Chapter 9
Does ‘Futurisk’ Game is an Effective Learning Tool for Malaysian Futures Market? A Case Study from UiTM Sabah

Associate Professor Dr Imbarine Bujang, Flicia Rimin, Anastasiah Binti Harbi, & Ahmad Fauze Bin Abdul Hamit

Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia

Abstract
Malaysian futures and options is one of the important courses taught in Business Management Faculty especially to undergraduate students majoring in finance, accounting and banking. In view of the increasing global use of derivative instruments, this subject appears to be of great significance or value as it underlies the very basic understanding towards Malaysian derivatives and its regulatory framework. However, teaching and learning of the subject itself can be quite challenging to lecturers especially when dealing with students of lower performance. Realizing this and the importance to ensure learning effectiveness among the students are reasons to innovate our teaching and learning strategies in order to improve students’ performances. Given these points, the team has invented an effective learning tool namely ‘Futurisk game’ to assist our undergraduate students’ understanding towards the subject matter. The objective of this invention is meant to encourage and improve their learning over the chapters especially for syllabus covering commodity, equity, interest rate and bond futures market. The main reason underlies on the specific chapters is due to percentages of questions given on the final examination, whereby, 70% to 80% are consist of questions on futures market and instruments. This is also followed by the fact that a majority of undergraduate students who failed the paper have lacking ability to understand the chapters. With this in mind, it is a hope that by introducing such innovation can increase the performances of undergraduate students as in line with the 21st century of learning where no students will be left behind.

Keywords: Malaysian derivatives, commodity, equity, interest rates, bond futures market

Introduction
‘Futurisk’ game is similar to monopoly game except it is designed for futures traders. The typical monopoly game trading properties but this game is mainly trading all futures underlying assets comprising of commodities, equities, interest rates and bonds respectively. This game is invented with a purpose to encourage and improve students learning over futures market by playing game rather than from traditional learning. There are various studies that had been done to support the importance of including games in learning environment such as Batson & Feinberg (n.d); Fabricatore & Lopez (2012); Griffiths (2002); and Tannahill, Tissington, & Senior (2012). They justified the importance of game based education for sustainable learning; enhance motivation; to teach certain skill; and encouraging system thinking. According to Tannahill, Tissington, & Senior (2012), persistent motivation and goal orientation are the characteristics pursued by students when learning. Thus, educational game is the effective means to attain those characteristics. In addition, Griffiths (2002) found that educational game can equalize individual differences in spatial skill performance. He claimed that language and social skills of students can be developed if they share a same passion when playing a game.

Problem Statements
The ‘Futurisk’ game is invented to cope with the increasing failure rates of finance students from UITM Sabah for the course of Malaysian Derivatives (FIN645/541). The source of failures is due to students did not fully understand the concepts and trading strategies of futures market which cover 70% of the final exam questions. Learning traditionally has further complicating the learning process as some students cannot imagine themselves as a trader trading futures with different strategies.
Potential of finance graduates being a better trader, broker or dealer in futures market is higher if they have exposure on how futures market works. The increasing trends of total contracts traded in Bursa Malaysia Derivatives from 2011 to 2015 indicate that a job as a dealer or broker will be highly demanded in the future. Thus, graduates that engaged in futures market simulation game will have comparative advantage in applying for the job due to their skills; knowledge; and experience are derived from real trading simulation. Tannahill, Tissington, & Senior (2012) found that game-based learning helps players in developing skills and attaining game wealth through trade and force like in real life.

Nowadays, due to easy accessibility of information from digital media such as Youtube, Facebook, etc. causing students feel less connected with learning institutions. Prentsky (2005) as cited in Batson & Feinberg (n.d) stated that students nowadays found their digital devices are more interesting than learning institutions. They feel that the current curriculum is less relevant for them. Static concentrations on traditional learning can further demotivate students and may neglect the potentials that games can offer in today’s learning environment (Fabricatore & Lopez, 2012).

**Benefits of Futurisk Game**

The ‘Futurisk’ game is invented with a purpose to enable a student to become a sustainable learner by engaging themselves in a role of futures trader when playing ‘Futurisk’ game, rather than merely acquire the knowledge traditionally from textbooks. Fabricatore & Lopez (2012) in their exploratory study found that games based learning have encouraged social interactions and foster sustainability learning for students.

Other benefit includes to comply with the holistic evaluation system (ICGPA) that require educator to be more creative in their learning approaches to ensure graduates are able to attain necessary skills comprising leadership, communication, entrepreneurial, social and critical thinking skills, which will be displayed in a “spider web” (The Star Online, 2015). Batson & Feinberg (n.d); Fabricatore & Lopez (2012); Griffiths (2002); and Tannahill, Tissington, & Senior (2012) stated that game based education indeed can develop the social and critical thinking skills of learners.

**Limitations of Futurisk Game**

The ‘Futurisk’ game has several structural weaknesses. This game is designed for futures traders only. Options contract is excluded from this game. In addition, each underlying assets in ‘Futurisk’ game has maximum of six
spaces only that disclose the contracts closing price which implying the anticipation risk for trading futures. Thus, each player can only make a single settlement for each underlying assets of futures suggesting that the games will ends fast.

Even though there were a few success cases which games designed in learning environment had helped special need groups in attaining a certain development skills. But, there is yet a solid evidence to prove whether these skills can be applied in a real world (Griffiths, 2002).

Applications of Futurisk Game

The ‘Futurisk’ game is invented to explore its potential as an effective learning tool for students learning of Malaysian futures. This game requires four (4) players and a clearing house to clear every settlement. The player objective is to become the richest player by trading all the futures assets comprising of commodities, equities, interest rates and bonds respectively. The game starts with each player receive a capital of $1,000,000.00 to trade all the futures assets. Each player in turn will throw a dice and move their token to designated space as indicated in the dice number. After the player arrives at his space, he will receive a card that gives details about the futures contracts. Then, the player will be given ten (10) minutes to decide a suitable trading strategy to make settlements. The next move will determine whether the player will earn profit or suffer loss as every space in the ‘Futurisk’ game have closing price that implying the anticipation risk for trading futures. A bankrupt player must retire from the game and a richest player that successfully trading all futures assets respectively will become a winner.

Conclusion

This paper supports the importance of including games in learning environment as they have been proven by previous scholars for sustainable learning; enhance motivation; to teach certain skills; and encouraging system thinking of students. Thus, the invention of ‘Futurisk’ game is believed can encourage and improve students learning over futures market by playing game rather than from traditional learning. Other benefit includes able to comply with current holistic evaluation system (ICGPA) that requires educator to be more creative in their learning approaches to ensure graduates is able to attain necessary skills. Batson & Feinberg (n.d); Fabricatore & Lopez (2012); Griffiths (2002); and Tannahill, Tissington, & Senior (2012) stated that game based education indeed can develop the social and critical thinking skills of learners.

References


