientation and training motivation.

Figure 2 shows that trainees with high organisational identification, irrespective of high or low performance orientation, show higher training motivation as compared with low organisation trainees. The highest training motivation occurs when both performance orientation and organisational identification are high.

The analysis of the moderating effect of organisational identification showed that organisational identification interacts with both learning-oriented and performance-oriented learners and has a high positive influence on training motivation. Trainees' recognition in the company and their view of themselves a part of the organisation increases training orientation and performance orientation, and further increases training motivation. Irrespective of whether trainees agree only partly with an organisation's culture, environment and reputation, this still increases training motivation, and urges trainees to learn and complete their tasks.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study mainly details how goal-orientation influences training motivations, employs organisational identification as a moderator, and shows that goal-orientation influences training motivation. Results show that learning-orientation and performance-orientation have positive and negative influences on training motivation, respectively. When organisational identification influences high organisational identification and low organisational identification, the learning-orientation and performance-orientation of trainees are higher, and training attendance motivation is also more evident.

Based on the results, the study offers the following practical suggestions: First, this research divides influences on training motivation into personal and environmental reasons. The results demonstrate that environmental reasons have an influence on personal reasons and have more influence on training motivations. This finding echoes and responds to the conclusion of the study by Lin and Huang on the moderating effect of contextual factors [2]. In addition, in practice, when organisations actively show that they care for employees' personal lives and provide meaningful and engaging work, employees feel attached to the organisation because they feel that the organisations care [11]; therefore, they become more active for participating in training classes offered by the organisation [1].

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