

OVERVIEW OF “GENERATION Z” BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTIC AND ITS EFFECT TOWARDS HOSTEL FACILITY

Mohd Sharil Mat Salleh¹, Nur Nazuha Mahbob² and Nik Sulaiman Baharudin³

^{1,2,3}Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology

Universiti Kuala Lumpur

Lot 2891 Jalan Jenderam Hulu, Jenderam Hulu, 43800 Dengkil, Selangor

Email: mshahrilms@unikl.edu.my, nazuha@unikl.edu.my, niksulaiman@unikl.edu.my

Abstract

There is a very less information and literature review we have in hand about Generation Z characteristic. Most organizations are still at large not much concern of their existence, while the society is just getting seriously influenced by them. This paper highlights on the behavioral characteristic of Generation Z in a sense of lack of self-belonging and responsibility to the hostel facility that had become one of the contributing factor in the increase of maintenance cost. This paper used UniKL MIAT in-campus residence as a case study. The study used three types of data collection. The first data collection is via distributed questionnaire survey that focused on individual background and traits identification using ‘Sidek Personality Inventory’ tools. Second data collection is the historical data on maintenance expenses for the past two years. Relevant evidences such as exhibits, summon notices, direct observation and interview with the University’s hostel personnel are also used as the third data collection. The behavior of in-campus residence, namely Generation Z is discussed thoroughly with support on the evidences. Finding reveals, the Generation Z behavioral characteristic is a part of the contributing factor to the increase of maintenance expenses. The outcome of the study will be useful as an input for the University in developing the right approach on the behavior modification in producing a good citizen to achieve the Graduate with High Order Critical Skill (GHOCS). Nevertheless, the study is only focusing on the Generation Z type in Malaysia.

Keywords: Gen Z, behaviour, hostel, university, facilities management

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Generation Z born between 1995 – 2012, who is widely known as “Digital Natives”, “Me Generation” and “Generation N” (Feiertag & Berge, 2008) whom predecessor mostly by Generation X. They were born into a challenges era, ranging from terrorism issue, world political instability up until environmental concerns. They are the first generation that is widely and directly exposed to the digital technologies such social networking sites and overloading information on the internet (Turner, 2015).

As well as the previous generation, Generation Z behavioural characteristic development is significantly shaped and influenced by the diverse environment and surrounding elements. They grow up along with a very high sophisticated media and technological environment that had made them

an internet savvy nation and much more expert compared to their predecessor.

Different generation cohort represents a different set of behavioural characteristic that is widely contributed and influenced by their surroundings of the era. This study highlights on the effects of Generation Z behaviour of less sense of belonging, responsibility and awareness that had become one of the contributing factor to the increase of maintenance cost in the in-campus residential. In order to obtain the necessary input, Universiti Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian Institute of Aviation Technology (UniKL MIAT) in-campus residence is used as a case study.

The outcome of the study will be beneficial for the University’s hostel personnel in identifying on what went missing in order to close the gap. In a broader perspective, the outcome also will be a useful input for the University in designing the right approach on

behavior modification. This will align with the University's aspiration in producing graduates with high order critical skills. However, this study is only generally applicable to the Generation Z type in Malaysia.

2.0 BEHAVIOURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GENERATIONS

Generation by definition according to the research by Glass (2007) is the term of year that the individuals live or a cohort of specific year. It illustrates the situation or surroundings whereby the individual has their own lifestyle. While Parry and Urwin (2011) define generation as "a set of historical events and related phenomena that creates a distinct generational gap". The identification of a generation requires "some form of social 'proximity' to shared events or cultural phenomenon". It also represents the individual general characteristic and how the world is being interpreted to the individual's understanding. Each individual has their own unique personality and behaviour that is defined as collection of every physical action and observable emotion related with individuals (Ouellette & Wood, 1998). While one's temperament and personality often consistent, behaviour will most likely to evolve throughout the lifetime of human being, from birth to adulthood. Apart from being controlled by age and genetics, behaviour also is being driven by thoughts and feelings, a perceived into the individual psyche, unfolding other things that include attitudes, values and beliefs.

To summarize, to date, there are six cohorts of generations that is widely used as a reference. Although there is actually no specific year range that could indicate the cohort category (MacKenzie & McGuire, 2016; Glass, 2007; Wiedmer, 2015), however the following definition of year range as at Table 1 and dominant behavioural characteristic according to the generation cohort can be used:

Generation Z is the latest generation that is currently growing up and will be dominating the world in the next several decades (Wiedmer,

2015). According to Renfro (2015) and White, (2015), there is a dispute on determining the exact starting and stopping points for Generation Z birth year. Singh, (2014) defines Generation Z are those who were born in 1995, while Jaleniauskiene & Juceviciene, (2015) and Schroer (2015) in their research stated that the birth year timeframe for Generation Z are from 1995 until 2012. They are the generation that currently represent the world population of 23 million and is rapidly growing and in Malaysia alone according to Jabatan Statistik Malaysia population statistic record in 2013 is 26.3% from total population.

Table 1: Generation dominant characteristic

Generation	Born year range	Dominant behavioural characteristic
Traditionalists	1900 – 1945	Loyal and discipline
Baby Boomers	1946 – 1964	Responsible, strong work ethics
Generation X	1965 – 1980	Independent thinkers, efficient
Generation Y	1981 – 1994	More social, confident, less independent
Generation Z	1995 – 2012	Poor communication skills, extensively engaged to technology

Source: MacKenzie, & McGuire, (2016), Glass, (2007) and Wiedmer, (2015).

Whereas the earlier generations born with a very less exposure to the digital environment, which is much more exposed to push media – radio and television – and surrounded by nature, Generation Z has come of age in a digital universe with the internet that is as convenient as in 'plug and play' (Feiertag & Berge, 2008). However so even if they were born without the technology surrounding them, this generation has held the focus of the parents when most of Generation Z parents are from Generation X as most of them are highly educated (Swanbrow, 2012) compared to the earlier generations; Traditionalists and Baby Boomers.

Born in the era of technological diversity environment, most of Generation Z are familiar with internet and social networking websites as they were introduced by their parents at the early age of their life. They are highly

encouraged and nurtured by their parents in indulging into the world of technology at the very early stage. Since they were born in the era of technological diversity, Generation Z also known by other names such as Gen Z, Zs, Gen Z'ers, iGeneration, Gen Tech, Gen Wii, Net Gen, Digital Natives, Gen Next, Post Gen and Plurals (Turner, 2015; Feiertag & Berge; 2008; Wiedmer, 2015). Despite of the names and terms given to Generation Z, they are currently occupying the educational sector. Therefore, this will be the critical point that all individuals and educational sector need to give more attention in designing and delivering instruction that will suit with their personality.

Even though they are concern by the parents of Generation Z to their unlimited exposure to the internet compared to the physical interaction, but for Generation Z, the truth for them is that the technology is not a tool that could do them any harm. It is even seen as a tool that could expedite movement and delivery of information much faster. Therefore, as for Generation Z, technology is their best friend and as described by Oblinger & Oblinger, (2005), 'the internet is like oxygen, they cannot imagine being able to live without it'. To be physically attached to the technology will enable them to communicate, interact and respond to the world without having to be in the same location and time.

3.0 CHARACTERISTIC OF GENERATION Z

Born in the mid of the detonation of technological, most of the traits described have yet to surface. However, many has associated the Generation Z by highly connected to having the lifelong use of communication and technology (Wiedmer, 2015).

3.1 Hypertext mindset

Since Generation Z upbringing is widely influenced by the digital technology, their behavioural characteristic development is shaped according to what surrounds them. Therefore, resulted from their obsession to the digital world, with lack of physical interaction, Generation Z in general the first to have known having a poor face-to-face interaction and less likely to use brain logic when it comes to thinking. Merriman, (2015) indicated that heir

heavy dependency to the internet has made them obtaining any information with hassle free and in no time. Although they are lack of physical social interaction, they are highly multi-tasking with reliance on social media (Cowan, 2014). The skill comes from their routine multiple activities performed at one time. For instance, while reading a textbook, they might do it while listening to the Ipod and at the same time updating their social media status.

Research by Jaleniauskiene & Juceviciene, (2015) indicated that due to intensively expose to the internet; they prefer watching video instead of reading hardcopy media; books and manuals. If earlier method of using paperback were used in delivering a lesson or a message such as newspaper, textbook and manuals, Generation Z would prefer getting it from a website that is much more interesting and alive, which is hypertext.

Despite of being highly tech savvy and extensively attached to the technology for navigating and using information to develop their skills, unfortunately according to Cowan, (2014), their factual knowledge level base remains immature and very least on information literacy.

3.2 Overprotected

Research by Cowan, (2014) stated that in Denmark, Generation Z is nicknamed as 'the curling generation' due to their parents diligently sweeping away the obstacle that lies in their path, as they march effortlessly towards their future. On the other meaning, they are being spoon-fed by their parents. In this case, it is most likely they would demand the same atmosphere to be created at universities (Jaleniauskiene & Juceviciene, 2015).

3.3 Lack of communication skills

Generation Z is explained as individualistic, self-absorbed and less team oriented than the previous generation (Turner, 2015). According to the research article by Prelude Consulting Limited (2016), most of Generation Z parents are 'stay-at-home' type or part time worker therefore they are less likely to attend day-care centre for group play activity and other social gatherings. Hence, the tendency their verbal communication skill to be well-developed is more likely. Reason being when most of their

communication takes place individually, online and 'shorthand'. This 'Google' generation who take for granted that the information is always readily for them; instant, immediate and free. Such upbringing has made them to be impatient, rebellious and expecting instant result (Turner, 2015). They are a generation that has the ability to form huge communities and a constant communication loop with people they have never met, and never will meet on the net; paradoxically this generation is collaborative, chatty and sociable on the net, yet in 'the real world' they tend to be less well able to develop personal relationships (Riva, *et.al.*, 2012).

3.4 Instant Gratification

Prelude Consulting Limited (2016) in their research article explained that with extensively exposed to the internet had made Generation Z impatient and require instant gratification, introvert and disengaged with the society. They are generation with a lower attention span. Such a high dependence on technology has led to some psychologists suggesting that there is a presence of 'Acquired Attention Deficit Disorder.' Dr Edward Hallowell, Psychiatrist, former Harvard Medical School faculty member and a specialist in attention deficit disorder claims people have "become so busy attending to so many inputs and outputs that you become increasingly distracted, irritable, impulsive, restless and over the long term, underachieving. You live at a much more surface level." A clinical associate professor of psychiatry at Harvard, specializing in neuropsychiatry, Dr. John Ratey, uses the term "Acquired Attention Deficit Disorder" to describe how the technology is restructuring the modern brain (Watkins, 2009).

4.0 BEHAVIOUR AND FACILITY MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP

There are very few literature studies in relating behavioural and facility management in order to ensure the facility to continually serve its purpose for a long period of time. Grinter, Michie & Jackson, (2014) indicated that behavioral approach in ensuring sustainability of a facility is relevant. It is by understanding behavior in context as the starting point for interventions and systematically designs a method to tackle for behavioral change. Report

by Bruce, (2008) in transforming Townsville city of Queensland into 'Solar City', the transformation process associates the facility with end users' behavior in achieving project's objective. As for hostel facility maintenance expenditure record, Mahbob, (2016) in her research indicated that there is an increasing trend in hostel facility maintenance cost occupied by Generation Z. In this study it is questionable when extensive amount of expenditure on maintenance has occurred every semester. Although the study did not associate end user behavior with high expenditure on hostel facility maintenance, it is likely possible to link the two elements since some physical equipment namely the facility is unlikely to damage or become unserviceable in a very short period of time by nature. Most damages were resulted from mishandling and vandalism activity by the end users. For example, in 2004 Higher Learning Institution in Malaysia loss millions of Ringgit Malaysia due to the vandalism activity during PLKN program by some of the participants to the university's facility. To bring this matter closer, Universiti Malaya alone suffered from vandalism activity which had cost around RM 1 million (Baharudin, 2007). Hence, based on the literature review, there is a possibility to relate human behavior as one of the factors that contribute to the rising of maintenance cost to the facility. Therefore, apart from a sound practice in facility management, human behavior also plays a vital role in conserving the physical structure of the facility.

5.0 RESEARCH APPROACH

To achieve the objective of the study, random sampling method to the focused group interview using questionnaires survey was initiated. Analysis on previous data on hostel maintenance expenditure and other useful exhibits were also being used as a supplementary source of information for the study.

5.1 Questionnaire Survey

Samples were taken from the in-campus residential students of UniKL MIAT.

'Sidek Personality Inventory' method was used as a tool in this study. The survey was conducted in the October 2016 within 21 days

and distributed using an online platform. Sample size of 300 out of 1000 respondents, on both male and female were taken in representing the population. The allocated sample size expressed 95% confidence level with 4.74% margin of error, which indicated as an ideal sample size.

5.2 Hostel Maintenance and Housekeeping History

Second data collection comes from hostel maintenance expenditure report on maintenance from 2014 until 2015. Details of expenditure and other related data were carefully analysed and evaluated. This is to study on the expenses trending throughout the period and occurrences involving hostel facility.

6.0 RESULT

The results are presented into traditional charts, table and graphical exhibits along with the extended justification and explanation.

6.1 Characteristic Analysis Based on Sidek Personality Inventory

First section on the questionnaire survey provides the overview of the respondents background in general.

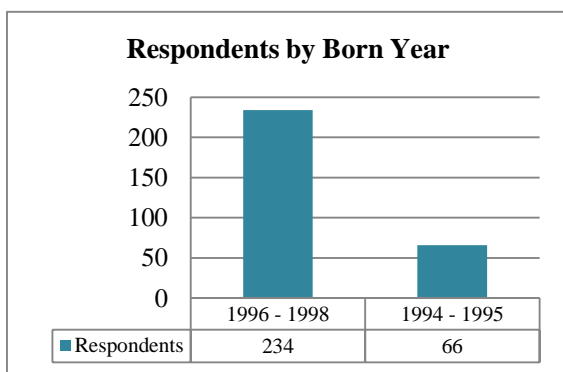


Figure 1: Number of respondents by their born year

Figure 1 illustrates the number of respondents which indicated 234 respondents born year was from year 1998 until 1996, which between 18 and 20 of age. While the rest of 66 respondents born year was from year 1994 until 1995, which between 21 and 22 of age.

The result verifies that respondents are from Generation Z era. While for duration of

stay, 180 respondents stayed less than six months which indicated that most of them are from Semester 1 students. For duration within 6 to 12 months and more than 12 months, there are 54 and 66 respondents respectively, which indicated the senior year students. Past hostel experience is to identify whether the respondents not only had experience staying at the hostel but also described that they are aware on the hostel rules and regulations. Result shows that, there were 144 students had past experience staying in the hostel while the remaining 156 students did not.

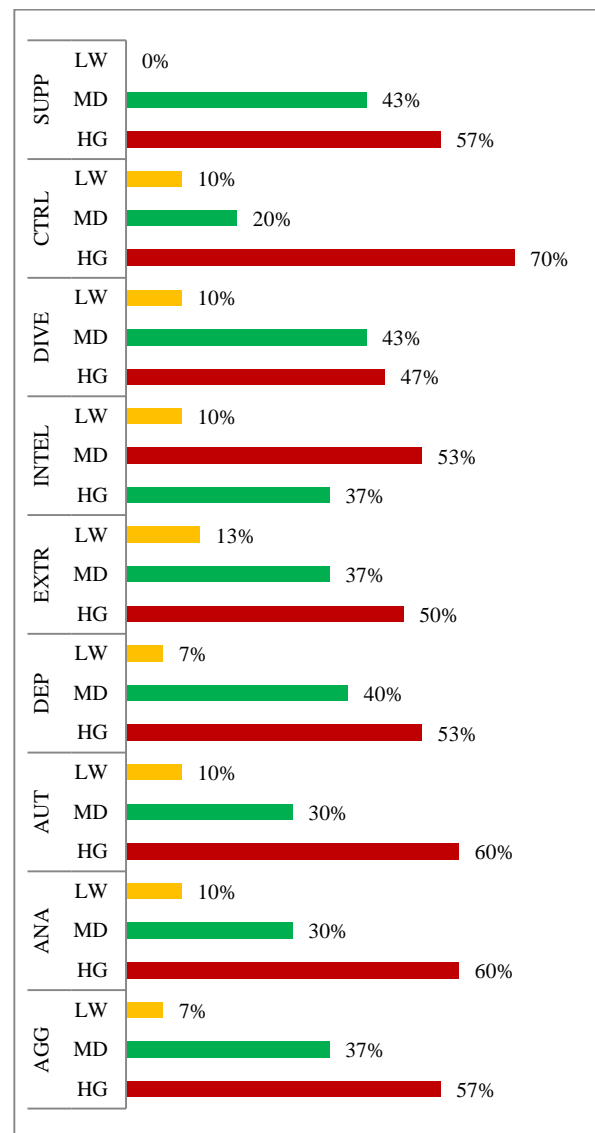


Figure 2: Sidek Personality Inventory result

Note:
 AGG – Aggressive INTEL – Intelligence
 ANA – Analytical DIVE – Diversity
 AUT – Autonomy CTRL – Control
 DEP – Dependability SUPP – Support
 EXTR – Extrovert

Figure 2 illustrates on the result from using For Sidek Personality Inventory tools. 9 traits out of 15 were used for this analysis. The score are divided into three level which is 'high range' (score between 70 – 99), 'medium range (score between 40 – 60) and 'low range' (score between 1 – 30).

Overall results indicated that there are eight traits hit for score on 'high range' which are 'Control', 'Diversity', 'Extrovert', 'Dependability', 'Autonomy', 'Analytical', 'Aggressive' and 'Support'. While 1 traits for score on 'medium range' which is 'Intelligence'. The traits represents the outcome on behavioural context from the respondents. A more detailed description of the outcome are described in the following section.

6.2 Analysis on Hostel Maintenance Expenditure

To support on the analysis, past record on hostel maintenance expenditure were carefully evaluated and analyzed. Data was extracted from UniKL MIAT in-campus residence maintenance expenses record.

Supplementary data in a form of hostel maintenance expenditure record for three semesters were obtained to analyze on the expenses trending on hostel maintenance. Figure 3 illustrated expenditure trends for hostel housekeeping every end of semester. Housekeeping works for hostel involving works on cleaning, rectification on the physical structure of the facility both civil and electrical, manpower expenses on assets inspection and relocation.

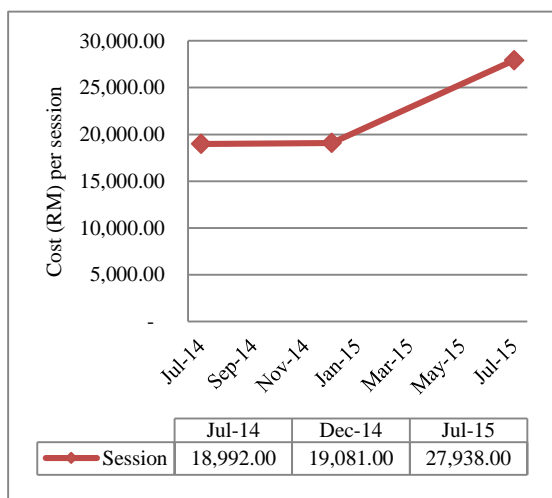


Figure 3: Hostel housekeeping session cost impact.

Based on the results, trending shows there is a significant increase on the cost on each session for almost 50% between session December 2014 and July 2015. It also indicates an inefficient and unwise practice of spending when such amount can be used for improvement and development work to the facility.

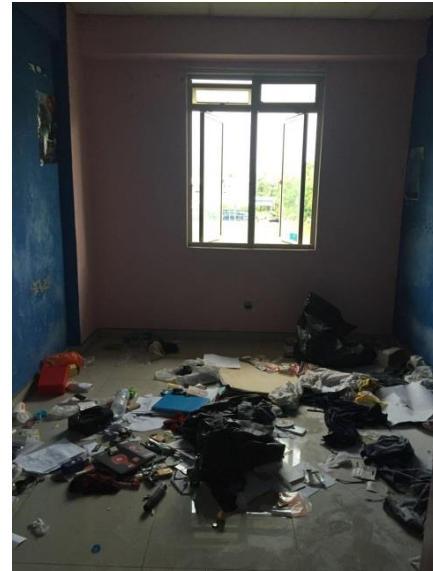


Exhibit 1: Badly unclean and dirty room.



Exhibit 2: Part of the hostel assets that does not belong to the place.

Both Exhibit 1 and Exhibit 2 indicated that some of the example of actual hostel situation that is experienced daily and also throughout every semester. Both of the situation not only requires an extensive cost on manpower on cleaning works, damaged assets disposable and purchase of new item for rectification and restoration, but also time consuming. According to the record, for year 2015 alone, a sum of RM 98,003.00 was spent for assets replacements due to the situations.

Table 2: Number of summon notice issued to the hostel residence.

Item/ Semester	Jul 15	Dec 15	Jan 16	Jul 16
Lost Key	150	187	164	193
Dirty Room	35	43	37	27
Asset Lost	119	55	68	77

Note:

- i. Average number of students per semester is 950 from 1000 placement.
- ii. Total rooms are; 106 rooms for male and 99 rooms for female.

Table 2 indicated the number of summons that has been issued to the students during housekeeping exercise at the end of each semester. 'Lost Key' indicated misconduct for lost and unreturned room key upon check-out. 'Dirty Room' indicated a misconduct for room that has not been restored as per during check-in. While 'Asset Lost' indicated misconduct for damaged and loss of hostel room assets such as furniture and fittings.

Based on the table presented, overall number of summon issued is high because there is no significant decrease in the number. This finding translated that high number of summon indicates a requirement for additional financial cost for rectification and restoration works.

7.0 DISCUSSION

Based on the result, dominant characteristic of Generation Z in this study indicated that they are to some extent is a bold generation even at a very young age. On the positive value of the traits, most of them open their mind to analyze, to think and value open discussion. Responded well to the surroundings, they are considered as sociable and wanted to be the centre of attraction. They seem to adapt well to changes and fairly contribute to the society regardless of their average level on intelligence.

Despite of the positive traits, with 'high range' score on Aggressive, Autonomy and Control traits, they are considered as highly reactive or responded openly to their surroundings. They seek satisfaction in obtaining autonomy and wanted their opinion to be considered or taking into account prior to concluding to any decision. They also openly voice out their criticism or their disagreement

often without wise judgement. Such trait may resulted them to be impatient, somewhat rebellious and seek instant gratification, regardless of the consequences.

Sidek Personality Inventory indicated that personality traits own by the individual does not ascertain the positive or negative behavior of an individual. Behavior that is reflected by the personality is subjected to the influence from the environment such as social and family background and it is variable (Noah, 2014). However, in this study, with the support from the literature review indicated that without proper guide and control, Generation Z is easily influenced by the surroundings. With conveniently access to the outside world via social media, wide array of information can be obtained effortlessly, but not the knowledge, literacy and maturity to verify the authenticity of the information. In which in this case, one thing that had gone missing is the ability of critical thinking. Without critical thinking, they will not be able to filter the information thus will only underline what bests according to their needs and desire. In many cases, such situation will most likely result to emergence of negative behavior such as vandalism.

Discussion with the University's hostel personnel also indicated that the increasing cost was due to the increasing number of man hours to fulfill the given timeframe which is usually four weeks to execute the housekeeping works. In which at the same time, the work had failed to be completed within the given timeframe because of the increase number of rectification works every semester to the hostel assets and facility. For example, the room was left unclean, untidy with a lot of missing or badly damaged assets by the students. Some of the rooms require major interior rearrangement, rectification and replacement on the furniture. There were also cases whereby some of the rooms were badly vandalized. The situation not only had impacted the expenses on the manpower in order to rectify the issue, but also an increase of the cost in replacing the missing and damaged assets.

Apart from the action on purchasing of the new assets, summon notice also has been issued to the affected students who had failed to observe the hostel rules and regulations. It is part of the mitigation exercise in controlling the damage as well as a reprimand exercise for student's misconduct. However, the summon notice issued is limited only to matters

pertaining the misconduct involving hostel assets and facility.

8.0 CONCLUSION

The study shows that, human behavior namely Generation Z indeed is part of the contributing factor to the increase of maintenance cost. These were substantiated by the management of the institution who observed cases of immoral behavior of the student to the provided facility. What went missing here in is not a guideline or a rules and regulations of the facility, but a stern action from the University's hostel personnel to ensure the enforcement of rules and regulations are in place. Despite of the enforcement, development on University's program content that focus on nurturing and improving the student's behavior is also proposed as part of the approach from the perspective on educational value.

Therefore, in this case, it is also suggested that the conservation of the hostel facility for long term use can be achieved by embedding some elements to the facility to inculcate a sense of appreciation and self-belonging from the students. For example, facility design and configurations that is tailored to the students' needs and requirement. Finally, this study does not only serve as a synopsis for developing a content that will pinpoint the behavioral aspect of the students on how to value the facility accordingly, but also as part of the process in realizing the University's aspiration in producing a graduate with high order critical skills.

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