

The Impact Of The M-Jet Hybrid International Student Exchange Program With Kanda University Of International Studies, Japan And Kuala Langat Community College

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Abstract

The M-Jet Hybrid International Student Exchange Program with Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS), Japan and Kuala Langat Community College (KKKL) was held on 5th June 2022 at the Malaysia Tourism Center (MaTiC). This program is an invitation from the Chiba Prefecture Commerce, Industry and Labor Department Education Interexchange Team, Japan. It is an online Japanese and Malaysian cultural exchange program. The problem identified at the early stage by the researcher was that the participants' English proficiency was moderate, and showed a lack of confidence in communicating. In addition, the selected participants experienced mixed feelings about participating in this program because they had a load of assignments and other commitments in several projects in college. The main objective of this study is to see the impact of this program on respondents, including emotional factors, skill improvement factors, value factors and suggestions for program improvement. This study is a combination of a quantitative and qualitative study. The quantitative method was through the distribution of questionnaires to twenty-two (22) respondents online. Meanwhile, qualitative research was conducted based on observations and interviews. The findings of the study showed that all the factors examined exceed the average value of 4.00, which is the overall average for the emotional factor (4.70), the skill improvement factor (4.38) and the value factor (4.69). While observations and interviews showed that the emotions and skills of the respondents are tested where the challenges and obstacles before the program takes place can be overcome with excellence and success. In conclusion, this program has had much positive impact, not only strengthening the relationship between educational institutions in Malaysia and Japan but also promoting cultural diversity and the education system of both countries. Hence, it promotes friendship and close cooperation between students and educational institutions of different countries.

Keywords: impact, emotion, skill, value

1.0 Introduction

The student exchange program can invigorate students' minds to a global level aligned with the country's hopes for the young generation that will lead the country in the future. Based on the Achievements of the Polytechnic and Community College Strategic Plan (PSPKK) First Phase (2018 – 2020) Core 1; to produce quality TVET graduates, there were almost 150 students who had gained experience and knowledge in the international arena such as Global Work Integrated Learning (GWIL), Southeast Asian Technical and Vocational Education and Training (SEA-TVET) Student Exchange Program and Learning Express Program (LeX). The experience and knowledge gained at the global level indirectly broaden students' experiences in planning their future direction and worldview. This effort also ranks the Polytechnic and Community College as the foremost TVET institution in the regional higher education arena.

In line with that, the PSPKK's Second Phase Aspiration (2021 - 2025) for Core 1 is to produce quality TVET; graduates have overcome many challenges since the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country. Internationalization programs require the transition of new norms that are more effective and sustainable through various alternative approaches, such as global knowledge sharing through virtual platforms that demand creativity and innovation from lecturers and students. On that basis, KKKL represented Community Colleges throughout Malaysia by participating in the M-Jet Hybrid International Student Exchange Program with Kanda University of International Studies, Japan, in conjunction with the Malaysia – Japan Festival 2022 online to fuel the internationalization agenda. This program also benefits students by integrating emotional aspects and improving skills and values. Through this program, participants were able to use their communication skills. They experienced the emotion of excitement when involved at the international level and the value of cooperation to ensure the success of this program.

1.1 Background of Study

This program was held on 5th June 2022 at the Malaysia Tourism Center (MaTiC). It was an invitation from the Chiba Prefecture Commerce, Industry and Labor Department Education Interexchange Team, Japan. This program is an online cultural exchange between Japan (12 participants) and Malaysia (22 participants). At the initial stage of the participant's involvement in this program, the problem identified by the researcher was that the English proficiency of the participants was at a moderate level, and they showed a lack of confidence to communicate. In addition, the selected participants experienced mixed feelings about participating in this program because they had a load of assignments and other commitments in several projects in college.

1.2 Research Questions

This study will answer the following questions: (i) What is the impact of emotional factors on respondents through this program? (ii) What is the impact of skill improvement factors on respondents through this program? (iii) What is the impact of value factors on respondents through this program? (iv) What are the suggestions and improvements for this program?

1.3 Study Objectives

Looking at the problem statement, this study was conducted to achieve the following objectives: (i) Identify the impact of emotional factors on respondents through this program; (ii) Identify the impact of skill improvement factors on respondents through this program; (iii) Identify the impact of value factors on respondents through this program; (iv) Identify suggestions and improvements for this program.

2.0 Study Highlights

The highlights of this study will further examine the impact of this program encompassing emotional factors and improving skills and values.

2.1 Emotional Factors

Various emotions experienced by the respondents from this program include positive and negative emotions. Regarding the Noor Afzaliza Nazira study, Maizatul Haizan, Mohd Hafifi, Mohd Sufiean, Nur Shazana and Khairi (2022), emotional intelligence is a person's ability to express, recognize, observe, use and manage their own emotions or the emotions of others. Thus, emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to use his or her emotions wisely to improve performance and achieve effective communication with others. Meanwhile, decisions influenced by negative emotions have various negative implications for others.

2.1 Skill Improvement Factors

Several aspects of skills are identified: (1) Communication Skills - Communication has two forms: verbal (verbal) - communication process that incorporates speech to convey information to the recipient. Oral communication is also categorized into speeches, presentations, conversations on the phone, and meetings, which involve two-way communication (fstm.kuis.edu.my, 2019). On the other hand, non-verbal (non-verbal) includes facial expressions, gestures, paralinguistics such as volume or tone of voice, body language, proxemics or personal space, eye gaze, haptics (touch), looks and artefacts (Calrase Patrick, 2022).

(2) Basic Mastery of Other Languages - According to a Berita Harian newspaper quoted dated 10th July 2021, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) stated that the marketability of graduates could be increased through the mastery of foreign languages such as English. (3) Time Management Skills - According to Zulfiqar (2022), time management is a significant term that requires inculcation to every person regardless of age or educational background, religion and race in order for the available time to be well utilized. Time is required to be utilized in an organized manner to manage

activity. Every implemented activity requires systematic time management, making it an activity that can be completed according to plan.

(4) Technology Use Skills - There is an international webinar organized by Merlimau Polytechnic (PMM) with international students at Bali State Polytechnic (PNB), Indonesia. They have shared their student exchange experiences through PMM's Facebook Live platform, which is broadcast live. Facebook surfers virtually witnessed this webinar from Malaysia and Indonesia through Facebook PMM (Mymetro Akademia, 2021). Dr Ehwan Ngadi, Lecturer at Genius Insan College, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), suggested face-to-face platforms such as Google Meet, Microsoft Team, Zoom and Skype should be used with high internet access.

(5) Management Skills Program – A management program involves four steps: planning, leading, controlling and organizing. According to Noorasiah & Nursaliha (2019), the aspect of employee skills is assessed specifically by categorizing skills into six dimensions: effective communication skills, thinking and problem-solving skills, teamwork skills, ethical and moral skills in the profession, management skills and entrepreneurial skills. This explains that management skills programs are essential in preparing students for the occupational world. (6) Information Literacy Skills - Information literacy is a person's ability to evaluate information to increase knowledge. The workforce generated from Higher Education Institutions must achieve excellence at the international level and become a highly knowledgeable generation.

2.1 Value Factor

According to the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Dictionary, the definition of value is an impactful quality that includes society, thought, religion and others. In this program, the value factors studied include; (1) The Value of Teamwork -Teamwork is one of the most significant parts of every organization because they can share information, provide motivation, and assist in making better decisions. When each skill is combined in a brainstorming session, the team can generate creativity together and increase the opportunities of getting the best solution or result (Media Permata, 2018).

Generally, teamwork refers to working in a group and often working together to mobilize joint efforts to achieve team goals. (2) The Value of Punctuality - According to Dr Siti Suriani Othman, a punctual person can reflect a person's pure personality, which is disciplined, efficient, better in carrying out activities, respected and trustworthy. This issue educates a person to value time and other people around him or her. (3) The Value of Respecting Other Cultures - The Charter of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Article 2, is written about respecting the cultures, religions and languages of different ASEAN people. In addition, this charter invites everyone to practice the spirit of the agreement in this cultural diversity constantly. (4) The Value of Earnestness - The meaning of earnestness in the dictionary of Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka is interest and persistence in doing something. According to Muhamad Shafiq & Noraini (2018), the findings indicated that interest has a positive influence on the student's achievements if they portray earnestness.

3.0 Study Methodology

This study is quantitative and qualitative. The quantitative method is by distributing questionnaires to twenty-two (22) respondents online through the following link: <https://bit.ly/3c4xU5r>. This study is analyzed in average form through Microsoft Excel. Meanwhile, qualitative research is conducted based on observations and interviews. The observation method applied is to observe the behaviour of program participants by making observation notes (Jacintha Henry & Nordin bin Mamat, 2022). The observation findings were recorded using pen and paper before being translated into formal documentation. The observations were conducted before and during the program.

This observation method is more valid and reliable because the researcher is also a participant in this program. As for the interview method, the researcher applied a semi-structured interview, a combination of structured and unstructured interviews. This interview was conducted with six (6) respondents who were the main presenters and were fully involved in this program, namely, internal preparatory training, preparatory training at MaTiC and the actual program. The interview findings were analyzed using percentages and notes.

4.0 Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of the findings discusses analysis from questionnaires, observations and interviews. Below are the findings:

4.1 Demographics of Respondents

The respondents of this study consisted of 27.3% males and 72.7% females. 72.7% of the respondents are between the ages of 17 to 19 years, 9.1% between the ages of 20 to 25, and the remaining 18.2% are between 35 to 40 years old. The respondents are comprised of several programs, namely, Business Operations Program (86.5%), 2D Animation Program (4.5%), Electrical Technology Program (4.5%), and General Studies (4.5%). The data also shows that 63.6% of the respondents have participated in an international program, while 36.4% are the opposite.

4.2 Objective 1: Identify the impact of emotional factors on respondents through this program

Twelve (12) questions from the questionnaire related to the impact on the emotional factors of respondents throughout this program. This question allows respondents to express their feelings. The findings from the questionnaire are summarized in Table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Impact of Emotional Factors

NO.	ITEM	MEAN
1.	I am happy to be selected as a participant in this program.	4.86
2.	I was excited when I got to know about this program.	4.73
3.	I am willing to spend time and energy preparing (slides, scripts and videos) for this program.	4.36
4.	I try to make the best preparation for this program.	4.50
5.	I am ready for the presentation session and the question and answer session.	4.55
6.	I am confident during the presentation and question and answer session.	4.50
7.	I am excited to communicate with Kanda University of International Studies, Japan students.	4.73
8.	I had fun after the program was over.	4.86
9.	I am happy to have the opportunity to meet friends from the Kanda University of International Studies Japan.	4.91
10.	I am happy to learn a new culture.	4.91
11.	I am happy to learn the basic Japanese language.	4.73
12.	I am proud to be given the opportunity to communicate in English with friends abroad.	4.82
TOTAL MEAN		4.70

As shown in Table 1, the study's findings indicated that the highest mean is from items 9 and 10, which are 4.91, respectively. This shows that the respondents were happy to have the opportunity to communicate with friends from abroad and were happy to learn a new culture that is different from the culture in Malaysia. This proves that this program positively impacts respondents when the total mean is 4.70. Based on observations, the researcher noted that the respondents initially felt worried and nervous, as seen through the respondent's silence and less responsive behaviour during the preparatory training. While through interviews, 50% of respondents answered "Yes" when being questioned, "Are you nervous?".

For the question, "Are you sure you do not want to present this?" 100% of them answered, "Not sure". The researcher continued the open question by getting the answer to the question, "Why are you not sure?". Among the responses recorded by the respondents were; "worried that Japanese people do not understand my English", "worried about being an embarrassment to the college", and "worried about not being able to answer Japanese questions". This is because they felt the need to shoulder a big responsibility to represent the college's name on the international stage. Furthermore, a few respondents have never been involved with impact programs and communicate with friends from abroad.

4.3 Objective 2: Identify The Impact Of Skill Improvement Factors On Respondents Through This Program

Through the questionnaire, there are seven (7) questions related to the impact on factors of improving the respondent's skills through this program.

Table 2: Impact of Skill Improvement Factors

NO.	ITEM	MEAN
1.	I can improve my oral communication skills.	4.50
2.	I can improve my non-verbal communication skills.	4.55
3.	I can improve my basic mastery of other languages.	4.27
4.	I can improve my time management skills.	4.45
5.	I can improve my skill in using technology.	4.36
6.	I was able to improve my skills in program management.	4.23
7.	I can improve my information literacy skill	4.27
TOTAL MEAN		4.38

The study results in Table 2 proved that the highest mean is from item 2, which is 4.55. Improving non-verbal communication skills such as facial expressions, hands, arms and body position can be mastered indirectly by respondents through this program. Through observation, they were also seen to lack communication skills in English when they were not fluent during the training session. The researcher found that the respondents did not use the correct voice intonation and used a flat and unattractive voice. In addition, they showed simple facial expressions and body positions and did not animate the text provided. During the interview session, the question asked: "Do you know the correct intonation for a presentation?" 83% of respondents answered, "Do not know". For the question, "Have you ever spoken Japanese?". 100% of them have never used Japanese in their daily communication.

For open questions, respondents were asked, "How do you search for information to come up with the speech texts and slides?". Among the answers given: were "Google search", "Based on experience", and "Discussion with friends". The following question was asked to the respondents after the program ended; "Are you able to learn the Japanese Language?". 100% of respondents answered yes. Another question asked: "What examples of Japanese phrases that you know?". The answers received are "Konnichiwa", "Arigatou", and "Wakari masu ka". Through this program, respondents can use information literacy skills in the preparation of presentation materials and discussions based on the distribution of tasks given. From the aspect of mastery of other languages, the respondents initially were less fluent in English pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar. However, the assistance of consultant experts, training and continuous improvement of the text and slides that need to be prepared before the program; have helped the respondents to improve these skills. In addition, they took the initiative to learn the basics of the Japanese language through internet searches.

4.4 Objective 3: Identify The Impact Of Value Factors On Respondents Through This Program

The questionnaire allocated four (4) questions related to the impact on the value factors of respondents through this program.

Table 3: Impact of Value Factors

NO.	ITEM	MEAN
1.	I was able to learn the value of teamwork.	4.68
2.	I was able to learn the value of punctuality.	4.68
3.	I can learn the value of respecting other cultures.	4.68
4.	I learned the value of earnestness in completing the assignments given for this program.	4.73
TOTAL MEAN		4.69

The research findings in Table 3 indicated that the highest mean is item 4, 4.73. Respondents learned the value of earnestness in completing assigned tasks, such as preparing videos and presentation slides. The observation found that all respondents could give excellent commitment and cooperation before and during the program, even though they were from different classes. This is because the speech text and presentation slides were prepared before the program, and they helped each other during the presentation session. In addition, all participants showed up five minutes earlier than the specified time. This finding showed that they were able to meet the set time.

Next, the interview aspect contains two questions: "Are you ready with the text and slides" 33% "Not ready yet". Another question was asked, "I ordered you to make the correction that day. Have you done it?" 100% responded, "Have done it". This is related to the seriousness of the respondents who required more attention from the guidance lecturer. This is because they must be regularly reminded to complete assigned tasks such as information literacy, text preparation and presentation slides.

4.5 Objective 4: Identify Recommendations And Improvements

Based on the findings of the study in Table 4, there are four (4) questions related to the recommendations and improvements of this program which are divided as follows: Two (2) questions show the mean value, one (1) question that uses options and one (1) open question that asks respondents to give suggestions or things that need to be improved for this program.

Table 4: Improvements to Items 1 & 2 of Part C

NO.	ITEM	AVERAGE
1.	I feel this program should continue in the future.	4.86
2.	I feel that all students and other programs should be given the opportunity to participate in programs like this.	4.64

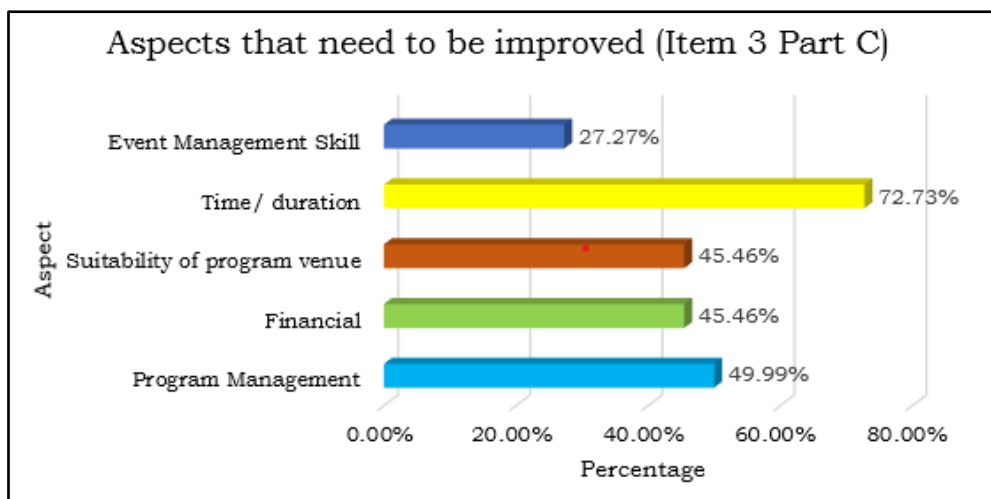


Figure 1: Aspects that need to be improved (Item 3 Part C)

Based on Figure 1, according to the respondents, the highest aspect that needs to be improved is time or duration. Based on the researcher's observations, the time or duration of this program is too short, resulting in respondents not having the opportunity to get to know their friends and immerse themselves in the culture of Japanese society. There are several suggestions or things that need to be improved that are stated by the respondents. Among them, they will be happier and more excited if they can meet face to face. Either they can go to Japan, or Japanese students come to Malaysia. In addition, the venue selected for sharing sessions needs to be improved, such as the use of a spacious seminar room to facilitate the movement of participants. Respondents also perceived that financial allocations such as food and drink and daily expenses should be considered for future programs. Based on the researcher's observations, the videos and presentation slides provided by the respondents are too formal and factual. They are suggested to produce videos that display everyday situations and are more relaxed.

5.0 Summary and Recommendations

This study has proven that the M-Jet Hybrid International Student Exchange Program Joint Program of Kanda University of International Studies, Japan and Kuala Langat Community College provided a good and positive impact on all respondents. All the factors studied through questionnaires, observations and interviews presented very good results. Although in the beginning, respondents showed emotional conflicts, with guidance, solid cooperation, consistent and continuous training, these obstacles and challenges could be overcome excellently. Overall, the preparation before, during and after the program, such as time management, program management, and preparation of materials, can improve the existing skills of respondents to a level they can be proud of. Programs like this need to be continued in the future as an added value to students, lecturers and organizations with the involvement and cooperation of all parties taking into account the aspects of improvement identified.

A further study suggested in the future is to conduct a similar study involving collecting respondent data from both countries to obtain a comprehensive impact compared to the current study, which is only limited to respondents in Malaysia. In addition, this advanced research method can obtain input for improvement suggestions from all respondents, allowing differences in findings that encompass various aspects.

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