



Learning Through a Business Simulation Program among Semester 3 students of the Food Processing Technology Program (SPK)

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Abstract

The Food Enterprise course is a core course included in the curriculum content for the Food Processing Technology Program (SPK) which must be taken by Semester three (3) students. Through this course, students are required to carry out business activities or run a Business Simulation Program directly/hands-on. The objective of this study aims to assess students' understanding of the concept of management, which is the benefits that students have obtained through business simulation program activities. Besides that, also to identify the effect of the Business Simulation Program on students' soft skills. The study sample consisted of 159 student respondents of the third semester of the SPK Program which consisted of eight (8) Community Colleges which were Arau, Bagan Serai, Jelevu, Jerantut, Lahad Datu, Pasir Salak, Sabak Bernam and Sik. This study is with a quantitative design, which uses a questionnaire as a research instrument that is transferred in the form of a google form and distributed online to all respondents. Data collected were analyzed with SPSS 21.0 statistical program. The results of the study analyzed in the form of frequency and percentage have shown that 98% of respondents agreed that the effects of business simulation programs can improve the understanding of financial management. In addition, this study also examines the benefits of business simulation programs for students. A total of 97% of respondents agreed that this business simulation program activities can benefit students to acquire social skills. In addition to that, this business simulation program should be continued because 97% of students agree that through this program students gain knowledge of business management. The results suggested that to improve the students in business abilities and simulations that mimic real business contexts with a certain degree of complexity and obstacles are necessary. Through this study it can also be used as a finding to help lecturers and the department in general in devising a more effective teaching and learning strategy as well as applying entrepreneurial elements along with the development of current technology to students. In conclusion, the business simulation program that has been implemented allows students to better understand aspects of business management that have been learned in theory.

Keywords: - Food entrepreneurship, business simulation, food processing technology

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1. Introduction

The Food Enterprise course is a core course that is included in the curriculum content for the Food Processing Technology Program (SPK) and must be taken by students in semester three (3). This aims to provide knowledge and skills to start a business to foster students' interest in doing business. Through this course as well, students are required to carry out business activities or run a Business Simulation Program. The Business Simulation Program must be completed by every student who takes this Food Enterprise course. This is in reference to the Course Learning Outcome (CLO) that needs to be achieved in this course by every student, which is through food product sales activities that have been implemented directly. In fact, the total scoring distribution of Continuous Assessment (PB) for this CLO is the highest and the scoring is based on the rubric that has been prepared.

This program offers students hands-on business experience. In the Business Simulation Program, students will work together in a small group that has been divided to carry out the required tasks, starting with the paperwork, followed by a Market Study of food products, calculating production costs and profits as well as will make a postmortem after completing the program that has been carried out. According to Razak et al. (2018), the entrepreneurial activities that have been carried out at the campus level are intended to enable students to practice the management theories and concepts that have been taught and to see the extent of understanding and give students experience.

The Ministry of Higher Education also issued guidelines for Entrepreneurship Integrated Education (EIE) in Higher Education Institutions Edition 2020 to cultivate entrepreneurial knowledge and realize the vision to produce graduates with entrepreneurial skills. Through the entrepreneurial ecosystem approach, the entrepreneurial agenda can be nurtured not only on campus but will also be practiced after graduation. This can deal with the unemployment crisis which is an issue among graduates. In 2020, the Department of Statistics Malaysia has announced that there is an increase as many as 772,900 people at a percentage rate of 4.8 percent recorded last December shows graduates who are not yet employed. The issue of unemployment among the youth is not a new phenomenon in the country.

Although the results of the continuous assessment of students for the Food Enterprise Course show that it has been achieved for each CLO, however, to date, there has not yet been a study assessing students' understanding of management concepts through business simulation activities that have been carried out by students in the third semester of the Program Food Processing Technology who take this course. Therefore, this research can help to identify the extent to which the impact or effect of the direct/hands-on food business sales activities that have been experienced by students can help students gain benefits. This also can improve the next soft skills to help students' inclination towards a career in entrepreneurship. This is supported by the findings of Othman et al. (2012) who stated that there is a tendency to be involved in

entrepreneurial activities if they have a positive perception towards entrepreneurial careers.

This study focuses on the respondents who are students of Semester three (3) who took the Food Enterprise Course at eight (8) Community Colleges that have a Food Processing Technology Certificate Program (SPK) which are Arau, Bagan Serai, Jelevu, Jerantut, Lahad Datu, Pasir Salak, Sabak Bernam and Sik that use the Curriculum Syllabus Version: 271020_1 Effective 2020.

This study aims to identify the benefits that have been obtained by students through the activities of the Business Simulation Program. Besides that, to identify the effect of the Business Simulation Program on students' soft skills.

2. Methodology

In this study, the questionnaire method was used to obtain the necessary data by using research instruments provided in the Malay language. This instrument provided is guided by Razak et al. (2018) which has been adapted with slight modifications to achieve the objectives of the study. The research instrument covers demographic information of the respondents followed by Part A which is eight (8) items related to the Effect of Business Simulation Programs on Students' Soft Skills, while Part B has eleven (11) items related to the Benefits of Business Simulation Programs to Students and finally followed by Part C which consists of six (6) items related to the Causal Factors of this Business Simulation Program need to be continued for students. The instrument produced is transferred in the form of a google form online and distributed to all respondents.

The study population consisted of 159 third semester students who took the Food Enterprise Course from 8 Community Colleges that have a Food Processing Technology Program (SPK), including Arau, Bagan Serai, Jelevu, Jerantut, Lahad Datu, Pasir Salak, Sabak Bernam and Sik who have undergone the Business Simulation Program at their respective Colleges have been selected in the sample of this study. The study period takes place in Session 1 2022/2023 which refers to the 2022/2023 Academic Calendar of the Polytechnic and Community College Study Program. Throughout the process of making Business Simulation program a success, the respondents indirectly have learned various things related to business and financial management for an entity business. Respondents were asked to provide feedback on skills and benefits obtained throughout operating the program until the end.

The students are required to answer in the Google form that has been distributed during the review week which is the 15th week of teaching and learning. Feedback receives further categorized for the data entry process. The data collected was analyzed with SPSS 21.0 statistical program. The study analyzed the percentages and frequency of the respondents for each question.

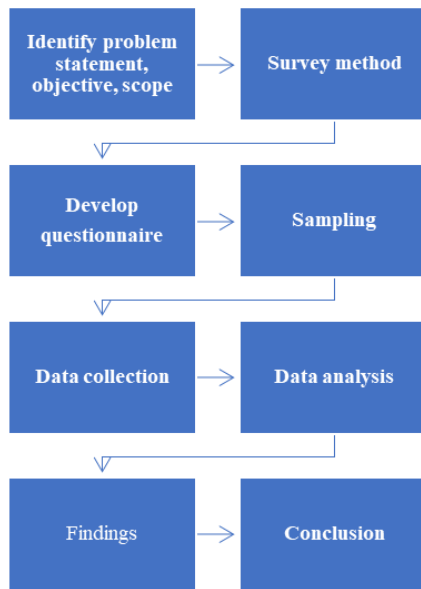


Fig. 1. The flowchart process of the study

3. Result and Discussion

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents involved in this study. From the entire sample, a total of 37 people (23.0%) were male students while 122 people (77.0%) were female students.

Table 1. The respondents of the research

Item	n	(f) %
Sex		
Male	37	77.0
Female	122	23.0
Race		
Malay	154	97.0
India	3	2.0
Others	2	1.0
Age		
Below 19	94	59.0
20-25	65	41.0
Community College		
Arau	15	9.0
Bagan Serai	32	20.0
Jelebu	21	13.0
Jerantut	9	6.0
Lahad Datu	7	4.0
Pasir Salak	17	11.0
Sabak Bernam	27	17.0
Sik	31	19.0
Entrepreneurship Experience		
Yes	139	87.0
No	42	13.0

Through the acquisition of research findings Part, A: The Effect of Business Simulation Program on Students' Soft Skills showed that 98% of respondents agreed that the effect of business simulation program can improve the understanding of financial management. This is because students need to calculate the production costs for a selected product such as the cost of raw materials, packaging costs and set the appropriate amount of profit. In addition, 99% of students agree that this program can improve decision-making skills. Students can gain business experience as a first step to venture into the field of entrepreneurship as a job opportunity after graduation and have the potential to become successful entrepreneurs (Nasharudin & Harun, 2010). This can overcome the issue of unemployment among graduates which according to the report of the Ministry of Higher Education (2020), found that more than 35,000 graduates were unemployed within six months after graduation in 2020.

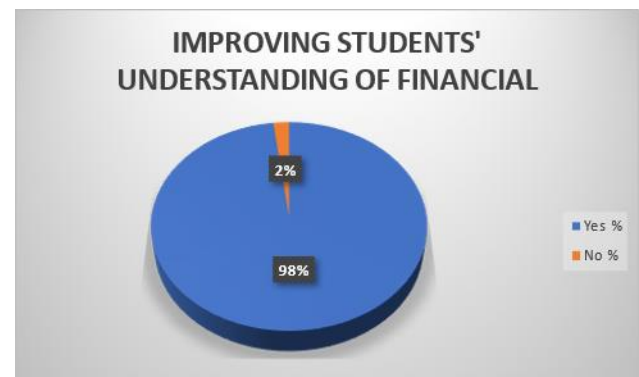


Fig. 2. Pie chart of the respondents on improving student's understanding of financial

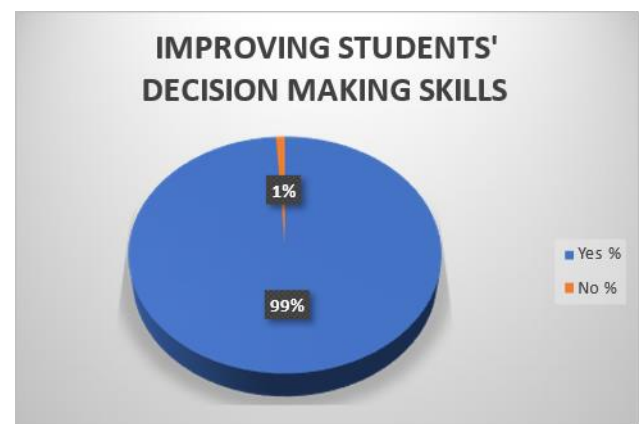


Fig. 3. Pie chart of the respondents on improving student's decision-making skills

Following the findings of Part B, this study also examines the benefits of business simulation programs for students. A total of 97% of respondents agreed that this business simulation program benefits students to acquire social skills. Among them, every student must put aside the feeling of embarrassment to attract the interest of customers to ensure that their products are sold. In addition, the results of the study show that 96% agree that

students can master effective promotional techniques. This is because they need to use online and offline mediums and follow technology trends in the current era of globalization to market their sales products. In addition to that, they need to design posters for promotion of their products by using applications such as Canva to attract customers.

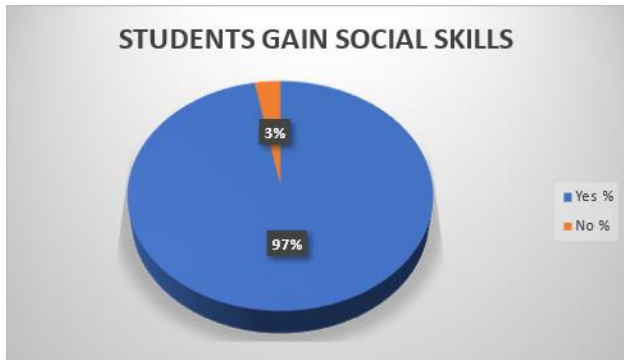


Fig. 4. Pie chart of the respondents on students gain social skills

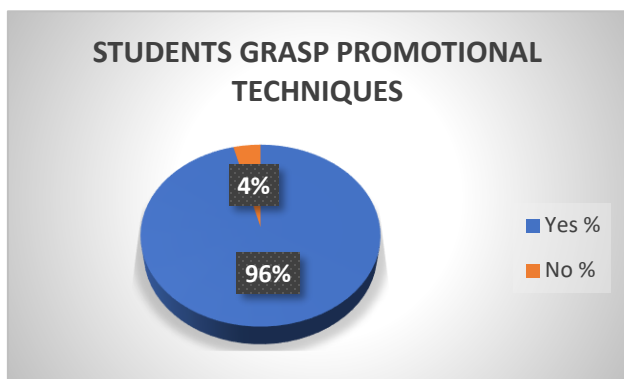


Fig. 5. Pie chart of the respondents on students grasp promotional technique

Findings of Part C: Causal Factors This Business Simulation Program needs to be continued for students showing 97% of students agree that through this program students gain knowledge of business management. This data is supported by Frederick (2014) through student involvement in real activities can improve understanding in the course studied.

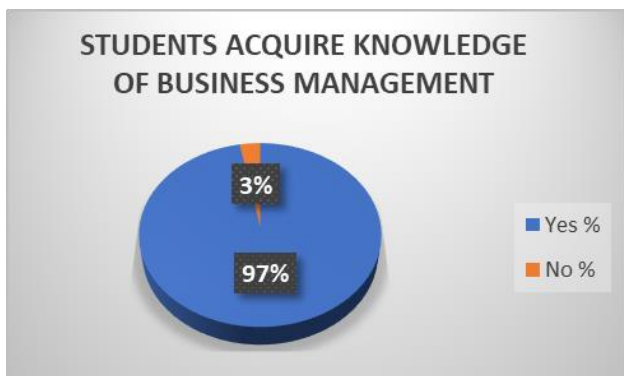


Fig. 6. Pie chart of the respondents on students acquire knowledge of Business Management

4. Conclusion

This study is carried out with the objective to identify the benefits and effects of the Business Simulation Program or business activities that have been carried out by students. The results of this study have proven that there are positive findings among students in venturing into the field of entrepreneurship. The results suggested that to improve the students in business abilities and simulations that mimic real business contexts with a certain degree of complexity and obstacles are necessary. This is also supported by Othman et al. (2012) that the delivery of entrepreneurship education to students through experience or hands-on is more efficient compared to traditional teaching in the form of theory alone such as in lectures, writing essays and exams. Through this program as well, the students were exposed to real business concepts and were able to attract the interest of the youth to make entrepreneurship a career in dealing with the issue of unemployment among graduates. Therefore, it is hoped that additional courses such as copywriting courses for improving the skill of producing promotional sentences can be attended by students. This course can help students to improve business and entrepreneurial ability. Through this study it can also be used as a finding to help lecturers and the department in general in devising a more effective teaching and learning strategy as well as applying entrepreneurial elements along with the development of current technology to students.

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