



Enhancing HR Capacity to Sustain in the New Normal

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Abstract. The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted businesses, making us realize that humans have limitations in life's activities, including work. Most businesses that used to run their operations offline can no longer do it since the government limits face-to-face activities. This leads to issues in business sustainability that must be given attention. In order to survive, a business must adapt to the situation. As the new period after the pandemic or known as the new normal, where the situation is not the same as before the pandemic, people still need to adapt to this situation. A new mindset to accept that the working condition is not the same as before and using digital technology to assist our work is important. That is why this qualitative research regarding enhancing human resources' capacity to sustain in the new normal was done. The facts revealed varied responses from human resources. This study discusses how a language course can answer the different responses and strengthen Human Resources capacity compared to what is needed.

Keywords: human resources · business · sustainability · new normal

1 Introduction

The emergence of Covid-19 has made a complex issue around the world. The covid-19 pandemic made humans struggle to survive. Many aspects of living and business have significantly impacted humankind as it is related to human resources and how employees should do their job. Employees are used to going to the office and doing their work there. However, the pandemic made global issues of how the organization could maintain the business. It concerns the changes regarding the business in the status of some occupations and their value of jobs [1]. In addition, human resources in the industry should cope with the working style changes. Regardless of the kinds of jobs, due to the pandemic, many things have been done to keep the work alive. One of the facts is how employees do their work in different locations such as home or other places besides the office. The Indonesian government formally mandated implementing work-from-home (WFH) for most sectors, including industries, to control the pandemic. The WFH policy induced the employees' productivity, business survivability, and national economic growth to decline [2].

The strength of human resources during the pandemic and afterward becomes essential to be considered for achieving business organizations' goals. WFH became the best

answer during the pandemic, with many advantages that can be acknowledged. However, after the pandemic, WFH became one of the reasons to be considered in such ways to finish white-collar jobs but not precisely to solve the industrial problems. Besides WFH, the tools to assist human resources in completing the jobs should also be known. Technology advances in communication and productivity, such as computers, mobile phones, and so on, really guide the industry to survive during the pandemic. So, it is more than just the working style of human resources but also the technology usage that a business has to continue supporting employees' jobs.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Human Resources and New Mindset

Humans work to fulfill their needs. Maslow's Hierarchy said work is a means of fulfilling human needs [3]. As humans work in a business or company, they all become human resources. According to Megginson [4], human resources is the comprehensive knowledge, skills, creative abilities, talents, and aptitudes of an organization's workforce and the individuals' values, attitudes, and beliefs.

These days, there are many variations of work because of the development of technology. During the Covid-19 pandemic, WFH became the alternative in most countries to work. In the extant literature, WFH is variably termed as 'telework', 'telecommuting', 'remote working', 'e-work', and 'virtual work' [5]. WFH made people realize that work could be done anywhere. Not all employees can apply their offline skills and knowledge (i.e., WFO) to WFH. Employees need to be prepared with such a new mindset in order to be able to apply all they need when they shift from WFO to WFH. Arief et al. [6] stated that a business must prioritize a new mindset strategy under challenging times. This business mindset said that they must change to adapt to new situations and be ready to face new normal conditions after Covid-19. If employees in a business have the correct mindset, there will be an opportunity for the business to sustain itself.

2.2 Technological Enhancement

During WFH, the assistance of technology becomes visible. The technology available allows people to stay in contact with others innovatively [7]. The remote condition pushes people to stay connected with each other. Indeed, digital technology in communication while WFH or WFO is a must. A business needs to prepare its employees to be ready to stay connected with their colleagues or their customers in a new environment, new way. Thus, digital communication, learning, and marketing are important, especially for education.

Digital technology Digital marketing through social media is a breakthrough during the pandemic and the new normal. Gray and Fox [8] said people have access to social media during this period. A company does the marketing activities, promoting the company's products and services through social media, where people can reach the products and services offered. Social media is a breakthrough because it has a different layout which can give companies some options to create promotional campaigns for the

business. Thus, a company needs to run digital marketing to reach its customers during this pandemic and the new normal to sustain the business.

Digital Learning The outbreak of COVID-19 led to a severe impact not only on the economic and education sectors. The policy was conducted to minimize the spread of the virus by eliminating all face-to-face learning activities [9]. This policy pushes education institutions to immediately think of alternative solutions so that the learning process can proceed without face-to-face interaction. The solution is conducting online learning activities [10]. Online learning activities eliminate distance by utilizing electronic learning, internet-based, in order to support the learning process without face-to-face interaction. Furthermore, Aristovnik [11] said that the learning process must continue, and the quality of learning must remain good even during the pandemic and new normal; therefore, the way teachers teach must change.

3 Methods

The method used in this study is a descriptive qualitative using a case study approach. This study described how a language course in Surabaya maintained its sustainability during the pandemic and new normal by emphasizing enhancing human resources capacity to adapt to this situation. When the human resources adapt, hopefully, the business will still be able to run and profit from customers.

The authors collected the data in April 2019-mid 2022 by conducting participative observation, in-depth interviews with the employees, and documents review. The authors analyzed the data by making data reduction from observation; then reduced the data to produce better data. The validity was achieved through triangulation. Then the authors compared the data from documents, observations, and interviews to get accuracy.

4 Results and Discussion

The authors studied how a language course in Surabaya can maintain its sustainability during the pandemic and face a new normal condition. Indeed, this language course has 20% administration staff and 80% teachers. Most of its customers are students that study at the university, while the rest are public.

The pandemic, which continued with a new normal situation, influenced the education sector as well, especially the number of customers since people need to do social distancing and cannot go to the course to minimize the spread of the virus. Consequently, the business process needs to be shifted online, so the business can operate as before and can be reached by customers. The problem is that not all employees are willing and ready to shift the business and the learning process to online [12]. In this situation, a new mindset about the pandemic and a new normal situation must be comprehended well by all employees. They must understand that the option is to change to sustain the business. Rachmasari [13] said that the pandemic and new normal situations should not be considered difficult but a case to be learned and solved. Thus, a proper mindset will keep the business running.

Figure 1 shows that 10% of the employees in this language course were resistant and unwilling to change. These staff portrayed that the pandemic is just short-term, so

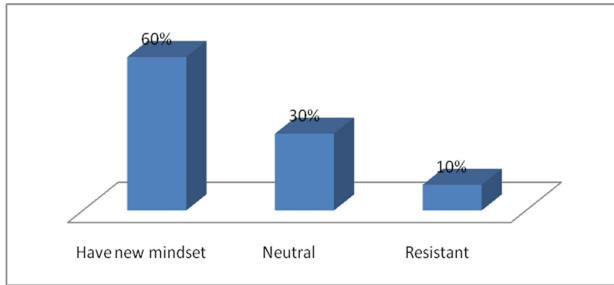


Fig. 1. The mindset condition of human resources

why try to prepare online things that make the staff difficult? Moreover, if this condition is solved quickly, it may lead to an obstacle. Thus, in this case, the course leader gave understanding and guidance to the resistant ones. The staff needs to be explained that this unexpected situation may be long and can affect the business if the business does not adapt to the situation. The business may stop if there are no customers.

In order to adapt to the pandemic and new normal situation, the company's human resources must be equipped with the necessary skill and knowledge. As shown in Fig. 1, the course identifies and equips human resources with the necessary skills: digital communication, digital teaching, and digital marketing.

All human resources received training in digital communication which is very important to communicate with both internal and external during the pandemic and new normal situation, especially during WFH. Some digital communications are Zoom, Google Meets, Google Forms, Google Drive, social media etc.

The teaching staff received training in digital teaching which is essential to create exciting and enjoyable learning for both online and hybrid learning so that customers are interested in joining the course. Teachers are trained to manage online classrooms (pedagogy, teaching method) and tools that can be used, such as premium zoom feature, Mentimeter, Padlet, quizizz, Kahoot etc. In doing so, the language course supports the learning process with premium zoom, good wifi, and other related equipment. Indeed, Al-Awidi & Aldhafeeri [14] said that teachers need to have pedagogical knowledge and digital learning skills to make learning more effective and efficient, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, the administrative staff received training in digital marketing, such as Instagram marketing, content writing etc., to make the product and service offered by the language course reachable to the public (Table 1).

The digital marketing chosen is social media marketing, especially Instagram marketing, since most of the customers are students who are mostly Instagram users. The

Table 1. Staffs' Training

Percentage of staff received training in digital communication	100%
Percentage of teachers received training in digital teaching	100%
Percentage of admin received training in digital marketing	50%



Fig. 2. Number of followers of social media

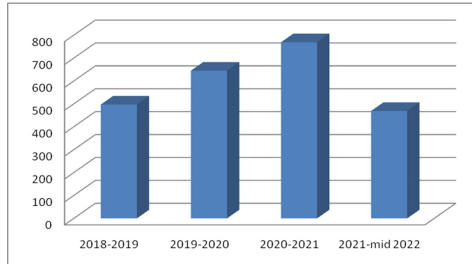


Fig. 3. Number of customers

administrative staff received training in digital marketing to boost the extent of customers so that they understand the product and service offered by the course.

The content posted on Instagram is created creatively and interestingly so that many people are interested in the course. We can see in Fig. 2 that the number of followers from year to year increases, which means the number of prospective customers that know the product and service offered by the course also increases.

Finally, in Fig. 3 exhibits the results of enhancing HR capacity in the language course. In this case, the number of customers was little affected since the course used a strategy to overcome the situation. The course prepares the mindset and equips HR with the necessary training and equipment, approaches loyal customers, and offers customized courses as they need with an economical cost fee. The strategy worked, and customers increased. Indeed, the profit is not much since the course offers many discounts and offers many programs with economical cost fees.

5 Conclusion

The pandemic and new normal conditions bring a business to a challenging situation that pushes businesses to act in new ways to sustain business. A business must consider a proper strategy [15]. The language center chooses the strategy of enhancing human resources. Indeed, it is proved to be effective in making the course sustainable during the pandemic and new normal. The mindset of HR is one key to adapting to the situation. Then the language course prepares the readiness of the employees by giving necessary training and support with related infrastructure. Consequently, the unusual condition of the pandemic and new normal is no longer a matter since through digital technology equipped by the employees; the course can reach the public to be customers and sustain.

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