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CRITERIA OF AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMME: A CASE STUDY

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Well-established criteria of training programme development are crucial to
ensure the effectiveness, and most importantly, to reveal the real value of
training programme.

This study was conducted among the lecturers in Universiti Putra Malaysia to
examine the criteria of an effective training programme by identifying the
programme development elements, and the approach to programme planning
preferred by the professionals. Also, it attempted to compare the perceptions
according to the teaching experience, experience in planning training programme,
and the frequency of their involvement in training in the last 12 months.

By using stratified sampling, 364 lecturers were surveyed, utilizing a structured questionnaire with a response rate of 89.6 percent. The data were analyzed quantitatively by using SPSS programme and was presented in table format.

The results of the statistical analyses indicated the components of designing, implementation, and evaluation were perceived to be significantly associated to training effectiveness. By comparison, implementation component was the most important component. The findings further revealed that the sub-components of target audience identification, obtaining credible facilitators/instructors, and formulation of recommendations for changes and future actions were very significant in a successful training. The professionals showed more favour to Classical Viewpoint on planning practice. It was also indicated by the findings, instead of teaching experience and frequency of involvement in training, the professionals' perception on the importance of those criteria varied by their experience in planning training programme.

The study therefore recommends that programme developers should take into consideration the training stakeholders' point of views when developing training programme. Further research could be pursued in examining the impact of the input evaluation and/or formative evaluation as to provide insights for improvement of programme development practice.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

KRITERIA PROGRAM LATIHAN YANG EFEKTIF: SATU KAJIAN KES

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Kriteria pembangunan program latihan yang mantap adalah amat penting untuk menjamin keberkesanan di samping menyerlah nilai sebenar sesebuah program.

Kajian ini telah dilaksanakan di kalangan pensyarah Universiti Putra Malaysia untuk menyemak kriteria program latihan yang berkesan dengan menyelidik elemen-elemen pembangunan program, dan pandangan mengenai amalan prancangan program yang digemari oleh para profesional. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk membanding persepsi para profesional berdasarkan pengalaman mengajar, pengalaman dalam merancang program latihan dan kekerapan penglibatan dalam latihan dalam jangkamasa 12 bulan yang lalu.

Melalui persampelan berstrata, 364 orang pensyarah telah dikaji dengan menggunakan borang soal-selidik berstruktur. Kadar pulangan ialah 89.6

peratus. Analisis kuantitatif dilaksanakan dengan program SPSS dan data dipaparkan dalam bentuk jadual.

Hasil analisis statistik menunjukkan komponen rekabentuk, implementasi dan penilaian amat berkaitan dengan keberkesanan latihan. Implementasi pula merupakan komponen terpenting. Hasil kajian mempamerkan para professional berpandangan bahawa sub-komponen pengenalpastian kumpulan sasar, memperolehi fasilitator/jurulatih yang berkemampuan, dan pembentukan cadangan untuk perubahan dan tindakan masa depan turut dianggap penting dalam latihan yang berjaya. Temuan kajian menunjukkan para profesional lebih berkecenderungan terhadap Pandangan Klasikal ke atas amalan perancangan program. Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan pengalaman mengajar dan kekerapan penglibatan dalam latihan tidak mempengaruhi persepsi profesional terhadap kriteria program latihan yang efektif melainkan pengalaman mereka dalam merancangan program latihan.

Kajian ini mencadangkan supaya para pembentuk program mengambilkira tanggapan daripada pihak berkepentingan dalam latihan ketika membangunkan program. Kajian berikutnya dicadangkan untuk mengkaji impak penilaian input dan/atau formatif demi kemajuan dalam amalan pembangunan program.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ASTD   :   American Society for Training and Development

CIPP   :   Context, Input, Process, and Product Model

CIRO   :   Context, Input, Reaction, and Outcome Model

HRD   :   Human Resource Development

INTAN   :   Institusi Tadbiran Awam Negara

SSM   :   Sistem Saraan Malaysia

UPM   :   Universiti Putra Malaysia

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of Research

In this global era of twenty-first century, the major critical challenge faced by the human society is to attain full employment and sustained economic growth. Technological changes, dynamic movements in financial markets, the emergence of global markets for products and services, international competition, dramatic increases in foreign direct investment, sophisticated business strategies, new management practices, new forms of business organization and the corporate of work are among the more significant developments that have been transforming the world-wide operations. Likewise, Malaysia as a developing country struggles for overcoming the challenges to become a fully developed and industrialized nation.

Since economic crisis in the year 1998, the country has been overwhelmed by its great impact on the economic growth, specifically tremendous increase of unemployment rate due to retrenchment. In the year 2001, Malaysia has recorded her highest retrenchment rate of 38,116 workers for the given year (Labour Department Penisular Malaysia, Sabah, and Sarawak, 2003). Such an regrettable phenomenon creates much more obstacles for the country to achieve the

requirements of sustaining the competitive advantages—realization of becoming an industrialized or developed country. Nevertheless, by making individuals employable and informed citizens, human resource development, which encompasses education and training, contributes to socio-economic development. Thus, a well-planned human resource development could lead the country to have more productive, innovative and competitive economy through the existence of more skilled human potential, meanwhile helping individuals to gain access to decent work and good jobs. Consequently, the country may have successfully escaped from poverty and marginalization.

Education and training are necessary for economic and employment growth and social development with a dual rationale: develop skills and knowledge that will help countries, enterprises and individuals to optimistically utilize the available opportunities and enhance the employability, productivity and income earning capacity of the nation. In Malaysia, training initiatives are widely acknowledged to be a salient feature of the competitive organization's corporate strategy. The present economic slow-down in the region has made more people aware of the fact that the era of affluence and easy life is over, and that organizations must be committed in developing the human capital via well-planned education and training framework within organization (Ikhlas and Moudi, 1995). Training and development are the best insurance against under-employment or insignificant

non-productive careers. Many philosophers and researchers have claimed that training is the core where organizational learning evolves (Dawson, 1995) that attributes its effectiveness to organizations' vitality and it is seen as a necessary corollary for nation to stay competitive in the global marketplace (Meriam & Mazanah, 2001).

In local context, there is greater awareness by the government of the necessity to address K-economy in order to fulfill the need for trained and educated workforce (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2002). This has brought recognition on the importance of self-development and continuing education by the government through the implementation of *Sistem Saraan Malaysia* in 2002. The core of this scheme is the introduction of *Penilaian Tahap Kecekapan (PTK)* or evaluation of proficiency standards, whereby all the Malaysian public servants are required to participate in continuing education such as training, for the purpose of self-development in order to fulfill the proficiency standards (Public Service Department Malaysia, 2002). Particularly, public servants' involvement in training becomes one of the requirements for career advancement and promotion (Public Service Department, 2002). Therefore, lecturers in public institution of higher learning are required to consistently involve either as programme developer or trainee in continuing professional education. Furthermore, since there is a growing trend to use universities as external

providers of training and development (Mavin & Bryans, 2000) and increasing concern about the threat of deprofessionalization, continuing education is even more important to the professional group in institution of higher education for quality assurance and the enhancement of educational service (Farrugia, 1996). In addition, university lecturers' training imbues them with, not only the promotions, salary movement, and academic awards of excellence through the proficiency assessment, but a high sense of self-actualization.

In its most general sense, strongly associated with learning in the workplace, training commonly refers to all the workshops, seminars, classes, and on-the-job training (OJT) that are designed to improve or enhance individual's work-related performance (Meriam & Mazanah, 2001). Generally, training, as a format of learning programme or continuing education, could be viewed as one of the most powerful human resource development strategies that enhance the overall organizational performance and professional development especially when facing rigorous and changing economic environment. Undoubtedly, an effective training programme may lead to realization of organizational objectives as well as individual needs. People might have recognized the potential business benefits and personal development accrued from effective training programmes. However, the true value of training always becomes either under- or over-

estimated because there exists gap within the practice of measurement of training effectiveness.

Effectiveness of a training programme will be determined by proper practices of programme development, which comprise training design, implementation, and evaluation. Effective programme development assesses needs and then assembles together human power, materials, and capital resources required to meet those identified needs (Murk & Walls, 1998). Meanwhile, the concept of evaluation is recognizably viewed as central to all phases of programme development. The fact that evaluation is so important to training is attributed to the benefits generated by training evaluation (Nooraini, 1994). The results of evaluation help the training practitioners to assess their effort and to determine the worth (strength and weaknesses) of the programme (Ruth, 1995; Sandi, 1996; Nooraini, 1994) and ultimately, to justify the continuation of the training.

In fact, most organizations have a beneficent attitude toward training and development whereby they attempt to implement those programmes without thoroughly measure the actual and latent benefits of training (Churchill *et al.*, 1997 cited in Dubinsky *et al.*, 2001). Essentially, the aforementioned three major components of training programmes development contribute significantly to the effectiveness of training. There are quite numbers of literature (Knowles, 1980

cited in Nooraini, 1994; Lewis & Thormhill, 1994; Dixon, 1996; Kirkpatrick, 1998; Campbell, 1998; Junaidah, 1999; Dubinsky *et al.*, 2001; Tukel and Rom, 2001; Tennant *et al.*, 2002; Geertshuis *et al.*, 2002) examines and provides insights into the problems and reasons for not evaluating, and the design evaluation framework. Nevertheless, there seems inadequate past research that fundamentally investigates and provides guidance in the design and implementation of training (Dubinsky *et al.*, 2001). Thereby, many organizations may face problems in developing effective training programme and truly bring about desired outcomes. Rather, as to avoid the problematic endeavors in developing programme, most of the training personnel may well be relying on organizational tradition, reproducing and reinforcing conventional wisdom, or their own perspicacity when designing and implementing training programme (Sork, 2000; Dubinsky *et al.*, 2001). Especially when those training personnel have insufficient experience and educational background in training and development, they tend to simplify and ignore the detailed parts of programme development by simply adopting the existing or tailor-made training programme especially when seeking answers to the following key questions throughout the process of programme development:

1. What are the specific objectives should be include for each learning activity?

2. What format should be used to deliver the training (e.g. written material, on-the-job)?

3. Who should conduct the training session (e.g. line or staff personnel, external trainer)?

4. Where the training should be held (e.g. company facilities, non-company facilities)?

5. What instructional method should be utilized (e.g. case studies, role playing)?

6. What should the training content be (e.g. topics on communication, presenting paper)? and

7. How to go about training evaluation (e.g. pre- or post-test, observation)?

There seems to be widespread agreement that programme development, which includes designing, implementing, and evaluating training, is not well conducted in real practice. Admittedly, the entire process of training development could be illustrated as a challenging job (Asma, 1994). Historically, the traditional ways of developing training have not successfully produced intended outcomes (Marthur, 1983 quoted by Asma, 1994).