

## Examining the Quality of Learning Environment of Sandwich Programmes in Ghana: A Case of Institute of Education

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper reports on a study that examined the quality of the learning environment of sandwich programmes in Ghana. The study used a sequential explanatory mixed method design and focused on tutors and 400 students of the programme. The Total Quality Management Theory, Expectation Confirmation/Disconfirmation Theory, Context, Input, Process, and Product Evaluation Model underpinned the study. A disproportional stratified selection method was used to select 1,000 students and 50 tutors from each of the four teaching centres. While a purposive sampling method was employed to select 12 students and eight tutors involved in sandwich programmes for follow-up interviews. The data were collected using a questionnaire and an interview guide. The quantitative data was analysed using means and standard deviation, while the qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. These findings revealed that the tutors show concern for the welfare of the students and offer chances for student-teacher contact. However, big class sizes limit how much faculty can customise the learning environment. Also, students were friendly, helpful, cooperative, and supported one another during activities. The study recommended that the management of the Institute of Education and centre coordinators make every effort to secure spacious classrooms to help reduce large class sizes and increase opportunities for student-teacher interactions, cohesiveness, and students' participation in the classroom. In addition, tutors should foster an atmosphere that invites student interaction and identify students' strengths and weaknesses.*

**Keywords:** Institute of Education, Quality Learning Environment, Sandwich

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, there is a growing interest among educators and policymakers in creating strategies to assess the knowledge and abilities of students (Birjandi & Nosratinia, 2009). Intellect is not the sole factor influencing a student's academic performance. A student's academic success is consistently linked to several learning environment elements. Paniagua and Istance (2018) propose that the learning and teaching environment should incorporate six essential functions: informing, communicating, collaborating, producing, scaffolding, and managing. Conceptually, the learning environment encompasses all the components and activities in which learning takes place. According to Isba and Walsh (2013), the functions of a learning environment can be summarised as follows: the purpose of the teacher component is to offer a balance between flexible guidance and explicit instruction. The agent can be either a human (near or far), an intelligent entity, or a set of instructions as found in certain textbooks. This component delivers information ranging from the syllabus to the task level. The desire of students to study is widely recognised as one of the most crucial factors contributing to the success and quality of any learning outcome (Eom et al., 2006). Studies indicate that students' judgements of their academic competence diminish as they progress through their educational journey (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). Schunk and Pajares (2002) ascribe this decrease to various variables, such as heightened competitiveness, less instructor focus on individual student advancement, and the pressures linked to school changes.

In the past ten years, a significant political focus has been on creating a learning environment that emphasises tangible and intangible elements contributing to an engaging learning experience. The learning environment has become crucial to educational policies in numerous countries and prominent international bodies. Therefore, significant entities such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), and the European Union, along with national organisations like the Higher Education Academy and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) in the UK, the American Council on Education (ACE), and the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance (NOKUT), have emphatically advised

educational institutions to prioritise the enhancement of their learning environments. In Higher Education, it is necessary to evaluate programmes to guarantee their quality and determine their effectiveness in reaching desired goals (Abiola, 2020). The Sandwich Programme (SP) in higher education has garnered significant interest in recent years due to its adaptable nature and diverse contributions to socio-economic advancement and national success (Wiston, 2019).

Effective learning extends beyond the confines of the classroom and into the professional environment, where students engage in work placements. According to Austin (2002), students' professional advancement and job preparation are influenced by the quality of learning opportunities, supportive supervision, and skill development possibilities in work placements. Students have increased self-assurance, proficiency, and a sense of belonging in a favourable work setting with well-defined expectations, guidance from mentors, and frequent evaluations (Zibit, 2020). This study assesses the perspectives of students and tutors about the learning environment of the Institute of Education Sandwich programme. Various methods and approaches are utilised to provide top-notch services in education, as quality is the sole acceptable criterion. A study conducted by Gallifa and Batalle (2010) revealed that several factors, including students, teachers, accreditation, curriculum design and standards, and administrative support, significantly impact the quality of higher education, particularly in the context of Sandwich courses. The Quality Learning Environment indicator is essential for worldwide discussions on the quality assurance of Sandwich Programmes in Higher Education Institutions (Nazeer, 2015; Sithole, 2015; Rolla, 2016).

Assessing how stakeholders evaluate academic courses can help Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) management compete in the current higher education landscape. Assessment helps provide high-quality educational programmes and services. The Sandwich Programme substantially contributes to economic progress (Odunaike & Amoda, 2008; Vargas-Hernández, 2020). This programme produces individuals with valuable skills, ethical values, creativity, and the ability to think independently. Consequently, this fosters leadership in the economy. Badu (2014, as cited in Amoako, 2019) underscores that the primary objective of the SP course is to equip students with the necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills to pursue professions in the fields of education or corporate environments.

### 1.1 Problem Statement

Management of higher education institutions should assess stakeholders' perceptions of academic programme quality to provide high-quality programmes and educational services that offer a competitive advantage in higher education. Odunaike and Amoda (2008) and Vargas-Hernández (2020) assert that the Sandwich Programme enhances economic growth by cultivating enduring marketable skills, ethical principles, ingenuity, and autonomous thinking, which promotes economic dominance. According to Badu (2014, as stated in Amoako, 2019), the sandwich course focuses on equipping students with the necessary information, attitudes, and abilities required for careers in teaching or business. Multiple colleges offer sandwich degrees, although their quality is a subject of global controversy (Rogers, 2019). The high unemployment rates among sandwich graduates can be attributed to the inadequate curriculum and services that restrict their employability skills (Amoako, 2019). Badu (2014) criticises the sandwich programme for not aligning with student objectives, industry demands, and the economic capacities of the 21st century. These concerns may be correlated with various performance metrics, leading higher education management to evaluate and rectify their programmes. Ensuring the provision of top-notch programming and educational services is crucial, particularly for students and other stakeholders. The statement emphasises the importance of regularly updating academic courses to produce graduates with the abilities employers value in the highly competitive job market. Since 1993, the Ghanaian government and several institutions have been endeavouring to establish quality assurance units to ensure the delivery of education of superior quality (Owusu, 2014). However, the Institute of Education (IoE) at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) confronts intense competition from similar programmes in other universities in the country (Badu, 2014). The Institute of Education has adopted some of the Colleges of Education and other institutions as satellite campuses to enrol new students for their programmes, increasing student numbers without a commensurate increase in physical facilities at those satellite campuses has questioned the quality of the learning environment these institutions provide. Preliminary observations and informal discussions with UCC students suggest that they are dissatisfied with the quality of the learning environment of their study. Various factors influence this constraint, including academic programme policies, underlying causes, social viewpoints, attitudes, beliefs, and stakeholder expectations. Previous research predominantly employed quantitative survey designs based on positivism, yielding descriptive results that lacked a comprehensive understanding of intricate matters. The present study uses a mixed-method approach to investigate the quality of the learning environment as perceived by tutors and students.

## 1.2 Research Objective

This study set out to examine the views of tutors and students regarding the quality of the learning environment of the Institute of Education Sandwich Programme at their various study centres.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Review

In examining the quality learning environment, three significant theories of quality evaluation in higher education functioned as a theoretical underpinning for this study. These include TQM theory (Deming, 1982), Expectation Confirmation/Disconfirmation Theory (ECT/EDT) (Oliver, 1980), and Context, Input, Process and Product (CIPP) Evaluation Model (Stufflebeam & Shield, 2007). Thus, the current research was rooted within these theoretical perspectives. TQM was used to identify quality performance indicators based on UCC's quality assurance policy. At the same time, ECT/EDT and CIPP evaluation models were utilised to measure tutors' and students' anticipations and views of the quality performance indicators in the sandwich programme. Although these hypothetical models varied in dealing with quality evaluation in higher education, they had comparative fundamental components and commended one another. The standard parts of the theoretical models assisted in recognising the basic quality performance drivers based on UCC's quality assurance policy. These include quality learning environment (QLE), quality service (QS), quality teaching (QT), quality student engagement (QSE), student competencies acquisition (SCA), and satisfaction (SAT) with EEP in UCC.

### 2.2 Quality Learning Environment (QLE) in Higher Education (HE)

The main goal of the "teaching and learning process" is to achieve a helpful change in conduct through basic reasoning and critical thinking. This interaction, in any case, does not happen in a vacuum but in a climate and an atmosphere planned and organised to smooth learning. Quality education can only occur in safe and supportive environments; consequently, QLE has attracted many researchers' attention for decades (Yang, 2013; Psycharis et al., 2013; Fraser, 2014; Budak & Kaygın, 2015; Yang et al., 2015). QLE is the atmosphere, ambience, tone, or climate that pervades the particular setting. The concept of QLE, as applied to educational settings, refers to the social, psychological, and pedagogical context in which learning occurs and affects student achievement and attitude (Fraser, 2012; Dorman, 2014).

QLE has two aspects: "One is the physical QLE environment (the material setting of the classroom such as furniture, lighting, spaces, desks, and chairs) that affects the safety, the comfort of students, and learning and personal development of students". The other is the "psychological environment referring to the social quality of the school and classroom". It encompasses the "assessment methods, curriculum, teaching methods, physical locations, context, the atmosphere of the institution, culture of a school or class and its presiding ethos and characteristics, including how students interact with and treat one another, as well as how teachers may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning" (Fraser, 2012; Tripathy & Dudani 2013; DiTullio, 2014; Dorman, 2014; Bakhshialiabad et al., 2015).

Extant researchers found that QLE is a "potent predictor of student cognitive and affective outcomes," including satisfaction, retention, participation and engagement, academic success, learning experiences, social behaviours, perceived well-being, enthusiasm and motivation to learn, aspirations, contribute to less aggression and violence, sexual harassment amongst students, learning approaches and skills acquisition (Fraser, 2012; Sayed & El-Sayed, 2012; Chukwuemeka' 2013; Sharkawy et al., 2013; Tripathy & Dudani, 2013; DiTullio, 2014; Bakhshialiabad et al., 2015). It also influences the quality of service, quality of teaching and learning, teacher effectiveness, school efficiency, effective curriculum, assessment, and teacher competence and development (Hénard. 2010; Chukwuemeka, 2013; Sharkawy et al., 2013; Tripathy & Dudani, 2013; Bakhshialiabad et al., 2015; Chmielewski-Raimondo et al., 2016).

Tutors and students may perceive the same QLE differently because it is an elusive and multidimensional construct. The faculty and learners' perceptions of the institutional site can be a reason for adjusting and advancing the educational climate. The assessment of the educational milieu is basic to the conveyance of an excellent, "student-centered curriculum." Therefore, QLE should be created to help all learners in their learning interaction and instructors and support the workforce in their missions.

In recent years, huge research has involved the conceptualisations, assessment, and investigation of perceptions of aspects of the classroom environment. However, these studies were conducted in developed and some developing countries using the College and University Classroom Environment Inventory (CUCEI) (e.g., Chua et al., 2011; Lay & Khoo, 2012; Strayer, 2012; Dorman, 2014; Farris, 2014; Li, 2014; Tedesco-Schneck 2016; Matoti, 2019). For instance, in Malaysia, Lay and Khoo (2012) investigated the "relationships between the perceptions of actual and preferred Science learning environment at tertiary level and the attitudes towards science among pre-service teachers in Sabah,

Malaysia." The study employed a survey design, and cluster random sampling was used to select 23 male and 27 female pre-service teachers. Adapted CUCEI was used to collect data from the respondents. The data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The study found that students positively perceived their actual science learning environment ( $M=3.61$ ,  $SD=.38$ ) as measured by CUCEI. They had a positive perception towards "cooperation" ( $M=4.16$ ,  $SD=.58$ ), "student cohesiveness" ( $M=4.16$ ,  $SD=.77$ ), "personalization" ( $M=3.80$ ,  $SD=.60$ ), "equity" ( $M=3.79$ ,  $SD=.81$ ), "task orientation" ( $M=3.53$ ,  $SD=.45$ ), "individualization" ( $M=3.04$ ,  $SD=.42$ ) and "innovation" ( $M=2.78$ ,  $SD=.54$ ). In contrast, pre-service Science teachers prefer and hope for a better Science learning environment ( $M=4.30$ ,  $SD=.42$ ) in most of the CUCEI subscales, especially "Cooperation" ( $M=4.67$ ,  $SD=.51$ ) and "Equity" ( $M=4.50$ ,  $SD=.60$ ). There was no significant difference in the perception of the actual ( $r = -1.795$ ,  $p=.080$ ) and preferred ( $t=-1.753$ ,  $p=.095$ ) tertiary Science learning environment between male and female pre-service teachers. Correlation analysis results showed low to moderate, positive, and significant correlations between the actual and preferred Science learning environment and the attitudes toward science. The study of Lay and Khoo is relevant and relates to the current examination as it deals with QLE. Conversely, it differs from the present research because it endeavoured to evaluate the QLE from the views of pre-service Science teachers in Malaysia. At the same time, the current investigation focused on tutors' and students' perceptions of QLE in the EEP in a higher education institution in Ghana.

In a related study by Matoti (2019), South Africa "assessed pre-service teachers' perceptions of classroom environments." The study employed a survey design, and 66 language student-teachers were used to complete the CUCEI scale. The study found that "student teachers' perceptions of their involvement in class ranked high, indicating a moderate to high perception of the tertiary learning environment. While they indicated a positive use of innovative teaching strategies in this classroom, task orientation was also ranked highly, indicating that the lecturer still dominated the classroom. The open-ended question revealed both positive and negative experiences. The student teachers perceived positive class experiences, which included a positive environment for them to participate in class through oral presentations, including discussions, encouragement and assistance given to students, and the emotional stability of the lecturer. The negative aspects revolved around the work overload and inadequate test preparation time. The latter have alerted teacher educators to the students' concerns about the course". The study of Matoti is relevant and relates to the current examination, as it deals with QLE. Conversely, it differs from the present research because it endeavoured to evaluate the QLE from the views of Language pre-service teachers in South Africa. At the same time, the current study focused on tutors' and students' perceptions of QLE in higher education in Ghana.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed sequential explanatory mixed methods. As stated by Creswell & Plano Clark (2018), this design involves initially collecting quantitative data and then using qualitative data to complement, clarify, or provide further understanding of the results obtained through quantitative methods. The population comprised 2200 students and 190 tutors. A multi-stage random sampling method was employed to choose four of the six centres of the level 400 students: Kibi College of Education, Okomfo Anokye, Wise Educational Complex, and St. Joseph's College of Education. A disproportionate stratified sampling was employed to choose one thousand (1000) students from each of the four teaching centres. By comparison, fifty (50) tutors from the selected centres were also chosen to participate in the study. For the qualitative inquiry phase of the study, the researchers employed the extreme case sampling technique to choose twelve (12) sandwich students and eight (8) tutors for follow-up interviews. This choice was made in reaction to the findings of the initial quantitative phase. Classifying the low, moderate, and high extreme results from the quantitative section of the study facilitated the process. A total of 12 students and six tutors were deemed suitable and adequate to achieve data saturation for the qualitative analysis. Data from students and tutors were collected using a questionnaire and a follow-up interview guide. Quantitative data was evaluated using SPSS version 26, while thematic analysis was conducted on the qualitative data. The presentation commenced with the display of the quantitative data, which was subsequently followed by the qualitative data. The follow-up interviews provided qualitative insights that helped clarify and expand upon the quantitative findings. The mean and standard deviation were utilised to assess and analyse the quantitative data. According to the five-point Likert scale, a mean rating of 1.00 to 2.49 suggests a low-quality learning environment. In contrast, a rating between 2.50 and 3.49 indicates a moderate level, and a rating from 3.50 to 5.00 suggests a high level.



#### IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSIONS

##### 4.1 Response Rates

Out of 1000 student respondents, most were male (n = 598; 59.80%), while 402 of them, representing 40.20%, were females. In the case of the tutors, most respondents were males (n= 41; 82.00%), while nine of them, representing 18%, were females. This result implies that more male tutors and students participated in the study than their female counterparts. Concerning the age distribution of students, the results indicated that 425(42.50%) majority were in the age bracket of 25-29 years. This was followed by 320 (32%) in the age bracket of 30-34 years, while twenty-eight of the tutors, representing 56%, were in the age bracket of 30-34 years and above. This result is significant because it helps to understand the diverse perspectives of tutors and students on the quality of the sandwich programme in terms of the Quality Learning Environment with the Institute of Education at UCC.

The aim of this study was to examine perceptions tutors and students about quality learning environment. Both quantitative and qualitative data were acquired. The quantitative results were clarified and expanded upon using the qualitative data from the follow-up interviews. The findings of the respondents' perceptions of QLE in the programme are shown in Table 1. It is clear from the results that tutors and students alike felt favourably about the QLE offered by the programme. As a result, the programme's tutors saw a high QLE while the students saw a moderate one. For instance, the tutors reported that they placed a strong emphasis on "personalisation" (M = 3.91; SD =.82) in the curriculum, whilst the students thought the tutors placed a moderate emphasis on the same concept (M = 3.15; SD =.49).

**Table 1**

*Tutors' and Students' Perceptions of Quality Learning Environment (QLE)*

Variables (QLE)	Tutors		Students	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
<b>Personalisation</b>	3.91	.82	3.15	.49
Involvement	3.96	.76	3.28	.47
Student cohesiveness	2.07	1.12	3.02	.48
Task orientation	4.12	.73	3.41	.45
Innovation	3.28	.93	2.98	.37
Individualisation	3.82	1.06	2.76	.51
Satisfaction	3.82	.83	3.46	.58
Mean of Means/SD	<b>3.57</b>	<b>.89</b>	<b>3.12</b>	<b>.48</b>

It was revealed in a follow-up interview that the programme offers chances for individual pupils to engage with the tutors meaningfully. The tutors showed genuine concern for the pupils' well-being on a personal level. The tutors helped students, were amiable, and invested in them. On the other hand, large class sizes are seen to hinder a "quality personalised learning environment." Some of the quotes from the students and tutors are as follows:

*"Our tutors are genuinely interested in helping us learn and are very open with us. A few of them made a great effort to teach us and were very helpful in making sure we understood what they were teaching. The majority of them ask for our thoughts or opinions on various subjects or ideas, and we discuss them in class."* (Excerpt from student 1).

*"Indeed! It's something I do frequently. I take a keen interest in the welfare of my students. Feel good about them and make an effort to assist them in class or after. I treat my students with kindness and consideration at all times. I sympathise with them and offer assistance as required."* (Excerpt from Tutor 1).

Nevertheless, a few interviewees also believed that the programme's huge class sizes prevented it from developing a "personalisation learning environment." The people who were interviewed stated:

*"Despite the size of our student body, the tutors make an effort to get to know each individual. Although the class size is a hurdle, they have good feelings for us and demonstrated concern for our development."* (Excerpt from student 4).

*"Yes, I do. My genuine interest in my students is evident. I personally visit each student occasionally to see how they are doing throughout class. However, as you can see, you are unable to care for them all due to their sheer number. Thus, it's a serious issue, yet I support them"* (Excerpt from tutor 8).

The survey participants generally held the belief that the programme places a strong emphasis on "personalisation." These findings indicate that the tutors show concern for the welfare of the students and offer chances for student-teacher contact. However, big class sizes limit how much faculty can customise the learning environment.

Regarding "Involvement in class," Table 1 also shows that the students perceived a moderate level of quality "student involvement" ( $M=3.28$ ;  $SD = .47$ ) in the curriculum, but the tutors felt they significantly prioritised "student involvement" ( $M=3.96$ ;  $SD = .76$ ). The students' active participation in class activities and discussions, as well as their involvement and cooperation with other students in evaluating the viability of new ideas, were confirmed by both the tutors and the students during the follow-up interview. Students participate in class activities mostly through group projects, presentations, and discussions. Here are a few quotes from the tutors and pupils.:

*"Indeed! They establish an atmosphere that engages kids. While educating, almost all tutors inquire about our opinions. To get us to think and participate in the lesson, several of them also pose critical thinking questions.... Some of them also divide us into groups for assignments and presentations. A few of us were part of two or three discussion groups, and we would get together to exchange knowledge based on what we learned in class and from our own research."* (Excerpt from student 3).

*"Because of our size, we performed group presentations rather than individual ones. Certain tutors conduct group presentations, requiring each of us to give a segment and respond to questions on the presentations. Thinking encourages participation in class because it requires you to work in a group, gather information, study more, and get ready for quizzes from the tutor or the class."* (Excerpt from student 12).

*"Yes, I did include my pupils. I primarily accomplish this through group projects and speeches. What actually happens is that occasionally, they set a date for me to attend their group gatherings. I visited two or three of them to see how the groups communicate during their own group sessions."* (Excerpt from tutor 2).

*"Because the subject I teach requires a higher level of communication and teamwork, I include my students in all classroom activities. In addition, I assign them to groups for group projects and presentations."* (Excerpt from Tutor 7).

These findings suggest that the tutors support their students' active engagement in the course.

The students suggested a moderate degree of quality "student cohesiveness" ( $M=3.02$ ;  $SD = .48$ ) in the course, however, the tutors dissimilarly evaluated a low level of quality "students' cohesiveness" ( $M=2.07$ ;  $SD = 1.12$ ) in Table 1. The results of the follow-up interviews with the tutors and students showed that, to some extent, the students were friendly, helpful, and self-aware. During activities, they cooperate and offer support to one another.

This cohesiveness is primarily developed through group projects and speeches. Nonetheless, the program's "quality students cohesiveness" was seen as being hampered by the size of the class, according to both the tutors and the students. These are what the tutors and students have to say..

*"Yes, it does exist, but because of how big our class is, it is really hard to know them all. Though I participate in class, not all of my coworkers and I personally know one another."* (Excerpt from student 3).

*"Indeed, it does exist, however somewhat. There were a lot of people in our class. We meet together and support one another in resolving academic issues. Some people also assist one another in resolving their own problems. I previously had assistance from a coursemate."* (Excerpt from student 5).

*"Indeed! That shows in the activities or assignments I assign them, such as the group projects, group presentations, and other things. They learn from all of these how to get to know one another, form cohesive teams, and support one another."* (Excerpt from tutor 1).

*"Yes, I do it frequently, and teamwork is one of the ways I even promote human bonding outside of intimate relationships. When forming teams, I typically employ the "Belbin team roles" scientific method. I put them in groups according to their aptitude and character. By the conclusion of the semester, the majority of them get to collaborate and interact with new people."* (Excerpt from tutor 4).

These findings imply that the program's participants are pleasant, helpful, and in some way acquainted with one another.

Table 1 on Task Orientation shows that whereas students in the course reported a moderate level of "quality task orientations" from their Tutors ( $M=3.40$ ;  $SD = .45$ ), Tutors perceived a high level of "quality task orientation" ( $M=4.12$ ,  $SD = .73$ ). The follow-up interview's findings demonstrate that the respondents had nice things to say about "task orientation". In general, students thought that the tutors kept the lessons on topic and that the activities in class were well-organized and clear. The tutors went over with them in detail the assignments and activities for the semester, the course prerequisites, and the expectations placed on the students. The events are thoughtfully planned, and students are informed of any modifications. The course outline informs them of the majority of the activities that will be covered in class. Here are some excerpts from the remarks made by students and tutors.:

*"That gets my vote of 70%. We receive course outlines from our tutors, which operate as a guide and give us a good idea of what to expect throughout the semester. The outlines include extensive information about the teaching and learning activities that will be covered in the class."* (Excerpt from student 2).

*"Indeed, a few of them do. Through the course outline, the tutors primarily specify the tasks that must be completed over the semester. The course and tutor expectations are outlined in the course outline. This further encourages us to plan ahead."* (Excerpt from student 7).

*"Absolutely, the students are aware of the tasks assigned to them for the semester, as well as what is expected of them and what needs to be done at what time. I therefore offer them the course outline on the first day. The course outline provides information about the types of quizzes, their format, due dates, and assignments. For instance, in today's video workshop, students are aware of the upcoming activities and the week in which they will take place from the start of the semester."* (Excerpt from tutor 3).

*"Indeed. On the first day of the semester, I personally went over the course outline with them along with some additional exercises. I thoroughly explained to them the course requirements and expectations as well as the outline, so on the first day, you know that this week you're writing a quiz and that this time you're doing this and that."* (Excerpt from tutor 6).

These findings suggest that the program's class activities are well-defined and structured.

Regarding "Innovation," Table 1 shows that both students ( $M = 2.98$ ;  $SD = .37$ ) and tutors ( $M = 3.28$ ;  $SD = .93$ ) moderately acknowledged that "innovation" techniques are offered in the programme. During a follow-up interview, it was found that most study participants thought tutors were creative thinkers who offered unique tasks, activities, and instructional strategies. Others of the interviewees, however, expressed dissenting opinions, and others further stated that the course's design discourages creativity in the classroom. Several of the respondents restated:

*"It happens occasionally, not frequently, in my opinion. Individual variances are the reason for it; while some people can accept concepts, others cannot. There are moments when you will know that we are going to have fun in class for this course. You'll know what's going to happen to others as well. Nothing new; as usual, this lesson will be dull."* (Excerpt from student 10).

*"The majority of them use lectures as their only mode of instruction. When you ask a question, the person answering it will do so. Some engage in that [innovation] during group presentations, encouraging and accepting of students' creative ideas."* (Excerpt from student 11).

*"I do strive to be creative, yes. I strive to introduce fresh material to the class in each tutoring session. For instance, I show educational videos to my students. We had a video workshop today, and I used some photographs to illustrate some of my points. This enhances student participation in the classroom. Thus, while I'm teaching, I try to be creative and I also appreciate when students come up with creative ideas. I usually arrange for someone to visit there each semester and give a talk on a particular topic. I occasionally take them on informative field trips where they can learn about some of the topics I cover in class."* (Excerpt from tutor 3)

*"Yes, I use films in my classes to provide fresh concepts and something new to the students. I utilise an online business game to supplement my teaching, however occasionally internet speed is a major issue in and of itself. I also like fresh suggestions from the pupils."* (Excerpt from tutor 7).

These findings suggest that the tutors use a modicum of innovative teaching strategies and offer challenging activities within the curriculum.

Table 1 shows that while students felt the programme offered a low grade of individualization ( $M = 2.76$ ;  $SD = .51$ ), tutors differed in how much they stressed individualization ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = 1.06$ ) among programme participants. The results of the follow-up interviews with the tutors and students revealed that students were given the freedom to decide on specific topics in class and that they were given different treatment based on their aptitude, level of interest, and productivity—particularly when it came to those students who had special needs. Big class sizes, according to some interviewees, prevented "individualization" from occurring under the project "Quality individualization learning environment." This academic freedom was not available to them during class activities. The entire "Quality individualization learning environment" was organised and designed. The following feedback was given by the students and tutors:

*"Because the course outline was available and we are required to follow it, we were never given the opportunity. In groups, we are expected to complete the same tasks at the same time, in the same manner. We are never given the option to select the learning activities we will engage in during the semester. The tutor has previously planned and made all of the decisions."* (Excerpt from student 10).

*"Not really. Either we don't have that autonomy in the classroom, or they don't emphasise individualization. Few tutors ask us about our issues regarding certain topics covered in class. They don't assign us customised tasks according to our demands or areas of interest."* (Excerpt from student 11).

*"I try my best to highlight individualization in the classroom, but due to the size of the class, I am forced to complete group assignments and presentations. I foster an atmosphere of individualization even in collaborative*

projects and presentations. I anticipate uniqueness and creativity in the tasks and speeches. Because of the size of my class, I usually let each group present their answers and listen to the discrepancies." (Excerpt from tutor 2).

"Yes, but it's at a mediocre level. Students typically have autonomy when it comes to homework, group projects, and other class discussions. However, as a result of their sheer numbers, it is challenging to establish an individualised learning environment." (Excerpt from tutor 7).

These findings imply that, regardless of their aptitude and areas of interest in the subject, pupils are seldom given the opportunity to decide on specific matters or activities within the curriculum and are instead treated equally. Furthermore, a big class size has a significant impact on the tutors' ability to produce a "quality individualization learning environment".

When it comes to "Satisfaction" in Table 1, the students said they are only moderately happy ( $M = 3.46$ ;  $SD = .58$ ) with the Tutors' instructional discourse, while the Tutors said they are extremely satisfied ( $M = 3.82$ ;  $SD = .83$ ) with their teaching practices in the classroom. It was discovered that the study participants' opinions of their happiness with the learning environment were not entirely consistent in a follow-up interview with the tutors and students. Most of the interviewees said that while certain classes were dull, they loved other classes. The type of the course and the tutor's personality were two factors that might indicate whether or not students were happy with the learning environment. The tutors and students bemoaned the following:

"I can't claim to have liked them all, nor can I claim that they were all dull. It changes based on the tutor in charge and the course. There are tutors who talk so much that they prevent their students from contributing. When this happens, students get bored and start to nod asleep. The lesson is lively and pleasant since others may also contribute comedy, which helps to relieve some of the tension." (Excerpt from student 6).

"Approximately 80% of the lectures piqued my curiosity. A small number of them had that uninteresting demeanour, and occasionally you feel like it's a waste of time to come here." (Excerpt from student 9).

"Yes. I establish a stimulating and entertaining learning atmosphere. I occasionally project images and films into the classroom when I notice that the students are fatigued. The images and videos are pertinent and connect to the ideas being covered. They relieve tension and add amusement." (Excerpt from tutor 6).

"Yes. Following every lecture, I experience a feeling of fulfilment. Additionally, you may detect that students are happy with the lecture by looking at their looks, their remarks, and their conversations after tutors." (Excerpt from Tutor 8).

These findings indicate that the students are interested in and generally enjoy the class. These findings led to the conclusion that generally speaking, both the tutors ( $MM = 3.57$ ;  $SD = .89$ ) and the students ( $MM = 3.12$ ;  $SD = .48$ ) felt favourably about QLE within the curriculum. Students and tutors both thought the program's QLE was at a moderate level and a high level, respectively. This is a result of their customisation being impacted by the huge class size. Individualization and coherence within the curriculum.

## 4.2 Discussion of the Results

This study validated Danielson's (2013) premise that instructors promote healthy student-to-student interactions. Tutors build a respectful, kind, pleasant, compassionate, and rapport-filled classroom through their interactions with students and those they have nurtured. Communication between teachers and students personalises learning, according to Danielson (2013). This may protect and value children.

In terms of "individualization," the study revealed that students are occasionally given choices during assessment activities and treated differently based on their aptitude, interest, and production. They engage students and increase their competency and academic performance by providing learning opportunities and using a variety of teaching methods according to their interests and preparation. The current study supported Danielson (2013), who found that teachers can develop courses based on student's needs, interests, knowledge, talents, and cultural background to create a personalised learning environment. Thus, teachers design lessons that engage and teach students (Danielson, 2013). To speed up and improve learning, tutors must understand and accept students' unique requirements and traits. As students grow and learn, tutors must grasp how that influences learning (Mourshed et al. 2017). Teachers must understand their students' experiences and use the right tools and methods to engage and promote class discussions (William, 2018). The US National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2017) found that teachers tailored classes to students' learning needs and learnt their traits to improve classroom instruction.

As for "involvement," tutors urge students to participate in class discussions and educational activities, offer their opinions, and listen to others. They emphasise teachings and foster a learning environment for activities and tasks. They make sure kids evaluate new ideas jointly. Kids may work harder and be proud of their accomplishments. Student social capital and cohesion may increase. The current study supports Danielson (2013), who found that a pleasant



classroom setting that emphasises the teacher's and students' educational duties can interest pupils. Damelson (2013) says educators use questions, interaction, and active listening to engage pupils. Like the current study, the US NSSE (2017) found that teachers fostered a classroom environment where all students felt empowered to engage actively in their education.

Data reveal tutors improve "student cohesiveness," when pupils get along and know each other. Develop a sense of community, be pleased with other students, be pleasant, collaborate on assignments, and offer more extensive guidance and aid. Encourage students to work together in class to foster relationships, interdependence, a friendly and cooperative environment, devotion and involvement, low absenteeism, and community. Social capital may grow in students. This may boost kids' enthusiasm, self-confidence, and learning skills while lowering stress and anxiety. This validates previous studies that high student cohesion improves peer relationships, academic performance, social integration, academic success, contentment, loyalty, and retention (Thornton et al., 2020). Successful student cohesion improves social, professional, and organisational skills. skill for time management (Curseu & Pluut 2013; Jackson et al., 2014; Hansen, 2016). It lets teachers use student-centered problem-based, cooperative, and team-based learning.

For "task orientation," the study revealed that instructors create a well-planned, structured, and understood learning environment. Also, pupils know their class duties: A strong task orientation could assist tutors in identifying relevant instructional resources and pedagogies to engage students and provide coherent education. That may also help tutors manage the classroom. The study supports Danielson's (2013) recommendation that instructors provide explicit instructions and protocols for class activities, assignments, and learning objectives. To increase teaching and learning, learning objectives and performance criteria should be clear, specific, and easily understood by teachers and students (Hattie, 2009).

For "innovation" teachers create an innovative learning environment. They offer creative lesson plans, excellent teaching methods, and engaging learning. Tutors know teaching strategies that have grown over time and are effective and necessary in the classroom. Innovative learning experiences can improve class involvement, attendance, skill development, and academic success for students. This study confirms Danielson's (2013) findings that teachers perceive successful content-related pedagogies that have evolved. Innovative learning environments with well-planned furniture and instructional equipment can greatly improve students' experiences. The current study confirmed the US NSSE (2017) result that teachers used various teaching methods to suit students' learning styles. This study supports Matoti (2019), who found that students valued class participation, creative instruction, and task orientation. Tedesco-Schneck (2016) discovered students loved their learning environment.

This study contradicted Farris (2014), which reported poor US student satisfaction. adaptable, creative, and task-oriented. Strayer (2012) revealed that inverted classroom students were less happy with how the classroom layout guided them toward course learning objectives in the US. Geographic boundaries, the educational systems of the study's participating nations, respondents' opinions and views, and questionnaire interpretation may affect results. Task orientation and innovation promoted "integrated system," "continuous improvement," "strategic," and "systematic approach" TQM. Many education stakeholders are concerned about QLE in the programme, thus new instructional pedagogical needs have been created to improve. For active learning, the Accounting Education Change Commission (AECC) (1990) suggested technology, group projects, and experiential learning. To address student needs, tutors should continue to deliver customised, cutting-edge 21st-century learning tasks, activities, experiences, and instructional methods. Tutors should foster student engagement, teamwork, leadership, factual decision-making, and teacher assistance. Faculty should adapt learning environment planning to QTM's continuous improvement.

This study's "environment satisfaction" results support Oliver's (1980) expectation-confirmation/disconfirmation theory. Students' learning environment satisfaction is key to tutor-student relationships and student cohesion. The programme's low quality and students' comfort reflect a mismatch between expectations and reality. Disconfirmation may occur. Dissatisfied students left class. Attendance is heavily influenced by class satisfaction (Oliver, 2010, 2014). Happy students attend class, whereas unhappy ones may not. The data demonstrate that a secure, engaging, and dynamic QLE is vital for learning, academic success, student happiness, retention, motivation, and skill acquisition. Teachers must construct a peaceful, purposeful, and safe classroom in 21st-century (Rowe et al., 2012). Use appropriate instructional materials like digital technologies (OECD, 2012). University administration may compare intended and actual learning environments to identify unmet needs (Stufflebeam & Coryn, 2014).

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

The study found that both students and tutors had favourable opinions of QLE within the programme. However, the students thought that the amount of individualization was inadequate. Both the tutors and the students mentioned

that a big class size had an impact on customization, Student unity and individualization within the curriculum. The University study Centres offer a programme with a moderate QLE. In some way, the lecturers use pedagogies that foster relationships between tutors and students, encourage differentiated instruction, and actively include students in the learning process. It seems like the tutors encourage social growth and inclusivity in the classroom. This would positively impact the behavioural outcomes of the pupils.

## 5.2 Recommendations

To decrease large class sizes and boost opportunities for student-teacher interactions, cohesiveness, and student participation in the classroom, the study recommends that the Management of the Institute of Education and centre coordinators make every effort to secure centres with spacious classrooms. Also, when it comes to "personalisation," it is recommended that tutors should foster an atmosphere that invites student interaction and identify students' strengths and weaknesses.

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