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A Study of Informal Space on Campus by Looking at Student Preferences

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Abstract. The University is an educational institution that provides space and venues for cognitive and social activities and developments for students. Currently, the learning process for students can still take place in informal spaces, such as in lecture halls or in public spaces within the campus. Students can be free to study independently or in groups in various places and facilities that support it based on its choice in public spaces in the campus. In these places of education, they provide educational support facilities such as libraries, cafeterias, corridors, terraces and sitting rooms equipped with student support systems for informal learning. However, phenomena require a change in the form of a learning physical environment, which can accommodate more relaxed informal learning activities that have wider space dimensions. This study aims to explore the preferences or choices of students in the informal learning space in the campus public space. The results of this study were to obtain characteristics from the informal learning room on campus, the choice of students in choosing where to study, and the behavior of the student activities in the existing informal study. This research product is expected to be used and utilized in designing informal study room in campus public space in the future.

1. Introduction

A campus is a place for students to get an education in science from a college or university. Various facilities and infrastructure provided by the university to implement the provision of learning materials, namely in the form of lecture rooms and laboratories. The lecture and laboratory spaces are the two places where students get their knowledge formally from their lecturers. In general, formal learning is a closed space within the buildings on campus.

The concept of building a university by providing a formal activity space to provide teaching materials in the form of a closed lecture hall has been studied for its success by educators and spatial designers (Barr and Tagg 1995, Wolff, 2003; Fisher, 2005b; Pearlman, 2010; Limppaibon, 2013; Ibrahim et al, 2013). According to them, the new design approaches of place for learning and teaching have changed. Barr and Tagg (1995) and Ibrahim et al. (2013) states that the study space has changed from conventional form to contemporary form. According to them, the concept of educational training in the future will move from the emphasis of place to give instruction to the place to produce learning.

The current lecture hall is not the only place for students to learn to gain knowledge on campus. Currently, students can learn to acquire and deepen their knowledge outside the classroom. They have a preference for learning informally or independently or in groups with colleagues in the public spaces that are on campus (Figure 1). Libraries, cafeterias, atriums, corridors, terraces, parks and other open spaces are some of the informal learning places in public spaces provided and can be selected by students to study informally on the campus's public rural (Anggiani and Heryanto, 2017ab).

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Figure 1 – Students learning in the public spaces of campus

Various criteria into consideration for students in the decision-making process of choosing a place to study outside the classroom. At the place of choice, students can conduct discussions, complete college assignments, read textbooks, search for additional materials and other learning activities via the internet with their portable computer.

One's preference for a place is determined by the circumstances and characteristics of the place. Different forms and types of places to study outside the lecture room provide an option for students to make their choices. Criteria for students to determine where he will learn based on learning materials, among others, location, availability of supporting facilities, characteristics of space and place, atmosphere and comfort and other factors related to learning objectives. These attributes are generally provided in the public spaces of the campus by various universities.

A good campus environment will encourage students' interest to learn, both formally and informally. Mercu Buana University, as well as higher education institutions in general, provides both formal and informal learning places. Students can conduct informal learning activities in the existing campus public space. In general, a variety of types and forms of facilities for informal learning are provided by public spaces on various campuses.

This study explores the preferences or choices of students in the informal learning room in the campus public space. The results of this study are expected to derive characteristics from the informal learning spaces, the choice of students in choosing where to study, and the behavior of student activities in the existing informal study. This research product is expected to be used and utilized in designing informal study room in campus public space in the future.

2. Research Question

The questions of the problem in this research are: What and how are the characteristics of the form of informal learning in the campus public space? What are the student preferences for informal learning in campus public spaces? What is the behavior of student activities in the informal study room in the campus public space?

3. Related Works

A university is an educational institution that provides space and venues for students' constructive and social activities and developments. A comfortable environment within the campus can contribute to the success of students in their education. Environment and a comfortable atmosphere for students in the learning process on campus is not only provided in the formal spaces only, i.e. in the classroom. The learning process for students can still take place in informal spaces that are closed or open in public spaces within the campus.

In the 21st century many schools, universities, and colleges provide more space for their learning process towards more nuanced to informal learning spaces (Pearlman, 2010; Limpaibon, 2012). In places of education of this kind, they provide educational support facilities such as cafeterias, corridors,

terraces, sitting rooms equipped with student support systems. Present technological tools are needed by students in improving their skills in supporting their learning process. Currently, the knowledge and skills acquired by students in campus learning are not only limited to the lecture hall but have exceeded the walls of the lecture hall. Phenomena require a change in the shape of the physical environment of learning (Pearlman, 2010), which can accommodate more relaxed informal learning activities that are broader in space.

According to Fisher (2005a, 2005b), there are three approaches to learning concepts: instructional instruction, practical learning, and informal learning or self-learning. The implementation of these three approaches is manifested in the form of a lecture hall, laboratory space and public space on campus. Thus, based on these approaches, the three means should be on the university campus. On the one hand, the two activities of the formal learning process are activities in a closed room because it is two-way, that is between the student and his lecturer. On the other hand, an independent informal activity room by students can be a closed space and open space.

Informal activities in the learning process conducted by students in the campus can be a library, cafeteria, atrium, hall, terrace, garden and other facilities provided by the university on campus. These spaces are public forms that can be shared by campus residents. In these informal spaces, the students can conduct their learning activities independently, together or in groups. Students are free to choose places to study based on their preferences in the campus public space. The term preference is technically widely used in the fields of psychology, economics, and philosophy related to the behavior of students in choosing one place among several places to learn. Student preference, in this case, is an element in the student's decision-making process of one of the most preferred places on the existing set of places to be selected.

The campus environment is good, does not limit the learning process in the classroom with a tight schedule, but the campus is also a potential and effective informal learning spaces for students. The atmosphere of a comfortable environment on campus affects the success of students in the learning process is informal, both knowledge and skills (Wolff, 2003). The place of learning is not only reviewed functionally or its purpose, but also must be taken into account the existing facilities and infrastructure, the state of the good environment and comfortable atmosphere. Facilities and infrastructure, environmental conditions and the atmosphere provided not only meet the physical needs alone but also must be able to meet the psychological and social value for the students as they learn.

The facilities and infrastructure provided, the state of the environment and the atmosphere of a campus have an important role for the students as a place to acquire their knowledge and skills. Various literature review and provide guidelines for designing formal and informal college campus spaces (Jamieson et al., 2000). Complete facilities and infrastructure, good environment and a comfortable atmosphere in the design of the place of learning will have a positive effect on students' feelings toward where he is (Brown, 2005). Furthermore, these positive feelings can increase the interest to learn in that place as well as give more results to the knowledge they learn (Obliger, 2006).

The design of informal learning spaces should have elements, flexibility, nuances of the future, clear, creative, supportive and interesting (JISC, 2006). Basically, the informal learning room is to support students' freedom in their learning activities outside the classroom. Thus, the attributes that these informal spaces must possess are inviting, friendly, comfortable, aesthetic, flowing, reasonable, diffuse, flexible, interactive, and accommodating (Souter et al., 2010). In these space, students are free to study independently or together, complete assignments or discussions. Informal learning spaces have transformed from pedagogical learning to a shift in the nature of social collaboration and group work (Raish and Fennewald, 2016).

4. Research Methods

Variable types of informal learning spaces include a library, cafeteria, lobby, hall, terrace, corridor, stairs, garden, atrium, and amphitheater. Variable characteristics of the informal learning room include inviting friendly, aesthetic, flowing, diffuse, flexible, interactive, accommodative. Variable student

preferences on informal learning spaces between consisting of convenient, quiet, clean, safe and strategic. Student activity variables include reading, doing a task, googling and discussing.

Visual observations were made at the research sites to obtain physical state data as well as the atmosphere of informal learning room life in the campus public space. The literature study was conducted for data on the theory of informal learning spaces, public spaces and student learning activities. The research instruments used are questionnaires distributed to students incidentally in the field. Camera to record student activities, atmosphere, and existing infrastructure. Computers to enter data, tabulation and statistical calculation of survey data.

The results of quantitative studies will be explained descriptively to get an overview of the characteristics of the facilities and the atmosphere of the informal learning room, the preferences of students in choosing places for learning and learning elegance in campus public spaces. Visual condition observations will also be described descriptively. The frequency tables will explain the characteristics of the informal learning room.

5. Analysis

5.1. Demographic

63 respondents were female and 39 were male students at Mercu Buana University, Meruya campus. The number of female students is more due to the fact that the Indonesian population is more female than male. A total of 36 people from the respondents are students from the Faculty of Business Economics, then 23 respondents are students from the Faculty of Engineering. The number of respondents is because students of the Faculty of Economics and Business is the faculty with the largest number of students compared with other faculties. Similarly, the second highest respondent, this is because the number of Engineering faculty students is the second largest after the Faculty of Economics and Business.

5.2. Reasons

The reason students learn in public spaces with the most is that the facilities available in the public space of the campus is very helpful for students in doing their work. Facilities available on campus public spaces such as internet and library networks, make students make the campus public space as a place to do their work. Followed by the second highest reason is that in the public space of this campus, students can do the task together with their friends.

5.3. Public Spaces in Campus

Students prefer the library as a place for them to study, compared to other public spaces such as atrium, corridor, and others. Most answers (44%), students answer that in doing their work in the public space of the campus is in the library. Followed by learning in the corridor of the building as much as 26%. The selection of the library as a place to learn can be because the library comes with a variety of facilities are quite complete, such as discussion room, an internet network, electrical outlet, and certainly a collection of books. Student assessment of the atmosphere in the campus public space is a good impression. Good in this case such as the atmosphere of clean public spaces and its availability of supporting facilities to do their task or study.

5.4. The attractiveness of Public Space in Campus

What makes the public space as a place of learning for students is a means and infrastructure that is complete enough for them. Facilities and infrastructure such as electricity grids, internet networks, the existence of chairs and tables, are what students want. Second, they enjoy learning in public spaces because in this public space they can learn with their friends (like to do a group work).

Students studying in the public sphere, most do their activities in groups. This is sometimes done considering the campus public space is used by students, one of them is when waiting for the turn of the

next hour which sometimes takes several hours. Campus public space is also as one meeting point for students. Followed later, students also study in this public space without friends.

5.5. Time Using of Public Space

Students do most of the learning activities in the public spaces during the day starting from 12 noon until 3 pm. This is mostly done considering they are studying when there is a break or when there is no class and waiting to enter the next class. Furthermore, many students are studying in the morning, this is because they have lectures during the day (enter the class after 1.15pm), so to prepare for the class in the afternoon, they gathered first to do the task or discuss in groups. At least the students who study in the public room at night, this is because the research respondents are Regular 1 students who have a schedule of lectures in the morning until noon.

Duration of study in campus public space is the longest for 1 hour, is the highest response from the student. Followed then long study in campus public space is for not more than 1 hour. Those who studied in for 1 hour, at most there in the daytime. At the time while waiting for the next class, the students do the afternoon break then proceed with study together in the public space.

5.6. Other Activities in Public Spaces on Campus

Other activities that are mostly done in the public space, in addition to learning, is the act of browsing or surfing on the virtual world. Followed then other activities undertaken in addition to learning is a chat, fellow students. Browsing activities that students do this is also a supporting activity to do their college assignments.

5.7. Position Body when in public space Campus

The most abundant positions on the students while studying in the campus public space are the sitting position on the bench. This can be seen in the availability of seats in public spaces scattered in several public areas, most notably in the canteen, then in the atrium. In some of the hallways of the building, there are also chairs and benches available. Many also sit on the floor while studying in public space campus. This can happen when they do not get an empty bench for them to use.

5.8. Respondent's Atmosphere Against Campus Public Space

Respondents who give a good impression on the public space is the number of answers the most. They mentioned that the public space on campus was in good condition. The condition of the public space available internet network, power grid, along with seating facilities, close to some canteen, make them feel that public space on campus in good condition.

Although the campus public space is located within a very busy atmosphere, the students do not feel disturbed over the crowd that occurred. The majority responded to the bustling atmosphere still tolerable crowds. Followed by a somewhat disturbed condition in the crowded atmosphere in the public space campus.

5.9. Additions in Public Spaces

The condition of the campus public space according to the students is good enough and they are satisfied with the condition, but still need the addition (as many as 47 responses) to the amount of public space in this campus. Even students answered they need once the addition of public space (as many as 34 responses). What is needed for the existence of this public space is a learning park (as many as 58 responses), which then followed by the addition of public space in the form of study and library.

5.10. Improvement of Campus Public Space Infrastructure Facility

Facilities and infrastructure already in the campus public space, still need to be improved. Highest, the students stated that they feel the campus public space needs to be upgraded for facilities and infrastructure (as many as 45 responses). Followed by those who respond that public facilities and infrastructure are essential to be improved. The highest for facilities and infrastructure that need to be

improved is the addition of the number of electrical outlet in the campus public space area. This is indeed because it is sometimes seen that students carry electrical extension stops if they want to require power lines. The second improvement to be done is the addition of facilities such as benches and tables.

6. Conclusion

Informal study room on the campus of Mercu Buana University of Meruya campus, in the form of a park, hallway of building or corridor, and atrium of the building. All of these informal learning spaces serve as a destination for students to learn.

Students choose to study in the campus public space, while waiting for the next lecture, before the start of the class, or after the class in the campus formal room. Public spaces that students choose for their place of study because space is available will facilities and complete infrastructures, such as power lines, the internet network, tables and chairs. Students also enjoy studying in the public space of the campus because the atmosphere of public space is comfortable, quiet, and also shady. Lesson time in campus public space is freer and much more compared to studying in formal classrooms.

Students study in public campus space with their friends, because the public space of the campus provides a large enough place for students to study there. In campus public space too, they can learn with a more relaxed atmosphere (can be while eating and drinking learning sauce). Studying in campus informal spaces, students feel freer to explore in learning, because they can learn to chat with their colleagues, search for learning support materials or college assignments, as well as anything else that cannot be done in a formal classroom.

Facilities and infrastructure in the campus public space that is sufficient, still require improvements in facilities as well. The existence of chairs and tables, power lines and internet network need to be added in number, considering the number of students who do learning activities in public space campus is quite a lot.

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