VIRTUAL JOB SHADOWING (VJS): AN ALTERNATIVE TO FACE-TO-FACE PRACTICAL TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Practical training shows engagement and collaboration between the university and industry in developing a competent workforce. However, the implementation of MCO to control covid-19 has a huge impact on students to find placement in the industry; as a result of the cessation of operations and reduction of human resources. Thus, to address the risk of difficulties in getting the practical training opportunity, the VJS is introduced. This approach allows students to participate in activities, programs and training implemented by various organizations especially public agencies and to clearly understand the role of public administrators or top management using online platforms. This idea was developed based on the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and the input-process-output Model. Based on the SDT, students' motivation to implement the VJS is based on three main factors, namely autonomy, competence and relatedness. Meanwhile, the input-process-output model describes the phases in the implementation of VJS, and which also contains the motivating elements. This study found that a systematic arrangement of activities in the implementation of VJS can increase students' motivation, manifested through their attitudes and behaviors, and overall foster the development of mental and physical well-being and skills that are unique and needed by the industry. This systematic process can also help all parties involved; students, supervisors, industry and organizations, understand the flow of activities and roles of the university to the community.

Keywords: Job Shadowing, practical training, Covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Job shadowing is recognised as work-based learning and is synonymously known as practical training, internships, apprenticeships, career mentoring, experiential learning and other hands-on job training that build specific skills. It provides students with real-world professional experience, practice-oriented and competency-based education (Van Wart, O'Brien, Varvayanis, Alder, Greenier, Layton & Brady, 2020; Thompson, Perez-Chavez & Fetter, 2021). There are various benefits of job shadowing including the development of desired attitude, personality, knowledge, specific skills and generic university educational competencies (Laguador, Chavez-Prinsipe & De Castro, 2020). Further, effective job shadowing initiatives increase professional competencies and expertise in student's field of studies and industries (Kencana, Karyono, & Masunah, 2020), which lead to professional development (Rezer, 2020) continuous connectivity with their potential employers, individual's career path (Thompson et al., 2021) as well as networking opportunities (Van Wart et al., 2020). Through the role modelling approach, job shadowing shapes individuals' moral character (Miniggio, Motloba & Wareham, 2021).

However, the abrupt shift to virtual educational interactions caused by the global COVID-19 pandemic and the movement control order (MCO)(Elhaty, Elhadary, Elgamil, & Kilic, 2020), has changed the approach of job shadowing from conventional or face-face-face practice into virtual or technology-based learning. Thus, the spread of COVID-19 has hit work-based learning opportunities that are important to career and technical education programs. With the shift into virtual work shadowing, students are allowed to have experiential learning flexibly; with a virtual environment and

through the online application, being remote and with no geographical barriers (Van Wart et al., 2020; Elhaty et al., 2020) while leveraging the same advantages under the conventional ways of executing job shadowing. Within the context of the Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, practical training is a compulsory course. However, within the current situation, with the enforcement of MCO, there are limited choices and a few students have failed to find practical training placement. As an alternative, and for risk management purposes, in providing practical training experience, VJS is introduced.

Guided by the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) motivation, this research is aimed to examine the personal and contextual factors that lead to individuals' success under virtual job shadowing (VJS). Under this VJS, three conditions under the System Theory necessitate the effectiveness of its implementation including the input, process and output.

2. METHODS

Motivation is referred to as factors that direct and inspires goal-oriented behaviours. A highly motivated person possesses desirable attitudes, behaviour, regulated emotion, self-regulated and self-discipline. Two main factors influence individual success, including internal and external factors. SDT explains that the motivation of individuals is inspired by autonomy (ownership), competence (the feeling of mastery) and relatedness (a sense of belonging and connection. Similarly, within the context of VSJ, there are a few factors recognised as the personal and contextual factors that influence the individual appraisal of their environment. The presence of the factors critical for VJS implementation leads to mental and spiritual strengths, and the development of required skill-sets and a well-balanced person (Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The successful implementation or effectiveness of VJS involves the input and output processes, which are explained under the System Theory. Input is the antecedents and is referred to as a team that handles the program, preparation of administrative activities, preparation of work programs, scheduling activities and briefing for students, peer support and mentorship (Kencana et al., 2020). The process is explained as the implementation of the VJS, including information searching, decision-making process, compilation and execution of tasks. Finally, the output is the results or achievement of the expected outcomes including the attitudes, skills and the required competency (Thompson et al., 2021; Chua, 2004).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The whole process of VJS is supported by the individuals' level of motivation explained under the SDT. Autonomy is concerned with empowerment and delegation with the assigned task, and the freedom to choose; organisations, national or international level, and an array of activities, to be involved with. Further, once students have started their activities, communication happens between the parties involved; students, supervisor, community and organisation. Under the SDT, competent students display certain forms of competencies including knowledge, cognitive, functional, personal, entrepreneurial, ethics and professionalism in fulfilling the needs and expectations of the course and programme requirements. Finally, relatedness is concerned with the presence of social agents that build individual's characters and self-confidence. Parents, peers and supervisors were recognised as good social agents (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Thompson et al., 2021).
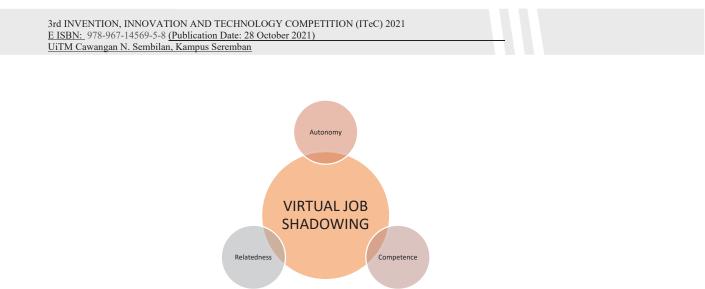
Figure 1: Self-Determination Theory and VJS

The following sections present the list of activities involved under the different phases of VJS; input, process and output.
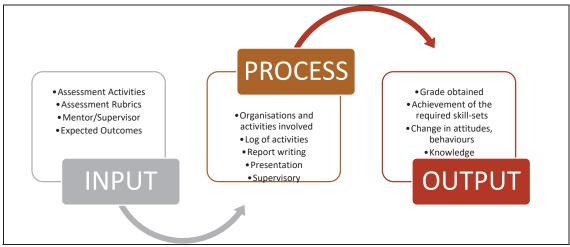

Figure 2: Input, Process and Output

As referred in figure 2, there are different activities placed under the input, process and output stage. The input stage involves the primary stage of VJS; briefing the students on course requirements including the assessment activities, assessment rubrics, supervisors appointed and the achievement of expected course outcomes. Students are allowed to examine different kinds of activities or tasks performed by public administrators or public managers involving diagnosing and solving problems under Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), policymakers and others related to social, political and economic roles (Abdullah, 2019). They can engage with public organisations at the federal or local level, statutory bodies, government agencies, non-governmental organisations and private organisations. Further, students were also allowed to get involved in training and development activities organised by local organisations or internationally. This virtual method of practical training allows for online platforms so that the gaining of knowledge, skills and abilities can take place without geographical barriers (Chua, 2004).

The next is the process phase. This is the execution phase, by which students need to do an information search to identify organisations as well as the types of activities involved. All information is gathered and analysed in the form of an activity log, presentation and report with three main sections; introduction, discussion and conclusion; elaborating on key activities involved during the practical training period. Students are required to present their key findings and be continuously engaged in different activities. The activities are guided through the assessment criteria stated in the rubrics. Under this phase, communication, brainstorming and networking are equally emphasised. Any kinds of obstacles and limitations were reported to the assigned supervisor. Finally, the output stage is where the submission of all tasks and evaluation starts. Students will be evaluated and their achievements on

course objectives and learning domains are reported. Any critical issues are identified as areas for improvement. From previous practices, it is noted that students have achieved a wide range of competencies including functional skills, personal and ethics and professionalism (Chua, 2004).

4. CONTRIBUTION AND USEFULNESS/COMMERCIALISATION

The project provides determinants of student's motivation including autonomy, competence and relatedness. The presence of these factors provides emotional and physical strengths, whilst its deficit affects student's performance and achievement in the VJS. Further, directly, the VJS outlined the list of activities under different phases of the input-process-output model, responsibilities of parties involved, program manager, supervisors and students, and supporting and complementing each other's roles. VJS provides an alternative to conventional types of practical training, which allows the implementation using the online platforms, enhancing the student digital, numeracy and practical skills as a consequence of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Adeosun, Shittu & Owolabi, 2021; Durrani & Tariq, 2012). The engagement of students with different types of organisations and types of activities explains the nature of the task that they are expected to perform once they enter employment. It builds students understanding of the personal qualities that they need to possess especially as public administrators with high integrity and accountability and this indicates the achievement of UiTM Education 5.0. Further, with various application and communication tools, VJS allows for creativity and innovation, and prevents the feeling of complacency and lack of urgency (Chua, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2020; Singgah, 2021).

5. CONCLUSION

This study has successfully developed the flow of activities, that assist the student in VJS, providing emotional and physical support that would lead to the development of competent students, equipped with the right skills for employment. The successfulness of VJS is associated with the presence of motivational elements under SDT.

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