Learning beyond borders: lifelong learning and learning culture in Islamic institutions in the pursuit of quality education

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Abstract

Purpose – The concept of lifelong learning and learning culture in education generally refers to the continuous acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout one's life, extending beyond formal education while learning culture is the creation of learning opportunities, resources and support systems that empower individuals to continuously enhance their knowledge and skills. Lifelong learning and a learning culture contribute significantly to the realization of SDG 4 by promoting inclusive, equitable and quality education that prepares individuals for a lifetime of learning and adaptation in a changing world. This paper aims to identify the level of understanding of school's community regarding these concepts and measuring the implementation level and readiness of primary schools across Malaysia.

Design/methodology/approach – Employing a mixed-methods approach, the initial qualitative phase involved interviewing teachers to know their level of understanding regarding the concept of lifelong learning and learning culture. The subsequent quantitative phase assessed the readiness and implementation level of 35 primary schools across Malaysia.

Findings – An interview that been done has successfully collected the viewpoints of teachers about lifelong learning and learning culture. A survey administered to primary schools affiliated with the MUSLEH organization affirmed the readiness and implementation level of schools in which it was found that most of the schools has high degree of awareness and understanding regarding the significance of the concepts to be implemented in the education system.

Originality/value – This study's contributions extend beyond academia, offering insights for educators and policymakers alike. The findings can inform education ministries, curriculum developers and

stakeholders, aiding them in providing substantial support to educators aligning with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

Keywords Education, Lifelong learning, Learning culture, Islamic education, Education quality, Sustainable development goal

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

The concept of lifelong learning encapsulates the ongoing pursuit of knowledge throughout one's entire life, extending beyond formal educational environments. It encompasses various ubiquitous pathways through which learning occurs. Lifelong learning is integral to developing skills essential for survival, ensuring the ability to thrive, survive and persist (Laal *et al.*, 2014). Fostering a robust culture of continuous learning within organizations with the help of supportive learning culture, particularly educational institutions, serves as a key mechanism to achieve this enduring commitment in acquiring knowledge.

Lifelong learning plays a crucial role in the education system of any society, and Islamic educational institutions are no exception. These institutions are not only responsible for imparting religious teachings but also for nurturing individuals who are equipped with knowledge, skills and values that enable them to lead meaningful lives guided by Islamic principles (Najadat and Alomari, 2020). Islamic educational institutions seek to develop a learning culture that promotes lifelong learning among students. This learning culture emphasizes the importance of continuous growth and development, both intellectually and spiritually, throughout one's life.

However, the reality on the ground globally shows a concerning trend in the contemporary educational landscape where a palpable decline in student motivation, evidenced by diminishing enrollment rates in tertiary education institutions (Dickler, 2023; Welding, 2024). This also happens in Malaysia as been reported by Yaacob (2023) where more than 300,000 students did not pursue for tertiary education. This resulted in slowing down the Ministry's target to produce 35% skilled workforce by 2030, considering that the country is currently at the 28% level. This phenomenon reflects a broader challenge faced by educators and policymakers alike – the pervasive perception among students that learning is confined to the rigid confines of the classroom, primarily revolving around meeting assessment criteria. Such a myopic view of education not only undermines students' intrinsic motivation but also hampers their ability to recognize the relevance of academic pursuits in their everyday lives and future endeavors.

As the world is changing especially toward digitalization, declining interest in learning due to excessive engagement with social media and digital distractions is becoming a concerning trend in today's education landscape. A study reported by Common Sense Media stated that teenagers that aged between 13 to 18 spend an average of nine hours per day for social media while the other study from George *et al.* (2023) mentioned on average of more than 7 h daily spent on screen time. This then indirectly resulted in digital addiction that not only become their main distractions in classroom but also declining their attention span (Chakraborty and Nautiyal, 2023). Backed by another study from Montagni *et al.* (2016), it was discovered that higher levels of screen time exposure correlated with a heightened risk of individuals perceiving attention issues and experiencing elevated levels of hyperactivity. To address this issue, learning should not be only restricted to schools, classrooms and syllabus but policymakers and educators must prioritize initiatives that promote lifelong learning principles and foster a culture of curiosity, exploration and self-directed learning.

Empowering individuals to take ownership of their education and embrace lifelong learning, regardless of when or where, helps counteract digital distractions and prepares them with essential

skills for success in today's digital age as well as fostering a supportive learning culture that transcends traditional boundaries, stakeholders can empower learners to adapt, innovate and succeed in an ever-evolving digital society. Furthermore, integrating digital literacy and responsible technology use into educational frameworks can help students navigate the digital landscape effectively and discern between productive learning activities and distracting online content.

To address this pressing issue, a paradigm shift is imperative – one that champions the principles of lifelong learning and emphasizes the importance of fostering a robust learning culture as aids to achieving meaningful education and reinvigorating student motivation. Lifelong learning offers a holistic approach that transcends the traditional boundaries of formal education, encouraging individuals to embrace learning as a continuous journey of exploration and growth within a supportive learning culture (Thwe and Kálmán, 2023). By extending the realm of learning beyond conventional classrooms and assessments, lifelong learning empowers students to discover the practical applications of academic knowledge in various facets of life, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Islam places a strong emphasis on education as a means of personal and societal development. According to Akrim (2020), education in the context of Islam serves as a powerful tool to preserve, promote and connect cultural, traditional and social values as well as societal and national ideals. Furthermore, it serves as a platform to promote change, stimulate innovation and drive improvements in society. Education should aim to be a catalyst that enables every student to realize their full potential and transform socio-cultural values imbued with the Islamic ethos. Through this co-operation between different fields, Islamic education will be more balanced and able to safeguard the diverse interests of humanity in all its forms. Islamic education aims not only to satisfy intellectual curiosity but also to educate man with reason and good behavior.

In today's global landscape, there is a growing recognition of the necessity for a robust quality, especially within the education domain, where the principles of lifelong learning and a pervasive learning culture are paramount. The quest for excellence in education is contingent on an unwavering commitment to maintaining a consistently high standard of quality. Every developed civilization has a characteristic that enables everyone to find, improve and utilize their unique abilities including a manifestation of the ethos of lifelong learning and a deeply ingrained learning culture. For comprehensive national progress, particularly in economic terms, both the quality of the institutional environment and the educational system are regarded as indispensable (Hanushek and Wößmann, 2007). Without this caliber of quality, access to education become meaningless and loses its intrinsic value within the context of lifelong learning.

Aligning with the principles of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outlined by the United Nations, quality education becomes a linchpin. As defined by Taghvaee *et al.* (2021), sustainable development ensures progress that caters to current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their evolving requirements. Quality education, seen through the lens of lifelong learning, emerges as the cornerstone for achieving various SDGs. Access to ongoing education is vital for breaking the cycle of poverty, securing continual skill development, and fostering a perpetually improved quality of life (Dei and Asante, 2022). Based on the study from Pauw *et al.* (2015), when the United Nations addresses Goal 4 regarding quality education, it actually focuses on two main issues, namely content and pedagogy. Firstly, it is to ensure the holistic contents covering three major aspects in SDG which are environmental, societal and economic. Secondly, it pertains to the teaching and learning process, with an emphasis on fostering the acquisition of skills and the development of competence for sustainable actions.

Despite the implementation of benchmarks and goals, it is crucial to acknowledge that not all individuals are afforded equal opportunities for success in education. Research consistently highlights substantial disparities based on socio-economic and socio-demographic factors within families (Boeren, 2019). The variation in access to educational opportunities underscores the significance of embracing lifelong learning and cultivating a robust learning culture. It is imperative to recognize that learning processes extend beyond conventional academic milestones, encompassing personal and professional development (Azlee and Jamilah, 2021). Lifelong learning and a nurturing learning culture emphasize the versatility of educational experiences, transcending traditional settings and contributing to holistic growth. It is also an acknowledgment concerning practical knowledge for individuals who strive to adapt themselves to the changing times as a necessity to survive (Buang and Mohamad, 2019).

Lifelong learning, embedded within a pervasive learning culture, equips individuals with the skills needed to critically analyze information, adapt to evolving circumstances and contribute meaningfully to society especially in providing knowledgeable and skilled workforce to compete at the global level (Hasami and Buang, 2018). Education becomes not just a marker of personal development but a lifelong journey offering continuous opportunities for growth, aligning seamlessly with the principles of lifelong learning and a pervasive learning culture (Hairani, 2018). The process of education and learning is not only centered around formal schooling but also encompasses other skills that can be beneficial in navigating life.

Infusing the principles of quality management into education, within the context of lifelong learning and a learning culture, is not merely a contemporary notion but a foundational pillar in the perpetual evolution of knowledge and skill acquisition. It is valuable to explore various aspects related to the incorporation of lifelong learning, including the motivation for embracing a culture of continuous learning, effective strategies to foster the learning process, challenges in implementation and the positive impact of lifelong learning and learning culture on individuals. With these considerations in mind, this research specifically delves into the following questions:

RQ1. How do the perspectives of school management and teachers regarding the concepts of lifelong learning and the cultivation of a learning culture influence educational practices?

RQ2. What is the level of implementation and preparedness of schools in adapting to lifelong learning and fostering a learning culture?

Literature review
Lifelong learning
Lifelong learning is a process that extends beyond traditional educational boundaries, allowing individuals to continuously acquire knowledge, skills and experiences throughout their lives from infant to death (Edwards and Usher, 1998; Gonczi, 2007). In the dynamically changing world, the concept of lifelong learning has gained prominence as a crucial element for personal and professional development. According to the study from Thwe and Kálmán (2023), lifelong learning spanning from formal education to career progression with few important skills encompass collaboration, critical thinking, communication, creativity and problem-solving. These competencies are anticipated as indispensable twenty-first-century skills, essential for adapting to changes and navigating the new normal.

Lifelong learning encompasses various components that contribute to its holistic nature. According to Bollington in the study from Seevaratnam *et al.* (2023), the main component is

being curious to explore new ideas, knowledge and skills as the curiosity and desire become the drive force and motivation that encourage people to involve in continuous learning. This is supported by Laal et al. (2014) stated that lifelong learning creates hungry mind that constantly looking for insights and stimulating intellectual discussions. Besides, the component for lifelong learning is also adaptability and flexibility which is relevant in a rapidly evolving world.

By drawing the concept of lifelong learning, Güven (2020) noted that integrating Project-Based Learning (PBL) into college curricula has the potential to improve students' lifelong learning abilities, including critical thinking, creativity, and problem-solving skills, thereby rendering the learning experience more engaging and motivating. This is supported by numbers of studies stating that PBL has the potential to facilitate the connection between classroom learning and real-life situations outside of school, making the educational experience more applicable and relevant (Giri, 2016; Moylan, 2008; Du Toit et al., 2016; Wang, 2022). The effects of lifelong learning programs according to Pramudia (2018) is to raise life-meaningfulness for an individual and his or her surroundings where it may resulted in knowledge orientation, change in more functional life orientation and may also impact the economic orientation of an individual.

Learning cultures

Learning culture is not a static entity but a dynamic force that responds to the changing tides of time. Understanding the nuances of learning culture provides us with insights into the essence of human progress, as it intertwines with education. A large and growing body of literature has investigated the importance of learning culture in organization especially educational institution. Poom-Valickis et al. (2021) in their work stated that a learning culture significantly contributes to the success of the school, fostering the creation and evolution of a collaborative and learning-oriented school culture improvement process. It enhances effectiveness by establishing an environment in which changes occur swiftly, challenges are collectively addressed, and teachers mutually support one another (Eisenschmidt et al., 2015).

Learning culture in educational institution usually been associated with collaborative learning environment (Poom-Valickis et al., 2021; Sabaitytė et al., 2020; Sezgin et al., 2020). Collaboration has emerged as a prevalent trend in the twenty-first century. Collaborative learning, an educational methodology, engages groups of learners in joint efforts to address problems, accomplish tasks or generate products. Within this collaborative learning setting, learners face social and emotional challenges as they encounter diverse perspectives and must express and justify their ideas. Through this process, learners develop their distinctive conceptual frameworks rather than relying exclusively on the frameworks provided by experts or texts (Laal and Laal, 2012). Collaborative learning is a manifestation of the broader learning culture within an educational institution. It embodies the values that are integral to a positive and effective learning culture.

According to the study by Purnadewi et al. (2023), learning culture in the institution like school environment has a significant influence on science learning outcomes along with the interest in learning, and learning motivation. Through this result from the study, it shows that stablishing a conducive learning culture necessitates providing teachers with ample learning resources and infrastructure within the school, thereby enabling them to enhance the quality of education through the cultivation of a positive academic environment. This approach aims to foster students' interest and motivation, ultimately fostering the development of high-caliber individuals.

Islamic education
Islam attaches great importance to education and the dignity of knowledge. The Qur'an views education as an endeavor to help people in fulfilling their role as servants and stewards of Allah on earth. This includes enriching the land, understanding its potential and the treasures hidden within it, while recognizing Allah's intentions in its use, development and improvement (Ruyani *et al.*, 2022). In Islam, the pursuit of knowledge is religiously motivated.

As noted by Hidayat *et al.* (2018), the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to actualize '*ubūdiya*h, the servitude and devotion to Allah, in the lives of individuals as well as in society. Islamic education goes beyond merely imparting knowledge; its essence lies in providing guidance for living a religiously oriented life. It is a means to reach heaven and a means to appease Allah (Hasan, 2018). This is mentioned in the hadith narrated by Abu Hurairah.

"Whoever travels a path in search of knowledge, Allah will make easy for him a path to Paradise." (Sahih Muslim 2699)

Similar to the definition of education in the conventional perspective, Islam also views education as a process. In essence, Islamic education is a process to facilitate a comprehensive understanding and application of religious principles in daily life. This is confirmed by Masamah (2016), who explains that education is a process aimed at nurturing and improving the individual, encompassing both mental and physical dimensions that unfold gradually. This is because no living being created by God reaches perfection immediately, but goes through a process of development. The goal is to reach maturity and excellence by maximizing one's abilities and potential over time (Masamah, 2016).

According to Akrim (2020), education in the context of Islam serves as a powerful tool to preserve, promote and connect cultural, traditional and social values as well as societal and national ideals. Furthermore, it serves as a platform to promote change, stimulate innovation and drive improvements in society. Education should aim to be a catalyst that enables every student to realize their full potential and transform socio-cultural values imbued with the Islamic ethos. Through this co-operation between different fields, Islamic education will be more balanced and able to safeguard the diverse interests of humanity in all its forms. Islamic education aims not only to satisfy intellectual curiosity but also to educate man with reason and good behavior.

There are three dimensions that are summarized under the term "education" in Islam. The first is *tarbiyyah*, an educational process that emphasizes a person's intellectual and physical growth. The second aspect is *ta'dīb*, the educational process of raising morally upright people who know the noble norms of behavior and ethics of Islam and who can behave in a just manner toward themselves and others in society. And finally, the teaching and learning-based educational process known as *ta'līm*. *Ta'līm* focuses more on the cognitive learning ability with instructions rather than the development of the human being itself (Yasin and Jani, 2013).

The history of education and knowledge in Islam began with the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad even before his emigration to Medina. It is divided into several phases according to the development of Islam. The history of knowledge begins with the theme of faith and the unity of God immediately after the first revelation to the Prophet Muhammad. It then develops further toward the understanding of Islamic law, regulations and the implementation of the way of life in the following years. With the spread of Islam, the number of followers naturally increased over time. The rapid and progressive social life, especially in the economic sphere, led to the emergence of complex problems within the community, forcing the caliphs to engage directly with the inhabitants to educate them about Islam (Anang, 2019).

The genesis of education and knowledge in Islam then continues in the *Umayyah* and *Abbasiyyah* eras, where these eras attest to the role of the Islamic religion in paving the way for the resurgence and importance of various branches of knowledge, including fields such as

healthcare, strategic implementation, science, administration, security and others. The Islamic world once achieved success and glory. This success and greatness of the Islamic world is characterized by the flourishing of knowledge and philosophy that has made it a beacon of excellence in both the West and the East. In the Middle Ages, scientists and philosophers emerged as a result of the empowerment of knowledge by Islam (Fardiana, 2017).

Education quality
The ability of a nation to grow depends crucially on its level of education. The future of a country depends on the quality of its education system because it shapes the well-being of society, which in turn affects the economy through the production of human capital. The long-term benefits of education are reflected in the generation of a nation. Before we delve deeper into the topic, it is important to understand the definition of education. Education is known to be a socially structured and regulated process of passing on socially significant experiences from one generation to the next. The transmission and reception of information has been described as the definition of education (Naziev, 2017).

According to Chazan (2022), education is not bound to a specific place, but it is a process. It is a conscious action that can take place outside of traditional educational institutions and within a variety of settings. Moreover, this conscious action is not only about the transmission of knowledge, but also about values, attitudes, skills, senses and more. This is backed up by a study by Morgan (2021) which states that moral education should not just be a standalone curriculum component but should be a part of the educational process. This is because one of the goals of education is also the development of maturity, which includes moral values and ethical issues.

Improving quality is at the center of most educational policy objectives and, according to Sallis, (1996), is probably the most important task facing many educational institutions. The concept of educational quality is not new. In 2015, the SDGs were created and published by the United Nations as a common framework for peace and prosperity. The SDGs, in particular SDG 4, talk about quality education. The United Nations states that it is crucial to ensure that all students receive an inclusive, equitable education of the highest quality and that everyone has access to lifelong learning opportunities, regardless of their financial situation, gender or other characteristics.

The main objective of the term "quality education" is to ensure the smooth and efficient functioning of the education system (Alam and Forhad, 2022). In the long run, education will undoubtedly produce a class of educated people that reaches a critical mass, which is the most important element in the endeavor to create a civil society. One of the fundamental requirements for human development and a prerequisite for a thriving society is education (Akareem and Hossain, 2016). As education is a top priority in many countries, both official and informal budgets are constantly increasing. Education budgets have increased significantly. The average annual budget of developing countries contains more than 15% for education (Rizvi and Khamis, 2020). This shows the seriousness of government in most countries to prioritize a quality education system to the citizens.

Methodology
This study employs a mixed methodology. According to Dawadi *et al.* (2021), mixed methodology in research empowers researchers to delve into research inquiries with both extensive scope and profound insight. Employing a quantitative approach facilitates the gathering of data from a sizable participant pool, thereby enhancing the potential for generalizing findings to a broader population. Conversely, the qualitative method enriches the investigation by offering a nuanced comprehension of the subject matter,

acknowledging and valuing the perspectives of participants. Essentially, while quantitative data contribute breadth to the study, qualitative data add depth to its analysis.

For qualitative part, an interview had been done to answer the first research question while quantitative part involving a survey that been conducted to answer the second question. In addressing the first set of questions, insights are derived from data collected from the management team comprising senior officers, as well as teachers at a primary school in Malaysia. The second set of questions is tackled by gathering data from multiple primary schools across Malaysia.

For the first question, this research employs a qualitative approach that takes place at Sekolah Rendah Islam Al-Azhar, Arau, an Islamic private primary school in Perlis, Malaysia. The scope of the study encompasses the view on lifelong learning and learning culture in daily activities, programs and operations of the institution. In the research process, the researcher formulates questions and performs various procedures to collect specific data from key informants. The informants include top management and teachers. The selection of informants follows the purposive sampling technique, meaning that informants are intentionally chosen based on specific criteria or considerations. There are two teachers and top management involved in the interview. The interview duration is around 5–7 min.

In selecting informants for interviews regarding lifelong learning and learning culture perspectives within a school setting, several criteria must be considered to ensure the richness and diversity of insights. Firstly, it is essential to include a mix of experienced teachers who have been involved in the educational system for a considerable duration, as well as newer educators who may offer fresh perspectives and experiences. Additionally, considering the varying roles within the management team, representatives should be chosen from different levels of authority to provide a comprehensive understanding of the organizational dynamics and decision-making processes. Furthermore, diversity in terms of educational backgrounds, teaching specialties, and leadership styles among the informants can contribute to a more nuanced exploration of lifelong learning and learning culture within the school. Finally, selecting informants who are willing to openly share their experiences, insights and challenges related to fostering a culture of lifelong learning is crucial for obtaining valuable and authentic data during the interview process.

For the second question, the questionnaire is distributed to the entire population of 40 Private Islamic Primary Schools under MUSLEH in Malaysia. After few reminders and clearing the unsettled and unfinished questionnaire, the sample for the study is 35 schools in Malaysia. The questionnaire consists of 78 items that take around 10–15 min to be completed. However, for this study, only two items will be extracted and analyzed as they are related to lifelong learning and learning culture implementation.

Result and discussion

The researcher has conducted a review on several aspects as a result of the analysis in this study. The first aspect is how the school community understands the purpose and significance of lifelong learning and the constructive learning environment. The awareness of the urgency to cultivate lifelong learning and the learning environment has been well understood and appreciated by the school community. Before dwelling deep into discussion, the meaning of the concept must be firstly understood by the teachers as the role of teachers in producing changes in student learning are very significant (Mohamad and Razak, 2018). The first informant stated:

Lifelong learning is a learning process that continues beyond the formal classroom, and it goes throughout the entire stages of life with the help of good learning environment that boost and motivate people to learn, e.g. the workplace environment that promotes knowledge/skill enhancement. (Informant A)

This is aligned with the view from Lee *et al.* (2011) stating that lifelong learning includes formal education, nonformal learning, and the entire range of informal and unintentional learning opportunities in a multicultural learning society. This is supported by Thwe and Kálmán (2023) stating that main idea about lifelong learning is to improve knowledge and also enhancing competencies and skills. In this context, both theoretical and practical approaches are acknowledged. This is supported by the meaning shared by another informant saying that:

> Lifelong learning involved all knowledge acquired that is remembered and used or applied in daily life with the help of learning environment that includes the facilities, teachers and friends. (Informant B)

Based on the interview excerpts above, the researcher can conclude that the teacher already has a fairly good understanding and is open to the concept of lifelong learning and this learning environment and culture. The informants also understand the significance of these concepts in the education world and how it can be implemented in the institutions:

> Lifelong learning is important so that learners would feel motivated to seek knowledge not for the sake of exam, but more to application of knowledge in life pursuit. It can be done by incorporating contextual learning, inquiry-based learning, problem-solving skill, and 21st century skills in the teaching and learning process. (Informant A)

The view from the first informant aligned with the previous literatures stated in the literature review where lifelong learning helps in creating hungry mind and inquiry in various knowledge fields (Laal *et al.*, 2014; Seevaratnam *et al.*, 2023). The informant also mentioned about problem solving skills that usually come together with project-based teaching and learning which also supported by the literature from Güven (2020).

The connection and link between lifelong learning and learning culture is mentioned by the second informant:

> Ensuring that the learning environment is conducive and tailored to the students' needs is a crucial aspect of facilitating lifelong learning. This approach extends beyond traditional classroom settings, emphasizing that learning should be continuous and adaptable throughout one's life. Creating an environment that supports ongoing learning fosters a mindset of continuous improvement and enables individuals to engage with new knowledge and skills across various stages of life. (Informant B)

Drawing insights from the interview excerpts provided, it becomes evident that teachers possess a commendable comprehension of the significance surrounding the implementation of lifelong learning principles and the cultivation of a conducive learning environment and culture. This understanding extends beyond the confines of traditional classroom settings, encompassing the broader scope of learning experiences both inside and outside the classroom. These findings underscore the teachers' recognition of the nature of education, acknowledging the importance of continuous learning and the role it plays in nurturing students' holistic development. Furthermore, the interviews highlight the proactive stance taken by educators in fostering an environment that encourages lifelong learning, demonstrating a commitment to equipping students with the skills and mindset necessary for success in an ever-evolving world.

For the second research question, there were two questions or items that been built specifically on lifelong learning and learning culture. Both elements fall within the construct of knowledge gained from the Quran through the practice of Quranic Text Mining. This concept has its origin in the revelation of Surah Al "Alaq, in which the importance of acquiring knowledge through the word 'Iqra'" is emphasized. Subsequently, this construct has been expanded to include several dimensions. Through consultation of previous literature and focused discussions with experts, the specific elements within each dimension were identified and developed. The questionnaire takes the form of a rubric with a score ranging from 1 to 5. The researcher opted for a rubric format as it is relevant to the

evaluation of implementation and therefore detailed explanations are required for each scale. Below are the questions included in the rubric:

- Lifelong Learning

For the first question pertaining to lifelong learning, particularly its implementation within institutions that been stated in Table 1, the data elucidates a nuanced distribution: two schools answer a score of 3, seven schools answer a score of 4, and the remaining 24 schools answer the highest score of 5.

These findings paint a picture of not just commendable, but notably great implementation across schools throughout Malaysia. This success likely stems from a comprehensive grasp among school members, notably educators, of the profound impact lifelong learning can have on personal and professional development. It reflects a concerted effort within these educational settings to prioritize and integrate lifelong learning principles into their curricula and institutional ethos, thereby fostering a culture of continuous growth and adaptability among students and staff alike:

- Learning Culture

Upon analyzing the gathered results in Table 2, it becomes evident for the first question regarding learning culture, only two schools indicated a score of 3. Additionally, only one

Score	Descriptions		No. of response	%
Score 1	(a) Relates with daily life	No items at all	0	0
Score 2	(b) Relates with moral values	Less than 20% of implementation	0	0
	(c) Relates with Islamic values			
Score 3	(d) Relates with Quran and Hadith	50% implementation	2	5.9
Score 4		75% implementation	7	20.6
Score 5		100% implementation	25	73.5
Source: Created by author				

Table 1.
The rubric score for lifelong learning items

Score	Descriptions		No. of response	%
Score 1	School do not provide learning culture at all		0	0
Score 2	School provides learning culture in classroom only		0	0
Score 3	School provides learning culture inside and outside classroom		2	5.9
Score 4	(1)	School provides learning culture inside and outside classroom	1	2.9
	(2)	School relates the learning with daily life situations		
Score 5	(1)	School provides learning culture inside and outside classroom	31	91
	(2)	School relates the learning with daily life situations		
	(3)	School encourages knowledge-sharing between students		
Source: Created by author				

Table 2.
The rubric score for learning culture items

school reported a score of 4, while the remaining 31 schools excelled with a score of 5. This distribution underscores a strikingly high level of consciousness among educational institutions in prioritizing the establishment of an accommodating and nurturing learning culture and environment.

Such a learning culture encompasses not only the alignment of syllabus and learning materials with real-life scenarios but also the fostering of an environment conducive to knowledge exchange among students. It reflects a concerted effort within these schools to go beyond mere academic instruction, aiming instead to cultivate an immersive and enriching educational experience that resonates with the practical realities and collaborative ethos essential for holistic student development.

Lifelong learning and a supportive learning culture are integral components of ensuring quality education within any educational institution (García *et al.*, 2020). This is also a part of Goal 4 in Sustainable Development Goal where lifelong learning is promoted. The survey findings reveal that the majority of schools are already implementing lifelong learning and fostering a supportive learning culture. These practices are crucial for promoting quality education, as they empower students to become self-directed learners and create inclusive environments where all students feel valued and supported. This commitment to lifelong learning not only enhances individual capabilities but also contributes to the overall quality of education by ensuring that educators remain updated with the latest pedagogical practices, advancements in their respective fields, and evolving educational trends.

Conclusion

In summary, lifelong learning and a learning culture are interconnected concepts that highlight the importance of continual learning throughout one's life and the creation of environments that actively promote and support this ongoing educational journey. Both concepts contribute to personal development, adaptability and the ability to thrive in a rapidly changing world. These two concepts are playing significant roles as lifelong learning and learning cultures go beyond formal schooling and it is a set of skills that can be developed and applied along one's life.

To summarize, the findings from the interviews with teachers who are practitioners in the field provide a comprehensive understanding of lifelong learning and learning culture. They not only grasp the essence of these concepts, but also recognize their profound importance in the field of education. Furthermore, the results of the survey reveal a positive trend indicating that the majority of elementary school in the sample have effectively implemented both lifelong learning and learning culture in their institutions. This alignment with educational principles is in line with the United Nations' call for quality education within the framework of the SDGs and represents a promising step toward promoting a holistic and impactful learning environment. These results not only confirm the importance of lifelong learning and learning culture but also underline their central role in promoting educational quality and sustainability at a global level.

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