

Research Article

LearnLOG: The Efficacy of Digital Logbook in Monitoring Daily Activities of Accounting Trainees

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Abstract: Practical training students are required to keep a record indicating the job's nature and relevant details of their assignments throughout the training period in a logbook. Trainees need to update their daily routine by writing it in the logbook provided by the faculty, which will be reviewed by the supervisor at the end of every week and will be evaluated by the lecturer at the end of the training period. The use of paper-based logbooks has several limitations such as time consuming, creating wastage in the forms of paper and inks, work redundancy and complicated validation and review processes especially with the practices of new norms where people work in multiple locations. Therefore, a digital logbook named LearnLOG was introduced to reduce the time for data inputs and reports, portability and adaptability of all people involved. LearnLOG is developed using an online document sharing feature in Google Sheet where the file is shared exclusively between the trainee, the supervisor, and the lecturer. This digital logbook allows the trainee to update his daily routine easily and quickly by typing them in the provided column at their own convenience. Beside the fact that it is simple to use, LearnLOG authorizes both the supervisors and the lecturers to assess and judge the competency of the trainees at a much earlier time rather than to wait for them to submit the report at the end of training period. The monitoring and real-time review would encourage effective communication between all parties involved in the process. Lastly, the use of LearnLOG would reduce the printing cost and the possibility of damaged storage as the files will be saved online in Google Drive. In summary, LearnLOG is a digital logbook which has been developed to automate the current manual process with the hope to reduce time to update and review the content, ease the monitoring and grading process as well as to solve the storage problem.

Keywords: digitalization; practical training; logbook; digital logbook; manual logbook



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1. INTRODUCTION

Practical training is crucial in preparing students for real-world experiences and professional growth (Kapoor & Gardner-McCune, 2019; Rohm, Stefl & Ward, 2021). Monitoring and documenting the daily activities of practical training students are essential for assessing their progress, providing feedback, and ensuring they meet the required learning outcomes (Sunitha & Desai, 2021; Fenta, 2022). Traditionally, trainees would record their daily actions in a logbook provided by the faculty, which would be reviewed weekly by the supervisor and evaluated at the end of the training period by the lecturer. However, in the face of fast technology improvements, the limits of manual logbooks have become increasingly apparent (Latif, Alias, Bachok, Yusof, Latib, Osman, Tholibon, Nazarudin, Abdullah, Zainudin, & Jaafar, 2018). The advent of digital logbooks opens new avenues for addressing

the issues associated with manual logbooks and improving the monitoring process in practical training situations.

Manual logbooks acted as a repository for trainees to record their activities, reflections, and progress during their training. While manual logbooks have been useful in many ways, they can have limits. When logbooks are missing, destroyed, or forgotten, it is difficult to track trainees' activities in a timely manner (Kantembe, Mushinka, Mushinka, Mwakumui & Nyirenda, 2021). Furthermore, maintaining the accuracy and trustworthiness of manual logbooks can be difficult because errors or inaccuracies may arise throughout the recording process. According to Kinnear, Bensalem-Owen and Kaufman (2018), the organizational obstacles associated with manual logbooks, such as the possibility of storage problems, present extra barriers for lecturers when examining and grading the work of practical training students. Finally, assessing trainees' progress using manual logbooks is frequently delayed since supervisors and lecturers only get to evaluate the logbook at the conclusion of the training time (Dahllof, Tsilingaridis & Hindbeck, 2004).

The introduction of digital logbooks has transformed the internship scene, offering trainees with cutting-edge tools to expedite their learning process and maximize professional development (Ryan, 2020). Digital logbooks, also known as electronic logbooks, are used by practical training students to record, monitor, and document their daily activities using digital platforms or applications. Opposite to traditional manual logbooks, digital logbooks use technology improvements to expedite the monitoring process and increase efficiency (Shelokov, 2022). Digital logbooks allow trainees, supervisors, and lecturers to access, edit, and check logbooks using a variety of electronic devices. Customizable templates allow trainees to record particular facts such as date, time, location, activities completed, reflections, and proof of learning (Shafee, Suhaimi, Hashim, Mohd & Thian, 2022). These templates can be customized to meet the needs of certain practical training programs or disciplines. Furthermore, digital logbooks frequently include extra features like multimedia integration, real-time data synchronization, and collaborative capabilities that allow for smooth communication between all parties involved in the process.

Using a digital logbook to monitor the daily activities of practical training students can offer several benefits. According to Chen and Chen (2018), digital logbooks can significantly reduce the time and effort required to record and track student activities, making the process more efficient. They can also be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, making it easier for supervisors and instructors to monitor student's progress remotely (Khan, Khan & Iqbal, 2017). In addition, digital logbooks can provide real-time feedback to students, allowing them to see how they are progressing and identify areas where they need to improve (Alam, Islam & Rahman, 2019). Finally, digital logbooks can provide valuable data on student performance, which can be used to identify trends and patterns, and inform decisions about curriculum and training programs (Kinnear, Bensalem-Owen & Kaufman, 2018).

Leveraging on the technology to solve the difficulties that manual logbooks have (Mokhtar, Samed, Isa, Abd Rahman & Suhaimi, 2022), a digital logbook named LearnLOG was introduced. The objectives of LearnLOG are to automate the currently manual process to reduce time to update the logbook, to ease the monitoring and grading process and to solve the storage problem.

2. METHOD & MATERIAL

LearnLOG is created using Google Sheet's online document sharing function, where the file is shared exclusively among the trainee, the supervisor, and the lecturer. Among the unique features of LearnLOG is the real-time tracking of trainees' activities, enabling both trainees and supervisors to monitor progress as it happens. Secondly, LearnLOG also provide task management features which allows trainees students to update tasks related to their practical training. This feature would enable

trainees to plan and organize their activities, set deadlines, and provide regular updates on task completion. Thirdly, this digital logbook includes features such as commenting on entries that facilitates communication between trainees and supervisors. This would enable supervisor to provide timely feedback and guidance to trainees throughout their practical training journey. Lastly, LearnLOG has a mobile-friendly interface that would enable trainees to access and update their logbooks conveniently from their smartphones or tablets. This flexibility would allow trainees to record their activities on the go and provide both supervisors and lecturers with real-time updates.

Before the commencement of the training, the coordinator will share the link of the customized template with students. Students need to download the LearnLOG template or make a copy of it in their own Google Drive. Then, students will set the access as “Commentor” to the assigned supervisor as well as the visiting lecturers. The supervisor and the lecturer will receive notification of the file sharing through their email. The trainee then will update his daily routine easily and quickly by typing them in the provided column at their own convenience. Aside from its ease of use, LearnLOG allows both supervisors and lecturers to assess and judge the competency of trainees far sooner than waiting for them to submit the report at the end of the training period. The monitoring and real-time assessment would encourage all parties involved in the process to communicate effectively.



Figure 1. Landing page of LearnLOG.

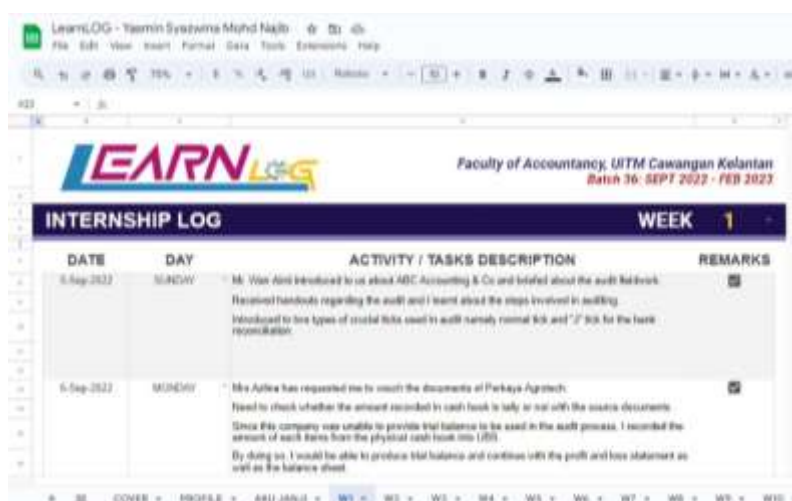


Figure 2. Separate sheets for trainees to update their daily activities.

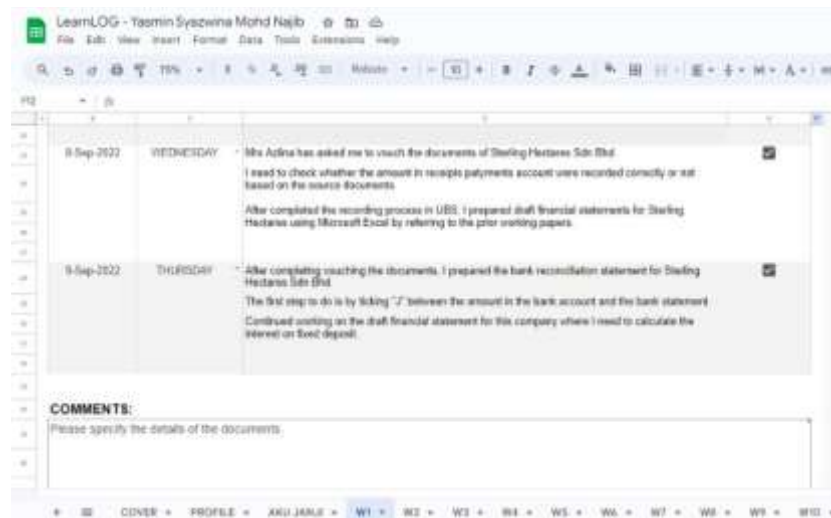


Figure 3. Section for the supervisors and lecturers to comment and provide real-time feedback.

LearnLOG was pilot-tested by a group of accounting students who were required to complete 24-weeks of practical training at firms of their choice as part of their programme requirements. A short survey is carried out to assess trainees' perceptions of the usability, utility, and general satisfaction with LearnLOG. A survey questionnaire was issued via Google Forms link to all 103 accounting students undertaking practical training for the Faculty of Accountancy, UiTM Cawangan Kelantan, during the current semester. Out of the 103 participants, 65 (63%) submitted complete responses, resulting in a 63% response rate. The questionnaire employs open-ended and Likert-scale type questions to capture a range of responses. Before distributing the Google Forms link, the researchers provide clear instructions via Google Meet discussion and the participants are given an appropriate time frame (14 working days) to complete the questionnaire.

3. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The data was analyze using Microsoft Excel to obtain the following results. 16 respondents (25%) are male and the remaining 49 (75%) are female respondents. The descriptive statistics are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

Questionnaire Item	Mean	Median	Max	Min	SD
Please rate your overall experience using LearnLOG to record daily activities of your practical training.	4.0615	4	5	3	0.4636
How easy was it for you to navigate and use LearnLOG?	4.5846	5	5	4	0.4966
Did using LearnLOG help you stay organized and keep track of your tasks and accomplishments during your practical training?	4.5781	5	5	3	0.5579
Did LearnLOG facilitate effective reflection on your learning experiences during practical training?	4.4769	5	5	3	0.6151
Did LearnLOG improve communication and collaboration with your supervisor/mentor?	4.5077	5	5	3	0.6155

To what extent do you believe LearnLOG helped you develop and improve your skills?	4.6000	5	5	3	0.6325
Did LearnLOG provide you with a better understanding of your strengths and areas for improvement?	4.7538	5	5	3	0.4687
How likely are you to recommend using LearnLOG to future practical training students?	4.6923	5	5	3	0.5281

Based on the table above, the study evidenced that most of the respondents' answers indicated that they agree that the digital logbook provides a very positive experience for them in keeping track records of their daily work routines. Majority of the respondents also agree that the navigation feature of the digital logbook is easy to access. In addition, these respondents also agreed that using a digital logbook can improve communication and collaboration with supervisors or mentors, helping develop skills and understanding strengths. These are evidenced from the mean score of 4 for each of the questions in the questionnaire set

The findings are in line with Ryan (2020), of while this digital logbook did expedite trainees' learning process and maximize their professional development. On top of that, the current findings are also consistent with previous researches (Chen and Chen 2018; Khan et. al, 2017 and Alam et. Al, 2019) that agrees that using digital logbooks could numerously offer benefits for practical training students, including reduced time and effort, remote monitoring, real-time feedback, and valuable data on performance as they can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, enabling supervisors and instructors to monitor students' progress remotely. Additionally, digital logbooks can identify trends and patterns, helping to inform curriculum and training program decisions. Overall, digital logbooks are a valuable tool for enhancing student learning and development.

4. CONCLUSION

This study examines the efficacy of utilizing Google Sheet applications as a digital logbook for monitoring the daily activities of accounting students during their practical training. The study focuses on assessing the benefits, usefulness, and overall satisfaction of students in using a digital logbook compared to traditional manual methods where students need to jot down their daily activities in the paper-based logbook provided by the faculty. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the digital logbooks, which replace traditional manual logbooks with electronic platforms, offer a plethora of benefits, ranging from expediting the monitoring process, increasing efficiency, to providing real-time feedback to students. They can be accessed from anywhere with an internet connection, allowing for remote monitoring and facilitating effective communication among trainees, supervisors, and lecturers.

By embracing this transformative technology, practical training programs can provide students with a more efficient, interactive, and growth-oriented experience. The integration of digital logbooks in monitoring the daily activities of practical training students presents a transformative opportunity for educators, administrators, as well the employers from the industries. In future, considering the suggestions and feedback from current users, LearnLOG is expected to be further upgraded into a web-based system with advance features such as integration with institution's learning management system or student information system, data security and privacy, evidence collection, progress report and analytics so it can significantly enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of tracking and assessing students' practical training progress.

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