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ACADEMIC VISIT TO FIBERTEX PERSONAL CARE SDN. BHD.: BRIDGING THEORY AND INDUSTRY PRACTICE

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On Thursday, May 16, 2024, all second-semester students of the Diploma in Textile and Clothing Technology programme (AS122) at UiTM Cawangan Negeri Sembilan, Kampus Kuala Pilah, had the privilege to go on an academic visit to Fibertex Personal Care Sdn. Bhd. in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan. Fibertex, a leading global manufacturer, produces nonwoven fabrics for essential items such as baby nappies, sanitary pads, and adult incontinence products. Spanning from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., this academic visit was organised to enhance the learning experience and to give a firsthand insight into the production of nonwoven fabrics, particularly for personal care uses. It also allowed us to observe industrial machinery and processes in action and interact with industry professionals. This was an exciting opportunity for all of us to connect with what we had been learning in class to real-world practices while sparking interest in potential career opportunities in the textile and manufacturing sectors.

The programme commenced with a warm welcome note from the company representatives led by Mr. Mohd Puzi bin Mohd Nasir, Assistant Quality Manager, who shared insights into Fibertex's background, operation, and global contributions. Through the briefing, we have also learned about the essential qualities required for nonwoven fabrics, such as strength, softness, and absorbency, which are crucial for the production of high-quality personal care products. The company also highlighted its commitment to sustainability and adherence to strict quality control measures to ensure safe and reliable products.

Next, we reached the highlight of the visit: a guided tour of the manufacturing facility, where we were able to observe the advanced processes and technologies such as spunbond, spunmelt, and calendering machinery in action. The machinery demonstrated the transformation of polymers into high-quality nonwoven fabrics intended for personal care products. The calendaring process, which involves heated rollers to bond fibres together and enhance the fabric's strength, was another fascinating part of the tour. Witnessing the operation of these machines up close facilitated our understanding of how complex and intricate the production process is.

Following the tour, we participated in an industrial lecture given by Mr. Mohd Puzi and his team. This lecture delved into the latest advancements in nonwoven fabric technology and how they are applied in the personal care industry. The experts explained how the company incorporates sustainable practices into their manufacturing processes and the importance of maintaining high-quality standards. Not only that, they generously shared their career journeys and offered advice to us as students, encouraging us to develop critical thinking, adaptability, and a strong work ethic. Listening to their experiences gave us a clearer picture of what it is like to work in an industry and the skills needed for success.

The visit was incredibly impactful for everyone, as it bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and industrial applications. It gave us a deeper appreciation for the effort behind creating everyday personal care products. For many of us, this visit ignited a newfound interest in exploring careers in textiles, nonwoven fabric production, and related industries. Additionally, the opportunity to engage with professionals allowed us to establish connections and gain insights into the working world, which will definitely benefit us as we progress in our studies and future careers.

In conclusion, the academic visit to Fibertex Personal Care Sdn. Bhd. was a valuable experience for all students. It provided us with the opportunity to observe the application of classroom concepts in the industry while also motivating us to think about our future career paths. Such programs are important because they offer students practical exposure and a deeper understanding of the real-world applications of what we are learning. We hope to see more opportunities like this in the future, as they play a crucial role in preparing us for our future in the textile and manufacturing industries.



Figure 1: At the entrance of the Fibertex Personal Care Sdn. Bhd., Nilai



Figure 2: Plant guided tour - the nonwoven sheets in rolls are prepared for shipment



Figure 3: Plant guided tour - at the material testing laboratory



Figure 4: Plant guided tour - at the nonwoven manufacturing site



Figure 5: Industrial lecture and sharing session conducted by Fibertex's expert team

*The pictures taken on the premises are provided courtesy of the company.