Soft Skills Implementation in Basic Vocational Education: Transformation of Malaysian Education System

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Abstract— This concept paper describes the implementation of Basic Vocational Education which is also a stream in the lower secondary system at the Academic Secondary School. The main focus is related to soft skills implementation in Curriculum Structure of Basic Vocational Education which includes three components namely Self-esteem, Vocational Technology and Vocational Skills apart from the Entrepreneurial Skills across the curriculum taught during the three years of study. Implemented curriculum also focused on building self-esteem, development of entrepreneurial competencies and competency development of Vocational Skills at Level 1 and Level 2 in the Malaysian Skills Certificate. In fact, the transformation of Vocational Education in Academic Secondary School was also highlighted by the addition of Vocational Education opportunities are offered starting with the Living Skills Course is taught from Form 1 to Form 3 as pre-technical and vocational education. Then offering Vocational subjects for students from Form 4 to Form 5 as an extension and expansion of Living Skills Course and also provides opportunities for students who are more likely to vocational programs in the form of hand skills. Basic Vocational Education is introduced at the earliest stage which is starting from Form 1 to Form 3 in preventing student dropout rates and also increases student enrollment vocational and skills in the country. This concept paper has proposed the improvements of soft skill adoption in the curriculum implementation in order to improve the effectiveness of the Basic Vocational Education. Finally through the inculcation of soft skills is able to produce students with critical thinking, creative and innovative, skilled and prepared with the noble values which will be a contribution to the success of Malaysian Vision 2020 to increase productivity and advancing the national economy.

Keywords—soft skills; Basic Vocational Education

I. INTRODUCTION

Applications of soft skills are often dealt with in Institutions of Higher Education (IHL) to produce graduates who are ready to step into the working environment. However, it is highly appropriate Soft Skills began to apply at the school at present as they are easily flexed and this practice continued until they continued high level of education consistent with the teachings of Islam that is demanded of His people doing well. Through the application of Soft Skills at the school will be able to prepare and complete the package in students with communication skills, have well personal appearance, good command of English, social skills and motivated as a preparation for the working environment. However, there is no specific list of soft skills, but mostly related to the soft skills such as teamwork, leadership, communication and continuous learning. These skills are important to enable students to become workforce that can contribute to productivity and will provide a positive impact on the organization, especially in terms of productivity and the services offered to customers or users.

Soft skills have been incorporated into the Basic Vocational Education (PAV) through the curriculum outlined by the Ministry of Education Malaysia (MOE), which led to the construction of self-esteem, the development of entrepreneurial competencies and competency development of vocational skills suited for the application of Soft Skills that emphasize moral values in life. PAV is a program that was initially implemented starting 2012 in Academy Secondary School as an extension of the Living Skills subject (KHB) in Primary 4 to Primary 6 in Primary Schools (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011b). With adoption of Soft Skills are also extremely necessary in inducing noble values of the student consistent with Salleh (2007) who state that is highly necessary soft skills are applied to students from the school to prevent misconduct and build the character of Malaysians. In this way the potential of students will be able to expand because according to Mok (1996), an effort to develop their potential is not only depends on the positive attitude of the individual, but also skills such as learning skills, thinking skills, social skills, communication skills and coping skills problems and challenges.

II. BASIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

PAV is a vocational program conducted as a stream system of education in lower secondary school from Form 1 to Form 3 and the implementation of this pilot program conducted at the 15 selected schools from the year 2012. This program is to provide the opportunity and space education in helping those who inclined, talented and interested in vocational education and special programs for students which are not in the form of academic learning. Stipulated curriculum is compatible with the implementation of skills-oriented program that is able to provide wider career opportunities for students and prevent them to dropouts from the current mainstream education.
Through this program, Jab (2012, January 4) considers that the implementation is in accordance with the government's desire to produce more highly skilled young talents since not all students are inclined towards an academic-oriented examination. With the student involvement in the skill in this PAV will be able to qualify them to pursue interesting work, challenge and provide a decent return. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2011c), PAV performance goal is to provide opportunities for post-UPSR students become skilled human capital to work and ready to continue learning to a higher level. If review of the objectives of PAV, this program is generally to prevent dropout of pupils at primary and lower secondary levels caused by a variety of causes such as weak students, student discipline problems, student socioeconomic problems and so forth.

Courses offered in the implementation of PAV enacted with reference to the National Occupational Skills Standard (NOSS) will entitle the student was awarded two certificates of Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) Level 1 and Level 2 for students according to their performance on skills for each task contained in each NOSS course after completing form 3. This situation seems to reflect the opinion Mohd Noordin (1993) who state that the goal to be achieved in the era of 2020 can be implemented through a comprehensive human resource development, balanced and integrated. Through the implementation of this program, the country will be able to produce workers who have work ethics and culture, and its high productivity to help the country's industrial sector and competitiveness in the international arena. With the supply of these certificates, career opportunities are also very bright students because of skill, whether semi-skilled or skilled in the field of employment offers exciting, challenging and provide a decent return (Mustor, 2006).

III. APPLICATION OF SOFT SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

According to Mustapa Mohamed (2007, July 13), the failure of graduates to get a job is because they do not have the necessary soft skills employers such as low English proficiency, the graduate is narrow-minded, no leadership, no sense of belonging and communication skills. The objectives of PAV, this program is generally to prevent dropout of pupils at primary and lower secondary levels caused by a variety of causes such as weak students, student discipline problems, student socioeconomic problems and so forth.

According to the Ministry of Higher Education (2006), key elements in soft skills to perform in Institutions of Higher Education are Communication skills, Professional Ethics and Moral, Leadership Skills, Critical Skills and Problem Solving Skills, Continuous Learning and Information Management, and Teamwork Skills. The writer is going to explain the implementation of Soft Skills in PAV using the element in soft skills to perform in Institutions of Higher Education because of the both elements is slightly the same.

IV. APPLICATION OF SOFT SKILLS THOUGH CURRICULUM IN BASIC VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

These skills are applied in the implementation of Vocational Education in Singapore at the Lower Secondary Vocational Education System of Singapore has introduced North Light School Program in 2006 to implement a curriculum designed for students who fail to meet minimum requirements for continuing their studies after secondary school sit examination Primary School Leaving examination (PSLE) (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011b). The teaching and learning in North Light School Program is to practice learning through experience that lead to the strengthening of self-esteem and emotional nourishment soft skilled in accordance with a very important application in the form of the people who can contribute to national development.

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<th>Component of PAV</th>
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PAV curriculum designed to produce skilled human capital, critical, creative and innovative through experience-oriented learning environment of work. Implemented curriculum also focused on building self-esteem, development of entrepreneurial competencies and competency development of vocational skills. Skills provided to students PAV is compatible with the progress the country is increasingly developing to get the desired job opportunities and develop a workforce that is able to face new economic challenges to increase productivity and competitiveness of the economy.
(Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011c). Standard curriculum that focuses on PAV produce skilled human capital in many aspects, such as technical and vocational skills, employability skills, able to communicate effectively, can work as a team and can make decisions when needed.

According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2011a), PAV curriculum designed to produce skilled human capital, critical, creative and innovative through experience-oriented learning environment of work. Implemented curriculum also focused on building self-esteem, development of entrepreneurial competencies and competency development of vocational skills at the level of Malaysian Skills Certificate (SKM) Level 1 and 2. It is suitable to the opinion Ku Seman (2006, December 24) of the skills that will be necessary in accordance with the progress the country is increasingly developing to get the desired job. Students are exposed to appropriate knowledge, technical skills and skills relevant to industry needs as asserted by Warwick (1998) and Abbott (1997). As such, the implementation of the curriculum in schools is the main way to incorporate values in every student in the Standard Curriculum that focuses on PAV produce skilled human capital in many aspects, such as technical and vocational skills, employability skills, can communicate effectively, can work as a team, can make decisions when needed (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011a). There are three components in the structure of the curriculum that emphasized the PAV self-esteem, Technology and Vocational Education and Vocational Skills. Meanwhile Entrepreneurial skills will be taught across the curriculum during the three years of study.

A. Communication Skills

The application of moral values that are global will also form a virtuous young and noble and consistent with the religious, cultural and community norms Malaysia (Ee, 1995). Communication skills this can be applied in this program through Self-esteem Component that aims to provide a student with the skills communicate, appreciate and practice the teachings of religion, attitude and noble values in life. In fact, consistent with the findings Mohd, Nuruddin & Yong (1995) in which there are several elements of the necessary skills available to graduates of vocational and technical skills who are able to communicate, initiative, confidence in facing the challenges of globalization. Components of Self-esteem consist of three dimensions of Communication, Patriotism and Spiritual Advancement. Apart of it, there are two subjects in the dimensions which are Bahasa Malaysia Komunikasi and English Communications. The curriculum structure is formed in the two subjects that are enables students to communicate effectively in Malay and English in addition to honing the students’ ability to communicate ideas clearly, effectively and with confidence, both orally and in writing.

B. Critical skills and problem solving skills

Critical thinking and problem solving skills (CTPS) involves the ability to think critically, analytically as well as the ability to apply knowledge and understanding to new and different problems. Application of these skills can be seen clearly through the components of Vocational Technology is aimed at strengthening science, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and this component consists of one dimension of technology through Vocational Science, Vocational Mathematics and vocational ICT. Through the dimensions can hone the students' ability to identify and analyze problems in complex and ambiguous situations, and make an assessment justified. By learning these subjects, students will be able to stimulate the ability to find alternative solutions to solve a particular task.

Even through this subject, student opportunity to expand and improve thinking skills such as explains, analyze and evaluate the discussion. Through these skills, students can generate ideas beyond the boundaries of decision-making based on strong evidence. Critical thinking refers to the ability to use the mind to make judgments or assessments with care (Azlena Shuib Zainal & Munir, 2004). Critical thinking is one of the micro skills often associated with problem solving or decision making.

C. Teamwork Skills

Ministry of Human Resources (2001) reported that the rate of workers with vocational skills to enter the job market is in a small number and many students from a variety of skills training centers fail to put themselves in the relevant industry which is the skills acquired are insufficient or do not match the industry needs. Thus, though, Vocational Skills component of the Basic Vocational Skills and Specific Vocational Skills that emphasize the development of vocational education in the proficiency-based curriculum to suit the needs of working people for the development of energy. It is compatible with the Specific Vocational Skills pressing on three important aspects to make the individual ready with the work of employability skills, skills, entrepreneurial skills and job specific skills that are hands-on. Both workability and entrepreneurial skills are also a soft skill, which will be applied to learning specific skills.

By emphasizing the importance of employability skills, students will be able to complete the task in connection with a job. This is consistent with the findings McDaniels (1992) in which the employability skills required by employers, including self-reliant, honest, smart, timely, effective connectivity capabilities, the ability to work in a group, ambitious, have good work ethics, loyal and can make modifications. In carrying out hands-on component carried out in the Vocational Skills, teamwork skills involve the ability to collaborate with others from different socio-cultural background can be achieved. In addition, students can also develop an ability to build relationships, interact with others and work effectively with them to achieve the same objectives of a project that has been assigned. Ability to understand and take the role of alternating between group leader and group members can also be nurtured in students that when making a group project that requires students to contribute to planning and coordinating the efforts of the group.

D. Entrepreneurial Skills

According to Joseph (1998), each individual has the opportunity to become entrepreneurs. The difference between entrepreneurs and non-entrepreneurs is their willingness to
combine creativity, innovation, risk taking efforts to assist, develop and maximize their potential to take advantage of the opportunities available. In fact, according to Faote et al. (2003), awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship can be seen through the increased supply of courses, programs, research and publication by the IHL and demand by students around the world since the 1980s. This can be seen by nurturing a culture of entrepreneurship across the curriculum that is relevant to current needs and future challenges to students PAV. This is because the execution was carried out entrepreneurial skills through the activities of teaching and learning to be a culture of entrepreneurship in their daily lives.

Entrepreneurial skills involve the ability to explore and develop awareness of the risks, creativity and innovation in business and employment related activities. A Component of Entrepreneurial Skills taught across the curriculum so that students can adopt entrepreneurial mindsets to adopt towards producing ideas, skill and knowledge in a business context, resulting in a product based technology and vocational skills, and has a moral behavior with ethical values by using the relevant subjects, and they learn in school. This is consistent with the findings Davidsson (1995) who found that the experience was gained with little impact on entrepreneurship in terms of practical knowledge. Kolvereid (1996) also found that respondents with entrepreneurial experience are more inclined to be entrepreneurs than those who do not have entrepreneurial experience.

Through the application of this skill, students who have a culture of entrepreneurship and good work and can result in innovation, design, and have a tendency to trade will be achieved. This is in line with the demands of national economic growth increased the number of graduates in technical and vocational fields and strive to create many of the entrepreneurs. This means that if the students are exposed to entrepreneurship courses during their studies, they will be keen to become entrepreneurs after their graduation. In the meantime, Turker & Selcuk (2009) also found that education and support factor structure of the various sectors in a country that affect the entrepreneurial intention. Through entrepreneurship education across the curriculum allows students to develop, explore and capitalize on business opportunities and employment and develop their business plans after graduation. This will produce students who can work on their own by identifying a business opportunity that fits their skills provided during the three years of study at Academic Secondary School.

E. Continuous Learning and Information Management

PAV program curriculum, students are exposed to technology so that they are not left out of the technologies and obtain new skills and knowledge. According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2011a), Components of Vocational Technology are aimed at strengthening science, mathematics and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). ICT for Vocational between the subjects in vocational technology component allows students to find and manage relevant information from various sources. In this way, students will receive new ideas and further develop inquisitive mind. Computer use in education was increasing in the period a decade ago. Thus, the formation of the knowledge society should be applied to ICT is capable of generating rich people with information overload as this component is a component that supports the learning of vocational skills. In the meantime, according to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2001a), the use of ICT in teaching and learning to produce students who are studying according to their own abilities and increase their motivation to learn.

F. Professional Ethics and Moral

The application of moral values that are global will also form a virtuous young and noble and consistent with the religious, cultural and community norms Malaysia (Ee, 1995). Learning through the Self-esteem Component can develop physical and aesthetic aspects of the pupils. This dimension of Islamic Studies or Moral Education, and Health and Physical Education, but also contains curricular activities including sports, uniformed bodies, clubs and associations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011a). There are many positive effects on student involvement in extra-curricular activities, among them self-control, mutual help, rational, skilled, independent and creative (Abdul Rahim, 1999). In this way, students will learn in an environment that has always been practicing ethical behavior and thus have a sense of responsibility to the community. In fact, the social ills among students will be able to overcome to be able to make decisions in solving problems related to ethics. For example, do not engage in vandalism and involvements with the criminal as always adopt a high moral standard in the practice of social interaction.

G. Leadership Skills

According to the Ministry of Education Malaysia (2011a) Identity component is to provide students with skills to communicate, appreciate and practice the teachings of religion, attitudes and values in life. In fact, consistent with the findings Mohd, Nuruddin & Yong (1995) in which there are several elements have the necessary skills in technical and vocational graduates who are able to communicate, initiative, confidence in facing the challenges of globalization. In addition, through the Identity component can develop physical and aesthetic aspects of the students. Self-esteem Component consists of three dimensions of communication, Patriotism and Personality Traits. Meanwhile, Personality Traits dimensions aspect, this dimension of Islamic Studies or Moral Education, and Health and Physical Education, but also contains curricular activities including sports, uniformed bodies, clubs and associations (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2011a). There are many positive effects on student involvement in extra-curricular activities, among them self-control, mutual help, responsible, considerate, tolerant, ambitious, hygiene, self-confident, sharp-minded, rational, skilled, independent and creative (Abdul Rahim, 1999). With student involvement in extra-curricular activities as well as to foster leadership qualities to lead a project in which these skills involve the ability to practice leadership skills in a variety of activities. In this way, the students themselves discipline to be able to understand and take the other alternating between team leaders and team members to familiarize students to supervise team members.
V. ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

PAV is a new program that emphasizes skill competency as students enter the program offered PAV consisting of pupils with low academic achievement are designed to maximize the content relevant to the content that can accommodate the sharpening. Therefore, the balance between the application of soft skills with the skills to help students improve achievement PAV their knowledge as well as the people who can contribute to national progress. In addition, the curriculum should also take into account the age and fitness level of students' thinking skills needed for students with basic knowledge of the medium and low bit slow to understand the subject matter presented by teachers and slow in acquiring a skill and thus less willing to follow learning in school.

Since this program began conducted in 2012, teachers are still in the process of adaptation for implementing this new program. PAV teacher preparation based on areas of specialization in accordance with PAV subjects at degree level, clearly a priority in the specialized field of view will produce highly skilled teachers who form the student in mastering the Soft Skills that can make students more ethical, when in the world of work and in their daily life. With the acquisition of knowledge related to Soft Skills can guarantee the quality of students' skills in enhancing the country's energy resources in the near future. However, as the first step of the program of related subjects can be implemented by offering new subjects in existing programs in Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL). Review the curriculum need PAV made from time to time to meet the needs of the workplace and meet the types of skills needed by industry.

VI. CONCLUSION

Through this concept paper describes in detail the application of soft skills in the implementation of PAV. It is hoped that through the effective implementation of PAV to produce students who are critical thinkers, creative and innovative, skilled, prepared with the natural world and the important work is a noble values to increase productivity and improve the economy. It is hoped that students who were enrolled in this program can live a good life in the tech world is complex and constantly changing and expanding.

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