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Industrial training: a survey on its effectiveness among undergraduates from the Faculty of the Islamic Studies

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Abstract

Industrial Training or (IT) is one of the compulsory courses for students at the Faculty of Islamic Studies. The objective of the course is to enhance the quality of graduates by exposing them early to the reality of the working world. After a number of years of its implementation the course needs to be reviewed in order to make room for further improvements as it has proven itself as having a great impact. The research was carried out with the main objective of determining the effectiveness of IT programme among students of the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) as well as to understand the principle underlying the concept of IT. For this purpose 110 questionnaires were distributed to third year students of various departments in FIS. The selected group of students comprised of those who have gone through their IT at the end of their fourth semester of studies. The research is further supported by a series of interviews with a number of stake holders and a comprehensive reference work at the library to gather supporting materials on the concept and the philosophical basis of IT. Data collected from the questionnaire survey was analyzed through the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, (SPSS). The research findings show that IT has been very positive in terms of re-shaping the attitude of students from FIS. Suggestions made by students involved in the survey were also taken into account to further improve the implementation of IT. The suggestions will definitely help in minimizing future problems related to IT.

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1. Introduction

IT is one of the compulsory courses at the Faculty of Islamic Studies (FIS) in UKM that is offered to all students. The course is expected to produce quality graduates by exposing them to a work experience while still studying at the university. Industrial attachment is an exercise that was implemented by the university to ensure that students are exposed to a brief work experience before they graduate and enter the competitive job market. By familiarizing

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themselves with the industry students will have a better understanding of the work situation apart from making early contact and establishing valuable network with their future employers (*Student Handbook Faculty of Islamic Studies*, 2005).

Through IT students are also exposed to the details of an organizational set-up and its internal management, a valuable asset that will assist them in finding better placement with their future employers. The exercise shows that the relationship between “theory and practice” has the potential to re-shape students in terms of their interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. On this initiative the course was introduced to the faculty (*Student Handbook Faculty of Islamic Studies*, 2008). Specifically the objectives of the course are to produce graduates who are: Capable of applying their basic and specific knowledge they acquired at the university to the real work situation; Capable of discharging their work and responsibilities efficiently; Capable of working in a group and of assuming leadership; Capable of doing administrative work and management with a keen interest to learn something new continuously; Capable of effective communication and Endowed with good professional ethics and a sense of responsibility.

2. Literature Review

It is undeniable fact that industrial training is very important in accessing the ability of the student particularly with respect to the variations in training practices and attitudes across national cultures. (Abderrahman Hassi, Giovanna Storti, 2011) The value of diversity training to promoting inclusivity, equality and fairness in organisations is underlined as is the importance of the human resource development community adopting a more proactive role in addressing the issue of diversity through research and course curricula. (David McGuire, Mammed Bagher, 2010).

In order to ensure that the above objectives are realized it is therefore necessary for the course to be reviewed in terms of its implementation and its effectiveness. However, no studies have yet been done to this effect at the faculty, whether in terms of its effectiveness and field monitoring, apart from perceptions and feedback from the employers. Hence a closer look need to be done not only in the areas suggested, but also in terms of students preparedness prior to their going to the field. It seems that initial studies done before this seems to deal with a general evaluation of students on pre-placement briefings conducted by the faculty. These briefings basically provide the students with information on how to apply for the placement and the process they have to go through during the attachment period (Azizi Bin Yahya, Saari Yazit, 2010). The present study goes beyond that; it aims at looking more closely at the concept itself, its implementation and its effectiveness in re-moulding student participants (Juliana Abd Rahman and Yahya Buntat, 2006).

3. Methodology

Specifically the objectives of the research are as follows:

- 1) To understand the basic concept underlying IT as practiced at the Faculty of Islamic Studies;
- 2) To evaluate the implementation and activities related to IT;
- 3) To examine the effectiveness of IT.

Data collection for the research comprised the use of a questionnaire and a series of interviews with a number of informants. The quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 18.

The questionnaires were distributed to a sample of 110 students that were selected from all the departments in the faculty covering both male and female, the origin of the students and IT agencies they have chosen. The second part of the questionnaire deals with the perception of students regarding the implementation and effectiveness of IT programme.

The structured questionnaire is self-administered in the sense that the respondents are required to answer the questions on their own. The answer for each question is to be given in the form of Likert scale with the range of 1 to 5 (most agreeable to most disagreeable).

Table 1 below shows the demography of the respondents according to the respective academic departments in the faculty.

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