Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training and Affective Commitment to Change: The Mediation Effect of Individual Readiness for Change

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Abstract:

This research explores the relationship between employees' perceived training benefits and affective commitment to change in an organizational context. In addition, this study examines the mediating role of individual readiness for change in this relationship. This study is a multiple correlational research. In this study, a explanatory-quantitative approach will be used. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis technique is used to test the proposed hypotheses using AMOS version 26 software. the population comprises 596 employees, data will be collected using the purposive sampling technique, therefore, this study will have a sample size of 100 participants. The results of this study revealed that employee perceived training benefits had no direct impact on affective commitment to change, but significantly influenced affective commitment to change indirectly through individual readiness for change. The implications of this study emphasizing the need for customized training programs and change management strategies, especially in the context of the oil & gas sector.

1. Introduction

The oil and gas sector in Indonesia is a critical pillar of the nation's economy, playing a vital role in providing energy resources and contributing significantly to national revenue. However, the sector faces an array of challenges, including dynamic changes in technology, regulatory requirements, and organizational restructuring. In this rapidly evolving landscape, the success of oil and gas companies hinges on their ability to adapt to these changes swiftly and effectively (Bratianu & Bolisani, 2015; Kane et al., 2017). The government also adds to the complexity with impending environmental regulations, such as the prospective carbon tax implementation (Law 7/2021 - Article 13 and Presidential Decree 98/2021 - Article 58), and Ministry of State-Owned Enterprises' direction to adopt AKHLAK values (Surat Edaran Menteri BUMN Nomor SE-7/MBU/07/2020), further compound the challenges faced by organizations operating in the oil and gas sector.

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PT XYZ finds that commitment to change is crucial for the business to thrive in the long run. Tahajuddin (2020) found that successful organizational change efforts heavily rely on the commitment of employees to embrace and adopt these transformations. Research findings have shown that there is a connection between employees' working attitudes, specifically their level of organizational commitment, and their perception towards human capital practices, including but not limited to training initiatives, that are implemented in the organization.

In PT XYZ, training programs are designed not only to impart essential skills and knowledge but also to foster a culture of continuous learning and improvement, and one of the mandatory training programs is intended to equip the employees with required competencies in the specific job level and change adaptability skills. However, there is a misalignment between the objectives and benefits of the mandatory training programs and employees' perceptions of these programs. The employees' do not understand the relevance of the training to their roles and career development, hence, they are not fully engaged in the learning process. Post-training evaluations often reveal that employees do not feel that the training has equipped them with the necessary skills to perform better in their roles, which turns out to be a misunderstanding of training objectives, benefits, and relevance in the day to day context.

Cummings & Worley (2016) emphasize that the dynamics and uncertainty inherent in organizational change often trigger anxiety and fear among employees, a phenomenon similarly observed within the oil and gas industry. In the context of the oil and gas industry in Indonesia, characterized by dynamic changes in company structure, core values, leadership, and industry conditions, there is a significant challenge in fostering commitment to change among employees.

Commitment to change binds individuals to actions considered essential for the successful implementation of change initiatives. Hence, in the context of PT XYZ where there will be an obligation to adhere to the change of direction, it is essential that every employee has the ability to understand, adapt, and champion the change process which, in turn, requires adequate employee preparation. PT XYZ acknowledges the significance of training and development programs in nurturing a skilled and adaptable workforce, as highlighted by Thakore (2013). Thakore underscores the essential and strategic nature of training, especially concerning long-term organizational goals, productivity, employee well-being, safety, and personal growth. Additionally, Oliver and Jacobs (2007) affirm that learning not only enhances individual competencies but also plays a pivotal role in facilitating organizational change and fostering innovation. PT XYZ proposed the formulation of mandatory training called flier management development program which was intended for supervisors to obtain relevant competencies related to managing self, people, and business in the context of changing organization. Despite the recognized importance of employee training and development programs, many employees attending the mandatory training sessions are often unaware of the specific objectives and personal benefits of the training. This lack of understanding and perception of training

ineffectiveness can lead to suboptimal learning engagement and hinder the acquisition of new skills and knowledge.

Madsen et al. (2005) contend that change interventions are contingent on individual changes, Individual readiness for change is crucial for building commitment to change because it serves as the foundation upon which successful organizational change efforts are built. When employees are mentally and emotionally prepared to adapt to and accept change, they are more likely to engage actively in the change process, align their personal goals with organizational objectives, maintain emotional resilience in the face of challenges, and trust in the change and its facilitators. This readiness encompasses positive cognitive appraisal, willingness to devote energy and effort, and a commitment to participate and collaborate effectively. Moreover, readiness often involves employee training and preparation, equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to navigate change confidently, thereby enhancing their competence and fostering their commitment to change, making it an essential factor in the overall success of organizational change initiatives.

Understanding how training is perceived by employees is crucial, as proposed by Allen & Meyer (1990), where the perception of human resource management practices can significantly influence employees' commitment to their organizations. Mansour et al. (2022) established a positive correlation between training and affective organizational commitment. Jain & Duggal (2016) also argued that affective organizational commitment is the most important and beneficial component of organizational commitment, since employees with a high level of affective organizational commitment are more likely to accept the change initiatives adopted by their organizations. In addition, Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) argue that in the context of change, commitment to change is a more relevant variable, as it significantly contributes to supportive behaviors during organizational transitions.

This research explores the relationship between employees' perceived training benefits and affective commitment to change in an organizational context. In addition, this study examines the mediating role of individual readiness for change in this relationship.

2. Theoretical Backgrounf

Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training

Organizations today face multifaceted pressures, from economic shifts to technological advancements, driving the need for employee adaptation. Training programs aim to equip employees with skills and knowledge to contribute effectively to organizational goals. These programs offer benefits to both organizations and employees, including understanding industry trends, reducing job-related stress, and enhancing skills. The perceived benefits of training, crucial for fostering employee confidence and commitment, encompass job, career, and personal advantages. Despite the success of PT XYZ's Flier Management Development Program, the specific benefits perceived by participants remain unexplored.

Readiness for Change

Organizational change is complex and can pose challenges at various levels, including organizational, team, and individual levels (Khan et al., 2018). Change readiness refers to individuals' preparedness to adapt to and support change, influencing its success (Huy, 1999). Factors influencing change readiness include the nature of the change, implementation strategies, organizational culture, and individual attributes (Holt et al., 2007). Effective change programs should address emotional, cognitive, and intentional dimensions of readiness (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). Trust, support, and collaboration are crucial for individuals to navigate change effectively (Schneider et al. cited in Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). Training plays a vital role in preparing employees for organizational change (Madsen et al., 2005).

Organizational Commitment

Organizational commitment, central to understanding employee behavior, comprises three dimensions: affective, continuance, and normative (Allen & Meyer, 1990). Affective commitment, characterized by emotional attachment and active involvement, is a consistent predictor of organizational commitment (Jackson & Schuler, 2000). While continuance and normative commitment are linked to different motivations for staying in an organization, affective commitment stands out for its impact on attendance, turnover, and performance (Meyer et al., 2002). Despite criticisms of continuance and normative commitment for their lack of alignment with emotional attachment, affective commitment remains pivotal, influencing individual outcomes like job stress and work-family conflict (Stazyk et al., 2011).

Commitment to Change

Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) suggest that commitment to change is more relevant than organizational commitment in change contexts, as it strongly influences supportive change behaviors. They define commitment to change as individuals' dedication to actions crucial for change implementation, comprising normative, continuance, and affective dimensions. Normative commitment arises from obligation, continuance commitment from perceived costs of not supporting change, and affective commitment from belief in change benefits.

Hypothesis Development

The perceived benefits of training, as defined by Yang et al. (2012, as cited in Mansour et al., 2022), refer to employees' perceptions of the positive outcomes they can achieve through training activities. Previous research extensively explored how employees perceive training benefits and its relationship to their commitment to the organization (Meyer & Allen, 1997; Mowday et al., 1979), consistently finding positive correlation (Alamri & Al-Duhaim, 2017; Almodarresi & Hajmalek, 2015; Mansour et al., 2022) Herscovitch & Meyer (2002) introduced "Commitment to change" as the driving force that motivates individuals to support and actively participate in workplace changes. Research indicates that, in the context of change, commitment to change is more pertinent than organizational commitment as it strongly influences supportive behaviors during the change process, and among the three dimensions of commitment, affective commitment stands out as the most reliable predictor of organizational commitment (Jackson & Schuler, 2000; Somers, 1995).

Individual Readiness for Change involves the extent to which individuals can adapt and prepare themselves to face change, making them crucial in the success of organizational change (Huy, 1999). Research by (Holt et al., 2007) emphasizes that change readiness includes individual behaviors such as the ability to implement change, commitment to the planned change by leadership, and the belief that the change is necessary for the organization's well-being. This comprehensive approach acknowledges the multifaceted nature of change readiness, encompassing both emotional and cognitive aspects, as well as individuals' intention to devote energy to the change process (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). Furthermore, the literature emphasizes the importance of empowering employees, building trust, and facilitating collaboration when facing change (Schneider et al. cited in Bouckenooghe et al., 2009).

Training can be seen as one of the most influential tool to empower, build trust, and facilitate collaboration. Individual Readiness for Change becomes relevant in this context as it reflects individuals' affective reactions to change, their beliefs and thoughts about the change, and their willingness to dedicate energy to the process (Bouckenooghe et al., 2009). The hypothesis created in line with all this information is as follows:

H_1: Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training have a positive influence on Affective Commitment to Change.

H_2: Individual Readiness for Change positively mediates the relationship between Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training and Affective Commitment to Change.
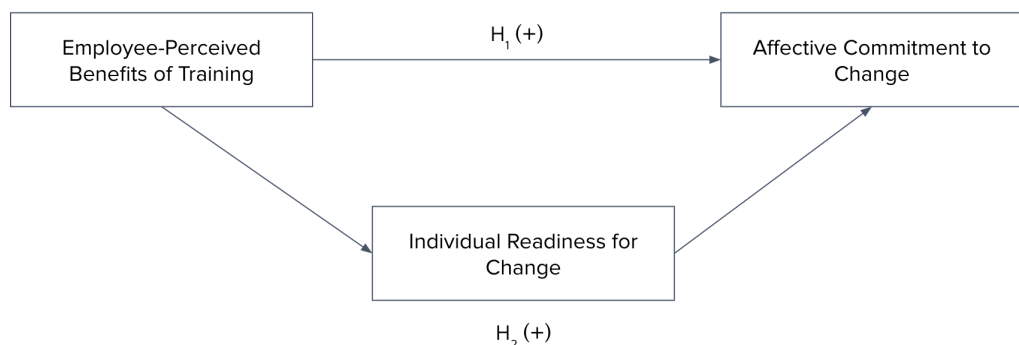

Figure 1. Research Framework

In this research, the researcher will examine the effect of employee-perceived benefits of training on affective commitment to change, as well as the role of individual readiness for change as the mediating variable

3. Methodology

This study is a multiple correlational research. In this study, a explanatory-quantitative approach will be used, where questionnaires on Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training, Individual Readiness for Change, and Affective Commitment to Changes will be distributed as the primary data to explore the relationships among these three measured variables.

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis technique is used to test the proposed hypotheses using AMOS version 26 software. The research's time dimension employs the cross-sectional ethod, which involves measuring data at a specific point in time. (Schindler, 2019)

This study collected primary data and secondary data. For this study, the primary data will be collected through self-administered surveys, where respondents complete the survey without the researcher's presence. The survey will utilize a Likert scale to measure the degree of agreement or disagreement of subjects with the questions asked, as described by Schindler (2019) and Sekaran & Bougie (2016). To streamline data consolidation and meet PT XYZ's request for questionnaire distribution, an online questionnaire using Microsoft Form is being utilized. This approach allows for efficient data gathering and easy access and response for the participants involved.

In this research, the population comprises 596 employees who have successfully completed the Flier Management Development Program at PT XYZ. In this study, data will be collected using the purposive sampling technique. Since there are 3 variables in this study, it needs at least 30 participants, but using SEM analysis requires a minimum of 100 participants. Therefore, this study will have a sample size of 100 participants.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Validity Test
Validity testing in this study involves both face validity and construct validity. Face validity entails consulting with the research advisor, Prof. Heru Kurnianto Tjahjono, regarding the appropriateness of the instruments for each variable. The assessment results confirm the validity of the questionnaire items. To evaluate construct validity, the researcher performed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA). The results, as presented in Table 1, demonstrate that all constructs and indicators meet the criteria for convergent validity, as their loading factors and AVE are ≥ 0.50 (Tjahjono et al., 2021).

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Result

Construct	Item	*FL*	CR	AVE
Employee Perceived Benefits of Training	EPBT_1	0,766	0,944	0,707
(EPBT)	EPBT_2	0,766		
	EPBT_3	0,824		
	EPBT_4	0,828		
	EPBT_5	0,927		
	EPBT_6	0,883		
	EPBT_7	0,877		
Individual Readiness for Change	IRFC_1	0,879	0,97	0,785
(IRFC)	IRFC_2	0,955		
	IRFC_3	0,841		
	IRFC_4	0,947		
	IRFC_5	0,792		
	IRFC_6	0,925		
	IRFC_7	0,86		
	IRFC_8	0,871		

Construct	Item	*FL*	CR	AVE
	IRFC_9	0,893		
Affective Commitment to Change	ACC_1	0,83	0,943	0,735
(ACC)	ACC_2	0,817		
	ACC_3	0,907		
	ACC_4	0,877		
	ACC_5	0,896		
	ACC_6	0,813		

Notes: CR = *Composite Reliability*, AVE = *Average Variance Extracted,* FL = *Factor Loadings, Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023*

Aside from the convergent validity testing, the discriminant validity testing is performed to measure the extent of differences between one construct and other constructs. Hair et al. (2019) stated that the testing is conducted using the Fornell-Larcker criterion table by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values (diagonal) with the correlations among constructs, which in this case shown in table 2.

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Fornell-Larcker Criterion	1	2	3
Employee Perceived Benefits of Training	**0,841**		
Individual Readiness for Change	0,580	**0,886**	
Affective Commitment to Change	0,620	0,658	**0,857**

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023

According to Table 2, it can be observed that all the square root values of AVE for each latent construct are higher than all the correlations among constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that overall, the latent constructs in this study are sufficiently unique and capable of capturing the measured phenomena.

Reliability Test

Based on the data presented in Table 1, it is evident that the constructs Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training, Individual Readiness for Change, and Affective Commitment to Change have Composite Reliability (CR) values of 0.841, 0.886, and 0.857, respectively. Additionally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for these constructs are 0.707, 0.785, and 0.735, respectively. All constructs have achieved CR>0.70 and AVE>0.50, indicating that they are reliable measures. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study demonstrate satisfactory levels of reliability.

Goodness of fit Test

Goodness of Fit testing was conducted Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using IBM SPSS Amos 26. In SEM, the full model is considered good or fit if it meets the overall model fit test based on the criteria of goodness of fit. Based on the goodness of fit measurements obtained from the output of Amos 26 in Table 3, it can be stated that the full model is a suitable or acceptable model.

Table 3. The Model Goodness of Fit

Indices	Variable Test	Result	Category
1	RMSEA	0.074	Good fit
2	RMSR	0.074	Good fit
3	CMIN/DF	2.676	Good fit
4	TLI	0.908	Good fit
5	CFI	0.904	Good fit

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023

Hypotesis Testing

The research utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with IBM SPSS Amos 26 for Hypothesis Testing, specifically to test mediation hypotheses. The study explores two paths to the dependent variable. The first path is the direct effect, where the independent variable, employee-perceived benefits of training, directly influences affective commitment to change. The second path is the indirect effect, where the independent variable first predicts the mediator variable, individual readiness for change, which then influences affective commitment to change. The results of the path analysis are presented in Figure 2, while the results of the structural model analysis and mediation testing are presented in Table 4.
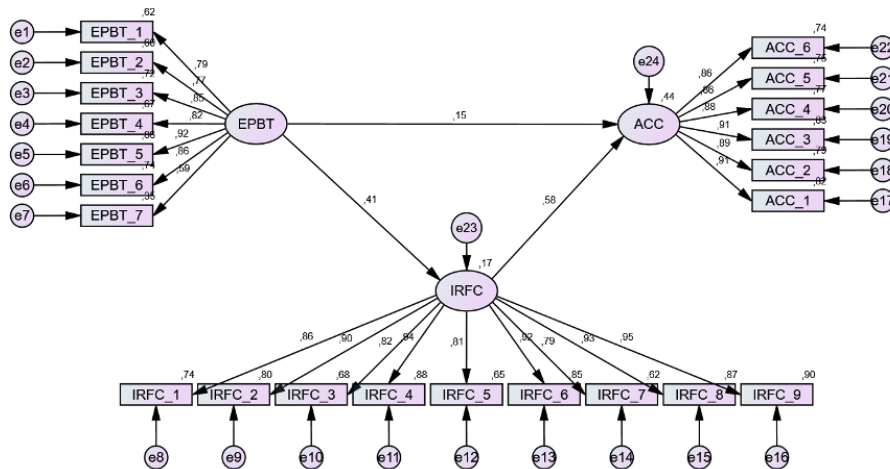

Figure 2. Path Analysis using Structural Equation Modeling
Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023

Table 4. Results of Structural Model Analysis and Mediation Testing

Variable	Est	S.E.	C.R.	P	β	95%CI		Conclusion
						L	U	
EPBT → IRFC	0.738	0.188	3.925	***	0,409			Significant
IRFC → ACC	0.614	0.103	5.976	***	0,584			Significant
EPBT → ACC	0.29	0.172	1.684	0.092	0,153			H1: Not Supported
EPBT → IRFC → ACC			3.28	***		.276	.716	H2: Supported

Note: L: Lower, U: Upper
Source: Processed Primary Data, 2023
The t-statistic was used to assess the significance of relationships, where t ≥ 1.96, at a significance level of 0.05, and the p-value should be < 0.05. The critical ratio (CR) of regression weights was utilized to obtain the t-value. If the CR-value exceeded 1.96, the hypothesis is accepted. The significance of the influence was determined using the probability value, which should be < 0.05. The coefficient of the direct relationship path was derived from the estimate of standardized regression weights.

5. Discussion

The Direct Effect of Employee-perceived Benefits of Training towards Affective Commitment to Change.
The main objective of this study is to investigate the impact of employee-perceived benefits of training on affective commitment to change, with individual readiness for change acting as the mediating variable.

The survey questions regarding employee-perceived benefits of training were designed to assess participants' understanding and positive perception of the Flier Management Development Program (FMDP) as a mandatory training. The average response for this category was 4.26, indicating that training participants hold a favorable attitude towards FMDP and believe that participating in the program will positively influence their job performance, skill development for future roles, and personal growth, leading to various psychological, political, and social outcomes, some of which may be work-related. Among the different perceptions, the highest mean score was related to personal development (average score of 4.38), while the lowest mean score was associated with the belief that training could open up more career opportunities (score of 4.17).

Contrary to the initial hypothesis, the study did not find support for the idea that Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training have a positive influence on affective commitment to change. This lack of support may be attributed to the way mandatory training is structured within PT XYZ, where the benefits of the training are not adequately communicated to participants before the training sessions. This lack of effective communication could result in a situation where commitment to learning and adopting change becomes less affective and possibly more normative or continuance in nature.

This finding differs from the research of Mansour et al. (2022) which suggested that Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training significantly enhances affective commitment to the organization. However, it is worth noting that although there is no direct significant relationship, Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training still plays a crucial role in managing change by improving job satisfaction, motivation, and organizational commitment (Sahinidis & Bouris, 2008). Additionally, Yousef (2000) discovered that employees' attitudes towards organizational change are positively associated with their affective commitment to the organization. Therefore, indirectly, Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training has an impact on employees' affective commitment to change through the mediating variable, individual readiness for change.

In addressing the findings of this research, it is crucial for PT XYZ to continue communicating the benefits of training through various approaches. This could include leadership presentations during employee town hall meetings to emphasize the importance of training and its urgency for the company. Additionally, more personalized approaches can be employed, such as direct introductions by supervisors to prospective participants regarding the training's relevance to their career development. By doing so, the company can enhance the effectiveness of its communication regarding the benefits of training, thereby improving employee understanding and commitment to the necessary changes within the organization.

The Mediating Role of Individual Readiness for Change
The findings suggest that the influence of Employee-Perceived Benefits of Training on Affective Commitment to Change heavily relies on Individual Readiness for Change. This aligns with previous studies that have demonstrated the positive impact of Individual Readiness for Change on commitment to change (Mahendrati & Mangundjaya, 2020; Santhidran et al., 2013).

The survey results reveal that IRFC.1, obtained the highest average score, indicating that most respondents are willing to participate in the change process at PT XYZ. On the other hand, the lowest average score in IRFC.5 suggests that although the score is still relatively high, respondents have some uncertainty about the positive outcomes of PT XYZ's development plans. Based on the findings, it is important for organizations to always check the employees' change readiness as it will impact the affective commitment to change.

Looking at the affective commitment to change, it can be observed that the indicator with the highest average is ACC.1, with a score of 4.23. This signifies that respondents express a significant level of trust in the value of changes at PT XYZ. On the other hand, the indicator with the lowest average is ACC.5 which obtains an average of 3.75. Despite being the lowest indicator, the result implies that respondents still believe the changes will have positive effects on the organization. Hence it is important to communicate more and put more emphasis on showing observable milestones so that it will be easier to maintain employees' morale and get their support every time.

6. Conclusions

This study explores the relationship between employees' perceived training benefits and affective commitment to change in an organizational context. In addition, this study examines the mediating role of individual readiness to change in this relationship. The results of this study revealed that employees' perceived training benefits had no direct impact on affective commitment to change, but significantly influenced affective commitment to change indirectly through individual readiness to change. This underscores the importance of nurturing employees' readiness to change in addition to providing training opportunities. The implications of this study extend to academia and industry, emphasizing the need for customized training programs and change management strategies, especially in the context of the oil & gas sector.

However, it is imperative to recognize the limitations of this study, including its focus on a specific company and potential bias in data collection. To overcome these limitations, future research should represent a wider sample and use diverse data collection methods. Going forward, PT XYZ is recommended to tailor training programs to industry-specific needs, prioritize developing employees' readiness to change, and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of their initiatives to increase commitment to organizational change. These recommendations are critical for PT XYZ and similar organizations looking to optimize leadership training and change management practices in the dynamic oil & gas industry landscape.

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