

Examining Students Satisfaction towards a Leadership Development Program at UiTM City Campus, Melaka

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Abstract: Enhancing students teaching and learning is a collective efforts at the university. Many programs are offered and implemented in order to improve student's performance in class as well as their soft-skills development. Examining the satisfaction of students towards Modul Kepimpinan (Leadership Module) at UiTM Kampus Bandaraya Melaka will provide facilitators and the University insights on how do students perceived the implementation of the program and whether they are satisfied or not. Based on 120 respondents, the students are highly satisfied. All variables correlated with satisfaction. However, of the four independent variables, only teamwork and content contribute significantly towards satisfaction. Facilitators and personal development are not. The results seem to suggest that perhaps, there need to be few modifications on the conduct of the module to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

Key words: Students leadership, satisfaction, soft-skills development, enhancing students, variables correlated

INTRODUCTION

Student's leadership development program is a program under Student's Leadership Unit, Students Affairs, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Melaka or known as 'Unit Kepimpinan Pelajar' (UKP), Universit. This program was previously known as 'Modul Kemahiran Insaniah' or also known as KI. There were two different modules that have been implemented under KI in the past and now the program has been totally revamped. If in the past, this program involved every students at UiTM, in the new module under UKP, only selected students will participate in three different modules.

The implementation of these new modules is hoped to provide greater benefits to the students in enhancing their soft skills development and to enhance their marketability upon graduating parallel with the government initiative under Malaysian education development plan.

There are three leadership modules under the new program. The first module is known as 'Modul Kepimpinan Survival Bangsa'. The second module is named as "Modul Kepimpinan Profesional" and the third module is called "Modul Kepimpinan Ikon". These modules are designed and revised with the intention to produce better students who are able to be future leaders.

Thus, the objectives of this research is to examine the perception and level of satisfaction among students

who have been selected to participate in "Modul 1: Kepimpinan survival Bangsa". The following research questions are to be addressed in this research:

- What is the level of satisfaction of students towards the module?
- What are the relationships between independent variables towards student's satisfaction?
- What are the most important factors that will contribute towards student's satisfaction?

It is hoped that the outcome of this study will shed some light especially towards gaining a better understanding on how student's who have been selected to participate perceived the conduct of the module. Students who are well-equipped with leadership skills are expected to have good and solid characters that could help them to improve their performance in class. Through exposures and programs implemented in the new modules, students are expected to come back to class as better students.

In addition, student's perceptions and satisfaction towards the module could be used to further enhance the overall content of the program and also to further improve the current instruments used to measure their satisfaction. Also, the identification of important variables that will significantly affect participant's satisfaction will assist facilitators to focus on polishing the delivery and conduct

of the program. At the same time, the outcomes also will highlight the factors that did not affect satisfaction. Perhaps, readjustment of the content for that variable can be identified. Finally, the outcomes of this research also is to be shared with student leadership institute (Institut Kepimpinan Pelajar, IKP), Student Affairs, UiTM Shah Alam. This unit is responsible to ensure the implementation of these new modules in every system of UiTM. It is hoped that the outcomes of this research is able to contribute to further develop and improve the module.

Literature review: Developing and designing programs to cultivate leadership qualities among students has become one of the responsibilities of the university. Universities are expected to prepare and design specific programs to meet this criteria (Kezar and Moriarty, 2000). Students, well equipped with additional soft skills are expected to have more added value going into the job market. Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia has indicated that graduates should have the knowledge on basic leadership theories which will allow them to lead a project. It is also important for the graduates to be able to understand the role of a leader and a group member and be able to carry out those roles interchangeably.

Kezar and Moriarty (2000) also agreed that to develop leadership qualities among students, specific extracurricular activities and co-curricular programs are required for the students. Perhaps these extra activities could provide more positive exposures for the students to sharpen and strengthen their leadership qualities. Earlier literature also stressed the importance for students to possess hard and soft skills as they complement one another. Spencer and Spencer (1993) also found that well-performing students are the ones who possess both technical and behavioral skills.

In any of the student leadership programs, students are the primary change focus. According to Reineltand colleagues through such programs, the skills and knowledge development, perspectives and behavior, attitudes modifications and clarification of values and beliefs are all possible benefits for participants. For longer-term results, the leadership paths that the students pursue and the networking that supports them in their work. Amongst the indicators in their studies were collaboration, communication, courage and confidence and leadership development.

Theoretical framework: The following is the framework of this study. Adapted from: IKP (2014) (Fig. 1). There are four hypotheses to be tested.

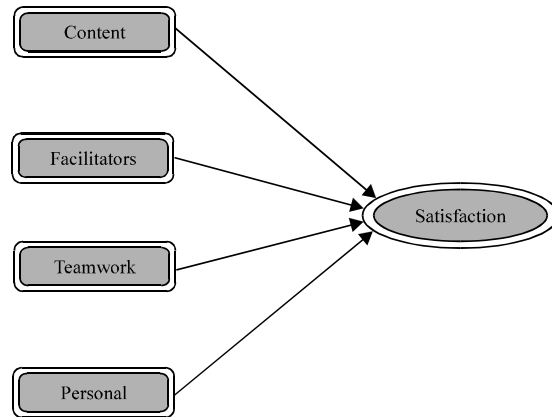


Fig. 1: Theoretical framework

- H₁: Content of the program has significant effect towards satisfaction
- H₂: Facilitator has significant effect towards satisfaction
- H₃: Teamwork has significant effect towards satisfaction
- H₄: Leadership development has significant effect towards satisfaction

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is a quantitative study. The target population will comprise of all newly registered students at UiTM Melaka City Campus. The target respondents were 120 pre-selected newly registered students. The selection of these students was conducted soon after the end of the orientation week. The selection criteria was primarily based from their past leadership experiences. However, there were students who had also requested to participate. Once these 120 students have been identified, notifications were posted throughout the campus so that the selected students were informed that they had been selected and prepared themselves for the upcoming trip because this module was to be conducted off-campus.

Thus, the selection of respondents for this study can be classified as purposive sampling. Since the sampling is a non-probability sampling, it limits the generalizability of the findings.

A questionnaire was prepared consisting of items relating to all four independent variables and satisfaction. Section A. consists of five items relating to the content of the program. Section B consists of five items relating to the facilitator. Whereas, Sections C and D consist of items measuring teamwork and personal development respectively. Section E consists of items for satisfaction and the final section, Section F covers the demographic

characteristics of respondents. By using a 5-point likert scales ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree, participants were asked to select the number that exemplify how strongly they agree or disagreed with the statements. Items were adopted from pre-existing evaluation form developed by Institut Kepimpinan Pelajar UiTM and also Reinelt.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A series of reliability check were conducted in this study to provide evidence that the five constructs; facilitator, teamwork, leadership development, content and satisfaction. The results were presented in Table 1. All values were >0.70 which indicated that the scales were highly reliable (Nunnally, 1967).

Participants analysis: Majority of respondents were aged between 20-21 year old representing 70.6% of sample population. There were 22 male with 18.5% and 97 female respondents with 81.5% involved in this study. Most of the respondents were Semester 3 students with 39.2%. Respondents were representatives of all programs at city campus, Melaka with majority were students of Faculty of Business and Management.

Mean analysis: Table 2 provides means and standard deviation distribution of all variables. Based from Table 2 the score of respondent’s satisfaction is high (M = 4.67). Among the independent variables, content and facilitator scored the highest mean with M = 4.68. Teamwork scored a mean of 4.60 and personal development scored a mean of 4.50.

Correlations: Pearson product moment correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between independent variables and satisfaction. All independent variables have significant and positive relationships towards satisfaction

For hypotheses testing, a standard multiple regression was performed between content, facilitator, teamwork and personal development towards satisfaction. The results as displayed in Table 3. By using the enter method, significant models emerged for the model of this study. Results indicated that content has a significant effect on satisfaction ($\beta = 0.273, p < 0.05$). Thus, H₁ is supported. Teamwork element of the program also has a significant relationship towards satisfaction ($\beta = 0.442, p < 0.001$). Thus H₃ is supported. However, results failed to provide significant support for elements of facilitator and personal development. Thus, H₂ and H₄ are rejected. The dimensions of the program predicted about 48.8%

Table 1: Reliability

Measures	α	No. of items
Facilitator	0.86	5
Teamwork	0.84	5
Personal development	0.82	5
Content	0.87	4
Satisfaction	0.78	4

Table 2: Mean scores of variables

Measures	Mean	SD
Content	4.68	0.44
Facilitator	4.68	0.42
Teamwork	4.60	0.42
Personal development	4.50	0.42
Satisfaction	4.67	0.42

Table 3: Correlations results

Parameters	Content	Facilitator	Teamwork	Personal development
Satisfaction	0.594**	0.551**	0.66**	0.524**
	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed); *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 4: Regression analysis satisfaction

Parameters	H _{2a}		H _{2b}		H _{2c}		H _{2d}	
	B	β	B	β	B	β	B	β
Satisfaction	0.261	0.273*	0.069	0.069	0.439	0.442***	0.025	0.804
R ²	0.505							

Adjusted R² = 0.488; F_{4, 115} = 29.321; Model; Significant = 0.000; Dependent variable: Satisfaction; ***,***p<0.05, 0.01,0.001

(adjusted R²) of the variability in satisfaction. This study is to identify student’s satisfaction towards leadership development program organised under student leadership unit, UiTM city campus Melaka. Data were collected from 120 respondents, representatives of all programs offered at the city campus. Based from Table 4, the level of satisfaction among respondents is high (M = 4.67) based on the rating scale 1-5. Perhaps, the respondents value the opportunity for them to mix around with students from different programs and faculty.

With regards to relationships between independent and dependent variables, the results indicated that all variables have significant and positive relationships towards satisfaction. The strength of the relationship ranging between moderate to strong relationship. It indicates that an increase in any of the element of the program will result in an increase in student’s satisfaction.

For hypotheses testing, the results presented in Table 4 showed that only content of the program and teamwork possess significant effect towards satisfaction. Between these two elements, teamwork has the most significant unique contribution towards satisfaction.

Results failed to find support for significant effect between personal development and facilitator towards satisfaction.

One justification why teamwork has the most significant unique contribution perhaps due to the fact that this module is a physical-intensive module. The activities conducted and organised require and push them to learn to work-well in a team. Activities like explorace requires every team to work together effectively in order to finish as a team a quite challenging course and to get through every checkpoints. There are tasks provided at every checkpoint and they need to complete the task before being release by the facilitator to the next checkpoints. They also have to do Hanging Bridge and Flying Fox. All respondents did both of these activities even though there were a number of respondents who have fear of heights. From observation, those who have fear of heights were being motivated and coached by their group members. Some of the in-door activities also require them to work within their respective teams and also with the rest of the other groups to complete the task. For example, "Build Malaysia" activity requires all groups to actually work together as one big unit and come out with only one big map of Malaysia. Thus, the involvement and practice of this leadership elements of the programs perhaps explain why it is the most significant contribution towards participant's satisfaction.

For content of the program, the combination of in-door and out-door activities, interactive forum, group discussion together with critical and mind games seemed to work well with the students. Through observation, respondents seem to enjoy their experience throughout the program.

For the other hypotheses that failed to be substantiated, perhaps some of the approach or conduct of the activity need to be re-evaluated. Identification of possible areas that could be improved may produce different results. The results seem to suggest that perhaps, there need to be few modifications on the content which will also be related to the personal development. Perhaps, more in-group discussions between facilitators and the participants during the conduct of the module might offer better communication opportunity and effective discussion between participants and facilitators.

Even though only two independent variables have significant contributions towards satisfaction, the combination of the four variables or model of this study still contribute about 50% variance in satisfaction. Thus it is hoped that the survival qualities as leaders that are shared and infused during the programs is hoped to be able to enhance students participation during teaching

and learning process. This will in turn improve their leadership and communication skills as these are among the attributes that are lacking among our graduates (Hanapi and Nordin, 2014).

This study is not without a limitation. First is the subjective measures of the variables. The measure of satisfaction and elements of program are all subjective measures. Since, majority of the facilitators are also lecturers, the students may exaggerate their actual satisfaction on the survey instruments. Second, this study only provides a snapshot of the situation. Perhaps a longitudinal survey to examine the pre and post effect of respondent's satisfaction might provide a different added value into the body of knowledge.

CONCLUSION

It is hoped that, the respondents will value and adopt what they have practiced during the program. As for the facilitators, perhaps few adjustments on the conduct of the activity may improve the development of the soft skills of the students. Instead of conducting a mass interactive forum, a small group discussion facilitated by one facilitator may provide greater opportunity for respondents to participate. This study is significant for future development of world-class leaders among students of UiTM City Campus Melaka. The results indicated that every improvement may provide significant increase in student's satisfaction. Thus, an on-going review of the content, delivery, facilitators, games, location and many other elements of training programs may definitely provide positive results towards development of future leaders.

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