

### ASSESSING THE ACHIEVEMENT OF PROGRAM EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: ALUMNI SURVEYS

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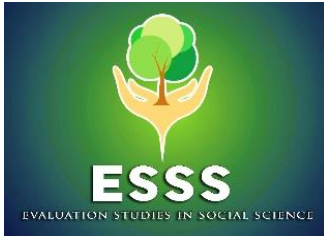
#### ABSTRACT

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is a learner-centred approach to education that emphasizes what a student should be able to perform in the real world after completing a course or programme. One of the important aspects of Outcome-Based Education is Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs). The Programme Educational Objectives are the statements that describe what the graduates are expected to perform and achieve in the three to five years following graduation. Every institution in Malaysia is required to measure the PEOs to comply with the requirements set forth by the Malaysian Qualification Agency (MQA). Each institution has its instruments to evaluate the achievement of PEOs. Hence, this study used alumni surveys to assess their perceptions of the PEOs for Islamic Banking and Finance programmes offered at Kolej Profesional MARA Bandar Melaka (KPMBM). In this survey, the attributes that make up each statement were identified and evaluated using the Likert scale. This survey was sent to alumni who have met the maturity period for PEOs measurement. The response from a sample of 34 alumni produces favorable results. Its percentage of achievement range from 60% to 88%. Overall, the percentage of achievement has met the indicator either equivalent to or more than 50% as stated in the Key Performance Indicator of Kolej Profesional MARA Bandar Melaka (KPMBM). Thus, the Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) committee of the college will maintain the programme of the study with the stated PEOs. However, it is suggested for the college to conduct an employer survey to ensure continuous programme improvement in the future.

**Keywords:** *Outcome-Based Education, Programme Educational Objectives, Malaysian Qualification Agency, Key Performance Indicator*

#### INTRODUCTION

Outcome-Based Education (OBE) is a learner-centered approach to education that emphasizes what a student should be able to perform in the real world after completing a course or programme. One of the important aspects of Outcome-Based Education is Programme Educational Objectives (PEOs). The Programme Educational Objectives are the statements that describe what the graduates are expected to perform and achieve in the three to five years following graduation (Malaysian Qualifications Framework, 2017). Good PEOs include those that are distinct, precise, quantifiable, achievable, result-oriented, and have a time frame. (Makinda, Bolong, Gungat and Sarman, 2011). Therefore, to develop PEOs that have these criteria, the opinions and views of external advisors comprising of college academic staff



representatives, industry representatives, academic staff representatives from other institutions as well as alumni representatives were taken into account.

In 2016, MARA Higher Education Division took steps to develop an outcome-based curriculum for all study programmes under its supervision. This pro-active step taken is in line with the MQA's accreditation requirements. Thus, the teaching concept based on OBE has been implemented in KPMBM beginning in 2017. Since PEOs are arguably the most vital part of OBE, MARA Higher Education Division requires the college to prepare a set of PEOs. The PEOs of the Islamic Banking and Finance programme conducted in KPMBM are shown in Table 1. They include knowledge, application of knowledge, teamwork, ethics, and interpersonal skills, as well as lifelong learning suggested by the Programme Standard of Muamalat and Islamic Finance (2018).

Table 1  
*Programme Educational Objectives*

No	Programme Educational Objectives
PEO 1	Knowledgeable and technically competent in Islamic Banking and Finance disciplines as well as qualified to meet the industry professional needs.
PEO2	Capable to solve problems related to Islamic Banking and Finance issues creatively and innovatively.
PEO3	Able to work in a team effectively, portray a high quality of leadership with integrity and exceptional manners and possess relevant soft skills which contribute to the development of the nation.
PEO4	Equipped with entrepreneurial qualities and internalized the need for lifelong learning for successful career advancement.

In addition, the PEOs and Programme Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are connected directly. The PLOs are supported by courses outcomes that have been identified in the curriculum design. If the students' PEOs were not met after graduation, there were probably problems with the PLOs (Hairi, Affandi and Nasri, 2019). Thus, the assessment of PEOs will support the evaluation of the institutions' curriculum development, teaching strategies, assessment practises, and evaluation procedures (Rajak, Shrivastava, Bhardwaj and Tripathi, 2019). The PEOs and PLOs matrices for the diploma in Islamic Banking and Finance programme are displayed in Table 2 below.

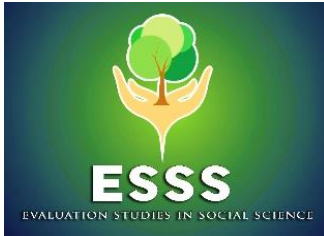
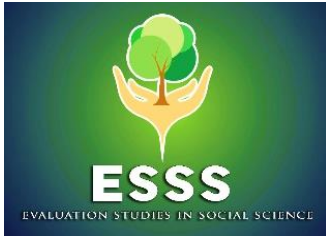


Table 2

Matrix PEO-PLO

NO	PROGRAMME LEARNING OUTCOMES (PLO)	PROGRAMME EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES (PEO)			
		PEO 1	PEO 2	PEO 3	PEO 4
At the end of the programme, graduates should be able to:					
PLO1	Demonstrate comprehension on the fundamental principles of Islamic Banking and Finance in the industry and other related areas.	/			
PLO2	Analyze issues and possible solutions in Islamic Banking and Finance fields by employing suitable and relevant approaches.		/		
PLO3	Display general and specialized skills in industrial related areas.	/			
PLO4	Demonstrate acceptable interpersonal skills in an organizational working environment.			/	
PLO5	Communicate effectively within the industry and in other related areas.			/	
PLO6	Use appropriate digital skills in managing an organization's information.	/			
PLO7	Apply numeracy skills to solve problems in the related disciplines	/			
PLO8	Demonstrate effective leadership qualities with some degree of responsibility and autonomy towards achieving a goal			/	
PLO9	Apply skills and principles of lifelong learning in career development				/
PLO10	Develop entrepreneurial skills for career growth				/
PLO11	Demonstrate ethical and professional values in all working environments.			/	



Structured PEOs are crucial in assessing a programme's quality, but little thought has been devoted to evaluate the PEOs (Abbadeni, Ghoneim and Alghamdi, 2013). The purpose of this study is to assess PEOs' achievements for the diploma in Islamic Banking and Finance study programme. The achievement of PEOs can be assessed in few ways. For example, by linking the PLOs and PEOs, employer surveys and alumni surveys. This study outlines how the diploma in Islamic Banking and Finance study programme at KPMBM evaluated its PEOs using the alumni survey technique. Weisbrook and Schonberg (2011) claim that alumni surveys offer a reliable primary method of evaluation for PEOs. Additionally, most public universities have a long history of using alumni surveys (Makinda et al., 2011; Hairi, Affandi and Nasri, 2019).

### METHODOLOGY

Given the limited reference to the assessment of PEOs especially in the Islamic banking and finance area, the main idea of this current study is to measure the achievement of PEOs in KPMBM using direct assessment tools that are alumni surveys. In this survey, the attributes that make up each statement were identified and evaluated based on the 1-7 Likert scale. The survey is divided into two sections. The first section of the questionnaires is about the organization's profile and alumni information and the second section is about the PEOs' descriptions. Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the scale. Values of Cronbach's alpha above 0.7 are regarded as sufficient, indicating that all of the test's items are valid (DeVellis, 2003; Nunnally, 1978). Cronbach's alpha values for all variables under study are above 0.7 and considered adequate.

Using the KPMBM alumni database, these questionnaires were disseminated to alumni using a Google Form. The survey was conducted for almost one month, and only 34 alumni responded to the surveys. Even though the response rate is low, according to Roscoe (1975), sample sizes larger than 30 and less than 500 are appropriate for most research. Based on the rules of thumb, the sample size of 34 is deemed appropriate. The analysis was conducted using descriptive analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### *Respondent Background*

Table 3 provides several basic personal information such as gender, education level, current employment status, and type of organization. The table below clearly reveals that more than 70% of alumni work in the field of Islamic banking and finance.

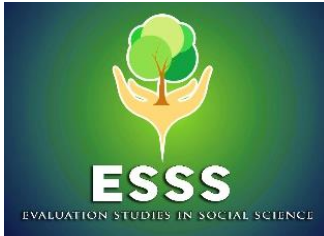


Table 3  
*Respondent's Background.*

Information	Frequency	Percentage
i) Gender		
Male	17	50
Female	17	50
Total	34	100.0
ii) Education Level		
Diploma	18	53
Bachelor Degree	13	38
Master Degree	3	9
Total	34	100.0
iii) Employment Status		
Working	18	53
Not Working	12	35
Continuing Studies	4	12
Total	34	100.0
iv) Types of Organization (Islamic Banking & Finance Industry)		
Yes	13	72
No	5	28
Total	18	100.0

***PEOs' achievement***

Table 4 below summarizes the findings of the results obtained from the assessments of each PEO. For PEO1, the results show that 72.1% of the alumni are able to apply theoretical knowledge into practice in the field of Islamic banking and finance as well as are able to use relevant skills to complete tasks in the field of Islamic banking and finance. The finding for PEO2 show that the alumni are able to apply their knowledge and skills to solve problems and make a decision within the Islamic banking and finance field. Generally, 76.5% of the alumni demonstrate effective leadership, good interpersonal skills, and ethical character in both the workplace and community. Finding for PEO4 reveals that 67.6% of the alumni are able to enhance continuous improvement in career and life through lifelong learning. They also engage in entrepreneurship-related activities, in keeping with the mission and vision of Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) in general and KPMBM in particular. In conclusion, these findings indicate that alumni can reach their desired PEOs three years after graduating.

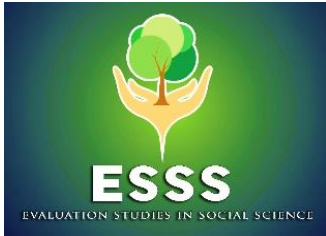


Table 4  
*Responses for PEOs.*

PEOs	ITEMS	Responses
1	Knowledgeable and technically competent in Islamic Banking and Finance disciplines as well as qualified to meet the industry professional needs.	72.1%
2	Capable to solve problems related to Islamic Banking and Finance issues creatively and innovatively.	67.6%
3	Able to work in a team effectively, portray a high quality of leadership with integrity and exceptional manners and possess relevant soft skills which contribute to the development of the nation.	76.5%
4	Equipped with entrepreneurial qualities and internalized the need for lifelong learning for successful career advancement.	67.6%

***PEOs' overall performance***

The overall performance of the PEOs is shown in Table 5. It illustrates that the overall performance of the alumni across all PEOs was in line with the KPMBM Key Performance Indicator's objective. In the coming Continual Quality Improvement (CQI) process of PEOs assessment and evaluation, it is suggested to revise the questionnaires as well as increase the number of respondents. Workshops will be arranged in the future to improve the surveys and figure out how to get more responses.

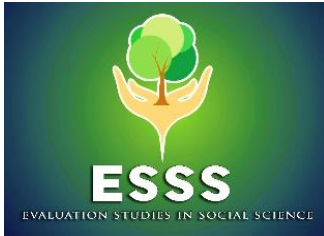


Table 5

*Overall Performance of the PEOs.*

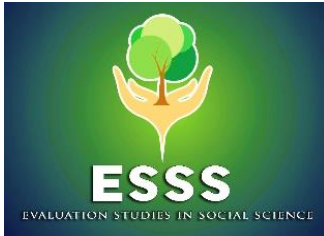
<b>PEOs indicator</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>% of PEOs achievement</b>	<b>Status</b>
Knowledgeable and technically competent in Islamic Banking and Finance disciplines as well as qualified to meet the industry professional needs	50%	72.1%	Achieved
Capable to solve problems related to Islamic Banking and Finance issues creatively and innovatively.		67.6%	Achieved
Able to work in a team effectively, portray a high quality of leadership with integrity and exceptional manners and possess relevant soft skills which contribute to the development of the nation.		76.5%	Achieved
Equipped with entrepreneurial qualities and internalized the need for lifelong learning for successful career advancement.		67.6%	Achieved

**CONCLUSION**

The assessment of PEOs for the alumni of the Diploma in Islamic Banking and Finance study programme at Kolej Profesional MARA Bandar Melaka is shown in this study. The results demonstrate that the alumni have a strong aptitude for achieving the required PEOs. This portrays that the PEOs have a clear link to the PLOs. Thus, the IQA committee in the college will maintain the study programme with the stated PEOs. These findings can also be used to strengthen the programme's continuous improvement plan and upgrade the curriculum to ensure that the programme continuous to be relevant and successful. However, to assure that graduates fulfil the employment market and industry demands, obtaining responses from an employer survey would offer more thorough perspectives. Employer surveys will assist the college in identifying employer’s needs, resulting in producing qualified workers in the area that will make them capable to compete of both national and global scales. Furthermore, it is advised that the current instruments be enhanced further as they are too broad. It is recommended that the sample size be increased in order to achieve more measurable and distinct results.

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