A STUDY ON IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE TRAINING ON PROJECT PERFORMANCE IN CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN KOTA BHARU, KELANTAN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between employee training (on the job training and off the job training), and the project performance in construction industry in Kota Bharu, Kelantan. In this research, the function is getting a response and difference idea to questions on what is the impact of employee training to the project performance in the related construction industry. The term in this research is “employee training” and “project performance” which find the way of this factor that contribute the construction industry in achieving their target. The main target is the result of good project performance after the completion of the project. A total of 48 sample size of participants which is contractors Grade 4 have completed the research study. Quantitative method and questionnaires have been used as the main instruments to collect the data. The questionnaires are consisted of three sections that are: - Section A: Demographic, Section B: Employee Training, section C: Project Performance. The data that are collected has been analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) database software. Reliability analysis, Pearson correlation analysis, regression analysis and analysis of hypothesis had been use to analyze the data. Based on the regression analysis that had been done, it shows that the hypothesis is accepted. As a conclusion, there is a positive relationship between employee training and project performance.
ABSTRAK

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

All organizations in the whole world are determined for victory and out-competing especially those in the same industry. In achieving that, organizations need to obtain and also utilize the human resources efficiently. Besides, in effort to keep their human resources the latest, organizations must to be alert of facing more realistic. This is one of the significant part in each of organizational, social, economically connected parts among other which is important to the accomplishment of the objectives in that particular organizations and also organizations successful market’s determination. Managers also must give more focus to all the basic and important functions of human resource management. This study is about one of the most important part of human resource which is employee training and its impact of project performance.

This chapter is divided into few chapters. The first chapter in this research is the background of the study which will then be followed by problem statement, objectives, scope of study, significance of study, and the operational definitions. Finally, the overview of the progress of the rest of research will be presented at the last section.
1.2 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

According to Evans, Pucik & Barsoux (2002), the competitions in most of the organizations are increasing day by day due to globalization, changes in technology, political and economic environments. As a result, to prepare the employees to adjust to the increases above, the organizations need to train their employee and thus enhance their performance. In every organization, the responsibility to build up the company’s performance and the employee training’s implementation is one of the main actions that most companies have to achieve. Employees are very important and it is very significant to optimize the employees’ contributions to the company’s goals and goals in the effort of maintaining a successful performance. Managers need to make sure of an enough number of employees that are socially and technically knowledgeable and skilled of career development into specialist departments or management positions, which is very important (Afshan, Sobia, Kamran & Nasir 2012, 646).

Human resources are very important. Remember that human resources are the most important assets of the company, employees are the main contributors of achieving competitive benefit (Houger, 2006), and training is the only technique to develop the intellectual assets of the organization by building the competencies of the employees. Besides, organizations also need to obtain and utilize the human resource effectively in order to succeed. Human resource management that can fit into the organization’s structure must be designed because it will make it easier for the organizations to achieve their goals and objectives. To get the essential needed skills and improve the commitment, organizations must assist their workforce.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

In spite of the increasing effects on training for employees by organizations, the literature on human resource development is still inadequate which is in the issues in developing countries (Debrah & Ofori 2006, 440). The presented studies in this relation have made the general human resource management (HRM) highlights on the making a slit on some issues such as the effect of training on the employees’ performance.
A good Human Resource will eventually produce a steadily growing company in the aspect of management and also the performance. In addition, much more skilled and knowledgeable workforces are needed as from time to time the construction industry is becoming more complex. Saiyadain and Ali (1995) stated that in Malaysian firms nowadays, the measurement of training effectiveness was inconsistence and the formal education in management was not posed by most Malaysian contractors. The contractors might have low sensitivity to send their employees to the training because of this matter. Based on the study that has been conducted among the industry people, it shows that the contractors in most industries do not seem to be nurturing continuous learning. Training for the employees is usually practiced in the beginning of years of the employment at the organizations. Regarding to Coetzer (2007), once the employees become productive, the emphasis on learning starts to slowly disappear.

In this study, the researcher will find out the relationship of employee training on project performance in construction industry.

1.4 OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study is:

- To identify the relationship between employee training and project performance
1.5 SCOPE OF STUDY

This study was conducted at construction industry in Kota Bharu, Kelantan, Malaysia. This study is mainly applies to the contactors of gred 4 in the companies. The study groundwork will lies on the conducted literature review to identify the impact of training on the project performance.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The findings of this study is expected to help to highlights which ways will human resource, which is employee training, can be useful not only to the organization itself, but also to the project performance.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

**Human Resource Development** is the method for organizations in managing their employees and shapes them to build up (McCourt & Eldridge 2003, 2) in the effort of executing organizations’ objectives and goals successfully.

**Training** is a planned, organized and it results in improved level of skill, knowledge and capability that are very important to carry out the tasks effectively (Gordon 1992).

**Project Performance** is the overall quality of a project in terms of its impact, value to beneficiaries, implementation effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability.
1.8 EXPECTED RESULT

The expected result for this research is to achieve a finding that can be use by the higher managements to improve their management and at the same time improve the project performance.
CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Training and Development (HRD) function contains training and development that is argued to be one of the important parts of Human Resource Management (HRM) (Weil & Woodall 2005).

2.2 EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Employee training has actually already been recognized as one of the important factor in Human Resources Management. It has also attracted huge research attention by academic writers (Gordon 1992, Beardwell, Holden & Claydon 2004). Therefore it has come with several of training’s definitions.

Employee training is the systematic and planned modification of actions by learning programs, events and activities that will result in the trainees having the higher level of skills, knowledge, abilities and competencies to do their work effectively (Gordon, 1992). However (Noe, Hollenback, Gerhart & Wright 2003) argues that training is a planned effort to facilitate the learning of skills, employee’s behavior, and
job related knowledge. According to Bernardin and Russell (1998: 172), employee training is defined as any endeavor to improve the performance of the employee on a held job or anything that is related. It also means modification in skills, attitudes, behaviors, or specific knowledge. To make it more effective, it must involve the learning experience, planned organizational activity, and also be designed in response to recognized needs.

Employee training is not only about getting new knowledge, abilities and skills, but also the likelihood to endorse entrepreneurship, let the employees know how to fit-in any changes, encourage them to have a better attitude, train and involve the employees to make any important decision-making regarding the works (Jelena Vemic, 2007).

Besides that the researchers also keep arguing about the importance of the training as they continue their quest in the area of training research. Some of the researchers have some argue that the acclamation of employee training’s important in these past years have quite been influenced by the competition’s growth where foregoing of employee development is considerably enlightened (Beardwell et al. 2004). In addition to the above, Beardwell et al. (2004) also quote that the technological developments and organizational change have slowly bringing some employers to realize that success depends on the abilities and skills of the employees. So that considerable investment in training is really needed.

### 2.3 BENEFITS OF TRAINING

Cut Zurnali (2004) stated that the major training purpose is for the employees to have a better knowledge, behaviors, and skills highlighted in training programs and to use them in their daily activities. Besides, training’s purpose is to acquire and increase knowledge in a good way, improve attitudes towards work related tasks, and improve skills. Training is also a motivator that can bring the short- term and long- term advantages for both individuals and organizations.
According to Cut Zurnali (2004), there a few benefits of training that is provided by the company, that are suggested by Noe, Hollenback, Gerhart, Wright (2003). The examples of the benefits are:

- The knowledge of the employees about culture and outside competitors increased.
- The employees who have the expertise can be assisted to work with new technologies.
- The employees can also be guided to work productively in teams in order to produce a better quality of products and services.
- The culture of the company is ensured to focus on innovation, learning and creativity.
- The safety can also be ensured by providing new ways for the employees to contribute to the company during their employment and their interests change or expertise when they are absolute.
- The employees are prepared to be able to work more effectively with their mates, especially the women and the minorities.
- The availability and quality of the staffs can be improved.
- The employees that have undergone training will become more confidence and motivated.

2.4 HUMAN RESOURCES TRAINING NEEDS

Regarding to Wognum (2001) training and development needs might take place at three organizational levels that are strategic level, tactical level, and operational level where in strategic level, the needs are based on the upper management while taking into account of organization’s missions, strategy, problems and goals that must be resolved or fixed.

The second one is tactical level, where the middle management considers the needs of the developments to the cooperation and coordination between the organization units wile determining the needs.
The third one is operational level which the employees and the lower executive management stated the needs while the operations problem is considered, such as individual workers and related departments performance problem. Effective training or development is based on having an understanding about what is needed by the individual, the department, and the organization as a whole. Besides, a training need can also be conclude as a shortage of skills that can be eliminated or lessen by having a training and development. In the process of enabling the organization to formulate the human resource training and development, the main targets that will allow both formal human resource training and informal human resource training and development programs and methods produce an employee that qualify competitiveness and effectiveness, the consideration is worth it for supplying proper coordination and also appropriate incorporation for three levels needs.

The first issue is to distinguish the needs that are linked to the objectives of the organizations. There are three categories of identifying training needs (Wognum, 2001; Torrington et al., 2005). The first one is resolving problems where it highlights on the worker’s performance, improving some working practices that highlight the improvement notwithstanding of the performance problems, renewing or changing the situations of the organization, which might appear because of the changes or transformations in the strategy. It is shows in the Table 1 below. However while identifying the training needs, it is no need to generate, enlarge, sustain or enhance any system that is related in producing the workers with the needed skills. The objectives of the training program will determine the training programs, the chosen trainees and the content of the training (Milkovic & Bordereau, 2003).

There are a few approaches that have been focused in the past literature to identify the needs (Edmond & Noon, 2001; Torrington et al., 2005). The approaches are problem-centered (performance gap) and profile comparison (changes and skills). Correspondingly, the number of the ways for investigating training needs depending or either new or current employees have been discussed by the past studies (see e.g. Torrington et al. 2005, 390 - 392). The two most usual approaches are the problem centered approach and the profile comparison approach. Generally, the problem centered approach highlights on any difficulty in the performance and the management
will find out whether the problems are due to lacking of skills, which must be develop if the crisis is to be solved.

Profile comparison approach alternatively highlights on the matching the skills or abilities with the job filled, whether new position or existing position. Any improvement in strategy and technology may also carry the necessitate for new or extra skills.

**Table 2.1** The training need’s types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
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<th>Wognum 2001 (levels)</th>
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<td>• Resolve problems</td>
<td>• Strategic level (higher management)</td>
<td>• Problem centered (performance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>(workers’ performance)</td>
<td>• Tactical level (middle management)</td>
<td>• Profile comparison</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Improve practices</td>
<td>• Operational level (lower executive management &amp; other employees)</td>
<td>) changes &amp; skills)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Change or renew</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(company situation)</td>
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### 2.5 TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT METHODS (ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND OFF-THE-JOB TRAINING)

Nadler (1984:1.16) agreed that all the human resource actions are function to either develop individual’s performance on the current work, train new workers for new jobs or new positions in the future and common development for both individuals and organizations in order of achieving organization’s current and future targets.
Basically, different organizations will choose different kind of training methods because of a few reasons such as it is based on the strategy, objectives, and resources available of the organization. It is also based on the identified needs at the time, and last but not least, it depends on the group that need to be trained, which might be among individual employees, groups, departments, or the whole organization.

Cherrington (1995:358) stated that the method of training is consisted of two methods, which are on-the-job training and off-the-job training.

On-the-job training might include of teaching or coaching by people or trainers that have more experience of that particular area, at the bench or at the worktable (Armstrong, 1995). Usually the on-the-job training is given to the employees while they are doing their usual work at the same work spaces. There are many examples of on-the-job training such as coaching and/or mentoring, job rotation and transfer, and apprenticeship.

Off-the-job training focus more on the development and long-term education. As discussed in the literature (e.g. Hamilton, 1990; Harris et al, 1998) and as foreshadowed by the employers, off-the-job training generally added an extra dimension to the training undertaken by the young people. For example, it afforded the chance to learn about practices in other companies and to learn skills that might not be utilised in the particular workplace.

Off-the-job training usually involving sending employees away from their regular work spaces, and at the same time the concentrations is all on the training. The examples for off-the-job trainings are conferences and role playing. These will be explained precisely.

2.5.1 Job Rotation and Transfer (On-the-Job Training)

According to McCourt & Eldridge (2003), job rotation and transfer is the way taken by the company to develop and improve the skills of the employees, that involving employee’s movements from one particular responsibility to another official responsibility. As an example having to work on a higher position in the organization or from the different branch of the organization to another branch.
As an example, in transfers, it might need the employees to move from one country to another country. Along the differences exist in different countries which the organizations are operating, the rotations and transfers will increase the knowledge of give the employees about the different operations in the organizations. The selected employees will acquire a beneficial knowledge that can give benefit to company because the competitive advantage of the company will increase.

2.5.2 Coaching and/or Mentoring (On-the-Job Training)

The more knowledgeable and skilled employees will be coaching the less knowledgeable and less skilled employees (Devanna, Fobrum & Tichy 1984; McCourt & Eldridge 2003, 256; Torrington et al. 2005, 394 – 395). Mentoring is proved that it provides so many benefits for development of the responsibility and relationship building (Torrington et al. 2005, 394 – 395). Usually, the fresh recruited graduates in the company is applied by the practice by being attached to coach that might be their instant managers or senior manager. However that does not mean that the older employees do not need training method as it is more emphasized on the fresh employed individual in the company.

2.5.3 Apprenticeship (On-the-Job Training)

Basically, apprenticeship trains employees to meet industry standards for some specific work. Training programs which get together with the changing needs and individual needs are usually designed by employers and skilled employees. The objective of the program is to produce many skilled employees based on the requirement of the specific industry. Regarding to Gary Dessler (2008), apprenticeship training is a process where some individual become skilled workers, by the mixture of long-term and formal learning on-the-job training. Apprenticeship system can also be concluding as a form of full time employment and a process of training and education. While learning, the people can also earning. Training and education of apprentices should be arranged in a way to assist apprentices meet the company’s objectives.
2.5.4 Conferences (Off-the-Job)

Conference is one of the training and development method that need presentations by more than one individual to a large number of audiences. A group of employees are trained on one some specific topics all at the same time in wide number of audiences. However, it is not that easy to make sure that all trainees understand the topic overall and this become as one of its disadvantages. The trainees might not have the same level of understanding.

2.5.5 Role Playing (Off-the-Job)

Role training is one of the most effective training and development techniques that attempt to capture and bring forth decision making circumstances to the employee that are being trained. It is an excellent method to achieve a lot of benefits for company, management, and employees. Role playing is not just about practicing to work with an imaginary client out loud. It actually helps a group of employees to act out work scenarios. A great deal of confidences can be developed by role playing technique as it is an open communication and it also put a player 'on-the-spot'. According to Goldstein (1993), role plays can be trained when one of the participants act as him/herself, meanwhile the other person act as that particular individual the trainee interacted before.

Role playing can help employees to learn the acceptable system and it is one of the best ways to communicate about the ideas with the clients. A low-stress environment is the most suitable environment to conduct this technique as it is easier to adapt learning. The trainers can make corrections about the employee on the role-playing by having more rehearsal and they can also critique the employees on training. To make it more clear, this type of training should be done in the real job place.
2.6 PROJECT PERFORMANCE

The main indicators of performance in construction projects are consist of cost, time, and quality (Pinto and Slevin, 1988). They are highly interconnected and need some trade-off and balance among them to reach overall control over the project performance.

Hobday (2000), Sydow et al. (2004) and Turner et al. (2008) stated that project-oriented companies (POCs) are momentary organizations that combine diverse expertise and resources to deal with increasingly complex environments through projects. The traditional barriers to organizational change and innovation can be overcome by project-oriented companies, and there are few project benefits such as increased technical and the complexity of the product, reduced time to market, and speedy response to customer needs (Hobday, 2000; Sydow et al., 2004). Regarding to DeFillippi and Arthur (1998), POCs are usually found in a broad range of industries, which are in services and manufacturing. There are some contexts that be constituted of projects in POCs.

As an example, Sydow et al. (2004, p. 1478) said that there are four levels of projects: 1) organizational unit, where the project is surrounded by a business or functional unit; 2) whole organization, where the organization is fully project-based; 3) inter-organizational collaboration on project that are provided by networks; and 4) a particular framework for a project-based organizing that are provided by organizational areas in some particular industry. Behavioral aspects, in example the communication between workers and clients are included in the evaluation of project performance that has been widened by the scholars (Jugdev and Muller, 2005); stakeholder’s view, in example client’s satisfaction and profitability (Freeman and Beale, 1992); both external stakeholders and internal stakeholders (Lester, 1998); environments of the project, radical change and incremental change as the examples (Raz et al., 2002); and last but not least cross-cultural perceptions (Pinto, 2013). An important difference in separating the project performance evaluation in the short run and long run has been provided by Shenhar et al. (1997, p. 9). Performance of the short-run project refers on the project completion. It usually includes the efficiency of the project and the instant and commercial success of the project. Meanwhile long-project performance refers to the potential of the project for the upcoming projects.
2.6.1 Time Performance

The success of the performance mainly is an indicator of a success of any construction project. There has been many researches done that circulate about the performance of construction project. Regarding to Chan and Kumaraswamy (2002), the construction time is becoming more important because it is a vital benchmarking for assessing the project performance the organization’s project efficiency. Time is one of the most basic criteria to determine a project success. Unfortunately, most constructions industry in Malaysia has been recognized as industries that are facing poor performance that will lead to failure in achieving effective time performance. Because of this, many projects faced a delay in big amount of time.

2.6.2 Quality Performance

The achievement of cost and time are the aspects that project management attends most of the time, resulting in the half-hearted effort to make quality of the project as one of the most important factor for project success. The quality is often overlooked while achieving the objectives of time and cost in a project. Even there are many studies that have been done showing that quality is very important in a project; they are sacrificed in order to achieve a short-term objective. The control of the performance of installation, building or engineering arrangement should be managed in the same way as how time and cost is managed (Barnes, 1987).
2.7 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND PROJECT PERFORMANCE

Smith (1997) in Irianto (2001:6) said that training has a very significant role for the project performance which contribute to three main issues, that are: 1) Training and development has the potential in improving the productivity of the labour; 2) Training and development can make the quality of that output better: a more highly trained employee is not only more skilled and experienced at the work but also alert of the importances of the project performance; 3) Training and development improves the capability of the employee to adapt to any changes; the successful implementation of change whether technical (in the form of new technologies, new products, new markets, etc.) depends on the skills of the organization 's member.

Since day by day the new technology is emerging, the training to help workers learn how to handle the complex machines related to a construction project as example, is very important. The improvement of skills and knowledge among the employees is becoming more vital towards the performance, competitiveness and innovation (Lawler, Mohrman, & Ledford, 1998; Martocchio & Baldwin, 1997). In spite the existence of relationship between training towards project performance, the studies that have been done to give enough proof for the thoughts are still lacking.

If training is planned, there are many benefits that can be derived from it. This means that the trainers and trainees are all set for the training well later on. Training is an important action needed in order of achieving the learning that are necessary for improved project performance (Kenney & Reid, 1986). Kenney and Reid agreed that there are a few steps involved in a planned training:

1) Identify and define training needs.
2) Describe the learning that are necessary such as types of skills and knowledge that have to be known and what attitudes need to be changed.
3) Define the training objectives
4) By using right combination for training techniques and locations, training programs to accomplish the needs and objectives have to be planned.
5) Decide who is going to provide the training.
6) Evaluate the training.