

Practical Training in Tertiary Institution: A Case Study in Malaysia

Zaherawati Zakaria¹⁺, Zaliha Hj Hussin², Nazni Noordin³, Mohd Zool Hilmie Mohamed Sawal⁴ and Zuriawati Zakaria⁵

¹ Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

² Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

³ Faculty of Administrative Science & Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

⁴ Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA,
08400 Merbok, Kedah, Malaysia

⁵ Faculty of Business & Finance, Department of Finance, Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman,
Jalan Universiti, Bandar Barat, 31900 Kampar, Perak, Malaysia

Abstract. Process of learning will be more effective when the students are being exposed to the real working condition by practically applying their knowledge and also the skills that they had learned. The scope of this study is focus on the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah. The sample size is 25% from the population which is 180 respondents that been choosing from the final year students which are the part 5 and part 6 of diploma students in all programs in 2008. The main objective of this research is tries to identify whether gaining experience, enhancing skill and proficiency, producing highly demand in job market and balance between theory and application has significant with students taken practical training. As a result of findings, this study found that all the variables has significant with the importance of the practical training. Students realizes that the practical training is the best medium to gain experience and think it is importance to work in real situation as well as a possible medium to enhance skills and proficiency. In order to make students realize the important of practical training. In future research, the awareness of the respondents towards the organizations demand for experienced, educates, skillful and quality graduates has made them believe the importance of the practical training should be stresses in early of study. By giving clear direction that the practical training is very importance and it gives big opportunity for the future career.

Keywords: Practical, Training, Student, Academic, Skills, Education, Learning

1. Introduction

The world nowadays is rapidly changes especially in working life, society and information technology. Most of the organizations have increased their demand on the experts in the working life. Process of learning will be more effective when the students are being exposed to the real working condition by practically applying their knowledge and also the skills that they had learned. In order to accomplish the particular condition, they should involve in the collaboration between the school institution and also the industry. This collaboration will provide the opportunity to the students to apply their learning theory at their school towards the industrial process. In other word, this collaboration will help the students to experience and expose in the working process in the industrial scene. Besides that, this situation will help the students to increase their interest towards certain career. There are several benefits and advantages which regards with

⁺ Zaherawati Zakaria. Tel.: +604- 4562565; fax: +604- 4562234.
E-mail address: zaherawati@kedah.uitm.edu.my.

the practical training at the industry for the students such as to learn in the real working situation, to get the support from the experience workers, be able to learn in solving the real technical problem and not hypothetical which usually occur in their past class at the school institution. So that, the systematically planning is vital and needed in order to attract the industrial's interest to participate in the collaboration. In the develop countries like United States of America, Germany and Japan, the collaboration between school institution and the industry had been integrated for long time. Practical training at the industry for the students has several benefits which are to get the exposure and can learn in the real working situation, get the support from the experience workers, be able to learn to solve the real technical problem and not theoretical as usually occur in the class. So the systemic planning is needed in order to attract interest from the industry to participate in this collaboration. The training programs should be form in the structured type and allow for the assessment for the trainee's level by accomplishment in familiarization with the working situation, in knowledge enhancement and in ability to apply the concepts and theories that they had learned. Partnerships between public and private sectors, universities and industries, faculties and business organizations as well as partnerships extending to incorporate the student-learners can be expected to grow in significance in the first part of the 21st century (Ferris, 2002). Super (1957) defined a career as a sequence of positions occupied by a person during the course of life time., career enables an individual to implement his or her self concept, a graduate's choice; a graduate's choice must be suited with his or her manifest interest. So career choice implies that an individual will chooses a career among other types available. However, Roe (1959), Plomin (1994) argued that individual's genetic backgrounds relate what the individual will do in future and that certain personality behaviours enable them belong to certain careers such as engineering profession, which has to be well polished at the university through learning. If a person cannot in his or her life time find opportunities to be the kind of person he or she wants to be, for self-fulfilment, he or she will be dissatisfied with his work. The emergence is then there is need to consider individuals' needs within their career management (Woodd, 2000). However, the new psychological perspective suggests that this can be achieved through regular renegotiation of the psychological contract between the individual and the organization (Schein, 1970).

Another view of working knowledge holds that for knowledge to be useful it must be put into practical. It is because words will only be words unless it is being used (Garber, 1998). With a vision for the 21st century, the UNESCO Educational Report (1998) advocated a new paradigm that will deal with flexibility, innovation and productivity, imparting the skills required, addressing the implications of changing labour markets, training and retraining the employed, unemployed and the marginalized with the objective of achieving equality of opportunity for all in both formal and informal sectors of the economy, which should be achieved through partnership between education and the world of work (Clarke, 1997). The practical training can be in the implicit, reactive or deliberative. The terms of deliberate is including the decision making, planning and problem solving. Deliberate process is needed in the work (Eraut, 2000). Then for metacognitive skills are linked with the skills to organize and also to review one's behaviour. It is including one's ability to act reflectively, then to think critically and also to develop a positive attitude towards lifelong learning (Bereitner and Scardamalia, 1993). According to Benson (2006), general training is more marketable and provides more opportunities for career growth for employees, need for electrical engineering graduates to take up entrepreneurship skills' training for self-employment. The educational practices should be relevant with the practices and activities that is required in the real working situations for which that the students are supposedly be prepared (Resnick 1987; Bereitner and Scardamalia 1993). According to Clarke (1997), employers are looking for a more flexible, adaptable workforce as they themselves seek to transform their companies into being more flexible and adaptable in response to changing market needs. So, as part of this flexibility, companies also seek to hire and fire their employees more readily in response to the continuing changes faced by employers (Cox and King, 2006), a reason for organization to recruit young college graduates that are dynamic, flexible and can easily be disciplined. Cox and King (2006) add that the graduates should have transferable skills to manage the changes and sufficient subject skills to adapt to the new technical demands.

2. Problem Statement

Malaysia is facing a critical stage of unemployment problem. The problem has occurred due to the graduated students who unable to get their position in the job market. There are about 400, 000 unemployed youths in Malaysia that still seek for a suitable job. According to Dr S. Subramaniam, Minister of Human Resource, most of the youth are very demanding in search for job. There is no better method than the practical training in order to changes their mindset (Utusan Malaysia, 2008). The unemployment problems exist due to the lack of experience and lack of exposure to the real working situation of the graduated students. In the recent time, most of the organizations are looking forward to employ the workers who have a working experiences and skilful. The organization needs experience workers because they wanted to be more competitive in the global market, gain more profit and also obtain the goals that have been stated. The graduated students that did not have any working experience will perform poor performance and non quality task.

According to Datuk Mustapha Mohamed, Minister of Higher Education (2007), the unemployment problems can be reduce if there are several of plans and programs are being implement in order to produce the graduates with the technical and also communication skills. It is because technical and communication skills are most demanded and accepted in the job market. There should have changes for the graduated students in order to make sure that they are being able to monopoly in the job market. He also added that the local institution and the industry sector should build a good relationship in every aspect such as co-curriculum, practical training, investigation and development. This is important in order to make sure that the curriculum of the institution is relevant and align with the current industrial market.

3. Methods & Material

A cross-sectional survey was conducted in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah from January 2008 until April 2008 using a quantitative method towards respondents. Just 180 students from final year part 5 and 6 were selected as respondents due to larger size of population. The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) in getting descriptive statistic and correlation.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. Profile of Respondents

The study found that most of the research respondents consist of final years of diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah are female students representing 59% (n=107) and 40.56% (n=73) are male students. 'Respondents' heard about practical training before' shows that majority of the respondents said yes they has heard about the practical training which representing 96.7% (n=174). Meanwhile 3.3 % (n=6) of the respondents said did not heard about the practical training. 'The importance of practical training' shows that most of the respondents of the research which is 91.7% (n=165) are considered that the practical training is important. Meanwhile the others 7.8% (n=14) of respondents are not sure of the important of practical training and 1 0.6% (n=1) of the respondent denotes that the practical training is not important at all. 'Respondents interest to join practical training' shows the interested of the respondents either to join the practical training or not. 93% (n=67) of the respondents are interested to join practical training program. Meanwhile, others 5% (n=9) and 2% (n=4) of the respondents are respectively are not sure and not interested at all to join the practical training. 'The suitable time for the respondents to apply their practical training' There are 58.9% (n=106) of the respondents considered to apply their practical training program during their study. But 41.1% (n=74) of the respondents are considered to apply their practical training after their study. Final years diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah are more prefer 3 months length of practical training with 107 59.4% (n=107) of the respondents. While the others 27.8% (n=50) and 12.8% (n=23) of the respondents respectively choose 2 months and 1 month. 'Respondents' who get the advice from their coordinator or lecturer whether to join practical training or not' about 59.4% (n=107) of the respondents are obtained the advice from the coordinator or lecturer. Meanwhile the others 40.6% (n=73) of the respondents did not obtain advice.

4.2. Result of Findings

Hypothesis 1 - The relationship between practical training is the best medium to gain experience and an effective way in getting a better job.

- H0 – There is no significant relationship between gaining experience and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.
- H1 – There is a significant relationship between gaining experience and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.

Table 1, the study has tested the correlation between practical training as the best medium to gain experience and as effective way to get a better job. There is a significant positive relationship exists between these two variables $p < 0.01$ ($p = 0.000$) $r = 0.373$. Therefore the researchers do not reject the H1.

TABLE 1 Hypothesis 1 Relationship

	Practical Training The Best Medium To Gain Experience	Practical Training Effective Way To Get A Better Job
Pearson Correlation	1	0.373(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	180	180

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 2 -The relationship between practical training is possible way to acquire skills and giving big opportunity to the future career.

- H0 – There is no significant relationship between enhancing skills and proficiency and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.
- H1 – There is a significant relationship between enhancing skills and proficiency and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.

Table 2, the research has surveyed the correlation between practical training makes possible to acquire skills and it gives big opportunity to the future career. There is a significant positive relationship exists between these two variables which $p < 0.01$ ($p = 0.000$) $r = 0.331$. Therefore, the researchers do accepted H1.

TABLE 2 Hypothesis 2 Relationships

	Practical Training Makes Possible To Acquire Skills	Practical Training Give Big Opportunity To The Future Career
Pearson Correlation	1	0.331(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
N	180	180

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Hypothesis 3 -The relationship between practical training gives big opportunity to the future career and important to see real situation & acquire practical skill.

- H0 – There is no significant relationship between producing highly demand workers in job market and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.
- H1 – There is a significant relationship between producing highly demand workers in job market and the importance of practical training for diploma students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah.

Table 3, the researcher has tested the correlation between practical training that gives big opportunity for the future career and important to see real situation and acquire practical skill. There is a significant positive relationship exists between these two variables which is $p < 0.01$ ($p = 0.001$), $r = 0.256$. Therefore, the researchers do accepted H1.

TABLE 3 Hypothesis 3 Relationships

	Practical Training Give Big Opportunity To The Future Career	Important To See Real Situation And Acquire Practical Skill
Pearson Correlation	1	0.256(**)
Sig. (2-tailed)		0.001
N	180	180

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the researchers conclude that main objective in this study which is to identify whether gaining experience, enhancing skill and proficiency, producing highly demand in job market and balance between theory and application has significant with students taken practical training. All of the hypotheses have been answered and all the variables have significant with the importance of the practical training. In recommendation, the study suggest that practical training should be concern more by the government as well as students to enhance both skills and proficiency and also give a big opportunity for the future career among students before go to reality in working environment. Nowadays the working sector perspectives are demanded on the flexibility, innovation and productivity, imparting the skills required, addressing the implications of changing labour markets, training and retraining the employed, unemployed which should be achieved through partnership between education and the world of work. In future research, practical training should be integrated with all parties to put more value added for all students especially through soft skills for the bright future career.

6. Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks goes to our colleagues in Universiti Teknologi MARA Kedah, Malaysia for whom we have great regard, and we wish to extend our warmest thanks to all those who have helped us with the creation of this paper.

7. References

- [1] Ferris, W.P. (2002), "Students as junior partners professors as senior partners, the B-school as the firm: a new model for collegiate business education", *Academy of Management learning and Education*, Vol.1, No.2, pp.185-93.
- [2] Super, D.E. (1957), *The Psychology of Careers*, Harper & Row, New York, NY.
- [3] Roe, A. (1959), *The Psychology of Occupations*, New York, NY: John Wiley & Sons.
- [4] Plomin, R. (1994), *Genetics and Experience*, Sage, Thousand Oaks, CA.
- [5] Woodd, M. (2000), "The psychology of career theory – a new perspective?", *Career Development International*, Vol. 5 No.6, pp.273-8.
- [6] Schein, E. (1970), *Organisational Psychology*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- [7] Garber, D. (1998), "Descartes, or the cultivation of the intellect", in Rorty, A. O. (Eds), *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives*, Routledge, London, pp.124-38.
- [8] UNESCO Educational Policy (1998), Report, Conference on Higher Education, Higher Education in the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action, Paris.
- [9] Clarke, A. (1997), "Survey on employability", *Industrial and Commercial Training*, Vol. 29 No.6, pp.177-83.
- [10] Eraut, M. (2000). 'Non-formal learning and tacit knowledge in professional work', *British Journal of Education Psychology*, Vol.70, pp.113-136.
- [11] Bereiter, C. and Scardamalia, M. (1993). *Surpassing Ourselves: An Inquiry into the Nature and Implications of Expertise*. Chicago: Open Court.
- [12] Benson, G. (2006), "Employee development, commitment and intention to turnover: a test of 'employability' policies in action", *Human Resource Journal*, Vol. 16 No.2, pp.173-92.
- [13] Cox, S., King, D. (2006), "Skill sets: an approach to embed employability in course design", *Education and Training*, Vol. 48 No.4, pp.262-74.
- [14] Utusan Malaysia, 7th Apr 2008, Sikap pilih kerja punca 400,000 belia menganggur.
- [15] Ministry Of Higher Education (MOHE) Report. (2007). *Latihan Praktikal Membawa Banyak Faedah*.