

THE HUMAN RESOURCE PERSPECTIVE
TOWARDS ACHIEVING VISION 2020

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ROLE OF I.T.M. IN HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN MALAYSIA

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INTRODUCTION

The role of an organizational entity in human resource development (HRD) encompasses two levels: micro and macro. At the micro level, like any other organization, Institut Teknologi MARA (I.T.M.) has its own human resources to be managed and developed in order to satisfy I.T.M.'s very own organizational objectives. Being part of a dynamic nation, I.T.M. is not divorced of some expected roles within that larger national framework of development. This paper discusses I.T.M.'s role in developing its immediate human resources and in contributing to the national human resource development.

DEVELOPMENT OF ITS PEOPLE

In many cases, organization problems are traceable to the human side of the organization. Notwithstanding the structures and systems that create the organization, it is the people that make the organization alive. Attitude and values upheld by the people shape organizational culture and redound to the corporate image and organizational effectiveness. Attention to people, therefore, is an institutional concern, for people is viewed as potential asset rather than merely variable cost (Beer et. al., 1985).

I.T.M.'s philosophy is a manifestation of that belief in the human potential. I.T.M. believes that every person possesses that natural capacity - talent, interest, and orientation - to learn, and by being properly educated, trained and developed, that person is able to self-actualize and to make invaluable contribution to the society and the nation.

Human resource development (HRD) per se is challenging because by nature the human being is complex. In I.T.M., the HRD task is even more challenging considering the chiasmus in an organization that has nationally distributed branches and that offers a wide range of disciplines of study. To an extent the HRD policy choices in I.T.M. is constrained by the government's remuneration and work systems. Nevertheless, the limit to creativity in HRD is fairly elastic.

With a view to achieving the 4Cs of HRD outcomes - commitment, competence, congruence (between employees goals and organizational goals), and cost effectiveness - as postulated by Beer et al., (1985), I.T.M. embarks on a centrifugal and centripetal approach to HRD. The focus of the centrifugal approach is the individual. The self development concept propagated by the Bina Insan program is calculated to be the thrust for a total HRD. Through self-realization, further HRD efforts will not be viewed by the individuals as a proselytizer - a perception commonly encountered in a massive HRD programme. Through self-realization a meaningful contribution of the individuals to the total HRD environment is anticipated. In other words, every member of the organization is an HRD change agent. The development process within the individual is also more rewarding if it is self-initiated. The process of self-exploration is a memorable experience because each step along the development process is meant to be more phantasmagoric than the last.

In setting the momentum for HRD through the centrifugal approach, a paradox is recognised. At the outset, recognising the human psychological barrier to change, individuals are directed to participate in Bina Insan or other starter programs. Eventually, the paradox 'directed to be self-directed' becomes an accepted necessity realised by the individuals themselves to be justifiable.

The ripples and cumulative effect of the centrifugal approach positively influence the environment. To hasten the HRD process, development of the environment is not entirely left to the effects of the centrifugal approach. Preparing a munificent environment is the intention of the centripetal approach. It is envisaged that under such an environment the initiatives for HRD will come mainly from the individuals rather than the establishment. Initially though, the establishment, through its Training and Scholarship Division, has been playing an active role in creating that munificent environment.

In orchestrating the effort, attention was paid to the training needs of all categories of employees. The short courses and programs offered gave ample opportunities for all to participate. In 1991 a number of 59 short courses were organised benefitting about 2,800 employees. For 1992, the Division has planned for 90 well diversified short courses or programs. Of course, the Division is also entrusted with responsibility of further developing the Institute's academic staff especially, through its annual budget allocation for further studies.

The Institute believes in the long-term effect of its human investment. For an effective HRD program, the Institute chooses to develop the individuals and the environment *pari passu*. Harping more on the individuals, it is hoped that future HRD efforts will see more initiatives springing from the individuals and only a modicum of initiatives from the establishment. An effective individual in control of his environment is after all the meaningful agenda in our HRD efforts which is part and parcel of nation building.

DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURE GENERATION

The recent seminar on Vision 2020 organised by the government and held at the Awana, Genting Highland, emphatically concluded that HRD is imperative in Malaysia's move toward 2020. In operationalizing the HRD concept, no other variables are as pronounced as education and training (see OPP2 pp. 25-26; also see Ungku Aziz, 1991). Under the Sixth Malaysia Plan, education and training share of the allocation is 15.5%, a drop of 0.6% compared to its allocation under the Fifth Malaysia Plan. This is nevertheless still a sizeable allocation relative to other sectors' allocation under the Sixth Plan. (See Table 1).

This section of the paper addresses I.T.M.'s role in contributing to the expectations of the Second Outline Prospective Plan 1991-2000, the sixth Malaysia Plan and the Report of the Cabinet Committee on Training 1991.

According to the Human Development Report 1991, "The lack of political commitment, not of financial resources, is often the real cause of human neglect" (p.1). In the case of Malaysia the three reports mentioned earlier are testimonies of political and financial commitments to HRD.

The HRD implications of the nine challenges Malaysia chooses to crystallize in the future are well presented (Ungku Aziz, 1991). The Prime Minister reiterated the importance of HRD in nation-building in his address at the opening of the Second Executive Programme on Project Appraisal and Risk Analysis Management at Bank Negara on January 6, 1992. He said, "Manpower plans should address skills shortages, staffing needs, career development, attitude change and productivity. Emphasis should be on building the level of professionalism and enhancing the quality of the labour force".

TABLE 1
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT ALLOCATION
AND EXPENDITURE BY SECTOR, 1986-95
(\$ MILLION)

SECTOR	Federal Government				
	5MP			6MP	
	Revised Allocation	Expenditure	%	Allocation	%
I. Economic	24,048	22,886	64.8	31,236	56.8
Agriculture & Rural Development	7,427	7,325	20.8	9,019	16.4
Mineral Resources Development	43	43	0.1	53	0.1
Commerce & Industry	3,981	3,981	11.3	5,752	10.5
Transport	7,393	6,823	19.3	10,759	19.6
Communication	815	792	2.2	73	0.1
Energy	947	918	2.6	979	1.8
Water Resources	2,954	2,667	7.6	3,773	6.9
Feasibility Study	74	52	0.1	228	0.4
Research and Development	414	285	0.8	600	1.1
II. Social	9,046	8,764	24.8	13,468	24.5
Education and Training	5,812	5,700	16.1	8,501	15.5
Health & Population	981	931	2.6	2,253	4.1
Information & Broadcasting	33	20	0.1	128	0.2
Housing	1,452	1,452*	4.1	803	1.5
Culture Youth & Sports	171	131	0.4	341	0.6
Local Town Council, Welfare Services	319	291	0.8	798	1.5
Village & Community Development	275	237	0.7	441	0.8
Purchase of Land	3	2	0.0	203	0.4
III. Security	2,955	2,527	7.2	8,408	15.3
Defence Services	1,858	1,497	4.2	6,000	10.9
Internal Security	1,097	1,030	2.9	2,408	4.4
IV. Administration	1,241	1,123	3.2	1,888	3.4
General Services	1,045	944	2.7	1,657	3.0
Upgrading and Renovation	196	179	0.5	231	0.4
Total	37,290	35,300	100.0	55,000	100.0

Source: Sixth Malaysia Plan, p.62.

Note: * Include housing loan programme for the public sector employee

Future Malaysia requires "well rounded" human resources. "In the nineties, knowledge and skills required will not be single discipline-based, but will be orientated towards a mix of technical, statistical and computer-based disciplines" (OPP2, p.173). The variegated knowledge and skills are harmoniously blended with positive attitudes, ethics and values to give birth to a new Malaysian personality. No one dares to claim that the new Malaysia will be one who has acquired all the accoutrements of success; nevertheless, within the framework of our Vision 2020, the personality fits the mould of the human resource that can lead the nation effectively towards the next century.

As education is a life-long process and in light of transience and novelties in the human life affairs, the role of educational institutions goes beyond mere educating and training. The process of education and training is extended to continuing education and retraining. I.T.M.'s programs such as the Distant Learning Program, the Executive MBA Program, the Advance Diplomas are part of I.T.M.'s commitment to the extended role of educational institution in the national HRD.

Challenge # 6 to achieving Vision 2020 states that: Establish a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology, but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization of the future. It is evident that in its march towards an industrialized status, the nation needs to enhance industrial competence and competitiveness, and this warrants the development of a strong science and technology (S & T) base. According to the OPP2, current estimate of full-time research scientists and technologies stands at 7,000. In terms of ratio, our prevailing ratio of 400:1 million population is low compared to that of the industrialized countries which is 3,500-6,500:1 million population. In line with the target of doubling current percentage share of R & D to GNP, by the year 2020 Malaysia's target ratio of S & T personnel is 1,000:1 million population.

The challenge to educational institutions is therefore formidable. Table 2 illustrates the point. Generally, local professional output between 1991 - 2000 could not fulfil the net increase in professional S & T employment for the same period. On I.T.M.'s part, as an illustration, its output of engineers/technical assistants for the period 1990 - 1995 is estimated at 2,500.

I.T.M. can look forward to more challenging tasks in the future as evidenced by the Report of the Cabinet Committee in Training. From the Report's list of industries viz, construction, electric and electronics, information technology, textile, wood based industry, manufacturing (ceramics, chemical, machinery and engineering, foundry and plastic), it is recognised that I.T.M. has been (and is expected to) playing an active role in assisting the development of industries such as wood-based, ceramics and plastic. It is also heartening to note that I.T.M. is the only educational institution that is involved in the E & T in the textile industry.

In consonance with the recommendations of the Cabinet Report (See Figure 1), I.T.M. is also involved in several of the measures. For example, several centres of excellence have been established to strengthen linkages between the academia and the industry. Innovation Centre, Machine Technology Centre, Centre for Computer Aided Design, Engineering and Manufacturing (CADEM), Integrated Information System Centre, Research and Consultancy Centre, and Pusat Daya Cipta are some of the centres of excellence at I.T.M.

Without doubt educational institutional changes are imperative in meeting the challenges of Vision 2020. The OPP2 describes some of the role adjustments that have to be made (OPP2, pp. 174 - 175). Job placement, off-campus programs, twinning programs, consultancy work and entrepreneurial training are some of the new roles expounded by the OPP2. Though these roles are not novelties to I.T.M., such activities will certainly be intensified in the future.

CONCLUSION

The above discussion may seem oversimplified where staff development is treated as constituting I.T.M.'s micro role in HRD and student development as the preoccupation of I.T.M.'s macro role. Nevertheless, the approach serves quite well in highlighting I.T.M.'s role in HRD. It is recognised that the population components of I.T.M. are not mutually exclusive. They may be categorised differently, yet each contributes to one functioning whole viz. the organisation, and by extension to one nation viz. Malaysia.

TABLE 2

CAPACITY OF LOCAL INSTITUTIONS TO MEET THE DEMAND FOR SELECTED PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL OCCUPATIONS 1991-2000

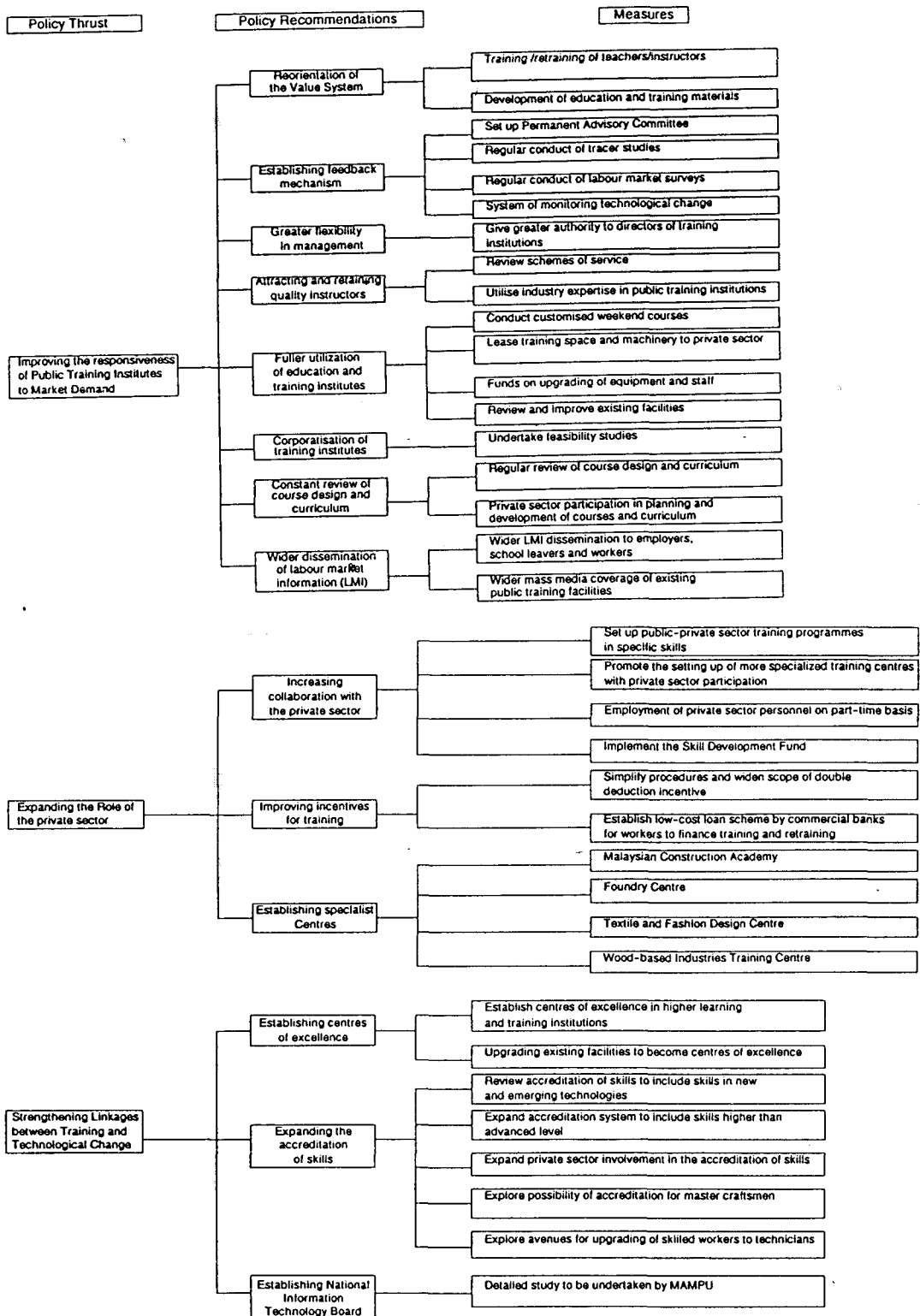
Occupation	Stock 1990	Employment 2000	Net Increase 1991 - 2000	Output (1991-2000) ¹	
				Local Public	Local Private
ENGINEERS	26,500	56,600	30,100	21,000	-
Civil	11,100	19,500	8,400	3,700	-
Electrical & Electronic	6,200	14,600	8,400	4,200	-
Mechanical	5,200	10,800	5,600	4,000	-
Chemical	800	2,000	1,200	900	-
Others	3,200	9,700	6,500	8,200	-
ENGINEERING ASSISTANTS	72,400	195,300	122,900	84,070	20,900
Civil	27,100	58,500	31,400	20,400	600
Electrical & Electronic	32,300	75,900	43,600	21,200	8,800
Mechanical	6,400	32,400	26,000	11,600	9,600
Chemical	600	6,000	5,400	570	-
Others	6,000	22,500	16,500	30,300	1,900
MEDICAL AND HEALTH	11,600	17,600	6,000	6,200	-
Physicians & Surgeons	7,900	12,300	4,400	4,600	-
Dental Surgeons	1,700	2,200	500	700	-
Pharmacists	2,000	3,100	1,100	900	-
MEDICAL AND HEALTH ASSISTANTS	47,300	57,400	10,100	5,660	1,050
Medical & Lab. Med. Assts.	9,500	13,000	3,500	1,000	-
Dentists & Dental Nurses	2,000	2,700	700	200	-
Pharmaceutical Assts.	1,500	2,400	900	360	-
Professional Nurses	34,300	39,300	5,000	4,100	1,050
SCHOOL TEACHERS	177,600	252,500	74,900	74,900	-

Source: Second Outline Perspective Plan, p.167.

Note: ¹ output does not include graduates from education and training institutions overseas.

FIGURE 1

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE ON TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT



Source: Report of the Cabinet Committee on Training, 1991, p.54.

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Note: This paper was presented by Dr. Adenan Bin Alias, Senior Lecturer, MARA Institute of Technology.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Comment: I think the paper by the MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) director is very specific on the role of ITM, and also on human resource development (HRD). I think they have dealt with the topic quite sufficiently but I would now like to actually focus on how to maintain the role in the context of Vision 2020 against the ways and structures or incentive system given to trainers. It is very important to talk of the pool of skilled and trained labour but we somehow or other tend to ignore the question of the process in producing that output. It is not only the capital or infrastructure aspect that is important but also the human aspect as the one who trains or produce that output is also human.

In the Malaysian context of a laissez-faire economy, workers can work anywhere they please especially where they are paid high salaries. Thus, we face a dilemma here - we want to achieve a rapid increase of skilled labour but at the same time we are facing a brain drain especially in view of the recent implementation of New Remuneration System (SSB). Many ITM lecturers and others from the universities are dissatisfied with the terms of the SSB. Actually, this question should be addressed to Dr. Fong but I was unable to attend that day so I hope ITM can take up this issue. This is nothing personal but it is very important for the nation really.

Reply: The problem of SSB is a problem among all the education sectors and institutes in the country except for the very senior professors. I don't feel I am in a position to comment directly as we are in the process of handing in the memorandums and things like that. The aim of SSB is of course very noble but somehow or other the outcome is not satisfactory to some quarters. Thus, to some extent, it does affect the motivation of the staff. Whether this is temporary or not I do not know. As a process of change, however, this is normal but in as much as we are frustrated, we want to make use of the opportunities. It reminds me of two industrialists, one from the United Kingdom, one from Japan, who wanted to set up shoe factories in India. The European, on seeing that Indians do not wear shoes exclaimed, "Problems!" but the Japanese exclaimed, "Opportunities!" Thus, when confronted with a set of problems, we want to look at both sides, the problems and the opportunities. The brain drain must be looked at as a plus within the context of national development. With regard to SSB, we must be positive in our outlook so we'll give it a chance. Thank you.

Comment: I hope Dr. Adnan would respond to my comments. I feel that the philosophy of ITM, in terms of HRD, is based on the latest human development paradigm, that is, *social learning or social engineering paradigm* where the basis for developing an individual or community is based on the principle of stimulus and response. This means that if a person has a bad habit like smoking, for instance, we have to find something to persuade him to get rid of that habit. Hence, we should, as Dr. Adnan rightly pointed out, have to create a conducive environment for humans to develop. We must not be selfish and accept SSB as a major motivating factor in the environment. I wonder if Dr. Adnan has any comments on whether my assumption on the first part of the philosophy of ITM and HRD training is correct or not.

Reply: I agree with you. *Social engineering* in Singapore is one example but as far as ITM is concerned, we want to get away from negative connotation or social engineering so we dare not call it social engineering. I must say that you are right in saying to a certain extent, HRD involves a significant part of social engineering, the whole gamut of HRD encompasses social engineering. Take as comparisons,

Iraq and Kuwait. Iraq could develop from the ashes as she is well developed because of motivation whereas Kuwait has to import foreign entrepreneurs to help develop the country. So within ITM, the philosophy is also similar. We want to develop the people and let the people develop and create themselves in the environment, not so much in terms of the environment being developed and encroached on the people to change. I feel that the centrifugal approach is very appropriate for an organization and the nation.

Question: If we were to refer to the second page of this paper, "With a view of achieving the 4Cs of the HRD's outcome - Commitment, Competence, Congruence and Co-effectiveness," how much is the achievement in ITM so far connected with the role of ITM within HRD in Malaysia?

Answer: The 4Cs that we propose are universal values. The only thing we haven't done right now is to put these into operation or to think of how we can use the 4Cs as a yardstick for the effectiveness in the steps to improve HRD. As a point of departure, the fruits of HRD outcome can be used as a starting point to develop or rather as a yardstick for gauging the progress of our HRD efforts. That is important but it has still not been done yet.

Question: Has any study been done regarding the effectiveness of ITM students, within the light of HRD operational outcome?

Answer: Yes, the Student Tracer Report. However, I did not answer the previous question by citing the study because even though you can say to an extent that it is an instrument to measure the effectiveness of ITM's efforts this far, HRD's conceptual framework and the Tracer Study cannot be simply juxtaposed. At the micro level, the Tracer Study does give some indications of our HRD's efforts. However, the study which aims at tracing the whereabouts, status, and performance of ITM's graduates is too specific, too macro. Thus, just citing the Tracer Report is insufficient.