

The Impact of Learning Sales and Marketing Module Toward Modular Student's Knowledge and Skill in Sungai Petani Community College

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Abstract—This study examines the impact of learning sales and marketing module on Modular Student's skill and knowledge in Sungai Petani Community College. Using qualitative approach through interview, some useful insights were obtained. The introduction of sales and marketing module constitutes to a promising outcomes. The module is gradually empowering students' knowledge and skills after three months part taking the module which enables them to implement the right technique of handling customer service, customer complaint, room and catering sales activities as well as implementing marketing communication. This positive indication although at an early stage has given implications for students, lecturers, parents, hospitality industry in general.

Index Terms—impact, sales and marketing module, community college modular system, competency

I. INTRODUCTION

Education in Malaysia is an ongoing effort towards further developing the potential of individuals in a holistic way in terms of intellectual, spiritual, emotional and physical aspects, by faith and obedience to the Almighty Allah s.w.t. This effort is to produce Malaysian citizens who are knowledgeable, competent, honorable, responsible and capable of achieving well-being as well as to contribute to high quality human capital. This is because human capital is the most important investment in the development of any country especially Malaysia. In addition, reference [1] noted that human capital is a key element in the means to improve organization assets and employees productivity which in turn sustain the competitive advantage. Proven by reference [2], which states that human capital should involved the processes that is related to training, education and other interventions to increase the levels of knowledge, skills, abilities, values, and social assets. In conclusion, education, skill and training are the integral elements of the human capital.

Many institutions are now focusing in providing individuals, especially those of the young age with less academic capability through a solid skills and knowledge which stresses slightly higher in practical rather than the theoretical aspects [3] compared to the classroom activity

approach. Most of the colleges in across the world are focusing on the classroom activity rather than extending students' learning beyond its boundaries such as associational networks as clubs, corporations, support groups, unions and communities that can be used as their learning experience [4]. This approach as argued by many scholars deter students or graduates from meeting the need of the industry and this has created the unemployability issue among the fresh graduates [2], [5]. The balance approach between theory and practical ratios of 50:50 seems has not solved or cater to the solution of the issue. The industry has always stated the issue of the missing gap between what is required in the industry and what is being taught at the college is their major concerned. Reference [6] regards that both relationship between academia and industry must be bridged in order to minimize the gap which involves designing, delivery and assesement of the specific courses. By addressing the gap through the collaboration with curriculum developer group will help to fullfill the needs of the industry. The implementation of the curriculum through hands on activity can enhance the required skill and improve the knowledge area.

Modular system education has been practiced by many countries. Some of the country has shown the successful effort in the development of manpower. Germany and Australia has shown their tremendous thrive in the area of teaching and learning through Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Their effort is driven by the employability factors and the aim to boost the country's economic. This change is purposely done on the students to prepare them for the real working situation aligned with their educational standard [7]. This modular system has been followed by many other countries across the globe including our country Malaysia, such as the modular system in Sungai Petani Community College. There are variety of curriculum offered and applied through a modular system especially in Community College and Sales and Marketing Module is one of the curriculums offered in Sungai Petani Community College.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Modular System

Modular system is an independent unit or sub division of an educational organization [8], [9], [5], [2]. It is a

self-contained, internally consistent and independent unit of the subject matter of a course, which also comprises guidelines for teaching, learning and testing through mutual relations between institution and industry that leads to the independence of the implementation [10]. Each of the unit plays a significant role (block system) which is inter-related and is considered as part of flexible learning. According to reference [8], the major concerns in the development of such modular curriculum are the learning outcomes, motivation of the students and school output. The modular system will bridge several known gaps within vocational education such as that of between theory and practice, between learning in school and learning on the job and between education and work as a whole.

B. *Modular Program in Malaysia (Sijil Modular Kebangsaan)*

The implementation of the modular program in Malaysia enables the students to take various short courses modules based on their capabilities. In the reference [11], curriculum used in community colleges is set to train and develop skill through a short course modular (within 3 to 6 months period) which emphasizes on technical competency, knowledge and social aspect.

In addition, the curriculum is also modelled through the Outcome Based Education (OBE) and Competency Based Education (CBE). At end of every module, graduate will be awarded with Sijil Modular Kebangsaan (SMK) or the National Modular Certificate.

C. *Community College*

Historically, the Technical and Vocational Educational Division (TAVED) under the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education was established in the year of 1964 [11]. The establishment of this division was intended to promote technical and vocational education in this country. Nevertheless, the name the division was changed to the Technical Education Department (TED) in October 1995 [11]. The first community college was set up in 2001. The purpose of Community Colleges is to confer certificates and diplomas to students who might not be as academically inclined or failed to score places in the local universities or other tertiary level educational institutions. These community colleges offer courses which are more hands-on and practical in nature. The ratio of practical to theoretical training is 75: 25 percent. According to reference [11], the innovative approach of the government by introducing the modular program has furnish a new dimension in teaching and learning at the Community colleges through the rebranding the function of this institution.

D. *Sales and Marketing Module*

This module aims to offer students a critical understanding of the sales and marketing operation within the hospitality industry. Sales and Marketing Module is one of the modules offered in Hotel Operations Program in Community College. The module provides students with exposure to sales and marketing techniques in dealing with customers. Students will be trained to use

the sales and promotion techniques in different situations. In addition, students are trained to produce promotion means. Besides that, sales and marketing module can be divided into three learning area (LA) which is namely; Public Relation (LA1), Sales Activity (LA2) and Marketing Communication (LA3).

E. *Competency*

Reference [12] defined competency as a capability or ability. In other words, competency refers to a combination of skills, human behavior, observation and applied knowledge that gives an organization a competitive advantage to become successful [13]. Moreover, competency cannot be separated from personal characteristics and professional skill [14]. Both are interrelated and support one other in the process of fulfilling the duties requirement. Competency is based on work performance based on the claim by [12], there are three factors that contribute to the maximum successful performance which is; organizational, jobs demand and individual. More recent studies had confirmed that, competency assessments are being assessed upon various approaches such as observation, supervisory assessments, ability and knowledge test, portfolios and self-assessment [15].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research data were gathered by using a qualitative method approach. The sampling and population for qualitative approach in this study was gathered from the students of Sales and Marketing Module from January 2013 intake session and ended on March 2013 which consists of twenty four (24) students. They are believed to have an overall idea about the Sales and Marketing Module after three months partaking the module. Based on targeted sampling and population, 5 respondents were randomly selected for an interview session.

Semi structured interview were selected as an instrument used in gathering the information from the respondents. Standardized interviewing method was developed with a pre-determined set of open ended questions and the questions are relating to the student's knowledge and skills regarding Sales and Marketing module. The main purpose of this interview were to determine the level of students's knowledge and skill before and after finishing the module. The process of gathering data through interview was personally undertaken by researchers and each session lasted between thirty minutes to one hour on average in which all sessions were tape-recorded for documentation.

IV. FINDINGS

A. *Respondent's Profile*

Five students that had taken sales and marketing module from Sungai Petani Community Colleges were involved in the interview. Three of them are females and the other two are males who had taken this module for

three months. Their profiles are simplified and presented in the following table:

TABLE I. RESPONDENT'S PROFILE

Respondents	Sex	Age	Education level
1	male	21	SPM
2	female	21	SPM
3	male	20	SPM
4	female	21	SPM
5	female	20	SPM

B. Respondents Feedback based on Knowledge

In responding to the first question which tests their knowledge, the question "What do you think on your knowledge with regards to sale and marketing before and after taking the module?" was probed in the interview. Upon assessing their pattern of response, all five respondents had given almost identical answers. They agreed that their knowledge with regards to sale and marketing module before and after taking the module had increased.

Respondent 1 for instance said:

"Before taking the module I only have a little idea on sales but do not know and understand what is marketing, nonetheless after taking the module I already understand the meaning and the overall idea of sales and marketing".

Respondent 3 similarly views that:

"Before taking sales and marketing module I do not know anything regarding the meaning of sale and marketing or the purpose of sales and marketing but after taking the module I have the basic idea as well as understand what is sales and marketing".

In the same vein, respondent 5 expressed that: *"Before taking this module I merely know that marketing is the process of how to market a product but after 3 months of taking the module I already have a full picture of sales and marketing and actually it is the most important aspect in increasing an organization's revenue".*

As for the second question regarding on respondent's knowledge, the question "Do you have any idea or knowledge in regards to customer service?" were asked. All five respondents gave positive and significant response as to how this module had given them an overall idea and knowledge relating to customer service. For example, respondent 2 provided the following feedback:

"Before taking sales and marketing module I don't have any knowledge or idea on what customer service is and its function in sales and marketing. But after 3 months of taking the module, my knowledge had improved in the sense that I went from knowing nothing to something of the overall idea on what customer service is".

Whereas the 5th respondent said that:

"Before taking the module, what I know about customer service is barely the fact that it is an activity that requires us to pick up the phone and serve customers. However, after taking the module, customer service I learn that it is more than just picking up a phone and serving customer but it is more than that."

The question "Do you have any idea how promotion are made in the hotel industry?" were asked as the third

and last question of the semi structured interview. Once again, all five respondents agreed that their knowledge and idea on how promotions are made had increased. It can be seen through the response by the first respondent whereby the respondent stated that:

"Before taking sales and marketing module I don't have a clear view of how promotions are made in the hotel industry and the only promotion means that I know is by distributing leaflets to the customers. But after 3 month taking the module I learn that there are actually several ways on how promotion are made in the hotel industry".

The 4th respondent stated that: *"Before taking the module, sales and marketing are words that are not commonly uttered by myself let alone understand how it is implemented but now it has become words that are always mentioned and used by me and my friends because of the understanding about sales and marketing as well as how promotions are done".*

C. Respondent's Feedback based on Skill

In terms of skill, the respondents were asked "What do you know the right technique of handling customer service?" and based on their feedback it transpired that, they significantly agree that after 3 months of taking sales and marketing module, they learnt the correct techniques and are able to impliment the right techniques in handling customer services with a different manner. For example, the 1st respondent stated that: *"Before taking the module i do not know what the right technique in handling customer service is and i was also unable to impliment it in quests. But after three months, i was able to understand the right technique in handling customer service and also able to impliment it".*

Same goes to the 5th respondent who stated:

"I know nothing about what customer service is and not to mention the right techniques in handling customer service. But it was different three month later after which is already know and understand what customer service is and is able to apply that techniques".

The second question posted in the semi structured interview was "Do you know the right technique of creating quotation and event order" and most of the respondents gave a positive opinion in which their skill in producing brochures and event order has increased.

It can be proven by the statement made by the 1st respondent which is: *"Before taking the module, I only know about what the quotation are and did not know anything about an event order. However, I do not know how to produce both techniques After 3 months, the module give me a clear view about the quotation and event order at the same time I was able to create it by myself".*

This can be supported by the statement of 4th respondent who stated: *"I do not have any idea or clue about the event order or what quotation is and the right technique in creating it. Now, I am able to create quotation and event order in the right way because I already understand the right technique used in creating it".*

"Do you know the right technique in creating hotel corporate video and brochures?" was the third question

posted in this interview. Once again, all respondents gave positive indication on their feedback whereby they had gained skills in creating brochure and hotel corporate video. This can be seen through the response of 1st respondent which is: *"Before taking the module, brochure is one thing that I've seen but do not know the right way to produce it. As of the hotel corporate video, I did not even know what a hotel corporate video is let alone know how to produce it. But 3 months later, I'm proud of myself for being able to produce brochures and corporate video with the correct technique"*.

Respondent 5 agreed that: *"After three months of taking sales and marketing module, I realized it had increased my understanding of what brochure and hotel corporate video are as well as being able to learn new skills in producing or creating hotel corporate video and brochure. This was different from 3 months ago; before taking this module which where is I've only ever seen examples of brochures and corporate videos in the media but do not know how to make it"*.

Based on the respondent's feedback, all five respondents had given almost identical opinion. Generally, they admitted that they have a better grasp in terms of the practical knowledge of the sale and marketing module compared to the theoretical knowledge. They believed that their level of knowledge as well as skills before and after taking the sales and marketing module had increased. This is because; they are able to understand the overall idea in sales and marketing, also the importance of sales and marketing in the hotel industry. Besides that, they are also able to apply the right technique and process in sales and marketing such as dealing with customer, producing and creating a good quotation, event order, brochure and corporate video.

From their feedback, it is shown that the level of the respondent's skill had increased from time to time. This can be seen from the results of their final evaluation which in which most of the students were able to practice the correct method and technique in sales and marketing module such as the technique in creating brochure and corporate video.

Most of the respondents confidently expressed that they are doing the right things based on their understanding and developing their level of confidence. The most significant development that can be seen is the way these students communicate and interact with other people now compared to before they had taken this module.

The data from the respondent's feedbacks showed that the objectives of the module are generally accomplished due to the significant improvement in terms of the respondents' knowledge and skill. This evidence is supported when at the end of the module these respondents were able to accomplish some of the critical tasks in the sale and marketing module with the right techniques, skills and were ready to be in a real working environment.

V. DISCUSSION, IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

This study highlights a range of interesting and

significant findings. Students believed that they are gaining knowledge from the Sale and Marketing module as it helps them not only to know the knowledge of sales and marketing in hotel industry but also expend their skill in customer service or the technique in dealing with customer. Besides that, they are able to produce and create quotations, event orders, hotel brochures and hotel corporate videos.

This module also exposes them to a real working environment which gradually boosts their confident in taking a leap at jobs within the industry. This promising finding indicates that this module directly provides positive impact on students, parents and the hospitality industry in general. Perhaps the students feel that the module had met their expectations and consequently they become satisfied with their program of choice and feel enthusiastic about their future career in the industry and their prospective employment. Parents may also feel that their investments of money in their children's education, along with the effort and time spent were worthwhile. Another wider implication is related to the hospitality industry practitioners whereby they may be able to recruit qualified and sufficiently skillful individuals as employees in the future.

The indicates of this study indicates that this module that was introduced to Community Colleges, especially that of Sungai Petani Community College is beneficial and thus it should be introduced to other institutions. This goal can be achieved with the government's effort in implementing this approach of education and the collaboration between academic institutions and industry practitioners should continuously be held and improved. This will result in the production of skillful and qualified workers in the local as well as international hotel industry.

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