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Relationship Between Training Effectiveness and Work Performance: Mediation of Workplace Environment

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Abstract

Background: There is widespread agreement that training and performance are positively associated in the prior studies. However, there is a lack of empirical evidence to establish the mediating role of the workplace environment in the relationship between training and performance.

Objectives: The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance and the mediating role of the workplace environment.

Methods: We used consecutive sampling to select respondents, adopting a descriptive cross-sectional research approach with a sample of 205 Nepalese commercial bank employees across five different commercial banks. To assess the role of the workplace environment in the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance, a self-administered structured questionnaire with 12 items was developed. Data were analyzed using SPSS and analysis of moment structures. The characteristics of the respondents were examined using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, and the link between training effectiveness and performance was measured using mean value analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factor structure of the measure used in the study and examine internal reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to demonstrate the link between the three components, test the hypothesis, and mediation effect.

Results: The findings of training related data indicated that 45.4% of the respondents perceived that training was highly influential, 60.0% were satisfied with the training provided, 43.9% of the respondents reported that their organization focus on both on and off-the-job training, 57.6% felt that training is crucial and 82.4% perceive that training has improved their performance and respondents positively perceived the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance. The exploratory factor analysis revealed that items on work performance, workplace environment, and training effectiveness have higher internal reliability. The hypothesis test results showed a positive association between training effectiveness, job performance, workplace environment, and work performance, and training effectiveness has the highest impact on work performance. Similarly, the results also depicted that the workplace environment mediates training effectiveness and work performance.

Conclusion: The study concluded that the more effective the training, the better the employees' work performance. As a result, greater emphasis requires improving the context and process of training from the employees' perspective. The study also concluded that the workplace environment affects training effectiveness and work performance. Therefore, it is essential to note that Nepalese organizations should provide practical training and create a favorable work environment for better work performance.

Key Words: Training Effectiveness, Work Performance, Workplace Environment, Mediation

Paper Type: Research Paper

JEL Classification: A14, D23

Introduction

The relationship between training effectiveness and job performance has widely been studied in the HR (Human Resource) literature and suggests that training enhances employee job performance and productivity (Tharenou, Saks, & Moore, 2007; Ballesteros, Saá, & Domnguez, 2012). However, only scarce studies have empirically investigated whether the workplace environment mediates the relationship between training and performance. There is widespread agreement that training and performance are positively associated in the prior studies. However, there is a paucity of empirical evidence to establish the mediating role of the workplace environment in the relationship between training and performance, especially in the developing world such as Nepal. As a result, this research focuses on the role of the workplace environment in mediating the relationship between training and work performance.

Previous studies in Nepal indicate numerous employee performance variables; for example, Gautam (2018) suggested that training may sustain employee performance. According to Pandey (2017), training frequency and intensity significantly impact organizational performance, notably turnover growth. Similarly, Bhattarai (2019) discovered that the training design, technique, and movement assessment all impact employee performance. According to Baniya (2004), training allows employees to expand their knowledge, abilities, and talents, which improves their performance. Similarly, Chalise (2020) suggested that training programs acquire technical skills. However, training and development programs are poorly structured and poorly intended to fulfill the requirements of employees. According to Chauhan (2019), training significantly influences employee motivation. According to Timilsena and Rimal (2018), training increases motivation and fosters a positive attitude among employees. Furthermore, training and motivation have improved the effectiveness and efficiency of staff (Subha & Bhattacharya,2021). However, research in the Nepalese context demonstrates that the impact of the working environment on the relationship between training and performance has not been studied empirically in Nepal. Therefore, this study aims to look at the link between training and work performance and whether or not the workplace environment plays a role in this relationship.

The present study is crucial because the role of the workplace environment is significant in the relationship between training and work performance and is a considerable concern in human resource management practices, which are greatly ignored. Furthermore, this research leads to a better knowledge of the role of the workplace environment in the relationship between training and work performance. The present study recommends improving the context and process of training from the employees' perspective. The present study is also significant to policymakers and management of banks and financial institutions in Nepal to adopt effective strategies to provide practical training and create a favorable work environment for better work performance.

The current study consists of five sections. Section 1 discusses the background, the objectives, the problem statement, the motivation behind the study, and the significance. Section 2 critically reviews the relevant literature and identifies the research gap to formulate the hypotheses. Section 3 discusses the methodological aspects, i.e., population and sample size, and the research procedures. Data analysis and results are presented in section 4. Similarly, Section 5 discusses the study findings, and, finally, section 6 concludes with the study's insights.

Review of Literature

Training Effectiveness and Work Performance

Previous research provides evidence of a robust positive relationship between training and employee performance. For example, Hameed and Waheed (2011) argued that if employees are well-trained and highly motivated, they work efficiently even without supervision because of their abilities and

confidence. Singh and Mohanty (2010) found that training practices are strongly linked to employee performance. Similarly, Thang (2010) revealed a positive link between training and firm performance, suggesting that employee knowledge and attitude affected the relationship between training and performance. Moreover, Khan et al. (2011) found that training enhances employee and organizational efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, Shaheen et al. (2013) found a tangible and beneficial link between employee performance and activity. From the preceding literature, it can be hypothesized that:

HI: Training effectiveness correlates strongly with work performance.

Workplace Environment and Work Performance

Previous research shows a strong link between environmental factors and training efficacy, reflected directly in training outcomes. This demonstrates that the working environment substantially impacts training effectiveness, influencing job performance. Other research has found varying degrees of correlation between environmental factors and work performance (Raziq & Maulabakhsh,2015; Jain & Kaur, 2014; Hamid & Hassan, 2015; Demus, Kindangen & Maria, 2015).

Few other studies conclude the relationship between the workplace environment and employee performance; for example, Temessek (2009) claims that the design and décor of the workplace are necessary for better job performance. Similarly, Haynes (2008) found that the workplace environment significantly impacted employee job satisfaction. It affects how individuals work and their physical, mental, and emotional health. According to Chandrasekar (2011) and Hammed (2009), a pleasant physical working environment can minimize absenteeism and boost employee productivity. Furthermore, Awan and Tahir (2015) discovered that employee contact with coworkers had a favorable influence on their performance. According to Oswald (2012), supervisor assistance is critical for workers to complete their jobs. Summarizing the above arguments, the hypothesis is formulated as:

H2: The workplace environment correlates strongly with work performance.

Workplace Environment Mediates Training Effectiveness and Work Performance

There have been few studies that empirically analyzed the mediating role of the working environment in training efficacy and employee job performance in the past. According to Vallerand et al. (2007), a positive working environment contributes to job performance training. Furthermore, according to Patel et al. (2015), individuals who work in a pleasant atmosphere perform better, showing that the office environment affects positively on job performance. Burke et al. (2015) found that a healthy work environment boosts productivity. Other research has discovered that the workplace environment has a direct and positive influence on employee job performance (Bonneville-Roussy et al., 2011). Hence, the study proposed that:

H3: The workplace environment mediates the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance.

Research Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional study was used in this research. Given the present pandemic scenario, an online Google form questionnaire was recommended. Respondents received self-administered questions using Google Forms via social media platforms such as Facebook, emails, Messenger, and Viber groups. A total of 205 commercial bank employees took part in the survey. The convenience sampling approach was used to select the participants. Participants gave their informed consent before the data was collected, and the survey took place from June to August 2021.

There were four sections to the survey questionnaire. The respondents' demographic and training-related information was covered in the first part. The effectiveness of the employees' training was assessed in the second part using four items on a 5-point Likert scale, including subscales such as

learning performance, individual performance, and organizational performance. The items of this subscale were adapted from S F A Aziz (2015). Similarly, five items measured the five dimensions of workplace environment: involvement, peer cohesion, autonomy, work pressure, and clarity, which was also adapted from Moos, R. H. (1981). Likewise, work performance was measured using four items on a 5-point Likert scale on two dimensions of work performance, such as task performance and contextual performance, adapted from Koopmans, L. (2015). Data were analyzed using SPSS and analysis of moment structures. The characteristics of the respondents were examined using descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, and the link between training effectiveness and performance was measured using mean value analysis. Exploratory factor analysis was used to identify the factor structure of the measure used in the study and examine internal reliability. Confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modeling were used to demonstrate the link between the three components and test the hypothesis and mediation effect.

Data Analysis and Results

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Research Participants

Table 1 shows the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics classified based on gender, age group, educational attainment, and work experience. The findings reveal that more than half of the sample respondents (54.6%) were female, while 45.4% were male. In terms of age, 37.1% of respondents were in the age group 20 - 30, 57.1% were of 31- 40, and 5.8% were of 41- 50. Similarly, 54.6% of respondents had a master's degree, 42.0 % bachelor's degree, and just a handful had a qualification higher than a master's degree (2.4%). Likewise, more than half (54.6%) of the respondents have more than 11 years of work experience, 40.0% of the employees have 5 – 10 years of experience and very few (5.4%) of the respondents have less than five years of work experience.

Table1: Socio-demographic Profile of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	93	45.4
	Female	112	54.6
Age Group	20 - 30 years	76	37.1
	31 to 40 years	117	57.1
	41 to 50 years	12	5.8
Educational Qualification	Intermediate	2	1.0
	Bachelors	86	42.0
	Masters	112	54.6
	Masters and Above	5	2.4
Work Experience	Less than 5 Year	11	5.4
	5 - 10 Years	82	40.0
	11 Years and Above	112	54.6
Total	**205**	**100.00**	

Training Related Aspects

Table 2 depicts the training-related characteristics of the respondents. The results reveal that the training provided in the bank is effective. Out of 205 respondents, 93 respondents, i.e., 45.4%, found that training is effective, whereas 76, i.e., 37.1%, found that training was essential. Eight respondents

didn't feel any effects on their performance after the training, and 28 respondents had a neutral feeling towards the training provided. Likewise, just providing training programs is not enough; an organization should also know whether or not the employee is satisfied with the training programs. The table shows that 123(60%) of the respondents were happy with the training provided by the bank, while 13.2% of employees were not satisfied with the bank's training.

Similarly, 26.8% of employees are confused about whether they are happy with the no. of training offered by the organization. Furthermore, most respondents (46.3%) had their internships at no specific time, meaning that the training was conducted with no fixed time—22% of the respondents had their training at least once a year, and 15.1% had their training every six months, whereas 16.6 % had their training quarterly.

Moreover, the majority of the banks (43.9%) offer a combination of both on-the-job and off-the-job training to address the training needs of employees. Whereas 26.3% of respondents get their training needs addressed through on-the-job training, 6.9% of employees are handled through off-the-job training. From Table 1, it has been identified that most banks consider both on and off-the-job training to be the most effective approach. In the same manner, it is observed that 57.6% of respondents responded that the significance of training was vital, 25.4% of respondents believe training is essential, 15.6 % answered that they had neutral, and 1.5% felt that the significance of training was little use to them. It was found that a maximum of respondents agreed that training provided to them was essential. The table also revealed that most respondents (82.4%) agreed that training helped improve their performance, whereas 12.70% were uncertain. Finally, 4.9% of the respondents felt no difference in their performance even after the training.

Table 2: Training-related Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Effectiveness of Training	Not at all	2	1
	little	6	2.9
	Neutral	28	13.7
	Effective	93	45.4
	Extremely effective	76	37.1
Training conducted	Quarterly	32	16.6
	Every six months	31	15.1
	Once a year	45	22
	No specific time	95	46.3
Satisfied with training provided	Yes	123	60
	No	27	13.2
	May be	55	26.8
Nature of training	Outdoor	44	21.5
	On the Job	54	26.3
	Off the Job	17	8.3
	Both On and Off the Job	90	43.9
Significance of Training	Little Useful	3	1.5
	Neutral	32	15.6
	Important	52	25.4
	Extremely Important	118	57.6

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Improvement in Performance through training	Yes	169	82.4
	No	10	4.9
	Maybe	26	12.7

Perception of Training Effectiveness and Work Performance

The association between training effectiveness, workplace environment, and work performance was measured using a 12-item five-point Likert scale, i.e., one representing 'strongly agree' and five representing strongly disagree, as shown in Table 3. The first four items described training effectiveness, and they measured three aspects: learner's performance, individual performance, and organizational performance. Involvement, peer cohesiveness, autonomy, job pressure, and clarity were used to assess the five dimensions of the workplace environment. Similarly, job performance was evaluated using specific items that included task characteristics and contextual performance. All the items in the scale had a mean value of less than three, indicating that respondents positively perceived the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance.

Table 3: Perception of Training Effectiveness and Work Performance

Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Performance (F1)		
I can carry out my work efficiently (WP1)	1.66	0.576
I work on keeping my job-related knowledge up to date (WP2)	1.67	0.624
I take on extra responsibilities (WP3)	1.82	0.797
Workplace Environment (F2)		
I am concerned and committed to my job (WE1)	1.79	0.781
My co-workers are friendly and supportive of each other (WE2)	1.78	0.802
I am encouraged to be self-sufficient and make my own decisions (WE3)	1.7	0.777
The press of work and time urgency dominates the job I do (WE4)	1.54	0.757
I know what is expected of my daily job routine, and the rules and policies are well communicated (WE5)	2.14	1.081
Training Effectiveness (F3)		
I know how to work more efficiently using the knowledge learned in training (TE1)	1.4	0.549
My competencies have improved after attending the training (TE2)	1.32	0.553
Training has motivated me to work (TE3)	1.28	0.538
What I have learned in training has improved my job performance and, subsequently, my organizational performance (TE4)	1.38	0.586

KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Two critical measures are used to assess the appropriateness of factor analysis. The first is the Kaiser-Meyer–Olkin (KMO) measure, determining overall sampling adequacy. In this study, the value of KMO for items in work performance (F1) is 0.638, 0.881 for workplace environment (F2), and 0.827 for training effectiveness (F3), all of which are greater than the acceptable limit of 0.6. It means that the sample size is sufficient to run the factor analysis. The other metric is Bartlett's test of sphericity, which had a value of 100.363 (work performance), 790.149 (workplace environment), and 480.914 (training effectiveness), with a p-value of 0.001. This measure indicates a highly significant correlation between the items of the survey's constructs, which is suitable for factor analysis.

Table 4: Results of KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.638
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	100.363
	df	3
	Sig.	0.001
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.881
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	790.149
	df	10
	Sig.	0.001
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		0.827
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	480.914
	df	6
	Sig.	0.001

The Output of Exploratory Factor Analysis

Table 5 explains the results of exploratory factor analysis. The communalities after extraction are more than 0.5, which signifies each factor loading is significant. Under the work performance (Factor 1) dimension, three factors are loaded with good loadings on a single element. The eigenvalue is 60.934 percent, which denotes three items that explain a 60.934 percent variance on Factor1. Similarly, under the workplace environment (Factor 2) dimension, five items are loaded with good loading on a single factor, and these items explain 77.37 percent variance on Factor 2. Further, under the training effectiveness (Factor 3) dimension, four items are loaded with good loading on a single factor, and these items explain 75.82 percent variation on Factor3.

Table 5: Result of Exploratory Factor analysis

	Initial	**Extraction**	**Factor loading**	**Total variance explained**
Work Performance (F1)				
I can carry out my work efficiently (WP1)	1	0.528	0.835	60.934
I work on keeping my job-related knowledge up to date (WP2)	1	0.697	0.777	
I take on extra responsibilities (WP3)	1	0.603	0.726	
Workplace Environment (F2)				
I am concerned and committed to my job (WE1)	1	0.74	0.86	77.37
My co-workers are friendly and supportive of each other (WE2)	1	0.794	0.891	
I am encouraged to be self-sufficient and make my own decisions (WE3)	1	0.798	0.893	
The press of work and time urgency dominates the job I do (WE4)	1	0.695	0.834	
I know what is expected of my daily job routine, and the rules and policies are well communicated (WE5)	1	0.841	0.917	

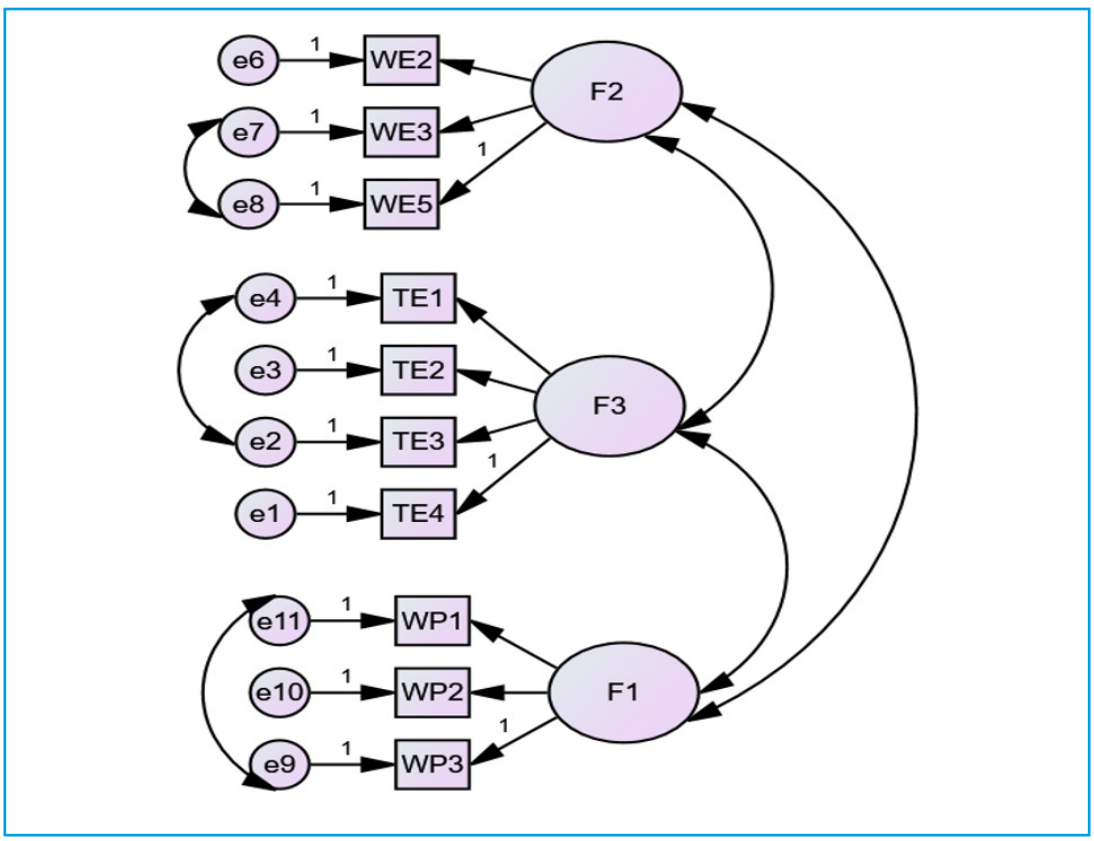
	Initial	Extraction	Factor loading	Total variance explained
Training Effectiveness (F3)				
I know how to work more efficiently using the knowledge learned in training (TE1)	1	0.688	0.829	75.82
My competencies have improved after attaining the training (TE2)	1	0.799	0.894	
Training has motivated me to work (TE3)	1	0.786	0.887	
What I have learned in training has improved my job performance and, subsequently, my organizational performance (TE4)	1	0.76	0.872	

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical model path diagram of the proposed measurement based on the final version of the questionnaire. Following the exploratory factor analysis, the confirmatory factor analysis was carried out to confirm the results obtained from the exploratory factor analysis. Initially, the study proposed 12 latent variables loaded on three factors: work performance (three), work environment(five), and training effectiveness (four). It is important to note that all the 12 latent variables were loaded on three factors.

Figure 1: Path diagram of confirmatory factor analysis



The Output of the Measurement Model

The result of the measurement model is shown in table 6. The measurement model should be significant to run the structural model. Three constructs, namely work performance(F1), workplace environment (F2), and training effectiveness(F3), was created, and only ten items were loaded after the removal of two items (item 1 and item 4 of workplace environment). After that, we ran the measurement model. The result shows that every item has significant loading. The result fits all indexes (CMIN/DF is 2.11, GFI is 0.943, CFI is 0.988, RMSEA is 0.07). Similarly, the result confirms the model's construct validity to run the structural model. Likewise, the development of average variance extracted (AVE) is equal to or greater than 0.5, and composite reliability (CR) is more significant than 0.7, which shows the convergent validity of our construct.

Table 6: Results of Measurement Model

Items		Construct	Estimate	P-value	AVE	CR
WE5	<---	Work Environment (F2)	0.961	0.0001***	0.825	0.93
WE3	<---		0.938	0.0001***		
WE2	<---		0.82	0.0001***		
TE4	<---	Training Effectiveness (F3)	0.804	0.008***	0.70	0.91
TE3	<---		0.881	0.0001***		
TE2	<---		0.831	0.0001***		
TE1	<---		0.821	0.0001***		
WP3	<---	Work performance (F1)	0.707	0.0001***	0.50	0.90
WP2	<---		0.687	0.0001***		
WP1	<---		0.70	0.0001***		

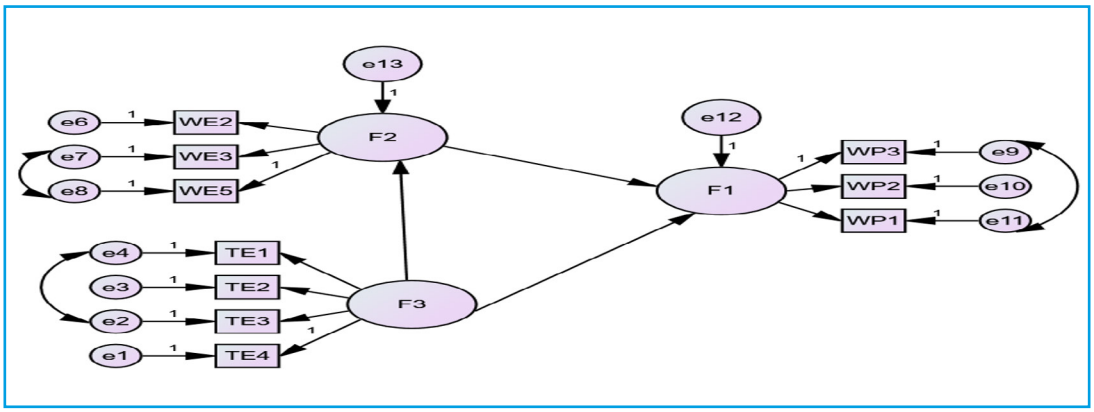
CMIN/DF = 2.11, GFI = 0.943 ; CFI = 0.988, RMSEA = 0.07

Note: *** represents significance at a 1 percent level

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

We can run the structural model if the measurement model is well fitted. The path diagram of the structural model is shown in the figure below:

Figure 2: Path diagram of the structural model



The Output of the Structural Model

The result of the structural model is shown in Table 7. After the measurement model becomes significant, as shown above, it is required to run a structural model to explain the nature and magnitude of the relationship between constructs, as shown in figure 2. The structural model is specified based on the existing theories of management. It is hypothesized that training effectiveness and workplace environment influence employees' work performance. The study evaluates the hypothesized causal relationship proposed in the theoretical model using structural or path analysis. The latent construct work performance (F1) is endogenous as exogenous variables explain the variable in the model. The latent constructs, training effectiveness (F3), and workplace environment (F2), are exogenous as other variables do not explain them in the model. The structural model examines the following hypotheses:

H1: Training effectiveness is positively associated with work performance

H2: The workplace environment is positively associated with work performance.

H3: The workplace environment mediates the relationship between training effectiveness and work performance.

As discussed in the preceding section, the path analysis results show the overall fit measures that provide judgment for how the structural model fits the data, as shown in Table 7. Results of the path model (CMIN/DF =2.118, GFI=0.943, CFI=0.978, RMSEA=0.074) yielded to a reasonable fit to data. The normal chi-square ($\chi 2$ /df) is 2.118, lower than the cutoff value of 3, implying a satisfactory model fit. Additionally, the RMSEA value of 0.074 is close to an acceptable limit of 0.08. Similarly, the incremental fit indices CFI values have generally cited the cut-off value of 0.9. Hence, the results indicate a mediocre model fit. Therefore, the model has an acceptable fit to go for further analysis.

The estimates of path coefficient are significant. The path analysis results allow testing a hypothesized relationship. In H1, training effectiveness (F3) was hypothesized to be positively associated with work performance (F1). The result indicates a significant positive relationship between training effectiveness and work performance (standardized beta of 0.624 with a p-value of 0.008). Similarly, it was also hypothesized that the workplace environment is positively associated with work performance which was also accepted (standardized beta of 0.321 with a p-value of 0.0001). Likewise, it was finally hypothesized that the workplace environment (F2) mediates the relationship between training effectiveness (F3) and work performance (F1). This hypothesis was also accepted (standardized beta of 0.277986, with a p-value of 0.0001). The idea revealed that training effectiveness has the highest impact on work performance.

Table 7: Results of Structural Model

Structural Path			Estimate	P-value
F2	<---	F3	0.866	0.0001***
F1	<---	F2	0.321	0.0001***
F1	<---	F2*F3	0.277986	0.0001***
F1	<---	F3	0.624	0.008***

CMIN/DF= 2.118, GFI=0.943; CFI=0.978, RMSEA=0.074

Note: *** represents significance at one percent level.

Discussion

The findings of the study provide evidence that employees have a favorable opinion of training effectiveness and work performance, which implies that employees consider the more impactful the training, the greater their job performance would be. This study corroborates the findings of Bhat (2013), who found that training, which is a crucial antecedent of performance, has a considerable

impact on organizational performance. Furthermore, the findings of this study support those of Nauman et al., 2021, who found that organizational training boosts employees' commitment to their jobs and improves their job performance. Furthermore, the findings of Kuruppu, Kavirathne, and Karunarathna (2021), who found a strong, positive, and substantial association between training and performance, are also in line with the findings of the present study.

This study also showed that the workplace environment and job performance are positively associated. This conclusion is consistent with Clarke's (2002) findings, which show that the working environment significantly impacts training effectiveness and employee job performance. Other studies (Raziq & Maulabakhsh,2015; Saidi et al., 2019; Hamid & Hassan, 2015; Demus, Kindangen & Maria, 2015) have also affirmed the finding that workplace environment and work performance are correlated to each other.

Finally, the study found that the workplace environment influences training effectiveness and job performance. This conclusion is consistent with Guan and Frenkel's (2019) prior findings, which showed a positive relationship between training and performance, but differs from the results of work engagement as a mediator between training and performance. Similarly, Aragón, Jiménez, and Valle (2014) found that activity and performance are substantially associated, but organizational learning mediates the association between training and performance. Tenneubaum and Yuki (2006) found that company culture moderates the association between training effectiveness and employee performance, contradicting the current study's conclusions.

Conclusion

The study concluded that employees have a favorable view of training effectiveness and job performance, which suggests that the more impactful the training, the better their job performance would be. Furthermore, the study indicated that the workplace environment influences work performance and that the working environment, in turn, mediates the link between training and performance. This study has implications for managers to focus on the context and process of training from the employees' perspective. Furthermore, managers must develop a suitable workplace environment to attain excellent job performance.

The study only revealed findings, limiting its applicability to a larger population. Because the study was restricted to only employees of five commercial banks in Nepal, it may not be a compelling case for understanding this phenomenon in Nepal's other banking, financial, and industrial sectors. Furthermore, this study did not look at other mediators which might be examined in future research. In addition, future studies should include gathering data from a more significant number of participants, including employees from other service sectors, to understand better how employees perceive the effectiveness of training and its impact on their work performance.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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