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The Impacts of Off-Campus Students on Local Neighbourhood in Malaysia

Dasimah Bt Omar, Faizul Abdullah, Fatimah Yusof, Hazlina Hamdan, Naasah Nasrudin, Ishak Che Abullah

***Abstract*—**The impacts of near-campus student housing, or off-campus students accommodation cannot be ignored by the universities and as well as the community officials. Numerous scholarly studies, have highlighted the substantial economic impacts either; direct, indirect or induced, and cumulatively the roles of the universities have significantly contributed to the local economies. The issue of the impacts of off-campus student rental housing on neighbourhoods is one that has been of long-standing but increasing concern in Malaysia. Statistically, in Malaysia, there was approximately a total of 1.2 - 1.5 million students in 2009. By the year 2015, it is expected that 50 per cent of 18 to 30 year olds active population should gain access to university education, amounting to 120,000 yearly. The objectives of the research are to assess the impacts off-campus students on the local neighbourhood and specifically to obtain information on the living and learning conditions of off-campus students of Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Malaysia. It is also to isolate those factors that may impede the successful learning so that priority can be given to them in subsequent policy implementations and actions by government and the higher education institutions.

***Keywords*—**off-campus students, neighbourhood, impacts, living and learning conditions

I. Introduction

THE impact of near-campus student housing, or off-campus students' accommodation cannot be ignored [1]. Besides the monetary returns, studies with special reference on social tolerance, which relates to the relationship between the off-campus students housing in the neighborhood is nonetheless, vaguely explored. Although, [7] reiterated that with appropriate planning strategies, studentification may not necessary hypothesize the adversarial housing-related phenomenon. However, as observed, the propensity to inciting the negativity is higher, trends are contested and the deprived relations between the community and the off-campus students are obvious [2]. These unexplored trends are endemic to the whole meaning of conduciveness [1] [2]. Many local residents may be employed by the university – and could be the largest employer in the community, where local businesses cater primarily to the university, and the students' population may outnumber the local population [10].

The provisions of adequate and safe student housing are equally important, especially in the aspect to regions sustainable planning [14]. This is when the definition of conduciveness of the dwelled students in off-campus living environment should be re-constructed. Thus, this paper intends not to delimit the definition of conduciveness that exhibit exclusively to the conditions of the living environments, but the most pertinent is to equate the whole meaning of conduciveness by framing the living environment that is tolerable to the local neighborhood.

To off-campus students, the sense of community among students dwelled off-campus is precluding in local neighbourhood [2] [3]. The absence of sense of community, as noted by [4] has been found to engender feelings of alienation, isolation and loneliness. On the contrary, a strong sense of community has been linked to a range of positive outcomes including improved wellbeing, empowerment, sense of efficacy, life satisfaction, and happiness, and abound literatures by [1], [2], [3], [5] and [8] could justified these characteristics. Social deprivation and disorder in residential areas contribute to create a climate of tolerance within the neighbourhood, which in turn may widen the incidence of acceptability within these communities [4]. As noted by [6] the 'moment of tolerance' within the community contexts seem to shape what can be termed cognitive landscapes or ecologically structured norms (normative ecologies) regarding appropriate standards and expectations of conduct. There has been little research in the context of off-campus student living environment living in community settings. Therefore, this paper will discuss the relationship between the neighbourhood social quality and the conditions off-campus students housing. In this contribution, this paper will present views of local communities in relation of off-campus students in their neighbourhood.

F. A. Dasimah Bt Omar is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: dasimah629@salam.uitm.edu.my; dasimaho@yahoo.com).

S. B. Faizul Abdullah is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying , Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: handai303@yahoo.com).

T. C. Fatimah Yusof is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: ftim02@yahoo.com).

F. D. Hazlina Hamdan is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: hazlina2020@yahoo.com).

F. E. Naasah Nasrudin is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: naasah76@yahoo.com).

S. F. Ishak Che Abdullah is with the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), 40450 Shah Alam, Malaysia (e-mail: ishak2162@salam.uitm.edu.my).

II. Overview On The Impacts Of Off-Campus Students On Local Neighbourhood

The issue of the impacts of off-campus student on neighbourhoods is one that has been of long-standing but increasing concern in Malaysia. The impacts of clustered near-campus students on local neighbourhood development are significant. For students, is to save transportation expenses and time, thus students' first choices are often the neighbourhoods closest to campus [10]. This can create congestion and overcrowding in those neighbourhoods. It also brings the potential for conflict, because students' lifestyles are often at odds with those of long-term residents who choose to live around them [15]. At the same time, any student living further away from campus will want to have a car for transportation. If off-campus students drive to and from campus, they add to traffic and parking congestion [11]. These are the issue of sustainability. If no proactive response to dealing with the issue of studentification, as like the well-planned and purpose built colleges to accommodate students living near-campus, socially; the tolerance gap among the communities will be widening [7] [12].

On the contrary, comprehend to the choices of maximum utility, the choices the students have are limited and any solution to the off-campus student housing issues must take into consideration the human elements, which enable saving on expanses [11][14]. But the reality is when the on-campus housing capacity are often reached the maximum, or the worst is when on-campus accommodation is not the sustainable dialectical adopted by the respective university's strategic planning [10]. The facts is, most campuses of public and private higher education institutions throughout the world, and Malaysia is not spared either, continued to experiencing the unprecedented growth in enrollment, while construction of on-campus housing options fell precipitously, and mostly are due to fiscal policy constraints. Statistically, as experienced in Malaysia, there is approximately a total of 1.2 - 1.5 million students at any given time in public and private higher education institutions combined in 2009, including enrolled in the community colleges and polytechnics [18]. By the year 2015, it is expected that 50 per cent of 18 to 30 year olds active population should gain access to university education, amounting to 120,000 yearly [16][18].

The social network formation among students and local residents is abridged, especially when students dwelled within the deprived neighbourhoods [13]. Within this limited social world, norms may be very different [15].

III. Off-Campus Students Of Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam

In this research, the case study chosen was Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Shah Alam. It is located in the most developed metropolitan region of Klang Valley in Malaysia [16]. UiTM is Malaysia's premier institution of higher learning that has experienced phenomenal growth since its inception in 1956 [16]. The university has expanded nationwide with 15 branch campuses, three satellite campuses, nine city campuses, 21 affiliated colleges and a smart campus for the future [16]. With this vast network and a workforce of 15,000, the university offers more than 300 academic programmes in a conducive and vibrant environment. It is also home to almost 120,000 students [16]. Today, UiTM draws strength from the initiatives of its founders, exploring and mastering various frontiers of knowledge as to obtain the world-class university status [16] [18].

TABLE I
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS REGISTERED BY SECTION

Section	No. of Student	(%)
Section 2	95	3.08
Section 3	28	0.91
Section 4	34	1.10
Section 6	91	2.95
Section 7	2149	69.75
Section 8	125	4.06
Section 9	28	0.91
Section 10	6	0.19
Section 11	16	0.52
Section 12	1	0.03
Section 13	19	0.62
Section 16	175	5.68
Section 17	184	5.97
Section 18	47	1.53
Section 19	41	1.33
Section 20	5	0.16
Section 22	9	0.29
Section 24	28	0.91
Total	**3283**	**100.00**

Off-campus students in Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam need to be registered under Non-Resident (NR) unit [16]. The main reason in acquiring them to register is to keep record and to monitor them and also to provide help when necessary especially if they have difficulties during their stay [17].

The total number of off-campus students who were registered with the NR unit in 2009 was about 5000 [17]. This research focused on 3284 students staying in 18 sections of Shah Alam [16], [17]. There are off-campus students who are not registered with the NR unit [17]. This is may be because some students do not know the existence of NR unit. Table 1 shows data on the number of students by sections in Shah Alam registered with the NR unit [17].

IV. Research Methodology

For the purpose of the study 386 respondents were selected based on the proportion of students staying in the sections given by NR unit as shown in Table 1. As far as the number of samples is concerned, the determination is based on the generalised scientific guideline for sample size decision [19]. The research also involved the community where another 386 respondents who were the next door residents of the students. Face to face interview was conducted for two weeks by 10 research assistants. The first set of questionnaires was pretested in a pilot study before sending to the respondents. The questionnaire was sent out to the 10 students from the Faculty of Architecture, Planning and Surveying. Building survey was also conducted by inspecting all respondents' (students) houses by observation technique to examine the students' living environment. A special form was used for recording defects found in each house. This is another method of assessing the level of the students' living environment. The questionnaire was designed by the authors and the reliability was tested by using statistical technique which the result is revealed in the next section.

V. Result And Discussion

A. Respondents' Profile

Among the types of respondents' dwellings surveyed are terraced, flats, apartments and condominiums. Analysis showed that up to 69 percent of respondents live in Section 7. and is the highest compared to respondents living in other sections. Analysis of residential respondents indicated that 58 percent of respondents are living in the apartment houses, 34 percent of respondents living in terraced houses, five percent of respondents living in condominiums, and only three percent of respondents living in the shop house apartments. Analysis showed that majority of the respondents who are off-campus can afford to live in apartment residential area. Profile analysis of the respondents also found that 78 percent of respondents are in 4^{th} semester to 8^{th} semester are living off campus. This shows that the University does not provide accommodation for senior students of semester 4 to semester 8. Respondents' profile analysis also showed that 99 percent of them were single. About 55 percent of total were male respondents, while only 45 percent of respondents were female. The majority of respondents' aged between 23 to 24 years, consisting of 48 percent compared to other age groups.

B. Conducive Accessibility Level Of Students' Houses To UiTM.

Based on the survey conducted it was found that the distance of houses in relation to the frequency of vehicles used by respondents was efficient. The distance of off-campus students' houses to UiTM is about one to two kilometers. Table 2 shows that about 48 percent of respondents stay at this location compared to those staying in other areas, 32 percent of them stay at distance between three to four kilometers. About 12 percent live at about 5-6 kilometers away from the university. Only six percent of the respondents stay more than seven kilometers away.

TABLE II
DISTANCE OF STUDENTS' HOUSES TO UITM

Residence Distance (km)	Respondents	Percentage
1-2	185	48
3-4	121	32
5-6	46	12
>7	24	6
Total	376	98

C. Mode Of Transportation To UiTM

Based on the survey conducted it was found that there were eight types of transportation modes used by off-campus students to UiTM. This include walking, riding bikes, riding motorcycles, riding friends vehicles, using bus such as Rapid KL bus, Saranas bus and UiTM bus. The majority of respondents (68 percent) who live in Section 7 commute to campus by riding motorcycles. About 15 percent of respondents travel by car, 10 percent of respondents walk and five percent use the UiTM bus service. Two percent of respondents stated that they were riding on friend's vehicles. However for students who live in Section 6, the majority of them are using Rapid KL Bus service (91 percent), followed by five percent of respondents using Saranas bus services, and only four percent of respondents use the UiTM's bus service. Analysis showed the students were more convenience riding on motorcycles and to them it is safe even if riding at night.

D. Monthly Rental Rate Of Houses

Data analysis shows the monthly rent payable by the off-campus students by gender. It was found that majority of students were renting houses or rooms at the rate RM100 - RM149 monthly. Table 3 shows the analysis of monthly rental rates for off-campus students by gender where 57 percent of male students and 43 percent are female students fall under the category RM100-149 rental rate. It was found that 35 percent of respondents were willing to pay monthly rent between RM150-200. There are about five percent of respondents can afford to pay monthly rent of RM200. Some of them received financial support from their families.

TABLE III
MONTHLY RENTAL RATE PAID BY STUDENTS

Rental Rate (per Month)	Male	Female	Total
<100	6	16	22
100-149	120	89	209
150-200	71	62	133
>200	11	7	18
Total	208	174	384

The Kruskal Wallis statistical tests were performed for further analysis.

TABLE IV
MEAN RANK OF HOUSES' RENTAL RATE

Factor	Mean Rank				
	Terrace	Apartment	Condominiums	x^2 Value	-p Value
Rental Rate (per Month)	198.17	176.03	258.49	17.744	0.000**

The result in Table 4 shows the differences in mean rank terrace, apartment and condominium are significant at the level of significance 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). It can be concluded that those who live in condominium have to pay about RM258 which is the highest monthly rent. This is followed by those living in terrace houses and apartment respectively. This is because residential condominiums in Shah Alam are more exclusive than other types of houses as the provision of facilities are better.

E. Off-Campus Students' Relation With Local Residents

Among the questions asked to respondents was whether off- campus students know their neighbours during their stay in the neighbourhood. Analysis found that 80 percent of the respondents showed a positive response where the students know their neighbours. This shows neighbourhood life is important for students because they need the neighbours as well especially in matters involving the community. However 20 percent stated the answer as no. They did not know their neighbours may be because they were new to the area.

F. Acceptance Of Off-Campus Students By Local Residents

The analysis on the communities' survey showed majority or 84 percent of the respondents felt comfortable living with off-campus students. However, there were 13 percent respondents who did not feel comfortable. Normally students spend their time attending lectures and majority of them do respect their neighbours. This somehow reduces disturbance to the neighbours who have families. There may be a few students who might have problems with their neighbours as they lack of sense of community and misunderstand the responsibilities of neighbourhood living. This matter can be discussed with residents' association which were formed to offer help or to advice students who were not on good term with their neighbours. In general, the majority of the local residents were happy with those off-campus students staying in their neighbourhood.

G. Students' Participation In Neighbourhoods' Activities

Data analysis showed 60 percent of respondents stated that students did not participate in the activities carried out by the neighborhood community. This reflected that majority of off-campus students were not participating actively in the activities carried out by their communities. Students may have time constraint and involve more in university activities. About 20 percent of respondents agreed that there were students who actively participate with community activities such as *gotong royong* and preparation for Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration. *Gotong royong* is one of the residents' activities to ensure that their living environment is clean and well maintained.

H. The Communities' Perception Regarding The Unpleasant Environment Created By Off-Campus Students

Based on the surveys conducted, several factors have been identified as negative contribution by the students to the local population. Table 5 shows the list of 12 factors related to unpleasant environment created by off-campus students in Shah Alam. Analysis showed that majority (72 percent) of respondents stated that the use of car park by students as the most unpleasant behavior. Students who have cars occupy the car parking spaces allocated for residents. This problem is one of the issues faced by the local authority especially for apartment units. The planning standards stated that two car parking lots is required one unit apartment. However there are students sharing the apartment unit having more than two cars. Besides that the increase in number of cars resulted in traffic congestion in residential areas as shown in the Table 5 listed as second most unpleasant environment.

The list also showed that neighbourhood community complained that students made noise especially at night as stated by 52 percent of respondent. About 50 percent of respondents mentioned that off-campus students involved in *khalwat* and smoking. The existence of students increases rental rates for houses and shops premises as stated by 44 percent of the residents. The survey also revealed that about 38 percent of respondents said that off-campus students can be associated with increase of crime in the neighbourhood. The recreation areas were congested as reported by 27 percent of respondents.

TABLE V
UNPLEASANT ENVIRONMENT BY OFF-CAMPUS STUDENTS

	Unpleasant Behavior by Students	**%**
1	Use of car parking	71.7
2	Traffic congestion	65.7
3	Making noise especially at night	51.8
4	Social problems *khalwat* and smoking	49.6
5	Rapid development	47.7
6	Increase in rental rates for residential and business premises	44.1
7	Unrelated business facilities	39.5
8	Increase in crimes such as burglary and thefts	38.4
9	Health problems such as dengue	36.8
10	Use of motorcycles - dangerous to public	33.9
11	Congestion of recreation areas	27.3
12	Vandalisme	19.7

I. Complaints by Local Residents

Based on surveys conducted, it was found that 95 percent of respondents indicated they never complain. Only five percent of respondents stated that they had made complaints regarding the off-campus students. The complaints made by residents were related to the unhealthy social relationship between female and male students and noise made by the students.

J. Consistency Test Of Students' Satisfaction Level Towards The Environment

TABLE VI
STUDENTS' SATISFACTION LEVEL TOWARDS THE ENVIRONMENT

Dimension	No. of Statement	Cronbach Alpha
The level of students' satisfaction towards the environment	12	0.885

Consistency tests were performed on the 12 statements used to measure students' satisfaction with the summary statistics on the environment as illustrated in Table 6.

Cronbach Alpha value (0.885) showed that the statements used are consistent or reliable in measuring the dimensions of the study.

K. The Normality Test

Statistical methods suitable for use in subsequent studies depends on whether the scores (values) scattering in a normal individual respondents for the eight factors. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (KS) was used for this purpose and summary of the statistics as in Table 7.

TABLE VII
KOLMOGOROV-SMIRNOV TEST (K-S)

Factor	Statistical Test	
	Value-K-S Z	Value-*p*
1. The level of student satisfaction with the environment	1.426	0.034*
2. Overall building facilities	9.205	0.000**
3. Environmental elements	1.655	0.008**
4. Monthly rental rates	6.675	0.000**
5. Fuel expenditure rates and fares	4.118	0.000**
6. Residential distance from the campus	5.810	0.000**
7. CGPA while staying in college	0.677	0.929
8. CGPA when staying outside college	0.749	0.354

* Significant at the level of significance 0.05
** Significant at the level of significance 0.01

Table VII shows that the values of KS Z factors of the level of student satisfaction towards environment, building system facilities as a whole, environmental elements, monthly rental rates, fuel expenses and fare rates and residential distance from the campus is significant at the level of significance 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) or 0.01 ($p < 0.01$). In summary, respondents' scores for the six factors did not relinquish normality distribution. In the case of the current Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), students who stayed in college and during off-campus stay , both the Z value is at significance level 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). In summary, the value of CGPA for either staying in college or living outside is normally distributed.

L. Students' Grade

The analysis is to compare the respondents' CGPA between their stay in college and live outside college as off-campus students. Since the values of a CGPA of respondents were normally distributed, the parametric method of statistical test was used. The comparison was involving the same respondent, the t-test sample pairs was used as shown in Table 8.

TABLE VIII
SUMMARY OF T-TEST PAIRS STATISTICS SAMPLES

Factors	Mean	Mean Difference	*-t Value*	*P Value*
CGPA while living in college	3.14	-0.04	-1.086	0.282
CGPA while living in outside college	3.18			

The difference between the mean CGPA during the stay in college (3.14) and mean CGPA while living outside the college (3.18) was not significant at the level of significance 0.05 ($p > 0.05$). This inferred that the CGPA is the same whether respondents stay in college or live outside college. The results showed that the academic achievement of off-campus students are not influenced by the environment although living as off-campus is said to be more challenging than staying on campus.

M. The Environmental Satisfaction By Gender

The analysis is to compare the satisfaction of environment between male and female students. Since the values of the level of students' satisfaction with the environment were not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical methods were applied. In cases involving two groups (male and female), the Mann-Whitney test was used as shown in Table IX.

TABLE IX
MANN-WHITNEY STATISTIC TEST: COMPARISON OF ENVIRONMENTAL SATISFACTION BY GENDER

Dimension	Gender	Mean Rank	*-zValue*	*-pValue*
Student's satisfaction level towards environment	Male	197.74	-1.115	0.265
	Female	185.10		

Table 9 shows that the difference in the mean ranks of male (197.74) and the mean rank of female respondents (185.10) and is not significant at the level of significance 0.05 (p> 0.05). It can be summarised there is no significant difference in the satisfaction with the environment by male or female off-campus students.

N. Students' Perception By Types of Houses

The analysis is to find out whether the views of respondents on the environmental factors are different between the three types of houses. The environmental factors include student satisfaction level towards the environment, building facilities, and the environmental elements. The three types of houses include terrace, apartments and condominiums. Since the individual respondent scores for all of these factors are not normally distributed, non-parametric statistical methods were applied. Since the comparison involves three types of houses, the tests used were Kruskal-Wallis test. Table 10 shows the summary statistics of test results and by factors.

TABLE X
SUMMARY OF KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST STATISTIC: PERCEPTION BY TYPES OF HOUSES

Factors	Mean Rank			χ^2 value	*-p Value*
	Terrace	Apartment	Condominium		
1. Student's Satisfaction Level Towards Environment	222.00	163.11	253.47	35.242	0.000**
2. Building Facilities	208.54	185.23	171.00	16.938	0.000**
3.Environ-mental Elements	165.33	186.45	256.24	19.738	0.000**

** Significant at the level of significance 0.01

i) Students' Satisfaction Level Towards Environment

The difference in χ^2 Value rank mean for terrace, apartment and condominium is significant at the level of interest of 0.01 (p <0.01). This inferred that the highest level of satisfaction with the environment was experienced by those living in condominiums, followed by those living in terrace houses and apartments. The level of satisfaction reflected that living in condominium are comfortable for off-campus students as the provision of better facilities compared to other types of houses.

ii) Building Facilities

The difference in χ^2 Value rank mean for terrace, apartment and condominium is significant at 0:01 significant (p <0.01).It can be concluded that those living in terrace houses indicated that the building has better facilities compared to those living in apartments and condominiums. This may be because the terrace houses rented by off-campus students were in satisfactory condition, especially those newly built houses in Section 7.

iii) Environmental Elements

The difference in χ^2 Value rank mean for terrace, apartment and condominium is significant at the level of significance 0.01 (p <0.01). This inferred that those who live in condominium have better environmental elements. This is followed by those living in apartments and terrace houses. The condominiums offer variety of facilities and considered as safer with the gated and guarded living environment.

VI. Conclusion

This paper has presented evidence that in general the majority of Shah Alam local residents were happy with those off-campus Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam students staying in their neighbourhood. The whole student housing issue that came about as a result of the analysis showed there was a need for more cooperation between all stakeholders, off-campus students, the community and the university.

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