

# An Examination of the Relationship Between Training and Employee Performance: The Mediating Role of Internal Communication

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## Abstract

Research focusing on the relationship between training, internal communication, and performance of the government employee is limited. This study aims to identify the influence of training on the employees' performance, considering the internal communication as the mediating variable. This study used questionnaires to collect data concerning the variables being investigated. The sample of this study comprises 323 employees working for the Office of Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. The data were analyzed using a structural equation modeling with a partial least square approach. The result of the study shows that training has a significant influence on communication, but not on the employee performance. The internal communication itself has a significant influence on the employee performance. The results of this study indicate that the effect of training on employee performance is taking place indirectly, namely through internal communication.

**Keywords:** training, internal communication, performance of government employee

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## 1. Introduction

The literature in general acknowledges that the rapid development of technology, economic globalization, shifting demographics, and fluctuations and market dynamics have caused the business environment to become increasingly complex, uncertain, and rapidly changing. Such conditions require every organization to change immediately and adapt to increasingly competitive environmental changes through organizational transformation. The implementation of the company's transformation process to achieve competitive advantage needs to be supported by competitive advantage resources, including human resources. Many experts recognize that human resources are the main source of competitive advantage because the management of other sources of excellence automatically requires the involvement of existing human resources. The involvement of human resources greatly determines the success of the organizational change process because human resources are important subjects that will implement the change process and the results of planned change processes (Moran and Brightman, 2000; Ubeda-Garcia et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the literature suggests that in order to improve competitiveness, companies must strive to improve the performance of human resources by increasing their skills and skills to prepare human resources for promotion and solving problems faced by companies (Burden and Proctor, 2000; Lyons, 2009). Improving the performance of human resources can be done through the process of education, training, and human resource development. Education and training focuses on several types of skills and expertise that are relatively similar and carried out in the short term, while the human resource development process is more oriented towards increasing skills and expertise that are broader and more diverse and can be done in the long term (Hamade et al., 2007; Ellinger et al., 2002).

Given the importance of training, it is not surprising that various approaches to finding successful training patterns exist. Literature generally agrees that training has a positive impact on the development of human resources and the company's business progress. For example, training [1] allows employees to learn and develop, [2] to achieve positive changes in their work behavior, and [3] improve employee performance and productivity. In addition, training can function as a tool for managing risks related to new products, markets and technologies. These experts emphasize that employees must be able to adapt quickly to changes that often occur in their work environment. Such conditions require employees to increase knowledge continuously, develop new skills, and adapt their work habits. Furthermore, the literature highlights the importance of training in the face of uncertainty in the business environment. Literature believes that increasing knowledge contributes to the company performance (Dermol and Cater, 2013; Nikandrou et al., 2009).

Furthermore, Dechawatanapaisal and Siengthai (2006) suggested that organizations that can create and utilize knowledge have a higher chance of being able to build and maintain competitive advantage. Similarly, Jayawarna et al. (2007) reminded that knowledge resources are an important factor for company growth. As such, it is

important to understand the relationship between training and performance. This is no easy task. In particular, there are many other external and internal variables that give weight to training-performance relationships.

Another factor that is considered to potentially affect employee performance is internal communication (Fletcher, 1999; Tourish and Hargie, 1996). In this perspective experts such as Hewitt (2006) and Meng and Berger (2012) suggest that internal communication has four functions: namely conveying information about company activities, building understanding among employees about the organization's goals, connecting people with activities within the company, and improving the performance of the entire company stakeholders. In the view of Jacobs et al. (2016), internal communication is an important part of the organization to achieve employee performance, create network efficiency, and assist organizations in communicating various strategic choices, especially in facing a crisis. Similarly, Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) viewed that the focus of internal communication is to improve all human resources in an organization. This means that employees must communicate effectively in the organization where they work. In an effort to achieve high individual performance, internal communication functions as an intermediary to support motivation, process, and value transfer, and all that an employee needs to do.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between training and employee performance by including internal communication as a mediator variable. Using multivariate analysis, this study explores whether the incidence, intensity, and approach to training are related to employee performance, and how internal communication variables can influence the relationship between the two variables. This research seeks to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the subject of human resource development working in government institutions.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

### *2.1 Training*

Literature generally agrees that training has a positive impact on the development of human resources and the company's business progress. For example, training [1] allows employees to learn and develop, [2] to achieve positive changes in their work behavior, and [3] improve employee performance and productivity. In addition, training can function as a tool for managing risks related to new products, markets and technologies. These experts emphasize that employees must be able to adapt quickly to changes that often occur in their work environment. Such conditions require employees to increase knowledge continuously, develop new skills, and adapt their work habits. Furthermore, the literature highlights the importance of training in the face of uncertainty in the business environment. Literature believes that increasing knowledge contributes to company performance (Dermol and Cater, 2013; Jayawarna et al., 2007).

Training enables companies to develop, change, and direct the abilities of their employees in carrying out certain activities. In this case, training can be understood in various ways. For example, training can be defined as [1] systematic development of competencies needed by employees to do their work, [2] activities that encourage individual learning, or [3] a combination of procedures that improve individual characteristics so that they do their work more good (Dermol and Cater, 2013; Nikandrou et al., 2009). Literature emphasizes that training is one of the long-term human development systems. Training not only leads to short-term learning, but is a long-term development. In other words, training is the process of renewing and systematizing the knowledge, skills, abilities and habits of employees. Training is not directed at dealing with current conditions and specific work assignments. Training must also be directed to [1] anticipating and meeting the future needs of employees and companies, [2] identifying potential changes in their environment, and exploring new ways to respond to them (Dermol and Cater, 2013)

Dechawatanapaisal and Siengthai (2006) claimed that opportunities for training must be offered to all employees in the company. Other literature also emphasizes the importance of training for all new employees and training because of special cases such as [1] new work initiatives, [2] transfer of employees to other work departments, or [3] changes in existing job descriptions. Some experts find that the quantity and quality of training is directly related to the company's financial performance and reduction of worker turnover.

Furthermore, the literature emphasizes that quality training addresses problems that can later be used in practice. In addition to technical knowledge and skills, quality training must also give trainees some emotional skills. The quality of training for new employees is determined by a series of clear learning goals based on [1] training needs, [2] teaching methods, [3] integration of practical experience, [4] learning tools used, [5] trainer professionalism, and [6] training evaluation right. A professional trainer must disseminate best practices, promote staff development and allow participants to reflect on important issues and learn about their social context. The choice of the right training participants is also important to achieve the training objectives and the quality of the training desired (Dermol and Cater, 2013).

### *2.2 Internal Communication*

Literature shows that communication and organizational success are interrelated. Thus, improving organizational

communication means improving the organization which is often interpreted as an effort to improve things to achieve organizational goals. Communication is one element of organizational elements. The main purpose of studying communication is to improve the organization. Studying the organization can be interpreted as an effort to improve things to achieve organizational goals. There are several reasons why internal communication occurs in organizations: providing information, influencing others, stimulating interest, reducing hostility, and stimulating employees to carry out tasks. Effective communication is basically how a message is received and understood so that the recipient of the message supports the message delivered (Tourish and Hargie, 1996).

According to Fletcher (1999), internal communication is a form of formal or informal communication carried out internally at all levels of the organization. Fletcher (1999) formulated internal communication as an exchange of information and ideas carried out in an organization. Meanwhile, Hewitt (2006) defines internal communication as a group that is responsible for communicating with employees, who often interact with human resources in a company. Hewitt (2006) emphasizes that internal communication is a strategic process in an organization or company where internal communication can be a tool to motivate and empower employees. If employees do not know what their company goals are and employees do not know that they are part of the achievement, and they do not receive feedback about their work, it is very possible that they lose motivation and interest in work. Many studies have shown that companies with effective communication strategies will be more successful than companies with poor communication.

Internal communication has several different functions. As stated by Zsidisin et al. (2015), internal communication has four functions: namely conveying information about company activities, building understanding among employees about the organization's goals, connecting people with activities within the company, and improving the performance of all company stakeholders. Meanwhile, Jacobs et al. (2016) identified four main functions of internal communication in an organization: namely controlling the behavior of organizational members, strengthening motivation by explaining to employees what to do, facilitating the release of expressions of emotions, feelings, and fulfillment of social needs, and providing information needed by individuals to make decisions. In the view of Ruck and Welch (2012), internal communication is an important part of the organization to achieve employee performance, create network efficiency, and assist organizations in communicating various strategic choices, especially in the face of a crisis. Similarly, Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) views that in fact internal communication is built as an effort to create employment engagement where all employees feel concerned about organizational goals and are fully involved in achieving organizational performance. The focus of internal communication is all human resources in an organization. This means that employees must communicate effectively in the organization where they work. In an effort to achieve high individual performance, internal communication functions as an intermediary to support motivation, process, and value transfer, and all that an employee needs to do.

### *2.3 Employee Performance*

Employee performance often referred to as work performance or actual performance is referring to the work performance or the actual achievement achieved by someone. Performance is the result or level of success of a person as a whole during a certain period in carrying out tasks compared to the standards or targets of work results that have been determined in advance and have been agreed upon (Storey, 2004). Koopmans et al. (2013) suggested that employee performance can also be understood as the appearance of work results both in quality and quantity. The performance can be viewed from three dimensions, namely as output (i.e. seeing what is produced), the process (how the procedures have been taken by employees in carrying out their duties), and the contextual aspects (work judgments seen from their abilities). According to Koopmans et al. (2013), performance is the result of work that can be achieved by a person or group of people in an organization in accordance with their respective authority in an effort to achieve organizational goals legally, not violating the law, in accordance with morals and ethics.

Literature in general argues that the level of employee performance is influenced by several factors such as high knowledge, skills to work, and the existence of rewards. According to Kellett et al. (2009), employee performance is a function of the employee's ability to complete the task or job of the employee. A person's skills are not effective enough to do something without a clear understanding of what will be done and how to do it. Performance is a real actor displayed by everyone as the work performance produced by employees in accordance with their role in the organization. To achieve the company's goals that have been set, the company must be concerned with employee performance is a very important thing in the organization's efforts to achieve its goals. Brightman and Moran (2001) emphasize that companies need to [1] measure and evaluate the performance of their employees, [2] identify factors that have the potential to affect employee performance, [3] eliminate factors that inhibit employee performance, and [4] determine the right policy to maintain and improve employee performance.

Kellett et al. (2009) describe that measures in performance measurement can be classified into three levels: business level, business operating system, and department or work center. At the department or work center level, the size used is the quality of work results, quantity of results achieved, timeliness in achieving results, and cost efficiency in achieving results. The quality of work results addresses how well and effectively the results are

achieved; quantity of work results discuss how much the amount of work achieved is based on targets; the time to reach discusses how fast the time to achieve work results; while cost efficiency is related to how economical the product is produced, including how much the error rate is produced. This is similar to van Emmerik (2008) view that measuring employee performance includes four dimensions: namely how much the target is achieved, how good the quality of the results achieved, how quickly each result of the work can be achieved, and how much the error rate is produce useless results.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

This study used a survey method to collect data of the variables being investigated in the study: namely training, internal communication, and employee performance. The data used in this study is self-report data: i.e., employees perceptions on training, internal communication, and employee performance. In this study, data were administered using questionnaires distributed directly to the respondents. The questionnaire used in this study consist of three parts: Part A, Part B, and Part C. Part A is intended to obtain data related to employees perception on training (seven items). Part B contains eight items concerning internal communication. Part C contains ten items pertaining to employees performance. This study measures all indicators using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### 3.2 Population and sample

The population of this study was all employees of the Office of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. The employees of this ministry could be classified into two: structural-position based employees and functional-position based employees. Structural position is positions that are explicitly in the organizational structure. Structural position levels are from the lowest to the highest level. Functional position is technical positions that are not listed in the organizational structure, but from the point of view of their functions are very much needed in implementing the main tasks of the organization. The sample involved in this study amounted to 313 employees with details as follows: 45 structural employees and 268 functional employees.

#### 3.3 Variable measurements

##### 3.3.1 Training

Following Dermol and Cater (2013), this study refers the training as the systematic development of competencies needed by employees to perform their work. Table 1 present the indicators used to measure the training variable.

Table 1

Indicators used to measure the training variable

Coding	Description
PEL1	Enhance employees understanding of duties and responsibilities
PEL2	Increase employees' knowledge
PEL3	Provide employees' skills in work
PEL4	Overcoming work problems
PEL5	Provide employees work motivation
PEL6	In accordance with the employees need
PEL7	Implement of the results

##### 3.3.2 Internal communication

Referring to Fletcher (1999), this study defines internal communication as a form of formal or informal communication which takes place in various format carried out internally at all levels of the organization. Table 2 present the indicators used to measure the internal communication variable.

Table 2

Indicators used to measure the internal communication variable

Coding	Description
KI1	Socialization of vision and mission
KI2	Quality of leader attention to employees
KI3	Level of employee access to information
KI4	The intensity of employee involvement in work planning
KI5	Communication concerning the performance targets
KI6	Quality of the interactive relationship
KI7	Employee collaboration between department
KI8	The atmosphere of intimacy within the organization

### 3.3.3 Employee performance

Based on Storey (2004) concept, this study refers to the employees' performance as the overall employees success level during a certain period in carrying out their tasks that are charged compared to standards have been set in advance and have been agreed upon. Table 3 present the indicators used to measure the employees performance variable.

Table 3  
 Indicators used to measure the employees performance variable

Coding	Description
KP1	Complete the assigned work in accordance with standard procedures
KP2	Complete the work conscientiously
KP3	Increased quality of work
KP4	Increased number of jobs completed
KP5	Complete work in a timely manner
KP6	Efforts to improve work results
KP7	Increased level of employee discipline
KP8	Compliance with clothing uniforms
KP9	Compliance with organizational regulations
KP10	Completion of work in accordance with the leaders' instructions

### 3.4 Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses

This study primarily aims to investigate the effects of training on the employee performance; considering internal communication as the mediating variable. Figure 1 depicts the conceptual framework of this study. Based on the above framework, this study proposes the working hypothesis as follows.

Hypothesis 1:

The training is positively associated with the internal communication

Hypothesis 2:

The training is positively associated with the employee performance

Hypothesis 3:

The internal communication is positively associated with the employee performance

Hypothesis 4:

The internal communication mediates the relationship between training and the employee performance

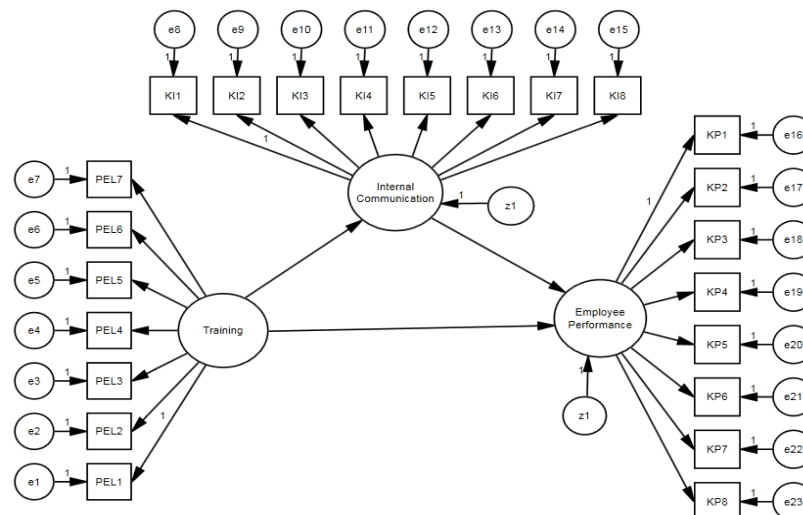


Figure 1  
 Conceptual framework of this study

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Measurement model

The results of confirmatory factor analysis confirmed that three indicators were valid to reflect training variable: namely overcoming work problems (f.l. = 0.803; mean = 4.49), in accordance with the employees need (f.l. = 0.819; mean = 4.31), and implementation of the results (f.l. = 0.782; mean = 4.40). Next, the results confirmed that seven indicators were valid to reflect internal communication variable: namely socialization of vision and



mission (f.l. = 0.705; mean = 4.24), quality of leader attention to employees (f.l. = 0.831; mean = 4.30), level of employee access to information (f.l. = 0.741; mean = 4.34), the intensity of employee involvement in work planning (f.l. = 0.743; mean = 4.33), quality of the interactive relationship (f.l. = 0.822; mean = 4.28), employee collaboration between department (f.l. = 0.828; mean = 4.28), the atmosphere of intimacy within the organization (f.l. = 0.765; mean = 4.34). Furthermore, the results confirmed that eight indicators were valid to reflect employee performance variable: namely complete the assigned work in accordance with standard procedures (f.l. = 0.770; mean = 4.22), complete the work conscientiously (f.l. = 0.755; mean = 4.21), increased quality of work (f.l. = 0.769; mean = 4.23), increased number of jobs completed (f.l. = 0.787; mean = 4.18), complete work in a timely manner (f.l. = 0.834; mean = 4.21), efforts to improve work results (f.l. = 0.708; mean = 4.22), increased level of employee discipline (f.l. = 0.744; mean = 4.23), compliance with clothing uniforms (f.l. = 0.761; mean = 4.24).

#### 4.2 Measurement model

The first hypothesis is related to the relationship between employee training and internal communication within the Ministry of Defense's Republic of Indonesia office. This study hypothesizes that between employee training will have a positive effect on internal communication within the office. This study applies Structural Equation Modeling to test the hypothesis. The test results, as can be seen in Figure 3, show that employee training has a positive effect on internal communication ( $\beta = 0.435$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is supported. The second hypothesis is related to the relationship between employee training and employee performance in the Ministry of Defense Republic of Indonesia office. This study hypothesizes that between employee training will have a positive effect on employee performance (  $\beta = 0.155$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is supported. The third hypothesis is related to the relationship between internal communication and employee performance in the office of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. This study hypothesizes that between internal communication will have a positive effect on employee performance in the office. This study applies Structural Equation Modeling to test the hypothesis. The test results, as can be seen in Figure 2, show that internal communication has a positive effect on employee performance ( $\beta = 0.615$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 is supported.

The fourth hypothesis deals with the relationship between employee training and employee performance, with internal communication as a mediating variable in the relationship. Following the advice of Kenny and Baron (1986), this study specifically developed two models, namely model 1 (without intermediate variables) and model 2 (including intermediate variables). Model 1, consisting of employee training variables and employee performance, is intended to examine the direct effects of employee training on employee performance. The results of SEM analysis confirm that based on the values of chi-square, GFI, TLI, and RMSEA, model 1 is fit. As shown in Figure 2, employee training positively affects employee performance ( $\beta = 0.433$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). Model 2, consisting of variable employee training, internal communication, and employee performance, aims to examine the indirect effects of employee training on employee performance, namely through internal communication. Comparing the results of Models 1 and 2, it was found that the positive effect of employee training on employee performance in Model 1 ( $\beta = 0.433$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ) was lower in Model 2 ( $\beta = 0.155$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). These results provide evidence that internal communication mediates the relationship between employee training and employee performance. Therefore, hypothesis 4 is supported.

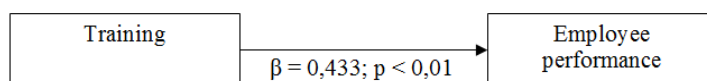


Figure 2

Model 1 (excluding internal communication variable)

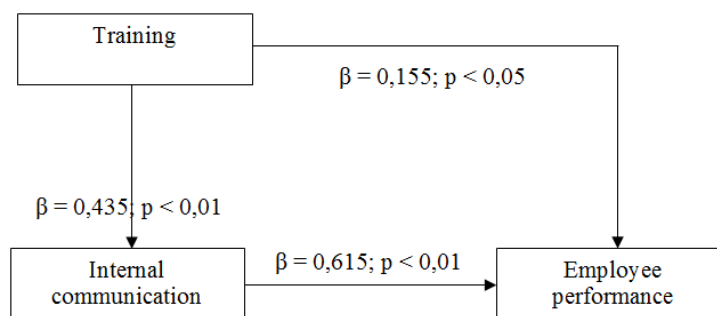


Figure 3

Model 2 (engaging internal communication variable)

The results of this study indicate that training is one of the factors that affect the internal communication of employees of the Ministry of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia. This is in accordance with the literature which shows that training is one of the main factors in building internal communication both at the individual and organizational levels. Quality training is believed to be able to meet the expectations of employees and institutions in building reliable communication so as to be able to contribute in realizing the vision, mission and objectives of the institution. The findings of this study support previous research which found a positive relationship between training and internal communication. Yorke and Harvey (2005) stated that employers generally look for workers who are able to adapt, be flexible, and have the desire to learn. In addition, the company also wants employees who have the skills to communicate, work in teams, and are proficient in using information technology. Furthermore, Yorke and Harvey (2005) emphasize that good communication skills are built through good training with good trainers. The basic skills that must be mastered by the trainer are interpersonal communication skills and have confidence or self-efficacy in training. According to Bandura (1997), efficacy is a person's self-confidence in his ability to organize and carry out a series of actions needed to produce something. Training is an activity designed to improve employee performance in carrying out work that is charged to employees. Interpersonal communication training is designed using experiential learning methods. Events in life can be simulated through a game that can be felt directly by training (Ancok, 2002).

Furthermore, this study found that training positively had an impact on improving the performance of employees of the Ministry of Defense Office of the Republic of Indonesia. This is in accordance with the literature which shows that training is one of the main factors in building internal communication both at the individual and organizational levels. Quality training is believed to be able to meet the expectations of employees and institutions in building reliable communication so as to be able to contribute in realizing the vision, mission and objectives of the institution. The implementation of training in an organization has a number of objectives. Job training is held and directed to equip, enhance, and develop employee competencies so that the ability, productivity and welfare of employees increases (Ubeda-García et al., 2013). Burden and Proctor (2000) suggest that in essence, training is carried out with the aim of improving employee performance, updating employee expertise, helping to solve operational problems, and meeting employee personal development needs. Furthermore Ellinger et al. (2002) suggested that training programs enable companies to improve the abilities, skills, and attitudes of employees so that they become more effective and efficient in achieving organizational goals. The results of this study are in line with several previous studies which found a positive relationship between training and employee performance. Dermol and Cater (2013) emphasize that training programs are important to implement in order to deal with the demands of the work and the needs of the organization. Programmed training is not only able to improve knowledge, skills and attitudes: more importantly, training can in turn improve employee excellence and performance.

Furthermore, this study found that internal communication positively had an impact on improving employee performance. This finding is in line with the findings of a number of previous studies which found that there is a positive relationship between internal communication and employee performance. The findings of this study reinforce the notion that internal communication is one of the factors that influence employee performance. Internal communication is an important factor in gathering information for effective management decision making. Therefore, companies need to build effective internal communication in order to achieve better employee performance. Tourish and Hargie (1996) revealed that internal communication contributes significantly to improving employee performance. Furthermore, Garcia-Morales et al. (2011) highlight the importance of companies to build effective communication between employees so that employees can work professionally and in order to realize superior employee performance.

## 5. Conclusions

The main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between training and employee performance with internal communication as the mediating variable. First, the results of this study indicate that the training program has a positive and significant effect on internal communication. This shows that training programs organized by organizations can foster employee communication skills. Thus, the better the quality of training, the more employee communication will increase. Second, this study also found that job training programs had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Job training programs organized by management are able to equip, enhance, and develop employee competencies, which in turn will improve employee performance. In other words, training that is programmed is not only able to increase knowledge, skills and attitudes: more importantly, training can improve employee excellence and performance.

Third, this study found that internal communication positively had an impact on improving employee performance. The findings of this study reinforce the support that internal communication is an important factor in the absorption and dissemination of information that is greatly needed in the preparation of management decisions. Therefore, companies need to build effective internal communication in order to achieve better employee performance. Finally, this study found that internal communication also acts as an intermediary variable

in the relationship between employee training and employee performance. In other words, training has a direct impact on indirect performance and impact, namely through internal communication.

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