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## **Qualitative Approach to developing a KASH Model as a Training Strategy**

**Hemaloshinee Vasudevan<sup>1\*</sup>, Diego Rafael Roberto Cabrera Moya<sup>2</sup>, Ravi Nagarathanam<sup>3</sup>, Cheok Mui Yee<sup>4</sup>, Cheryl Withaneach<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1,4</sup>Tun Razak Graduate School, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, Menara Liberty Branch, UniRazak City Campus, 50350, Jalan Chow Kit, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

<sup>2</sup> Faculty of Economic and Administrative Sciences, Jorge Tadeo Lozano University, Bogotá, Colombia.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Accountancy and Business, Perak Branch, Tun Abdul Rahman University Management & Technology, 31900, Kampar, Perak, Malaysia

<sup>5</sup>Trainer, Leaderonomics, Phileo Damansara 1, 9, Jalan 16/11, 46350 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

**\*Corresponding email:** hemaloshinee@unirazak.edu.my

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### **Abstract**

The KASH model has proven to be very effective in improving the long-term performance of an organization's entire resource base, including people, processes, plant and machinery, equipment, energy/power, operational efficiencies and effectiveness, and so on. In this case, the automotive industry is one of the significant sectors contributing to Malaysian economic growth, accounting for 22.1% of the gross domestic product. The paper aims to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the KASH model in organizations and the application of the KASH model as a training strategy that can help managers achieve their goals. The KASH model seeks to explore these four characteristics to improve individual commitment and organizational effectiveness. KASH characteristics influence our ability to succeed in our personal and professional lives. According to the KASH model, poor attitudes and bad habits combined with a lack of knowledge and skills result in low commitment and performance. The KASH model, on the other hand, demonstrated that the success of an organization is determined not only by knowledge and skills but also by individual attitudes and habits. Most people are fired because of their attitude and habits instead of a lack of knowledge or skills (performance and commitment issues) (training issues). To explore the possibility of employing the KASH model as a training strategy in Malaysia's automotive industry. This study used a qualitative method based on semi-structured interviews. Thus, the study's population of employees, trainers, and training managers from various Malaysian automotive firms, with a population of 700,000 expected in 2020. According to semi-structured interviews, employees from a variety of businesses responded positively. As a result, the KASH model was proposed as a training method for increasing employee commitment to their jobs across all industries.

### **Keywords**

KASH Model, Training Strategy, Qualitative Approach, Organizational Effectiveness

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### **1. Introduction**

The paper aims to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of the KASH model in organizations and the application of the KASH model as a training strategy that can help managers achieve their goals. Unemployment is a worldwide problem, not just in Malaysia (Ramli et al., 2018; Borhan et al., 2023). As a result, training is an essential component of any business because it motivates employees to become more productive at work by improving knowledge, skills, attitudes, or habits through the learning process to achieve a successful outcome (Andriani et al. 2018; Sartori et al. 2018; Yoo et al. 2018; Ibrahim et al. 2017; Vasudevan, 2014; Vasudevan et al., 2023). Training may influence skill, attitude, and habits because these four aspects are essential for workers and the choice of employers to move the business in line with economic growth. Employers are dissatisfied with technical and vocational graduates, particularly in terms of personal quality has been exacerbated by the lack of recognition for vocational graduates who worked as technologists or technical staff (Mustapha, 2017). It demonstrates Malaysia's critical need for professional and semi-skilled labor, especially technical graduates. As a result, techniques training plays an essential role in enhancing highly skilled workers in Malaysia by providing excellent education to employees who are passionate about technical and vocational skills (Yaakob et al., 2020; Al-Ali, 2021; Soon et al., 2021). It occurs not only as a result of workers' lack of skills or the interaction with stochastic factors in the workplace process

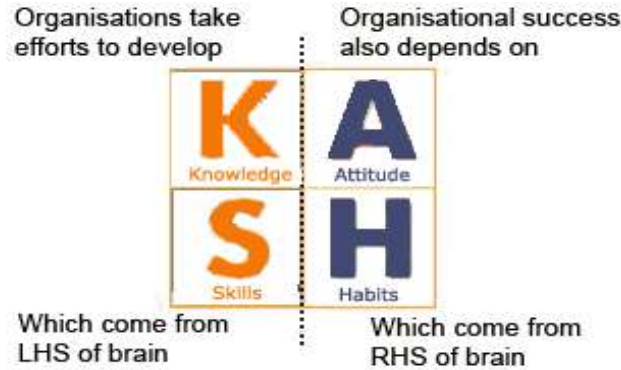
but also as a result of a lack of procedures that channel workers' skills with their customs and attitudes in the pursuit of a correct alignment (Kazimoto, 2016).

Due to drastic changes in technology and increasing convolution in work processes, automotive industries have recognized new demands for skilled laborers and training implementation for employees from this sector, which has been critical in recent days for business sustainability because training is a vital strand for successful implementation of organization's practice through the involvement of Malaysian automotive industry employees in producing quality (AlManei et al., 2017; Dedy et al., 2016; Doolani et al., 2020; Ragothaman and Palei, 2020; Kamaruddin, 2018; Mustapha and Rahmat, 2013; Nordin et al., 2010). Furthermore, training can provide numerous benefits to employees in the automotive industry, including the ability to broaden their knowledge, skills, and potential to thrive as team members, advance their career development, and increase their job satisfaction (Cabrera-Moya et al., 2023; Doolani et al., 2020; Hanaysha, 2016). Surprisingly, empirical evidence showed that only 50% of these employees applied the knowledge and skills they had learned to their work after attending training provided by their employers, and others are still lacking (Mustapha and Rahmat, 2013; Dawal et al., 2009). It can harm overall performance at both the individual and organizational levels. Gaps in knowledge or skills can be filled through training programs; it was proven by empirical study, the researchers (Goniewicz et al., 2021) claimed that the training program is successfully accomplished and can retain the healthcare staff's knowledge and skills. Moreover, previous studies (Adepoju et al., 2021) also indicated that a low level of knowledge in the construction 4.0 technologies will cause a low level of training among professionals perhaps the result showed a high gap in skills. However, the professional attitude in giving full commitment is also affected in health sectors (Banazadeh et al., 2021), hospitals (Kortteisto et al., 2021), industrial companies (Piwowar-Sulej, 2021), educational robotics or technologies (Papadakis et al., 2021), travel industry (Gajić et al., 2021), and hotel industry (Salem, 2021) due to unskilled workers as cited in Vasudevan et al., (2023). KASH model is a training strategy or tool that evaluates a person's capacity to execute an individual job with numerous features or aspects that can be characterized as professional by their level of professional commitment. Training programs or hands-on experience are the best way to handle the KASH model. The importance of this model determines the effectiveness of training levels in increasing employees' professional commitment and organizational productivity. None of the training focuses on both aspects of technical and individual development as the KASH model does.

## **2. Literature Review**

Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Habits (KASH) identified professional employee identity as an essential aspect that is receiving increasing attention among researchers in the fields of human resource development (HRD) and organizational management due to its impact on the formation of effective and efficient employees (Jain, 2020; Jones et al., 2020). Employee involvement as a professional has been recognized as a determining factor of success for organizations in the age of globalization (Holdener et al., 2020; Mukaihata et al., 2020). Employees who have a high level of knowledge, attitude, skills, and habits in using existing resources to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness are more likely to be engaged (Ahmed et al., 2020; Witasari et al., 2020; Sadq et al., 2020; Clardy, 2021; Mikolajczyk, 2021).

The Ministry of Human Resources Strategic Plan 2016-2020 is a five-year document that describes strategic planning and direction for the ministry. In this scenario, the KASH model (Westphal et al., 1990; Westphal et al., 1991) will be examined and proposed for future use in all industries' Human Resource Strategic Plans, ensuring that all workers meet the company's requirements while working in the industry due to product and service quality, productivity, and efficiency (Amrina et al., 2021; Anwar et al., 2021; Dung et al., 2021; Tarigan et al., 2021; Tien et al., 2021; Verma et al., 2021). This strategic plan encompasses the organization's role, which includes policy formation and labor enforcement, skill development, knowledge management, attitude development, habit changes, and support services, all of which are critical to the country's economic success. Furthermore, the KASH Strategic Plan's approach is expected to help develop workforce competitiveness, integrity, professional commitment, and work ethic. As a result, as Malaysians strive to achieve a common goal, this becomes the driving force behind a strong work culture. Furthermore, the organization will ensure that this strategic plan is always progressive, responsive, and dynamic to achieve the organization's vision of employee training development as a national leader in human resource development and management (Berman et al., 2021; Greer, 2021; Zhykharieva et al., 2021). This study was analyzed to meet the strategic plan's goal, and Figure 1 shows the KASH model as a training method.



**Figure 1. KASH Model as a Training Strategy**  
Source: SAN Techno Mentors Pvt. Ltd

### 2.1 Theme and Hypothesis Development

Authors identified sub-themes and classified them into three central themes, which are summarized in Table 1 with relevant quotes extracted from participants. These three core themes are (1) training and development’s need of employees; (2) knowledge sharing and skill development and; (3) impact of training.

**Table 1 Summary of themes and sub-themes**

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	Example
Training and development’s need of employees	Focus on employees’ learning for current role and future development	Providing trainings for various aspects outside the employee’s current role.	“For research and development, we are focused on acquiring technical know-how from someone else and bring it here for my departmental staff...”
	Link between employees’ training and performance	Providing hand-on trainings to gain practical experience	“I would say that It’s based on results. It’s based on...performance.”
Knowledge sharing and skill development	Culture of knowledge sharing and skill development within the organization	Encouraging individuals to share their knowledge with others	“Through trusting your own team and building your own culture within your team.”
	Lack of effective training and knowledge sharing practices	No improvement in work practices due to lack of proper system and process	“... [In terms of the effectiveness of training] of big challenge at present due to infrastructure...”
Impact of training	Variety of training methods used	The delivery and content of the training, the role of the trainer, and the use of technology to track employee training and assess their knowledge.	“...”Role play and simulation tools...can simulate participation of employees [in training sessions as well.]”

Source: Vasudevan et al., 2023

*H<sub>1</sub>: Knowledge link between employees' training and performance*

Employee training directly impacts their performance, both positively and negatively, and may result in behavioral changes and the knowledge and experience gained during training (Wijayanti, 2019; Muardi and Rohmawan, 2022). Furthermore, acquiring information through training enables employees to develop new skills, which adds value and leads to a competitive advantage to improve their organization's performance in areas such as sales and so on (Wijayanti, 2019; Azeem et al., 2021).

*H<sub>2</sub>: Attitude link between culture of knowledge sharing and skill development within organization*

Knowledge sharing, reading, and organization foster a learning attitude in employees, allowing them to learn new skills and apply them on the job (Battistelli, 2019; Nair and Munusami, 2020). It enables them to improve their skills while having fun (Battistelli, 2019; V Nair and Munusami, 2020). As such, attitude is the strong tendency to behave in a specific manner; all workers in the automotive industry are aware of the application of knowledge and abilities while performing routine tasks. As a result, the attitude developed during training is an essential aspect of the program (Wijayanti, 2019).

*H<sub>3</sub>: Skills link between employees' learning for current role and future development.*

Acquiring the necessary skills is critical for an employee's and an organization's overall development (Baird and Parayitam, 2019; Karim et al., 2019). As a result, experts believe that increasing an employee's performance will directly impact their ability to complete tasks quickly, on time, and professionally (Muardi, 2022; Karim et al., 2019). As a result, training is critical to providing and improving employees' abilities to meet their demands in carrying out their jobs and beyond (Muardi, 2022; Ozkeser, 2019).

*H<sub>4</sub>: Habit link between effective training and knowledge sharing practices.*

Efficient training techniques, effective trainers, and information-sharing practices in automotive organizations will foster their employees' habits of better-absorbing knowledge and skills and applying them in their daily jobs (Tashtoush et al., 2022). Continuous improvement may instill in them the habit of staying focused on the training and may lead to participation in additional coaching provided by their company. Surprisingly, training appeared to be less successful in some automobile companies based on the interview data.

### **3. Methods**

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a phenomenological design to gather underlying responses from the participants. This design allows us to explore and verify the stakeholders' insights and experiences regarding the training conducted within the automotive industry. This study's target population comprises employees, trainers, and training managers from automotive organizations in Malaysia. Phenomenological design requires 3 to 10 participants to share their viewpoints on a given phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). This study involves 6 participants from each segment of employees, trainers, and training managers. These participants were approached as they had attended or conducted training for at least 20 hours in the last 3 months. An interview protocol was initially prepared by referring to the typology of the KASH model. Knowledge, Attitude, Skills, and Habits are the key components of this interview protocol. A few probing questions were added to facilitate the interview process. One participant from each segment (i.e., employer, trainer, training manager) was approached in person for the preliminary data collection stage. The preliminary interview was to identify the appropriateness of the instrument's main questions besides observing the participants' non-spoken language [*Participants stated that there is a dedicated department under HR for training programs that provide training within or even outside their scope of responsibilities*]. The research instrument was then amended based on the feedback obtained from the participants of preliminary interviews. Our team pre-determined 30 participants who met the study's requirements and obtained their consent prior to the scheduled interviews. The interview sessions were carried out remotely [note; I suggest conducting interviews over Microsoft Team as it allows us to do real-time transcription or any other platform that can ease us for the transcription]. Each session lasted about 45 minutes. All the sessions were recorded. In this study, the researchers used a thematic analysis approach to analyze the data upon completing the coding process.

### **4. Results and Discussion**

The authors identified sub-themes and classified them into three central themes while analyzing the data, which are relevant quotes extracted from participants. These three core themes are (1) employee training and development needs; (2) knowledge sharing and skill development; and (3) training impact.

**Theme 1: Training and development need of employees**

The first theme is concerned with organizations emphasizing the importance of employees learning to help them with their work responsibilities. Participants stated that HR has a dedicated department for training programs that provide training within or even outside of their scope of responsibilities.

"Besides technical abilities, the company takes the initiative to give you training from other aspects outside automotive... [that is] outside engineering [or] finance for non-finance people," [Participant One].

"For research and development, we are focused on acquiring technical know-how from someone else and bringing it here for my departmental staff," [Participant Six added].

**Theme 2: Knowledge sharing and skill development**

The first theme is the significance of cultivating a culture of knowledge-sharing and skill development within organizations. Every participant agreed that organizations have a culture of collaboration and teamwork, but there were challenges with effective knowledge-sharing practices observed. Nonetheless, they agree that learning is an essential part of their job, and they need to incorporate it into the company culture and hold employees accountable for the learning outcomes derived from training.

"Culture of sharing amongst each other is important, especially when there is homework [provided by trainers]," said [Participant Four]. We will discuss our points of view in groups and share them."

Likewise, [Participant Two] stated, "By trusting your team and creating your own culture within your team."

Participant Six had the same realization as [Participant Four]. "Teamwork is good-knowledge sharing culture...to everyone to be able to apply it...if they have something, they will come up and tell all," said [Participant Six].

**Theme 3: Impact of training based on the skills and habit**

Employees are allowed to learn various training programs, including finance topics that are out of the scope of their job, to improve their skills and habits. Organizations would even hire foreign trainers to provide a different perspective on the content to the participant. Training outcomes can be achieved by utilizing various training methods, such as hands-on training and simulation tools. Employees' learning efforts would be valued while fostering a creative mindset and improving communication skills for increased productivity.

"...notes and interaction are [important] tools to facilitate training sessions," said [Participant Five]. Role-playing and simulation tools...can simulate employee participation [in training sessions as well]."

[Participants three and five] agreed that "...physical training is a better platform than online training... Trainers should be well-versed in their respective fields... They [should] know the industry's insider story... They should share their experiences with us, as they have faced various challenges..."

**5. Conclusion**

A KASH model-based process for developing employee professional commitment must be precisely based on its four components (Knowledge, Attitude, Skill, and Habits). It is the ideal combination of developing training processes based on employees' backgrounds and experiences, as well as the support of a model for increasing the organization's levels of effectiveness. Employees who were committed had a stronger desire to stay with the company, a more proactive attitude towards their responsibilities, and a higher level of professional commitment. As a result, including aspects of identity in training strategies that take into account each person's habits and attitudes increases the sense of professional commitment. The KASH model prompted researchers to propose appropriate theories to strengthen the model's support. In this case, the effectiveness of KASH elements in developing employees' professional commitment to the workplace is underpinned by the Social Identity Theory and Marcia's Identity Status Theory.

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