

A Qualitative Method in Identifying Academic Aspect Element of Academic Enhancement Support for Student-Athlete

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Abstract--- *Student-athletes who are enrolled at the undergraduate level in higher educational institutions in Malaysia have the challenge of raising their academic achievement. Preliminary survey shows that nearly 40 percent of student-athletes have cumulative grade point average (CGPA) below 3.00. This study aimed to develop an academic enhancement support framework for student-athletes in Malaysian Public Universities. Problems, in order to improve academic achievement among student-athletes, are due to factors of academic factor that do not support the improvement of academic achievement student-athletes during their study sessions. As a result, student-athletes could not be maintained in the session of study, scholarship, and the implications from the result are they are not allowed to participate in training and also competition. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to explore elements of support increase academic achievement to students-athletes in aspects of academic. Qualitative research approach involves 12 respondents representing academia, management institutions and the management of student-athletes to explore elements of support increase academic achievement in terms of academic area for student-athletes. This data is collected through face to face interview and data analyzed based on thematic analysis by using pencil and paper to identify elements of support increase academic achievement in aspects of academic area. The result of the analysis found that there are 10 elements in aspects of academic area that can help increase the academic achievement of student-athletes that enroll undergraduate programs in Malaysia Public Universities. Therefore, 10 elements of support expected to help undergraduate student-athletes at public universities to improve their academic achievement.*

Keywords--- *Academic Enhancement Support, Student-Athlete, Academic Aspect.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Students is the main asset of each institution of higher education in which students ' academic achievements plays an important role in producing quality graduates who are of high quality and at the same time is human capital for the lead and move the social and economic growth of the country. It is important for the Administration and teachers of higher education institutions to focus on the academic achievement of students even the company and also the interest in the industry look at the energy consumption in their new company. Academic achievement is one of the factors considered by employers in recruitment especially graduates(Rozali, Puteh, Yunus, Khan, & Khan, 2018). Academic achievements of students are assessed with a cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

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CGPA of students' academic achievement shows as a whole where it shows the average grades of all examinations for all semesters in the University (Alfan & Othman, 2005; Ali, Jusoff, Ali, Mokhtar, & Salamat, 2009). Unlike ordinary students in Higher Education Institution, student athletes is a small student population at each educational institution whose role within the campus, have patterns of life and the different needs in their study sessions (Shelangoski, Hambrick, Gross, & Weber, 2014). As such, most student-athletes earn academic grades and average score low due to have the amount of time many assigned to give a commitment to physical exercise and at the same time as a student where they are responsible meet the requirements of academic (attending lectures, complete assignments, pass exams) during the study session (Keith Carodine, Almond, & Gratto, 2001).

Sports programs at both Higher Education Institution in Malaysia governed under part Sports Ministry of higher education Malaysia. Therefore, statistics and execution has been taken by the Ministry of higher education Malaysia to ensure the goal in order to produce student-athletes who are competitive and that we can be born. To this end, policy development of sports Higher Education Institution (DPSIPT) has been launched and aims at the following objectives, namely bringing the Higher Education Institution as a catalyst to the development of excellence in sports in the country, creating a culture of sports towards empowering human capital quality and balanced in terms of academic achievement and involvement in the field of sports and target to produce at least 30% of the country's athletes are athletes, IPT or "The Thinking Athletes" (Rozali & Puteh, 2017). Based on DPSIPT (2009), the implementation of this policy is set to move the planning and implementation of the agenda in the development of sports in Higher Education Institution. It can be implemented in a more holistic and systematic manner through a focus on the following seven cluster Innovation Program, Sports Infrastructure development programme, Sports Development Programme, Sports Centre of Excellence Scheme, welfare, incentives and Sports Research (SKIPS), Academic Development Program, Program promotion and athletes' Networking and career development programs of study at Higher Education Institution.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Most of the Higher Education Institution aims to produce students who earn academic achievement is good but the nature of competition in sports and also their participation has resulted in the formation of a branch of cultural 'intellectual' Alder & Alder (1985), poor academic performance among student-athletes Allen (1997) and too dependent on other individuals from personal support in order to increase motivation better achievements in the academic and social environment (Sack, 1988; Yusof, Chuan, & Shah, 2013). Adler & Adler (1985) argues that most student-athletes setting in higher education institutions do not provide and nurture interest towards the development of academic achievement. They just enrolled into study sessions at the University or College to develop their careers in sports. They obtained a CGPA of low dropout rate, the higher education level and low percentage of study sessions in resolving them. According to Beamon & Bell (2006); Miller & Kerr (2002) and Tudor (2014) is of the opinion that, the student-athletes at the University achieve academic standards a weak compared to students not involved in active sports. The result of the findings by Yusof, Chuan, & Shah, (2013) found that the University Administration and the role of coach didn't help in developing student-athletes academic performance and lead to their achievement is not comparable to a non-athlete students in Higher Learning Institution

in Malaysia. A study conducted by Feldpausch(2013)applicable program requirements academic support for student-athletes at educational institutions which found that there was a problem in the academic achievement of student-athletes for those involved in sports that are more popular because of the lack of academic support from the institutions. In addition, the influence of parents, socio-economic status and family support structure affect academic achievement student-athletes Fortes, Rodrigues, & Tchantchane (2011)however there are any findings of the effects of socio-economic status of parents of students ' academic achievement. As such, it is important for education institutions in providing financial support to the student-athletes, which could help enhance their motivation to improve academic achievement (Yelk, 2013).

Student-athletes are individuals who are experiencing stress in discharging its duties as an athlete and a student in an institution of learning (Yelk, 2013). This is because, the student-athletes can is the individual serves as a full time students at educational institutions and actively involved in sporting activities (Diersen, 2005). By such, the student-athletes involved active at the University level or the international level should be given special attention and support as they need to cope with various forms of challenges and requirements during sessions of study (Broughton & Neyer, 2001; K Carodine, 2001). Student-athletes in Higher Education Institution have to learn how to balance their responsibilities in terms of sports and also academic in ensuring balanced academic achievements such as the needs of the institution suffered. As such, they should streamline the number of hours in the following sports training activities to ensure that they stay fit and at the same time commitment in the academic regulations set by the institution. According to Diersen (2005), sport in colleges and universities of the United States to be a part of student life, which sports could be given priority of academic needs of students in outdoor activities and ensure that students can train the ability after undergoing routine and daily academic load.

Student-athletes in attendance from students who have different variations in terms of gender, ability, race, sports in institutions of higher education. Therefore, it is extremely difficult to classify every student-athlete this category. Understanding how students received various support in a wide range of groups and sports team affect students ' academic achievement (James, 2010). Generally, student-athletes experience the same experience as other student matters regarding academic and social during sessions of study. However, the student-athletes involved with the schedule of activities and sports directly provide challenges in their daily learning sessions (Howard-Hamilton & Watt, 2001; Watt & Moore, 2001). Most of the team coach or student-athletes at the University considers that time students more spent for training, team meetings, and compete in competition during the lecture session. According to Eitzen (2009)is of the opinion that the student-athlete normally spent more than forty hours a week for sports activities and will involve the amount of time a lot more when the student-athletes injured or is undergoing recovery process. Clearly showed that student-athletes have a very short period of time to pay attention to academic and other activities. To obtain the balance between academic and sports for student-athletes, the institution must provide academic support services and at the same time they have to make up strategies to apply to student-athletes to form a competitive edge and motivation into their learning session (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Harrison et al., 2010).

Most of the psychologists counselling and education put more attention in understanding the factors that influence student academic achievement.

It is aimed at ensuring the success of academic achievement could be structured so that the educational curriculum aimed to raise the level of academic achievement (Akomolafe, 2013). Without a clear understanding of the factors that can influence academic achievement student-athletes, the sports administration and the Student Affairs was unable to formulate and provide services in support of student-athletes education sessions in education institutions in ensuring success in academia as a whole. However, predicting academic achievement student-athletes is a challenge because this individual sessions study the same as ordinary students but have the burden of commitment and academic and sports at the same time.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Participant

This qualitative research was conducted in order to explore the support elements from academic aspect to helping student-athletes on their academic enhancement in public institutions of higher education in Malaysia. A purposive sampling method was used in selecting the participants which is individual's in-depth knowledge about student-athletes in public institutions of higher education in Malaysia. Though they cannot be general or representative, this is not the main concern in this sampling since the concern is to acquire the in-depth information to explore the matter of importance (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., 2011). Overall, a total of 12 participants agreed to participate in this research. Upon agreement on participation, the author organized a time to meet with each individual participant at a time and location that was convenient to them. The participants were informed of the purpose of the study as well as the voluntary of the participation. The anonymity of the participation and confidentiality of the reported data were also been informed to the participants.

3.2 Data Analysis

The transcribe data were then analyzed using thematic analysis with pencil and paper method. The reason why pencil and paper method is used because the tangibility of this method allow researcher to identify any codes that has to be taken out from the analysis and will make the data keeping in easier way. This is because researcher will be able to see the unrelated codes and allow researcher to make reporting easier and on track (Bazeley, P., 2013). The analysis begun with open-coding where codes were assigned based on the author understanding and also words that came from the interview. This produce a theme that help author to understand the main overview of the phenomenon being described and analyzed (Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K., 2011). Overall, ten elements were produced based on this thematic analysis.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

After on going the analysis of the raw data, the support element from academic aspects toward academic enhancement for student-athletes. The importance of academic aspects in providing support on academic enhancement for student-athletes has been studied from previous researches (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011; Jensen, 2011; Tinto & Pusser, 2006) The finding indicates 10 important support elements that define in environment aspects for providing support on academic enhancement for student-athletes in public institutions of higher education Malaysia.

This support elements range from aspects of academic area which is important on academic enhancement for student- athletes in public institutions of higher education Malaysia.

There are ten elements from academic aspect. The support elements are student learning hour, student training hour, learning sessions, attendance on learning sessions, approaches on learning and teaching sessions, period of study, guidance toward career selection, student-athlete handbook, and centralize course program. The first element is student learning hour. Under this element, there are three sub- element which structure and systematic learning schedule, schedule based on training and competition and flexibility on taking minimum learning credit hours.

“Provide support and assistance to students pursuing their studies in which we ask the instructor to coordinate and adjust their academic schedule so that if they have the lecture sessions and exams also so as not to interfere with or distracted with training sessions and also training programs.- E06

The next element is student training hour which is there are three sub- elements define on this element. The three sub- elements is support in systematic training schedule, training schedule based on academic sessions, and coordination in training hours.

“Design tailor program based on academic session”- E03

“Help adjust and balance training needs which how many hours to be training as well as academic requirements with the institution”-E06

Learning sessions also one of elements from academic aspects toward academic enhancement for student-athletes. There also have six sub- elements is special assessment, Flexibility in assignment submission, shortened lecture session, intensive class, mobility program, special exam and embedded assignment based on sports.

“Support in terms of flexibility on delivery assignment, presentation, group work”- E08

“Special method of evaluation which differ from students who play sport. So they can maintain their good academic.”- E10

Other than that, attendance on learning sessions also one of element that required toward academic enhancement for student- athletes. There are three sub- element which is define on attendance on learning sessions. The sub- elements is flexibility on attending learning session, relieve from attending learning sessions, and participation on competition counted as attending class session.

“Exemption on attending learning session when the student attending competition”- E05

Approaches on learning and teaching sessions also one of elements that important in order to helping on academic enhancement of student- athletes. It could be define from four sub- element which is variety teaching presentation, online teaching session, innovate delivery presentation, and interesting teaching session.

“Variety and keep changes how deliver lecture session.”- E01

“Apply interesting lecture session to student” – E10

Period of study for student-athlete also plays important role in order to helping on academic enhancement of student- athletes. It’s could be define from coordinate period of study schedule, flexibility on semester extension system, flexibility on arrange semester and application on delayed period of study.

“Giving them flexibility during period of study, make them decide based on training schedule.”- E07

Next element is support on guidance toward career selection. This element can be define based on preparation for career platform, program on life skills course and exposure on volunteerism and entrepreneur program.

“Set up a platform to shape their career from what they learn and what sports they compete.” E01

Student-athlete handbook also one of important element on helping academic enhancement of student- athletes. This kind of element could be help a lots by giving information on right and welfare and also for manual on manage study session.

“It’s better to have student-athlete handbook to make sure this community knows their rights and welfare.”- E11

Finally, the last element on academic aspect is centralize course program. This element important to be implement because arrange special intake, coordinate extra class based on that program, diversity on field of study, period of study could be change, have special modules, can monitor academic session, easy on arrangement of lecture and training session and easy to focus academic session.

These support elements were group into eacademic aspect. Figure 1 shows the support elements that are believe able to help academic enhancement for student- athletes in public institutions of higher education Malaysia.

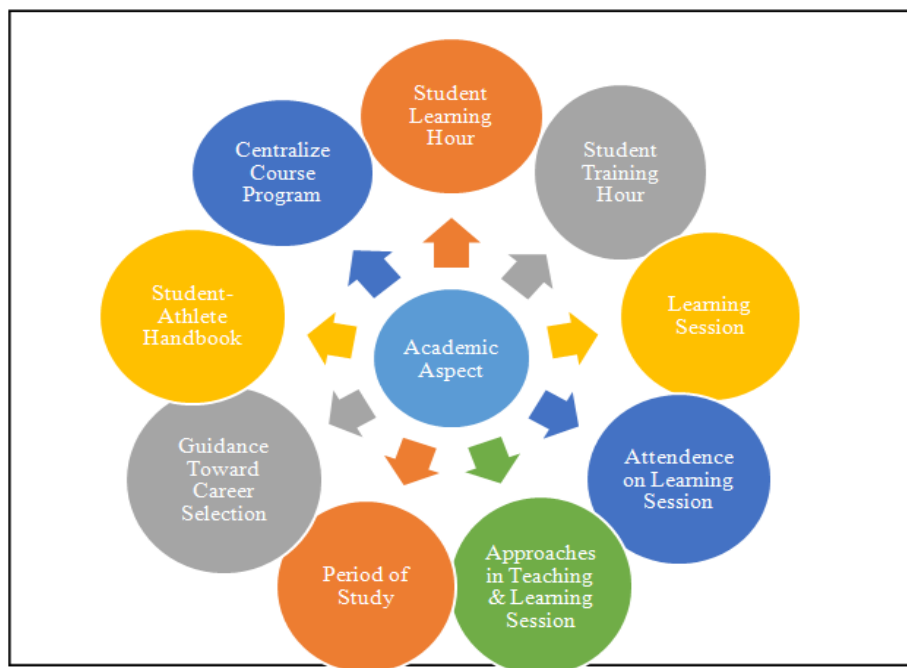


Figure 1

V. RESULTS

The importance of element supports from academic aspects in providing support in order to enhance academic achievement on student- athlete’s public institutions of higher education cannot be denied. Academic achievement to become the benchmark to rate of dropout students in Higher Education Institution (Larsen, 2013).

Through this research, it has a wide range of interest to several parties such as the top management of the University, faculty, and sport division of ministry of higher education. This study is important to the top management of university in addressing the problems of academic achievement student-athletes in an institution of higher learning. This study also can be used as a reference to the management faculty in students' academic achievement problems saw athletes who is undergoing study session in Higher Education Institution in Malaysia. In addition, as parties to monitor and coordinate the Sports Division to make this study as a guide in helping student-athletes in improving academic achievement towards empowering human capital quality and balanced academic achievement and involvement in the field of sports.

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