

Effectiveness of Employees Training at Technical Academy Telekom Malaysia

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Abstract: Employee's training is an important element for developing competent workforce in the company. Many organizations in the world have spent millions of money on employees training as they believe that outcomes from the training can contribute to human capital enhancement in the organization. However, the outcomes of training are difficult to measure without formal training evaluation process. The aim of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of employees training at Technical Academy (TA) and Telekom Malaysia (TM). In this study, the training evaluation model used was Kirkpatrick four levels evaluation model. The scope of evaluation is confined to three levels which are trainee's satisfaction, trainee's learning and trainee's work performance at workplace. The quantitative method was applied in this study where self administered questionnaires and pre and post test questions were used as a research instruments. A sample of 155 TM employees who attended the training is selected as respondents. From the results, it is found that the trainees were satisfied with the training and the level of trainee's learning was increased moderately after the training. There were also positive and significant relationship between knowledge and skills acquired with work performance. This study has a significant impact to the training evaluation practice at Technical Academy Telekom Malaysia.

Key words: Effectiveness, employees, training, Kirkpatrick model, performance, respondents

INTRODUCTION

Now a days organizations in the world have invested lot of money on employees training and development programs. For example in the United States (US), businesses spent about \$70.6 billion. This figure was calculated by projecting the average training budget to a weighted universe of 125,778 companies. In Malaysia, best employers such as the Ritz-Carlton Hotel Kuala Lumpur, American Express (M) Sdn. Bhd, Federal Express Services (M) Sdn. Bhd, SP Setia Bhd. and Telekom Malaysia (TM) are spending millions of Ringgit Malaysia on employee training (Mohamed and Alias, 2012).

TM is a Malaysian telecommunication service company with headquarters at Kuala Lumpur. Currently TM has 27,830 employees and over 2.2 million broadband customers. Today, TM becomes Malaysia's broadband champion in providing comprehensive range of communication services for data and fixed line. With the vision to be Malaysia's new generation communication provider, TM continues to play an important role in transforming the way Malaysians connect, communicate and collaborate towards a better future. The great achievements of TM in providing broadband services to

the customer cannot be obtained without tremendous support and contribution from employees. In realizing that employees is the most important asset of the company, TM is fully committed in developing people through training and development activities as to increase people's knowledge and skills to carry out the tasks. Thus, TM through Technical Academy (TA) has designed series of training in the area of technical and Information Technology (IT) to uplifting the employee's competency level at workplace.

Training and organization: According to Dessler, training refers to the activities which provide new or current employees the skills which are needed to perform their jobs. Noe *at al.* (2011) claims that training is considered as the organizations efforts which are planned with the aim at helping employees acquire job-related competencies. In an organization, training is extremely important and becomes part of professional development for the employees. According to Paradise, organizations are now recognizing that employee learning and skill development are important for organization to sustain a competitive position. Private and public sector organizations are agreed with training and development is very critical to the growth and development of the core

activities in which the organizations engages (Noe, 2002). Furthermore, training plays an important role in Human Resource Development (HRD) which helps employees to adapt rapidly changing task requirements. This is supported by Kim (2006) that employee's training has become an important tool through which organization can improve its service quality, decrease labor cost and increase productivity and profitability. However, according to Kirkpatrick (1998) training is of little value to the organization unless it translates into performance.

Training evaluation: In determining the impact of training to the organization, training evaluation must be conducted effectively. This is very important for the organization since there is no alternative way to observe the impact of training except through evaluation process. Training evaluation is a study of whether training works and able to produces desired changes in trainee's knowledge and skills (Kraiger *et al.*, 1993). According to King *et al.* (2001), training evaluation is a process of assessing the results or outcomes of training and Brinkerhoff (2006) adds that training evaluation as a process of identifying changes as the result of learning occurred.

Training evaluation and training effectiveness are related each other and becoming a significant issue in evaluating training in the organization. While training evaluation is a systematic process of assessing the outcomes of training programs, training effectiveness is a study of characteristics of the individual, training and organizational that affects training processes before, during and after training (King *et al.*, 2001). Measuring training effectiveness is considered the most significant element in organization to ensure that employees and organization able to gain some value in terms of job performance improvement and organization business result.

Training evaluation models: There were many training evaluation models available in the literature. For example, Context Input, Process, Product (CIPP) model by sufflebeam Iput, Process, Output and Outcomes (IPO) model by Bushnell's, Contact Input Reaction, Outcome (CIRO) by Warr, bird and rackham, six stage model by brinkerhoff, phillips ROI model and the most popular and well-known model is Kirkpatrick four levels evaluation model. From many other models the most popular and recognized model of training evaluation is Kirkpatrick (1998)'s model of training evaluation. The four levels of Kirkpatrick' training evaluations are reaction/satisfaction, learning, application transfer and result (Kirkpatrick, 1998). All the four levels of measurement were shown in Fig. 1.

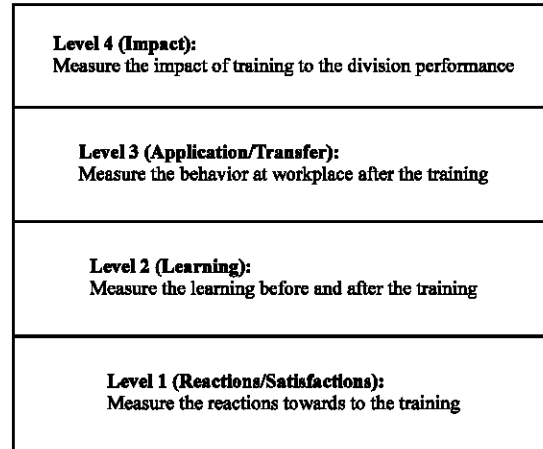


Fig. 1: Kirkpatrick four levels evaluation model (Kirkpatrick, 1998)

Each level is essential and has an impact on the next level. The process becomes more complicated and time consuming as the assessor move from one level to the next. As reported by the American Society for Training and Development as TD in its state of industry report, a survey of 276 organizations reports that 75% of organizations have collected reaction measures, 41% learning measures, 21% job behavior measures and only 11% collected business impact measures (Werner and DeSimone, 2006). The reaction level (Level 1) focuses on the participant's perceptions of the training program. Bersin point out that "satisfaction" is a more appropriate term to use than "reaction" because it distinguished the effect of training design towards the training effectiveness.

Learning level (Level 2) aims to evaluate how much the participants have learned from the training program and the behavior level (Level 3) is to measures whether the learning were transferable to the workplace to reflect positive changes in job performance. Chiaburu stressed that transfer of training is used to measure whether what is learned from training is transferred to the workplace. Kirkpatrick (1998) emphasizes that learning does not transfer to the job does not have any impact on the organization.

The results level (Level 4) is the effects on the business or environment resulting from the improved performance of the participants. This level seeks to determine whether the learning impacted the business by providing more profit, high sales, reduce cost and reducing numbers of customer complaints. This level is the most difficult level to measure. According to Speizer (2005), measuring organizational impact is very difficult, especially when establishing a relationship between training and an increase in profits.

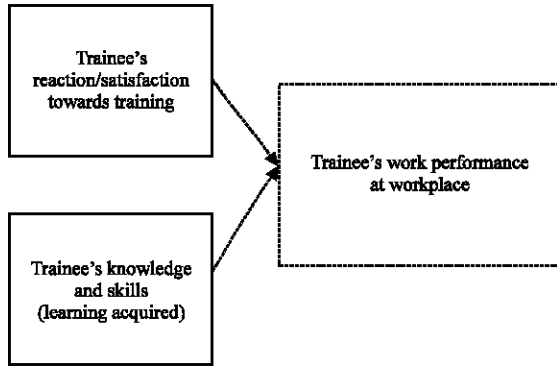


Fig. 2: Research framework

Training effectiveness studies in Telekom Malaysia:

There were few studies conducted on training effectiveness in Telekom Malaysia. However, most of the studies were conducted on Sale and Information Technology (IT) training. For example, Badrul has conducted a research to measure the effectiveness of competency training in handling CRM system training and its impact on job performance. The study revealed that less significant relationship between knowledge and skills towards job performance. Mohd (2007) carried out a research to measure the effectiveness of Sales Programmes for sale people in TM. The finding of the study revealed that learning, transfer of learning, works results and management support indicated a positive relationship to sale skills improvement. Zarim (2004) conducted the research about the competency based training and work performance in telecommunication company (Telekom Malaysia). The findings indicated that the competency-based training was moderately effective. The study also found that the competency level of the sales workforce after the training was average.

Research framework: The research framework (Fig. 2) was developed based on the objective of this study which is to evaluate the effectiveness of employee training based on trainee’s reaction, trainee’s learning and work performance. In addition, this study also investigated the relationship between these three variables. According to Ya-Hui, Kirkpatrick and Kirkpatrick, positive reaction or satisfaction to the training experience does not guarantee that learning occurred and employees did learn from the training, does not mean they will change their behaviours at workplace.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The methodology of the study is based on quantitative method where questionnaires survey was

Table 1: The rating score classification

Classification	Mean score
Low	1.00-2.33
Moderates	2.34-3.67
High	3.68-5.00

used as an instrument. In this study, the instrument is divided into four categories that are questionnaires for trainee’s background, trainee’s satisfaction, trainee’s knowledge and skill and also trainee’s performance at workplace. Pre and post test questions are developed to support the findings.

Respondents of the study were from network operation staff Telekom Malaysia (TM) who attended three days training at Technical Academy TM. There were 209 of trainees were selected as respondents. Trainees are required to answer the questionnaires and pre and post test questions before and after the training. After three month of training, trainees were assessed on their work performance. The assessments were conducted by supervisor at workplace.

All the feedback from the questionnaires was analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 20. The types of statistical analysis used were descriptive analysis, paired sample t-test analysis and pearson correlation analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were 209 questionnaires distributed to the operation’s staffs who have attended the training. Out of 209 questionnaires distributed, only 155 are completely returned. This is represents (74.2%) from the total population. Even though the percentage of returned quite low, nevertheless the figure 155 are appropriate enough to be calculated for sampling size based on Morgan and Krejcie.

Trainee’s satisfaction: This study describes the mean and standard deviation for all items/variables; satisfaction towards training. The mean values was obtained and interpreted to obtain an initial insight into the respondent’s feedback towards the variables and its dimensions. At this stage, the mean score will use to define the level of criteria of training satisfaction. The classification for the rating scale will be used to investigate the level of each item in variables as indicated in Table 1.

From the result, it is found that the average score for the nine dimensions under this measurement was 3.8924. This value is categorized as a high rating score based on the above rating classification table. This finding has supported earlier research by Badrul and Zarim on effectiveness of training in Telekom Malaysia where the participants has showed high satisfaction level towards the training.

Table 2: Correlation/relation indication

Correlation	Relationship indication
$r = 0.1$ to 0.3 or $r = -1$ to 0.3	Small/Weak
$r = 0.3$ to 0.5 or $r = -0.3$ to 0.5	Medium/Moderate
$r = >0.5$	Large/Strong

Trainee’s learning: There were two set of instrument used to measure this level. The first instrument was self rated questionnaires and the second instrument was pre and post test questions. From the result of first instrument, it showed that there were significant impact on knowledge and skills of trainees before and after the training. The p-value was below than 0.05 and the t-value was 27.564. For the pre and post test evaluation there were 155 of trainees sit for test before and after the training. The results showed that there was significant impact for pre and post test where the p-value was 0.000 (<0.05). The mean score for post test result was much higher compare to pre test. It can be concluded that the trainees were able to gain their knowledge and skills from the training given and the training has taken place. According to Mohamed and Alias (2012), if the participant’s knowledge has increased, skills have improved or their attitudes have changed then it is considered that learning has taken place.

Trainee’s work performance: There were many methods and approaches to measure this level. One of the familiar approaches is self rated questionnaires and the other approach is assessment at workplace by supervisor or superior. In this study, the second approach was applied where all the trainees who attended the training were assessed their level of work performance after the training. Based on the results, the average mean score for trainee’s work performance after the training is 3.514. Therefore, the conclusion can be drawn that the work performance achievement after the training was at moderate level. This finding is also inline with previous studies such as Ehrhardt *et al.* (2011), Ji *et al.* (2012), Jones *et al.* (2011) and Ng and Dastmalchian (2011).

Relationship between trainee’s satisfaction, trainee’s learning and work performance: This study was also investigated the relationship between trainee’s satisfaction, knowledge and skills after the training to the work performance. Therefore, to test and analyze the results, pearson correlation test was applied. As a reference and guideline on the level of relationship for each variable, Cohen’s table is referred as shown in Table 2.

The results show that there was positive relationship between trainee’s satisfaction, learning and work

performance. However, there were weak relationship between trainees satisfaction and work performance where the r value is = 0.027. The p-value is also equal to 0.010 or (>0.05) means there were no significant impact between trainees satisfaction to the trainees work performance. On the other hand, the result revealed that there were moderate relationship between trainee’s learning and work performance where the r value is equal to 0.402. The significant value p is also equal to 0.000 ($p < 0.005$) means there were a significant impact between these two variables. Thus, it can be concluded that there were moderate relationship between knowledge and skills acquisition to the work performance. This is supported by previous studies for example many other studies concluded positive relationship between the organizational learning and the job performance.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluates the effectiveness of employees training at Technical Academy Telekom Malaysia. The training evaluation model used for the study was four levels Kirkpatrick evaluation model. Out of four levels measurement this study evaluated the training for three levels only which are trainee’s satisfaction, trainee’s knowledge and skills (learning) and trainees work performance at workplace. From the study, it is found that the trainees were satisfied with the training. The results also showed evidences that trainees had improved their knowledge and skill level after the training and trainees also were able to apply on what they learnt to the workplace. However, the relationship between trainees satisfaction to the work performance was weak and the relationship between knowledge and skills acquired with work performance was moderate.

This study is contributes to the operation division Telekom Malaysia pertaining on the importance of training and development of employees and the impact of training to the staff and division’s performance. On top of that, this study is also assists Technical Academy to enhance the process of evaluating the training effectiveness. This study also would contribute to the training policy maker particularly to HRD Telekom Malaysia in conducting employees training and development plan. Due to some limitations in terms of sample size used for this study it is suggested that in future study, the sample size should be bigger for accurate results. The study also can be expanded to Level 4 evaluations which are training results in terms of division performance as well as monetary impact.

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