

The Training Implementation and Effectiveness Among Majlis Daerah Cameron Highlands Employees: From the Perspective of Human Capital Management

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the implementation and effectiveness of training provided by the Cameron Highlands District Council (MDCH) in meeting the needs and functions of the department's employees. Through this study, the researcher revealed that the work performance problems faced by MDCH's employees called for the need for more training for them. A qualitative interview approach was used, and primary data was collected from 15 informants positioned in various departments in the MDCH. Through this study, the researcher found how the training was set for each employee in the MDCH. The findings of this study showed that work performance problems and training effectiveness have a significant relationship. The work performance problems experienced by MDCH employees were caused by the lack of acceptance of specific forms of training in their own field of work. The results of this study will help the management of the MDCH in improving the problems or needs required by the employees at the MDCH. Indirectly, this study can also help in diversifying the form of specialized training according to the scope of tasks and work areas available at MDCH.

Keywords: Training implementation, training effectiveness, work performance, human capital management, district council

1. INTRODUCTION

The knowledge, skills, and talents of the people working for the organization made up its human capital. The people participated in information processing, interpretation, and response to information while making judgments about how they wanted to feel and act. A key component of an organization's market value was its human capital. In other words, the organization must be benefited from the development of human capital (Armstrong & Taylor, 2014).

Human capital served as the foundation for the idea of human capital management (HCM). It focused on gathering, analysing, and reporting data that guides strategic, investment, and operational choices at the corporate level as well as at the level of frontline management. HCM was concerned with intentional measurement rather than just measurement. The distinguishing feature of HCM was the use of metrics to direct an approach to managing people that views them as assets and emphasizes competitive advantage, attained by making strategic investments in the assets through employee engagement and retention, talent management, and learning and development initiatives. HCM provided a link between corporate strategy and human resources. People produce, retain, and apply knowledge and skills (human capital), as well as developing intellectual capital.

The growth of the organization's mission to accomplish objectives or execute functions will be hampered by poor work performance issues. Employers in Malaysia were facing challenges in getting right candidates with the

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expected skills for their operational requirements (Low et al., 2024). According to Chavan (2018), the majority of social encounters involve some degree of soft skills. One may bargain to get a new job at a firm, tell coworkers about their fresh ideas, network for new positions, and other things. Soft skills were used often at work, hence strengthening them can help one to get more clients and advance more quickly in their profession.

On the other side, a lack of soft skills may restrict one or even lead to the failure of their organisation. Strong leadership, delegation, collaboration, and communication abilities allowed one to take on more tasks with ease, provide outcomes that satisfy everyone, and even favourably influence one's personal life by enhancing how they connect with others. Soft skills like communication were utilized outside of the workplace to form social groups and meet partner.

When employees have performance problems, they need relevant training, especially in the field and scope of their duties in line with the needs to fulfil the functions of the department and organization. Therefore, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of the training obtained by employees who have distinct functions for each field of work.

The main objective of this study is to explore the implementation and effectiveness of training in Majlis Daerah Cameron Highlands (MDCH) in meeting the needs and functions of the department. The specific objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To examine the implementation of training towards MDCH employees.
- ii. To examine the effectiveness of training towards MDCH employees.

This research was conducted in MDCH, Pahang, Malaysia. Fifteen employees from different departments in MDCH such as *Jabatan Kejuruteraan dan Kemudahan Awam (JKKA)*, *Unit Penguatkuasa (UPK)*, *Unit Tempat Letak Kereta (UTLK)* and *Jabatan Kesihatan Awam dan Perkhidmatan Perbandaran (JKAPP)* were chosen as informant to be interview in this research. This group of people was selected due to the nature of their work which requires good training to serve good quality of work.

This paper has four sections. The first section will discuss about the concept of human capital management focusing on talent optimization, specifically training and development. The second section will discuss on the research method while the third section will be discussing about the data analysis and findings. The last section will provide discussion, recommendation, future study and conclusion.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Capital Management (HCM) represented a paradigm shift in the field of Human Resources (HR), changing the paradigm from a primarily administrative position to a strategic driver of organizational performance (Kapur, 2020). Recognising that an organization's most precious asset was its people, HCM took a comprehensive approach to human resource management and development. HCM formed the cornerstone of a holistic and integrated approach to the management and development of human resources (Garengo et al., 2022). It went beyond perceiving individuals within an organization as mere employees or resources and recognized them as dynamic individuals with their own distinctive skills, talents, and aspirations.

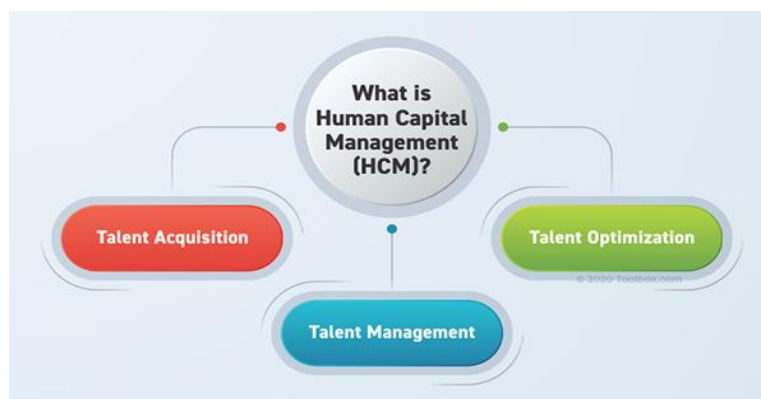


Figure 1. Human capital management

Based on Figure 1, a talent acquisition strategy was a tailored technique used by an organization to find, assess, and hire the most qualified applicants to meet its long-term objectives. Employers utilised talent acquisition as a

strategic process to assess their long-term requirements for people in the context of their organization objectives, find and develop the best personnel sources, and conduct the plan via candidate recruitment, assessment, and onboarding. Typically, it was the result of top executives' involvement and strong coordination between the HR department and talent acquisition experts.

The planned, systematically organised process of bringing on the appropriate people and assisting them in developing to the fullest extent possible while keeping organisational goals in mind is known as talent management. Thus, the process entails determining skill gaps and open positions, seeking out and onboarding qualified candidates, helping them develop within the system and acquire the necessary skills, providing future-focused training for expertise, and successfully engaging, retaining, and inspiring them to meet long-term organisational objectives. The concept highlights the broad scope of talent management and how it ensures that the organisation meets its goals by influencing every facet of human resources at work. Hence, it involves bringing the appropriate individuals on board and empowering them to further the interests of the organization as a whole.

Without sacrificing corporate goals and objectives, organisations must continuously look for ways to optimise people for both individual and group development. From the perspective of talent optimization, organizations may train their employees for both the skills that will be needed in the future and the skills that are now needed by using a customised HCM solution. Organisational leaders may make the best career-pathing choices ahead of time with the help of effective cloud-backed, data-driven HCM solutions, giving the organisation and the person a path forward.

The central goal was to transform employees into active contributors to the overall success and mission of the organization. The transition to HCM was akin to a paradigm shift, where people cease to be viewed as merely the cogs that keep the organizational machinery running; instead, they are acknowledged as the driving force propelling the organization forward. It repositioned human capital at the forefront of an organization's strategic framework. Here, the emphasis extended beyond the conventional management of employees' roles and responsibilities to unlocking their full potential and aligning their growth with the organization's overarching objectives. This comprehensive approach underscored the importance of understanding the diverse skills and aspirations of employees and leveraging this understanding to create a workforce that is not just competent but is also genuinely inspired and ardently committed to the organization's mission.

2.1 Training and development in human capital management- talent optimization

HCM places a premium on training and development, which extends beyond the conventional emphasis on basic skills and job-specific training. HCM recognises the importance of continual learning and skill enhancement in a rapidly changing corporate world. Organisations that practise HCM strive to create a learning culture in which people are encouraged to broaden their knowledge and abilities. This includes mentorship, on-the-job learning, and possibilities for higher education and certifications in addition to official training programmes. The goal is not just to improve employees' existing positions, but also to develop adaptability and innovation, which are critical in today's ever-changing global economy.

Within the scope of HCM, training and development programmes are a dynamic catalyst for increasing employee engagement (Nguyen & Duong, 2020). These efforts, in addition to skill acquisition, serve as a compelling expression of an organization's dedication to its personnel. They demonstrate that the organisation is invested in the growth and development of its employees, producing a genuine sense of appreciation and value within the workforce. As a result, employees become more engaged with their positions, teams, and the organisation as a whole. Employees who are engaged actively aspire to provide their best, and this dedication considerably improves their performance and the general productivity of the organisation (Alrafi et al., 2023).

The effect of training and development on employee engagement spreads throughout the workplace, increasing job satisfaction. Employees who are engaged are not only motivated, but they also have a better level of job satisfaction. They experience personal and professional growth as they learn new skills and broaden their knowledge, which greatly enhances their job experience. Job satisfaction is enhanced by the sense of personal fulfilment that comes from continuous growth (Nguyen & Duong, 2020). Employees who feel respected, encouraged, and fulfilled in their jobs are more likely to be productive, creative, and enthusiastic about their work. This optimistic attitude not only benefits their personal well-being but also improves their interactions with coworkers, resulting in a more pleasant and productive work environment.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher employed a qualitative research method for this investigation. The development of the qualitative research method in the social sciences allowed for the study of social and cultural phenomena as well as the observation of emotions, ideas, behaviours, and general societal beliefs. Grounded theory, action research, and case study research were a few examples of qualitative methods. Observation and involvement observation (fieldwork), interviews, questionnaires, written materials, and the researcher's feelings and perceptions were all examples of sources of qualitative data. The interview approach was used for this study. The purpose of the interview was to evaluate the performance of human capital management for employees in MDCH. Selective individual interviews were a crucial technique often used by qualitative researchers. The purpose of adopting the interview approach was to allow the researcher to learn about the subject matter, efficacy, and employee acceptability of management. The interaction between the researcher and the subjects consisted of a conversation in which both parties experienced comparable experiences and numerous truths were examined.

3.1 Population and sampling method

In this study, the researcher employed the purposive sampling method for the selection of the participants. Purposive sampling referred to intentionally chosen sample according to the needs of the study. This means the researcher selected participants because they have indicated their willingness to participate in the study. Likewise, this strategy enabled the researcher to collect relevant and useful information for answering the research question. Face-to-face interview was conducted however there are a number of informants being interviewed via email and phone calls due to hectic scheduling.

3.2 Thematic analysis

Thematic analysis was a method of analysing qualitative data. It was usually applied to a set of texts, such as interviews or transcripts. The researcher scrutinized the data to identify common themes, topics, ideas and patterns of meaning that appeared repeatedly. Though it was not as common in academic settings, thematic analysis was one of the most popular research techniques in qualitative research (Boyatzis, 1998). Despite this, this approach works incredibly well for examining patterns and topics in any kind of reference material to increase the amount of information that can be researched on a certain subject.

In this study, the researcher focused on how the MDCH management manages the training provided to their employees. These data were obtained through interviews with relevant informants. Based on Figure 2, when the researcher received and familiarized the data from the informant, the researcher produced a codification through research on the data obtained. Next, the data obtained were categorised through themes related to the question of the implementation and effectiveness of training before further analyses were conducted.



Figure 2. Thematic analysis

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This part of the chapter presents the finding and analyses the data obtained from the individual interviewees (Table 1) on the implementation of training and its effectiveness towards the employees.

Table 1. Profile of informants

Informant Number	Job Position in MDCH
1	Civil Engineer
2	Landscape Architect
3	Health Officer
4	Building Architect
5	Assistant Legal Officer
6	Assistant Engineer
7	Assistant Engineer
8	Assistant Engineer
9	Assistant Administrative Officer
10	Head of Information Technology
11	Assistant Administrative Officer
12	Administrative Assistant
13	Auditor
14	Chief Administrative Assistant
15	Administrative Assistant

4.1 Training

Training and development programs played a significant role in every organization. The need for training and development was determined by the lack of employee performance. The main areas where employees were usually trained in organizations were soft skills development, personality development, interpersonal relationships, problem solving techniques, management and supervisory training programs, quality improvement programs, technical processes, quality circle programs, time management skills, employee competency development programs, violence prevention programs, regulatory compliance, goal setting and program implementation, workplace safety management and workplace communication. The MDCH had an allocation of RM100,000.00 for a period of one year to manage any program or training which is deemed needed. If the allocation given was insufficient, the management can make an application and present in the Budget Meeting for additional allocation or the management can also apply for additional allocation by using votes from existing departments at MDCH. It was a long-term investment for employees' self-development so that they become more competent and able to cope with current developments.

This return on investment reflects the organization's concern for the importance and training needs of employees. This was mentioned by Informant 15, who stated that training and development were particularly important in ensuring that the skills and performance of employees can be improved. In addition, he also stated that the training provided by the organization will bring a return on investment if the employees succeed in reaching the set skill level. Employees at MDCH can apply what they learn from the training to the execution of their duties. Referring to the statement above, this study can be interpreted that investment in training is a commitment to plan, implement and monitor training programs effectively. This is important because it is a strategic plan conducted by the organization to improve the self-development of employees.

The study also found that the number of hours and training requirements are sufficient for each employee at MDCH. However, the management only provided basic training and lacked training related to the scope of work and meeting the needs and requirements of the department.

"The role of the organization does not meet the needs of the staff and does not achieve the target." (Informant 1)

"The organization does not provide adequate training. Service for 15 years but there is still a lack of knowledge

related to the scope of work, especially in the field of engineering, construction and so on.” (Informant 2)

“In my opinion, the MDCH still does not meet the requirements and fulfill the functions of the department. Until now I still lack more in-depth training related to the field I am involved in which is the field of landscape.” (Informant 3)

4.2 The effectiveness of training towards employees performance

As stated by Informant 14, the management of training implemented so far has a favourable effect in MDCH.

“If we carry out some work by following the procedure and layout, surely the organization can achieve its goals and be able to produce good work produced by the staff. This can also be proven through the various achievements that have been achieved by the Cameron Highlands District Council every year. This is also the result of efficient management by the management and also the result of the cooperation of the MDCH staff themselves”.

In addition, Informant 15 who is also the person in charge of the training department also stated that with the training and courses given, they can provide additional knowledge to the existing employees and indirectly can further improve the performance of employees.

“The training that is provided to the staff and that is carried out every year can provide them with additional knowledge, especially according to the needs of their respective departments. In addition, where the country has moved to the phase of modern technology, the planned training and courses are not directly able to help especially the old staff to keep up with the changes in technology to facilitate business and the implementation of a task”.

Based on the results of the interview also stated the implications of the courses and training given to be able to maintain employee performance in terms of attitude and integrity. Therefore, integrity was particularly important so that they do not abuse power. It was also stated by Informant 14 that as long as she takes care of and manages the human resources department, integrity was the most important thing. The MDCH also collaborates with the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Putrajaya Branch in curbing wrongdoing if MDCH employees were involved in the crime. Until now, MDCH employees are still free of corruption symptoms, and it is a noticeably big impact in curbing and controlling such crimes from happening. At MDCH there was also an Integrity Officer appointed to control corruption crimes from happening. Until November 2023, there were no more complaints related to wrongdoing or behaviour involving criminal cases of corruption. It was clear that courses and training related to corruption were immensely helpful for MDCH employees to be aware with corruption.

5. DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, FUTURE STUDY AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Discussion

The study's overall focus is on the issue of MDCH employee's performance, including issues related to attitudes and job performance. The research issues that the project is centered around how employees training is implemented, and how well employees training is tailored to the department's needs. In general, the findings of the research that has been carried out found that the employees do not have serious attitude problems, and it is not as serious as the problems that lead to the occurrence of criminal cases. This is because, MDCH always focuses on preventing the occurrence of serious criminal problems involving the employees themselves. This can be proven from the management's efforts to constantly monitor employee's behavior with monitoring from external agencies such as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the National Anti-Drug Agency. Indirectly, it can prevent serious problems involving the attitude of the employees themselves.

According to the study's findings, employees' performance would suffer, and the range of their job will be impacted by a lack of training and education. As a result, this research may assist management in understanding the unique requirements and preferences of the workforce in accordance with the need to complete the assigned tasks. Researchers must consider previous research and use it as a model for their current work. As a reference for next research, researchers may also point out shortcomings in the current study. Additionally, it is evident from

this research that employees of the MDCH struggle with job performance and need education and training to help them conduct their assigned tasks more effectively.

5.2 Recommendations

Suggestions to overcome this problem will be the role of the head of departments. The head of departments are an important group in making decisions and driving towards achieving goals for an organization. Therefore, they must play an important role to ensure that the needs of the department are met. For example, local authorities have strong finances, and the head of departments can consider to be able to provide the specific needs of each department. By increasing the number of specific trainings for the scope of work, it will indirectly strengthen the function of each department. In fact, employees can also perform tasks well because they have expertise and skills. Every movement to fulfil the function to the public starts from the upper level itself.

The second recommendation is the frequency of monitoring from MDCH management. As requested by the informant, the management needs to conduct monitoring to see if there are any deficiencies in a department especially those that have problems in conducting a task. If the monitoring is conducted frequently, the management will indirectly know what the deficiencies in the department are and what solutions are needed to overcome the problem. Usually, it is related to the individual's expertise and skills in performing essential tasks. It will be complicated when there is job rotation in the organization where the employees will be involved with new tasks and they will not always be placed in the same department except for those that involve technical tasks such as engineers, architects, enforcers, audits and urban planners.

5.3 Suggestions for future study

Based on the researcher's experience while conducting this study, there are several suggestions that can be improved by future researchers who will conduct a similar study. Among them, the first suggestion is to hope that this study can be continued by involving more informants or involving other agencies to see the extent of effectiveness and differences between agencies. This is because with a wider scope, the researcher can understand and know how to effectively maintain and improve work performance for employees in the organization by providing effective training management. Indirectly, the researcher can also share how the organization implements the steps taken by the management.

Next, future researchers may use quantitative methods in conducting research like this, which is by preparing questionnaires. This is because when many respondents are involved, the researcher will receive a lot of feedback from a large number of respondents and can indirectly help to get more information in conducting a study. However, future researchers can also use both methods in their studies, and this can further improve the results of the study conducted.

5.4 Conclusion

It was found that this study's objectives were achieved due to encouraging feedback from the informants to meet the criteria required in this study. In addition, supporting sources through secondary sources such as articles and the results of previous researchers' writings further strengthen the achievement of the study objectives. Apart from that, the researcher also used thematic analysis in conducting this study. Because of that, the researcher can explore the progress of this study based on themes and indirectly expand the research space in a specific field of knowledge. Correspondingly, the work performance problems experienced by MDCH employees are caused by the lack of acceptance of specific forms of training in their own field of work. In addition, the findings of this study indirectly help the management of MDCH to know the problems experienced by heads of department and subordinate employees. They can also take an approach by providing specific training to meet the needs and wants of the department itself.

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