Learning Through Competition – A Case Study Research in Competition Skills Malaysia 2013, Field of Culinary Arts and Food Services

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Abstract—**The purpose of this research being conducted was to find out about the effectiveness of learning through series of competition which are perceived as being able to empower student's skills aside from receiving input through lessons in the classroom as well as practical in workshops. Exposure through competition is one of the measures that are perceived as effective on certain students who possesses high hands-on skills. This quantitative research involved 19 respondents who made it to the last stage of the national competition whereby these students represents their respective educational institution in hopes of becoming the 2013 champion. The data from the respondent's response was analyzed using the SPSS software in order to answer the research questions. The research findings showed that the knowledge input surpasses that of knowledge input in the classroom and fulfill the demands of the industry. Training approach that involves trainer from the industry from particular organization had overpowered the learning curriculum of the college also boosted up student's confidence level. The research findings may be brought forward to the management department to be looked into in order for them to support the development of a better teaching and learning for the students.**

Index Terms—**malaysia skills competition, blooms' taxonomy, teaching and learning, skills**

I. INTRODUCTION

Every year the government, through the department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resource organizes Malaysia Skills Competition in which participants involved are amongst trainee or students of the Skills Training Institution (ILK), Government Higher Educational Institution (IPTA) or Private Higher Educational Institution (IPTS) as well as industrial manpower of the age 21 and below. This competition intends to acknowledge trainers or expert worker with the most impeccable skills.

Every area of skill that is being contested requires participants to carry out tasks based on questions that were enacted covering the learning scope of the trainee in ILK and National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS). For the students from Skills Training Institution, IPTA and IPTS such as Community College, Institute of the

National Youth Skills (IKBN), MARA University of Technology (UiTM), this competition also serves as a platform for them to enrich their skills and test their level of skill that had been learnt during the teaching and learning process at their respective educational institution. As for that, this competition is in fact a part of their learning process whereby students will complete each tasks and be evaluated to identify their level of understanding and competency in completing the tasks after the selection and training process. Besides that, this competition also helps increase the level of confidence and skills of each students or participant who joins this competition.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM)

Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM) is a skills competition organized by the Department of Skills Development (JPK) and Kementerian Kerja Raya (KKR) with the sole purpose of identifying and acknowledging the Malaysian youths with ultimate skills that may represent Malaysia in the ASEAN Skills Competition (ASC) and World Skills Competition (WSC) after going through several selection and evaluation processes that has been set. Indirectly, this competition helps in improving the Malaysian workmen force to an international standard. According to Reference [1], the main vision of the Malaysia Skills Competition is to produce skillful and competent work force that is of international standard while at the same time promoting a skill training culture and giving acknowledgement to skillful worker through strategic cooperation and commitment to the industry. However, participants must possess a few criteria such as; Malaysian citizen of the age not more than 20 during the year of competition [1].

B. Food Services and Culinary Arts

Food Services course is a course offered by the Department of Hotel Operations in Sungai Petani Community College which encompasses of four learning domain. The domains consist of namely; Introduction to the Food and Beverage Department, Beverage Serving, Banquet Services and Restaurant Services [2]. For the first domain of learning which is Introduction to the

Department of Food and Beverage, students are exposed to the structure of the organization, its role and function in relation to other departments within a hotel as well as the equipments used in the Food and Beverage Department [2].

According to Reference [3] beverage serving is the second learning area in which students are exposed to the types of hot and cold beverages as well as the steps or method in handling them correctly based on the standard operating procedure. Whereas, banquet services is the third learning domain that aims in providing exposure and knowledge of performing tasks and services related to banquet services such as organizing themed event, seminars as well as differentiating the menus prepared in each banquet event. As for the fourth learning domain which is restaurant services, students will be exposed to the procedures in carrying out services for the *American service, French service and Russian service* [3].

Culinary Arts is also a field offered at the Sungai Petani Community College which consists of Western Cuisine, Malaysian Cuisine, Art of Cold Food Serving as well as Pastry and Confectionary [2].

C. Competency

Reference [4] explains that competency is a form of knowledge, skill and capability of handling something that allows one to carry out a task excellently. However, Reference [5] on the other hand defined competency as an ability or capability. This statement was supported by a research done by Reference [6] in which competency refers to the combination of skills, behaviour, human's actions, observation and knowledge that is used as additional factors in increasing the rate of success of a particular organization. In addition, competency could not be seperated from personal traits and professional skills [7]. This is because both elements are needed in fulfilling the demands of tasks and are both evaluated through work performances. Competency assessement may be evaluated through various approaches such as that of observation, supervised evaluation, ability and knowledge tests, portfolio as well as self-evaluation [8]. Amongst the approach that is immensely used in most researches are self-evaluation and supervised-evaluation. In fact, there are three factors that contibutes to maximum performance which are namely; organizational factor, working demands factor and individual factor [5].

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research structure that has been used for this research was in the form of quantitative and descriptive method. The method used throughout the research was questionnaire. The questionnaires were distributed to the finalist of the Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM) for the field of Culinary Arts and Food Services that was organized by the Ministry of Human Resource. These questionnaires were also specified for the 19 finalists of the Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM) which consists of the two fields; Culinary Arts and Food Services (Restauant Service).

The advantage of using questionnaires as an instrument for this research is standardization whereby every respondent will be asked the same questions according to the same order which allows the researcher to systematically compare the differences or similarities of their responses. As for that, the use of questionnaires is the best mean for this research. According to Reference [9] questionnaires include questions that are specifically constructed that helps respondents to feel at ease and thus allowing them to recall past events better. In accordance to that, this research identifies the means of student selection, the students' development throughout the skill training period as well as the facilities provided during training and competition. The questionnaires were constructed bilingually; in Bahasa Malaysia and English.

In this research, the questions were measured based on a five likert scale which facilitates the respondents in choosing the most accurate response. The scale value of each question depends on the item of whether the items were made of positive or negative statement. For the item with positive statement, the highest scale determines highest value whereas for the items with negative statement the highest scale determines the lowest value.

In this research, the research location involved were Malaysia Agro Exposition Park (MAEPS), of Putra University Malaysia. The choice of location was based on the venue of the finals of the Malysia Skills Competition. This choice of location was to ease the process of data collection and sampling selection through group sampling. According to Reference [10], when a research is done on populations that consists of a large area and a high number of subject in a population, where the list of subject is not obtained, group sampling is used. As for that, choosing the location mentioned earlier intends to obtain a reliable data and trustworthy result.

IV. RESULT

A. Structure of Research Respondents

The sample respondents were choosen based on the trainee who were qualified to the final stage of the Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM) 2013, consisting of nineteen (19) students of the Food Services and Culinary Arts students from various government higher educational institution such as Community College, MARA University of Technology (UiTM), MARA Skills Institution (IKM), National Youths Skill Institution (IKBN), IKIP College Pahang and KFC College.

Frequency analysis for gender showed 63.2 percent (n = 12) of participants were male and 36.8 percent (n = 7) were female participants. While 94.7 percent (n = 18) participants were Malays and only 5.3 percent (n = 1) were Chinese. Most participants were aged from 18 to 20 years which results in the frequency analysis of 100 percent (n = 10). Besides that, the frequency of courses of study showed 68.4 percent (n = 13) were from the field of Culinary Arts contestants and 31.6 percent (n = 6) were from the fields of Hotel Operations. Frequency of institutions involved in the competition PKM 2013 were 52.8 percent (n = 10) representing Community Colleges

throughout Malaysia such as Sungai Petani Community College, Community College of Langkawi, Selayang Community College and Community College of Bukit Beruang, Kuantan Community College and Community College of Nibong Tebal. While 21.1 percent (n = 4) of the National Youth Skills Institute (IKBN), 10.5 percent (n = 2) while as for MARA Institute of Skills (IKM), 5.3 percent (n = 1) of Mara University of Technology (UiTM), 5.3 percent (n = 1) were from KFC College and 5.3 per cent (n = 1) were from IKIP College.

B. Results and Analysis

1) Means of students selection PKM 2013

Descriptive analysis shows that there were several steps imposed before the selection process of the students for the Malaysia Skills Competition (PKM 2013) final stage. Where students are aware that they need to go through the pre-qualification stage before being qualified to the finals (M=4.42, item 1) as well as fullfiling the terms and criteria of selection at the pre-qualification of the Malaysia Skills Competition (M=4.26, item 2). Whereas, announcements about the competition had been made widely (M=4.05, item 3) and most of the students have low level of understanding regarding their field before the competition (M=3.42, item 4)

2) Student's skills training PKM 2013

During the competition training, participants stated that their college provided external trainer to train them alongside their lecturers (M = 1.58, item 1) whereby the trainers consists of experts from their respective field (M=4.11, item 2). Next, participants believe that they had to go through difficult and gruelling moments during while the training takes place (M= 3.58, item 3). This was supported by a student's statement on the success that they intend to accomplish must be through intensive training that requires their sacrifice in time, energy and mind (M=4.16, item 4). In terms of the training pattern given, it is suitable with the students and the competition (M= 3.74, item 5). All in all, students believe that there are improvements in terms of their skills upon partaking this training sessions (M=4.11, item 6)

3) Competition equipment PKM 2013

Students believe that the equipment provided for the training and competition were complete and conforms the needs of the competition as well as industry (M=3.68, item 1). This proves the fact that the equipments provided during the competition had helped them in the competition (M=3.89, item 2). Lastly, participants also believe in improving the quality of individual competition, the equipments need to be maintained from time to time in order to guarantee their working standard according to the needs of the competition and industry (M= 3.74, item 3)

V. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research being conducted was to find out about the effectiveness of learning through competition that is perceived as effective in enhancing student's level of skills aside from experiencing teaching and learning outside of classroom and practical workshop.

This is because exposure through competitions is one of the means that is deemed effective on particular students with high level of hands-on ability. Result of the findings shows something promising whereby learning took place more than what is set in the syllabus as well as fulfilling the demands of the industry.

Overall, generally the factors such as participant's selection, means of training carried out and the equipments provided that were used contributes to the development in terms of the students performance during the competition. Indirectly, this improves the student's competency, knowledge of their field as well as their level of self confidence.

This can be seen through their improvements in terms of their deeper level of understanding of their respective fields before and after the competition. In fact, the student's individual skills also improved in terms of their communication, management aspect, time management aspect, and working environment. This is because the training involves trainers from the industry which includes knowledge beyond the content of the syllabus set by their college's which puts them at a higher level professionally and in turn boosts their confidence level. In addition, the provision of appropriate and adequate equipment also plays a role in improving skills. This is because without the proper and adequate equipment student is unable to perform a given task perfectly.This gives rise to a positive effect on the students and the particular industry as well as allowing the students to feel that they have a bright future in their career. In addition, the industry will also be benefited from this research as they will produce qualified workers who also have competent skills in the future. Finally, the results of this study can be highlighted to the management to be looked into and support the development of a better teaching and learning process.

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