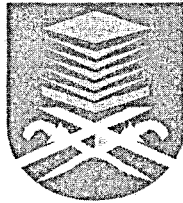


**THE EFFECT OF PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING ON STUDENTS' GENERIC
COMPETENCIES**



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FOREWORD

First and foremost, we are really in gratitude for the blessing bestowed upon us by Allah the Al-Mighty as this research report would not be able to be completed and submitted without His consent and permission.

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Last but not least, our special thanks also go to our family who keep us going even though the goings get tougher. All support, co-operation, love and understanding are just too great to ignore or to go without mention.

May Allah bless us all and make us strong to face whatever test or calamity and each test would make us stronger and eventually, earn us a place in paradise.

Ameen...

Noor Liza bt Adnan
Wan Karomiah Wan Abdullah
Jun 2010

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ABSTRACT

Many parties have discussed the issue of unemployed graduates and many have pointed their fingers to the higher institutions for failing to equip the students with necessary generic competencies or soft skills required by the potential employers. Many have also blamed the pedagogy used that encourages passive learning rather than active learning. As such this paper attempts to discover how students generally perceived and evaluated a pedagogy known as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and how they generally view the effect of PBL on their five aspects of generic competencies namely self-confidence, teamwork ability, communication skill, self-directed learning, and the ability to think critically. Potential problems that they might face learning under PBL approach were also looked into. The respondents which consisted of forty-eight graduating accounting students from UiTM Terengganu were surveyed. The findings revealed that most students perceived PBL positively and they moderately agreed that PBL was an effective approach of learning. Even though PBL initially created tension among students but it was only temporary. Using the Wilcoxon rank test, PBL has left a significant positive effect on four competencies which are self-confidence, teamwork ability, communication skill and self-directed learning. Only the ability to think critically was not found to be significantly affected by PBL. However, Spearman's rank correlation indicated that students highly associated PBL to the need to think critically. Mann-Whitney Test conducted showed both male and female students did not show a significant difference in all five aspects of competencies. However, students in different groups of CGPAs revealed varied effects of PBL on their five different aspects of generic competencies, where weaker students (with CGPA of up to 2.99) obviously gave higher ratings compared to those with higher CGPA. At the end of the paper, limitation of the study was outlined and future researches were recommended.

Key Words: *Problem based learning; generic competencies/soft skills; Self-confidence; self-directed learning; teamwork ability; communication skill; ability to think critically*

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