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## BUILDING TEAM EFFECTIVENESS THROUGH WORK ATTACHMENT TRAINING

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### Abstract

The effectiveness of the team is one of the important factors that determines the success of an organization in achieving its goals. This study aims to test the effect of work attachment training on increasing team effectiveness in employees of human resources consulting companies in Yogyakarta. The study used a quasi-experimental design of a *pretest-posttest control group* involving 24 participants, consisting of 12 people in the experimental group and 12 people in the control group. Data were collected using the Team Effectiveness Scale and the Work Engagement Scale. Data analysis was carried out using the Mann–Whitney and Wilcoxon tests. The results of the study show that work attachment training is effective in increasing team effectiveness. *Gain score* analysis showed significant differences between the experimental group and the control group ( $W = 107.00$ ;  $p = 0.045$ ;  $d = 0.486$ ). In addition, the experimental group experienced a significant increase in team effectiveness after training ( $W = 1.50$ ;  $p = 0.006$ ) as well as an increase in work attachment ( $W = 13.00$ ;  $p = 0.045$ ). These findings suggest that work attachment training can be one of the human resource development strategies to increase the effectiveness of teams in organizations.

**Keywords:** *team effectiveness, work attachment, training, quasi-experimentation*

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### INTRODUCTION

The increasingly fierce competition in the business world requires organizations to continue to improve the quality of service and performance in order to survive and develop. One of the factors that determines the success of an organization is the effectiveness of the work team because the organization basically consists of individuals who work together to achieve a common goal. The effectiveness of the team contributes directly to the effectiveness of the organization as a whole (Cummings & Worley, 2009). On the other hand, organizations will have difficulty in achieving their vision and mission if the team in them is not able to work effectively (Setiadi, 2019). Therefore, efforts to increase team effectiveness are one of the important aspects in human resource management.

The problem of team effectiveness was found in one of the human resources (HR) consulting companies in Yogyakarta. This company is engaged in the provision and management of labor which involves cooperation between *Relationship Officer* (RO) staff and support staff. In its implementation, the company experienced obstacles in meeting the needs of clients which was marked by the emergence of complaints from the head office. The search results show that there is a misunderstanding between the RO staff and support staff regarding the delivery of information, meeting client needs, and the division of job responsibilities. This condition raises suspicion among team members and has an impact on the achievement of organizational targets. According to Nofrida (2014), suspicion between members is one of the indicators of low team effectiveness. If this condition continues, it can interfere with the overall performance of the organization.

Team effectiveness is the ability of a group of individuals to work together to achieve optimally set goals (Tarricone & Luca, 2011). An effective team is not only able to produce performance according to organizational and customer expectations, but also able to build working relationships that support the sustainability of cooperation in the future (Ramdhana, Mangundjaya, & Nugroho, 2018). Cantu (2007) explained that the effectiveness of the team is shown through good cooperation, proper decision-making, leadership support, trust between members, appreciation for members' contributions, and orientation to customers. Thus, team effectiveness is not only related to the results of the

work, but also to the quality of the interactions that occur within the team. Various studies show that the effectiveness of a team is influenced by individual factors as well as group factors. Task conflicts, task dependencies, and personality characteristics are some of the factors that contribute to team effectiveness (D'Silva & Ahrari, 2016). In addition, open communication, good coordination, mutual support, and balanced contributions from each member are also important characteristics of an effective team (Hoegl & Gemuenden, 2001). Therefore, organizations need to pay attention to factors that can encourage team members to be actively involved in the organization's work and goals. One of the factors that is suspected to play a role in increasing team effectiveness is *work engagement*. Work attachment is a positive psychological condition characterized by vigor, *dedication*, and *absorption* of work (Bakker et al., 2008; Ramdhani & Sawitri, 2017). Employees who have high work attachments tend to show a strong commitment to their work and organization (Lockwood, 2007; Gibbons, 2006). They not only strive to complete tasks well, but also strive to make a greater contribution to the team and the organization.

Work attachment is also related to the ability to work together in a team. Employees who are tied to their work will better understand the importance of collaboration to achieve organizational goals (Robinson et al., 2004; Soetrismo & Sutanto, 2017). In addition, work attachment encourages the emergence of a sense of responsibility, loyalty, and the desire to provide the best performance for the organization (Mujiasih & Ratnaningsih, 2016; Handayani, 2016; Wenang et al., 2020). Employees with a high level of work attachment also tend to have more harmonious work relationships, are more focused on completing tasks, and are able to maintain performance despite facing various job challenges (Alwi, Sylvana, & Risnashari, 2016; Pratama & Wardani, 2018; Pri & Zamralita, 2018).

Based on this description, work attachment is seen as one of the factors that has the potential to increase team effectiveness. However, studies on increasing team effectiveness through job attachment training at HR consulting companies are still relatively limited. Therefore, this study was conducted to test the effect of work attachment training on team effectiveness in employees of HR consulting companies in Yogyakarta. The results of the research are expected to make a practical contribution to organizations in developing effective interventions to improve team and organizational performance.

**METHOD**

**Research Design**

This study uses a *quasi-experiment* method with an *untreated control group design with dependent pretest-posttest samples*. This design was used to compare changes in team effectiveness between the experimental group that received work attachment training and the control group that did not receive treatment. Measurements were carried out before (*pretest*) and after (*posttest*) the implementation of the intervention.

Table 1. Research Design

Groups	Pretest	Treatment	Posttest
Experiment	O <sub>1</sub>	X	O <sub>2</sub>
Control	O <sub>1</sub>	–	O <sub>2</sub>

Description:

O<sub>1</sub> = pretest *measurement*;

X = Job Attachment Training;

O<sub>2</sub> = final measurement (*posttest*).

**Research Participants**

The research participants amounted to 24 organic employees at one of the human resources consulting companies in Yogyakarta consisting of *Branch Managers*, *Assistant Managers*, *Relationship Officer (RO)* staff, recruitment staff, and finance staff. The selection of participants used *purposive sampling* techniques based on involvement in teamwork activities and the results of initial observations that showed problems with team effectiveness. Participants were then divided into two equal groups, namely the experimental group (n = 12) and the control group (n = 12), using a *matching* technique based on *pretest* scores.

Table 2. Characteristics of Research Participants

Features	Eksperimen (n=12)	Control (n=12)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	10	11
Woman	2	1
<b>Age</b>		
< 30 years	5	5
≥ 30 years	7	7
<b>Tenure</b>		
< 3 years	5	5
≥ 3 years	7	7

### Research Instruments

Data collection was carried out using a team effectiveness scale adapted from the *Team Effectiveness Scale* developed by Cantu (2007) and adapted by Iedliany et al. (2018). The instrument measures six aspects of team effectiveness, namely teamwork, decision-making, leadership support, trust and respect, recognition and reward, and customer focus. Of the initial 40 items, 30 items were declared valid after a validity test with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.966. In addition, work attachment is measured using *the Work Engagement Scale* which refers to the concept of Bakker et al. (2008), covering three dimensions, namely *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption*. This instrument consists of 17 items with a Cronbach's Alpha reliability value of 0.968. All items on both instruments use a seven-level Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*very inappropriate*) to 7 (*very appropriate*).

### Intervention

The interventions provided are in the form of work attachment training which is arranged based on the three main dimensions of work attachment, namely *vigor*, *dedication*, and *absorption* (Bakker et al., 2008). Before use, the training modules are validated by two psychologists who have competence in the fields of industrial and organizational psychology as well as human resource development. The training was carried out in one session for three hours through the delivery of materials, group discussions, and participant worksheets guided by professional trainers. Evaluation is carried out through discussions, questions and answers, and filling out evaluation sheets to find out participants' understanding of the material provided.

### Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using nonparametric statistics because the sample size was relatively small. The Wilcoxon test was used to analyze the difference in pretest and posttest scores within each group, while the Mann-Whitney test was used to test the differences between the experimental group and the control group. All analyses were performed using JASP software with a significance level of 0.05.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Team Effectiveness Before and After Training

Descriptive analysis showed an increase in team effectiveness scores in the experimental group after participating in work attachment training. The average team effectiveness score in the experimental group increased from 144.92 during *the pretest* to 154.67 during *the posttest*. In contrast, the control group showed a relatively fixed score, from 145.50 in the *pretest* to 145.42 in the *posttest*. These results indicate that work attachment training contributes to increased team effectiveness in the experimental group.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Team Effectiveness

Groups	Pretest	Posttest	SD Pretest	SD Posttest
Experiment	144,92	154,67	30,71	22,96
Control	145,50	145,42	32,01	22,21

Before the training was given, the Mann–Whitney test showed no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group ( $p = 0.908$ ). These results suggest that both groups had equal initial conditions. After the training, the difference in posttest scores also did not show statistical significance ( $p = 0.225$ ), so a gain score analysis was carried out to see the magnitude of the changes that occurred in each group. The results of the gain score analysis showed that the experimental group had an average increase of 11.98, while the control group experienced a decrease in score with an average of -22.89. The Mann–Whitney test of gain scores showed significant differences between the two groups ( $W = 107.00$ ;  $p = 0.045$ ) and moderate effect sizes ( $d = 0.486$ ). These findings show that work attachment training is effective in increasing the effectiveness of employee teams.

Table 4. Mann–Whitney Test Results on Gain Score

Variabel	W	p	Effect Size (d)
Gain Score	107,00	0,045	0,486

To find out the changes in each group, the Wilcoxon test was performed. The results of the analysis showed that the experimental group experienced a significant increase in team effectiveness ( $W = 1.50$ ;  $p = 0.006$ ), while the control group showed no significant change ( $W = 39.50$ ;  $p = 1.000$ ). These results reinforce the finding that work attachment training has a positive influence on team effectiveness.

Table 5. Wilcoxon Test Results Team Effectiveness

Groups	W	p	Remarks
Experiment	1,50	0,006	Significant
Control	39,50	1,000	not significant

The findings of this study show that the research hypothesis is accepted, namely that job attachment training is able to increase team effectiveness in employees of HR consulting companies in Yogyakarta. These results are in line with the opinion of Robinson et al. (2004) who stated that work attachment contributes to team effectiveness through increased individual commitment to organizational goals. Employees who have high work attachments tend to give their best efforts because they feel their work is meaningful and has an important contribution to the organization. In addition, work attachment encourages individuals to work not only for the sake of rewards, but also to achieve organizational goals collectively.

**Changes in Team Effectiveness Aspects**

Further analysis was carried out to determine the influence of training on each aspect of team effectiveness. The results showed that only two aspects experienced significant improvements, namely teamwork and decision-making. Meanwhile, aspects of leadership support, trust and respect, recognition and rewards, and focus on customers did not show significant changes.

Table 6. Team Effectiveness Aspect Test Results

Aspect	p-value	Interpretation
Teamwork	0.032	Significant
Decision Making	0.013	Significant

Leadership Support	0.502	Not Significant
Trust and Respect	0.056	Not Significant
Recognition and Appreciation	0.62	Not Significant
Customer Focus	1	Not Significant

The improvement in the teamwork aspect indicates that the training successfully encouraged team members to collaborate more actively in achieving organizational goals. This finding supports the study by Soetrisno and Sutanto (2017), which states that work engagement can improve individuals' ability to work together due to the emergence of awareness to provide the best contribution to the team. Employees with high work engagement tend to prioritize organizational success over personal interests, resulting in more harmonious working relationships.

A significant improvement was also found in the decision-making aspect. Work engagement encourages the emergence of a sense of ownership and responsibility toward work, making team members more proactive in solving organizational problems. This condition enables team members to collaborate in determining solutions and making decisions more effectively. This finding is in line with Simanullang and Ratnaningsih (2018), who stated that work engagement increases a sense of responsibility toward work, as well as Ramdhani and Sawitri (2017), who explained that individuals with high work engagement tend to make active contributions in supporting the achievement of organizational goals.

In contrast, the non-significant improvement in the leadership support aspect indicates that work engagement does not directly develop leadership competencies. According to Aryani et al. (2013), leadership requires managerial, social, strategic, and ethical competencies that cannot be developed in a short period of time. In addition, leadership competencies develop through continuous interaction between individual and environmental factors (Farihatunnafsiyah & Widayat, 2017). Therefore, the relatively short duration of the training is presumed to have been insufficient to produce significant changes in the leadership support aspect.

The trust and respect aspect also did not experience a significant improvement. Trust among team members requires a longer development process because it is related to perceptions of individual integrity, competence, consistency, loyalty, and openness (Raharso, 2011). In addition, the research participants came from different work units and most of them interacted virtually, so the process of building trust requires more time compared to teams that interact directly (Puspitasari & Hendriani, 2019). These conditions are presumed to be the reason why a significant improvement has not yet emerged in the trust and respect aspect.

The recognition and appreciation as well as customer focus aspects also did not show a significant improvement. Recognition and appreciation are related to organizational systems and individual characteristics in giving appreciation to coworkers (Triyanto & Sudarwati, 2014; Nawir & Nurlaela, 2019). Meanwhile, customer focus is closely related to service competencies and the ability to understand customer needs, which require a continuous development process (Susilawati, 2017; Iedliany et al., 2018). Therefore, although work engagement increased after the training, changes in these two aspects were not significantly apparent within the relatively short duration of the study.

Overall, the results of the study indicate that work engagement training is effective in improving team effectiveness, especially in the aspects of teamwork and decision-making. This finding supports the opinion of Robinson et al. (2004) that work engagement can improve team effectiveness through increased individual commitment to organizational goals. Employees with high work engagement tend to give their best efforts, build better cooperation, and contribute optimally to the achievement of organizational goals (Soetrisno & Sutanto, 2017; Mujiasih & Ratnaningsih, 2016).

### **Increased Work Engagement**

In addition to measuring team effectiveness, this study also evaluated changes in work attachment in the experimental group after participating in training. The results of the Wilcoxon test showed a significant increase in work attachment between the pre- and post-a-grade measurements ( $W = 13.00$ ;  $p = 0.045$ ). These results show that the training provided succeeded in increasing the work attachment of the participants.

Table 7. Wilcoxon Work Attachment Test Results

Stages	W-score	p	Remarks
Prates–Pascates	13,00	0,045	Significant

The increase in work attachment showed that participants experienced increased vigor, dedication, and *absorption* of work after participating in the training. These findings indicate that training materials designed based on the dimension of work attachment are able to increase employees' psychological involvement in their work.

**Evaluation of Participants' Reactions**

Reaction evaluation showed that participants responded positively to the training. As many as 83% of participants were in the high category and 17% were in the medium category. These results show that the training is assessed in accordance with the needs and expectations of the participants so that it is able to create a learning atmosphere that supports the involvement of the participants during the training.

**Learning Evaluation**

Learning evaluation is carried out to determine the level of participants' understanding of the training material. The measurement results showed an increase in participants' understanding after participating in the training. Before the training, all participants were in the very low and low categories. After the training, all participants moved to the high and very high categories.

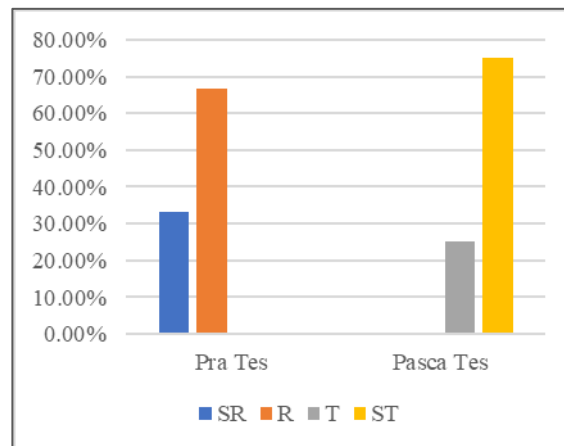


Figure 1. Learning Evaluation Results

The learning evaluation showed an increase in participants' understanding of the training material. Before the training, all participants were in the low to very low category, with 33.33% of participants in the very low category and 66.67% in the low category. After the training, all participants were upgraded to the high and very high categories, with 25% of the participants in the high category and 75% in the very high category. These results show that the training material can be well understood by participants and is able to improve their knowledge of work attachment.

**CONCLUSION**

This study aims to examine the effect of work attachment training on team effectiveness in employees of human resources consulting companies in Yogyakarta. The results of the study show that work attachment training is able to significantly increase team effectiveness. The increase can be seen from the difference in team effectiveness scores in the experimental group after participating in the training compared to the control group that did not receive treatment.

Further analysis showed that the increase in team effectiveness mainly occurred in the aspects of teamwork and decision-making. In addition, the results of the study also showed an increase in participants' work attachment after

participating in the training. These findings indicate that training designed based on the dimensions of vigor, dedication, and absorption is effective in increasing employees' psychological involvement with their work.

Practically, the results of this study show that work attachment training can be used as one of the human resource development strategies to increase team effectiveness in the organizational environment. Further research is recommended using larger numbers of participants, longer follow-up periods, and involving different types of organizations to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of job attachment training.

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