

**THE IMPACT OF THE FACILITATORS'
COMPETENCIES AND MODES OF INSTRUCTION
ON LEARNING BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE
ROYAL MALAYSIAN CUSTOMS ACADEMY,
SABAH BRANCH**

By

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Business
Administration**

March 2004

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DECLARATION

The materials in this thesis are original except for quotations, excerpts, summaries and references, which have been duly acknowledge.

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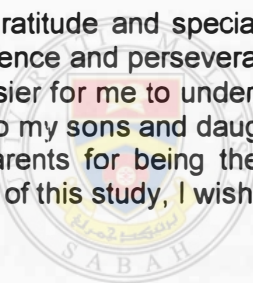
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people have made it possible for me to complete this thesis. First and foremost, I am greatly indebted to my supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Roselina Ahmad Saufi for her excellent tutoring, guidance, helpful suggestion; detailed comments and invaluable advice in all aspects. My appreciation is extended to my co-supervisor, Associate Professor Dr. Syed Azizi Wafa, Dean of School of Business and Economics for his invaluable comments and words of encouragement.

My special thanks to Tuan Haji Sarmin Md. Hussin, the former State Director of Royal Malaysian Customs, Tuan Haji Hassan Arshad, the present State Director of Royal Malaysian Customs for their invaluable support and encouragement. My appreciation is also extended to my colleagues, Mr. G. Ramachandran of Customs Internal Tax Section, Kota Kinabalu and Mr. Iwan Hermanan of Kota Kinabalu for their immeasurable help, suggestion and interest in the topic. I would also like to thanks my superior, Mr. Zaini Md. Desa, Senior Assistant Director of Customs for his support and endless encouragement.

My deep gratitude and special appreciation is extended to my beloved wife, Jahliah, for her patience and perseverance, and her undivided support, and sacrifice in order to make it easier for me to undertake this MBA program. My grateful appreciation is also extended to my sons and daughters for their support and finally to my brothers, sisters and my parents for being there all the way. Finally, to all who assisted me in the completion of this study, I wish to express my sincere gratitude.



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ABSTRAK

THE IMPACT OF THE FACILITATORS' COMPETENCIES AND MODES OF INSTRUCTION ON LEARNING BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE ROYAL MALAYSIAN CUSTOMS ACADEMY, SABAH BRANCH

Matlamat utama tesis ini di buat ialah bagi mengenalpasti faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi kemampuan pemudahcara dan kaedah mengajar terhadap kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku. Ianya juga berusaha mengenalpasti kesan penyederhana terhadap tahap pelajaran, tempoh latihan dan usia peserta dalam mempengaruhi hubungan di antara kecekapan pemudahcara dan kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku. Kajian ini menggunakan model yang dibentuk oleh Kirkpatrick dan diubahsuaikan oleh Profesor Madya Dr. Roselina Ahmad Saufi. Data tersebut di ambil daripada 75 orang warga kerja Kastam Diraja Malaysia, Sabah yang telah mengikuti kursus di Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia, Cawangan Sabah. Kajian ini relational dan empirical bagi menentukan perhubungan di antara tiada pergantungan dan faktor penyederhana. Hasil daripada kajian tersebut didapati bahawa terdapat perhubungan positif di antara kemampuan pemudahcara, kaedah mengajar dan kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku. Ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat 52% perbezaan terhadap kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku melalui nilai-F 38.956; ($p < 0.000$). Walau bagaimanapun, mengikut dapatan angkubah penyederhana, didapati bahawa tiada pengaruh terhadap kemampuan pemudahcara dan kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku. Mungkin salah satu sebab ialah bahawa walaupun peserta berkenaan muda atau tua, dan sama ada tempoh latihan tersebut pendek atau panjang, ianya tidak akan mempengaruhi kemampuan pemudahcara dan kesudahan perubahan tingkahlaku. Berpandukan kepada hasil kajian tersebut, ianya boleh disimpulkan bahawa keseluruhan latihan yang dijalankan di Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia, Cawangan Sabah adalah berkesan. Tetapi, seperti yang dinyatakan oleh Read dan Kliener (1996), walaupun latihan tersebut berkesan sekiranya pekerja tidak dapat memindahkan apa yang telah dipelajari, maka latihan yang diperolehi tersebut hanya sia-sia belaka.

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF THE FACILITATORS' COMPETENCIES AND MODES OF INSTRUCTION ON LEARNING BEHAVIOR OUTCOMES AT THE ROYAL MALAYSIAN CUSTOMS ACADEMY, SABAH BRANCH

The main objective of this thesis is to identify the influence of the facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction on learning behavior outcomes. It also attempts to identify the moderating variables such as the level of education, the duration of training, and the age of the participants in influencing the relationship between the facilitators' competencies and learning behavior outcomes. The model was adapted from the model developed by Kirkpatrick and Associate Professor Dr. Roselina Ahmad Saufi modifies it. The data was taken from the 75 respondents of the Sabah Royal Malaysian Customs' employees and who had attended the computer courses at the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch. The study was relational and empirical in nature to determine the relationship between the independent, dependent and the moderating variables. From this study, it was found out that there is a significant positive relationship between facilitators' competencies, modes of instruction and learning behavior outcomes. This is indicated by 52% in variance on learning behavior outcomes with a significant F-value of 38.956; ($p < 0.000$). However, the findings on the moderating variables have no influence on the facilitators' competencies and learning behavior outcomes. One possible reason is that even though the participant is young or old, and whether the duration of training is short or long, it would not affect the relationship between the facilitators' competencies and the learning behavior outcomes. Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the overall training programs conducted at the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch is effective. But, as stated by Read and Kliener (1996), even though the training itself may be effective, if employees cannot transfer what they have learned, training is wasted.

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Introduction to the Study

Training means to impart knowledge to the employees so that the employees can enhance their knowledge and learning skills. It is important for an organization to train their employees in order to keep abreast with the latest developments in the department. Training involves changes, for example, changes in how they do their jobs, how they relate to others, and the conditions under which they perform or changes in their job responsibilities (Mello, 2002).

It was difficult to show the direct links between the forms of training and their outcomes or benefits to the organization. Training can be costly, and trainers should be able to demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of the training function. Any training programs should be evaluated against the organizational needs it is intended to address: Is training the best way of meeting these needs? What specific outcomes are aimed for in terms of employees' performance? What training methods are used? Are these the most effective ways of achieving the desired outcomes? Is the training conducted skillfully and cost-effectively? Are the desired outcomes achieved? (Fowler, 1993). Training plan should be integral element of human resource planning, which in turn should be firmly rooted within the organization's business plan. No training should be undertaken without a clear view of its desired outcomes. The effectiveness of training programs may be significantly influenced by the skill of trainer in the use of whatever techniques are used (Fowler, 1993).

Every year hundreds of Customs' employees are sent for training to acquire the necessary knowledge. They are exposed to many types of training, for instance, management, technical matters, other related customs matters, and etc. It has come

to my knowledge that there have been many complaints from the Head of Sections and Units regarding their employees' inability to perform their jobs as expected. Job performance was declining and there were many complaints about the late assignments. The employees did not perform effectively although they have been trained not long ago. There were rumors that the training modules were not properly developed to meet the needs of the employees. As a result, the training did not contribute to the enhancement of the job performance. Were the facilitators ineffective or were the employees not performing?

The factors that influence learning behaviors include facilitators' competencies and the modes of instruction used to teach in class. A knowledgeable facilitator should be able to relate knowledge to practicality, and his or her communication skills should determine the success of his presentation in class. According to Bell (1998), the modes of instruction used most frequently to teach in class are lecture, self-instruction, hands-on training, or practical. The training that was acquired in class can be transferred into learning behavior outcomes, which in turn will transmit it into knowledge, behavior change, and attitude change. Thus, the knowledge that was acquired can be applied to enhance for better performance.

Facilitators with good educational background and who have undergone proper trainings will perform better in class. Facilitators should take into consideration the level or standard of education of the participants so that the participants can understand and follow instructions that are given to them. The duration of the course can determine the success of the course. Long duration of courses can diminish the retention levels of the participants. The age factors should also be taken into consideration because older people seemed to be less interested if the subject matters are too academic, and they get bored sitting in a classroom for extended period of time. Johnson (Mello, 2002) says, as the time spent in learning become longer and longer, the percentage of knowledge retained diminishes.

This research attempts to focus on computer-training programs at the Customs Academy. Since the computer-training program is highly technical in nature, it requires high knowledge and the ability to relate the knowledge to practicality. One-way communication is no longer accepted, thus, hands-on training is more favorable. Different training programs require different competencies skill and modes of instruction that are to be used.

1.2. Research Problems

Training has become an important tool in enhancing knowledge, skills and abilities in performing a task. Without a proper training an employee will be left behind in technology. So, it is important that all employees are exposed to some kind of training so that they will know what is going on around them. However, not many organizations have made an attempt to evaluate the effectiveness of their training programs and to determine to what extent the training help to improve their competencies (Sazri, 1999). Therefore, this study tries to find out to what extent do facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction influence learning behaviors of the employees of Royal Malaysian Customs Department who have participated in the computer training programs? How does the moderating effect of the level of education, the duration of training, and the age of the participations influence the relationship between the determining factors and learning behavior outcomes? To what extent are the changes in reaction, knowledge, behavior and performance due to attending these computer-training programs? This research also attempts to highlight that different training programs require different competencies skill and the modes of instruction used to teach in class.

1.3. Research Objectives

There are three main objectives of this research. First, is to identify the influence of facilitators' competencies in learning behavior outcomes. Second, is to identify the

influence of modes of instruction in learning behavior outcomes. And, finally, is to identify the moderating effect of the level of education, duration of the training, and age of the participations in influencing the relationships between the determining factors and learning behavior outcomes.

1.4. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out the independent variables (for example, facilitator competencies and modes of instruction) that influence learning behaviors outcomes. The research attempts to indicate whether the moderating factors such as the level of education, the duration of training, and the age of the participation have any relationships between the determining factors and the learning behavior outcomes.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of the study is to focus on facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction in influencing learning behavior outcomes among employees of Royal Malaysian Customs who have participated in computer-training programs. For the purpose of this study, the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch was selected because all courses are conducted at this Academy. This study only focused on the computer-training program that was conducted between the years 2000 to 2003. During these four years, *ten computer courses* were conducted at the Customs Academy. The Customs personnel's from Kota Kinabalu conducted the training programs. Employees from different level of positions in the department were selected to attend the computer-training programs.

1.6. Significance of the Study

This study is significant for three reasons: First, is to find out how facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction influence learning behavior outcomes.

Second, is to find out whether the moderating factors (level of education, duration of training, and age of participants) have influence in the relationship between independent variables (facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction) and dependent variables (reaction, knowledge, behavior and performance). Third, the study may benefit not only the management of the Royal Malaysian Customs Department but other organizations to specifically study the facilitators' competencies and modes of instruction in affect to training effectiveness. By knowing these factors that influence the learning behavior outcomes, it will suffice to gauge the effectiveness of the courses that were conducted at the Customs Academy.

1.7. Definition of Terms

The independent variables consist of two factors as follows:

1.7.1. Facilitator's Competency

Ellis (2001) says, a **trainer** manages instruction, information, and practical skills. A **facilitator** guides people toward knowledge, insight, and awareness. The **trainer** deals in instruction, whereas the **facilitator** deals in learning.

The **trainer** is responding to a performance need that is linked to skill or knowledge gap. Effective training yields a worker who can complete all job-related tasks. By contrast and definition, **facilitator** makes things easy. They assist a team or workgroup in achieving its mission by focusing on the process and to develop a technique used to enhance the learning experience and improve its success (Ellis, 2001).

The question arises as to what is a good **teacher**. A good **teacher** can be defined as a teacher who helps the student to learn. The competency of the teacher or facilitator may contribute to this in number of ways. The competency of the teacher or facilitator includes the way he or she presents his or her lectures, the ability to relate to

knowledge and the ability to relate to practical. The teacher's role goes well beyond information giving. Two concepts are based on the strategies of teacher-centered and student-centered education. Teacher-centered strategies are focused on the teacher as a transmitter of information to the new learner. Student-centered strategies, in contrast, focus on changes in student's learning and on what students do to achieve this rather than on what the teacher does. If the students are to learn desired outcomes in an effective manner, then the teacher's fundamental task is to get students to engage in learning activities that are likely to results in achieving those outcomes (Harden and Crosby, 2000).

1.7.2. Modes of Instruction

According to Bell (1998), the three modes of instruction used most frequently to teach in class are lecture, self-instruction, and hands-on or practical. He says, he uses all three, but hands-on training is the best way to get students actively involved in the learning process. If they can complete a 60 to 90 minute instruction session, it makes a big difference in their attitude towards further learning.

Lecture is defined as prepared oral delivery of a topic by a subject matter. The lecture remains one of the most widely used instructional methods, whereas **self-instruction** is defined as an effective method for situation where there is a requirement for self-performance of physical skills (Harden and Crosby, 2000).

Practical exercises provide learners with the opportunity to apply new knowledge and skills. This application activity results in increase retention and skill development. The practical exercises, which are based on real-life situations, employ various types of handlings, and followed by discussion. This in turn provides the participants with some tangible benefit (Kane and Wallace, 1991).

1.8. Organization of this Study

This report contains 6 Chapters. **Chapter 1** is an introduction of the research. In this chapter, it mentions about how the study is conducted. What are the research problems, the research objectives, the purpose of the study, the scope of the study, why the study is significant, and the definition of terms. **Chapter 2** presents an overview of the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch. It also highlighted the number of employees, the types of training conducted at the Academy, the logistics, and the Head Office. **Chapter 3** mentions about the literature review. In the literature review, it includes the definition of training, how training is developed, the Kirkpatrick Model, review of related studies and other related studies. **Chapter 4** deals with theoretical framework, research hypotheses, research design, population and sample, the type of instrument used the administration of questionnaire and the statistical method used. **Chapter 5** highlighted the results of the study, which comprises of respondents' profile, and reliability of measures. **Chapter 6** discusses the interpretation of the findings, recapitulation, discussion, limitation, suggestion for additional research and the conclusion.

Chapter 2

ROYAL MALAYSIAN CUSTOMS ACADEMY, SABAH BRANCH

2.1. Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch. The Royal Malaysian Customs Academy, Sabah Branch was established in 17 July 1989. It is located at the Customs Housing Complex, in Menggatal, which is about 18.5 km from Kota Kinabalu city. The main function of the Customs Academy is to formulate training programs for officers at all levels in order to attain a high level of efficiency and to conduct courses and training for the Customs employees (Tan, 1990).

Initially, the setting up of the Customs Academy is meant to cater the training needs of the Customs employees in Sabah, but in mid 1991, it was later opened to the Customs employees from Peninsular Malaysia and Sarawak. Since 1989, about 7,000 Customs employees (including licensees, shipping agents, community leaders, and school children) have been trained by this Academy.

2.2. Employees

An Assistant Senior Director of Customs heads the Academy. Other employees include two lectures with the rank of Superintendent of Customs, two Customs officers, two clerks, a typist and an office assistant. In the beginning, the head of Customs Academy was referred to as the *Principal* but in mid 2002; the head became to be known as the *Regional Director* of Customs Academy, Sabah.

2.3. Types of Training Programs

Officers are sent to the Academy during their career for training as and when found

necessary. By conducting training, the Academy is in a way able to equip the officers with the required minimum knowledge of Customs law, regulations and procedures so that the officers can carry out their duties accordingly. The Academy is well equipped and has the facilities to cater for training needs of the country's Customs employees of all ranks or grade. To get the Customs Officers to understand a broader area, to accept more responsibilities, and to exercise more authority, the Academy conducts various types of courses such as management, counseling, accounting, career developments, computers, Customs related matters (for example: prevention, narcotics, prosecution, valuation and etc). Therefore, the Customs Academy has developed their own training programs that offer relevant courses so that the Customs employees can continue to grow develop and progress, enabling them to keep up with changes (Tan, 1990). The participants came from different level of positions in the Customs department. The majority of the facilitators who were invited to conduct the courses were Customs personnel from all over Malaysia. But, officers from other government agencies' and lecturers from University of Malaysia Sabah and University of Institute Technology Mara, Sabah Branch were also invited once in a while to give lectures on management, and counseling at the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy.

2.4. Logistics

The Customs Academy is well equipped with the latest technology and has the facilities to cater for training needs such as video conferencing sets, computers, LCD projector and other audiovisual equipments. It has four vehicles, a mini library, a mini gymnasium and a mini museum. The lecture hall can accommodate up to 50 persons at a time.

2.5. The Customs Academy's Head Office

The head office of the Customs Academy is located in Malacca. It has four branches

namely; Langkawi Branch, Northern Branch in Kelantan, Sarawak Branch and Sabah Branch. The Royal Malaysian Customs Academy is allocated millions of ringgit every year to conduct the courses. We are proud that the Royal Malaysian Customs Academy is known internationally as one of the best academies in the Asia and Pacific Regions. Every year hundred of participants from all over the Asia and Pacific Region attend international courses in Malacca.



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Chapter 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

3.1. Introduction

To further understand the subject matter on this research, the literature related to training, developing training programs and the Kirkpatrick Model are reviewed. This chapter also tries to review related topics such as training needs and methods, and some other related studies that are related to this research.

3.2. Training

If an organization considered its employees as human assets, training and development represents an ongoing investment in these assets. Training involves employees acquiring knowledge and learning skills that they will be able to use immediately. Learning implies ongoing development and continuously adding to employees' skill and knowledge to meet the challenges the organization faces from its external environment. Employees training and development is increasingly becoming a major strategic issue for organizations for several reasons. First, the rapid changes in technology continue to cause increasing rates of skill obsolescence. In order to remain competitive, organizations need to continue training their employees to use the best and the latest technologies available. Second, the redesign of work into jobs having broader responsibilities requires employees to assume more responsibility, take initiative, and further develop interpersonal skills to ensure their performance and success (Mello, 2002).

According to Webster's, training is ***"to instruct or condition to some manner of behavior or performance; to make proficient through special instruction and drill."***

Goldstein (1993) in Sazri (1999) defines ***training as the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment.*** Training is also defined as planned process to modify attitude, knowledge or behavior through learning experience to achieve effective performance. Its purpose is to develop the abilities of the individual and to satisfy the current and future manpower needs of the organization. Training can contribute to the success of an organization in a number of ways:

- by improving methods, quality of decision, skills in communication and morale.
- by preparing for new processes, methods and technology.
- by increasing workforce flexibility and versatility, productivity and output.
- by reducing labor turnover, employee and management problems.

Training involves some kind of changes for employees: change in how they do their jobs, how they relate to others, the conditions under which they perform or changes in their job responsibilities (Mello, 2002).

Training is provided to develop the know-how for the success on the job and within the company. The type of know-how differs across the companies. The value placed on know-how will be reflected in the nature of job rotations and the extent to which training is conducted through in-house or external courses (Schneider and Louis Barsoux, 1997). Conducting a training program is only one step in an ongoing process that begins with identifying needs and extends through evaluation and follow-up (Hultman, 1982).

3.3. Developing Training Programs

There are ***two factors*** in developing successful training program in organizations. First is the ***planning***, and second is the ***training strategy***. First key factor is the ***planning*** which involves four steps such as need assessment, the establishment of objectives and measures, delivery of the training and evaluation (Mello, 2002).

3.3.1. Needs Assessment

Need assessment involves determining why specific training activities are required. Need assessment involves three levels of analysis that is organizational, task and individual. At the organizational level, the training is considered within the context of the organization's culture, politics, structure and strategy. This analysis considers how the training will assist the organization or unit in meeting its objective. Task-level involves looking at specific duties and responsibilities assigned to different jobs and the types of skills and knowledge needed to perform each task. The individual level requires an analysis of their existing levels of knowledge and skills and whether there is any special need to be addressed in the design and the delivery of the training (Mello, 2002).

3.3.2. Objectives

After the training need has been assessed, the objectives of the training activities must be developed. These objectives should follow directly from the assessed needs and it must be described in specific measurable terms. Measures should be stated in terms of both desired employee behaviors as well as the results that are expected to follow such behavior (Mello, 2002).

3.3.3. Design and Delivery

After the objectives and measures have been set, the next step is the design and delivery of the training. Two critical issues must be considered in the design of the training prior to its delivery. The first is the interference. Interference occurs when prior training, or learning, establish habits act as a block or obstacle in the learning process. Second critical issue is the transfer. Transfer refers to whether the trainee or learner can actually perform in the new skills or use the knowledge on the job. The delivery of the training should anticipate any interference that might be present, and a strategy