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THE CHALLENGES OF PUBLIC ACADEME IN UNIVERSITY SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: THE INFLUENCES OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT'S INTERVENTION

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ABSTRACT

__Background:__ Human Resource Development has been identified to play significant role in Corporate Social Responsibility. Thus, this study aims to investigate the relationships between human resource development intervention and corporate social responsibility awareness among academic staff in a public university in Malaysia. __Methods:__ A survey method using questionnaire was implemented to obtain data for this study. A total of 152 respondents participated in this study, giving a return rate of 67 percent from the entire population. Correlation and multiple regressions were performed using Statistical for Social Sciences to analyze the data. __Results:__ The result indicated that training and development has significant and highest correlation with corporate social responsibility awareness. Performance and rewards management were the strongest predictors to corporate social responsibility awareness. __Conclusions:__ It is crucial for HRD to take part in CSR as it helps in fostering organization and society belongingness with strong focus towards socially responsible activities.

INTRODUCTION

Universities started to focus on their civic responsibilities as well as public contributions in the areas of research and scholarship, teaching and learning, and outreach and partnership. Different terms are used to relate to the engagement of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), including community participatory research, service-learning, volunteerism, science shops, civic engagement and corporate social responsibility have become more popular among HEIs in different countries as they are re-emphasizing their responsibilities to prepare students to be more active and while engaging the citizens to contribute to our everchanging global society. Alongside teaching and research, cultivating social responsibility within Asian universities is the third mission of contemporary HEIs. According to ISO 26000, the level of an institution's social responsibility is measured by whether it has considered the impact of social and environmental outcomes. A university is a stakeholder in a society and should bear its 'university social responsibility' (USR).

The term Corporate Social University (CSU) have shifted to University Social Responsibility (USR) through demonstration of framework which meet the expectation of the respective stakeholders [1]. Teesside University for instance, created space and opportunity for cultural activities, promoted and performed and provided a forum for dialogue on issues relating to culture in the Tees Valley. The 'community engagement' has become an important agenda nowadays and are documented in university policy, which was further converted into a community engagement framework. Apart from these responsible actions, the university holds an ethics committee to evaluate the ethical dimensions of the academic research conducted on human related subjects such as health, security, human rights, general law and ethical principles [2].

LITERATURE REVIEW

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has received large amount of attention and is a form of value formation that has the power to reconnect business and society resulting to the next trend of global growth [3]. CSR may serve as an effective strategy for organization to gain competitive advantage by differentiating their products, processes or the firm itself from its competitors [4]. Besides that, CSR is in fact believed to be one of the challenging trends among organization nowadays and has become popular in companies globally as it may give a significant boost to corporate ethics [5]. Universities and colleges are recognized as the institutions surrounded by the communities and are also believed to play active roles in their contribution to community enhancement and problem-solving abilities [6]. Universities are more than intellectual centers with enormous knowledge and they have become known as engines that may enhance the core mission in teaching, research and service and serve as real world problem solver. The practice of USR represents a renovated commitment with their different publics, aligning USR with everyday management of institutional processes. USR is a concept whereby a university takes all the necessary steps to improve the quality of life for all its employees and their families, its students, its faculties, local and international communities as well as the society at large [7].

HRD intervention and CSR

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Previous studies have looked at Human Resource (HR) contribution to CSR which has created a wide CSR culture-oriented organization. However, there is lot more that need to be understood and additional

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understanding on specific involvement of HR in other CSR aspects covering the social , environmental and ethical aspects [8]. Due to the above, Human Resource Development (HRD) is proven to play a significant role in attaining social, environment and economic goals by assisting the organizations and has become important contributor to CSR [9]. Previous studies [10] [11] highlighted that the crucial variable in CSR is the size of the business, which serves as an indicator to why the company engages in CSR activities. In addition to the foregoing, CSR is believed to be different if the concepts and linkage to the company's principles and the progress of the activities are consistently monitored [10]. Therefore, organization's commitment to CSR can be identified from how they translate their CSR statements into action. Within this context, CSR could be linked to organizational management practices such as HRD [12]. This implies that HRD should demonstrate their leading role in promoting the CSR activities at all levels in organizations.

Despite the many strategies in developing organizational success, HRD is believed to have a significant role in assisting organization towards achieving social, environmental and economic goals [9]. Since employees' involvement is expected to be a crucial success factor in determining CSR performance, HRD may take a role in the implementation of the CSR plan and monitoring of the adoption proactively, reporting the CSR activities and documenting their success throughout the company {13]. Despite the number of previous discussions by many researchers on the importance of HRD and CSR [8] [9] [14] [15] [16] [17] [18] [19], there is lack of explanation on how these CSR principles can be implemented in the organization [20]. Furthermore, HRD's role in promoting CSR and contribution are still ignored by practitioners and are not empirically studied by previous researchers [21].

Proposed conceptual framework

In conjunction to the above, the purpose of this study has two folds: (1) to examine the relationship between HRD's intervention and CSR awareness, and (2) to identify the most used predictor of HRD's intervention. Figure 1 illustrates the proposed conceptual framework of this study. The predictor variables were the HRD's intervention components consisting training and development, management support, employees' engagement, employees' wellbeing and performance and reward management. Meanwhile, the criterion variable was CSR awareness.

HRD INTERVENTION

- Training and development
- Management support
- Employee engagement
- Employee wellbeing
- Performance and reward management
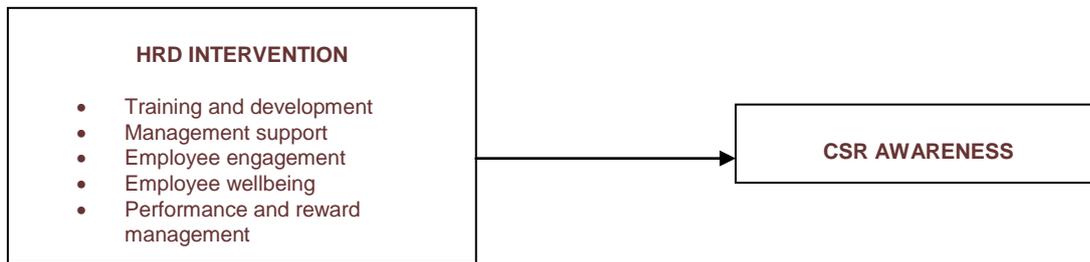
CSR AWARENESS

Fig. 1: Correlation between HRD intervention and CSR awareness

METHODS

This study was carried out in University Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), one of the established public universities in Malaysia. In order to sustain and to remain competitive, UTM needs to be involved in USR to accelerate its shared mission and purpose by establishing strong collaboration with the community. This study was based on staff involvement in community outreach and community based participatory research (CBPR) program in 2014. We gathered the data from the UTM's Center for Community and Industry Network (CCIN). Out of 260 identified staff who were involved in the respective projects, a sample of 152 was involved in this study. Overall, only 102 questionnaires were returned, providing a response rate of 67%. 64% of the respondents were male and 36% were female. Majority of the respondents (68%) were those with more than 5 years of working experience in UTM.

The questionnaire was developed and adapted from previous relevant literatures and all the measures are reliable (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of test reliability

Construct	Items	Reference	Cronbach Alpha (n=15)
Training and Development	12 items	Sukserm and Takahashi [16]	0.910
Management Support	8 items	Garavan [22]	0.856

Employee Engagement	8 items	Mirvis [23]	0.909
Employee Wellbeing	10 items	Rodrigo & Arenas [24]	0.898
Performance and Reward Management	7 items	Lam and Khare [8]	0.838
CSR awareness	21 items	Ardichvili [21] Strandberg [25]	0.946

RESULTS

Based on the results in Table 2, respondents reported high mean scores for training and development, management support, employee engagement, employee wellbeing and performance and reward management. The highest correlation was found between training and development and CSR awareness (r=.716, p<0.01), while management support showed a moderate relationship with CSR awareness (r=.585, p<0.01). Other scales such as performance and reward management, and employee engagement had poor correlation (r=.482, p<.001, r=.0397, p<.001, respectively) while employees' wellbeing showed no significant correlation with CSR awareness.

Table 2: Correlation among variables (N=102)

Predictor	Mean	SD	CSR awareness
Training and development	4.49	0.531	0.716***
Management support	4.52	0.492	0.585***
Employee engagement	4.41	0.535	0.397***
Employee wellbeing	4.09	0.751	0.073
Performance and reward management	4.10	0.687	0.482***

***Significant at p<0.001

Table 3 showed the finding of multiple regressions to assess the impact of HRD's Intervention and CSR awareness. Overall, the model concluded that HRD's Intervention contributes 39% to CSR awareness. The strongest predictor of CSR awareness was performance and reward management (ß = .383, p<0.001), followed by training and development (ß = .257, p<0.01), employees' wellbeing (ß = -.242, p<0.01) and employees' engagement (ß = .224, p<0.05). There was no significant impact of management support on CSR awareness (ß = .054, p>0.01).

Table 3: Regression analysis for HRD intervention and CSR awareness (N=102)

Predictor		CSR awareness
	R²	ß
Training and development		0.257*
Management support		0.054
Employees' engagement		0.224***
Employees' wellbeing		-0.242*
Performance and reward management		0.383**
	0.392**	

***Significant at p<0.001

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Social responsibility in a university as well as in a business organization is an important factor to strengthen employees' motivation and attracting highly qualified employees as well as maintaining them [26]. University demonstrated that they could educate young people to become more socially responsible individuals and encourage their participation in creating positive social change through personal projects related to the community development and educational program [27]. For that reason, providing training and development program to employees to get them embrace the organization's effort on CSR is crucial. Having trained employees on CSR is a challenge for organization to achieve its sustainability goal [28]. HRD's active involvement in CSR by providing training and development for the managers and employee may allow staff to gain competitive advantage that may develop a culture which focuses on societal issues [9]. The integration of HRD and CSR has been argued may lead to the development of potentials in organization through three facets such as individual development, performance improvement and organizational development [29]. This implied that academics and social and community development may benefit from training and development.

This study found that performance and reward management were the strongest predictors among HRD's intervention. These rewards and recognition program includes incentive pay, benefits such as award program, employee of the month, challenging and meaningful CSR task and others [25]. As for UTM, besides granting certain promotion to employees, they were also given paid time off when they were involved in CSR activities. This study postulates an understanding that employees' performance increased when they attributed their intrinsic and extrinsic motives for CSR. For instance, employees perceived organization is allowing them to grow as a person, improve self-confidence, mature and foster self-esteem. In summary, a resource-based view (RBV) claimed that the specific contribution by HRD and its resources would represent both assets and create values to the organization. Therefore, it is crucial for HRD to take

part in CSR as it helps in fostering organization and society belongingness with strong focus towards socially responsible activities.

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