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BEYOND LECTURES: INSIGHTS FROM BUSINESS DISCIPLINES (REFLECTIONS, TRANSFORMATIONS, AND THE HUMAN SIDE OF TEACHING)

FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT
UiTM CAWANGAN JOHOR

Beyond Lectures: Insights from Business Discipline-

(Reflections, Transformations, and the Human Side of Teaching)

Chief Editor
Dr. Azila Jaini

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Patron:
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Saunah Zainon
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Advisors:
Dr. Nor Hazila Ismail
(Deputy Rector, Academic Affairs, UiTM Cawangan Johor)

Cik Nurul Haida Johan
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Chief Editors
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PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AS AN ECONOMIC EDUCATOR

Siti Noradiah Amar, Nur Fatihah Shaari, Norfariza Mohd Ali

Introduction

Professional growth in education can be defined as the continuous process where educators like teachers and lecturers systematically improve their knowledge and skills to enhance student outcome and career efficacy (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2022). It requires setting objectives, involving in formal or informal training and learning, and collaborating with colleagues to adapt with new teaching methods, technologies, and educational needs. Economic education plays a vital role in the academic world to produce more experts in this field. As we know that economy is one of the important fields that should be exposed to the young because knowledge and understanding about economy can assist our country to improve the value of Gross National Product and the balance of payment. Therefore, in this paper we would like to share our professional growth as an economic educator in Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM).

Strong academic qualification

Before being an educator, one must expert the foundation of economics. In secondary school, students must learn principles of economics which cover Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. In Microeconomics they will be exposed to demand and supply theory, cost of production theory, equilibrium market, elasticity of demand and supply, and market structure. Meanwhile in Macroeconomics, students will learn about Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Gross National Product (GNP), balance of payment, creation of money, national income accounting, inflationary gap and deflationary gap. After finishing secondary school, students will further study economics in various fields offered by the university, for example, labor economics, international economics, environmental economics, energy economics, business economics, and managerial economics.

Professional growth as an economic educator requires strong academic qualifications and continuous development in both knowledge and research. To become an economic educator, one must at least possess a bachelor's degree in economics, which provides the fundamental understanding of economic theories, analytical skills, and policy analysis. However, in most Higher Education Institutes in Malaysia such as Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), holding a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) is highly preferable. This is because a PhD not only demonstrates advanced expertise in a specialized field of economics but also reflects the ability to conduct rigorous academic research and contribute new knowledge to the discipline. Such qualifications align with UiTM's vision of leading the development of professionals through impactful research, where educators are expected to actively engage in scholarly activities, publish research findings, and contribute to academic and societal advancement. Therefore, pursuing higher academic qualifications and engaging in continuous research activities are essential steps in supporting long-term professional growth as an economic educator.

Research activity

Research activity is a compulsory responsibility among the economic educators at UiTM. Research plays a vital role in strengthening academic excellence and professional development as it enables us to investigate current economic issues, analyze real-world data, and propose practical solutions to various economic problems faced by society, business, and policymakers. Besides that, by doing systematic research, economic educators are able to contribute new knowledge and ideas to the economics fields while boosting their expertise and critical thinking skills. Furthermore, through research activities encourage collaboration with other researchers and academicians from different institutions and countries, allowing the

exchange of ideas, perspectives, and innovative approaches to economic challenges. These collaborations not only expand the impact of the research but also assist educators to stay updated with global economic trends and developments.

Attending conference and workshop

Besides pursuing a higher level of education and doing research, attending conferences and workshops are also part of the professional growth as an economic educator. The main purpose of attending the conference is to share knowledge and new findings with other researchers from different countries and institutions. During the conference audience and speaker can change the ideas and improve the quality of the research. It can help educators to always keep up with the current economic issues, policies and global trends. An economic educator must have this strong subject-matter knowledge in economics to deliver the ideas with the students especially postgraduate students, Master levels and PhD levels. In terms of workshops, an economic educator must join various types of workshops, for example, Outcome Based Education (OBE), pedagogy, writing articles, research methodology, and many more that are related to the academic. An effective economic educator must adapt teaching methods to different learning styles of students.

Upgrading teaching skills

As an economic educator in 2026, we are dealing with the Generation Z or Gen-Z students. This Gen-Z refers to the group of people born roughly between 1996 and 2010 (McKinsey & Company, 2024). People who are born within these years are grown up with the internet, smartphones, and social media. There are huge differences between this generation with Millenials (Generation Y) and other generations before them. For example, generations before Gen Z prefer traditional methods in teaching which use whiteboard and slide show. Due to this difference in technology, we must upgrade our teaching method so that students will enjoy our classroom. Gen z prefers to use online learning platforms, interactive graphs and economic simulations, and data visualization tools. These kinds of teaching methods using technology help economic concepts to be more engaging and easier to understand by Gen z students since they are more prone into technology. Therefore, as an economic educator that was born before Gen z, integration of technology in teaching is one of the important platforms to enhance learning and it is part of our professional growth in our career.

Board of Study (BOS) Meeting

To ensure our students' qualification matches the industrial requirement, it is important to develop and plan the curriculum properly. A meeting called the Board of Study (BOS) will be held with the representative from the industry to discuss the curriculum. This meeting should be held once per year to ensure that our syllabus is still in line with the industrial relevance. This also can help to reduce the unemployment rate or abundance of jobless fresh graduates. It is important to revise the curriculum and syllabus so that the institution can maintain the relevance of the program. If the curriculum does not meet the industrial requirement, it will affect the students after graduation.

Promoting Economic Literacy and Civic Engagement

Promoting economic literacy and civic engagement is a crucial dimension of professional growth for economic educators, as it positions them not only as instructors but also as catalysts for informed citizenship. By teaching students to critically analyze the impacts of economic policies on society, educators help learners develop a nuanced understanding of how markets, government decisions, and global events shape daily life. Beyond the classroom, organizing workshops and outreach programs on financial literacy empowers the broader community to make informed personal and collective economic decisions. Additionally, designing learning modules that connect economic concepts to pressing social issues, such as inequality, environmental sustainability, and labor rights cultivates students' ability to interpret data, engage in ethical reasoning, and apply problem-solving skills to real-world challenges. Through these strategies, students acquire essential competencies in

analytical thinking, data literacy, and ethical decision-making, equipping them to participate responsibly in civic and economic life while fostering a culture of informed, proactive citizenship.

Role as an Academic Advisor

Besides that, an economic educator also should be assigned as an academic advisor. One advisor (mentor) must have at least 30 mentees. Acting as a mentor provides educators with the opportunity to develop leadership, interpersonal, and guidance skills which are vital for career advancement. Educators can refine their ability to communicate complex economic concepts comfortably while fostering motivation and resilience among students. These can be enhanced by advising mentees on academic pathways, research opportunities, and career planning. This mentorship role not only gains the educator's professional growth, for example coaching, problem solving, and ethical decision making, but also strengthens their impact on student success and institutional growth, thereby integrating teaching excellence with broader educational leadership.

Updating to the Global Current Issues

Updating the global current issues on economic issues is a major role as an economic educator. By keeping up with the economic issues, an educator can collaborate with other researchers to address the issues. This also can help the educators to strengthen their expertise in comparative economic systems, finance, international trade and labor markets, which is why these skills are increasingly demanded in a globally connected economy. Exposing students with various types of case studies from different countries can help an educator to improve their analytical skills and foster their competencies in project management, collaboration, and intercultural communication. This method encourages educators to adopt innovative teaching skills, apply real-world global examples, and mentor students in understanding complex international economic dynamics. Ultimately, cultivating these global and cross-cultural competencies contributes to the educator's professional development by positioning them as a thought leader capable of bridging local and international economic knowledge, enhancing student learning outcomes, and shaping curricula that reflect the realities of a globalized economy.

Community Service

An economic educator must be involved in community service because economics is closely connected to real-life social and financial issues. Through these community programs, we can change and share the basic economic knowledge which can help improve the economic well-being among individuals and families. There are various types of community service activities, for example financial literacy workshops, encouraging local entrepreneurs, and providing guidelines to the young entrepreneurs to build business. This initiative can help the educators to gain new insights into real economic challenges faced by society. Besides that, this involvement helps to strengthen the relevance of economic education and allows the educators to connect theoretical concepts from various fields, such as Financial Economics and Environmental Economics with real-world applications, ultimately enriching both teaching practice and community impact.

Publications

Reading and writing articles are compulsory if you want to be an educator in any field. It is because to be able to write you must be able to read and understand first. By reading many books, articles, journals, newspapers and so on also can give new insights to the educators. The new insights gained from that reading can be shared to the public. One of the Key Performance Index (KPI) should be achieved by the educator is journal publication. This is one of the main responsibilities of an economic educator because it allows them to contribute new ideas to the economic fields and education. Through academic publications such as journal articles and books, educators can share their research findings, teaching innovations, and analyses of economic issues in a broad professional community. Therefore, publication

ensures that an educator is not only a knowledge consumer but also an active producer of research that benefits students, scholars, and society.

Seeking Research Grants

An educator also must actively seek research grants because it enables them to conduct meaningful and recent research in the field of economics and economic education. The grant can be applied from the universities, government agencies, or international organizations. By applying the grant, economic educators can support data collection, research activities, collaborations, and the dissemination of findings through publications and conferences. This process will contribute to the advancement of economic knowledge and enhance the educator's professional growth. Besides that, through this funded research, it can help the educators to develop stronger research skills, expand their circle of academic networks, and keep engaging with the current economic issues and new methodologies. Ultimately, they can develop new ideas with real-world evidence into their teaching in the classroom, improving the quality of instruction and strengthening their ability and expertise as a professional in the economic education fields.

Conclusion

To conclude, professional growth as an economic educator started from secondary school. In the secondary schools, you should have the basic concepts of economics in Microeconomics and Macroeconomics. In universities, you should specialize your expertise based on your preferences in economics fields, for example environmental economics, energy economics, labor economics, and international economics. After involving in academic world, that is become an economic educator in university, we must actively take all the responsibilities, for example upgrading teaching skills, seeking grant for research activities, involving in community service, updating with the economic current issues, discussion with the representative from the industry, attending conferences, and mentoring students. By integrating strong subject expertise, innovative pedagogy, and continuous learning, economic educators can effectively prepare students to understand complex economic issues and make informed decisions in the modern world. Therefore, sustained professional development is vital for ensuring that economic educators remain relevant, impactful, and committed to advancing knowledge and education in economics.

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