

Discovering Students' Preference on College's Activity: Kolej Tuanku Canselor Case Study

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ABSTRACT

College activity is one of the outdoor learning platforms for students to enhance their soft skills. Student involvement in college activities affects their personal development like communication skills, time management, leadership as well as creative and critical thinking. However, it can be clearly seen that senior students are less responsive to those activities. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to identify students' interest in these types of activities to ensure greater involvement of senior students in college activities. This study utilized a questionnaire method which involved the students of the Kolej Tuanku Canselor (KTC) from Year 1 to Year 4.

Keywords: *Extra-curricular activity, soft skills, student's preferences*

1. INTRODUCTION

College activity is recognized as one of the vital parts of a university student's co-curriculum life. By participating in co-curricular activities, university students can socialize with each other. It is also a popular method that enhances the students learning experiences despite what they are learning inside a classroom. Those experiences can be relevant to the academic curriculum as well as enhances their soft skills [1]. These types of activities are designed by the universities to the students for them to experience authentic learning by applying their own thought and ideas. Despite other development initiatives like study-based learning, outcomes of these activities are fully depending on students' abilities [2].

The Kolej Tuanku Canselor (KTC) of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) has developed its college activities to produce quality university students to meet the national requirement besides improving their academics. It helps in developing a student with academic excellence, problem-solving, leadership, creative and innovative follow by number of good qualities. As it can be observed by past activities, the participation from the senior students is less compared with the juniors. These may be caused by the preferences of the students when choosing to participate in a certain activity. Thus, a study on finding the students' preference for college activity is conducted among the student in KTC by using the method of questionnaire.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Probabilistic Students' involvement and participation in extra-curricular activities during the college years are inevitable due to the increasing demand for marketable graduates in this fast-paced world. In this context, the industries need graduates with immense quality in soft skills as well as competencies for the changing economy. It is essential for students to involve in extra-curricular activities to gain skill sets including effective communication, creative and critical thinking skills as well as psychosocial intelligence, in order to improve themselves thus increasing their employability.

Extra-curricular activity, or also labeled as the "other activity", provide opportunities for students to enhance their soft skill such as leadership, communication skill and also help them to manage their time well. All these skills will be needed to assist practical realities of work life. Many kinds of research regarding extra-curricular participation have reported the importance of informal learning, which is obtained from activities outside classroom. Most colleges in university have student organizations that will conduct various activities for student's involvement.

There are many types of student organizations in a university such as student welfare group, academic clubs, governing bodies, professional societies, honour societies, publication and media group, volunteer service group,

religious organizations, sports clubs and cultural groups [3-4]. Through these various organizations, students can choose any activity they want to join depending on their likes and preferences. Likewise, many factors have influenced students to be highly involved in such activities; from both internal and external factors. For example, they are motivated to prepare a good resume for future work, improve themselves in fields that they are lacking and make friends to adapt to college environment.

Based on Astin's Theory of Student Involvement, it states that there is a direct correlation between students' involvement and their academic performance [5]. This theory was later proven by few researches that have been done showing positive impacts on academic achievement on students who were involved in extra-curricular activities [6-7]. It was found in a literature that usually a highly involved student in university was also an active student during pre-university stage regardless of the previous environment they were in [8-9], supporting one of the core concepts of Astin's theory which is the students' inputs referring to their background or previous experiences.

Another core concept behind this theory is students' present college environment played a big role in their involvement in extra-curricular activities which results in greater outcomes in their participation. For example, students at larger institutions have greater opportunities to join extra-curricular activities compared to those who study at smaller institutions.

Besides that, Astin also advocates that the involvement of students are influenced by what they gain from the activities and later entails the quality and quantity of their involvement which requires a continuous investment of their psychosocial and physical energy. In this matter, it is important for our education system to identify students' needs and preferences on type of co-curricular activities that spark students' interest to encourage their involvement.

While many studies have been focusing on the learning style preferred by students in lectures, there are only a few researches that have been reported regarding this gap of knowledge concerning the preferences of students in co-curricular activities in Malaysia's university [1,10].

A study by [11] has investigated the participation of students in fully sponsored activities in college. In the investigation, it was reported that even when the activities were sponsored, they did not receive full participation from the students

According to the previous study conducted in KTC done by Mustafa N. H. (2018), reported that the final year students were the least involved in college activities compared to students in another year [12]. This shows that final year students prefer to focus on their academics rather than joining activities. Thus, it can be concluded that student's preference does affect their participation in college activities.

Through this paper, a study was conducted to investigate the student's preference for joining the activities organized by the college. This study is equally important for both activities' organizers and students to be more aware of the type of activities that are needed and preferred thus ensuring a more effective audience and boosting students' growth in

campus life through extra-curricular activities. information to the user, even if the framework could not produce an accurate judgment. More details are described in the following sections.

3. METHODOLOGY

Research is being conducted by collecting data through questionnaires. The data is being collected through Google Form. The sample consisted of 68 students from Year 1 to Year 4 from Kolej Tuanku Canselor (KTC), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM). Most of the participants were students enrolled in Bachelor of Electrical Engineering and quite active in college's program. This method is used in this research is mainly because the main objective of this paper which to collect and analyze the preferences of students to participate in college's program. Thus, through the data obtained, the program can be organized based on the preferences of students which results in an increasing number of participants in college's program. There are about five main questions of the student's preferences on the type of program, level of participation of program, collaboration preferred, duration of program and places of the program that the students preferred. Quantitative analysis will be done from the data collected using frequency distributions of item responses.

4. RESULTS

The section below is the presentation and analysis of data from the responses obtained from the distributed questionnaires. The results were based on the various data obtained from the use of questionnaires.

The participants consisted of First Year to Fourth Year student from Kolej Tuanku Canselor (KTC). It is shown in Figure 1 that the number of students for First Year to Fourth Year whose participation in this questionnaire is quite varied. The numbers showed that most of the respondents who have answered this questionnaire are fourth-year students. Then, followed by 19 third year, and 12 from second and first-year students.

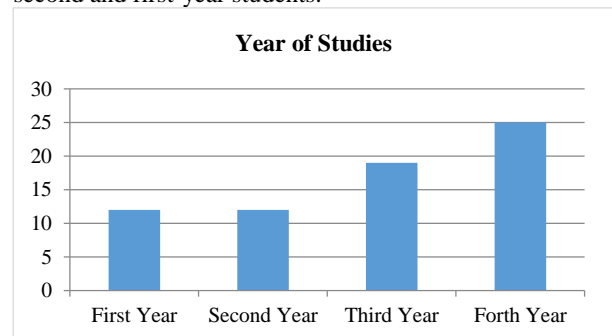


Figure 1 Year studies of respondents

In Figure 2 below, 56 students out of 68 students are Malay and followed by Chinese, Indian and other races. Thus, this figure shows that most of the respondents are Malay's

students and the rest of them are other races which are approximately similar in numbers.

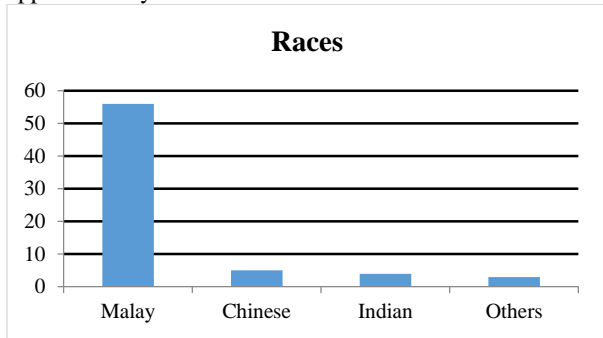


Figure 2 Races of respondents

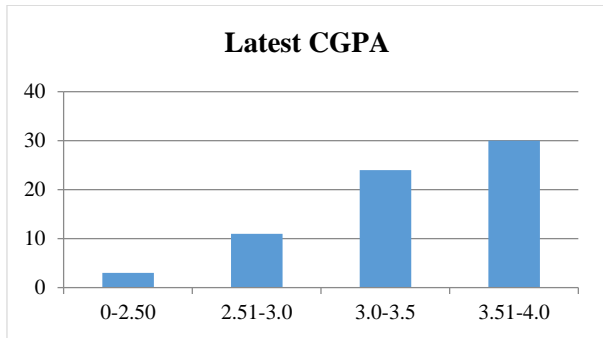


Figure 3 Latest CGPA of respondents

In Figure 3, it's shown that the majority of the students obtained latest Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of 3.51 to 4.00 and only three of the students obtained CGPA of 0 to 2.50. It is clearly proven that participating in college's program will not give a negative effect on the CGPA of the student if they manage their time wisely and keep the balance between their study and joining college's program.

4.1. Preferences of Students to Participate in the College's Program

Frequency distributions were run on the data response obtained from the questionnaire. It is mainly focused on the preferences of the student to participate in college's program. All frequency distributions can be examined and analyzed as in Table 1 below. There are about five questions about their preferences on types of program, level of participation, collaborations, duration of program and places of program.

As shown in Table 1, the frequency analysis for the first question on the preferences of the student on the type of program shows that nearly half of the students prefer to join programs related to Social and Sustainability. It is followed by Sports and Recreational by 25% and Management of

Organization by 14.7%. Lastly, both Culture and Spiritually along with Counseling and Academic results in 7.4%. The percentage shows that students most prefer to join Social and Sustainability types of the program compared to other types. Most probably, this is because volunteerism and involvement with community usually included in this type of program. Students also know that their participation in this type of program would give them extra credit during job interviews.

Next, for the second question, the students were asked on what level of participation of program that they want to participate. The percentage of the students who choose to participate in university, national and international levels are quite even which are 26.5%, 25.0%, and 23.5% respectively. These three levels are higher in percentage when compared to the other two levels which are College and Club. It can be seen that students are more preferring to participate in higher-level program compared to club and college level.

The third question in Table 1 is on who they prefer to collaborate with for their future program. Out of four choices, more than half of the students prefer to collaborate with other universities with 55.9% compared to other choices. It is much more likely because students will learn new experiences and cultures from other universities. This makes them more prefer to collaborate with other universities rather than other colleges from the same university. It is followed by collaboration with company with 33.8%.

Since the participants are students, it is important to ascertain their willingness to invest their time in participating in college's program. Thus, the fourth question is on the duration of program that they preferred to participate. It is shown that most of the students choose to join the program with longer duration which is a week with 33.8% and two days with 32.4%. Program with a longer duration has its own advantages such as consists of various slots, more ample time for preparing and running the program and give more satisfaction to people who involved. In case of social programs, longer period of time may lead to more contribution to society. However, the students must be aware that, the longer the duration of the program, the higher the cost and time required preparing for the program. Lastly, the students were asked in places that they prefer the program to be organized. It is indicated that majority of them prefer the program is organized out of Johor state with percentage of 41.2%. Meanwhile, 35.3% of the students choose to participate in program to be organized overseas and followed by in the universities, in Johor, and in college. It can be concluded that most of the student prefer to involve in the program which conducted outside of the university. Students like to have their program conducted outside mainly because they want to experience a change in surrounding environment and to feel the differences.

Table 1 Distribution of Items Response from the Preferences of Student to Participate in College's Program (n=68)

| Item | Frequency | Percent |
|--|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Which type of college program did you will prefer to participate? | | |
| Social and Sustainability | 31 | 45.6 |
| Culture and Spirituality | 5 | 7.4 |
| Sports and Recreational | 17 | 25 |
| Counseling and Academic | 5 | 7.4 |
| Management of Organization | 10 | 14.7 |
| 2. Which type of level of participation in the college's program did you will prefer to participate? | | |
| Club | 6 | 8.8 |
| College | 11 | 16.2 |
| University | 18 | 26.5 |
| National | 17 | 25.0 |
| International | 16 | 23.5 |
| 3. Which collaboration that you will prefer to do in the program that you will be participates in the future? | | |
| With other colleges | 4 | 5.9 |
| With the faculty | 3 | 4.4 |
| With other universities | 38 | 55.9 |
| With company | 23 | 33.8 |
| 4. How long the duration of the program that you prefer to participate? | | |
| Half of the day | 9 | 13.2 |
| One full day | 14 | 20.6 |
| Two days | 22 | 32.4 |
| A week | 23 | 33.8 |
| 5. Where do you prefer the program to take place? | | |
| In the college | 3 | 4.4 |
| In the university | 8 | 11.8 |
| In Johor | 5 | 7.4 |
| Out of Johor | 28 | 41.2 |
| Overseas | 24 | 35.3 |

5. CONCLUSION

Conclusively, our study discovers that most of the respondents in Kolej Tuanku Canselor would prefer to join and involved in the Social and Sustainability type of program. In addition, they also prefer program with higher levels such as University, National and also International levels. In terms of collaboration parties, more than half of them choose to collaborate with other universities in the future program. And lastly, our finding showed that students prefer to join program with longer period of time and conducted outside of the university.

These findings would greatly help in planning and organizing future programs to attract and to ensure the increase of student participation in the program. However, further study is suggested to investigate the preferences of student in large scale with large number of respondents across different backgrounds and years. Further studies are also recommended to investigate the effect of these preferences on college activities.

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