

Implementing Business Project Portal in Business Management Program: A Case Study in Vocational Colleges, Malaysia

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Abstract

Business Project is a required course for students of Diploma in Business Management, offered in vocational colleges, Malaysia, during their fourth semester. It is a capstone course that integrates all students' acquired skills and the body of knowledge of the discipline, and students will be evaluated in continuous formative and summative forms. However, students are observed to have struggled to complete their assignments which comprise a business plan, reports, and a presentation. Lacking creative ideas for the assignments has been a major hindrance to their efforts. Therefore, the "Business Project Portal" is designed to be a repository for the course. The platform will house related materials pertaining to teaching and learning of the course with the intention to assist students, as well as teachers. The repository will act as a point of reference for them so that students will be able to obtain some ideas in preparing for their assignments, and teachers will also be able to improvise their strategies in delivering the lesson up to the learning outcome standard. The introduction of the portal is an initial effort for the Business Management program in consolidating necessary materials in one digital repository so that some of the best practices are shared among the colleges. Using the survey method for 39 vocational colleges, the "Business Project Portal" has garnered a trustworthy platform from students to be used as classroom materials. The portal is viewed as fantastic, simple to comprehend, user-friendly, and with quick accessibility, it serves as instructional materials. The feedback has also indicated that students appreciate a sample website, a training video made by a professional industry trainer, and samples of authentic previous students' assignments. The potential of the "Business Project Portal" would be further expanded with the involvement of potential

partners like the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) Sdn Bhd and the Small and Medium Enterprises Association of Malaysia (SAMENTA).

Keywords: Business Project, Portal, Instructional And Learning Material, One-Stop Centre, Vocational College

Introduction

The Business Project is a pivotal capstone course offered to students pursuing the Diploma in Business Management program in vocational colleges across Malaysia. Designed for fourth-semester students, this course integrates and applies the cumulative skills and knowledge acquired throughout their studies. It emphasizes critical thinking and creativity, requiring students to develop comprehensive business plans, detailed reports, and effective presentations. As a simulation of real-world entrepreneurial scenarios, the course aims to equip students with foundational business skills that align with the demands of the modern entrepreneurial landscape (Chen, 2024; Hou, 2024).

The course fosters entrepreneurial acumen by introducing essential skills, enabling students to identify and generate viable business ideas while aligning these with their individual capabilities and opportunities. Additionally, students are trained in strategic business planning, from drafting business proposals to implementing and continuously improving them. This integration of knowledge and skill is critical for nurturing entrepreneurial mindsets and enhancing employability in the ever-changing business environment (Oleynikova et al., 2024; Seredina et al., 2024). Through these efforts, the course aspires to inspire students to engage meaningfully with real-world business opportunities, preparing them to thrive in a competitive global economy (Harun et al., 2024; Teoh et al., 2024).

Despite the comprehensive structure of the course, students face persistent challenges in completing the required assessments, particularly in generating creative ideas for assignments such as business plans, reports, and presentations. This lack of creativity, coupled with insufficient guidance, has led to reduced confidence and lower engagement among students. Furthermore, these challenges limit their ability to develop essential entrepreneurial skills, which can hinder their readiness for real-world business challenges (Knibbe et al., 2024; Nelmira et al., 2022). If unresolved, these issues may result in diminished interest in entrepreneurship and could potentially impact the overall quality of future business leaders. This calls for a systematic intervention to address these critical issues and support students in achieving the course's intended learning outcomes.

To address these challenges, the Business Project Portal was developed as a centralized digital repository designed to support both students and educators. The portal consolidates essential teaching and learning materials, such as sample business plans, video tutorials by professional trainers, and exemplary past assignments. These resources aim to inspire creativity and serve as benchmarks for students while enabling educators to refine their teaching strategies to meet learning outcome standards (Mustaffa et al., 2024). This initiative marks a significant milestone in streamlining resources and sharing best practices among vocational colleges, fostering a more effective and engaging learning environment.

The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Business Project

Portal in enhancing the learning experience and outcomes for students enrolled in the Business Project course. By collecting feedback from 39 vocational colleges, this research investigates the portal's role in improving student confidence, creativity, and engagement. Additionally, the study explores opportunities to expand the portal's potential through partnerships with organizations such as the Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Association of Malaysia (SAMENTA). By demonstrating the impact of digital tools on teaching and learning, this study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on vocational education and entrepreneurship (Ayao et al., 2024; Jamil et al., 2024).

Literature Review

In recent years, educators in Malaysia have employed various strategies and methods to help students excel in business project-based learning. One common approach has been the integration of experiential learning, where students engage in hands-on activities such as real-world business simulations and collaborations with industry partners. This approach provides students with practical exposure to entrepreneurship, allowing them to apply theoretical concepts to real-life scenarios. Studies by Mack et al. (2024) highlighted that experiential learning, when paired with structured mentorship from teachers and industry professionals, significantly improves students' ability to conceptualize and execute business ideas. Moreover, problem-based learning (PBL) has also gained traction, where students are encouraged to work on industry-related challenges, fostering critical thinking and creativity (Lim et al., 2024).

In addition to experiential and problem-based learning, technology has played a pivotal role in enhancing business project education. Digital tools such as virtual business simulators, video tutorials, and interactive learning platforms have been widely adopted to create a more dynamic and engaging learning environment. Educators often use digital repositories to provide resources like templates, instructional videos, and case studies that students can access anytime. Fitriani (2024) demonstrated that the incorporation of digital platforms significantly improves students' ability to draft comprehensive business plans and develop marketing strategies. These digital resources have also enabled teachers to deliver lessons more effectively, ensuring that the learning outcomes align with industry standards (Knibbe et al., 2024).

Synthesizing these findings, the development of the Business Project Portal is a natural progression in addressing the limitations of earlier methods. Unlike standalone digital tools or in-person mentorship programs, the portal consolidates essential resources into a single, centralized platform, enhancing accessibility and efficiency for both students and teachers. The portal combines experiential elements, such as sample business plans and reports, with technology-driven features like video tutorials and real-world case studies. This approach aligns with the recommendations from previous studies that emphasize the importance of integrating practical exposure with digital tools to maximize learning outcomes (Agustin et al., 2024). Moreover, the portal's potential to facilitate collaboration among educators from different institutions echoes the findings of Ren et al. (2024), who advocate for knowledge sharing to promote standardized and innovative teaching practices. As such, the Business Project Portal represents a significant advancement in equipping students with the entrepreneurial skills required to excel in the Malaysian business landscape.

Business Project Portal

The Business Project Portal, hosted on Google Sites, is an innovative platform designed to empower students and educators with a wealth of resources tailored for success in business management projects. Serving as a comprehensive hub, the portal provides essential information, tools, and guidance to foster effective learning and the practical application of business concepts. By emphasizing real-world scenarios and entrepreneurial skills, the platform aligns perfectly with vocational education goals. Its user-friendly design ensures easy accessibility and interactivity, making it an indispensable resource for both educators and students.

At the core of the portal are several thoughtfully curated sections that seamlessly guide users through their learning journey. The Class Overview offers a clear snapshot of course objectives, learning outcomes, and expectations, helping students understand the scope of their projects. Complementing this is the Syllabus and Course Outline, which lays out key topics, timelines, and assessment criteria, providing students with a structured pathway to success. To ensure consistency and clarity, the Guidelines section provides detailed instructions for completing tasks and assignments, creating a solid foundation for a well-organized and effective learning experience.

To enhance hands-on learning, the portal includes a diverse range of resources that bridge theory and practice. Website Examples and Video Tutorials by industry experts inspire and guide students in creating impactful business projects, from website design to strategic marketing initiatives. Additionally, examples of Continuous Assessments, such as business plans, reports, and presentations, offer students invaluable insights into expected standards. These resources serve as benchmarks, encouraging students to elevate their creativity, refine their ideas, and produce professional-grade project submissions.

One of the portal's standout features is its focus on creativity and publicity, equipping students with essential skills for promoting their products and services. Resources like an Example Theme Song add an engaging and memorable element to business presentations, while detailed guides on publicity strategies teach students effective marketing techniques. By incorporating these creative and practical elements, the portal not only develops students' business acumen but also nurtures a holistic skill set essential for thriving in today's competitive landscape. Together, these features make the Business Project Portal a dynamic tool for cultivating entrepreneurial excellence and innovation.



Figure 3: Guideline of Business Project

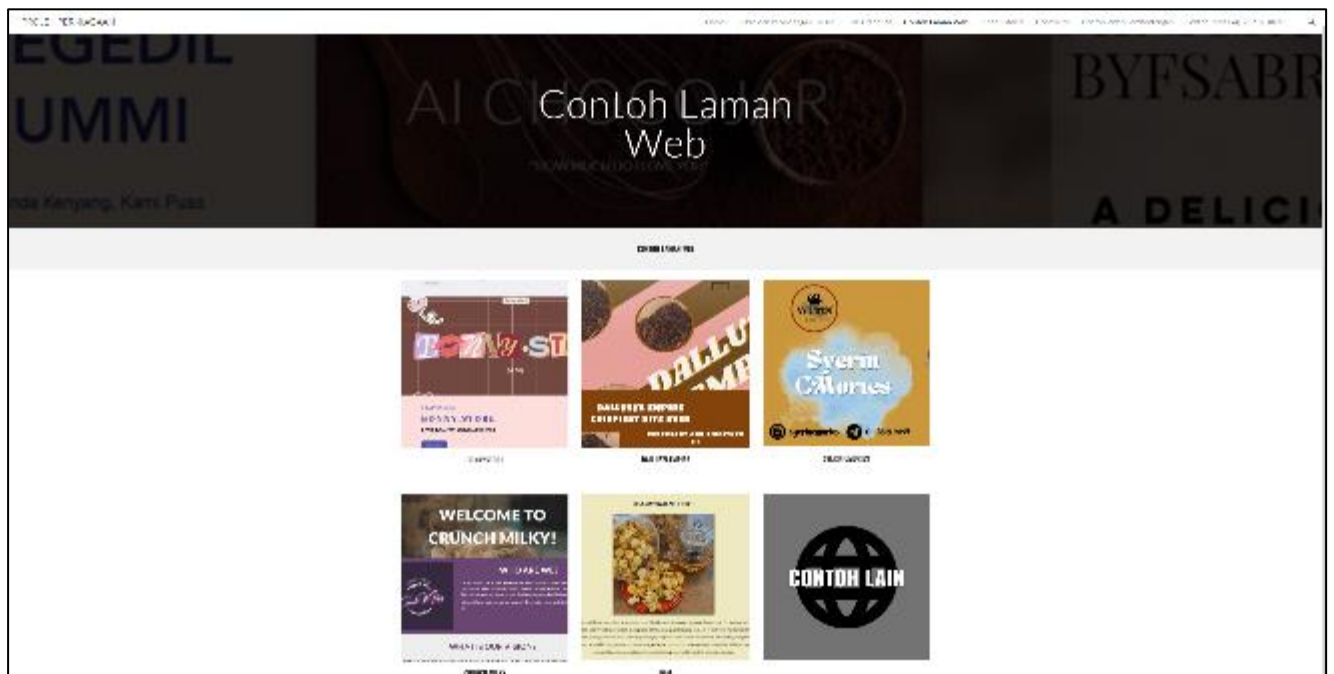


Figure 4: Example of Business Website

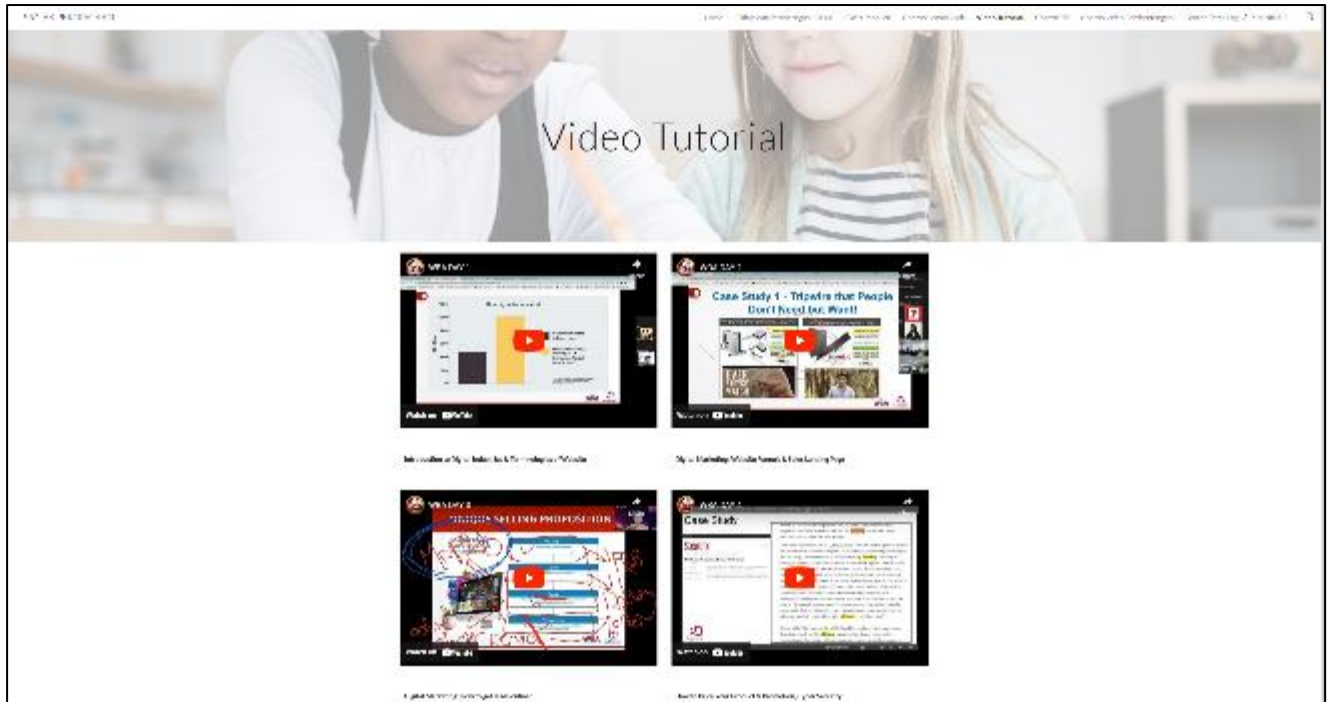


Figure 5: Video Tutorial by industry expert



Figure 6: Example of Continuous Assessment



Figure 7: Example of Presentation



Figure 8: Example of Theme Song and Publicity on Media Social

Students and Teachers' Perceptions towards Business Project Portal

The Business Project Portal has been positively received by both students and teachers in vocational education settings as a tool to enhance teaching and learning experiences. According to recent studies, students have found the portal to be user-friendly, easily accessible, and highly beneficial in helping them understand and complete their course assignments. Features such as sample business plans, video tutorials by industry professionals, and past project examples have been particularly appreciated for their practicality and relevance to real-world applications (Agustin et al., 2024). These resources have boosted students' confidence and creativity, addressing their challenges in generating innovative ideas for their coursework (Knibbe et al., 2023).

From the teachers' perspective, the portal has been recognized as a valuable instructional resource that supports more effective lesson delivery. By centralizing essential teaching materials, the portal allows educators to save time and focus on improving their teaching strategies. Educators have highlighted the usefulness of the portal in aligning lessons with intended learning outcomes and in providing a consistent framework for student assessments (Oleynikova et al., 2024; Seredina et al., 2024). Furthermore, the availability of industry-driven content has been praised for bridging the gap between academic learning and practical application, enabling teachers to better prepare students for the demands of the business world (Sa'diyah et al., 2024; Sharma, 2024).

The collaborative potential of the portal has also been acknowledged, as it fosters knowledge sharing among teachers across different vocational colleges. Teachers have noted that the portal encourages the adoption of best practices, which can lead to a more standardized and effective approach to teaching entrepreneurship (Fadillah et al., 2024; Kesse, 2024). Overall, the Business Project Portal has proven to be a transformative tool, aligning with the needs of both students and teachers, and further research suggests its potential to enhance vocational education on a broader scale.

Methods

Research Instrument

To collect data for this study, a survey method was employed. The researcher collaborated with lecturers from 39 vocational colleges to ensure the accuracy of data collection, minimize bias, and enhance the overall quality of the research findings (Creswell, 2015; Sekaran & Bougie, 2010). The survey aimed to measure perceptions of the Business Project Portal in the context of the Business Project course, a subject taught during the final semester of the Diploma in Business Management program at vocational colleges. The study involved 247 respondents from vocational colleges across Malaysia. The survey questionnaire was carefully modified based on insights from previous literature.

Sample

Convenient sampling was utilized to gather data from 247 respondents, primarily students from vocational colleges. This sampling method was chosen due to the researcher's accessibility to these students and teachers and their willingness to participate in the study (Kivunja, 2015). Respondents voluntarily completed the survey, providing valuable insights into their perceptions of the portal. The use of convenient sampling ensured practical and timely data collection while maintaining the study's objectives.

Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a structured questionnaire containing 11 questions. These were divided into two sections: Part A focused on demographic data with two questions, while Part B included seven questions exploring perceptions of the Business Project Portal. The questions in Part B were adapted and modified from the study by Oh et al. (2022). Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), to gauge the intensity of respondents' perceptions.

Pilot Study

To ensure the validity of the research instrument and verify its suitability for the context, a pilot study was conducted. This process aimed to confirm that respondents could understand the questions and that the instrument was appropriate for the study's objectives. Reliability, as defined by Mail and Noordin (2015), refers to the consistency of variables or indicators over repeated measurements. Validity and reliability are closely interlinked in research, and according to Sekaran and Bougie (2010), a reliability coefficient value of 0.6 indicates low reliability, 0.7 is acceptable, and 0.8 or higher reflects strong reliability. The pilot study involved 30 respondents, and the results demonstrated excellent reliability, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.989. These findings confirmed that the questionnaire was suitable for the main study.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey were analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) version 26.0. Descriptive analysis was conducted to evaluate the mean scores and provide an overview of the perceptions held by students and teachers in vocational colleges regarding the Business Project Portal. This method enabled the researcher to identify trends and key insights into the portal's effectiveness.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

A total of 247 respondents participated in the survey, providing valuable data on their perceptions of the Business Project Portal. The analysis of the responses is summarized in the table below, presenting key trends and insights that highlight the portal's impact on teaching and learning in vocational colleges.

Table 1

Respondent's Demographic

Demographic	Factor	Frequency	Percentage
State	Johor	3	1.2
	Kedah	24	9.7
	Kelantan	10	4.0
	Melaka	10	4.0
	Negeri Sembilan	33	13.4
	Pahang	20	8.1
	Perak	51	20.6
	Perlis	7	2.8
	Pulau Pinang	22	8.9
	Sabah	14	5.7
	Sarawak	17	6.9
	Selangor	22	8.9
	Terengganu	14	5.7
		247	100.0

Table 2

The result of the perception of student and teacher towards Business Project Portal

	Item	Mean score	S.D.
1	The Business Project Portal helped me get an overview of Business Project course.	4.39	.683
2	The Business Project Guidelines helped me understand the course requirements in detail.	4.33	.694
3	I will refer to the website samples in the Business Project Portal when I develop my own business website.	4.21	.752
4	Business Accelerator video tutorial will improve my knowledge on how to design a website.	4.23	.721
5	Business Accelerator video tutorial will improve my knowledge about digital marketing.	4.21	.745
6	Business Accelerator video tutorials will improve my knowledge about cyber security.	4.25	.698
7	Samples of assessment in the Portal can be used as my reference.	4.28	.692
8	Themed songs and promotions shared in the Portal gave me ideas on how to promote my products and services in a more interesting way.	4.16	.689
9	I can use the information found on the Business Project Portal for other courses offered in the Business Management Program.	4.23	.722
10	The Business Project Portal is easily accessible on various devices (eg: mobile, desktop, tablet).	4.44	.689
11	The Business Project Portal contains critical information in implementing a Business Project.	4.28	.732

"1" = Strongly disagree, "2" = Disagree, "3" = Neutral, "4" = Agree, "5" = Strongly agree

The empirical test shows that the lowest mean was for the question 'Themed songs and promotions shared in the Portal gave me ideas on how to promote my products and services in a more interesting way.' (mean = 4.16); this indicates that the students might be saying that while the themed songs and promotions are somewhat helpful, they are less impactful compared to other resources provided in the portal, and further enhancements or examples may be needed to make this feature more engaging and practical.

On the other hand, the question with the highest mean, which is 4.44, is 'The Business Project Portal is easily accessible on various devices (e.g., mobile, desktop, tablet).' This indicates that the students and teachers highly value the accessibility of the portal across multiple devices, making it convenient and versatile for use in various settings, thereby contributing significantly to its overall effectiveness and usability.

Discussion

The findings of this study align closely with previous research emphasizing the effectiveness of digital platforms in enhancing business education. Similar to the findings of Fitriani (2024) and Knibbe et al. (2024), the Business Project Portal was highly valued for its accessibility, practicality, and relevance to real-world applications. The high mean score (4.44) for accessibility underscores its convenience across devices, a feature often highlighted as critical in digital learning environments. However, the lower mean score (4.16) for themed songs and promotions suggests a potential area for improvement, consistent with earlier studies that noted the importance of more engaging and creative elements to support entrepreneurship education (Mustaffa et al., 2024).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the Business Project Portal serves as a valuable tool in supporting students and educators in vocational colleges. By providing accessible, practical, and relevant resources, the portal enhances the learning experience and addresses the challenges students face in completing their business projects. While overall perceptions were positive, the findings highlight the need for further improvements in creative features like promotional tools to better engage students and stimulate innovative thinking.

Contribution of the Study

This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on the use of digital tools in vocational education, particularly within the Malaysian context. It highlights the potential of the Business Project Portal to bridge the gap between theory and practice in business education. By offering practical resources and improving accessibility, the portal supports students in developing entrepreneurial skills and helps educators enhance their teaching methodologies. Additionally, the study provides insights for policymakers and educators on the importance of integrating user-friendly and creative elements into digital learning platforms.

Limitation and Recommendation

This study has several limitations and areas for further improvement, along with actionable recommendations. One notable limitation is the reliance on convenient sampling, which may not fully reflect the diversity of vocational college students across Malaysia. To ensure broader generalizability, future research should adopt a more inclusive and comprehensive

sampling approach.

Before the implementation of the Business Project Portal, educators primarily relied on experiential learning methods, such as real-world business simulations and collaborations with industry partners. Problem-based learning (PBL) was also widely adopted to address industry challenges and foster critical thinking and creativity. However, these approaches often lacked centralized, easily accessible resources, leading to inconsistent outcomes and time-intensive efforts. The portal has addressed many of these challenges by providing a structured, centralized repository of teaching and learning materials, but there is still room for enhancement.

While the portal's accessibility across devices was highly rated, certain features, such as themed songs and promotional tools, received comparatively lower scores, indicating a need for refinement. To enhance the portal's effectiveness, future iterations should incorporate more engaging and interactive content, such as gamified elements and industry-specific case studies, to inspire creativity and innovation. Additionally, continuously updating the portal's content with current examples, industry trends, and new teaching materials will ensure its ongoing relevance. Feedback from educators and students will be invaluable in identifying areas for improvement. Another area for improvement is tracking how frequently students and teachers utilize the portal while completing their assignments. Gathering precise usage data through analytics or surveys can provide deeper insights into the portal's actual impact and guide further enhancements.

Strategic partnerships are another avenue worth exploring. Collaborating with organizations such as Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC) and the Small and Medium Enterprises Association of Malaysia (SAMENTA) can help bridge the gap between classroom learning and real-world industry requirements. Such partnerships would not only enrich the portal's content but also provide students with valuable industry insights and exposure.

Finally, this study has significantly contributed to the body of knowledge by demonstrating the potential of centralized digital tools in vocational education. The Business Project Portal has successfully enhanced learning outcomes, bridged the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, and supported entrepreneurial skill development. These findings offer valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers looking to implement similar initiatives, ensuring a more robust and future-ready vocational education system.

Theoretical and Contextual Contribution

This research significantly contributes to the existing knowledge in vocational education and digital learning platforms by demonstrating how a centralized digital repository can enhance instructional quality and student engagement. Theoretically, it aligns with constructivist learning theories, which emphasize the importance of accessible, structured, and interactive learning resources in fostering deeper understanding and independent problem-solving skills. By integrating elements of experiential and problem-based learning with digital accessibility, the Business Project Portal bridges the gap between theory and practice, reinforcing the relevance of digitalization in vocational training. Contextually, this study provides a tailored

solution to challenges faced by business management students in Malaysia vocational colleges, offering a scalable and similar educational contexts. The findings highlight the necessity of industry-aligned, technology-driven learning tools to equip students with entrepreneurial skills that meet real-world demands. Additionally, the research sets a foundation for further collaboration with industry partners and policymakers to refine and expand digital education strategies in vocational training, ensuring that students receive practical, up-to-date, and industry-relevant education.

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