Qualitative Meta-Analysis of Academic Culture in Higher Education

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Abstract

This article examines previous concept of academic cultures. Informing by earlier work on academic cultures, this qualitative study uses meta-analysis approach. The meta-analysis examines resources of academic cultures from published books and peer-reviewed researched articles indexed by Scopus. The use of meta-analysis is to answer two research questions: what are the pattern of research in academic culture and what kinds of methodology are used in the area of academic culture? The findings of the study show that there has been variety of pattern of research in academic cultures. In addition, it is also identified that various research methods and design are used by researchers in conducting investigation in academic cultures issues. The meta-analysis of academic cultures has implication for lecturers and teaching staff. This study can contribute to the debates and understanding of current map of academic cultures across the globe.

Keywords: qualitative meta-analysis, academic culture, higher education

Introduction

The theme of academic culture in higher education has become the common interests and debates among scholars and researchers across the globe. The understanding of the importance of academic culture can enhance the quality of teaching and learning, provide good quality services for students and community, deliver world class teaching and research based activities, and implement high standard of academic services and cultures. For these reasons, the research into academic culture is important for further investigation.

Academic culture is defined as the set of campus complexities characterized by teaching, research and community services. Shen & Tian (2012) explain the academic culture as follows:

> Academic culture of universities mainly consists of academic outlooks, academic spirits, academic ethics and academic environments. Campus culture in a university is characterized by individuality, academic feature, opening, leading, variety and creativity. The academic culture enhances the construction of campus culture. The campus culture conditions and restricts the development of academic culture. The construction strategies of academic culture and campus culture are as follows: university should stick to its mission, enhance cultural confidence and cultural consciousness, integrate culture into the process of talent cultivation, promote cultural development and innovation (Shen & Tian, 2012, p. 61).

From Shen and Tian's definition, the academic culture shared common values of transformation, academic atmosphere, transparency, accountable, and future imagination. More importantly, the campus culture should reflects on the philosophical foundations and reasons of the university establishment including ontological, epistemological and axiological perspectives of university vision and mission, and strategic planning.

Research into academic culture has been explored across the globe. For example, Bektas, Çogaltay, Karadag, & Ay (2015) explore the roles and the influence of academic culture on students' achievement. This meta-analysis study examines the 25 papers relating to academic cultures. They identify that indeed the school culture has positive contribution on the academic achievement of the students. They recommend that building dynamic academic culture can be one of stepping stone for

producing highly qualified and competent graduates. The other study relates to intercultural of academic setting in bilingual university contexts (Abduh & Rosmaladewi, 2018). From this study, the stable and dynamic academic atmosphere can stimulate the creativity of academics, students and campus stakeholders. As a result, they are able to produce the best possible result they can achieve in the academic milieu.

Research into academic culture within Indonesian contexts has not been much explored by researchers particularly those who are Indonesian native. Therefore, this article aims to provide meta-analysis of articles of academic culture that are published in Scopus-based journal. These articles can inform the study of academic cultures within Indonesian university contexts. This meta-analysis is significant for researchers, academics and students in understanding current debates, patterns and trends of academic culture in other parts of the world.

Research method

The research method used in this study is the qualitative meta-analysis of published articles in the area of academic culture. Qualitative meta-analysis is "an attempt to conduct a rigorous secondary qualitative analysis of primary qualitative findings. Its purpose—to provide a more comprehensive description of a phenomenon and an assessment of the influence of the method of investigation on findings—is discussed'' (Timulak, 2009, p. 591). For this meta-analysis, the researchers used Google scholar search engine with word "academic culture" and the result is 60. 600 articles. The word "academic culture" and "higher education'' is used for searching, the result is 33.600 articles. From the total of these articles, only 101 are Scopus based indexed. The researchers choose 10% as the representative of Scopusindexed articles. The procedures as follows:
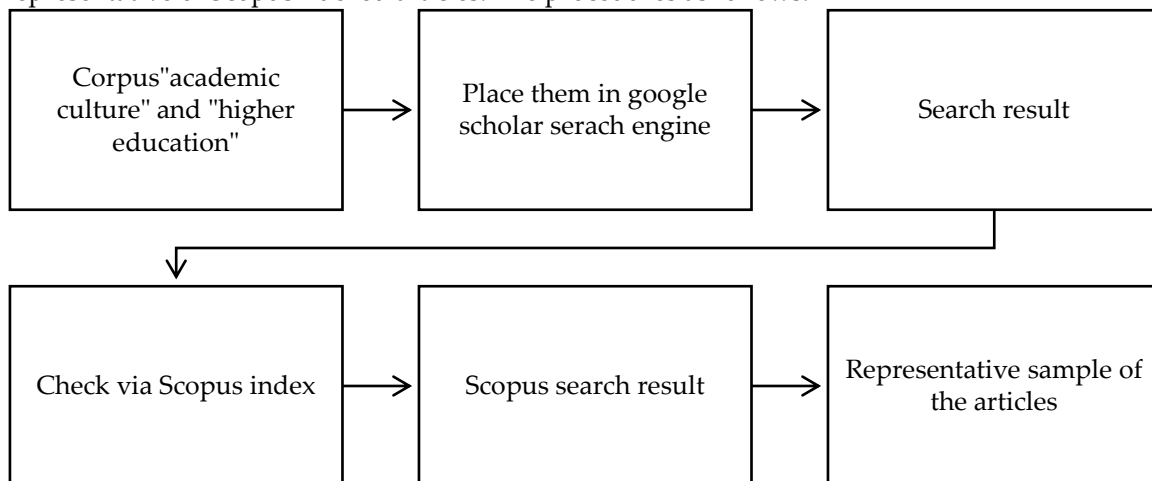

Figure 1: Procedure of meta-analysis

The meta-analysis components include theme pattern and research method and methodology writers employed in their research article. The meta-analysis is described in Figure 2 below.
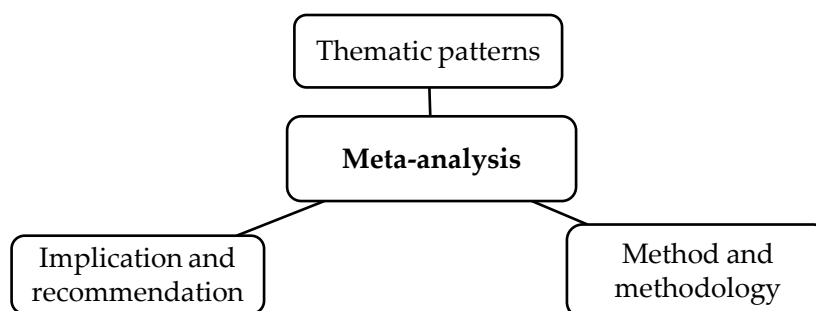

Figure 2: Meta-analysis framework

Findings and Discussion

The finding of the study is compiled in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Findings of the study

Authors	Thematic pattern	Research method
Bektas et al., (2015)	Teaching culture and students achievement	Meta-analysis research
Godor (2016)	Teaching culture in higher education: deep and surface dichotomy	Q-methodology research design
Komolthiti (2017)	General culture and its impact on human behavior	Qualitative meta-analysis research design
Scager, Akkerman, Pilot, & Wubbels(2017)	The challenges of teaching	Reflective practice research design
Downs & Downs (2017)	Culture of valuation in higher education	Conceptual review paper
Arvaja (2018)	Teaching and professional identity	Qualitative dialogical approach
Virtanen & Tynjälä (2018)	University students experineces in teaching culture in higher education in particular teaching and learning of generic skills	A confirmatory regression analysis
Vrieling, Stijnen, & Bastiaens(2018)	Successful teaching in higher education: balancing self-regulation with instructional planning	Conceptual review paper
Fredholm et al.(2019)	Teaching practice thresholds	Hermeneutic narrative inquiry
Levander, Forsberg, Elmgren, Levander, & Forsberg(2019)	Teaching and meaning making	Evaluative research inquiry

From Table 1 above, the findings show that the majority of thematic patterns of the academic culture relates to teaching cultures. The teaching culture covers teaching practice, teaching policy, teaching planning, teaching experiences, teaching thresholds, and successful teaching cultures. Several themes covers learning and generic academic culture. The findings demonstrate the importance of providing high quality teaching for students to assist them reaching an overarching understanding of the concept, knowledge, and skills required in the challenging future times.

In relation to research methods, there are two major types of research designs: qualitative and quantitative research designs. The quantitative design involve aconfirmatory regression analysis. The qualitative research design covers qualitative meta-analysis, Q-research methodology, narrative inquiry, reflective practice and conceptual research papers. The diversity of research design and methods enhance the credibility and the sounding the findings of the research (Creswell, 2012). This findings also show that unique research designs such as Q methodology and reflective practice become alternative ways of conducting research in academic culture. This extends the understanding of researchers, practitioners, and lecturers within higher education contexts.

Conclusion, implication and the limitation of the study

The findings of the study show that the thematic pattern of the academic culture involves both teaching and learning aspects. The research patterns In addition, it is also identified that various research methods and design are employed by researchers in conducting investigation in academic culture issues such as Q methodology, meta-analysis, reflective practices, a confirmatory regression analysis and conceptual paper analysis.

The implication of this study is that researching academic culture in higher education contexts can be conducted via different methodological perspectives. Lecturers can explore the ways to investigate the issues that suit their cases and phenomenon in their study. In addition, the students who are at the stage of thesis writing can apply appropriate methods and designs that are currently available publicly.

The limitation of the study is that the research has covered limited scope of Scopus based journal data-bases. Therefore, it is suggested that the investigation into larger data bases can be furthered explored via meta-analysis research design. Despite the limited scope of the data in this research, the findings can contribute to the understanding of the current debates on the academic culture discourses using meta-analysis.

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