

A REVISIT OF QUALITY OF CAMPUS LIFE

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Abstract:

This study is intended to revisit the total quality of campus life in institution of higher education in Malaysia. It is a review paper that focusing on the total quality of campus life. This study intends to compliment previous studies by looking at the overall quality of campus life. Previous studies more focused on the quality of campus life in terms of the formal curriculum and informal curriculum. However, this study improves previous studies by adding new variables of quality of campus life which includes support service quality and well-being. Hence, it will highlight all aspects of campus life in higher education of institution. The total quality of campus life can be categorized into four (formal curriculum; informal curriculum; support service quality and well-being) Consequently, a conceptual model will be proposed as a result of this study.

Key words: Total quality of campus life, formal curriculum, informal curriculum, support service quality, well-being.

INTRODUCTION

Student life refers to both academic and non-academic aspects of campus life where students gain experiences while studying at the university. The campus has become a second home for students because students spend a lot of time in campus.

Quality campus life can be beneficial for students, university administrators and faculties. Quality campus life can improve generic skills, academic achievement, learning outcomes, student persistence and student development [1,2,3,4,5,6,7]. For university administrators and faculties, the quality of campus life can be a guidance to improve their services and facilities by providing an effective and efficient service and facilities [8,9,10]. Therefore, the study on quality of campus life is important because a good quality provides valuable experiences for both parties in the university.

Quality of campus life has been studied in different point of views. Many past researchers evaluate the quality of campus life in terms of formal curriculum or quality of teaching and learning [1,2,4,6,7] and informal curriculum or college activities, out-of-classroom experiences and extracurricular activities [3,4,5,11,12,13,14,15,16,19]. However, this study improves past research by exploring other dimensions of quality of campus life including the well-being [8,9,18] and support service quality [10].

There are many dimensions to measure the quality of campus life that have been explored, but yet they are still inconclusive. Some arguments are focused on the issue to build a new comprehensive instrument that covers total quality of campus life among students. Therefore, there is a need to come up with a more refined and comprehensive instrument to measure the total aspect of student life in campus. Hence this study is carried out to address this matter.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Total quality of campus life are categorized into four categories which are formal curriculum, informal curriculum, support service quality and subjective well-being

2.1 Quality of campus life based on formal curriculum

Quality of campus life in terms of formal curriculum or known as quality of teaching and learning has been extensively studied by previous researchers [1,2,6,7]. Saemah and Seri Bunian [6] studied the relationship between learning environment, learning approaches and generic skills among engineering students. In this study, student's experience on learning environment influenced the use of learning approaches and hence affects the development of students' generic skill. Learning environment is categorized as learning resources, clear objective, good teaching, assessment, workload and learning community. While learning approaches that involves deep approaches and surface approaches are used as a mediator in which in turn influence students' generic skill.

Besides that, study by Devadason *et al.*, [2] found that experience in formal teaching and learning activities influence the student's generic skills development. Formal teaching and learning activities can be categorized in two models which are stand alone subject model and embedded model. This study used an embedded model in which the best skills are transferred through integrated skills in interdisciplinary courses, and even the teaching style also change in which students are actively participating in the learning process covers as the instructor plays the role of facilitator [19,20,21,22]. The study proved that students' participation in formal curriculum in terms of quality of teaching and learning has influenced students generic skills such as teamwork skills, entrepreneurship skills,

lifelong learning and information management skills, critical thinking and problem solving skills, professional ethics skills, leadership skills and communication skills [2].

Moreover, Wan Azlinda and Mime Azrina [7] studied on students' experiences on cooperative learning in the form of curricular activities that affect students' generic skills. In this study, the quality of teaching and learning does not only limited on the program quality, teaching quality, assessment and learning resources itself. However, teaching and learning in cooperative learning involves the participation of students to complete their task given by lecturers [7]. The method of cooperative learning is teaching strategy that not only involves students' participation in class, but also help to improve students' generic skills. Ballantine and Larres [1] also studied on the pedagogy of cooperative learning to improve generic skills among final year undergraduate students in accounting field. This study defined cooperative learning as group learning and the role of instructor is vital to create a successful environment of cooperative learning. There are three roles of the instructor known as group formation, group management and group assessment. Results indicated that cooperative learning is beneficial to develop some skills that are useful to a career in accountancy. Result suggested that there are successful interaction among groups and contributed to the overall effectiveness of the project.

2.2 Quality of campus life based on informal curriculum

Quality of campus life can also be measured in terms of informal curriculum or can be specified as college activities and out-of-classroom experiences or extracurricular experiences. According to the involvement principle by Astin [23], the amount of interest that student gained from college and university attendance is through time spent by students not only in academic-related activities, but also in out-of-classroom activities. For example, social activities with friends and participating in cultural events and volunteer activities

within and outside the campus. Study from Brown-Liburd and Porco [12] focused on quality of campus life in informal curriculum in terms of out-of-classroom experiences or extracurricular experiences that influence the development of cognitive moral development of undergraduate accounting students. In this study, out-of-classroom experiences or extracurricular experiences consists of internship experiences, volunteerism experiences, beta Alpha Psi membership experiences and participation in student government. This study proved that the students' experience in outside classroom activities can improve students learning experience in ethics education.

On the other hand, Smith and Bath [16] found that student's experience on quality of teaching and programs, interactive, social and collaborative on learning community often influence the development of student's learning. This study found that despite quality of teaching and learning, learning community also is significant to student learning outcome. In addition, Ahmad *et al.*, [11] focused on student's experience on co-curricular activities in developing generic skills among polytechnic students in Malaysia. Co-curricular activities like sport and games, uniformed body unit, society and clubs affect student's generic skills specified in management generic skills such as planning, management, organization, conflicts, control and assessment. Co-curricular activities help develop students' generic skills and meet the demands of the working world. Furthermore, Elkins *et al.*, [13] investigated students' involvement in out-of-class activities that affect students' perceived sense of campus community. The study proved that students who have higher levels of participation in campus involvement have significantly greater perceived sense of campus community in teaching and learning, history and tradition, diversity and acceptance, residential experience and loneliness and

stress.

In addition, Flowers [3] also examined the effects of student involvement in African American College Student Development. The study explored student involvement experiences which influenced African-American students' development in college. The study employed the College Student Experience Questionnaire (CSEQ) to measure student involvement experiences in college. Its involve library experiences, experiences with faculty, course learning, art, music and theater, personal experiences, student union, athletic and recreation facilities, as well as clubs and organizations. The study found that in-class and out-of class experiences are significantly positively related to student development for African American college students. Student involvement experiences directly influence student developmental gains in understanding arts and humanities, personal and social development, understanding science and technology, thinking and writing skills and vocational preparation for students [3]. Furthermore, Hu [4] examined the relationship between student engagement in college activities and student persistence in college. He found that students who have higher level of engagement in academic activities does not relate to probability of persistence. While, students who have higher level of social engagement tend to have positive correlated with probability of persisting.

Furthermore, Toyokawa and Toyokawa [19] focused on the relationship between Japanese students' engagement in extracurricular activities and adaptation in American campus life. According to Barrat & Huba [24] and Toyokawa *et al.*, [25], international students are keen to explore a new culture and society and make friends in the host country. Therefore, international students generally spend their time participating in various types of outside of classroom activities. Through these activities, international students have an opportunity to make friends with the host citizens, could learn social skills to interact with them as well as social customs and values of the host culture

[19]. This study explored the relationship between the level of engagement in extracurricular activities of Japanese students studying in the United States with academic involvement, psychological health, social support and leisure time actively used. Results showed that students who are more engaged in extracurricular activities have higher levels in general life satisfaction, more passionate about academic courses, tend to perceive learning as useful for exploring their future goals and perceived great benefits through extracurricular activities.

Study by Lau *et al.*, [14] was on graduates perception on the impact of graduate participation in various extra-curricular activities during college on graduate employability. Extra-curricular activities involved government students such as student councils, services such as scouts clubs, sports, music and arts clubs. This study hypothesized that college graduates who had been core members in extra-curricular activities were more likely to have significant positive rate on their employability skills such as time management, communication, leadership, creativity and self-promotion compared to college graduates without participation in college activities. Results showed that graduates who were a core member in extra-curricular activities like sports have more opportunities to become a leader and be responsible for their teams. While, graduates enhance their creativity skills when involve in music clubs and followed by art clubs.

Communication skills and self-promotion skills were the benefit from all extra-curricular activities and time management skills enhanced from graduate participation in student government and sport clubs. Findings from this study is supported by Pascarella and Terenzini [26], Tchibozo [27], Harvey *et al.*, [28] and Kuh [29] that suggested participation in extra-curricular activities improves student employability.

Moreover, Ruhanita *et al.*, [15] studied on industrial training in soft skills among undergraduate accounting students. According to Colloins [30], industrial training is a bridge from the classroom to the workforce. Industrial training is an out-of-classroom experience that students gained during their studies. Ruhanita *et al.*, [15] examined the perception of trainees on the benefit of industrial training to students, skills development via industrial training and characteristics of trainees related to course outcome. The study found that training give huge benefit to trainees especially on the real life experience of working life. There are three elements of soft skills developed during training which are communication skills, leadership and teamwork skills and self-management skills. The study also found that trainees believe that behavior which was developed through training are ethical and social responsibility, cooperation between group and the management and commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. This is supported by Kavanagh and Drennan [31] which suggested that the lack of soft skill training in accounting degree programme can be supported by industrial training programme.

Lim and Muszafarshah [5] also studied on the effectiveness of industrial training in improving students' generic skills. Respondent reported that their generic skills after attending industrial training are more satisfactory compared to before attending industrial training. The study shows that industrial training enhance students' generic skills effectively. The study also examined the effectiveness of industrial training in GLC companies, government department and private sector. This study indicated that GLC companies is more effective in improving communication skills, creative analytical skills, time and group management skills and ICT skills among students. On the other hand government departments, industrial training is more effective in improving English language proficiencies and ICT skills among students and private sector shows more effective on industrial training in improving English proficiencies among students.

2.3 Quality of campus life based on support service quality

Yu and Lee [10] defined quality of campus life as a cognitive and affective of quality of campus life. Cognitive component of quality of campus life refers to various needs as satisfaction in college life such as satisfaction with health and safety needs, satisfaction with economic and family needs, satisfaction with social needs, satisfaction with esteem needs, satisfaction with self-actualization needs, satisfaction with knowledge needs and satisfaction with aesthetics needs [9]. Affective component of quality of campus life refers to positive affect and negative affects that happened for the past few months of experience [32,33].

Quality of campus life by Yu and Lee [10] can also be conceptualized as support service quality in which quality of campus life had significantly been effected by various college services such as satisfaction with education service, administrative service, and facilities service. Satisfaction with education service consists of satisfaction with courses, instructors and overall education services. Satisfaction with administrative service consists of satisfaction with core administrative services, peripheral administrative services, service provider's attitude and overall administrative services. While satisfaction with facilities service consists of satisfaction with educational facilities, social activity related facilities, convenience facilities, campus environment and overall facilities.

2.4 Quality of campus life based on subjective well-being

Sirgy *et al.*, [9] measured the quality of campus life in terms of well-being measure. This study developed well-being measure to motivate university administrators to improve the quality of campus life of their student. Quality of campus life is interpreted as the total feelings of satisfaction a student

experiences with college life [9]. The quality of campus life is conceptualized as influenced by the effect of positive and negative affects in two types of student experiences which are known as satisfaction with academic aspects as well as with social aspects of the college [9]. Satisfaction with university facilities and services influenced satisfaction with academic aspects and satisfaction with social aspects of the college.

Satisfaction with academic aspects consists of experience with faculty, satisfaction with the teaching methods, satisfaction with classroom environment, satisfaction with student workload, satisfaction with academic reputation of the college and satisfaction with academic diversity. While, satisfaction with social aspects consists of experience with on-campus housing, satisfaction with international studies programs and services, satisfaction with spiritual programs and services, satisfaction with clubs and parties, satisfaction with collegiate athletics and satisfaction with recreational activities. Satisfaction with university facilities and services consists of satisfaction with library services, satisfaction with transportation and parking services, satisfaction with healthcare services, satisfaction with book store, satisfaction with telecommunications and satisfaction with recreation center [9].

Sirgy *et al.*, [18] expanded the study of the quality of campus life from his earlier studies [9] into two studies which are replication study and extension study. The replication study provided additional validation of quality of campus life measure which is satisfaction with college life overall. Satisfaction with overall college life is considered to be influenced significantly by satisfaction with academic aspects and satisfaction with social aspects of college life and then are influenced by satisfaction with college facilities and services [18]. For the extension study, it provided additional validation of quality of campus life measure by connecting satisfaction with overall college life with satisfaction with overall life quality [18]. Satisfaction with overall college life had a positive impact on life satisfaction [18]. Study from Arslan and

Akkas [8] also looked at satisfaction with overall college life that are influenced by academic satisfaction, service satisfaction, social satisfaction, life satisfaction and identification. This study used Sirgy *et al.*, [9] to measure satisfaction with overall college life. The study found that life satisfaction and identification have positive relationship and social

satisfaction is the most important impact on quality of college life. Thus, the overall quality of campus life will be strengthened through the improvements in the aspects of academic and services. All of the above statement have reviewed the overall quality of campus life. Hence, figure 1 shows the proposed conceptual framework for the total quality of campus life.

A proposed conceptual model of total quality of campus life are shown in Figure 1.

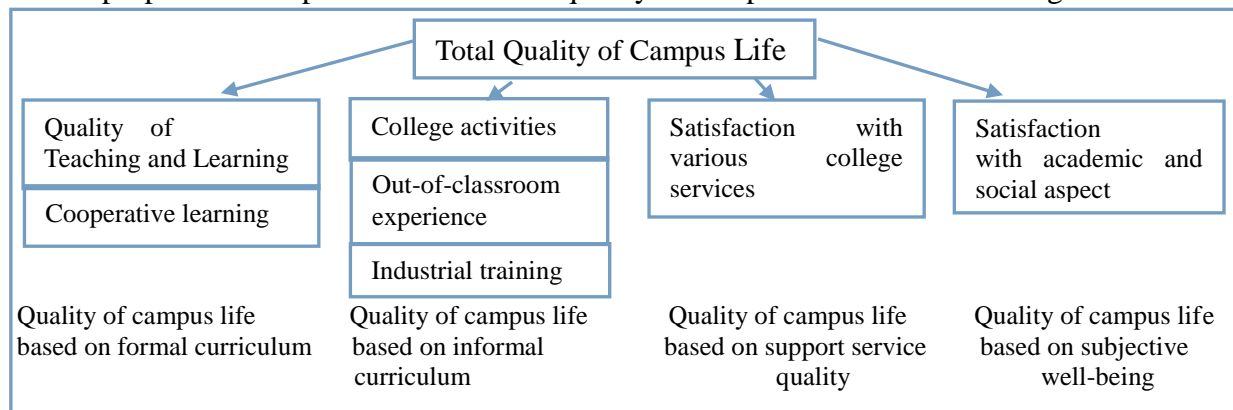


Figure 1: A conceptual model of total quality of campus life

DISCUSSION

Students gain experience in the quality of campus life during their studying at university. Quality of campus life provides useful experience for students that not only covers the formal curriculum and informal curriculum, but also covering other aspects which also provides experience to students. Therefore, this study was done to improve previous studies by adding service support quality and subjective well-being as the overall quality of campus life in higher education institutions in Malaysia. This study needs to be done as it can serve as a

guide to students and a policy to the university administration in understanding all aspects of the quality of campus life that can provide useful and beneficial experience to students. Students’ experience obtained from the quality of campus life can also give a positive impact on student development. Thus, the university can provide support by providing the best services and facilities to the students. In fact, the quality of campus life could also serve as a method for the university to engage with the students in campus life to boost student development and their future career.

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