

## The Effectiveness of Intensive Workshop Activities for Enhancing Students' Understanding on Educational and Sociological Theories

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### Abstract

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*The aim of this study was to identify the effectiveness of the Intensive Workshop Activities towards students' understanding on educational and sociological theories. Respondents were participants that have been enrolled in the Intensive Postgraduate Workshop. The focus was on how the activities affect students' ability to comprehend educational and sociological theories. The study utilized a true experimental design where the participants were given the pre-test and post-test. The instrument was adapted and modified from past empirical studies and literature. Results showed that there was no significance difference between before and after the intensive workshop that has been run. However, there was an increasing mean score in the students' understanding. This indicates that participants who attended the workshop gained useful knowledge on educational and sociological theories. This informs the importance of intensive learning activities for enhancing students' understanding on theories.*

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**Key words:** intensive workshop, graduates, Educational and Sociological Theories

### 1.0 Introduction

University is a place for teaching and learning in a diversity source of knowledge. It is a place of sharing research knowledge and information between students, researchers and academicians. Moreover, the researches done are basically to be shared publicly. According to Muhammad Shukri (2011), research is defined as looking for more information about something, going deeper, and conducting extensive research or in-depth investigation through certain procedures.

Generally, research skills is defined as the systematic methods that help researchers – undergraduate, post-graduates, and doctorates to study the problems and the issues whether in the social sciences or natural sciences (Mohd Azhari.2012). In addition, through the skills of research, Amelia Ismail (2008) stated that it is in the knowledge of every researcher, for every problem there is a solution which needs to be studied. This objective can be achieved through the research skills that help researchers to devise a better and effective writing. There are some basic research skills to be mastered by graduate student and one of the important research skills is mastery of the theory of education and sociology.

### 2.0 Literature Review

Theory is a concept designed by previous researchers that have been recognized their skills, knowledge and expertise in the field. This theory has various concepts in their respective fields. Norain Mat Lazim (2012) explained that this theory is conceptual, assumptions and general guidelines that are used to describe a phenomenon in which the issues and the construction of this theory is finally hoped to benefit the future generation. In the matter of research skills, this theory provides three contributions to the researchers, particularly in the academic writing. There are explanation, assumption and control on any issues and cases.

According to Asiah Pariekutty (2008) the concept of theory is actually to clarify and strengthen the powers in variables such as dependent variable and independent variable. This is because; variables and theory are two related concepts and that provide input and insight to the research title.

This influences the researchers in planning the writing and research to be in line with theoretical concepts that have been selected. The second function of theory is to guide the researchers to find the facts as content and context that will be used in formulating hypotheses and leading researchers in building the research instruments. It is important for a good researcher to find a good correlation between theoretical concepts with hypotheses and instruments so that the research results are consistent with the objectives that have been built. Thirdly, to regulate and discuss the research results. Result of any study will not be strong without any concept or theory included in the study. Researchers will be looking for a solid theory to help defending them in the debate if questioned by researchers and other academicians. Therefore, it is important for a researcher to find a theoretical concept that has the same basic objective with the study so that it can help the researchers to defend his studies (Baharom et. Al 2012).

Selecting certain theories to support the study is supposed to be associated with the conceptual framework of the study (Neuman 2009). This is because, the theory chosen will be revolving around the process of identifying methodology, selecting subjects; or better known as sampling, data collection methods; which include the type of data and how to collect survey information. All of this procedures are influenced by the theory concept innovated by researchers themselves based on advice and guidance from supervisors. Therefore, theory selection is required by a researcher to help him to relate the context and content of the research with the robust knowledge and scholarly which are gathered from the reading that has been done. Directly, studies conducted by good researchers will lead to a better research.

### 3.0 Objective of the Study

The current study aimed at identifying the effectiveness of the Intensive Workshop Activities towards students' understanding on educational and sociological theories.

### 4.0 Research Methodology

The study used the experimental method of pre-test and post-test to test the level of graduate students' skills in education theory and sociology in one of the public universities in Malaysia based on the intensive research skills workshops that have been conducted. Through the intensive workshops, two sets of similar questionnaire were distributed to a small group of graduate students. The participants of the study were 36 graduate students from one of the public universities. Data collected then was analyzed by focusing the descriptive statistic i.e. the mean scores and one-Way ANOVA.

### 5.0 Findings and Discussions

This chapter discussed the findings of the information gathered by the research question that has been raised. Results of the study are discussed in the form of descriptive to identify the level of skills of education theory and sociology of the graduate students.

**Table 1.** Overall mean scores pre-test and post-test

Skills	Pre-test				Post-test			
	N	Mean	S.D	Interpretation	N	Mean	S.D	Interpretation
Education Theory and Sociology	36	3.03	.670	Moderately High	36	3.90	.444	Moderately High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>.670</b>	<b>Moderately High</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>.444</b>	<b>Moderately High</b>

According to Table 5.1, the mean score of education theory and sociology skills before the intensive study was 3.03 and after the intensive study, the mean score increased to 3.90.

**Table 2.** Detailed mean scores Pre-test and Post-test

Item	Pre-test				Post-test			
	N	Mea n	S.D	Interpretatio n	N	Mea n	S.D	Interpretatio n
I understand well the basic theory of sociology.	36	3.19	.710	Moderately High	36	4.11	.523	High
I have a deep understanding on the Bronfrenbrenner Theory of Ecological Systems.	36	3.47	.878	Moderately High	36	4.19	.668	High
I am able to explain the theory of Capital of Culture well.	36	2.81	.889	Moderately Low	36	3.81	.577	Moderately High
I fully master the theory Social Capital.	36	2.78	.866	Moderately Low	36	3.97	.609	Moderately High
I mastered the theory of Human Capital well.	36	3.14	.899	Moderately High	36	3.92	.554	Moderately High
I mastered the theory and principles in Andragogy.	36	2.78	.832	Moderately Low	36	3.42	.649	Moderately High
<b>Overall Mean</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>3.03</b>	<b>.670</b>	Moderately High	<b>36</b>	<b>3.90</b>	<b>.444</b>	Moderately High

Table 2 shows that the highest score before the implementation of the intensive research skills workshops can be seen in the item 'I have a deep understanding on the Bronfrenbrenner Theory of Ecological Systems.' with mean score of 3.47. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was 2.78, which is in the item 'I fully master the theory Social Capital.' and 'I mastered the theory and principles in Andragogy'. After the implementation of the intensive research skills workshops, the item 'I have a deep understanding on the Bronfrenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory; I still had the highest mean score of 4.19, while the lowest mean score remained at the item, 'I mastered the theory and principles in Andragogy' with the value of 3.42. In conclusion, there was an increase in the understanding by the graduate students from 3.03 (before the workshop) to 3.90 (after the workshop) through the workshop that was conducted.

This study suggests that the intensive research skills workshop is useful. Through the implementation of intensive research skills workshops, a lot of information can be gained. Although overall results showed that there is no significant difference between pre-workshop and post-workshop, there is an increasing of the mean score.

## 7.0 Conclusions

It is clear that the implementation of intensive workshop is useful. Graduate students are supposed to master a lot of theories. It becomes a pre-requisite for students at that level. Apart from that, research skills such as abilities to build the framework of the research, development of questionnaires, analyzing data and writing techniques need to be improved in order to produce graduates that can provide valuable input and improve the quality of archipelago education. Graduate students are required to master both theirs and research skills as it will help them in carrying out empirical research successfully.

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