

Initial Exploratory Analysis during the Halal Supply Chain Stakeholders' Engagement Programme

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Abstract

Halal Supply Chain (HSC) Stakeholders' Engagement Programme is one of the programme that gather the stakeholders from the Halal Industry organized by Malaysian Institute of Transport (MITRANS). The programme attended by total of 57 participants from the various industry. This study is initial exploratory in nature and data are collected through focus group interviews during the programme. Besides that, this study applies purposive sampling and judgement sampling as information are conveniently available from specific target groups. Results obtained from this study uncover the various issues faced by Halal players and are coded into five namely ISSUE 1 for training for the new comers will incurred cost, Communication barriers for ISSUE 2, Different training types, methods and curriculum for ISSUE 3, Lack of collaboration between JAKIM and organizations for ISSUE 4 and last but not least issues pertaining lack of government and management support for ISSUE 5. The paper is part of doctoral study and its significance shall serve as a reference for the government halal authority, training providers, higher institutions and researcher towards halal human capital development implementation in Malaysia.

Keywords: halal training, halal human capital development, halal education, halal professional

1. INTRODUCTION

MITRANS is Malaysia's advisory transportation institute and is responsible for transportation research, consultancy and training. The aim of the institute is to play a leading intellectual role in strategic transportation and logistics planning and development (MITRANS 2012). Over the years, MITRANS has also taken the lead in initiating changes, particularly in the application of new technologies, in the transportation industry.

MITRANS is prepared to provide innovative research and real-life approaches to the many challenges that the transportation industry faces in this interconnected age. Based at Universiti Teknologi MARA, a university with breadth of scholarship and entrepreneurial heritage, the institute is able to engage researchers and senior academics with specialist knowledge and know-how from multi-disciplinary fields, ranging from Freight Logistics and Urban Transportation to Innovative Technology and Transport Engineering. To ensure that the knowledge and skills of our staff and students as well as the technologies we create will contribute to the development of the industry, we commit ourselves to teamwork and effective partnerships with the government, industry and local authorities (MITRANS, 2012).

In 2009, a RM5 million research and educational grant from the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE, 2009) with the support of the Malaysian Logistics Council (MLC) was awarded to MITRANS to propagate more research on transport and logistics to be carried out for the nation. It was at this time, the needs for graduate research assistants (GRAs), research assistants (RAs) arose that led to the creation and design of postgraduate programs in transport and logistics (Shariff, 2014). The establishment of HSC is an extension of the rating MITRANS as a Centre of Excellence in Higher Education (HICoE) and services. MITRANS is the first center of excellence in Malaysia to accept the rating as HICoE core services.

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1.1 Halal supply chain (HSC) stakeholders' engagement programme

Halal Supply Chain (HSC) Stakeholders' Engagement Programme is a programme that organized by MITRANS on 8th July 2015 at Holiday Villa in Subang. The main objectives of the programme were as below

- To share initial research findings with the stakeholders;
- To obtain further information related to Halal Supply Chain from the perspectives of policy makers, service providers and users;
- To provide a platform of networking and collaboration among the university, policy makers and industry;
- To provide realistic recommendations to policy makers, service providers and users on Halal Supply Chain implementation at the end of the research.

The HSC programme is a focus group discussion where there are 7 groups involved. The groups were based on research area which are 1) Human Capital, 2) Legal, Institution and Governance, 3) Operational, 4) Inter-organisational, 5) Information Technology, 6) Shariah, and 7) Food Sciences. Each table will have representatives from industry and also representative from academic side, the researcher and also graduate research assistant. This programme was successfully conducted and the researcher managed to gather the information and able to make in depth interview with the respondents. A number of 103 had joining this programme with below breakdown, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Total participants during HSC stakeholders' engagement programme

Participants	Number
Industry People	57
Researcher	22
Graduate Research Assistant	24
Total	103

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Human capital development in halal industry

Human capital is best defined as a key element in improving a firm assets and employees in order to increase productive as well as sustain competitive advantage (Landau, 2009). Human capitals also refer to processes that relate to training, education and other professional initiatives in order to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets of an employee which will lead to the employee's satisfaction and performance, and eventually on a firm performance. Most economists acknowledge that a high human capital stock within a company resulting from a sound training policy is a major source of innovation and competitiveness. (Lucas, 1988) sheds light on the positive impact of education on workers productivity within a macroeconomic model. On a microeconomic level, the rise of new production and management technologies entails better qualified workers and managers which in turn requires the improvement of their skills. The impact of human capital on the productivity of the firm is all the more relevant at the higher level of the organization (Welch, 1970; Pack, 1972). Griliches and Regev (1995) stated that human capital significantly impacts productivity: firms endowed with a high quality human capital are more productive. Bartel and Lichtenberg (1987) and Booth and Snower (1996) link the level of human capital with deployability of new technologies leading to higher productivity gains as cited in (Au, Altman, & Roussel, 2008).

Human capital improves economic growth by having a positive growth effect on total factor productivity of a given economy (Ogunade, 2011). Financial capital is required for sustained economic growth, and foreign direct investments (FDI) are a means of raising the capital base for economic activity. In this regard, human capital spurs economic growth by attracting FDI used for capital intensive production processes.

In Malaysia, the development of the human capital is very important. According to (Muhamad, Fatimah, Sulaiman, & Sanusi, 2012), human capital is the key driver of growth in the knowledge-based economy and will determine the competitive position of the nation. The successful development of the knowledge-based economy will, therefore, largely depend on the quality of the education and training system.

Due to increasing expenditure of training and development, most organizations had raised the questions concerning the return on these investments. As a result, there is a decreasing willingness to spend money on faith and an increasing pressure to justify training and development costs. (Baldwin and Ford, 1988) claimed that "not more than 10 percent of training and development expenditure actually results in transfer to the job." In this

context, it is imperative also focus on evaluation of training and development; and to properly demonstrate and communicate to management that training efforts are making worthwhile contribution (Topno, 2012).

2.2 Halal human capital development

Halal Human Capital Development is now referring to the 4 main elements. According to Schultz (1993), stated that human capital is an important input for organizations especially for employees' continuous improvement mainly on knowledge, skills, and abilities. Halal is much concerned on the Syariah. Hence, Halal Human Capital Development now is a combination of four elements which are (1) knowledge, (2) skills, (3) abilities or skills and (4) syariah.

Human capital, recognized by organizations as the strategic value of the human assets, is the collective value of the workforce. Human capital is not the worker in a company- it is what that person brings and contributes to the success of the organization. Human capital is the collective value of the capabilities, knowledge, skills, life experiences, and motivation of the workforce (Aldisent, 2002). To remain competitive companies need to develop strategies to retain this knowledge from older workers and transfer it successfully to other employees in the corporation (Calo, 2008).

Technical knowledge is very important especially when comes to technical works by technical people. Sometimes new technical knowledge is used as an information commodity and sometimes it used as human capital. Technical and scientific knowledge, finally, refers to the mastery of specific bodies of organized knowledge and analytical techniques that may be of relevance in production or in the advance of technology, such as physics, architecture or the principles of logical circuit design (De la Fuente, 2002).

In Islamic context, the meaning of human capital is the ability and experience of human being to fulfil his objective and responsibility on this earth to be the successor of Allah on the earth and carry out the orders of Allah in the world (Abdullah, 2012). Hence, the differences between human capital in Islamic and conventional perspectives is Islamic human capital cover all aspects as a whole meanwhile conventional only focused on the human capital as a tools for maximize organizational profit and achieving the goals. Instead of that, the foundation of Islamic human capital is based on Quran, Hadith and Sunnah instead of conventional which is only refer to the ethics – the human law.

When look at the human capital high performance, job competency is one of the elements that contribute to the development of human capital. Competencies such as interpersonal skills and teamwork can be as important as traditional knowledge, skills, and abilities. Competency Based HR Management more effectively translates strategic vision into the behaviors that deliver desired business goals. HR leaders using competencies are able to tackle critical organizational challenges, and achieve the recognition they merit from senior management.

2.3 Halal trainings in Malaysia

Halal training is important for human resource development in the halal industry. As consumers for halal products, we must have basic education and knowledge pertaining halal so that we are aware and understand certain halal issues in the halal industry and market. For example, unauthorized or dubious halal logo should be tackled wisely with adequate knowledge and information about the halal logo; and to advise the company management on how to address the issue and to solve effectively if we are the employees. As consumers, we ourselves should also know the current halal trends and halal requirements on the food and products that we buy. For examples: consumers rights for clean and hygienic, halal and safe products to consume and use, services that are halal and permissible by religion; consumer rights for choices of education; rights for seeking compensation, peacefully environments, to mention a few (KPDNKK, 2013).

According to Malaysian National Integrity Plan (PIN) and Laporan Awal Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia (LAPPM) 2013-2025, vocational schools with cooperation by industry players have now introduce halal elements to their educational syllabus. All institutions of education and higher learning have developed their respective training programmes and modules related to halal and halal management. However, the halal educational training programme is not offered to the public by JAKIM Malaysia (Department of Islamic Development Malaysia) as it will contradict with their roles as halal certification body as well as halal enforcement. JAKIM is the government body that issues the halal logo together with halal certificates to applicants seeking for halal certification; and at the same time, this body also carries out halal audit and surveillance to ensure halal integrity; and this government agency is not for economy profits.

The rapid expansion of the halal services industry had increased; consequently creating the shortage of skilled workers and semi-skilled workers for the halal industry; and to maintain the integrity of their halal products in manufacturing, marketing and distribution. To meet the obligations of Islam or "obligatory kifayah", efforts are made to ensure that these workers, as front-liners are knowledgeable throughout the whole halal supply chain. Institute of Halal Research and Management (IHRAM) develop halal modules, training programs and services. Collaboration are done with agencies which have the skills and experience in conducting training Halal programs, such as Halal Industry Development Corporation (HDC), Global Integrity Products & Services Sdn Bhd (GIPS), the Religious Affairs Department and Chemical Company of Malaysia Berhad (CCM) the necessary courses and training in knowledge transfer programs were designed to meet the identified target groups. It covers the aspects of the knowledge needed to become a professional workforce, before undergoing the practical training in industry.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach has been chosen in conducting this research. As a qualitative study, purposive sampling was used to select participants from a population of stakeholders. The sample frame were drawn from two subpopulations: training providers and the participants of training or users. The researcher adopted purposive sampling technique in selection of informants for the study (Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 1996). The researcher felt that it was important to choose the right participants which could satisfy the purpose of this study. The data which may consist of interview transcripts, field notes from observations, a wide variety of records and historical documents, and memoranda, are treated to rigorous ongoing analysis. Three processes are blended throughout the study: collection, coding, and analysis of data. This approach encourages the kind of flexibility so important to the qualitative researcher who can change a line of inquiry and move in new directions, as more information and a better understanding of what are relevant data are acquired (Blumer, 1999). Table 2 indicates that all samples are conveniently chosen to have fair representation of Halal logistics players in Malaysia.

Table 2: Respondents in human capital during HSC stakeholders' engagement programme

Company	Description
Company AB	Government Agencies
Company CD	Training providers
Company EF	Practicing Halal logistics with dedicated warehouse facilities
Company GH	Manufacturing Company
Company IJ	Retail Company
Company KL	Manufacturing Company

Data collected for this study are obtained from primary sources, collected through series of focus group interviews. The researcher's act as a moderator in the focus group. Sekaran and Bougie (2009) stated that the moderator plays a crucial role as he/she is the one responsible for introducing the topic, throwing the questions, observing, taking notes and recording the discussion. According to (Ezy, 2002), to build theory and interpretations from the perspective of the people being studied, simultaneous data collection and data analysis are the key elements to strengthen the methods. Before analyzing the data, each transcript was read a few times and the tapes were played back as well. This was done so that researcher could recall and reflect back the interview session with the participants. The data will be recorded and the researcher will transcribe the scripts. Although there are scarcity of studies on Halal human capital development, the interview questions are designed from the combination of significant information from related Halal literatures.

The participants for this focus groups consists of six experts as Cooper and Schindler (1998) states that focus group should consists of six to ten respondents. Table 3 summarizes the respondents' information. In addition, the conversation are recorded using voice recording devises with the consent from the respondents.

Table 3: Summary of focus group respondents

Company	Type of Company	Position	Years in Industry
Company AB	Government Agencies	Assistant Director	10 Years
Company CD	Training providers	Trainer	6 Years
Company EF	Halal Seaport/Warehouse	Senior HC Executive	5 Years
Company GH	Manufacturing Company	Senior Halal Executive	9 Years
Company IJ	Retail Company	Halal Executive	4 Years
Company KL	Manufacturing Company	Corporate Manager	5 Years

The theme for the focus group is critical issues and challenges in improving the Halal Human Capital especially in Halal logistics. All the questions are designed and arranged from general to specific to invite openness and avoid bias (Grudens-Schuck et al., 2004). Based on (Miles and Huberman, 1994), conclusions are drawn once the data has been analyzed.

4. PRELIMINARY FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

During the discussion, the issues faced by the respondents from the focus groups were listed and compared. Table 3 shows the listing of issues faced in developing the Halal Human Capital especially in logistics. Based from the list, all issues are coded as ISSUE as per below table:

Table 4: Issues faced in developing halal human capital in halal industry

Code	Issue
ISSUE 1	Training for new comers will incurred cost
ISSUE 2	Communication barriers with foreign workers during training
ISSUE 3	Different training types, methods and curriculum
ISSUE 4	Lack of collaboration between JAKIM and organizations or companies
ISSUE 5	Lack of government and management support

All issues encountered during the focus group session by the respondents. All five issues have their own solutions based on the discussion during the programme.

ISSUE 1 indicates the general issues encountered in Halal Industry. High rate of turnover is one of the challenges that will be faced by the organisation as they need to hire new staff and need to repeat the trainings. Turnover is costly in terms of the recruitment and training needed to replace workers, as well as in the productivity lost while new workers are learning how to perform up to expectations. In fact, one study found that changing retention rates up and down results in magnified changes to corporate earnings. From the perspective and view of organization, employee turnover is very expensive. When employee leave an organization, it has become imperative for that specific organization to make a costly replacement as soon as possible. These replacement costs include for example, search of the external labour market for a possible substitute, selection between competing substitutes, induction of the chosen substitute, and formal and informal training of the substitute until he or she attains performance levels equivalent to the individual who quit (Fahad, 2011). Company GH claimed that even not given an annual training, the new comers will be given an orientation. The cost of giving an orientation to the workers may increase if the frequency increased. In addition, Company IJ also agrees that cost of issuing often training program will be the main contributor of high cost. Company KL had mentioned about the solution taken by her company by providing a lot an Internal Halal Policy and guideline for the workers.

ISSUE 2 express the issue pertaining to communication barriers with the foreign workers during training. Both company EF and GH explained that training can be monitor and guided thoroughly to the workers as the work directly under them. A supervisor has approximately have 10 workers under them. They have translator in order to overcome the communication barriers. Officially, a shift briefing must be done within their own schedule as a frequent reminder to the workers. The media guideline is according to the context of the info that needs to be provided. The warehouse workers have more foreigner but not by truck drivers. Representative from company IJ mentioned that the company provides three different languages of the guideline for assist the foreign workers in understanding the Halal requirements and regulations.

ISSUE 3 covers the training programmes and also modules. The respondents had shared their experience on the training programmes that had been attended before. The main critical problems here are that the halal training

program/modules/courses vary in content and syllabus, and training durations (Halal Dialog Session, 2014). There are many training providers providing halal awareness trainings with duration from 2 days and maximum of 6 months (Jamaludin et al., 2015). Besides that, the coverage, depthless and duration of halal trainings are inconsistent. All halal trainings/program are also not be verified for quality and accredited by a body. Tieman (2015), reveals that the University that incorporates Halal components into existing subjects, and suggested including lectures on Halal matters into existing courses as a way to fill the gap in Halal education. Representatives from Company KL and IJ mentioned that training is done quarterly (4) with each a different module content. Their company is establishing a Halal executive and team (Halal management and community). Other than that, engaging with HDC in term of providing the training module based on the level of the management and their nature of work. The scenario described by Company KL and IJ are in line with views from Company AB and can be supported by Jamaludin et al., (2015). Pertaining to the evaluation methods, refresher became the most important point to remember to make sure that trainings are valuable. Questionnaires are given to obtain the awareness and understanding of the training after a certain period of time and they have own control system and checklist in the critical point of the overall manufacturing process. As a one of the training providers in Malaysia, Company CD expressed that workshop is very important to lower level employees (foreign or not/muslim or non) and providing an internal understanding of halal. 60 days of evaluation form to verify if the workers are following the guidelines.

ISSUE 4 specifies on collaborative issues between Halal logistics industry players and JAKIM. In 2011, all the responsibilities including certification shifted to JAKIM and this causes confusion and more difficult process. Furthermore, JAKIM's procedures are difficult to abide and are not cost-effective. For instance, representative from Company EF said that they have a dedicated Halal warehouse that required an annually training by collaborating with JAKIM and HDC in organizing a Halal act for terminal way. Company CD said that the government should come out with their own initiatives to make sure that the halal industry in Malaysia growing fast. Curriculum in education within halal concept even international Uni's which makes Malaysia as reference for Halal Supply Chain. He also propose a free training course and workshop in halal concept to all organization.

ISSUE 5 express the issues pertaining to government's support and promotion. Although government supports the growth of Halal industry, the main attention is given towards product manufactures and small- medium enterprises (SMEs). It was also recommended that the support should also be internally understood by having training and awareness before implementing other stuff. Since awareness is very important to the industry, support from management to boost the level of knowledge towards the workers is very important. Although this issue might be contradicting with the research's opinion, it still an issue among the respondents. Company KL and EF claimed that the weak government and management support and intervention in promoting Halal logistics is the cause of previously mentioned and discussed issues. As consumers and as manufacturers for halal products, we must have adequate education and knowledge in halal matters so that we could understand the problems and issues; and to formulate relevant solutions to assist the halal industry. Appropriate trainings on halal management will ensure that the levels of knowledge and skills are meeting the halal and human capital standards among the halal industry players.

5. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the initial exploratory study has achieved its research objectives specifically to find out the issues faced by the industry players in developing the halal human capital. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are five critical issues encountered in Halal Human Capital Development in Halal Industry. The issues are coded as ISSUE 1 for training for the new comers will incurred cost, Communication barriers for ISSUE 2, Different training types, methods and curriculum for ISSUE 3, Lack of collaboration between JAKIL and organizations for ISSUE 4 and last but not least issues pertaining lack of government and management support for ISSUE 5. As cost becomes the main issue, the management must ensure that new comers are given the proper supervision and understanding of the work nature and Halal concept matter in their daily routine work. Training guideline and policy must be standardizing to ensure that the format and the content is verify and compliance with the regulation set by Jakim and Syariah. It must be provided immediately to ensure the stability and integrity of halal food product majorly within the scope of Human Capital. When dealing with foreign workers, it is a must to provide a suitable media of the training module given to ensure a better understanding of the things that need to be presented. Visual aids are also recommended as it would trigger more attention to the information given. Management must ensure that the type of training module and the way how the information is presented is suitable with level of the workers and their nature of work. The content of Halal training provided by each players are differs. Vendors (SME) especially Bumiputra are not been given a fully expose on the important and necessary closure of having GMP. Ensure that the requirement to have GMP is lowered down as a way to promote Halal integrity supply chain

from farm to fork. Ensuring that the type of training provided towards the workers are in par with their level of management and nature of work so that the information given can be fully adapt and understand by them. Make it interesting yet educational enough up to their standard of understanding Context of the module must be made base on the concept of T&A for a better outcome and ensuring that the trainer provide is acknowledge by JAKIM. Need more people to proposed with the outcome of the halal module as Halal is still a new thing. Module training given does not repeat annually or casually thus it is important to have an evaluation regardless the method to ensure that the workers are well develop and implementing and practicing the Halal concept within their work scope. Before getting into the lower lever, the top must be educate 1st as there are the triggers of the successfulness of implementation HALAL logistics concept.

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