

The effectiveness of the leadership transformation programme among off-campus students

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ABSTRACT

The social issues involving off-campus students are quite serious as these students are more susceptible to negative influences such as friends and the surrounding environment. Results from the preliminary study showed that there were four major problems which are relationship with the Creator, self-management, social relationship with housemates, as well as housekeeping management and upkeep. Therefore, an intervention programme named Transformation Leadership Programme for Off-Campus Students was designed. The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the leadership transformation programme among off-campus student. The effectiveness of the intervention programme reported in this study is based only on pre- and post-tests from quantitative data collected from 30 respondents. The results show that there is no significant difference for the variable, 'respondents' belief in the Creator' although the mean value increased in the post-test. Apart from that, the findings also show significant improvements in the other three variables assessed, (i.e., relationship with the Creator, self-management, social relationship with their housemates and housekeeping management and upkeep). Data also show that there was also positive impact on off-campus students' academic achievement due to the decrease in the number of respondents with CGPA below 2.5. Therefore, this means the programme is successful in helping off-campus students to understand and make a connection between the value of belief in the Creator (spiritual intelligence) with the exercise of social responsibility as a leader to oneself, others and housekeeping management and upkeep.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the social problems among students in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in Malaysia are quite serious. These social problems include students being reported to have engaged in bribery to get a pass from their lecturers [1], and to have taken drugs to stay awake so that they could study for their examinations [2]. These problems should not be ignored since university students carry the nation's hope for the country's future. If there is no intervention, it will worsen and our country will suffer, particularly in the quality of human resources. Therefore, all parties need to scrutinize this issue and focus their attention on students who live off campus as these students are usually beyond the university management's control. Therefore, the likelihood of them being affected by negative influences and engaging in risk behaviours is higher.

In order to identify the problems among off-campus students, a preliminary study was conducted within a month among UMP off-campus students staying in the Gombang area [3]. The study used qualitative methods and non-participation observation. Seven off-campus students were chosen randomly and interviewed to find out more about their problems. Non-participation observation was done by asking the participants to take a few photos in their house such as the living room, kitchen, bedroom and bathroom to observe their housekeeping management and upkeep. Findings showed that most of the students faced problems in: (1) relationship with Creator; (2) self-management; (3) social relationship with their housemates and (4) housekeeping management and upkeep [3].

One of the self-management problems identified was related to time management. The students admitted to being late to class, submitting assignments after the due date, last minute studying for exams and many more. Problems also arose due to their weak relationship with the Creator; most of the off-campus students admitted that they often forgot to remember Allah, by missing their *solat* (i.e., prayers) especially their Fajr or daybreak prayer, they did not recite the Quran and more. In order to develop good personality and self-management, one needs a strong connection with the Creator as the connection will develop one's internal self-control [4]. A strong sense of connection with the Creator also develops the core potential of a human being which is spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence is defined as "a higher dimension of intelligence that activates the qualities and capabilities of the authentic self (or the soul), in the form of wisdom, compassion, integrity, joy, love, creativity, and peace. These innate spiritual qualities are usually displayed through one's thoughts, attitudes and behaviours [5]. Being spiritual means that one's ego is dissolved, leading to one's virtue being restored to character or in other words, one's virtue becomes more positive and the connection of one's spiritual values with one's inner and outer worlds transforms positive thoughts into positive actions as a *khalifah* (leader) [5, 6].

The spirituality and religion may differ in form of associations, connotations and definitions, yet connected and related phenomena [7]. In a social scientific study, it is important to specify the meaning of spirituality so that the application, measurement and definition do not mislead to different associations, connotations and meanings [8]. From this study, spiritual intelligence is attained through faith, and worship which influences moral development [9]. This illustrates that student's need spiritual intelligence knowledge in their life to develop a good personality. Knowledge, spirituality and physical capability are among the important elements in shaping the character and personality of students holistically [10, 11]. As such, religion is seen as the essential element that helps in addressing social problems among young people [12].

Another finding was that off-campus students also have issues with their housemates. As off-campus students spend a lot of time with their friends and housemates, they need to understand and tolerate each other in order to have a good relationship and live together harmoniously. Housemate conflict was also observed to be caused by poor upkeep and poor housekeeping management. From the observations made of off-campus students' rented houses during the preliminary study, the researcher found that in many of the houses, the condition was unpleasant, messy and disorganized. Some of the students only cleaned their own rooms rather than other places in the house for the example the living room, toilet or the kitchen. It shows that the students have individualistic behavior. This finding shows that students lack social responsibility.

Based on these problems, the researcher initiated a leadership transformation programme to help off-campus students improve their personality and to better their quality of life experience as off-campus university students. The involvement of students in any extra leisure activities such as the leadership transformation programme would also benefit them in term of the development of prosocial skills, self-efficacy, autonomy, and increased independence, personal motivation, and responsibility, as well as acting as a protective factor against risky behaviors [13]. Therefore, this programme would help them to improve their lifestyle by integrating spiritual intelligence to reinforce inner strength and create awareness on social responsibility. Hence, the objective of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of the leadership transformation programme among off-campus students which integrated spiritual intelligence to strengthen internal strength and promote awareness on the practice of social responsibility. Social responsibility is measured by the practice of justice towards the management of self, the management of others (i.e., housemates) and the management of one's environment (i.e., housekeeping management and upkeep).

2. METHOD

2.1. Participants

For the 2016/2017 academic session, the off-campus students who were registered with the Department of Student Affairs and UMP Alumni total 266 students. Since it was a challenge to get students' involvement as respondents, the researchers used non-probabilistic sampling method to select 30 students from Soft Skill II class. Soft Skills II class is a compulsory course that focuses on critical thinking and problem solving based on real problems. The students were selected based on certain characteristics. One of the

characteristics was that they were second year students of Universiti Malaysia Pahang since findings from the preliminary study showed that students usually start living off-campus when they are in their second year. The second characteristic was that they stayed with their friends, and not their family. Of the 30 students, 14 were male students and 16 were female.

2.2. Intervention programme

The Leadership Transformation for Off-Campus Students Programme is an intervention programme that was specifically designed to improve the characteristics and personality of off-campus students so that their quality of life as university students is improved. This programme integrated spiritual intelligence which is belief and faith to the Creator in order to reinforce students' inner strength and to create awareness of social responsibility as a *khalifah* or in other words, as a leader toward oneself, others (housemates) and one's environment or physical world through housekeeping management [6]. The programme was conducted from week 4 to week 14 during the academic session. It required 10 weeks and it began with a briefing session and a pre-test. A group of students were assigned as off-campus committee members. Next is the knowledge-sharing session, which took two weeks. Then, the respondents were assigned to work in groups and they had to prepare a proposal based on their housekeeping management problems. Next, they had to plan and execute a simple innovation project to solve the problem together. In week 9, a housekeeping management contest was carried out. A few lecturers were assigned as judges to visit and evaluate the participants' houses. Finally, the off-campus students' committee arranged an appreciation day and during the event, the post-test instrument was distributed. In addition, information about their CGPA was also collected after their overall results were released by their respective faculties.

2.3. Instrument

The method used for this study is quantitative research method [14]. Therefore, instrument used was a set of questionnaire that was developed based on the variables identified from the preliminary study and previous study [15, 16]. It was distributed before the programme and after the programme as a pre-test (week 1) and post-test (week 10). The questionnaire was divided into 2 parts: Part A and Part B. Part A required respondent to provide personal information including their CGPA. Part B has 4 sections consisting of 40 questions and they were designed to elicit feedback from the respondents about the effectiveness of the leadership transformation programme in terms of (1) relationship with the Creator, (2) self-management (3) social leadership transformation with their housemates and (4) social transformation for housekeeping management and upkeep. Data from the questionnaire were analysed in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) 23.0 using comparative analysis of the pre- and post-test mean data.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section will discuss the findings to measure the effectiveness of leadership transformation programme among off-campus students based on four variables measured which are (1) relationship with the Creator (2) self-management, (3) social leadership transformation with housemates and (4) social transformation for housekeeping management and upkeep. Further analysis was also carried out to study the impact of the programme on students' academic achievement.

Table 1 shows the findings on students' perceptions of their relationship with the Creator before and after they went through the programme.

Table 1. Relationship with the creator

Item	Mean Pre Test	Level (Pre)	Mean Post Test	Level (Post)
Believe in the Creator	4.73	High	4.83	High
Believe that the Creator gives peace	4.70	High	4.83	High
Faithful to the Creator	4.60	High	4.83	High
Strong relationship with the Creator	4.63	High	4.83	High
Having confidence in the Creator to feel safe	4.56	High	4.83	High
Belief in the Creator to feel not alone	4.56	High	4.90	High
I need to know the purpose of life because I do not feel good	3.93	High	4.06	High
Have confidence in the existence of the Creator so that I am capable of controlling behavior	4.40	High	4.63	High
Without religion I feel free	4.53	High	4.03	High
Choose goodness because I realize that it is our Creator's command	4.63	High	4.63	High
Average Mean	4.43	High	4.64	High
Variable	t	df	Sig	
Trust the Creator	-1.080	29	.289	

Table 1 shows that the respondents' relationship with the Creator has increased from 4.43 (pre-test) to 4.64 (post-test). Both mean values indicate that the level of respondents' relationship with Creator is high. The t-test shows that there is no significant difference as the t value (1.08) is already significant with the value already higher than 0.05. Despite that, the programme still managed to have an impact on the participants as seen in the increase in the post-test value which illustrates improved participants' relation with the Creator.

Table 2 shows the results of the second variable which reveal the effectiveness of the programme on students' self-management. Table 2 reveals that there was an increase in the average mean for transformation of self-management (leadership responsibilities toward oneself) from 3.62 (pre-test) to 4.24 (post-test). Overall, the mean score improved from moderate (pre-test) to high level in the post-test. There are several items that were at a moderate level during the pre-test but increased to a high level during the post-test. They are: time management; be able to determine a better way of life; dislike to stay up late and wake up late in the morning; I feel more responsible toward academic tasks; excited to succeed.

Table 2. Transformation in self-management

Item	Mean Pre Test	Level (Pre)	Mean Post Test	Level (Post)
Today is better than yesterday	4.46	High	4.53	High
Willing to learn and face challenge as off campus students	4.16	High	4.40	High
Time management	3.50	Moderate	4.30	High
Be able to determine a better way of life	3.53	Moderate	4.00	High
Dislike to stay up late and wake up late in the morning	3.60	Moderate	3.70	High
I feel more responsible toward academic tasks	3.40	Moderate	4.10	High
More self-independence and responsible for self-management	4.20	High	4.50	High
Excited to succeed	3.66	Moderate	4.40	High
Knowledge in human sciences has helped my survival as an off-campus student	4.03	High	4.26	High
Average Mean	3.62	Moderate	4.24	High
Variable	t	df	Sig	
Transformation in Self-Management	-3.845	29	.001	

This finding shows that the programme has succeeded in helping off-campus students to transform their self-management to be better. The programme has also improved the determination of off-campus students to be more successful. The mean comparison derived from the t-test shows that there is a significant difference between pre-test and post-test ($t = -3.845$, $df = 29$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the programme has contributed significantly to improve self-management which is responsibility as a leader toward oneself as a basic skill to survive as off-campus students. In other words, the programme has succeeded in enabling students who participated in the programme to manage their time better and to feel more responsible toward themselves and also their academic achievement.

Table 3 shows the results of the effectiveness of the programme in transforming off-campus students' social responsibilities towards their housemates.

Table 3. Transforming social leadership with housemates

Item	Mean Pre Test	Phase (Pre)	Mean Post Test	Phase (Post)
Responding to housemates positively when they make mistakes	3.56	Moderate	4.13	High
Accept friend's comments	4.10	High	4.43	High
Unaffected by the housemates doing negative activities	2.16	Low	3.90	High
Keep up with friends even though you've got a conflict	4.10	High	4.00	High
Influence housemates to do a good moral activity	3.93	High	4.13	High
Talk to your friends if there is any problem	3.56	Moderate	3.96	High
Always pray together	2.96	Low	3.43	Moderate
Always play/exercise together	3.60	Moderate	3.90	High
Off-campus life makes students closer and friendlier	3.86	High	4.13	High
Share personal matters with housemates	3.50	Moderate	3.53	Moderate
Average Mean	3.53	Moderate	3.96	High
Variable	t	df	Sig	
Transformation Of Social Relationship With Housemates	2.94	10	.015	

Table 3 shows the mean value of leadership transformation with housemates (social intelligence) has increased from 3.53 (pre-test) to 3.96 (post-test). The mean score increased from low and moderate to high levels for the following items: responding to housemates when they make mistakes; unaffected by the housemates doing negative activity; talk to your friends if you have a problem; always pray together; always play/exercise together

Findings from *t*-test show that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests achievement as the *t*-value is significant at lower than 0.05 ($t = 2.94$, $df = 10$, $p < .05$). Therefore, this programme has contributed significantly to transform the social leadership skills among off-campus students. The programme has succeeded in enhancing social relationships among off-campus students and their housemates. Good social relationships among off-campus students will definitely develop a sense of love and tolerance among them and finally contribute to a better quality of life in general.

Next, Table 4 shows findings on the effectiveness of the programme on the transformation of housekeeping management and upkeep.

Table 4 Transformation of housekeeping management and upkeep

Item	Mean Pre Test	Phase (Pre)	Mean Post Test	Phase (Post)
Do house chores	3.47	Moderate	4.33	High
Take an action if the house is messy	3.16	Moderate	4.20	High
Return things to their place	3.26	Moderate	3.83	High
Have time to arrange and clean the house	3.33	Moderate	3.80	High
Work together to clean the house	3.10	Moderate	3.63	Moderate
Maintain cleanliness is our responsibility	4.43	High	4.23	High
Do not leave water tap on when brushing teeth	3.16	Moderate	4.03	High
Housemates and I take responsibility to manage the house	3.96	High	4.06	High
Provide a place to put some items	3.86	High	4.07	High
Like to wash the toilet at home	3.36	Moderate	3.46	Moderate
Feel safe and comfortable staying at home	3.80	High	4.26	High
Average Mean	3.53	Moderate	3.99	High
Variable	<i>t</i>	df	Sig	
Social Transformation of House Management	3.8	10	.003	

Table 4 shows that there is an increase in the mean value for overall leadership for transformation of housekeeping management and upkeep from 3.53 (pre-test) to 3.99 (post-test). The mean score improved from moderate to high levels for the following items: do house chores; take an action if the house is messy; have time to arrange and clean the house; do not leave water tap on when brushing teeth.

The *t*-test results show that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests ($t = 3.98$, $df = 10$, $p < .05$). Therefore, the programme has succeeded in instilling self-awareness of housekeeping management and upkeep and it improved off-campus students' sense of responsibility towards keeping their house clean. If every off-campus student is aware of their responsibilities and is responsible toward keeping their house clean, their quality of life will be improved and this will support their academic achievement and personality development holistically. Table 5 shows the overall results for every variable measured in this study.

Table 5. Overall mean comparison

Item	Mean Pre Test	Phase (Pre)	Mean Post Test	Phase (Post)
Relationship with the Creator	4.43	High	4.64	High
Transformation of Self Leadership	3.62	Moderate	4.24	High
Social Leadership (Housemates)	3.53	Moderate	3.90	High
Transformation of Environment (housekeeping management and upkeep)	3.53	Moderate	3.99	High
Average Mean	3.78	High	4.20	High
Variable	<i>t</i>	df	Sig	
Leadership transformation	4.84	3	.017	

The overall average mean value shown in Table 5 increased from 3.78 (pre-test) to 4.20 (post-test). Findings from the *t*-test also shows that there is a significant difference between the pre- and post-tests ($t = 4.84$, $df = 3$, $p < .05$). This finding proves that after the respondents attended the Transformation Leadership Programme, there was a significant impact on self-leadership, social leadership with others (housemates) and

social responsibility toward their environment (housekeeping management and upkeep). In other words, this programme has contributed significantly to improve the off-campus students' way of life.

Table 6 and Figure 3 both show that in terms of academic achievement, there was an increase in students' CGPA from 0% at pre-test to a CGPA of between 3.26 - 4.00 at post-test (6.7%), as well as from 30.0% at pre-test to a CGPA of between 2.51-3.25 at post-test (60.0%). Meanwhile, the number of students with CGPA below 2.5 decreased from 21 students to 10 students (36.7%). This is an indirect impact of the Leadership Transformation Programme on off-campus students' academic achievement.

Table 6. Average overall grade valuation

CGPA	Pre Test		Post Test		Percent
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	
1.00 – 1.75	0	0	0	0	
1.76 – 2.50	21	70.0	10	33.3	Decrease 36.7%
2.51 – 3.25	9	30.0	18	60.0	Increased 30%
3.26 – 4.00	0	0	2	6.7	Increase 6.7%
Total	30	100.0	30	100.0	

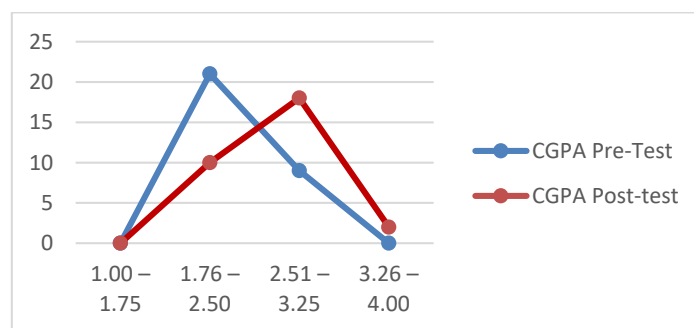


Figure 3. Number of students and CGPA before and after programme

The findings show that this programme has proven that while developing social intelligence is possible, it is incomplete without the integration of spiritual intelligence, which develops in students a strong sense of responsibility as a leader in managing oneself as well as developing good social connection or relationship with others including one's environment. The development of social intelligence without spiritual intelligence as its foundation will cause the education process to be void of guidance and subsequently, lead to the failure of developing a strong sense of responsibility among human beings [17, 18].

It has been proofed by many researches that the sense of being monitored by a trustworthy and supportive entity will help people to cope with their risk behavior [19]. The findings of this study indicate that the off-campus students who were selected for this study fortunately already had a strong belief in God Al-Mighty, the One they believed that always monitoring their life. Nevertheless, after following the programme, there was still a slight increase in this variable. This finding proves that a good training can further improve and increase spiritual intelligence [20]. Due to the existing strong connection with the Creator that they already have, the difference shown between pre- and post-tests does not seem that significant. However, this finding was consistent with a study conducted by a researcher who integrated the value believing in God in teaching and learning activities for Malaysian prison instructors. The research revealed that Malaysian people do not isolate themselves from the sense of having a connection with God in their life [21, 22].

However, there were significant improvements and changes in the other three variables assessed namely the transformation of self-leadership, the transformation of social leadership (housemates) and the transformation of environment leadership (housekeeping management and upkeep). Therefore, the implementation of the Leadership Transformation Programme among off-campus students has helped them to make a stronger connection between the values of belief in God (spiritual intelligence) and to demonstrate that value better by being a more responsible leader to oneself, to others and to their environment [6]. This result proved that spiritual intelligence has a positive effect on ethical attitude [23]. Furthermore, this finding also shows that spiritual intelligence allows its association with rational thinking or intellectual intelligence and helps individuals to move in the direction to play their role as a leader more effectively [20, 23]. Moreover, spiritual intelligence also will enhance the living conditions as the individual can now place their actions and

their lives in a wider perspective and meaning [24] as their actions no longer go through their 'ego' filter, making them naturally virtuous [25].

Therefore, a holistic self-transformation process requires the awareness of the purpose of life as a slave to Creator by strengthening their faith using integrated knowledge development approaches and then exercising this responsibility as a caliph or a leader that develops positive change continuously to oneself, others and in the environment where they live [26, 27]. In other words, it is our responsibility to rearrange our life according to Allah's command by understanding what does God want me to do [28]. Self-awareness about God's command will develop positive emotional and rational thinking ability in facing any problem and finally improve our action to be more positive as a proof of our faith and gratitude to the Creator [29, 30]. Hence, developing leadership skills by integrating spiritual awareness will foster a high sense of responsibility [28, 31].

4. CONCLUSION

All in all, the findings show that all the variables are interrelated. Although the first variable, relationship with the Creator, may not have shown a significant increase, it is however the foundation for all the other variables (i.e., self-management, social relationship with housemates and, housekeeping management and upkeep) which are actually the practical aspects of one having a strong bond with the Creator. Therefore, although the finding for the first variable showed that the bond was already strong, it was not really translated in the actions of the off-campus students. This means that in terms of knowledge, the respondents had strong awareness, but in terms of practice, how the students managed themselves, managed their social relationships with their housemates and managed and maintained the upkeep of their rented houses were still lacking. After the intervention programme, the results of the post-test showed that the off-campus students improved in *all* the variables. This shows that the respondents' knowledge and practice are now balanced. Their strong bond with their Creator is now demonstrated in their actions.

This study aligned with many other findings as discussed previously. The involment of students in a leadership transformation programme have benefited them in term of the development of a holistic being. In addition, the sense of being monitored by God as a trustworthy and supportive entity has helped the students to improve their self, their social skills and their environmental awareness.

Therefore, the researcher recommends that this programme to be continually implemented in future in Universiti Malaysia Pahang to develop better individuals, regardless if they are on or off-campus students. This will create future engineers and technologists who not only have a strong bond with the Creator as stated in UMP core values but who will also have a stronger sense of responsibility as a leader to lead themselves, and their society toward goodness as well as a leader who cares for the environment. Moreover, the implementation of the Leadership Transformation Programme for off-campus students will also make their life experiences as university students more meaningful. They will feel that even as off-campus students, they are not neglected or left behind by the management of the university. Therefore, this programme will also contribute in developing a more holistic and comprehensive university student management system.

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