Journal of Institutional Research South East Asia

JIRSEA
Volume 15 Number 1, May/June 2017
ISSN 1675-6061

Editor:
Nirwan Idrus
PhD*Mon* IQA*Lond* FIE*Aust* FIPENZ

All papers are refereed by two appropriately independent, qualified experts and are evaluated according to:

- Significance in contributing new knowledge
- Appropriateness for the Journal
- Clarity of presentation
- Technical adequacy

(see http://www.seaairweb.info/journal for details)

JIRSEA is indexed with SCOPUS, the Directory of Open Access Journals and EBSCoHost (Education Research Index/Education Research Complete). As provided in the Ulrich's Directory, all journals in the DOAJ are also indexed in the Ulrich's Directory

SEAAIR
SOUTH EAST ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH

http://www.seaairweb.info

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITORIAL

This edition of JIRSEA presents to you nine articles from authors in Southeast Asia as well as Saudi Arabia, Australia and UK. They cover four areas of interest in *Institutional Research*.

The first area of interest is on learning quality involving engagements of teachers and students as well as attempts at novel learning methods and technology. These include the **Best Paper** from the 2016 SEAAIR International Annual Conference held in Bangkok, Thailand which deals with teachers' effectiveness and engagement.

Institutional performance forms the second area of interest. Three papers each from Saudi Arabia, Indonesia and Taiwan deal with internal performance and quality improvements through benchmarking, national higher education ranking system and perceptions.

The third area of interest is on teaching and learning for effective English speaking in the Southeast Asian context. It is generally accepted that although a number of Southeast Asian countries could count English as being their close second *local* language, speaking English is still a challenge in the region. The lack of immersion opportunities which many claimed to be an essential prerequisite for good language speaking is a factor. Therefore endeavors in enhancing the learning of speaking is only appropriate in order to resolve the challenge such lacks.

The fourth area of interest deals with international students at an Australian university.

Refreshingly, all the areas of interest together formed an introspective attempt at improving educational quality in the region or affecting students from the region. By no means does this imply a poor educational standard there at the moment. In fact several universities in some of the Southeast Asian countries had achieved a place in the top 100 ranked universities in the world while others are highly recognized for some of their programs.

It is nevertheless refreshing as introspection is not normally a quality ascribed by many. This is therefore a virtuous trend that would please a lot of educationalists who are also committed to overall improvements in the standard and quality of education in the region.

Happy reading.

Nirwan Idrus
Editor

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: DEFINING TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND TEACHER ENGAGEMENT

Ma. Florecilla C. Cinches
Liceo de Cagayan University
Ruth Love V. Russell
Xavier University-Ateneo de Cagayan, Cagayan de Oro City
Judith C. Chavez
Lourdes College, Cagayan de Oro City
Rosella O. Ortiz
Liceo de Cagayan University,
The Philippines

ABSTRACT

Teacher quality defines student quality. This study hypothesized that student engagement is among the major defining outcomes of teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement. This was verified in three higher educational institutions (HEIs) in a city of Southern Philippines. Concurrent mixed method research design was used where modified survey questionnaires as the main sources ofquantitative data while key informant interview, focus group discussions and observations were used for triangulation. Ninety eight (98) teachers from three HEIs were purposively chosen and were assessed by a combined total of 2,238 students. Descriptive statistics, correlations and multiple linear regressionswere used and complemented with qualitative data. Teacher effectiveness was found to be a significant predictor of student engagement with teacher engagement trailing far behind. This study hopes to contribute to the scanty researches in the Philippines that focused on the role of teachers as designers of learning environment to support student engagement.

Key words: Student Engagement, Teacher Effectiveness, Teacher Engagement

Introduction

Student engagement gained prominence recently because of its crucial role in students' success. Studies have pointed its positive link to academic outcomes such as grades, persistence, and retention (Kuh et al., 2008; Tinto, 2006). High quality learning outcomes such as gains in general abilities and critical thinking as well as greater application and deeper approaches to learning were also found to be significant outcomes of student engagement (Pike and Kuh, 2005; Zimitat and Horstmanshof, 2007; Krause and Coates 2008).

Such engagement has become the focus of attention among those aiming to enhance learning and teaching in higher education, headlining meeting agendas and theming conferences in campuses around the world (Trowler, 2010). In fact, Chen, Lattuca and Hamilton (2008) in their study admitted that the concept is now not only prominent in higher education communities; rather, these higher education institutions (HEIs) are emphasizing the role of faculty as designers of educational environments to support student engagement. The authors as academicians continue to search for more explanations on student success considering that their respective higher education institutions are experiencing fluctuating trends of academic outcomes especially in terms of students' academic achievements, and graduates' employability.

The study of student engagement cannot miss out the major role that teachers play in influencing engagement. In fact, what they do are the key factors of materializing student engagement (Groves et al., 2015; Kraft et al., 2013; Russell & Slater,2011; Zepke et al., 2010). Vgotsky in Chen et al. (2008) claimed that rich learning occurs when there is a good fit between these factors: the task at hand, student's ability to perform and the availability or presence of a more knowledgeable individual to provide assistance in moving the learner to the next phase of learning. The teacher is considered as one of the "more knowledgeable others" in the students' academic life.

Considering the fundamental role of teachers in students' success, this study investigated on the influence of teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement on student engagement. The expected results hope to confirm the extent of teacher behavior impact on student engagement and eventually the effectiveness of the teacher as seen in student engagement. Additionally, this study hopes to contribute to the scanty researches that focused on the role of teachers as designers of learning environment to support student engagement in the Philippine setting.

Framework

This study assumed that student engagement is a function of teacher effectiveness and of teacher engagement (Chen et al, 2008; Klem and Cornell, 2004). It is logical to believe that teachers who are effective will more likely display behaviors facilitative of students' engagement. A teacher who is, therefore, engaged and effective has a greater chance of effectively influencing students' academic achievement. Such postulation has been held by (Valenta, 2010) about teacher engagement, teacher effectiveness and student achievement. It is, thus, argued that teachers who are engaged and effective are also actively involved in establishing healthy student relations;

demonstrate enthusiasm in improving pedagogy and responsive to the global demands for quality teaching; and make or participate in teaching-learning decisions that enrich the lives of students.

Student Engagement

Central to student quality is student engagement. Student engagement is seen as the students' extent of meaningful participation in purposeful educational activities both in and outside the classroom which leads, contributes, and links to high quality and measurable learning outcomes (Krause and Coates, 2008; Kuh et al, 2007; Trowler 2010). Fredericks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) espoused the three dimensions of student engagement: behavioral, emotional and cognitive or intellectual. *Behavioral engagement* are students' observable actions of participation in class activities ; emotional engagement refers to feelings of belonging, safety and attachment to teachers, classmates or the institution that propel willingness to work; and cognitive or intellectual engagement refers to investment in dealing with more complex ideas and mastery of skills. This study assessed the students' level of behavioral, emotional and intellectual engagements.

On the other hand, Kuh et al. (2008) coined student engagement as representing both time and energy students invest in educationally purposeful activities and the effort institutions devote to using effective educational practices. This is where teacher factor plays vital role in students' significant academic outcomes as a result of student engagement. Kuh developed the first framework for student engagement used during the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, developed in 1998). This was based on five benchmarks: 1) level of academic challenge; 2) enriching educational experiences; 3) active and collaborative learning; 4) supportive campus environment; and 5) student–faculty interaction (cited by Bryson and Hardy, 2010). These five benchmarks are supportive of Fredericks et al.'s model of student engagement since the framework encompasses the behavioral, emotional and intellectual aspects of the students' academic life.

Although student engagement is succinctly linked to good outcomes, Bryson et al. stressed that it is more difficult 'why' and 'how' this process occurs: 'it is not clear to what extent student engagement and other measures of effective educational practice contribute to achievement and persistence over and above student's ability' (Kuh et al., 2008). Nevertheless, in US and Australia, engaging students is widely perceived as proxy for high-quality teaching(Bryson et al., 2010). In other words, teacher behavior is central to engaging students.

How do teachers influence student engagement? Some studies espoused *teacher behavior* as a critical factor to student engagement. Umbach and Wawryznski in Zepke et al. (2010) concluded that "educational environment created by teachers' behaviors has a dramatic effect on student engagement." On the other hand, other behaviors cited were: coming to class well prepared, displaying mastery and confidence in the delivery of content and in communicating well structured, high and fair expectations, are engaging in teaching-learning dialogue with students and setting availability for consultation (Klem and Cornell,2004; Mearns, Myers and Bharadwaj and Umbach and Wawryznski as cited by Russell and Slater , 2011). Other studies also pointed out that *teacher attributes* increase student engagement (Russell and Slater, 2011; Zepke et al, 2010).Some of these attributes included: being friendly, interesting, approachable, those that have positive beliefs and attitudes toward learning (Russell and Slater, 2011) and those that

know how to form quality, deep relationships with students with the intention of fostering supportive and caring environments (Groves et al., 2015; Pascarella and Terenzini et al., 1991, 2005; Taylor and Parsons, 2011). The discussion on teacher behaviors and teacher attributes contributing to student engagement emphasizes the paramount importance of teacher effectiveness to.

Teacher Effectiveness

Teacher effectiveness is a critical area of inquiry that has emerged through the years among educational researchers (Stronge, 2008).In this study, teacher effectiveness is linked with student engagement. The higher the teacher's effectiveness, the greater is the tendency for the learner to be actively engaged which will eventually lead to students' academic gains. Teacher effectiveness predominantly influences student academic growth (Stronge, 2009). Teachers are the most significant factor that affects student achievement (Darling-Hammond & Snyder, 2000; Long & Hoy, 2006; Sanders & Rivers, 1996 as quoted by Ortiz, 2015). Teacher effectiveness stems from the teacher behaviors that impact the teaching-learning process as assessed. Such effectiveness can be concretized through students' feedback on teacher's performance and the teacher's effect on students. Accordingly, teachers are effective if they are able to cultivate students' thinking skills, stimulate their interest in the subject, motivate them to initiate their own learning, present learning materials well, challenge students intellectually, set high standards and have good elocutionary skills including their interpersonal skills (Weimer, 2013). In this study, teacher effectiveness was measured based on students' assessment of their learning outcomes as a result of their teacher's performance in the classroom. With 2000 sampled students, a study established the significant effect of teacher performance on teacher effectiveness (Polancos, Ortiz and Cinches, 2013).

Darling-Hammond (2009)opined that standard-based evaluations of teaching are significantly related to student achievement. Such evaluations aid teachers enhance their practice and effectiveness. This investigation adopted the framework developed by Liceo de Cagayan University to assess teacher performance vis-à-vis teacher effectiveness. This current study, therefore, looked into the basis of standards of teacher's performance as basis of measuring teacher effectiveness. The standards which cascaded from Philosophy and Principles of Faculty Evaluation were formulated within the context of the University's core values and sound teaching practices based on research and literature. These are *instructional delivery, student engagement, learning environment, professionalism, and assessment skills*.

Teacher effectiveness is manifested in *instructional delivery where teacher's pedagogy promotes student's active participation* (McEwan, 2002; Zwart, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Studies have shown that teachers' manner of communication allows students to think critically and to assimilate the lessons and or learning experiences facilitated by the teacher.

Moreover, effective teachers need to be adept at organizing and maintaining an appropriate *learning environment*. Crucial to the *learning environment* is the teachers' capability to establish good discipline, efficient routines, smooth transitions, and ownership of the environment as components of establishing a supportive and collaborative climate (Shellard&Protheroe, 2000). The teachers' ability to create a conducive and homey atmosphere in the classroom coupled with

their effective time management and gentle approach with the students is a key component of teacher effectiveness which has bearing on student engagement.

It is likewise essential to look into teachers' assessment skill. Since teachers are primarily responsible for evaluating instruction and student learning, there is a widespread concern about the quality of classroom assessment. Assessments should relate to instructional plans. The teacher's conduct of regular assessment and prompt feedback of the results of evaluation assist students in determining their strengths and weaknesses as well as help them better prepare in their lessons. Extensive studies around the globe show that in consistently applying the principles of *assessment* of student learning, impressive gains in student achievement especially for struggling learners can be attained according to Black & William (1998) in Stiggins (2007).

The primary task of the teacher is to design engaging tasks and activities for students to succeed in the completion of these tasks. Student engagement is generally considered one of the predictors of learning. Carini, Kuh& Klein (2006) postulated that the more students study or practice in a subject, the more they tend to learn. In this context, teacher's way of questioning, her facilitation of learning tasks, her teaching style as well as her positive learning expectations, and open mindedness contribute to students' active engagement in class. Interests in lesson resulting in meaningful task behavior occur when lessons are clearly discussed and constructively supportive to real life experiences.

Moreover, teacher's professionalism characterized by teacher's positive behavior and values and her good interpersonal skills is another component of teacher effectiveness which may impact student engagement. Orosa (2008) identified teacher's dispositional and personality-related traits covering caring and concern for others' welfare, ethical conduct and integrity as themes of good teaching. Frymier& Houser (2000) also acknowledged the existence of interpersonal variables that are positively related to learning and asserted that student-teacher relationship is essential to effective learning outcome. It is crucial, therefore, that teachers create a positive interpersonal relationship with students in order to improve student academic achievement. In summary, the above cited activities encourage students to engage and actively participate in the learning process.

Another important concept to consider in understanding student engagement is teacher engagement. It is advanced that student engagement is influenced by teacher engagement. The dissertation of Caldwell (2011) found high levels of teacher engagement with positive effect on student engagement levels.

Teacher Engagement

As earlier hypothesized, student engagement is influenced by faculty engagement and teacher effectiveness. Kahn (1990) espoused three psychological conditions linked with engagement namely: meaningfulness or the extent to which people feel that what they are doing is worthwhile and valuable; safety, or the extent to which people feel comfortable being who they are at work; and availability, or the extent to which physical and psychological resources are accessible while engaging in work (May, Gilson, and &Harter, 2004 as cited by Ortiz, 2015).

In educational institutions, teachers build social relationships with colleagues during work, but the emphasis on social relationships with students characterizes the heart of the work of teaching. In fact, the opportunity to work closely with students is a strong motive for many teachers entering the profession (e.g., Watt & Richardson, 2007). Measuring teachers' work engagement without capturing social engagement with students ignores one of the most important aspects of teacher engagement (Klassen, Yerdelen, and Durksen,2013).

An engaged teacher is available to provide student support to accomplish the assigned tasks; adjusts ones teaching to accommodate students' pace; sets aside time to know students' needs and concerns (Kahn, 1990 as cited by Gilson and Hater, 2004).Similarly, Tinto (1993, 2000) documented the strong association of both formal and informal faculty–student contact to enhance student learning. This link was highlighted by Ewell (1997). Umbach&Wawrzynski (2005) also argued that the educational context created by faculty behaviors and attitudes has a profound effect on student learning and engagement.

Teacher-student relationships promote student engagement and positive student outcomes (Davis, 2003; Klassen, Perry, & Frenzel, 2012; Pianta et al., 2012; Wang, 2009). This engagement is beneficial to teachers too, as Jennings & Greenberg (2009) found that teachers who devote energy to forming warm and nurturing relationships with their students tend to experience higher levels of well-being, and less emotional stress and burnout.

While the authors argue that student engagement is an outcome of teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement, it is noteworthy to consider that teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement have their own antecedents. Although it is beyond the scope of this study, these authors believe that institutional structures and organizational milieu are critical to establishing both.

In a nutshell, student engagement is one of the outcome variables of teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement (Chen et al, 2008; Klem and Cornell, 2004;Umbach&Wawryznski in Zepke et al. 2010). Teacher effectiveness influences student engagement (Stronge, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2009; McEwan, 2002; Zwart, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2010). Moreover, teacher engagement promotes student engagement (Davis, 2003; Klassen, Perry, and Frenzel, 2012; Piantaet al.2012; Wary, 2009and Valenta 2010). Figure 1 illustrates the interplay of variables in the study.

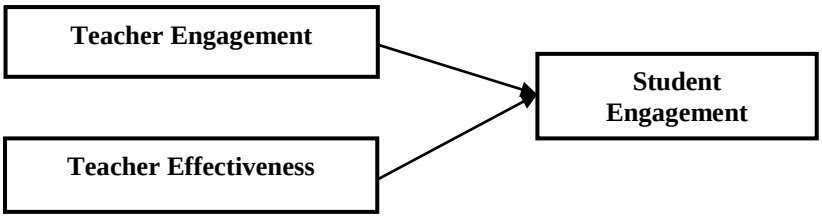

Figure 1. Schematic Presentation of the Study

Objective of the Study

This study attempted to strengthen the common supposition that a favorable outcome of teacher effectiveness and teacher engagement is student engagement.

Methods

The study used descriptive correlational survey which was complemented with qualitative data emanating from focus group discussions. Three (3) adapted 4-point scaled survey instruments generated the quantitative data for the study. These were: Teacher Effectiveness Inventory and Teacher Engagement adapted from Ortiz (2015) dissertation entitled "*Personal and Organizational Antecedents of Teacher Effectiveness in Two Autonomous Higher Education Institutions in Mindanao* and Fredericks, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) on Student Engagement. The instruments were tested for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (R).Cronbach's alpha determines the internal consistency of items in a survey instrument to gauge its reliability.George and Mallery (2010) said that for scales to be reliable, values from 0.7 to 0.9is considered acceptable. An R value of 0.9 or greater excellently indicates that the items representing the variable of the study are highly correlated to each other and therefore internally consistent (George et al., 2010). Normality values were established considering that there were only 98 teachers putting the set of data in question as to their normal distribution. Thus, normality values of skewness and kurtosis were computed. Values for kurtosis (K) between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable in order to prove normal univariate distribution. Meanwhile, for symmetry, if skewness(S) is between -0.5 and 0.5, the distribution is approximately symmetric. Normality assumption is necessary for multiple linear regressions and higher statistical test given that the set of data is less than 200 to support the calculation of the p values for significance testing.

Table 1 shows a total of 98 college teachers and 2,238 students across the three higher education institutions (HEIs) that participated in the study. These were the full time college teachers representing the core faculty of the colleges of business, teacher education and arts, who had assignments during summer classes from April to May 2016. Descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple linear regressions were used to organize the data as well as to address the objective of the study.

Table 1. Respondents Distribution

HEI	Teachers	Students
A	18	271
B	30	527
C	50	1440
Total	***98***	***2238***

Results and Discussions

Table 2 gives the basic descriptive data, to demonstrate scale reliabilities, normality measures (skewness and kurtosis), means and standard deviations. The different parts of the scale indicating the various constructs had the following Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (R), namely: student engagement is 0.98; teacher effectiveness is 0.99; and teacher engagement is 0.90. The R values of the scale indicate a very high internal consistency considering that the acceptable range is from 0.7 to 0.9(George et al., 2003). This also means that the indicators used in the constructs are highly reliable. Thus, it can be inferred that the indicators consistently represent the constructs of the study.

The range of scale response is 1 to 4 where 4 is the highest indicating *highly effective* for *teacher effectiveness* and *highly engaged* for *teacher engagement* and 4 in *student engagement* means *high extent*. The following values indicate the overall result of each construct: Student Engagement (S=-0.35, K=0.02, M=3.16, SD=0.30, *moderate extent*); Teacher Effectiveness

Table 2. Scale Reliabilities, Normality Measures, Means, Standard Deviation

Variable	*Cronbach's Alpha (R)*	*S*	*K*	*Mean*	*SD*
1. Student Engagement	0.98	-0.35	0.02	3.16	0.30
2. Teacher Effectiveness	0.99	-0.12	-0.14	3.19	0.35
3. Teacher Engagement	0.90	0.47	0.27	3.62	0.20

Range	Student Engagement	Teacher Effectiveness	Teacher Engagement
3.51-4.00	High Extent	Very Effective	High Extent
2.51-3.50	Moderate Extent	Effective	Moderate Extent
1.51-2.50	Low Extent	Slightly Effective	Low Extent
1.00 -1.50	Very Low Extent	Not Effective	Very Low Extent

Legend: Scalar Interpretation (Connelly, L.M. and Powers, J.L.,2004); Padua (2014)

(S=0.-0.12, K=-0.14, M=3.19, SD=0.35, *Effective*) and Teacher Engagement (S= 0.90, K=0.47, M=3.62, SD=0.20, *Highly Extent)*. The variables are normally distributed as shown by their skewness (S) and kurtosis(K) values where the limit of S is from -0.5 to 0.5 and K is from -2 to 2. These values assure that the confidence level or the significance level (p-value)in the multiple linear regressions is valid even with a sample of 98 teachers. The students, in general, were only *moderately engaged* behaviorally, emotionally and intellectually, while teachers were found to be *effective* and *highly engaged.* The values of standard deviations in the three constructs indicated homogeneity in the responses. This means that the responses of each respondent are spread very near to the mean. Table 3 further shows the relationships between and among the variables of the study.

Table 3. Pearson R Values on the Relationship between Student Engagement and Teacher Variables

Teacher Variables	***Student Engagement* (mean, sd, r-value)**		
	Behavioral (mean=3.03,0.21)	**Emotional** (mean=3.14,0.23)	**Intellectual** (mean=3.28,0.22)
Teacher Effectiveness	**r**	**r**	**r**
Professionalism (mean=3.28,0.38)	0.70**	0.830**	0.826**
Instructional Delivery (mean=3.18,0.36)	0.751**	0.858**	0.841**
Student Engagement (mean=3.19,0.37)	0.698**	0.831**	0.815**
Learning Environment (mean=3.21,0.36)	0.663**	0.812**	0.802**
Assessment (mean=3.17,0.34)	0.660**	0.764**	0.759**
Teacher Engagement			
Student-teacher relation (mean=3.69,0.31)	0.001	0.23*	0.30*
Improving pedagogy (mean=3.57,0.40)	0.09	0.07	-0.08
Participating in teaching-learning decisions (mean=3.21,0.39)	0.056	-0.130	0.085

The data revealed that student engagement was found to be significantly related to every factor of teacher effectiveness but not to all teacher engagement variables. Specifically, student engagement (*behavioral, emotional and intellectual*) can be significantly associated with teacher effectiveness variables such as *professionalism, instructional delivery, student engagement, learning environment and assessment.* On the other hand, only *student-teacher relation* was found to be significantly linked with the *emotional* and *intellectual* engagement in the study. Among the significant findings of the study is that the standards set for the teaching effectiveness (*professionalism, instructional delivery, student engagement, learning environment and assessment)* had been validated in construct through the findings of the study. The indicators of the different standards in terms of student outcomes were found to be highly significantly related to student engagement construct.

Table 4 on the other hand, presents the multiple linear regression analysis showing the influence of the teacher variables on student engagement.

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of the Influence of Teacher Variables

Teacher Variables	***Beta***	***T-Value***	***Sig.***
Teacher Effectiveness	0.501	15.61	0.000
Teacher Engagement	0.034	-0.888	0.377
Dependent Variable	*Student Engagement*		
Constant	1.61		
Adjusted R^2	0.76		
F-Value	124.51		
Significance	0.000		

Student engagement = 1.61 + 0.501 teacher effectiveness + 0.034 teacher engagement

The regression equation above represents the best equation model considering that the F-value of 124. 51 is highly significant at 0.00. This further shows that 50.1% of the changes in student engagement is most likely influenced by teacher effectiveness and 3.4% of the increase in student engagement is explained by teacher engagement.

The data also revealedthat teacher effectiveness is the best single predictor of *student engagement* with teacher engagement too far behind. However, this further means that taking *teacher effectiveness* and *teacher engagement* as one, the model explains 76% of the variation in student engagement. What could account for the remaining 24% can be speculated as coming from other variables which are not part of this study.

The study established that teacher effectiveness significantly influenced student engagement. However college student-respondents assessed their student engagement as only *moderate extent* in the three areas: *(behavioral, M=3.03, SD=0.21); (emotional, M=3.14, SD=0.23); and intellectual (M=3.28, SD=0.22).* Students on the other hand, rated their teachers' effectivenessas generally *effective* only and not *highly effective*. In the Focus Group Discussions (n=45) conducted in the three HEIs, the following were the common responses on the questions, "what encourages you to participate in class?" "..finish your projects?"

- *"when my teacher makes the lesson easier for us to understand"; "…is approachable" "competent"; "knows how to recognize student achievement"; and "open-minded".*
- *"teacher's passion for the lesson is felt"; "topic is interestingly discussed"; "use appropriate teaching strategies"; "versatile and highly knowledgeable of the topic" "brings positive energy into the classroom"; "explains lesson well"; "shows professionalism"; "good attitude to students"; "encourages student interaction and participation";*

From the answers, a common thread on the positive teacher-factor was very prominent confirming the ideathat *teacher behavior* impacts student engagement and that the "educational environment created by teachers' behaviors has a dramatic effect on student engagement" (Umbach and Wawryznski in Zepke et al., 2010). On one hand, the students also cited behaviors such as *competence, explains lesson well, good attitude to students, professionalism and allowing for student interaction*. Quality learning comes from quality teaching.

The foregoing traits emphasized by the students during the focus group discussions were also cited by Russell and Slater(2011). The authors emphasized the following behaviors such as 'coming to class well prepared', 'displaying mastery and confidence in the delivery of content and in communicating well structured', 'high and fair expectations', 'engaging in teaching-learning dialogue with students and setting availability for consultation' encourage student motivation. One of the students who was interviewed unknowingly said it all when he succinctly declared *"students' attitudes towards the class or projects, etc. are largely based on teachers' behavior and attitudes towards students."With this claim , the* authors of the present study believe thatwhen teachers prepare for their classes well and show them encouraging behaviors such as those that were mentioned above, students feel good and important, vis-à-vis motivated.

What are the implications of this study? Theoretically, it confirms the various theories and concepts that grounded this study. Students engage because the teachers generate the encouraging learning environment not only in class but also outside the classroom and those positive attitudes and traits motivate students to engage fully and to be actively involved in their academic life (Umbach and Wawryznski in Zepke et al., 2010; Klem and Cornell,2004; Russell and Slater , 2011; Groves et al , 2015; Pascarella and Terenzini et al, 1991, 2005; Taylor and Parsons, 2011).

Some practical implications can also be drawn from the study beyond theoretical inferences. For one, students were only *moderately engaged* and *teacher effectiveness* was gauged by the students as only *effective*. On the other hand, *teacher engagement* was not significantly sensed or experienced by the students to have impacted their *student engagement*. The argument that any effort done by the teacher to professionally equip them should cascade to the students was not confirmed in this study. While teachers saw themselves as *highly engaged* as a teacher, this was not significantly felt by the students. Institutions need to look into teacher engagement activities and determine the extent of relevance of these practices or activities in relation to students' academic learning outcomes. This further implies that for students to *highly engage*, institutions need to come together with the teachers, administrators, and staff primarily to "organize more meaningful learning opportunities" beyond what are presently practiced and expected. Furthermore, more purposeful activities and services have to be designed for students to fully engage in their college life and achieve academic outcomes (Chen et al., 2008; Kuh et al. 2008).

Conclusion

Higher education institutions see student engagement as part of their retention strategies as scholars agree that campus life plays an important role in influencing students to stay. This is viewed on the context of improving their graduation rates and minimizing possible revenue loss. Conscious effort to hold and /or retain students requires a steady focus on many aspects of the institution citing Pascarella and Terenzini (2005), who continue to promote that student meaningful engagement depends on institutions, the teachers and staff that generate the conditions which stimulate and encourage student involvement .

Institutions should consider consistently espousing the philosophy that student quality is largely based on teacher quality and student quality is characterized by the degree of student engagement. Since such engagement can be predicted by teacher variables, it is paramount for the institutions to revisit and review their faculty development program and explore other innovative strategies of supervision other than what are being currently practiced especially in areas that target further development and/ or refinement of teachers' competence and enhancement of teachers' traits. Teachers' capabilities to engage students positively need to be developed consistently and become part of their performance requirements considering the outcomes based education.

References

Caldwell, Michelle E. (2011). Patterns of relationship between teacher engagement and student engagement. (education doctoral). Retrieved from http://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=education_etd

Carini, R., Kuh, G. & Klein, S. (2006). Student engagement and learning engagement: testing the linkages. *Research in Higher Education*, 47(1). doi: 10.1007/s11162-005-8150-9

Chen, H. L., Lattuca, L. R. & Hamilton, E. R. (2008). Conceptualizing engagement: contributions of faculty to student engagement in engineering. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 97 (3), 339-353. Retrieved from ProQuest Education Journals database

Connelly, L.M. and Powers, J.L. (2004). Online patient safety climate survey: Tool development and lessons learned. Advances in Patient Safety: From Research to Implementation (Volume 4: Programs, Tools, and Products) Retrieved from http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK20585/ (January, 2015)

Darling-Hammond, L. (2009). Recognizing and enhancing teacher effectiveness. *The International Journal of Educational and Psychological Assessment*, 3, 1-24, http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2010-11469-001

Ewell, P.T. (1997). Organizing for learning a new imperative. *AAHE Bulletin*. Retrieved from http://www.aahea.org/articles/ewell.htm

Fredericks, J. A., Blumenfeld, P. C. & Paris, A. H. (2004). School engagement: Potential concept, state of evidence. *Review of Educational Research*, 74(1), 59-109. Retrieved from http://www.isbe.net/ learningsupports/pdfs/engagement-concept.pdf

Frymier, A.B., & Houser, M.L. (2000). The teacher-student relationship as an interpersonal relationship. *Communication Education*, 49(3), 207-2019. doi: 10.1080/03634520009379209
George, D., &Mallery, M. (2010). SPSS for Windows Step by Step: A Simple Guide and Reference, 17.0 update (10a ed.) Boston: Pearson.

Goe, L. & Stickler. L.M. (2008). Teacher quality and student achievement: Making the most of recent research. *TQ Research and Policy Brief, National Comprehensive Center for Teacher Quality*. Retrieved from http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED520769.pdf

Groves, M., Sellars, C., Smith, J. & Barber, A. (2015). Factors affecting student engagement: A case study examining two cohorts of students attending a post -1992 university in the United Kingdom. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(2), 27-37. doi: 10.5430/ijhe.v4np27

Harbour.K.E. Evanovich L.L., Sweigart, C.A. & Hughes, L.E. (2015). A brief review of effective teaching practices that maximize student engagement. *Preventing School Failure: Alternative Education for Children and Youth*, 59(1), 5-13. doi: 10.1080/1045988X.2014.919136

Jennings, P. & Greenberg, M. (2009). The prosocial classroom: Teacher social and emotional competence in relation to student and classroom outcomes. *Review of Educational Research,* 79(1), 491-525. doi : 10.3102/0034654308325693

Kahn, W. A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, *33*(4), 692-724. Retrieved from https://engagementresearch.wikispaces.com/file/view/Kahn+(1990)_Psychological+conditions+of+personal+engagement+and+disengagement+at+work.pdf

Klassen, R. M., Yerdelen, S., &Durksen, T. L. (2013*)*.Measuring teacher engagement: development of the engaged teachers scale (ETS). *Frontline Learning Research*, *1*(2), 33-52. doi: 10.14786/flr.v1i2.44

Klem A. M. & Connell, J. P. (2004). Relationship matter: Linking teacher support to student engagement and achievement. *Journal of School Health*, 74(7), 262-272 Retrieved from http://www.irre.org/sites/default/files/publication_pdfs/Klem_and_Connell_2004_JOSH_article.pdf

Kraft, M. A & Dougherty, S. M. (2012). The effect of teacher-family communication on student engagement: Evidence from a randomized field experiment. *Journal of Research on Educational Effectiveness*, 6(3), 199-222. Retrieved from http://scholar.harvard.edu/files/mkraft/files/kraft_dougherty_teacher_communication_jree.pdf

Krause, K.L. & Coates, H. (2008). Students' engagement in first-year university. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 33(5), 493-505. Retrieved from http://www98.griffith.edu.au/dspace/bitstream/handle/10072/26304/53553_1.pdf?sequence=1

Kuh, G., Cruce, T.M.,,Shoup, R. &Kinzie, J. (2008). Unmasking the effects of student engagement on first year college grades and persistence. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 79(5), 540-563. doi: 10.1353/jhe0.0019

Li, Y. & Lerner, R. M. (2013). Interrelations of behavioral, emotional and cognitive school engagement in high school students. *J Youth Adolescence*, 42, 20-32. doi: 10.1007/s10964-012-9857-5

May, D., Gilson, R. & Harter, L., (2004). The psychological conditions of meaningfulness, safety and availability and the engagement of human spirit at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 77, 11-37. Retrieved from ww.paulmarciano.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/The-psychological-conditions-of-meaningfulness-safety-and-availability-.-.-.-.pdf

NSSE (2002). NSSE 2002 Psychometric framework. Retrieved from http://nsse.indiana.edu/html/psychometric_framework_2002.cfm

Orosa, M.A.B. (2008). Inquiring into Filipino teachers'conceptions of good teaching: A qualitative research study. *Asia Pacific Education Researcher*, 17(2), 157-171. Retrieved from

http://eds.b.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=42213f68-328d-4fe2-b477-523df94500a9%40sessionmgr107&vid=0&hid=108

Ortiz, R. O. (2015). Personal and organizational antecedents of teacher effectiveness in two higher education Institutions in Northern Mindanao (Dissertation). Liceo de Cagayan University, Cagayan de Oro City, Philippines

Pike, G. &Kuh, G. (2005). A typology of student engagement for American colleges and universities. *Research in Higher Education,* 46(2), 185-209. doi: 10.1007/s11162-004-1599-0

Russell, B. & Slater, G. RL. (2011) Factors that encourage student engagement: Insights from a case study of the 'first time' students in a New Zealand university. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice,* 8(1), Retrieved from http://ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1083&context=jutlp

Shellard, E. &Protheroe N. (2000). Effective teaching: How do we know it when we see it? The Informed Educator Series, Arlington VA: Educational Research Service.

Stiggins, Rick (2007). Assessment though the student's eyes. *Educational Leadership*, 64(8), 22-26. Retrieved from http://ati.pearson.com/downloads/Asssessment-Through-the-Students-Eyes.pdf

Taylor, L. & Parsons, J. (2011). Improving student engagement. *Current Issues in Education*, 14(1). Retrieved from http://cie.asu.edu/

Tinto, V. (2006). Research and practice of student retention: What next?.*J. College Student Retention*, 8 (1), 1-19. Retrieved from http://academics.uky.edu/uge/ias/provosts%20retention%20group%20information/tintoretention-whatnext.pdf

Tinto, V (2000). Linking and leaving: Exploring the role of the college classroom in departure. Retrieved from https://vtinto.expressions.syr.edu/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Linking-Learning-and-Leaving.pdf

Trowler, V. (2010). Student engagement literature review. *The Higher Education Academy* Retrieved from https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/studentengagementliteraturereview_1.pdf

Umbach, P. D. &Wawrzynski, M.R. (2005). Faculty do matter : the role of college faculty in student learning and engagement. R*esearch in Higher Education,* 46 (2).doi: 10.1007/s11162-004-1598-1

Valenta, R. L. (2010). Effect of teacher engagement and teacher effectiveness on student achievement. (Dissertation). Retrieved from ProQuest Education Journals database

Weimer, M. (2013). Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice. Retrieved from

http://www.uwec.edu/CETL/resources/upload/LearnerCenteredTeachingFiveKeyChangestoPractice.pdf

Zepke, N., Leach, L. & Butler, P. (2010). Student engagement: What is it and what influences it? *Teaching and Learning Initiative*s, retrieved from http://www.tlri.org.nz/sites/default/files/projects/9261-Introduction.pdf

Zimitat, C., &Horstmanshof, L. (2007) Future time orientation predicts academic engagement among first-year university students. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, 77(3), 703-718. doi: 10.1348/000709906X160778

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND ITS CONTRIBUTIONS TO DEVELOPMENT OF WORKPLACE SKILLS IN A SOUTHEAST-ASIAN CONTEXT

Siew Ming Thang and **Najihah Mahmud**
School of Language Studies and Linguistics, National University of Malaysia, Bangi, Malaysia

Abstract

The use of storytelling in teaching and learning has been revived with the advent of digital storytelling (DST), a technological innovation that combines the art of storytelling with a variety of audio, video and multimedia images. Studies in western countries have revealed that DST is effective in infusing language learning skills, ICT literacy skills, inventive thinking and problem-solving skills among students. These skills have been described as workplace skills or 21st century skills. Studies on the effectiveness of DST in fostering development of such skills have been undertaken in some Asian contexts but rarely in the South-East Asian context which makes the findings of this study relevant and crucial. This study sets out first to investigate the effectiveness of DST in fostering workplace skills development among Malaysian undergraduates. The study is framed by the Situated Learning Model (NLG, 1995) and supported by the workplace skills framework developed by enGauge (2003). The study utilised a mixed approach with quantitative data collected from a questionnaire survey and qualitative data derived from focus groups interviews of selected students. The quantitative findings revealed that, in general, the students perceived DST as beneficial in terms of development of their English Language skills, ICT Literacy skills, Critical Thinking and Problem-solving skills and Collaborative skills. However, the qualitative revealed subtle and yet crucial variations resulting from differences in students' proficiency levels and ICT literacy skills.

Keywords: digital storytelling, English language learning and technology, workplace skills, 21st century, innovation in language learning

Introduction

Rapid development of information technology and swift changes in the world economic order, make it essential for workers to be equipped with strategic skills appropriate for the workplace (Fonseca, 2010). These skills which comprise a combination of skills ranging from language skills, soft skills, and ICT literacy skills have been named as workplace skills or 21st century skills. Johnson (2009) proposes that the acquisition of such skills require a curriculum that blends thinking and innovation skills; information, media and ICT literacy skills; and life and career skills within the context of core academic subjects. Hence, more innovative teaching approaches need to be injected into the education system. Research studies have shown that the use of technology in language learning is not only more motivating and engaging but it also enable students to learn language faster and easier (Hopson, Simms andKnezek, 2001; Vinther, 2011; Wehner, Gump and Downey, 2011; Kessler, Bikowski and Boggs, 2012, Yang and Wu, 2012; Bodnar et al., 2014). It has also been described as having the potential to equip them with critical thinking and problem-solving skills too (Hafner and Miller, 2011). Technology has also been discovered to support the creation of a more conducive language learning environment (Hsu, Wang, andComac, 2008; Cardoso, 2011; Sun, Yang and He, 2014; Huang and Chuang, 2015). A variety of technological tools has been utilised to aid language learning, ranging from web-based tools like blogs, Wikipedia, Google Scholar, online quizzes, discussion forum, to computer-based tools like Microsoft Word, concordance software, video editor, electronic dictionary and word games.

Digital Storytelling and development of Workplace skills

The term 'digital story' was coined by Dana Atchley in the 1980's (Robin, 2008). Digital Storytelling (DST) is one of the new educational approaches that implement computer-based multimedia applications in language learning in an attempt to impart workplace skills to learners. The use of digital devices is integrated into the traditional storytelling methods. Simple video editing software like Microsoft PhotoStory 3 or Windows Movie Maker can be used to create basic digital stories which constitute a set of slides with corresponding narration or music. Learners can record their own voice to narrate their stories. Studies undertaken in Western contexts have found that giving students the task of creating their own digital stories in group or individually has helped them developed skills in line with the needs of the 21st century (Howell and Howell 2003; Jakes and Brennan 2006; Kim, 2014; Robin 2008; Godwin-Jones, 2012; Castaneda, 2013; Swan and Hofer, 2013; Alexander, 2014).

The process involved in developing the various components of DST is seen as an ideal alternative to conventional language learning tasks given to the students. These computer-based multimedia tasks will help the students to simultaneously improve their four language skills namely reading, writing, speaking and listening throughout the project (Godwin-Jones, 2012; Castaneda, 2013; Kim, 2014). It can also motivate the learners especially the poor readers and writers to give their own voices and contribution towards their stories (Bull andKajder, 2004). One of the important components in a digital story is the script. Writing the script requires students to follow all the steps in the writing process; prewriting, drafting, revising, proofreading and publishing, which allows students to concentrate on sentence structure and other language elements (Papadopoulou andIoannis, 2010; Castaneda, 2013). Storyboarding process of a digital

story facilitates the introduction of events in a logical and orderly sequence thereby illuminating gaps or omissions overlooked in a traditionally composed draft (Sylvester andGreenidge 2009; Kearney, 2011). DST project also provides an environment in which interaction and collaboration could take place to help students write more productively. This can lower the anxiety level as writing is not viewed as individual work anymore (Sadik, 2008). Students work in groups to create their digital stories and within the group, they get to interact with each other and share their ideas and opinions.

Due to the positive results obtained in studies in western contexts, educators in Asia have also started to experiment with DST. Hafner and Miller (2011) found that the process of developing digital stories fosters independent learning among students in Hong Kong. Students also displayed positive attitude towards the project although some of them did experienced some technical problems due to lack of technological skills (Hafner and Miller, 2011). A similar study with a focus on enhancing students' speaking skills in the target language through producing interactive stories using web-based multimedia system was recently conducted in an elementary school in Taiwan by Hwang et al. (2014). Students who produced their own stories using web-based multimedia system were found to be able to remember new vocabulary better and practice speaking skills more frequently compared to the other students. This helped them to become competent in speaking the target language and improve their overall learning performances (Hwang et al., 2014). Studies undertaken in the Malaysian studies have shown that the use of interactive digital stories have successfully captured the attention of preschool children in daily reading activities (Cut Nora Azizah, 2010) and also helped them to understand moral values better (Salimun, 2011). Lim (2011) studied the effectiveness of DST as an additional teaching-learning method to the conventional teaching process and found that it increases student's learning of the content of the subject.

As shown above, very few studies on digital storytelling has been undertaken in Asian contexts. In the case of Malaysia, all the studies undertaken have focused on the use of DST as a teaching aid in the classroom. This study which explores students' process of creating a digital story in a learning English as a Second Language context addresses an area that has not been investigated in Malaysia and rarely explored in other Asian contexts too. Specifically, this study seeks to find answers to the following research questions:

(1) What are the students' perceptions of the use of DST in helping them develop the following workplace skills?
    i. English Language skills
    ii. ICT Literacy skills
    iii. Critical Thinking and Problem-solving skills
    iv. Collaborative skills
(2) How are these perceptions link to differences in basic ICT literacy skills and English language proficiency level?
(3) How are problems and challenges faced by these students link to their basic ICT literacy skills and proficiency levels?

Background to the study

The study is undertaken at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, at the National University of Malaysia on students who are required to undertake a compulsory English for Social Sciences (ESS) course. This course has been taught primarily through the face-to-face mode since its introduction in 2002. A recognition for the need to come up with a more innovative approach to teach these students due to poor attendance and lack of students' participation in class has led to the decision to incorporate technology into this course. The decision was further spurred by the awareness that the previous approach to teaching this course has failed to develop workplace skills among these students which is an issue highlighted by Ministry of Higher Education due to the low employability rate of graduates from local universities.

Therefore, since Semester 1, 2011/2012 session, DST was introduced as a compulsory project in the ESS course and students' performance in the project was evaluated. The project involves the creation of an approximately 10 minutes long digital story by groups of 3 to 4 students. Discussion blogs are incorporated and the digital stories are presented by each group at the end of the semester. They are allowed to choose any theme they like as long as it falls within the scope of Social Sciences. Robin and Pierson's (2005) four-step approach in creating and integrating digital stories into learning was adopted as the procedural guide for the project. The four stages involved in the DST project are displayed in Figure 1.

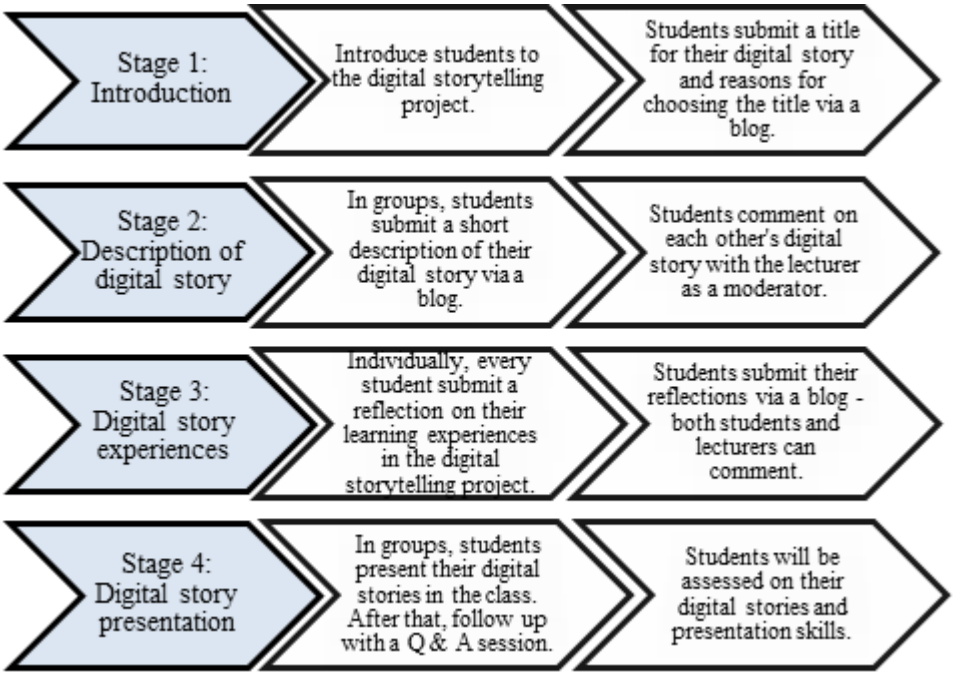

Figure 1 : Description of the tasks and assessment involved in the project

For the first semester, a workshop was given to the ESS instructors to introduce the concept of DST and demonstrate how to use Microsoft PhotoStory 3, which was the video-editing software chosen for the project. This software was chosen because it was deemed easy to operate and learn.

Theoretical Framework of the study

This study is framed by the situated learning theory which describes learning as an 'immersion in meaningful practices within a community of learners who are capable of playing multiple and different roles based on their background and experiences' (NLG, 1996, p. 85). Situated learning involving the use of technology is becoming more popular nowadays. In this study, this theory of learning is supported by the 21st Century Skills framework developed by enGauge (2003). The main categories in his framework include (1) Digital-age Literacy, (2) Inventive Thinking, (3) Effective Communication, and (4) High Productivity. Several other categories are classified under them as show in Figure 2.

Since the DST project for this study was undertaken for an English as a Second Language (ESL) course, only three categories relevant to English language learning were utilised in this study.

- Category 1 - Digital-age literacy skills – represented by ICT Literacy skills
- Category 2 - Inventive Thinking – represented by Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving skills
- Category 3 - Effective Communication – represented by English Language skills and Collaborative skills

Fig. 2 - enGauge 21st Century Skills Framework

The advent of technology in learning has made it possible for learners to interact with technology to simulate situated learning practice which previously in the past requires involvement in authentic learning environment. This study which involved the use of technology in the form of digital storytelling aimed at creating such environment that would enable the learners to acquire some essential workplace skills. Heeter (2005) describes an authentic learning environment as one where the tasks parallel real world situations where students interact to learn from each other, collaborate to solve problems and also develop other related cognitive skills (Heeter, 2005). Research studies on digital storytelling (DST) have shown that creating and sharing of multimedia production using digital images and digital videos can result in the creation of an authentic working environment that has the potential to enhance learners' workplace skills (Shewbrige and Berge, 2004; Kearney and Schuck, 2006; Bull and Bell, 2010; Hafner and Miller, 2011; Swan and Hofer, 2013; Alexander, 2014; Castaneda, 2014; Hwang et al., 2014). However, majority of these studies are undertaken in the Western contexts.

Methodology

Sample Population

244 undergraduates which made up the total first batch of students for the ESS course were used for this study. The sample population comprised of 84.8% Malay, 8.4% Chinese, 2.1 % Indian, and 4.7% from other ethnic groups. These students were categorised into two groups based on their results in the Malaysian University English Test (MUET) ranging from Band 1 as 'very limited user' until Band 6 as 'very good user'. The high proficiency (HP) group comprised of students with Band 3 and above, and the low proficiency (LP) group comprised of students with Band 1 and 2. 87 (45.5%) students belonged to the LP group and 104 (54.5%) belonged to the HP group.

Research Design and Procedures

This study adopted a case study approach involving the utilisation of both quantitative and qualitative data gathering tools. According to Denscombe (2010), a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods for data triangulation will assist the researcher to illuminate different aspects of the same issue and provide a more complete picture to the study. The instruments used for data gathering were questionnaire and focus group interviews.

The questionnaire consists of 30 items designed to measure students' attitudes towards DST. Each item is measured using a four-point Likert scale with 1 as 'strongly disagree' and 4 as 'strongly agree'. The questionnaires were administered to all 244 ESS students at the end of the semester, after their DST presentation. The questionnaires were collected on the same day. 196 (80.3%) questionnaires were returned and only 191 (78.3%) were fit for data analysis as the rest was incomplete. The questionnaire data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17.0. The questionnaire administration was followed by focus group interviews to probe deeper into students' perceptions generated from their beliefs, views and experiences. The focus group interview approach was deemed most appropriate as it provides a platform for students to share opinions and to support similarities of views and to argue out

differences in views. The interview questions comprised six open ended questions with follow-up questions which would be asked if necessary. Three groups of LP students and three groups of HP students from different classes (comprising of 4-5 students in each group) were randomly selected and interviewed. The total number of respondents interviewed was 27. All interview sessions were recorded with an audio recorder and transcribed for in-depth data analysis.

Research Findings

Data from the questionnaire

The quantitative data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Item analysis was the descriptive tool used whereas reliability analysis and one-way ANOVA were the inferential tools used.

Item Analysis

The ranking of mean scores of individual items for LP and HP groups shows that the mean scores fall between 1.72 (approaching 'strongly disagree') and 3.52 (approaching 'strongly agree'). Table 1 shows the ranking of the top five items according to proficiency. It can be seen that four out of the top five items are the same for both the LP and HP group although the positioning of the ranking may vary. The top five items are about the students' experiences in carrying out this project. The mean scores for these items are all above 3.25 which indicate that both groups of students agreed that the experience of developing digital stories was enjoyable. Although working as a team (Q3) is not in the top 5 list for the LP learners, the mean score of 3.28 shows that they also collaborated well in the project.

Table 1 : Items with the highest mean scores according to proficiency

Top Five Items	Low proficiency			High Proficiency		
	N	Mean	Rank	N	Mean	Rank
Q1 - I enjoy the learning experience in this Digital Storytelling Project.	104	3.52	1	87	3.30	3
Q18 - I enjoy putting the photos, music, and narration together to create a digital story.	104	3.46	2	87	3.28	4
Q2 - I enjoy creating a digital story because I get to work with my friends.	104	3.41	3	87	3.31	2
Q19 - I enjoy using my imagination and creativity to create an interesting digital story	104	3.40	4	87	3.26	5
Q17 - I enjoy browsing for more information on the Internet to create my digital story	104	3.32	5			
Q3 - In my group, all of us work as a team to complete the digital story.				87	3.37	1

The five items with the lowest mean scores are shown in Table 2. It can be seen that the bottom five items for both groups are exactly the same with only a slight difference in mean scores.

These are negative items and the fact that they rank bottom five indicates that the students felt that DST in general was not a problem to them. However, for both groups, the mean scores for item 16 are slightly above 2.55 (inclines towards agree). Thus, it would appear that some of these students did feel that DST was too time consuming. Nevertheless, it was encouraging to see that they did not feel that creating digital story was a waste of time (item 14) and did not find it too difficult (item 4).

Table 2 : Items with the lowest mean scores according to proficiency

Bottom Five Items	Low proficiency			High Proficiency		
	N	Mean	Rank	N	Mean	Rank
Q16 - Digital storytelling project is too time-consuming.	104	2.62	1	87	2.56	1
Q29 - I am confused on what is needed to complete this project.	104	2.30	2	87	2.38	2
Q4 - I find it very difficult to work as a group to create the digital story.	104	2.27	3	87	2.08	3
Q6 - I find the blog activities time consuming and a waste of time.	104	2.19	4	87	2.06	4
Q14 - I find creating a digital story a waste of time.	104	1.84	5	87	1.72	5

Comparison of Mean scores

The next procedure was to carry out a one-way ANOVA to compare the mean scores of the two groups of students' perceptions of DST in helping them develop the following skills: (1) English Language skills (2) ICT literacy skills, (3) critical thinking and problem-solving skills and (4) collaborative skills. This was undertaken to confirm the reliability and validity of the descriptive findings. Before this was done, the items from the questionnaire were grouped according to the four aforementioned workplace skills. However, 3 items (6, 14, 16) were left out as they did not fit into any of the four categories.

It was necessary to check the reliability of the 4 groupings before undertaking the one-way ANOVA. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability test was utilised to test group internal consistency. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value for ICT literacy skills is 0.83, for critical thinking and problem-solving is 0.71, for English Language skills is 0.91, and for collaborative skills is 0.60. The Cronbach's Alpha reliability value for the first three categories is above 0.70 which is within the statistical acceptable level. The value for the last category (collaborative skills) is below the acceptable level but due to the fact that it has only five items whereas other categories have at least six items, it was still maintained for data analysis. However the data related to it were analysed with greater caution.

The mean scores of the items in the grouping were compared using ANOVA and were tabulated in Table 3 below:

Table 3 : Comparison of mean scores

Workplace Skills	Proficiency level	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	F	Sig.
ICT Literacy Skills	Low	3.1820	.50437	1	2.153	.144
	High	3.0728	.53356			
Critical Thinking & Problem-solving skills	Low	3.2844	.45955	1	1.811	.180
	High	3.1983	.42648			
English Language skills	Low	3.0560	.47657	1	.047	.829
	High	3.0713	.50965			
Collaborative skills	Low	3.0899	.44927	1	.231	.631
	High	3.0575	.49265			

The results from the one-way ANOVA as shown in Table 3 revealed that there is no significant differences in mean score between the low proficiency students and the high proficiency students ($p<0.05$) for all four categories which means that students in general did not have significantly different perceptions regarding the effects of DST on their development of the four sets of skills. In addition to that, the mean scores of all groups are above 3.0 which suggest that on the whole, students have positive feelings towards DST in helping them acquire these skills.

Data from the focus group interview

The analysis of the qualitative data is based on the four categories from the framework of the study which are; (1) English Language skills (2) ICT literacy skills, (3) critical thinking and problem-solving skills and (4) collaborative skills.

Development of English Language skills

The data revealed that most of the HP students were of the opinion that they did not benefit much in terms of developing their English Language skills through DST. As one HP student said, *'There was no drastic improvement for me as we use simple words.'* (HP2A). In addition to that, they felt that the language tasks involved in creating their digital stories were not challenging enough to actually enhance their English Language skills. Taking the script writing task for example, student HP3A explained that she would *'...just take it from the internet, put it in our videos. We just read it back. It's not like something we read or repair the grammar here and there.'* (HP3A). She simply copied the information from the Internet and used it as it is for her script. Besides, they claimed whatever they had written for the project was too short to help in improving their writing skills:

> *Because we're using the software, include the pictures, writing something but the short text. Not a long article.* (HP3B)(High Proficiency, Group 3, Student B)

The HP students indicated their preference for more demanding language tasks such as:

> *Quizzes for example.So that we can improve our English more. Much better…. If essay, we'll look for some books and we have some reference, then we'll do the essay and we can improve our writing, grammar, vocab, all.* (HP3B)

> *I think by doing presentation, oral presentation it can improve a lot because the moment you speak, you will be very careful of what to say, what the grammar to use.* (HP3A)

> *…when it comes to English, writing is better because like she said usually you refer, when you write you are much more aware. And you do proofreading whether is this the right sentence or not? (HP3A)*

Another interesting point to note is when they were asked whether they preferred learning English through ICT-based project or the usual 'chalk and talk' way, only 2 out of 14 HP students indicated they preferred DST.

However, a few did agree that DST to a certain extent helped them in their pronunciation when recording the narration:

> *When we do a narration, maybe in speaking wise we pronounce the word correctly.* (HP3B)

> *Speaking, yes. Because we need to record our voice and dub it in the movie so it really helps actually.* (HP1F)

A few also mentioned that doing this project meant that they had to read in their search for suitable English materials for this project which they felt had helped them to *'…find new vocabularies and I learned more about grammar…'* (HP1A) and also *'…get more knowledge, can get more experience…'* (HP1C).

In contrast to the HP students, most LP students unanimously agreed that the DST project helped them improve their English language skills to a certain extent. Student LP2B stated that DST project helped *'…sharpened my writing skills since it has been a while since I write in English.'*(LP2B). They revealed that they focused on the accuracy of their grammar and sentence structure when they wrote the script for their digital stories and would ask their teachers for help if in doubt:

> *We refer to our instructor, she will look at everything. She corrected anything that was wrong.* (LP2B)

Aside from that, they may refer to their friends or use Google Translate:

> *If we spelled it wrongly, Google Translate will let us know.* (LP3A)

Similar to the HP students, the LP students also felt that the DST project encouraged them to read more English language materials. Student LP2C even said that *'If we are not doing this, maybe we might not even read English language materials at all.'* Student LP1C made a similar comment which was *'If it's on ourselves, we would not be reading books.'* (LP1C). They also felt that through reading they were *'…exposed to a lot of new words in English language that we never knew of'* (LP3A) and they were encouraged to *'Open the dictionary or whatnot to search for words that we are not familiar with.'* (LP2A).

In addition to writing and reading, most LP students also agreed that their pronunciation had

dramatically improved. Since they had to use their own voice for the narration part, they were more careful with their pronunciation. Student LP2C commented:

> *Before we start recording, we practice first how to pronounce it, the intonation.* (LP2C)

They were motivated to do this by the fact that their teachers and classmates would be watching the video they created as explained by LP3C:

> *When we wanted to create a video, we wanted our friends and the lecturer to be able to understand right. So, we learned.* (LP3C)

Development of ICT Literacy skills

A scrutiny of the qualitative data showed that the students with low ICT skills, regardless of their English proficiency level, seemed to benefit more from the DST project in terms of developing their ICT literacy skills. They indicated that the various components of digital story such as still images, voice narration, background music, word captions and short video clips enabled them to utilize their ICT knowledge to the fullest and engaged closely with technology.

> *So, when we had to work on the DST project, we utilized the internet and many other software more. So, it really helped.* (HP2C_Low)(i.e. HP Group 2 Student C_Low ICT skills)

> *DST is good because it could enhance my skills. Especially with the software, PhotoStory 3.* (LP3A_Low)

The majority of the students with low ICT skills were in favour of Microsoft PhotoStory 3 which they described as *'could directly use it without much difficulty..'* (LP1A_Low) and *'…easy to be used.'* (LP1C_Low). Some students did face some minor technical difficulties with Microsoft PhotoStory 3 for example:

> *….but sometimes the software 'hangs'.* (LP2C_Low)

> *I found that it is very hard for me to adjust the duration of the sound.* (HP3D_Low)

Nevertheless, this was not the case for the students with high ICT skills. They found this type of technology to be too simplistic and not sufficiently challenging:

> *it's too simple that there are not a lot of things that we can do. We can just add music...* (HP3A_High).

These students who were frustrated with the limited functions offered by Microsoft PhotoStory 3 turned to software with more advanced features such as 'flash software' (HP1F_High), *'video cutter, song cutter, etc…'*(HP2B_High), and *'Windows Movie Maker'* (HP3B_High).

Development of Critical Thinking and Problem-solving skills

Although the interviewees did not expressly said that DST helped the development of these skills, there was evidence to suggest that the HP students could have acquired critical thinking and problem-solving skills by figuring out ways of elevating their digital stories through the use of more sophisticated software. For example with flash software, student HP1F created his own animation to project his imagination in the digital story. The HP students also displayed an ability to be independent as follow:

> *I'm being independent because I'm doing all the work.* (HP3B)

> *The lecturer did not tell us how to combine narration with music. Then, this kind of things we had to find it ourselves.* (HP2B)

Since they were able to solve their problems without relying too much on their instructors, the HP students concluded that the DST project was not challenging enough:

> *For me, the DST project is not that challenging, and as for me, I was not that excited to do this… It's common, just like any other typical assignments that we had to do.* (HP9A)

However, DST gave them an opportunity to solve their problems on their own which means that they have helped them to actually develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills as admitted by student HP9A.

As for the LP students, although they faced frustrating technical problems in the beginning, most of them managed to resolve their problems as explained by student LP3A below:

> *Firstly, when we record our voice, it was not clear. The voice was slow. Then, we had to redo it. We did it over and over again. Then, we found a solution by using a laptop. A laptop that can record the loudest input. My laptop can't do so because it's volume was too slow. So we used my friend's laptop. So, we could get it, we can continue.* (LP3A)

The team had taken their own initiative to explore and solve their problems instead of seeking their teachers for help which shows that DST has developed problem-solving and independent learning skills even among the LP learners. However, the LP students still wanted affirmations from their instructors that they had done a good job.

> *…when we completed our draft, we showed it to Dr.Hafizah. So, Dr.Hafizah will give her comment on each word that we used.* (LP3C)

They also complained about not getting adequate input regarding DST from their instructors:

> *When it is combined in one day, there are 2 meetings for this class right. Within the week, the lecturer did not even tell us about digital storytelling.* (LP1A)

The LP students would prefer their instructors to follow their DST's progress closely to ensure they were on the right track. In that sense, they were more dependent as compared to the HP students.

Development of Collaborative skills

It was observed that most HP students had mixed reactions with regard to working in groups for DST. On the positive side, student HP2B commented that working in group enabled them to complement each other's strengths and weaknesses:

> *When we do DST, we need one person who knows how to create video, one who knows grammar, one who is good at finding information etc., so we have to cooperate. We cannot do it alone even we know how to create video.* (HP2B)

A few HP students claimed that they *'…could get more ideas…'* (HP2D) and were *'…more creative…'* (HP1C) when they worked in group. Student HP2D went further and stated that it was implausible to work on this project individually.

However HP students' grievances against group learning were more apparent. They complained that it was not possible to work as a group on the technical aspects. Two lamented that they did more than the other.

> *…so you cannot..ok you do this and we combine it later. No….. In some sort I work a little bit more than them.* (HP1F)

> *…because only one person can hold on to the project. So, in some ways, it is only like a good exposure to one person only.* (HP3A)

The above two students had better ICT skills and ended up taking the lead and doing most of the difficult technical aspects of the project. She assigned other team members simpler tasks that did not require advanced ICT skills such as *'…search for information. For example emailed her pictures.'* (HP3C). Some of her team members were not happy with this situation as they felt they had not learned much from this project. As student HP3C said:

> *I felt aggrieved because I did not get any benefit from this. I want to do it, but I don't know how…. Because she was the only one who did it from the beginning till the end.* (HP3C)

Their team leader had a different story to tell. She claimed that her team members including student HP3C were too dependent on her:

> *A lot of the time. I mean everyone was like 'Jaja, what do we do? Jaja, what do we do?' But if I asked them to do something, email me this and that, they'll do it.* (HP3A)

Thus there seemed to be miscommunication between the group leader and the members which led to misunderstanding and resentment from both sides.

Problem with finding time to get together was another issue raised by the HP students. This was due to the fact that the team members came *'…from different courses.'* (HP2D) and *'…different*

residential colleges.' (HP2C). However, even when they finally managed to meet, there appeared to be a lack of cooperation and commitment shown as illustrated by the following statements:

> *…they're with their own works with Facebook, with their Twitter, Tagged and chit-chatting…. Commitments.Then, with their own work. When we meet up, they'll be doing their own work like they're not involved in the discussion.* (HP3B)

> *For example, when one receive a phone call, then they will keep talking on the phone without care this project. But the discussion is still on.* (HP3D)

On the whole, the HP students described their experience of working with problematic team members as *'burdening'* (HP3A) and *'a really bad experience'* (HP3B). Many indicated that they would prefer to work individually or in pairs. Nonetheless, they acknowledged that this was a problem they faced when working on other projects too.

In contrast to the HP students, LP students seemed to embrace group work. Cooperation and commitment issue did not seem to be a problem with them:

> *Like in my group, everyone can give commitment. No problem.* (LP3D)

This resulted in a smooth division of workload among the members. Although they did have some difficulty finding a mutual time to meet they were able to resolve it easily. As student LP3A explained:

> *…when I did my part, others will continue from there… for the second part, 'Cause of Starvation', the other member is in charge, so she will continue from there.So, continuously. So, it goes in a cycle every week, work is moving. Even though we did not meet, the work is moving.* (LP3A)

Working in relay not only reduced the inconsistency of the final product, but also solve the problem of finding a suitable time to meet.

However, they did admit to facing some minor problems with commitments such as *'…Some have to go for field work, some have meetings, some even went on dates…'* (LP2A) and

'…staying in different residential colleges' (LP2D) but on the whole they were very satisfied with the experience of working in group.

Discussion of Findings

The findings from the quantitative analysis revealed that in general, the ESS students perceived DST as beneficial in terms of the development of their English Language skills, ICT Literacy skills, Critical Thinking and Problem-solving skills and Collaborative skills. Thus, it would appear that the students in general believed that DST has equipped them with essential workplace skills to prepare them for the 21st century workplace. The findings further indicated

that there was no significant difference in perceptions between HP and LP students in this respect. However, the qualitative data demonstrated that the pattern is not so clear cut. Deeper insights can be derived from the qualitative analysis.

English Language skills

The opinion of the HP students and the LP students with regard to the development of English Language skills differ substantially in the interview data. The HP students felt that DST was not of much help in improving their English Language skills though it did help in some measures in aiding some vocabulary and grammar development because the tasks were generally too simple as they involved only writing short texts or captions. This to a large extent was their own fault as they tended to 'copy and paste' information from the Internet instead of coming up with ideas of their own. Almost all indicated a preference for the face to face mode of learning English in comparison to the use of ICT and asked for more difficult language tasks such as quizzes and writing essays which are typical of tasks given in a conventional class room. According to Jakes and Brennan (2006), the writing process involved in developing digital stories encourages the visualization of writing which gives students an additional level of perception that helps them to write more effectively. Thus they are more creative and interactive than writing of conventional essays. The problem is that these students are not aware of the value of such tasks and hence did not take them seriously.

The inability to perceive the value of the use of ICT in learning is also evident in Lin et al. (2013) which revealed that Malaysian undergraduates preferred the face to face mode despite having the necessary ICT skills to cope with technology in learning.

Surprisingly, in contrast, LP students expressly stated the DST project helped them improve their English language skills such as grammar, reading, vocabulary, speaking and writing skills. However, despite that, they still felt they would like the support of their teachers to check their mistakes. The contrast in these two groups of learners may be due to the way they perceived the tasks given. The HP students perceived them as too simple and were not willing to put in any effort to realise that it would make the tasks beneficial to them. The LP learners were more easily satisfied and felt the tasks were appropriate for them hence they derived satisfaction from working on them. This finding is similar to that of Bull and Kajder's (2004) and Lee (2014) who also found that DST is especially beneficial to poor learners.

ICT Literacy skills

The qualitative analysis revealed that the students with low ICT skills seemed to find DST more helpful in developing their ICT literacy skills than the students with high ICT skills. According to them, they derived technical skills from designing the various components of a digital story such as still images, voice narration, background music, word captions and short video clips. On the other hand, the students with high ICT skills found this type of technology too simple and not sufficiently challenging for their level. Students with high ICT skills probably belonged to the generation that Prensky (2001) identified as the 'digital natives', and these students who are used to technology in their everyday life would find DST as nothing special. Author 1 et al. (2104a,

2014b), Hafner and Miller (2011), and Dillard-Eggers et al (2011) found similar findings in their studies.

Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving skills

Students did not specifically state that DST had helped them to be more critical and to develop problem-solving skills in the interviews. However, the interview data suggests that both the HP and the LP students could have developed critical thinking and problem-solving skills to a certain extent from their experiences working on their digital stories. There was also some evidence to suggest that their experience had helped them to be more independent. LP students seemed to benefit more from their experiences as they related many examples of how they overcome technical problems through their own initiatives. This is possibility due to their lack of exposure to technology compared to the HP students. Hence, they found the experience more enriching.

However, despite that LP students indicated that they preferred more guidance from their teachers which revealed that they could not easily move away from being teacher-centred as shown in other studies undertaken in Malaysian contexts (Author 1 and Alias, 2007; Author 1, 2009) This is another evidence of the 'spoon feeding' culture which is common in the Malaysia education system.

Another positive quality evident in the interviews was the sense of competitiveness among the students. This motivated them to be actively involved in developing their digital stories and practise their dialogues numerous times. As discussed earlier, the nature of working on a multimedia producing task or project will provide an authentic environment that will motivate learners to put in more effort and thoughts and subsequently maximize their involvement and motivation. This can also lead to longer retention of knowledge Goldsmid and Wilson (cited in Korinek, Howard and Bridges 1999).

Collaborative skills

To a limited extent, HP students agreed that working in a group allowed them to support each other, however a majority complained about the difficulty of working in a group especially two students who had high ICT skills who claimed they did most of the more advanced technical work. On the contrary, some of their group mates claimed they were not given the opportunity to contribute and not that they were unwilling to do so. Nevertheless, it was found they faced the same problem when working in other projects too hence it indicates that this is not a result of DST but the inability of the group members to cooperate well. In contrast, LP students had no difficulty working together. Cooperation and commitment issues did not arise which resulted in a smooth division of workload among the members. Even when they had difficulty to meet, they were able to resolve this by working in relay on the project. Sadik (2008) in his study also found that students with more advanced technical skills did more work than the other team members. The lack of cooperation among HP learners suggests that they are more individualistic and preferred to work on their own. This finding is consistent with those of French, Walker and Shore's (2011) who found that more skilled students preferred to work alone as they did not like

others to get a "free ride' from them. Although group learning seems more suitable for LP students since they like the idea of getting regular support from each other, HP students should not be excused from such activities as ability to work well in group is a skill highly required in the 21st century job market. Instead they should learn to cooperate with each other since this is a problem they faced in all the courses they were taking.

Pedagogical Implications

The study revealed that the LP students were more dependent and seemed to need more continual support from their respective instructors in terms of language and technology used. Thus, there is a need for the instructors to be well-equipped with technological knowledge on DST so that necessary support can be given to the students. The study also revealed that the main software (Microsoft PhotoStory 3) used for the DST project was too basic for students with high level of ICT skills. The implication of the finding was that, the research team should introduce a variety of appropriate software instead of solely recommending Microsoft PhotoStory 3 for the DST project. Some students suggested Windows Movie Maker which has more functions than Microsoft PhotoStory 3 and it is usually pre-installed in any computer that uses Windows as its operating system. Other video editors that could also be recommended are JayCut, Animoto, and ZooBurst.

This study also reported that having to showcase their final products to their classmates seemed to have motivated the students to put in extra effort into their digital stories. It might be possible to maximize this motivational effect through increasing the viewership by including students from other classes and also by instructing them to put their digital stories online for a public viewing on free video streaming websites like YouTube.com, dailymotion.com, or vimeo.com. This was also proposed by Hafner and Miller (2011) in their study on collaborative video project. This approach would give students a more authentic learning experience.

As far as problems related to group work are concerned, carrying out the DST project in group should be maintained since this creates an authentic learning environment akin to those found in workplace. To address this problem, it is proposed that measures be undertaken to create awareness among the students, especially among the HP leaners, regarding the benefits of DST such as its benefits in helping them write more effectively (Jakes and Brennan, 2006). Teachers should give an induction session in the beginning of the semester to explain to students what sorts of benefits they can reap from the DST project by giving examples of good digital stories with well-developed storyboards as examples and also showing video clips of past students showcasing their digital stories and sharing the benefits they derived from their DST experiences. In addition to that, teachers can get students to prepare their expected learning goals and outcomes and then discuss ways in which they can achieve them. With such clear vision and directions, students undertaking this project in future will be able to benefit substantially more from this project.

Finally, since all the students highly appreciate teacher's guidance, it is proposed that teachers be more actively involved in supporting students in their writing process as well as in the development of their storyboard. Students should also be encouraged to choose topics related to

their personal experiences. These measures will cut down rampant cutting and pasting among students especially among the HP students.

Conclusion

The study has pointed out that DST has the potential to benefit students in Malaysia in the development of English Language and other related workplace skills if the approach used in implementing DST is improved as suggested in the implications. In addition to that, the study further revealed characteristics among these students which are similar to students in other countries in many aspects such as students with lower proficiency benefitting more from DST than higher proficiency learners, students with high ICT skills finding the technology as nothing special and students deriving a sense of competitiveness from DST which motivated them to be more actively involved. However, there were also characteristics that were distinctly Malaysians such as the belief that face-to-face learning with their teachers is still the best, traditional approach is still better and their reluctance to be critical in the questionnaires but their willingness to be more open in small group discussions. It is our belief that such characteristics are more prevalent among South-east Asian students which is something that is definitely worth exploring in future studies.

Acknowledgement

This work was supported by two research grants provided by UniversitiKebangsaan Malaysia [grant number UKM-PTS-2011-071], [grant number UKM-DLP-2012-032].

References

Alexander, C. (2014). Student-Created Digital Media and Engagement in Middle School History. *Computers in the Schools, 31*(3), 154-172.

Bellah, K., & Dyer, J. E. (2009). Attitudes and stages of concern of elementary teachers toward agriculture as a context for teaching across grade level content area standards. *Journal of Agricultural Education, 50*(2), 12-25.

Buckingham, D. (2003). Media education and the end of the critical consumer. *Harvard Educational Review, 73,* 309-327.

Bodnar, S., Cucchiarini, C., Strik, H., & van Hout, R. (2014). Evaluating the motivational impact of CALL systems: Current practices and future directions. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, (ahead-of-print), 1-27.

Bull, G., & Bell, L. (2010). *Teaching with digital video: Watch, analyze, create.* Eugene, OR: International Society for Technology in Education.

Bull, G., &Kajder, S. (2004). Digital storytelling in the language arts classroom. *Learning & Leading with Technology, 32*(4), 46-49.

Cardoso, W. (2011).Learning a foreign language with a learner response system: The students' perspective. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 24*(5), 393-417.

Castaneda, M. E. (2013). "I Am Proud that I Did It and It's a Piece of Me": Digital Storytelling in the Foreign Language Classroom. *CALICO Journal*, *30*(1), 44-62.

Cut Nora Azizah. (2010). Potentials of interactive digital storytelling for preschool children in daily reading activity. Master's Thesis. Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Czarnecki, K. (2009). Technology Leadership. *Teacher Librarian,37*(2), 75-76.

Denscombe, M. (2010).*The good research guide: for small scale social research projects.*4th Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill companies.

Dillard-Eggers, J., Wooten, T., Childs, B., & Coker, J. (2011).Evidence on the effectiveness of on-line homework. *College Teaching Methods & Styles Journal (CTMS)*, *4*(5), 9-16.

enGauge. (2003). *Literacy in the Digital Age.* Metiri Group: California.

Fonseca, C. (2010). The digital divide and the cognitive divide: Reflections on the challenge of human development in the digital age. *Information Technologies & International Development*, *6*(25).

French, L.R., Walker, C.L., & Shore, B.M. (2011). Do gifted students really prefer to work alone? *Roeper Review*, *33*(3), 145-159.

Godwin-Jones, R. (2012) Emerging technologies digital video revisited: storytelling, conferencing, remixing. *Language Learning & Technology*, *16*(1), 1–9.

Hafner, C.A., & Miller, L. (2011).Fostering learner autonomy in English for science: A collaborative digital video project in a technological learning environment. *Language Learning & Technology*, *15*(3), 68-86.

Heeter, C. (2005). *Situated Learning for designers: Social, Cognitive and Situative Framework.* Retrieved on February 26, 2008 from the Michigan State University Web site: http://teachvu.vu.msu.edu/public/designers/social_interactions/index.php?page_num=4

Hopson, M.H., Simms, R.L., &Knezek, G.A. (2001).Using a technology-enriched environment to improve higher-order thinking skills.*Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, *34*(2), 109-120.

Howell, D., & Howell, D. (2003). What's Your Digital Story? *Library Media Connection*, *22*(2), 40.

Hsu, H. Y., Wang, S. K., &Comac, L. (2008).Using audio blogs to assist English-language learning: An investigation into student perception. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *21*(2), 181-198.

Huang, Y. H., & Chuang, T. Y. (2015). Technology-assisted sheltered instruction: instructional streaming video in an EFL multi-purpose computer course. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, (ahead-of-print), 1-20.

Hwang, W. Y., Shadiev, R., Hsu, J. L., Huang, Y. M., Hsu, G. L., & Lin, Y. C. (2014). Effects of storytelling to facilitate EFL speaking using Web-based multimedia system. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, (ahead-of-print), 1-27.

Jakes, D., & Brennan, J. (2006).*Digital Storytelling, visual literacy and 21st century skills.*http://www.techlearning.com/techlearning/pdf/events/techforum/ny05/Vault_article_jakesbrennan.pdf [11 December 2011].

Johnson, P. (2009). The 21st century skills movement. *Educational Leadership, 67*(1), 11.

Kearney, M. (2011).A learning design for student-generated digital storytelling. *Learning, Media and Technology, 36*(2), 169-188.

Kearney, M. &Schuck, S. (2006). Spotlight on authentic learning: Student developed digital video projects. *Australasian Journal of Educational Technology,22*(2), 189-208.

Kessler, G., Bikowski, D., & Boggs, J. (2012). Collaborative writing among second language learners in academic web-based projects. *Language Learning & Technology,16*(1), 91-109.

Kim, S. (2014). Developing autonomous learning for oral proficiency using digital storytelling. *Language Learning and Technology, 18*(2), 20-35.

Korinek, K., Howard, J.A., & Bridges, G.S. (1999). "Train the Whole Scholar": A developmentally based program for teaching assistant training in sociology. *Teaching Sociology*, 343-359.

Lee, L. (2014). Digital news stories: Building language learners' content knowledge and speaking skills. *Foreign Language Annals, 47*(2), 338-356.

Lim, W.W. (2011). *Implementation of digital storytelling to increase learnability among primary students.* Project Report. UTeM, Melaka, Malaysia.

Lin, L.K., Author 1, S.M., Nurjanah, M.J., &Noraza, A.Z. (2013). Digital storytelling as a project in EAP course: Insights from Malaysian undergraduates. *Journal of Institutional Research in South East Asia,11*(2), 48-67.

New London Group. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review, 66*(1), 60-92.

Papadopoulou, S., &Ioannis, S. (2010). The emergence of digital storytelling and multimedia technology in improving Greek language teaching and learning: Challenges versus limitations. *Sino-US English Teaching, 7*(4), 1-13.

Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants part 1. *On the horizon,9*(5), 1-6.

Robin, B., & Pierson, M. (2005).A multilevel approach to using digital storytelling in the classroom. In C.M. Crawford, R. Carlsen, K. McFerrin, J. Price, R. Weber, & D.A. Willis (Eds.). *Proceedings of Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference 2005,* p. 708-716.

Robin, B.R. (2008). Digital storytelling: A powerful technology tool for the 21st century classroom. *Theory Into Practice, 47,* 220-228.

Sadik, A. (2008). Digital storytelling: A meaningful technology-integrated approach for engaged student learning. *Educational Technology Research and Development56,* 487–506.

Salimun, S. (2011). Basic components in creating contents for moral subject using digital storytelling: A conceptual model. Master's Thesis. Universiti Utara Malaysia.

Shewbridge, W. & Berge, Z. (2004). The role of theory and technology in learning video production: The challenge of change. *International Journal on E-learning,3*(1), 31-39.

Sun, Z., Yang, X. M., & He, K. K. (2014).An extensive reading strategy to promote online writing for elementary students in the 1:1 digital classroom. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, (ahead-of-print), 1-15.

Swan, K., & Hofer, M. (2013).Examining student-created documentaries as a mechanism for engaging students in authentic intellectual work. *Theory & Research in Social Education*, *41*(1), 133-175.

Sylvester, R., &Greenidge, W. (2009). Digital storytelling: Extending the potential for struggling writers. *The Reading Teacher*, *63*(4), 284-295.

Author 1, S. M. & Alias, A. (2007).Investigating Readiness for Autonomy: A Comparison of Malaysian ESL Undergraduates of Three Public Universities. *Reflections on English Language Teaching Journal*,*6*(1), 1- 18.

Author 1, S. M. (2009). Investigating the learner autonomy of Malaysian ESL learners: Towards a redefinition. *Learner autonomy: Research and practice in Malaysia and Singapore*, 13-32.

Author 1, S.M., Nurjanah, M.J., Nambiar, R.M.K., Zaini, A., & Wong, F.F. (2014a). Are Malaysian undergraduates 'digital natives' in the true sense of the word? A quantitative analysis.*3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*,*20*(1), 177-191.

Author 1, S. M., Nambiar, R. M., Wong, F. F., Jaafar, N. M., & Amir, Z. (2014b). A Clamour for More Technology in Universities: What Does an Investigation into the ICT Use and Learning Styles of Malaysian 'Digital Natives' Tell Us? *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher*, 1-9.

Vinther, J. (2011). Enhancing motivation with cultural narratives in computer-mediated communication. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *24*(4), 337-352.
Wehner, A. K., Gump, A. W., & Downey, S. (2011). The effects of Second Life on the motivation of undergraduate students learning a foreign language. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *24*(3), 277-28

STUDENTS' AND TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF LEARNING QUALITY AND LEARNING OUTCOMES IN A MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITY

S. Chee Choy, Joanne Sau-ChingYim and **Poh Leong Tan**
Tunku Abdul Rahman University College, Kampar, Malaysia

Abstract

This study investigates the relationships between students' and teachers' Metacognitive Experiences, Metacognitive Knowledge, Learning Quality, and Learning Outcome. Metacognitive Experience was measured with delivery support and students' English exposure, while Metacognitive Knowledge included curriculum, learning environment, and resources. Theoretical foundations were drawn from metacognitive theory as framework for the development of questionnaire and the analysis of these relationships. Structural equation modelling approach (SEM) was employed to analyse hypothesised relationships on 1490 students and 100 teachers. We found English exposure and learning environment to be salient in explaining Learning Quality for both student and teacher samples. Delivery support and curriculum were significant in explaining only students' perception of Learning Quality, while Learning Quality significantly explained Learning Outcome for both samples. Contrary to our hypothesis, resources do not have significant influence on Learning Quality on both samples.Implications for research and practices in enhancing Learning Quality and Outcome were discussed.

Keywords: Perceptions relationships, Learning Quality, Learning Outcomes, Metacognitive

Introduction

High quality learning has been one of the key aims of the current reforms in Malaysian higher education and this has led to the increasing demand for quality assurance (QA). The crux of the Malaysian Quality Assurance (MQA) framework is to reinforce and ensure the importance of institutional autonomy and responsibility in QA in order to produce graduates that are learned and employable (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). The MQA has developed a code of practice for higher education in Malaysia which has been benchmarked against international standards. This code of practice cover nine critical areas from setting the vision and mission of the university to continued quality improvement of the learning environment (Malaysia Quality Assurance, 2009), this study focuses on delivery and support, resources, learning environment and curriculum as determinants of QA as perceived by teachers and students. The need for quality in the Malaysian education system is echoed in the Malaysia Education Blueprints for both the school system and higher education (Ministry of Education Malaysia 2012, 2015) where there is a call to develop holistic, entrepreneurial and balanced graduates who are well-balanced and highly competent.It must also be noted that universities are increasingly focused on maintaining effective relationships with their learning environment and answering the needs of its stakeholders by placing them at the centre of the academic and research processes (Cancela et al., 2010).

Literature Review

Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of QA

Previous research on QA has focused on either students' or teachers' perceptions. For instance, Johnson (2000) found in his study that the use of student evaluation to establish and maintain QA is often externally motivated by managerial interests of the institution rather than the theories of professional development.The same study also noted the exclusion of the perceptions of teachersin such evaluations can bias reports of QA. Hill (1995) also encouraged institutions to focus on students' expectations as determinants of QAas they are the primary consumers in a university. There is less emphasis for institutions to obtain feedback from teachers as they are expected to live up to students' expectations (Hill, 1995).In another study on teachers' perceptions of QA, Anderson (2006) found academic staff to be suspicious of students' appraisal of teaching and performance appraisals processes hence giving rise to resistance of the QA process in their institutions. The same research further noted the ambiguities that arose as a result of the different terminologies used to define QA.Pennington and O'Neil (1994) advocated the use of student assessment together with teacher reflection on their own practices as a means to measure the quality of learning that takes place in a university.This implies that there are differing perceptions of QA between all stakeholders most crucially between the students and teachers.Hence giving rise to an'implementation gap' (Newton, 2000) between the expectations of students and teachers toward quality learning and its expected outcomes.

Langstrand, Cronemyr, and Poksinska(2015) found that the quality in the design and delivery of courses will determine the QA of an institution in terms of student performance and evaluation and advocates basing the design and delivery of courses on the needs of customers, namely students. The understanding here is that teachers have to reflect on, work with and facilitate the

situation to bring about the needed results.However, Langstrand et al.'s(2015) study stresses the ideal and does not address situations where the teachers may not be able to or know how to reflect on the situation they are in because they are more focused on attaining results that satisfy the standards set by the management and achieving their own key performance indexes (Anderson 2006). As Elassy (2015) pointed out,universities view QA as a concept of "standards"where the level of conditions must be met for the institution to be accredited by an accreditation agency, hence "benchmarking" established "standards" to other equivalent institutions where needed. One way of achieving such "standards" is to ensure that students are satisfied (Douglas at al, 2014) and the service quality given by universities meet their needs (Ali et al., 2016). It must be noted out that students in universities today will compare the 'knowledge value' (Ali et al., 2016) which is the maximum value they can get out of every dollar they pay and the most important factor in creating this are the teachers. Nicholson (2011) in her report on the QA processes in the Canadian higher education system, points out that QA borrowed from business and industry is ill suited for use in higher education because of the wide and varied often conflicting views among its stakeholders. The report also notes that students will judge the quality of a university on whether or not their educational experience has met their expectations while teachers are likely to measure quality in terms of their contributions, that is, the number of publications and courses taught. This emphasis on what students and teachers perceive as important is necessary to maintain positive perceptions of QA and ultimately their loyalty to the institution (Nicholson, 2011).The studies currently reviewed analysed perceptions of either students or teachers towards QA. None of the studies found analysed the perceptions of quality learning and learning outcomes in terms of how it influenced relationships between the stakeholders and the various services provided by a university. Such comparisons between the primary stakeholders (students), the primary service providers (teachers) and other complimentary services by the university will provide new knowledge to enhance the learning experiences of students and in turn improve the QA in such institutions.

In order to fill this gap in the knowledge on QA, the current study will attempt to establish students' and teachers' perceptions of critical areas used by the MQA to benchmark learning quality in a Malaysian university. Oliver (2001) noted that a principal aim of an institution is to create a student-centred environment that develops self-learning and metacognition thus providing opportunities for high quality flexible learning experiences for its students. Srikanthan and Dalrymple (2007) further emphasised that a hallmark of quality learning is transformative learning which eventually leads to metacognition. Hence the underpinning theory in this studyis the metacogntive theory (Flavell, 1979) and it will culminate with a model to explain the relationships between students' and teachers'perceptions of learning quality with factors in the learning process, such as delivery of teaching, student approaches to learning and the teaching-learning environment provided, using structural equation modeling.

Metacognitive Theory

Metacognitive theory according to Kuhn (2000) can be conceptualised in a developmental framework, beginning with the dawning awareness of young children which undergoes developmental progression resulting in complex metaknowing capabilities usually not mastered by many adults. During its process of development, metacognition becomes more explicit,

powerful, and effective as it comes under the conscious control of the adult. Metacognition can be seen as a supporting condition for critical thinking in that it can monitor the quality of thoughts and beliefs in an individual (Lai, 2011) which is relevant when measuring learning quality because the ultimate goal of a university is to encourage students to develop deep learning (Biggs, 1999) during their learning episodes. According to Flavell (1979) learning episodes which he termed cognitive enterprises occur through the interactions of four phenomena: metacognitive knowledge, tasks/goals to be achieved and strategies used, and metacognitive experiences.

Metacognitive knowledge (Fernandez-Duque et al., 2000) is the stored world of knowledge which can be equated to prior knowledge and acquired beliefs. This consists of knowledge or beliefs about what and how factors can interact to affect the course or outcome of learning. These factors consist of three major categories: person, task, and strategies (Marcel et al., 2004).In the context of this study the persons involved in the learning that occur are the students and teachers. The task is the overall perceptions of learning quality. The strategies used are the resources available (Resources), learning environment (Learning Climate), curriculum design (Curriculum) of each programme in the institution. Metacognitive knowledge will in part help individuals form perceptions about their learning outcomes based on the strategies they use.

Tasks/goals refer to the objective of learning and the strategies used to achieve the learning outcome. These are procedural knowledge (Efklides, 2006) and an individual deliberately uses them to control learning, ultimately monitoring the outcome of the process. This is elaborated by Biggs (1999) in his '*constructive alignment'*. The term '*constructive*' has been added to emphasise the importance of aims that focus explicitly on high quality learning and a deep level of understanding and implies a constructive approach to the teaching and learning process. In the context of this study, 'constructive alignment' refers to the quality of learning (Learning Quality) provided by the teachers and experienced by the students. This is measured by the learning outcomes (Learning Outcomes).

Metacognitive experiences (Kuhn, 2000) are any conscious cognitive or affective experiences that are associated with learning. These experiences help individuals make an assessment of the progress they are making or are likely to make.They are likely to occur in situations that stimulate a lot of careful highly conscious thinking where every step of the process requires planning ahead and evaluation afterwards. This allows for quality control of individuals' thought processes (Flavell, 1979).Hence, the difference between metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive experiences is in the content and function of the learning. In the context of this study, metacognitive experiences will be students' and teachers' perceptions of the influence of a good command of the English language (English Exposure), the delivery and support (Delivery and Support) provided to bring about the learning process. As English is a second language in Malaysia and not the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools, it is necessary to determine the influence it had on the learning quality at university where the medium of instruction is English. Hence English Exposure is added as another construct.

Metacognition according to Kuhn (2000) is guided by individuals' beliefs, hence their perceptions will in some form influence the way they think and learn. Flavell (1979) defined metacognition as the process of cognition about cognition. Hence, when executing a specific

task, the effect of the personality of an individual decreases and information from monitoring a task (e.g. fluency, conflicts, and interruptions) receives more attention, this will in turn trigger control decisions (Efklides, 2006).At this level, metacognition and affect can take the form of subjective experiences where the individual is aware of on-going thinking and feelings that denotes exertion of efforts (behaviours) during processing of a task. From the perspective of behaviour, Ajzen (1991) noted that individuals will act according to their perceptions of control over their behaviour. Hence in the context of this study, the perceptions of students and teachers towards the various learning environments of the university will be used to study their perceptions of the learning quality and ultimately the learning outcomes.

Aims of this Study

Students often enter University with firmly establish study habits (Entwitsle et al., 2002) and perceptions of learning which may be inappropriate for higher education. They tend to interpret the situation in terms of their prior experiences, in which teachers may have provided knowledge and strong guidance about the work to be done. This will result in markedly different approaches to learning and also contrasting perceptions of the teaching and learning environment they experience. This study will use a framework derived from the metacognitive theory using the guidelines for higher education providers by MQA as constructs for the model (Malaysian Quality Assurance, 2009). The same framework for the perceptions of learning quality will be used for both students and teachers. The following research questions will underpin this study:

1. What is the validity of the metacognitive theory in explaining students' and teachers' perceptions of learning quality in a university?
2. What are the significance of delivery and support, English exposure, resources, learning environment, and curriculum as predictors of learning quality?
3. What is the significance of learning quality as a predictor of learning outcome?

Research Model and Hypotheses

Figure 1 provides the conceptual framework for the influences of perceptions on learning quality based on the metacognitive theory. This framework was derived from the metacognitive theory (Flavell, 1979; Kuhn, 2000) using the critical indicators of learning quality listed by MQA in their code of practice (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2015). These indicators are adopted and adapted by all higher institutions of learning in Malaysia as a bench mark to measure learning quality. Asif and Searcy (2014) suggested a similar framework to measure quality learning higher education and found that it was effective in measuring learning excellence. A study on learning excellence by Ali et al. (2016) used similar constructs in their study on quality learning at university however, the construct on physical facilities provided by the university was excluded. The focus of the study was on the learning experience of students.

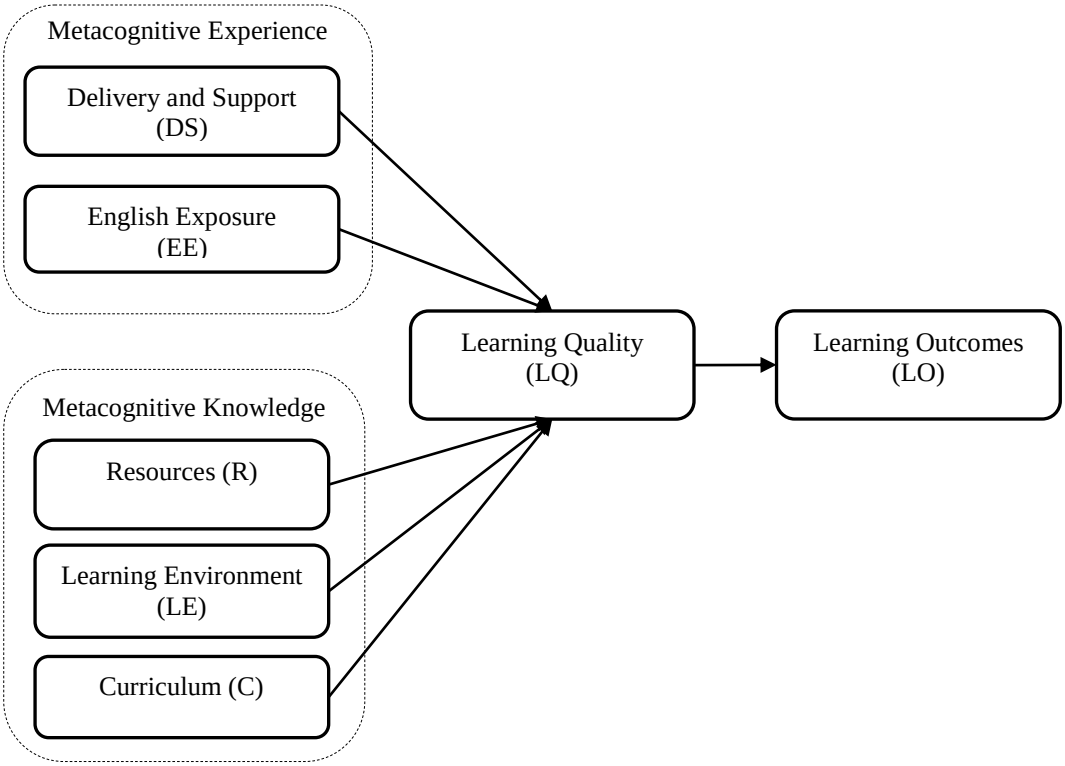

Fig. 1 - Conceptual Framework of the Influences of Perceptions on Learning Outcomes

The following hypotheses were formulated:

H_1: Delivery and Support will have a significant influence on Learning Quality.
H_2: English Exposure will have a significant influence on Learning Quality.
H_3: Resources will have a significant influence on Learning Quality.
H_4: Curriculum will have a significant influence on Learning Quality.
H_5: Learning Environment will have a significant influence on Learning Quality.
H_6: Learning Quality will have a significant influence on Learning Outcomes.

Operationalisation of Constructs

For this study, Learning Outcomes is defined as the learning achieved and experiences of students during the learning process (Biggs, 1999). Learning Quality is defined as the key aspects of a university QA system that link together to ensure development of a quality learning environment(Nicholson, 2011).Curriculum is defined as the arrangement of courses that are structured for a specified duration and learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes (Harvey & Green, 1993). Delivery and support is defined as the support (teaching and administrative) given to students in the University (Hill, 1995). Resources is defined as the infrastructure and facilities provided by the University (Nicholson, 2011). Learning environment is defined as students; perceptions of their relationship with the staff and peers in the University and the learning climate in the University (Douglas et al., 2014). This is considered a composite of the following two constructs; relationship and learning climate and Relationship is defined as

the relationship students perceive they have with lecturers, support staff and their peers. English exposure is defined as the influence of English proficiency on the learning experiences of students.

Method

This study employed a structural equation modeling (SEM) approach to analyse the conceptual framework that represents the relationship among the seven constructs: delivery and support, English exposure, resources, learning environment, curriculum, learning quality and learning outcomes. Data was collected using questionnaires designed to measure perceptions of quality from students and teachers respectively.

Participants and Data Collection

A total of 1490 and 100 students and teachers respectively at a university in Malaysia participated in this study. The student sample consisted of 533 males and 957 females. A total of 498 were from Bachelor and 992 from Diploma programmes. The teacher sample consisted of 45 males and 55 females. The samples were from one faculty in the University. Before the survey questionnaire was administered, participants were informed about the purpose of this study and were told they could withdraw from the study at any time during or after the study. They were also assured of the anonymity and that all data they provided will be private and confidential.

Measures

The questionnaires for the two samples were designed based on the nine areas of quality assurance evaluation listed on the guidelines for higher education providers (Malaysian Quality Assurance, 2009).Three key factors were used as criteria for development of the questionnaires. Firstly, the questionnaires needed to be short for easy repeated administration. It also needed to reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the process of learning quality in the university. Secondly the questions needed to represent the nine areas of quality learning evaluation required by MQA (Malaysia Quality Assurance, 2009). Thirdly, a high degree of reliability that fitted the requirements for measuring QA needed to be established (Cohen et al., 2000)

The two questionnaires were called Quality Assurance Perception Questionnaire – Student (QAPQ-S) and Quality Assurance Perception Questionnaire – Teacher (QAPQ-T).The QAPQ-S and QAPQ-T was designed to be used concurrently. The items on the QAPQ-Tare similar to the QAPQ-Sbut phrased from the teacher perspective. The items on the two questionnaires encompassed the following areas: learning outcomes, curriculum design and delivery, assessment of students; student support, academic staff, educational resources, and learning quality. Another area was added to the questionnaires to determine perceptions of the English language. The scale items for the QAPQ-S and QAPQ-T is listed in Appendix A and B respectively.Other similar questionnaires by Entwistle et al. (2002) and Biggs et al. (2001) were used as guides during the development process. A 5-point Likert scale was used for each item, with a 5 indicating Strongly agree, 4 Agree, 3 Neutral, 2 Disagree and 1 Strongly disagree. It was decided to have the neutral response choice in the questionnaire to have better psychometric coherence when the items were considered as a whole, and this would have little effect on the

overall reliability and validity (Dassa et al., 1997). In addition, the study was also focused on assessing the convictions of students, in terms of their firm opinions about how and why they learn. The neutral response represented a conviction and was different from a "no opinion" and a "don't know" response (Briggs & Cheek, 1986). The data was then encoded and then entered into SPSS (Version 20) for initial analysis.

Results

Convergent Validity

Hair et al. (2010) suggested three procedures to show convergent validity: factor loadings, reliability and average variance extracted (AVE). On the item reliability, a factor loading of 0.50 and higher was recommended (Hair et al., 2010). In this study, the factor loadings of items in the measurement model for both students and teachers ranged from 0.60 to 0.89 (Table 1); hence they demonstrated validity at the item level for most of the items except for eight items on the student questionnaire.

At the construct level, an alpha of 0.70 and higher was recommended to reflect adequate reliability (Tavakol&Dennick, 2011). As shown in Table 1, the reliabilities of all the constructs ranged from 0.70 to 0.87, which were all at or above the level recommended by Tavakol and Dennick (2011).The third indicator of convergent validity, AVE, measures the average communality. Convergent validity was judged to be adequate when AVE equalled or exceeded 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). As shown in Table 1, the convergent validity for the proposed constructs of the measurement model was adequate.

Table 1: Results of the Measurement Model for Students and Teachers

Latent Variables	Student					Teacher				
	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]
LO	LO 1	.69	.84	.50	.83	LO 1	.70	.87	.86	.60
	LO 2	.65				LO 2	.78			
	LO 3	.66				LO 3	.83			
	LO 4	.67				LO 4	.79			
	LO 5	.64								

Latent Variables	Student					Teacher				
	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]
	LO6	.61								
	LO7	.58								
C	C1	.59	.70	.45	.71	C1	.69	.82	.56	.83
	C2	.66				C2	.73			
	C3	.65				C3	.66			
	C4	.55				C4	.63			
LQ	LQ1	.66	.70	.45	.70	LQ1	.74	.70	.50	.72
	LQ2	.61				LQ2	.61			
	LQ3	.55				LQ3	.68			
DS	DS1	.67	.81	.50	.81	DS1	.62	.80	.52	.81
	DS2	.67				DS2	.80			
	DS3	.71				DS3	.83			
	DS4	.70				DS4	.61			
	DS5	.64								
LE	LE1	.50	.72	.50	.83	LE1	.89	.80	.51	.80
	LE2	.57				LE2	.70			
	LE3	.66				LE3	.62			
	LE4	.71				LE4	.60			
	LE5	76								
	LE6	.76								

Latent Variables	Student					Teacher				
	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach's alpha (>.70)[a]	Average variance extracted AVE (>.50)[a]	Composite reliability (>.60)[a]
R	R1	.83	.82	.56	.84	R1	.83	.80	.60	.80
	R2	.80				R2	.80			
	R3	.69				R3	.64			
	R4	.78								
EE	EE1	.55	.79	.50	.50	EE1	.69	.75	.50	.71
	EE2	.72				EE2	.73			
	EE3	.70				EE3	.66			
	EE4	.76				EE4	.63			
	EE5	.56								

[a] Indicates an acceptable level of reliability or validity.
Fit indices:
Student model: χ^2/df = 3.72, RMSEA = 0.043, GFI = 0.925, CFI = 0.927, TLI = 0.917
Teacher model: χ^2/df = 1.83, RMSEA = 0.092, GFI = 0.897, CFI = 0.811, TLI = 0.786

Discriminant Validity

In this study, discriminant validity was assessed by comparing the square root of the AVE for a given construct with the correlations between that construct and the other constructs. If the square root of the AVEs were greater than the off diagonal elements in the correlation matrix, this suggests that the construct were more strongly correlated with its indicators than with the other constructs in the model. In Table 2, the diagonal element in the correlation matrix has been replaced by the square roots of the AVE. Discriminant validity appeared satisfactory for all constructs at both the item and construct level. Hence the constructs in the proposed research models for both students and teachers were deemed adequate for further analysis.

Table 2: Discriminant Validity for the Measurement Model

	Student							Teacher						
	LO	C	LQ	DS	LE	R	EE	LO	C	LQ	DS	LE	R	EE
LO	(.71)							(.92)						
C	.59**	(.67)						.74**	(.75)					
LQ	.60**	.63**	(.67)					.57**	.70**	(.71)				
DS	.67**	.63**	.69**	(.71)				.48**	.68**	.69**	(.72)			
LE	.58**	.50**	.50**	.57**	(.71)			.52**	.63**	.67**	.61**	(.71)		
R	.35**	.30**	.30**	.34**	.43**	(.75)		.75**	.81**	.68**	.64**	.68**	(.77)	
EE	-.03	.03	-.06*	-.07**	.01	.12**	(.71)	.30**	.35**	.21*	.29**	.28**	.27**	(.71)

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Model Fit

The model fit of the research model for this study was tested using AMOS 20.0. The literature recommended to use several fit indices to measure model fit (Bentler& Bonnet, 1980; Bentler, 1990; Browne &Cudeck, 1993).According the Hair et al. (2010)fit indices can be classified into absolute fit indices, incremental fit indices and parsimony fit indices. Absolute fit indices provide the basic assessment of how well the measurement model fits the sample data. The absolute fit indices commonly referred to are the chi square (χ^2), the goodness-of-fit (GIF) and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). The incremental fit indices access how well the estimated model fits other alternative baseline models. The most commonly used incremental fit indices are the adjusted goodness of fit index (AGFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the Tucker-Lewis index (TLI). The parsimony fit index provides information on which model among a set of competing models is best, considering its fit relative to its complexity. This is determined by the ratio of $\chi^2$with the degrees of freedom (df). A ratio on the order of 3:1 or less are associated with better fitting models. In this study all the fit indices mentioned were used and summarised in Table 3. The result of the model fit as shown by the various fit indices show that the research model has a good fit.

Table 3 - Indices for the Research Model for Students and Teachers

Model fit index	Values				Recommended guidelines*
	Initial measurement model for Students	Final structural model for Students	Initial measurement model for Teachers	Final structural model for Teachers	
χ^2	1892.72	1351.95	711.61	483.19	Nil
GIF	0.93	0.95	0.89	0.90	>0.90
RMSEA	0.03	0.02	0.03	0.02	< 0.05
AGFI	0.91	0.94	0.84	0.90	>0.90
CFI	0.93	0.95	0.81	0.92	>0.90
TLI	0.92	0.95	0.79	0.91	>0.90
χ^2/df	3.717	2.70	1.83	1.37	< 5.0

*Hair et al. (2010); Bentler (1990)

Hypothesis Testing

From the results for students, five out of the six hypotheses were supported by the data. Among the independent variable resources did not seem to have a significant influence on learning quality (β = .00, C.R. = -.31, p = 0.98> 0.05), hence did not support H_3. Delivery and support (β = .46, C.R. = 6.53, p = 0.00< 0.05), English exposure (β = -.04, C.R. = -2.47, p = 0.01< 0.05), learning environment (β = .30, C.R. = 2.07, p = 0.04< 0.05), curriculum (β = .41, C.R. = 5.60, p = 0.00< 0.05), and learning outcome (β = .84, C.R. = 20.11, p = 0.00< 0.05) had a significant influence on learning quality, supporting H_1, H_2, H_4, H_5, and H_6 respectively as shown in Table 4.

From the results for teacher, three out of six hypotheses were supported by the data. Delivery and support (β = .41, C.R. = 5.60, p = 0.00< 0.05), English exposure (β = 2.69, C.R. = 2.25, p = 0.024 < 0.05), and learning environment (β = .88, C.R. = 2.57, p = 0.010 < 0.05) had a significant relationship with learning quality, hence H_2, H_4, and H_6 are supported. However, delivery and support (β = .82, C.R. = -1.19, p = 0.23> 0.05), resources (β = .84, C.R. = 7.77, p = 0.00> 0.05) and curriculum (β = .59, C.R. = -1.20, p = 2.29 > 0.05) did not have a significant influence on learning quality, therefore H_1, H_3, and H_5 were not supported as shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Hypothesis Testing Results

				Students				Teachers			
Hypothesis	Path	←	Constructs	Estimate	C.R	P* Value	Results	Estimate	C.R	P* Value	Results
H1	LQ	←	DS	0.46	6.53	0.00	Supported	-0.83	-1.19	0.23	Not Supported
H2	LQ	←	EE	-0.04	-2.47	0.01	Supported	2.69	2.25	0.02	Supported

				Students				Teachers			
Hypothesis	Path	←	Constructs	Estimate	C.R	P* Value	Results	Estimate	C.R	P* Value	Results
H3	LQ	←	R	0.001	-0.31	0.98	Not Supported	-.084	-0.47	0.64	Not Supported
H4	LQ	←	LE	0.27	2.07	0.04	Supported	0.46	2.57	0.01	Supported
H5	LQ	←	C	0.41	5.59	0.00	Supported	-0.59	-1.20	0.23	Not Supported
H6	LO	←	LQ	0.84	20.11	0.00	Supported	0.88	7.77	0.00	Supported

* Significant at 0.05

Discussion

This study examined the factors influencing perceptions of learning quality among students and teachers in a Malaysian university. The results of the study suggested that there were differences in the perceptions of quality learning between the students and their teachers. English exposure, defined as the influence of English proficiency on the learning experience was found to have a significant influence on learning quality for both students and teachers. However, the relationship was inversed implying that students perceived that exposure to English decreased the learning quality in university. This perception was not evident for teachers. The results for the teachers supports the findings of Chambers (1999) and Gámez(2015) that exposure to English enhances the learning quality among students.

Similarly learning outcome and learning environment also had a significant influence on learning quality for both students and teachers. A study by Iyunade (2014) also found a significant relationship between learning outcomes and the quality of learning. Similarly Kember and Leung (2009) also found a significant relationship between learning outcome which they called learning process and learning quality. They also found a significant relationship between the learning environment in terms of student-teacher relationship and the learning quality.

There was a significant influence of delivery and support and curriculum on learning quality for students. It is interesting to note that these did not have a significant influence on learning quality for teachers. Research by Coleman and Furnborough (2010) had also found a significant relationship between method of delivery and students' perceptions of learning quality. Similarly Lee et al. (2011) also found a strong relationship between perceived support and student overall satisfaction for the course. Tsinidouet al. (2010) also found a strong relationship between students' perception of quality learning and curriculum specifically the hands-on activities incorporated into the curriculum.

The results of this study revealed that the teachers were more focused on students' command of English, the overall learning environment and the learning outcomes of their courses. However, the students were more broadly focused, to include the influence of the curriculum and the delivery and support given by their teachers. This suggests that the teachers were more focused on teaching and the techniques of teaching and archiving the outcomes that is expected of them. The students on the other hand perceived their learning experience form a more holistic point of view, in terms of complexity and different areas contributed to their overall experience.It must be noted, despite the differences in perceptions between the students and teachers, both groups

perceived the important influence of learning environment to the overall learning quality which in turn had a significant influence.

Implications for Practice

This study has several implications for higher institution administrators and teacher educators. The results show that there was a perception gap between students and teachers in terms of quality learning. In this study, students perceived learning quality as related to a more holistic education experience and the ability of their teachers to develop and structure their lessons but teachers only perceived their ability to teach and achieving the learning outcomes as important to quality learning. According to Smith et al. (2007) such perceptions will determine future behaviour of individuals. If the needs perceived by the students are not met, it may result a decrease in enrolment for a university because students are dissatisfied with the 'returns on their investment'. It must also be noted that Lizzio et al. (2002) in their study found that students' perceptions of their current learning environment were a stronger predictor of learning outcomes at university than prior achievement at school. Hence students' perceptions that they were having their expectations met were an important predictor of quality learning in a university. Petruzzellis et al. (2006) pointed out the importance of meeting student expectations in a university setting as this can result in high dropout rates and a longer time needed to complete a specific curriculum for the individual.

Limitations of the Study

It must be noted that the data was collected from only one faculty of a university in Malaysia. Although the students sampled exceeded that recommended by Krejcie and Morgan (1970),self-reported instruments were used hence the truthfulness of the respondents cannot be assured. The teacher sample was also from the same faculty, hence only a limited number of teachers were available. This has the potential to lead to a situation to inflate true associations between variables.Attempts have also been made to avoid interpretations of the data from the current study that will reflect seeing the perceptions of the teachers and students as trait-like entities. The interpretations are from a more systemic view of the QA process in the University College. This does not mean that students and teachers will exhibit similar perceptions if the context or the environment changes.

Conclusion

This study contributes to the literature by suggesting a model for perceptions of quality learning based on the metacognitive theory. Previous studies have not shown this approach to interpreting perceptions and learning quality before. It can be concluded from the findings that the proposed model of students and teachers perceptions of quality learning and the factors that influence the learning experience.

References

Ajzen, I. (1991). The theory of planned behaviour. *Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes*, *50*, 179-211.

Ali, F., Zhou, Y., Hussain, K., Nair, K. P., & Ragavan, A. N. (2016). Does higher education service quality effect student satisfaction, image and loyalty? A study of international students in Malaysian public universities. *Quality Assurance in Education*, *24*(1), 70-94.

Anderson, G. (2006). Assuring quality/ resisting quality assurance: Academics' responses to'quality' in some Australian universities. *Quality in Higher Education*, *12*(2), 161-173.

Asif, M., & Searcy, C. (2014). Determining the key capabilities required for performance excellence in higher education. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *25*(1), 22-35.

Bentler, P. M. (1990).Comparative fit indexes in structural models. *Psychological Bulletin*, *107*(2), 238-246.

Bentler, P. M., & Bonnet, D. C. (1980).Significant tests and goodness of fit in the analysis of covariances. *Psychological Bulletin*, *88*(3), 588-606.

Biggs, J.(1999). What the student does: Teaching for enhanced learning.*Higher Education Reaserch and Development*, *18*(1), 57-75.

Biggs, J., Kember, D., & Leung, D. (2001). The revised two factor study process questionnaire: R-SPQ-2F. *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, *71*, 133-149.

Briggs, S. R., & Cheek, J. M. (1986).The role of factor analysis in the development and evaluation of personality scales. *Journal of Personality*, *54*, 106-148.

Browne, M. W., & Cudeck, R. (1993).Alternative ways of accessing model fit. In K. A. Bollen, & J. S. Long (Eds.), *Testing structural equation models* (pp. 136-162). Beverly Hills: Sage.

Cancela, A., Sanchez, A., Gandon, R., Rey, M. J., & E., C. (2010).*Quality assurance in higher education*.Paper presented at 4th International Technology, Education and Development Conference,Valencia, Spain. Retrieved from https://library.iated.org/publications/INTED2010

Chambers, G.N. 1999. *Motivating language learners*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Researchmethods in education.* London: Routledge-Falmer.

Coleman , J. A., & Furnborough, C. (2010). Learner characteristics and learning outcomes on a distance Spanish course for beginners. *System, 38*, 14–29.

Dassa, C., Lambert, J., Blais, R., Potvin, D., & Gauthier, N. (1997).The effects of neutral answer choice onthe reliability and validity of attitude and opinion items. *The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, 12*(2), 61-80.

Douglas, J. A., Douglas, A., J., M. R., & Davies, J. (2014).Understanding student satisfaction and dissatisfaction: An interpretive study in the UK higher education context. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(2), 329-349.doi: 10.1080/03075079.2013.842217

Efklides, A. (2006). Metacognition and affect: What can metacognitive experiences tell us about the learning process? *Educational Research Review, 1,* 3-14.

Elassy, N. (2015). The concepts of quality, quality assurance and quality enhancement. *Quality Assurance in Education, 23*(3), 250-261.

Entwistle, N., McCune, V., & Hounsell, J. (2002).*Approaches to studying and perceptions of university teaching-learning environments: Concepts, measures and preliminary findings.*Edinburgh: School of Education, University of Edinburgh.

Fernandez-Duque, D., Baird, J. A., & Posner, M. I. (2000).Executive attention and metacognitive regulation. *Consciousness and Cognition, 9,* 288–307 .

Flavell, H. J. (1979).Metacognition and cognitive monitoring: A new area of cognitive—developmental inquiry. *American Psychologist, 34*(10), 906-911.

Gámez, P. B. (2015). Quarterly classroom-based English exposure and English Language learners' expressive language skills. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly, 31,* 135-146.

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis* (7th ed.).Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education.

Harvey, L., & Green, D. (1993). Defining quality. *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education, 18*(1), 9-13.

Hill, F. M. (1995).Managing service quality in higher education: The role of the student as primary consumer. *Quality Assurance in Education, 3*(3), 10-21.

Iyunade, T.(2014). Quality assurance in higher technical education and the context of youth empowerment for sustainable development for sustainable development. *Journal of Arts and Humanities, 3*(5), 59-66.

Johnson, R. (2000).The authority of the student evaluation questionnaire. *Teaching in Higher Education, 5*(4), 419-434.

Kember, P.,& Leung, D. Y. P. (2009). Development of a questionnaire for assessing students'perceptions of the teaching and learning environment and its use in quality assurance. *Learning Environment Research. 12,* 15-29.

Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970).Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 30*, 607-610.

Kuhn, D. (2000).Metacognitive development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *9*(5), 178-181.

Lai, E. R. (2011). *Metacognition: A literature review.* Retrieved March 12, 2016, fromhttp://images.pearsonassessments.com/images/tmrs/metacognition_literature_review_final.pdf

Lee , J., Srinivasan , S., Trail , T., Lewis , D.,& Lopez, S.(2011). Examining the relationship among student perception of support, course satisfaction, and learning outcomes in online learning. *Internet and Higher Education, 14*, 158–163.

Langstrand, J., Cronemyr, P., & Poksinska, B. (2015).Practise what you preach: Quality of education in education on quality. *Total Quality Management & Business Excellence*, *26*(11) , 1202-1212. doi: 10.1080/14783363.2014.925290

Lizzio, A., Wilson, K., & Simons, R. (2002).University students' perceptions of the learning environment and academic outcomes: Implications for theory and practice. *Studies in Higher Education*, *27*(1), 27-52.

Malaysia Quality Assurance. (2009).*Guidelines on criteria and standards for higher education providers.* Petaling Jaya: Government of Malaysia.

Marcel, V. M., Pascal , W., & Jos , J. (2004).The relation between intellectual and metacognitive skills from a developmental perspective. *Learning and Instruction, 14*, 89-109.

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2012).*Malaysia Education Blueprint: Executive Summary, 2013-2025.* Retrieved September 12, 2014, from http://www4.unescobkk.org/nespap/sites/default/files/Preliminary-Blueprint-ExecSummary-Eng_0.pdf

Ministry of Education Malaysia. (2015).*Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education).*Putrajaya: Ministry of Education.

Newton, J. (2000).Feeding the beast or improving quality? Academics' perceptions of quality assurance and quality monitoring. *Quality in Higher Education, 6*(2), 153-163.

Nicholson, K. (2011).*Quality assurance in higher education: A review of the literature.*Retrieved April 18, 2016, from http://cll.mcmaster.ca/COU/pdf/Quality%20Assurance%20Literature%20Review.pdf .

Oliver, R. (2001). Assuring the quality of online learning in Australian higher education. In M. Wallace, A. Ellis, & D. Newton (Eds.), *Proceeding of Moving Online II Conference* (pp. 222-231). Lismore: Southern Cross University.

Pennington, G., & O'Neil, M. (1994).Enhancing the quality of teaching and learning in higher education. *Quality Assurance in Education, 2*(3), 13-18.

Petruzzellis, l., D'Uggento, A. M., & Romanazzi, S. (2006).Student satisfaction and quality of service in Italian universities. *Managing Service Quality, 16*(4), 349-364.

Smith, J. R., Manstead, A. S., Terry, D., Louis, W. R., Kotterman , D.,&Wolfs, J. (2007). Interaction effects in the Theory of Planned Behavior: The interplay of self-identity and past behaviour. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 37*(11), 2726-2750.

Srikanthan, G., & Dalrymple, J. F. (2007).A conceptual overview of a holistic model for quality in higher education. *International Journal of Educational Management, 21*(3), 173-193.

Tsinidou, M., Vassilis, G.,& Fitsilis, P.(2010). Evaluation of the factors that determine quality in higher education: an empirical study. *Quality Assurance in Education, 18*(3), 227-244.

Tavakol, M., & Dennick, R. (2011).Making sense of Cronbach's alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education, 2*, 53-55.

Appendix A

List of constructs for QAPQ-S and corresponding items

Construct	Code	Items
Learning Outcomes	LO1	The learning outcomes of this course have been very clearly highlighted to me.
	LO2	The topics in this course follow each other in a way that made sense to me.
	LO3	The course is well organized.
	LO4	What was taught matched what I was supposed to learn.
	LO5	The different types of teaching (lectures, tutorial, labs, presentation, etc.) supported each other well.
	LO6	The way the course was taught helped me learn better.
	LO7	We were given a good deal of choice over how we went about learning the material for this course.
Curriculum	C1	Handouts and other materials were given to help me understand the course.
	C2	I learned something in this course that helped me rethink my understanding of some parts of the course.
	C3	Plenty of examples and illustrations were given to help me understand the course better.
	C4	The lecturer used websites and on-line resources to help me understand better.
Learning Quality	LQ1	The lecturer guided me in my thinking to reach conclusions in this course.
	LQ2	It was clear what was expected for me to pass this course.
	LQ3	The course work helped me to make connections to my existing knowledge.
Delivery and Support	DS1	I was encouraged to think about how best to tackle the course work assigned.
	DS2	The feedback given on my work helped me to improve my ways of studying.
	DS3	Lecturers gave me the support I needed to help me complete the coursework.
	DS4	The lecturer was really enthusiastic about this course.
	DS5	The lecturer was good at explaining things that were difficult to understand.
Learning Environment	LE1	An environment was set that made it easy for me to discuss work with my course mates.
	LE2	I was comfortable discussing ideas with the other students.

	LE3	The lecturer is available during consultation hours.
	LE4	My lecturer knew the course well.
	LE5	I like to learn in this campus.
	LE6	The environment on campus makes it easy for me to learn.
Resources	R1	I can get the books I need for this course from the library.
	R2	The online resources from the library are useful for my course.
	R3	The librarians are very helpful.
	R4	I can get the books I need for this course from the library.
English Exposure	EE1	I am often confused by the content of the courses in my programme of study.
	EE2	I could see how the course work helped me to learn the material for this course.
	EE3	It is difficult for me to complete the tutorial exercises.
	EE4	I struggle with completing my course assignments.
	EE5	I find it difficult to understand the lessons in my programme of study.

Appendix B

List of constructs for QAPQ-T and corresponding items

Construct	Code	Items
Learning Outcome	LO1	I know the programme learning objectives covered in this course.
	LO2	The learning outcomes of this course have been very clearly highlighted to my students.
	LO3	The topics in this course follow each other in a way that will make sense to my students.
	LO4	The course is well organised.
Curriculum	C1	I encouraged my students to look for links between this course and others.
	C2	Handouts and other materials were given to help my students understand the course.
	C3	I tried to ensure that my students learn something in this course that helped them expand their thinking about the course.
	C4	Plenty of examples and illustrations were given to help my students understand the course better.
Learning Quality	LQ1	What was taught matched what my students were supposed to learn.
	LQ2	I know the subject well.
	LQ3	I am readily available for consultation with students.
Delivery and Support	DS1	I guided my students to reach conclusions in this course.
	DS2	I was clear about what was expected for my students to pass this course.
	DS3	I made sure the course work helped my students learn the material for this course.
	DS4	The course work was designed to help students make connections to existing knowledge or experience.
Learning Environment	LE1	I give the support needed to help my students complete the coursework.
	LE2	I try to be really enthusiastic about this course.
	LE3	I created an environment that made it easy for students to discuss work with each other.
	LE4	I encourage discussing ideas among students.
Resources	R1	The librarians are very helpful.
	R2	I can get the books I need for this course from the library.
	R3	The online resources from the library are useful for my course.
English Exposure	EE1	The different types of teaching I used in this course (lectures, tutorial, labs, presentation, etc.) supported each other well.
	EE2	The way the course was taught helped my students to learn and

	understand better.
EE3	I was given autonomy over how we went about planning the learning materials for this course
EE4	The feedback given to my students is to help them improve their ways of learning and studying.

INTERNAL BENCHMARKING SYSTEM FOR HEIs' PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE

Teay Shawyun
King Saud University, Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Benchmarking has long been held as a potentially important and inherent process whereby academic programs or HEIs compare their progress or performance relative to a comparable external entity equitable or better or the best in the same or across different entities. While this type of benchmarking has long been practiced, they are practically external to the institution, and this is the norm of benchmarks that are favored and very widely used and practiced. Though external benchmarking is the norm and used widely, there appears to be a lack of research into an internal benchmarking system, whereby academic programs within the same schools, or across the different schools, or schools across the whole institution can be benchmarked within the same institution. The call for internal benchmarking is for continuous improvements, sharing and learning across the different units for competitive collaborations towards the institution's mission collectively. While most accreditation bodies emphasized the importance of the use of external benchmarks, the NCAAA (National Commission for Accreditation and Assessment) of Saudi Arabia dictates that all academic programs or HEIs seeking national accreditation needs to provide evidence of both external and internal benchmarks. This has led to a serious dilemma for all HEIs as most IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) were not established with internal benchmarks nor most lack an inherent IQA for the HEI or programs for its internal quality management. Based on this requirement, this paper advocates an IQA system that focuses on its processes and result base criteria and its inherent performance indicators as a strong and valid composite set of fundamentals and approach in incorporating an internal benchmarking system within its IQA management system. This paper provides a broad literature review of benchmarking applications in HEIs and uses a case study of the IQA system of a leading Middle East university to exemplify and realize this internal benchmarking mechanism.

Key words: IQA (Internal Quality Assurance) System, Internal Benchmarking, HEIs (Higher Education Institutions)

Introduction

While it is normal practices for any institutions or organizations to know of their performance, how well they are doing, the top executives would also like to know how well they are doing relative to others. What are their comparatives? How well do they measure up? These are key essential questions that the University Councils, Board of Trustees, or Board of Governors, or for that matter, all key executives of the HEIs seek an answer to their performance relative to others. This is where comparisons of performance leading to the ultimate "ranking" games are still the name of the game. But effectively, it will be too idealistic for any institutions to compare with those in the top tiers while an institution is still muddling around, and they need to find their best next to comparatives, which is where benchmarking profiles highly.

What exactly is benchmarking? Webster's Dictionary defines it as "A standard or reference by which others can be measured or judged". Dew and Nearing (2004) provided a more definitive statement as "Benchmarking means finding out who is the best in an area, studying how they work, and adopting the best practices that are suitable to your organization". Benchmarking is normally used for improving core processes important to educational value deliveries and accomplishment through the examination of these processes or models relative and comparing with other schools and adapting their techniques and approaches (Camp, 1989 and 1995; Chaffee and Scherr 1992; Clark, 1993). Kempner's (1993) concise statement was "benchmarking is an ongoing process for measuring and comparing the work processes of one organization to another, by bring an external focus to internal activities, functions or operations" and bring about cost improvements (Shafer &Coate, 1992; Watson, 1993). McNair and Leibfried(1992) analogized benchmarking as a human learning process and are described as a method of teaching an institution or program how to improve.

Innovation Network (1994) emphatically stated that ideally benchmarking is not just comparative analysis of how one measure up to another in terms of some indicators as they do not "drive change" and "does not specifically focus on practices that create superior performances". In addition, it is not process reengineering where process are examined and improved on, nor just a survey where data is collated and aggregated nor is it a "three hour show and tell" comparison with another institution. It is not a one-off event (Spendolini, 1992) as it is a continuous process that provides valuable information rather than simple answers: it is a process of learning from others rather than copying, adopting or adapting: it is a time consuming and labor intensive process as against being quick and easy; and a viable tool for improvements and innovations rather than a fad or buzzword. These definitions practically mean that these "processes" should be evaluated based on a set of criteria that can determine their "progress in performance" as an active and dynamic longitudinal time bound continuously improving set of actions as opposed to a static proxy one off performance indicators as a snap shot of performance.

Practices of Benchmarking in HEIs

Schofield (1998) stated that the key reasons for benchmarking included, 1) greater international competitiveness; 2) development of interest in enhancing quality and growth of quality

"movement"; and rapid growth of IT making data collection and management possible. Practically, the key rationale for benchmarking in HEIs is that benchmarking allows an HEI to "leapfrog" through learning from others and bringing about innovative changes or adaptations of best practices which offers a way towards cost containment and enhanced quality and value added educational offers in a cost-effective and quality oriented framework (APQC, 1993; Shafer &Coate, 1992). Typical mistakes to avoid when implementing benchmarking includes: ineffective leadership, poor team selection and preparation, inadequate resources and support mechanisms, imprecise objectives, unrealistic time and cost expectations as benchmarking is time consuming and costly in capturing and managing these data, inadequate understanding of both data and practices and inappropriate follow-through (Innovation Network, 1997) which are supported by Fielden (1997) who observed the misconception that benchmarking is a quick and inexpensive process.

According to Tuominen (1993; 1997), they are four types of benchmarking which are: 1) Strategic benchmarking (which examines how organizations compete by analyzing strategic goals in search for alternative activities as part of the strategic planning process through comparison of strategic choices and dispositions made by other companies/organizations, for the purpose of collecting information to improve one's own strategic planning and positioning) (Andersen &Pettersen 1996, 5; Watson, 1993); 2) Performance benchmarking which compare organizational key processes, products and services that focuses on elements of price, technical quality, product or service features, speed, reliability and other performance characteristics leading to the assessment of competitive positions (Bogan& English, 1994, 7-9);3) Process benchmarking deals with learning to improve one's own selected processes by identifying the most effective operating practices from several organizations performing similar operational functions with the comparison and analysis aimed at focusing and describing the methods and activities that lie behind the identified performance improvement; and 4) Competence benchmarking advocates the idea that the foundation of organizational change processes lies in the change of actions and behavior of individuals and teams where Karlöf&Östblom (1996, 197) use the term "*benchlearning"* which also refers to a cultural changes in efforts to become a learning organization".

Most literature identified five main techniques of benchmarking: 1) ***Internal*** (where comparisons are made of different schools, programs, campuses, departments within the same university to identity best practices in the institution; 2) ***External competitive*** (where comparison of performance in key areas is based on information from institutions seen as competitors); 3) ***External collaborative functional/industry*** (involving comparisons with a large group of institutions who are not competitors) and 4) ***External trans industry or generic or best in class*** (that seeks to look across multiple industry for new and innovative "best practices" regardless of types or source);and 5) ***Implicit Benchmarking*** (where benchmarking variant are applied through market pressures of privately produced data, central funding or coordinating agencies within individual systems) (Alestete, 1995; Camp, 1989; Schofield, 1998).

Though there are several types of benchmarking, basically there are five main approaches in terms of methodologies of benchmarking: 1) ***Ideal type or "Gold" Standards*** (whereby a model like the MBNQA (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards) is created based on best practices and used as the basis to assess institutions on the extent of "fit" with the model; 2) ***Activity based***

(where a selected number of activities typical of or representative of the range of institutional provisions are analyzed and compared against selected institutions; 3) ***Vertical*** (which seeks to quantify costs, workloads, productivity and performance in a defined functional area; 4) ***Horizontal*** (seeks to analyze costs, workloads, productivity and performance of a single process that cuts across different functional areas in an institution; and 5) ***Use of comparative indicators***(which are based on privately or centrally collected and published datasets (Camp, 1989 and 1995; Spendolini, 1992; Schofield, 1998).

Underlying these methodologies are basically a five-steps process of: 1) determining what to benchmark; 2) forming a benchmarking team and planning the benchmarking study;3) identifying benchmarking partners and conducting the research;4) analyzing the data and information; and 5) taking actions and adapting the findings to the home institution (Watson, 1989; Spendolini, 1992). On the other hand Zairi (1996) presented a 16 steps two phase approaches which distinguished those actions to ensure effectiveness' of existing process and those that gain or benefits from: 1) transfer of knowledge from and to employees/organizations; 2) acquisition of specific knowledge lacking in the organization; and 3) development of the performance of managers by providing them with increasingly demanding tasks (Zairi, 1992, 6).

While benchmarking has made some inroads into HEIs, in USA and Canada, "benchmarking" in its true sense is not benchmarking, but is "typically a systematic generation of management information of performance indicators that can lead to identification of benchmarks, but do not extend to the identification of best practices within the institutions context, or "outside of the box" and are sporadic practices and continue to be "halting" (Schofield, 1998). The Australian experience is limited and confined to individual practices, and it needs more commitment to be seen as part of the core business of the HEI, and overcome problems arising from cultural and definitional differences implied in comparisons as interpreted by professionals (Massaro, 1998). In UK, while benchmarking is alive, it is still in its infancy that suggests worthwhile benefits (Lund, 1998). In Europe, benchmarking in HE is not common nor do they show a strict pattern of benchmarking as described in textbooks (Schreiterer, 1998). In summary, "benchmarking" in HEIs has diverse definitional and practical meaning to different institutions or countries depending on their context of "what is important" and what they want" which are influenced by the socio-political context of differing needs and expectations.

Performance Measurement and Benchmarking in HEI

In most HEIs, it is undisputed that "management through measurement" is an imperative performance measurement and management approach that accentuates informed decisions or actions of status of performance "as its stands at a specific point of time when measured" normally based on a set of measures that includes standards, criteria or performance indicators. These institutional, collegiate or programmatic performance measures are assumed to provide pre or post performance status to determine increased or deteriorating performance over a period of time. These should be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound) measure of efficiencies or effectiveness of inputs, processes, outputs and outcomes. As highlighted by Serrat's "The Perils of Performance Measurement" (2010), performance indicators can be misinterpreted, misunderstood or misused, due to (1) diverse definitions of indicators ranging from objective numerical measure of the degree to which an objective is being

achieved" to a more subjective "observable change or event that provides evidence that something has happened"; (2) complicated cause-effect relationships which can be caused by real world complexity beyond the control of agency's processes and outcomes focused approaches of outcome mapping (Earl, Carden, and Smutylo, 2010) which is a "methodology that can be used to create planning, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms enabling organizations to document, learn from, and report on their achievements" or the BSC (Balanced Scorecard) of Kaplan and Norton (1992), and (3) according to Behn (2003)'s performance which must have can have specified and specific purposes to evaluate, control, budget, motivate, promote, celebrate, learn, and improve, thereby, there is no single metrics for each of these 8 arch purposes for performance measures.

Stated or unstated, most HEIs aim for performance excellence or desired excellence. In Performance Excellence, there are two main proponent models of MBNQA or EFQM and other adapted / hybrid versions which inherently are based on two sets of performance criteria. These underlining performance criteria are the processes or enablers criteria (that subscribe more to Deming's PDCA – Plan, Do, Check and act, in its ADLI– *Approach, deployment, Learning and Integration* evaluators of its processes or enablers) and the result criteria (LeTCI - *Level, Trend, Comparison and Integration*) that normally are performance indicators or statistical performance data that are inevitably benchmarked through its comparatives.

As discussed above, while there are perils in the use of performance indicators, they should be defined within the context of the HEI with an identified purpose to best measure what they are supposed to measure. In addition, key performance indicators can be defined for their key educational and service support processes that create and deliver on educational value and results based criteria aimed for excellence. This inherently means that the performance measures are based on the performance scoring of the ADLI for evaluation of processes and LeTCI for evaluation for results or the numerical values of the results indicators itself.

These standpoints will open up other dimensions of internal benchmarking in HEIs, that needs re-thinking and re-design that can be used to compare the performances of different colleges within the institution or programs within the college based on a generic set of process and results performance criteria. This, as such, is the premise of the proposed approach for internal benchmarking which can be used for units within the same institutional umbrella or that collectively works towards a generic set of high level institutional or organizational mission as advocated in the following sections of this paper. The underlying assumption is that all units within the same institution or organization works towards the same institutional or organizational mission, and can be measured on the same internationally best practice yardstick as selected for that institution. These are evaluated based on a set of generic process and results based criteria applied generically across board all units, and are evaluated based on the same ADLI and LeTCI performance scoring system of the same process and results yardstick.

IQA Benchmarking and CQI (Continuous Quality Improvements)

At the core of any accreditation is CQI (Continuous Quality Improvements), which is a key outcome, and this outcome needs to be compared albeit with peer programs/institutions, to understand how well one is faring. As such, another key rationale for benchmarking is to ensure

that the CQI which is the foci and loci of learning how these learning and educational service support systems function and can be improved on to bring about better performance. It allows HEIs to identify, strategize, and implement activities and improvements or innovations to delivering educational value, on par or above par as compared to its peers and knowing that they are moving in the right direction. As such, CQI is basically the heart of any IQA of any HEI. Basically, most IQA quality management approaches evaluation can be approached in four ways of: measuring against defined objectives or standards set internally or externally; against measure of customer satisfaction; against expert and professional judgment; and against comparator institutions all over a defined time-scale (Schofield, 1998).

Dew and Nearing (2004) stated that changing the CQI "system" of an institution requires the implementation of:

- ***a scientific process*** of "developing an accurate description of the process, via flowcharting, the collection of data regarding the performance of the process, and the development of theories as to how the process can be changed to achieve the desired result",

- ***a socio-political process*** of "assembling the right group of people to study and modify the process, giving their efforts legitimacy on the campus, and providing them with the necessary time and access to data", and it is affected by the social cultural aspect of the university systems, its transforming leadership, staff empowerment, organizational learning (Schofield, 1998), organizational and individual capacity and capability (Teay, 2008, 2009) its resources and so on, and

- ***a technical process*** of "QMS (Quality Management System) which is a set of coordinated activities to direct and control an organization in order to continually improve the effectiveness and efficiency of performance" (Department of Trade and Industry UK, 1998) .

The QMS of a HEI normally constitutes the IQA of the HEI, and to support better performance, the internal processes can also be internally benchmarked across the different programs within a school or different schools within an institution. While benchmarking as discussed earlier is mostly external in nature, there is paucity in researching or the development of the internal benchmarking system for a HEI based on its processes and results based criteria. As such, this paper advocates that setting up an internal benchmarking system will contribute to better learning and sharing within the HEI itself towards better coordination and cooperation and sharing and learning towards more efficient and effective performance in the creation and delivery of education value of its processes and results criteria.

The IQA Case Study

KSA (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) launched its national accreditation requirement in 2007 that was strongly enforced in 2011. Illustrating this mandatory accreditation, the case study is the leading and oldest in KSA and a top ranked institution (in the 200 to 300 groupings) on all the world ranking systems, and was the first to be accredited in 2010 and re-accredited in 2017. To

comply with the previous NCAAA (National Commission on Academic Accreditation and Assessment) and present EEC-HES (Education Evaluation Commission – Higher education Sector), the institution established its own unique IQA system, the KSU – QMS (King Saud University Quality Management System). It follows the 11 Standards and 58 Sub-Standards of NCAAA that was adapted to a set of "process-based" criteria and "result-based" criteria of the MBNQA (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award) and the EFQM (European Forum for Quality Management.

The resulting KSU – QMS model (KSU, 2012) was a set of 58 process criteria and 56 results criteria (which is composed of 42 quantitative KPIs and 14 qualitative KPIs). It also adopted the MBNQA performance evaluation approach of using the ADLI (Approach, Deployment, Learning and Integration) for the "process" criteria and the LeTCI (Level, Trend Comparison and Integration) for the "results" criteria. The "process" and "results" criteria were assigned weights and the scoring is based on a 100% scoring range, all of which led to a weighted score that is based on 1000 points. This literally meant that there is a "performance score" for each of the process and result criteria. The protocol is for program to assess its own processes and results performance scoring i its SSR (Self-Study Report). The SSR was then submitted to the independent university appointed KSU – BOA(Board of Assessors) for performance assessment to ascertain the variances or differentials in performance scoring assessment. This ultimately led to the QPAR (Quality Performance Assessment Report) developed by the KSU – BOA which identified the performance scores for each of the criteria, the overall performance score out of 1000 points, the strengths and OFI (opportunities for improvements). Later the assessed program will close the CQI loop through the development of action plans, implementation of the action plans to address the OFIs, update the SSR which then leads to the second cycle of internal audit and assessment by the KSU – BOA. This is recursive and nurtured through a mentoring system of an appointed mentor for each of the school.

The Proposed Internal Benchmarking System

This methodology provides KSU with an objective performance assessment of the good practices within the 58 core processes in the 11 Standards, and a set of quantifiable institution prescribed 56 KPIs. This serves as the foundation and fundamentals of the proposed Internal Benchmarking System (Teay, 2013). With these quantifiable and objective performance scores of the processes and results based criteria based on the ADLI and LeTCI evaluation scheme and with the actual KPIs as computed, these can be used as the basis for performance comparisons based on a generic set of Standards and Criteria of:

- All Colleges within KSU as an institution;
- All programs within the same College as an entity;
- Colleges and its programs within a categorical grouping of Health Science Group, Humanities Group and Science Group.

The use of the 1000 points performance scoring system and the 22 sets of Results Criteria of its 56 KPIs (42 quantitative and 14 qualitative Key Performance Indicators) are the basis of the internal benchmarking system aimed at:

1. Providing an objective performance scoring of its process and results criteria which can be used as a set of internal benchmark to compare the performance of the Colleges in the Institution or the programs within the college as a whole.

2. Providing an objective set of 56 institution prescribed KPI that can be used as a comparison of the performance of the Colleges in the Institution or the programs within the college as a whole.

3. Providing a composite of comparative performance based on certain Standards and KPI as a comparison of the performance of the Colleges in the Institution or the programs within the college as a whole.

4. Providing an objective quality management system based on (1), (2) and (3) for continuous improvements and as a "internal ranking system" for the allocation of resources or awards or capital resources of:

    a. Financial support for quality initiatives
    b. Financial incentives for quality motivations

Based on the above rationale, the 5 different types of computation and analysis as proposed (combined with the purpose of the above clustering) can be used for internal benchmarking or as the basis of "ranking" of programs / schools within KSU (depending on the selection of the KPIs or areas or performance of its processes or results performance) based on objective performance evaluation as follows:

- **Type 1** Analysis and internal benchmarks (with 3 sub-types) are based on all the performance scoring of the 11 Standards and 58 processes and 56 KPIs ;

- **Type 2** Analysis and internal benchmarks (with 3 sub-types) are based on the performance scoring of selected group of Standards which the institution / college / categorical group desire, e.g. only the use of Criteria of Standards 1, 2 3, and 4, 10 only;

- **Type 3** Analysis and internal benchmarks (with 3 sub-types) are based on selected institutional KPI of Standards and does not use the performance scores of the processes, e.g. 14 selected KPIs from Standard 4 (Teaching and Learning) and 10 (Research);

- **Type 4** Composite Analysis and internal benchmarks (with 3 sub-types) are on performance scoring of selected Standards as a related categorical grouping and selected prescribed Institutional KPI, e.g. Process Criteria and KPIs of Standards 4 (Teaching and Learning) and 10 (Research);

- **Type 5** Composite Analysis and internal benchmarks (with 4 sub-types) are based on performance scoring of all Standards or selected Standards for a related categorical grouping and selected prescribed Institutional KPI in a group of similar College category e.g. only colleges in Health Science Group.

Using the analysis and approaches above, KSU can use this Internal Benchmarking System to determine the performance of each College / Programs / Categorical group and use their performance scoring and KPIs as the basis for "ranking" and "allocation of resources", the basis of informed decision making by the institution / college management. This illustration will only provide a sample discussion of a set of internal benchmarking system based on Type 1 and Type 4 analysis and discussion. Though the types of analysis as discussed are different, they use the same set of sample data for illustration purposes. For all types of analysis, there are 16 sub-types.

a) Type 1 Analysis based on all performance scoring Standards

Table 1: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons of INSTITUTION / COLLEGE / PROGRAM AS A WHOLE across different academic years for trend analysis

Scaled Scoring Performance Standards	**Weights**	**Performance Achievement (Institution / College / Program)**			
		2010	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
○ Standard 1: Mission and Objectives	40	8	21	25	29
○ Standard 2: Governance and Administration	50	10	21	25	32
○ Standard 3: Management of quality assurance and improvement	70	12	26	35	40
○ Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120
○ Standard 5: Student administration and support services	70	23	33	40	45
○ Standard 6: Learning resources	60	26	32	35	35
○ Standard 7: Facilities and equipment	60	22	35	37	37
○ Standard 8: Financial planning and management	40	15	19	20	20
○ Standard 9: Employment processes	80	28	36	40	45
○ Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
○ Standard 11: Institutional relationships with the community	80	8	11	30	35
Standards Overall Performance Score	**1000**	**261**	**374**	**487**	**568**

Discussion: This analysis is based on all the 11 Standards over a period of 4 years to provide a trend analysis of the comparative performance of the institution as a whole. It shows that there are progressive improvements in all the standards across the whole institution as a whole over a period of 4 years.

Table 2: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons of ALL COLLEGES WITHIN THE INSTITUTION in an academic year

Scaled Scoring Performance Standards	**Weights**	**Performance Achievement for AY 2015/2016**			
		College 1	**College 2**	**College 3**	**College 4**
○ Standard 1: Mission and Objectives	40	8	21	25	29
○ Standard 2: Governance and Administration	50	10	21	25	32
○ Standard 3: Management of quality assurance and improvement	70	12	26	35	40
○ Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120

Scaled Scoring Performance Standards	Weights	Performance Achievement for AY 2015/2016			
		College 1	College 2	College 3	College 4
○ Standard 5: Student administration and support services	70	23	33	40	45
○ Standard 6: Learning resources	60	26	32	35	35
○ Standard 7: Facilities and equipment	60	22	35	37	37
○ Standard 8: Financial planning and management	40	15	19	20	20
○ Standard 9: Employment processes	80	28	36	40	45
○ Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
○ Standard 11: Institutional relationships with the community	80	8	11	30	35
Standards Overall Performance Score	**1000**	**261**	**374**	**487**	**568**

Discussion: This analysis is based on all the 11 Standards to provide a snap shot of the annual comparative performance of all the colleges in the institution as a whole in an academic year 2013/2014. It shows that of the 4 colleges analyzed, compared and internal benchmarked; the best performing college is College 4, while the worse performing college is College 1. Based on this internally benchmarked performance on the same 11 Standards, the institution can take corrective or remedial actions, or for the allocation of resources and financial incentives.

Table 3: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons WITHIN SAME COLLEGE OF ITS DIFFERENT PROGRAMS in an academic year

Scaled Scoring Performance Standards	Weights	Performance Achievement for AY 2015/2016			
		Program 1	Program 2	Program 3	Program 4
○ Standard 1: Mission and Objectives	40	8	21	25	29
○ Standard 2: Governance and Administration	50	10	21	25	32
○ Standard 3: Management of quality assurance and improvement	70	12	26	35	40
○ Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120
○ Standard 5: Student administration and support services	70	23	33	40	45
○ Standard 6: Learning resources	60	26	32	35	35
○ Standard 7: Facilities and equipment	60	22	35	37	37
○ Standard 8: Financial planning and management	40	15	19	20	20
○ Standard 9: Employment processes	80	28	36	40	45
○ Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
○ Standard 11: Institutional relationships with the community	80	8	11	30	35
Standards Overall Performance Score	**1000**	**261**	**374**	**487**	**568**

Discussion: This analysis is based on all the 11 Standards to provide a snap shot of the annual comparative performance of all the programs in the College as a whole in an academic year 2013/2014. It shows that of the 4 programs analyzed, compared and internal benchmarked; the best performing college is Program 4, while the worse performing college is Program 1. Based on this internally benchmarked performance on the same 11 Standards, the institution or college

administration can take corrective or remedial actions, or for the allocation of resources and financial incentives.

b) Type 4 Composite Analysis based on performance scoring of selected Standards as a related categorical grouping and selected prescribed Institutional KPI

Table 4: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons and Institution / College / program related to Governance and quality of educational offers of INSTITUTION / COLLEGE / PROGRAM AS A WHOLE across different academic years for trend analysis

Scaled Scoring Performance	**Weights**	**Performance Achievement (Institution / College / Program)**			
		2013	**2014**	**2015**	**2016**
Standards related to quality of educational offers					
o Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120
o Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
Performance scores of quality of educational offers	***450***	***109***	***140***	***200***	***250***
Selected prescribed Institutional KPI		**2003 Score/KPI**	**2014 Score/KPI**	**2015 Score/KPI**	**2016 Score/KPI**
o Proportion of full-time equivalent students in proportion to the total number of full-time faculty members	3	0.08/60:1	1.09/50:1	1.5/30:1	1.89/10:1
o Percentage of the full-time faculty members obtaining academic or professional awards at the national or international level. (%)	3	0.60/0.02	0.62/0.03	0.62/0.03	1.28/0.05
o Proportion of students entering undergraduate programs who complete those programs in minimum time	3	0.08/0.12	0.49/0.33	0.9/0.55	1.77/0.85
o Proportion of full time member of teaching staff with at least on refereed publications during the previous year	5	0.38/0.05	0.69/0.25	0.69/0.25	2.19/0.35
o Number of citations in refereed journals in the previous year per full time equivalent teaching staff.	5	0.31/0.60	1.19/1.20	1.31/1.30	2.75/1.90
Performance scores of quality of educational offers and research	19	1.45	4.08	5.02	9.88
Overall Performance Score	469	**110.45**	**144.08**	**205.02**	**259.88**

Discussion: This type of analysis is a composite of select Standards and selected prescribed KPIs over a period of 4 years to provide a trend analysis of the comparative performance of the institution as a whole. It shows that there are progressive improvements in these selected Standards 4 and 10 that relates to "quality of educational offers" across the whole institution as a whole over a period of 4 years. It is also supported by the analysis of the selected prescribed institutional KPIs to provide an objective set of analysis and internal benchmark based on selected Standards and KPIs, which in this case are the KPIs related to "quality of teaching, learning and research". In this case, its shows that there are progressive improvements over a period of 4 years trend analysis as a whole.

Table 5: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons related to Governance and quality of educational offers of ALL COLLEGES WITHIN THE INSTITUTION in academic year

Scaled Scoring Performance	**Weights**	**Performance Achievement for AY 2015/2016**			
		College 1	**College 2**	**College 3**	**College 4**
Standards related to quality of educational offers					
o Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120
o Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
Performance scores of quality of educational offers	***450***	***109***	***140***	***200***	***250***
Selected prescribed Institutional KPI		**College 1 Score/KPI**	**College 2 Score/KPI**	**College 3 Score/KPI**	**College 4 Score/KPI**
o Proportion of full-time equivalent students in proportion to the total number of full-time faculty members	3	0.08/60:1	1.09/50:1	1.5/30:1	1.89/10:1
o Percentage of the full-time faculty members obtaining academic or professional awards at the national or international level. (%)	3	0.60/0.02	0.62/0.03	0.62/0.03	1.28/0.05
o Proportion of students entering undergraduate programs who complete those programs in minimum time	3	0.08/0.12	0.49/0.33	0.9/0.55	1.77/0.85
o Proportion of full time member of teaching staff with at least on refereed publications during the previous year	5	0.38/0.05	0.69/0.25	0.69/0.25	2.19/0.35
o Number of citations in refereed journals in the previous year per full time equivalent teaching staff.	5	0.31/0.60	1.19/1.20	1.31/1.30	2.75/1.90
Performance scores of quality of educational offers and research	19	1.45	4.08	5.02	9.88
Overall Performance Score	**469**	**110.45**	**144.08**	**205.02**	**259.88**

Discussion: This type of analysis is a composite of select Standards and selected prescribed KPIs to provide a snapshot of the 2013/2014 academic year trend analysis of the comparative performance of all the colleges in the institution as a whole. It shows that College 4 is the "best performing" while College 1 is the "worst performing" based on these selected Standards 4 and 10 that relates to "quality of educational offers" across the whole institution as a whole. It is also supported by the analysis of the selected prescribed institutional KPIs to provide an objective set of analysis and internal benchmark based on selected Standards and KPIs, which in this case are the KPIs related to "quality of teaching, learning and research". In this case, it supports the comparative performance of the Colleges based on the KPIs, and a combination of both the selected Standards and KPIs analysis as a whole.

Table 6: Sample of Performance Scoring Comparisons related to Governance and quality of educational offers WITHIN SAME COLLEGE OF ITS DIFFERENT PROGRAMS in an academic year

Scaled Scoring Performance	**Weights**	**Performance Achievement for AY 2015/2016**			
		Program 1	**Program 2**	**Program 3**	**Program 4**
Standards related to quality of educational offers					
○ Standard 4: Learning and Teaching	250	48	60	90	120
○ Standard 10: Research	200	61	80	110	130
Performance scores of quality of educational offers	***450***	***109***	***140***	***200***	***250***
Selected prescribed Institutional KPI		**Program 1 Score/KPI**	**Program 2 Score/KPI**	**Program 3 Score/KPI**	**Program 4 Score/KPI**
○ Proportion of full-time equivalent students in proportion to the total number of full-time faculty members	3	0.08/60:1	1.09/50:1	1.5/30:1	1.89/10:1
○ Percentage of the full-time faculty members obtaining academic or professional awards at the national or international level. (%)	3	0.60/0.02	0.62/0.03	0.62/0.03	1.28/0.05
○ Proportion of students entering undergraduate programs who complete those programs in minimum time	3	0.08/0.12	0.49/0.33	0.9/0.55	1.77/0.85
○ Proportion of full time member of teaching staff with at least on refereed publications during the previous year	5	0.38/0.05	0.69/0.25	0.69/0.25	2.19/0.35
○ Number of citations in refereed journals in the previous year per full time equivalent teaching staff.	5	0.31/0.60	1.19/1.20	1.31/1.30	2.75/1.90
Performance scores of quality of educational offers and research	19	1.45	4.08	5.02	9.88
Overall Performance Score	469	**110.45**	**144.08**	**205.02**	**259.88**

Discussion: This type of analysis is a composite of select Standards and selected prescribed KPIs to provide a snapshot of the 2013/2014 academic year trend analysis of the comparative performance of all the programs in the college as a whole. It shows that Program 4 is the "best performing" while Program 1 is the "worst performing" based on these selected Standards 4 and 10 that relates to "quality of educational offers" across the college as a whole. It is also supported by the analysis of the selected prescribed institutional KPIs to provide an objective set of analysis and internal benchmark based on selected Standards and KPIs, which in this case are the KPIs related to "quality of teaching, learning and research". In this case, it supports the comparative performance of the programs within the same College based on the KPIs, and a combination of both the selected Standards and KPIs analysis as a whole.

Implications and Discussion

Quality in HEIs have mostly tended towards "qualitative" rather than "quantitative" evaluation especially on the processes in most of the areas of governance, leadership, management, teaching and learning, research, learning resources, infrastructure and facilities, IQA system, financial and risk management, human resources management and societal responsibility, partnerships and

collaborations (Teay, 2012; CUC, 2006 and 2008) where most areas of quality performance are more similar than dissimilar. This is in addition to certain "proxy measures" that were developed to provide a measure of performance in terms of KPIs like progression rates, faculty-student ratio, research publications per faculty, number of societal responsibility projects, etc. etc. Teay (2014) conducted a comprehensive review of strategic and operational KPIs, as used in HEI and as identified in strategic plans, which were supported by CUC (2006) and Pollard, et.al. (2013) which identified 29 key areas where KPIs for HEIs performance measures could be developed.

But practically, though standards for academic performance and management were defined in most accreditation system, its performance assessment are most likely to be qualitative supported by evidence rather than an objective based evaluation of processes or results as used in MBNQA or EFQM for performance excellence assessment. Only one case of the Commonwealth University Benchmarking and Management Club (Wragg. 1998) usage of a scoring process for benchmarking was found. But these accreditation systems are still externalized systems, and normally most HEIs' IQAs are a mirror of the externalized accreditation Standards without a formalized internal system and is mostly qualitative in nature.

While aiming for a world-class" education in its KSU 2030 Strategic Plan, KSU has also set up an IQA system (KSU – QMS)that integrates the national standards and sub-standards with the MBNQA's approach in performance evaluation of ADLI and LeTCI and its scoring methodology aimed at comparison with "best practices" which is a fundamental foundation of MBNQA. Inadvertently, this IQA approach provided a "good practice", objective framework with strong fundamentals in evaluation and assessment of its processes and results and quantifiable approach towards an internal benchmarking system as discussed earlier. Though this paper has advocated a unique approach in developing an internal benchmarking system, there are key fundamentals that any HEIs applying such need to consider the following:

1. ***The HEI's socio-political system*** – Fundamentally, all HEIs are like any organization powered by and led by human (McNair and Leibfried, 1992). Capitalizing on the HEIs' human capitals means strengthening and sustaining its organizational and individual capacity and capabilities (Teay, 2008 and 2009), its strategic context and content of its direction and commitment towards society and delivering on its educational value. This calls for a close look into the leadership, its human empowerment(Schofield, 1998), its social-cultural dimensions of humanizing the teaching and learning, its social environments of collaborations and cooperation, sharing and learning, all of which are fundamentally the organizational and individual learning. It also calls for a strong and sustainable CQI (Dew and Nearing, 2004). The HEIs need to avoid the typical mistakes made in benchmarking as discussed earlier (Innovation Network, 1997). The very failure of this due to these mistakes or downplaying the importance and imperatives of the socio-political aspects of the HEI can undermine any initiatives or endeavors towards an efficient and effective IQA system for education sustainability.

2. ***The HEI's scientific system***(Dew and Nearing, 2004) – Education value creation and delivery is generic regardless of its discipline. As discussed earlier and evidenced by CUC (2006 and 2008) key areas of focus in all HEIs' educational system revolve around the same focused areas. This inadvertently mean that most of the core processes (Camp,

1989 and 1995; Chaffee and Scherr 1992; Clark, 1993) defining, supporting and accomplishing educational value creation and delivery should be designed and developed to maximize value and minimize cost in delivering educational values to the students by the academics and support staffs(Shafer &Coate, 1992; Watson, 1993). The education "value chain" that cuts across academic and administrative units could be re-focused or re-engineered to bring about the maximal processes value.

3. ***The HEI's technical system***(Dew and Nearing, 2004) –If the strong fundamentals of (1) and (2) above are developed, the technical aspects is less of an issue where information technology (APQC, 1993; Shafer &Coate, 1992) can make the number crunching, the academic processes management and the data and information management less of a burden and headache. This has been accomplished when KSU developed the electronic version of its IQA system in the form of the E-QMS which incorporates most aspects of course specifications and report, program specifications and report, the faculty portfolio system, the performance metrics system, the internal audit and assessment system, the SSR development system, all of which are interfaced with the university data warehouse, in the upcoming four years, KSU will move into the performance management system targeted at 2020. This will be the hallmark where the proposed internal benchmarking system will underscore the performance comparatives and management across the whole university.

Conclusion

While benchmarking is recognized as a must, there are still disparate and sporadic activities that systematically provides a benchmarking system across the different education systems in the world. Though much progress in benchmarking has been made in the US due to its institutional research approach and its central data system, it is still progressing when most HEIs are asked to provide benchmarking data or information. In developing countries, much need to be done especially at the central or national level to politically and socially instill this benchmarking culture and practice.

Though benchmarking is normally externalized in nature, there is no reason why a HEI do not or will not set up its own internal benchmarking system to drive performance through sharing and learning within its own system. This paper has illustrated that such a system can be established albeit the socio-political and the scientific aspects are dealt with conscientiously as the technical aspects supporting the internal benchmarking system is technology based. Such an internal benchmark system can be created through "out of the box" thinking and being open to innovative changes. It calls for strong leadership and commitment from one and all within the system.

In conclusion, the very fundamentals of the internal benchmarking system are not much different from the external benchmarks as both can offer "good o best practices" to be shared and learned. Both the internal and external benchmarking systems, used collectively, can represent a very strong approach towards CQI, which is what quality management in HEI is about.

References

Alestete, J.W., (1995), *Benchmarking in Higher Education: Adapting Best Practices to Improve Quality*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 5

Andersen, P. &Pettersen P.G., (1996), *The Benchmarking Handbook: Step-by-Step Instructions*. London: Chapman & Hall.

APQC (1993), American Productivity & Quality Center - *The Benchmarking Management Guide*, - Productivity Press - Cambridge - MA - USA

Bogan, C.E. & English, M.J., (1994), *Benchmarking for Best Practices: Winning through Innovative Adaptation*, McGraw-Hill., August 1, 1994

Behn, R., (2003), Why Measure Performance? Different Purposes Require Different Measures. *Public Administration Review*.September–October. Vol. 63, No. 5, pp. 586–606.

Camp, R.C. (1989), Benchmarking – the search for industry best practices that lead to superior performance, Milwaukee, WI, The American Society for Quality Control Press.

Camp, R.C. (1995), Business Process Benchmarking: Finding and Implementing Best Practices, Milwaukee, WI, The American Society for Quality Control Press.

Chaffee, E. &Sherr, L., (1992), *Quality: transforming postsecondary education*, ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report no. 3 (Washington DC, ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education).

CUC (Committee of University Chairs) (2006), CUC Report on the Monitoring of Institutional Performance and the Use of Key Performance Indicators (November 2006)

CUC (Committee of University Chairs) (2008), Report on the Implementation of Key Performance Indicators: Case Study Experiences(June 2008)

Department of Trade and Industry UK, (1998), From Quality to Excellence, www.dti.gov.uk/quality/qms

Dew, J.R. &Nearing, M.M., (2004), *Continuous Quality Improvement in Higher Education*, American Council on Education / Praeger Series on Higher Education, Praeger Publishers, Westport CT, August 30, 2004, pp 101

Earl, S., Carden, F., and Smutylo, T., (2010), *Outcome Mapping Building Learning and Reflection into Development Programs*, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa, Canada

Fielden, J., (1997) Benchmarking University Performance, CHFMS monograph, 1997

Innovation Network, (1994), Applying Benchmarking in Higher Education, Insight Series, Brentwood Tennessee, 1994

Pollard, E., Williams, M., Williams, Joy., Bertram, C. and Buzzeo, J., of IES (Institute for Employment Studies) and Drever, E., Griggs, J. and Coutinho, S., of NatCen (National Center for Social and Economic Research, entitled:

a. *How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators Part One: The Synthesis Report* (November 2013)
b. *How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators Part Two: The Evidence Report* (November 2013)

McNair, Carol J, and Leibfried, Kathleen H J, (1992), *Benchmarking: A Tool for Continuous Improvement*, HarperCollins, 1992

Kaplan, R.S and Norton, D. P. (1992). "The Balanced Scorecard – Measures That Drive Performance". *Harvard Business Review* (January–February): 71–79

Karlöf, B. &Östblom, S. (1995). *Benchmarking*.Tuottavuudellajalaadullamestariksi. Gummerus.

Kempner, D.E., (1993), The Pilot Years: The Growth of the NACUBO Benchmarking Project, NACUBO Business Officer 27(6), pp. 21 – 31

KSU (King Saud University) (2012), *KSU – QMS King Saud University Quality Management System*, 3rd Edition, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2012

Serrat, O. (2010). *The perils of performance measurement.*Washington, DC: Asian Development Bank.

Shafer, B.S. &Coate, L.E., (1992), Benchmarking in Higher Education: A Tool for Improving Quality and Reducing Cost, Business Officer, 26(5), pp. 28 – 35

Spendolini, M, (1992), *The benchmarking book*, New York :Amacom, c1992

UNESCO, (1998), *Benchmarking in Higher Education*, A Study conducted by the Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service, UNESCO, Paris.

- Schofield, A., An Introduction to Benchmarking in Higher Education
- Schofield, A., Benchmarking: An Overview of Approaches and Issues in Implementation
- Farquhar, R., Higher Education Benchmarking in Canada and the United States
- Massaro, V., Benchmarking in Australian Higher education, Lund, h., Benchmarking in the UK Higher Education

- Schreiterer, U., Benchmarking in European Higher Education
- Wragg, C., The Commonwealth University Management Benchmarking Club

Teay, S., (2008), Sufficiency and Sustainability: Institutional Capacity Building for HE, Proceedings of the 8th Annual SEAAIR Conference on Institutional Capacity Building toward HE Competitive Advantage in Surabaya, Indonesia, 4th – 6th November, 2008.

Teay, S., (2008), Sufficiency and Sustainability: Individual Capacity Building for HE, scholarly paper presented at the 48th Annual 2008 Association for Institutional Research Forum, Seattle, Washington, 24th May – 29th May, 2008

Teay S., (2009), Institution and Individual Sufficiency and Sustainability of the future HEI, Proceedings of 9th Annual SEAAIR (South East Asia Association for Institutional Research, 13th – 15th October 2009, Penang, Malaysia

Teay, S., (2012), Commonalities in Diversity, Proceedings in APQN 2012 Conference in Siem Reap, Cambodia from 28th February to 2nd March 2012.

Teay, S. (2013), KSU Internal Benchmarking System, Internal Research Paper of Deanship of Quality DoQ 1/2013, King Saud University, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 2013

Teay, S., (2014), *Developing Strategic KPIs of King Saud University*, King Saud University Research Report – Deanship of Quality DoQ # 1/2014,January – April 2014 G

Tuominen, K., (1993), *Benchmarkingprosessiopas*. Opijakehitäkilpailijoitanopeammin. Metalliteollisuudenkustannus.TammerPaino.

Tuominen, K., (1997), *Muutoshallinnanmestari*. Kuinkatoteuttaastrategisetsuunnitelmatkilpailijoita-nopeammin?SuomenLaatuyhdistys ry.

Watson, G.H., (1993), *Strategic Benchmarking – how to rate your company's performance against the world's best*, John Wiley, New York, USA

Zairi, M., (1992), *Competitive Benchmarking – An Executive Guide*, Technical Communications (Publishing) Ltd., Letchworth, UK.

Zairi, M., (1996).*Effective Benchmarking. Learning from the best*, London: Chapman & Hall.

INDONESIA AT A HIGHER EDUCATION CROSS ROAD: IS WCU[1] THE RIGHT PATH?

Dyah Kusumastuti and **Nirwan Idrus**
School of Postgraduate Programs, Widyatama University, Bandung, Indonesia

Abstract

Communication and other technologies have pervasively impacted everyday living including higher education. Continual changes are inescapable. Higher education will meet more than one cross-road in its life and they will be global. The pursuit of World Class University (WCU) status is therefore universal. Much has been written about WCU and there is no consensus on its definition. As we arrived at a *cross-road* a question may arise as to whether a path towards WCU status exists and is appropriate for higher education in a country like Indonesia? Being a giant in the region much of the changes have been somewhat sluggish also in higher education. Recent development in the country however, appears to instill confidence in its ability to take the right path. One of these confidence-enhancing developments is the National Higher Education Institutions Ranking system (NHEIRS) introduced in 2015. This paper outlines the potential of the NHEIRS in ushering Indonesia's higher education institutions towards the WCU status and discusses how it creates quality through empowerment. The conclusion is that there are significant potentials but the path is still onerous for Indonesia.

Introduction

Indonesia has more than 3000 higher education institutions of which only about 140 are public or state-owned. With a population of more than 250 million spread over 5000 kms from west to

[1] WCU = World Class University

east, it is perhaps understandable that the government is unable to satisfy the higher education needs of the people by itself.

Challenges facing higher education in Indonesia range from the lack of physical facilities to the dearth of qualified academics to teach and carry out research. It was not uncommon to have what became popularly known as *flying lecturers* who literally flew from Jakarta to provincial capitals to give lectures at a university there because it did not have qualified lecturers. Anecdotal evidence suggested that that system suited everyone. It suited the home university because it could not find funds to better remunerate lecturers; the provincial university for they were otherwise unable to mount the program of study concerned; the lecturers who simply had to have other jobs in order to maintain a reasonable family life and the government because it could meet access to higher education demanded by the people. Everyone seemed to be happy. However, the quality of higher education suffered as no one was doing any research while it is the second of the trinity foundation of higher education in Indonesia namely *Teaching*, *Research* and *Community Service* (Suryadarma & Jones, 2013; Kemristekdikti, 2016). However, with the size of population demands quickly exceeded supplies. As a result, there is a proliferation of private higher education institutions (PHEIs) in the country which brought with them a variety of challenges for the Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE). In addition to quality of education there is a plethora of non-educational matters that it has to *control* though a lot of them are not controllable by DGHE. These may include the study programs PHEIs choose to offer, students' entry criteria, exams system, study and other fees PHEIs may charge.

Given the problems cited earlier in respect of qualified academics, PHEIs opened up opportunities for public universities' academics closer to their *homes* rather than having to fly off to another province. In some cases public universities' academics ended up as heads of programs and even Deans of Faculties at PHEIs while keeping their positions at their home public universities. One could easily imagine the quality and standard of learning that resulted from such a system.

In addition, the study programs offered at PHEIs are necessarily limited to *chalk and talk* types as the science-based study programs would require facilities that are relatively expensive to have and which would significantly reduce profits for the PHEIs. As a result students aspiring to become engineers and scientists could only study in the already small number of and crowded state HEIs while the need for engineers were high to ensure the country's development.

Slowly PHEIs started to mount science-based study programs in some cases with very limited laboratory and workshop facilities and academics *borrowed* from state HEIs. Industrial Engineering appeared to be the sort of *Engineering* being taught by many PHEIs as it is basically a chalk and talk study program although known as an engineering program. The limited laboratory and workshop facilities obviously compromised the quality of the study programs.
What is clear from the above is that there was no research being done and research at universities in the country was not enculturalised. This relegated universities to being glorified high schools with the result that Indonesian university graduates were no more than high school graduates who cannot be assigned professional jobs.

A couple of *revolutions* later and international exposures that enhanced expectations of students' and parents' created unavoidable pressure on the government and universities both State-owned and Private to improve. The actions taken by those involved are discussed in the following sections.

1998 was a turning point

Without evoking the history of Indonesia it suffices to mention that there were two major *revolutions* that occurred in the country. The first was in the fight for independence in the mid to late 1940's and the second in 1965 against the Communists. However another significant event was the ousting of Indonesia's second President Suharto in May 1998 after ruling the country for more than 32 years by then.

While the country developed, corruption at all levels was also endemic during that period. Education did not escape the effects of the corrupt practices including the centralized control of all its aspects. Curricula were dictated by the Education and Culture Ministry as were teaching and learning methods. It is not surprising that the mode of learning was limited to *rote* in order to ensure effective indoctrination of state philosophy. However, this seemed to be then extended whether deliberately or not to what may seem to be minor items like uniforms, books, and stationery which provided monetary opportunities to certain groups that were allowed to control the provision of those items to schools.

There are many anecdotal examples of inefficiencies in schools and universities throughout the country with those further away from Jakarta suffering more.
All above contributed to the apathy amongst staff while *rote-learning* and the indoctrinizing environment prevented staff to think out of the box (Suryadarma & Jones, 2013). *Business as usual* went on despite rhetoric about democracy, empowerment and the crusades against corruption.

It took another five Presidents before a semblance of incipient democracy was observed.
President Joko Widodo who was elected in October 2014 is Indonesia's first President who has no ties to the establishment and he is also not a military man. His style is acutely different from previous Presidents and he got things moving in many areas including higher education.

His almost immediate decision following his election was to move the Directorate General for Higher Education from the Ministry of Education and Culture to the Ministry of Research and Technology. While this in itself was a momentous move, the change had started in 1998.

By way of an internationally-funded project being conducted then the Minister of Education and Culture and the Director-General for Higher Education initiated a program of modernizing state university management in the country by introducing the concept of State-Owned Legal Entity (SOLE). Through this reform, eligible state universities were given autonomy or empowerment in their management of both human and financial resources while a single line budget would still be provided by the government. This meant that the University President/Vice-Chancellor would no longer be appointed by the President of the country through the Minister of Education and Culture as has been the practice hitherto and universities were able to remunerate their staff, both

academics and administrative outside the civil services scale. However such empowerment would also mean a strengthening requirement of the governance of the university and a rigorous selection of management appointments.

The government led the way by changing the name of the Ministry from Education and Culture to National Education. Soon several of the recognized high-ranked universities applied for the new entity from among which some successfully gained the status. A Quality Assurance Handbook was produced by the DGHE in 2000 to assist in improving the quality of universities in the country (Idrus et al, 2000) commensurate with the incipient autonomy.

With empowerment comes responsibility. By 2003 universities were required by law (Law No. 20, 2003) to submit a range of data to DGHE at the end of each semester and a database was created at DGHE.

Changes in governments and ministers over the ensuing period regrettably reversed the higher education situation in the country back to 1998 with SOLE being abandoned and centralized control of public universities reinstated. However, the impacts of responsible empowerment had by then been tasted by universities and a complete disbanding of SOLE was not to be accepted unchallenged. A version of SOLE was later instituted and with DGHE being moved to the Ministry of Research and Technology by the 7th Indonesian President, the principles of empowerment appear to be acknowledged.

The pursuit of WCU

The pursuit of WCU had been driven by the national needs for higher education to be globally recognized (Salmi, 2009) and was reinforced by the publication of the world ranking of universities (The World University Ranking, 2017). However, there has not been any consensus about it as stated below:

> "…*everyone wants one, no one knows what it is, and no one knows how to get one*…"
>
> (Altbach 2004, quoted by Salmi, 2009)

The question then is, how one could pursue it when one does not know how to define it and what one has to do to get it.

In some countries the global recognition would give them competitive edge to become and maintain a status of *the most sought after university* to study at, to attract the brightest students as well as staff and to park donations at by corporations. The Ivy League universities in the USA would be such, as are Oxford and Cambridge in the UK.

In other countries, however, the exercise of pursuing WCU could be costly with little or no return and relevance. This is particularly so as the university world ranking and WCU are *moving*

targets with respect to the criteria used in determining such ranking and recognition from year to year.

In developing countries such as Indonesia priority has to be given to *access* by its eligible population to higher education. Nevertheless, continuous quality improvement in all aspects of its higher education must be undertaken at the same time. Salmi (2009) summarized what appear to be the requirements for establishing a WCU as shown in Figure 1.

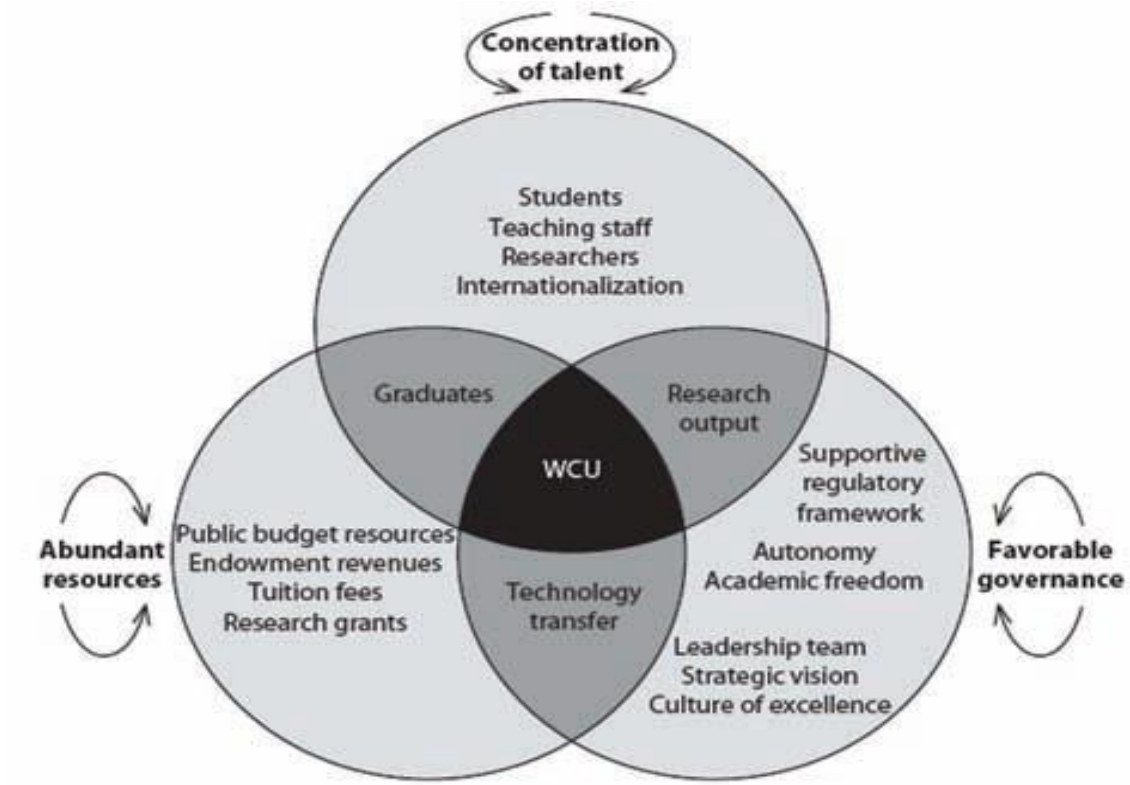

Fig. 1 – Summarized requirements to establish a WCU
(after Salmi, 2009)

Clearly, three macro but primary conditions need to be met, viz. the *Concentration of Talents*, *Abundant Resources* and *Favourable Governance*, each in turn produces tangible results namely *graduates, technology transfer* and *Research output* respectively that overlap to form WCU.
It goes without saying that each of these primary conditions must be of quality; otherwise their resulting overlaps will not produce a WCU. To achieve this, every 'Graduates', 'Technology transfer' and 'Research output' must also be of quality and in their turn all the items listed in each of the overlapping circles must also be of quality. It is recognized that even these will have building blocks in each which have to be of quality.

Is Indonesia ready to meet these requirements?

Considering the *Macro Primary* requirements above it would seem predestined that we look at evidences from the past and the characteristics of the people affected by them.

Personal experiences after 5 years living in Indonesia (Idrus, 2003) are echoed by others and summarized in *Facts and Details* (2015), Suryadarma & Jones (2013) and Whidiarto (2014). Two characteristics and behaviours that are prominent, conspicuous and relevant in this discussion are the *feeling of shame/pride* and *loyalty to hierarchical structures*. With the incipient and fledgling democracy in the country especially after President Joko Widodo's election, some changes to these two characteristics are beginning to be noticed though relatively small at the moment.

Shame/Pride are dichotomies with *Pride* normally being evoked when the *shame* was unbearable. One therefore tries not to be shamed and to shame others, for the result could be a show of pride and thus shames the one who 'humiliates'. Hence everyone holds back anything unpleasant and an error becomes an oversight and needs not be highlighted. This is exacerbated by the *loyalty to hierarchical structures* for those higher up in the structure expects no insubordination even if delivered in the nicest manner and the lower downs know exactly what might happen to them if they do so.

These translate in education and higher education to the belief that *teachers/lecturers/ professors* know best while students are simply austere recipients of their wisdom. Arguably this is likely the reason for *rote-learning* system thriving in the country and for the profound difficulties to introduce any other and more effective learning systems. One also wonders how candid discussion on research results for example could occur especially say between a PhD candidate and his/her Supervisor. Perhaps as a result peer comments may also not be entertained.

The question then is how could one develop *talents* when new ideas are hardly entertained by higher-ups? As a consequence even the higher-ups would be unable to develop their own talents. Similarly with products of research namely papers for publication which do not get a thorough and rigorous internal review before being sent to international journals for consideration of publication and thus resulting in it being rejected.

With respect to resources, Indonesia in fact allocates 20% of its budget (for 2016 it is IDR 2,095.7 Trillion) to education (Indonesia Investments, 2015). This is about IDR 420 Trillion (or approximately USD 32 billion) and up by about USD 5 billion from 2014. OECD data for 2013 showed that the proportion of public spending for non-tertiary to tertiary education is in the ratio of 1.184/2.095 (OECD, 2013). Thus for 2016, tertiary education would have got USD 20.4 billion while non-tertiary got USD 11.6 billion. With about 140 state tertiary institutions in the country, each tertiary institution therefore would be allocated USD 146 million on average. Given that a small country like New Zealand has an education budget that is 7 times that of Indonesia's per student and there are multiple times of students in Indonesia compared to New Zealand, the average amount of USD 146 million per tertiary institution in Indonesia is nowhere near what is required in terms of 'abundance' meant in Fig. 1.

Given the historic characteristics and behaviour of Indonesians stated earlier, it is also an uphill battle to meet the requirements of favourable governance. The hierarchical loyalty syndrome of Indonesians deprived them of exposure to governance that is so essential in for example to achieve a culture of excellence. Similarly is the case with autonomy and empowerment.

Clearly Indonesia's education and higher education are still a long way from achieving a WCU state. This does not mean that it cannot be accomplished but in good time and with a lot of effort and changes that must be owned and accepted by everyone.
Indeed a relatively simple *modernization* of higher education, such as the acceptance and implementation of *blended learning* even in the Asia-Pacific region had left Indonesia behind (Lim and Wang, 2016) while this exercise is only a microcosm of efforts toward WCU.

The journey has started

Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, incipient changes in education and higher education in Indonesia had started in 1998 and one of the first government laws about collecting data on universities was enacted in 2003. Regrettably no further changes of significance occurred until the election of President Joko Widodo in 2014. One of his earliest decisions almost immediately after his installation as President of the country was to move the Directorate General for Higher Education to the Ministry of Research and Technology. This was a major change in higher education in Indonesia. It signaled the importance of research in higher education which is strongly underlined in any of the world's university ranking systems.

Soon after, the State-Owned Legal Entity (SOLE) university model introduced in 2000 and was rescinded by an intervening Minister of Education and Culture, was revamped and instituted as Higher Education Institution – Legal Entity (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri – Badan Hukum*). The new Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (MoRTHE) affirmed empowerment to HEIs in a document that also announced the revitalization of the DGHE Database and the associated responsibility requirements of HEIs per the *Legal Entity* status (MoRTHE, 2015). Importantly, it also announced the National Higher Education Institutions Ranking System (NHEIRS), a move that is argued here as a significant step in both materially empowering HEIs and opening the door towards modernizing HE in Indonesia. In the following sections this paper will show how this system provides the light at the end of the higher education tunnel in Indonesia.

The NHEIRS

Recognition of excellence is important in its own right. There are a number of world ranking systems in the world, for example The Times Higher Education and the Jia Tong World University ranking systems.

What are the criteria used by the NHEIRS?

The 2015 Indonesian HEIs ranking system used four criteria (Kemenristekdikti, 2016) as follows:

- ***Quality of academics*** – measured by the percentage of staff with Professorial status; the percentage with PhD; the sum of these percentages is converted to a number between 0 and 4 using a pre-determined scale

- ***Quality of management*** – measured by the overall/institutional accreditation level; the percentage of study programs with A and B accreditation; again the achievement is converted to a number between 0 and 4 using a pre-determined scale

- ***Quality of students*** – measured by the prestige they gained at the National Students' Week (PIMNAS); again the achievement is converted to a figure between 0 and 4 using a pre-determined scale

- ***Quality of research*** – measured by the number of documents and scientific papers published in Scopus indexed instruments/journals by academics; again the total publication is converted to a number between 0 and 4 using a pre-determined scale

The weighting used in calculating the Total Score for each HEI is 0.3, 0.3, 0.1 and 0.3 respectively. The Total Score is the number used in establishing the rank of the HEIs.

Why is *NHEIRS* significant

- For the first time in the history of the country all 3,240 higher education institutions are ranked

- The ranking is available to the public as are the criteria used to rank HEIs

- It forms a reward for those HEIs that had spent efforts in continually improving themselves as the ranking recognizes them through the ranks they get and the attendant financial advantages through potentially increased enrolment

- It is a manifestation of empowerment of HEIs by the government. While HEIs are obligated by law (Law No.20, 2003) to submit required data at the end of each semester, the accuracy and veracity of the data are completely under the control of the HEIs. Erroneous data impact on the HEIs' rankings one way or other. There are sanctions on HEIs who submitted superfluous data to improve their ranks. By the same token HEIs that missed to report data due to their lack of proper management will suffer ranks below what they deserve. At least one HEI that is normally considered to be in the top 100 ended up between 900 and 950 because apparently it missed to submit data on one of the criteria above or that the data are unacceptable.

- It is one of the few known obligatory government requirements that carefully avoids duplicated collection of data by the HEIs. The ranking criteria use data already available either at the HEIs or in government agencies, e.g. the National Accreditation Board – Higher Education. This is a refreshing change that potentially eliminates unnecessary (and expensive) tasks and therefore costs as time and effort saved could be spent usefully elsewhere.

- By declaring that the rank criteria are not *set in concrete* the DGHE and the government are proclaiming that *the only constant is change* and that they are not always right. This is another refreshing signal from the Joko Widodo administration.

- With the confidence that HEIs will attempt to improve their ranks the NHEIRS is providing the impetus for them to delve into the quality of their systems and management for only quality systems and management will produce the desired results and data to be submitted to the DGHE at the end of each semester.

Overall, the NHEIRS can be seen to be an instrument used by the Indonesian government to develop HEIs in Indonesia toward global level institutions that have the initiatives to be fully committed to producing human capital to meet the country's developmental needs as well as global requirements. It is a clear lead given by the Indonesian government that it is weaning itself off natural resources to survive. In other words Indonesia is now entering the *Knowledge Society*.

How does the NHEIRS impact on Indonesia's journey towards WCU?

As shown in Figure 2, the Indonesian NHEIRS is attempting to address one of the macro primary requirements namely *Concentration of talents* leaving *Favorable Governance* and *Abundant Resources* for later.

It would appear that this approach is realistic and logical knowing that the reputation of Indonesian HEIs, their teaching and learning system and research competence of their academic staff still need significant upgrading (Whidiarto, 2014). As shown in Fig. 2 there is good structural matching between the NHEIRS criteria and the elements of the WCU's *Concentration of Talents* requirement. By addressing the shortfalls in these elements Indonesian higher education is mobilized toward WCU's path.

However, the structural consideration has to be followed by substance and this is facilitated by the quality requirements of the NHEIRS criteria. It is heartening to note that DGHE has already declared that these requirements will be updated and modified as necessary.

At the same time improvements on the quality proxies of the criteria will need to be effected. The quality measure of academics for example, uses the percentages of staff with PhD and holding professorial status, without any riders. As is well known the standard of PhDs varies from awarding university to awarding university and even from one faculty of the same university to another faculty. Similarly is the case with professorial titles. As it is not the right of governments to devalue qualifications including PhDs, DGHE has very quickly moved in line with the government's aim to improve research in the country's universities, by specifying the number of research publications academics to produce per year in order to retain their allowances. Those with professorial titles have to meet a more rigorous specifications than lecturers and the rescinding of allowances is effective immediately (PerMenristekdikti, 2017).

As is the case in developed countries, research is not just measured by the number of research publication in good journals, but also the number of times the papers were cited by other authors (The World University Ranking, 2017). It is understandable that DGHE is not able to require Indonesian academics to publish papers in good journals and get cited aplenty. So publication in Scopus-indexed journals seems appropriate for now.

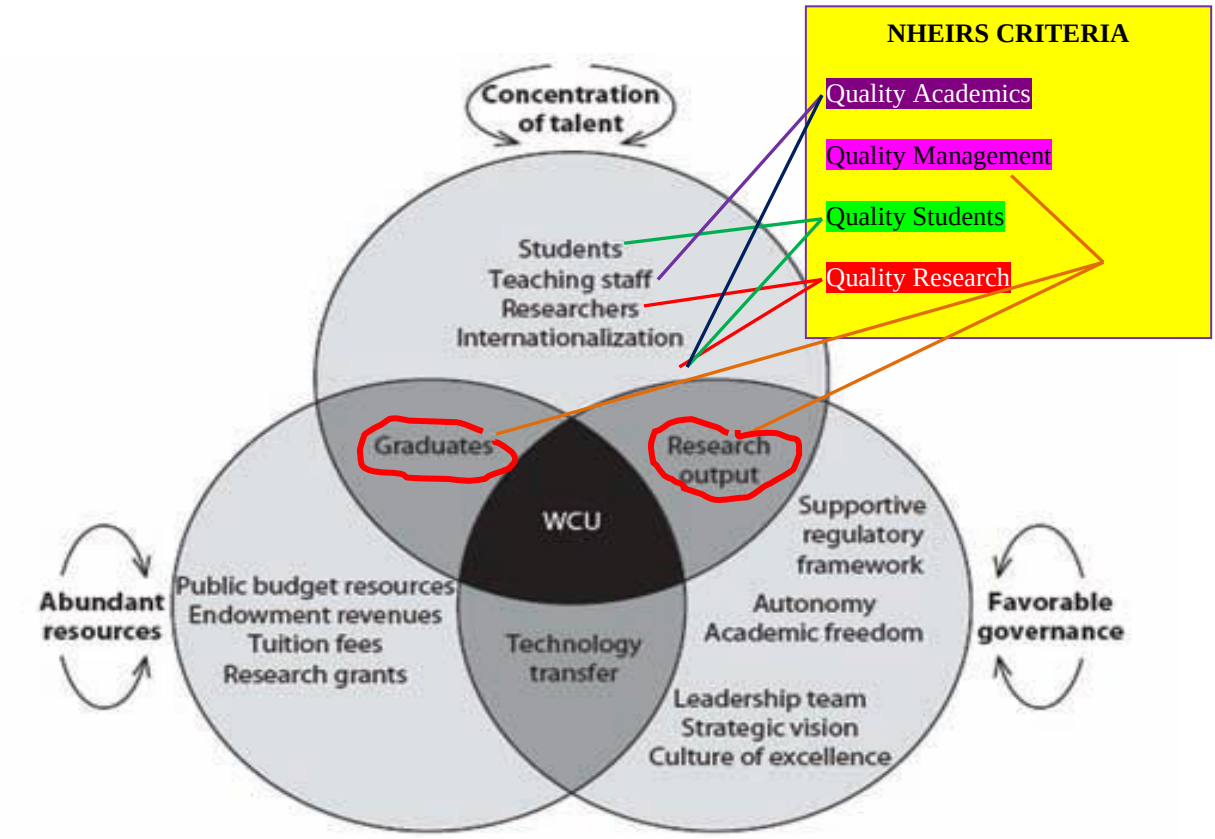

Figure 2 – Matching elements of WCU with NHEIRS criteria

Quality of students also needs other measures other than PIMNAS and DGHE has already stated that additional measures are being looked at (Kemenristekdikti, 2016).

In terms of *Internationalization*, teaching staff, students and researchers are directly involved with the HEI managing it.

It is clear that the NHEIRS closely trails one of the three macro primary requirements of WCU. With DGHE's commitment to continual improvements in the criteria as evidenced by continuing new and modified rules governing research and teaching it is safe to conclude that the Indonesian government is moving forward towards WCU though slowly and in a considered pace.

Nevertheless as shown in Fig 2, a WCU cannot exist without the other two macro primary requirements met as well. So the Indonesian government through DGHE will need to either already have planned or in the process of planning the execution of the other two macro primary requirements. To some extent the *Favorable Governance* requirements may fall into place when the elements of the *Concentration of Talents* requirements are met successfully since for example *culture of excellence* in the *Favorable Governance* requirements would have been cultivated alongside improvements in academics, management, research and students quality in the NHEIRS criteria.

Thus NHEIRS is a positive if incipient move towards quality improvements in higher education in the country. Provided that the momentum of change initiated by the government is continued on to the other two macro primary requirements of WCU, Indonesian HEIs are aligning along the path towards WCU status.

Conclusion

Higher education in Indonesia has been centrally controlled for many decades since independence. As a result HEIs had not enjoyed autonomy as they do in developed countries. Under the administration of the 7th President, serious attempts are being made to improve higher education in the country realizing that knowledge-based economy is inevitable. Human capital, university management and research are evaluated through the National Higher Education Institutions Ranking system using quality-based criteria aligned to the requirements of WCU status. Consistent with this administration's trademark of action popularly known as "*work, work, work*", rules implementing the details of decisions related to the changes above are already put into practice. These include non-payment of allowances to academics for failure to meet the new requirements.

The NHEIRS is a good starting point even though there is still a long road towards WCU. Whether WCU is the ultimate goal or not is still subject to how successful are the universities and other higher education institutions in the country able and manage to reform themselves given the seemingly austere guidance by the government.

References

Facts and Details, 2015 *Indonesian characters and personality* http://factsanddetails.com/indonesia/People_and_Life/sub6_2a/entry-3987.html accessed 21 Oct 2016

Idrus N, Buchara U, Sukisno and Jones M (2000) *Quality Assurance Handbook* Engineering Education Development Project, Directorate General for Higher Education, Jakarta, Indonesia

Idrus N (2003) *Indonesia: A blueprint for strategic survival* Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta, Indonesia. ISBN979-8026-80-2

Indonesia Investments (2015) *Politics of Indonesia – House approves 2016 State budget* http://www.indonesia-investments.com/news/todays-headlines/politics-of-indonesia-house-approves-2016-state-budget/item6103 accessed 11 Nov 2016

Indonesian Law (2003) *Undang Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional* about National Education System accessed 1 October 2016 through http://www.dikti.go.id

Kemenristekdikti [Ministry of Research Technology and Higher Education)(2016) *Rencana Strategis 2015 -2019 Kementerian Riset, Teknologi dan Pendidikan Tinggi* [Strategic Plan 2015-

2019 of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education] Kemenristekdikti, Jakarta, Indonesia. accessed 1 October 2016 through http://www.dikti.go.id

Lim C P and Wang L(Eds) (2016) *Blended Learning for Quality Higher Education: Selected Case Studies on Implementation from Asia-Pacific,* United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris and Bangkok, ISBN 978-92-9223-565-9

MoRTHE (2015) *Permenristek No. 13, 2015* (Ministerial Decree No. 13, 2015) Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, Jakarta, Indonesia accessed 1 October 2016 through http://www.dikti.go.id

MoRTHE (2016) *Klasifikasi dan Pemeringkatan Perguruan Tinggi 2016* [The classification and ranking of Higher Education Institutions 2016] available as pdf on the following, accessed on 1 October 2016 through http://www.dikti.go.id

OECD Report (2013) *Education spending data* https://data.oecd.org/eduresource/education-spending.htm#indicator-chart accessed 11 Oct 2016

PerMenristekdikti (2017) *Minister for Research, Technology and Higher Education Decree No. 20, 2017,* enacted on 27 January 2017

Salmi J (2009) *The challenges of establishing World-class universities* The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development/The World Bank, Washington DC, USA ISBN 978-0-8213-7865-6

Suryadarma D and Jones G (2013) *Education in Indonesia* Institute of South East Asian Studies, Singapore

The World University Rankings(2017), https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/2017/world-ranking#!/page/0/length/25/name/Trisakti University/sort_by/rank/sort_order/asc/cols/stats

Widhiarto H (2014) Amid soaring education budget, performance remains low, The Jakarta Post, Oct 18, 2014

PERCEPTIONS OF UNIVERSITY PROFESSORS IN TAIWAN TOWARDS INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCE AND SOCIAL CAPITAL: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL PERSPECTIVES

Sophia Shi-Huei HO
Graduate School of Educational Administration and Evaluation, University of Taipei

Robin Jung-Cheng CHEN
Department of Education, National Cheng-Chi University

Michael Yao-Ping PENG
Department of Business Administration, Hsuan-Chuang University

Abstract

Changes in social systems have demonstrated that various structural disadvantages have jointly led to increasing competition among higher education institutions (HEIs) in many countries, especially Taiwan. As the major concerns of HEIs are teaching, service, and research outcomes, this paper describes a nationwide evaluation of institutional performance in relation to management of HEIs. The study seeks understandings about the perceptions of faculties from Taiwanese HEIs regarding institutional resources, relations and performance, and adopts a survey approach. After choosing 30 HEIs of various sizes and from different geographical regions, 926 aculties were selected randomly as participants. Using structural equation modeling and ANOVA, this study explores the relationship among the variables. The results show that all relationships among the variables are statistically significant and positive, while significant mean differences were found between at least two groups. Finally, based on the results, this study provides some discussions, suggestions and managerial implications for HEIs and future studies

Keywords: Higher education; institutional performance; institutional resource; social capital.

Introduction

As the people-to-people competitive mode extends to the state-to-state one, globalized competition is becoming increasingly fierce and playing an ever-more important role in the development of higher education, so that the demographics and sizes of classes in higher education institutions (HEIs) have changed accordingly. Due to the ever-changing nature of higher education, the previous static view cannot be applied to the current environment. Specific to the changes seen in HEIs, it is of great significance to ensure the quality and fairness of teaching and learning (Maringe & Sing, 2014).

In 2014, the stagnant economy has led to the total fertility rate (TFR) down to 1.11 in Taiwan, as compared with Japan 1.40, South Korea 1.25 and Singapore 0.80. Besides, Taiwan's college enrollment rate by college entrance examination is above 95% in recent years. In this connection, Taiwanese HEIs have been approaching saturation in terms of their development intensity, so as to their education pattern has been transformed from elite education to mass education (Taylor et al., 2013). In particular, after joining the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001, Taiwan opened up the education market, which brought about fiercer competition among HEIs, and, in turn, new dilemmas and challenges (Shin & Harman, 2009). These various disadvantages have jointly caused the imbalance between supply and demand of the higher education market. Therefore, exploring the development and performance of Taiwanese HEIs is an interesting research avenue, and the results will be also beneficial to HEIs of different countries in similar situations.

By referring to discussions in the literature about organizational management, we can further understand the keys to success. From a systematic viewpoint, factors that influence organizational operations can be roughly divided into internal and external. In terms of internal factors, scholars have focused on the quantity and attributes of internal resources using the resource-based view (RBV) (Barney, 1991). They have suggested that the development and performance of an organization depends on the quantity of resources it owns (Barney, 1991). Furthermore, the corresponding measurement of resources is classified into reputation (Boyd et al., 2010) and slack resources (O'Shea et al., 2005; Su et al., 2009; Voss et al., 2008), which are essential factors within the RBV.

Although the internal resource perspective emphasizes that the conditions of development and operation can be created by HEIs internally, it neglects the channels by which external resources and knowledge are acquired (Walter et al., 2006). Due to the intangibility, ambiguity, and social embeddedness of knowledge and resources, external relations have become key factors in absorbing external resources (Leana & Pil, 2006). The emergence of the relational perspective complements the shortcomings of the RBV, and external relations contribute substantially to the performance of HEIs. Relational resources may be derived from HEIs both internally and externally, and bring benefits to organizations simultaneously (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Therefore, studies focused on both internal and external factors should extend the theory and concept for combination with multi-type social capitals.

In exploring the influence of social capital and resources on HEI performance, we must take into account the fact that there are notable differences between Taiwanese HEIs in terms of sizes and

geographical features. Differences in the light of institutional size will help us understand which HEIs have better perceptions of performance in each factor, and what priority tasks for these HEIs are in order to enhance performance, according to their size. Besides, examining HEIs with reference to their regions is also important since regions vary in terms of their infrastructure and industrial structure. While northern Taiwan includes the most and largest HEIs, which have well-established physical and human resources, many southern HEIs struggle with a lack of resources. Therefore, it is of great significance to account for the size and geographic location of HEIs when investigating faculties' perceptions of institutional resources and social capital.

However, this study will contribute to drawing a clear picture of the current situation in Taiwanese HEIs in terms of faculties' levels of perception of, and the relationships between, institutional resources, social capital, and performance. It is aimed to improve HEIs' governance in resource investment and performance, so as to face the highly variable educational market situation and cross-country and cross-region competitive pressures. Also, through investigation and understanding of HEIs in Taiwan, inference is drawn on countries with similar population structure and development of higher education system, like Japan and South Korea.

Literature Review

Resources of Higher Educational Institutions

The RBV emphasizes that the exploration of "internal" organizational resources is a type of strategic logical behavior (Barney, 1991). Although the RBV has been widely used and developed in studies conducted on for-profit organizations, it can also help us to understand the operation of HEIs for the following reasons. Firstly, HEIs look for survival and development opportunities in a competitive environment that often entails dramatic changes to the industrial structure (O'Shea et al., 2005), but the competition between HEIs for financial and human capital resources mainly lies in raising research funds and recruiting suitable teachers and students (Boyd et al., 2010). Secondly, similar to enterprises, HEIs often suffer from resource shortages, while maintaining institutional operations and academic research requires huge expenditures; thus, administrators must make additional efforts to keep resources effectively and efficiently (Ryan, 2005). Moreover, although HEIs have previously been able to avoid market competition, the current low birth rate in Taiwan has intensified inter-institutional competition, which is as fierce as perfect competition (Powers & McDougall, 2005). Therefore, with respect to the attributes of resources that influence the development of HEIs, this study aims to evaluate the attributes of both tangible and intangible resources, where the tangible resource view focuses on institutional slack and the intangible resource centers on reputation (Powers & McDougall, 2005; Ryan, 2005).

Institutional Slack

In strategic and organizational studies, size is always deemed a significant variable. Some theories hold that, compared to smaller organizations, large organizations were provided with competitive advantages because of more slack resources. These potential and available resources can be used to realize the organization's goal and ensure ideal performance of the organization through transfer or reallocation. Under the high uncertainty of education policy transformation,

the influence of slack on the performance of Taiwanese HEIs is especially important (Su et al., 2009; Tan & Peng, 2003).

Institutional Reputation

The RBV regards reputation as a type of intangible asset consisting of internal investment and external evaluation (Dowling, 2001; Roberts & Dowling, 2002). From this perspective, reputation can be defined as a series of general organizational characteristics (Roberts & Dowling, 2002). The value generated from the relationship between these characteristics will develop into causation and competitive advantages, and will finally generate performance advantages (Barney, 1991; Boyd et al., 2010). Specifically, reputation can also lower uncertainty through the transfer of valuable information. In studies on educational institutions, scholars have defined reputation according to (1) a social cognition, such as knowledge, impression and feeling; and (2) social cognition depending on the minds of external observers (Boyd et al., 2010).

Social Capital

Social capital was defined as "the aggregate of the actual potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 248). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) regarded social capital as a kind of organizational resource, and defined it as the current or potential embedded resources obtained by individuals or social units, or transferred from social relationships.

Kharouf, Sekhon, and Roy (2014) indicated, from the perspective of building strong ties with students, that enhancing students' trust on HEIs would be helpful to raise student satisfaction and retention, and furthermore provide an effective word-of-mouth description of their respective HEIs. However, drawing from the arguments of Adler and Kwon (2002), and Leana and Pil (2006), this study discusses the relationship between social capital and HEI performance, and verifies the results from an integrated viewpoint. Here, social capital can be considered as being divided into internal and external.

Internal Social Capital

Internal social capital can be defined as structural and relational content between individuals within the organization (Adler & Kwon, 2002). Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) summarized previous studies and proposed that social capital consists of structural, relational, and cognitive dimensions. The structural dimension presents all the patterns of ties between network members, and explores whether they can obtain an advantageous position in the relationship network. Another role that information sharing plays in enhancing competitive advantages is encouraging individuals to learn in a context of profound meaning (Leana & Pil, 2006). In the relational dimension, relationships are accumulated via a long-term interactive process (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998) in which behavioral norms are developed between members by mutual trust, shared value, and interpersonal recognition. In particular, trust is the key factor in establishing a social network, which means that organizations should trust that members have the ability and

willingness to exchange or combine knowledge, and lower the risk inherent in knowledge exchange (Kharouf et al., 2014; Leana & Pil, 2006). The cognitive dimension involves the common expression, interpretation, and implications of social members, which can unify the behaviors of individuals.

External Social Capital

External social capital mainly relates to the repeated connections (resources, relationships, and information) between a group of actors (individuals, groups, and organizations); it also explores why actors conduct specific interactions in different environments, what results will be produced by such interactions, and the position of the actors in the relationship network (Laursen et al., 2012). With the opening of Taiwan's education market, the educational environment became much less easy to predict and control. In addition to exploiting existing resources and capabilities more effectively, HEIs should also establish partnerships with other organizations in order to obtain more knowledge and abilities, to overcome the challenges brought about by the environment, and maintain competitiveness (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Leana & Pil, 2006). Therefore, establishing external social capital will facilitate institutions to share risk and new technology, enter the market, and supplement each other with economies of scale and technological advantage.

Methodology

Sample and Data Collection

The research was conducted in Taiwan and the survey employed a stratified random sampling method to collect data from 63,238 full-time faculties of 161 Taiwanese HEIs. The database is taken from the annual list published by website of MOE, which conducts all information of Taiwanese HEIs. While assembling the sample for the study, location (northern, central and southern), classification I (public university and private university), classification II (general university and university of technology) and size (large, medium and small) served as the criteria for HEIs selection, since these were assumed as defining features of HEIs in Taiwan. Accordingly, 30 HEIs in defined size (3 large, 9 medium and 18 small), location (10 HEIs each), classification I (15 HEIs each) and classification II (15 HEIs each), were randomly selected, and about 3.2–7.0% of faculties at each HEI were randomly selected in turn. The survey packages were sent by post to a total of 2,000 faculties of 30 HEIs in 2014. Each survey package contained a covering letter explaining the survey purpose, a survey instrument and a postage-paid envelope.

A total of 926 valid survey instruments were returned, for an effective response rate of 46.3%. According to the data gathered, 588 of the faculties (63.5%) were from northern HEIs; 209 (22.6%) from central ones; and 129 (13.9%) from southern ones. Specifically, there were 301 faculties (32.5%) from small HEIs, 443 (47.8%) from medium ones, and 182 (19.7%) from large ones; 29.4% of sampled faculties were from public HEIs and 70.6% from private ones. In terms of respondent demographic profiles, 66.8% of the respondents were males and 33.2% were females; moreover, 20.4% of the respondents were aged below 40 years old, 22.8% were

between 41~45, 20.0% were between 46~50, and 36.8% were over 51; 24.6% were professors, 34.6% were associate professors, and 40.8% were assistant professors.

Measurement

All scales used in this study were found to be reliable, with Cronbach's α ranging from 0.77 to 0.91 in Table 2. In order to gauge validity, this study employed confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) to verify the construct validity (both convergent and discriminant) of the scales. Hair et al. (2006) recommended convergent validity criteria as follows: (1) standardized factor loading of higher than 0.7; (2) average variance extracted (AVE) above 0.5; and (3) composite reliability (CR) above 0.7. The evaluation standard for discriminant validity is the square root of AVE for one dimension greater than the correlation coefficient with any other dimension(s). Results showed that standardized loadings ranges from 0.65 to 0.83, most of which exceeded 0.70 threshold value. As Table 1 indicates, all three criteria for convergent validity were met, and correlation coefficients were all less than the square root of the AVE, suggesting that each dimension in this study had good discriminant validity.

Table 1. Assessing the convergent validity and discriminant validity of constructs

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1. Size	-										
2. Slack	.16**	*(.74)*									
3. Reputation	.24**	.59**	*(.81)*								
4. Information sharing	.20**	.62**	.54**	*(.76)*							
5. Trust	.21**	.61**	.61**	.82**	*(.81)*						
6. Shared vision	.18**	.63**	.60**	.77**	.82**	*(.84)*					
7. Social interaction	.15**	.62**	.56**	.61**	.62**	.64**	*(.78)*				
8. Political participation	.12**	.50**	.45**	.52**	.50**	.54**	.67**	*(.78)*			
9. Teaching outcomes	.17**	.63**	.58**	.66**	.66**	.69**	.60**	.51**	*(.81)*		
10. Service outcomes	.16**	.70**	.61**	.68**	.70**	.69**	.67**	.56**	.74**	*(.71)*	
11. Research outcomes	.15**	.55**	.52**	.54**	.56**	.57**	.53**	.39**	.61**	.69**	*(.85)*
Mean	1.87	3.67	3.92	3.76	3.89	3.87	3.67	3.72	3.90	3.70	3.69
SD	.71	.68	.70	.62	.63	.65	.62	.65	.58	.62	.73
α	-	.87	.90	.89	.85	.93	.91	.81	.91	.83	.91
CR	-	.88	.91	.89	.90	.93	.91	.81	.91	.83	.91
AVE	-	.55	.66	.58	.65	.70	.60	.60	.66	.50	.72

Notes: *** p<0.001. Diagonal (italic) elements are square roots of the AVE; note that AVE is not applicable for single-item measures.

Results and Analysis

In order to understand whether institutional resource and social capital were predictors of institutional performance, SEM was conducted. In Figure 1, the main results of the structural model are summarized, including the corresponding standardized path coefficients. Path analysis attested that the standardized path coefficient of institutional slack for teaching (β=0.239, p<0.001), service (β=0.342, p<0.001), and research outcomes (β=0.246, p<0.001) reached statistical significance. Similarly, the standardized path coefficient of reputation in teaching (β=0.072, p<0.05), service (β=0.080, p<0.01), and research outcomes (β=0.102, p<0.01) also attained statistical significance. The standardized path coefficient of internal social capital for teaching (β=0.468, p<0.001), service (β=0.332, p<0.001), and research outcomes (β=0.309, p<0.001) reached statistical significance. Finally, external social capital had a significant effect on teaching (β=0.129, p<0.01), service (β=0.255, p<0.001), and research outcomes (β=0.125, p<0.05).

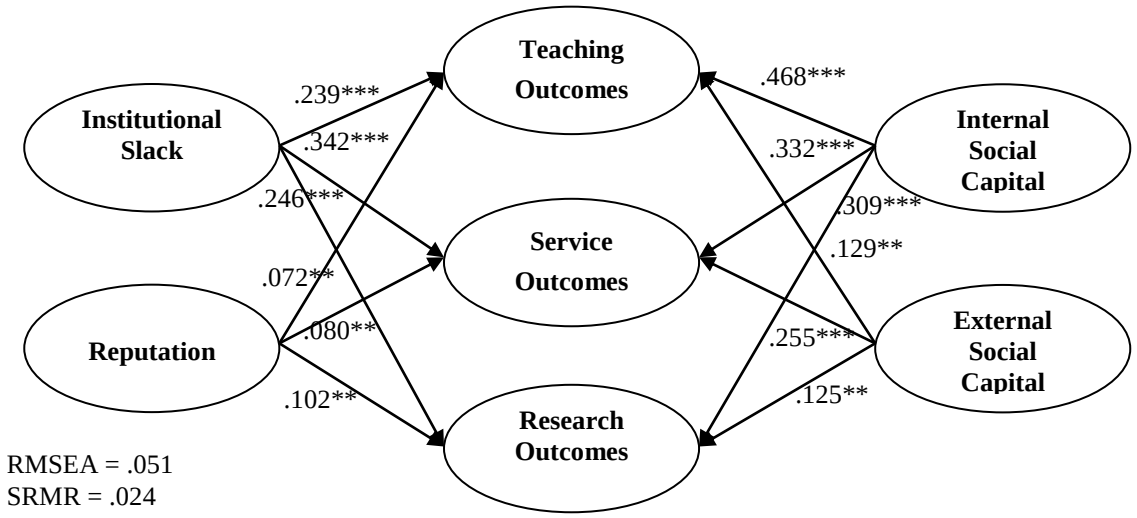

Fig. 1 - Structural model with standardized coefficients

In order to explore whether there were significant differences in institutional slack, reputation, and internal and external social capital based on the size and geographical region of HEIs, a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted. According to the ANOVA results provided in Table 2, there is a significant difference between at least two groups for institutional slack [F(2, 923) = 21.763, p<0.001], reputation [F(2, 923) = 69.860, p<0.001], and internal [F(2, 923) = 26.345, p<0.001] and external social capital [F(2, 923) = 18.426, p<0.001] based on the size of the HEIs. According to multiple comparison tests (Fisher's Least Significant Difference, (LSD)) conducted to understand which groups exhibit significant differences, institutional slack, reputation, and internal and external social capital were found to vary for small, medium, and

large-sized HEIs. The mean value for medium-sized HEIs is significantly higher than those of the other HEIs in all three fields.

Table 2. ANOVA results for independent variables based on sizes of HEIs

Variables	Size	N	M	SD	F	LSD
Institutional Slack	1-Large	301	3.47	0.70	21.763***	2-1***
	2-Medium	443	3.79	0.67		3-1***
	3-Small	182	3.72	0.59		
Reputation	1-Large	301	3.57	0.73	69.860***	2-1***
	2-Medium	443	4.15	0.62		2-3***
						3-1***
	3-Small	182	3.94	0.59		
Internal Social Capital	1-Large	301	3.64	0.60	26.345***	2-1***
	2-Medium	443	3.92	0.57		3-1***
	3-Small	182	3.97	0.53		
External Social Capital	1-Large	301	3.52	0.57	18.426***	2-1***
	2-Medium	443	3.77	0.59		3-1***
	3-Small	182	3.73	0.52		

Notes: *** $p < .001$.

According to the ANOVA results outlined in Table 3, there is a significant difference between at least two groups for institutional slack [F(2, 923) = 19.538, p<0.001], reputation [F(2, 923) = 16.639, p<0.001], and internal [F(2, 923) = 12.984, p<0.001] and external social capital [F(2, 923) = 9.489, p<0.001] based on the geographical region of the HEIs. As a result of multiple comparison tests (LSD) conducted to understand which groups exhibit significant differences, institutional slack, reputation, and internal and external social capital differ for northern, central, and southern HEIs. The mean value for central HEIs is significantly higher than those of the other HEIs in all three fields.

Table 3. ANOVA results for independent variables based on regions of HEIs

Variables	Location	N	M	SD	F	LSD
Institutional Slack	1-Northern	588	3.58	0.68	19.538***	2-1***
	2-Central	209	3.91	0.61		2-3***
	3-Southern	129	3.71	0.66		3-1***
Reputation	1-Northern	588	3.84	0.72	16.639***	2-1***
	2-Central	209	4.16	0.63		2-3***
	3-Southern	129	3.91	0.60		
Internal Social Capital	1-Northern	588	3.79	0.60	12.984***	2-1***
	2-Central	209	4.02	0.56		2-3***
	3-Southern	129	3.77	0.53		
External	1-Northern	588	3.65	0.57	9.489***	2-1***
	2-Central	209	3.83	0.56		2-3***

Social Capital	3-Southern	129	3.57	0.63

Notes: *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

This paper demonstrates that influential factors affect the performance of HEIs in Taiwan from a social capital and RBV perspective. Based on social capital theory, this study theorizes that internal and external social capital play important roles in predicting HEI performance in Taiwan. The research result is similar to that of Kharouf et al. (2014); Taiwanese HEIs shall not only stress successful relationship building and maintaining with students, but also strengthen internal bonding among members which have forced HEIs to focus on value-added activities to enhance the teaching, service, and research outcomes. Namely, the communications and interactions that the internal members of HEIs engage in to maintain mutual benefit and trust will enhance the internal working efficiency and learning effect of HEIs, which will facilitate HEIs to understand students' learning needs so that they can provide better teaching strategies and establish a more attractive enrollment policy.

This study also finds that social capital is the most non-substituted resource in Taiwanese HEIs. There is a strong indication that while HEIs fight for available resources, they shall first develop good social capital, especially internal one. In other words, when there are strong regulations, visions and values among internal members, it could promote HEIs resource to be applied and distributed with higher cost efficiency, thereby improving HEIs in running efficiency.

Based on the RBV, this study proposes that institutional slack and reputation help enhance institutional performance. With more institutional slack, which is likely to be made up of valuable, unique, and hard-to-imitate resources, HEIs can support strategic behaviors to create a dynamic fit with the competitive educational environment, and further raise their performance. Reputation also plays a crucial role in the effort to understand why some HEIs outperform others; it is an intangible resource that has financial consequences with respect to creating value. Moreover, this study has explored the impact of slack on HEI performance in two ways. First, research findings are similar to those found by Tan and Peng (2003). As there are significant differences between different types of firms, our study fills a necessary gap in testing the impact of institutional slack on performance in the context of recent higher education. Second, we find that the RBV is useful for identifying the relationship between institutional resources and performance. This theory suggests that the amount of resources available to HEIs influences their strategic behaviors, such as their use of institutional slack and accumulation of reputation (Su et al., 2009).

Based on current education context, although funds obtained from government aid programs are deemed an important type of slack. From the perspective of resource dependence, if HEIs overly depend on government aid, it will intensify government interference on HEIs, and reduce their autonomy in budget allocation and academic development. Therefore, it is suggested by this research that HEIs shall reduce their dependence on government funding, and expand resource access through academic alliance; that is to say, HEIs shall share resources between each other to

create synergy. At the same time, by checking and reviewing internal operation conditions, HEIs can promote resource utilization.

As to the size of HEIs, a significant difference was detected for institutional slack, reputation, and internal and external social capital. For each field, small and especially medium-sized HEIs have more positive perceptions than large-sized ones. Due to the smaller population of students and the specific organizational hierarchy of medium-sized HEIs, their faculties have more opportunities to communicate and interact with each other, which may facilitate social relationships among them and make them more willing to share information, knowledge, and beliefs with others. In addition, in terms of institutional resources, the perceptions of the faculties in small and medium-sized HEIs are more sensitive than those of faculties at large ones, and this result is closely related to the setting of benchmarks in HEIs.

In light of the regions in which the HEIs are located, a significant difference was detected between both central and southern HEIs and northern HEIs for institutional slack, and between central HEIs and both southern and northern HEIs for reputation, and internal and external social capital. This is in line with Kale (2013), who argued that it is important to consider the geographic location of HEIs when conducting institutional research. The results suggest that perceptions of institutional slack are changing in a positive manner when HEIs are considered from northern to central and southern. While moving from northern to central region, perceptions of reputation, internal and external social capital increase.

In Taiwan, HEIs are not distributed evenly across each district, and the industry development in each region is taken into consideration when establishing HEIs. The institutional mechanism of university-industry linkage provides great incentives and opportunities for commercialization, and increases the likelihood of HEIs obtaining external funding. In northern Taiwan, Taipei and Hsinchu, the two most metropolitan areas in Taiwan, host the most concentrated high-tech industrial parks (Mathews & Hu, 2007); thus half of the HEIs have been established in the northern region. Accordingly, problems concerning resource allocation have arisen.

The intensity of HEIs and the industry development of each region have become the key causes of institutional slack, which requires active partnership and financial support from industry and funding agencies in order to overcome the lack of resources (O'Shea et al., 2005). Moreover, due to the great homogeneity related to the size and development level of Taiwanese HEIs that face lower competition, the degree of competition in the education market in the central region is relatively lower than that of the northern and southern regions. Therefore, faculties in the central HEIs have higher and more positive perceptions – not only towards reputation, but also towards internal and external social capital – compared to faculties in other regions.

Although different countries have differences in city development and establishment of educational institutions, most are centered on major cities. Thus, it is suggested that for the institutional development, each HEI shall take industrial development trend and characteristics of its location into account, and take it as an important direction to the thinking on how to establish its own features and advantages. As a result, even facing the effects on low fertility, HEIs can still enhance students' attending willingness as well as school-running efficiency.

In short, the main findings of this study are that the effects of social capital and institutional resources on institutional performance and measurement variables vary according to institutional sizes and geographical regions. Specifically, these effects were found to be maximized in the medium-size HEIs and in central region. Although the distinctions between different-sized HEIs and between different regions have become rather blurred, the findings have theoretical and practical implications. From a theoretical standpoint, they suggest that researchers should pay more attention to institutional features as moderating variables when they conceptualize antecedents' influences on institutional performance. From practical perspective, the findings can be used to support Taiwan and other countries with similar educational structure in dealing with government's funding decisions in relation to the aid programs, as our data indicate that institutional resources and social capital are more effectively encouraged in central HEIs because these HEIs are in much more stable competitive condition and homogeneity.

Limitations

Although the findings are significant for both institutional and educational research, there are three primary limitations. Firstly, this study only uses cross-sectional resources, and may not be generalizable to the viewpoints of dynamic relationship development. Thus, future studies can focus on the co-evolution of social capital development stages and institutional performance. Secondly, the results are context-specific for Taiwan, and caution should be used when generalizing them to other countries.

References

Adler, P. S., & Kwon, S.-W. (2002). Social capital: Prospects for a new concept. *Academy of Management Review, 27*(1), 17-40.

Barney, J. (1991). Firm resources and sustained competitive advantage. *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 99-120.

Bourdieu, P. (1986). The Forms of Capital. In John G. Richardson (Ed.) Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, New York: Greenwood Press.

Boyd, B. K., Bergh, D. D., & Ketchen, D. J. (2010). Reconsidering the reputation—performance relationship: A resource-based view. *Journal of Management, 36*(3), 588-609.

Chaudhuri, A. (2002). How brand reputation affects the advertising-brand equity link. *Journal of Advertising Research, 42*(3), 33-43 .

Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., Anderson, R. E., & Tatham, R. L. (2006). *Multivariate data analysis* (6th ed). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kale, M. (2013). Perceptions of college of education students in Turkey towards organizational justice, trust in administrators, and instructors. *Higher Education, 66*(5), 521-533.

Kharouf, H., Sekhon, H., & Roy, S. K. (2014). The components of trustworthiness for higher education: a transnational perspective. *Studies in Higher Education, 40*(7), 1239-1255.

Laursen, K., Masciarelli, F., & Prencipe, A. (2012). Regions matter: how localized social capital affects innovation and external knowledge acquisition. *Organization Science, 23*(1), 177-193.

Leana, C. R., & Pil, F. K. (2006). Social capital and organizational performance: Evidence from urban public schools. *Organization Science, 17*(3), 353-366.

Maringe, F., & Sing, N. (2014). Teaching large classes in an increasingly internationalising higher education environment: pedagogical, quality and equity issues. *Higher Education, 67*(6), 1-22.

Mathews, J. A., & Hu, M.-C. (2007). Enhancing the role of universities in building national innovative capacity in Asia: the case of Taiwan. *World Development,* 35(6), 1005-1020.

Ministry of Education in Taiwan. (2014). *Statistics of the number of higher education institutions in Taiwan.* Retrieved from http://www.edu.tw/Default.aspx?wid=31d75a44-efff-4c44-a075-15a9eb7aecdf

Ministry of Education in Taiwan. (2011). *University Act in Taiwan.* Retrieved from http://edu.law.moe.gov.tw/EngLawContent.aspx?Type=E&id=47&KeyWord=%e5%a4%a7%e5%ad%b8%e6%b3%95

Nahapiet, J., and S. Ghoshal. (1998). Social capital, intellectual capital, and the organizational advantage. *Academy of Management Review,* 23(2), 242-266.

O'Shea, R. P., Allen, T. J., Chevalier, A., & Roche, F. (2005). Entrepreneurial orientation, technology transfer and spinoff performance of US universities. *Research Policy*, *34*(7), 994-1009.

Powers, J. B., & McDougall, P. P. (2005). University start-up formation and technology licensing with firms that go public: a resource-based view of academic entrepreneurship. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *20*(3), 291-311.

Roberts, P. W., & Dowling, G. R. (2002). Corporate reputation and sustained superior financial performance. *Strategic Management Journal*, *23*(12), 1077-1093.

Ryan, J. F. (2005). Institutional expenditures and student engagement, a role for financial resources in enhancing student learning and development? *Research in Higher Education, 46*(2), 235-249.

Shin, J. C., & Harman, G. (2009). New challenges for higher education: Global and Asia-Pacific perspectives. *Asia Pacific Education Review, 10*(1), 1-13.

Su, Z., E. Xie, & Li, Y. (2009). Organizational slack and firm performance during institutional transitions. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management ,26*(1), 75-91.

Tan, J., & Peng, M. W. (2003). Organizational slack and firm performance during economic transitions: Two studies from an emerging economy. *Strategic Management Journal*, *24*(13), 1249-1263.

Taylor, B. J., Webber, K. L., & Jacobs, G. J. (2013). Institutional research in light of internationalization, growth, and competition. *New Directions for Institutional Research, 157*, 5-22.

Voss, G. B., Sirdeshmukh, D., & Voss, Z. G. (2008). The effects of slack resources and environmental threat on product exploration and exploitation. *Academy of Management Journal, 51*(1), 147-164.

Walter, A., Auer, M., & Ritter, T. (2006). The impact of network capabilities and entrepreneurial orientation on university spin-off performance. *Journal of Business Venturing*, *21*(4), 541-567.

THE EFFECTS OF IMPROMPTU SPEAKING PRACTICE ON ENGLISH SPEAKING ABILITY OF THAI EFL STUDENTS

Thanawan Suthiwartnarueput
Faculty of Liberal Arts, Mahidol University, Thailand

Abstract

The ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) was recently established with the hope of promoting economic sustainability and bringing benefits to the region. One of the factors important to the region's growth is language. This is a key to success not only for education but also for commerce. And it could pose a great barrier to people with poor language proficiency in order to reap potential advantages. Apart from local languages, English is widely used and plays a significant role as the lingua franca in South East Asia. It is also used as an official language in many ASEAN countries. In Thailand, even though English is not an official language, it is included in the school curriculum. For Thais, however, English is a difficult subject. Most Thai students are not good at English. The ability to speak English well is particularly tough for Thai EFL students. Therefore it is important to find suitable methods to help students speak English more fluently and proficiently. This research realizes the importance of English speaking ability and experimented with *impromptu speaking practice*, which is a recognized English speaking teaching method. The researchers explored the effectiveness of impromptu speaking practice on the development of English speaking ability of Thai EFL students. The data were collected from a pre-test, post-test and interview responses completed by 40 undergraduate students in a public university in Bangkok, Thailand. It was found that the mean score of the post-test was significantly higher than that of the pre-test ($t = -8.05$, $p \leq 0.05$.) This indicates the effectiveness of impromptu speaking practice. The interview responses revealed that most of the students enjoyed learning English with impromptu speaking practice since it is authentic and natural and similar to daily life speaking activities.

Keywords: impromptu speaking practice, English speaking ability, Thai EFL students

Introduction

Speaking is one of the necessary skills for everyday communication. We negotiate, chat, discuss, give a speech and do many tasks through speaking. Speaking fluency is considered to be a much better indicator of knowing a language than writing and reading fluency (Bashir, 2011). In Thailand, a lot of Thai EFL students appear to not master the language as they should although English is taught since primary and nursery schools in urban areas. EFEPI (Education First English Proficiency Index 2015) also showed that Thailand has a very low English proficiency having a rank of 62 out of 70 non-native English speaking countries in the world.

Not only does poor English speaking ability affect learning, it also causes many disadvantages. In trade, insufficient language proficiency can lead to a competitive disadvantage. Countries with poor language proficiency cannot negotiate favourable purchases as effectively as those with good language proficiency. This could result in the loss of foreign investments. In education, students can lose the opportunity to study in higher education. Most of the well-known universities in Thailand require students to do term papers and present their work in English. Otherwise they would not get good grades or even a degree. It is also a fact that people with better English speaking ability could get jobs easier as they could potentially benefit business English negotiation. As a result, they can get better pay compared to those with poor language proficiency.

Given all the above, it is therefore urgent for Thai EFL students to improve their English speaking ability. An additional factor that needs consideration is students' lack of confidence in speaking English (Boonkit, 2010). Most of Thai EFL students are afraid of making errors and have some anxiety when they speak English with foreigners (Trent, 2009). To solve this problem, they need to develop confidence together with fluency and accuracy. Bashir (2011) states that students need three areas of knowledge for their speaking development as follows:

1. Mechanics (pronunciation, grammar and vocabulary)
2. Function (knowing when precise information is required and when it is not)
3. Social and cultural rules and norms (status, pauses, circumstances, speed, etc.)

To master these areas of knowledge, students need to practice their speaking skills in authentic communication as well as being capable of using grammatically correct sentences for particular contexts and correct pronunciation. Grice and Skinner (1998) proposed four basic ways to master public speaking which include impromptu (speaking without preparation), speaking from memory, speaking from a manuscript and speaking from notes (extemporaneously.) Among the four methods, impromptu has very limited application but gains attention in a considerable way.

Initially, impromptu speaking is a speech without much preparation since the speaker is given a very short notice (Ayuba, 2012). For example, in a wedding ceremony, a privileged guest can be asked to speak without prior planning as a surprise for the couple. Apart from this, with the challenging characteristic of impromptu speaking, it has attracted a lot of scholars who have provided various definitions to fit this speech type. Henderson (1982) defined impromptu speaking as a simple speaking exercise with limited time and formal preparation. Lehtonen

(1982) classified speaking types in terms of how instantaneous they are and defined impromptu speaking as a spontaneously delivered speech. Enkvist (1982) disagreed with the terms "unplanned" or "unprepared" for impromptu speaking claiming that similar to other types of speaking, impromptu speaking still requires a certain amount of time for planning. Ardito (1999) believes that the degree of impromptuness can vary depending on the existence of the script. That is, in the case with some written notes, the speaker can use the notes to elaborate their speech. They need to comment, explain and use visual devices. Moreover, impromptu speaking is considered advantageous for drama since this speech type requires the performer to speak within a short moment (Ayuba, 2012). It can also be the most challenging speaking exercise for contestants in a debate because speakers in such a competition have to speak out presenting the points on an assigned topic with limited preparation (Sleskovitch, 1982; Wood, 2001.) To put it another way, impromptu speaking helps promote debating skills since it practices the speaker to think fast, a basic nature of language use.

However, even though impromptu speaking is more likely to enhance the ability to speak naturally, this speaking type seems to be difficult for beginners or low language proficiency students since they have been given a limited duration of time to speak out. To use impromptu speaking with low proficiency students, O'Neill (2013) suggests that when impromptu speaking practice is assigned in the classroom, various types of impromptu speaking should be provided and students must listen to the instruction at the beginning. They should be allowed to speak every session. Impromptu speaking can be done as a warm-up activity since it can build confidence and improve speaking skills of the students. For nervous students, they should be allowed to stand in their place and when they have more confidence, they move to the front of the classroom. For highly proficient students, on the other hand, more challenging topics should be assigned and they should be given a lot of topics for speeches or debates. In addition to this and to enhance learning effectiveness, the teacher can choose the impromptu speaking exercise that fits his students most. Henderson (1982) has classified impromptu speaking practice into four types as follows:

1. The "simple" word topic (i.e., ethnocentrism, utopia, pessimism, etc.)

2. The fill in the blank conditional (i.e., If I won the first prize lottery, I would...)
   Using this impromptu type, the speaker can add their own idea like "If I won the first prize lottery, I would buy a mansion."

3. The straight-forward fill in the blank (i.e., The greatest thing in human life is …….). The students can add some related words or phrases like "love," "food," or "money."

4. Sayings and quotations (i.e., "Money is not everything," "Time heals everything." This type of impromptu speaking is considered the most difficult for non-native English speaking students. To do so, the teacher can help students define some unfamiliar terms in the sayings and quotations.

Within each type above, impromptu speaking consists basically of four parts as follows (The International Debate Education Association, 2004):

1. **Introduction**. The speaker begins a talk with jokes, facts, quotations, personal experiences or anything that can easily attract the audience.

2. **Body**. The speaker discusses main points using examples, facts or personal stories that are related to the topic.

3. **Conclusion**. The talk can end with a summary. The speaker can restate the introduction or talk in brief about what can be learned from the topic.
4. End. The speaker talks according to the plan and remember that the most important thing of the talk is quality.

As previously mentioned, it seems that impromptu speaking is one of the best ways to practice speaking because it has special characteristics that promote the development of English speaking ability. However, it is not usually included in research as a major focus but only as a minor speaking treatment. Rojo-Laurilla (2007) carried out a study with 50 incoming first-year students in Bataan, the Philippines and found that participants proved to be better in impromptu speech than *debate* or *persuasive speech* when 70% was set as a pass score.

In more recent research, Masmaliyeva (2014) surveyed 21 undergraduate students in Turkey on their attitudes and beliefs toward the effectiveness of oral presentations including impromptu speaking amongst ten presentations namely formal informative group, individual personal experience, persuasion, impromptu, demonstration, pet peeve, mock job talk, introduction to speaker, special occasion and final farewell speeches. The findings showed that 95% of the students enjoyed the class and the oral presentations increased students' motivation, confidence, ownership over learning, sense of community, fluency and accuracy. Kazemi and Zarei (2015) investigated the effect of topic familiarity on EFL oral presentations of 30 female intermediate students in Shiraz, Iran. The unfamiliar impromptu topics were assigned to the participants as their pre-test. Then the subsequent topics were introduced to them. At that time, the participants were allowed to search for information about the topics through the internet or books. Finally, the post-test oral presentations were administered to the participants. The results revealed that the participants did better when they were familiar with the presentation topics having a mean score of 17.83 for the post-test which was significantly higher than that of the pre-test (8.50).

The above therefore showed the efficacy of *impromptu speaking* and it seems logical to recommend it in classrooms as an advantageous teaching and learning method. The present study explored the effectiveness of impromptu speaking practice on the development of English speaking ability of Thai EFL students.

Research Questions

The research questions to support the objective above are:

1. To what extent could *impromptu speaking practice* develop Thai EFL students' English speaking ability?

2. What special aspects of impromptu speaking facilitated and supported Thai EFL students' English speaking development?

Research Methods

The present study was carried out with the participation of 40 undergraduate students in a public university in Bangkok, Thailand. They had studied English for twelve years; nonetheless, they couldn't speak English fluently and accurately. The research procedure started with assigning the pre-test to the students. The pre-test speaking topic "Love Is All around You" was developed to find out their English speaking background proficiency. During the test, the students were given two minutes to prepare their impromptu speech by taking some keynotes. Then they had five minutes to speak out on the topic. Their English speaking ability was graded using the university criteria (See Appendix). In the experimental phase, it took the students eight weeks to practice impromptu speaking. Each time, they were given 2 minutes for preparation and 5 minutes to speak out. The impromptu speaking tasks included simple word topics, fill in the blank conditionals, straight-forward fill in the blank, and sayings and quotations. The following excerpt shows the improvement of a student during the experiment.

Table 1: The Improvement of a Student during the Experiment

A. Simple (Week 1 - 2) **Week 1** **Topic: Vacation** *"Ah! (pause) I go to my hometown last week. See parents. I happy. Aha (pause) eat food with family. Go around town. Fun very fun. Ah (pause) Thank you."* **Week 2** **Topic: Hobby** *"I play with my friends. I play football. Ah. It's a (pause). It's a good. I watch matches on TV. Very exciting and happy. Thank you."* **B. The fill in the blank conditional (Week 3 - 4)** **Week 3** **Topic: If I won the first prize lottery, ……** *"If I won the first prize lottery, I would buy a house for mom and dad. Very big, very big house. Ah. It's happy. I need it. I, mom and dad will happy together. Ah. One more thing (pause). A money is good. Thank you."* **Week 4** **Topic: If I were a celebrity,……** *"You know celebrities have lots of money. They are beautiful and handsome. People will know me and greet me. I will not feel lonely. I will have friends cause people want to make friends with celebrity like me. Ah (pause). I don't know. Thank you."*	**Week 6** **Topic: The hottest contemporary issue is ……** *"I think the hottest contemporary issue is global warming. You know global warming has become the hottest issue for many years and people have realized about it for many years. It seems that people just have a campaign to reduce global warming but only little people take action in the issue. Some people use energy carelessly. I think Ah (pause). People can make our world better if only to reduce the energy use. Ah, it's not difficult. You just turn off lights when not use. Thank you."* **D. Sayings and quotations (Week 7 – 8)** **Week 7** **Topic: "Nothing is impossible."** *"I believe in this saying" Nothing is impossible." The saying inspires me that I am not different from others. If people can, I can. Ah, once I failed the middle exam and I think that I would get an F in that subject (pause). I think that it would be too difficult for me to pass it. I thought that it was impossible to pass it. But then my friend said "Don't lose your confidence." "You can do it." I thought that it was impossible to pass it. So I read a lot and prepared myself well for the exam. Finally, I got a C in that subject. I was very happy. Ah. (pause) and I believed that "Nothing is impossible." Or "Everything is possible." In other words, so believe in your power and do it to be successful in your goal."* **Week 8**

C. The straight-forward fill in the blank (Week 5-6)	**Topic: "Money isn't everything."**
Week 5 **Topic: The most important thing in my life is ……** *"The most important thing in my life is love. I want love from friends, relatives, dad and mom. I will feel unhappy if they don't love me. I have no idea. I don't know what my life will be if no one love me. It's a (pause). It's a good thing. I like it. Thank you."*	*"I think I agree with this saying. "Money isn't everything." You know nowadays people are too greedy. They want much money although they are rich. It seems that their money and property is not enough for them. They tried to do everything both legally and illegally just only to make a lot of money. But they forget to think that money isn't everything. For example (pause), money can't buy love. Money can't make dead people come alive. Some may think money can buy happy but I think it's not true. (pause) because when you have much money, you can't make sure that people who do good things for you. They do it because they love you or they need your money."*

After the experiment, the post-test speaking topic "Life Is Beautiful" was assigned to the students. Its purpose was to find out some possible improvement of the students after doing impromptu speaking practice throughout the eight-week period. After their English speaking ability was graded, ten students were requested to take part in the interview. During the interview, their attitudes towards their English speaking ability and impromptu speaking practice were recorded and transcribed.

Results

Considering the results of the pre-test and post-test speaking score, it is obvious that the students' English speaking ability improved in a statistically significant level.

Table 2: English Speaking Ability of the Students Comparing the Pre-Test and Post-Test Scores

Speaking Ability	Full Marks	Tests	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
1. Fluency	10	Pre-Test	1	9	3.71	2.22	-7.07	.000
		Post-Test	2	10	5.34	2.23		
2. Pronunciation	10	Pre-Test	2	9	4.07	2.13	-3.45	.001
		Post-Test	2	9	4.71	1.91		
3. Grammar and Word Choice	10	Pre-Test	2	9	5.39	2.07	-5.11	.000
		Post-Test	2	9	6.27	1.72		
4. Content	15	Pre-Test	3	15	6.12	3.39	-6.06	.000
		Post-Test	4	15	7.63	3.11		
5. Facial Expressions	5	Pre-Test	1	5	2.66	1.04	-3.86	.000
		Post-Test	1	5	3.15	1.11		
Total	50	Pre-Test	10	47	21.95	10.08	-8.05	.000

Speaking Ability	Full Marks	Tests	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD.	t	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Post-Test	12	48	27.10	9.12		

As shown in Table 2, the students showed a great improvement in their English speaking ability. In total, the students had a mean score of 27.10 in the post-test which is significantly higher than a mean score of 21.95 in the pre-test ($t = -8.05$, $p \leq 0.05$.) Considering the subcategories of speaking ability, it was found that the students gained higher mean scores in all of them. This indicates that the students spoke English more fluently with fewer pronunciation and grammatical errors. They used the right words to create their story with good facial expressions as it showed through eye contacts with the teacher and classmates.

Not only did they have a higher score in the post-test, but the students also made fewer speaking errors as shown in the following tables.

Table 3: English Speaking Errors Detected in the Pre-Test Speaking Topic "Love Is All Around You"

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage	Examples of Errors Found in the Study
1. Repeated Subject	18	6.5	*Error:* "My mom she loves me so much." *Correction:* "My mom loves me so much."
2. Incorrect Subject and Verb Agreement	22	7.9	*Error:* "She don't want me to go out at night." *Correction:* "She doesn't want me to go out at night."
3. Incorrect Use of Final Sounds	25	9.0	*Error:* "My parents love me so must." *Correction:* "My parents love me so much."
4. Incorrect Use of Tenses 4.1 Past Simple	37	13	*Error:* "When I was a child, I usually go shopping with my mom." *Correction:* "When I was a child, I usually went shopping with my mom."
4.2 Present Progressive	11	3.9	*Error:* "I trying to solve problems." *Correction:* "I am trying to solve problems."
4.3 Present Perfect Simple	14	5.0	*Error:* "I knew my friends for two years." *Correction:* "I have known my friends for two years."
5. Fragments	29	10	*Error:* "Making friends fun for me." *Correction:* "Making friends is fun for me."
6. Pause (more than 1 minute)	22	7.9	*Error:"* I need ……(1 minute pause)…love from others." *Correction:* "I need love from others."
7. Incorrect Word Choice	10	3.6	*Error:* "I come to school to see friends." *Correction:* "I go to school to see friends."
8. Double Negative	8	2.9	*Error:* "Many people don't have no friends." *Correction:* "Many people don't have friends."
9. Incorrect Word Stress	6	2.2	*Error:* "We show love through facial expression [Ikspreˈʃn]." *Correction:* "We show love through facial expression [Ikˈspreʃn]."

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage	Examples of Errors Found in the Study
10. Incorrect Pronunciation	17	6.1	*Error:* "A moody ['m^dI] person doesn't receive love." *Correction:* "A moody ['mu:dI] person doesn't receive love."
11. Incorrect Conjunctions	8	2.9	*Error:* "I am lazy and my mother loves me." *Correction:* "I am lazy but my mother loves me."
12. Incorrect Use of Auxiliary Verbs	6	2.2	*Error:* "You is happy." *Correction:* "You are happy."
13. Articles	27	9.7	*Error:* "My mother gives me an advice." *Correction:* "My mother gives me some advice."
14. Pronouns	11	3.9	*Error:* "My family and me usually go camping." *Correction:* "My family and I usually go camping."
15. Irrelevant Sentence	8	2.9	*Error:* "My mother always stays besides me. I like to go out with my friends. I have dinner with my mother most of the time." *Correction:* Delete the sentence "I like to go out with my friend."
Total	**279**	**100**	

Table 4: English Speaking Errors Detected in the Post-Test Speaking Topic "Life Is Beautiful."

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage	Examples of Errors Found in the Study
1. Repeated Subject	12	7.0	*Error:* "I think my life it is beautiful." *Correction:* "I think my life is beautiful."
2. Incorrect Subject and Verb Agreement	20	12	*Error:* "You must be satisfied with what you has." *Correction:* "You must be satisfied with what you have."
3. Incorrect Use of Final Sounds	16	9.4	*Error:* "Be happy with your life [laIt]." *Correction:* "Be happy with your life[laIf]."
4. Incorrect Use of Tenses 4.1 Past Simple	19	11	*Error:* "When I was a little girl, I always think that I was so poor." *Correction:* "When I was a little girl, I always thought that I was so poor."
4.2 Present Progressive	10	5.8	*Error:* "I having a good time now." *Correction:* "I am having a good time now."
5. Fragments	17	9.9	*Error:* "Seeing the world positively." *Correction:* "See the world positively."
6. Incorrect Word Choice	9	5.3	*Error:* "I enjoy doing cake with my mom." *Correction:* "I enjoy making cake with my mom."
7. Double Negative	3	1.8	*Error:* "I haven't never ignored good things in my life." *Correction:* "I have never ignored good things in my life."
8. Incorrect Word Stress	2	1.2	*Error:* "Your life is beautiful [bju:'tIfəl]as soon as you know how to live happily." *Correction:* "Your life is beautiful ['bju:tifəl]as soon as you know how to live happily."

Types of Errors	Number of Errors	Percentage	Examples of Errors Found in the Study
9. Incorrect Pronunciation	14	8.2	*Error:* "My life and other creatures[kɹi: 'eIθəs]' lives are meaningful." *Correction:* "My life and other creatures[kɹi:'eItjʊəs]' lives are meaningful."
10. Incorrect Conjunctions	6	3.5	*Error:* "I want to relax or I usually go to a shopping mall." *Correction:* "I want to relax so I usually go to a shopping mall."
11. Incorrect Use of Auxiliary Verbs	9	5.3	*Error:* "I were very happy when I lived with my mom." *Correction:* "I was very happy when I lived with my mom."
12. Articles	19	11	*Error:* "I want to have the good moment." *Correction:* "I want to have a good moment."
13. Pronouns	10	5.8	*Error:* "Some people aren't satisfied with your life." *Correction:* "Some people aren't satisfied with their life."
14. Irrelevant Sentence	5	2.9	*Error:* "Once I was pessimistic, but now I am optimistic. My friend is bored about his life." *Correction:* Delete the sentence "My friend is bored about his life."
Total	**171**	**100**	

As far as speaking errors are concerned, it was found that the number of errors the students made in the pre-test topic was relatively high when compared to the post-test. As illustrated in Table 3, the students made 279 errors in total. The number of errors detected most were incorrect uses of past simple tense (13%), followed by fragments (10%), articles (9.7%) and incorrect uses of final sounds (9%.) However, they made fewer errors in the post-test which were only 171 errors in total as shown in Table 4. The errors found most in the pre-test dramatically decreased and some of them such as present perfect simple and pause (more than 1 minute) disappeared in the post-test.

To illustrate the improvement of the students' English speaking ability, the following examples show great improvement of a student. As is seen, in the pre-test speaking topic "Love Is All around You," she could not present her ideas well. She repeated words, made long pauses, incorrect pronunciation, and incorrect grammar many times. However, in the post-test speaking topic "Life Is Beautiful," her English speaking skills improved a lot. She could give her opinions better and speak English more fluently without a long pause.

Pre-Test Speaking Topic

"Love Is All around You."

"We need love. Love is our desire. We want love from others. But many times we can't get love in return. I think …Ar…. I think teenagers want love from boyfriends and girlfriends. We ……(pause) ……..Arr! We don't think about parents (pronouncing /pæɹən/ instead of /pɛəɹənts/.) When we are (verb tense) children, we were fed by mother (Noun). We often forget about this. Mom is always besides you when you have problems. But how many times you think of her. I think ……(pause) ……We need love from others but but (Repeat) we forget that love is all around you. It's your mom who always loves you. Thank you."

Post-Test Speaking Topic

"Life Is Beautiful."

"Many people commit suicide because they don't love themselves. They don't think that life is beautiful. I think life is beautiful. There are many good things that come to our life. But you know life is not always smooth. It is sometimes rough (pronouncing /ɹʌp/ instead of /ɹʌf/.) There are obstacles or bad things. Before we are mature or reach adulthood, we have experienced a lot of things both good and bad. However, we have to think positively because it doesn't mean that we will experience only bad things. For me, when I feel stress (missing –ed ending and pronouncing /stɹæs/ instead of /stɹæst/)out, I usually listen to music. I love pop music. When I listen, I feel happy. I want other friends to feel happy like me so sometimes I sing songs for them. I don't want my friends to feel so sad and I want them to think that their life is beautiful. That's all about my opinion. Thank you teacher."

Apart from their English speaking improvement, most of the students had positive attitudes toward impromptu speaking practice. The interview responses revealed that most of the students enjoyed speaking English with impromptu methods because it had a unique characteristic that did not allow students to plan their speech but had to speak out spontaneously. This aspect of impromptu speaking practice was close to everyday life situations. They had to speak English with foreigners who needed some help about the direction to a country's landmark. They claimed that the more they practiced impromptu speaking, the more confidence they had when speaking English. Further, they claimed that impromptu speaking practice helped them speak English much more fluently and accurately because during the treatment, they knew they had to be active with the impromptu speaking tasks almost all the time. It stimulated them to improve themselves through more reading and stay well-prepared for every task all the time.

"I think impromptu speaking activities are better than many other kinds of speaking activities. Many Thai people can't speak English well. But if they have more opportunities to speak without plans, it will help them speak English better and faster because in everyday life we can't memorize what we are going to say but speak out immediately. For example, when we have a debate, we need to think and speak quickly. When I see some foreigners who need some help in order to get to a country's landmark, I need to speak English."

"Impromptu speaking keeps me speaking out immediately. Sometimes I feel nervous but I think it makes me dare to speak more and have more confidence. Personally, I think it helps me improve my English speaking. It stimulates me to read more books so that I can learn more things and use the content from the book to speak in the next impromptu speaking task. Although I was given only two minutes for preparation, I had memorized the content for what to speak on my mind. It stimulates me to read more and practice speaking English more both in and out of the classroom since I know that I need to speak English giving the answers to the impromptu topics in a short moment. In short, it made me enthusiastic and well-prepared for the impromptu tasks."

The interviewees added that impromptu speaking practice was a good teaching method for promoting critical thinking and life skills, such as problem solving, planning to speak in the limited time, interpreting the meaning of questions, explaining ideas and giving reasons. They claimed that all of these life skills allowed them only a short time to think thoroughly and give answers and impromptu speaking practice encouraged them to think critically and figure out some possible answers for both simple and complicated topics in quick time.

"I think impromptu speaking is the best speaking practice because it evaluates and allows students to practice a lot of skills, such as problem solving, planning to speak, interpreting the meaning of questions, explaining ideas, and giving reasons in English. To overcome these skills,

we need to have good language proficiency. We need to listen to the questions carefully, know vocabulary and choose words to explain our thoughts."

"I prefer impromptu speaking to other speaking teaching methods. Making a story or explaining our ideas within the limited time promotes critical thinking and quick responses because when we get an impromptu topic either simple or complicated from the teacher, we are allowed only a short moment to analyze the topic and figure out some possible answers for the topic. At that moment, we can't think roughly but critically about the topic within the limited time. I think we can use all these skills in our real-life situations as well."

Some of them also claimed that impromptu speaking practice could evaluate speaking fluency well and encourage students to speak out in a short time.

"I prefer impromptu speaking to other kinds of speaking activities because it can test students' speaking proficiency better than other activities. Besides, impromptu speaking teaches students to speak English more fluently in the daily basis."

In addition to promoting speaking fluency, some students claimed that impromptu speaking practice best helped them speak English more naturally because it occurs in real-life situations and they do not have scripts in their hands.

"Impromptu speaking promotes students to speak English fluently by nature. It's good because I don't have to write scripts. If I speak from my scripts, I won't be able to speak English fluently and naturally."

Moreover, most of them thought that impromptu speaking practice made them witty and alert since it encouraged them to brush up their English speaking proficiency almost all the time.

"Impromptu speaking best helps students practice English speaking because in order to speak in the limited time under a lot of pressure, we need to be witty and brush up our English background almost all the time. We need to practice both in class and outside. So we will have sufficient English proficiency to speak out within the limited time."

In respect of its weaknesses, some of them said that they felt nervous during impromptu speaking practice because they were not allowed to write or read from their full scripts, and with the limited time, they could not think of anything to say. However, they still believed that impromptu speaking practice was the best method because it was authentic, exciting and challenging.

"I like impromptu speaking because I have a good chance to practice speaking with my teacher. However, the allotted time is too short. I feel nervous with the limited time and many times I couldn't think of words to say."

"I feel nervous with impromptu speaking since I am not allowed to use my full script. However, it is the best way to practice speaking. The method is more authentic, exciting and challenging because in our real-life situations, we have not much time to prepare our speaking and impromptu speaking can happen to us any time."

Briefly, as is evidenced by the pre-test and post-test and interview results, impromptu speaking practice improved Thai EFL students' speaking ability satisfactorily. The tests' results indicate a satisfactory level of the students' speaking ability. Likewise, the interview results revealed that

the special aspects of impromptu speaking such as spontaneity and authenticity contributed to developing English speaking ability.

Discussion

The results in this research have revealed that English speaking ability of Thai EFL students reached a satisfactory level after the impromptu speaking practice as shown by a higher mean score (M=27.10) of the post-test than that (M=21.95) of the pre-test ($t = -8.05$, $p \leq 0.05$.) When distinguishing speaking ability into subcategories, the students apparently spoke English more fluently with more accurate pronunciation. They created more grammatically correct sentences and used the right words to express their opinions towards the impromptu topics. They also had more confidence to speak English as it showed through their facial expression. They made more eye contact with the teacher and classmates during their speaking. Considering their confidence as is found, Boonkit (2010) claims that Thai EFL students feel lack of confidence to speak English and the present study has proved that the students gained more confidence after the impromptu speaking practice. This indicates that the impromptu speaking practice could boost their self-confidence.

When considering speaking errors, even though the students were under a time constraint being allowed only two minutes to take notes for their five-minute impromptu speech, they made fewer errors in the later weeks in the experimental period and in the post-test. The number of errors detected was reduced from 279 times in the pre-test to only 171 times in the post-test. Additionally, there was no evidence of a long pause or any incorrect use of present perfect simple. This indicates that impromptu speaking practice improved both language fluency and accuracy of the students. In other words, it seems that the more they had impromptu speaking practice, the more their English speaking fluency and accuracy improved. How could this happen, the answer was given in the interview responses.

The interview responses have revealed that most of the students enjoyed impromptu speaking practice. They claimed that their English speaking ability was better after doing impromptu speaking practice. The reason was that impromptu speaking practice was authentic and natural and had a unique characteristic related to daily life speaking activities. Considering this, in previous studies, it had been found that impromptu speaking practice was one of the oral presentations that students enjoyed and it helped improve the students' motivation, confidence, ownership over learning, sense of community, fluency and accuracy (Masmaliyeva, 2014). With respect to its authenticity, as is claimed by the students in this study, in everyday life they had to speak English without any plan. They had to speak English spontaneously when foreigners came to ask them some questions about the direction to a country's landmark. Impromptu speaking practice also built their confidence and when they had more confidence, they dared to speak English more without being afraid of making mistakes. Such self-confidence helped them speak more fluently free from anxiety. Additionally, when they knew that they had an impromptu speaking task, they had to plan the content on their mind; the speaking topics had not been told before, though. That incidentally enforced them to read more and stay well-prepared for every impromptu speaking task. That is, impromptu speaking stimulated them to read more and practice English speaking more both in and out of the classroom. However, some students claimed that they felt nervous when doing impromptu speaking tasks because of a time

constraint, but they still preferred impromptu speaking to other methods. This is because impromptu speaking practice was authentic, challenging and exciting and in everyday life they could encounter with impromptu speaking anytime. From this response, it is worth designing impromptu speaking practice as a challenging speaking activity such as debates or speech competitions when speakers have a short time to prepare their speech (Sleskovitch, 1982; Wood, 2001.)

As is found in this study, with its unique feature close to real world situations, impromptu speaking practice is one of the English speaking teaching techniques that should be promoted and used in the language classroom.

Implications

For Language Teachers

As is found in the present study, impromptu speaking practice worked well with Thai EFL students. Regarding its effectiveness, impromptu speaking practice is recommended for speaking classes since it promotes students to speak language spontaneously and naturally staying close to real-life situations. However, when it is used in a language classroom, the teacher needs to consider the students' language proficiency. The impromptu speaking topics should not be too tough or too easy for the students but match their language proficiency levels. The teacher can begin with the "simple" word impromptu speaking topics for low language proficiency students. The teacher can ask them "What come up on your mind when you see the word, *wealth*," for instance. For higher language proficiency students, more complicated impromptu tasks like sayings and quotations can be assigned to them. The teacher can also develop impromptu speaking practice into other kinds of speaking tasks such as debates, real-time speeches or interview simulation.

For Future Research

The results of the present study have revealed that impromptu speaking practice is one of the best English speaking tasks. Not only is it authentic and related to everyday speaking activities, impromptu also builds students' confidence to speak English. The present study was carried out with Thai EFL students using simple words, fill in the blank conditional, straight-forward fill in the blank, and saying and quotation impromptu tasks as the treatment for Thai EFL students. Future researchers can use these impromptu speaking tasks with other groups of EFL or ESL students or even other complicated impromptu tasks such as debates, real-time speeches or interview simulation. The experiment is worth trying out with other age groups and language proficiency levels.

References

Ardito, G. (1999). The systematic use of impromptu speech in training interpreting students. *The Interpreters' Newsletter, Trieste, EUT Edizioni Universita di Trieste, 9*, 177-189.

Ayuba, K. A. (2012). Oral English as an aid to learning in higher institutions in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2*, 97-103.

Bashir, M. (2011). Factor effecting students' English speaking skill. *British Journal of Arts & Social Sciences, 2*, 34-50.

Boonkit, K. (2010). Enhancing the development of speaking skills for non-native speakers of English. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Science, 2*, 1305-1309.

Education First English Proficiency Index (2015). *The world's largest ranking of countries by English skills.* Retrieved from www.ef.co.th/epi

Enkvist, N. E. (1982). Impromptu speech, structure, and process. In N. E. Enkvist, (Ed.) *Impromptu speech: A symposium* (241-253). Abo: Abo Akademia.

Grice, G. L., & Skinner, J. F. (1998). *Mastering public speaking.* Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon.

Henderson, D. (1982). Impromptu speaking as a tool to improve non-native speakers' fluency in English. *JALT Journal, 4*, 75-87.

Kazemi, S. A., & Zarei, L. (2015). The efficacy of topic familiarity on oral presentation: Extensive speaking assessment task of Iranian EFL learners in TBLT. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 4*, 93-97.

Lehtonen, J. (1982). Non-verbal aspects of impromptu speech. In N. E. Enkvist, (Ed.) *Impromptu speech: A symposium* (241-253). Abo: Abo Akademia.

Masmaliyeva, L (2014). Using affective effectively: Oral presentations in EFL classroom. *Journal of Language and Literature Education, 10,* 145-154.

O'Neill, J. R. (2013). *Thinking and speaking: Practical activities for the primary classroom.* Australia: Teaching Solutions.

Rojo-Laurilla, M. A. (2007). English for maritime purposes: Communication apprehension and communicative competence among maritime students in the Philippines. *Reflections on English Language Teaching, 6,* 39-58.

Sleskovitch, D. (1982). Impromptu speech and oral translation. In N. E. Enkvist, (Ed.) *Impromptu speech: A symposium* (241-253). Abo: Abo Akademia.

The International Debate Education Association (2004). *Speaking across the curriculum: Practical ideas for incorporating listening and speaking into the classroom.* New York: The International Debate Education Association.

Trent, J. (2009). Enhancing oral participation across the curriculum: Some lessons from the EAP classroom. *Asian EFL Journal, 11,* 256-270.

Wood, D. (2001). In search of fluency: What is it and how can we teach it? *Canadian Modern Language Review, 57,* 573-589.

Appendix

Scoring Rubric for Impromptu Speaking Pre-and Post-Tests

Scoring Criteria	Maximum Score	Earned Score
1. Fluency		
1.1 Speak with the acceptable number of pauses	5	
1.2 Don't repeat or use redundant words	5	
2. Pronunciation		
2.1 Pronoun words correctly.	5	
2.2 Stress syllables and words in the sentence correctly	5	
3. Grammar and Word Choice		
3.1 Speak with grammatically correct structure	5	
3.2 Use appropriate words and expressions	5	
4. Content		
4.1 Show coherence	5	
4.2 Speak relevantly to the topic	5	
4.3 Speak within an acceptable length of time	5	
5. Facial Expression		
5.1 Look at the audience while speaking	2	
5.2 Be confident and try to engage the audience's attention	3	
Total	**50**	

CODE SWITCHING IN ESL SPEAKING CLASS: HOW & WHY?

Nalini Arumugam, Kuldip Kaur,
Kaarthiyainy Supramaniam and Xavier Thayalan

Universiti Teknologi MARA,
Malaysia

Abstract

This study investigates tertiary learners' views and ideas in switching from one language to another while engaged in academic discussions and how code switching facilitates academic discussion. In particular, it examines the how group discussion can be used as a teaching approach in developing speaking skill among tertiary learners in Malaysia. This study employed a qualitative approach. The respondents are 33 learners from Diploma in Engineering program in a public university in Malaysia. This study was conducted for 8 weeks of 2 hours each session. The respondents are 33 learners from Diploma in Engineering program in a public university in Malaysia. The learners were grouped into small groups of 3 – 4 members in a group. Researchers observed group discussions and conducted group interviews with students and instructor to elicit information. The results showed that code switching in group discussion enhanced academic discussion and created space for limited proficient students to hold a better grasp in L2 discussion. Structured interview responses revealed that the leeway to use L1 in ESL (L2) classroom sharpened their academic discussion and speaking skills. It can be concluded that codeswitching in the ESL speaking classroom as an effective technique to enhance students' academic discussion skills and elevate their self-esteem.

Key words: code switching, ESL speaking, group discussion, appropriating, confidence

Introduction

Bilingual leaners switching from one language (L1) to another language (L2) or vice versa is a common practice. This occurs when bilinguals or trilinguals replace a word or phrase from L1 to L2. In general, code switching is perceived as a technique to communicate or disseminate information effectively. Gumperz (1982) opines code switch mode as gratifying and enhancing effective communication while creating interlingual unity. Foreign language learners (FLL) switch back to their mother tongue (L1) when they are encounter challenges in the target language communication, especially oral conversation. They added that codeswitching occurs often when the learners are not fluent in the target language, such as when they feel incompetent in the target language or lack confidence in imparting message in the target language (Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2005). Although codeswitching in social contexts is more acceptable and seen as something natural and a part of bilingual speech, in educational settings it is viewed as unsuitable and wrong (Wei & Martin, 2009).

It was also found that students code switch for different reasons such as comfort peer pressure (Liang, 2006) and in private conversations to show solidarity and affection (Holmes, 2013; Al-Khatib, 2003). At times some words are not available to the speakers in the target language. Thus, the speakers code switch during their conversation (Muthusamy, 2009). Anderson (2006) on the other hand feels that some words sound better and clearer in L1 than L2 so code switching takes place automatically. Studies reveal that codeswitching from L1 to L2 or vice versa is beneficial learning tool. Cook (2001) perceives codeswitching as a natural learning process especially in a bilingual academic setting. He also added that bilingual or trilingual learners prefer this mode of discussion as they are at ease as they codeswitch as they need. Additionally, even teachers at times adopt code switching strategy to achieve their objectives and learning outcomes in classrooms (Probyn, 2010). In relation to code switching, Amin (2009) feels that switching code does not only involves mixing between languages but it also shows the ability of using and appropriating mother tongue which creates opportunities for students to make sense accordingly.

Learners do not only codeswitch in ESL classrooms but also other subjects like Mathematics and Science as well as in other language classes. Research (Gumperz, 1982; Hughes et al., 2006; De Fina, 2007; Jorgensen, 2003; Gardner- Chloros & Finnis, 2003) shows that bilingual and multilingual learners code switch to meet a desirable social behavior their peers. Algharabali, Alhaidari and Taqi (2015) showed that learners in Kuwait codeswitch to prefer to English as they perceive the language to be the cool popular language while codeswitch to Arabic because they are comfortable with the language which unites many Arabs in Kuwait. Holmes (2013), however, shared that many students perceive codeswitching in the classroom as a beneficial approach, especially when speakers lack certain vocabulary in the target language especially when interacting with monolingual students.

Some researchers also stressed that code switching among the ESL learners played an extremely crucial role as it was designed to cultivate inter-lingual unity, convey precise meaning and communication as well as develop means to serve the learners to appropriate their language skills and to fulfil these needs (Canagarajah, 2005; Kow, 2003; Cook, 2001). When bilingual or trilingual learners are able to code switch, it is indeed an asset and enhances their mode of

communication (Canagarajah, 2005). However, ESL educators perceive code switching as a failure to grasp the target language or the reluctance of learners to do so. In ESL teacher training pedagogy, code-switching in the ESL classroom is viewed as a counter-productive behaviour. It is also advocated that the progress in the second language is expedited if only one code is used in classroom teaching and learning process (Modupeola, 2013; Cummins & Swain, 1986) and this imposes restriction on code switching from L1 to L2 without giving much consideration to benefits to code switching. They argue that learners code-switch to facilitate students' engagement in academic discussion as well as to generate a better understanding of given tasks. Many studies have been conducted on code switching in ESL especially in the local context. Hence this study is an investigation into the use of code switching among Malaysian learners at a higher learning institution in an ESL classroom. Thus, this study will address the following research questions:

1. How do tertiary-level ESL learners code switch in ESL speaking class?

2. Why do tertiary-level ESL learners code switch in ESL speaking class?

Teacher- student Academic Expectations

Four decades of empirical research on teacher and student relationships and expectancy effects show that teachers' perception affects their students' academic performance (Jussim & Harber, 2005) and self-esteem (Kususanto, Ismail & Jamil, 2010). When teachers' perceived their students to be weak, the students tend to have poor perception of themselves although they did not initially do so (Madon, Smith, Jussim, Russell, Eccles, Palumbo & Walkiewicz, 2001). Although teachers are expected to be just and treat all students fairly, research shows that they demonstrate positive biasness in evaluating high expectancy students' work compared to the low expectancy students (Jussim & Eccles, 1992). They give more response opportunities and praises, are less critical (Brophy, 1987), provide more challenging instruction (Brophy, 1987), and interact more warmly (Babad & Taylor, 1992) with the high expectancy students. In sum, teachers' expectations and differential treatments of high and low ability students (Kuklinski & Weinstein, 2001) adversely impact low achievers.

In transactional theory, the higher a student's expectation is, the greater the teacher's expectation, which in turn leads to more challenging, warmer, and more responsive instruction. This in turn leads to the student's improved achievement (Jussim & Harber, 2005). In other words, if the students' display low expectations, they are less likely to receive the attention they deserve from their teachers in order to improve themselves and are more likely to be marginalised. However, there are teachers who are highly motivated and influence their students' learning and motivation whether they have high or low expectancies. These teachers are found to reach out to low-achieving students and invest attention and effort in them. They are often generous with praises during the teaching and learning *processes* rather than the students' ability in learning (Ashton & Webb, 1986). Hence the point is, highly motivated teachers could be the catalyst to spur their students' academic success. This raises a concern for teachers who experience burnout in continuously dealing with the pressure of showing certain percentage of success in high-stake examinations and the socioacademic challenges of

dealing with the potentially at-risks students. What is needed in such a case is an external intervention that could break the adverse transactional cycle of teacher-student classroom behaviour. An intervention programme such as the *"Student Training in Attitude and Responsibility" (henceforth STAR)* described in the subsequent parts of this paper demonstrates how an intervention approach could deal with the vicious adverse transactional cycle in school in preparing highly at-risk students for a high-stake examination.

Methodology

This study employed a case study approach adopting the a qualitative method. Observations and focus group interviews were used to elicit data to investigate the effects group discussion in enhancing learners' speaking skill. Group interview questions were adapted from Johnson and Johnson (1994) to elicit information from 33 learners at a public institution of higher learning, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. This group of students is in their final semester of completing their diploma in Business Management. One of the researchers was assigned by the institution to teach this class (all 33 respondents belonged to 1 intact group) speaking skill. Thus, the researchers had easy access to observe the classroom discussions and carry out focus group interviews to collect data. The study took into account that students could learn on the effort of their friends. As there were a minimum number of 4 students in a group and the speaking activity was based on a situation given by the teacher, the students were compelled to participate in the activity. This avoided some students becoming free-rider whereby the fluent speakers encouraged them to participate in the discussion. The learners had six contact hours per week over 14 weeks with each lesson lasting two hours. The six contact hours are to cover listening, speaking, reading and writing classes. However, researchers only focused on the writing class. The writing class had 2 contact hours per week over a six-week duration. During the study the learners discussed and practiced speaking tasks assigned in their respective group. During this phase, researchers observed students' discussion while the class instructor assumed the role of facilitator. However a limitation in this study is the researchers did not investigate the frequency of code switching but only the purposes such as inability to find the right vocabulary. All the learners belong to the same ethnicity group and share the same mother tongue. This makes it easier to communicate using their mother tongue, Bahasa Malaysia. Finally, the researchers also carried out structured interviews with the learners in their group to investigate the effectiveness of code switching in academic discussions.

The Speaking Task

The students discussed and presented five topics; basically on social issues and general knowledge. They were given a topic and allotted 20 minutes to prepare. Then each group was given 7-10 minutes to present their final product to class. These group discussion tasks were conducted during class hours. The students were given a choice of 5 topics: (Effects of Cellular Phones, How to Maintain a Good Health, Causes of Road accidents, Abandonment of Babies, and Causes for Aged Parents to be Abandoned). Students had to sit in their respective groups and discuss the assigned tasks. The instructor facilitated while researchers observed the use of code switching skill in learners' discussion.

Data Collection

The groups were given five topics as their speaking tasks (given as above).The researchers observed all the five group discussions. While observing, field notes were made. The groups were observed during the two-hour lesson with three researchers positioning themselves at different positions in the classroom. The primary data for this study came from the observation and semi-structured interviews. The interview responses were reordered and transcribed for analysis.

The researchers also conducted focus group interviews to gather information about the learners' perceptions of their collaborative academic discussion experiences. The interviews were conducted after the fifth group discussion by the research team which lasted between 15-20 minutes for each group. The class instructor was also interviewed. These interviews were to elicit information about the students' perception of code-switching from L2 to L1 in ESL speaking classrooms. The interview questions were to find out when code switching occurred and why they did so. Subsequently the data were analysed and transcribed using an open coding system. The recorded responses were transcribed and analysed verbatim. All excerpts and quotes are assigned pseudonyms R1 – R33.

Results and Discussion

The findings discussed in this paper are drawn mainly from the observations and triangulated with data from group interviews. The current study identified a number of themes from the data but only three prominent themes are described and discussed: (1) Generating Ideas (2) Active participation in discussions and (3) Creating a Stress- Free Environment.

Learners code switched when they need develop ideas especially when they found it challenging to generate language to express their ideas, and selecting suitable words that convey their intended message in a precise and interesting way. It was apparent that code switching occurred during the planning and generating ideas stage. It was observed that the learners code-switched, to obtain the suitable words or to get better understanding if the topic was unfamiliar. This technique was employed by the learners while being engaged in the group discussion, the learners code-switched to L1 naturally. In the presence of the instructor, the learners avoided speaking in L1 and if they desperately needed to translate something, they whispered to one another. However, it was noticed that some learners were vocal and did not worry much about the researchers' presence.

Generating Ideas

The learners showed more code switching while generating ideas. These learners went beyond the ideas that were already given in the class striving to obtain a better grade. The learners mostly code-switched from L1 to L2 such as *'Tak cukup pengalaman' (lack of experience*), *'pemandu yang tak senonoh'* (reckless drivers) '*pengaruh'* (influence) and so on. As all learners were bilingual (Bahasa Malaysia, English), code switching (predominantly in Bahasa Malaysia) was clearly witnessed throughout the discussions. This feature expedited the group discussion. Canagarajah (2005) perceives that code switching is common practice among bilingual and

trilingual learners and this is in fact a strength that facilitates group discussions. Cook (2001) concurs with this argument and claims that code switching among the ESL learners played an extremely crucial role as it was designed to cultivate inter-lingual unity, convey precise meaning and communication as well as develop means to serve the learners to appropriate their language skills and to fulfil these needs. Code switching helped the learners to follow the group discussions. In most cases, the learners translated their ideas using L1, to express their thoughts clearly and also to encourage participation of all group members. A proficient speaker, R9 ***(Alia)*** helped to translate the term "reckless drivers" to L1 (Bahasa Malaysia) term "t*ak senonoh* " to help her group member who was unsure of its equivalent in English. In another session, R30, a limited proficient learner who had a very good point to put forward was unable to elaborate his points in English. He used L1 to convey his idea and then requested his group member to translate his point in English as shown below:

> *Saya rasa punca utama peningkatan kehamilan remaja di Malaysia adalah kelonggaran amalan agama. Remaja berasa amalan nilai-nilai agama sebagai kepercayaan karut dan fesyen lama. Mereka tidak memahami pengajaran agama mereka dan meninggalkan amalan-amalan ini untuk orang dewasa. Tiada satu yang agama menggalakkan hubungan seksual sebelum kahwin. Jika semua orang memahami amalan agama mereka, maka tidak akan ada apa-apa kehamilan remaja"*
>
> English version
>
> I think the main cause of increase in teenage pregnancies in Malaysia is the lack of religious practice. Teens feel the practice of religious values as superstition and old fashioned. They do not understand the teaching of their religion and abandon these practices as they are meant only for adults. No religion promotes premarital sexual relations. If we understand the practice of our religion, there will not be any teenage pregnancy.

R18 translated R30's point of view to English without any hesitation. This translation assisted the group to continue their group discussion. The assistance from peers in code switching was apparent among the learners throughout the discussions. Whenever any of the members had difficulty expressing their views in L2, they resorted to L1 to continue their discussion. Even some learners who were able to express their ideas in L2, code switched to encourage their groups members' engagement in their discussion.

Furthermore, the structured interview responses revealed that learners' intention of code switching was to express their ideas and thoughts. Learners were also aware of importance of using English as medium to discuss but somehow L1 code switching and code mixing enabled them to deliver their point of view effectively and allowed the group members to engage actively in the group discussion. They added that code switching did not cause any obstruction but enhanced their understanding of the topic. In addition learners also felt that although monolingual teaching and learning would enhance their grasp in the language, but code switching encouraged their participation and comprehension of the discussion. R25 said, "My English is not very good. When my group explains to me certain words in Malay, I will join the discussion and learn new words too". R9 and R 17 also shared similar views. It was observed that R5 often code switched during group discussions. R28 expressed, "When my friend clarifies the topic and points in Malay, I can *understand the issues better*". In general, learners perceive code switching as a means to learn new words and to participate in teaching and learning process

actively. As such, many learners opined that code switching was a method to strengthen their English language too.

However there were also opposing views to code switching in discussions as indicated in this study. One of the respondents, R15 said, "Code switching has more negative effect on L2 than L1. No doubt some of my group members understood better when we explain in Malay but I feel they will become too dependent on translation and may not strive to learn L2". Some also shared that they prefer their instructor teaching and discussing only in English, which was strictly abided by the instructor. Students were in fact strictly reminded to discuss in English as it will help them to improve their English speaking skills. Similarly, respondents (R8, R11, R25 and R32) also perceived that discussions in English would lead to better grades in speaking assessment. Results from this study highlight the role of L1 in L2 group discussions. Code switching contributed to full participation in discussions as it enabled the students to generate more ideas and brain storm actively. The students' code switching in discussions has a great impact on their academic performances as it is seen as an influential tool to facilitate learning and therefore helps increase students involvement. One of the students explained : "Of course we prefer not to code switch during speaking assessment because we may obtain lower scores. But code switching in a normal classroom discussion will help us to generate more ideas and give feedback to our group members".

A respondent, R26 suggested, "Code switching should be adopted in bilingual ESL classes to enhance teaching and learning. Not all of us come from an English speaking background. So using L1 to explain a subject matter will help us to engage in class work. I think there is nothing wrong in code switching in ESL class." The analysis of the group discussions depicted that code switching played a crucial part in assisting the students to engender suitable vocabulary. Instances of seeking assistance in vocabulary are as shown below :

> R8 : "I *rasa (feel)* cellular phone *itu (is)* very important to *menghubungi (contact), what we say in English?" and R8 replied "contact".*
>
> R7 : *"*Cellular phone makes people *rapat dengan keluarga, h*ow to tell properly eh..in English?" and R8 again said *"*strengthens relationship among family members".

Hence, it is observed that the learners code-switched, to obtain the suitable words or to get a good understanding if the topic was unfamiliar. This technique was very vividly employed by the learners in both cases. Canagarajah's (2005) pointed that code switching in the ESL classroom "serves to help teachers and learners to manage their classroom interactions efficiently and to negotiate the pedagogical content meaningfully" (p.139). This was evident during the planning and generating ideas stage while learners discussed their assigned speaking tasks. Another obvious reason used in code switching is for seeking clarification of meaning. R5 asked, "What is gadget"? to which R7 replied and explained "*alat-alat electronic macam telefon*" (gadgets mean electronic tools like telephones) These things are called gadgets". The observation shows that there were students who needed translation to enhance their participation in group discussion. R27 said that "*Rakan saya tolong terjemah perkataan dari Bahasa Malasia ke Inggeris, Inggeris ke Bahasa Malaysia bila saya tak faham atau keliru dengan maksudnya."* (My

group members help me translate from English to Malay or Malay to English when I am not sure of the meaning of some words).

Feedback from Interview with class instructor also showed that learners benefited from code switching. She reported that they were more confident in expressing their ideas and this helped to improve their overall speaking skills. Lack of topic-related vocabulary and also the lack of appropriate registers seemed to be another reason engaging in code switching for 10 of the respondents selected for the study. When interacting on specific topics, bilinguals seem to have difficulty in selecting appropriate words that suit the particular topical area. As a result, they tend to choose lexical items that are appropriate from the language where their repertoire is more comprehensive, that is, where the available register contains the lexemes they need in order to express themselves effectively. This results necessarily in a code switch.

The bilingual and trilingual learners use code switching as a way to converse in the target language especially to fill in the stopgap with words in the native language to continue the conversation confidently. Besides, code switching also helps learners to accentuate and reinforce some information to ensure that all members understood the message delivered in the target language whereby some learners may depend on the repetitive message in L1. This also clears any misunderstanding in the information. Besides, the learners also showed maturity in their manner of discussion and handling their group members. Translation enabled the respondents to understand the assigned work better and participate actively. This also encouraged the quiet learners to attempt discussing without feeling left out as pointed out by Canagarajah, (2005) and Kow, (2003). In general, the learners utilised their L1 to share their ideas and send message across to their group members who had limited language proficiency.

Demonstrating active participation in discussion

Based on the observation it was noted that the learners were keen to participate and contribute to the group discussions. They were groping for words and used a lot of fillers such as ‘err’, ‘hmm’, ‘ah’ when elaborating their points. They would code switch to L1 when they had difficulty in expressing their ideas or just ask their group members how to say something in English. They wanted to show they were equally active as fluent speakers in the discussion. This was made known by the learners during the interviews.

The instructor shared that the group discussion sessions enabled her to study the positive side of her learners though she was not in favour of code switching in ESL classroom. She shared that she felt that her learners were very cooperative and helpful to one another. Whenever a member did not understand the assigned tasks, the group members’ code switched spontaneously to assist their peers. There were no complaints or qualms about group members’ weaknesses or inability. Though the instructor is not supportive of code switching, she agreed that code switching promoted better academic discussions during the speaking sessions. Besides, she acknowledged that learners were incompetent to participate in discussion because of their weak grasp of the language that hindered their active involvement. The researchers also observed the learners helping one another in the group to “swim together’ as Johnson (1998) claimed benefits group discussion.

The class instructor also reported that the group discussion sessions gave her an opportunity to understand her learners' responsibility and love for their parents. When a topic on leaving aged parents at old folks home was assigned, the learners felt that it was not right to abandon aged parent in old folks home. They felt that it is the duty of children to take care of parents. Some learners were emotional about leaving their parents at a home and strongly suggested that they should be punished legally for ignoring their duties as children. R12 said, "What about having an extended family system? This may help to reduce old folks home in Malaysia. When parents live in with their children, they help to babysit their grandchildren and *boleh memantau pembantu* (monitor their domestic maids). R10 felt that children should provide *bantuan kewangan* (financial support) for aged parents to lead a decent living. Children *yang mengabai ibu bapa* (who abandon their parents) should be punished legally. The fear of punishment will help to reduce parents dumping. The instructor felt that her learners still had obligation of Asian children who want to take care of their parents.

Stress-Free Learning Environment

It was observed that code switching created a stress-free learning atmosphere where the members were friendly to one another, and this created a good rapport among the group members. Though learners were seen to deviate at times, somehow the leaders played an effective role by executing their responsibilities in keeping them on track. In this way, group members were seen helping one another and there was not much of fuss on their peers' strengths and weaknesses though at times, the proficient learners were contributing more in terms of checking on grammar and appropriate vocabulary.

As all learners shared the same L1, the inclination to code switch for the reason of commonality was apparent. Besides, they perceive this approach to strengthen their rapport among them as they feel closer as they communicate in their mother tongue although the speaking lessons were supposed to be formal, it was noted that mostly the conversations and discussions were informal. Learners also indicated in the structured interviews that they code switched to L1 because they lack the appropriate words and as such they found it comfortable using L1 to discuss. In this way they also feel that they can express their views clearly. As learners practised their speaking tasks in their groups respectively, the class instructor assumed the role of facilitator. Learners were free to discuss among themselves especially in the absence of the instructor. They did not fear making errors in the presence of their peers. Moreover, group members' moral support and assistance given by code switching on issues discussed made all members feel comfortable and less anxious. Thus, code switching also helps to reduce anxiety level of learners.

Learners agreed that communication with the class instructor was not the same as with group members. It is apparent that code switching from L2 to L1 was very frequent among the learners and less with the instructor although they have similar L1. It is noteworthy that all learners and instructor tried speaking in the target language in the class especially when the researchers were present in the class. This observation is in line with Berlin's (2005) who claimed that the dominance of a language relies on the language-learning environment. The majority of learners indicated in the interviews that code switching was effective in the classroom as it made lessons more interactive and encouraged even average and below average learners to communicate in English. However, a small number of learners (R5, R11, R15 & R22) perceived otherwise. They

felt that the class instructor should be firm in ensuring only English Language was used in all communication and discussions in the ESL speaking classroom. This will indirectly force learners to use the target language and gradually they will be more confident in speaking in the English language.

However, based on the observations, it was found that the learners code switched in almost every sentence they uttered in their discussions. It was also noted that learners made a lot of grammatical errors as they had direct translation and code switching frequently. This situation inspires ESL practitioners to reconsider if code switching is an effective tool in helping learners to enhance their grasp or obstruct their fluency in the language. No doubt code switching elevates learners' understanding and communicative abilities, L2 learners need to master a certain level of linguistic ability to develop their fluency and competency in the language to be able to compete in globalised job market. Therefore, it is hoped that the overall result of this study will provide a basis for educators to strategize the use of code switching in their ESL classrooms.

Conclusion

In general, it is worth looking at the group members' ability not merely their grasp in the language but also their capacity in participating in an academic discussion. Their focus was on their tasks and not the medium of communication, English or Malay. The class instructor too played her role well in the sense she did not restrict them too much though she kept reminding them to communicate in the English language. It was noted that the learners were not limited in their thoughts or weak in their academic discussion. However, their inadequate grasp of the language posed a hurdle for their academic contribution. When they were restricted to only English language, they did not actively engage in their tasks throughout the discussion. It is important to highlight the learners ability in appropriating their ability, let it be the language and the knowledge in the right time and place. Code switching also encouraged them to translate their ideas and strengths and share them with their group members, especially some passive learners. This has been highlighted by Canagarajah (2005) and Kow (2003) who claimed that code switching provides opportunities for learners to engage actively in group discussion.

Educators and learners perceive code switching differently. Some feel that code switching facilitates language learning and should be allowed while others perceive otherwise. However, it is important to understand as to why students code switch, be it from L2 to L1 or vice versa. It is believed and practised by many educators that the target language should be used to its optimum because it will be a platform to practise the language. Canagarajah (2005) and Skiba (1997) suggested instructors should see code switching as a "bridge between two languages" for bilingual learners. However, it is good to monitor and motivate learners to use the target language in the classroom to create opportunity for learners to use it and limit the extent to which code switching takes place in class. After all in reality it is common to code switch in everyday conversations in a multi lingual society. Therefore code switching should be allowed in classrooms to fulfil some functions as the present study indicates it helps students.

Recommendation

As this study was conducted among mono cultural students, we may not be able to generalise the findings to other educational settings. It is recommended that this study is carried out among more diverse cultural students and explore the benefits of codeswitching in other language classes. Future research could also deal with experimental study to examine code switching in reading or grammar areas where most of the time code switching is done in understanding grammar rules or reading text in ESL classrooms. The pre-test and post-test results with experimental and control groups with longer time frame may provide different results. Instructors use code switching could also be compared to see to what extent they hinder or enhance students learning for language and content based classrooms in the higher institutions where lessons are delivered mainly in English language.

Reference

Al-Khatib H. (2003) *Language alteration among Arabic and English youths: Reflecting or constructing social realities?* International Journal of n and Bilingualism, 6, 409-422. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/136700503

Algharabali, Alhaidari & Taqi (2015) *Multilingual students code switch between English, Arabic and French and the various sociolinguistic functions that motivate them to engage in this linguistic practice during their daily interaction* English language and literature studies vol 5 no. 4, 2015, 47

Anderson T K (2006) Spanish-English bilinguals' attitudes toward code-switching: Profiency, grammaticality and familiarity. *The Pennsylvania State University. ProQuest dissertations and Theses, retrieved on 5 August 2011, http://search.proquest.com/docvies/305259787?accountid= 42518*

Canagarajah A S (2005) *Resisting Linguistic Imperialism in English Teaching: Adopting a Critical Perspective on Pedagogy*, Oxford University Press, 9-38

Cook V (2001) *Second Language Learning and Language Teaching*, Arnold, London

Cummins, J & Swain, M (1986) *Bilingualism in Education*, Harlow: Longmans

Gumperz J J (1982) *Conventional Code-switching*, in Discourse Strategies. Cambridge University Press, England

Holmes J (2003) *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, Routledge, New York

Johnson D W and Johnson R (1994) *The new circles of learning cooperation in the classroom and school* http://www/.cooperation/.org Accessed on 24 Nov 2014

Kow Y C (2003) *Code Switching for a Purpose: Focus on Preschool Malaysian children* Multilingua 22, pp 59-77

Liebscher G and Daily-O'Cain J (2005) *Learner Code-switching in the content-based foreign language classroom* The Modern Language Journal [e-journal] 89, ii. http://www.diva-poral.org/smash/get/diva2:404799/FULLTEXT02

Liang X P (2006) *Identify and language functions: High school Chinese immigrant students' code-switching dilemmas in ESL classes* Jnl of Identity, Language & Education, 5(2), 143-167 http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s 15327701jlie0502_3, retrieved 31 Aug 2016

Modupeola O R (2013) *Code-Switching as a teaching strategy: Implication for English Language teaching and learning in a multilingual society* IOSR Jnl of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), 14(3), 2279. Retrieved from http://www.Iosrjournals.org on 14 Dec 2014

Uthusamy P (2009) *Communicative functions and reasons for code switching: A Malaysian perspective. Retrieved on 5 Aug 2012 from http://www.crisaps.org/newsletter/summer2009/ Muthusamy.doc*

Probyn M (2001) *Teachers' Voices: Teachers' reflection on learning and teaching through the medium of English as an additional language in South Africa* International Journal of Bilingual and Bilingualism, 4(4)

Skiba R (1997) *Code Switching as a countenance of Language Interference*
The Internet TESL Journal, 3 (10). Retrieved on 23 Nov 2014 from http://iteslj.org/Articles/ Skiba-Codeswitching. Html

Wei L and Martin P (2009) *Conflicts and tensions in codeswitching in a Taiwanese EFL classroom.* Internatioanl Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 12(2), 117-122. Retrieved 2 Sept 2016 from http://www.diva-portal.org/mash/get/diva2:404799/FULLTEXT02

A 'PATHWAY' TO SUCCESS: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AS PARTNERS IN THE PROCESS OF TRANSITION TO AUSTRALIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

Donna M Velliaris
University of South Australia, Australia

Paul B Breen
The University of Westminster Professional Language Centre, UK

Abstract

Today's university students are expected to graduate from their institutions with an increased awareness of the attributes they have acquired during their degree programs. The set of accumulated knowledge, skills and dispositions have come to be known as Graduate Attributes (GAs), which this paper sets out to define and then refocus around the needs of international 'pathway' students in the pre-university sector. To capture a sense of how this worked in practice, this paper is focused on the case of the Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT), which serves as the setting for a study that explored the way 'values' can be added to the experience of first-year international pathway students in Australia. Emphasis was on drawing 'new' students' attention to the acquisition of 'Core Learning Values' (CLVs) and asking them to choose one of the Institute's four values—Respect, Excellence, Curiosity or Passion— to discuss via a mandatory online questionnaire. Qualitative and narrative data provided rich insight into students' preferred value and their reasoning.

Keywords: Australia, Core Learning Values (CLVs), Diplomas, Graduate Attributes (GAs), International Students, Orientation Week, Pathway Programs, Pre-University

Introduction

Pathway programs are intended to articulate students into Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) on the basis of them receiving significant units of credit transfer upon successful completion and oftentimes equivalent to one full year (Bode, 2013; Fiocco, 2006). In theory, such programs assist in facilitating a smooth transition from pre-degree preparation, to the point of entering full and mainstream undergraduate study. For pathway students, however, this is likely the first time they have encountered the environment and experience of large lecture theatres; enrolling in tutorial sessions; and/or accessing library facilities. Pathway students do not have the same length of time to adjust to their new tertiary environment as others who have entered university as direct-entry first-year students (Velliaris & Breen, 2014). According to Bode (2013, p. 4), pathway students face their actual 'first-year experience' as second-year students and while HEIs offer orientation/transition programs for direct entry first-year students, there is an expectation that second-year students have already adapted to university life. As a consequence, students who have had a more traditional first-year experience may be at a considerable advantage over pathway students, not only in terms of academic literacy, but also in the acquisition of the HEI's GAs (Velliaris & Breen, 2014).

Background: Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology

Founded in 1989, the Eynesbury Institute of Business and Technology (EIBT) is the pre-university pathway provider through which this study investigated a process of tailoring GAs to meet the needs of its international student population. The context of this small-scale study is imbedded in the provision of 'Foundation' and 'Pathway' programs for international students. Such preparatory programs aim for full and independent participation in the HE sector within which there has been increasing contemporary emphasis on the student experience and active engagement with all aspects of the learning process, as exemplified in Bryson, Hardy and Hand (2009). Since the late 1990s early 2000s, the demand on 'pathways' has increased rapidly due to the rising number of international students enrolling for HE studies in English-speaking countries (Jordan, 2002). At the outset of this expansion, the majority of these students came from South-East Asia, and this largely remains the case, despite an increase in numbers from other developing societies such as Africa, India, and Saudi Arabia.

In many cases, students have attained 'institutionally-determined language proficiency requirements before commencing their studies' in the form of a 'satisfactory English-language proficiency exam score' such as the International English Language Testing System (IELTS). Those, however, who do not have a (equivalent) score need to undertake some form of 'preparatory program' (Gilbert, 2015) that usually entails a combination of specific subjects, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Such courses are concerned with working on students' ability to 'communicate effectively in academic environments' (Todd, 2003, p. 149), to provide a 'foundation for the acquisition of academic literacy' (Braine, 2002, p. 60), and preparing 'non-native speaking learners for academic study and research in English-medium courses and institutions' (Gilbert, 2013, p. 117).

Traditionally, these programs/courses have been delivered in university disciplines and departments, as is still the case in a great many places, though increasingly, HEIs are choosing to 'outsource' them to private schools. Thus, this research occurs within such a context. The Institute featured in this study is one of a growing number of educational providers strategically partnered with local (state-wide) HEIs to establish opportunities to promote Australian HE globally.

Literature Review: Graduate Attributes

The concept of articulating GAs to be developed by students during their time with the HEI, came to prominence in the late 1980s and early 1990s, although they have been part of university thinking since the 1860s (Barrie, 2005). As the push for HEIs to develop GAs gained momentum, so too did their position in the context of 'teaching and learning'. When government funding for HEIs was linked to, and became (to a large extent), dependant on teaching and learning outcomes, GAs were seen as an explicit indicator of 'performance'. They began to take on an importance that stretched beyond the original concept of an indicator of a graduate's preparedness for employment and to a certain extent, HEIs began to see them in a 'marketing' context (Nunan, 1999).

Today, Australian HEIs are required—as part of the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) audit process—to show *how* they are embedding GAs in the delivery of undergraduate degrees (Barrie, Hughes, & Smith, 2009, p. 7). The Australian Technology Network (ATN), described GAs as the 'qualities, skills and understandings a university community agrees its students should develop during their time with the institution and consequently shape the contribution they are able to make to their profession and society' (Bowden, Hart, King, Trigwell, & Watts, 2000). That is, HEIs inculcate in their graduates a set of personal attributes (e.g., appropriate presentation and grooming, interpersonal communication skills, and punctuality) and intellectual attributes (e.g., ability to manage large volumes of information from various sources, and the analytical and problem-solving abilities needed to work effectively) that are consistent with its 'philosophy' of education.

Although, 'academics hold qualitatively different conceptions of the phenomenon of GAs' (Barrie, 2004, p. 261), so too 'in different working situations, the combinations of knowledge, skills and dispositions which employers anticipate from graduates [also] vary' (Su & Feng, 2008, p. 2). Nationally and internationally, the GAs developed by different HEIs vary, not only in terms of which attributes, but with respect to the nature and level described. They may go beyond the disciplinary expertise that has traditionally formed the core of many university programs and range from 'simple' technical skills to 'complex' intellectual abilities and ethical values. Characteristically, GAs should not be: (a) too general as to be unintelligible; (b) too detailed as to lose all sense of focus; nor (c) too idealistic as to be unattainable (Velliaris & Breen, 2014, p. 3).

Chronologically, in 2004, Barrie defined GAs as being the 'skills, knowledge and abilities of university graduates, beyond disciplinary content knowledge, which are applicable to a range of contexts' (p. 262). In 2006, Hager and Holland expressed GAs as 'thinking skills…effective communication skills, teamwork skills…personal attributes…and values such as ethical practice,

persistence, integrity and tolerance' (2006, p. 2). In 2009, Pitman and Broomhall (2009) identified the *five* most cited attributes as: communication skills = 98%; interpersonal skills = 82%; problem-solving skills + mastery of disciplinary knowledge + awareness and respect for others = 71% each. Oliver (2011, p. 2) contended that the most common generic attributes (i.e., apart from knowledge outcomes) appeared to be clustered among *seven* broad areas: critical and analytical, and sometimes creative and reflective thinking; ethical and inclusive engagement with communities, cultures and nations; information literacy, often associated with technology; learning and working collaboratively; learning and working independently; problem-solving, including generating ideas and innovative solutions; and written and oral communication.

Other generic GAs encompass descriptors such as students becoming: active learners; culturally and socially aware; environmentally responsive and responsible; global in outlook and competence; and lifelong learners who are work-ready (e.g., Baker, 2014; Barrie, 2004, 2005, 2007; Barrie et al., 2009; Bridgstock, 2009; Hager & Holland, 2006; Su & Feng, 2008). It is important to note that the linking and weighing of GAs against assessment tasks as prescribed by HEIs and other accrediting bodies, does *not* ensure that they are being explicitly taught, and neither does it ensure that they are being effectively measured.

Core Learning Values (CLVs) in Practice

A review of the relevant literature suggests that there is considerable work in the areas of acquiring academic literacy and autonomy, highlighted as a key requirement for international students in BALEAP (2008). Yet, scant discussion exists on how GAs apply to pathways. In fact, the National Graduate Attributes Project (GAP), a key paper exploring this issue, refers 'exclusively' to universities. The role of the pathway provider is to prepare students not for transitioning to employment, but for transitioning to mainstream HE. In addition to scholastic results, pathway student outcomes should focus on 'broader values' that will see them in a stronger position to achieve ongoing academic success. Certainly, pathway providers have an implicit obligation to begin the development of GAs consistent with those of the HEI to which students will transfer.

EIBT has moved away from the term 'attributes' and introduced a set of 'values' believed to be more representative of the ongoing development and desired outcomes of its students. The four CLVs are: (1) *Respect*; (2) *Excellence*; (3) *Curiosity*; and (4) *Passion*. These values are indicative of the features required by 'pathway' students while broadly encompass the GAs mandated by its partner universities. Each value is/should not be viewed as a 'standalone', but rather as a collective whole working together for the social and educational advancement of students in preparation for mainstream [Australian] HE studies. Academic and professional staff and students are expected to engage in, and demonstrate, the CLVs within the Institute through a wide range of experiences both inside and outside of the classroom starting from 'Orientation Week'. Significantly, these values are built into this institution's Teaching and Learning (T&L) Model so that delivery, assessment, staff performance, and the culture of teaching etcetera are aligned to them. Each value is expressed with the behaviours that help articulate it (refer to Appendix A).

Method and Methodology

A fact of providing transitional programs for overseas students is that international relocation involves large scale social, academic, and environmental changes, and aims to facilitate a positive and successful transition for commencing students to their diploma program. The site of this study was an Institute that reflected these characteristics, with the focus of the research being the platform of transition rather than the course provider itself. From the outset, the study was intended to serve as a small-scale instance of action research (Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 2000; McLean, 1995) that could inform practice at a local level and then feed into further and future explorations at a broader national or international level. The first cycle or stage of this research was to introduce the concept of CLVs over the course of an orientation week, with the rationale being that—as with GAs—these values should be part of the student learning experience from 'Day One'. Held one week before the trimester officially commences, orientation is a crucial period for predominantly 'newly' arrived international students to be presented with information that will help them survive and thrive in their new educational setting. Orientation processes provide academic, administrative, geographic and social familiarisation, as well as the opportunity for students to embrace the diversity of their previous educative experiences (Velliaris & Breen, 2014, p. 5).

Students are introduced to the CLVs through a PowerPoint presentation and asked to discuss each value and *how* it can be demonstrated in the context of their new learning environment. Students are then required to complete a mandatory online questionnaire to further reinforce them. An author-developed 'semi-structured' (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) and 'open-ended' (Creswell, 2008; Kaufman, Guerra, & Platt, 2006; Neuman, 2004) format was chosen, which included a series of 25 items. As students have a range of English-language proficiency levels it was essential that the questionnaire included clear wording and a straightforward layout (Blankenship, Crossley, Heidingsfield, Herzog, & Kornhauser, 2008; Oppenheim, 1992). In first-person narrative form, qualitative and electronic data was amassed from new students across four consecutive trimesters (2014-03, 2015-01, 2015-02 and 2015-03). A total of n=279 students were asked the question: *The Core Learning Values are (1) Respect, (2) Excellence, (3) Curiosity, and (4) Passion. Choose ONE and highlight how it will relate to teaching and learning within your diploma program at EIBT?*

The excerpts presented below include students' own reflections and do not make any generalisable claims. They provide insight into international students' own choice and should be conceived as a subjective process realised in a specific historical context. Relatedly, using existing data can be collected relatively quickly and would appear to have higher credibility because it is independent of any specific research activit(ies) (Altrichter et al., 2000, p. 82). To properly manage the quantity of qualitative and narrative data, quotations were minimally edited to enable a free-flow of response, and excerpts do not disclose any information that may prejudice participants; students are not identifiable either by name or description.

Findings and Discussion

Drawing on Wenger's (1998) criteria, it can be argued that pathway students are part of several interlinked/interlocking Communities of Practice (CoP), engaged in the end goal of attaining full

(or equal) participation in a parallel CoP, which is the regular first-year study group. To best understand any CoP, it is advantageous to evaluate students' thoughts and activities through their own voice. To achieve this, students were given the tools to define and choose their preferred CLV prior to commencement of their diploma program.

Table 1: Results of students' choice of preferred Core Learning Value (CLV) over four consecutive trimesters (Year + -01 trimester 1, -02 trimester 2, or -03 trimester 3)

Trimester & CLVs	*Respect*	*Excellence*	*Curiosity*	*Passion*	*NA No response*	*Total*
2014-03	22	10	21	19	2	74
2015-01	38	7	12	23	5	85
2015-02	15	6	20	30	5	76
2015-03	16	3	10	13	2	44
Total	***91 (1st)***	***26 (4th)***	***63 (3rd)***	***85 (2nd)***	***14***	***279***

With reference to Table 1, in 2014-03, the most popular choice was *Respect* (n=22), but only by one point over *Curiosity* (n=21). In 2015-01, the most popular choice was again, *Respect* (n=38) by a significant margin over second-placed *Passion* (n=23). In 2015-02, students' first choice was *Passion* (n=30), ten more votes than *Curiosity* (n=20). In 2015-03, *Respect* returned to the forefront with the highest votes (n=16), followed closely by *Passion* (n=13). Overall, in descending order across four consecutive trimesters, 279 students chose: (1) *Respect* (n=91 or 33%); (2) *Passion* (n=85 or 30%); (3) *Curiosity* (n=63 or 23%); and (4) *Excellence* (n=26 or 10%). Fourteen respondents did not answer the question with one definitive CLV.

The principles underpinning this research were such that: (a) this group of international students could be taken as a representative sample of a much broader local, national, and international population; and (b) the steps taken could be replicated with a much larger sample. In descending order of popularity, the following section is focused on each CLV and provides student narratives—one each from 2014-03 to 2015-03—as examples of the rich narrative data collected over four trimesters.

Core Learning Value: 'RESPECT'

As part of the independent learning process, it is essential that educators know their students well, which includes knowing their personalities, circumstances and backgrounds. Educators need to observe, reflect and 'respect' students' learning process(es). This principle eschews a one-size-fits-all approach and acknowledges the need to understand the student's place on the learning continuum, in order to find the 'starting point' from which independent learning can develop.

> *Respect is a significant word in our life. If you are not respectful to other people, then no one would respect you. First, we need to respect our educators when they are talking, we should not talk or do other things like playing on phones or sleeping. When we have*

questions, we should raise our hands first. We also need to respect our classmates. We cannot neglect or discriminate against any students.

(2014-03)

EIBT treats and respects all students equally. The educators don't differentiate among any of the students and answer all of their questions with great virtue. No matter how silly the questions are, the educators don't make fun of the students but tries to solve them to clear all their doubts. When they give respect, they deserve the same from students. It's one of the most important factors that makes EIBT what it is.

(2015-01)

I want to talk about 'respect'. After I go to Australia, I think respect is important. It's because in here, most of the people are talking English, but for me, I am talking Cantonese. Most students talk in Mandarin. When we are having a lesson, we need to respect the teacher and speak English. If we speak Chinese, it is disrespectful.

(2015-02)

Respect is the best value, not only in EIBT, but also to the realistic world. Teachers and students have to give each other respect, and I have to show myself respect that I am going to achieve something right here, not wasting my time and tuition.

(2015-03)

Core Learning Value: 'PASSION'

When students are passionately engaged in their learning i.e., when they are mesmerised by their learning environment or activities, there are a myriad of responses in their brains making connections and building schema that would not have occurred without that 'passion'. Learning activities in which a student has *little or no* interest is likely to diminish their initiative. Thus, aside from influencing emotion, passionate engagement can empower them to feel in control of their own learning.

Educators and students need to keep their passion in order to teach or learn. Passion is motivation; keeping passion in the course you can learn easily and quickly. People need to keep their passion to do work. We can see a big difference between a person who has passion and a person who is doing something like a robot.

(2014-03)

Passion is important for both lecturers and students. In my opinion, if lecturers do not have any passion for the subject they're teaching, they can't possibly expect students to love it. And with students, I don't see the point of studying that particular course if you don't have any passion for it. It is also easy for a student to fall behind that subject if they have no passion.

(2015-01)

Passion is what I want to talk about. Only when we keep the passion on something, we can work really hard for it. If you do not like it, time will make all your goals more and more difficult to achieve, but if you have the passion for it, nothing can stop you. The point I am

trying to make is we should have passion for what we do. It is the only way to make things better.

(2015-02)

I love the word 'passion'. In my opinion, the people who can be successful they are all passionate. I remember that the most efficient period during my study is when I was very passionate. I was confident and I believed I could complete everything because of my passion. And I think a passionate teacher can give students energy and attract attention. In my eyes, the EIBT's teachers are enthusiastic and energetic.

(2015-03)

Core Learning Value: 'CURIOSITY'

Providing learners with open-ended questions and assisting them to examine the choices they make is an indispensable part of the learning experience. Creation of problems in which students have to integrate knowledge across topics—interlinking ideas and using understanding(s) to solve problems in other areas—encourages extrapolation and reinforcement. Thus, deliberate setting of learning tasks that necessitate students to make their own connections, followed by opportunities for discussion, is an imperative part of the developmental process.

Curiosity is that desire to know about something. It relates to learning in EIBT because as we are more curious about something, we would have that determination to find out about it. Being curious would enable us to ask our educators about that something that we don't know. After asking, we would get more information. And with more information, we can diversify our minds to know more.

(2014-03)

Curiosity helps students to be interested in the topic. When the lecturer points out something that a student is curious about, they will try to get the answer by asking questions or doing personal research. In the process of asking and researching, students actually learn many things that they cannot imagine. Even better, they may start to become curious about the things that relate to the topic.

(2015-01)

Curiosity is important for learning. Once people have curiosity, they cannot wait to know and understand, which has become a driving force in learning. It can promote people to continue to learn and progress, and constantly improve.

(2015-02)

Curiosity is a great motivation for both teachers and students, because curiosity can make students think ahead of their studies which could provide an opportunity for teachers to teach them more. It motivates students to ask questions, and to be willing to discover more things beyond the textbooks and this knowledge would also be useful to their future life.

(2015-03)

Core Learning Value: 'EXCELLENCE'

Sound pedagogy should prepare students for lifelong learning and the pursuit of personal excellence. That is, pedagogy should help students to see the significance of their learning as a student, a citizen and as a professional, producing greater understanding and awareness of their own and others' cultural beliefs, values and behaviours. Recognising one's impact on intercultural interactions, while developing the ability to think globally and consider issues from a variety of perspectives, will manifest into 'excellence'.

> *Excellence is a great value in education, because it is evidence that you are trying in your subject. It's useless if you have passion and curiosity, but you don't apply them in the test and assignments and don't reach excellence. I personally chose EIBT and The University of Adelaide, because of the education excellence, because if there is no excellence, you won't be well-prepared for your future.*

(2014-03)

> *I would say that 'excellence' relates to teaching and learning within EIBT. I noticed the first day that Eynesbury really wants their students to succeed since we started with plenty of information about how to study successfully and what the university requires.*

(2015-01)

> *I think that excellence is an important quality in my studies within EIBT. If you cannot be excellent, you are just normal. I do not want to be normal. I need to look after my parents and my family. I have important responsibilities.*

(2015-02)

> *I choose excellence. I will put all the effort on learning to make a great grade. During my study period if I have some problems and do not understand I should ask teachers immediately. And this is what I lack, I need to correct this shortcoming. I think if I am able to do this, I will have good grades.*

(2015-03)

Implications and Future Recommendations

There were *two* key areas that this experience enhanced and indeed, can be further developed over the full duration of EIBT students' diploma studies.

- First, was to provide the basis for the establishment of a conceptual framework to serve as both a theoretical and practical starting point for evaluating the aims and design of pathway programs geared towards transition for international students from one phase of study to the next. With this in mind, there was scope for creating a conceptual framework of relevance to the local context, as is one of the goals of 'action research' (e.g., Altrichter et al., 2000; Koshy, 2005; McLean, 1995). Burns (1999, p. 24) speaks of action research as oftentimes prompted by 'concrete and practical' issues of 'immediate concern' in the workplace, echoing Lewin's (1946) original conceptualisation of 'research which will help the practitioner' (p. 34). In this case, this study helped the research-practitioners to establish the basis for a framework that can serve as a guide in

designing pathway courses at a local level, with the aim of sharing this knowledge in the broader context of HE and other pathway provisions. Though such a framework is still maturing, it has been titled the PERC Model, from combining the four CLVs espoused by students—*Passion, Excellence, Respect* and *Curiosity*—and using these values to underpin Institutional imperatives such as induction, course design, and assessment.

- Second, was to provide students with a sense of continuation and a broader picture of their diploma pathway; that they are on a learning continuum and there is a logical and coherent connection between/among different parts and years of their studies. The values that they bring with them through their pathway year, are a transferable part of that learning continuum and are open to constant recycling and adaptation. Furthermore, the second area involved fostering in students a (stronger) sense of autonomy as they transition to a new educational system. From the start, they are partners in the learning process and their educators are there as guides/facilitators on the road to self-efficacy. This is particularly salient to the international student context, as evidenced in the work of BALEAP (2008, p. 5), which stressed the need for students to be scaffolded over time in the teaching and learning of EAP towards greater autonomy.

New students' choice of CLV could help compensate for those who may not gain the traditional first-year university experience. At the very least, it was beneficial to guide them towards a sense of what self-selected primary attribute may assist and improve their own learning experience. And looking ahead, there are extensive opportunities for added research and development in GAs/CLVs-related areas, such as in tracing/tracking the subsequent progress of students from pathways to degree programs. In addition, there is scope for comparison into the long-term effectiveness of the process of introducing the concept of CLVs to students, and the possibility that it may even reverse the situation of pathway students being 'disadvantaged' in the acquisition of GAs through missing-out on key aspects of a 'traditional' first-year experience.

Conclusion

EIBT is committed to gathering and assessing its strengths and weaknesses in relation to acculturating its international student body to mainstream Australian HE. Using a data source such as international students' *own* reflections related to EIBT's CLVs *has* and *will* continue to facilitate outcomes with compelling advantages. These include, for example, demonstrating an institutional commitment to: (a)v improving teaching, learning and community engagement; and (b) advancing university partnerships in a common educative endeavour. This Institute will continue, therefore, to encourage and inspire both staff and students to undertake periods of self-examination and reflection to (better) understand each other's experiences and perspectives, and to act strategically on the insights gained from such heightened awareness.

References

Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (2000). *Teachers investigate their work: An introduction to action research across the professions*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Baker, L. (2014). *Enhancing employability skills and graduate attributes through work-integrated learning*. National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER). Adelaide, South Australia. Retrieved from http://www.voced.edu.au/content/ngv63405

BALEAP. (2008). Competency framework for teachers of English for academic purposes. Retrieved from http://www.baleap.org.uk/projects/eap-teacher-competencies

Barrie, S. C. (2004). A research-based approach to generic graduate attributes policy. *Higher Education Research & Development, 23*(3), 261-275.

Barrie, S. C. (2005). Rethinking generic graduate attributes. *HERDSA news, 27*(1), 1-6.

Barrie, S. C. (2007). A conceptual framework for the teaching and learning of generic graduate attributes. *Studies in Higher Education, 32*(4), 439-458.

Barrie, S. C., Hughes, C., & Smith, C. (2009). *The national graduate attributes project (GAP): Integration and assessment of graduate attributes in curriculum*. Retrieved from http://www.itl.usyd.edu.au/projects/nationalgap/resources/GAPpdfs/National%20Graduate%20Attributes%20Project%20Final%20Report%202009.pdf

Blankenship, A. B., Crossley, A., Heidingsfield, M. S., Herzog, H., & Kornhauser, A. (2008). *Questionnaire preparation and interviewer technique.* American Marketing Association. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1248194

Bode, S. (2013, 3-6 December). *The first year experience in second year: Pathway college versus university direct entry.* Paper presented at the 24th ISANA International Education Association Conference, Brisbane, Australia.

Bowden, J., Hart, G., King, B., Trigwell, K., & Watts, O. (2000). Generic capabilities of Australian technology network (RMIT, QUT, UTS, Curtin & UniSA) university graduates. Retrieved from http:/www.clt.uts.edu.au/atn.grad.cap.project.index.html

Braine, G. (2002). Academic literacy and the nonnative speaker graduate student. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 1*(1), 59-68.

Bridgstock, R. (2009). The graduate attributes we've overlooked: Enhancing graduate employability through career management skills. *Higher Education Research & Development, 28*(1), 31-44.

Bryson, C., Hardy, C., & Hand, L. (2009). *An in-depth investigation of students' engagement throughout their first year in university*. Paper presented at the UK National Transition Conference, University College London.

Burns, A. (1999). Analysing action research data. In A. Burns (Ed.), *Collaborative research for English language teachers* (pp. 152-180). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2000). *Research methods in education*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research* (Third ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Fiocco, M. (2006). *An evaluation of a pathway program: The students' view*. Paper presented at the Australian International Education Conference, Perth Convention Exhibition Centre, Perth, Western Australia. www.idp.com/aiec

Gilbert, J. (2013). Innovations in learning technologies for English language teaching. *English for Academic Purposes*, 117-143.

Hager, P., & Holland, S. (Eds.). (2006). *Graduate attributes, learning and employability*. Netherlands: Springer.

Jordan, R. R. (2002). The growth of EAP in Britain. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 1*(1), 69-78.

Kaufman, R. A., Guerra, I., & Platt, W. A. (2006). *Practical evaluation for educators: Finding what works and what doesn't*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Koshy, V. (2005). *Action research of improving practice: A practical guide*. London: Paul Chapman.

Lewin, K. (1946). Action research and minority problems. *Journal of Social Issues, 2*(4), 34-46.

McLean, J. E. (1995) Improving education through action research: A guide for administrators and teachers. *The Practicing Administrator's Leadership Series: Roadmaps to Success*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Neuman, W. L. (2004). *Basics of social research: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

Nunan, T. (1999). *Graduate qualities, employment and mass higher education*. Paper presented at the HERDSA Annual International Conference, Melbourne, Victoria, Australia.

Oliver, B. (2011). *Assuring graduate outcomes*. Retrieved from Strawberry Hills, NSW, Australia: http://assuringlearning.com/resources/Assuring_graduate_outcomes_ALTC_Good_practice_report.pdf

Oppenheim, A. N. (1992). *Questionnaire design, interviewing, and attitude measurement*. London: Continuum International Group.

Pitman, T., & Broomhall, S. (2009). Australian universities, generic skills and lifelong learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 28*(4), 439-458.

Su, Y.-H., & Feng, L.-Y. (2008). Assessing graduate attributes for employability in the context of lifelong learning: The holistic approach. *US-China Education Review, 5*(11), 1-10.

Todd, R. W. (2003). EAP or TEAP? *Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 2*(2), 147-156.

Velliaris, D. M., & Breen, P. (2014, 2-5 December). *Tailoring graduate attributes to meet the needs of international students in a pathway program.* Paper presented at the Conference Proceedings of the 25th ISANA International Education Conference, Adelaide, South Australia.

Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning as a social system. *Systems Thinker, 9*(5), 2-3.

Appendix A

Respect — respect yourself and others will respect you

Refers to showing courtesy in everything one does. At EIBT, we treat others with dignity and honour the rules of our society. We show respect by:

- acting in an ethical and sustainable manner;
- adhering to rules of academic integrity;
- developing cultural awareness and a global perspective;
- identifying and honouring the needs of others; and
- working collaboratively and building positive relationships.

Excellence — excellence is the key to success

Refers to doing one's best. At EIBT, we work with diligence and enthusiasm to achieve. We show excellence by:

- being an effective communicator across a wide range of literacies;
- gaining a mastery of a body of knowledge;
- preparing, planning and committing 100% to everything;
- taking responsibility and increased ownership for personal learning; and
- using the wisdom of others as a foundation of knowledge.

Curiosity — curiosity is the cure for boredom

Refers to having the desire to know or learn. At EIBT, we work to enhance our understanding and learning through exploration, investigation, and critical enquiry. We show curiosity by:

- actively exploring, investigating and analysing possibilities;
- asking questions to deepen understanding;
- embracing the principles of research and investigation;
- engaging in a broad range of learning activities; and
- making informed judgments about the validity and reliability of opinions.

Passion — without passion there is only work

Refers to showing commitment and motivation to achieve one's chosen path. At EIBT, we work with purpose and enthusiasm, and take joy from our achievements. We show passion by:

- being an active member of the classroom and community;
- demonstrating the courage to follow convictions;
- possessing a positive attitude;
- remaining committed to a lifetime of learning; and
- striving to solve problems and generate ideas.