

Training and Development for Library and Media Teachers in Selected Malaysian School Resource Centres

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Abstract

Training and development for library and media teachers is used as means of achieving positive outcome results in school resource centre. However, it appears that many educational organisations in Malaysia including school resource centre have not paid sufficiently close attention to training and career development of their human resources, leading to an under-utilisation of talent in the organisation. This study investigated the training and development practices at school resource centre. A questionnaire-based survey was carried out among a sample of the library media teachers in the Kemaman district of Malaysia. The study, which was aimed to investigate the training and development of human resource in school resource centre revealed that even though respondents were aware of and had appreciable knowledge of the policy, the fact that the training policy has not been formally instituted and implemented shows a lack of commitment on the part of the management of school authority towards developing its human resource at school resource centre. The training and development procedures at school resource centre have no standard practices. However, the relevance and effectiveness of the methods used were successful in equipping the library and media teachers with the required skills for their work.

Keywords: School Resource Centre, Library Media Teachers, School libraries, Training and Development, Human Resource Needs

1. Introduction

School resource centre as it is known in Malaysia or school library, is a centralised collection of books, a story-telling place, and a reading or a multi-media room. School resource centre play an important roles as a centre for teaching and learning process. Basically school resource centre support the school curriculum. The school resource centres in Malaysia today is managed by library and media teachers – the new official term used in Malaysia for teacher-librarians. Beginning in 2006, the Ministry of Education of Malaysia has started appointing teachers as library and media teachers in all schools, and these teachers are given a reduced teaching load so as to enable them to manage the school resource centres. They are expected to function as library managers, as well as information managers to provide information needed by their students. They are also expected to help the students become information literates.

1.2 Background of the study

All schools in Malaysia have resource centre or library to support their teaching and learning process. To what extent the school resource centre has been effective in supporting the school curriculum remains unclear. Nevertheless, it is convenient to say here that almost all school resource centres are managed by library and media teachers while the position has been regularly changed. In Malaysia, the post of a professional teacher-librarian still remains unfilled, and their training and experience is far different from those acquired through the main stream information professional programme (Raja Abdullah & Saidina Omar, 2003).

Training and development of human resource need for library and media teachers as means of achieving positive outcome results in school resource centre. However, it appears that many educational organisations in Malaysia including school resource centre have not paid sufficiently close attention to training and career development of their human resources, leading to an under-utilisation of talent in the organisation. Human resources are key element to improving an organisation's assets then training and development should be that organisation's top priority. Development in the context of human resource management is a broad ongoing multi-faceted set of activities (training activities among them) to bring someone or an organisation up to another threshold of performance, often to

perform some job or new role in the future (McNamara, 2008).

Organization particularly government institutions such as school does not see the need to train and develop their staff. However, in an era of economic transformation plan introduced by current government, all public institutions have realised the importance of developing the capabilities and enhance the abilities of their employees in order to meet the increasing demands and expectations of the government and the public. Employee training and development is the organisational activity which aims either to improve an employee's current performance, change attitude or develop skills (Maimunah Aminuddin, 2011).

Library and media teacher training is most significant investment for the success of school resource centre programmes. Unfortunately, a lot of money is wasted on ineffective training. Therefore, it is essential that a systematic approach be used when organising training programmes. This study explores the training and development patterns of school resource centres in Malaysia. The findings are intended to help indentify factors that hinder library and media teachers from playing their roles effectively. Consequently, corrective necessary measures should emerge, capable of improving the overall educational system in Malaysia schools.

1.3 Trends and Issues

In Malaysia school system, the position of library and media teachers were appointed by school principle and extended to the state educational department for confirmation. Often, teachers appointed to these positions do not have appropriate qualifications, knowledge and skills to carry out the task. Raja Abdullah and Saidina Omar (2003) claimed that most school resource centre in Malaysia today are managed by library and media teachers who do not possess any training in school librarianship, or by those who have received either pre- or in-service training only.

There are no standard methods by which Malaysian library and media teacher attained their librarianship skills and there is also a lack of uniformity in terms of courses attended and the syllabus. Fatimah (2002) claimed only 36% of the school resource co-coordinators or library and media teachers in Malaysia have undergone short courses of 3 months or 35 and 45 hours in library management. A study by Tan & Singh (2008) proved that the training on school resource management received by library and media teachers is inadequate.

Indeed there is a need for better management and leadership in the development of school resource centre in Malaysia. The government, universities and professional body that concerned with school resource centre must ensure that there are trained personnel at the policy making and policy implementation levels, and at the grassroots level. These personnel must have good basic training in librarianship and opportunities must be provided for the library and media teachers to continue their education. The professional preparation and continuous training of library and media teachers should help them to develop resource based learning programmes and provided them with competencies needed for management and services of the school resource centre (Walter,2008). Hence, library and media teachers must play an important role to strengthen school resource centre programmes (handbook of school library and media duties, 2007).

Abuzaid & Singh (2007) proved that the lack of qualified librarians as a main constraint for the student to access school library resources. The training for library and information professional is essential for effective functioning of the libraries and information society in general (Varalakshmi, 2003). Developments in the areas of information and knowledge management make their own demands for introducing such academic programmes that would satisfy the existing needs and future demands for Malaysian context. This requires the Ministry of Education and university in this country to be proactive in introducing academic programmes that are compatible with these expressed needs and the future aspirations. Rehman (2008) noted that a qualified human resources equipped with befitting competencies is a must for the post of the information and knowledge professional.

An interesting point was by Songsaengchan, Chansawang, and Prapinpongsakorn (2008) who found that Teacher librarians with Library and Information Science degree have more important roles in school library role than those who do not have. It shows that the government must ensure that library

and media teachers should be equipped with appropriate academic background. The availability of qualified library and media teachers undoubtedly will be producing a better quality services in school resource centres.

The training for library and information professional including library and media teachers is essential for effective functioning of the libraries and school resource centres in general (Varalakshmi, 2003). It is argued that school resource centre and library and media teacher will continue to play critical roles as the need for the effective preservation and transmission of knowledge in society still remains. Library and media teacher must continue to make significant contributions through their work in school resource centres.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to investigate the current training and development needs for school resource centre in Malaysia. This is considered important as the school resource centres are expected to shoulder a heavy responsibility of producing information literate students. The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To evaluate the knowledge and awareness of training and development policy among library and media teacher
2. To examine how the training and development policy at school resource centre is being implemented.
3. To investigate the effect of training and development policy at school resource centre

1.5 Significance of the Study

Human resource development has become a very important statement nowadays. The study will therefore be of great benefit to the management of school resource centre as well as to school authority since it will bring to light the benefits of human resource training and development. This study will be significant for providing an insight into how school resource centre can effectively streamline its training and human resource development to improve their services. The study may also help improve training and career development practices for library and media teachers by providing practical information about training and development of human resource needs among library and media teachers. The findings of this study will contribute and complement the already existing knowledge and literature on the role of training and human resource development particularly in the libraries in Malaysia

1.6 Scope of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the training and development needs for library and media teachers and to suggest ways of enhancing the development of human resources for library and media teachers for efficient and effective service delivery. This study covered current human resource training and development programmes for library and media teachers and examines the future of training and development of human resource needs for library and media teachers. This research was limited to a sample of library and media teachers from Kemaman district, Terengganu, Malaysia. Kemaman district comprises both urban and rural areas, and is thus fairly reflective of the variation in the country.

1.7 Methodology

A survey questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. The questionnaire for the respondent had four sections. A self administered questionnaire was sent to a sample of library and media teachers in the selected school in Kemaman district, Terengganu, Malaysia. A total of 10 library and media teachers from ten schools participated in the study. The data were collected and analysed with excel.

The questionnaire for the respondent had four sections. Section A was be on the background of the respondent, and also solicited information on the age, sex, educational level and length of service of the respondent. Section B of the questionnaire covered questions on the outlook of the human resource needs, and Section C had questions on adequacy of human resource needs received by respondent. The fourth section, D, dealt with issues of human resource support needs among respondent to perform their duty. Questionnaire was mainly structured or close-ended questions with few open-ended questions (Appendix I).

1.8 Results and Discussion

A total of 10 questionnaire were sent out to the Library and Media Teachers in Kemaman District, of these 10 replied, giving a return rate of 100%. Unless otherwise stated, the figures given in this report are percentages.

1.8.1 Personal profile of respondent

Out of 10 respondents, 80% of respondents were female, while the rest were male, a fact fairly reflective of the teaching population in Malaysia which is predominantly female. Slightly over 70 % of respondents were library and media teachers at primary level (Table 1). The ages of the respondents ranged between 32 years and 46 years, with an average age of 37.9 years.

Table 1: Gender and affiliation of the respondents

| School level | Female | Male | Total (%) |
|--------------|--------|------|-----------|
| Primary | 7 | 0 | 70% |
| Secondary | 1 | 2 | 30% |
| Total (%) | 8 | 2 | 100% |

Table 2 shows that a majority of the respondents (50 %) had a Diploma in education, (40%) had first degree while only one respondent had master degree. Generally, most of the staff had attained considerably high levels of education. This indicated that all the library and media teachers were academically qualified and professionally trained as teachers.

Table 2: Educational background of the respondents

| Educational background | Frequency | Percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Diploma | 5 | 50 |
| First degree | 4 | 40 |
| Masters degree | 1 | 10 |
| Ph. D | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 10 | 100 |

The respondents were asked type of school resource centre courses attended, it was interesting to find that all respondents had undergone basic courses in school resource centre management. This finding support an early study by Fatimah (2002) that revealed 36% of the school resource centre co-coordinators(the previous term for library and media teachers) in Malaysia have undergone short courses of 3 months or 35 and 45 hours in library management. However, based on the researcher experience, basic courses were conducted by Teacher Activity Centre officer within three days period. During this course, library and media teachers are exposed to basic library management including library planning, financial planning, stock management and management of both print and electronic resources. On the contrary, a study by Tan and Singh (2008) found that 59.5% of these teachers had not attended any courses on information literacy. This is mainly because the school management keeps changing the the teachers in charged of the school resource centre.

Table 3 shows the main bulk of the respondents (50%) had eleven to twenty years of teaching experience, one respondent had more than 20 years' of teaching experience, with a mean of 13.6. It appeared that a majority of the respondents had adequate teaching experience and were probably in a position to provide good feedback regarding their work as library and media teacher's position.

Table 3: Teaching experience of the respondents

| Teaching experience | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| ≤ 5 years | 2 | 20 |
| 6-10 years | 2 | 20 |
| 11-20 years | 5 | 50 |
| ≥ 21 years | 1 | 10 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

1.8.2 Knowledge and awareness of human resource training and development policy

Respondents were asked if their school resource centre have training and development policy, 80% confirm about it whilst 20% respondents state otherwise. In response to the question as to whether the policy has been explained to them, 90% of the respondents who were aware of the policy affirmed that the policy has been explained to them. Only 1 respondent (10%) of those who were aware of the policy answered that the policy has not been explained to them.

An interesting point can be observed that 3 respondents (30%) said more than one communication medium are used to convey the policy. It can be concluded that the common means by which the training and development policy was communicated to library and media teachers was by word by mouth (33.3%). It shows that no clear procedure is used to communicate the training and development policy by school authority. Thus school authority used different ways to communicate the training and development policy to their staff. Table 4 summarised the medium used in communicating the policy to library and media teachers.

Table 4: Medium used in communicating the policy

| Medium of communication | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| During recruitment | 3 | 20 |
| Formal briefing | 3 | 20 |
| Seminar | 2 | 13.3 |
| By word of mouth | 5 | 33.3 |
| Others | 2 | 13.3 |
| Total | 15 | 100 |

In response on the level of understanding of the training and development policy, the results in Table 5 were obtained. The majority of the respondents rated their understanding between average and good, with 40% stating that they had a good understanding of human resource training and development policy.

Table 5: Level of understanding of the training and development policy

| Level of understanding | Frequency | percent |
|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Excellent | 0 | 0 |
| Very good | 1 | 10 |
| Good | 4 | 40 |
| Average | 5 | 50 |
| Poor | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

When asked in what ways they think human resource needs at school resource centre can be improved, it can be noted that they echoed many of the opinion. These can be listed as:

1. By observing the level of school resource centre's needs
2. Provide appropriate training
3. Assign more support staff for the school resource centre
4. Increase the number of school resource centre grant

1.8.3 Human resource training and development practices at school resource centre

When the respondents were asked about how often their performances were appraised, a large proportion of the respondent (80%) said their performances were appraised once in a year, 10 % indicated that their performances were appraised monthly while the rest indicated that their performances were appraised every six month (Table 6). In response to the question as to whether performance appraisal are used in selecting staff for training, it was found that 60% of respondents felt that the performance appraisals were not used. 40% of respondents felt other criteria such as selection is done at state education department or at district level, Discretion of school authority, based on qualification, based on specific training needs and based on schedule of work.

Table 6: Conduct of appraisal

| Conduct of appraisals | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Monthly | 1 | 10 |
| Quarterly | 0 | 0 |
| Every six month | 1 | 10 |
| Once a year | 8 | 80 |
| Never | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

The study sought to know whether the respondents view were sought on human resource training and development programmes at school resource centre, 90% of them confirmed about it. It shows that school authority work closely with library and media teachers in developing human resource training and development programmes in school resource centre. Based on researcher experiences, library and media teacher and school administrator sit together in school's curriculum committee to plan human resource training and development programmes.

Based on the ministry of education policy, the ministry has been training its staff and sponsoring some others for further studies in various fields. In response to the questions as to whether the respondents have been sponsored for further studies during the past five years, majority of them (60%) answered in the affirmative whilst 40% stated otherwise. The study showed that the majority of the respondents were aware of the training and development policy and also had appreciable knowledge of it.

The study sought to know how often respondents participate in training programmes. The results in Table 7 show the responses of the respondents to the question on how often they undergo training. There was agreement in all respondents that they undergo training based on specific training needs and based on schedule of work (40%). Generally, the results indicated that even though the entire respondents have ever participated in a training programme, majority indicated that the training programmes were not regular.

Table 7: Participation of training

| Participation of training | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Quarterly | 3 | 30 |
| Every six months | 1 | 10 |
| Once a year | 2 | 20 |
| Every two years | 0 | 0 |
| Others | 4 | 40 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

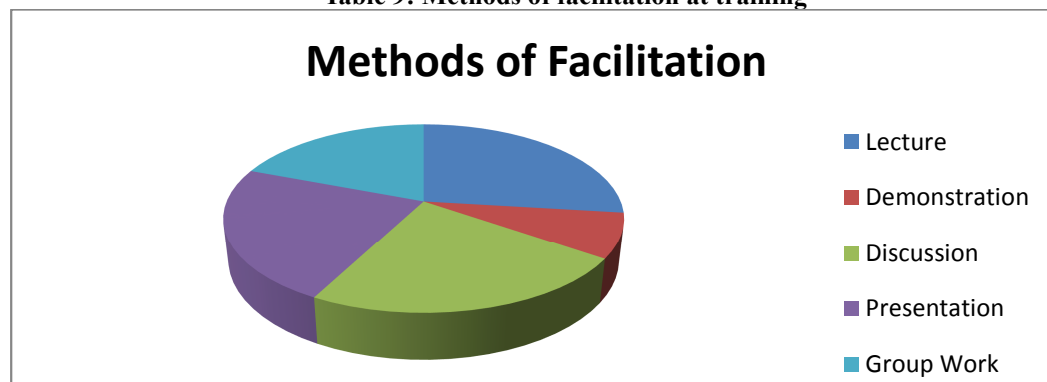
Respondents were also asked about the frequency of training programmes were attended for the last five years. It was found that majority of respondents indicated the training types they have experienced as In-house training (100%). Only 30% of the respondents have experienced state level training and none of them attended national or international training. In general, Ministry of Education, and their State, District and local level offices such Teachers Activity Centre was responsible in training and development of school resource centre personnel.

Table 8: Frequency of training programmes were attended for the last five years

| Training programmes | Percent | | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------|------|-------|-------|-------|
| | None | Once | Twice | Trice | Other |
| In house- Refresher courses | - | - | 20 | 50 | 30 |
| District training | 10 | 50 | 30 | 10 | 10 |
| State training | 70 | 20 | 10 | - | - |
| National training | 0 | | | | |
| International training | 0 | | | | |

Table 9 summarised the method of facilitation at the training were attended by library and media teachers. From table 9, the common methods of facilitation at training that respondents have attended are lectures, discussion and presentation.

Table 9: Methods of facilitation at training



On the quality of the training programmes the respondents have participated in, the results in Table 10 were obtained. The majority of the respondents were impressed with the quality of the trainings they have participated in and rated them between average and very good. Specifically, 50% of the respondents rated the quality of the training they have participated in as good, 30% described them as average and 20% stated that they were very good.

Table 10: The quality of the training programmes

| Quality of training | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------|-----------|---------|
| Very poor | 0 | 0 |
| Poor | 0 | 0 |
| Average | 3 | 30 |
| Good | 5 | 50 |
| Very good | 2 | 20 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Respondents were also asked whether the methods used in the training programmes they have participated in had any impact on their skills, 80% of them agreed that the methods used in training have an impact on their skills. Regarding some of the specific skills acquired through training, respondents' lists include:

1. School resource centre management
2. ICT skills
3. Resource based learning
4. Library management

The respondents were also asked how often they would like to undergo training on the skills they needed to improve their work. Table 11 shows that a majority of the respondents (40%) would like to undergo training every six months. 30 % of respondents want it frequently, that is quarterly whilst the rest would like to undergo training once a year (30%).

Table 11: Frequency of training programmes expected

| Expected training | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------|-----------|---------|
| Monthly | 0 | 0 |
| Quarterly | 3 | 30 |
| Every six months | 4 | 40 |
| Once a year | 3 | 30 |
| Never | 0 | 0 |
| Other | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

When the opinion of the respondents were sought as to whether the staff at school resource centre had the requisite skills for their daily activities, an interesting point emerged where 50% of respondents answers positively while other 50% answered negatively. The results in table 12 show how the respondents rated the competency of the staff of school resource centre in service delivery. It can be observed that 70% of the respondents rated the competency of the staff of school resource centre in terms of service delivery as good, 20% rated them as average, only 10% of the respondents rated the service delivery as poor.

Table 12: Competency of the staff at school resource centre

| Competency of the staff | Frequency | Percent |
|-------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Poor | 1 | 10 |
| Average | 2 | 20 |
| Good | 7 | 70 |
| Very good | 0 | 0 |
| Excellent | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Respondents were also asked about the type of problems that they face with regard to human resource training and development. The majority indicated that they faced problems such as:

1. Lack of time
2. Inappropriate training
3. Inappropriate duration of training
4. Insufficient equipment or facilities
5. Irrelevant courses or training
6. Unfairly distributed tasks among teachers
7. Lack of cooperation among teachers

1.8.4 Effect of human resource training and development at school resource centre

Respondents were asked about the effectiveness of trainings and development on the operations of school resource centre. It was found that 50% of the respondents pointed out that they not sure about the effectiveness of the training and development programmes successfully equipped them with skills needed. However, 40% of the respondents affirmed that the trainings were effective.

Table 13: Effectiveness of the training programmes

| Effectiveness of training | Frequency | Percent |
|---------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Not effective at all | 0 | 0 |
| Not effective | 1 | 10 |
| Not sure | 5 | 50 |
| Effective | 4 | 40 |
| Very effective | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

Respondents were also asked about the relevance of the trainings received to work activities. It was interesting to note that a large proportion of the respondents perceived that the training they received were relevant to their work (60%). 30% respondents felt not sure about the relevance of the training they receive whilst 10% of respondent indicated that the training was not relevant to their work. Table 14 show the result obtained. When the respondents were asked whether they thought human resource training and development at their organisation affects its operations, hundred percent of respondents answered in the affirmative.

Table 14: The relevance of the trainings received to work activities

| Relevance of training | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------------------|-----------|---------|
| Not at all | 0 | 0 |
| Not relevant | 1 | 10 |
| Not sure | 3 | 30 |
| Relevance | 6 | 60 |
| Very relevant | 0 | 0 |
| Total | 10 | 100 |

When respondents were asked about in their views on ways to improve human resource training and development programmes at school resource centres, there are their responses:

1. Increase the numbers of in-house training
2. Increased funding for training and development
3. The duration of training should be increased, for example three months duration of training
4. training
5. Regular and constant review of the training content and methods
6. Facilities and logistics at the training should be improved
7. Provide facilitators who are more experienced and knowledgeable
8. Comprehensive and continuous training throughout the year
9. Increase the frequency of courses, training and seminars.
10. ICT based courses should be incorporated in the training

1.9 Conclusion

The study, which was aimed to investigate the training and development of human resource in school resource centre revealed that even though respondents were aware of and had appreciable knowledge of the policy, the fact that the training policy has not been formally instituted and implemented shows a lack of commitment on the part of the management of school authority towards developing its human resource at school resource centre. The training and development procedures at school resource centre have no standard practices. However, the relevance and effectiveness of the methods used were success in equipping the library and media teachers with the required skills for their work.

With the transformation of knowledge society, training and development has been identified as a strategic tool for competitive positioning. An information literacy programme for library and media teachers needs to be developed to provide them with a basic set of skills in identifying, locating, accessing, evaluating and using information (Intan Azura & Shaheen Majid, 2005). A systematic training programme based on the functional activities and the career progression of each staff could be planned to meet the training and career development needs of staffs. This will ensure that training and development needs will be planned in advance and implemented to enhance their capabilities to provide quality services. The individual training plan of the staff should, however, be reviewed and updated periodically to meet the challenges of the time.

The study revealed that library and media teacher is lack of training for school resource centre management. They need for continuing education at both information, communication technology and librarianship skills. In the changing patterns of librarianship worldwide, especially in the information technology era, library professionals need to play a very effective role in supporting education and knowledge knowledge society concept. Good school resource centre services totally depend on trained and efficient library and media teachers.

Another way to improve the effectiveness of school resource centre is to ensure that all schools in Malaysia employ full-time and adequately trained professional school librarians. Nowadays, all the schools do not have positions for professional library and media teachers, and often teachers without proper professional library or information science training manage their school resource centre. As these teachers are also expected to take full teaching load and other tasks assigned by their school management, they have limited time to the school resource centre. The full-time library and media teachers would be able to play a more proactive role in promoting knowledge based society. A

professional library and media teacher can also help for better information literacy programmes among school community.

The efforts of the Ministry of Education, State Educational Technology Department, local Teacher Activity Centre offices, are applauded and acknowledged, but more effort needs to be done. The library and media teachers need to be adequately trained, and provided with the necessary support. This is important if the school resource centres are to transform themselves into focal points of information centres. The authority body that responsible in developing school resource centre should improve its training policies to include reward or compensation for staff who undertake self advancement to enhance their skills.

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