KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL AMONG LECTURERS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY

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(2013)
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK

This declaration is made on the 11th day of September 2013.

Student’s Declaration:

I, Liu Tse Hui, 11031844, Faculty of Cognitive Sciences & Human Development (PLEASE, INDICATE STUDENT’S NAME, MATRIC NO. AND FACULTY) hereby declare that the work entitled, Knowledge and Skills Among Lecturers in Community College: A Case Study is my original work. I have not copied from any others students’ work or from any other sources except where due reference or acknowledgement is made explicitly in the text, nor has any part been written for me by another person.

Date submitted

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Supervisor’s Declaration:

I, Rusli B. Ahmad, (SUPERVISOR’S NAME) hereby certify that the work entitled, Knowledge and Skills Among Lecturers in Community College: A Case Study (TITLE) was prepared by the above named student, and was submitted to the “FACULTY” as a “partial/full fulfillment for the conferment of MSc (HRD) (PLEASE INDICATED THE DEGREE), and the aforementioned work, to the best of my knowledge, is the said student’s work.

Received for examination by: ____________________________ Date: ____________

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ABSTRACT

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL AMONG LECTURERS IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE: A CASE STUDY

LIU TSE HUI

(Qualifications of skilled workers in the field of technical and vocational education are key issues for the competitiveness of the economy in most countries in the world. Therefore, the knowledge and skill of lecturers in technical and vocational education training (TVET) Malaysia should be emphasized to ensure that quality employees can achieve competitive excellence in the international competition level. This study is to explore knowledge and skill among TVET lecturers in one of community colleges in Sarawak.) In addition, this study also aims to explore the effect of education and training to their knowledge and skill competency, and to identify factors that influence their knowledge and skill competency, and finally identified a number of suggestions from informants about increased efficiency in terms of knowledge and skill. The interview involves nine informants consisting of top management, the head unit and lecturers with semi-structured questions. The result of this study showed that background qualifications of lecturers are closely related to competence in terms of knowledge and skill, where competence is not only based on the characteristics of an individual in striving towards excellence. In conclusion, one would not be able to apply their knowledge and skill to the maximum if it is found that their fields do not match the fields that they teach at community colleges. Besides this, recommendation and implication of this study also stated in order to maximize the utilization of human resource in term of lecturers’ technical knowledge and skill in this organization.)
Kelayakan pekerja mahir dalam bidang teknik dan vokasional merupakan isu-isu utama bagi daya saing ekonomi dalam kebanyakan negara di dunia. Dengan itu, pengetahuan dan kemahiran pensyarah di latihan pendidikan teknik dan vokasional (TVET) Malaysia perlu dititikberatkan untuk menjamin pekerja yang berkualiti supaya mampu kecemerlangan dalam daya saing yang sengit yang bertaraf antarabangsa. Kajian ini adalah untuk menerokai pengetahuan dan kemahiran di kalangan pensyarah TVET dalam sebuah kolej komuniti di Sarawak. Di samping itu, kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk meninjau kesan pendidikan dan latihan kepada kemahiran mereka, serta mengenal pasti faktor yang mempengaruhi kompetensi pengetahuan dan kemahiran mereka, dan akhir sekali mengenal pasti beberapa cadangan daripada pemberi maklumat mengenai peningkatan kecekapan dari segi pengetahuan dan kemahiran. Temuduga ini melibatkan sembilan orang yang terdiri daripada pengurusan atasan, ketua unit dan pensyarah dengan soalan berbentuk semi-struktur. Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kelayakan latarbelakang pensyarah adalah berkaitan rapat dengan kompetensi dari segi pengetahuan dan kemahiran mereka, di mana kompetensi bukan setakat berdasarkan ciri-ciri seseorang individu dalam menuju ke arah kecemerlangan. Secara kesimpulan, seseorang tidak akan dapat mengaplikasikan pengetahuan dan kemahiran mereka secara maksimum sekiranya didapati bahawa bidang mereka tidak sepadan dengan bidang yang mereka ajar di kolej komuniti. Selain itu, cadangan dan implikasi daripada kajian ini turut dibincang untuk mengoptimumkan penggunaan sumber manusia dari segi pengetahuan dan kemahiran dalam organisasi tersebut.
CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter describes about technical and vocational education training (TVET) lecturers’ skill and knowledge competency. It covers background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, and research questions, significance of the study, the scope of study and terms used in this study. This chapter is important because it gives general overview of the study and it’s significant.

1.1 Background of Study

Malaysia is a fast developing country and now moving towards a high income nation, as envisioned in Vision 2020. The development strategy does not only focus on the national unity, social cohesion, politics and others, but also develop through enhancing Malaysia industrial growth equipped with highly skilled workforces. This mission has been emphasized in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) by Dato’ Sri Mohd Najib Bin Tun Abdul Razak, our Prime Minister in Malaysia on 10 June 2010. Based on Bukit (2012), the qualification of skilled worker is the key issues for the competitiveness of economy of most countries in the world. Speaking of economic transformation particularly in the global
competition, to be able to achieve knowledge-based economy, each country required to develop its knowledge based workers who are competent, adaptive and innovative. According to Jailani (2004), the workforce must have technical skill expertise especially for those that need hand-on experience. This group is identified as a main asset in ensuring the country’s productivity. Thus, the education system needs improvement both in terms of institutions development as well as the competency of TVET educators in order to produce high quality expertise. In this study, the knowledge and skill competency issue among TVET lecturers is focused.

Human capital lies at the core of innovation and a productive high income economy. It is the most important investment for Malaysia today especially when it is moving towards a high income country. Based on report from Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015), no economy can be succeed without a highly skilled talent base that is able to respond rapidly and creatively to economic changes, and it centralized on developing and utilizing knowledge. This statement is also supported by Guthrie, Harris, Simons and Karmel (2009) that qualification of skilled workers is one of the key issues for the competitiveness of economies of most countries in the world. As the demand for qualified skilled workers is increasing, the demand for competent TVET lecturers is also strongly emphasized because it could provide skill training and produce competitive human
capital towards country development (Jailani, Ahmad Esa, Mohd Jamil dan D’oria Ilamiah Rosli, 2010).

Mahazani, Noraini and Wahid (2010) found that TVET lecturers plays an important role as main vectors for the creations, developments, sharing and transfer of knowledge in TVET. Based on them also, European countries had to make sure that lecturers are highly competent, motivated and committed, in order to master their increasingly complex tasks. It is due to TVET needs to responsive to rapidly changing students and workforce needs. According to Bottoms and McNally (2008), the mission of TVET lecturer is to prepare students for the ever increasing workplace requirements and they believed that an educational institution needs competent lecturers who can create and manage learning environments where students could relate theory to practice through simulated work environment in school and industrial attachment at real workplace.

In Malaysia, education is always regarded as the important factor for sustainable development. It is supported by Muhyiddin in Education dialogue with public on 4 March 2012, he believes that, to ensure Malaysia achieved its target of becoming a developed and high-income nation by 2020, the field of education was not exempted from having to undergo a transformation which was in line with the current needs and demands. According to Karen, Tan Shiow Chin and Lim (2010), in a move
to upskill the labour market, Malaysia seeks to boost TVET and complementing the recent transformation plans for polytechnic and community colleges, as TVET were the preferred choices for students to realize their full potential in developing the skill before entering the workforces.

Community colleges in Malaysia play a main role in providing a wide range of vocational and technical post-secondary education courses within the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MDF). Under the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015), the government start implementing a new and innovative approach for community colleges by rolling out modular programmes, with the basic objective to prepare student gain job-oriented education, clear career paths and opportunities to gain access to higher education. This modular programmes named National Modular Skill Certificate programmes, shortened the duration of study to between three and six months from two years to allow students to complete multiple short modules at their own pace. These modules can be combined towards achieving the Malaysian Skill Certificate qualification. Around 70% of these training modules will be practical-based training on the factory-floor or in work-places. These programmes will cater to the upskilling of technically or vocationally-inclined students who did not do well in academically. Consequently, lecturers' knowledge and skill competency is emphasized in order to produce the high quality of student for this programme.
According to Sim Bak Heng and Ahmad Fairuz Othman (2012), through Education dialogue between Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and public, he stated that community colleges had been given the responsibility as hubs for lifelong learning by implementing skilled-based and apprenticeship training programmes for those who lacked good academic background to gain required skill in order to fulfill the current industry needs. With this flexible modular approach, it is expected to deliver a total of 135 different courses by 2015 from a total of 52 courses in 2010. The targeted total enrolment for community colleges will increase from 31,000 students in 2010 to 120,000 students by 2014 (Tenth Malaysia Plan, 2011-2015).

Therefore, in order to meet the expectation, community colleges must always be proactive in creating innovations in curriculum development, human resource training, strengthening the structure and governance of the institution as well as boosting co-operation between institution and industry. There are several factors affecting the quality of TVET, particularly in generating workers with qualified knowledge and skill, and reality show that the quality of TVET lecturers is the most salient factor among them. Therefore, competency among TVET Lecturer in community colleges is one of the most crucial aspect that need to be emphasized because this group is the most valuable asset to produce high quality of students and developments in order to achieve competitive advantage among the others TVET providers in Malaysia.
1.2 Problem Statement

Focusing into scenario of TVET in Malaysia, most lecturers were recruited directly after they graduated from universities and colleges having lack of industrial work experience which is essential to assure quality especially in knowledge and skill aspects. This hampers their ability to understand what their students will face in real world of work and prepare them for the needs of the industries. At the same time, qualified personnel with work experience are not willing to become lecturers due to unattractive salary scheme (Rashid and Nasir, 2003: Mimi, Sukri and Adnan (2009). It is also supported by Hashim (2010) stated that attracting high-qualified staff into teaching and teachers’ training in technical and vocational education was a problem for most countries, often because of the pay and comparatively conditions were better in commerce and industry. In a number of countries besides Malaysia, TVET lecturers have a purely theoretical vocational background and lack of practical and work-based vocational experience in terms of their knowledge content (Guthrie, et al. 2009). This is also supported by Bukit (2012) in Indonesia, he stated that TVET lecturer show poor learning culture towards the new knowledge and technology, and the evaluation to that particular lecturers indicate that they prefer to just ‘receive’ rather than ‘search’ for new knowledge and technology because of the environment.
One of the unique features in TVET education is that the knowledge and the skill of TVET lecturers can soon become outdated in a short period. For example in the case of Information Technology (IT), 50% knowledge loses its relevance within a year due to rapid innovation in the science and technology (Khambayat, 2010). That is why competency in terms of skill and knowledge of TVET is always emphasized in order to overcome this kind of unique features, particularly for community colleges that given the responsibility by government under Tenth Malaysia Plan to provide a wider opportunity and access to tertiary education through modular programmes as well as skill training to the general public. The message to educator is clear that learning process is continuous, which facilitate life-long self-updating and upgrading of knowledge, inside and outside the workplace.

Each individual can acquire competency if given the appropriate instructions, guidance, teachings, opportunities and time (Palan, 2008). It is applicable to use in UK approach, which competence is not only related to attributes of job-holders, but also refers to a range of guidelines and personal effectiveness issues required to get a job done. Therefore, finding the root of issue is a crucial key to solve the problem faced in TVET nowadays since various researches indicate that there is a competency needs among TVET teachers or lecturers. Consequently, this study is to find out the root of the problem by exploring the factors affecting competences, as supported by Shaikhah, Sarmad and Wafi (2009), as well
as they believe two main factors affect competency are education and training. In Malaysia, the education and training can be seen as the most important issue since government had allocated the largest allocation (23%) of the total development budget on education and training in TVET in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015).

Besides, the reason to conduct this study is that there is a challenge in TVET in Malaysia whereby there is imbalance and mismatch in education and training. Government absorbed all unemployed graduates with teaching qualifications and places them in community colleges and polytechnics (Karen, 2006). This issue has been raised up again in the study of Mahazani, et al. (2010) that this mismatching issue was the major problems in TVET in Malaysia whereby Malaysia need skilled knowledge worker required for developing Information Technology (IT), film industry, interior design, architectures and landscape, textile, biotechnology and agriculture.

In addition, there are a lot of previous studies carried out in quantitative method and most of the studies conducted are based on developing the framework of competency and require the respondents' perception about the level of importance of each competency domain and analyze the output descriptively. Therefore, it attracts researcher to investigate in-depth and with holistic view of lecturers' competency by exploring knowledge and skill competency, the effect of education and
training on competency among TVET lecturers, factor affecting knowledge and skill competency, as well as suggestion for knowledge and skill competency enhancement. This study is crucial to be carried out since Government had allocated the largest allocation (23%) of the total development budget on education and training in TVET in the Tenth Malaysia Plan (2011-2015). This is on par with statement from Shekinah, Sarmad and Wafi (2009), they stated that it is important to know what factors affect competences in order to maximize each individual’s competences.

Finally, competency studies have been carried in universities and polytechnics but lack of study on competency among TVET lecturers in community colleges so far. Therefore, it attracts again researcher to conduct the competency study in community college in order to get another perspective about the output of competency study in Malaysia.

In conclusion, there is a need of this study to be conducted to identify the real picture about lecturers’ knowledge and skill based on their perception and experiences, as well as to investigate factor affecting on their knowledge and skill competency, lastly to investigate whether there is a background qualification mismatch among them or not.
1.3 Objectives of the Study

Objective of this study consists of general and specific objectives, which are shown as below:

1.3.1 General Objective

The objective of this study is to explore the skill and knowledge among TVET lecturers.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are showed below:

i. To explore the current knowledge among lecturers.

ii. To explore the current skill among lecturers.

iii. To explore the effect of education on lecturers’ knowledge and skill competency.

iv. To explore the effects of training on lecturers’ knowledge and skill competency.

v. To identify the factors affect lecturers’ knowledge and skill competency.

vi. To seek for suggestions on knowledge and skill competency.
1.4 Research Questions

Five research questions are derived to answer Objective 1.4.1 until 1.4.6

1.4.1 What is the current knowledge among lecturers?

1.4.2 What is the current skill among lecturers?

1.4.3 What are the effects of education on knowledge and skill competency?

1.4.4 What are the effects of training on knowledge and skill competency?

1.4.5 What are the factors affect knowledge and skill competence among lecturers?

1.4.6 Any suggestions in enhancing knowledge and skill competency?

1.5 Research Framework

As purpose of this study, research framework use as a guide which can help researcher to achieve the objectives. The framework provides the perspectives that can be applied as a contribution an evolving process in competency study (Spencer, Ritchie, Lewis and Dillon, 2004)

Table below shows that research framework divided by three which is context of the study, issue and method will be used in this study. In this study, lecturers' skill and knowledge competency as an independent variable and will be supported by issues that might be
occurred during the investigation. Academic staff from various backgrounds will be the informants and they will be given the open ended questions related to these issues.

![Diagram]

**Table 1.1: Research Framework of Skill And Knowledge**

*Source: Rusli and Hasbee (2011)*
1.6 Significant/ Contribution of the Study

There are several contributions from this study. One of the contributions is perceptions towards knowledge and skill competency can be explored and recognized. Other than that, this study will also cover factors affecting competency, as well as suggestions to enhance knowledge and skill competency.

Moreover, the other contribution is towards methodology. As this is a qualitative study, the data collected from survey questionnaires along with interview session were interpreted and figures were used to explain the findings. This method can be replicated in future research and may serve as reference for future researchers.

In addition, another contribution is towards human resource practitioners. Findings from the study will help human resource managers or training manager to obtain better knowledge about staffs' competency to avoid mismatching between their work scope and their educational background, as well as the factors which affect competency and suggestion to enhance their competency.

Furthermore, this study also contributes to the organization. Finding from the study can be used by the managements to assist lecturers