

Traditional and Modern Employee Development Action Types: What is Being Utilized in the UAE?

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ABSTRACT

Experts concur that employee training is a complex human resource practice that has the ability to directly influence the accomplishment of organizations. The main purpose of these programs should be to obtain the correct knowledge, teamwork, create forward-thinking and problem-solving skills. With that said, this research study aimed to explore the multiple traditional and modern development action types utilized within organizations in the UAE as well as analyze the level of awareness of these action types and how often they are utilized. There are newly generated tools regularly put into practice and therefore, acquiring an in-depth knowledge of each program assists in recognizing which method is applicable and most suitable for each role and employee. This article mainly focused on understanding the following traditional action types (1) classroom training; (2) job rotation; (3) mentorship and; (4) job shadowing as well as modern development action types (1) eLearning; (2) podcasts and; (3) webinars. The research was conducted through a cross-sectional study that uses a close-ended survey research design. With a sample size of 29 respondents, the survey collected data from participants employed in different private and public organizations across the UAE. In addition, the data collected considers which development action types are provided in the participants' workplace, their level of awareness towards each method as well as their preference. There were a limited number of survey responses as well as close-ended questions that restricted and influenced respondents by the options available in the survey. Although those aforementioned limitations were faced, this study fills the gap of identifying which traditional and modern development action types are currently offered and practiced within the UAE.

Keywords: *Employee Development, Job Rotation, eLearning.*

Introduction

The ways in which organizations are utilizing employee development action types are ever changing. Employee development alludes to the long-term personal and professional flourishing of individuals. It serves under the umbrella of human resource development, which refers to structured learning experiences that are yielded to improve performance and personal growth as stated by Tansky and Cohen (2001). They have invested in skill development in order to enhance employee performance and capabilities as well as ensure a competitive advantage within the organization (Oseghale, Malik, Nyuur, Pereira, & Ellis, 2018). As mentioned by Oseghale, et al. (2018), during earlier years, traditional development action types have been at the forefront of enhancing employees' skills. This includes instructor-led training, mentorship, rotation programs and considerably more. However, modern development action types have recently been put into practice where employees are not restricted to full day class training and management shadowing in order to acquire new knowledge or skill (Ellis and Kuznia, 2014). There are now possibilities of listening to podcasts, attending a lecture or watching a webinar on the subject matter at hand. With that being said, combining the traditional and modern learning methods is considered highly impactful (Blended Learning, 2010). According to Cherry and Morin (2020) learning through multiple ways further engraves the knowledge gained. Furthermore, acquiring those various approaches and styles gives the employees the option of choosing the method that works best for their abilities.

In the UAE, companies offer a variety of workshops and development opportunities in order to strengthen their employees' abilities (Komal, Naeem, Anami, Shahnaz & Didar, 2018). This supports them in developing behavioral and technical competencies based on their requirements and role (Komal et al., 2018). This includes on-the-job mentorship, classes, assignments, and so forth. Moreover, training facilitated can either be internal or external depending on the organization's resources (Oseghale et al., 2018). For instance, an external training is implemented when companies have little to no budget or subject matter expertise and internal trainers (Oseghale et al., 2018). In addition, rotation programs are designed and applied for the purpose of development. This includes full rotation, brief rotation and contact rotation based on duration (Gough & Wilks, 2012). Mentorship programs are also offered, in which a mentor guides an individual based on their own experience and seniority (Haqquee, Goff, Knorr, & Gill, 2020).

There are a variety of traditional developmental opportunities to select and partake in. However, modern learning methodologies, such as eLearning platforms have simplified accessibility to educational content and media (Chivu, Orzan, & Popa, 2019). With today's technological and quick paced world, modern learning tools have impacted the usage of the traditional learning methods. For instance, the percentage of adult readings has dropped in the United States, and listening to podcasts has inclined for the past 5 years (Casares, & Binkley, 2021).

The purpose of this research study is to identify and explain the multiple traditional and modern development action types commonly applied in organizations in the UAE. This study analyzes the level of awareness of these action types and how often they are utilized. In addition, it compiles the previous and current approaches to learning in order to showcase the multiple types available for individuals to select from. Also, the aim of this study is to support companies and their employees in learning and grasping all the methodologies that can be implemented and the outcome of each method. Newly generated tools are regularly put into practice. Therefore, acquiring an in-depth knowledge of each program assists in recognizing which method is applicable and most suitable for each role and employee.

However, there are limited studies regarding this subject. Researchers currently look into organizations' websites and data provided in order to explore the possible development methodologies offered in the UAE.

Background

Development in UAE Organizations

Experts concur that employee training is a complex human resource practice that has the ability to directly influence the accomplishment of organizations. The main purpose of these programs should be to obtain the correct knowledge, teamwork, forward-thinking and problem-solving skills. This type of effective training and development assists management keep employees as well as increases efficiency and productivity levels (Komal et al., 2018).

Organizations within the UAE offer both traditional and modern development action types, shown in figures 1 and 2. These training and development programs are created to care for, prepare and polish employee performance, which in turn benefits organizations (Shah, Sheikh & Pirzada, 2018). Each organization applies the action types and practices that operate best with their

environment. With that said, the Federal Authority for Government Human Resources provides traditional development methods, such as training, job shadowing and rotation programs for their employees (Training & Development System for Federal Government, 2020). On the other hand, Abu Dhabi School of Government (ADSG) offers a combination of both methods, which consists of classroom training, mentorship, eLearning, webinars, and so forth (ADSG Initiatives, 2021). ADSG promoted digital learning opportunities as a way to support and encourage UAE's next generation of leaders by providing them with the most in-demand skills to steer future market landscapes.

Emirates Institute for Banking and Financial Studies actively provides training and eLearning programs across the UAE. Their employees are required to develop new skills and abilities as well as master the latest technologies in order to keep up with the industry. Therefore, a wide spectrum of relevant programs and courses will be offered through their forward-thinking and technology driven 2019 Annual Training Plan. Also, a proactive Technical Advisory Committee that provides training needs analysis and develops tailored programs (Jassmi, 2019).

Therefore, this reveals that different sectors and organizations are implementing diverse development methodologies. Although modern development methods are being introduced, a low percentage of organizations make use of distance digital learning and a higher percentage utilize classroom training as stated by Wilkins (2001).

Traditional Development Types

Classroom Training

Classroom training is a well-known traditional approach to development. This type of training is a structured in-person lesson plan led by an expert in the subject matter at hand. Companies generally conduct internal or external training. Internal training is conducted by subject matter experts in senior positions with years of experience and knowledge. On the other hand, an external training is conducted by a consultant or training provider, when internal resources are not available. The training topic and objectives are reliant on individual level, organizational, and environmental factors. On an individual level, employees require specific advancements related to their capabilities, aspirations and job requirements. Also, certain training is essential due to organizational requirements and improvements in industry knowledge. Moreover, other trainings

are significant due to environmental factors which are related to external influences such as market elements, customers, and many more (Oseghale, et al., 2018).

According to Shah, Sheikh & Pirzada (2018), the instructor is the most important “player” in order to result in a successful training for the employees. Trainees are more likely to learn and comprehend the information when the instructor is engaging, knowledgeable and confident in the subject matter. However, a bad instructor may result in poor knowledge and skill retention. In addition, classroom training encourages learning, interactions and cooperation between the instructor and employees. However, it is time consuming and difficult to incorporate mainly theoretical findings into their everyday job (Hunt, 2013).

Rotation Programs

Job rotation entails employee transferal and rotational plans within the organization, in order to obtain different assignments and exposure to new tasks and functions. This is a highly powerful tool to enhance a company’s human capital, as on-the-job assignments are a vital and effective approach to learning (Kampköttera, Harbringb, Sliwkac, 2018). A rotation program consists of a full rotation, brief rotation or contact rotation. A full rotation is when an employee fully shifts to another department, while a brief rotation is for a short period of time. A contact rotation is when the employee remains in their current job yet rotates between different sections to grasp and obtain knowledge (Gough & Wilks, 2012).

As stated by Shah, Sheikh & Pirzada (2018), job rotation programs support in increasing motivation and decreasing tedium in the workplace. This method results in acquiring new skills, innovation as well as a drop in absenteeism. Also, it contributes to loyalty, long term employment and seniority wages. Furthermore, rotation programs enhance employee flexibility, exposure to opportunities and work with employees from other departments, obtain knowledge and offer employees the chance of a new beginning (Duffield & Velasque, 2019). Nonetheless, rotations impact the knowledge learned from the previous job role and require time and effort to acquire the skills for the new role. Also, manager expectations are high towards employee performance (Kampköttera et al., 2018).

Mentorship

Peer mentorship program is another traditional tool utilized in employee development. This is when a senior is selected and expected to be a mentor to a junior mentee. The program can either be highly or low structured. A highly structured program entails training given to the mentors and mentees prior to the program. This covers setting goals, planning activities and obtaining feedback. Whereas, a low structured program is flexible with fewer activities and monitoring interactions with each other.

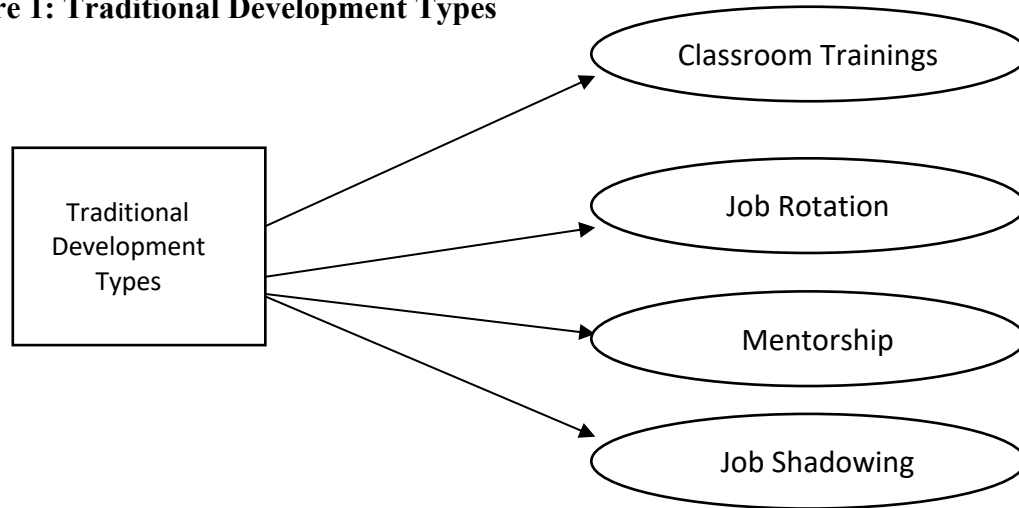
This program encourages building relationships, giving constructive feedback, and decreases the hierarchy through relationships created between seniors and junior level employees. Nevertheless, it is a time-consuming program and might result in disengagement (Haqquee, Goff, Knorr, & Gill, 2020).

Job Shadowing

Job shadowing is a traditional on-the-job method implemented to become acquainted with a role. An employee observes and monitors an experienced employee in order to become familiar with the role. This encourages one-to-one interaction, which aids in gaining the knowledge effectively and swiftly. This is essential for professions that require hands on experience, such as medical professions, technicians and so forth (Heathfield, 2020).

Job shadowing types are observation, regular briefings and hands-on. The observation mainly entails monitoring different tasks, such as attending a meeting. This type is best suited when the employee desires to obtain a general understanding of a certain topic. While, the regular briefings involve the employee shadowing the senior in specific tasks over a period of time. Furthermore, when the employee monitors and performs some of the tasks, it is considered hands-on shadowing.

The benefits of this method are the opportunities to learn through experience, understand different roles and interact with others. However, the drawbacks are that some management may not be committed to or have time for the program (Job Shadowing Guidelines, n.d.).

Figure 1: Traditional Development Types

Modern Development Types

Elearning

Elearning is a modern development method of learning online. This platform features simplicity and feasibility in finding educational content and material online. Individuals can complete a course through an online software, such as Blackboard, in order to gain the knowledge needed rather than physically going to a campus or training facility. It is mentioned by Ellis and Kuznia (2014) that employee training is linked with employee turnover and job satisfaction. Highly trained employees work harder and in turn are more willing to stay in one organization longer. Therefore, many educational institutions and universities are utilizing these software's to adopt, organize online courses as well as a web space for instructors and students to communicate.

It is argued by Caudill (2015) that learners in the workplace want to enhance their skills and participate in learning activities that directly bring value to their day-to-day work. Elearning is uniquely positioned to execute this by relating the knowledge gained directly to the work and, through this close connection with the learner's responsibilities, influencing greater engagement and retention than other learning tools. Elearning is also favorable in yielding learners with greater control of the learning experience, which in turn increases both their satisfaction and motivation. Caudill (2015) continued to express that organizations should provide positive learning conditions that also yield an appropriate reward system as an incentive. Involving management at an early stage requires more than just establishing the organizational structure; it also aids in aligning the content with the needs of the organization.

Furthermore, this method of learning has the ability to deliver eLearning at anytime, anywhere and to any individual. It is stated by researchers that the benefits of eLearning (1) decrease training expenses by utilizing virtual solution training; (2) training courses and solutions customized to each employee; (3) ability to keep information of training records and trace employee performance; (4) access to factual and present training resources through systematic examinations and up-to-date learning materials and information from subject matter experts. However, these cannot be achieved without management support and employee comfortability with using eLearning systems and softwares which will help in easily transitioning and accepting any new changes in the organization (Ellis & Kuznia, 2014).

Even though eLearning hinders human interaction, this methodology is becoming highly prevalent. This is a big boost and advantage in the field of education and has impacted the necessity for traditional classroom training (Chivu, Orzan, & Popa, 2019).

Podcasts

An innovative and modern development tool is the digital recording and sharing of podcasts. Podcasts are digital audio files offered on different topics as educational content, including lectures, audio books, story-telling, conversations and knowledge from expertise. With the advancement of technology in the modern-day, the offering of tablets, smartphones, and speakers simplifies the accessibility of the podcasts. In the US, people are leaning more towards listening to a podcast rather than reading a book, as 68 million access a podcast in a week (Casares & Binkley, 2021). Furthermore, it has been shown that utilizing podcasts as a listening development tool produces a positive effect in improving an individual's listening and comprehension skills (Harutyunyan, 2015).

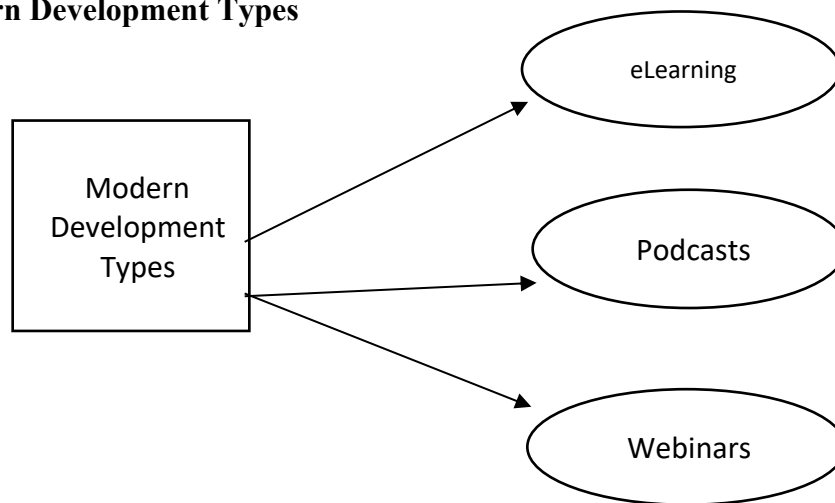
Although human interaction is limited, podcasts are becoming easy to access as well as increasing employee motivation and engagement. (Casares & Binkley, 2021).

Webinars

Webinars is another modern tool used in sharing knowledge, increasing awareness, and encouraging development. A webinar is a video or multimedia presentation which provides online learning between lecturers and students. They are commonly known to last between 60 to 120 minutes. A study shows that participants started to leave webinars that lasted more than 90 minutes

(Tanidir et al., 2021). In this method, discussions and interactions are encouraged. Also, this simplifies the ways in which groups and communities share their learnings due to its geographical flexibility (Gegenfurtner & Ebner, 2019). Webinars are a cost-effective and inexpensive form of learning that provides personal gratification from the skills and knowledge gained. Moreover, this method yields further understanding of the subject from a different perspective. The newly acquired information can also be shared with colleagues (Coiffe, 2012). Nowadays, online education is becoming more prevalent as learning is not restricted to a classroom environment. Though some individuals do face challenges in utilizing technology (Černý, 2019).

Figure 2: Modern Development Types



Research Methodology

This section contains the methodology and examines how the research was conducted, collected and examined. This section includes the following subsections: research design, time horizon, instrument, data collection, results and discussion.

Research Design

The research method used in this study is quantitative research. As stated by Goertzen (2017), quantitative research methods are focused on gathering and analyzing data that is structured and presented numerically. Also, one of the main goals is to construct precise and reliable measurements that allow for statistical analysis.

Time Horizon & Instrument

This is a cross-sectional study formed to mainly collect data at a certain period of time. Therefore, a survey was conducted through a set of multiple-choice questions uploaded and directed to participants via SurveyMonkey, a trusted free online survey tool. The close-ended questionnaire was targeted towards employees in the UAE exclusively.

The survey questions mainly related to the traditional and modern development action types implemented and utilized within the UAE. In which the questions were designed based on the topic selection and the aim of the article. Also, segregation of the questions into traditional versus modern development tools.

Data Collection

The survey compiled data from a sample of participants employed in different private and public organizations across the UAE. In addition, the data collected is based on which development action types are provided in the participants' workplace, their level of awareness towards each method as well as their preference. The questions were set as compulsory in order to ensure participants respond to every single one.

The survey generated 30 responses in total, with a 74% response rate. However, participants that responded 'no' to being employed in the UAE were omitted. Therefore, 29 responses were included in the final data analysis and only one was identified as an outlier.

Results

The goal of the study is to identify the traditional development types versus modern development types that are utilized across different organizations within the UAE, and the level of awareness among the participants concerning the methodologies. The survey is set out to firstly inquire participants on their age and workplace category in order to correlate between the environment and development methods utilized afterwards.

As displayed in table 1 below, the ages of the sample that participated in the survey ranged from 18 to 44 years. However, 83% of participants were mainly aged from 25 to 34 years. Approximately, 66% worked in the government sector, 28% in private, and 7% in other.

Table 1: Demographic Profile		
Description	Frequency (N=29)	Percentage
Age group		
18-24	1	3.4
25-34	24	82.8
35-44	4	13.8
Company type in the UAE		
Private	8	27.6
Government	19	65.5
Other	2	6.9

The participants were given the choice to select more than one option. Therefore, the responses revealed that 83% of participants mainly acknowledged classroom training as a

traditional development action type as shown in table 2 below. Furthermore, job rotation programs were recognized by 45%, mentorship programs by 34% and job shadowing by 31% as traditional methods. These results indicate that employees are aware of other traditional methodologies and are not restricted to training in order to advance their knowledge and skills.

Table 2: Traditional Development		
Description	Frequency (N=29)	Percentage
Methods		
Classroom Training	24	83
Job Rotation	13	45
Mentorship	10	34
Job Shadowing	9	31
Organization Use of Methods		
Yes	25	86
No	4	

On the other hand, as shown in table 3 below, 90% acknowledged eLearning as a modern development action type. Followed by webinars with 59%, and podcasts with 28%. Therefore, a large number of participants mainly selected eLearning and webinars, which in turn displays the widespread use of these particular methods in the UAE. However, this indicates that organizations are not utilizing podcasts to advance their employees' knowledge through audio learning. As for the sector type, both government and private sector had a high rate of acceptance and application of classroom training and eLearning.

Table 3: Modern Development		
Description	Frequency (N=29)	Percentage
Methods		
eLearning	26	90
Webinars	17	59
Podcasts	8	28

Organization Use of Methods		
Yes	22	76
No	7	

Furthermore, participants clarified that various organizations utilize traditional and modern development action types. 86% declared their organizations offer the traditional development type, and 76% also selected the modern development type. These results reflect that with the advancement of technology, organizations are more flexible and eager in providing modern development action types. Throughout the years, diverse forms of learning and development have been introduced and organizations are eager to offer methods that work best for each employee's abilities in order to improve and develop their skills.

The final question in the survey reflected the preference of participants in regards to the development types. As shown in table 4 below, the responses conveyed that 59% preferred utilizing modern development action types, while 41% preferred the traditional types.

Table 4: Participant Preferences		
Description	Frequency (N=29)	Percentage
Method Type		
Traditional	12	41
Modern	17	59

The results imply that both traditional and modern types are being utilized for development. However, the traditional action types of job shadowing and mentorship as well as the modern action types of streaming podcasts are being neglected. Organizations will acquire time and effort to adjust, however it is expected to eventually occur.

Discussion

A significant finding of this study is that organizations focus mainly on providing employees with traditional development action types, even with the notable rise and flexibility as well as participants' preference towards modern methods. The former method supports the

argument made by Wilkins (2001) that utilizing in house training programs is the most favored form of training, with 91% of organizations using them. Whereas, external private training is used by 64% and 59% send their employees to conferences and seminars. An organization's main objective of training and development is to enhance work performance. Therefore, they mainly focus on providing job specific training, general management and skill improvement programs (Wilkins, 2001). It is stated by Tansky and Cohen (2001) that employee development can play a significant role in sustaining employee productivity and effectiveness. With that said, through the traditional development method of mentorship, managers who train their employees have the ability to enhance their skills and motivation. Their findings suggest that employees who seek opportunities to establish new competencies in different areas, will be able to increase their value within the organization as well as external labor markets whether or not they decide to depart (Tansky and Cohen, 2001). In addition, a research study conducted by Shah, Sheikh & Pirzada (2018), displayed that mentorship and instructor-led classroom training had a positive impact on employees' performance. This reveals that traditional development methods still play an essential role in employees' professional growth.

As mentioned by Ellis and Kuznia (2014), a large number of employees utilize eLearning with 91.5% of participants stated to have applied this method in the workplace. This results in participants having the ability to better comprehend work duties as well as improvement in managing, competency and work skills. Furthermore, a study done by Kramer (2007) assesses the behavioral changes during the job due to eLearning. The results display that knowledge expands for participants that react agreeably to eLearning which in turn shows advancement in work productivity and performance as well as a depletion in cost, turnover and absenteeism (Ellis & Kuznia, 2014). This is conveyed in this research study, where organizations are attempting to implement eLearning towards employee development. Although, it is shown that organizations cling to methods familiar to them, while other forms of modern methods are yet to be utilized. This study provides evidence that a higher percentage of participants prefer modern development methods. Therefore, organizations should take into consideration employee preferences as they have firsthand experience participating in the programs. Nevertheless, some eLearning practices may not always be successful. Some participants expressed that their work environment is not suited for eLearning due to the stress, inconvenience and extra time needed outside of work to

study the eLearning tools as stated by Ellis and Kuznia (2014). Therefore, offering employees the ability to select the method that works best for them will enhance employee skill and performance.

It is shown in this research study that 59% of participants utilize and acknowledge webinars as a modern development action type. This supports researchers Gegenfurtner and Ebner (2019) who studied the effectiveness of webinars to encourage student achievement in higher education and professional training. With that said, they compared the development of knowledge and skills between participants in webinars and participants in other learning environments. The results displayed a trivial yet positive effect on webinars promoting more student achievement compared to other learning tactics. Also, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a shift in learning tactics. According to Tanidir et al. (2021), the pandemic sped up the adaptation of the digital world among professionals and in turn, webinars started gaining popularity and became an essential part of reaching individuals and learning about new information.

Limitations and Future Research

Limitations were encountered during this research study. There were a limited number of survey responses with a sample of 29 participants employed with the UAE. Also, a cross sectional study is formed to mainly collect data for a short period of time, which in turn, results in limited participants as well as findings. The questions were formed to be close-ended which restricted as well as influenced respondents by the options available in the survey. Furthermore, they were not given detailed information about each development action type and thus, their responses were based on their own perceptions.

Although there were limitations, this study is helpful for organizations in the future to be cognizant of the different methods available in order to improve employee skills and development.

Future research can be expanded further by obtaining a bigger sample, which in turn, results in additional responses and opinions. Furthermore, incorporating qualitative research such as focus groups, interviews and open-ended survey questions are essential and effective in filling in knowledge gaps within the study (Goertzen, 2017). The benefits of open-ended survey questions are uncovering detailed responses that one gives on their own accord, as opposed to the bias that may occur from the multiple-choice questions (Reja, Manfreda, Helbec & Vehovar, 2003). Moreover, a segregated survey may be conducted for government and private sectors in order to compare and contrast findings. This may open possibilities of digging deeper into further

understanding the reasoning behind the use of some development action types over others as well as the impact of each method on employees' learning and development.

Implications for Management

It is highly encouraged that organizations and individuals do not limit or restrict their learning experiences to certain methodologies. In addition, offering blended learning of the old passive and new active approach is evidently highly beneficial. Employee development is a crucial part of an organization's success and competitive advantage. Therefore, it is important for organizations to step out of their comfort zones and consider different development action types. As previously stated, not all methodologies are currently implemented as there is restriction of what is offered to employees. It is vital for organizations and employees to be cognizant of the multiple ways in which skills, knowledge, and competencies can be improved.

Conclusion

The main objective of this study is to highlight the different traditional and modern employee development action types recognized and utilized within the UAE. This is a cross-sectional study that uses a close-ended survey research design. With a sample size of 29 respondents, the survey compiled data from participants employed in different private and public organizations across the UAE. In addition, the data collected is based on which development action types are provided in the participants' workplace, their level of awareness towards each method as well as their preference. With that being said, this research study concludes that traditional development action types are still put into practice in most organizations, with classroom training being the most recognized by respondents. The results also indicate that employees are aware of other traditional methods and are not restricted to training in order to improve their skills and work performance.

Traditional methods to acquiring knowledge are no longer the only approaches to learning. With that being said, this concludes that modern development action types are also being utilized, as most respondents were aware of eLearning. The results also show that both traditional and modern types are being used for development. However, the traditional action types of job shadowing and mentorship as well as the modern action types of streaming podcasts are being neglected.

Over the years, different types of development have been introduced and organizations are eager to offer methods that work best for each employee's abilities. Although limitations were faced, this study fills the gap of identifying which traditional and modern development action types are currently offered and practiced within the UAE.

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