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(IJEPC)**www.ijepec.com**LEVERAGING CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AS A
TOOL TO ENHANCE STUDENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**Aslinda Mohd Shahril¹, Mohd Shazali Md. Sharif^{2*}¹ Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara, Puncak Alam Campus, Malaysia
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DOI: 10.35631/IJEPC.954050This work is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)**Abstract:**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is not only undertaken by corporate companies but is also commonly practiced by academic members of universities. As part of a teaching innovation practice, a CSR initiative through a Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) was conducted, involving Master's students and students from Kolej Vokasional (KV) Muar, Johor. The aim of this initiative was to address the limited exposure of KV students to culinary and hospitality education practices. Therefore, the objectives of this activity were to introduce KV Muar students to new knowledge and experiences through activities organized by UiTM students and lecturers. This initiative marks the first collaboration in academic activities between UiTM and KV Muar, Johor combining various activities such as career talks, table setting sessions, napkin folding, and mentor-mentee interactions. The contribution of this project to society is significant, as it provides KV Muar students with new knowledge and experiences. Through academic collaborations with UiTM, and activities like career talks and practical sessions, such as table setting and napkin folding, KV Muar students are equipped with practical skills that are valuable in both academic and professional settings.

Keywords:

Corporate Social Responsibility, Knowledge Transfer Program, Learning Experience, Teaching Innovation

Introduction

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is one of the ways to connect with the community. CSR is not only carried out by corporate companies but is also commonly practiced by academic

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members of universities, including lecturers who organize various activities with the local community. For academics, CSR is commonly carried out in schools, colleges, universities, and various segments of society.

One of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity that can be offer is through Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) to the society. The KTP stands as one of the efforts of teaching innovation, offering benefits to both the students who conduct the program and the recipients who benefit from it (Smith & Brown, 2023; Thompson & Davis, 2023). This initiative goes beyond conventional teaching methodologies, creating a dynamic and interesting learning environment.

The KTP program conducted in class facilitates the application of theoretical knowledge in real-world scenarios. Students will engage in knowledge transfer not only to reinforce their understanding of academic concepts that they have learnt in class but also gain hands-on experience, bridging the gap between theory and practice (Chen & Li, 2023). By involving in KTP activity, students experience knowledge transfer where it refines their communication skills as they convey complex ideas in a comprehensible manner.

KTP program is in line with the Malaysian Education Ministry point of view that that a well-designed higher education curriculum should include creativity and innovation to enhance student learning experience and by conducting the CSR through KTP program, it definitely enhances the delivery style of teaching and learning. In similar vein, SDG 4 which focus on Quality Education is particularly relevant to the context of a KTP in Malaysia.

SDG 4 goal emphasizes the importance of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. This KTP aligns with SDG 4 in the Malaysian context where the KTP can contribute to providing access to quality education by disseminating knowledge and skills beyond traditional classroom settings. Through the program conducted, students and instructor have the opportunity to engage with practical, real-world applications that enhanced students' education and enriching their learning experiences.

The conventional method of delivering knowledge through face-to-face interaction, lecturing and spending most times in classrooms need to be enhanced since it emphasizes the lack of experiential learning in a usual class environment and deficiency of creativity and innovative teaching and learning style. Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the researcher would like to examine the impact of CSR through KTP to those students who performed the activities and to the recipients that received the additional learning experience. This activity was done to expose students to such activities and examine the impact of the activities to their learning experience.

Literature Review

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives, particularly through Knowledge Transfer Programs (KTPs), can significantly enhance the learning experience for students where the practical application of knowledge often involve partnerships between businesses and educational institutions where industry expertise and resources are transferred to students (Zhang et al., 2023). This practical application of knowledge allows students to see how theoretical concepts are applied in real-world settings, enhancing their understanding and skill development (Jones & Smith, 2019).

KTP also enhance experiential learning opportunities. By participating in KTPs, students can engage in hands-on projects and activities that are aligned with current industry practices and challenges. This experiential learning approach not only reinforces academic learning but also helps students develop critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills in a practical context (Brown et al., 2020).

Additionally, through KTPs, students gain access to industry insights and trends directly from professionals working in the field. This exposure helps them stay updated with industry developments and understand the practical implications of their academic studies, which can inspire future career paths and inform academic research (Green & Taylor, 2021). It also provides students with valuable networking opportunities with industry professionals. These connections can lead to internships, mentorships, and potential job opportunities upon graduation, thereby enhancing their career prospects and bridging the gap between academic learning and professional practice (White & Johnson, 2022).

In similar vein, when students see the relevance of their studies through KTPs, they often become more motivated and engaged in their learning. The opportunity to work on meaningful projects that contribute to societal and business needs can foster a sense of purpose and responsibility among students, encouraging them to strive for excellence in their academic and professional endeavours (Clark, 2023).

Finally, integrating CSR through Knowledge Transfer Programs enriches the learning experience by providing practical application of knowledge, experiential learning opportunities, access to industry insights, networking opportunities, and enhanced motivation for students (Garcia & Chen, 2023; Lee & Smith, 2023). These benefits highlight the importance of KTPs not only in fostering academic excellence but also in preparing students for successful careers in their chosen fields (Martinez & Davis, 2023). Additionally, these programs help build a strong foundation for lifelong learning and professional development. For instance, a recent study by Zhang, Wang, and Sun (2023) highlighted the positive impact of CSR initiatives on students' learning experiences, emphasizing the role of KTPs in enhancing innovation capabilities within dynamic environments.

Project Description

The idea of introducing this teaching and learning innovation is to expose students to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities. CSR topic is one of the chapters that student learnt for Strategic Marketing for Hospitality (HTM705) course. The instructor believed that through CSR activities, the students can relate the theory that they learnt in class and practice it in real world environment. The students that involved in this program are students enrolled in Master in Foodservice, Master in Hospitality and Master in Gastronomy, Universiti Teknologi Mara.

Based on the above idea, the CSR was planned and an initial contact and discussion was made with the Head of Hospitality program in Kolej Vokasional Muar or known as KV Muar. KV Muar was chosen because the college offer Hospitality program majoring in Culinary. During the discussion, the person in charge (PIC) of KV Muar, which is Puan Nurul Hanis suggested that Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) is suitable to be conducted based on current need from the students. She suggested some activities that can be done to benefits KV students and that it can be applied to enhance their knowledge.

Furthermore, based on the discussion, KV Muar highlighted the current issues or challenges while dealing with their students. It is important to note that the students in KV Muar are those taking Diploma in Hospitality majoring in culinary program. They are fresh and young as they entered KV Muar starting from the age of 16 years for Diploma program and graduated at age 19 which obviously the students are still young and fresh and they have lack of exposure to real working environment. Therefore, this KTP program will add some new inputs to KV Muar students and benefits their learning experience. Nevertheless, for the instructor of this program, the objectives of the KTP are to apply teaching innovation to enhance academic experience through CSR and implement post program assessment to measure students' understanding of the KTP program.

The visit was on 5th November 2023 and it was a full day activity. To ensure the program went smooth and started as time planned, the students have rented several homestays for their overnight stay before commencing the program the next morning. They have also brought all the necessary supplies, such as napkins for napkin folding activities, and gifts for KV Muar students.

Once arrived at 9 am, the students and lecturers were greeted by KV Muar management team and commenced with the planned activities such as career talk, game, tables setting for restaurant service, napkin folding and mentor mentee session.



Figure 1: Career Talk Session Conducted by UiTM Lecturers

Figure 1 shows the lecturers share knowledge during career talk session and it was inspiring and full of motivation to the KV student. The recipients which were KV Muar students gave a very positive reaction as the speech gave them a new insight into what the future hold for them.

Then, the KTP started with Kahoot game to test their basic knowledge of food, beverage and culinary. This segment provides questions on the Kahoot platform for the students to answer through their phones. Not a surprise, that many of them were able to answer the questions. It shows that the students are well-equipped with basic knowledge on food, beverage and culinary knowledge.



Figure 2: Kahoot Game Session

After Kahoot game, the session began with the UiTM Master students, conducting a demonstration on the proper arrangement of cutlery on the table. The arrangement involved basic styles, ensuring the correct placement for each spoon, fork, knife, plate, cup, saucer, dessert spoon, drinking glass, and table decorations. Although KV Muar students have learned these techniques, this session provided them with new exposure, as there were certain techniques they had not yet encountered, such as the tools required when a customer chooses fish as the main dish. After completing the cutlery arrangement demonstration, it was the turn of KV students to arrange the cutlery on the table as demonstrated by the UiTM students. The KV students benefits this session as it refreshed their skill and they were provided with the latest technique on serving guide as well.



Figure 3: Table Setting Session Conducted by UiTM Students

The next activity is to prepare various types of napkins folding. This activity is important as it provides ideas to KV Muar students about the common types of napkins folding used and displayed in various festive events. UiTM students demonstrate basic techniques in several types of napkins folding. Subsequently, KV students replicate the napkin folding, and those with the best presentation receive prizes as motivation for their efforts.



Figure 4: Napkin Folding Session

Finally, there is a Mentor-Mentee session where KV Muar students are divided into small groups, and UiTM students act as mentors. In this session, UiTM students share their experiences in the hospitality field, pre-master's work experiences, learning experiences at UiTM, and words of encouragement for KV Muar students. They also took the opportunity to promote UiTM to KV Muar students as their next place to further study



Figure 5: Mentor Mentee Session

Results and Findings

A survey on the effectiveness of the KTP has been conducted to understand how it benefits the students. For UiTM students, the survey conducted aims to measure the program's positive impact on them, assess its effects on their understanding of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) after participating, and examine the implications of this Knowledge Transfer Program (KTP) on them. The questions were adapted from Carrol (1991) who is a well-known author in the field of CSR and has contributed extensively to understanding the various dimensions and impacts of CSR on organizations and society. The question used scale 1 to 5 indicating 1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree.

The challenge in collecting research data is ensuring that every KV Muar student answers all the survey questions within the given time. However, this challenge was overcome because the KV Muar students cooperated well by answering all the survey questions within the given time. For UiTM's student, they answered the questions well within the stipulated time.

Table 1: The Survey Questions for UiTM Students

Questions	Mean	Std Deviation
Q1. This Transfer Knowledge Program has increased my understanding to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and its relevance to Strategic Marketing Course.	4.92	0.27
Q2. This program helped me to apply CSR concept to real-world project.	4.25	0.45
Q3. This Transfer Knowledge Program allow me to gain valuable insight in my CSR activity in future	4.57	0.50
Q4. Incorporating this activity in the course encourages me to be more socially responsible to the community and society.	4.57	0.50
Q5. Participating in this activity assist me to grasp the importance of CSR to the community	4.33	0.49
Q6. I am able to share my knowledge on hospitality and culinary art learning experience in UiTM to the KV Muar students.	4.60	0.50
Q7. This program able to increase my self confidence and communication skills	4.25	0.45
Q8. I am are able to promote the study opportunity available in UiTM	4.57	0.50

The results above show by incorporating CSR principles into their course, these students not only gain practical insights into responsible CSR practices but also cultivate a sense of social and environmental consciousness.

On the other hand, survey was also done towards the recipients which is KV Muar students. Therefore, they were requested them to fill out the provided survey form to assess the effectiveness of this program on them.

Table 2: The Survey Questions for KV Muar Students

Questions	Mean	Std Deviation
Q1. This KTP program is very good	4.46	0.50
Q2. This KTP program gives a positive impact to myself	4.44	0.50
Q3. This KTP add knowledge to my Restaurant Service course	4.51	0.51
Q4. The knowledge I gained today will be applied in future learning sessions	4.33	0.47
Q5. The lecture provided useful insights for me regarding the potential employment opportunities in the hospitality industry, especially in the	4.46	0.50

culinary field.		
Q6. This program provides information to me about the upcoming study selection centre after I complete my studies at KV Muar	4.46	0.50
Q7. Overall, I am satisfied with the Knowledge Transfer Program	4.46	0.50

Based on the results above, the KTP activities benefits the KV Muar students and this program can enhance the knowledge as it is related to one of the courses they study in college. This program also provides an opportunity for them to gain knowledge beyond what they learn from their own lecturers. Overall, KV students were satisfied with the conducted program and hope that similar programs can be organized again in the future.

Outcome of the Knowledge Transfer Program

Conducting this Knowledge Transfer Program on hospitality and culinary activities for KV Muar students as a corporate social responsibility activity can yield several positive outcomes for the students involved. Similarly, the objectives of this study were achieved. For UiTM's students, they may practice hands-on experience and demonstrate their practical skills in hospitality and culinary activities through the program. They also have the opportunity to engaging in organizing and implementing the program allows them to reinforce their understanding of hospitality and culinary concepts through hands-on experience with KV Muar students. The findings of this study align closely with those of Adams and Johnson (2023), who similarly found that knowledge transfer program (KTP) activities significantly enhance students' learning experiences and enrich their overall educational journey. These programs not only contribute to academic growth but also augment the enjoyment and satisfaction derived from the learning process, fostering a more engaging and fulfilling educational experience.

Some of the students were never exposed to any CSR activity, therefore with this KTP program, students develop an awareness of the importance of social responsibility in the business world. In the Strategic Marketing class (HTM705), they learnt how companies can contribute positively to communities and society, and with this KTP activity, it aligned their academic knowledge with ethical and socially conscious practices.

This effort is to support and inspire faculty to step outside of traditional boundaries of teaching to improve student's learning styles. This innovation also supports Malaysia National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHEAP) that higher learning curriculum should include creativity and revolution to enhance students' learning experience. It also promotes good collaboration for future teaching activities as the UiTM lecturers can be the reference to KV all over Malaysia.

This initiative aligns UiTM with contemporary societal needs, ensuring that graduates are not only academically proficient but also socially conscious and responsible professionals. The program enables the university to actively contribute to community welfare, fostering a positive public image and stronger community ties. Furthermore, the Knowledge Transfer program aspect ensures that UiTM remains at the forefront of industry trends and practices, enhancing the overall quality of education and research.

Novelty of the Project

The novelty of this project included several aspects which first, integrating CSR into KTP provides students with hands-on learning experiences that enhance their understanding of social responsibility in real-world contexts. This practical application can deepen their learning beyond theoretical knowledge. By incorporating CSR into these programs, students can develop skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving in socially responsible contexts as what they have learnt in class. CSR integrated into KTPs encourages learning innovation and creativity.

Students explored new ways to apply their knowledge to address social or environmental challenges, fostering innovative solutions that benefit both recipients and society (Brown & White, 2023). They were the one that perform all the activities with the guidance from the instructor and they were empowered to perform their skill and knowledge. Finally, this is the first-time collaboration between Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management, Universiti Teknologi Mara and Kolej Vokasional Muar and this can foster future academic collaboration between these two parties.

For future studies, researchers could conduct other activities that would benefit the recipients, such as organizing cooking classes, food photography sessions, and other related events and it can be conducted to other vocational colleges available in Malaysia.

Conclusion

The successful execution of the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) through the Knowledge Transfer Program at the KV Muar, involving UiTM Master students, leads to several noteworthy conclusions. Firstly, the positive impact of the program on the KV Muar students and their learning experiences is evident. The knowledge transfer facilitated by the UiTM Master students has not only enhanced the understanding of specific subjects but has also provided practical insights and real-world applications. This reflects a successful integration of theoretical knowledge with hands-on learning, contributing to the holistic development of the vocational college students

Secondly, through teaching and learning innovation, the engagement of Master students in the CSR initiative underscores the potential for academic institutions to foster a sense of responsibility and community engagement among my students. The collaborative effort in sharing their knowledge creates a good relationship, benefiting both the giver and the receiver. This successful model of CSR through knowledge transfer serves as a blueprint for future initiatives, highlighting the importance of leveraging academic resources to uplift and empower communities.

Overall, the conclusion drawn is that such CSR programs not only fulfil social responsibility but also enrich the educational experience for all involved, creating a positive impact that extends beyond the classroom, thus teaching innovation can be achieved.

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