A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF TRAINING EFFECTIVENESS ON I-LEARN PORTAL AT UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA (UiTM)

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ABSTRACT

Effective training ensures that lecturers use the tools and test equipment, documentation, and spare parts efficiently to provide the required system operational reliability, through the proper installation, operation and maintenance of the prime mission equipment (IALA/AISM, 2001). i-Learn Center (i-LeC) was established on the 30th of December 2005 and operated under the Academic Affairs Division (HEA). The center is responsible for handling adaptation of e-learning in UiTM and providing two parts of training for UiTM lecturers across faculties and campuses throughout the country. The first part is i-Learn Portal System Training that deals with hands-on training of the system. The second part is e-Note Training that focuses on the optimization in using Microsoft Office (MS Word, MS Power Point and MS Excel) and Macromedia Flash MX in teaching environments. Questionnaires to gauge the effectiveness of the training were distributed to the lecturers in training and the data analyzed. Thus in this study, we present the findings and the results obtained reflecting the response of the lecturers about the effectiveness of i-Learn Portal System Training and e-Note Training. Finally, we also discuss on the direction of the findings in this study.

1. INTRODUCTION

The continued need for individual and organizational development can be traced to numerous demands, including maintaining superiority in the market place, enhancing employee skills and knowledge, and increasing productivity. Training is one of the most pervasive methods for enhancing the productivity of individuals and communicating organizational goals to new personnel. Given the importance and potential impact of training on organizations and the costs associated with the development and implementation of training, it is important that both researchers and practitioners have a better understanding of the relationship between design and evaluation features and the effectiveness of training and development efforts. i-Learn is the name for UiTM *Learning Management System (LMS)* which is managed by the staff at the centre. Some of the tasks involve managing the system which includes entertaining queries via helpdesk, ensuring the system's stability, adding new users, integrating the system with other system in UiTM, and removing or adding remaining courses. The portal is accessible via internet where lecturers could access the system to create content and online collaboration with students. Students can also access the system from anywhere to download content and collaborate online. *i-Learn Content Development* is a platform which supports, enriches and upgrades the teaching and learning process. i-Learn centre is currently developing high quality courseware for students' use to optimize the acquisition of knowledge. At the moment, the uploaded courseware is still in its first phase of development. The information below shows the phases of courseware development that have been carefully planned in order to achieve its objectives. *i-Learn Portal System Training* is hands-on training about the system itself. The objectives of the training are to manage and upgrade existing course contents, to identify and develop high quality course content, to promote and encourage preparation of course content among lecturers and use by the students, and to ensure the technology and information sharing culture among lecturers and students through promotion and training. i-Learn Portal System Training also includes hands-on in course handling, question bank, question paper, scheduler,

forum moderation, assignment, e-mail and report. Course handling functions can be classified into the following sub-functions namely - define course outline, define course assessment, modify course attributes, announce course, announce course assessment and etc. Question bank functions can be classified into – new question creation, modify existing question attributes, remove question and search question in the question bank. Question paper functions can be classified into – new question paper creation, modify existing question paper attributes, remove question paper, search question in the question bank and assign marks for each question in the question paper. Scheduler functions can be classified into – new event creation, modify event attributes, remove event, new task creation and modify task attributes. Forum moderation functions can be classified into – post topics, post replies, approve / reject topics and approve / reject replies. Assignment functions can be classified into – new assignment creation modify existing assignment attributes and remove assignment. Email functions can be classified into – send mail to individual or all users, read incoming mails, reply mail and delete mail. Reports functions can be classified into – course reports and learner reports.

2. EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Over the past 30 years, there have been six cumulative reviews of the training and development literature (Campbell, 1971; Gold-stein, 1980; Latham, 1988; Salas & Cannon-Bowers, 2001; Tannenbaum & Yukl, 1992; Wexley, 1984). On the basis of these and other pertinent literature, we identified several design and evaluation features that are related to the effectiveness of training and development programs. However, the scope of the present article is limited to those features over which trainers and researchers have a reasonable degree of control. Specifically, we focus on (a) training management and (b) course contents. The choice of evaluation criteria (i.e., the dependent measure used to operationally the effectiveness of training) is a primary decision that must be made when evaluating the effectiveness of training. Although newer approaches to, and models of, training evaluation have been proposed (e.g., Day, Arthur, & Gettman, 2001; Kraiger, Ford, & Salas, 1993), Kirkpatrick's (1959, 1976, 1996) four-level model of training evaluation and criteria contin¬ues to be the most popular (Salas & Canon-Bowers, 2001; Van Buren & Erskine, 2002). Reaction criteria, which are operationalized by using self-report measures, represent trainees' affective and attitudinal responses to the training program. However, there is very little reason to believe that how trainees feel about or whether they like a training pro¬gram tells researchers much, if anything, about (a) how much they learned from the program (learning criteria), (b) changes in their job-related behaviors or performance (behavioral criteria), or (c) the utility of the program to the organization (results criteria). This is supported by the lack of relationship between reaction criteria and the other three criteria (e.g., Alliger & Janak, 1989; Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver, & Shotland, 1997; Arthur, Tubre, Paul, & Edens, 2003; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Kaplan & Pascoe, 1977; Noe & Schmitt, 1986).

3. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this preliminary study was threefold. First, it serves as a quantitative measurement of the effectiveness of i-Learn portal training towards lecturers in UiTM. Second, it identifies the necessity of giving continuous i-Learn portal training to lecturers. Third, it provides the basis for the exploration of viability to improve and enhance the quality of the i-Learn portal training. Subjects of the study were 400 lecturers of the university randomly selected from 24 faculties and subjects were required to attend the i-Learn portal training. The questionnaire was designed to contain two sections; Section A is concerned with the overall satisfaction of training management; Section B consists of questions concerning the effectiveness of training contents.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

4.1 Training Management

Respondents were asked to answer questions concerning the overall satisfaction of training management in Section A.

4.1.1 Satisfaction on overall training program quality

Figure 1 illustrates the results for the subjects' perception on the quality level of training program.

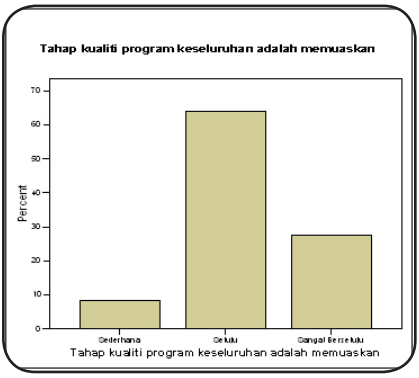

Figure 1: Satisfaction on overall training program quality

4.1.2 Duration of training is satisfactory

Figure 2 shows the overall percentage of respondents' perception on the duration of training.

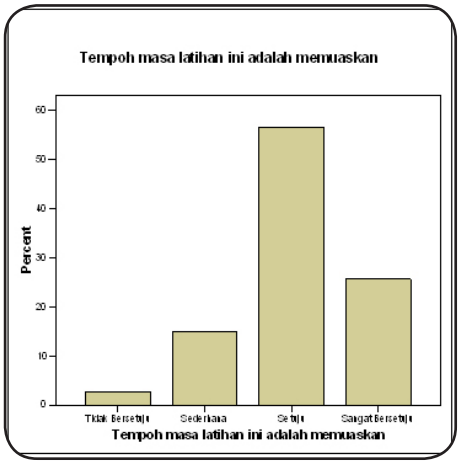

Figure 2: Duration of training is satisfactory

4.1.3 Continuous training is required

Figure 3 shows the overall percentage of respondents' perception on whether the training should be provided by i-Learn.

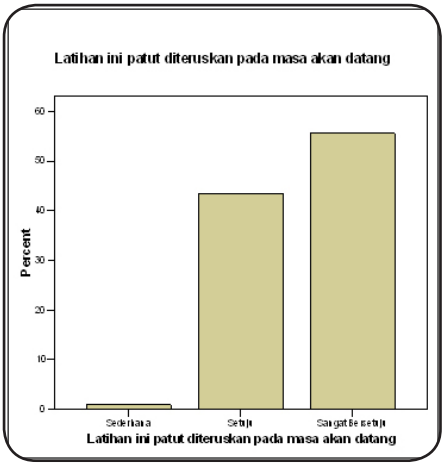

Figure 3: Continuous training is required

4.1.4 The Training Is Very Important For Learning E-Learning

Figure 4 shows the overall percentage of respondents' perception on the importance of training in learning process.

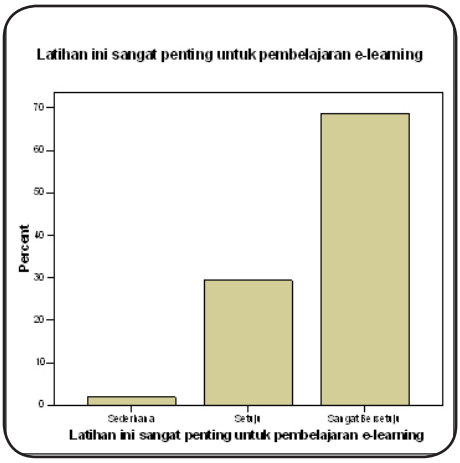

Figure 4: The Training Is Very Important For Learning E-Learning

4.1.5 Satisfaction on Training Program Promotion quality

Figure 5 shows the respondents' perception on the training promotion.

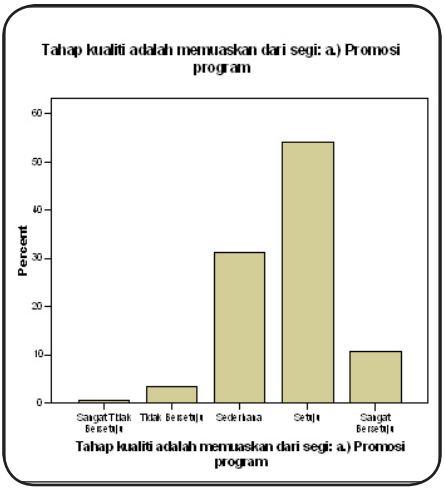

Figure 5: Satisfaction on Training Program Promotion quality

4.1.6 The Quality Level of Training Committee at Satisfactory Level

Figure 6 shows the respondents' perception on the quality level of training committee.

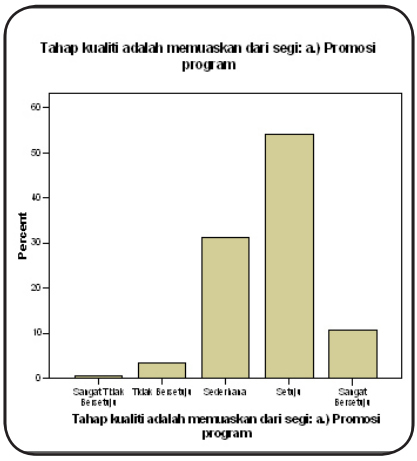

Figure 6: The Quality Level of Training Committee at Satisfactory Level

4.2 Training Contents

Respondents were asked to answer questions concerning the Training Contents variable in Section B.

4.2.1 The Trainee Can Implement LMS When Training is Provided

Figure 7 shows the respondents' perception on the implementation of LMS.

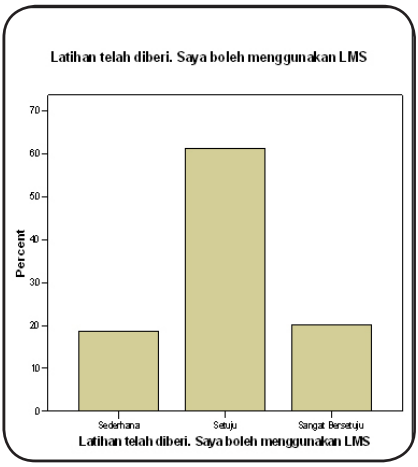

Figure 7: The Trainee Can Implement LMS When Training is Provided

4.2.2 The Trainee Can Implement e-Note When Training is Provided.

Figure 8 illustrates the respondents' answers concerning on the implementation of e-note.

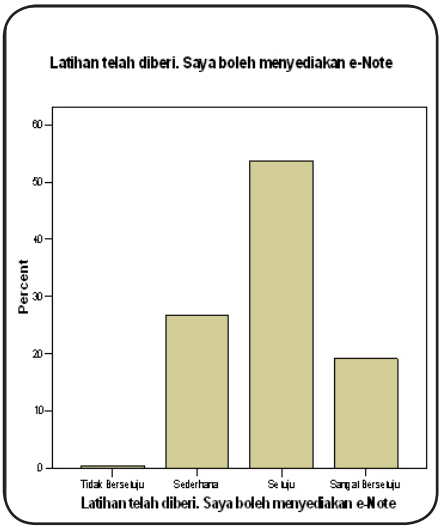

Figure 8: The Trainee Can Implement e-Note When Training is Provided.

4.2.3 The LMS Competency Level before Attending Training at Satisfactory Level

Figure 9 illustrates the respondents' perception on the level of usability LMS before attending training.

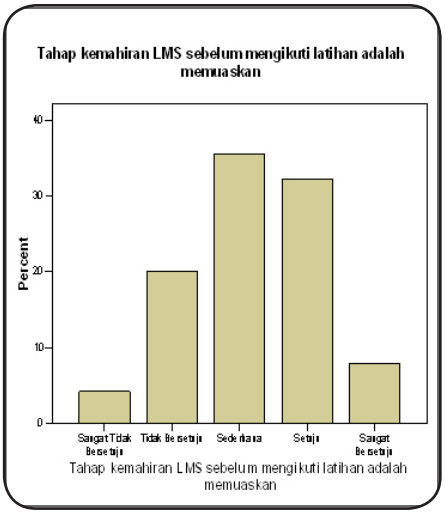

Figure 9: The LMS Competency before Attending Training at Satisfactory Level

4.2.4 The LMS Competency Level After Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

Figure 10 shows the perception of the respondents on the level of usability LMS after attending training.

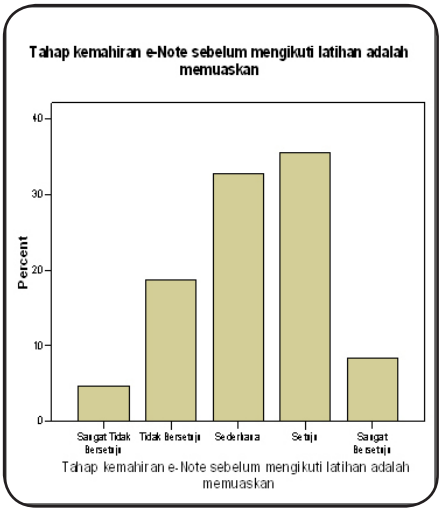

Figure 10: The LMS Competency Level After Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

4.2.5 The e-Note Competency Level Before Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

Figure 11 shows the perception of the respondents on the level of usability e-Note before attending training.

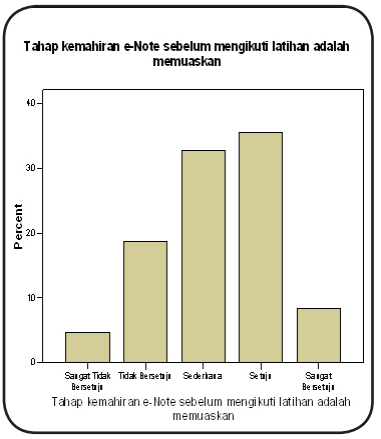

Figure 11: The e-Note Competency Level Before Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

4.2.6 The e-Note Competency Level After Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

Figure 12 shows the perception of the respondents on the level of usability e-Note after attending training.

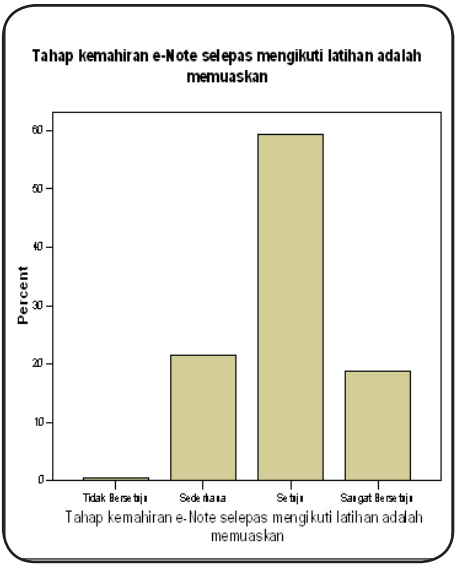

Figure 12: The e-Note Competency Level After Attending Training At Satisfactory Level

5. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Continuous need for development that enhances employee skills, knowledge and increase productivity may come in the form of training. Training undoubtedly is one of the most pervasive methods for enhancing the productivity of individuals and therefore needs to be evaluated on its effectiveness. The evaluation indicated that respondents reacted positively on the program, its duration, and the training conducted. They also found that the hands-on training regarding the LMS and e-note were beneficial and worthwhile. However future study can look into the other two levels namely, the transfer learning, and results as outlined in the Kirkpatrick's four-level model of training evaluation to ensure the full effectiveness of the training program.

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