

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON SKILL COURSES PROGRAM IN COMMUNITY COLLEGE MALAYSIA

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Abstract

The Malaysian Community Colleges is an access for secondary school level to obtain knowledge and skills before they involve into the job market or pursue their education at a higher level. Community Colleges of Malaysia intend to transform into an education center of excellence in the fields of technology, business and service industries. The purpose of this working paper is to present findings studies of family income, differences income before and after enrolling in courses, distribution income during and after the course, current income distribution and type of employment, and level of self-confidence of the participants and quality of services of Community colleges in Malaysia. This study applies cross section survey method based on questionnaires that are answered by respondents. Cluster Sampling is used due to the large population. The findings of the study shows an increase in the level of self confidence, self competency of participants and increase in income after going through the programmes at Malaysian Community Colleges. Suggestions to enhance the quality of services, lecturers and ICT were also discussed towards improving qualities of service and skills-based programmes and life long learning in Malaysia for the future.

Keywords: Community colleges, outcome and impact, knowledge and skills

Introduction

Rebranding of the community colleges as announced on 27th June 2006 through the National Implementation Task Force (NITF) became a new platform to widen the scope and responsibilities of community colleges. Its purpose is to enhance the role of community colleges in contributing to the development of quality human capital. It has become an alternative path and a lifelong learning center or hub across all age levels and academic qualifications and skills of every individual who realize the importance of and are willing to learn. Relatively, lecturers must be equipped with various skills that are relevant to the demands and needs outlined in the curriculum and co-curriculum in community colleges to improve the inovative and creative teaching & learning. The existing skills and knowledge demonstrated by current lecturers in community colleges are the measuring tool that gauge the quality and direction of community colleges to keep on being competitive in the future.

The needs of outcome assessment for skill based courses

To maximise the benefits from the implentation of courses carried out at community colleges, there must an effort to formulate a concept involving staff/lecturers and outcome/impact on indivuals in an organisation. Refer to an expert in training assessment

Paul Kearns (2008), learning organization see evaluation and return to investment (ROI) when appropriate as intergral to a holistic learning culture.’ Based on the following formula; training = input and learning = outcome.

The need of analysis of course/training is one of the methods used to analyse the enhancement of individual quality for the purpose of measuring the utility value obtained from an organisation. There are various models that have been developed in the past 40 years in evaluating the outcome and impact of a program or skill-based training implemented. The influence of Kirkpatrick Multi Level model is one of the important framework in evaluating outcome and impact dan it includes (Tamkin, 2002);

Reaction level

Learning / initial level

Behavior / middle level

Results / Final level.

Identifying intrinsically from the Kirkpatrick model is focussing on the change in behavior as a result from training programmes or courses intervention that significantly reflects the successful outcome/impact from the programme or courses attended by a participant. Any change in that stage has a direct relationship with the impact of training or course implemented.

Evaluation methodology

This descriptive research involves collection of data for the purpose of evaluating the level or resolving issues related to self competency of course participants and current situation of programmes in community colleges besides using correlation techniques to identify relationships between two or more variables and using this form of relationship to make predictions.

The design of this research is based on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Qualitative method involves examining past models and studies (desk research) on courses involving literacy and skill aspects.

The quantitative study applies cross section survey based on questionnaires answered by respondents. Cluster sampling is used since the population is too large. Therefore, respondents will be selected randomly according to zones (northern zone, middle zone, eastern zone and southern zone) of Peninsula Malaysia. Respondents involved consist of students from community colleges all over the peninsula.

This evaluation study involves 687 samples selected from 14 community colleges in Peninsula Malaysia. Respondents involved in this study consist of course participants who are undergoing and have completed short term programmes and long term programmes at selected community colleges.

Evaluation findings

This research was conducted on students and ex-students of community colleges through out Malaysia who have completed courses offered by community colleges. The results of analysis showed that 687 respondents have given feedbacks in the questionnaires. The analysis was divided into four sections which are:

Respondents’ Profile

Attitude Towards Skills Aspect

Self confidence aspect

Service quality aspect

Respondents’ Profile

This section explains respondents’ profiles which include college name, course, gender, race, age, marital status, country of residence, education level, job, income and courses taken while in community college.

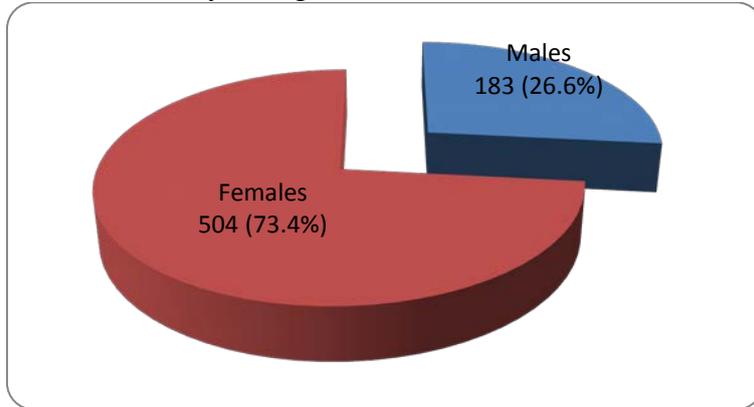


Diagram 1.1: Respondents Spread According To Gender

From the spread of respondents according to gender, it was found that there were more females who attend courses at community colleges, which was 73.4 percent compared to males which was only 26.6 percent.

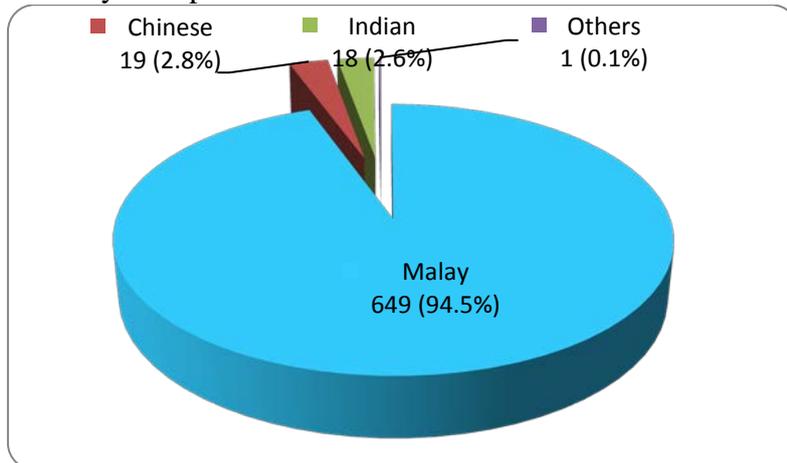


Diagram 1.2: spread of respondents according to race

Diagram 1.2 shows the spread of respondents according to race. It was found that most respondents were Malays which came up to 94.5 percent compared to the Chinese, Indians and others.

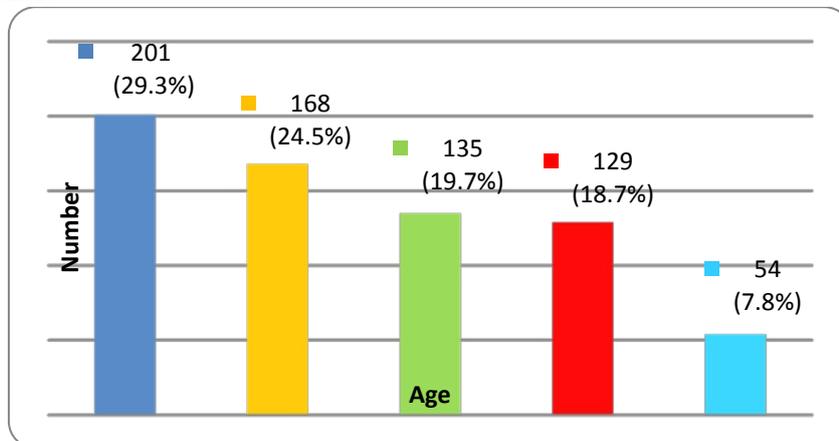


Diagram 1.3: Spread of respondents according to age

Diagram 1.3 shows the spread of respondents according to age. It was found that the highest percentage of respondents were aged 20 and below which was 29.3 percent. This was followed by respondents who were between 21 and 30 years old which was 24.4 percent. While the lowest number of respondents were 51 years old and above which was 7.8 percent only.

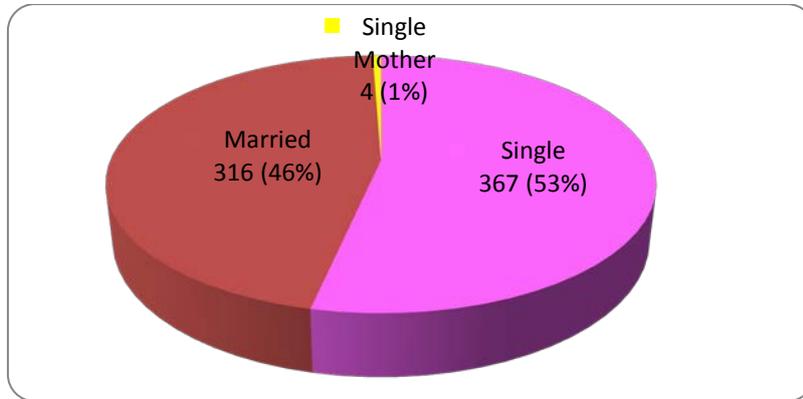


Diagram 1.4: Spread of respondents according to marital status

The spread of respondents according to marital status showed that most respondents were single with the highest percentage of 53.2 percent. This was followed by married respondents which was 46.2 percent and single mothers which was only 0.6 percent.

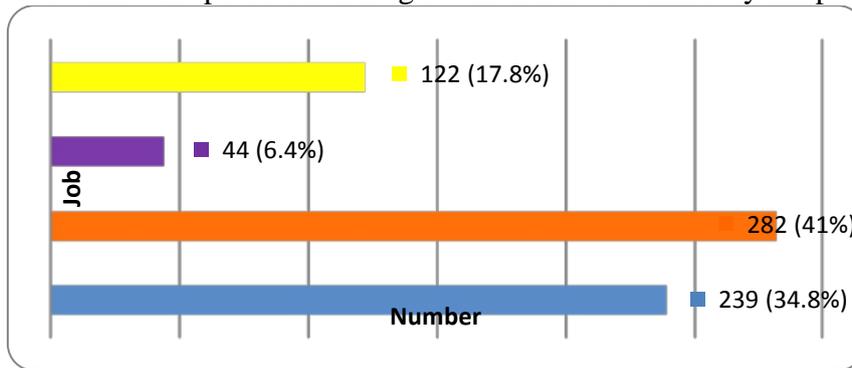


Diagram 1.5 : Spread of Respondents According To Type Of Job

The diagram shows the spread of respondents according to type of job. The findings show that working on their own or doing business is the career chosen by the highest number of respondents, that is, 282 respondents (41%), followed by respondents who have not or are not working which are 239 respondents (34.8%) and only 44 respondents (6.4%) choose to work in the private sector. This can be summarised that most respondents who attended skill based courses at community colleges have goals to become entrepreneurs.

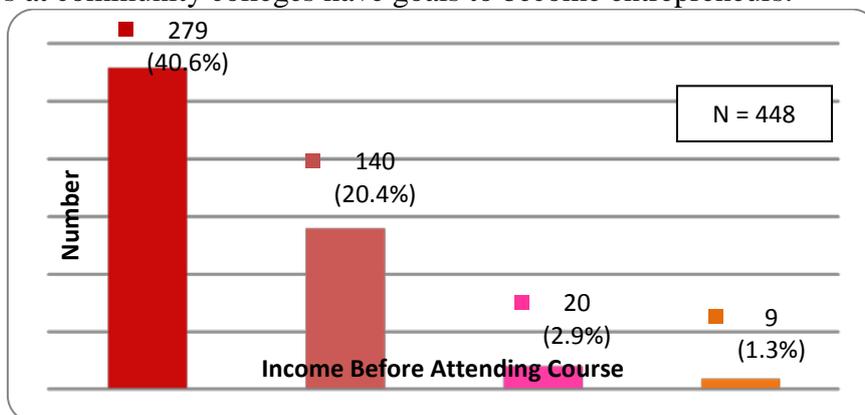


Diagram 1.6: Respondents Spread According To Income Before Attending Courses

Diagram 1.6 shows the respondents spread according to income before attending courses at community colleges. This spread is only based on the number of respondents who are working, that is, 448 of them only because the rest of them which are 239 are still waiting to be employed or unemployed (Refer to Diagram 5.8). Out of the total respondents who have worked, it was found that most of them have total income of less than RM1000 before attending courses with the highest percentage of 40.6 percent. This is followed by respondents with total income of RM 1001 up to RM2000 which came up to 20.4 percent.

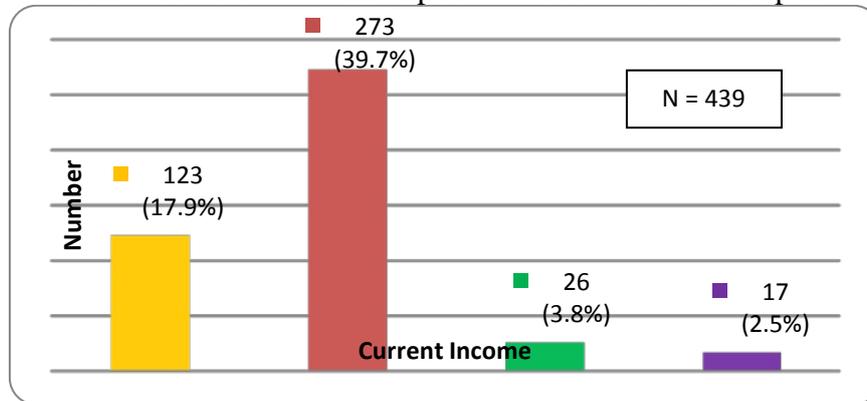


Diagram 1.7: Respondents spread according to current income

Diagram 1.7 shows the respondents spread according to current income before attending courses at community colleges. This spread is only based on the number of respondents who are working, that is, 449 of them only. Out of the total it was found that the highest percentage was those with total income of RM 1001 up to RM2000 which came up to 39.7 percent. This shows a big difference in incomes before they attended courses at community colleges (Refer to Diagram 5.9). This could be because most respondents consist of those who work on their own or are doing business (Refer to Diagram 1.7). This proves that the courses attended by respondents managed to elevate their standard of living indirectly. While the remainder of 17.9 percent respondents have current incomes of less than RM1000.00.

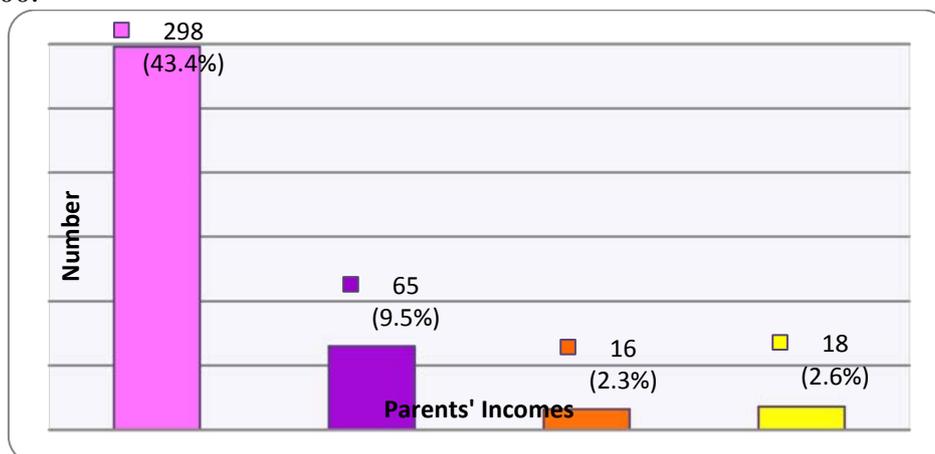


Diagram 1.8: Respondents Spread According To Parents' Incomes

The Diagram shows respondents spread according to parents' incomes. From the total respondents (N=397) who stated the incomes of their parents, it was found that 43.5 percent have total family income of less than RM 1000. This was followed by respondents with total family income between RM 1001 and RM 2000 which was 9.5 percent. This shows that the course participants of Community Colleges in Malaysia consist of those with low family incomes.

Discussion and conclusion

Based on the research findings several steps have to be taken by the Community Colleges to enhance the outcomes and impact from courses and programmes implemented in community colleges all over Malaysia. Among the focus that should be given priorities are to increase entrance and intake of students especially post SPM and PMR male students. This is because 67% of post SPM students are females. Therefore, community colleges should take effective measures by implementing promotional programmes more aggressively in secondary schools through out Malaysia. This research found that the lack of information and opportunities in Community Colleges causes students who are left out or did get any place at IPTAs and IPTSs are not aware of the courses and opportunities that they will get from community colleges.

Attention and promotion should be focussed on prospective courses but are not getting positive response such as information technology, quantity surveying and electrical engineering besides other courses offered by community colleges nationwide. Geographical factors should also be considered in implementing promotions by focussing on states with less involvement in programs in colleges such as Trengganu, Kelantan, Perlis, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak.

There should also be emphasis on increasing the total number of bumiputera entrepreneurs in Malaysia. The evaluation study clearly indicated a positive inclination of participants who have shown their interests in entrepreneurial fields. There have also been interests and inclinations to enter this field among degree and diploma holders. This study has also shown positive outcomes and impact in the entrepreneurial field through the increase in incomes after completing the programs at community colleges. Therefore, community colleges need to put in more effort to increase the involvement and participations of women and the less able people such as single mothers to increase their ability to improve their standard of living. This study shows that the involvement of this group is still at a low level that is 1% only. Besides that, efforts to increase the number of participants among the graduates should be stepped up aggressively to produce more graduate entrepreneurs in addition to help government to decrease dependency of graduates on the government sector and minimize the employment rate among graduates. Other than that, attention should also given to the veterans or those aged more than 40 years to venture into the field of entrepreneurship. Furthermore, this research clearly shows the interests of this group (25%) to participate in the courses available at community colleges in Malaysia.

This study also shows that community colleges have succeeded in helping the government to help the poor and the low income group to increase their standard of living by participating in skill based courses offered by the community colleges. The findings show that 43.4% of participants consist of families with low incomes which were less than RM3000.00 a month. Therefore, community colleges need to look at the positive inclination as a stepping stone to help the government to increase the living standard of Malaysians. Hence, efforts to explain and promote should be targeted to the low income group to increase their involvement in skill based courses offered by community colleges in Malaysia.

Besides that, community colleges should focus their attention on students' interests and inclination to attend more than one courses available in community colleges. The increase opportunities in various skill based courses will indirectly produce more entrepreneurs who not only focus on a field but also in various fields to help them increase opportunities in the field of entrepreneurship which requires various skills and capabilities.

Reinforcement of attitude and interest of students should also be given priority in developing self resilience and self confidants among graduates of community colleges. There are a few aspects that need to be emphasized and given serious attention by community colleges based on these research findings, among others are participants have shown that the

learning concepts in community colleges are not fun especially through group learning. There is also social loafing among students attending programs in community colleges. In fact, participants are aware of the importance of collaborative learning. Therefore, this matter should be given serious attention towards creating learning environment that is more fun which will directly minimize social loafing problems. This concept is an important agenda in government efforts to increase the number of more potential entrepreneurs who are able to raise the level of excellence in national development.

Besides that, there should be efforts made by community colleges to improve students' attitude towards ICT and this is viewed as something very serious in government's effort to increase the level of ICT literacy in Malaysian communities in the year 2010. Moving on, several steps need to be taken to improvise courses and raise the level of self confidence of students in community colleges. This is because this study found that the outcome of self confidence level and the improvisation level of courses in community colleges are still at moderate and low levels. This indirectly will result in low impact on the effectiveness of programs in community colleges and consequently to national development.

Cooperation between community colleges and skill based institutions and other government bodies also need to be upgraded such MARA, Institut Kemahiran Mara, Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara (IKBN), National Anti Drug Agency (AADK), Youth Department and so on in an effort to increase opportunities and self confidence of students. This cooperative effort will be able to help community colleges in the proses of information distribution and attract more youths to participate in programs available at community colleges.

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