

IDENTIFICATION OF TRAINING NEEDS ASSESSMENT IN ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: *Every organization spends money on implementing effective training programmes to maximize the value of their existing human capital. Human development training programmes have been an integral part of encouraging the employees to be a competent and skilled labour force that is knowledgeable and able to perform assigned tasks based on their training needs. Training needs assessment is the first critical stage in training and development. Training needs come from underdeveloped skills, insufficient knowledge or inappropriate employees' attitudes in their job. Failure to identify the gap between current performance and skills required causes major problems in terms of time, resources, and money, which have been wasted on unnecessary and ineffective training. Therefore, the organization should realize that there are elements for the identification of training needs assessment to increase the knowledge, skills, attitude, and performance of their employees. There is still a lack of study that reviews the potential elements for the identification of the training needs assessment in the organization. This study is conducted to address this gap. Specifically, this study will review previous studies to identify the essential components for the identification of training needs assessment in the organization.*

Keywords: *Training Needs Assessment, Knowledge, Skills, Performance.*

Introduction

Training needs assessment is critically important for the execution of training and development in an organization at all levels. It can be as main tools and powerful process of training that helps employees, groups and the whole organization to be successful. However, training needs assessment (TNA) can be constructed as expensive and costly if not as it should be managed in correctly. TNA should be planned in wider perspective of growth and development for the employees in organization. It is essential to recognize the significance value of properly implementation of TNA in order to provide effective cost of training that motivates and nurtures employees' job performance. It is undeniably that TNA is vital especially for the organization to use the various tools TNA in accordance to increase the job performance of employee and organization development.

A training needs assessment is primary elements to determine who needs to be trained, where training is needed, what training needs to be taught and conducted (Rikkua & Chakrabartyb, 2013). The purpose of training is to ensure the effectiveness of the training programme well managed in right types of training that needed by the employees, employers and organization. Amos & Natamba (2015) in their study found that identifying training needs in the training process, having clearly training objectives, articulated training content and applying off the job training techniques significantly influence on job performance. Therefore, the existence of these factors significantly influence how employees are likely to perform in their respective tasks on job. They also describe that among the tested factors identifying training objectives and training needs were proved to be of a more significant importance in predicting job performance.

Training Need Assessment

Identification of training needs are the most common terms that can be used to refer either training needs analysis or training needs assessment and both terms are often used interchangeably and it generally used as similar terms (Rikkua & Chakrabartyb, 2013). Training needs identification become critical to change the employees' orientation and manage smooth change in the organization (Kapoor et al., 2015). Training needs assessment as one of the prime factors to increase the knowledge, skills, abilities and competency of the employees to achieve expected individual and organizational performance.

More than a few TNA models have been presented in the literature (McGehee and Thayer, 1961; Mager and Pipe, 1984; Rossett, 1987; Rummmler and Brache, 1995; Taylor et al. 1998; Leigh et al. 2000) which are known as Organization-task-person (OTP) model of training needs assessment. This model also considered the core framework for training needs assessment in the academic literature and most of the models developed since have been based on this three-tiered approach of TNA framework (McGehee and Thayer, 1961).

Leigh et al., (2000) acknowledged that needs assessment models have existed for the past three decades and each differs in terms of its levels of concentration. However, the TNA models have not seen significant changes over the past 30 to 40 years, in terms of theory as well as practice (Goldstein, 1993). Holton et al. (2000), Goldstein and Ford, (2002) and Clarke (2003) also stated that the (OTP) model arising from an investigation of training needs to meet organisational needs, task or job needs, through to the specific of the individual or person needs for determining the needs that training can be reached based on OTP model. McGehe and Thayer (1961) introduced the tripartite level of the TNA model and this model has been a great influence to other subsequent models of TNA. There are the following brief description of three

levels conception of needs assessment; (i) organizational Analysis, (ii) task analysis and (iii) individual analysis.

Organisational Analysis

Organizational analysis focuses on identifying where in the organization training is needed (Goldstein and Ford, 2002). The organization analysis determines the performance within the organization. This level of analysis can help to reach organizational goals. The purpose of organizational analysis is to provide information about where and when training was needed in an organisation as described by McGehee and Thayer (1961).

Task Analysis

This level of analysis identifies the nature of the tasks to be performed on the job and the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) that are required to perform these tasks. Task or operations analysis attempts to identify the content of training on what an employee must do in order to perform competently based on job analysis, task analysis, and knowledge and skill gap analysis (Goldstein and Ford, 2002). This level of analysis concerned with what knowledge, skills and abilities are necessary to perform certain jobs or tasks. The questions on what the employees must learn and what types of training are required in order to perform well in tasks or job can be identified in this level.

Person Analysis

Person or individual analysis determines how well each employee is performing the tasks that make up their job (Goldstein and Ford, 2002). It analyses how well individual performs the task and job. This level identifies who need the training and who should be trained, what training is needed by individual and for what purpose the training should be conducted in this analysis.

All three levels of the needs analysis above are interrelated and the training needs should be identified at all levels. Organisation's needs as well as employee's needs can be developed through all of the three level: organisational, tasks and individual training needs in order to produce a good training program to their employees in organization. Muhammad and Rashid (2011) in their studies provides rationale linking for uses of training needs assessment with nine major human resource management and development areas such as training plans, goal setting, employee development, knowledge, skills and attitude, learning motivation, cost effectiveness and performance appraisal. They said that training needs assessment provide information between training and non-training needs that should be used for employees' professionals and personal development respectively. It shows that training needs is one of the main process to develop human resource to attend an appropriate training that suitable with their training needs thus enhance the performance in organization.

Therefore, it is critical that before the training program begin, there are few elements that can be as a guideline in order to know the importance predictor that relate with the training needs assessment process. It can be analysed with identifying the competency of knowledge and skills of employees itself. When there is a lack of knowledge and insufficient skills thus both of these aspects can be improved through the identification of training needs assessment first. This is one of the important elements that need to be consider in training process. Chiu, et al (1999) claim that performance' problems due to employee lack of knowledge and skills can only be solved by training. Wright and Geroy (1992) pointed out that training needs assessment is conducted to improve organization performance through developing the employees to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills. The following description explain on the importance

elements for identification of training needs assessment that should be address in organization. There are few crucial elements identification of training needs that essential to be identified and it relates with the purpose of conducting training needs assessment.

Elements for Identification of Training Needs Assessment in Organization

Competencies of Knowledge and skill assessment

Training is a systematic process for an individual to learn the skills and increase knowledge for the personal and organizational goals (Armstrong, 2012). Human resource needs to be trained in order to enhance the performance and increase the knowledge and skills of the employees in organization. The job can be performed in effectively through the assessment of knowledge and skills that needed by the employees (Gupta, 2007). Both of these aspects can be as a solution to identify the training that are required by the employees in organization. This point of view is supported by Amna and Sumaira (2012) knowledge and skills assessment is influence the training needs analysis by 80 respondent who are manager in Islamic banking sector. They found that the manager realized that they need more training based on their urgent need for enhance their capability knowledge and skill in managing employees for more efficiency and effectively. Knowledge and skills are the critical factors that can be trained through identification of training needs in organization.

There are six conditions to implement knowledge and skills assessment in which the first, it is for new business opportunities, second is the operation of a new system or technology, third is to update a current training program, forth is to add new job responsibilities, fifth is to reorganize when there is a time for downsizing in an organization, and lastly is to support rapid organizational growth (Gupta, 2007). Fyffe and Fleck (1998) study to assess the knowledge and skills necessary to enable staff to use a new information technology system. They are using questionnaires, focus groups, observation and interview method of TNA. The findings reveal that a gap was identified between perceived and actual training needs in terms of the technical skills required and the need to apply technology. It shows that both of these elements; knowledge and skills are important predictor that being studied in analysing the training needs. In addition, Breshnahan & Johnson (2013) says that the methodology used in needs assessment allowed to evaluate gaps in skills and develop a plan for training. It also takes into account on assessing the current knowledge or lack thereof and analysis the trainees' opinions. Knowledge and skills are the factors that can be used when justifying the identification of training needs among the employees. This can provide actual training and will improve the knowledge and skills of potential trainees through the implementation of training needs assessment.

A study done by Horng and Lin (2013), found that the importance of competency is determined by using the fuzzy Delphi technique and 360-degree feedback. This competency factor being studied by Horng and Lin (2013) focusing on competency-based training framework integrating training needs assessment approach. It shows that Delphi technique and 360-degree feedback being important approach to assess the training needs of individual, task and organizational analysis. This method is based on someone experts' opinions to confirm the importance of the competencies required by employees or trainees in training needs process. It can be one of indicator to analysis the competencies that can be improved and provided through accurate training needs. It could fill the gap and problems or issues that can be address in their lack of employee performance in organization. The experts such as general manager, director, experience practitioner training, professor and any expert persons that match with the position on that training areas can be recommended to involve for the fuzzy Delphi method whether

through interview or questionnaires. It shows that competency assessment can be as the factor for the identification of training needs assessment.

The competency has become an important element in today's organization and every organization is choosing for a competent workforce for their organization (Luann, 2012). The competent workers can attain better strategic goals and the reason for implementing training needs assessment for any organization is to understand training requirements of staff (Luann, 2012) and it can be invested for the right person to the right training needs. This is due to employees is the biggest asset in every organization and the analysis of training needs should be plan in properly.

Furthermore, Knowledge and skills competencies are the important techniques that are required by the employees in organization. A study by Kapoor et al (2015) found that management adapt some of the important techniques like competencies of Knowledge and skill are important and essential by the team, performance appraisal, Client or Customer Satisfaction Index, and Direct Observation are made to identify the training needs. The study indicate that identification of training needs assessment enables to give the smooth flow information of the right training and help organisation to enhance employees' productivity, competitiveness person and good moral in an organization.

Career Development Assessment

According to Rees et al. (2005) the significance of training and development has widely perceived by both organizational theory and practice. Training and development provide a guidance to employees for enhance their career development. There are some conditions training need assessment for career development of employee in the organization (Aгнаia, 1996) which are new employees are acknowledged to work in the organization, employee's promotion, continuous knowledge and skill development, or movement of the changes of the task on the job. Clarke (2003) highlights that the implication of the results of training needs assessment is for the career prospects and future job security of competent employees.

When the career development is the main priority of employee, training need analysis be a tool which is can help them to improve their skills, knowledge and attitude by attending training related to their job tasks. Therefore, no issue of mismatch of training occur among the employees. The right person to the right job with the right training will produce the excellent of employees for achieving mission and vision of the organization. Furthermore, managerial-level employees require more lifelong learning opportunities, as well as a long-term, systematic personal training plan (Hjalager & Anderson, 2001). It means that training needs analysis initially at first before any training program conducted for the employees. Employee career development can retain the best talent (Yang & Wan, 2004) and devoting themselves as attention factor that remain the employees participate and attend the training that are needed by them for their future career opportunities.

Clough (2000) suggests that longer term training needs will be identified through individual employee's development plan. It means that the career development of employees can be assess through training needs and give the opportunity for them to growth by attending the required training development needs that organized by the organization. Therefore, organizations must continuously assess their employees' current training and development needs and identify training and development needs to prepare employees for their next position. This is essential for the organization to recognize the training needs will change over time based on their career position and different employees will have different training needs for career development.

Performance Analysis

Rothwell and Kazanas (2004) defined performance analysis as the analysis of conflict between standard and actual performance which the problems can be solved through instructional solutions and through non-instructional solutions. Meanwhile Swanson (1994) mentioned “the analysis of performance variables to determine actual versus desired organizational, process, and individual performance” is a performance analysis. Individual, processes and organization are the three-element related to performance analysis (Castle, 2005). It is also supported by Rummier and Brache (1995) which mentioned that the three elements are the technique in enhancing of the performance. Rummier and Brache (1995) argued that the three elements of performance analysis consist of organization level which affects performance and provides the solutions of problems, process level makes certain that processes meet the needs of customers, and organizational needs for making the process work effectively and efficiently and individual level the most detailed level of improving performance. After these three elements are identified, the training need assessment can be easier in fulfilling the real needs of both sides between employee and organization in implementing the training programme.

Most of the organization analysis the performance of employees by looking at the performance appraisal of their staff. The performance analysis is one of the elements that are interrelated with the analysis of the training that are needed by employees and organization. This is one of the tools that can measure and analyse the employees and job performance. When the performance is bad and there is a lack of individual and job performance therefore performance appraisal is used to identify what is the training that is suitable and appropriate to increase their job performance in the current and expected performance based on the execution of training needs assessment.

Rebeka et al., (2011) study the impact of performance appraisals on training needs analysis and it was found that performance appraisal is the most popular method used by human resource division and 73.33% stated this practice as ‘frequently’ and ‘always’ uses as practice on analysing training needs in organization. In addition, a study done by Koech & Nzulwa (2017), found that majority of the respondents indicated that the most used method in identifying employees training needs was employee performance appraisal at 90%, 7% on employee interview and 3% on employee questionnaires. It shows that performance analysis can be implied by using performance appraisal and that is the best method of sourcing the training needs assessment in applying the training and development among employees in organization.

Job Analysis

Bemis et al (1983) stated that job analysis is ‘to provide an objective description of the job, not of the person performing it’. Meanwhile Gupta (2007) argued that scope, responsibilities, and tasks of a job are the information should be notified to employees. Job analysis is also conducted when the current job descriptions are inadequate for use with a more systematic task analysis (Rothwell and Kazanas, 2004). Job analysis is the second step after process of analysing training problem (Nolan, 1996). Training is the solution of problem for employees who lack of skills and knowledge in job task. When the organization aware the actual job of the employees based on the job analysis, the organization should provide a training need analysis for identify the training which suitable to the employee. Job analysis shows the specific task and can match the need of training that the employee should attend. It shows that job analysis should be considered as one of the factors in identifying the training needs among the employees in organization.

Most of the local organization are little emphasis on training needs analysis and provide training essentially for replacement purposes (Chew, 2005). Yong (2003) argues that local firms are not emphasize in training need because they are less interest in skill enhancement, approach training on a needs basis and limit learning to job specific training. Local organization have their negative perception towards local employees. They are not expecting employees to commit to lifelong learning especially in new technology. The employees do not show their interest in the career advancement which they are not committed to their job. Training and development focus on technical knowledge and skill training with little emphasis on social and intercultural skills and competence development.

According to Kitching & Blackburn (2002) employees in the smallest organizations are more concerned the job analysis is gained through training qualification rather than those employed in the largest organizations and effect performance in organization. Devins, Johnsin and Sutherland (2004) claimed that any types of training can be affected to the organization performance. When the organization identified the job analysis, the variety types of training programme listed and the employees have option to choose which training programme suitable to them. It is the one of the process of training need analysis, which if the organization provide variety types of training, it can encourage employees to enhance their capabilities based on the job analysis. The job analysis is the one of elements that can be match with what the types of training that are needed by the employees to increase their performance in organization.

Web Based Approach

There are various ways to determine employees' developmental needs. The most commonly used method is a survey to the employees and their managers measuring the employees' skill levels. However, survey is a traditional method and it a tedious and time consuming. According to Yu Hui, Rosa and Sun (2006) web-based tool is the most effective in identifying training needs assessment which accessible by using internet technology. Web-based training needs assessment system to effectively and efficiently assist organizations in their pursuit of competitive core competencies. Advances in web technologies in recent years provide a promising new avenue for the development of training support applications.

Meade (2000) emphasized that web-based HRIS software provides self-service accessibility to the employees and managers via Internet for mutual communication. Evans and Mathur (2005), discussed the role of Internet in survey research, presented 16 major strengths of online survey including global reach, flexibility, speed and timeliness, ease of data entry and analysis, and low administration cost. The only obstacle to collecting data via technology is the design and development of web pages, which can be very time-consuming. Fortunately, this can simply be supported by questionnaire design tools (Tao and Yang, 2000). Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals do recognize the power of web technology in helping them become more efficient.

Therefore, web-based training needs assessment system for competence-based training, is well-received by the HRD professionals. These claims by Yu-Hui et al (2006) which was evidenced by several eager HR managers who came up to the researchers after the system demonstration of first-phase evaluation to express interest in utilizing a complete system, based on knowledge of the prototype. Training need analysis can be improved by using web-based as a tool to collect the information about the need of training by employees.

Discussion

Based on the above, (i) competencies of knowledge and skills, (ii) performance analysis, (iii) career development, (iv) job analysis and (v) web-based approach as the elements for the identification of training needs assessment. Analysis of training needs can be determining through lack of knowledge and skills from the employees, incompetence, the way to increase the performance of employees by their performance appraisal, emphasizing on job analysis; job description and job specification and enhancing employees' career development needs through the right training.

Koech & Nzulwa (2017) found that 60.8% all of the employees in Kenyan Manufacturing Firms Organization were involved in the identification of staff training needs assessment in their organization. It shows that all employees were involved in the identification of training needs compared to top management who determined staff training needs analysis at 39.2% only. It indicates that the employees as the main person that should be ask on what is types of training that are really needed by them to increase their performance in organization.

A few organizations just depend on performance appraisal and other source but ignoring by asking their employees itself. They also indicated that a total of 76.5% strongly disagreed and disagreed they as individual employees were involved in identification of respective staff training needs analysis and only 23.6% averagely agreed there were involved on this matter. This indicates that individual staff was not involved in the analysis of staff training needs hence facing a challenges and barriers in implementing the training needs in organization and confronting a conflict of interest between the employee and the supervisor (Koech & Nzulwa, 2017). This point of view is supported by Ferdous & Razak (2012) indicated that most 70% of the employees claimed that the management are not seeks the input from their employees on identifying training needs assessment (TNA).

Therefore, identification of training needs could be address in order to scrutinize what is the elements that are necessary before the training needs have been identified. Previous studies show that proper training needs identification process will help organization to improve its productivity and develop employees' competitiveness and morale (Kapoor et al., 2015).

The organization also need to pursues an effective staff training needs analysis thus it has a positive effect on the employee and company performance (Koech & Nzulwa, 2017). In addition, they said that training needs should be used as a basis for training allocation in every organization. Clough, (2000), Hjalager & Anderson (2001), Clarke (2003), Koech & Nzulwa (2017) suggest that the study on why factors such as age, marital status or education background limit employees from attaining carrier development, lifelong learning opportunities and employee's development. This is one of the elements that need to be address in training needs in developing future career for employees in organization.

Apart from that, competencies of knowledge and skills (matched with person and task analysis in OTP model), performance analysis (relate with organizational, person and task analysis in OTP model), job analysis (relate with task analysis in OTP model) and web based approach (relate with task and person analysis in OTP model) and career development (relate with task and person analysis in OTP model) are also considered as an area that need to be explored for identification of training needs assessment in organizational context. All of these elements are related with the OTP model of TNA that considered to have been first developed by McGehee and Thayer (1961). Thus, all of these three levels of training needs must be identified in a systematic and continuous manner in order to design training program in effectively.

Conclusion

Human development training programmes have been an integral part in encouraging the employees to be a competent and skilled labour force that is knowledgeable and able to perform assigned tasks based on their training needs. Training needs assessment is the first critical stage in training and development. Training needs come from underdeveloped skills, insufficient knowledge or inappropriate employees' attitudes in their job. Failure to identify the gap between current performance and skills required causes major problems in terms of time, resources, and money, which have been wasted on unnecessary and ineffective training. This study is conducted to address this gap. Therefore, the organization should realize that there are elements for the identification of training need assessment to increase the knowledge, skills, attitude and performance of their employees.

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