# The Best Practices of Mcdonald's Malaysia: A Case Study of the National Dual Training System

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**Abstract:** The National Dual Training System (NDTS) was officially launched in February 2018 and there are five NDTS-approved McDonald's practical training locations at the early implementation of the NDTS. By 2025, 450 McDonald's Malaysia restaurants are expected to expand, adding 10,000 jobs to the current workforce of 12,000 employees. Based on the increasing number of employees and positive implementation of the NDTS program in McDonald's Malaysia, this study aimed to explore the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia in the context of NDTS. Methodologically, a qualitative approach was employed in this study by conducting a group discussion with the McDonald's personnel, document analysis (such as news, annual reports, and websites) and a literature review. From the thematic analysis, the findings highlight the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia and the positive implications of the NDTS implementation. A review of McDonald's training and skill development around the world provides additional support for the findings. Significantly, this study contributes to promote the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia, the positive image of McDonald's Malaysia and the positive implications of NDTS in supporting skills development in Malaysia.

**Keywords:** McDonald's Malaysia, work-based learning, National Dual Training System

## 1.    Introduction

The motivation to conduct this research is driven by Pinnow's (2019) study that emphasized the need to publish the dual training evaluation and analysis (on benefits and difficulties) to increase the visibility of best-practices examples. Hence, successful work-based learning can be promoted and positive images of TVET and work-based learning could be established. Dual training is one of the elements of work-based learning in Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (Dehnbostel & Thomas, 2017). In the dual education system, Remington (2018) described the dual education system enables youth to gain not only technical and occupational skills but also broadly defined competencies that serve as the basis for rewarding work and social esteem. A partnership with the industries is viewed as a potential approach to work-based learning; as a place of learning for an individual's competence development is unique compared to other places of learning (Schröder & Dehnbostel, 2021).

In this article, the training and development in McDonald's is the main discussion. Globally, McDonald's Restaurant Limited is the world's largest restaurant chain, with locations on every continent and in almost every country (Eaglen et al., 2000). In the context of Malaysia, McDonald's Malaysia was recognized as the best of the best employer

by Kincentric1 in 2022 (McDonald's Malaysia, 2022). Also, McDonald's Malaysia is recognized for its commitment to talent (Money Compass, 2019). Following the success stories of McDonalds worldwide and in Malaysia, the best practices of McDonald's are explored. In this article, the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia in the context of NDTS and its positive implementation are presented and discussed.

There are seven sections in this article. The first section introduces McDonald's Malaysia and the implementation of a dual training system in McDonald's Malaysia. The second section describes the theoretical stances underpinning the study followed by the aim and central research question in the third section. In the fourth section, methods in data collection, analysis, and strategies to establish rigour and trustworthiness are presented. In the fifth section, the findings are presented and further discussed in the sixth section. In the seventh section, the conclusion, limitations and recommendations are presented for future research works.

## 1.1     History of McDonald's Malaysia in NDTS Implementation

The first restaurant of McDonald's Malaysia was opened at Jalan Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur, in April 1982. In 1995, McDonald's Malaysia obtained the Halal certification from JAKIM, making them the first Quick Service Restaurant with Halal certification in Malaysia. In June 2007, McDonald's launched 24-hour service at over 70 restaurants nationwide. In 2013 and 2014, McDonald's received the Aon Hewitt Best Employers in Malaysia award (for the third time in a row) and won the gold award at the Putra Brand Awards (for the 5th year in a row). Striving in the era of digitalisation, McDonald's Malaysia is moving forward with a cashless facility and McDonald's Delivery Service went 100% online in 2016. In December 2016, Saudi Arabia's Lionhorn Pte Ltd became the owner of McDonald's Malaysia through the McDonald's Developmental Licensee franchising structure (McDonald's Malaysia, n.d). In 2018, McDonald's Malaysia marked another milestone in human capital development through McDonald's NDTS; which supports students' skills development within the context of fast-food services and baristas (McDonald's Malaysia, 2018).

Similarly aligned with the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (2016-2020), which aimed to accelerate human capital development for the advanced nation (Economic Planning Unit, 2015), McDonald's Malaysia received accreditation from the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia as the provider of apprenticeship programmes under the National Dual Training System (NDTS). The NDTS was officially launched in February 2018; started at McDonald's Malaysia restaurant in Kota Damansara (Jabatan Pembangunan Kemahiran, 2018).

At the early implementation of the NDTS, there are five NDTS-approved McDonald's practical training locations (known as Training centres) – Damansara Utama (Headquarters), Mutiara Damansara, Birch House, Penang, Permas Jaya, Johor and Kota Laksamana, Melaka) and one Training Centre (or known as McDonald's Vocational Academy). By 2025, 450 McDonald's Malaysia restaurants are expected to expand, adding 10,000 jobs to the current workforce of 12,000 employees (McDonald's Malaysia, 2018). The NDTS at McDonald's Malaysia training programme is 18 months, and the McDonald's apprentices receive 70 per cent of practical training in the restaurant and 30 per cent of theoretical lessons conducted in classrooms. Also, several social and religious classes (such as Halal dan Amanah Dalam Bekerja) are included in the training syllabus. The successful apprentices will be awarded the Malaysian Skills Certificate (Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia, SKM) Level 2 and (SKM) Level 3 (McDonald's Malaysia, 2018). MYR1200 (the monthly allowance) and hostel (accommodation) allowance is provided only for selected apprentices (who are really in need).

## 2.     Theoretical Stances

The best practice in this study was viewed from Ray Kroc's philosophy and values. Ray Kroc is a founder, who make the brand of McDonalds recognised worldwide. A study made by Robert et al (2005) emphasised Ray Kroc's four values in McDonalds: McDonald's People Promise, Corporate Responsibility, Diversity and World Children's Day. Kroc believed that for McDonald's to achieve the goal of being the world's best quick-service restaurant experience, McDonald's must have the best experience for all McDonald's employees. Kroc's belief in best working experience is aligned with the experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (1984); in which he emphasised experience as the source of learning and development.

## 3.     Aim and Central Question

This article aims to explore the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia in the context of NDTS. The central research question is, what are the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia in the context of the NDTS? The significance of the study contributes to the positive role of McDonald's Malaysia in supporting skill development in Malaysia.

## 4.     Methodology

This study used a qualitative approach with the aim to carry out a deeper exploration of the best practices of Malaysia in the context of NDTS. This is in line with the study by Smith and Morse (2005) which clarified that qualitative studies are appropriate for measuring something subjective, difficult to evaluate, and has broad concepts such as competency studies. The purposive sampling method was used to determine the selected participants to meet the criteria required in responding to the questions of the study. The researcher selected three experts' personnel for face-to-face online focus

group interviews: expert 1 is referred to as P1, expert 2 as P2, and expert 3 as P3. All the experts are from human resource, training and development backgrounds and positions in the NDTS implementation in McDonald's Malaysia. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), the sample size is dependent on the questions and also the qualitative approach used; for case studies, the number of participants required is usually between 3 to 10 respondents. The rationale for this specialist selection is to gain a wide range of different experiences and perspectives on NDTS implementation based on their respective positions in McDonald's Malaysia. Berliner (2004) explained that those with experience in a field for over five years can be classified as experts.

## 4.1    Data Collection

To explore the elements of McDonald's best practices   in the context of NDTS, this study used two methods, namely (i) based on the analysis of the documents by making a literature review through the integration of models and theories related to experiential learning as well as the implementation of NDTS by McDonald's Malaysia and (ii) interview with the key stakeholders in the implementation of NDTS in McDonald's Malaysia

In order to maintain a clear focus in line with the selection of interviewing techniques, careful preparations are necessary to obtain maximum input to answer the research questions (Turner, 2010). Hence, the researcher made early planning in two important aspects of preparation i.e identifying individuals to be interviewed and preparing the interview protocols.  Preparation of this interview protocol included developing, organising and validating interview questions.  In addition, the researcher also obtained the experts' permission to be interviewed. The interview process was done through an online focus group. The interview session took approximately 72 minutes. Some principles were applied and emphasised at this stage such as making an appointment, explaining the purpose of the study, showing confidence to interview, explaining the interview format, informing the interview duration and ensuring that the installed recording devices did not interfere with the interview session

A qualitative approach was employed in this study. First, an online group discussion with three McDonald's personnel (a manager, human resources executive and a training officer) was conducted via the Google Meet platform. The field note was used to jot down information during discussion and later compiled as a report. The interim data from online group discussion was later corroborated with several documents such as blogs, news, annual reports, and websites using the document analysis method. Document analysis was conducted as a complementary data collection procedure to support of data triangulation (Bowen, 2009). Finally, a systematic literature review on McDonald's training and skill development around the world was employed to support the findings.

The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram template was adapted in this study (Page et al., 2021). The term document was used instead of "report" as outlined in Page et al's 2021 PRISMA 2020 flow diagram. Nevertheless, both terms represent a similar meaning, "report" according to Page et al.'s 2021 stated "a report could be a journal article, preprint, conference abstract, student register entry, clinical study report, dissertation, unpublished manuscript, government report or any other document providing relevant information" (p.5).

There are two processes in this study. One is the identification of documents via a database. The inclusion criteria for the literature search are English or Malay publications and open access to three main databases: Web of Science, Scopus and Google Scholar. Several keywords such as 'best practices in McDonald's', 'training in McDonald's', 'skills development in McDonald's' 'National Dual Training System', 'Skim Latihan Dual Nasional', 'McDonald's' and 'McDonald's Malaysia' were used to search the literature. Two, the identification of documents via other methods. Similar keywords, and inclusion and exclusion criteria from the literature search were used to search documents in a Google search platform. The term 'document' was used in this study, which refers to three types of documents known as scholarly work (such as scientific or peer-reviewed publications, masters or a doctoral dissertation, textbooks, and other course materials), media and communication (such as newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, webpages) and working documents (such as reports) (Dalgish et al., 2020).

 For exclusion criteria, apart from non-English publications and no keywords of McDonald's in the document, there are eleven reasons for the exclusion of McDonald's articles were identified. The exclusion happens because these articles did contain McDonald's but did not mention any information related to NDTS, training or skills development. These eleven reasons are the undergraduate dissertation and report (n=2), marketing strategies (n=12), covid-19 pandemic (n=5), halal (n=6), boycott (n=2), technology (self-order kiosk) (n=6), the consumer (n=9), quality and performance (n=5), health issues (n=2), mention McDonald's but no explanation (n=9) and human resources and management (n=12). The total number of documents after exclusion is 45 documents.
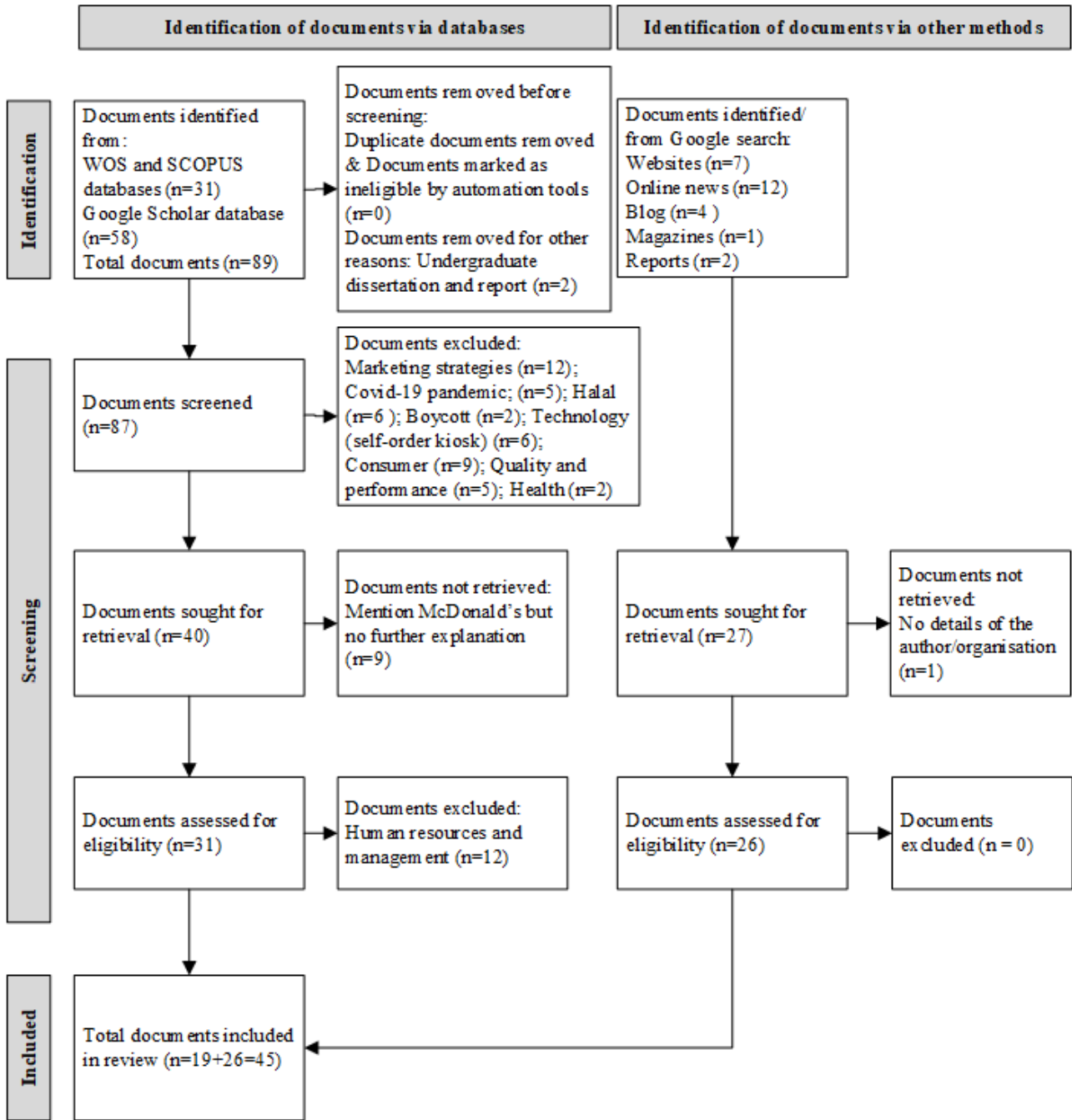
**Fig. 1 - The PRISMA 2020 flow diagram used in this study (adapted from Page et al., 2021)**

Based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, Table 2 - shows the number of documents by year of publication. The total number of documents for this study is 45. The increasing number of documents can be seen from 1987 until 2022. There are nine document types were analysed in this study, which are the report, website, news, master dissertation, magazine, scientific journals, conference proceeding, book chapter and blog. The highest number of documents are scientific journals (14), followed by news (12), websites (7), blogs (4), conference proceedings (3), master dissertation (2), and 1 document for each type: report, magazine, and book chapter (1). Here, there are two key points. One, it is interesting to see the research on training and skills development in McDonalds has been discussed since 1987. Two, the challenges to get access to the McDonald's documents from the public domain, which indicate the fluctuate number in 2021.

**Table 2 - Number of documents by year of publication and by types of documents**

| Year/ document types | Blog | Book chapter | Conference proceeding | Scientific journals | Magazine | Master dissertation | News | Report | Websites | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1987 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1988 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1993 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1995 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1996 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 1999 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2001 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 2007 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2009 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2010 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 2012 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2014 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 2016 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 2018 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| 2019 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 8 |
| 2020 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| 2021 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 2022 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 6 |
| Not mentioned | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals | 4 | 1 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 2 | 12 | 1 | 7 | 45 |

Meanwhile, Table shows the number of studies by region, where the distribution of McDonald's research around the world is based on a literature search. Four types of documents are book chapters, conference proceedings, scientific journals, and master dissertations. The highest total number of studies is obtained from scientific journals (13); in which six studies were from the United Kingdom, two studies from Australia and the United States of America and one study from India. In different cases, one study involved two countries: The United Kingdom and Germany and one study did not mentioned countries. For the conference proceedings document type, one study from each country: New Zealand, Pakistan, and Portugal. Then, for the master dissertation document type, two studies are from the United States of America and for the book chapter, one studies from Australia. The other group of documents that is grey literature type such as blogs, news, magazine, and report were reported from Malaysia. Of the group of websites, one is from the United States of America and six websites are from Malaysia.

**Table 2 - Number of studies by region and by types of documents**

| Document types by region | Australia | India | Malaysia | New Zealand | Pakistan | Portugal | United Kingdom | USA | Not mentioned | UK and Germany | Totals |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Book chapter | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Conference proceeding | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 |
| Journal | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 13 |
| Master dissertation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Blog | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Magazines | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| News | 0 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 12 |
| Websites | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Reports | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| **Totals** | 3 | 1 | 25 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 45 |

## 4.2    Data Analysis

The analysis of the interview data began once the first interview process took place. Data were obtained from audio recording were transcribed in verbatim form and verified by the participants to ease the researcher in making further analysis. This is in line with Merriam's (2009) view that verbatim transcription is the best database for analysis. After conducting the transcription process, the researcher compiled and segregated the data according to the importance of the study so that non-essential data could be isolated.  Subsequently, the coding and analysis process were conducted based on the recorded transcript of the interview. Coding is a method that allows researchers to include passages or sentences to groups that have the same meaning or are categorised as "family" because of characteristic similarities (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).  In this stage, researchers use interpretation skills to find frequent, unique, relevant and interesting codes for coding purposes.  The final analysis process was thematic and narrative analyses where the researcher reported the findings in the form of storytelling supported by the interview quotes.

For document analysis, Dalgish et al.'s (2020) READ approach was adopted in this study. The inductive thematic analysis was used in this study. Data from the ProWoThai report (compilation from the field notes), documents and literature review were later analysed using the ATLAS.ti 22.
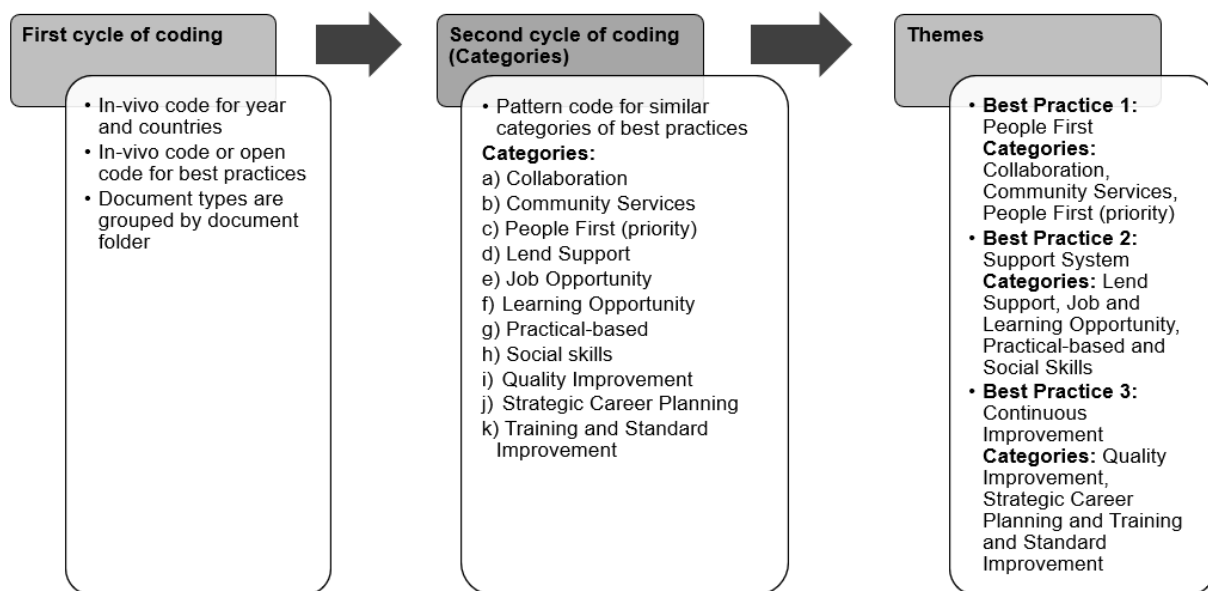


**Fig. 2 - The coding process in inductive thematic analysis**

Fig. 2 shows the coding process in inductive thematic analysis. In the first cycle of coding, document types are grouped by document folder. The in-vivo code was used for years and countries whereas, for best practices, the open code and in-vivo code was used. In the second cycle of coding, the pattern code was used for similar categories of best practices. There are eight categories in the second cycle of coding which are 'Collaboration', 'Community Services', 'People First' (or known people as priority), 'Lend Support', 'Job Opportunity', 'Learning Opportunity', 'Practical-based', 'Social Skills', 'Quality Improvement', 'Strategic Career Planning' and 'Training and Standard Improvement'. The themes were later defined based on similar categories of best practices. Three main themes are *People First* which consists of three categories (collaboration, community services and people first); *Support System* which consists of five categories ('Lend Support', 'Job Opportunity', 'Learning Opportunity', 'Practical-based' and 'Social Skills') and *Continuous Improvement* that consists of three categories ('Quality Improvement', 'Strategic Career Planning' and 'Training and Standard Improvement').

## 4.3    Rigor and Trustworthiness and Ethical Consideration

For credibility, a source triangulation was employed. Data obtained from the grey literature was corroborated with primary and secondary literature. Data from the ProWoThai report were extracted and validated by McDonald's personnel. The interim data from group discussion was further supported by the findings obtained from document analysis and systematic literature review. For dependability, similar keywords are used to search for documents and literature reviews to ensure consistency in data collection. For confirmability, data triangulation was utilised to establish a credible finding. The dataset from the published documents was analysed together with the dataset from the literature review. Consent and approval from McDonald's Malaysia were also obtained as part of the ethical requirement.

## 5.    Findings

From the thematic analysis, three major themes were identified as the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia, which are 1) People First; 2) Support System and 3) Continuous Improvement. Each theme contains similar categories of best practices. A review of McDonald's training and skill development around the world provides additional support to the findings.

## 5.1    Best Practice 1: People First

The first best practice is People First. The first theme was derived from the category of 'people is a priority'. In McDonald's Malaysia, the well-being of the employees (from top management to the crew) and customers are the main priority. One example, the minimum wages for the full-time staff are adjusted in alignment with the Malaysian government's proposal as reported in news, D33.

> *By the end of 2022, McDonald's will be adjusting the wages of its full-time staff in support of the government's latest proposal to raise the minimum wage, a testament to its 'people-first' commitment [D33]*

Apart from the well-being of the employees and customers, McDonald's Malaysia is also active in partnership and collaboration activities (which refer to the category of 'collaboration'. The study discovers numerous collaborations were conducted between McDonald's Malaysia and the federal and state governments (such as the Ministry of Education, and Ministry of Human Resources) and non-government organisations (such as Pusat Zakat and Majlis Belia Negara). For example, in news, D20, the collaboration between the state government and McDonald's Malaysia to implement the NDTS program in new McDonald's outlets were reported.

> *Collaborating with the ministry on this programme is a significant milestone for us as it reflects how we are able to serve as a foundation for local youths to build meaningful careers [D20]*

In addition to that, the training objectives and initiatives in McDonald's Malaysia are also supported by the McDonald's Global, through McDonald's Youth Opportunity program, which aimed to reduce barriers to employment for young people (McDonald's Malaysia, 2021a). The benefit from the active partnership and collaboration is a win-win situation between the company and students, explained by the McDonald's Malaysia personnel, as jotted down in the Field Notes.

> *The benefits from NDTS implementation are a win-win situation, for students, the allowance is provided (MYR1200 every month) and for the company (for long term) - the company can have a competent crew and manager, and this is good for the company in the long run [Field Notes].*

Besides the wellbeing and collaboration, McDonald's Malaysia also actively participating in community services (which refer to the category of 'community services'. The appointment of youths from underprivileged families in McDonald's NDTS provides them with the employment opportunities, as jotted down in the Field Notes.

> *NDTS McDonald's Malaysia training programme is not designed only for hiring purposes but also contributes to community service, where the apprentice can stay or work in other places [Field notes].*

The findings of Theme One are supported by Timsal et al.'s, (2016) study, which conducted qualitative research related to the responsibilities of the employees, and the kind and type of training involved during their jobs in McDonald's United Kingdom. In Timsal et al.'s, (2016) findings, McDonalds placed a major effort to motivate their employees by giving them incentives, for instance, good pay rates, training for skills development and better career prospects. In other findings conducted by Kamal et al.'s, (2014) studies in Pakistan, McDonalds provides material support and encouragement to the people who need it most. These findings are similarly aligned with (the initial philosophy of social corporate responsibility stated if *you are going to take money out of a community, give something back*" that was coined by Ray Kroc (Reingold, 1992, p.67 as cited in Kamal et al., 2014), Here, people are the priority and all positive efforts made by McDonald's contributed back to the welfare of the employees and the community.

## 5.2    Best Practice 2: Support System

The second-best practice is Support System. The theme was derived from the category of 'Lend Support'. The study reveals a strong support system in McDonald's Malaysia. The McDonald's Malaysia management is not only lending support in terms of finances, but also providing job and learning opportunities.

For the category of 'Lend Support', several pieces of evidence are obtained from news, D25 and field notes:

> *Among the initiatives announced include McDonald's business zakat contribution and the appointment of youths from underprivileged families to participate in McDonald's NDTS (National Dual Training System) training programme [D25]*

> *Training programs in McDonald's Malaysia are driven by three main objectives: 1) to help the community by providing employment and certified skill, 2) to support the Malaysia government to produce the skilled worker and 3) to uplift the competency level of McDonald's staffs and managers and providing them with a career path in McDonald's Malaysia [Field Notes]*

For the category of 'Job Opportunity', McDonald's Malaysia provides the opportunity to work in McDonald's for those apprentices who are successfully completed their training. As said by Your Highness Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail, reported in news, D23:

> *Pelajar yang menyertai program ini akan dianugerahkan Sijil Kemahiran Malaysia (SKM) Tahap 3 dan Tahap 4 seterusnya layak memulakan kerjaya di McDonald's atau kerjaya dalam bidang perkhidmatan makanan," titah baginda pada program Komuniti McDonald's Malaysia Peringkat Negeri Perlis di sini malam tadi. [D23]*

In English translation,

> *Students who are participated in this program will be awarded Malaysia Skills Certificate (MSC) Level 3 and 4, and eligible to start working in McDonald's or in any career in food services" said Your Highness in the McDonald's Malaysia Community programme Perlis state level here last night [D23]*

For the category of 'Learning Opportunity', McDonalds' Malaysia also supports student admission in the training program by offering a place for training. For instance, the student capacity in Vocational Schools in Malaysia is limited, and thus, through the NDTS, students can attend the training programme offered by McDonald's Malaysia (McDonald's Malaysia, n.d). The NDTS apprentices also could work and learn in a real workplace setting, through the 'block-release' type training. The blended learning approach was used in the NDTS program with four methods known as self-study, training tools, on-the-job coaching, and classroom training.

> *The 'block release' type of training was adopted in McDonald's approach with the Department of Skills Development (DSD) agreement. The apprentices were taught with the theory first and followed by the practical, and the maximum capacity of the apprentice at the training centre is five apprentices (for one coach) and 25 apprentices (for one trainer) [Field notes].*

For the category of 'practical-based' and 'social skills', several positive implications could be seen from NDTS implementation, for instance, the apprentices are more discipline and knowledgeable [see field notes].

> *The positive outcome of NDTS implementation, is the quality of the NDTS apprentice, is more discipline, different skill set and more knowledgeable [Field notes] The NDTS at McDonald's Malaysia training programme is 18 months, and the McDonald's apprentices receive 70 per cent practical training in the restaurant and 30 per cent of theoretical lessons conducted in classrooms. Also, several social and religious classes (i.e. Halal dan Amanah Dalam Bekerja) are included in the training syllabus [Field notes]*

These findings are aligned with the positive implications of a good support system from McDonald's worldwide. In the studies conducted by Greenback et al (2009), one interviewee appreciated the transferable skills that were developed during his employment at McDonald that help him to pursue his career goal. Here, the support system provided by McDonald's is not only providing financial support, job opportunity and learning opportunity but also, supporting the trainee's knowledge, skill and competencies development. These findings are supported by Eaglen et al.'s (2000) findings stated that "the company's approach to crew training is based on shaping personal competencies that are described as a combination of knowledge, skills and behaviours critical to job success" (p.336).

## 5.3    Best Practice 3: Continuous Improvement

The third-best practice is *Continuous Improvement*. This theme consists of three categories which are 'Quality Improvement', 'Strategic Career Planning' and 'Training and Standard Improvement'. In continuous improvement, the quality of the NDTS program (which refers to the category of 'Quality Improvement' is maintained through the audit process, as reported in the field notes.

> *The internal certification is also provided for McDonald's Malaysia employees, whereas SKM Level 3 certificates are for apprentices. The Food Safety certificate is compulsory. Meanwhile, the audit process was conducted by DSD [Field notes]*

For the category of 'Strategic Career Planning', McDonald's Malaysia is also responsible support the skills development of the trainees, as written in the blog, D27 and McDonald's website, D43.

> *At McDonald's, opportunities are in abundance for its people to grow. This is strongly supported by its strategic career planning initiatives, which map out available opportunities and avenues for growth within the company [D27]*

> *The McDonald's® Employee Value Proposition (EVP) is the promise of delivering what McDonald's® employees value most as they work at the restaurants. In developing the EVP, McDonald's® asked its employees through a global survey, "What is it that you love most about working at McDonald's®?" Their responses gave birth to what is known as the McDonald's® EVP of the 'three Fs' - Family & Friends, Flexibility and Future [D43]*

For the category of 'Training and Standard Improvement, McDonald's Malaysia has its own training regulations and guidelines. Nevertheless, the training regulations and guidelines are also adapted to the NOSS requirements [see Field notes].

> *McDonald's Malaysia already has its own training regulation/training guidelines but adapted through the mapping process to the NOSS requirements (Field notes).*

> *The employees must follow all Standard of Procedures (SOP) based on McDonald's guideline [Field notes].*

These findings are supported by Eaglen et al.'s (2000) studies where McDonald's is viewed as a company that makes a major commitment to training as a means of achieving strategic objectives to increased customer and employee satisfaction, lowering operating costs and increasing market share. Here, the continuous improvement in McDonald's Malaysia maintains high quality in all aspects, including the operational, management and training.

## 6. Discussion

In this section, Olivera et al.'s (2022) structure of discussion was adapted, which contains the overview of findings, the strengths and limitations, the implications of the findings, and how the findings fit the literature except for policy recommendations. A clear policy could be seen in McDonald's Malaysia and worldwide where they emphasise seven values which are: 1) *we place the customer experience at the core of all we do*; 2) *we are committed to our people*; 3) *we believe in McDonald's system*; 4) *we operate our business ethically*; 5) *we give back to our communities*; 6) *we grow our business profitably*; and 7) *we strive continually to improve*.

### 6.1 The Overview of Findings

Based on data analysis, *People First*, *Support System* and *Continuous Improvement* are the three best practices in McDonald's Malaysia. These findings are also supported by similar best practices found in McDonald's worldwide. In India, for instance, the training program at McDonald's is designed in a highly structured format; in which the program consists of "on the floor" training and major practical-based (Puleka et al., 2018).

### 6.2 The Strengths and Limitations

There are three strengths in the best practices in McDonald's Malaysia. One is good support from the government. The findings show multiple stakeholders such as the Ministry of Education (vocational schools), Ministry of Human Resources (training centres) and federal and state governments promote the NDTS programme to encourage the youth participating to learn and earn in McDonald's Malaysia. Two, the good partnership and collaboration between McDonald's Malaysia and the training centres and schools. Three, a positive working environment in McDonald's Malaysia.

### 6.3 The Implication of the Findings

There are two-three implications discovered from the findings. One is the research implication. Data related to the best practices and NDTS implementation in McDonald's Malaysia are mostly obtained from online news and another type of grey literature such as blogs, magazines, reports, and websites. There is a lack of published scientific journals on the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia. Nevertheless, there is numerous empirical research found in McDonald's worldwide (such as in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Australia, New Zealand, Portugal, Pakistan, and India)

which contribute to the training and skills development in McDonald's. Following the findings, this study contributes to the literature gap of McDonald's in the Malaysian context.

Two, the societal implication. People are the priority in McDonald's Malaysia. The positive implementation of NDTS is well-known among the public. The NDTS programme is viewed as an opportunity for the youth to work and learn at the same time. However, there is a lack of evidence on the NDTS trainees' perspectives in this document analysis.

Three, the practical implication, refers to the training approach at McDonald's. Despite different countries and management, the training approach is similar.

## 6.4    How Do the Findings Fit the Literature?

The best practices of McDonald's Malaysia are consistent with the best practices of McDonald's worldwide. Despite different countries and different management, the training approach is remaining similar due to the standardization by the McDonald's headquarters.

## 7.    Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendation for Future Research Work

Significantly, this study contributes to filling the literature gap on the best practices of McDonalds in the context of NDTS. In addition to that, this study reveals the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia and promotes the positive image of McDonald's Malaysia and NDTS in supporting skills development in Malaysia.

There are three limitations in this study. First, data related to the best practices of McDonald's are hugely obtained from the viewpoint of the top management and public perspectives but few from the NDTS apprentices. Two, the risk of bias as only a positive view on the best practices of McDonald's and NDTS was found in the published document and literature. Three, few scientific journals related to McDonald's in the context of training and skills development, and therefore, the old publications of McDonald's are included for analysis and to support the findings. Despite old publications, nevertheless, the findings contribute to the evidence of the continuous effort made by McDonald's in skills development.

Following these limitations, this study provides two recommendations for future research work. One, the study suggests a new study involving the NDTS apprentices to gain a balanced view of the best practices of McDonald's Malaysia in the context of NDTS. Two, the study suggests research to be conducted on the issues and challenges in NDTS implementation in McDonald's Malaysia.

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