

Curriculum Assessment in Social Sciences at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation for undergraduate programme in the Faculty of Human Sciences, UPSI producing quality and competitive educators. Curriculum implementation has to go through an assessment process that aims to determine the problem, select relevant information and collect and analyses this information for conclusions that are useful for curriculum improvement. This initial study used a questionnaire with a sample of 150 graduates of the Faculty of Human Sciences who graduated in the year 2012/2013. Descriptive analysis was used to examine the effectiveness of variables, assessment of knowledge and skills of graduates, application of knowledge, skills of graduates and assessment in terms of employers and colleagues. The results showed that all variables are at high level, except for the assessment of knowledge and skills of graduate's variable, which was at a moderate level. This initial study showed that the level of implementation of the social science curriculum at UPSI is noteworthy in several respects concerning knowledge and skills among major courses. As a producer of graduates who will be called teachers, the responsibility of the faculty to produce quality graduates and be competitive, in line with the objectives of UPSI and the country as a whole.

Keywords: effectiveness, curriculum, social scientists, educators

1. Introduction

Education is the key element forming the basis for the realization of national aspirations. Changes in global education constitute a challenge to national education plans (Ministry of Education, 2012). The impact of globalization, liberalization and the development of information technology around the world require the Ministry of Education (MOE) to make adjustments and improvements to the existing education system, including at the level of Institutions of Higher Learning (Institusi Pengajian Tinggi-IPT). IPT also play a role in generating human capital, which has the capacity for knowledge, skills and personal characteristics that are superior in terms of students' holistic science, personal character or spiritual self (Ministry of Higher Education, 2012) and IPT was also given responsibility for producing a group of creative and innovative talent (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In the course of time and in the face of the globalization of social, economic, technological and ideological demands, higher education institutions accepted the challenges (Ministry of Education, 2014). Thus the learning process is a systematic and comprehensive path towards producing quality graduates (Ministry of Education, 2014). The best education system is one that covers the entire life of society; it does not stop when the individual leaves school or graduates from institutions of higher learning, but it is a continuation of life to retirement by contributing to developing the nation (Mior Khairul Azrin, 2011).

The purpose of this paper is to discuss the effectiveness of the curriculum implementation undergraduate programme in the Faculty of Human Sciences, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris in order to produce quality and competitive educators from graduates perspective, employer perspective and colleagues perspective.

2. Literature Review

An appropriate curriculum should be developed or altered so that individuals can meet current needs and in line with the desire of the country to try to provide a high quality and outstanding education system in order to develop the new millennium generation towards Vision 2020. An understanding of the curriculum will give an advantage to educators in implementing educational programmes more effectively (Mohini & Suhaila, 2011). As an educational institution it has to deliver the products and services necessary to achieve the outcomes it intends to produce (Javier, 2012).

At the level of educational institutions, evaluation and review of the effective and committed task of improving the quality of a course or programme of academic studies is necessary in order to remain relevant to national needs. Curriculum assessment will be undertaken to improve the quality of the education system in the Faculty of Education. In addition, through the assessment carried out, students are able to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the programme offered, so that the faculty can improve on weaknesses that

exist; this is important in order to produce quality graduates in accordance with the requirements of the ministry school (Mohini & Suhaila, 2011). Therefore, a study should be undertaken to assess the effectiveness of the programme or curriculum that was implemented in the form of an institution or programme evaluation studies curriculum.

The need to review the effectiveness of the curriculum by getting information from various parties, especially graduates, employers, colleagues and students, is vital to enable UPSI to design strategies to promote higher quality programmes that can be marketed and are relevant to changing times and needs.

The views of employers and colleagues on the effectiveness of the curriculum should be considered in evaluating the performance of employees as well as colleagues. Employers now require workers who have personal characteristics including communication skills and a good knowledge of ICT. Research by Ahmad et al. (2010) examined the interdependency between job satisfaction and performance among employees in Pakistan, where performance was measured based on employees' quality of work, productivity and problem solving skills. The general skills required by employers are language skills, up-to-date general knowledge and the ability to serve customers, as well as general knowledge and experience in ICT or disclosure work (Muhammad Hazrul, 2012).

3. Study Design

In this study, the study design uses quantitative methods involving a survey method (surveys) using a questionnaire. There are three sets of questionnaires to three groups of respondents; graduate set, employers set and colleagues set, distributed randomly to graduates who have been placed in formal schools. The initial study sample size was 150 people for the three groups of respondents. Assessments from three different parties give different significance in the direct recipient of the curriculum FSK (graduates), those receiving and studying the graduates (employers) and the official in charge of the joint graduates (colleagues).

The research involved four variables, namely the level of knowledge and skills of graduates, knowledge application and skills of graduates, employer assessment phase of graduates and the level of assessment of graduate colleagues. The Likert scale was used measuring 5 points varying according to the variable. For the variable level of assessment of knowledge and skills of graduates, the scale used is 1-unsatisfactory, 2- poor, 3- moderately satisfactory, 4- satisfactory and 5- very satisfactory. Enabling the measurement scale application level of knowledge and skills of graduates are 1 strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- not sure, 4- agree and 5- strongly agree. For measuring the level of how employers and co-workers value graduates, the scale used is 1- very low, 2- low, 3- moderate, 4- good and 5- excellent.

4. Findings And Discussion

4.1 Analysis of Demography

Table 1. Background of respondents (FSK Graduate UPSI)

Background of Respondents (FSK Graduate UPSI)		N	%
Location	Urban	81	54.0
	Rural	69	46.0
	Total	150	100
Gender	Male	47	31.3
	Female	103	68.7
	Total	150	100
Bachelor degree	Geography	30	20.0
	History	30	20.0
	Islamic Studies	30	20.0
	Moral Education	30	20.0
	Malaysian Studies	30	20.0
	Total	150	100.0
Year of graduation	2012	50	33.3
	2013	100	66.7
	Total	150	100.0
Honors degree division	First class	49	32.7
	Upper second class	100	66.7
	Lower second class	1	0.7
	Total	150	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of respondents' background FSK UPSI graduates. For the location of the school, a total of 81 respondents (54%) were in urban areas and the remaining 69 graduates (46%) in rural areas. For the gender of the respondents, a total of 47 (31.3%) involved male graduates and 103 (68.7%) female graduates. Percentage of bachelor's degree studies shows 30 (20%) graduates each for ISMP Geography, History, Islamic

Studies, Moral Education and Malaysian Studies. For year of graduation, 50 students (33.3%) graduated in 2012 and 100 people (67.7%) graduated in 2013. As regards degree classification, a total of 49 (32.7%) graduates received a first class degree, 100 people (66.7%) had an upper second class and 1 (0.7%) had a lower second class degree.

Table 2. Background of respondents (employers)

Background of respondent (employer)		N	%
Gender	Male	65	43.3
	Female	85	56.7
	Total	150	100.0
Position	Headmaster	130	86.7
	Senior Teacher	4	2.7
	Head of Subject	2	1.3
	Other	14	9.3
	Total	150	100.0
Length of experience in education field	1 – 10 years	50	33.3
	11 - 20 years	54	36.0
	21 - 30 years	46	30.7
	Total	150	100.0

Table 2 shows the background of graduate employers. A total of 65 (43.4%) of respondents were male and the rest were women, 85 (56.7%). For the position of the employer, a total of 130 respondents (86.7%) involved principals, 4 respondents (2.7%) senior assistants, 2 respondents (1.3%) head of subject ; 'others' comprised 14 respondents (9.3%). For the experience of employers in the field of education, a total of 50 respondents (33.3%) had experience ranging from 1 to 10 years, 54 respondents (36%) had experience of 11 to 20 years and 46 respondents (30.7%) had experience of 21 to 30 years.

Table 3. Background of respondents (colleague)

Background of Respondents (Colleague)		N	%
Gender	Male	92	61.3
	Female	58	38.7
	Total	150	100.0
Position	Principal	28	18.7
	Senior Teacher	4	2.7
	Head of Subject	89	59.3
	Head of Committee	26	17.3
	Other	3	2.0
	Total	150	100.0
Length of experience in education field	1 – 10 years	133	88.7
	11 - 20 years	12	8.0
	21 - 30 years	5	3.3
	Total	150	100.0

Table 3 shows the background of graduate colleagues who participated in this study. A total of 92 (61.3%) male colleagues were involved and 58 women (38.7%). For the position of colleagues, a total of 28 respondents (16.7%) involved principals, 4 senior teachers (2.7%), 89 heads of subject (59.3%), 26 heads of committee (17.3%) and 3 'others' (2.0%). For the colleagues' length of experience in education, a total of 133 (88.7%) had experience ranging from 1 to 10 years, 12 (8%) experience of 11 to 20 years and 5 respondents (3.3%) had experience of between 21 and 30 years.

4.2 Analysis of Graduate Assessment in Knowledge and Skills

Further analysis of the effectiveness of the implementation of the curriculum will involve variables, namely the assessment of knowledge and skills, application of their knowledge and skills, and assessment by their employer and colleagues. Three stages consist of a low level (a score of 0.00 1.66), medium level (score of 1.67 3.33) and high level (score 3:33 5.00).

Table 4. Level of graduate assessment in knowledge and skills

Construct	Low level		Medium Level		High Level		Mean	SD	Mean Level
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
• Major Course Knowledge	0	0.0	119	79.3	31	20.7	3.09	0.58	Medium
• Curriculum Knowledge	0	0.0	0	0.0	150	100.0	4.16	0.34	High
• Co-Curriculum Knowledge	0	0.0	6	4.0	144	96.0	4.17	0.41	High
• Career Information Knowledge	0	0.0	4	2.7	146	97.3	4.18	0.49	High
• T&L Knowledge	0	0.0	7	4.7	143	95.3	4.04	0.36	High
• T&L Assesment Knowledge	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.16	0.36	High
• Major Course Skills	0	0.0	120	80.0	30	20.0	3.11	0.52	Medium
• ICT Skills	0	0.0	6	4.0	144	96.0	4.19	0.43	High
• Language Skills	0	0.0	6	4.0	144	96.0	4.19	0.39	High
• Soft Skills	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.21	0.40	High

As shown in Table 4, the variables shows the standard of graduates' knowledge of major courses: at medium level, a total of 119 (79.3%) and 31 at high level (20.7%). Obviously the level of graduates' major course knowledge assessment as a whole is at a medium level (M= 3.09, SD = 0.58). For the curriculum knowledge variable all respondents answered at high level, 150 (100.0%). The level of the variable overall is at a high level (M = 4.16 and SD = 0.34). The variable of co-curriculum knowledge clearly indicates the average level of 6 (4.0%) and high levels of 144 (96.0%).

The level of the co curriculum knowledge variable as a whole is at a high level (M = 4.17 and SD = 0.41). The variable of career information knowledge is at a medium level of 4 (2.7%) and a high level of about 146 people (97.3%). Obviously the level of the knowledge of career information variable as a whole is at a high level (M = 4.18 and SD = 0.49). The next variable - T&L knowledge – shows 7 at medium level (4.7%) and 143 at high level (95.3%). Moreover, the level of the T&L knowledge variable as a whole is at a high level (M = 4:04 and SD = 0.36). Finally, for the T&L assessment knowledge variable, 3 respondents were at medium level (2.0%) and 147 at high level (98.0%). Therefore the level of the T&L assessment knowledge variable as a whole is at a high level (M = 4.16 and SD = 0.36).

For the skill level, the table shows the graduate major courses skills variable 120 (80.0%) at medium level and 30 (20%) at high level. Therefore the level of graduate major courses skills assessment as a whole is at a moderate level (M = 3.11 and SD = 0.52). For the sub variables of ICT skills, there were 6 at medium level (4.0%) and 144 (96.0%) at high level. Obviously the level of ICT skills variables as a whole is at a high level (M = 4.19 and SD = 0.43).

The language skills variable shows 6 at medium level (4.0%) and 144 (96.0%) at high level. It can be concluded that the overall language skills variable is at a high level (M = 4.19 and SD = 0.39). Finally, for the soft skills variable, there were 3 at a medium level (2.0%) and 147 at high level (98.0%). Therefore the level of the soft skills variable as a whole is high (M = 4.21 and SD = 0.40).

4.3 Analysis of Graduate Applications in Knowledge and Skills

Table 5. Level of graduate applications in knowledge and skills

Construct	Low level		Medium Level		High Level		Mean	SD	Mean Level
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
• Curriculum Knowledge	0	0.0	6	4.0	144	96.0	4.20	0.44	High
• Co-curriculum Knowledge	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.20	0.41	High
• ICT Skills	0	0.0	11	7.3	139	92.7	4.25	0.48	High
• Language Skills	0	0.0	5	3.3	145	96.7	4.24	0.44	High
• Soft Skills	0	0.0	9	6.0	141	94.0	4.14	0.45	High
• Skills Values	0	0.0	2	1.3	148	98.7	4.19	0.45	High

Table 5 shows the variables based on the level of graduate curriculum knowledge application are at a

medium level for 6 (4.0%) and high levels for 144 (96.0%). Obviously the graduate curriculum knowledge application variable as a whole is at a moderate level ($M = 4.20$ and $SD = 0.44$). For the graduate level co-curriculum knowledge application variable, at medium level there were 3 (2.0%), and 147 at high level (98.0%). Obviously the graduate co-curriculum knowledge application variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.20$ and $SD = 0.41$).

Next, the variable for the level of application of ICT skills of graduates had 11 at medium level (7.3%) and 139 at high level (92.7%). Obviously the level of application of ICT skills of graduates as a whole is high ($M = 4.25$ and $SD = 0.48$). For the sub variable of application of language skills for graduates, there were 5 at medium level (3.3%) and 145 at high level (96.7%). Obviously the level of the application of ICT skills of graduates variable as a whole is high ($M = 4.24$ and $SD = 0.44$).

The sub variable for soft skills of graduates language application clearly indicates 9 at medium level (6.0%) and 141 at high level (94.0%). Obviously the level of the variable for application of ICT skills of graduates as a whole is high ($M = 4.14$ and $SD = 0.45$). Finally, the variable for the sub skills of graduates' moral values application shows 2 at average level (1.3%) and 148 at high level (98.7%). Obviously the variable for graduates' level of skills of application values as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.19$ and $SD = 0.45$).

4.4 Analysis of Employers' Evaluation

Table 6. Analysis of graduate employer's level

Construct	Low level		Medium Level		High Level		Mean	SD	Mean Level
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
• Communication and Interpersonal	0	0.0	0	0.0	150	100.0	4.17	0.37	High
• Decision making and solving problem	0	0.0	5	3.3	145	96.7	4.19	0.35	High
• ICT	0	0.0	4	2.7	146	97.3	4.05	0.37	High
• Leadership	0	0.0	2	1.3	148	98.7	4.22	0.39	High
• Teamwork	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.21	0.39	High
• Work Planning	0	0.0	5	3.3	145	96.7	4.12	0.40	High
• Thinking Skills	0	0.0	8	5.3	142	94.7	4.11	0.41	High
• Ethics and Values	0	0.0	15	10.0	135	90.0	4.16	0.55	High

Table 6 shows the evaluation phase of graduate employers. The first variable, for communication and interpersonal skills, shows 150 (100.0%) of respondents rated at a high level. Obviously the communication and interpersonal skills variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.17$ and $SD = 0.37$). The variable for decision making and problem solving showed a total of 5 (3.3%) at medium level, with high levels totalling 145 (96.7%). Obviously the decision making and problem solving variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.19$ and $SD = 0.35$).

The next variable, ICT, showed a total of 4 (2.7%) at medium level, with high levels for 146 (97.3%). Obviously the ICT variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.05$ and $SD = 0.37$). For the leadership variables, there were 2 (1.3%) at medium level, and 148 at high levels (98.7%). Obviously the overall leadership variable is at a high level ($M = 4.22$ and $SD = 0.39$). Teamwork variables showed 3 (2.0%) at medium level, with 147 at high levels (98.0%). Obviously the level of the teamwork variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.21$ and $SD = 0.39$).

Next, work planning variables showed 5 at a medium level (3.3%), with high levels consisting of 145 (96.7%). Obviously the level of the work planning variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.12$ and $SD = 0.40$). The thinking skills variable showed 8 at a medium level (5.3%), and 142 at high levels (94.7%). Clearly the thinking skills variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.11$ and $SD = 0.41$). Lastly, the ethics and values variable showed 15 at a medium level (10.0%) and 135 at high levels (90.0%). Obviously the ethics and values variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.16$ and $SD = 0.55$).

4.5 Analysis of Colleagues Evaluation

Table 7. Level of evaluation of graduate colleagues

Construct	Low level		Medium Level		High Level		Mean	SD	Mean Level
	N	%	N	%	N	%			
• Communication and Interpersonal	0	0.0	4	2.7	146	97.3	4.13	0.32	High
• Decision making and solving problem	0	0.0	6	4.0	144	96.0	4.18	0.38	High
• ICT	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.23	0.39	High
• Leadership	0	0.0	2	1.3	148	98.7	4.25	0.40	High
• Teamwork	0	0.0	2	1.3	148	98.7	4.32	0.41	High
• Work Planning	0	0.0	0	0.0	150	100.0	4.24	0.35	High
• Thinking Skills	0	0.0	3	2.0	147	98.0	4.20	0.37	High
• Ethics and Values	0	0.0	5	3.3	145	96.7	4.23	0.44	High

Table 7 shows the analysis by assessing the level of graduate colleagues. The first variable is interpersonal communication, which shows 4 at medium level (2.7%) and 146 at high levels (97.3%). Obviously the communication and interpersonal variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.13$ and $SD = 12:32$). The decision making and problem solving variable showed a moderate level for 6 (4.0%) and high levels for 144 (96.0%). Obviously the decision making variable and problem solving variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.18$ and $SD = 0.38$).

The next variable in simple ICT showed a total of 3 (2.0%) at medium level and 147 at high levels (98.0%). Obviously the ICT variable as a whole is at a high level ($n = 4.23$ and $sd = 0.39$). For the leadership variable, there were 2 at medium level (1.3%) and 148 at high levels (98.7%). Obviously the overall leadership variable is at a high level ($M = 4.25$ and $SD = 0.40$). Teamwork variables showed a medium level for 2 (1.3%) and high levels for 148 (98.7%). Obviously the teamwork variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.32$ and $SD = 0.41$).

Work planning variables showed a high level for all 150 (100.0%). Obviously the work planning variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.24$ and $SD = 0.35$). The ordered thinking skills variable showed a moderate level for 3 (2.0%), with high levels for 147 (98.0%). Clearly the thinking skills variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.20$ and $SD = 0.37$). Finally, the ethics and values variables showed a total of 5 (3.3%) at medium level and 145 at high levels (96.7%). Obviously the ethics and values variable as a whole is at a high level ($M = 4.23$ and $SD = 0.44$).

5. Discussion

The findings of the analysis showed that the assessment of knowledge and skills of graduates is at a high average level of knowledge and skills, unless major courses are at a moderate level. The analysis of the level of application of knowledge and skills of graduates shows all variables are at a high level. The research findings are mostly the same as OUM research, in which they received a rating of 3.8 for knowledge and skills gained from the study programmes, which were satisfactory, and the teaching and learning performance of tutors and facilitators generally met their expectations, except for the ability to relate teaching to current practices of the industry (Latifah & Ramli, 2010). This finding coincides with the findings of Mohini and Suhaila (2011), which show that UTM students are satisfied with the programme because it has provided skills and knowledge, employing good trainers and preparing students for the world of employment. This shows that the programme in FSK UPSI is at a satisfactory level and must be maintained.

The evaluation of graduate employers as well as assessment of undergraduate colleagues also showed that all variables are at a high level. The findings are in line with the 2012 Ball State University Teachers College Employer Satisfaction Survey, which states that a total of 51.4% of principals indicated that they "strongly agree" with the statement that they would consider hiring a teacher who completed their programme through Ball State University in the future. The findings are also similar to the work performance of the teachers of the Cotabato City division on the seven domains, which is rated as proficient (Annierah, Kamarulzaman, Maeda & Datu, 2013). The findings from Hui et al. (2013) strengthen the leadership style practised, either transformational or transactional, which tends to be more rational, spontaneous and impulsive nature, and positive in relation to decision making. This supported past studies where peer or colleague relationships play an important role in adolescents in work (Cui et al., 2010; Kok et al., 2011). Therefore, academic staff attitudes are affected in part by workplace conditions such as a positive and safe work environment, a supportive administration, career progression, salary, work teams, peers, and the job itself as well as evaluation by employers and colleagues (Fauziah & Kamaruzaman, 2009).

6. Conclusion

The results of this study show that the effectiveness of the curriculum at the Faculty of Human Sciences, UPSI to produce graduates to meet the needs of the education sector is perceived at high and medium level. The review and improvement of the curriculum is expected to enhance the effectiveness of the course of study being undertaken. In addition, this study also showed that the assessment of the performance of graduates of FSK, UPSI can be used as a tool to check the effectiveness of the curriculum. The effectiveness of the delivery of information and knowledge enables graduates to increase their confidence. In fact, employers will show a high level of confidence when graduates demonstrate their capability. On the basis of the findings of the study, a phase of improvement should follow, with a comprehensive action plan. Further research is expected to be done by involving a larger sample size for the quantitative method. Qualitative method is also significant to be considered for this study in order to deliver a more in depth research.

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