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VIRTUAL SYMPOSIUM ON TEACHING & LEARNING (VSTL) 2020

Redefining the Practice of Teaching and Learning

E-PROCEEDING

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INTRODUCTION

The very first Virtual Symposium on Teaching and Learning 2020 has been organised by the Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Cawangan Johor Kampus Pasir Gudang in collaboration with Unit Penulisan dan Penerbitan, BPJIA UiTM Cawangan Johor Kampus Pasir Gudang.

This symposium has provided an opportunity for researchers and educators to share their ideas and insights in the name of education. This symposium has also provided a platform for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in relevant fields and promoted exploration of potential collaboration for future research.

This event has the goal to bring academicians and researchers in education together from across the globe.

Researchers and authors have been invited to submit original high-quality extended abstracts. Papers are solicited on, but not limited to:

- a. E-Learning
- b. Innovation and Creativity in Teaching and Learning
- c. Assessment and Evaluation in Teaching and Learning
- d. Best Practices in Teaching and Learning
- e. Others (related to Teaching and Learning)

All accepted extended abstracts have been presented by participants on the symposium day via Google Meet.

All accepted, registered and presented extended abstracts have been published in this e-proceeding with e-ISBN. Authors of selected extended abstracts will be invited after the symposium to submit a full paper for Scopus-indexed Journals/ a special issue in the Insight Journal UiTM Cawangan Johor. Best Papers and Best Presentations have also been awarded in this event.

FOREWORD BY ASSISTANT RECTOR



Dr. Haryana binti Mohd Hairi

Assistant Rector, UiTM Pasir Gudang

Assalamualaikum wbt and good day everyone.

I am pleased to welcome all of you to the Virtual Symposium on Teaching and Learning, VSTL, 2020. Congratulations for your participation, fruitful sharing session and discussion for the symposium.

Today, we have witnessed educators across institutions, disciplines and expertise, coming together to share the insights, experience, and practices in teaching and learning. I bet that everyone has had your fair share of not only getting inputs and ideas from others, but also share your own perspectives in the field of teaching and learning.

Ladies and gentlemen,

VSTL 2020 is one of the many virtual academic get-togethers, which could have been organized in the conventional way, with face-to-face meetings and sessions. However, considering the many aspects in our current situation, with the seemingly unending COVID-19 fiasco, this symposium is successfully done on a virtual platform today without neglecting the ultimate purpose of such programs. I believe that all of us today have gained so many positive inputs for various aspects in teaching and learning even without physically meeting each other, which is no less than if the program is done conventionally.

It is high time that such an event took place to highlight the remarkable contribution, in which “the new norm” of teaching and learning took place in our current education situation. I am proud to know that, through a glance at the list of presentations planned for today, reveals the amazing diversity of these areas. Congratulations to all of you.

COVID-19 pandemic has not only changed our way of teaching and learning, but also forced us to become more creative and innovative. In some cases, we could not meet our students face to face, and had to use virtual methods, as how we met today to carry out our duty as teachers and educators. This can be easy for some of us, but a mounting task for others. However, the responsibility of educating our learners still needs to be carried out, in one way or the other, no matter how challenging it is. Thus, the purpose of this symposium is for us to

not only share the traditional practices but also new methods and techniques in online or distance learning.

I hope that VSTL 2020 has been a good platform to inspire us, the educators to try out new teaching techniques and the experts to share their insight and valuable knowledge in this area. This could also be the route to a unique opportunity to share and exchange with counterparts from different specialties the advancements in your field. I also hope that our meeting will not stop today and can promote exploration of potential collaboration for future research.

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the committees and UiTM Cawangan Johor, I would like to thank all of you for your support and I hope that you have had fruitful and rewarding exchanges from this program. I would like to also congratulate the Academy of Language Studies, UiTM Cawangan Johor, Kampus Pasir Gudang for organizing the symposium, together with Unit Penulisan dan Penerbitan of BPJIA, UiTM Cawangan Johor Kampus Pasir Gudang. It is my hope to see more programs such as this in the future.

Before I end my speech, I would like to share a quote by Phil Collins;

“In learning you will teach, and in teaching you will learn”. May all of us here never stop learning, and continue inspiring the learners, and each other in our jihad to share and value the knowledge that we have.

I hereby officiate the closing ceremony and announcement of awards of Virtual Symposium on Teaching and Learning 2020.

All the best to everyone, and may all our effort be blessed. Thank you.

Challenges Faced by the Tourism Industrial Training Students Due to the COVID-19

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Abstract

Final year undergraduates are required to undergo industrial training programs as it is a compulsory requirement to graduate. The training helps the students to experience real-life working scenarios in their field of study to develop excellent employability skills. Nonetheless, as soon as The World Health Organization, 2020 declared the COVID-19 as a pandemic, COVID-19 has affected other industries throughout the world with no exception to the hospitality industry. Tourism, in particular, has been hit massively. Almost the entire enterprise needs to be closed during the movement control order. At the same time, it affects the final students who are undergoing their industrial training. In conjunction with the current issues, a qualitative study was conducted to discover the challenges faced by industrial training students of Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Campus. This paper conducted a semi-structured interview as its qualitative method, aiming to identify issues and challenges among the students that occurred during the period of industrial training due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Measures taken by industry and faculty to overcome the challenges were also discussed in this paper.

Keywords: Industrial Training, Internship, COVID-19, Tourism Industry

Introduction

11 March 2020 became a historical date as World Health Organization (WHO) announced the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic (Sahu, 1999). In response to Malaysia's alarming rise of infection cases, the Prime Minister Muhyiddin prohibited all non-essential social activities including worship, sporting, social and cultural events to defend against the spreading of COVID-19 through the National Movement Control Order from 18 to 31 March (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, Malkawi, Glowatz, Burton, & Lam 2020). Education institutions were eventually closed, and later, assisted their students through online distance learning methods to prevent the disruption of schooling (Ozer, 2020).

Baum and Baum (2020) stated that businesses in tourism industries, such as transport operators, especially airlines, were facing critical financial pressures due to the pandemic. Others also include the affected tourist's attractions and facilities, closure of non-essential retail and hostels in many destinations, loss of links to beaches and national parks. Travel and tour packages had to be cancelled, mainly affecting hotels and airlines (Karim, Haque & Anis, 2020). As for the hotel and resort industry, most businesses decided to lay off their workers and resorted to rapid-fire recruiting and staff retrenchment, as a critical tactic to minimise their wage bill to survive in challenging times (Dwomoh, Luguterah, & Duah, 2020; Baum, Mooney & Robinson, 2020).

Since the COVID-19 pandemic affected the activities in the tourism and hospitality industry massively (Dwomoh et al., 2020), it impacted industrial training students also as they lost the opportunity to undergo their training. Therefore, this research paper aimed to identify; What kind of challenges and experiences did the final year undergraduates of Tourism Management students, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka Campus involve in during industrial training programs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper also discusses the measures taken by employers and faculty/institutions to overcome those challenges.

Internships have taken on an increasingly important role in education over the past decade since they present students with many advantages, ranging from gaining experience and obtaining career-related direction to networking (Gashaw, 2019; Bukaliya, Region, & Marondera, 2012). Furthermore, students often complete graduate training at different sites (King, 2020). The duration of industrial training of students depends on the faculty requirements. Usually it takes at least four to six months (Rodzalan & Saat, 2012). Remarkably, Gashaw (2019) suggested that working experience in industrial training can be interpreted as a triangle of three stakeholders: the instructor, the employer and the student. In fact, all these three different elements are responsible for its objectives and signifies a dynamic existence.

According to Bukaliya, Region & Marondera (2012), employers benefit greatly from industrial training students as a trainee could provide them with affordable assistance, new ideas, and possible future hires. However, industrial training students are not paid in full like full-time employees, and some do not give any fees or allowances. Even so, students can apply the knowledge of a position's responsibilities and duties and may pursue their interest in a sector (Gashaw, 2019).

In a different study, Gashaw (2019) also found that universities that send students to undergo training have benefited from increased business cooperation and collaborations. However, since the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have taken concerted steps to avoid and protect the high-infection disease of all parties involved (Sahu, 2020). Universities are moving to online teaching platforms, but the situation of students undergoing training should be given strict attention so that they also do not expose themselves to the dangers of COVID-19.

Methodology

This research utilised a qualitative method through a semi-structured interview to gather data from the participants. Twenty-one final year undergraduates of Tourism Management Program, Faculty of Hotel & Tourism Management students, Universiti Teknologi MARA from Melaka campus have partaken in this study. Eight students have undergone training at parks/theme parks, seven students at travel agencies, three students at transportation operators, two of them at government organisations and one student at a resort. The data from the interview were analysed using thematic analysis. Among the questions asked to students for this study were challenges faced by students during training due to the impact of COVID-19, the number of companies students contacted to apply for training after being terminated, effects on students during industrial training, for example, psychology, money, family or rental house, and assistance or advice received by students from universities and training companies in dealing with this situation.

Findings and Discussion

The Challenges faced by the Industrial Training students due to COVID 19 Pandemic made Students more Resilient

Industrial training students struggled with challenges due to the pandemic when they were working for 2 to 4 weeks. Findings from the interview revealed that students faced several unexpected situations. Eight students were laid off and another eight students remained training in the same place. Even so, some were ordered to take two or three months of leave of absence without knowing the possibility of continuing the training or vice versa. Five students were instructed to work from home.

The results found that for those who were fired faced obstacles in searching for a new place during the critical COVID-19 situation. There were students who have been rejected by 5 to 15 organisations. They were distressed due to being unable to fulfil this requirement to graduate on time. Some students were required by their employers to work from home, but they need to get used to working with less monitoring, a task that takes a long time to complete with a limited internet connection.

In terms of employment, the participants learnt about the job management system in the new norms and standards of procedures issued by the company. They were requested to maintain social distance with customers, wear face masks, take body temperature daily, and some even needed to wear gloves. Besides, the most valuable and different experience in industrial training students this time is; they became a part of the company staff who saw for themselves and faced with the company

struggling from losses and falls due to the pandemic and movement control orders. It is not easy for them to get such a valuable experience.

In a detrimental context, students felt they were less experienced in handling real situations. Many events were cancelled, their scope of work was reduced due to fewer customers, unlike usual. Financial problems also disturbed the emotional and mental well-being of industrial training students due to the withdrawal of allowances by the company, to some extent affecting their transportation, accommodation and parking expenses. Furthermore, they faced the risk of physical communication and frequent meeting with visitors and customers, which added to their concern on health and personal safety from the threat of this COVID-19 pandemic.

Student Support Systems have Solved their Problems

Although the challenges faced by students are clearly stated in this study, most of the training companies, universities and faculty are concerned and responsible for the students involved. The evidence from the interview revealed that some employers still retained their industrial training students in their companies despite their losses. The employers' empathy for industrial training students' difficulties in finding other companies as their training site made some companies keep students in their company until the end of the training period set by the university. However, not much work could be given during the movement control order period. Students could only be instructed to complete simple tasks, and some could be done from home.

All respondents agreed that the coordinator and faculty helped students until their problems were solved and they completed the training. The vital communication channel of students was with the coordinator appointed by the faculty. From the analysis of this study, it is undeniable that the role of the coordinator is significant to ensure that students calm down in dealing with problems and difficult situations with the company. The coordinators act as intermediaries to the students and the company. The task of the coordinator is like a counsellor to give words of encouragement, stabilise emotions/psychology and motivate students to wake up from the current situation. The coordinator has helped the students to get a new place through their industry connections after being stopped. Besides, the coordinator has updated the current decisions and rules issued by the university to the students.

The university has accepted three students to work at the faculty to reduce the problem of finding a new place. Nevertheless, the university was unable to accommodate all due to the limited space and scope of work. Among other ways to help students were providing opportunities to submit assessments and final presentations via online Apps such as Google Classroom and the university's online platform such as I-learn for final assessment which was previously conducted through the conventional method. Consistent with findings by Sahu (2020) and Crawford (2020), majority of public universities in Malaysia primarily utilised online learning during the MCO period.

Studies conducted by Hamdan & Rahman (2020) stated that universities and faculties are not very efficient and less effective in the management of industrial training. Besides, the training coordinator also lacks communication with students in conveying information. However, this situation is very different from this study, where all students were satisfied even in the condition of COVID-19 problems. Moreover, another assistance provided by the university to students was through providing financial assistance such as RM30 for electricity/internet usage for each eligible student. The university acted in making final decisions in all policies and changes that occurred during this COVID-19 period by taking the views and feedback of all stakeholders involved. Finally, the evolving situation of COVID-19 has led to industrial training situation changes. The present finding also supports Crawford, et. al., (2020), which concluded that it is essential to provide information and flexibility among stakeholders for responding and reacting to a situation. Therefore, it is in good agreement with the results of the present study.

Conclusion

Current industrial training students have encountered numerous challenges due to COVID-19 pandemic. The interview revealed that these participants were concerned about issues such as economic, psychological, losses in industry exposure, layoffs, and the uncertainty in finding potential companies in critical situations. Although this global issue has significantly impacted everyone, it is crucial for those involved in industrial training programs to play their respective roles in overcoming the challenges while maintaining professionalism to maintain positive relations between industry and universities in the future.

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