LEARNING ORGANIZATION PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY AT SARAWAK ROYAL MALAYSIA POLICE HEADQUARTERS, KUCHING

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Kota Samarahan
2004
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BY

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02-02-0698

A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration
Faculty of Economics and Business
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak
(2004)
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I, certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a research paper for the Degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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This research paper was submitted to the Faculty of Economics and Business, UNIMAS and is accepted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Corporate Master in Business Administration.

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I, hereby declare that this research is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references and a bibliography is appended.

Signature

Date : 17 May 2004

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I wish to extend my sincere thanks to all the lecturers involved in the CMBA program at UNIMAS. My heartfelt thanks to Associate Professor Dr. Shazali Abu Mansor, the Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Business for his assistance and the invaluable guidance rendered to me to complete this paper. A big thank you to all the respondents, my fellow colleagues, attached to the Sarawak Royal Malaysia Police Headquarters, Kuching.

Last but not least, I wish to thank my beloved wife and children for their understandings and supports.

Alhamdulillah, with the kindness, blessing and God willing, I have completed this program, CMBA @ UNIMAS.
Abstract

Learning Organization Practices: A Case Study at Sarawak Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) Headquarters, Kuching

The purpose of this research is to assess factors that could make RMP a learning organization. The population of this study consists of the Senior Police Officers at RMP Headquarters Sarawak. This group was chosen because they are the Staff Officers, divisional heads, sub-section heads and decision makers, both at Headquarters and Ground Levels. The size of the sample was 60 senior police officers, i.e. 30 Gazetted Officers and 30 Inspectors. The sample of this study covers 44.7% out of the 134 Senior Police Officers at the RMP Police Headquarters, Sarawak.

The findings of this research will help to give some ideas to the Senior Police Officers in the RMP to identify and assess the factors that could make RMP a learning organization. At the same time, enlighten the officers and men in the RMP on the importance of becoming a learning organization in order to stay relevance in this ever changing and challenging era. Lastly, to correct weaknesses towards attaining a positive service attitude, befitting the vision, mission and objectives of the RMP.
1.0 Introduction

In today’s lightning-speed economy, success depends on our desire and capacity to learn. By learning we embrace new ideas and adapt to changing circumstances. We become better managers and better leaders. Learning has increasingly becomes an important aspect to many organizations, as most organizations had realized that learning is a key to competitiveness.

Drucker (1989) and Kock (1995) assumed that firms learn from their past experiences and transform them into useful knowledge that will make them more competitive in the future. In order to succeed in an ever changing world, organization must reshape and response to change (Raja Maznah Raja Hussain, 1995). However, hard work, capability and capacity are needed in responding to change. Unfortunately, there is a tendency where resistance to change occurred at all levels within the organization (Reynierse, 1994). If this situation occurred, it may cause to the little improvement in the organization.

Learning organization has a culture and value set that promotes learning. Learning culture is categorized into three important aspects, i.e. openness to experience, encouragement of responsible risk taking, and willingness to acknowledge failures and learn from them. In an organization with active learning culture, every employee will actively participate and take the opportunity to learn, nurture and grow in-line with the interests of the organization. Group should be engaged in an active conversation while leaders in the organization should be keen in creating conditions that can foster conversation (McGill and Slocum, 1993). This scenario is important to ensure the effectiveness of learning in the organization.

From the above viewpoints, it is obvious that with the aim of succeeded in a competitive environment, organization should
The Organization:
Royal Malaysia Police (RMP): An Overview

"The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) should maintain its relevance by fulfilling the expectations of the Government and society. This could be achieved if the force was prepared to continuously receive and manage changes. The value of hardware that we possess will not benefit society if our mindset remains the same, police personnel should serve the society with sincerity and continue to provide excellence service." These are among messages of Inspector General of Police (IGP) in-conjunction with 196th Police Day Celebration for 2003.

The 196th years old Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) falls under Article 132 of the Federal Constitution and is established under the Police Act, 1967. It has its roots in the First Charter of Justice declared in Penang on 25th March 1807. This Charter set that paved the way for the establishment of an organized police force ala the British model. In the twenty decades that followed, it has undergone many structural reforms and changes as dictated by the needs of the environment. Today, it stands out as an unique civil force taking full charge of the entire internal security in Malaysia. It is unique by virtue of its very composition and functions. Besides being charged with the traditional task of maintaining law and order, it is also a para-military force and an intelligence organization. Its ambit of responsibility covers the land, sea and air that are designated territories of the nation. No other police force in the world is charged with such wide spectrum of duties and none has such colorful character. It is self-contained to meet any situation affecting the internal security of this country.
Being the second largest civil service, next only to the teachers, it comes under the Police Force Commission as enshrined in Article 140 of the Federal Constitution. The power of appointments, promotions, confirmations, transfer and disciplinary matters are vested with the Police Force Commission. Today, the RMP has a total man-power of approximately 83,000 officers and rank-and-file not to mention the thousands of other supporting civilian staff carefully planned and deployed in all 13 States in Malaysia and the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Labuan.

1.1.1 Vision of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP)

In its efforts to establish a Force which will become a catalyst to prosperity, economic and political stability in the country, the RMP would endeavor to:

(a) Practice the principle of “Courteous, Quick and Correct” (Mesra, Cepat dan Betul) in providing excellent services;

(b) Enhance professionalism amongst its personnel on a continuous basis;

(c) Ensure the Force is always trustworthy, reliable and respected by the community; and

(d) Exercise all powers and rights based on the provisions of the law with full responsibility, transparency and justice.

1.1.2 Objectives

As provided under Section 3(3) of the Police Act, 1967, the functions of RMP are to achieve the following objectives:-

(a) Maintenance of law and order;

(b) Preservation of the peace and security of Malaysia;
1.1.3 Mission

In line with the vision and objectives of the RMP, the mission of the Force is to:

(a) Endeavor to reduce the crime rate to a minimum level;

(b) Endeavor to reduce the demand and supply of dangerous drugs;

(c) Reduce the rate of fatal accidents to a barest minimum;

(d) Continuously act against all forms of vices;

(e) Adopt an attitude of being more transparent, responsive and ready to serve;

(f) Ensure that personnel are aware of their roles and responsibilities to achieve the job objectives; and

(g) Enhance the confidence of the community that their life and security is always guaranteed.

1.1.4 Core Values

In its efforts to improve the quality of service to the community, the leadership of the RMP has introduced a community policing approach that is in line with the aim of the Ministry of Home Affairs to be a “citizens friendly” Ministry. The term ‘friendly’ is defined as the harmonious interaction between individuals with emphasis to sincerity and integrity. It also carries the
meaning that all thoughts and actions should contain universal human values.

In the context of RMP, it refers to the interaction between the members of the Force and its clients, i.e. the public. Among the features of “friendly policing” are friendliness, politeness and good manners, decent actions and words, readiness to help, soft-spoken, unbiased, cheerful, non argumentative; patience and in control of the situation, calm and poised, a good listener, places emphasis on facts rather than sentiments, render explanations and not nagging, resilient and firm.

1.1.5 The Management and Administration

In compliance with the policy to enhancing effectual management practices, the Administration Division has drawn up programs for the modernization of the Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) through Total Quality Management (TQM), Quality Control Circles (QCC), Quality Procedure Manuals, Works Procedure Manual and Desk Files, as well as the Client’s Charter. These programs are in line to achieve the MS ISO 9000 and also to facilitate the implementation of the “Electronic Government”, one of the mega projects of the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

1.1.6 The Strength of RMP

Currently, the RMP is having approximately 83,000 officers and men in its Six Departments, Management Department, Crimes Investigation Department (CID), Internal Security and Public Order Department, Narcotics Department, Logistics Department and Special Branch (SB). In 1999, the strength of RMP was 79,849; with 2,722 Gazetted Officers, 4,746 Inspectors, 66,822 Other Ranks and 5,559 members of Auxiliary Police. And, the police workforce is growing as the workload of the police was getting heavier.
1.1.7 The History of RMP Sarawak Contingent

There was no effective law enforcement agency in Sarawak before the arrival of Sir James Brooke. A recognizable police force began to emerge between the periods of 1840 to 1880. The Rajah himself and his small band of officers helped to maintain law and order. Small forts were built in important parts of Sarawak and ‘fort-men’ were garrisoned. From these fort-men, the Sarawak Police and the Sarawak Rangers were later formed. In 1932, these two forces were amalgamated to form the Sarawak Constabulary.

In 1862, a force of 120 men was raised in Kuching under Major W.H. Rodway and in 1972, this force was granted the title ‘The Sarawak Rangers’. Apart from Sarawakians, Indian and Javanese also served in the Rangers. The Sarawak Rangers’ Depot was established in Kuching and small detachments were kept at various stations. The Sarawak Rangers took part in all the major expeditions during this period. When the Sarawak Constabulary was formed in 1932, its strength was only 859. In the same year, village constables were appointed to perform police duties but they were not part of the Regular Constabulary.

In 1938, the village constables were disbanded as the scheme proved unsuccessful. The strength of the Sarawak Constabulary was increased to 1,000 and took over the duties of the village constables under the terms of a ‘Constabulary Order’, which was put in force in 1940. Force ‘A’ consisting of 900 all ranks, was responsible for civil police duties and provided armed guards and escorts in the principal stations throughout the state. Force ‘B’ consisted of 100 men from all ranks, consisting of three platoons of Dayaks and was employed on para-military duties along the lines of the Police Field Force.

On 1st July 1946, when the British officially took over Sarawak, the strength of the Constabulary was 1,079, and by 1954 the Constabulary improved in general
standards. By 1962, there was considerable improvement in the Constabulary. By 1960, police recruits were required to possess a minimum educational standard of Primary 6 from the English and Malay medium schools.

Today, the Sarawak Police Force has a total of about 8,000 manpower, with 500 officers and 7,600 men, serving in six departments; i.e. Management, Crimes Investigation Department (CID), Internal Security and Public Order, Narcotics, Logistics and Special Branch (SB). Nevertheless, the current strength is still insufficient in the context of combating crimes and maintaining law and order. The ratio of crime-fighting policemen to the population of Sarawak is moderately big.

Due to the shortage of manpower in combating crimes, the Public Services Department (PSD) had approved application of Royal Malaysia Police (RMP) to increase an additional manpower of 23,000 in this country, in the next few years, to cope with the ever-increasing workload.

1.1.8 Organizational Structure of the RMP Sarawak Contingent

The organizational structure of the Sarawak Police Contingent is as follows:
In Sarawak, the Police Contingent is headed by the Commissioner of Police who is responsible to the Inspector General of Police (IGP). He is assisted by a Deputy Commissioner and seven Heads of Departments; i.e. the Officer in-Charge of Criminal Investigations Department (CID), Anti-Narcotic, General Operations Force (GOF), Logistic, Management, Internal Security and Public Order, Special Branch (SB). The Officer in-Charge of Police District (OCPD) is representing the IGP and CP, and he is responsible to all the policing matters at the District level.

1.2 Problem Statement

Learning culture will enhance an organization in achieving its objectives. Government sectors started to realize the importance of becoming a learning organization. The public sectors must also learn to “work smarter” so as to be able to
gain efficiencies and increase productivity. However, in this regard, organization should know the factors that make a learning organization.

"... for the advancement in the human resources arena, the recruitment of a total of 100 senior officers and 1,435 junior officers to undergo basic training. Subsequently, advance courses and other courses aimed to enhance the etiquette of RMP’s workforce were also conducted on a frequent basis. On this note, a total of 516 serial advance courses with an attendance of 19,655 participants and 229 series of Etiquette Enhancement Courses with an attendance of 11,835 participants were successfully conducted. These courses were conducted in terms of achieving the objectives of instilling the spirit and aspiration of all members of RMP towards attaining service attitude, befitting the vision, mission and objectives of the RMP.” (RMP Annual Report, 1999)

Tan Sri Norian bin Mai, the Inspector General of Police (1999) said “equipped with adequate knowledge, it is envisaged that the Force will be more proactive, able to adapt to a changing paradigm and be more resilient. On this consonance, the RMP would henceforth be able to project herself as a ‘knowledge-based organization’, whereby its personnel vide a variety of skills would be able to diligently render a quality service to the community at large”.

These days, many large organizations are trying to develop new structures, systems and policies that are more adaptable and responsive to change (Appelbaum and Goransson, 1997).

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to assess factors that could make RMP a learning organization.

The specific objectives of this research are to evaluate or assess whether the following factors could make RMP a learning organization by using Learning Organization Practice Profile adapted by O’Brien (1994); i.e. Learning dynamic, Organization transformation, People empowerment, Knowledge management, and Technology application.
1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this research will help to give some ideas to the Senior Police Officers in the RMP to identify the factors and the dominant factor that could make RMP a learning organization. At the same time, enlighten the officers and men in the RMP on the importance of becoming a learning organization in order to stay relevance in this ever changing and challenging era. Lastly, to correct weaknesses towards attaining a positive service attitude, befitting the vision, mission and objectives of the RMP.

1.5 Definition

1.5.1 Learning Organization

O'Brien (1994) defined a learning organization as an organization that has woven a continuous and enhanced capacity to learn, adapt and change into the fabric of its character. It has values, policies, practices, programs, systems and structures that support and accelerate organizational learning. Its learning results will change the ways in which individuals and the organization operates.

According to Garvin (1993), learning organization always learns from experience and from the best practices of others.

According to proponents of the learning organization, learning is the key to leveraging knowledge assets and thereby increasing intellectual capital. A learning organization is one that knows how to use knowledge and gives its employees the opportunity and the tools to develop and apply knowledge, and has the ability in transferring knowledge quickly and efficiently throughout the organization.

1.5.2 Learning Dynamics

Learning dynamics refers to the ability and capacity to learn. It shows the speed, quality and leverage of learning processes and content from the foundation
and nutrient which support, nourishes and flows through the order sub-systems of the learning organization (Marquardt, 1996).

In this research, learning dynamics referred to officers/men and RMP learning development.

1.5.3 Organization Transformation

An organization which transforms from a non-learning to a learning organization requires a significance change, this is similar to the metamorphosis of a caterpillar. Hence, the structure and strategies of an organization must change almost as dramatically as to become a learning organization (Marquardt, 1996). In this study, organization transformation can be understood as the capability of an organization changing itself to become accustomed to the ever changing environment. It was related to the vision, culture and strategy of the RMP.

1.5.4 People Empowerment

People empowerment is the delegation of authority, accountability, and responsibility to employees for improving the business processes under their control without obtaining permission from management (John Civerolo). This term referred to the aspect of empowering and enabling people. People are considered as the masters who can take data and transform it into knowledge for personal and organizational use. To be an effective part of organizational learning, every effort must be made to utilize and capitalize on the skills and knowledge of the available human resources (Marquardt, 1996).

However, in this research ‘people empowerment’ referred to the ability of the organization to empower the employees, i.e. officers and men of the RMP.
1.5.5 Knowledge Management

Ganesh D. Bhatt (2001), viewed knowledge management as a process of knowledge creation, validation, presentation, distribution and application. These five phases in knowledge management allow an organization to learn, reflect, and unlearn and relearn, usually considered essential for building, maintaining and replenishing of core-competencies.

Successful learning organization systematically guide knowledge, so that it can be successfully applied and utilize. It shows how knowledge is managed (Marquardt, 1996). In this research, the term referred to how organization manages the knowledge in the organization through simple four steps: acquisition, creation, storage and transfer or utilization of knowledge.

1.5.6 Technology Application

Organization that knows how to harness technology to enhance their learning capacity will possess a decided competitive advantage (Marquardt, 1996). In other words, it referred to the action of adding technological power to organizational learning.

In this research, this term is referred to as the uses of information system, technology-based learning or electronic performance support system in the organization.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This research only assesses the five aspects/factors that could influence or make RMP a learning organization. There will be other factors that have a great influence on an organization in becoming a learning organization. And, the research not covers all the officers and men in this contingent.
1.7 Conclusion

This Chapter covers the overview background of RMP, problem statement of the research, objectives, significant of the study, definitions and the limitation of this study.
Chapter II

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents the literature review of this research, which among others, includes the philosophy of learning, learning organization, organizational learning, factors that could make a learning organization and the implications of learning organization.

2.1 The Philosophy of Learning

The word ‘learning’, has many definitions.

Learning is any permanent incremental change in behavior that occurs as a result of practice or experience (Warty, 1990). However, to Saccuzzo (1987), the word ‘learning’ covers a wider perspective; it involves the capacity to engage in a new pattern of behavior as a result of experience. In this context, learning refers to getting knowledge or skills by studying, experiencing or being taught. In other words, it is a process of erudition/sophistication (Oxford Advance Learner’s English-Chinese Dictionary).

Learning refers to the development of insights, knowledge and associations between past actions, the effectiveness of those actions and future actions (Fiol and Lyles, 1985). From another point of view, learning is to be said involved the restructuring of organizational problems which will then bring to the outcome (Chandler, 1962). Hence, learning is both action outcomes and changes in the state of knowledge. Fiol and Lyles (1985) also studied the low-level learning and high-level learning. Low-level learning refers to behavior that may or may not being repeated by past behavior. Although it often repeated at a routine level, it usually forms cognitive associations. High-level learning refers to the development of complex rules and associations regarding new actions. It also involved the understanding of the fundamental of the