



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

**PARTICIPATION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINEES IN A SUPERVISED
WORK EXPERIENCE AND THE ACQUISITION OF EMPLOYABILITY
SKILLS**

SHARIFAH KAMALIAH SYED SOFIAN

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By

SHARIFAH KAMALIAH SYED SOFIAN

**Thesis submitted in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Doctor
of Philosophy in the Faculty of Educational Studies
Universiti Putra Malaysia**

May 2008



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my three lovely daughters; Nuha Nadiah, Nur Hannani and Imtiaz Amani, please remember this...

Today's impossibility becomes tomorrow's reality when human efforts are fueled by enthusiasm and passion.



Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2008

Chairman: Professor Ab. Rahim Bakar, PhD

Faculty: Educational Studies

The purpose of the study was to compare vocational trainees participating and not participating in a supervised work experience on the acquisition of employability skills. The population of the study was vocational trainees who had completed vocational programmes in various fields. They were compared on the basis of whether they had participated in a supervised work experience on the acquisition of employability skills. An equal-sized groups stratified sampling was administered as it was considered useful if one wants to compare the performance of different subgroups, besides, Cohen (1988) prescribed the desirability of equal-sized samples as it can be demonstrated that equal division yields greater power than unequal division does. The process of power analysis determined the sample size. The number of sample was 138. Items



comprising the translated version of SCANS foundation skills and work competencies measured acquisition of employability. The consent to use the translated version in the Malay language was officially given by the Planning and Research Unit of the Technical Department, Ministry of Education of Malaysia. The researcher developed items comprising the background characteristics of respondents based on appropriate literature. The dimensions of self-concept and achievement motivation were adopted from a study by Ab. Rahim (2001). The result showed that participating students achieved a moderately higher level of employability skills compared to students not participating in the supervised work experience. A significant difference in the acquisition of employability skills between participants and non-participants of the supervised work experience was observed at ($t = 2.3, p < .05$), although the magnitude of the differences in the means was moderately small ($\eta^2 = .04$). This result could be regarded as material with the said magnitude as it has the potential of changing the way others think about the phenomenon of having a supervised work experience as a feasible mode in nurturing such skills. Study indicated there were also other factors attributing to the acquisition of employability skills, and these include gender, age, previous work experience, self concept and achievement motivation. However, achievement motivation was found to be significantly related to the acquisition of employability skills. This psychological variable is also a well-known contributor in the development of entrepreneurial skills leading towards the development of successful entrepreneur. In addition, type of school to work transition was

found to be significantly related to previous work experience and gender. Therefore, participation of vocational trainees in a supervised work experience influences the acquisition of employability skills, an important psychosocial construct. Evidently, employability skills also identified as career success skills could facilitate youth in negotiating from school to work transition as employers seek potential employees nurtured with such skills.

Abstrak tesis dibenteng kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi syarat untuk memperolehi ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGLIBATAN PELATIH VOKASIONAL DALAM PENGALAMAN BEKERJA
SECARA TERANCANG DAN PENERAPAN KEMAHIRAN KEPEKERJAAN**

Oleh

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Kajian ini memperihalkan penglibatan pelatih vokasional dalam pengalaman bekerja secara terancang mempengaruhi pembentukan kemahiran kepekerjaan. Kemahiran kepekerjaan, satu konstruk psikososial yang penting, dikenali juga sebagai kemahiran kejayaan dalam kerjaya. Di antara peranan penting yang dimainkan oleh kemahiran kepekerjaan termasuk; mempermudah proses transisi dari sekolah ke alam kerjaya, disamping itu majikan menghendaki bakal pekerja yang mempamirkan kemahiran tersebut. Isu kemahiran kepekerjaan hangat diperdebatkan bersabit pihak yang patut dipertanggungjawab untuk menerapkannya. Bukti jelas menunjukkan bahawa penglibatan yang berterusan di antara pihak majikan dan pendidik perlu diwujudkan. Peranan institusi keluarga, jaringan dan fisikal dipercayai menyumbang terhadap pembentukan



kemahiran tersebut. Populasi kajian terdiri dari kalangan pelatih vokasional yang telah menamatkan program vokasional dalam pelbagai bidang. Pelatih dikategorikan kepada dua kumpulan; kumpulan yang telah mengalami pengalaman bekerja secara terancang serta kumpulan yang sebaliknya. Perbandingan dibuat untuk meninjau tahap penerapan kemahiran kepekerjaan. Hipotesis utama kajian menyatakan bahawa kumpulan yang mendapat pendedahan memperoleh tahap kemahiran kepekerjaan yang lebih tinggi dari kumpulan yang sebaliknya. Bilangan ahli kedua kumpulan diagihkan secara sama rata. Bentuk teknik persampelan berstrata dipilih kerana ia amat sesuai untuk membandingkan pencapaian dari pelbagai aspek. Menurut Cohen (1998), perbandingan antara kumpulan yang terdiri daripada bilangan ahli yang sama berkemungkinan besar untuk memperolehi kuasa yang lebih tinggi. Proses analisis kuasa diaplikasi untuk menentukan bilangan saiz sampel. Bilangan saiz sampel terdiri dari 138 orang pelatih. Kerangka SCANS terdiri dari kemahiran asas dan kompetensi kepekerjaan yang telah dialih bahasa mengukur tahap penerapan kemahiran kepekerjaan. Kebenaran untuk menggunakan alat ini telah diperoleh dari pihak Jabatan Teknikal, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. Penyelidik membina item maklumat latar belakang responden. Manakala dimensi konsep sendiri dan motivasi pencapaian diadaptasi dari kajian Ab. Rahim (2001). Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa kumpulan yang mendapat pendedahan pengalaman bekerja secara terancang memperolehi tahap kemahiran kepekerjaan yang lebih tinggi daripada kumpulan yang sebaliknya. Terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara kumpulan dari segi kemahiran

kepekerjaan pada paras $t=2.3$, $p<.05$. Walaupun magnitud perbezaan bersaiz kecil pada tahap eta kuasa dua menunjukkan .04, namun keputusan boleh dianggap penting kerana ia mempunyai potensi untuk mempengaruhi persepsi masyarakat terhadap fenomena penglibatan dalam pengalaman bekerja secara terancang sebagai salah satu mod penting untuk penerapan kemahiran kepekerjaan. Dimensi yang tidak kurang pentingnya adalah kedudukan konstruk motivasi pencapaian sebagai satu penentu dalam pembentukan kemahiran kepekerjaan. Konstruk ini merupakan pembolehubah yang sangat penting dalam pembentukan usahawan. Sehubungan itu, model kajian perlu mengambil kira aspek penambahbaikan ini di dalam perancangan kajian masa depan.

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I certify that an Examination Committee met on 15 May 2008 to conduct the final examination of Sharifah Kamaliah Syed Sofian on her Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled "Participation of Vocational Trainees in a Supervised Work Experience and the Acquisition of Employability Skills" in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.

SHARIFAH KAMALIAH SYED SOFIAN

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| ILO | The International Labour Organization |
| MOE | Ministry of Education |
| ICT | Integrated Computer Technology |
| STWOA | School to Work Opportunities Act |
| SCANS | Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills |
| SPM | Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysia Certificate of Education) |
| MPT | Maktab Perguruan Teknik |
| GPA | Grade Point Average |
| LSWEP | Learning through School Supervised Work Experience Programme |
| JCI | Job Characteristics Inventory |
| NEL | National Educational Longitudinal Study |
| TIMSS | Third International Mathematics and Science Study |
| MARA | Majlis Amanah Rakyat (Council of the Indigenous Group) |
| NOSS | National Occupational Skills Standard |
| NDTS | National Dual Training System |
| VET | Vocational Education and Training |



ESP

Employability Skills Profile

HRDC

Human Resources Development of Canada



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Nature of the study

This study attempted to determine whether participation in a supervised work experience by vocational trainees was a stronger basis for the acquisition of a greater level of employability skills compared to vocational trainees that had not participated in such an experience. According to Wentling and Waight (2001), participation in supervised work experience, an aspect of work-based learning, not only provides students with a sense of career direction, but also sets the stage for subsequent workplace experiences. Students could enter potential workplaces with greater awareness hence adjusting to company's culture more readily. Through work experience, students come into contacts with real workplaces issues such as the application of various interpersonal skills in addressing workplace problems.

In a related case, designed to understand students' involvement in an apprenticeship scheme in Australia, Velde and Cooper (2000) discovered that students participated for exposure to greater career options when they were less inclined academically. The scheme provided them with hands-on

