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Abstract

There is an increasing interest in training in the world in general and in United Arab Emirates in particular to improve the performance of human resources to achieve the desired level of effectiveness and to remain successful. In most of Arab countries training is not conducted in a professional manner, in terms of TNA, nominating the trainees, implementing the programmes and evaluating the programmes.

Training Needs Analysis (TNA) is often considered the most important step among the steps in the training cycle and therefore, should precede any training intervention. However, in spite of needs assessment’s important role, the literature contains little empirical work on the topic. Thus, this study seeks to understand the role of existing training needs analysis process of Abu Dhabi Police, and the factors that affect the process to identify the needs and the impact of this on improving organisational performance.

To achieve the aim of this study, questionnaires and interviews will be carried out in the Abu Dhabi Police. Moreover, this study hopes to contribute to the knowledge, by raising and improving the understanding of current methods and practices of training needs analysis in Abu Dhabi Police and enrich and fill the gaps in the literature of training needs analysis in Arab countries.
Introduction

The significance and value of training has long been recognized. Given today’s business climate and the exponential growth in technology with its effect on the economy and society at large, the need for training is more pronounced than ever (McClelland, 2002).

Therefore, organisations need to consider some important issues as they face the future: continuous technological change; the increasing removal of trade barriers; the consequent globalisation; the volatility of customer demand within existing markets (Luoma, 2000; Ulrich, 1997). These continuous changes have challenged organisations to learn how to manage their businesses in the context of these continuous unpredictable changes, to learn how to confront these changes quickly and successfully. It is argued that, in order for an organisation to achieve its objectives and goals, it needs to consider the important role of its people; it needs a highly competent, skilled and trained workforce.

The need to compete from the inside out has made organisations aim to increase the power of their people-related processes to build and sustain competitive advantage as the ultimate organisational objective; thus, outperforming competitors (Luoma, 2000).

What is Training?

The simplest definition of the training in the traditional training theory is “...the acquisition of knowledge and skills for presently know tasks” (Lawrie, 1990, p 44, quoted in Crutchfield, 2000, p 92). Deutsch (1979, p 104) also, define training as following: “Training serves to help increase upward mobility within the organization, to adjust workers to the technological changes affecting the workplace, and often simply to introduce people to the world of work at the entry level”.

Therefore, training is an important activity within an organisation and it aimed at effecting positive changes in the trainees in terms of their knowledge, skills and attitudes,
making the level of performance better. In other words, training is a planned and continuous process designed to meet the training needs of present and future of an individual through increasing knowledge and improving skills, which improves employees’ performance and increase productivity at work.

Training is responsible for building skilled, qualified and capable people, which helps organisations to improve their performance and adapt to any new change. This is why some successful organisations spend a great deal on the Training and Development function; however, organizations often train more employees than necessary, or the training investment is "wasted" on the wrong employees. In USA, an estimated $50 billion is spent annually on formal training, with an additional $90 to $120 billion on less-structure, informal training (Broad & Newstrom, 1992, p.5, quoted in Cekada, 2010). Therefore, scholars generally recognised that the first important phase in planning and developing a training programme is to determine the needs for such a programme within an organisation (Boydell, 1976; and McGehee and Thayer, 1961). Furthermore, the idea behind training needs analysis is that only when there is a match between training needs and the content of training, beneficial outcomes to organizational performance can be realized (Van Eerde, et al, 2008)

**Identifying of Training Needs**

In general, the identifying training needs step is recognised as one of the most important steps in training. This first step in training process is primarily conducted to determine where training is needed, what needs to be taught, and who needs to be trained. Thus, without this step, there can be no solid prognosis to diagnose if the whole training process was correctly designed (Anderson, 1994, Bowman and Wilson, 2008, Goldstein 1993).
Definition of TNA

One of the clearest explanations of needs assessment is given by Anderson (2000, p 9), who writes that the needs assessment is the starting point in the training process. It is the phase in which an organization’s needs are identified, forming the foundation of an effective training effort. The needs assessment tells where and what kind of training programs are needed, who needs to be included, conditions under which training will occur, and criteria to guide program evaluation.

Therefore, Training needs assessment is an ongoing process of gathering data to determine what training needs exist so that training can be developed to help the organization accomplish its objectives (Brown, 2002). Furthermore, the idea behind training needs analysis is that only when there is a match between training needs and the content of training, beneficial outcomes to organizational performance can be realized (Van Eerde, et al, 2008).

Different TNA Models

In general, training needs analysis models can be grouped into two major categories: the organisation-task-person analysis framework (referred to as the McGehee and Thayer’s three-level ‘O-T-P’ model in this research) and Mager, and Pipe’s “Performance Analysis Model”. The former is more popular among academicians, and many models developed by them are based on this foundation. The latter is popular among practitioners, and gaps between expected and current performance are considered as needs for training.

Furthermore, these two theoretical models of TNA have dominated the training literature for over three decades. Within the O-T-P model in particular, decisions being determined as a result of integrating macro through to micro analyses, arising from an investigation of training needs to meet organisational needs, task or job needs, through to the particular needs of the individual or person. By contrast, the performance analysis model
focuses on identifying the areas of discrepancy between desired and actual performance and subsequently analysing the causes of such discrepancies. Also, compared to the performance analysis approach, the O-T-P approach tends to be more strategic to organizational missions and needs for the future are also analyzed as part of analysis (Taylor et al., 1998).

This study will use The McGehee and Thayer’s three-level (Organisation-Task-Person) conception of needs assessment because it is considered the core framework for needs assessment in the academic literature and most of the models developed since have been based on this three-level framework (Holton, E. et al. 2000). Clarke (2003) also, stated that the (O-T-P) model integrated macro through to micro analysis, arising from an investigation of training needs to meet organisational needs, task or job needs, through to the particular needs of the individual or person.

**Rationale of the study**

The rationale of this study comes from the increasing interest in training in the world in general and in United Arab Emirates in particular to improve the performance of human resources to achieve the desired level of effectiveness and to remain successful. The review of the relevant literature on training and training needs assessment shows a real need for this study. The literature on training shows that this concept in the Arab countries has been a subject of increasing interest and debate in recent years (e.g. Al-Faleh, 1990; Atiyyah, 1993; Weir, 1994; Abu-Doleh, 2000, Abu-Doleh 2004). However, few would disagree that one of the most critical challenges the developing countries are facing is the training of their employees. In contrast, in the developed countries it appears to be an increased recognition of the efficacy of training and development as strategies to improve organizational effectiveness and competitiveness.
Furthermore, the literature on training needs analysis shows that, most of Arabic countries have difficulty in identifying the training required for their employees. Many of Arab researchers, such as Al-Ameer et al. (1978), Al-Khader (1980) and Al-Faleh (1985), who argued that the Arab organizations lack job descriptions, clear performance appraisal and that the approach used for assessing the development needs of employees was impressionistic rather than systematic. Thus, this study seeks to understand the role of existing training needs analysis process of Abu Dhabi Police, and the factors that affect the process to identify the needs and the impact of this on improving organisational performance.

**Aim and Objectives of the study**

The main aim of this research is to examine the management of training needs analysis in order to identify the different barriers of doing an effective TNA process. Therefore, this study is specifically concerned with achieving the following research objectives:

- To explore the nature of existing training needs analysis offered by Abu Dhabi Police. Therefore, this study will try to identify the levels of TNA and the data collection methods and techniques used in each level.
- To develop an understanding of the political, cultural, social and technical elements relating to the implementation of TNA
- To identify the challenges of training needs analysis.
- To identify the main factors in order to determine an effective training needs analysis.
- To identify the barriers both technological in doing an effective training needs analysis.
- To proposed suggestions to tackle those barriers so that desired performance of Abu Dhabi Police can be achieved.
Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives and aim of this study the researcher have set the following research questions:

Q1. What are the existing methods of training needs analysis of Abu Dhabi Police?
Q2. What is the strategic direction to do training needs analysis?
Q3. What are the emerging challenges in doing training needs analysis?
Q4. What are main factors to determine an effective training needs analysis?
Q5. What are the technological barriers of TNA?
Q6. Are there any ideological barriers of TNA?

Scope of the Study

Abu Dhabi Police is one of the most challenged organisations among all the public sector organisations in Emirate of Abu Dhabi in the UAE. This is the one and alone force that has direct interaction and communication with the general public. The scope of the study will basically be limited to the impact of the methods of TNA and their practices to uphold the performance of Abu Dhabi Police. The scope of this study is limited to identifying the training needs of Abu Dhabi Police. Thus various officials from top to bottom, policy makers, academics and experts in this area are included within the scope of the study. The scope of the study further extended to suggest recommendations for the policy makers to implement the training needs analysis models in identifying training needs of Abu Dhabi Police.

Methodology of the Study

The research methodology is an approach concerned with the methods or techniques used for data generation and collection when carrying out research (Oppenheim, 1992). Traditionally, research methodologies are broadly classified into two: qualitative and
quantitative. Myers (2009) distinguishes that qualitative research is an in-depth study of social and cultural phenomena and focuses on text whereas quantitative research investigates general trends across population and focuses on numbers.

**Research Approach of this study**

The basis of this study is phenomenology which will adopt mainly a qualitative approach to achieve the aims and objectives. The phenomenological paradigm involves detailed examination of participant’s personal experience and is concerned with an individual’s personal perception or account of an object or event as opposed to an attempt to produce an objective statement of the object or event itself. For better understanding of the set objectives, this study will also use quantitative techniques as well.

**Data Collection**

Both primary and secondary data will be used in this study. As this study employs both qualitative and quantitative techniques the combination of interview for qualitative data collection and questionnaire for quantitative data collection will be used to achieve the objectives and to answer the research questions of this study.

**Implications**

This study hopes to contribute to the knowledge as being the first empirical study conducted in identifying training needs analysis in the UAE. Thus, it will raise and improve the understanding of current methods and practices of training needs analysis and management in Abu Dhabi Police and enrich and fill the gaps in the literature of training needs analysis in Arab countries. This study will also hope to raise awareness of the importance of the training as an important strategic function, which could help organizations
to achieve corporate strategies and gives a better understanding of how training needs analysis could be effectively approached and implemented and help to uphold the performance of different public organizations, like Abu Dhabi Police.

References


