

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF MONITORIAL
SYSTEM IN A PUBLIC UNIVERSITY IN
CHINA: A QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

GUO JING

**FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA SABAH
2021**



The image contains a circular logo of the University of Malaysia Sabah on the left, featuring a shield with a yellow and blue design and the text 'UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH' around it. To the right, there is a large, light grey watermark of the letters 'UMMS' with 'UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH' written below it.

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Profesor Madya Dr. Christina Peter Ligadu
(Panel Penilai)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the material in this dissertation is my own except for quotation, citation, excerpts, summaries and references, which resources have been stated and duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

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Assoc. Prof. Dr. Christina Peter Ligadu

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would never have been able to finish my thesis without the guidance from my supervisor, co-supervisor, the support and encouragement from the faculties, staffs from University Malaysia Sabah, students and lecturers from Qiqihar University in China and the help and motivational support from my friends and family.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Dr.Suyansah Swanto, a professor in faculty of Psychology and education, University Malaysia Sabah, for his guidance, encouragement, and patience over the last three years. Thank you so much for forcing me to finish my research and my work in different ways and for opening my mind. Your support was essential to my success. I also want to thank my co-supervisor, Dr. Irma Wani Othman, a lecturer in Centre for the Promotion of Knowledge and Language Learning, University Malaysia Sabah, for proving indispensable advice, information and support on different aspects of my project. Great appreciated going to the contribution of lecturers and students in Qiqihar University, China, for the assistance, cooperation and guidance during the research study.

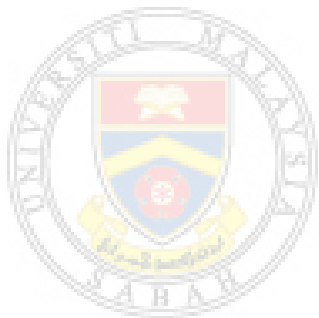
The special thank goes to my friends and family who were always helping and encouraging me with their best wishes.

Guo Jing

07th December 2020

ABSTRACT

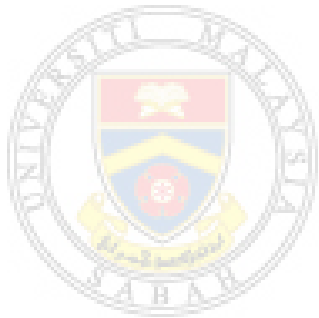
The main objective of this case study is to examine the implementation of the student monitorial system (SMS) and its benefits. In this qualitative study, the experiences of six students, four monitors and two lecturers were explored through in-depth semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method concerning the phenomenon under study. Open-ended questions were asked based on research questions of this study, and participants were encouraged to discuss their experiences in depth. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data to identify themes from the data obtained from the interview. The findings revealed that all twelve participants indicated positive perceptions and satisfaction in their descriptions of the implementation of the monitorial system and benefits of SMS. Aside from that, the findings also revealed the deficiencies of the implementation of student monitorial system.



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ABSTRAK

Matlamat utama kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan Sistem Pemantauan Pelajar (SPP) serta manfaat sistem berkenaan kepada pelajar. Dalam kajian kualitatif ini, penerokaan pengalaman fenomena kajian dilakukan keatas enam orang pelajar, empat orang pengawas dan dua orang pensyarah melalui temubual mendalam, menggunakan teknik semi-struktur sebagai kaedah utama pengumpulan data. Soalan terbuka telah dikemukakan berdasarkan persoalan kajian dan pelajar digalakkan untuk membincangkan pengalaman mereka secara terperinci. Penggunaan analisis tematik bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti tema-tema yang muncul dari data. Hasil dapatan kajian mendedahkan bahawa kesemua 12 orang peserta kajian member indikasi persepsi positif dan mereka berpuas hati dengan implementasi system pemantauan pelajar serta manfaat dari sistem SPP. Hasil kajian turut mengemukakan kekurangan berhubung pengimplementasian sistem pemantauan pelajar tersebut.



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

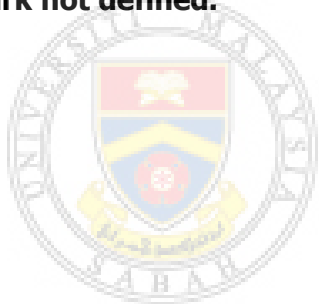
SMS	-	student monitorial system
S1	-	student 1
S2	-	student 2
S3	-	student 3
S4	-	student 4
S5	-	student 5
S6	-	student 6
M1	-	monitor 1
M2	-	monitor 2
M3	-	monitor 3
M4	-	monitor 4
L1	-	lecturer 1
L2	-	lecturer 2



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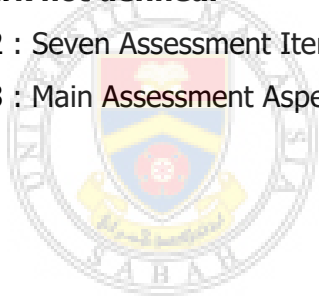
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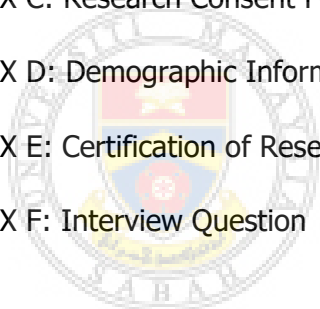
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

According to latest five-year report in China by the Ministry of Education, every year over 30 million students enrol in China universities (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2020). China possesses a distinctive management system that has precise principles of improving the quality of higher education in China includes counselling, tutoring, credit and monitorial system which are selected by different universities, in order to cater to the education needs of a considerable number of students. Monitorial systems have been quite popular amongst colleges and universities in China (Huang, 2008). These monitorial systems aim to improve the quality of higher education and management of some universities in China by following the university education system, for instance, teaching model, activity model, institutional model, and skill training model (Huang, 2008). According to Guo (2012) and Zou, *et al.* (2013), in the monitorial system, the monitoring process itself plays a vital role. Monitors, students who are appointed to guide other students academically as well helping fellow students social issues, are portrayed as crucial human resources in both teaching and student management as they provide guidance, aid and advice. Nonetheless, the monitor's role has different significance in different models of monitorial systems.

1.1 Background of the Study

With the various developments in China, the speed and scale of talent training have become increasingly difficult to adapt to the needs of society, and the contradiction between supply and demand in higher education has become more prominent (China.com.cn, 1999). The reformation of the education policy in the year 1999 by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, had caused the People's

Republic of China to increase the number of student enrolment in colleges and universities. The aim of this effort is to accommodate the challenges of a knowledge-based economy (The People's Republic of China, the Third National Conference on Education, 1999). Hence, in 2013, China was renowned as having one the highest enrolments in the world with a total of 6 million enrolments into national colleges and 24 million enrolments into high schools (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China portal website, 2006). Nevertheless, the investment for higher education was unable to keep up with the increment in enrolment.

The Education Department of Anhui Province, China (2013) stated that the increase in enrolment has negatively affected some universities and colleges as they have insufficient equipment and classes for specific subjects. This statement was once again issued by the Ministry of Education of China: Notice on Doing a Good Job in Enrolling Students from Rural and Impoverished Areas in Key Universities in 2018. Appropriate considerations must be given towards the minority students, poor students, psychologically troubled students, and especially immature students and those from rural mountainous areas, for a more compelling management of their education (Wu, 2008). It also does not help that many of the college students are pampered by parents and have experienced little to no hardships as they are the only child in the family.

As asserted by Yang (2005), Ji (2011), and Jiang (2013), students lack of motivation despite having strong personalities. Simultaneously, students from poor, rural mountainous areas in China lack self-esteem as they compare themselves to urban students. Plus, various beliefs and theories are injected through the veins of college students as a result of living in a diverse, information-rich society. Moreover, college students face difficulties in differentiating the good from the bad and are unable to distinguish between true and false in real life due to the inadequate guidance and supervision from their busy, contemporary parents.

Thus, a competent student monitorial system comes in handy as its contributions can vary from the purpose of retaining, to assisting the graduation of

students. As mentioned by Jiang (2014), despite the monitors and students being peers in the monitorial system, monitors are typically a year older than the novice student. Recently, the monitorial system has been widely used in most colleges and universities in China. As pointed out by Xu *et al.* (2004), Wang *et al.* (2005), Li *et al.* (2008), and Fang *et al.* (2011) excellent and exceptionally good students within the same course are usually chosen by the lecturers as monitors to guide and tutor other students. The monitors function as a guide and aid for others to improve their achievements and interests in their studies, with the help of their lecturers (Cai *et al.*, 2014). Most of the time, monitors come from the line of outstanding students who are then paired or grouped with the respective peers. Their responsibility is part of that of the lecturers', although only to a certain extent, as they help achieve the goal of improving teaching and learning effectiveness in a university (Wu, 2008; Zhang *et al.*, 2013).

1.2 Problem Statement

As there are a significant number of student enrolments, a few staff in the university and some students from the rural areas have never been exposed to urban lifestyle in the university. The cultivation of self-management, self-service, and other advantageous skills for students are adequately provided through mentoring practice, apart from guiding the students' self-education. After the year 1999, the universities encountered issues in complementing the increasing number of required courses and also the inadequate operating conditions to accommodate this sudden increase of student enrolment in colleges and universities in China (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 1999). As stated by Li, *et al.*, (2004), Huang, *et al.*, (2008) & Liu, (2011), the issue of university student management has been aggravated by the fact that different students come from different parts of China, from variety of backgrounds, with some being poor and coming from remote areas, some are rich, urban kids, and some are from one-child families, aside from other diversities.

As proposed by the Document No. 16 (Central Committee of the State Council (CPC) on Further Strengthening and Improving the Ideological and Political Education of College Students, 2004), the practice of this management along with ideological

and political education work has been incorporated into Chinese colleges and universities. Jiang (2014) asserted that it concerns the community that the quality of teaching and number of teaching resources which include human resources have been negatively impacted by the sharp rise in the number of college students. She also stated that a systematic method to implement the monitorial system in the university classroom is non-existent. Less systematic and effective principles and rules are used in China universities since the monitorial systems are still at an experimental stage (Sun, 2008). One of the many criteria for the selection of monitors is being a straight-A student or a communist party member (Jiang, 2014). After the first semester, the monitor's interests regarding the development of their assigned peers would usually wear off (Cai, 2014). Sometimes, monitors are unable to balance their studies and monitorial works (Duan, 2007). Zhou and Sun (2013) pointed out that the monitors are upset as the administrators are ignoring the rewards for excellent monitors. There is comparatively little application of the theory or practice of the monitorial system in China universities as compared to the western countries.

Therefore, in this research, the implementation of the student monitorial system and its advantages to three different groups in a public university in China will be investigated.

1.3 Aims and Objectives of the Study

In general, this study aims to investigate the implementation of Student Monitorial System (SMS) in a public university in China, as to whether it benefits both students and lecturers under the monitorial system implementation. The objectives of this study are:

1. To examine how the monitorial system is implemented in Qiqihar University, China.
2. To investigate how the Student Monitorial System benefits the three different groups selected in this study namely the novice students (freshmen), the monitors and the lecturers.

1.4 Research Questions

In this research, the objective of the research questions is to aid the use of process methods to initiate the barrier of research.

1. How is the student monitorial system implemented in this university?
2. How does the student monitorial system contribute to the process of teaching and learning in the university?
 - 2.1 How does SMS help the students in their university life?
 - 2.2 What are the benefits of the SMS to the monitors?
 - 2.3 How does SMS help the lecturers in achieving their teaching goals?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Through this system, novice students are under the guidance of their monitors. This situation might not only help students to have a profound understanding of the involved teaching content but may also form a better knowledge structure. Moreover, another advantage of the supervision of monitors that can be seen is that students would find it easier to accept what is being taught. The findings obtained in this study would provide a better picture of how the monitorial system works in a university in China, and this would help the involved individuals in this field to understand the concept better.

As for lecturers, some of the findings on the monitorial system regarding the teaching methods as well as student management could be considered to be applied in classroom settings or in the student affairs department to enhance group works, school activities and the application of communist party (in China) in order to enhance the quality of education. For students with monitors, they would have a chance to review and organize learning materials and understand the paths and methods of learning. This is vital, especially to new students.

1.6 Conceptual Framework

In this study, the SMS (student monitorial system) was implemented in Qiqihar University, in China to help the teaching and learning process. It also assists students to cope with university social life. The relationships between these concepts are illustrated in Figure 1.1.

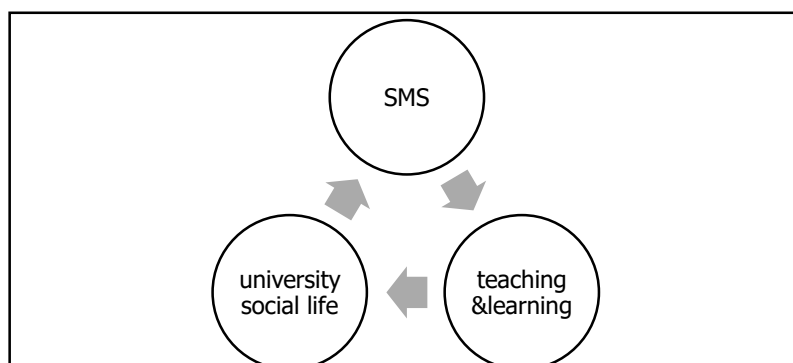


Figure 1. 1: Conceptual Framework

1.7 Operational Definitions

The Monitorial System

The "student monitorial system" can be defined as a selection of students with good personality and high academic achievements, and abilities to assist the lecturers for inducing, helping, assisting, and organizing the first grade students in the intensive training classes, and preparing them for their second and third grade in university.

In this study, the monitorial system was implemented in 2013 by the Faculty of Education and Communication, Qiqihar University, not only in teaching and learning but also in the department of student management.

Monitor

Taking the definition of the monitorial system explained above, a monitor is a student who guides other students in learning, simultaneously helping the learner to deal with student issues. The monitor is more equipped and more capable compared to

the monitored one (Kong, 2011). In support of that statement above, another claim by Whiteman (1988) and Yang (2014) stated that a monitor has more knowledge and ability to guide other students. According to Yang (2013), it is described that the differences in students' cognitive abilities are crucial. In other words, students with better learning traits such as fast learners and good at interpreting and transferring knowledge will have higher probability of being selected by the lecturers to become monitors.

Students

In this study, the students refer to the novice students of freshmen under the student monitorial system program which was implemented in 2013 by the Faculty of Education and Communication, Qiqihar University. They are novice, first grade students who undergo the period of one-year program with the guidance of their monitors.

Lecturers

In this study, the lecturers are educators who have had over 20 years teaching experience and participated in the student monitorial system program which was implemented in 2013 by the Faculty of Education and Communication, Qiqihar University.

1.8 Scope of the Study

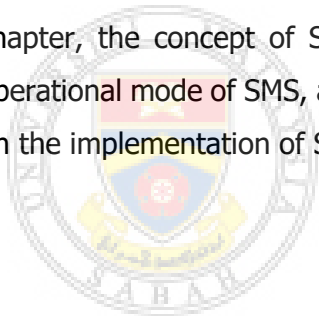
Sample Size

The study was done based on the teaching model (see 2.3.1) of the monitorial system case study, and the scope of the monitorial system is limited only to the model of teaching. In this case, only twelve participants are examined as directly influencing the findings of this study, which is more realistic. The participants included 6 undergraduate students, 4 monitors and 2 lecturers who had been given more precision of the researcher's estimation and the strength of the study to draw a plausible conclusion. Each of the participants were asked to answer open-ended

questions in order to evaluate their experiences and opinions. This sample size of twelve participants enables the researcher to focus the study within the achievable parameters.

1.9 Conclusion

The introduction of this current study and its importance had been discussed in this chapter. The primary purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of the Student Monitorial System in a faculty of a chosen college located in the north-east of China from the perspective of the participating first grade students at the end of their first year studies and their monitors who have also participated in the program. As one purpose is insufficient, this study also investigates the benefits of the system for three different groups, namely novice students, monitors and lecturers. Monitors and students were asked to meet regularly, leading to a better finding. In the next chapter, the concept of SMS, fundamental theories of SMS, models of SMS, the operational mode of SMS, advantages of SMS, roles of monitors and related research on the implementation of SMS will be elaborated.



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