

**WORKPLACE SKILLS: A STUDY OF THE SKILLS  
TAUGHT IN UiTMCS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE  
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SARAWAK**



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Date: 30 June 2003

The Head  
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Dear Professor,

**FINAL RESEARCH REPORT ON 'WORKPLACE SKILLS: A STUDY OF  
THE SKILLS TAUGHT IN UiTMCS AND ITS RELEVANCE TO THE  
CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN SARAWAK'**

With reference to the above, I am pleased to submit 3 (three) copies of the final research report entitled 'Workplace Skills: A Study of the Skills Taught in UiTMCS and Its Relevance to the Construction Industry in Sarawak'.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



**FOO KIEN KHENG**  
Leader  
Research Project

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to identify the skills taught to the DCE graduates and juxtapose them to a predetermined set of skills which had been benchmarked earlier to make a comparison. It also seeks to explore the level of workplace knowledge and competency of both the DCE students as well as the graduates who are currently employed in the construction industry. This study also has practical considerations whereby the various parties concerned could use the findings to aid their decision-making process. As this study has no intention of inferring the findings to the general population, the snowballing technique was employed to select the respondents which comprised the Part 6 DCE students, the lecturers who taught them, graduates of the same program and their supervisors. The research design used is the ex-post facto survey technique using face-to-face interview and a self-administered questionnaire as the major data collection methods. The findings highlight evidence of a gap in certain skill components between what is taught in the institution and what may be needed in the construction industry. The results show no observable differences in the rating of the three skills components by both the employees and employers. Opinions gathered from the respondents show that they unanimously supported the compulsory implementation of Industrial Training in UiTMCS . Recommendations related to Industrial Training, the teaching and learning of skills in the institution of higher learning and viable research ideas are proposed. Finally, the constraints of implementing an integral approach and the limitations of the study are also discussed.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Background of the Study

Meeting the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century labour market promises to be a great challenge for employees, employers, educators and policy makers. Nations aspiring to stay competitive and prosperous in a knowledge-based economy will have to devise policies and strategies which encourage economic growth and increase productivity. According to Thurow (1996), "The skills of the labour force are going to be the key competitive weapon in the 21<sup>st</sup> century." The ever-changing environment for prosperity, competitive edge and economic well-being requires a workforce that is adaptable, highly literate and multi-skilled. Many studies have been undertaken on the subject of workplace skills (SCANS, 1991; McLaughlin, 1995; Nabi and Bagley, 1998; Sneed and Morgan, 1999; Richens, 1999; Fallows and Stephen, 2000; Conference Board of Canada, 2000; Stewart and Knowles, 2001; Ramlee Mustapha et al., 2001). These studies indicate clearly the employers' concern for reliable and motivated employees with good workplace skills. Malaysian employers too, share the same concern.

In a recent international conference held on technical education and vocational training in Kuala Lumpur (2002), the need for more comprehensive and business-oriented training for Malaysia's future growth was discussed. In order to keep pace with the rising levels of skilled labour in this information era, Malaysia needs to equip its workforce with greater knowledge and training. According to Dr. Ahmad Sipon (1999), Deputy Director-General (Technical Education Department), Ministry of