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## **SCHOOL ENTERPRISE: NURTURING STUDENTS' ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS THROUGH SALES BOOTH**

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### **Abstract**

*School Enterprise is an approach in learning that aims to foster students' entrepreneurial skills and enhance their competence in managing business projects. Thus, the Business Management Programme of Keningau Vocational College decided to launch the School Enterprise Project in order to boost the students' skills in entrepreneurship. The aim of the project was to provide more opportunities for students to demonstrate their skills in making sales and profits. The funds raised during this project would be used to purchase reference books on topics related to business management since there was shortage of such books at the college. An intact class of 14 students were involved in the study and they were assigned into five teams in which each team set up their own booth to sell their merchandises. The data were collected through observation,*

*survey and an analysis of their business plan including their profits. The findings showed that the result were positive as students gained profits from sales that they successfully made and they displayed optimistic views on their experience. It was recommended that this project should be turned into a regular assignment.*

**Keywords**

School Enterprise, Vendor Rental, Consignment, Vendor Boutique

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**1. Introduction**

School Enterprise (SE) is a program that is primary based on the concept of running business in order to earn profits that are typically introduced in college education. The goal of SE program is to produce students who are capable of leading and running a business while being able to develop their innovative and entrepreneurial skills. One of the main objectives of the program is to cultivate students' interest in entrepreneurship. It also aims to improve the performance of an institute in establishing business network.

At vocational colleges, students are exposed to entrepreneurship through SE programme and this is consistent with the goals of the national department on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) which has set its target to produce 10 percent of entrepreneurs from the total number of its graduates annually (BPTV, 2015). Entrepreneurship is defined as “a prelude to initiating, creating and expanding a company or organization, creating an entrepreneurial team and gathering resources to seek opportunities in the market over a long period of time” (Van Aardt et al., 2008). The government has become aware of the importance of integrating entrepreneurship into its national education system as it is an important component of economic growth (Giacomin et al., 2010). Paul (2005) defines SE programme as an institution that can produce students who are able to develop business-oriented skills and well-versed of the facets and issues related to business and economic development.

Entrepreneurship is a form of discipline which leads to the main reason of growth and development for the country's economy. Entrepreneurship helps individuals to generate more incomes if they continue to pursue their ideas and put lots of efforts into it. Hence, entrepreneurship is the best opportunity for the students to engage in the entrepreneurial world as well as improving their socioeconomic status. In order to integrate entrepreneurial aspects into learning, we cannot solely rely on syllabus. Thus, SE program implementation can encourage

students to venture into business industry and it can increase students' interest in entrepreneurship that can give positive outcomes on creating a generation of entrepreneurs.

## **2. Problem Statement**

Practical learning is one of the best ways to foster individuals' interest on business field. Having practical skills in is one of the main priorities to succeed in the real world but this does not undermine the importance of understanding theories related to business. The students of business management at the college lacked the opportunities and platforms for them to develop entrepreneurial skills. Therefore, SE is a suitable method that can improve students' knowledge and skills by giving them the experience to run their own business and perform tasks related to it. This would prepare them for the real working environment and enable them to learn to be more creative, productive, innovative and most important thing is they are well-prepared for the real world. In addition, this program will increase students' interest and motivation to attain vocational and skills education. Hence, the combination of academic studies and skill training is crucial in helping students gain better understanding on how the real world of business and industry works. It directly contributes towards improving the capabilities and quality of Malaysian graduates.

As stated by Hytti and O'Gorman (2004) in their research, the most plausible way of nurturing entrepreneurial skills at workplace is through experiential learning. Thus, lecturers at vocational colleges must be equipped with enough knowledge and skills for them to explore suitable approaches and techniques in implementing learning and teaching methods that are based in experience. This research was supported by European Commission Enterprise and Industry (2009) that claimed the main challenges in implementation of production-based education and entrepreneurship is to provide competent lecturers in terms of skills and knowledge. That is why there is still a lack of platform for students to show and develop their skills in entrepreneurship and one of the reasons why it is hard to realize the goal of producing 10% entrepreneurs from vocational colleges. Most lecturers are not exactly clear of how they can effectively train their students to be entrepreneurs and they should be given mentoring support and training.

The other issue that the business management programme at the college had was the shortage of reference books that they needed to assist them with their learning like completing

assignments and preparing for exams as well as their main resources for their projects and extracurricular activities related to business.

### **3. Objectives**

There were two objectives of this study. The first one was to analyze and examine the capital and the profit that was gained through SE program. The second one was to raise funds to purchase more reference books for the business management programmes.

### **4. Concept and Implementation of the School Enterprise(Se) Programme**

SE method has been one of the well-known methods of teaching entrepreneurship to students and the main reason this concept was chosen was to create a practical, meaningful and engaging learning experience for the students of business management. The purpose of this program was to produce competent graduates who are capable of applying the skills that they acquire from their studies. SE is one of the most common entrepreneurship-oriented initiatives adopted by many educational institutes. It is designed to be replicated at any industries and help students gain working experience pertinent to their career choice (Gugerty,2008). SE is one of the suitable methods that can be implemented by vocational colleges in their business management programmes. It is a practical approach that can lead to the development of ideas and opinions to create students that can become competitive entrepreneurs. SE is an educational project that encourages students to capitalize on the sales of products or offer of services as a way of creating successful entrepreneurs and this might help vocational colleges meet industry's demands for students of higher level of employability and skills (Bahagian Pendidikan Teknik dan Vokasional, Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2009).

This programme was based on the concept of consignment. Consignment store or kiosk is a business concept where a store allows other fledgling entrepreneurs to place their products at the shop as part of the merchandises sold by the store. There is usually an agreement between the owner of the store and these individuals on how much they need to pay for rentals, percentage of profit and other related matters. Humam and Friends (1992) argued that most businesses failed due to weak management, marketing and financial problems. Thus, the concept of "vendor boutique" is considered as a feasible method that can assist individuals who do not possess the capacities or feel less confident in their capabilities in running their own business by providing them secure platform to sell their products without little financial risks. This concept is

considered a win-win situation for every party especially for small businesses. The payment method is though cash sale in which the customers pay cash directly for the goods or services that they get.

## **5. Methodology**

The project was conducted in three days and the capital and revenues that were gained by the seller/traders were compared in order to obtain the actual profit that each team of students earned. There were 14 business management students who were involved and they were assigned into five teams. Their financial records were analyzed in order to identify the amount of money that had been spent on the business and the amount of money that they were able to earn as their profit. This method is known as document analysis.

## **6. Findings & Discussion**

Table 1 illustrates the amount of money spent on the booth sales as capital and the amount of money that they got as profit.

**Table 1:** *The Revenue and Profit Obtained from the Sales*

<b>No.</b>	<b>Items</b>	<b>Revenue (RM)</b>	<b>Profit (RM)</b>
1	Vendor rental	RM40.00	RM40.00
2	Consignment	RM900.00	RM135.00
3	Used clothes	RM 43.00	
Total Profit		RM 218.00	

The findings showed positive result as the students managed to gain profits. When they were interviewed, they claimed that they were able to apply their entrepreneurial skills in the booth sales that they carried out. This implied that SE is an effective method in training students of business management programme to put the skills that they have learnt into practice. Thus, it can be conducted as a regular programme and it should be integrated into the college's curriculum. The students also managed to raise enough funds to purchase reference books for their programme. Hence, this programme can also be utilized as a method in raising funds for charity or to finance other aspects of their studies.

## 7. Conclusion

It is suggested that this programme can be implemented nationwide across vocational colleges in Malaysia. There is also a possibility that the programme can be integrated into other courses like early childhood education, cosmetology, automotive technology and construction technology.

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## Appendix

These were the photos taken during the flea market organized by the students where each team set up their own sales booth and promote their merchandises

