HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (CCAs) IN POLYTECHNIC: METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Co-Curricular Activities (CCAs) is a very important and essential part of educational system. In aspect of education, CCAs prepares the students to be holistic. Nevertheless more emphasis has generally been given to the CCAs aspect resulting from the student’s inability to link the excellence in performance academically to the active participation in CCAs. Besides, Holistic Student Development (HSD) through Critical Agenda Project (CAP) of National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPTN), in line with the government’s efforts to produce well-balanced graduates or human capital in terms of appearance, patriotism, discipline and moral values towards the formation of the nation’s human capital. The updated framework will enable education providers to better align their co-curriculum to encourage students’ holistic development in terms of life skills, competencies and values.

Keywords - Holistic Students Development, Co-curriculum Activities (CCAs)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Co-Curricular activities (CCAs) are an integral part of students’ holistic education. Through CCA, students discover their interests and talents while developing values and competencies that will prepare them for a rapidly changing world. ‘Holistic’ in the context of human capital development, is not only confined to academic disciplines and enhancing skills, but also includes aspects of mind, spiritual, character and ethics. In other words, human capital development is focused on aspects of “humanity”, which are built through a philosophy of life, religion and moral support. With these characteristics, the human capital available is ready to transform and develop individuals, families, communities, the country and the world in a more structured manner.

Polytechnic as one of the education providers are responsible to educate the students to the demands and needs of the nation. As part of its efforts to provide students with a holistic and well-rounded experience in the co-curriculum, Ministry of Higher Education have implementing National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPTN) which now in the Phase 2 Action Plan (2011-2015). The Holistic Student Development (HSD) Critical Agenda Project (CAP) focuses on the development of students’ personality in order to produce well-balanced graduates or human capital in terms of appearance, patriotism, discipline and moral values towards the formation of the nation’s human capital.

2.0 BACKGROUND OF STUDY

There is a long history of educational research questioning whether extra-curricular (CCAs) have any value at all. Some feel that extra-curricular activities may serve no more than social function and de-emphasize, or even subvert, more kritikal academic work. Others are concerned about devaluing bright, committed students who simply are not “joiners”. Still others believe that out-of-class experience serve a valuable social and personal growth function but hold no primacy over coursework, team projects, and assignments in facilitating the development of interpersonal skills.

In order to develop interpersonal skills or soft skills among students’ themselves, in Malaysia the government already implementing holistic student development through National Higher Education Strategic Plan (PSPTN). Holistic student development refer to the ways that institutions help students learn more about who they are, what they want to do, and who they want to become. The 4C framework; culture, curriculum, co-curriculum, and community use to analyze and describe how colleges can become and remain holistic and student-centered.

The concept of developing purpose is an approach to thinking broadly about life in ways that encompass vocational plans and aspirations as well as personal interests and interpersonal and family commitments. The
college experience can help students grapple with how to reconcile the personal and the professional and how to create a good life\(^{[10]}\). A holistic view of student learning and development that helps students integrate experiences in and out of the classroom as well as inner and outer life experiences is key to helping students develop purpose and meaning\(^{[11]}\). A holistic and integrated approach to development that recognizes the mutually reinforcing nature of cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal development. For students to grow cognitively and to integrate knowledge in a way that reflects learning, they also need to grow interpersonally by considering themselves as part of a larger whole and intrapersonally by establishing a belief system that acts as a filter, guiding choices and experiences\(^{[12]}\).

### 2.1 Student Involvement Theory

Significant research has been conducted regarding the involvement of students in Co-Curricular activities (CCAs) in correlation to success in college. In particular, student involvement theory links the amount of time and energy a student spends on the collegiate experience to persistence\(^{[13]}\). The more involved college students are in the academic and social aspects of campus life, the more they benefit in terms of learning and personal development \(^{[14]}\). The students who devote much more time and effort to academic pursuits tend to become isolated from their peers, therefore showing below average changes in personalities and behaviors\(^{[15]}\).

Besides, through interactions in the social and academic realms, students either reaffirm or reevaluate their initial goals and commitments\(^{[16]}\). Students who lack sufficient interaction with others on campus or have negative experiences may decide to depart the university as a result of this reevaluation. A primary concern is the amount of time spent on out-of-class activities and the effect it has on academics. Some faculty members believe spending too much time on co-curricular activities means students do not spend the required time needed to study and complete homework. However, based on previous study found a positive relationship between academic and co-curricular involvement. Therefore, when involvement in co-curricular activities increases, there is a corresponding increase in academic involvement. Some of these co-curricular involvements included participation in campus-wide activities, departmental activities, student clubs, serving on committees, and designing activities for clubs or departments.

### 3.0 Statement of the Problem

There are numerous benefits of participation in co-curricular activities yet there are views that students’ participation in co-curricular activities (CCAs) is a waste of time and that students should invest their time and efforts in pursuing the core curriculum. The present study sought to establish learners’ views on the significance of their participation in CCAs in developing Holistic Students Development (HSD).

### 4.0 THE CONCEPT OF HOLISTIC STUDENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES (CCAs)

To think holistically means to attend to the whole person by addressing issues affecting the mind, the body, and the spirit and thrives on three critical elements namely balance, inclusion and connection\(^{[17]}\). While educational provider always provided a great deal of attention to the mind and most now operate recreation and health facilities to attend the needs of the body, the spirit often receives little or no attention on campus\(^{[18]}\).

#### 4.1 Intellectual

A primary concern is the amount of time spent on out-of-class activities and the effect it has on academics\(^{[19]}\). Previous research study found that spending too much time on CCAs means students do not spend the required time needed to study and complete homework\(^{[20]}\). However recent research study found a positive relationship between academic and co-curricular involvement\(^{[21]}\). Therefore, when involvement in CCAs increases, there is a corresponding increase in academic involvement.

#### 4.2 Emotional

CCAs helps students gain new knowledge and skills as well as educating them against developing unhealthy activities during their leisure time\(^{[22]}\). Prior research has highlighted that CCAs help students’ reduced academic stress and tension, helping students become more alert and productive in their learning\(^{[23]}\). Another research regarding CCAs was clearly found that the students who was participated in CCAs was knowledgeable and skill in managing stress, thus the body activates can cause decreasing stress and depression\(^{[24]}\).

#### 4.3 Spiritual

Spiritual development through CCAs can reveal the person self-confidence to feel and think success and turn person mind to final victory so it leads to think positive in any decision he makes\(^{[17]}\)\(^{[25]}\).

#### 4.4 Physical

In the process of holistic student development, positive attitudes, fun and healthy lifestyle must be well planned by the education providers and also students’ themselves \(^{[26]}\). Physical movement is good for changing person mood and attitudes besides having a healthy body\(^{[27]}\).

#### 4.5 Social

CCAs has long held intuitive appeal as an element in well-rounded college education. In social life, the interpersonal skill are very needed as particularly with
an increased corporate interest in interpersonal skills. The empirical studies indicate that smoking and cocaine use are lower among athletes than among the general school population. Previous study revealed that regarding co-curricular participation as part of further education, independence of thought and problem solving skills are identified as outcomes. These contribute to both economic and non-economic areas of life, illustrating that there are inter-connections between economic and non-economic outcomes of learning.

5.0 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Survey based methodology was used to underlying philosophy guiding this study and methodological triangulation as the paradigm in collecting the data. Methodological triangulation is the type of triangulation that has been widely used in social sciences. Methodological triangulation as the use of both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods and analysis in studying the same phenomenon. This approach was well suited to design of this study because this study use more than one methods in collecting the data which is quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (interview). For completeness purposes, researchers use this triangulation method to increase their in-depth and understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by combining multiple methods and theories.

In addition to unexplored research phenomenon, triangulation for completeness purposes is of significant in studying the complex research phenomenon. Thus, a researcher can start by employing the within-methods in the qualitative paradigm to generate more rich data and getting wider understanding of the phenomenon under study. After rich data is being generated by qualitative research method, then a researcher has to employ the quantitative research methods in the form of data collection methods and analysis towards having deeper and more comprehensive picture of the phenomenon under investigation.

This study seeks to explore the concept of holistic students’ development (HSD) through co-curricular activities (CCAs) based on five aspects which is intellectual, emotional, spiritual, physical and social. Therefore, this study was undertaken to fulfill below objectives as a guide to the study:

a. To investigate the dominant factors that contribute to holistic students’ development (HSD) through co-curricular activities (CCAs) in polytechnics.

b. To identify the effects of holistic students’ development (HSD) through co-curricular activities (CCAs) in polytechnics.

c. To determine the relationship between the dominant factors that contribute to holistic students’ development (HSD) with the effects of holistic students’ development (HSD) through co-curricular activities (CCAs) in polytechnics.

d. To propose a model of holistic students’ development (HSD) through co-curricular activities (CCAs).

5.1 Population and Sample

Randomization of samples can be achieved in two levels. In the first level, a randomization is achieved through the selection of subjects from a homogeneous population. In the second level, randomization is achieved by the allocation of subjects into different level of treatment. In this study the first requirement of randomization was achieved in the two stages of a cluster sampling technique. The first stage was the selection of the polytechnics, followed by selection of classes.

The three institutions chosen are Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah in Shah Alam (Selangor), Politeknik Ungku Omar in Ipoh (Perak) and Politeknik Johor Baru (Johor). To ensure that quality is upheld, the premier polytechnics will be benchmarked against renowned technical institutions in order to carried out this study as this three polytechnics involve in Critical Agenda Project (CAP) of National Higher Education.

Based on the Department of Polytechnic Education Malaysia (2013) estimated the number of engineering students (civil engineering, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering) in the polytechnic diploma reach 2362 students. Based on the sample size table Krejcie and Morgan (1976), the total sample for this study are 335 students.

5.2 Scope / Limitation of Study

The limitation of this study are:

i. Only polytechnic premier involved (Politeknik Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah in Shah Alam (Selangor), Politeknik Ungku Omar in Ipoh (Perak) and Politeknik Johor Baru (Johor).

ii. Only co-curricular credit program involved (240 hours).
iii. Only diploma engineering students involved (civil engineering, electrical engineering, and mechanical engineering).

5.3 Instruments

First, the study employed a semi-structured questionnaire to collect quantitative data and comments by participants on the open-ended questions on the questionnaire provided qualitative data. Comments on responses provided a rich layer of information which could not be gathered through a highly structured questionnaire. Second, semi-structured interview were used to collect variety of data, which is essential and allows for an in-depth understanding of social phenomena studied.

5.4 Reliability and Validity

The main statistical measure to determine reliability of the questionnaire was the use of Chronbach’s alpha coefficient. A pilot study was used to ensure validity of the questionnaire.

5.5 Data Analysis

Data collected was coded and analysed through a blend of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Quantitative data were analysed with the aid of the SPSS statistical software package version 21 and presented through a blend of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data were analysed using content analysis method and presented through verbatim quotations of the respondents.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Based on this study, researchers hopes that students’ involvement in co-curricular activities (CCAs) will positively develop a holistic students development of students’ personality in order to produce well-balanced graduates or human capital as well as beneficial as it had ripple effects on academic achievement through its impartation of skills and values necessary in students’ academic pursuits.

REFERENCES


