

APPROACHES TO OPTIMIZING MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING FRAMEWORK IN CHINA

Abstract

This study examines the management development and training (MDT) framework in relation to organizational characteristics. Data were collected from 405 managers across 306 organizations in China. The results showed that MDT is related to three factors: motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and support for training. The findings provide new perspectives and support the overall validity of the nomological network of MDT factors. The study also provides insights on how organizations motivate and support managers for training practices. In addition, the findings suggest that organizations should explore ways to enhance a manager's willingness to train and also inform organizational decision makers about practices of training support. Implications for theory and practice are discussed along with avenues for future research.

Keywords Management development, Training, China, Organization

Introduction

Today organizations are facing enormous challenges, opportunities and growing competition, due to the unprecedented business environment which is changing rapidly and becoming more and more complex (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012). Under these circumstances, organizations all over the world recognize that the knowledge, skills and abilities of their managers, represent a major source of gaining and sustaining competitive advantage. This recognition appears to make several organizations focus on Management Development and Training (MDT), by providing managers with opportunities to learn and enhance the skills needed to function effectively in the organization.

The purpose of this study is to understand MDT practices in organizations doing business in China. Previous research indicates all organizations need to offer MDT opportunities for their managers (Beier & Kanfer, 2010; Bulut & Culha, 2010; Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012; Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011; Shen & Darby, 2006). Despite a significant degree of academic interest in MDT practices in world-wide research, the literature of MDT in the Chinese context is still underdeveloped. On the one hand, this study aims to build a structural model for MDT studies in China. Previous MDT studies in other countries show that the effectiveness of MDT practices is mainly related to motivation for training, access to training, support for training (Beier & Kanfer, 2010; Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012; Newman et al., 2011). However, there is limited research conducted in the Chinese context. The findings of this study shed light on developing and establishing a framework for MDT practices in China. On the other hand, another central contribution of this study is that it extends our understanding of how individual demographic variables and organizational characteristics affect MDT. To be more specific, this study tests how demographic factors influence Chinese managers' perceptions on MDT and explores the differences of MDT practices among organizations doing business in China, in terms of organizational size, age and type of ownership.

Organizations can adopt two strategies for MDT efforts: (1) organizations can buy skills through recruiting and selecting people with the right skills to fill the management positions; or (2) organizations can enhance skills of the current employees through human resource development (HRD) practices by offering training programmes after recruitment and selection (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Pearce, Manz, & Akanno, 2013). In the latter case, the resource-based view (RBV) of the organizations claims that management skill development is critical for improving organizational competitiveness and performance (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Espedal, 2005; Sheehan, 2012; Wang, Rothwell, & Sun, 2009). The RBV of organizations provides a theoretical framework for the relationship between MDT and organizational performance by emphasising that internal factors, both physical and intellectual, are key sources of competitive advantage (Espedal, 2005; Sheehan, 2012). This paper follows the latter strategy, i.e. development of managers' competencies through training.

Like any essential management concept, MDT also has been defined based on either traditional or contemporary views (Luoma, 2006). Traditional views focus on the MDT processes (how MDT is done) and stress formal planned training. For example, McGirr (2012, p. 50) defines MDT as "any planned intervention aimed to improve a manager's ability to lead, manage, and/or achieve performance improvements within the work context". However, there is an increasing recognition that MDT is not confined to formal training programmes (Mabey & Thomson, 2000). More contemporary views emphasize both formal and informal processes of MDT, and are also concerned with their specific purposes (why MDT is done), for example, how MDT benefits both organizations and individuals (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Sheehan, 2012). Tyson & Ward (2004, p. 206) argue MDT activities may range from formal programs "such as seminars and workshops for coaching, mentoring and e-learning"; to less formal on-the-job developments "such as delegation, project work and forms of action learning". Akuratiyagamage (2007) points out that organizations today should integrate both MDT processes, as there are deficiencies in the total reliance on a single process - formal or informal. Hence, the definition of MDT adopted in this study is as follows:

Any form of training, formal or informal, accredited or non-accredited, which enhances the ability of managers to provide direction, facilitate change, use resources, work with people, achieve results, or manage self and personal skills (Management Development Council, 2010, p. 17).

This definition has also been applied by Sheehan (2012, p. 2492), who argues, the above definition captures both formal training and development and "less tangible competences developed through experiential learning". Drawing from the resource based view of organizations, this paper explores three different factors of MDT: motivation for training, access to training and support for training. In addition, our data and research design allow us to take advantage of studying MDT in China across demographic and organizational characteristics. The related literature of MDT has shown that both individual demographic variables (Branie, 2005; Ely, Ibarra, & Kolb, 2011; Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012; Laharnar, Glass, Perrin, Hanson, & Anger, 2013) and organizational characteristics affect MDT (Gray & Mabey, 2005; Mabey & Thomson, 2000; Branie, 2005).

Literature review

Researchers have attempted to apply a cultural lens to MDT related issues, under the assumption that HR and MDT practices differ widely between countries (Jackson, Amaeshi, & Yavuz, 2008; Kamoche, 2011; Klarsfeld & Mabey, 2004; Shen & Darby, 2006; Watson, 2008). The majority of these studies collected data from multinational enterprises MNEs. For example, Sheehan (2012) found that MDT practices that coexisted with the local cultural contexts led to "successful" MNEs. The cultural influence on MDT practices is also an important topic of research with the pioneering work of Hofstede. Based on Hofstede's dimensions, Sparrow (1996) found that cultural value dimensions, such as individualism-collectivism influence the social indications

that managers use to decode information in their psychological contract. Aktaş (2012) further explored this by claiming individualists prefer learning by themselves rather than observing their social context, in contrast to collectivists.

MDT studies: a global view

A number of studies related to MDT have been conducted in different countries. For instance, Mabey & Thomson (2000) examined MDT in the UK from both provider and participant perspectives. They found that MDT is linked to organizational commitment. MDT has a high degree of impact in organizations, especially in those that have written MDT policies, since these organizations value and give high priority to MDT practices. These findings have also been supported by Watson (2008), whose study focused on the hospitality industry in the UK. Watson (2008) considers MDT as an open system based on the work of Doyle (2004). She found that apart from organizational commitment, which is an organizational factor, MDT also integrates with environmental factors (such as culture and policies, technologies and social relationships). Moreover, Sheehan's (2012) study focused on the impact of MDT on organizational performance. He found that the perceived importance and provision of MDT were both positively and significantly related to perceived performance.

Dastgeer and Rehman (2012) employed the D'Netto model to identify the predictors of MDT effectiveness in Pakistani organizations. The D'Netto model contains seven key factors associated with MDT: organizational learning culture, individual initiative, top management support, link to corporate strategy, post-program evaluation, line manager support, and opportunities for skill utilization (D'Netto, Bakas & Bordia, 2008). Dastageer and Rehman (2012) found that if an organization had a learning culture and the support of top management and line managers, employees were more likely to be committed to MDT. The results of their study also showed a positive link between corporate strategy and MDT effectiveness.

Gray & Mabey's (2005) study investigated MDT practices in Europe. They examined how organization size affects the MDT practices. Their study compared and contrasted the MDT practices in small (with less than 200 employees) and large organizations (with over 500 employees). Their results showed that, in respect to the size of the organization, there were significant differences between small and large organizations with regard to the MDT policies and practices. Compared to large organizations, small ones lack written policies and reports of MDT.

MDT in China: Changing dimensions

There is an urgent need for all organizations in China to develop management competencies (Branie, 2005; Cook, 2012; Lau & Roffey, 2002; Wang, et al., 2009; Warner & Goodall, 2010). Rapid change and development of China has resulted in managers facing difficulties when trying to cope in a competitive environment, especially for managers in state-owned organizations (Branie, 2005; Cook, 2012; Lau & Roffey, 2002; Warner & Goodall, 2010; Wang & Wang 2006). Due to historical reasons (i.e. the Cultural Revolution), the majority of Chinese managers in senior positions do not hold management related degrees and have been appointed or promoted because of their political status or military background. Thus, there is a significant gap between skills possessed by managers and the skills required by their employers. Wang et al. (2009) explored China's MDT policy at three different levels: (1) National level – as a national policy; (2) Organization level – as an organization strategy; and (3) Individual Level – as self-development by individual managers. Firstly, the Chinese government has passed relevant laws and legislative regulations as primary responses to the vital skills shortage of managers, such as the *Labour Law* (1994, 2007), the *Vocational Education Law* (1996), the *Employment Promotion Law* (2007), and the *National Talent Development Policy* (2002-2005). In the meantime, the Chinese central government also contributes to MDT through international cooperation on formal

management education and training, such as MBA programs. Secondly, all organizations doing business in China develop different MDT strategies to address the issue of the skills shortage of managers. State-owned organizations have been shifting the selection of managers from governmental appointment to open competition. Organizations with foreign investment, attempt to adopt localization strategies, i.e. developing their own managers through their corporate universities and training. Thirdly, Wang et al. (2009) claim that there is limited literature on how Chinese managers develop themselves. In addition, Shen & Darby (2006) focus on the MDT of Chinese MNEs. They found that Chinese MNEs lack international MDT systems and provide very limited training to their managers. However, according to a study by Xiao & Tsang (2004), there is evidence that Chinese managers in Shenzhen participated in both internal and external training programs to develop their skills and competence. Chow (2004) argues, the purpose of these training programs is to remove performance deficiencies, update technical knowledge and skills, and enhance the adaptability of workforce.

Hypotheses development

Research on MDT practices in China is very limited, although there are an increasing number of multinational enterprises operating in China (Ng & Siu, 2004). With skills scarcity and deficiency among Chinese managers, training is considered critical to business success (Newman, Thanacoody, & Hui, 2011). Bulut and Culha (2010) used a structural model based on survey data in Izmir, Turkey to estimate employees' perception of training. They developed a training framework consisting of the following components: training motivation, access to training, benefits from training and support for training. Moreover, Newman et al. (2001) conducted research on training and turnover intentions among multinationals in the Chinese service sector. The study applied a model composed of five training-related variables, and showed training outcomes were related to perceived availability of training, motivation to learn, perceived supervisor support for training, perceived co-worker support for training and perceived benefits of training. While several studies provide good insights into the MDT in other countries, they do not establish the reliability and validity of any MDT models for use in the Chinese context. Despite a significant degree of academic interest, the topic of MDT is under-researched and remains underdeveloped in China. This highlights the need for further experimental research to have a greater understanding of MDT in China and the paucity of MDT models to address the contemporary emerging training needs in China. Considering the discreet nature of dimensionality of the MDT, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: The nomological networks of latent factors of MDT are interrelated and multi-dimensional predictors.

Motivation for training

Noe (1986, p. 743) describes motivation to learn, also known as motivation in training (Beier & Kanfer, 2010) and motivation for training (Bulut & Culha, 2010), as the "specific desire of the trainee to learn the content of the training program". Previous research indicates that trainees' motivation to learn new knowledge and skills is an important component for active engagement in the learning process, since those who are willing to learn tend to apply learnt skills more effectively in their work (Beier & Kanfer, 2010; Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012). For instance, Beier and Kanfer (2010) note that the motivation for training is an important precursor to initiate learning activities. Moreover, Newman, Thanacoody and Hui (2011) found that well-motivated employees were more likely to have a positive perception of the training environment in the organization, which in turn, led to greater participation and more effort in training activities (Barrett & O'Connell, 2001; Brum, 2007).

Access to training

The availability of training is the extent to which employees are able to access training opportunities (Newman et al., 2011). Newman et al. (2001) suggest that employees will be more committed to training if they feel they are able to access training easily. It can be observed that most of the problems related to training are related to the barriers to training access. For example, James & Waldron (2011) claim simply not having access to transport can be a key barrier to accessing training. As a result, when organizations develop new training programs, they should take into account training access, which make training more attractive to employees.

Perceived support for training

Studies have indicated that human resource practices such as training, require strong organizational support (Dardar, Jusoh, & Rasli, 2012; McElroy, 2001). Dardar et al. (2012) note organizations that are more supportive of training are most likely to implement training practices and programs effectively. Burke (1995) also found that employees who perceive the organization as being more supportive, are more willing to attend training programs and rate the training as most relevant. Therefore, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: A nomological network and causal relationships of dimensions namely Motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and organization support for training (SUP) would support a multivariate effect of the component factor outcomes of MDT.

Individual and organizational differences in MDT effectiveness

There is evidence that demographic variables, such as gender, age, management level, and educational qualifications are related to training performance and training factors such as motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and support for training (SUP) (Ely et al., 2011; Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012; Laharnar et al., 2013). Laharnar et al. (2013) argue that training scores indicate that age, sex, and years of working experience have an effect on training performance. They found that women and younger supervisors (50 years or younger) had significantly higher knowledge gain than their counterparts (i.e. male supervisors and elder supervisors). Supervisors younger than 30 years did best in the post-test performance; interestingly the supervisors with over 30 years working experience received the lowest scores. In addition, Gegenfurtner and Vauras (2012) point out that literature on age-related differences in motivation for training revealed somewhat mixed results that can be synthesized into two themes: a view of age-related motivational decline and a view of age-related motivational maintenance. The view of age-related motivational decline assumes, motivation for training decreases with increasing age. In contrast, the view of age-related motivational maintenance assumes that motivation to participate in training and development activities is maintained regardless of age.

The study by Schmidt (2004) indicates new employees, especially those with less years of experience, receive more training than employees with longer tenure. He points out employers pay more training-related attention and support to new employees, especially those who have just graduated from university. This is to say, employees with less working experience are more likely to get training access and training support. This is supported by Sonnino (2013) who found employees, especially those who are relatively new to the organization, receive a greater extent of training support and training opportunities from their employers. Sonnino (2013) also found that many training opportunities are stratified on the basis of management levels, while others target specific groups such as minorities and women, or career paths such as leadership in organizations. We, therefore, hypothesize that all three MDT factors are associated with individual differences, as follows:

Hypothesis 3: Motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and support for training (SUP) are significantly influenced by individual demographic variables.

A range of previous research promotes the contextual nature of MDT (Watson, 2008) that has primarily focused on how organizational factors influence MDT within organizations, such as organization size (Gray & Mabey, 2005; Mabey & Thomson, 2000), organizational learning culture (Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012; McGirr, 2012), managers' support (Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012), and organizational/corporation strategy (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012; McGirr, 2012). Most of these studies found a positive relationship between MDT effectiveness and the above factors. For instance, Dastgeer & Rehman (2012) argue there is a positive link between MDT effectiveness and organization support, which is associated with organizational learning culture, organizational strategy and managers' support. In addition, Gray & Mabey (2005) found a range of differences in MDT practices related to the size of the organization. In contrast, Mabey & Thomson (2000) note that organizational characteristics such as organization size, sector and future growth, were not found to be important differentiators. Therefore, we predict that all three MDT factors are related to organizational characteristics, as follows:

Hypothesis 4: Motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and support for training (SUP) are significantly influenced by organizational characteristics.

Methods

Sampling framework and strategy

The initial pool of participants consisted of managers at different management levels in various organizations in China. The list of these organizations was compiled from both the Economy and Commerce Committee and the National Chamber of Commerce, China. However, researchers working in China have noted that access to data is challenging (Heikkilä, 2013). As a result, these lists were expanded through the snowballing approach, i.e. the researcher asked respondents to give referrals to other respondents. Finally, 306 organizations consented to participate. The participants in this study were all managers who were intensively involved in workplace training practices and programs. It makes them a reliable source of valid information for this study. The participants of the study were informed that participation was voluntary and anonymous.

Prior to the actual data collection, a pre-test with a draft version of the questionnaire was performed with 22 managers who had been asked to comment on the questionnaire. The questionnaire was then modified according to their suggestions. Then, a description of the project's objectives along with a questionnaire package was sent to specific contacts at those companies, which had agreed to participate in the study, for distribution to managers willing to participate. The completed questionnaires were collected by the specific contact at each organization and returned to the researcher. This study received multiple responses from each organization. Out of the 1,100 questionnaires distributed, 422 were collected back, of which 405 were fully completed and usable. The 17 incomplete questionnaires were deemed unusable and were discarded. This yielded a response rate of 36.81%.

All substantive variables of this research have been adopted from the existing literature. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements based on a 5-point Likert-style grading, ranging from 1, "strongly disagree", to 5, "strongly agree". Managers reported their perspective on training practices in the organizations in which they were working, based on their own experience. The survey employed in this study was bilingual and was presented in both English and Chinese. The questionnaires were initially drafted in English, since the target research population were managers who were supposed to be reasonably educated with good oral and written skills in English. However, to assist participants with limited English language capability, all questionnaires were translated into Chinese. In order to ensure the accuracy of translation, standard translation/back-translation procedures were adopted (Brislin, 1980; 1986).

Measures

Motivation for training. Nine items were employed for the managers' access to training scale from the study by Noe and Schmitt (1986) and Bulut and Culha (2010). A sample item is: "I am usually motivated to learn the skills emphasized in training programmes". The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.86.

Access to training. A scale containing three items developed by Bulut and Culha (2010) and Bartlett (2001) was employed to measure this variable. A sample item is: "My organization provides access to training". The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.89.

Support for training. This variable was measured by employing a scale consisting of six items based on the study by Bartlett (2001) and the study by Noe and Schmitt (1986). A sample item is: "my organization enthusiastically supports my participation in training programmes". The coefficient alpha of the scale was 0.92.

Individual Demographic variables and Organizational Characteristics

At the individual level, this study considered age, gender, educational qualification, management level, years of experience and industry as demographic variables. At the organization level, this study considered number of employees, years of establishment and ownership as organizational variables.

Data Analysis

The fit between the theoretical model and the empirical findings was tested by employing a two-step approach suggested by Anderson and Gerbing (1988). Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was performed first by employing SPSS 20.0 before moving on to confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modelling (SEM) by using LISREL 8.70. First, EFA was conducted to test the measurement model. Secondly, CFA and SEM were employed. As suggested by Norris and Lecavalier (2009), factor analysis was conducted to determine the factor structure, i.e. establish underlying dimensions between measured variables and unobserved latent variables (i.e. factors), thereby allowing refinement of theory. The study employed EFA and CFA to determine whether the MDT scale had a valid factor structure. EFA was employed to examine the MDT factorial structure according to the data collected from the Chinese manager participants; and CFA was applied to confirm the original structure of MDT among organizations doing business in China. The application of SEM exhibits advantages of measurement and prediction over standard multiple regression methods and captures a truer representation of the variation of variables, as path analysis is subsumed in the model.

Results

Of usable returns from the survey (n = 405), 54.3% (n = 220) were from males and 45.7% (n = 185) were from females. 74.1% (n = 290) of participants were aged from 20 to 40, 21.2% (n = 86) aged from 41 to 50 and only 4.7% (n = 19) were aged over 51. The education level for the majority of participants was a bachelor degree: 67.9% (n = 275), followed by those who held a post-graduate degree: 18% (n = 73), diploma holders: 10.6% (n = 43) and those with a doctoral degree: 3.5% (n = 14). Regarding management level, 46.9% (n = 190) were in entry level management, 43.2% (n = 175) were at the middle level and 9.9% (n = 40) were at the senior level. T years of managerial experience of respondents was relatively evenly dispersed, 28.9% (n = 117) two to five years, 24.9% (n = 101) six to ten years, 20.7% (n = 84) 11 to 15 years, 25.4% (n = 103) more than 16 years. The industries in which respondents worked were more likely to be IT: 14.1% (n = 57), education and training: 8.9% (n = 32), information media and telecommunications: 6.9% (n = 28), and many respondents were from industries were not listed: 24.7% (n = 100). 306 organizations participated in our study. 89% (n=273) of these were Chinese organizations; both state owned: 48.1% (n=147) and privately owned: 41.2% (n=126). These

organizations had been in business for an average period of 18 years (s.d. = 2.19) and the average organization size was 675 employees (s.d.= 1.88)

Tests of the MDT model

Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations (SDs) and the correlation coefficients of the variables in the study, as well as internal reliabilities of the three factors of training (i.e. training motivation, training access and training support) investigated in this study. Internal reliabilities of the three factors of training were assessed by Cronbach's alpha, and each of the three factors had acceptable internal reliabilities with acceptable values of alpha ranging from 0.86 to 0.90. Statistical analysis using MANOVA indicated training access was not related to organizational variables, but was related to the three demographic variables. Table 1 shows training access was significantly related to respondents' gender ($r = 0.135$, $p < 0.01$), years of experience ($r = 0.108$, $p < 0.05$) and industry they worked in ($r = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$). However, training motivation and training support were not significantly correlated with demographics and organizational characteristics. Finally, the three factors of training were not significantly correlated; indeed, the highest pair-wise correlation was between motivation for training and support for training at 0.006.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlations^a.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. Gender	1.46	0.499	–											
2. Age	2.00	0.840	-0.003	–										
3. Education qualification	2.14	0.637	-0.019	0.110*	–									
4. Management level	1.67	0.649	-0.156**	0.429**	0.224**	–								
5. Years of managerial experience	2.43	1.155	-0.026	0.808**	0.061	0.458**	–							
6. Industry	7.77	4.199	0.040	-0.030	-0.088	0.075	0.022	–						
7. Number of employees	3.25	1.882	0.162**	0.177**	0.191**	-0.043	0.177**	0.180**	–					
8. Years of establishment	3.98	2.188	-0.071	0.364**	0.169**	0.027	0.368**	-0.057	0.550**	–				
9. Ownership	2.31	0.653	0.018	-0.006	-0.106*	0.136**	-0.010	0.169**	0.234**	0.336**	–			
10. Motivation for training	0.0005467	1.00216917	-0.070	-0.003	-0.019	0.064	-0.004	-0.006	-0.047	0.089	0.090	–		(0.856)
11. Access to training	.00002624	1.00040057	0.135**	-0.100	0.046	-0.040	0.108*	0.125*	-0.016	0.011	0.039	-0.004	–	(0.885)
12. Support for training	0.0052968	0.99991764	-0.062	-0.086	0.079	0.100	-0.088	-0.052	0.048	-0.092	0.052	0.002	0.006	(0.919)

Reliability indexes for measurement scales are reported on the diagonal (Cronbach's alpha).

^a N = 405. Gender dummy coded (male = 1, female = 2).

* p < 0.05.

** p < 0.01.

In order to determine the underlying dimensions of management training, this study employed Principal Axis Factoring (PAF) as dimensionality reduction using Promax rotation to extract factors based on the latent root orientation (eigenvalue >1), total variance explained and correlation matrix were tested. The results are shown in Table 2.

First, Table 2 presents the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity. Kaiser (1974) suggests that KMO values between 0.5 and 0.7 are mediocre, values between 0.7 and 0.8 are good, values between 0.8 and 0.9 are great and values above 0.9 are superb. Data of this study showed the KMO value was 0.934 which falls into the range of being superb. Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2 = 5014.323$ showed significant correlation amongst a number of variables at $p < 0.00$. Therefore, the factor analysis was appropriate for this data.

Secondly, the table summarises the loadings for each item (variable) onto each factor from the correlation matrix. According to Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black (1995), factor loadings with correlation coefficients at 0.30 to 0.39 are considered minimally significant, at 0.40 to 0.49 are considered important, and at 0.50 or greater are considered practically significant. This recommendation was followed in this study. By default SPSS 20.0 displays all loadings, while this study requested all loadings less than 0.4 to be suppressed in the output. Results showed that 17 of the 18 items had a significant relationship within the data, as all these 17 items had a significant factor loading ranging from 0.505 to 0.917.

Table 2: Factor structure and reliability analysis of managers' perceptions on MDT variables

Factor Items	Scale Items	Factor Loadings	Cumulative Variance Extracted %	Cronbach Alpha, α
Factor 1 Training Motivation	MTM1.I try to learn as much as I can from training programs	0.793	54.193	0.856
	MTM2.I tend to learn more from training programs than most people.	0.594		
	MTM3.I am usually motivated to learn the skills emphasized in training programs.	0.483		
	MTM4.I am willing to exert considerable effort in training programs in order to improve my skills.	0.917		
	MTM5.I believe I can improve my skills by participating in training programs.	0.830		
	MTM6.I believe I can learn the material presented in most training programs	0.770		
	MTM7.Participation in training programs is of little use to me because I have all the knowledge and skills I need to successfully perform my job.	0.533		
	MTM8.I am willing to invest effort to improve skills and competencies related to my current job.	0.773		
	MTM9.I am willing to invest effort to improve skills and competencies in order to prepare myself for a promotion.	0.651		
Factor 2 Training Access	MTA1.My organization has stated policies on the amount and type of training the employees can expect to receive.	0.516	72.237	0.885
	MTA2.I am aware of the amount and type of training that my organization is planning for me in the coming year.	0.505		
	MTA3.My organization provides access to training.	0.544		
Factor 3 Training Support	MTS1.My organization can be counted on to help me develop the skills emphasized in training programs.	0.557	66.069	0.919
	MTS2.I can expect my organization to assign me to special projects requiring use of the skills and knowledge emphasized in training	0.879		
	MTS3.My organization enthusiastically supports my participation in training programs.	0.774		
	MTS4.My organization believes advising or training is one of the employer's job responsibilities.	0.700		
	MTS5.I would not hesitate to tell my organization of a training need I have in a particular area.	0.962		
	MTS6.My organization makes sure I get the training needed to remain effective in my job.	0.851		

Note. Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring. Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization. KMO = 0.934 (0.000 significance). Bartlett test of sphericity $\chi^2 = 5014.323$. Composite scale reliability (CSR) = 0.926

Thirdly, it also demonstrates the results of factor structure for the three factors of management training (i.e. Training Motivation, Training Access and Training Support) generated from the analysis, their respective reliability, coefficient and their subjective interrelations. Nunnally (1978) claims that Cronbach's alpha of around 0.70 is acceptable. Therefore, the reliability of the three factors was acceptable, as all of the three factors demonstrated an acceptable Cronbach α , Factor 1 (Training Motivation) at 0.856, Factor 2 (Training Access) at 0.885 and Factor 3 (Training Support) at 0.919, respectively. Moreover, all three factors had high explanatory power with high correlation values, ranging from 54.193% to 72.273%. The second factor (Training Access) had the highest explanatory power, explaining 72.237% of the variance.

CFA was employed to further examine the latent structure of the factors, after the establishment of the valid factor structure for training (EFA). CFA was conducted to evaluate the distinctiveness of the three measures of training based on the data collected from Chinese managers working in organizations doing business in China. In total 18 items were used to investigate managers' perspective of training practices in their organizations: nine items were used to measure the motivation of training (MTM1, MTM2, MTM3, MTM4, MTM5, MTM6, MTM7, MTM8 AND MTM9); three items were used to measure the access to training (MTA1, MTA2 and MTA3); and six items were applied to measure support for training (MTS1, MTS2, MTS3, MTS4, MTS5 and MTS6) (see Table 3).

Table 3 Structural parameters estimates for the structural models^a

Structural path ^b	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	Standard loadings	<i>t</i> -values	Standard loadings	<i>t</i> -values	Standard loadings	<i>t</i> -values	Standard loadings	<i>t</i> -values
MOT→MTM1	0.72	17.47**	0.68	15.01**	0.68	15.05**	0.72	15.04**
MOT→MTM2	0.63	16.19**	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOT→MTM3	0.64	14.40**	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOT→MTM4	0.70	19.46**	0.70	17.77**	0.70	17.72**	0.82	17.69**
MOT→MTM5	0.71	18.74**	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOT→MTM6	0.64	16.09**	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOT→MTM7	-0.081	-1.21**	-	-	-	-	-	-
MOT→MTM8	0.62	15.41**	0.67	15.88**	0.68	15.92**	0.76	15.92**
MOT→MTM9	0.61	13.86**	-	-	-	-	-	-
ACC→MTA1	0.90	21.56**	0.90	21.49**	0.90	21.69**	0.88	21.67**
ACC→MTA2	0.94	20.28**	0.94	20.35**	0.94	20.29**	0.84	20.21**
ACC→MTA3	0.89	20.35**	0.89	20.31**	0.89	20.04**	0.84	20.20**
SUP→MTS1	0.83	18.78**	0.83	18.77**	-	-	-	-
SUP→MTS2	0.88	18.87**	0.89	18.90**	0.86	18.15**	0.77	17.83**
SUP→MTS3	0.90	22.37**	0.90	22.34**	0.91	22.51**	0.90	22.75**
SUP→MTS4	0.86	20.43**	0.86	20.45**	0.87	20.76**	0.86	20.87**
SUP→MTS5	0.77	15.68**	0.77	15.56**	0.78	15.92**	-	-
SUP→MTS6	0.91	21.34**	0.90	21.33**	0.92	21.78**	0.86	21.17**

^a N = 405; completely standardized solution.

^b MOT = Motivation for training; ACC = Access to training; SUP = Support for training.

* $p < 0.05$

** $p < 0.01$.

Absolute fit indices determine how well the a priori model fits/reproduces the sample data (McDonald & Ho, 2002) and which proposed model has the most superior fit (Hooper, Coughlan, & Mullen, 2008). Based on the overall goodness-of-fit (GFI) and adjusted goodness-of-fit statistics (AGFI), items with lower coefficient values were removed (Hooper, et al., 2008). This process was conducted three times, following which a good fit of the proposed model was developed (Model 4). Table 3 demonstrates the modifications process.

Table 4 shows Model 1, which contained all of the 18 items used to measure the three factors of training. The model had an acceptable comparative fit index (CFI), but unacceptable GFI and AGFI and high RMSEA values (GFI = 0.82, AGFI = 0.77, CFI = 0.96, and RMSEA = 0.119). RMSEA values above 0.10 indicated poor fit (MacCallum et al., 1996) and the possibility of improvement to the measurement model. A re-specification process was conducted to find a better fit model.

From Model 1, six items (MTM2, MTM3, MTM5, MTM6, MTM7 and MTM9) belonging to Motivation for Training were not significant predictors of training. Therefore, all these six non-significant paths were dropped from Model 1, and the second model (Model 2) was developed. Model 2 consisted of 12 items indicating a better fit with a more acceptable RMSEA at 0.097 and other indices (GFI = 0.91, AGFI = 0.86 and CFI = 0.97).

Table 4 Fit indexes for structural models^a.

Variables	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
χ^2	778.04			246.68			136.02			70.87		
df	116			51			41			32		
χ^2/df	6.707			4.837			3.318			2.215		
p (χ^2)	0.000			0.000			0.000			0.000		
GFI	0.82			0.91			0.94			0.97		
AGFI	0.77			0.86			0.91			0.94		
RMSEA	0.119			0.097			0.076			0.005		
CFI	0.96			0.97			0.98			0.99		
$\Delta\chi^2$	-			531.36			110.66			65.15		
p ($\Delta\chi^2$)	-			0.000			0.000			0.000		
Sq. multiple correlation	MOT	ACC	SUP	MOT	ACC	SUP	MOT	ACC	SUP	MOT	ACC	SUP
N												
MOT ^b	-			-			-			-		
ACC ^c	0.56*	-		0.45*	-		0.45*	-		0.46*	-	
SUP ^d	0.56*	0.90*	-	0.48*	0.90*	-	0.48*	0.88*	-	0.47*	0.89*	-

^a N= 405; all variables included in the more constrained models, with paths constrained to zero.

^b MOT = Motivation for training

^c ACC = Access to training

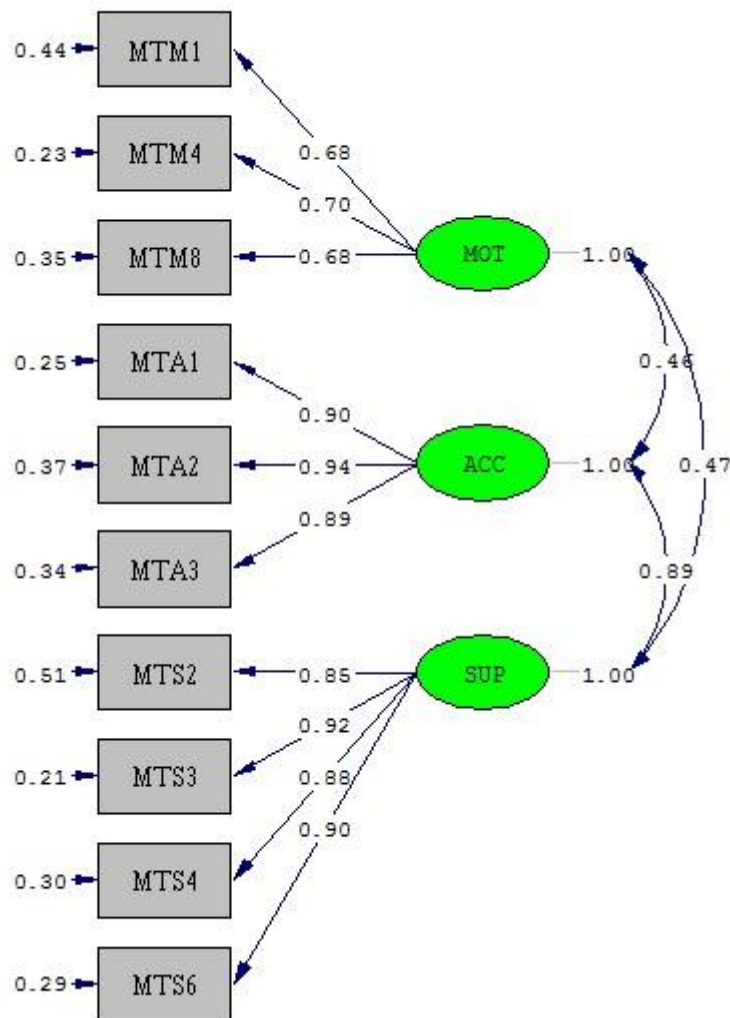
^d SUP = Support for training

* p < 0.05

** p < 0.01

On this basis, a final reduced model (Model 4) was converged via removing one non-significant item (MTS1) from Model 2, and another non-significant predictor (MTS5) from Model 3. Model 4 generated a three-factor solution model, and each factor consisted of at least three items (see Figure 1). Table 3 displays structural parameters estimate for the four models and Table 4 indicates the results of indices for all four models. Figure 1 demonstrates the path diagram for the final model. Model 4 contains 10 significant items measuring management training. This revised model demonstrated a perfect-fit model ($\chi^2/df = 2.215$ $p < 0.000$, CFI = 0.99, GFI = 0.97, AGFI = 0.94, RMSEA = 0.055). These analyses provide support that the MDT factors were optimal extrapolative predictors, thus offering support for H₁ and H₂ by establishing dimensionality and interrelation between the factors.

Figure 1 Structural model (M₄) for management development and training (MDT)



Note: Chi-Square = 70.87, df = 32, p-value = 0.00009, RMSEA = 0.055

This study employed a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) to examine how demographic and organizational factors affect management training. MANOVA was conducted to investigate the relationship of three dependent variables, i.e. motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC), and support for training (SUP), and nine independent variables ($N = 405$). Table 5 shows the results of MANOVA, including group means for each dependent variable. First, the table presents the goodness of fits of the model and the statistical significance of the estimated parameters. Findings showed that there were significant effects of the demographic and organizational variables on MOT ($F = 2.391, p = 0.012$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.031$), ACC ($F = 2.903, p = 0.002$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.041$) and SUP ($F = 2.115, p = 0.027$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.024$).

Secondly, analysis of the individual dependent variables indicated the gender ($F = 5.06, p < 0.05$), age ($F = 3.33, p < 0.05$) and educational qualification ($F = 2.81, p < 0.05$) of the participants ($F = 4.334, p < 0.05$) had a significant effect on MOT, while other variables showed an absence of significant meaningful demographic and organizational differences in MOT. Female managers ($M = 3.76$), managers aged from 31 to 40 ($M = 3.77$) and managers with bachelors ($M = 3.74$) were more motivated for training than others.

Moreover, only two demographic variables, i.e. educational qualification ($F = 3.74, p < 0.01$), and industry type ($F = 4.42, p < 0.01$) had significant differences in ACC. Managers with doctoral degrees ($M = 3.76$) and managers with bachelor degrees ($M = 3.46$) reported more positive attitudes towards ACC than those with diploma ($M = 3.09$) and those with masters degrees ($M = 3.18$). Additionally, two organizational variables, i.e. years of establishment ($F = 3.37, p < 0.01$) and ownership ($F = 5.39, p < 0.01$) had significant differences in ACC. Managers from organizations that had been established for over 30 years ($M = 3.55$) and managers from foreign-invested organizations ($M = 3.57$) were more likely to get access of training. Moreover, all three of organizational factors, i.e. number of employees ($F = 2.74, p < 0.05$), years of establishment ($F = 2.57, p < 0.05$) and ownership of the organizations ($F = 2.81, p < 0.05$), had significant differences in SUP. Both managers from organizations with 51 to 100 employees ($M = 3.68$), managers from organizations that had been established for 21 to 25 years and managers from state-owned organizations ($M = 3.57$) perceived significantly more support of training than others. However, no individual demographic variables had significant explanatory power on SUP. It can be deduced from the results that there is a significant relationship between some individual and organizational variables and MDT factors, thus offering partial support for H_3 and H_4 .

Table 5 One-way MANOVA test for motivation for training, access to training, and support for training by demographic and organization variables

Value Label	N	MOT		ACC		SUP	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<i>Gender</i>							
Male	220	3.63	0.60	3.40	0.92	3.49	0.85
Female	185	3.76	0.64	3.35	1.02	3.46	0.95
<i>F</i>		5.06*		0.37		0.13	
<i>Age</i>							
20-30	123	3.71	0.71	3.44	1.02	3.52	0.97
31-40	177	3.77	0.53	3.39	0.96	3.45	0.90
41-50	86	3.61	0.60	3.30	0.86	3.45	0.78
51 and above	19	3.35	0.85	3.16	1.15	3.46	0.93
<i>F</i>		3.33*		0.71		0.17	
<i>Educational Qualification</i>							
Diploma	43	3.45	0.63	3.09	0.88	3.36	0.84
Bachelor	275	3.74	0.63	3.46	0.97	3.53	0.88
Masters	73	3.66	0.57	3.18	0.98	3.31	0.99
Doctorate	14	3.71	0.73	3.76	0.88	3.70	0.90
<i>F</i>		2.81*		3.74**		1.63	
<i>Management Level</i>							
Entry Level	175	3.67	0.67	3.31	0.96	3.41	0.90
Middle Level	190	3.74	0.56	3.42	0.97	3.50	0.90
Senior Level	40	3.61	0.70	3.48	1.01	3.59	0.89
<i>F</i>		0.98		0.81		0.83	
<i>Years of Managerial Experience</i>							
2-5	117	3.76	0.65	3.47	0.98	3.52	0.91
6-10	101	3.74	0.69	3.34	1.11	3.36	1.04
11-15	84	3.69	0.48	3.47	0.81	3.58	0.82
16 or above	103	3.60	0.63	3.23	0.91	3.44	0.80
<i>F</i>		1.36		1.48		1.09	
<i>Industry</i>							
Banking	26	3.64	0.84	3.54	1.03	3.56	0.96
Medical	14	3.89	0.54	3.64	0.97	3.71	1.06
Manufacturing	57	3.76	0.62	3.42	1.00	3.46	0.96
IT	25	3.79	0.62	3.47	0.75	3.55	0.74
Financial and Insurance	24	3.95	0.43	3.74	0.94	3.76	0.83
Education and Training	32	3.88	0.59	3.66	0.99	3.50	0.93
Construction	26	3.67	0.47	2.92	0.93	3.04	0.93
Agriculture	17	3.41	0.68	2.84	1.08	3.23	0.78
Retail Trade	15	3.55	0.77	3.18	1.19	3.08	0.91
Wholesale Trade	21	3.47	0.61	3.29	0.68	3.47	1.00
Information Media and Telecommunications	28	3.61	0.64	3.48	0.81	3.59	0.71
Accommodation and Food Services	20	3.61	0.64	3.13	1.10	3.47	0.91
Other Industries	100	3.69	0.60	3.36	0.95	3.52	0.88
<i>F</i>		1.51		4.42**		1.24	
<i>Number of Employees</i>							
1-50	92	3.68	0.68	3.25	1.05	3.38	0.97
51-100	87	3.78	0.59	3.44	0.93	3.68	0.85
101-400	71	3.72	0.63	3.40	0.98	3.56	0.90
401-1000	33	3.72	0.54	3.59	0.80	3.62	0.68
1001-1500	26	3.44	0.57	3.04	0.87	3.09	0.64
1501 or above	96	3.69	0.62	3.44	0.97	3.36	0.95
<i>F</i>		1.25		1.45		2.74*	
<i>Years of Establishment</i>							
1-5	59	3.66	0.68	3.34	1.07	3.32	1.04
6-10	73	3.76	0.63	3.27	1.08	3.44	0.95
11-15	67	3.67	0.62	3.30	0.92	3.46	0.88
16-20	54	3.67	0.63	3.36	0.93	3.44	0.96

21-25	23	3.66	0.54	3.38	0.75	3.64	0.63
26-30	28	3.55	0.60	3.32	0.77	3.54	0.77
30 or above	101	3.76	0.61	3.55	0.96	3.55	0.84
<i>F</i>		0.64		3.37**		2.57*	
<i>Ownership</i>							
Foreign-Invested	43	3.76	0.66	3.57	1.04	3.52	0.89
State-Owned	195	3.73	0.60	3.49	0.89	3.57	0.85
Private	167	3.65	0.64	3.19	1.01	3.35	0.95
<i>F</i>		0.97		5.39**		2.81*	

MOT: $F = 2.391^*$, sig. = 0.012, Adjusted R squared = 0.031

ACC: $F = 2.903^{**}$, sig. = 0.002, Adjusted R squared = 0.041

SUP: $F = 2.115^*$, sig. = 0.027, Adjusted R squared = 0.024

Discussion

The present study establishes baseline data on management development from managers working in organizations in China. It enriches management literature on MDT through collecting data from 405 Chinese managers. First, one of the most important findings was that MDT is related to three factors motivation for training (MOT), access to training (ACC) and support for training (SUP). The results help to understand how those three factors might influence MDT practices.

Secondly, a two-step approach was employed to generate a theoretical model that examines the relationship between the three latent factors of MDT among Chinese managers from different organizations and to test the fit between the theoretical model and empirical results. Results from EFA confirmed the three dimensions of MDT and their reliability coefficients. CFA was then performed to evaluate the distinctiveness of the three factors, to further investigate the latent structure of the factors, and to confirm the originality of MDT scale structure in organizations doing business in China. The results from the structural equation model (SEM) indicate confirmation of the nomological network of the latent factors for MDT.

The current study yielded a three-factor model: MOT, ACC and SUP. The outcome of SEM demonstrates the final model of MDT, which confirms the originality of MDT for organizations doing business in China. This model was generated by removing non-significant paths. All three factors were processed through CFA employing maximum likelihood estimation. Predictably, χ^2 and other fit indices, such as CFI, GFI, AGFI and RMSEA, were employed to assess the fit of the model. In this final model, all three factors of MDT, including ten items, revealed a good fit to the data and correlations among them, which lend support to H_1 and H_2 .

The results from MANOVA give partial support to the assertion that MDT practices, as measured by MOT, ACC and SUP, are related to demographic and organizational variables (Akuratiyagamage, 2007; Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012; Gray & Mabey, 2005). Considering all demographic variables, there were significant differences in MOT based on participants' gender and age. However, there were no significant differences in ACC and SUP. Educational qualifications of participants had significant differences in MOT and ACC, but not in SUP. Organizational characteristics were more likely to matter for ACC and SUP than MOT, since all three organizational variables had significant F-values for ACC and SUP, ranging from 2.57 to 5.39. For instance, managers from foreign-invested organizations and managers from old organizations (established for over 30 years) were more likely to get access to training. Meanwhile, organizations with 51 to 100 employees and organizations that had been established for over 20 years were more supportive of MDT.

Moreover, the findings of this study partly coincide with a study by Mabey and Thomson (2000), who also found industry type was not a significant factor for MDT. However, Mabey and Thomson (2000) also found that other organizational characteristics (such as organization size) were not important differentiators for MDT, which is incompatible with results of this study. As indicated earlier, we received only partial support for H_3 and H_4 .

Theoretical implications

The findings of this study have a number of implications for international human resource development theories. First, this research contributes to the management development and training theories by providing a conceptual treatment of MDT in China, and by systematically analysing how demographic and organizational variables influence MDT practices. Collectively, the findings indicate that while management development and training is very important, it has received only slight attention in China. The present study thus advances the understanding

of MDT in China in several ways. The most direct implication of this study was the three-factor training model generated from the SEM analysis, which implies that to maximize the benefits of training organizations must consider three different factors: motivation for training, access to training and support for training. This model also contributes to the IHRD literature. According to Hartmann, Feisel and Schober (2010) career development through training and development of employees is increasingly recognized as an important aspect of best HRD practices. This training model may assist in developing and establishing frameworks for IHRD and provide guidance on training practices for MNEs.

The analysis of MDT also highlights the potential impact for international organization theory, by examining how demographic and organizational variables influence MDT in China. On the one hand, results from MANOVA indicate managers with different backgrounds have different perspectives on MDT. On the other hand, our study has advanced the current research on management development and training across organizational characteristics in China. Managers' perceptions of MDT practices differ markedly across organizations.

Practical Implications

This study also has a number of substantial practical implications, along with its contribution to theory. Given the important role of managers, it is worthwhile for every organization to exploit MDT practices to enhance managers' performance. This could be achieved by applying valid selection methods or management training (Pearce et al., 2013). First, one of the most important outcomes of present study is the three-factor model of management training, which contains ten items. This model provides benefits to any organization and individual who intends to study MDT related topics in China.

Secondly, the findings suggest that organizations should explore ways to enforce or activate manager's willingness to train. For example, our findings suggested employees who were over 51 years old and with over 16 years of experience were least willing to participate in training. Organizations need to channel their efforts to motivate these employees to join training programs by offering opportunities for promotion, job rotation and possible voluntary extension of employment. Thirdly, for practice, our study suggests that organizations should offer new training practices to eliminate the obstacle of training access. Our results found participants from private, small and new firms were less likely to get access to training. Therefore, these organizations should focus on the accessibility of training programmes, such as through online-training courses. Finally, our findings can inform cross border managers in MNEs and decision makers in other international business organization about practices of training support. Results of this study show that there is a positive relationship between support for training and an organization's age. Therefore, new organizations should increase their training budgets and put more effort into training support.

Limitations and directions for future research

There were a few limitations with this study. One of the limitations of the present study was generated from the research method, as data were collected via surveys. According to Yang and Mossholder (2010), results based on data from surveys may have been biased by the Common Method Variance (CMV), which refers to the spurious variance that is attributable to the measurement method rather than to the constructs the measures represent (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). In order to reduce this potential bias, this study employed the procedural remedy of assurance of anonymity and confidentiality (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To overcome this limitation, future studies may apply multiple sources of data (i.e. collect data from peers, supervisors and subordinates as well), or temporal separation which measures each variable at a different point in time separated by two-week intervals (Johnson, Rosen, Chang, Djurdjevic & Taing, 2012). In addition, due to the limitations of our data, we did not collect information related to organizations' and managers' commitment to MDT, which is

also important (Dastgeer & Rehman, 2012; Gray & Mabey, 2005). Therefore, it may be worthwhile for other researchers to incorporate this factor into the analysis of MDT. Finally, although the intention of this study was not to conduct a cross-cultural comparison, testing the model in the Chinese context may have influenced our findings. Future research may systematically examine the effects of culture on our model, through collecting data from expatriates (foreign managers working in China), and from MNEs, to find out whether the pattern of our findings is valid in a cultural context.

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