

Empowering Performance: How Motivation and Training Drive Excellence in Klang Valley Employees

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of intrinsic motivation and job training on employee performance among employees in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The main objective is to determine the extent to which these two factors contribute to employee performance and to identify which serves as the stronger predictor. A quantitative research design was adopted, involving 441 employees from various organizations in Klang Valley. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire measuring intrinsic motivation, job training, and employee performance, with all reliability coefficients exceeding 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Inferential analyses were employed to test the research hypotheses. The Independent Sample T-Test results revealed no significant differences between the groups in terms of motivation ($p = 0.443$), training ($p = 0.931$), and performance ($p = 0.312$), indicating that both groups shared similar experiences and perceptions. Further regression analysis showed that both intrinsic motivation and job training had a significant positive influence on employee performance, with job training emerging as the stronger predictor. This finding suggests that employees who receive adequate and continuous training tend to perform better and demonstrate higher engagement levels. The study contributes to the understanding of human resource development by highlighting the importance of integrating motivation and training programs to enhance employee performance. Organizations in Klang Valley are encouraged to prioritize continuous learning and motivational strategies as part of their workforce development initiatives to achieve sustainable organizational growth.

Keywords: Intrinsic motivation, job training, employee performance, klang valley, human resource development

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance remains a critical determinant of organizational success, particularly in competitive urban regions such as the Klang Valley, Malaysia. In today's dynamic work environment, organizations increasingly recognize that sustaining high performance depends not only on employee competence but also on their motivation and access to effective training opportunities. Intrinsic motivation defined as the internal drive to perform tasks for personal satisfaction and professional growth rather than external rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2020) plays a pivotal role in enhancing creativity, engagement, and persistence at work (Gagné et al., 2022). Complementing this, job training equips employees with essential knowledge, skills, and confidence that translate directly into improved efficiency and work quality (Ahmad et al., 2021). Conversely, insufficient training may lower morale and hinder productivity (Ismail & Hassan, 2023). Understanding the interplay between intrinsic motivation and job training is therefore essential for organizations seeking to enhance employee productivity, retention, and overall organizational growth.

In the Malaysian context, the significance of these factors is particularly evident within the service industry, where adaptability, innovation, and customer satisfaction are key to competitiveness. Rooted in Self-

Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), intrinsic motivation is linked to the fulfillment of autonomy, competence, and relatedness, all of which contribute to higher levels of job satisfaction and performance (Olafsen et al., 2020; Kong et al., 2022). At the same time, structured training programs have been shown to strengthen employees' technical and problem-solving abilities, improve confidence, and enhance performance outcomes (Sitzmann & Weinhardt, 2023). Given the ongoing digital transformation in Malaysia's workforce, such training initiatives have become integral to sustaining productivity and service quality (Abdullah et al., 2023). However, while intrinsic motivation encourages self-driven effort, its effectiveness can be amplified through continuous skill development highlighting the need for a balanced approach that integrates motivational and developmental strategies.

The Malaysian government has also emphasized the importance of employee motivation and skill development through policies such as the *Employment Act 1955 (Amendment 2022)* and the *Industrial Harmony Policy*, which advocate for fair labor practices, flexible work arrangements, and development opportunities (Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, 2022). Empirical studies support this focus, showing that on-the-job training significantly improves performance across sectors, including manufacturing, telecommunications, and banking (Abdul Halim et al., 2023; Kanapathipillai & Ferdous Azam, 2022; Rahman et al., 2024). Meanwhile, motivation-related factors such as job security, leadership, and work-life balance have been found to enhance engagement and satisfaction (Khalid & Razak, 2023; Nordin & Hassan, 2021; Sulaiman et al., 2022). Together, these findings demonstrate that the integration of motivational and training strategies is essential for achieving sustainable organizational performance.

Gender differences further influence how employees respond to motivation and training initiatives. Studies indicate that male and female employees may experience and express motivation differently due to social, cultural, and professional factors (Hashim, 2022; Shafiee & Abas, 2023). National data also reveal disparities in training participation, with women comprising 41.5% of participants in HRD Corp's national training programs (HRD Corp, 2022). Despite higher female enrolment in tertiary education, women in Malaysia continue to face barriers to achieving equitable employment and pay (The Star, 2024). Research further suggests that gender moderates the relationship between intrinsic motivation, job training, and job performance, emphasizing the need for inclusive organizational practices that address these differences (Norwani et al., 2024).

In light of these factors, this study aims to examine the impact of intrinsic motivation and job training on employee performance among employees in Klang Valley, Malaysia, while considering the moderating role of gender. By integrating *Self-Determination Theory* and *Goal-Setting Theory*, the study seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically by offering insights for designing targeted training programs and motivational strategies that foster higher employee performance and long-term organizational success.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Work performance is a central construct in organizational research, encompassing the degree of efficiency and effectiveness with which employees fulfill their roles and contribute to organizational objectives (Kandie & Kipsang, 2023). It reflects both individual accomplishments and alignment with institutional goals (Mansor, Rozalli, & Othman, 2021). Mughal et al. (2025) conceptualized work performance through five core dimensions: quantity, quality, teamwork, innovation, and independence each representing a critical aspect of how employees meet job expectations and support organizational success. Goal-setting theory provides a dominant theoretical lens for understanding performance, proposing that clear and challenging goals enhance employee focus, effort, and persistence (Permeadian & Zhao, 2024).

Empirical evidence supports this view, as structured goal-setting and training programs have been found to strengthen skills, motivation, and productivity (Khushk, Zengtian, Amoah, & Grace, 2021). When employees actively participate in setting their goals, they experience greater intrinsic motivation, autonomy, and engagement, leading to improved performance outcomes (Pervaiz, Li, & He, 2021). Similarly, proactive goal regulation and participatory goal-setting, reinforced through feedback, enhance precision, innovation, and continuous learning in task execution (Wang, Kim, Jiang, & Tang, 2022; Pramanik et al., 2022). Consequently, performance appraisals remain essential for evaluating measurable outputs and informing decisions regarding promotions, training, and workforce development (Khan, Hussain, & Khan, 2020; Eke, 2023).

Job training, meanwhile, plays a crucial role in building employee capabilities and sustaining high performance. Noe (2020) defines job training as a structured process through which employees acquire the skills and knowledge required to enhance job performance. Similarly, Aguinis and Kraiger (2021) describe it as a systematic effort to develop employee competencies through formal programs or on-the-job experiences, while Salas et al. (2022) emphasize its role in bridging the gap between existing capabilities and organizational demands. Research has increasingly highlighted the role of intrinsic motivation in effective training participation. Deci and Ryan (2020) and Gagné and Deci (2021) conceptualize intrinsic motivation as the inherent enjoyment derived from engaging in learning activities, while Reeve (2022) links it to curiosity and personal mastery. Intrinsically motivated employees perceive training as meaningful and aligned with personal growth goals (Kuvaas et al., 2023; Meyer, 2024; Vansteenkiste et al., 2025), which enhances engagement and long-term skill retention.

Empirical studies consistently show that well-designed job training programs significantly enhance employee performance across various contexts. Smith and Johnson (2022) demonstrated that digital training initiatives improved productivity by 25%, while Martinez et al. (2021) found that soft skills training strengthened collaboration and problem-solving abilities. On-the-job training (Osei & Mensah, 2020), gamified modules (Chen et al., 2023), and VR-based programs (Anderson et al., 2022) have each been shown to improve performance by increasing engagement and knowledge retention. Training also contributes to leadership development and long-term performance gains (Thompson & Davis, 2021; Rivera & Patel, 2024; Khan & Ali, 2023), underscoring the need for ongoing and personalized learning interventions that blend technical and interpersonal development.

Intrinsic motivation further emerges as a powerful driver of employee performance. Defined as the internal desire to engage in activities for inherent satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Howard et al., 2021), it leads individuals to pursue tasks with enthusiasm, persistence, and creativity. Studies indicate that intrinsic motivation fosters autonomy, competence, and self-directed behavior (Wigfield et al., 2022; Vansteenkiste et al., 2021), promoting deeper engagement and higher-quality output (Reeve, 2023; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2024; Hidi & Renninger, 2020; Niemiec & Ryan, 2025). Empirical findings consistently affirm its positive relationship with work performance.

Kumar and Ranjit (2022) found that intrinsic motivation significantly enhances job performance through creativity as a partial mediator, while Hoxha and Ramadani (2024) showed that intrinsic drivers such as autonomy and competence strengthen work engagement. Other studies have emphasized its mediating role in improving self-efficacy and reducing job anxiety (Razak, 2022) and its capacity to predict job performance independently of external incentives (Raphani, 2021). Similarly, Qulsum and Kadir (2024) found that intrinsic motivation explained 26.8% of performance variance, while Kuncoro and Putra (2023) confirmed its predictive role in healthcare settings, reinforcing its universal importance across occupations.

When intrinsic motivation is aligned with job training, the combined effect can substantially enhance work performance. Intrinsically motivated employees approach training with enthusiasm and persistence, while structured programs provide the technical and cognitive tools needed for success (Ira Bura et al., 2023; Loor-Zambrano et al., 2022). This synergy between internal drive and professional skill development fosters creativity, efficiency, and organizational growth (Adula et al., 2023; Ahmad et al., 2020; Dessler, 2020; Lestari, 2023). Together, intrinsic motivation and job training create a reinforcing cycle of engagement and improvement, where employees continuously refine their skills and derive satisfaction from their accomplishments (Andronicus et al., 2021; Bappah & Inuwa, 2023).

Finally, emerging studies highlight that gender may moderate the relationship between intrinsic motivation, job training, and work performance. Ramasamy et al. (2025) found that men and women differ in how they interpret intrinsic rewards, influencing turnover intention and job satisfaction. Abdul Halim et al. (2023) and Shafiee and Abas (2023) revealed that while both genders benefit from training, women often experience greater gains in collaborative settings. Similarly, Norwani et al. (2024) reported gender-based variations in the link between motivation and job-benefit satisfaction among gig-economy workers in Malaysia. These findings suggest that gender differences should be considered in motivation and training initiatives to ensure equitable and effective performance outcomes.

In summary, the literature demonstrates that intrinsic motivation and job training are interdependent drivers of work performance. Employees who are both internally motivated and well-trained exhibit greater engagement, creativity, and productivity. Moreover, gender remains an important contextual factor shaping how these relationships unfold, emphasizing the need for inclusive and adaptive human resource strategies that foster both motivation and skill development to enhance organizational success.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative correlational research design to examine the relationship between intrinsic motivation, job training, and employee performance among employees in Klang Valley, Malaysia. The correlational approach was chosen to determine the strength and direction of associations between the variables without any manipulation, thereby enabling an objective evaluation of how intrinsic motivation and job training influence employee performance. The study involved a total of 441 employees from both private and public organizations. A convenience sampling technique was utilized to select participants who were accessible and willing to participate, ensuring a diverse representation of individuals from various occupational sectors.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire consisting of four sections. The first section gathered demographic information such as age, gender, education level, and employment sector. The second section measured intrinsic motivation using the Intrinsic Motivation Scale adapted from Gagné et al. (2015), while the third section assessed job training based on the Australian Quality Training Framework (2001). The final section evaluated employee performance using the Employee Performance Scale developed by Koopmans et al. (2015). All items were rated on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree."

The reliability analysis showed that Cronbach's alpha values for all constructs exceeded 0.70, indicating good internal consistency. The questionnaires were distributed both online and physically, with participation being entirely voluntary and anonymous. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, and confidentiality of their responses was assured. Data were analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 30). Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize demographic information, while inferential analyses, including correlation, regression, and t-tests, were conducted to examine the relationships among intrinsic motivation, job training, and employee performance.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

A total of 441 responses were analyzed. The majority of respondents were female (60.1%), while male respondents accounted for 39.9%. Most participants were aged between 26 and 35 years, reflecting a relatively young and active workforce in Klang Valley.

Table 1: Independent sample T test

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Motivation	Equal variances assumed	.008	.928	-768	439	.443
Training	Equal variances assumed	.002	.968	-086	439	.931
Perfomance	Equal variances assumed	.949	.330	1.012	439	.312

An Independent Samples T-Test was conducted to determine whether there were significant differences between the two groups in terms of motivation, training, and performance. The test compared the mean scores of both groups to identify any statistically significant variations. For the motivation variable, Levene's Test for Equality of Variances indicated that the assumption of equal variances was met ($F = 0.008$, $Sig. = 0.928$). The t-test results ($t = -0.768$, $df = 439$, $p = 0.443$) showed no significant difference between the groups. This finding suggests that both groups demonstrated similar levels of motivation. In the case of training, the Levene's Test ($F = 0.002$, $Sig.$

= 0.968) confirmed equal variances, and the t-test value ($t = -0.086$, $df = 439$, $p = 0.931$) revealed no significant difference between the groups. This indicates that both groups received or perceived training at comparable levels.

For performance, the Levene's Test ($F = 0.949$, $Sig. = 0.330$) also confirmed the homogeneity of variances. The t-test results ($t = 1.012$, $df = 439$, $p = 0.312$) indicated no significant difference in performance between the two groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that both groups performed similarly. Overall, the results of the Independent Samples T-Test show that there were no statistically significant differences between the two groups in motivation, training, and performance ($p > 0.05$). This implies that group membership did not influence these variables, and participants shared comparable experiences across all three factors.

Table 2: Regression Analysis

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.710	.504	.502	3.379

The results of the multiple regression analysis, as presented in Table 2, reveal that the model produced a correlation coefficient (R) of 0.710, signifying a strong positive relationship between the independent variables training and intrinsic motivation and the dependent variable, employee performance. The R Square value of 0.504 indicates that approximately 50.4% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by the combined influence of training and intrinsic motivation. The Adjusted R Square of 0.502 demonstrates that the explanatory power of the model remains consistent even after adjusting for the number of predictors, suggesting minimal model overfitting. Additionally, the standard error of the estimate (3.379) implies a moderate level of dispersion around the regression line, indicating a relatively good model fit.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide important insights into the relationships between intrinsic motivation, job training, gender, and work performance among employees in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. Overall, the results indicate that gender does not significantly influence employees' levels of intrinsic motivation, access to job training, or overall work performance. Instead, both intrinsic motivation and job training were found to have a significant and positive impact on employee performance, with job training emerging as the stronger predictor.

The results highlight that in today's diverse and inclusive workplaces, gender differences in motivation and performance have become less pronounced. This may be attributed to the growing implementation of equitable human resource policies, flexible work arrangements, and inclusive leadership practices that provide equal opportunities for all employees. Modern organizations in Malaysia, guided by initiatives such as the Industrial Harmony Policy (Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia, 2022), are emphasizing fairness, well-being, and professional development factors that contribute to a balanced and motivated workforce. These findings are consistent with global trends where intrinsic motivation is increasingly recognized as being shaped by psychological needs, autonomy, competence, and relatedness rather than demographic characteristics (Ryan & Deci, 2020; López-Vilchez et al., 2024).

The significant influence of job training on work performance reinforces the vital role of continuous learning and skill development in achieving organizational effectiveness. Structured and relevant training enables employees to enhance their technical knowledge, confidence, and problem-solving abilities, which in turn improve productivity and service quality (Ahmad et al., 2021; Sitzmann & Weinhardt, 2023). Moreover, training initiatives that align with employees' career goals and organizational objectives help strengthen engagement and retention, particularly in fast-evolving industries within the Klang Valley.

Intrinsic motivation also plays a crucial role in shaping positive work attitudes and performance outcomes. Employees who find meaning and satisfaction in their tasks are more likely to demonstrate creativity, persistence, and commitment, even in challenging work environments. When organizations create conditions

that support autonomy and personal growth, they cultivate a self-driven workforce capable of sustaining long-term productivity (Gagné et al., 2022; Reeve, 2023).

Importantly, the combined effects of job training and intrinsic motivation illustrate a synergistic relationship. Training fulfills employees' need for competence, while intrinsic motivation fuels their desire to apply newly acquired knowledge effectively. This interaction aligns with Self-Determination Theory and Goal-Setting Theory, both of which explain how internal motivation and skill development work together to enhance job performance and organizational growth.

Overall, the study underscores that employee performance in the Klang Valley is best supported through a dual focus on capability building and psychological empowerment. Organizations that invest in meaningful training programs while fostering an intrinsically motivating work environment are more likely to achieve sustained performance improvements. These findings highlight the importance of integrating equitable human resource policies with ongoing professional development strategies to cultivate a skilled, motivated, and high-performing workforce suited to Malaysia's dynamic economic landscape.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that both intrinsic motivation and job training play a significant role in enhancing employees' work performance in the Klang Valley, Malaysia. The findings reveal that employees who are intrinsically motivated tend to be more engaged, persistent, and creative, while effective job training improves their skills, confidence, and efficiency. Among the two, job training showed a stronger influence on performance, highlighting the importance of continuous learning and development in the workplace. The results also indicate no significant gender differences in motivation, training, or performance, suggesting that both male and female employees experience similar opportunities and drive at work. Overall, this research emphasizes that organizations should invest in structured training programs while fostering intrinsic motivation to build a more capable, committed, and high-performing workforce.

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