SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT IN MALAYSIA AND CHINA

HENG JING

DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT (MASTER BY COURSEWORK AND MIXED MODE)

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMICS
SULTAN IDRIS EDUCATION UNIVERSITY

2018

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan membandingkan persepsi pelajar sekolah menengah tentang persekitaran bilik darjah di Malaysia dan China. Penyelidikan kuantitatif ini menggunakan instrumen *Student Perceptions of Classroom Quality (SPOCQ)* untuk mengumpul data. Sejumlah 260 orang pelajar dari tiga buah sekolah menengah di Tanjung Malim, Malaysia dan 351 orang pelajar dari empat buah sekolah menengah di Wilayah Feng, China telah dipilih secara rawak sebagai responden kajian ini. Analisis deskriptif dan analisis inferensi digunakan untuk menganalisis data yang dikumpul. Analisis deskriptif menggambarkan tahap persepsi pelajar sekolah menengah di Malaysia dan China terhadap persekitaran bilik darjah dalam lima faktor iaitu daya tarikan, cabaran, pilihan, pengertian dan efikasi kendiri akademik. Statistik inferensi menggunakan ujian-t untuk menunjukkan perbezaan persepsi di antara pelajar sekolah menengah Malaysia dan China terhadap persekitaran bilik darjah berdasarkan jantina dan juga secara keseluruhan. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi pelajar sekolah menengah Malaysia dan China terhadap persekitaran bilik darjah berdasarkan jantina dengan nilai (t=-0.849, p=0.544) untuk pelajar Malaysia dan (t=0.676, p=0.325) untuk pelajar China. Dapatan kajian juga menunjukkan terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam persepsi pelajar sekolah menengah Malaysia dan China terhadap persekitaran bilik darjah secara keseluruhannya (p=0.004). Dapatan kajian ini adalah penting untuk pendidik dan pentadbir sekolah untuk memahami secara mendalam tentang keperluan pelajar dalam pembelajaran dan meningkatkan tahap pencapaian akademik sekolah. Implikasi kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa guru hendaklah meningkatkan kemahiran pengurusan bilik darjah dan kemahiran pedagogi serta mengoptimumkan persekitaran bilik darjah berdasarkan persepsi pelajar terhadap persekitaran bilik darjah.

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to compare secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China. This quantitative research used the Student Perceptions of Classroom Quality (SPOCQ) survey instrument to collect the data. A total of 260 respondents from three secondary schools in Tanjong Malim, Malaysia and 351 respondents from four secondary schools in Feng County, China were randomly selected for this study. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential analyses. Descriptive analysis described the level of Malaysia and China secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment on five factors which were appeal, challenge, choice, meaningfulness and academic self-efficacy, while inferential statistics which involved the independent-sample t-test analysis was used to address the differences between Malaysia and China secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment based on gender as well as the overall secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment in Malaysia and China. The results showed that there were no significant differences in Malaysian and Chinese secondary students' perceptions of classroom environment based on gender with the values (t=-0.849, p=0.544) for Malaysian students and (t=0.676, p=0.325) for Chinese students. The findings also indicated that there was a significant difference in overall secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment in Malaysia and China (p=0.004). The findings of the study are crucial for educators and school administrators to get a better understanding of students' needs in learning and improve the academic standards of the school. The study implicates that teachers may improve their classroom management and pedagogical skills, and optimize classroom environment based upon students' perceptions of classroom environment.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CES	*Classroom Environment Scale*
CPI	*Classroom Participation Inventory*
ISSC	Integrated Secondary School Curriculum
ITBM	Malaysian Institute of Translation and Books
LEI	*Learning Environment Inventory*
MEB	Malaysia Education Blueprint
MOEC	Ministry of Education of People's Republic of China
MOEM	Malaysian Ministry of Education
MSECEI	*Middle School English Classroom Environment Inventory*
NCR	New Curriculum Reform
NPSC	New Primary School Curriculum
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
SBA	School-Based Assessment
SPOCQ	*Students' Perceptions of Classroom Environment*
SPSS	*Statistical Package Social Science*
WIHIC	*What Is Happening In this Classroom*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In *Twenty Thousand Hours*, Fraser (2001) pointed out that students spend up to 20,000 hours from entering primary school to graduating from university in the classroom. Classroom is the main place of school teaching, and it has great effects on students' growth. Since the 1980s, the western scholars have explored the impact of the classroom on students through the classroom environment (Liu, 2012).

Classroom teaching is one of the ways for teachers to impart knowledge, cultivate students' abilities and improve students' overall quality. Classroom environment has often been closely connected with students' learning. Si (2013) stated that classroom environment has increasingly attracted attention from domestic and foreign researchers since 1930s. In the twenty-first century, one of the remarkable characteristics of education is lifelong learning, and this has become the main form of education. Nevertheless, classroom is still considered as one of the places for students' learning. Students spend a great deal of their time learning in classroom. The classroom environment is also the central section of school education, and it is the main form of implementing curriculum plan.

Ramli, Masri, Zafrullah, Taib, and Hamid (2012) stated that school students in Malaysia spend most of time in classroom environment and they spend about 5 to 10 hours each day in school environment. With the further popularization of quality education, the classroom environment improvement has become a new trend of the future, therefore, an increasing number of educators and policy makers in education pay close attention to improve classroom environment.

Under the background of implementing quality education in China, classroom teaching is the main position for students to study scientific and cultural knowledge during school as well as the main channel of ideological and moral education for

students (Shi, 2014). What is more, Zhai, Guo and Jiao (2009) stated that classroom teaching is the direct form of education in school education, it is also the core and important component of the teaching quality monitoring system. Apart from that, classroom learning is the way for students to acquire knowledge and skills. Therefore, the quality of teaching depends mainly on the quality of classroom environment.

Classroom environment has been a popular topic in educational field. There are a lot of research on how students perceived their classroom environment. For example, Hu (2015) conducted a survey on senior high school students' perceptions of English classroom environment. Rahmi and Diem (2014) investigated junior high school students' perceptions of classroom environment and their academic achievement. Murugan (2013) conducted a research to examine the level of mathematics classroom environments and performance in Sabah, Malaysia based on students' perceptions. Another research examined the relationship of middle school students' perceptions of the classroom environment with their motivation and achievement (Gilbert et al., 2014). There is a research conducted by Yang (2013) to investigate on senior secondary school students' perceptions of mathematics classroom learning environments in China and its relationship with their attitudes. On the other hand, the study carried out by Lau (2011) to examine the relationship between Malaysian students' perceptions of classroom environment and their motivation in learning English language. Thus, it is clear that classroom environment is a popular research due to its impact on students' learning.

1.2 Background of the Study

Comparing to the abundant research in foreign countries, the research on classroom environment can still be placed at the beginning stage in China. In recent years, some China scholars have started to attach great importance to the classroom environment research since 1990s. Classroom teaching is a bilateral activity between teachers and students. What is more, classroom environment is a major determinant of students' cognitive and affective outcomes. According to Hu (2015), classroom environment is one of the significant factors affecting students' achievement and classroom performance. Classroom teaching is the main position of teaching and learning in secondary schools in China. In recent years, it has attracted more attention from the field of educational theory and practice.

In Malaysia and China educational atmosphere, learning is typically exam-oriented and students are regularly spoon-fed by the teachers (Du,2012; Yuan, 2016; Rahman et al., 2012). Zabidi and Rahman (2012) claimed that Malaysia's education has been focusing on exam-oriented system since independence in 1957. In China, the teachers only consider the students as the receivers not the masters of their knowledge, thus the students are always in a passive state and lack the initiative towards learning. In the whole teaching process, students' independent thinking, critical thinking and their development of personality are denied. This is quite similar to Malaysia's context.

Peen and Arshad (2014) argued that students listen to their teachers passively and depend on teachers to give them all the information, explanation, and instructions in Malaysian secondary school classroom. According to the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China (MOEC) (2010), education should always be student-oriented, with teachers playing a leading role in order to mobilize the initiatives of the students; and implementing quality-oriented education. Moreover, the concept of student-oriented quality education has become a guiding principle of education policies both in China and Malaysia until now. For instance, in an effort to move away from an exam-oriented learning environment, the Ministry of Education (MOEM) in Malaysia has introduced School-Based Assessment (SBA). SBA was implemented in accordance with the Standards-Based Primary School Curriculum in stages starting in 2011 as part of Malaysia educational reform (Mansor, Leng, Rasul, Raof, and Yusoff, 2013). Furthermore, according to Talib et al. (2014), School-Based Assessment attempts to reduce exam-oriented learning and evaluate students' academic progress. This shows that the two countries are trying to move away from a heavily examination focused education to a quality education.

It is a fact that Chinese teachers tend to depend on conventional teaching patterns, highly focus on school examinations, therefore the success of the reform, to a certain extent, relies on how to change the function of teacher's teaching. Du (2012) stated that teachers should change the old conceptions and traditional teaching method

"injection" or "Cramming education" (in Chinese "Man Tang Guan '满堂灌' "), and construct the teaching mode of students as the main body and the teacher as the main leader to stimulate students' subject consciousness. In doing so, students can get more opportunity and choice to show the teacher what they have learned in the class, increase students' motivation to participate actively in the class as well. Similarly, Tan and Arshad (2011) stated that traditional teacher-centered approaches are still used in Malaysian secondary schools. During the process of students' learning, they are always in a passive state waiting for teachers to provide them with information and examination tips. Consequently, students lack of higher-order thinking and are not looking for long-term knowledge or skills gain, but rote memorizing to pass examinations in such context (Dwee & Anthony, 2017). Besides that, Lin (2012) suggested that the ideology of teaching, teaching process, teaching methods and teaching effectiveness must be gradually transformed from examination-oriented education to quality-oriented education.

With the development and improvement of the society, the traditional teaching mode has become more and more difficult to keep up with in the era development. In the traditional concept of education, the teacher is the leader in education and responsible for arranging the teaching tasks, where students are passive receivers. Consequently, most students are not able to enjoy the learning process and they regard learning as a kind of burden (Zhong, 2016).

The New Curriculum Reform (NCR) has been in place for over six decades in China. China's basic education curriculum has experienced several waves of changes since the establishment of the People's Republic of China in 1949; there have been seven major waves in previous years, and the eighth wave of New Curriculum Reform in China starts from 1999 to present (Cui & Zhu, 2014). NCR is a strategic measure that the educational authorities for the present education form, and it is an innovation of the traditional education (Zhong, 2016). The advancement of the new curriculum reform plays an important role in the field of education. For junior middle school mathematics classroom, the teaching mode has been changed dramatically on the basis of the traditional concept of education, which greatly improves the students' interest in learning (Zhong, 2016). Further, in the face of increasingly rigid traditional education, the new curriculum reform has undoubtedly brought new highlight, it can help students cultivate interest in learning, develop the spirit of independent study and exploration, and promote students' all-round development (Yuan, 2016).

Similarly, new curriculum reform also has been carried out in Malaysia and it has experienced several waves as well. New curriculum aims to reduce the focus on exam-oriented in the schools and encourage students to think, to know, to understand what they have learned in the classroom as well as can apply the knowledge learned in their life (Rahman et al., 2012). The significant development of the New Primary School Curriculum (NPSC) and the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (ISSC)

were introduced by MOE of Malaysia in 1983 and in 1989 respectively. According to Ahmad (1998), the NPSC aimed at decreasing the previous heavily content-oriented curriculum to focusing on the three Rs (reading, writing, and arithmetic). The ISSC, on the other hand, emphasized on "life skills" as part of the core, continued to provide general education until the 11th year of schooling, and allowed students to make choices to choose elective subjects of their interest. In the light of the above, it is apparent that curriculum reform and development in education is a constantly changing process which is affected by current trends and issues happening locally and globally for the two countries.

It is worth mentioning that according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2014), the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2012 results show that Shanghai in China ranked first in mathematics performance. Students in Shanghai performed so well in mathematics that the OECD report compares their scoring to the equivalent of nearly three years of schooling above most OECD countries. Chinese students in Shanghai are not only placed first in mathematics but also including reading and science (OECD, 2010). PISA exam items frequently demand the application of concepts to challenging, real life situations (Chen, 2014). Malaysia has also participated in PISA 2009 and PISA 2012. However, PISA 2012 results show that Malaysia's ranking is below OECD's average in mathematics, reading, and science (OECD, 2014). According to the Malaysia

Education Blueprint (MEB 2013-2025), Malaysia aims to be the top third rankings for international assessments in PISA within 15 years.

In this study, it is important to point that although PISA results cannot identify the causality of the relationship between policies and students' achievement, it is useful to guide governments to measure students' knowledge and skills in comparison with those in other countries, and thus construct policy targets against measurable goals achieved by other education systems (Gurria, 2016). This shows that the PISA results between China and Malaysia are useful in helping policy makers and educators to better think how education systems are similar and different and what that means for students.

Besides that, there is an English proverb saying "Give a man a fish and you have fed him for today; teach a man to fish and you have fed him for a lifetime". This indicates that effective learning is not imitated simply and memorized mechanically, but rather involves hands-on and independent exploration, cooperation and exchange. That is, teachers should stimulate students to pursue the interests in the method of solving problem as well as provide students more chances to think independently in the classroom. In this study, the researcher attempts to compare secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment between Malaysia and China, is there any difference between the two countries and explores what is the level of secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Nowadays, classroom environment has been receiving more and more attention and many studies on classroom environment show that students' achievement is closely related to the classroom environment.

Although with the deepening of quality education reform in China, the level of teaching has been significantly improved, there are still many deficiencies in terms of classroom environment. For example, "excessive assignments tactics" (in Chinese "Ti Hai Zhan Shu '题海战术' ") is a common problem in high school education in China. It refers to consuming plenty of time, conducting a great deal of practice in an aimed, planned and reflective way before the important examinations, which is to consolidate the knowledge points and improve students' speed of doing exercises. According to Yang (2012), in order to pass the senior high school entrance examination, a quarter of the time is occupied by the majority of the schools organizing students to carry out the "excessive assignments tactics", which greatly reduces students' enthusiasm and interest in learning.

According to Liu (2016), the existing problems in senior high school English classroom environment are as follows: 1) the main body of the classroom is teacher, and cramming teaching method is a common phenomenon in the classroom; 2) students'

participation is low and classroom interaction is difficult to carry out. As a result, students accept the knowledge that teachers impart to them passively; meanwhile the effect of knowledge absorption is poor, which affect students' learning interests and attitudes towards English learning. Similarly, Anthony (2017) also stated that the passive attitude and lack of interests in learning English among Malaysian students.

Besides that, Yuan (2016) claimed that due to the impact of conventional exam-oriented teaching ideas, many teachers in senior high school still adopt the teacher-centered teaching mode, which leads to fixed and rigid classroom teaching mode. As a result, the efficiency and quality of whole classroom teaching is greatly reduced.

At present, the main problem of classroom teaching in China is that too much emphasis is placed on knowledge transmission and less on the function of knowledge education. According to Bu (2016), the teachers only pay attention to whether the student's answer is correct or not, and they do not notice or cannot effectively guide the students self-learning and group learning. Under such circumstances, therefore, it cannot enhance students' learning ability and interests in learning as well as cultivate the goals of students' good emotion, attitude and values.

In practice, we found that many teachers hardly change the traditional classroom teaching of "knowledge-orientation" teaching philosophy, they still emphasize "knowledge-orientation" and ignore the overall concern for the development of human

life (Pei, 2012). For example, Hao (2017) stated that this traditional teaching philosophy ignored the interaction between teachers and students as learning community in the classroom teaching activities, and it regards students as a container to be filled with knowledge, which disconnected knowledge and life. Students' real experiences are neglected in the process of traditional teaching and learning, which makes classroom teaching like a program of the factory assembly line, the whole classroom environment full of tediousness and lack of vitality and curiosity.

As mentioned earlier, according to Tan and Arshad (2014), in traditional Malaysian classrooms, students listen to their teachers' explanations and instructions passively and engage in rote learning, hence there are low participation rates among students in the whole process of classroom teaching and learning, and lack of logical thinking and higher-order thinking skills.

Lau (2011) also claimed that students have low participation rates in the classroom. In his study, he found that the majority of students in Malaysia have problems when they are learning English language in the classroom such as they have low level of intrinsic motivation and seldom pay attention or take part in their classroom activities. He also stated that students need interesting and meaningful classroom environment when learning English language.

According to Ahmad, Shaharim and Abdullah (2017), many Malaysian students had low interest in science and pointed that the learning environment could be one of possible factors impact this issue. They also argued that the teacher provided less chances for students to become responsible for their learning in the classroom from the perceptions of students.

Based on what has been discussed above, it is clear that the main issue revolves around that teachers' limited ability to connect classroom materials and activities to students' daily living. Moreover, there are less appropriate challenging tasks for students in the class, and the whole classroom environment atmosphere lacks vigor and vitality, which decreased students' interests in learning. Additionally, teachers always regard the students as a passive object to shape, and students have limited chances to provide their own opinions or standpoints. Further, teachers' inappropriate teaching methods result in students lack of confidence severely for their study. Therefore, students learning passion, interest and motivation will be decreased dramatically.

Classroom research has become one of the hottest research areas in western field. In recent years, some researchers in the educational field pay attention to the classroom environment in Malaysia and China. Based on the previous research, there are many researchers who discussed the classroom environment in China and in Malaysia. However, to my knowledge, there are very limited comparative studies of

the classroom environment in Malaysia and China. Nonetheless, Malaysia and China have some similarities, for example, the two countries have experienced new curriculum reform and are trying to move away from examination-oriented education to student-oriented education.

Besides that, it is the fact that no studies in Malaysia have been done using Students' Perceptions of Classroom Quality (SPOCQ) instrument. Hence there is a gap, and this research is valuable in determining the usefulness of the instrument in Malaysia. Therefore, this study intends to compare students' perceptions of their classroom environment in Malaysia and China in order to provide useful advice to help secondary school educators and teachers improve classroom environment for the two countries.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

In general, the main objective of the study is to compare secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China. The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

a. To identify the level of secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment with regard to appeal, choice, challenge, meaningfulness, and academic

self-efficacy in Malaysia and China.

b. To compare secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment between male and female students in Malaysia and China.

c. To compare the overall secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China.

1.5 Research Questions

a. What is the level of secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment with regard to appeal, choice, challenge, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy in Malaysia and China?

b. Is there any difference in secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment based on gender in Malaysia and China?

c. Is there any difference in overall secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China?

1.6 Hypotheses of the Study

The Null Hypotheses are as follows:

Ho 1: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment based on gender in China.

Ho 2: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' perceptions of their classroom environment based on gender in Malaysia.

Ho 3: There is no significant difference in overall secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment in Malaysia and China.

1.7 Conceptual Framework

The present study has adopted the Chinese version of Students' Perceptions of Classroom Quality instrument. For this study, the framework consists of two main parts: 1) respondents' demographics, 2) students' perceptions of classroom environment, which include appeal, challenge, choice, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy, as illustrated in figure 1.

The original Students' Perceptions of Classroom Quality (SPOCQ) instrument was developed by Gentry and Owen (2004), which was used to measure secondary

students' various perceptions about classroom activities. The instrument focused on five constructs of appeal, challenge, choice, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy to examine difference between gifted and general students' perceptions of their classroom environment.

Based on Gentry and Owen's (2004) instrument, Yang (2012) has translated the Chinese version of Students' Perceptions of Classroom Quality (SPOCQ-C) instrument. This instrument also focused on five motivational factors, which are appeal, challenge, choice, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy. For the Malaysia study, back-to-back translation of the Gentry and Owen (2004) instrument was used.

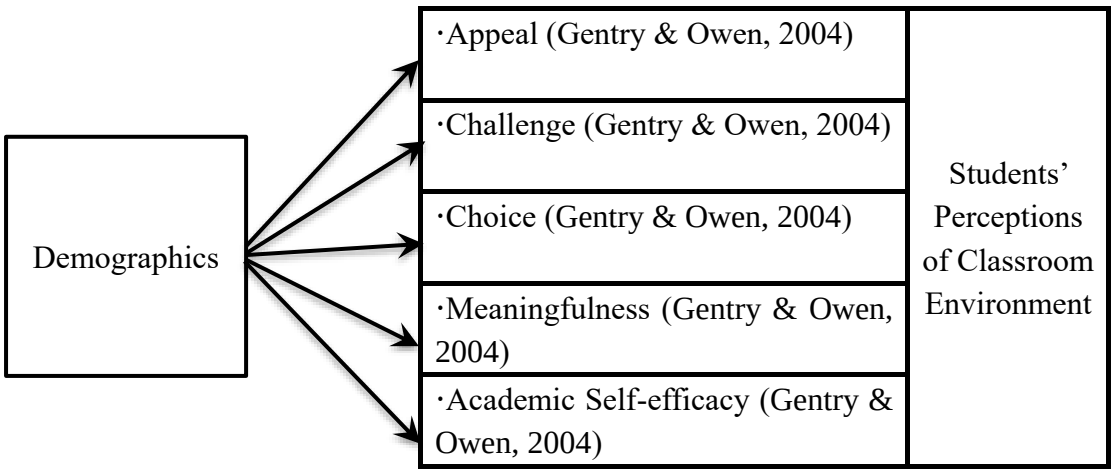

Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the educational policy makers and other stakeholders for policy development and strategies for improving the quality of classroom teaching and act as a guide for teacher educators in training teachers. Houstan and Fraser (2008) stated, "Students' perceptions of classroom environment can provide useful criteria for evaluating educational alternatives." Furthermore, it is of great significance to evaluate classroom quality and promote the improvement of teachers' teaching level, and to ensure the realization of the goal of quality education and personnel training.

The purpose of this study is to compare students' perceptions of the classroom environment with regard to appeal, choice, challenge, meaningfulness and academic self-efficacy between China and Malaysia. The study helps teachers identify their important factors that contribute to students' learning by assessing students' perceptions of classroom environment, and also can help teachers to improve their teaching methods, classroom management and enhance their professionalization.

Finally, this study provides the information about what factors will be helpful to students' learning base on students' perceptions by comparing students' perceptions of classroom environment between Malaysia and China. Besides that, the results found

in this study can assist teachers and researchers get a more scientific evaluation about students' perceptions of classroom environment in secondary school. Several teaching implications are also provided for teachers to make proper adjustments of their teaching methods, with the purpose of improving the standard of teaching and students' learning.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

There are still a number of limitations in this study. Firstly, about the location the researcher only chooses Feng County, Baoji city, Shaanxi Province (a northwestern province of China) and Tanjong Malim, Perak, Malaysia to explore secondary school students' perceptions of classroom environment.

Secondly, the other limitation is that this study only focuses on how students perceive their classroom environment through five motivational constructs of appeal, choice, challenge, meaningfulness and academic self-efficacy.

Last but not the least, all of the participants in this study come from Feng County and Tanjong Malim secondary schools. They may not represent the general perceptions of secondary school students in Malaysia and China.

1.10 Operational Definition

1.10.1 Classroom Environment

The classroom environment is defined as in terms of the students' and teachers' shared perceptions in that environment (Fraser & Pickett, 2010). In this study, the classroom environment is students' perceptions on their classroom and their feeling about the classroom teaching and learning based on five factors: appeal, choice, challenge, meaningfulness, and academic self-efficacy.

1.10.2 Appeal

Appeal combines interest and enjoyment. And it indicates a pleasant, safe, and satisfying learning environment that encourages smiles, positively engages students, and reflects their preferences for topics and activities (Gentry and Owen, 2004). In this study, appeal refers to interest. It indicates that the classroom environment is harmonious, pleasant and interesting, as well as the teaching content is interesting, which can motivate the desire of students' learning.

1.10.3 Challenge

Conceptually, challenge inspires learners to actively engage in learning with positive affective perception and extra effort (Chae and Gentry, 2007). In this study, the meaning of challenge is similar to Gentry and Owen's (2004) definition: challenge involves rigor, depth, and complexity and is at the intersection of content, process, product, and audience. Optimal challenge is based on individuals, engaging them in effective learning.

1.10.4 Choice

Choice involves empowering students to direct and make important decisions about their learning (Gentry and Owen, 2004). Similarly, choice, in this study, also refers to give students more choices for their learning and allow them to make choices in the class.

1.10.5 Meaningfulness

Meaningfulness involves when content and methods have relevance to students' lives and are significant, important, connected, and worth caring about, then meaningfulness has been achieved (Gentry and Owen, 2004). In this study, meaningfulness means that the contents and teaching methods are connected with students' daily life, science and technology and students can integrate theory with practice, apply the lessons they have learned to practical experiences.

1.10.6 Academic Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is defined as, one's judgment about the capabilities to organize and execute the course of performance to achieve desired goals (Bandura, 1997). Academic self-efficacy reflects students' perceived confidence in performing important classroom learning behaviors (Gentry and Owen, 2004). Academic self-efficacy, in this study, means that students' capability and self-confidence to make judgment of their own learning behaviors.

1.10.7 Secondary School of Malaysia

Secondary school of Malaysia indicates that lower secondary school (Form 1 to 3) and upper secondary school (Form 4 to 5), and the secondary school students at the age of 13 to 17 years old.

1.10.8 Secondary School of China

Secondary school of China lasts 6 years, it refers to junior middle school (3 years) and senior high school (3 years), and the secondary school students' age is from 13 to 18 years old.

1.11 Summary

This chapter discusses the overview of the classroom environment. The researcher began by giving a brief introduction which explain the secondary school classroom environment in Malaysia and China. It is followed by an account of elaboration on the classroom teaching and its problems that are discussed in the statement of the problem section. The objectives, research questions and hypotheses of the study are also stated

in this chapter. In addition, the significance of this study is that it may be helpful for school administrators or stakeholders to make relevant policy and measures to improve the classroom environment quality from students' perceptions. Moreover, it will enable teachers to improve the effective teaching and learning as well as satisfy students' learning needs by considering students' perceptions of classroom environment. It is hope that this study will contribute knowledge in the research field.