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YSS007 - INNOVATIVE ONLINE SURVEY : ASSESSMENT OF ODL'S IMPACT ON GRADUATE SKILLS AND CAREER OUTCOMES

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ABSTRACT

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become prominent in recent years. The adoption of ODL, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, ignited a new revolution in the educational landscape, particularly in today's digital era. Nevertheless, its effectiveness in generating job-ready graduates remains uncertain. Most importantly, the current workforce is heavily influenced by the Fourth Industrial Revolution, necessitating competence in a wide range of skills compatible with this industrial trend. The new educational delivery mode is now under question, particularly regarding how effectively it can develop and deliver the skills critical for today's industry and labour market. To address this, a novel online survey was created to assess how well ODL equips students with essential skills and prepares them for the future workforce. Featuring a self-assessment scale, the survey captures valuable insights into the alignment between graduate competencies and industry needs. The findings obtained for the survey aim to support the ODL educational mode continuity based on its contribution in graduates' human capital development. At the same time, strengthen the connection between academic training and real-world job expectations.

Keywords – ODL, Industry 4.0 Workforce, Skills and Competencies, Online Questionnaire Survey

INTRODUCTION

Graduates transition from education to real professional world requires greatest supports from higher education institution (HEI). Degree certificates alone are not sufficient to guarantee job entrance and success. Especially for employment in the era of fourth industrial revolution, the demand are higher than before. A diverse set of skills and competencies relevant to this era are highly demanded by employers in the industry.

In Malaysia, this is regarded as one of its objective that need to be achieved which was included in their five year national plan (2021-2025). This objective have been embossed in its national agenda, Twelfth Malaysia Plan (RMK-12), generating a future-ready graduates through reskilling and upskilling the workforce for Industry 4.0. The skills and competencies can be nurtured during their educational period in HEI(Roksa, Arum, &

Cook, 2016). These are regarded as return from education which are beneficial for their future career journey.

Unfortunately, the educational landscape are transforming. The introduction of ODL in recent years has become prominent and acceptable in educational setting. The adoption of ODL brings challenges in producing competent talent for the industry and labour market.

Despite this, ODL capabilities and developing skills are acknowledged in past literature (Karmani & Acharekar, 2024), suggesting that this new learning modality essentially supports the development of workforce-ready skills vital in today's industrial landscape.

OBJECTIVE

Taking into consideration the transformation happening in the industry, workforce and education landscape, a survey was designed to investigate the affect of transformation towards graduates' human capital development and career succes. This survey was primarily developed with the aim to investigate the effectiveness of ODL in ODL in equipping graduates with industry-relevant skills demanded by current global workforce. By using the Industry 4.0 vital skill frameworks introduced by World Economic Forum in 2020 that are relevant for employment in year 2025 onwards, this help ensure that future graduates are armed with the in-demand skills compatible to Industry 4.0.

This paper discuss the need to have a robust assessment or survey to capture the possible enhancement in graduate's employability and human capital under the new learning environment and new era of industry and labour market. This paper also aims to contribute on the development of effective and innovative survey which can help offer greater insights into the new mode of learning that is ODL and its impact towards graduates' employability to become part of dynamic future workforce.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Specifically, the innovative survey was part of a PhD research study at UPSI. It was designed with the aim to evaluate the ODL effectiveness in developing critical Industry 4.0 skills and preparing accounting graduates for future employment. The online survey is dedicated to captured opinions of graduates who enrolled in and graduated from formal educational learning in UiTM during the period of Covid-19 outbreak, whereby ODL adoption are instructed and imposed. These graduates have ample experienced learning in ODL, hence allowing them to evaluate the impact of this mode of learning have over their career access and success. This survey allows them to self-assessed their developed skills gained through ODL, their views on skills essential for future careers and how it influence their readiness for the labour market. This survey was created in online format to allow easy distribution to the gduates who are scattered accross Malaysia.

An online questionnaire survey was developed as part of a PhD research study at UPSI to evaluate the effectiveness of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) environment in developing critical Industry 4.0 skills and preparing accounting graduates for future employment. Specifically designed for UiTM graduates from the March and October 2020 intakes—who experienced ODL extensively—the survey gathers their self-assessed proficiency in key skills gained through ODL, as well as their views on skills essential for future careers. By comparing perceived competencies with industry demands, the survey

aims to identify gaps in the ODL learning experience and provide insights into its role in enhancing graduate employability. The instrument was distributed online via Google Forms to the targeted respondents.

INDUSTRY 4.0 EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND UiTM GRADUATES CAREER READINESS THROUGH OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) ENVIRONMENT

Greeting dear participants,

I am Fatin Adilah Razali, a lecturer at the Faculty of Accountancy, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Puncak Alam Campus, and also a PhD student at the Department of Accountancy, Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI).

I am conducting a research on Industry 4.0 Employability Skills Development and UiTM Graduates Career Readiness Through Open and Distance Learning (ODL). This study aims to **identify the graduates' perspectives on effectiveness of Industry 4.0 employability skills developed under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) environment towards their career readiness.**

I humbly request that Mr./Mrs. will able to help answer the survey genuinely. This survey will take approximately **20 minutes** of your time to complete. This questionnaire contains **four sections (A to D)**, which are as follows:

Section A: Demographic Profiles (3 Questions)

Section B: Effectiveness of Industry 4.0 Employability skills under ODL environment (13 Questions)

Section C: Graduate Career Readiness (22 Questions)

Section D: Impact of ODL environment towards the Industry 4.0 employability skills development and graduates career readiness (19 Questions)

Figure 1: Snapshot of Online Questionnaire Survey



Figure 2: Poster Calling for Participants

NOVELTY

Innovative self-rating assessment is the key feature of this survey. It captures graduates' perceived proficiency in critical Industry 4.0 skills developed during the ODL learning period and graduates perceived important of the same skill in the workplace setting. This approach offers valuable insights into the relationship between learning experiences and workplace requirement and expectation. The survey instrument is comprehensive, addressing multiple dimensions of the ODL environment that include ODL functionality, curriculum, stakeholder recognition, and its relevancy to graduates employability and human capital development. The data collected provides meaningful input for educational stakeholders to make informed decisions about the future of ODL. As the link between evolving learning environments and graduate employability remains underexplored, this study offers a timely and valuable contribution to the field.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this online innovative survey presents a distinctive and future-oriented assessment tool that aligns with the shifting needs of both education and the modern labour market. It is carefully designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the ODL environment while offering a comprehensive measure of graduate employability within the context of Industry 4.0.

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