BORANG PENGESAHAN STATUS TESIS

JUDUL:   STUDENTS’ SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS THE GENERIC SKILLS APPLIED IN THE CO-CURRICULUM SUBJECTS IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA


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TEKNOLOGI MALAYSIA

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AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
FOR THE DEGREE OF B.Sc.Ed.
(TESL)

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"Saya akui karya ini adalah hasil kerja saya sendiri kecuali nukilan dan ringkasan yang tiap-tiap satunya saya telah jelaskan sumbernya."

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My endless love to:

My beloved parents.
Thank you for being there for me.

My amazing brothers and lovely sister and sister-in-law.
You are one of the many wonders in my life.

My adorable baby nephew.
You bring joy and luck to everyone in the family.

All my wonderful friends, wherever they are.
Our moments together will stay with me forever.

The special one in my heart, Azizul Aziz.
Thank you for being there for me, through thick and thin.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study would not have been possible without the help of many people.

First of all, I would like take this opportunity to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Encik Kamarudin B. Hj. Kasim, for his advice, guidance and support from the very beginning of this project till the end. Thank you very much.

I would also like to thank all the participant who have given such a great support and full cooperation throughout the study.

I am also very grateful towards endless encouragement from my family and friends along the way.

Finally, a very big thank you to everyone who had involved in this project, whether directly or indirectly, for their time and cooperation.
ABSTRACT

Generic skills are an important element in equipping the graduates as their preparation to the employment world. Therefore, it is important for institutions of higher learning in this country to take a plunge in integrating generic skills; not only in academic subjects but also in co-curricular activities. This research investigated the undergraduates’ satisfaction level towards the generic skills applied in co-curriculum subjects, particularly in Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). This research was carried out on 50 undergraduates from UTM. It attempts to look into the satisfaction among the students vis-à-vis generic skills in co-curriculum subjects and also to gain feedback about the implementation of generic skills in subjects offered by UTM Co-curriculum Center. The findings of this study indicated that the percentage of UTM students are indeed contented by the generic skills applied. Hence, this will contribute to UTM’s vision to produce proficient, innovative, and all-around future graduates.
ABSTRAK

Kemahiran generik adalah satu elemen yang penting dalam melengkapkan graduan sebagai persiapan mereka ke alam pekerjaan. Oleh itu, adalah penting bagi institusi pengajian tinggi di negara ini untuk mengambil langkah dalam mengintegrasikan kemahiran generik; bukan saja dalam matapelajaran akademik tetapi juga dalam kegiatan ko-kurikulum. Kajian ini melihat kepada kadar kepuasan mahasiswa terhadap kemahiran generik yang diaplikasikan dalam matapelajaran ko-kurikulum, khasnya di Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Kajian ini telah dijalankan ke atas 50 orang mahasiswa dari UTM. Ianya bertujuan untuk mengkaji tahap kepuasan mahasiswa terhadap penerapan kemahiran generik di dalam matapelajaran ko-kurikulum serta maklumbalas terhadap implementasi dan keberkesanan kemahiran generik dalam matapelajaran ko-kurikulum yang ditawarkan oleh Pusat Ko-kurikulum UTM. Hasil kajian dalam bentuk peratusan menunjukkan mahasiswa UTM berpuas hati dengan kemahiran generik yang diaplikasikan. Ini seterusnya akan menyumbang ke arah matlamat UTM bagi menghasilkan graduan yang berkemahiran, berinovasi, serta serba boleh.
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1. UTM - Universiti Teknologi Malaysia
2. UiTM - Universiti Teknologi Mara
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Generic Skills in Malaysia: A Brief Overview

From country to country, different terminology is used to refer to generic skills. The range of terms include: ‘key competencies’, ‘soft skills’, or ‘employable skills’ in Australia; ‘key skills’ or ‘core skills’ (United Kingdom); ‘essential skills’ (New Zealand) and ‘necessary skills’, ‘employability skills’ or ‘workplace know-how (United States).

Regardless of what people would address it, generic skills are mainly about skills, expertise, knowledge, abilities and traits that a person should occupy in order to succeed in his or her studies and career. These skills should give a person an access to function and contribute effectively in solving problem, communicating effectively, thinking critically and creatively, and taking part as an effective team member at the workplace. Besides that, such skills, once attained, also come in handy in other areas of a person’s social, academic and professional life.

Graduates from this country suffer a lot of hardship in getting a job after they finish studying, especially when there are more applicants rather than vacancies (The Star, August 2005). According to an article in StarEducation entitled “Employable
Skills”, the reason behind this problem is that they have insufficient generic skills that are required in the current working field, mainly skills in planning and organizing, problem solving, decision making, communication, leadership, creativity, critical thinking and conceptual and networking skills (The Star, August 21, 2005). Their academic requirements may reveal their intelligence, but when it comes to generic skills, they are still left behind.

Generous amount of efforts had been poured by various parties to overcome the hardship of the graduates in getting involved in the working world. The government itself is trying hard to overcome this problem while learning institutions take generic skills into account when designing and implementing courses. If academical effort is not enough, co-curriculum and inside campus activities also play a major part in banishing the deficiency of generic skills among the future graduates. This is to ensure that they are guaranteed a place when they set their foot into the working world.

Therefore, in this paper, generic skills will refer to the skills that should enable individuals to meet the challenges in the workplace.

1.1 Background of Study

As the government realizes the pressing in producing employees with better generic skills in order for them to be competitive in the working environment, various steps have been and are being taken to address the problem. One of the most recent is as quoted in The News Straits Times (Sept 11, 2005) being the decision made by the Higher Education Ministry to announce plans to re-introduce the four-year degree programme in public universities to teach the undergraduates the professional attachments and the development of skills demanded by the job market.

Institutions of higher learning in Malaysia are currently developing programmes that accentuate the highlighted skills. Universiti Teknologi Mara
(UiTM) for instance, introduced a 14 week personal development course with three credit hours for its business administration undergraduates, in which the course content encompasses self-esteem, communication, skills, teamwork, time management, emotional intelligence, leadership and stress management (The Star, August 21 2005). Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) too, is putting emphasis on this matter by developing the skills not only through academic activities, but also through extra-curricular activities. Nevertheless, the feedbacks from the undergraduates who are taking the subject and those who already took it are yet to be known.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In a survey conducted by Dr Ranjit Singh Malhi, 258 Malaysian private sector managers identified certain generic competencies, such as manners in communication, problem solving and team working, are lacking in Malaysian undergraduates (The Star, August 21, 2005). The shift that the working organizations are experiencing, away from traditionally rigid and fragmented approach to a more flexible one, has witnessed a greater demand for workers who are highly skilled and more adaptable to job conditions and requirements. More employers are putting more emphasis on the overall competence of individuals, especially on their ability to communicate, solve problems and work in teams, rather than their technical skills.

The same source also stated that the Ministry of Higher Education too has expressed concern about the employment rate of local university graduates and their lack of generic skills. As a solution, the ministry has proposed that degree programmes to go back to four years so that undergraduates will have more time to master these skills (News Straits Times, September 11 2005). The generic skills are not only taught through academic activities but also being put into practice through extra-curricular activities. However, the effectiveness of the programmes in which the generic skills are being implemented is yet to be found out.
As the government’s directive is likely to affect most immediately the undergraduates of all courses, this study will focus on gathering data to investigate the satisfactory level of undergraduates enrolling the co-curriculum subjects, towards the generic skills applied in the co-curriculum subject that they took in UTM.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study was carried out to achieve the following objectives:

i. To determine the awareness about generic skills among UTM students.
ii. To determine the satisfactory level among the undergraduates towards the application of generic skills in co-curriculum subjects.
iii. To obtain the perspectives of the respondents regarding the implementation of generic skills in co-curriculum subjects offered by UTM Co-curriculum Center.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives mentioned, some of the research questions that were answered are:

i. Do the respondents know about generic skills?
ii. Do the respondents know about the generic skills being implemented in the co-curriculum subject?
iii. Are they satisfied with the generic skills implemented in the co-curriculum subject?
iv. To what extent is the respondents’ satisfactory level (in terms of percentage (%)) towards the implementation?
v. What are the respondent’s perception regarding the need to master the generic skills?

vi. What are the views of the respondents on generic skill’s application in co-curriculum subjects offered by UTM Co-curriculum Center?

vii. What suggestion could be given by the respondents to improve generic skills teaching in co-curriculum subjects?