

Skill Mismatch Among Instructors Across Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) Institutions in Malaysia

Khairul Anuar Hasnan^{a*}, Zainizam Zakariya^b, Khoo Yin Yin^c, Shahrul Nizam Abdul Aziz^d, ^aDepartment of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technical and Vocational, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia, ^{b,c,d}Department of Economics, Faculty of Management and Economics, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim, Perak, Malaysia, Email: ^{a*}khairul.anuar@ftv.upsi.edu.my

There are some challenges outlined under the 11th Malaysia Plan, especially the lack of skills among technical vocational education and training (TVET) teachers. A lack of skills in TVET institutions reflects a mismatch between the skills that employees have and those needed to perform their jobs. This problem has been considered a significant hindrance to the effectiveness of training in terms of meeting the needs of the industry. Poor skills in industry also result in economic and social deprivation, reduced tax revenues, wasted human capital investment, lower job satisfaction, lower employment and improved job search behaviour. These effects provide a strong basis for further research on the skills gap, given the key role of teachers and teacher quality in determining general education quality and specific job competencies. The objective of this research was to explore the level of job satisfaction and the intention to leave work. The study employed a quantitative analysis to survey 250 respondents, consisting of TVET instructors. The findings show that average respondents have the ability and capability to perform tasks. In addition, respondents were satisfied with the content of their work, the wages they received and the guarantee of employment. The findings also indicate that respondents have no intention of retiring as instructors in TVET.

Key words: *Education Training, TVET, Vocational Education, Malaysia*

Introduction

The education system is essential for shaping a country that is economically, politically and socially developed. Through education, individuals have the opportunity to improve their

quality of life, build a successful society and contribute to the development of the nation. The education system provides a wealth of knowledge and skills to the community to advance the country's growing economy. It is therefore clear that education is the foundation of a united and skilled nation.

According to Suriana (2012) a good education system is essential for developing people who are willing to innovate, as well as for creating technology to solve problems and produce a highly skilled workforce. According to statistics released by the OECD (2010), only 23 per cent of those in the Malaysian workforce are highly skilled. This percentage is much lower than in developed countries like South Korea and Singapore. It can be concluded that Malaysia lacks a highly skilled workforce, and that the best way to address this is through technical and vocational education training (TVET) programs.

Technical and vocational education actually provides the best way for students to realise their potential. It gives young people the knowledge and skills they need in the workforce (Rasul et al., 2015), enabling them to realise their potential. TVET involves practical preparation, as well as theory at all levels, in various fields of production and service. TVET can be used as both formal and informal learning. TVET in Malaysia was established in 1964 and has grown to encompass more than 1000 institutions, of which 506 are public institutions such as polytechnics, community colleges, vocational colleges and other institutions of higher education. Some 230,000 students were part of the system in 2015.

The Vocational Education Transformation Program (TPV), which was aimed at strengthening the country's vocational education system, began in 2013. Vocational education transformation is an effort to strengthen the existing vocational education system to create a new vocational education system that can contribute to Malaysia's transformation into a high-income country (KPM, 2011). This step was taken to support the country's economic transformation agenda, which aimed to produce a highly skilled and high-income population.

Various steps have been taken to strengthen TVET; however, some challenges are outlined under the 11th Malaysia Plan (MP), including challenges of lack of skills and industry exposure among TVET principals in public institutions (Afferro & Hassan, 2013; Ramli, 2013; Yunus & Yasin, 2014). The country's education system is slowly moving to TVET, given that the country needs more skilled labor – especially in the manufacturing sector. However, there is a shortage of trained teachers in TVET institutions (Ramli, 2013). In addition, qualified staff who already have work experience are unable to become teachers due to unattractive pay schemes (Rasul et al., 2015). In fact, most staff recruited directly after completing university and college studies are assessed on the basis of their academic qualifications without their skills being assigned any importance (11 Malaysia Plan, 2016). In addition, TVET teachers in developing countries often do not meet global workplace

standards (Dallmeier, 2017; Kelly & Science, 2013; Schroder, 2014). In other words, there is a shortage of qualified technical and vocational educators in all public TVET institutions in Malaysia. A lack of skills in TVET institutions indicates a mismatch between the skills that employees have and those needed to perform their jobs. Affero and Hassan (2013), Mustapha and Grace (2013) and Spöttl and Steinbeis (2016) all state that being an instructor at a TVET institution seems not to be a career of choice among technical-based graduates, due to unattractive salaries and lower job and promotion prospects. They may choose to become teachers simply as a way to avoid unemployment (Zakariya, 2012).

This affects the quality of graduates produced by TVET institutions and leads to TVET institutions failing to produce the high-quality human capital the country needs. The presence of this problem has been considered a hindrance to the effectiveness of training in meeting the needs of the industry. Therefore, this study was intended to explore the level of job satisfaction and intention to leave work.

Methodology

In the context of this study, the researchers used a quantitative research method, with data collected through a survey. According to Azhari and Mustapha (2016), surveys are used to measure perceptions or to obtain opinions regarding issues, services or products. The survey method was selected because it has many benefits and was suitable for this study. Zaharuzzaman and Azmi (2013) list the benefits as follows: the data can be collected quickly and easily; it saves time and expense; and a large number of respondents can be surveyed. This quantitative research method involves a descriptive analysis, which is used to answer the research questions about the impact of skill mismatches on instructors' productivity with respect to earnings, job satisfaction level, job search behaviour and intention to quit.

The instrument used in this study was a questionnaire, which was adapted from questionnaires used by previous researchers. Respondents were required to choose their answers based on a seven-point Likert scale. The data were then analysed descriptively by using SPSS software. This study involved 250 respondents, who were TVET instructors in Malaysia.

Findings

This discussion aims to highlight the findings based on the respondents' feedback. The demographic profiles of the respondents who participated in this study are shown in Table 1. A total of 250 respondents were involved, consisting of 154 female instructors and 96 male instructors. The majority were Malay respondents (93.6%), Chinese (0.4%), Indian (0.8%) and the rest other races (5.2%). Most respondents were married and had a university

education level. A total of 178 respondents worked as TVET instructors, with 66 university teachers and higher education/professional teachers.

Table 1: Demographics of respondents

Demographic	Item	Amount	%
Sex	Male	96	38.4
	Female	154	61.6
Ethnic group	Malay	234	93.6
	Chinese	1	0.4
	Indian	2	0.8
	Other Bumiputeras	13	5.2
Marital status	Married	200	80.0
	Divorced	1	0.4
	Widowed	8	3.2
	Single	41	16.4
level of education	Upper secondary education	6	2.4
	Post-secondary education	10	4.0
	Diploma education	28	11.2
	University education	206	82.4
Type of Job	Teaching university and higher education teaching professional	66	26.4
	Vocational education instructor/training officer	178	71.2
	Others	6	2.4

Next, the descriptive analysis involving the mean scores and standard deviations was used to determine the level of job satisfaction and intention to quit. The mean scores in this study are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Interpretation of mean score

Scale range	Interpretation of mean score
1.00–2.20	Extremely low
2.21–3.40	Low
3.41–4.60	Medium
4.61–5.80	High
5.81–7.00	Extremely high

Table 3 shows an analysis of the skills and abilities of instructors in performing their tasks. The table shows that respondents in the TVET category have high ability and capability to

perform tasks with a high mean score of 5.3748. This means that instructors have the ability and ability to perform their duties as instructors. That is, they are good at solving problems and making decisions, have confidence in their tasks, can work in teams, are good at communicating and can use ICT applications.

Table 3: Ability and capability to perform tasks

Item No.	Statement	Mean score	Standard deviation	Level of ability and capability
a.	Workplace adaptability	5.49	1.401	High
b.	Problem solving and decision-making skills	5.30	1.285	High
c.	Confidence to perform the task required	5.47	1.324	High
d.	Working in a team	5.64	1.331	High
e.	Communication skills	5.67	1.227	High
f.	Proficiency in <i>Bahasa Melayu</i> : Spoken	6.00	1.269	Extremely high
g.	Proficiency in <i>Bahasa Melayu</i> : Written	5.84	1.368	Extremely high
h.	Proficiency in English language: Spoken	4.45	1.273	High
i.	Proficiency in English language: Written	4.50	1.296	High
j.	Ability to use ICT applications	5.38	1.243	High
Total		5.3748	1.07806	High

Table 4 shows instructors' satisfaction with work content. The overall mean of the total satisfaction item on the work content was high at 5.7391. This means that educators were satisfied with the content of their work, and felt the work they did was rewarding. Respondents also liked the work they did and the job gap in this field.

Table 4: Satisfied with work content

Item No.	Statement	Mean Score	Standard deviation	Level of satisfaction
a.	My job is rewarding.	5.47	1.360	High
b.	I enjoy coming to work.	5.72	1.312	High
c.	I have good working relationships with my co-workers.	5.92	1.183	Extremely high
d.	I find my work challenging.	5.68	1.186	High
e.	I like the kind of work I do.	5.83	1.225	Extremely high
f.	My working conditions are good.	5.73	1.227	High
g.	I am proud to work for this institution.	5.83	1.270	Extremely high
h.	I am satisfied with the opportunity to use my skills and abilities in my job.	5.69	1.319	High
i.	I am happy with overall job satisfaction in my present position.	5.78	1.339	High
Total		5.7391	1.10773	High

The next finding related to the satisfaction of salaries received as lecturers at TVET institutions (Table 5). The results of the SPSS analysis show that the overall mean score indicates that the level of satisfaction of the respondents in the salary range is 5.2465. This means respondents feel they are being paid fairly and properly for their work.

Table 5: Satisfied with salary

Item No.	Statement	Mean score	Standard Deviation	Level of satisfaction
a.	I am satisfied with my level of pay.	5.45	1.368	High
b.	I feel I am adequately paid compared to my colleagues at other companies	4.44	1.650	Medium
c.	I am paid appropriately for the work-related experience that I have.	5.28	1.439	High
d.	The current pay system has a positive effect on employee productivity.	5.44	1.353	High
e.	I am compensated fairly for the work I do.	5.36	1.408	High
f.	I am satisfied with the increases	5.28	1.462	High

	in compensation.			
g.	I have a clear understanding of the institution pay policy.	5.34	1.317	High
h.	I am happy with overall pay received for my present position	5.38	1.333	High
Total		5.2465	1.18089	High

As for job security, the study found that the average respondents felt TVET institutions had a high job security of 4.8736. Moreover, they feel that they were free to express themselves. Some felt pressure to work in the institution. Overall the mean score for job satisfaction items was high.

Table 6: Satisfied with the job guarantee

Item No.	Statement	Mean score	Standard deviation	Level of satisfaction
a.	I feel free to express my opinions without worrying about negative actions or responses.	4.89	1.533	High
b.	I feel I have job security.	5.43	1.382	High
c.	I worry about losing my job.	4.34	1.967	Medium
d.	I view job security as of prime importance.	5.46	1.383	High
e.	I frequently feel stress in my job.	4.26	1.860	Medium
Total		4.8736	1.14170	High

In relation to intention to quit, Table 7 shows that the mean of the entire item for the intention to quit was very low with a value of 2.1413. This means that only a few respondents intended to leave work. It can be concluded that the respondents did not intend to leave their jobs as TVET instructors.

Table 7: Intention to quit work

Item No.	Statement	Mean score	Standard deviation	Level
a.	I often think about quitting.	2.44	1.832	Low
b.	It is likely that I will actively look for a new job next year.	1.99	1.629	Extremely low
c.	I will probably look for a new job in the next year.	1.89	1.522	Extremely low
d.	I often think of changing my job.	2.27	1.811	Low
e.	I intend to leave the current position in the near future.	2.29	1.880	Low
f.	I am actively searching for another alternative job.	1.97	1.669	Extremely low
Total		2.1413	1.54835	Extremely low

Overall, the instructors at TVET institutions are very satisfied with their work. They are also satisfied with the content of the job and the salary received.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a study of TVET faculty members shows that average instructors have the ability to perform their duties as instructors. In addition, they are satisfied with the content of the work provided, the salaries received and the guarantee of employment in the field. Since the respondents were satisfied with the work, they mostly have no intention to quit as TVET instructors. This study suggests the use of a more reliable and robust measure, such as using the Rasch model analysis measurements to test the reliability. In addition, the study population and sample need to be extended to cover more educators in the TVET field.



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