



AENSI Journals

Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences

ISSN:1991-8178

Journal home page: www.ajbasweb.com



### 3The Integration of Soft Skills in English Camp Activities

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#### ARTICLE INFO

##### Article history:

Received 30 September 2014

Received in revised form

17 November 2014

Accepted 25 November 2014

Available online 13 December 2014

##### Keywords:

English camp, soft skills, generic skills

#### ABSTRACT

English Camp program is designed to develop soft skills in which students are not able to gain during the normal study duration. Even though English camp is known to be a success among students, studies that look into the development of soft skills equipped in it are rather limited. Due to this, the soft skills incorporated in the English camp have remained unknown. Therefore a study has been carried out to gather information about soft skills that are consciously or unconsciously embedded into the English Camp program. This article is to describe a survey conducted with 114 students at a Malaysian university. Of all the seven main skills introduced by The Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, the findings revealed that Teamwork skill had been frequently integrated in the English Camp activities, different from Information Technology Management skill, which had been minimally used. Finally, the data points to the need for future studies on the integration of Entrepreneurship skill in the English Camp activities.

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**To Cite This Article:** Nur Salina Ismail, Misrah Hamisah Mohamed, Sharifah Nor Madiyah Syed Omar., 3The Integration of Soft Skills in English Camp Activities. *Aust. J. Basic & Appl. Sci.*, 8(24): 139-147, 2014

#### INTRODUCTION

The present challenging economic environment and the fast growing number of students passing higher education system intensifies the competition for established positions in professions. Thus, having knowledge of academic courses alone is no longer sufficient for new graduates to gain employment. They have to equip themselves with graduate attributes that will enhance their employability. These attributes, which is also known as soft skills in Malaysia, are the set of qualities and skills predetermined by a university that students should develop and acquire from the institution which later contribute to their career (Bowden et al., 2000; Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, 2006). As proposed by Everson (1999), equipping students with soft skills could make the difference in obtaining and retaining the jobs which they have been prepared for.

Realizing how soft skills competency can be the key to graduates employability, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) developed a soft skills module which was introduced to the public universities in 2006. The module highlighted seven soft skills which need to be incorporated into the curriculum; communication skills, critical thinking and problem solving, teamwork, lifelong learning and information management, ethics and professional moral, entrepreneurship, and leadership skills. This module was introduced after taking into consideration the feedback given by employers who pointed out that local graduates lacked soft skills (Asma and Lim, 2000; Kanapathy, 2001; Lee, 2000; Quek, 2000). Thus, using the module as the basis, universities were required to embed these skills into their respective courses. Besides the courses, the skills can also be developed through students' co-curricular activities which can stand alone or be embedded.

Corresponding to the module developed by MOHE, Faculty of Languages and Communication in Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) Malaysia becomes one of the many faculties that abide to the module proposed. All the courses offered in this faculty have the elements of soft skills embedded with its course outline. Of all the courses, two courses offered for Diploma in Teaching English as a Second Language are informal courses; English Camp 1 (BTS 1042) and English Camp 2 (BTS 1092). These courses are considered informal courses as they are carried out through informal teaching and learning process where students no longer attend formal classes and lectures, but primarily involve in more hands-on activities, both inside and outside the classrooms.

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Similar to other courses, these two courses, which are commonly known as English Camp, are embedded with the elements of soft skills. However, how much emphasis is given to the use of soft skills during both camps is not known.

Thus, the aims of this study are to identify the soft skills and its frequency of use in each English Camp activity. In order to meet these aims, two research questions were addressed;

1. What are the soft skills integrated in the English camp activities?
2. Which activity carries the most and the least usage of soft skills?

### **Background Study:**

The Malaysian Prime Minister in tabling the Ninth Malaysia Plan on March 31, 2006 reinforced that the development of human capital and the upgrading of the mentality and intellectual capacity of a nation must be a priority if Malaysia is to be a developed country. Thus, there is a greater demand for knowledgeable workers with a strong orientation towards interpersonal skills, teamwork, creativity, and lifelong learning. Employers also prefer to hire candidates who are productive and do not have to undergo trainings to better equip themselves in the long run. Unfortunately, most graduates in Malaysia are lacking the soft skills required by employers. It was found that Malaysian graduates are mostly weak in English language proficiency and communication skills, not proactive, not able to work as a team, unwilling to learn from subordinates and narrow minded (National Higher Education Research Institute, Malaysia (IPPTN), 2005).

Thus, many employers suggest that universities collaborate with the industries in order to design courses which will eventually produce graduates that meet the needs of the industry. As the highest determinant of graduates' employability is communication skills instead of academic achievement, it is believed that the development of soft skills among university students is as important as the academic achievement (Barclay, 1993; Lim, 1994; Ivancevich and Lee, 2002; Mason *et al.*, 2009). Due to this reason, the Minister of Higher Education announced that public universities in Malaysia must introduce soft skill elements and incorporate them in the undergraduate syllabus.

### **Soft Skills:**

Soft skills refer to the cluster of personality traits, social graces, facility with language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism that mark people to varying degrees. Soft skills are vital for all graduates to acquire, regardless of their field of study. Communication skills, analytical, critical and problem solving skills, lifelong learning, entrepreneurship and management skills are some skills that employers value as important skills for potential employees to possess. One straightforward reason is today's job market, in many fields, are very competitive. In order to be successful in this tough environment, the candidates must possess an additional edge that distinguishes them from any other ordinary candidates. These additional qualities involve soft skills which have been a good indicator for evaluating job performance. Thus, soft skills are crucial in ensuring the success of graduate employees in the workplace and continued progress in their career (Hager *et al.*, 2002). Soft skills also enable graduate employees to understand and adapt successfully to the cultural norms of the workplace. Besides, it is also true that soft skills shape human personality (Schulz, 2008). It enables graduate employees to optimize their personality and personal productivity primarily through learning self-awareness, maintaining self-objectivity, bolstering self-esteem and resilience, cultivating good values and manners, developing a strong work ethics projecting themselves positively, and managing their time successfully (Ranjit, 2008).

Employers usually look for qualified candidates that possess good interpersonal communication skills, high level of moral ethics and professionalism, problem solving skills, and critical and creative thinking (Grewertz, 2007). These attributes can be seen from those who have been exposed to series of exposure to any courses or classroom activities that prepare the undergraduates for working environment. Due to this reason, Minister of Higher Education introduces seven soft skills and defines them as generic skills needed by students to be successful practitioners in academic, employment and life (Falk and Millar, 2002; Hambur *et al.*, 2002; Lublin, 2003).

Critical thinking and problem solving skills are among the skills introduced by MOHE where graduates should be able to think in a critical, creative, innovative, and analytical manner which includes the ability to apply knowledge in order to solve problems. The elements that graduates must possess under this aspect are the ability to identify and analyze complex situation as well as making evaluations that are justifiable. They should also have the ability to expand and improve thinking skills, to provide ideas, and alternative solutions. Another trait is teamwork. It involves the ability to work and cooperate with people from various social and cultural backgrounds so as to achieve a common goal. In order to build a good working relationship with colleagues, it is essential that graduates are respectful toward others' attitude, behavior, and belief. From time to time graduates are also expected to undertake the role of a leader and a group member interchangeably.

Next, lifelong learning and information management skills help graduates to do self-regulated learning independently in acquiring skills and knowledge. They should have the skills to search for relevant information from various sources and able to manage them efficiently. They should also be receptive to new ideas and able

to develop an inquiry mind. In the meantime, entrepreneurship skill involves the ability to venture into business and work-related opportunities while creating risk awareness. This skill includes the ability to identify business opportunities and be able to prepare, build, and explore business plans which eventually leads to self-employment.

Graduates should also be able to practice with high moral standards in the relevant professional practice and understand the effects of economy, environment, and socio-cultural factors on their respective professional practice. Furthermore, graduates should be able to analyze and arrive at decisions in matters concerning ethics. They should be able to practice good ethics while having a sense of responsibility toward society. Due to these factors, ethics and professional moral have also been considered as another trait of soft skills. Finally, leadership skills entail the ability to lead in various activities. Graduates should have the knowledge on basic leadership theories which will enable the graduates to lead a project. It is also essential that graduates are able to understand the role of a leader and a group member and be able to carry out those roles interchangeably.

### ***English Camp:***

English Camp was introduced to enhance English communication skills among students. This course is a compulsory subject for every student as part of the curriculum for Diploma in TESL at UniSZ, Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia. The English camp course is designed to allow TESL students to master English language learning in an authentic natural learning environment which they are not able to gain during the normal study duration. Thus, the course is a platform for helping students to use English confidently as a media of thinking and communication to speak and write. Each camp is graded as a two-credit course. The duration for English Camp is two weeks. The camp is divided into two parts - indoor camp and outdoor camp. The indoor camp is conducted on campus whereby the activities are done in classrooms. The outdoor camp on the other hand is usually held off campus at any resort in Terengganu.

The syllabus purported that the camp aimed at training the students with necessary skills in order to be able to communicate in English effectively, cooperate among themselves, develop leadership qualities, assume responsibilities, develop a sense of belongings, and develop creative and critical thinking skills. As highlighted in the pro-forma of the course, English Camp comprises controlled and partially controlled activities, and exposes the students to good communication skills which can be used to achieve success in their command of the English language. It also provides opportunities for students to further develop their natural inborn skills in the context of the English language. Besides, the students will be immersed in English-speaking environments. English Camp is also designed to be enjoyable and intellectually stimulating. It will encourage cooperative work that leads the students to assuming responsibilities for their own progress (Diploma in TESL syllabus, 2009).

### ***English Camp Activities:***

English Camp activities comprises all proficiency skills; writing, reading, listening and speaking. As mentioned earlier, the activities designed for the English Camp are divided into two categories; indoor and outdoor. The indoor activities include My Team, Poem of 15, Song Visualization, Grammar Chant, Motivational Talk, Trip to YPKT Kindergarden, Trip to Syahbandar, Home Shopping, In No Time Flat, Bed Time Stories, If Shoes Does Not Fit, Puppet Show and Nasyid Competition. Meanwhile the outdoor activities include Hot Seat, Treasure Hunt, Campfire Horror Story and Bukit Keluang Hiking.

During My Team activity, students have to form their own teams. Each team is allotted one hour to prepare a group name, a flag, name tags, a logo and a group chant. Then each team has to present their products within five minutes. All group members have to participate actively during the presentation. After this activity, students move on to Poem of 15, where students need to construct a poem based on the theme given by cutting words or letters from the newspapers. At the end of the session, they will have to paste it on the wall and recite it to their friends. Their friends will later vote the best poem. Next, in a different activity called Song Visualisation, each team is given lyrics of a song and students have to translate the song into their own understanding. Members of the team are given ten minutes to present their masterpiece.

Grammar Chant is another interesting English Camp activity. It is part of jazz chant, a combination of repetition and learned response. Besides repeating other language items, Grammar Chant repeats grammatical items, (i.e. tag questions, be-verbs, modals, prepositions, etc). Through this activity, students will get used to pronouncing grammatical phrases and using correct grammar based on situational contexts. Besides creating their own chant, students also have to invent a home based product using a box as the base. This activity is called Home Shopping. At the end of the session, the students have to present and promote their products in five to seven minutes time.

Different from the two activities mentioned above, there are also other activities that require students to create and invent their own production such as Bed Time Stories, Puppet Show and Nasyid Competition. However, these activities provide students with stimuli as their sources of preparation. For example, in Bed Time Stories, students are given an opportunity to do a role-play based on the bed time stories that they choose. They are allowed to insert extra elements in their story to make it more interesting. Based on the story also, they

have to prepare their own props and appropriate costumes. In the meantime, during the Puppet Show activity, students have to be puppets while narrating a story. They are allowed to adapt the story from any movies such as Harry Potter or Snow White. This activity also requires them to prepare interesting props and costumes. Another activity that provides students with stimulus is Nasyid Competition. In this activity, students have to choose a song and are free to translate the original lyrics and change or add their own ideas to improvise the song. Students have to perform the song for about five to seven minutes. During the performance, each group is encouraged to use live instrument such as guitar, drums, and custom percussions such as pails and cookie jars.

Besides creating and inventing, students also involve in activities that require them to communicate with the community outside the campus. These activities also aim to expose students to the real world situation involving other people outside the campus. These activities are trips to YPKT Kindergarten and Syahbandar. At the kindergarten, students have to teach the children to sing English nursery rhymes. Before the trip, they have to prepare an "activity plan" which is similar to a lesson plan. Students are given two hours to conduct the learning session which involve more communication skills. On the other hand, during the trip to Syahbandar, students are assigned to find interesting sight-seeing tourist attractions from Taman Syahbandar to Kg. Cina, along Sungai Terengganu. After the trip, they have to write a report about the tour and suggest ideas to make the places better.

Other activities which are also carried out during the English Camp are Motivational Talk, In No Time Flat and If Shoes Does Not Fit. The Motivational Talk is a session with a guest speaker. The speaker will give an inspirational talk, stimulating students with stories and experiences. At the end of the talk, students will write a simple reflection based on what they have gained from the talk. On the other hand, In No Time Flat activity is an adapted version of Win, Lose or Draw. One representative from each team will have to choose a paper strip of phrases or English proverbs. Then he or she will draw any images that may visualize the strip. The rest of the team members are given one minute to guess. In the meantime, If the Shoe Does Not Fit is another activity requiring students to provide logical and concrete answers based on their prior knowledge to a given situation in order to win the audience's support. This is also similar to the mock survey programme on television. This is also a group activity whereby two teams will compete at a time and the other groups will become the audience.

All the activities mentioned above are considered indoor activities as they are carried out in the campus area. As mentioned previously, English Camp also requires students to participate in the outdoor activities which are carried out outside of the campus. There are four activities involved which include Hot Seat, Treasure Hunt, Campfire Horror Story and Bukit Keluang Hiking. For the Hot Seat, every group of students will against each other. One representative from each group will sit on a chair facing his or her group members. Another team member will take one paper strip provided and he or she will write the word on the board, behind the person sitting on the chair. The other team members will try to give clues to their team member who is sitting on the chair.

As for the treasure Hunt, this activity is more on problem solving task. This activity requires all members to participate at the same time. There are 15 treasures to be searched and each group is given a written clue to help them find the treasures. Another activity that requires all students to participate at one time is climbing up the Bukit Keluang in Besut. This activity mainly involves teamwork since students have to stay in their groups no matter what happened. The group that reached the finishing line together with all members is considered the winners. Last but not least, Campfire Horror Story is another outdoor activity carried out during the English Camp. In group, students have to discuss a frightening ghost story to be told to other students. The story has to be narrated in the scariest way by one representative from the group. Marks are awarded to the group based on the creativity and also the body language used during the story telling.

### **Research Methodology:**

#### **Sampling:**

A total of 114 TESL students were chosen as respondents for this research study. The majority of the respondents were female students (92), leaving the male students (22) as the minority. In terms of study enrolment, there were 55 students from semester two and 57 students from semester four. These students represent an appropriate choice for examining the integration of soft skills in the English Camp activities as they have been engaged in the course. Furthermore, their current knowledge of the course will ensure their participation and output given are relatively informative and relevant. Being the participants of English camp, these students would be able to comment and provide more valuable feedback on the incorporation of soft skills into the various activities of the course. Since the respondents were purposely chosen for their participation in English Camp, this study employs purposive sampling.

#### **Instruments:**

This research highly relies on a set of structured questionnaire which consists of 2 parts; Part A and Part B. Part A was meant to compile the demographic profile of the respondents and also the general information of their knowledge on soft skills and Part B was designed to gather the respondents' perceptions on the application

of soft skills in every single activity carried out during the English Camp. The analysis of the data mainly revolved around the information gathered from Part B. Items in this section require ranking, based on a 5-point Likert scale of 1 to 5: 1 – unsure of the skills applied, 2 – skills are not applied at all, 3 – skills are occasionally/sometimes applied, 4 – skills are frequently applied and 5 – skills are consistently applied. There are 17 constructs with a total of 119 scale items for this section. The items in this section cover basically two elements which are the application of soft skills and its frequency of application in each activity.

Cronbach's alpha reliability test was used to examine the degree of consistency between the items representing the scale. Cronbach's alpha coefficient was reported of .975. Since the result was higher than .7, the scale of the items was considered to have good internal consistencies (DeVellis, 2003). In terms of content validity, each construct had been designed to represent each activity of the English Camp. The items were identified from the nature of the overall activities and the skill competencies outlined by the MOHE. Meanwhile, for face validity, the questionnaire was pilot-tested on 30 TESL students who have joined the English Camp with the same activities. There were no major difficulties in answering the questionnaire, thus minor changes were made to improve its format and facilitate analysis.

#### **Data Collection Procedures:**

After finalizing the questionnaire, a survey was carried out on the following week, right after the respondents attended the English Camp. They had to complete a questionnaire which was personally distributed by the researchers themselves. The researchers were there to help and guide the respondents to complete the questionnaire. It took approximately 30 minutes for each respondent to complete the questionnaire. Upon completion, the researchers personally collected the questionnaire from the respondents and each of them was given a token of appreciation on the return of the questionnaire. After the data collection, the researchers put in the data into SPSS software to be analysed.

#### **Data Analysis:**

In this study, quantitative data collected were analyzed using descriptive analysis. The data were presented and analysed based on the research questions. In order to identify the soft skills used during the English Camp and to determine the most and the least significant domain of soft skills used during the activities, the mean interpretation by Ehrman and Oxford (1991) was used (Table 1). The mean of every item that measured each of the seven skills was rounded. For example, item 1 in each construct (activity) measured the frequency use of communicative skills in the activity. The mean of all item 1 in seventeen constructs were rounded and calculated to obtain the level of use of soft skills among the students during English camp.

**Table 1:** Mean interpretation by Ehrman and Oxford (1991).

INTERPRETATION	SCORE
High	3.5 - 5.0
Average	2.5 - 3.4
Low	1.0 - 2.4

#### **Results:**

##### **Addressing the First Research Question: What are the soft skills integrated in the English camp activities?:**

In addressing the first research question, the mean interpretation score by Ehrman and Oxford (1991) was adopted to determine the soft skill incorporated in each English Camp activity. In terms of the mean of use of soft skills in each activities carried out during English Camp, the mean interpretation score by Ehrman and Oxford (1991) was adapted by looking at overall mean and by domain category. Table 2 shows the mean of use of soft skills in each activity carried out during English Camp. Mostly the mean of use of soft skills in all activities was high and average with the mean score between 2.5 to 5.0. The mean of use of soft skills is very high in Bedtime Stories, Home Shopping, Puppet Show and Trip to YPKT Kindergarten because all skills were applied in these activities with the mean score of more than 3.5. In Bedtime Stories, the mean scores are from 3.51 to 4.47. In Home Shopping the mean scores are from 3.51 to 4.46. Meanwhile in Puppet Show the mean scores are from 3.5 to 4.34. Then the mean scores for Trip to YPKT Kindergarten are from 3.81 to 4.52.

Meanwhile all skills were applied in Poem of 15, Grammar Chant, Nasyid, Hot Seat and Treasure Hunt are rated high except the Information Technology Management. The mean score Poem of 15 are from 3.53 to 4.37 except for Information Technology Management which is placed at average at 3.16. The mean score for Grammar Chant is 3.69 to 4.38 and Information Technology Management with 3.4. The mean score for Nasyid is from 3.58 to 4.26 with Information Technology Management scored at 3.47. Meanwhile Hot Seat scored 3.71 to 4.25 and Information Technology Management with 3.38. Treasure Hunt scores 3.71 to 4.54 and Information Technology with 3.21. Management Critical Thinking, Leadership and Information Technology Management were applied in Bukit Keluang Hiking with the average mean score of 3.4, 3.44 and 2.9 respectively.

**Table 2:** Mean of use of soft skills in each English camp activity.

Activities	CS	T	CTPS	E	L	LL	ITM
My Team	3.95	4.41	3.88	3.49	3.88	3.27	2.9
Poem of 15	3.83	4.37	4.14	3.55	3.66	3.53	3.16
Song Visualization	3.83	4.15	3.81	3.39	3.49	3.38	3.33
Grammar Chant	4.26	4.38	4.24	3.69	3.77	3.75	3.45
Motivational Talk	3.21	2.7	2.88	3.58	2.67	3.86	3.03
Trip to YKT Kindergarten	4.52	4.52	4.24	4.34	3.9	4.51	3.81
Trip to Syahbandar	3.43	3.88	3.54	3.45	3.40	3.39	3.35
Home Shopping	4.21	4.46	4.42	3.75	3.95	3.66	3.51
In No Time Flat	4.04	4.20	4.15	3.6	3.46	3.7	3.15
Bedtime Stories	4.47	4.42	4.03	3.82	3.87	3.78	3.51
If Shoe Does Not Fit	3.49	3.59	3.6	3.21	3.14	3.10	2.88
Puppet Show	4.29	4.34	4.04	3.71	3.92	3.76	3.52
Nasyid Competition	3.87	4.26	3.76	3.72	3.73	3.58	3.47
Hot Seat	4.33	4.52	4.35	3.71	3.84	3.86	3.38
Treasure Hunt	4.16	4.54	4.36	3.96	4.04	3.71	3.25
Campfire Horror Story	3.79	3.44	3.13	3.21	3.10	3.12	2.69
Bukit Keluang Hiking	3.54	3.88	3.46	3.51	3.44	3.82	2.90

CS - Communication Skills

T - Teamwork

CTPS - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

E - Ethics

L - Leadership

LL - Life-long Learning

ITM - Information Technology Management

**Addressing the Second Research Question: Which activity carries the most and the least usage of soft skills?:**

In addressing the second research question, the researchers rounded all the mean scores of the soft skills used in each activity to determine the activity that has the most and the least usage of soft skills. It is an apparent finding that all the soft skill domains were applied in all activities carried out. Therefore, the calculation of mean has been considered valid and acceptable. The results of mean calculation are presented in table 3. Using Ehrman and Oxford's (1991) mean interpretation score, the findings reveal that of all the seventeen activities carried out during the English Camp, four of them did not highly implement the use of soft skills. This is due to the mean scores they carry which are lower than 3.5. These four activities are Motivational Talk (3.13), Trip to Syahbandar (3.49), If Shoes Does Not Fit (3.29), and Campfire Horror Story (3.21). In the meantime, other activities listed are found to have high level of use of soft skills because their mean scores are more than 3.5. They are My Team (3.68), Poem of 15 (3.74), Song Visualization (3.63), Grammar Chant (3.93), Trip to YKT Kindergarten (4.26), Home Shopping (3.99), In No Time Flat (3.76), Bedtime Stories (3.99), Puppet Show (3.94), Nasyid Competition (3.77), Hot Seat (4.00), Treasure Hunt (4.00), and Bukit Keluang Hiking (3.51).

**Table 3:** Mean of the Use of Soft Skills in Each English Camp Activity.

No.	Activities	Mean
1	My Team	3.68
2	Poem of 15	3.74
3	Song Visualization	3.63
4	Grammar Chant	3.93
5	Motivational Talk	3.13
6	Trip to YKT Kindergarten	4.26
7	Trip to Syahbandar	3.49
8	Home Shopping	3.99
9	In No Time Flat	3.76
10	Bedtime Stories	3.99
11	If Shoe Does Not Fit	3.29
12	Puppet Show	3.94
13	Nasyid Competition	3.77
14	Hot Seat	4.00
15	Treasure Hunt	4.00
16	Campfire Horror Story	3.21
17	Bukit Keluang Hiking	3.51

Among the activities that are listed to have high level of use of soft skills, it is obvious that Trip to YKT Kindergarten is the activity that carries the most frequent usage of soft skills (4.26). In the meantime, the four activities – Motivational Talk, Trip to Syahbandar, If Shoes Does Not Fit, and Campfire Horror Story – which have lower than 3.5 of mean score are evaluated. Of these four activities, the activity that carries the least frequent usage of soft skills is found to be Motivational Talk.

### **Discussion:**

The findings of current study show that soft skills are widely integrated in the English Camp activities. This indicates that the English Camp outlined for students highly emphasizes the use of soft skills among students. Therefore, it can be claimed that the soft skills module which was introduced by MOHE to the public universities in 2006 has been well adapted into this course. Even though the distribution of each mean of soft skill are not well distributed, still the major component of soft skill such as teamwork, Communication Skill, Ethics and Leadership are seen highly tabulated in each of the activities in the English Camp. Thus, the students who involved in English Camp do not only enhance their language skills, but also implicitly practice and develop their soft skills gained from the activities implemented.

The second research question has been addressed based on the overall analysed data. It demonstrates that Teamwork has been highly practiced, compared to Information Technology and Management which was found to be the least soft skill applied. These results appeared to be parallel with the nature of the activities, where most of them required students to work in groups rather than individually. It is because through group work that the students can communicate with one another. Hence Teamwork activity was thoroughly assessed. Meanwhile it is not a surprise that Information Technology Management was found minimally applied throughout the English Camp. The use of technology can be expected when the students are to prepare written report after the trips and also when preparing the lesson plan. Even so, there were activities involving the use of ICT for example when the students have to do some ground research on the tasks assigned to them such as Bedtime Story, Puppet Show and also Grammar Chant. However, it was found that the students' preference towards working in groups rather than individually has become the main reason why these students opted for pure ideas brainstormed among the team members rather than finding the sources from other technological devices. In addition, the limited time given to attempt the tasks making them less dependent on technological devices. Due to these reasons, Information Technology Management has not been applied as frequent as Teamwork even though the nature of the activities would require students to practice the Information Technology Management skill.

The designed activities played important roles in influencing the participants not only to learn and use English but also to allow students to apply the embedded soft skills without them even realizing it. As indicated by the findings, all activities created for English Camp integrate soft skills listed by MOHE, except entrepreneurship. This has become a major weakness of this English Camp as students were not exposed to entrepreneurship. Again, due to time constraint which is only 2 weeks, it is very unlikely that any entrepreneurship activities could be carried out effectively. Even so, the activities, which were intended to ensure the participants would freely take part in the activities without being tied up with exam-oriented or classroom situation, have achieved the objectives to encourage students to do self-regulated learning by independently searching for relevant information from various sources and to manage them efficiently. Therefore, even though entrepreneurship skill has not been practiced in any activities done, English Camp is still considered beneficial for students since it still offers them various other skills highlighted by MOHE. This is proven through the findings which show how students perceived English Camp to have soft skills applied in all its activities. In fact, Trip to YKT Kindergarten has been perceived by students to be the best activity that frequently applied the soft skills as this activity covers all aspects; individual, team members and also outsiders in which students have to make thorough preparations before the actual event takes place. In fact, during the actual event, they were able to apply some of the soft skills domain such as communicating not only with their teammates but also to the teachers and pupils at YKT Kindergarten. The students even realized that they have applied most of the skills in this activity. This particular activity is believed to assist students to be more independent in the outside world. This is in contrast with Motivational Talk, which was perceived as lacking of soft skills application due to its nature which involved students to only listen and give feedback at certain time of the activity.

### **Conclusion:**

Current study reveals a clear evident that the application of soft skills has been extensively implemented in the English Camps outlined for Diploma in TESL students. This, in a way, shows that the qualities emphasized by MOHE are nurtured in English Camps. The soft skills applied during the English Camp have given a major contribution to the physical and environmental education and enhances many other curriculum areas. The skills practiced also contribute to students' personal growth and social awareness and develop their skills for life. It also prepares the undergraduates to the working environment which requires them to master the soft skills

embedded. In other words, the activities carried out during English Camp have given positive impact towards students' intellectual, physical, spiritual, social and moral development.

As revealed in the study, English Camp activities have given wide opportunities for students to gain knowledge and practice the soft skills integrated throughout the camp. This will eventually give students a great deal of intrinsic enjoyment and satisfaction to be experienced, especially in building their self-confidence which is fundamental to any language learner's development. However, the activities were limited to only six skills highlighted by MOHE. Therefore, there is a need for curriculum makers to revise the activities so that all the seven skills, including entrepreneurship, can be incorporated in the English Camp.

Finally, as this study involves a purposive, small sample and is limited to a single university, the findings from the data collected may not be suitable to be generalized to represent university students in general. Thus, further research on the application of soft skills should be explored, preferably on a larger measure and also in ongoing basis, involving other public universities in Malaysia with similar course of this nature. Besides, it is recommended that for such course, research be conducted to involve studies on individual activity to determine its impacts on the participants as well as on how each of these activities helps students in mastering any domain of soft skills besides improving their command of the English language.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The study of Integration of Soft Skill was conducted using Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) Grant Fund, grant code: UniSZA / 11 / GU (034). The researchers acknowledge Research and Innovation Management Centre (CRIM), UniSZA on the approval of this research.

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