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E-PROSIDING

SEMINAR PENGANTARABANGSAAN PENDIDIKAN TINGGI 2022

Melonjakkan Aspirasi Pengantarabangsaan
Pendidikan Tinggi Yang Mampan

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SPPT 2022

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**Penerbit USIM Adalah Anggota
MAJLIS PENERBITAN ILMIAH MALAYSIA (MAPIM)**

e-Prosiding Seminar Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi 2022
(SPPT 2022)

29 September 2022, Malaysia

Editor:
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Anita Ismail
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PRAKATA



Seminar Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi 2022 (SPPT 2022) merupakan salah satu daripada Program Bitara Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi dan Program *Signature* Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi bagi tahun 2022 yang dianjurkan oleh Bahagian Education Malaysia, Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi dengan kerjasama Pusat Antarabangsa, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM 'Alamiyyah). Dengan tema "**Melonjakkan Aspirasi Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi Yang Mampan**", SPPT 2022 diadakan sebagai salah satu platform perkongsian ilmu pengetahuan, pandangan dan perbincangan untuk memantapkan usaha dan strategi pengantarabangsaan dan promosi pendidikan tinggi negara.

Komitmen daripada pelbagai pihak berkepentingan dan pemegang taruh adalah amat penting bagi memastikan kerjasama dan peranan semua pihak dapat mencapai objektif utama agenda pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi negara. Justeru, SPPT 2022 pastinya akan dapat memberikan peluang dan ruang kepada semua pembentang dan peserta untuk membincangkan strategi dan keberkesanan pelaksanaan program pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi.

Sebanyak **44** Kertas Kerja dengan sub tema **Memperkaya Pengalaman Pelajar Antarabangsa; Meningkatkan Strategi Pemasaran dan Promosi; dan Memperkukuh Kerjasama Antarabangsa dalam Pendidikan Tinggi** dibentangkan semasa Seminar ini berlangsung yang diadakan dalam Sesi Plenari / Selari dan semua bahan pembentangan ini telah dikumpulkan dan diterbitkan sebagai **e-Prosiding Seminar Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi 2022**.

Editor:

Rezki Perdani Sawai
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The Role of English Language, Networking and Internationalization in Globalizing Private Universities in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

In the current education scenario, the private high education institutions in Malaysia are seeking to enhance their internationalization in their efforts to adapt to the developments taking place in the country and worldwide. These developments include the response to globalization, the emergence of an international network and the role of English language that has resulted in universities to incorporate international collaboration. The aim of this paper is to highlight the impact of globalization on the internationalization of Higher education in Malaysia and summarize and describe some of the potential challenges in this regard to highlight Malaysia's effort in internationalization to produce competent work force in its efforts to intensify globalization. Furthermore, the quality assurance framework in the Malaysian blueprint and its efforts in the upward mobility of higher education are discussed. To achieve this aim, relevant literature was reviewed, and conclusions were drawn in a critical review process. The solutions for the enhancement and futurity of globalization in higher education are summarized and suggestions are provided for policies and practices that can be adopted by private universities to enhance the recognition in the global market.

Keywords: English; globalization; higher education; internationalization; Malaysia; private university

1. INTRODUCTION

An incredibly wide range of higher education institutions throughout the world are interested in the phenomena of internationalisation. According to Rumbley et al (2012), this is a noteworthy development, especially within the past few decades. We have witnessed the swift growth of global university ranking systems in the last decade. The procedures related to internationalization in the global landscape of higher education are associated with the commodification and marketization of education; as such, we also see increased competition between the higher education institutions which in turn have led to new modes of governance to improve rankings (Larsen, 2016). This in turn has led to changes in the way these institutions employ the latest available technologies in all aspects of the business to achieve their revamped objectives.

Related to the notion of internationalization in higher education is globalization of it. The

simple definition of internationalization is when an institution expands beyond its borders and that of globalization refers to the flow and exchange of commodities such as products and services, capital, and technology worldwide (Difference Between Internationalization and Globalization (with Comparison Chart) - Key Differences, retrieved 20 July 2022).

In our paper, we refer to the internationalization of Higher education beyond the Malaysian borders. The impact of the commodification and marketization of Higher Education to other countries such as China and those in the Middle East and Africa, and this seems to be growing rapidly. We note this happening in the Malaysian private universities. These private institutions in Malaysia may have a slight advantage in that English is used almost exclusively as the medium of instruction. English is the second most important language in Malaysia, after its official language, Bahasa Malaysia. Being the lingua franca in many parts of the world, it is acknowledged that non-native speakers of English outnumber native speakers (Dewey, 2007). In view of its importance, it is not surprising that English is adopted as the medium of instruction in private universities in Malaysia. In the final analysis, it cannot be denied that these institutions of higher learning, being private enterprises, are also concerned with profit.

Adopting English as the medium of instruction makes these institutions attractive to international students as they do not have to spend time learning the local official language before they enrol on the program of their choice, which may be the practice in some other countries that offer similar programmes. But potential international students do need to have achieved a certain level of proficiency in the English language to be accepted into any programme at these institutions. This has made our higher education programmes in the private universities more competitive and attractive to international students.

In the past two decades, before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, international students enrolled on higher education programmes physically, and then moved on upon completion of their studies. However, during the pandemic in 2020-2021, majority of the continuing international students have had to continue their studies online. This was the same for those who enrolled on graduate programmes during this period. In fact, the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in an influx of graduate international students, particularly from China to private universities in Malaysia.

The advent of technology and the prevalent use of the various online platforms during the pandemic and the lockdown has encouraged this influx as graduate students need not be physically present for their classes and supervision sessions. Although the use of technology was inevitable during the partial and full lockdown periods, this mode of communication was

the only viable one and it was a certainty that all meetings between lecturers and supervisors and students were conducted online, mainly via the Teams or Zoom platforms.

Going back in time, before the pandemic of 2020-2021, much of the developed world was already dominated by technology. The education sector is no exception to this domination. Schools at all levels had resorted to technology to aid the process of teaching and learning. With the onset of the pandemic, the need for the technology was greater than ever as children and older students were all locked down at home. Graduate students were not exempted.

Despite the pandemic, networking among people, including students, did not stop as this is aided by social networks afforded by the web; and as noted by Gaftandzhieva et al. (2020), social networking has become a powerful tool for communication, sharing of information and discussions on various topics. This is particularly true for our graduate international students.

In the meantime, the race to the top of the global university ranking systems among the private universities continues. Despite the prevalence of technology in higher education, and as we move into the endemic stage after the pandemic, we also need to view this situation with new lens. It is advocated that we now must move beyond this mode of teaching and learning, in particular higher education. According to Dervojeda (Feb 3, 2021), we should now “look beyond technology and bring humans back to the centre of the educational process”. She opines that although “the potential of technology-enabled learning is immense”, it is nevertheless just “a great tool for education” and as such, it may be misused or even abused. Although technology, which include AI, robotics, automation, and Big Data, have helped us move educational institutions, including the private universities, to full digitalization mode during the pandemic, this has occurred with corresponding implications in terms of quality and students’ performance (Dervojeda, 2021).

Further, students’ motivation, as well as their physical, emotional, and mental wellbeing may be compromised. The same could be happening to our graduate students, particularly those from abroad. The teachers, lecturers and supervisors only meet them online during the pandemic. This has continued to this day, particularly to students of countries with strict zero covid policy. This mode of teaching and learning is definitely not the same as meeting the students face-to-face. The latter allows the teacher or supervisor to gauge the student’s motivation, progress in his or her work, and physical and mental well-being up close and personal. When we meet them online, we are deprived of such personal touch, and we are not able to render the appropriate aid to the students who are affected.

Although technology has aided the education process to a great extent, we still need “a common vision and systematic approach” for the education system and process to be

successful (Dervojeda, 2021). As educators of higher education, it should be what we want to ultimately gain with the aid of technology, not what technology will attain for us in higher education. If before and during the pandemic, the aim was helping equip our graduate students with technology (IR4.0), now is the time that we change our perspective and try to rehumanize the higher education process with expeditious collaboration between us and technology (IR5.0). It is only through this process that the change that ensues will have a long-term impact on higher education.

IR5.0, in particular Education 5.0 begins with us, the educators, not technology. It is now imperative to focus on what is to be achieved by our graduate students as humans, i.e. it is about helping them to be intellectual and creative beings, and to be socially and emotionally strong, as well as physically and mentally healthy all in one fell swoop. In this perspective, technology enables the process but does not play the main role.

To achieve our objective, both supervisors and graduate students, including the international students, now must be mindful of the type of content they want to study. They must identify and perhaps develop content that pays attention to topics such as, “questions of ethics, social inclusion, diversity and sustainability” (Dervojeda, 2021). It is through such a concerted effort to move us back to ourselves that we feel that we can produce a competent work force in our endeavour to intensify globalization of skills that our graduate students, both local and international, can bring to the marketplace. However, there are challenges of globalization in this scenario.

According to Zolfaghari, et al., (2009), the absence of required specialisations, low levels of education and consciousness, as well as a lack of science and technology, are major issues in today's cultures. The majority of people in countries, especially those that are underdeveloped, lack access to education, despite the fact that specialisation and skill development are the foundation of every community. Therefore, it is essential for states to prepare for the advancement of education, heightened awareness, and the development of both technical and professional abilities.

2. AN OVERVIEW OF GLOBALIZATION IN UNIVERSITIES

Globalization's pressures push the state to implement policy changes to improve the quality, applicability, and marketability of the higher education system, but local and ethnic polarizations operate in diagonally opposing directions by calling for equality in opportunities, access, and treatment. The word "globalization" has come to stand in for the current situation,

indicating that some global processes have started to influence every aspect of our lives. Given how significantly globalization has changed our world, it stands to reason that educational systems would also be impacted (Guo and Guo, 2017). The organization, management, and supervision of educational systems are now undergoing a change in several countries.

Fundamental changes in the form and nature of educational institutions, the way the curriculum is organized, the nature of teachers' work and professionalism, and the goals and objectives of assessment all occurred in the era after the 1990s. Additionally, this time period has been marked by significant and frequently contentious. The nature and goals of higher education in society have also been the subject of extensive and sometimes heated discussions, notably those involving education, the economy, and society. Particularly, institutions of higher education are now subject to new expectations and challenges regarding accountability, accessibility, quality, and the adoption of new technologies and curricula (Chin, 2019).

Governments must now ensure that public higher education institutions are competitive and on par with their international counterparts due to demands from globalization. As policymakers consider the rising cost of supporting these public institutions, there is a growing desire for increased accountability and transparency of public institutions on the local level (Chin, 2019). By 1998, five of the oldest public universities had been corporatized, thanks to an amendment made to the Universities and University Colleges Act of 1971 in 1995. These institutions are likely to incur an increasing percentage of their operational costs from sources other than the government because of corporatization. The push for world-class universities in Malaysia is also reflected in the increasing importance of research and the increased accountability for research output. To enable more dynamism at the institutional level and enable rapid responses to changes, this calls for greater liberalization of public higher education from the administrative restraints of the central administration. Public universities' corporate cultures are increasingly incorporating business processes including quality control, capital budgeting, governance, and many others throughout this period of corporatization (Arokiasamy, 2011).

English Language and Globalization in Malaysia

Fast economic growth in the 1990s increased demand for widespread higher education, particularly among those populations that choose English-language higher education (Jamshidi et al., 2012). For universities in emerging nations, language is a constant source of

complexity. Without exception, these colleges must possess the necessary proficiency in English, the universal scientific language. Universities cannot effectively participate in the global knowledge network if both academic staff and students lack a reasonable degree of English proficiency. Many colleges in developing nations require English language proficiency from applicants. International students cannot enroll in these universities unless they have mastered the English language because it is one of their primary requirements. Hence the private educator sector also complements the efforts of the government in its effort to be the hub of education globally. The development of globalisation is significantly aided by the English language. The relevance of using the English language has expanded due to the globalisation of trade and commerce and the growing diversity of the labour force with various cultural values. Prior research demonstrated that foreign students improve their English skills before leaving to study abroad, but they encounter language difficulties that have a detrimental effect on their academic success (Bista, & Gaulee, 2019).

What is more, universities in industrialized countries expect that their international academic relations will take place in English; as a result, they are increasingly offering some courses and frequently entire degree programmes in English (Doiz et al., 2013). This is true even in countries where English is not used as the language of instruction in universities. In general, it is expected that programmes will be given in English when joint degrees or branches are established. While many research institutions in emerging nations provide all or most of their courses in English, others are placing more and more emphasis on the language as the standard for academic discourse (Altbach, 2013). While Francophone and Lusophone Africa, for instance, are mostly still committed to their respective languages, these nations are worldwide outliers. Although English is becoming increasingly common, instruction in Latin American nations still takes place in Spanish or Portuguese. However, English is now more frequently employed in several courses and programmes as the language of instruction. For instance, a select number of courses across all disciplines are increasingly being offered in English to Chinese students at top research institutions in China. Professors are encouraged—and occasionally required—to publish their research in English, ideally in journals that are acknowledged by the global businesses that assess usage and effect (Altbach, 2013).

The native language of Malaysia, Malay, or Bahasa Melayu is utilized extensively in the country's educational system as the medium of instruction, particularly in public universities and national schools. The government feels that employing the Malay language in all facets of the educational system might improve nation-building and national integration. A plural society such as Malaysian needs a robust mechanism for communication and integration reasons.

The government has permitted the use of English as a language of teaching, particularly at private universities, as the nation enters a new period marked by the transition from a production-based economy to an innovative and knowledge-based one. Malaysia is an intriguing example, which switched from English to Bahasa Malaysia and is currently reintroducing English at universities. Although English is often given more priority in developing nations, this is not always the case (Altbach, 2013). This transformation is necessary because the government must adapt to internationalization and globalization.

Additionally, English must be the language of teaching in private universities in order to fulfil the government's goals of making Malaysia an educational center in the area and luring foreign investment in education. As a result, the primary goal of luring international students to Malaysia is language. The use of English as a language for teaching technical subjects in post-secondary courses is permitted under both the Private HEIs Act and the Education Act of 1996. Additionally, courses offered through twinning partnerships with foreign universities and online campuses are permitted to be taught in English. However, according to Section 23 of the Education Act of 1966, "the national language should be taught as an obligatory subject in the educational institution if the major medium of the instruction in an educational institution is other than the national language". Since Malay is the official language of Malaysia, this clause is in place to prevent it from losing all significance (Grapragasem et al., 2014).

Academic publications are significant because it has long been accepted wisdom in academia—across all fields of study and national contexts—that one must "publish or perish." The development of the knowledge-based economy, which is dependent on knowledge creation and distribution, has made the reinforcement of this heritage even more important. However, due to the rapid speed of globalization, academic publications can no longer be seen in isolation from the many globalizing practices and processes that have a significant impact on the creation of academic texts. Producing more research also implies disseminating it more widely, which is tied to the function of English in academic contexts and publications once again (Finardi & Rojo, 2015). These globalizing systems and activities, Due to its status as the language of academic and scientific study, as well as the creation and transmission of information, English plays a crucial part.

The enormous influence of the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), located in the United States, as well as the growth of the impact factor, which favors academic papers in English, are all contributing to English's growing prominence. To acquire international respect for their research, academics in non-Anglophone nations are under increasing pressure to publish in English, which harms academic publications that are published in local tongues.

These journals will cease to be relevant from a worldwide perspective unless and until they are indexed by ISI (Tan and Goh, 2014).

In today's globalised society, communication with others is a need. The growing use of English in Malaysia seems to support the idea that cultural exchanges are one-way in the web of activities that make up modern globalization (Mandal, 2000). The globalization of higher education has the potential to aid in the creation of an ASEAN area that is cohesive, as stated by Khalid et al (2019). Academic mobility is improved by concentrating on modernising partnerships between partner universities, which also raises the appeal of higher education systems in European nations. The Ministry of Education (MOE) Malaysia is entrusted with providing quality education for the people of Malaysia. Education in Malaysia begins from preschool and continues to university. The vision of the MOE is to make Malaysia a center for education excellence (Grapragasem, et. al, 2013). On the basis of equality and improved academic mobility among member nations, Malaysia needs consistency in its internationalisation and regional development strategies. Harmonization across countries with different cultures, customs, and languages can be aided by a complete international strategy at the institutional, national, and multi-regional levels. ASEAN countries can join forces to build one higher education forum through significant networking, collaborations, and digital transformation of HEIs (Khalid et al. 2018), which may result in unification.

It is difficult not to overstate the importance of English as a global language in this process of interdependence on a global scale if globalization is regarded as the connectivity of peoples, communities, and states. English has affected many aspects of life, directly or indirectly, in many regions of the world, much as globalization has influenced all aspects of current life (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). English is the most used language in the world for mass entertainment, worldwide telecommunications, scientific publications, as well as the publication of newspapers and other literature. It is the first global lingua franca and the first world language. In this era of globalization, the widespread use of English as an international language and the development of the internet as a quick, boundary-less communication channel are mutually reinforcing new trends and bringing about enormous changes (Rao, 2019).

In view of the above, the relationship between English and globalization is symbiotic and mutually beneficial, regardless of whether English is the driver of globalization or vice versa. If English provides the linguistic and communicative infrastructure for globalization, the latter promotes the cause of English by making the language necessary for participation in globalised networks, markets, and resources. The driving force behind the English-in-

education policy in Asia may be observed in these discussions on English and globalization (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). An open educational system is necessary since there are many academic transfers and exchanges that take place across international borders in an open society (Hoàng, 2013). English is a key component of the globalised and integrated world. It plays a variety of functions in higher education, some of which are included below: the facilitation of student and faculty exchange programmes, the promotion of intercultural exchanges in the academic setting, the carrying out of cooperative education and research initiatives, the creation of course equivalency and course transfers and for preparing of students for international study (Hoàng, 2013).

Internationalization In Higher Education

At the institutional, national, and regional levels, internationalisation has become more and more influenced by East Asia during the past ten years. For instance, more Vietnamese students are travelling to China and Malaysia to further their education. Malaysia has placed a strong emphasis on several internationalisation strategies, notably student mobility/exchange and research partnership, as it works to establish itself as a regional educational powerhouse (Khalid et al., 2019). Higher education institutions have been impacted by global influences such as worldwide economies, global political conflicts, and global communication networks. To satisfy the political, economic, and social demands, higher education institutions (HEIs) must adapt to the changes brought about by the globalization (Othman et al., 2011). In order to compete in the global information society, Malaysia is aggressively upgrading its educational systems. Due to a lack of adequate resources for internationalisation practices, language barriers, low funding, and a lack of regional scholarships, as well as ineffective national and institutional policies to implement internationalization, less developed countries are currently not competitive on a global scale (Khalid et al., 2019).

Internationalization has gained considerable prominence at the highest levels of institutional leadership and policymaking in many parts of the world after occupying a relatively minor place on the agendas of institutions, countries, and international organisations (Rumbley et al., 2012). Moreover, raised internationalisation initiatives have boosted the intensity of internationalisation, which has increased student, programme, and institutional mobility (Tham, 2013). Internationalisation of higher education was mostly understood in terms of idea connections, cultures, knowledge, and values. As a result, this commodity is now a sign of

high-quality higher education. It appears that multiple levels and sizes, including the global, region, nation, state, community, organisation, and person, are considered while considering internationalisation (Shahijan et al., 2016). The higher education system in Malaysia has changed as a result of internationalisation. Students, academic members, education and mobility programmes, and higher education providers all encounter the phenomenon. In this regard, Malaysia has started to improve methods for international cooperation, student mobility, and academic programmes since the 1980s (Munusamy & Hashim, 2019).

Furthermore, Shahjahan, and Edwards (2022) stated that by creating an assumed sense of security as a consequence of investment in capitalist employment and economic systems, globalization of higher education promotes pre-caution, pre-emption, and readiness. The ability to foresee one's future value—such as knowledge, talents, and abilities—seemingly ensures one's future. Another element influencing the internationalisation of universities is the increasing use of world university rankings. They add that an examination of race as the structuring factor underpinning this global phenomenon is still missing among increased discussions about how the globalization of higher education reproduces disparities (Shahjahan, & Edwards, 2022).

Higher education development stakeholders think that the internationalisation process might strengthen connections and ties between the domestic and foreign higher education sectors (Jana et al., 2017). As a result, higher education providers must now actively participate in the internationalisation of higher education to preserve its standing, quality, and visibility on a global scale (Girdzijauskaite, & Radzeviciene, 2018). Additionally, the idea of internationalisation in higher education has been promoted to attract more foreign students and produce qualified graduates who can compete and survive in a globalised society (Robson & Wihlborg, 2019).

Employers are increasingly looking for university graduates with global perspectives and cross-cultural competency, according to research, and students themselves are becoming more interested in travelling abroad. Therefore, internationalisation is motivated by both global and local intercultural interests. A modern university's commercial and entrepreneurial endeavours, as well as its service delivery, research, and teaching, may all benefit from internationalisation. The idea works best when it is implemented as part of larger objectives rather than as a stand-alone goal. Internationalization is more likely to be successful if it is integrated into everyday university practice by altering the institutional language, culture, and attitudes. An overarching topic of this series is internationalisation as a potent force for change, as opposed to the economic or brand-enhancing benefits of foreign participation (Ziguras, &

McBurnie 2015).

Networking in Globalizing Higher Education in Malaysia

Universities today form connections with one another to form alliances to compete for resources, faculty members, and students. Since many years ago, the internationalization of higher education has included the mobility of students, university faculties, knowledge, and even ideals (Siemens et al., 2013). The changes to the flow of foreign students are numerous and complicated, according to network research. However, despite the expansion of new study abroad locations, the network of foreign students has grown more centralized, less densely connected, and less "small world"-like. Its structural parallels to those of the global commerce and political networks, particularly the latter, are striking. The contemporary environment presents several new prospects for improved access to higher education, global strategic collaborations, and the growth of institutional and human resource capability. While the provided an account of international student and faculty flows, it falls short of providing a thorough analysis of the situation in a world driven by neo-liberal principles. This is partly because of the decreased financing and neo-liberal governance frameworks that have gradually created the conditions for universities to become globally recognized. Nation states' interests in incorporating other ideologies and cultures are served by recruiting and educating overseas students (Ng, 2012).

One of the main components of a university is networking. They have a crucial role in fostering communication within the national academic system since they are at the top of the academic hierarchy in their respective nations, but they are also the channel via which a national academic system may interact with the global knowledge network. As a result, networking is a key component of the university. Unsurprisingly, academics in institutions, particularly in the most important knowledge hubs globally, control the primary knowledge networks in many fields. Universities in underdeveloped nations have access to these networks since they are a member of this nexus (Altbach, 2013). Universities throughout the world engage in a variety of communication methods that allow access to the most recent developments in research and scholarship and allow casual conversation to contact with coworkers throughout the world. Academics at other, lesser-known universities can access worldwide scientific information, but they have a considerable disadvantage when it comes to actively engage in intellectual discourse. With more direct connections to peers around the world and better access to informal academic and scientific networks, research institution

professors find direct contact to be more convenient. Therefore, research institutions frequently serve as the entry point for international knowledge into global academic systems and as a channel for the dissemination of information from emerging nations to a larger global knowledge network. The "democratization of science" and the new era of information sharing on a global scale have both been discussed extensively. While to some extent this is true, it would be more accurate to refer to the current situation as the "anarchy of science." Therefore, there is an abundance of information available that comes from several sources, but there are few means to evaluate the worth or veracity of much of the vast array of information. In some respects, anarchy strengthens the existing networks, which are essential for deciding what knowledge is useful (Altbach, 2013).

To increase the capacity of their workforce in university administration, most institutions have set up systems to ensure the competence of their academic personnel. Institutional networking and internationalization have been incorporated as one of the institutional Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in most universities' blueprints for higher education in Malaysia, while also ensuring that the missions and vision of the universities are in line (Hassan et al., 2015). The eighth shift made it very evident that networking and collaboration with foreign higher education institutions should be stepped up globally. To support institutional personnel in obtaining the top university ranking and maintaining networking and internationalization, it is not just necessary to forget about foreign funding. It goes beyond the mobility of the students and covers a larger range and capability, including the transfer of information, technology, academic research, and educational resources. Sharing educational materials would benefit institutional staff competency even if networking and globalization are desirable for the university as an educational institution (Hoover, E., & Harder, 2015). The staff mobility programme, for example, really achieves practically all the networking and internationalization goals. Staff members have excellent possibilities to develop their skills and learn via experience throughout the mobility period. Depending on the focus and objectives of the mobility programme, this competency development would increase the number of skill categories. The mobility programme, which places more of an emphasis on research and development, would boost staff proficiency in research abilities, which would be beneficial for both teaching and learning (Hassan et al., 2015).

Thus, the network society encourages universities to deepen their connections with key stakeholders and to communicate with partners, such as other academic institutions and business partners (Pucciarelli, & Kaplan, 2016). Not only that to achieve better results and to draw people, research opportunities, and financing, tighter collaboration and networking must

be expanded worldwide when applicable. To support this strategic approach, postgraduate education and training have taken on a new significance. Malaysian academics must advance toward the global frontiers of science and take a leading role in global networks for the generation of new knowledge (Azman et al., 2016). By maintaining academic offices abroad and working with partner universities to boost student enrollment, Malaysia has developed worldwide networks. It is currently one of Asia's leading private higher education providers for international students (Chin, 2019).

As more connections take place throughout the world via social networks, people are no longer exclusive; rather, the entire idea of inclusion has to be thoroughly studied (Harun et al., 2018). The networking viewpoint in the process of internationalisation has grown over the past few decades as a management tool for the higher education industry. Due to funding and resource restrictions, this is being done to boost its global engagement. To mitigate the dangers of global expansion, higher education providers and administrators collaborate on sharing information, resources, and technology (Girdzijauskaite et al., 2018). Higher education institutions responded fast to global prospects in the early 1980s by setting up networks for a variety of activities, including staff and student mobility, course and curriculum development, cooperative research, and organisations. Therefore, by establishing a robust internationalisation network, Malaysia can raise the standard of higher education in order to draw in more foreign students and foster innovation through R&D activities (Shahijan et al., 2016).

In the higher education sector, which includes stakeholders at the ministries, departments, agencies, and higher education institutions, there are numerous administration and bureaucracy, lively collaboration, and extensive networking elements. The hiring of international students, followed by the advantages for economic and sociocultural reasons, is one of the main drivers influencing the internationalisation of higher education (Girdzijauskaite et al., 2018). For higher education institutions to collaborate closely with their foreign partners and attract more international students, international networking is essential. The bridging mechanism that characterises networking in internationalisation may prove to be a very effective strategy and method for attracting more foreign students. To attract targeted international students, market intelligence and penetration strategies are also key networking tools in internationalisation. The networking's intermediate function has helped higher education organisations learn more about foreign students all across the world and encourage them to enrol in educational institutions (Sarkar, & Perényi, 2017).

The quickest method to adopt internationalisation techniques and tactics is through

institutional networking between domestic and international higher education institutions. The networking of higher education institutions in internationalisation is now a positive kind of international collaboration that opens doors to the foreign higher education market. Through international networking, higher education institutions may also raise their reputation abroad in order to benchmark programme quality, accreditation standards, and curricular requirements. It also establishes strategic and multilevel cooperation amongst partners that may maximise the method, justification, and tactics for higher education globalization (Kristensen & Karlsen, 2018).

Chin and Lim (2012) developed a model which emphasises on collaboration between academia and industry within the framework of state-sponsored educational programmes and initiatives that support knowledge transfer to transform Malaysian SMEs, particularly those that serve as contract manufacturers for global firms, and provide the stakeholders a solution that is least expensive, fast, competent, and long-lasting.

Challenges of Globalizing Private Universities in Malaysia

Malaysia's goal of being a top international education destination by 2025 is being strengthened by the increasing international acclaim for its higher education system. By 2025, the Malaysia Education Blueprint for Higher Education 2015–2025 seeks to enroll 250,000 foreign students (Chin, 2019). In Malaysia, the development and quick expansion of private higher education institutions have drastically altered the scene. In fact, emerging countries often exhibit a shared trend of globalization in the education sector (Halid et al., 2020). Adopting the higher education of overseas developed nations has been one of the significant shifts in Malaysia's private higher education in recent years (from the middle of the 1990s). This adaption has led to the establishment of several foreign campuses that can accommodate the great majority of local students as well as some international students. Foreign partners that are eager to collaborate closely with private education institutions for a win-win outcome, therefore, regard Malaysia as an "educational center" (Foo, 2013).

A rising number of foreign students are choosing to study in Malaysia because of the difficult global economy and shifting geopolitical tendencies, giving Malaysia the opportunity to build on its strengths in higher education and attract more international students. The economic impact of international students in Malaysia is now estimated to be RM 5.9 billion and is projected to increase to RM 15.6 billion by 2020. They support cultural awareness, competition, and networking those benefit students and the community in addition to contributing to the

Malaysian economy (Chin, 2019).

The Malaysian education industry is conscious of the strain to satisfy the high expectations of this economic sector in terms of attracting and keeping a knowledgeable and talented workforce due to the severe competition in this industry. To satisfy the economic, political, and social needs of the modern day, PHEIs—along with public higher education institutions—must be able to react and adapt fast to the changes in the dynamic outside world (Halid et al., 2020). According to Abd Aziz and Abdullah (2014), higher education has become more globally focused, making it difficult to discuss changes in the field without taking into account the global, national, and local levels of operation that higher education institutions experience, the cross-border movement of talent, academic programmes, and brick and mortar institutions, the growing influence of institutional rankings on decision-making and marketing, and the quick adoption of technology through massive open online courses (MOOCs). Since this sector is one of the twelve pillars that define a country's competitiveness, the stakes for this sector in national growth are much higher. The phenomena are characterized under the more general idea of "internationalization of higher education," a word that has undergone many operationalizations and definitions by various authors. Despite the many interpretations, institutional development strategies will continue to include the internationalization of higher education as a key component (Abd Aziz and Abdullah, 2014).

The public university system, nevertheless, has not been able to meet these needs. Through the adoption and reform of legislation pertaining to universities, the government began to acknowledge the importance of private higher education and created an integrated legal framework in 1996. The Malaysian government supported the private higher education industry to supplement the public higher education system in 1996, as stated in the Private Higher Educational Institutions Act. Since the middle of the 1990s, one of the biggest changes in Malaysia's private higher education has been the opening of numerous branch campuses of reputable foreign universities from developed countries. The entry of these foreign universities has increased competition between local and international public and private higher education institutions (Jamshidi, et al., 2012).

There have been several locations across the world where private higher education has grown and expanded. Private higher education looks to bridge the gap between supply and demand in the most demanding study disciplines when public higher education's capacity is unable to keep up with demand from the increasing population. According to Jamshidi et al. (2012), the government's support for the expansion of private higher education is a result of several factors, including the need to increase access and enrollment despite growing

budgetary constraints, meet social demand for higher education, which enables students (buyers) to pay for tuition, and self-funding by private providers. Since the 1990s, the private sector has been a major player in higher education in several nations. The key causes of the rising participation of the private sector in higher education internationally are the widening gap between government budget increases and enrolment growth. However, most of them have decreased their share, and as the number of gross enrolment snowballs, the funding per student from the government was seen to decrease dramatically as well. Some developing countries that have paid attention to basic education over the past few decades could concentrate on higher education (Kaplan, & Haenlein, 2016).

In many nations across the world, the private sector is the area of higher education that is expanding the quickest. In the past several years, developing countries and growing economies throughout the world have built more private organizations than state ones. Global demand for higher education is rising overall, and private institutions and international studies are filling a sizable piece of that need. Higher education-related publications, papers, and meetings (seminars, colloquia, and conferences) in recent years have hinted at a worldwide "dilemma" the system is confronting. The "dilemma" is that when nations increase their efforts to improve the availability, quality, and visibility of their various higher education systems, they run the risk of forgetting the fundamental principles and purposes of higher education.

Countries rely on higher education to provide the necessary intellectual ability for a knowledge-based economy and fields like science, technology, and innovation (Siemens et al., 2013). This necessitates deliberate plans to increase access to higher education for as many people as feasible, as well as methods to improve the standard of higher education offered for both home and export markets. For instance, allowing private operators to absorb the exponential demand for higher education, opening the nation's higher education to foreign academic programmes and international branch campuses, exporting higher education as a commodity, and quality assurance mechanisms in regulating the provision of higher education are some examples. The unpleasant fact is that, in terms of attracting foreign students and generating knowledge, higher education systems are either at the centre or on the periphery of the global higher education landscape.

The spread of rankings has had a significant impact on how higher education institutions operate and allocate resources. As a result, universities are encouraging students to enrol, teachers to teach, and researchers to conduct research that will help them rank better on league tables. In the past ten years, market forces have increasingly played a role in the development of higher education policies, placing the preservation of rich indigenous or

traditional knowledge at risk on top of other challenges like graduate unemployment and elitism in higher education to the privileged few (Abd Aziz, & Abdullah, 2014).

A number of difficulties have been brought on by the globalization of HEIs, including the commoditization of tertiary education, commercially controlled research that can restrict the flow of knowledge, rankings of HEIs and world-class universities that appear to have attracted significant public attention, as well as issues with transparency (Othman, et al., 2011). According to Altbach, and Knight (2007), the majority of demand-absorbing programmes are found in the less esteemed end of the higher education spectrum. Foreign companies, which nearly always seek to make a profit, may collaborate with local business people or public, or private universities, or they may create their own branch campuses. Malaysia is creating plans to draw in students and export educational institutions and programmes. Malaysia, as a country that receives cross-border education, has created methods to record and keep track of the calibre of foreign instruction. Similar cross-border initiatives are sponsored by American higher education institutions in Malaysia (Altbach, & Knight, 2007).

The nation's growing need for higher education cannot be met by the public institutions. The first private colleges appeared in Malaysia in the early 1980s, but it wasn't until the Private Higher Educational Institutional Act (PHEIA), which opened the door for the private sector to compete in the higher education market, went into effect in 1996 that they really began to take off (Arokiasamy, 2011). The adoption of higher education from other industrialised countries has been one of the most significant shifts in Malaysia's private higher education since the middle of the 1990s. To accommodate the great majority of local students and some international students, several foreign campuses have been established. Foreign partners that were eager to collaborate closely with private education institutions for a win-win outcome then saw Malaysia as an education hub (Arokiasamy, 2011). Furthermore, according to Rumbley et al (2012), Asian nations tended to export their human capital to the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia.

During the 1990s, famous colleges from those regions expanded to establish satellite campuses in Asian nations like Singapore and Malaysia. Malaysia is one of several Southeast Asian nations that have already created or put in place their own quality control systems. A flexible employment structure being developed by trends like combining universities in Malaysia has made it simpler to hire teaching professionals and researchers from outside as well. Although the trend for educational programming to flow North-South still predominates, one of the more intriguing phenomena is a noticeable increase in South-South movement, like the trends in student mobility (Rumbley et al, 2012).

The research by Tham (2013) revealed that, despite a growing emphasis on research and knowledge creation, government strategies still largely centre on attracting more international students to boost export income. Public and private institutions respond differently to internationalisation goals set by the government because the former have access to research funding while the latter is much more fee-dependent and thus tends to focus on international students as an additional source of revenue. Nevertheless, both view internationalisation goals set by the latter as an end in themselves. As a growing nation, Malaysia must put more emphasis on the need of lifelong learning in order to fulfil the changing demands for skilled employees and additional knowledge workers (Othman et al., 2011). Harun et al. (2018) explored Malaysian university students' descriptions about their cross-cultural interactions with other students on campus. The researchers concluded that the students controlled their social connections on campus by self-implemented and individual tactics for a variety of reasons. Harun et al. (2018) added that as a result of globalization and digitization, the concept of groupism appears to be quite nebulous.

Globalization of Private Universities in Malaysia

With the global reorganisation of higher education, the idea of education as a purely welfare or social benefit has given way to one that is governed by market principles (Arokiasamy, 2011). As stated by Zolfaghari, et al., (2009), the causes for the globalization of higher education are numerous and varied. These factors are always evolving and interconnected; they can be complementary or incongruent depending on the objectives of various stakeholder groups. Governments have been urged to switch from a public policy focused on social good to one based on economic good with the help of the World Bank and OECD. The 1994 World Bank Report on Higher Education advised governments to diversify their university financing sources to include more money from tuition, consulting fees, and donations rather than relying too much on a single (public) source. This results from the notion that education has both societal and individual advantages. Centralized bureaucracies are being dismantled in favour of quasi-markets that place a strong focus on parental choice and competitiveness (Arokiasamy, 2011).

Due to Malaysia's transformation from a sending to a receiving nation in the 3 decades, the internationalisation of higher education in terms of student mobility has undergone a significant transition. The number of international students enrolled has grown steadily over time, with most of the students coming from other emerging nations, particularly China (Tham,

2013). The broad economic, technical, and scientific tendencies known as globalization are understood to have an impact on higher education and are generally unavoidable in the modern world (Guo, & Guo, 2017). It includes markets and rivalry between institutions and between countries, but it also contains much more. The Internet did not exist when the new public management and marketization began, therefore they cannot be attributed to globalization in and of itself. Both can happen simultaneously.

However, changes based on modern public management have been generatively linked to a certain type of globalization in significant ways. The worldwide size of the reform template dissemination has increased the structural and organizational similarity between the various national systems. One argument for change is that institutions and processes are better equipped for the global challenge thanks to competition, performance financing, and openness. Higher education systems have developed into venues for competition and contestations of many types in diverse nations against the backdrop of globalization. Higher levels of demand for fewer openings in higher education and employment have made competition and contestation for access and equality inevitable (Konstantinovskiy, 2012). As a result, policymakers and sociologists should pay close attention to the effects of globalization on strategies adopted to include historically excluded social, ethnic, and racial groups on the one hand, and to meet the needs of the emerging labor market, industry, and the global system on the other. In this regard, studying Malaysia offers a chance to learn from and comprehend the experiences of nations that have implemented neoliberal economic reforms to confront and balance the issues brought on by globalization.

According to Prathap and Ratnavelu (2015), higher education is being impacted by globalization in so many nations. Higher education is facing problems because of globalization in every nation, area, and location. Malaysia's higher education has evolved into a knowledge-based economy because of the competitiveness of the global economy. Malaysia has no universities at all when it became independent in 1957. Since the 1980s, tertiary education has changed from being an elite to a mainstream higher education. Massification has a significant influence on governance, finances, quality, curricula, faculty, and student enrollment, whereas globalization involves the creation of international marketplaces that function in a single financial system with cross-border production mobility.

"The extension and deepening of social, economic, and political interactions across regions and continents" are what is meant by "globalization". It is a multifaceted phenomenon that is supported by the first global networks of communication, information, knowledge, and culture and is geared at creating a single global community. Additionally, it causes changes in

various processes and at various time frames (Ng, 2012). They also emphasize how the new paradigm of governmentality shows a change from flat structures with collegial governance to hierarchical models with imposed management standards for worker performance. Although globalization has good effects on education, some academics contend that the nature of globalization is largely incompatible with the justification for internationalizing higher education and that academic standards and work are under attack. For instance, the marketization and massification of higher education have intensified rivalry among institutions for resources, students, and professors. Faculty members then participate in international marketing initiatives in addition to teaching and research. Globalization is viewed as the universalization of capitalism since it is a market-induced phenomenon (Ng, 2012).

After the University of Malaya was founded in 1959, the first wave of new higher education establishments started. The character and roles of higher education in Malaysia have undergone significant and dramatic change because of the effects of globalization and the growth of the knowledge-based economy. The higher education sectors in most nations confront several issues in a globalized economy, including the growing rivalry between domestic and foreign institutions, gaining a competitive edge in better worldwide rankings, and, finally, the establishment of prestigious institutions as a result. Universities across the world, have started internationalization projects that might result in the creation of branch campuses, cross-cultural collaboration projects, and student exchanges for foreign specialists, the introduction of degree and programme offerings in English (Ziguras, & McBurnie, 2014). By electronically eliminating geographical barriers or through physically located campuses, higher education is a key factor in managing the difficulties of globalization, which has boosted transnational travel. Higher education services exporting first appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but it is currently developing into a Malaysian private, market-driven, and international sector (Chin, 2019). In Malaysia, private higher education has shifted from a supplementary to a primary role in the government's reaction to globalization. Globalization has a significant impact on Malaysian higher education institutions, either directly or indirectly. They support the development of a knowledge society that trades in symbolic products, global brands and images, and scientific expertise (Chin, 2019).

Although the phrase "internationalization" was initially intended to describe businesses growing globally, it is now used in a wide range of sectors. According to Munusamy and Hashim (2019), the internationalization of higher education in Malaysia began in the 1980s. It has been a subject that has gotten a lot of attention over the last 10 years and how it has been transforming higher education, despite how it has been defined and changed over the years.

The goal of international integration is to enhance intercultural, quality, and fairness in higher education, even though internationalization is poorly defined and highly neutral from the standpoint of any position concerned. The term "internationalization" may be defined as systematic and persistent effort aimed at making higher education responsive to the needs and problems associated with the globalization of societies, economy, and labor markets (Hauptman, 2018).

However, there are significant differences in how higher education is delivered today and in earlier decades. Universities support a multi-cultural sensibility, which is increasingly significant and has helped to broaden the diversity of their student body. A student's capacity to compete in the international market may be improved through internationalization, which has the potential to promote cultural awareness. More than simply a fad, internationalization in higher education has become a key focus for academic institutions all around the world. The different programmes that make up global higher education include study abroad, student exchanges, international admissions, and outsourced campuses. This phenomenon might promote cross-cultural understanding and, more significantly, higher levels of knowledge for bright and motivated students (Munadi, 2020).

In addition, internationalization was seen by many nations as essential to reaching global academic standards. In the case of many institutions in affluent nations, doing so will enable students to get the information, skills, and experiences they need to succeed in the global economy and contribute positively to a varied global community. It has been discovered that this just affects institutional assessment systems both internationally and domestically. Numerous institutions of higher learning claim to have plans to become world-class universities by a specific date or that they have already attained this status because of the widespread internationalization of higher education providers worldwide spurred by globalization and the lack of uniformity in ranking systems. The main challenge for scholars currently is the lack of a complete set of indicators and data sources for assessing the level of internationalization of an institution. The wide range of settings, perceptions, justifications, and priorities influencing institutional attitudes and practices tend to constrain such models' ability to analyze the amount of institutional internationalization implementation and perceived relevance in various circumstances.

Regarding emerging nations like Malaysia, internationalization has altered the higher education system's landscape in terms of the makeup of the staff and students, the mobility of the programmes and curricula, and the variety of higher education providers (Ramanathan, 2012). In Malaysia, the internationalization of higher education has mostly focused on boosting

export income through an increase in inbound students, according to research by Tham (2013). This was confirmed by Munusamy and Hashim (2019) in their study on the reasons for the internationalization of higher education in Malaysia, where they discovered that the main reasons for the internationalization of higher education in Malaysia were economic, i.e. revenue generation from international students and the view of higher education as a platform for producing skilled workers for the economy. The basis for income creation may be evident, but the notion that higher education serves as a platform for developing skilled labor for the economy is not; this begs the question of whether the local or global economy is meant. Universities have grown more internationalized in the age of globalization. The idea of a knowledge-driven, global economy has increased demand for universities, which are considered essential institutions in the corporate world, the creation, use, and distribution of knowledge, to enlist the help of talent outside the country (Da Wan, & Morshidi, 2018).

According to Munusamy and Hashim (2019), Malaysian internationalization is not primarily driven by academic justification, one of the four reasons for internationalization. A limited understanding of the notion of internationalization, wherein internationalization is still perceived solely in terms of the number of international students at its higher institutions, may explain why Malaysia's internationalization efforts are focused on economic goals. According to Foster and Carver (2018), the definition of internationalization has changed in recent years to include curriculum issues like curriculum content, pedagogy, how students interact, and the values promoted by the programmes offered, in addition to student recruitment (i.e., where students come from). If properly created and implemented, internationalization of the curriculum might considerably improve the learning environment for all students, assist students in developing a global focus and competencies, and prepare them for the global economy (Munadi, 2020). A country's education system must be able to meet the expectations of the economy in terms of knowledgeable and skilled people if it is to compete in a globally competitive economy (Othman et al., 2011).

3. CONCLUSION

The concept of "internationalization" has changed and developed over time. Internationalisation of higher education is defined differently by different stakeholder groups, including the government, private industry, institution, faculty, academic field, and students. We are at a turning point, and new initiatives and methods must make sure that global higher education serves the public interest as well as financial gain (Altbach, & Knight, 2007).

Implementation of internationalization has increased in education during the course of this century. Governments now place a strong emphasis on developing global interchange and cooperation in higher education, and as such, institutions and universities create their own strategies to internationalise their research and teaching. It can be concluded that the causes for the globalization in higher education differ across and within nations. In certain nations, international higher education will be widely accessible, while in others it will only be a "niche market." These are the driving forces behind the expansion of higher education abroad and the range of courses and institutions in Malaysia. The upward mobility of higher education follows the trends of globalization and private universities play a pivotal role as a education hub in promoting English to attract more international students as well as to enhance students' mobility. Universities in ASEAN must understand and admit that academic institutions have always been a component of the global knowledge system, and that they are even more related to global trends in the age of change and digitization, as supported by Khalid et al. (2019).

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Enriching International Students' Experiences through Malaysian Amazing Arts, Culture and Heritage (MAACH) Programme

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia aims to become the hub of international higher education. It is parallel with the current market trends that showed Asian universities are now becoming the main choice among international students to further their tertiary education. On becoming the best higher education provider, the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education has tabled its own internationalisation plans and policies, expanding upon and going beyond the guidelines set out by the Malaysian government. Apart from that, the Malaysian government and its related institutions came out with plans, procedures, and resources to entice overseas students together with the efforts taken by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The objectives of this study is to explore the factors behind migrating international students to Malaysia for higher study and examine the experiences that they face during studying at a Malaysian university. Third-country students choose Malaysia to further their higher education because of scholarships and grants, various initiatives, extended visas, high-quality education, social security, and rankings of universities. Additional appealing elements like tuition costs, ideological and cultural compatibility, language skills, job availability, and simple immigration procedures might affect their decision. However, the above-mentioned privileges are also certainly offered by other countries. Therefore, this research aims to comprehend the other justified reasons why international students decide to pursue their higher education in Malaysian universities, with a special focus on East-Coast universities. This research also makes an effort to analyze the experiences experienced by international students during their study period in Malaysia. The primary theoretical framework for discussing the findings of the study is the "Push and Pull factors" approach. Interviews were conducted with 25 international students enrolled in postgraduate programs at the East Coast universities in Malaysia. Education quality, world-class institutions, social security, the standard of living, simple application procedures, and Malaysia's amazing arts, culture, and heritage (MAACH) are recognized as major "pull factors" behind the decision of international students in choosing Malaysia as a higher education destination. Meanwhile, Social insecurity, political instability, educational opportunity and quality of the home country, personal choice, and job opportunity are found to be the major "push factors." The findings of this research offer prospective international students the best consequences they will experience when studying in Malaysia.

Keywords: Higher education, international students, Malaysia, amazing arts, Culture and Heritage (MAACH), push and pull factors.

1. INTRODUCTION

International students from third countries are a common occurrence in Malaysia's higher education sector, and their presence has taken on substantial political, social, cultural, and

economic significance. According to OECD (2013), nearly 0.8 million international students were enrolled in different educational institutions across the world in 1975 which increased to approximately 4 million in the present time. Teaching courses in English in non-English-speaking countries is one of the major considerations behind this proliferation. Because of this reason Malaysia, a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), has experienced an increase in the third country nationals as students in higher education institutions over recent years. According to the report from MOHE 2011, Malaysia had 28.3 million multiethnic residents and 20 state universities, 50 private universities, six branch campuses of international institutions, 403 active private colleges, 30 polytechnics, and 73 public community colleges. These Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) provide a variety of tertiary degrees at reasonable costs. However, the number of students decreased after 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic all over the world. Despite high tuition fees, third-country nationals are attracted to Malaysia higher education institutions and according to MOHE (2011), more than a million students in 2011, of which about 93,000 were international students from more than 100 countries. Most of the ASEAN countries identify the advantages of foreign students and graduates as skilled migrants due to their innovation, language skill, contribution to social integrity, and meeting labor demand. Lerke, (2020) points out international education as a good foundation for intercultural learning and network expansion. According to the opinion of Blackmore et al., (2017), international education can be beneficial if the host country can accept foreign students into the labor market. Promoting the mobility of international students has been part of the ASEAN's relocation policies since 2013 whereby the MEB (Malaysia Education Blueprint) 2013-2025 aims to put Malaysia among the top one-third of the best education systems in the world beyond 2025 in line with the ASEAN adopted a (non-binding) resolution on the admission of third-country nationals to the territory of the member states for study purposes. As a member of ASEAN, the regulations on foreign students in Malaysia have been influenced by ASEAN law regarding this issue. A proposal on visa extension for six months for job seeking in Malaysia after the graduation of third county students was proposed by a parliamentary committee in March 2011. The Malaysian government has scholarship programs for international students. The scholarships and grants of about approximately 250 million Malaysian Ringgit for international students are provided by the Malaysian government. Third-country students choose Malaysia for higher education for a variety of reasons, including the strategies, actions, and resources the universities and Malaysian government have taken to actively recruit international students and welcome them in Malaysia, such as scholarships and grants, various projects, extended visas, etc. However, other factors like tuition costs,

ideological compatibility, language skills, job availability, simple immigration procedures, etc., may also affect a student's decision.

Over the last several years, there has been a surge in the number of foreign students opting to attend institutions internationally for their further education. The choices for higher education destinations are influenced by factors like the choice of the university itself, which depends on the University's ranking, course rating and also tuition fees and living expenses. Lippmann, & Curtis, (2017) also assert some critical factors including personal reasons, institution image, country image effect and program evaluation which dominate their decision. It is not to be exaggerated to state that like other third-country nationals, international students are also attracted to study in Malaysia because of these factors as well as the strategies taken by the Malaysian government and universities. However, Heublein, (2014) contends on the issue of choice of higher education institution and describes it as an irrational process. On the other hand, according to Chininga, et al, (2019), the decision of making choice is a recurrent, complicated notion including three correlated elements: context, key influencers, and selectors. In addition, Malaysian universities appreciate the worth of the experience of cross-cultural students and the global influence of education and research. So, the students through strategic partnerships and exchange programs are very much significant. The society and culture of the host country's campus are predominantly influenced by the international students as well as the development of research and innovation in the host country is also affected.

The purpose of the study is to examine and discuss the factors that lead international students to choose Malaysia and Malaysian universities as their overseas higher education destinations. It also describes the gathered experiences of international students who migrated to Malaysia.

The researcher tried to find out feasible answers to the following questions:

- Q1. What are the factors behind migrating international students to Malaysia for higher study?
- Q2. What are the experiences they face during studying at a Malaysian university?

Literature on Malaysian Amazing Arts, Culture and Heritage (MAACH) Programme

Higher Education's Global and Internationalization: A lot of studies have been conducted on the impact of internationalization and globalization on global education. According to Shahjahan (2016), higher education institutions can be considered the most international institutions in certain ways as knowledge is universal. Both globalization and internationalization highly impact higher education, however, these two are opposite concepts.

Hill (2008) describes globalization as a tumultuous circumstance as it overlooks and outstrips national borders which creates global trends and competition by putting significant impacts in the global knowledge economy, for instance research, enrollment of students, branches of schools, franchising, etc. Thus, Badry and Willoughby (2016) pointed out globalization as the patron of “corporatization” of universities changing spirit and nature to complete the global market effectively which turns the education sector into a source of trade in many developing countries. On the other hand, Morosini et al, (2017) describe internationalization is a way to create relations of global collaboration and mobility. In a nutshell, globalization is more about a competition where internationalization pays heed to strategic relations. In the discourse on the internationalization of higher education, the most stated topic is the physical mobility of students. The topic was discussed on a large scale after the second world war and assumed as a key to eliminating enmity among nations and creating mutual understanding and cooperation and became prominent in the 90s. Student mobility expanded widely in that period and the concept of internationalization of universities with substantial professional support, international strategies and policies became prominent. Under this circumstance of globalization and internationalization of higher education, external and internal environment play an important role in mobility. Teichler (2017) further continued that physical mobility and knowledge transfer are the factors of border crossing which is one of the main ideas of internationalization in Higher Education. Another concept mentioned by him is ‘diversification’ which indicates a changed direction of particular activities towards being more international. Le Ha (2013) states that internationalization of higher education has been geared up by globalization. Thus, the two-term ‘internationalization’ and ‘globalization’ are sometimes confusing and can be used alternatively. Knight (2017) defines internationalization as one of the ways of responding a country to globalization while maintaining the individuality of the nation.

Internationalization of Higher Education: ASEAN and Malaysia in most of the literature on internationalization of higher education are found to give emphasis on Canada, the USA, the United Kingdom, and Australia, - the predecessor of internationalization of higher education. To draw in international students, several nations have embraced the internationalisation of their educational institutions. As a consequence, many international students now choose to pursue higher education in ASEAN nations. The majority of the literature groups the study along with more general categories, such "ASEAN" or "Asian nations," for instance. In ASEAN, more institutions (61%) have internationalisation policies than in other regions of the globe, which are lower than ASEAN. Additionally, the

internationalisation policies of many ASEAN organisations clearly distinguish between actions taking place inside the ASEAN framework for regional cooperation and globalisation in general. The ASEAN nations have created their own internationalisation plans and policies, building on and going beyond the guidelines set out by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Push-Pull Model: The push and pull model is inspired by the work of Ernst Ravenstein (1885), who argued that migration is affected by push and pull factors. The push factors are mostly related to the degrees of oppression, frustration, inequalities, and severe economic situations that are pushing the migrants to migrate to an appropriate destination. While the pull factors can be perceived as something that has to do with the destination countries. The pull factors, therefore, manifest the gains that the individual believes can be achieved in the destination countries, such as job opportunities, freedom of choice, education, healthcare, and freedom of movement. Moreover, Ravenstein contributed to this model by formulating laws and regulations related to migration. The essence of his contribution emphasizes that migration is affected by the host countries in terms of economic development. It is still crucial to note that economic factors reinforce migration. This perspective refers to the opportunities and gains that many migrants would like to achieve when they migrate to developed countries. The push-pull model enables an understanding of the reasons why migrants are leaving their countries of origin. It can also be considered multidimensional because it combines different substantive factors such as economic, political, cultural, and social. According to Maringe, & Carter (2007), this model has evolved to include the significance of the rational decision-making role, which allows the individual to select between either staying in the country of origin or migrating to the destination country. Maringe and Carter's argument illustrates reasons for migration which include factors that are connected to the home countries and the destination countries. Maringe, & Carter (2007) consider various factors that affect the individual's decision to migrate. These factors are connected to the destination countries that the migrants intend to migrate to and the gains that they believe they will achieve when migrating. Additionally, some factors are related to the obstacles that the migrants might encounter while migrating. These obstacles include migration laws and regulations, the physical distance from their home countries, and personal factors. Maringe, & Carter introduced the so-called 'plus', 'minus' and 'zero' in order to illustrate the process of migration. The 'plus' refers to certain factors that motivate the migrants to migrate. In other words, it refers to the gains. While 'minus' refers to the factors that do not encourage the migration process. The 'zero' set is related to indifferent factors that certain individuals may find positive and other individuals may find negative. It relies on personal factors. Thus, the set of 'plus', 'zero' and 'minus' are related to the

individual's evaluation and calculation. In other words, the same variable and factor can be interpreted differently in the origin and destination countries depending on the personal reasons of the individual. Maringe and Carter's analysis concerning intervening obstacles can be divided between the migrants' origin countries and the destination countries. It clarifies that in the origin countries, there are obstacles that prevent people from migrating. These obstacles include the costs of the trip or migration, poor health, and the geographical distance between the origin countries and the destination countries. Additionally, migration policies constitute a major intervening obstacle that has intrinsic effects on the migrants in the destination countries. This paper looks at Malaysia as a typical migration destination that has attracted thousands of foreigners. This is relevant and reminiscent of Uysal, Li & Sirakaya's model concerning the factors (including economic gains) that influence migrants in choosing their destination countries. According to Maringe and Carter, migrants used to estimate the advantages and disadvantages of a potential destination country in terms of job opportunities, education, legal status, and social life. However, some migrants find out that they have not taken into consideration the difficult circumstances that they might encounter in their destination countries. This will be explicitly developed by analyzing the views and experiences of the interviewees. The push and pull model is an influential model that has made remarkable contributions in terms of understanding the factors that cause migrants to make decisions concerning migration. However, it does not reveal the influence of migration and how it affects both the destination and the origin countries.

The Push and Pull Theory: The classic theory of push and pull factors can impact the decision of students studying abroad. A lot of data on the decision-making process of international students can be provided by the theory. The "push and pull" theory of population migration was first introduced by an American expert named E.S. Lee in the 1960s by determining two factors "push" and "pull". Later, these three factors combine into population mobility. The students have to face at least three different phases while taking decisions for higher studies related to the three factors. The chronological order of students' decisions for the higher study includes deciding to study abroad rather than at home which is dominated by "push factors", then choosing the destination influenced by the "pull factors" and finally selecting a particular institution which is dominated by additional "pull factors" that make the institution more preferable. Ahmad and Buchanan (2016) indicate while choosing a study destination, pupils from China, India, Indonesia, and Taiwan also have to experience these three stages influenced by 'push' and 'pull' factors. The interaction of push and pull factors impacts the decision of students for higher education abroad. They indicate 'push factors' as

home country aspects as well as 'pull factors' as host country features. According to Dago and Barussaud (2021), the "Push" factors and the "Pull" factors can inspire students to study abroad and influence the students' decisions.

The Push Factors: To make international learning decisions "push factors" play an important role. First of all, the decision is associated with the selection of where to study—home or abroad. At this stage, the "Push" factors are very important. Ahmad, Buchanan and Ahmad (2016) show that choosing international education over local is the initial attempt of the students for higher studies which is influenced by 'push' factors. To be specific, as students are not satisfied with the quality of education in their own country, they look for the global standard of higher education. Some students who do not get access to local universities are "pushed" from their home countries. The lack of relevant study opportunities at home universities especially in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East makes pursuing higher education very tough. In the majority of the related studies, students' expectations of experiencing a new culture and developing their own personality as well as the expectation of international experience for being positive for future careers are found. And this is related to personal factors also. The anticipated global standard of education and range of global or multicultural experiences that they assume to have abroad in comparison to their domestic countries compared to that in their native countries push the students. LeBoeuf, Shafir and Bayuk, (2010) figure out that the students take their own decision, however, the immediate family members influence them while taking decisions. In making a final decision recommendation of parents, relatives, friends and other "gatekeepers" play as a key factor. Among the "push factors" mentioned by Larbi and Fu (2017) are improved employment opportunities, language proficiency advancement, and exposure to a foreign culture. Medium of teaching is a key factor in enrollment of international students. The Malaysian universities offer highest English taught courses in ASEAN which is preferable for international and exchange students and thus makes Malaysia becomes participant in the international education market. English-speaking environment is an important factor to international students to study abroad. However, the authors indicate pull factors including host country's academic reputation, cultural difference and geographical distance from home country, living cost, tuition fee, program suitability and so on.

The Pull Factors: In the Second stage, the "Pull" factors dominates the preference of the destination. "Pull" refers to those features which make the selected country more preferable to international students. According to Rodriguez González et al. (2011), the host country's academic reputation, cultural diversity, physical distance from the home country, cost of living,

tuition fees, and programme appropriateness are the pull factors that make the destination more preferable. According to Dima (2002) Financial status can affect the students' decision to study abroad. Higher fees decrease the number of applicants. To intrigue international students reducing tuition fees is one of the best ways. The number of students decreased after 2010 because of the tuition fees introduced by Malaysia in 2011 for the non-ASEAN and the third country students. When families decide to send their children studying abroad, tuitions fees and living expenses play the most important role. International scholarships and fellowships, establishing new international partnerships and collaboration impact the stature of the education system of a country implicitly. The Malaysian government has scholarships programs for international students. Approximately 50 million Malaysian Ringgit in scholarships and grants to international students are provided by the Malaysian government. However, the number of scholarships is not enough for international students for instance Asian students with poor financial backgrounds.

The Third stage is about selecting an institution which also includes some “Pull” factors. This usually considers the global status of institutions, market profiles, a resource used, promotion and marketing, and so on. Lam et al. (2011) classifies ‘push’ factors as personal growth, language and career and ‘pull’ factors as college, physical geography and culture. In addition, they include visa issues and money as ‘structural “factors. To decide higher education destination, reputation of educational institutions plays a crucial role. The global status and ranking of the universities are the most dominating factors to draw attention of international students. Before choosing an institution student look into reputation, past experience, and marketing activities. Furthermore, factors like academic status, quality of teachers, academic opportunities are also crucial. A study conducted among students from four countries by Hazelkorn (2007) conveys that the status of institutions is considered as the most important factor in taking decision. According to Papademetriou and Sumption (2013) students’ choice of study destination depends on the immigration policies of the host country. Immigration policies such as job opportunities and citizenship impact the decision in studying abroad. The selection of a nation or university may be impacted by restrictions on visa applications, employment opportunities throughout the study period, and/or a lack of resources for academic, social, and linguistic support.

Expectation and Experience: Expectations refer to a cultural emphasis on the future standard of life and financial security. The availability of job opportunities and the possibility of emigration is also included in expectations. Students studying in abroad want to serve on the basis of qualification and merit as well as expect to be assured that it will make them more

potential for finding employment. A study by Wiers-Jenssen et al., (2020) in Japan finds that mobile students seek for and have more work experience abroad than non-mobile students did. If the expectations and choices, set before leaving the domestic country, are fulfilled then it is a satisfying experience for the students. Contact with local culture is very important for international students for studying abroad. Culture refers to the interpretation of human behavior which encompasses beliefs, values, norms, and social practices. Gu et al., (2010) show that students expect to have a new cultural experience. It is obvious that international students belong to different cultures, languages and religions, cultural and social backgrounds which vary from the host cultures. In this case, it refers to Malaysian Amazing Arts, Culture and Heritage (MAACH) Programme, such as traditional cultural arts activities. It is very common that students may find alienated and outsiders in the host country. Some of their important values are likely to be ignored in the host country and vice versa. Wu et al., (2015) find out that the sense of loss can be created from the differences in values, and belief attitudes between the host and domestic country which may create a huge pressure on the student. The international students' experiences can constitute an intermingle of factors including their family and personal history, previous experience of mobility, and personality which impact on life satisfaction of them. Life satisfaction refers to the individual's contentment with life, aspirations, and achievements. Studying in another country will have implications for different domains in life. Abeuova and Muratbekova-Touron (2019) state that studying abroad may appear as a self-realization project for the student which can make them more open-minded.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Study Area: The biggest corridor in Malaysia has been called East Coast Malaysia and includes Kelantan, Terengganu, and Pahang. In Malaysia, it is the corridor with the fastest growth. It has for public universities including Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu and Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin. This is combination of comprehensive, focused and Malaysian Technical University Network-MTUN universities with a clear emphasis. With 10337 students enrolled in 25 foreign programmes, there are more than 60 different nations represented. To perform the study, the researcher purposefully chose the overseas students who are remaining and attending these colleges.

Method: The researcher selected universities located on the east coast, of Malaysia as the area of his study. To gather the purposive information related to the factors and experiences of the migrated students from all over the world to these universities, the

qualitative method was selected as the most convenient to conduct the study. To analyze the correlation between theory and research qualitative research is a feasible and empirical method. Guba & Lincoln (1994) state that qualitative research is an interpretive and naturalistic approach.

3. DATA COLLECTION METHOD

Interview: The interview method was chosen by the researcher for facilitating the data collection from the respondents. The researcher found semi-structured interviews as the appropriate method for data collection. The advantage of a semi-structured interview is that it allows the participants to express their thoughts freely and which makes provides rich and direct information to the researcher. According to Szombatová (2016) through the semi-structured interview, the researcher can gather qualitative data according to his need. Zhang and Wildemuth (2009) mentioned a semi-structured interview as a combination of the structured and unstructured interview where the researcher is flexible to ask not only the predetermined open-ended questions but also questions that arise from the answers of the respondents. A list of pre-determined open-ended guided questions was prepared before conducting the semi-structured interview to meet the objective.

Sampling / Participants: The sample for the study was selected through a purposive sampling technique. According to Karatas et al., (2015), this is a nonrandom technique that allows the researcher to select people who can and are interested to provide information according to their knowledge and experience. The participants were selected deliberately through homogenous sampling who possess some common characteristics. According to Etikan, Musa & Alkassim (2016), in this sampling researcher selects participants who commonly have particular characteristics, for instance, the respondents may share a similarity in terms of ages, cultures, jobs, or life experiences. They also focus on the relationship between the homogenous characteristics and the research topic. The participants for the study were selected based on their homogeneous characteristics.

The characteristics were: they were an international student that has the active status of study in that particular university, their current status should be active studentship, registered at university or institute in East Coast universities in Malaysia, and currently physically residing in East Coast universities in Malaysia. Considering those criteria, the potential students were contacted through mobile, messenger, and WhatsApp for participating in a face-to-face interview. The students who showed their interest and provide a schedule were selected finally.

Thus 5 respondents were interviewed in this qualitative interview. Though the researcher tried and was interested to conduct more interviews adverse covid-19 situations, social distancing, respondent's availability and time constraints made the list limited to 25. The respondents are anonymous and came from all over the world to East Coast universities in Malaysia, Malaysia for studying 2 years for master's and Ph.D's programmes at East Coast universities in Malaysia University. Among them, 10 were male and the rest 15 were female.

Materials and Devices: While conducting the research study few materials and devices were used to get the information from the respondents. These were the consent forms, android mobile to record the interview with due permission of participants, a laptop to store and summarize data and convert information from audio to visual and in written form, headphones, and the guided semi-structured interview questions. The guided questions were divided into 3 sections which included the background of the respondent in the first part, interview questions related to their migration to East Coast universities in Malaysia, Malaysia, and the factors of home and host country in the second part, and questions related to their experiences, challenges and required skill in the third section.

Data Collection: Both primary and secondary sources were used to get the data. The researcher's in-person interviews with foreign students served as the major source, while secondary data were gathered through publications in books, journals, and internet sources. The respondents' agreement was obtained by the researcher in order to conduct the study. Statistical analysis of quantitative data was performed using the Microsoft Excel application.

Procedures Preparatory works for the interview and materials were ready then the respondents communicated their schedules. They shared the approximate duration of the interview so that they prepared for the session and selected the place of the interview. Also shared that the session will be recorded. After having a consensus with respondents, the researcher confirmed the schedule and the place. At the scheduled time the interview was conducted in a friendly environment where the respondents enjoyed their freedom of giving opinions. Before starting the interview, the researcher briefed the research title and objective and confirmed the signing of the consent paper. The whole interview was recorded. Thus 25 interviews were conducted and stored for interpretation and descriptive discussion.

Data Summarize, Result, and Interpretation When the interviews were completed the voice records of the interviews were copied from mobile to laptop. Thus, the audio information was stored on the laptop. After conducting all the targeted interviews, the researcher tried to interpret the audio and transcribe the interviews accurately. Microsoft Excel software was used

to summarize the information of the respondents. The research questions were coded as RQ1 and RQ2 with subdivision and the respondents were coded as Anonymous1 to 25.

4. DISCUSSION

As the nature of choosing a higher education institution for higher study is complex (Briggs, 2006; Soutar & Turner, 2002), a lot of push and pull factors are found. Among those the major push factors from the home country were social insecurity, people's perception of labor division, corruption, law and order, job scope and satisfaction, crimes, conservativeness and social discrimination, adverse urban life and family issues influences, as well as personal career motivation, acted main force to migrate in Malaysia. The pull factors identified by Lam et al. (2011) that make the destination more appealing include the academic standing of the host country, the cultural and physical distance from the home country, the cost of living, the cost of tuition, and the appropriateness of the programme. Malaysia as a receiver country there are a lot of attractiveness and pull factors which include social security, calmness, and peaceful life, the highest quality of education system with world-ranked public renowned universities, an easy application process with comparative fewer tuition fees, favorable visa processing, recognition of the western degrees and diversification of advanced knowledge. The interaction of push and pull factors impacts the decision of students to higher education in Malaysia (see Figure 1). To decide higher education destination, the reputation of educational institutions plays a crucial role. Though East Coast universities in Malaysia are located in northern Malaysia with harsh weather, the reputation of East Coast universities in Malaysia university and their international fame encourage them to migrate here as their study destination. To be specific, as students are not satisfied with the quality of education in their own country, they look for a better quality of higher education (Lee, 2017).

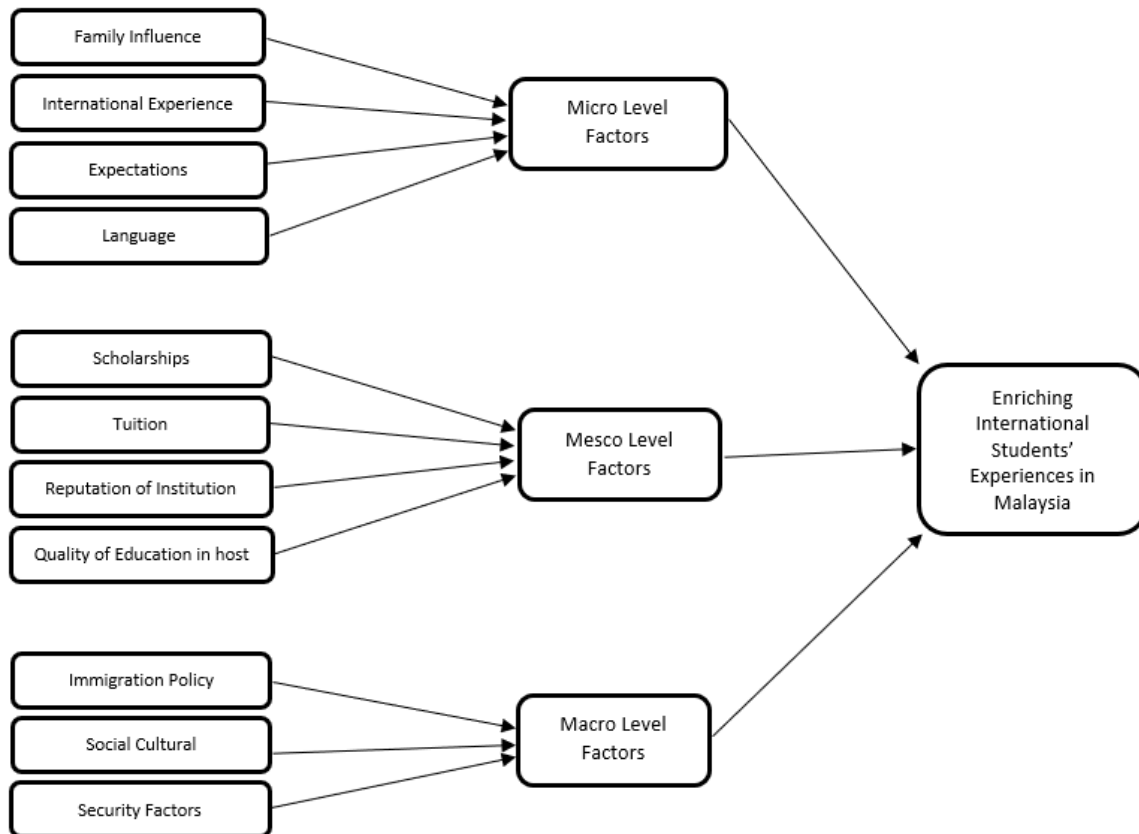


Figure 1: Model of factors affecting international students' experiencing of study in Malaysia

This study analyzes Micro-level factors (Family Influence, Gaining International Experience, Expectation, Language, etc.), Meso-level factors (Scholarships, Tuitions, Reputation of the Institution, and Quality of Education in host country), and Macro-level factors (Immigration Policy, Security Factors, and Social Culture) to find out the factors influencing international students to study in Malaysia. It is obvious that international students belong to different cultures, languages, and religions which vary in Malaysia. Students expect to have new cultural experiences. After migrating the students experienced real Malaysian life, society, and culture. Contact with local culture is very important for international students for studying abroad. By the influence of push and pull factors, international students arrive in Malaysia with certain expectations. The availability of job opportunities and the possibility of emigration are included in the expectations. If the expectations and choices, set before leaving the domestic country, are fulfilled then it is a satisfying experience for the students which makes the students settle in the host country. International students' first-hand experience of Malaysian life, society, and culture influence their future plans regarding careers and life. The absence of labor division and equal respect for all people despite their race, origin, religion, ethnicity, and

gender, the diversified culture of cross-continent, calm and peaceful life, and social security inspires them most to lead their plan to stay in Malaysia as their future destination. Though the study expenses and living cost is comparatively higher than the other ASEAN countries and obviously very high compared to third world countries. Again, the students are considering the expenses as an investment so that after completing academic education they will manage a job and thus secure their life in Malaysia and their future generation.

5. CONCLUSION

Despite the tuition fees introduced by Malaysia for non-ASEAN and third country students after 2010, International students remain attracted to Malaysia because of certain reasons. The chronological order of students' decisions for higher study includes deciding to study abroad rather than at home which is influenced by "push factors", then choosing the country dominated by the "pull factors" and finally selecting a particular institution which is dominated by additional "pull factors" that make the institution more preferable. The introduction provides the objectives of the research which discuss the factors influencing international students who migrated to Malaysia and especially in the universities in Malaysia along with their experiences gathered during their current academic period. Through the qualitative approach and the interview with 25 international students of the selected University, a good number of factors were shared by the respondents which were analyzed and discussed to address the student's migration from other countries.

The purpose of this study is to examine the factors that influence international students' experiences through Malaysian Amazing Arts, Culture and Heritage (MAACH) programme. According to the results from in-depth interviews, all the propositions we put forward at the beginning of the study are supported. Gaining international experience (micro level factor), expectations (micro level factor), reputation of institutions (the medium level factor) are the three most important factors affecting international students as it relates to choosing Malaysian institutions. These factors also demonstrate the importance of both the micro level and the meso level factors, and Malaysian institutions can focus on these factors to improve the publicity strategy and meet the target students' needs. In general, this study helps Malaysian institutions better understand international students' choice of destination. A large number of data collected from different types of international students reflect their current ideas. This information can help Malaysian institutions improve their strategies and communication mechanisms to attract more international students to Malaysian universities.

The result of the study shows that better and secured life, higher education and international degree, professional integrity, high standard of education, the possibility of settling in ASEAN etc. mainly motivates international students to study in Malaysia. It finds out unemployment, job opportunity, corruption, political unrest, social insecurity, discrimination etc. as the major push factors for international students which make them leave their home country. Additionally, students' decision-making must take into account factors like improved employment possibilities, linguistic advancement, and exposure to other cultures. Strategies, measures, and tools were taken by the universities and Malaysian government to actively recruit international students and welcome them to Malaysia including scholarships and grants, different projects, extended visas etc. play an important role behind third-country students choosing Malaysia for higher studies. The study points out that the easy application process, the reputation of the university and standard of education, social security, peaceful environment, equal opportunity, easy visa process etc. play as the main pull factors for international students to choose Malaysia as their destination. Western life standards, absence of discrimination and labor division, and the possibility of permanent residency are also some factors mentioned by the participants. These factors both clearly are related to the expectation and experience of the students studying in Malaysia which may impact the future planning of their life and career. Though the students face some challenges during living in Malaysia. It is very common that students may find alienated and outsiders in the host country. Some of their important values are likely to be ignored in the host country and vice versa. Language, weather, food, culture, high living expenditures, time variation, introverted people etc. are some challenges mentioned by the participants. However, the overall experience of the international students in Malaysia is positive and up to their expectations. If the expectations and choices, set before leaving the domestic country, are fulfilled then it is a satisfying experience for the students.

To overcome the challenges, the respondents mention some recommendations which include Malaysian language proficiency, driving, technical knowledge, a positive attitude towards all jobs, professionalism, and punctuality. Mastering these skills can help the students to adjust to the new socio-cultural condition which may cause their self-realization of themselves. Studying abroad may appear as a self-realization project for the student which can make them more open-minded. To conclude it can be said that the push factors of the home country and the pull factors of the host country facilitate a positive trend of student migration from other countries to Malaysia. Moreover, the personal motivation of students for eastern life, academic and professional degree, and Malaysia's welcoming and favorable

migration policies to international students are also dominants to choose to study here and migrate for settled down after completing their studies.

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Research as Diplomatic Tools in Strengthening International Collaboration

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ABSTRACT

Research has plays significant roles in the development of technological solutions and contributes to the development of one's nation and country. Due to hefty amount of monetary requirement, longer time span for a result, and higher risk for completion, an innovative approach is desired. Research collaboration, an external matching grant, and universities-industry paired scheme are the efforts made by Malaysian government, specifically Ministry of Higher Education, as the largest recipient for managing research grant in Malaysia. It perceived that research is now as diplomatic tools, for finding, matching, pairing, and even managing Malaysia research community with international research community, research firms, or even foreign government. Using cases as a reference, this study found that research not only contributes to the embarking new knowledge and advancing modern technologies, but it also serves as diplomatic tools in strengthening international collaboration. It is hope that the government will consider a more research funds, because it not only benefitting Malaysia internally, but also paving for Malaysia as potential international collaborators, thus enhancing Malaysia prestige internationally

Keywords: Research; diplomatic tools; international collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

Throughout history, research plays significant role in the development of technological solutions and contributes to the development of a person, institution or even a nation or country at large. From a decent way of living, embark to a complexity of hierarchical society, to an existence of huge empire, research does play vital role. An Ancient Egypt, Greek, Arabs, and Western civilizations evidences the advanced of technology of its times. How is that possible? From the definition itself, as the creation of new knowledge and the use of existing knowledge in a new and creative way to generate new concepts, methodologies and even understandings to any social, physical, nonphysical phenomenon permits the development of such entities. Accordingly, in a Cambridge Dictionary defines research as a detailed study of a subject, especially to discover latest information or reach a new understanding.

However, due to the various challenges faced on doing research, such as a requirement of hefty budget, the longer time required, or higher risk for completion, an innovative, win-win

sharing opportunities and out of the box collaboration is desired. International collaboration becomes one of the approaches in making research activities continues embark for a frontier of knowledge, sharing experience, even finding for a common good. This can be evidence, when Covid19 struck the health system globally, global superpower countries play part in finding solution. The United States, China, Russia, even European Union rallying to find vaccines. As Ju, Sannusi, and E. Mohamad, (2022) explains, despite both China and United States perceived in race for public goods, somehow it also making research as a diplomatic tool, and directly contributing to the global community.

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Higher Education is responsible for the strategic planning and directing the national research through fundamental grant management. In 9th Malaysia Plan, the ministry received an allocation of 285 million from the Economic Planning Unit as central agency to pave for a fundamental research grant, let alone a million from international collaboration activities. It does not only contribute to the amount of research activities, but also making a potential visibility among research community globally, enhancing ranking and rating of higher education system in Malaysia, and potentially increasing Malaysia economic income. Thus, this study will analyze programs and projects that involved international collaboration, in which subsequently contribute to the prestige of Malaysia higher education.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of research is to inform action, gather evidence for theories development, and to contribute to the developing knowledge in a field of study. Therefore, it understood that research is a tool for building knowledge and facilitating learning. Besides that, it is important to promote for finding the truths and disapprove lies. Apart from it, research also encourage to find, gauge, and seize the opportunities. That is why, the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and South Korea were the top five countries with research and development expenditure in the world (Statista, 2022). Historically, it can be analyzed through the approach of Swedish initiative (E. Paglia, 2021). Further evidence showed that, in terms of numbers of scientific publications, China was ranked number 1st with global share of 20.67%, followed by United States and India (World Economic Forum, 2022). Therefore, it can conclude that, research, besides contributing for a common good of humanities, it also plays an effective role as diplomacy tools.

When it comes to diplomatic tools, Aranda (2022) coins the term science diplomacy as interrelates the concept of science diplomacy with other current forms of external action, such as economic diplomacy, public diplomacy, people-to-people diplomacy, or cultural diplomacy.

In fact, all these terms can be regarded as smart power (H. Altin, 2022). Therefore, research could be acknowledged as one of the sources of soft power, that outcome obtained through attraction and persuasion, rather than coercion or forms of payment (J. Joseph S. Nye, 2019). In that regard, Malaysia, also taking into account the needs for not only economic diplomacy or science diplomacy, but innovation diplomacy which appears as an element that can be better define, or characterise specific diplomatic practices (Griset, 2020). This is what Fernand Braudel termed as 'Civilization Materielle' as it doubly connected to the world of knowledge and ideas (R. Cameron, 1978; G. Garner, 2010; G. Ribeiro, 2011; T. Tanioka, 2001; R. E. Lee, 2018).

Universities, as knowledge institutions, plays a major role in understand current trends, latest development or even new breakthrough technology, knowledge or even valid information. The increasing complexity of ecological life was contributed by identification of universities, often with high reputation and cutting-edge research members. Academia, after all is the key partner in the search for answers to pressing concern of social and environmental issues. Universities plays a bridge between different communities of practice (D. Armitage et al, 2015; D. J. Weerts and L. R. Sandmann, 2010; A. Barua et al. 2021). Thus, it is evidenced that research plays important roles as diplomatic tools in enhancing and strengthening international collaboration. Universities does play a major role in research engagement, by passing its organized anarchies, which led to the innovation adoption, through research activities bilaterally.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study analyzed cases from Malaysia efforts in planning and managing several initiatives involving collaboration from several international bodies and foreign countries. Such initiatives were from special grants opportunities involving countries like Japan, French, and Spain. Two more countries are at the preliminary stage involving United States and China. All these initiatives packaged as MyPAiR. While there are also grant opportunities involving international bodies, such as Erasmus+, governs by European Council. Author then analyzes those cases and presents the detail in discussion. Problems, challenges and recommendation may be found in the following passage.

4. DISCUSSION

The biggest amount collaboration involving foreign countries, so far were the Japanese. Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) Malaysia has given substantial funding to support and match the international research programs under MyPAiR initiative which is the Science and

Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) from the Japanese Government. The technical collaboration between Malaysia and Japan are through the implementation of the SATREPS through the ministry since 2011. In fact, SATREPS project is not only in Malaysia, but also involved various countries, for example Sri Lanka, Peru, South Africa, Myanmar, Laos, Afghanistan, Croatia and Indonesia (Alagu, T. Ban, H. Tsujimoto, ... M. M.-W. I., 2022; H. Nakamichi, M. Iguchi, ... H. T.-J. of D., and undefined 2019; F. Yamazaki, C. Zavala, S. Nakai, ... S. K.-J. of D., and undefined 2013; Ž. Arbanas et al., 2017; R. Durrheim, H. Ogasawara, M. Nakatani, and Y. Yabe, 2012; K. Meguro, G. H.-J. of D. Research, and undefined 2018; K. Konagai, A. Karunawardena, and K. Sassa, 2021. SATREPS is a joint research program that span out from 3 to 5 years between Japan and developing countries that aims to find solutions to issues of a global scale. The collaboration is focused on the fields on environment and energy, bio-resources, disaster prevention and mitigation and also infectious diseases control. It is part of Japan's "science and technology diplomacy" that collaboratively pursued by the science and technology sector and the diplomatic sector to promote mutual development. To date, this initiative has funded 9 projects since 2011.

MOHE has also collaborated with the United Kingdom (UK). MOHE partnership with the UK Government through the Newton-Ungku Omar Fund (NUOF) and British Council has been very successful, particularly in Non-Communicable Diseases, Climate and Environmental Resilience, and STEM Education, among other themes. The Newton Fund builds scientific and innovation partnerships with 17 partner countries including Malaysia to support their economic development and social welfare, and to develop their research and innovation capacity for long-term sustainable growth. A total of 6 programs comprises of 34 projects has been funded through this partnership.

Research as diplomatic tools has been extended to France. This can be evidenced through France and Malaysia joint funding program for the innovative development and high-level joint research projects, known as Hubert Curien Partnership Hibiscus (PHC Hibiscus). The PHC Hibiscus program is meant to intensify further both country efforts and to imagine and prepare future developments. The cooperation will develop synergies between the research communities of the two countries in order to create structured and sustainable high standards research networks recognized at the European and international level. After the successful implementation of the PHC-Hibiscus in 2019 and 2020 conducted in collaboration of MOHE with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and Ministry of National Education, Higher Education and Research (MESRI) France, Malaysia-France Bilateral Research Collaboration 2021 (MATCH 2021) has been introduced as an initiative to continue supporting bilateral cooperation in research. Altogether, 26 projects has been implemented

under this cooperation.

The diplomatic ties also conducted in the MOHE collaboration with the Malaysian Industry Government Group for High Technology (MIGHT) and The Center for the Development of Industrial Technology, E.P.E. (CDTI) to implement the Malaysia-Spain Innovating Program (MySIP). It is a joint program between MOHE, MIGHT and the Centre for the Development of Industrial Technology, E.P.E. (CDTI) in Spain to promote and fund market-driven research and technology development as well as to encourage partnerships and business-led Research, Development, Innovation (R&D&I) collaborative projects between entities from both countries. For the first call, 2 projects have been successfully selected as grant recipient.

There are 71 projects that has been conducted involving 4 foreign countries involving millions of funds signify the importance of research as tools for diplomatic relationship. More collaboration is on the negotiation phase, as countries realize besides some conventional diplomatic initiatives, research as soft diplomacy tools provide a bigger opportunity for both countries and enhanced technology and knowledge transfer mutually, and most importantly, increased the chances for mutual understanding.

Looking into the way forward, international matching grants can be used a tool to expand connections and help the education ecosystem in training researchers and enabling technology transfer between nations. It can also be made as a wealth generator initiative by Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia and help kick start priority research area innovation, development and commercialization. It also helps to increase a smart partnership between both countries which positively more sustainable and provide some longer term partnerships. Another benefits that can be derived from such initiatives, where it drives more economic expansion and indirectly contribute to the social development. The effect of having more research activities can be evidenced through expanding the quantity and quality of domestic research, where it can boost to the research and development while ensuring remains competitive at global level. Another plus point that can be deductive from research activities is the global presence of innovation enhancement that tackling global challenges which requires a multi-disciplinary of international expertise that works in synergy.

Research collaboration also contributes to the society that answerable to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) as outline in United Nation General Assembly in 2015, which aims to achieve by 2030. Furthermore, a green business opportunities were created for the value-added business product. In sum, all of these efforts, increases the global visibility for Malaysia higher learning institutions.

5. CONCLUSION

Research collaboration between two foreign countries undoubtedly contributes to the development of new knowledge, expanding the science diplomacy into another level of bilateral cooperation. Malaysia commitment through Ministry of Higher Learning initiative with MyPAiR program, marked the vision of country to become the developed country status is not impossible. With the involvement of most active and biggest countries in term of R&D funds, Malaysia benefits inward and outwards. But the commitment needs more seriousness among policy maker in term of budget allocation for the sake of matching with foreign countries. Otherwise, research is not a sustainable diplomatic tool. This is the way forward for Malaysia to increase its visibility at the global arena.

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Strengthening International Collaboration in Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

Increased globalization has resulted in increased internationalization within the higher education environment, however, there is a need to ensure, in light of lessening pandemic restrictions, that forward progress continues in this area. The objective of this study was to assess the ways in which international collaboration could be reinforced in higher education. Qualitative analysis of pre-pandemic efforts led to the identification of recommendations that could be used to strengthen international collaboration. Four recommendations were identified including restrictions on administrative travel, the use of virtual exchanges, the integration of interactive learning management systems, and audits of course syllabi, along with the creation of online portals to promote knowledge gains with respect to internationalization as a campus strategy. Through the completion of this study it was possible to explore the efforts and effectiveness of the implementation of past higher education internationalization programmes and discuss these strategies and the promotion of internationalization in higher education institutions post-COVID-19.

Keywords: Internationalization; higher education; strategies; collaboration; recommendations

1. INTRODUCTION

Increased globalization has led to marked changes in higher education and one of the predominant ways that this shift has occurred is through internationalization. Internationalization has become both a concept and a strategic agenda, driven by “political, economic, sociocultural, and academic rationales and stakeholders” (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). Higher education internationalization programmes were first introduced in the early 2000s (de Wit, 2020). Since that time, these programs have grown and evolved, adopting various focuses over the years (de Wit, 2020). A cornerstone of internationalization programs in higher education is their adaptability, allowing these programs to continue in spite of any disasters or disastrous events that may arise (Amaratunga, Liyanage, & Haigh, 2018). Yet, in spite of the ability of these programs to facilitate the weathering of any disaster to date (Amaratunga, et.al., 2018), these programs have not yet had to weather a global pandemic.

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had widespread effects throughout society, affecting everything from supply chains to the delivery of education (Chandasiri, 2020; Ibn-Mohammed, Mustapha, Godsell, Adamu, Babatunde, Akintade, Acquaye, Fujii, Nidaye,

Yamoah, & Koh, 2021). These educational impacts have affected students at all grade levels and led to rapid response changes to the delivery of education from primary school through tertiary school (Kamil, Rahardja, Sunarya, Aini, & Santoso, 2020). Yet, as the pandemic nears what many world leaders are viewing as a manageable level, there is a need to start exploring what the most appropriate response is for education in “post-COVID schooling” (Crutchfield, & Eugene, 2022). To this end, the purpose of this paper is to explore the efforts and effectiveness of the implementation of past higher education internationalization programmes and, using this information as a foundation, discuss the internationalization strategies and the promotion of higher education in higher education institutions post-COVID-19.

2. INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization was first defined in 2008 by Knight as “the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions, and delivery of post-secondary education” (de Wit, 2020) This definition, however, lacked certain key components that were necessary to the effective integration of internationalization programs at the tertiary levels of education. Starting with Knight’s definition, the European Parliament sought to investigate the matter further in order to explore the effectiveness of the state of internationalization (de Wit, 2020). A global Delphi Exercise was conducted, leading the expansion of the definition of internationalization to “the intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff to make a meaningful contribution to society” (de Wit, 2020). This definition allowed for both the implementation of a normative direction for higher education internationalization programmes while simultaneously acknowledging that clear intentions are necessary for programme success and highlighting that internationalization is not a goal in and of itself, but a function of quality improvements to the higher education of individuals toward societal betterment (de Wit, 2020).

Trends in Internationalization

When looking back over the history of internationalization in higher education, eight primary trends have emerged (de Wit, 2020). Trends included being focused on internationalization occurring abroad instead of at home, in the form of study abroad offerings; fragmented and ad

hoc programs, rather than the integration of strategic policies; targeting internationalization programs to the elite subset of students who could afford such a focus as opposed to focusing on increased globalization within the institution; focused on economic and political motivations; predominantly concerned with regional, national, and global rankings of their programs rather than the contents of the programs themselves; maintained a lack of alignment between the three core international dimensions of education, service to society, and research; served as a strategic offering of the higher education as opposed to a targeted priority toward globalization; and were considered to be programs of less importance in both emerging and developing countries and a strategic focus only in developed countries (de Wit, 2020). These trends highlighted the need for and the reason behind the decision to create a unified definition of internationalization and to redefine the process as a concept and as a strategic agenda, as opposed to the means to an end in and of itself (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021).

Effects and Effectiveness of Internationalization

In light of the emergent trends identified by de Wit [2] in the years prior to the standardization of the definition of internationalization, it can be argued that these trends highlighted a lack of effectiveness in the implementation of internationalization prior to its redefinition. Since that time, however, the effects and effectiveness of internationalization have been, even though more standardized in approach and more resilient in their ability to withstand difficulties, still varied in their implementation based on country, agenda, and other similar factors of consideration (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021, Amaratunga, et.al., 2018). Yet it is because of these challenges and variations that internationalization has entered into a new phase of approach, with a targeted focus on collaborative learning, societal beneficence, and research for all students in higher education (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). Such approaches were, however, in their nascent stages prior to the occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that the exploration of their effectiveness has been somewhat limited due to the rapid changes occurring within the education field as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021; Chandasiri, 2020; Ibn-Mohammed, et.al, 2021); Kamil, M., Rahardja, , Sunarya, Aini, & Santoso, 2020).

Internationalization Strategies

Key internationalization strategies were implemented, or were starting to be implemented, prior

to the start of the pandemic (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). These included a focus on adopting practices of internationalization at all levels of the higher education institution, ensuring that all internationalization efforts were as carbon neutral as possible, increasing overall contributions of internationalization efforts toward the global society, and creating links between local activities and global activities (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). Some of the ways that these strategies were starting to be implemented included placing limits on administrative travel, focusing on virtual exchanges and the adoption of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), and placing a focus on identifying ways through which refugee and immigrant population needs could be addressed (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). These strategies are desirable and in alignment with the elaborated definition of internationalization, and some of these strategies are even in alignment with the educational changes made to accommodate the need to continue education during the COVID-19 pandemic (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021; de Wit, 2020; Chandasiri, 2020; Ibn-Mohammed, et.al., 2021; Kamil, Rahardja, Sunarya, Aini, & Santoso, 2020). Yet, further efforts are needed if internationalization is to continue to evolve “in response to local, national, regional, and global environments” (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021).

3. PROMOTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS POST-COVID-19

With many higher education institutions attempting to return to a post-COVID-19 normal, there is a need to promote the use of internationalization strategies in the delivery of higher education to higher education institutions and a need to provide exposure to these institutions on the importance of cooperation and involvement of all parties in the internationalization of higher education. In order to accomplish this task, there is a need to ensure that the pre-COVID-19 momentum for these changes does not dissipate in the adoption of and the subsequent attempt to revert to pre-COVID-19 methods. The sequestering of persons through distancing methods and virtual approaches works well in instances in which the individual has other outlets through which to connect with other humans, as in instances in which a person chooses a virtual higher education alternative in order to accommodate a work schedule in which interactions with other humans in a physical environment are common. However, changes to work from home in addition to virtual schooling efforts as a means of addressing distancing requirements in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus meant that many individuals lost other forms of in-person interaction. To this end, there is a need to ensure that elements including virtual interactions and COIL (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021) do not fall by the wayside in the resultant swing toward person to person interactions. There is a need to ensure balance in a return to

non-distanced activities while maintaining the strategies of internationalization.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The internationalization efforts in higher education that commenced prior to the start of the current pandemic were practical, focused on the achievement of the three core international dimensions of education (de Wit, 2020) and were designed to strengthen efforts in international collaboration in higher education (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021). In order to ensure that these elements do not fall by the wayside, the following recommendations are made. First, it is recommended that limits remain in place with respect to administrative travel. To accomplish this task, a two-pronged approach is recommended: that all non-essential travel is negated, and that all efforts are made to find alternatives to travel where possible. This means continuing to engage in digital conferencing efforts where possible, engaging in remote tasks where possible, and, in instances in which administrative travel is required for the completion of activities that cannot be completed virtually, that all efforts are made to minimize the degree to which the method of travel utilized will adversely impact the planet.

Second, focus should continue on virtual exchanges, utilizing telephone and internet communication where possible in order to foster increased interactions while decreasing the associated financial and environmental costs associated with collaboration. Figure 1 lists several of the different ways in which virtual exchanges can occur along with corresponding software that can be used for those purposes. In addition, further efforts should be taken to foster increased exchanges between higher education institutions, including the creation of continual programs of collaboration, rather than simply focusing on virtual exchanges and transient efforts at collaboration that start and stop with the formulation and completion of a single project. Still further, the creation of international collaboration programs should extend beyond faculty or staff and incorporate student led collaborations as well, allowing for the integration of multiple perspectives as a means of exploring societal problems on a broader scale.

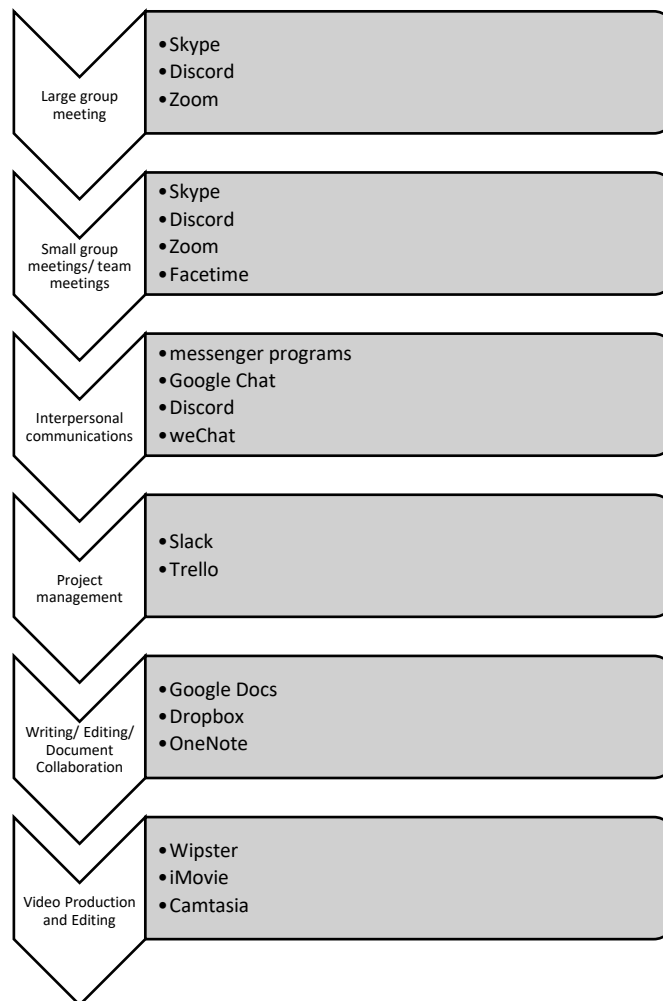


Figure 1: Technologies for Different Types of Virtual Exchanges

The third recommendation allows for the incorporation of elements that were integrated during the height of the pandemic. While many institutes of higher education already utilized interactive learning management systems (ILMS) as a means of delivering distance education, other higher education institutions integrated ILMS software as a means of continuing the provision of education while maintaining social distancing recommendations and requirements as a means of facilitating a reduction in the spread of the virus (see Figure 2). Utilizing the ILMS software approach as the foundation, an international platform could be created in order to not only continue COIL efforts, but to enhance COIL efforts. Schools could work together to create international classes or programmes that students could take as electives, allowing students from other countries and other institutions to work together in a collaborative online environment. Curriculum standards for these programmes could be based in the findings of the global Delphi Experiment that were used as the foundation in creating the standardized

definition of internationalization (de Wit, 2020). By focusing on the bigger picture, student learning throughout these programmes would embody the three core international dimensions of education (de Wit, & Altbach, 2021).



Figure 2: Components of an ILMS

A fourth recommendation designed to decrease the likelihood that efforts in internationalization are not overlooked in the efforts to return to something akin to the status quo prior to the start of the pandemic is for higher education institutions to conduct audits of their current course syllabi in order to identify a) whether the courses include aspects that address the three core elements (education, service to society, and research) (de Wit, 2020) and b) if not all elements of internationalization are present, identify the ways in which the course syllabi can be modified to ensure that internationalization is present within the course environment. While not all classes will have elements of international collaboration, the

inclusion, and focus, on international collaboration in higher education will be reinforced within the higher education institution's environment. This reinforcement of internationalization and international collaboration will work to facilitate shifts in the students' and staffs' worldview to allow for a greater understanding of awareness with regard to the place of the individual within the world, facilitating perspectives that are more service focused. The adoption of a broader worldview will allow students and staff alike to view their perspectives within the larger scale of society, which will in turn work to support international collaboration, internationalization, and an increasingly global society.

It is further recommended that institutions of higher education are provided with an online portal that provides information on internationalization. This information should include the definition of internationalization, identification of the core international dimensions, steps on how to incorporate international collaboration in higher education, and general information on how to setup collaborative efforts. The provision of this information will work to increase the likelihood that the principles of internationalization are adopted and integrated into higher education institutions by negating the additional research time that administrators will need in order to locate this information themselves. Additionally, higher education institutions could be asked to pledge to support the principles of internationalization.

5. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to explore the efforts and effectiveness of the implementation of past higher education internationalization programmes and, using this information as a foundation, discuss the internationalization strategies and the promotion of internationalization in higher education institutions post-COVID-19. In reviewing the strategies that did not work in the past and highlighting the strategies that were being implemented prior to the start of the pandemic, it became clear that, in order to promote higher education through internationalization strategies in higher education institutes post-COVID-19, caution must be taken both to remember the reasons that such internationalization strategies were adopted and that there is a need to ensure that the strategies of internationalization are not abandoned in the rush to return to an in-person normal. In order to accomplish this task, it is recommended that higher education institutions are provided with the information necessary to remind them of the purpose of these strategies and to facilitate adherence to these strategies in keeping with the need to ensure that the three core international dimensions of education, service to society, and research; served as a strategic offering of the higher education as opposed to a

targeted priority toward globalization (de Wit, 2020) do not once again come to be viewed as programs of less importance in both emerging and developing countries or as only a strategic focus for institutions in developing countries. These programs have the capability to reinforce the core international dimensions of education, but only if they are embraced wholly and are not discarded as a tool of the past due to their elements of distancing as a means to an end, and not as a pandemic initiative.

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Designing a Government-Facilitated Collaborative Metaverse Model for TVET in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) implementation requires more localization of context. Deeper understanding of local real-world problems, like food insecurity and its relationship with education, is required. Further, collaborations between rural, urban, and international stakeholders are needed in light of complex problems. Technology to support this, like the metaverse, integrated with pedagogies like game-based learning can help. Thus, this project reviews a government-facilitated effort to create collaborations to set up a metaverse-learning curriculum for language learning and green technology curriculum for TVET instructors in Malaysian Polytechnics and Community Colleges. Two training sessions were conducted to refine a metaverse-learning conceptual model. Based on the metaverse model, instructors were able to utilize non player characters to create robot-assisted learning experiences through story and dialogue through multiple scenes. Scenes are also planned to be integrated across partner countries in Thailand and Hong Kong to create more authentic learning. Instructors found the collaboration interesting and were motivated to put in more effort to support the model. In this study, a conceptual model for international collaborations across different subjects like language learning, sustainability and agricultural innovation. A metaverse game-based learning model is also discussed.

Keywords: Sustainable development goals; localization; local governments; intermediaries, metaverse

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Masuda et al., (2022). Sustainable Education Goals (SDGs) implementation on a local level requires multi-stakeholder partnerships. Many of these partnerships involve participation with numbers of public, private and not-for-profit organizations. Reviewing and implementing programs on a local level requires in depth understanding and analysis of problems that match problems specific to a region or area. This would allow better assessment of inequalities within countries and better-informed decision making and resource allocation (Lucci, 2015). Some examples include urban/rural and regional breakdowns and where possible disaggregation for lower geographies, such as local authorities and marginal areas, such as slums. Thus, this project aims to introduce a government-facilitated private-public collaboration to boost Polytechnics' and Community

Colleges' instructional and digital learning delivery in Malaysia. The project also discusses the use of a game-based metaverse-learning to facilitate local and international integrations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Multi-stakeholder dialogues require community-based deep critical thinking as they are complex in nature, especially when SDG topics are involved (Luna-Nemecio et al., 2020). These problems are often non-linear, where one party's decision may have implications for another. Concepts of co-creation can be used in collective groups where people might feel empowered to pull people together towards a common purpose. Inclusion, legitimacy, trust, resource allocation, scalability of solutions, and shared expectations from local transformation efforts and local governments were all emphasized in one study using the co-creation approach (Frantzeskaki & Rok, 2018). Given the prevalence of multi-stakeholder decision-making, the potential of collective thinking, or collective efficacy, is now more important than ever.

The concept of social learning and collective learning primarily relies on the contribution that each individual makes to a group. In the reverse, the group's collective action is then enforced back to the individual. The idea has also been discussed in theories of collective intelligence (Glassman et al., 2021; Kang et al., 2015). Students reported that the collective learning approach increased motivation, goal-setting, and interest in one study that involved private sector partners and academic institutions across Hong Kong, Indonesia and Malaysia, facilitated by the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (Wong et al., 2022). Additionally, the project included mini conferences, webinars and workshops where participants exchanged concepts, ideas, and scenarios.

Rural areas often lack access to modern education for developing the human capital to adopt and use digital technology. An average student in low-income nations performs worse than 95% of students in high-income countries (United Nations, 2020). The ineffectiveness of digital-centric teaching methods has been cited as one factor hindering their performance (World Bank, 2018). For instance, poorly designed curricula make it difficult for pupils to catch up if they fall behind. It is argued that technology can be used to customize instruction to the needs of certain students. In particular, Malaysia's challenge is of particular interest because Malaysia underperforms in foundational competencies when compared to regional rivals. The World Bank Human Capital Index indicates that additional measures are required to improve educational systems and learning outcomes (Nah et al.,

2014). The capacity of children who can read and interpret text (13%) in Malaysia is lower than the regional average (15%). Low reading and writing ability is a problem that has been noted for the lower 40% of earnings (Mohamod et al., 2021), also referred to as the B40 group in Malaysia.

Intermediary roles are required to address the aforementioned issues and encourage multi-stakeholder engagement to achieve the SDGs (Masuda et al., 2022). One area to pay attention to is human capital, which is directly tied to at least three of the sustainable development goals. Utilizing technical expertise, story-based teaching methods, and experiential learning techniques are some ways to improve education in impoverished nations (Chapple & Montero, 2016). Using storytelling can inspire more effective collaborative learning and action. The use of the Metaverse to develop interactive and captivating activities has gained popularity recently. According to Kye et al., (2021), the metaverse allows users to jointly expand space-time. They can also be utilized to encourage dialogic, game-based, and story-based learning from an educational perspective (Nah et al., 2014). Robot-assisted non-player characters can be used to offer educational content (Hwang & Chien, 2022). These characters can help to provide scaffolding and goal setting. The advantages of enhancing goal setting are aligned with recommendations by Biermann et al., (2017), where goal setting is a crucial strategy for global governance.

While examples of governmental-public-private sector collaborations have been described by Biermann et al., (2017), a broader approach to boost strategy, resource planning, networking, aims, and experimentation is needed. With this goal in mind, the purpose of this project is to determine:

1. Do educators see the teaching and learning benefits of a government-led partnership to advance digital social learning?
2. How does a metaverse-based learning model enable institutional integration across boundaries?

3. METHOD

Participants

This study looks into the projects and approach conducted as part of a social mobile integrated learning environment between a Singapore company, Soqple Pte Ltd, the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia (the Government Lead), and its associated Polytechnics and Community

Colleges. In these projects, a total of 35 Community Colleges and four Polytechnics in Malaysia were involved over two metaverse training sessions. Topics covered were in English language learning and green technology literacy, which were discussed as opportunities for the metaverse-based method (Biermann, et al., 2017).

This study also evaluates a new initiative (August 2022) targeting food insecurity issues at rural areas in Malaysia which involves the Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries. The goal of this new initiative is to target food insecurity problems through a new entrepreneurship development program.

Methodology and Measure

A government-as-intermediary framework by Masuda et al., (2022) was used as a basis for the government-led effort. The model consists of i) strategy, ii) resource planning including recruitment of participants, iii) networking - local, and international, iv) aims and v) experimentation - testing spaces for new teaching methods.

As the initiative's technology partner, Soqple Pte. Ltd. offers a metaverse application with multi-scene sharing and teacher authoring capabilities. The experiential and narrative mechanisms of the metaverse will be covered as part of this study. Through training workshops, focus groups were used to design and build these methods. The following focal theories will be applied to metaverse design:

1. Game-based features for scenario and goal-based learning to help visualize key concepts of entrepreneurship to boost entrepreneurship intent and goal setting (Nah et. al., 2014).
2. Scene simulations for entrepreneurship competency skills development (e.g., psychological, strategic, organization skills) with non-player characters (Kye et al., 2021; Hwang & Chien, 2022)

Focus groups and surveys were used as the primary data collection method. Instructor perceptions of how they would integrate new technology into the curriculum were discussed. The focus groups, focusing on metaverse, would provide illustrative quotes, and also examples of how curriculum could be adapted.

4. RESULTS

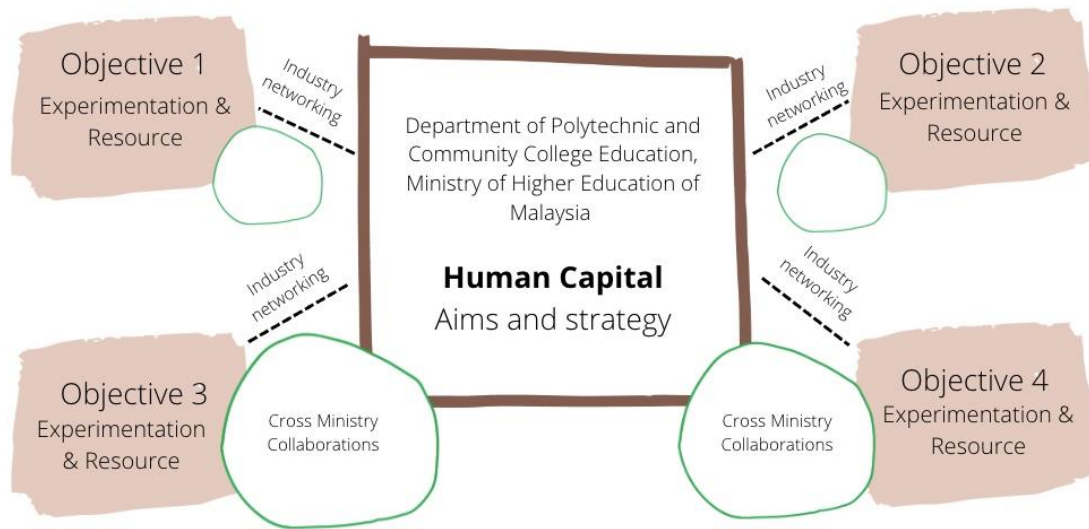
Government-Led Multi-Stakeholder Model

The project was facilitated by the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia. Details are provided in Table 1.

Table 1 *Activities facilitated by the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia*

Component	Description
Strategy	Guided discussions on opportunities in education for TVET and B40
Resource Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recruited instructors and connected potential collaborators for social metaverse learning as well as an entrepreneurship development program. - Designed instructor upskilling plans to enhance digital literacy on e-learning methodology.
Networking	<p>Besides Malaysia, collaborators from Singapore, Indonesia, Hong Kong and Thailand were invited to the training activities.</p> <p>An Agreed Minutes of Meeting (AMM) was signed between the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia and Soqgle Pte. Ltd. in 2021. The document described collaborative efforts between the two parties for knowledge sharing, technology support, research and development of teaching resources.</p>
Aims	<p>Drove the strategic plan for collaboration and internationalization. Provided opportunities for students to interact with international partners.</p> <p>Scenes designed for environmental literacy will be integrated with Lingnan University in Hong Kong, focusing on climate change, thus creating promise for more international collaborations.</p>
Experimentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Created 'experimental pilot spaces' through the development of social mobile integrated learning environment training for instructors. 8 narratives were created after two training sessions. - 4 metaverse scenes will be created for empirical studies

Based on the activities conducted, a conceptual model for government-led collaborations is proposed in Figure 1.



Government-facilitated collaborative model

Figure 1: The proposed government-facilitated collaborative model

Social-Learning Integrated Metaverse Model

Participants who took part in the focus group produced eight different scenarios, for which four were on English language learning (Workplace English and Communicative English) while four were on Green Technology literacy. Storyboards were produced, which were split into three stages for scaffolding of the narrative. Table 2 shows the storyboard narratives that were produced.

Table 2: Metaverse learning scenarios

Scenario	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Language learning to introduce sentences, words, grammar to students	The player (student) has lost his/her memory temporarily and the diagnosis shows that he/she cannot remember the names of objects	The player (student) is trying to recall familiar places based on the pictures shown by the doctor and the investigator	The player (student) helps give directions to others. The player (student) asks and gives directions
A school scene	Helping the institution to	Identify energy waste	There are few types of

idea was generated to help students rationalize the use of energy which includes conservation and efficiency	reduce electricity bills consumption by interacting with TNB, instructors etc.	in campus by interacting with light bulbs, motion sensors etc.	renewable energy that can be used in order to help the institution reduce the electricity bills. We should take a look at which renewable energy is the best option for this campus.
Demonstrate green economy and green culture challenges	Dispose of dangerous waste at the riverside polluting the water systems. Talk to protagonist who dumps industrial waste into the water system/river	Conserved resources - fresh drinkable water Talk to the player about an imminent attack to steal water resources by protagonist	Power needed for desalination plant “The last fossil fuels for our desalination plant is running out” “We need to look for sustainable energy for our desalination plant”

Illustrative quotes from the participants were extracted.

“Metaverse is new to me. but I really enjoy (I rarely give my 100% focus in training, but I give my 200% for this course)”

“Very excellent platform to deliver my lesson through this platform via online”

“Interesting concept to be applied in our teaching and learning”

“1. Can we have a face-to-face course next time, please? It would be easier to brainstorm ideas. 2. Enjoyed the course, (I) would love to join more courses like this one in the future I (would) say yes to anything that could help the students to learn English better. 3. Looking forward to using what we have brainstormed in real lessons :D”

An Industry-Focused Metaverse Entrepreneurship Development Program

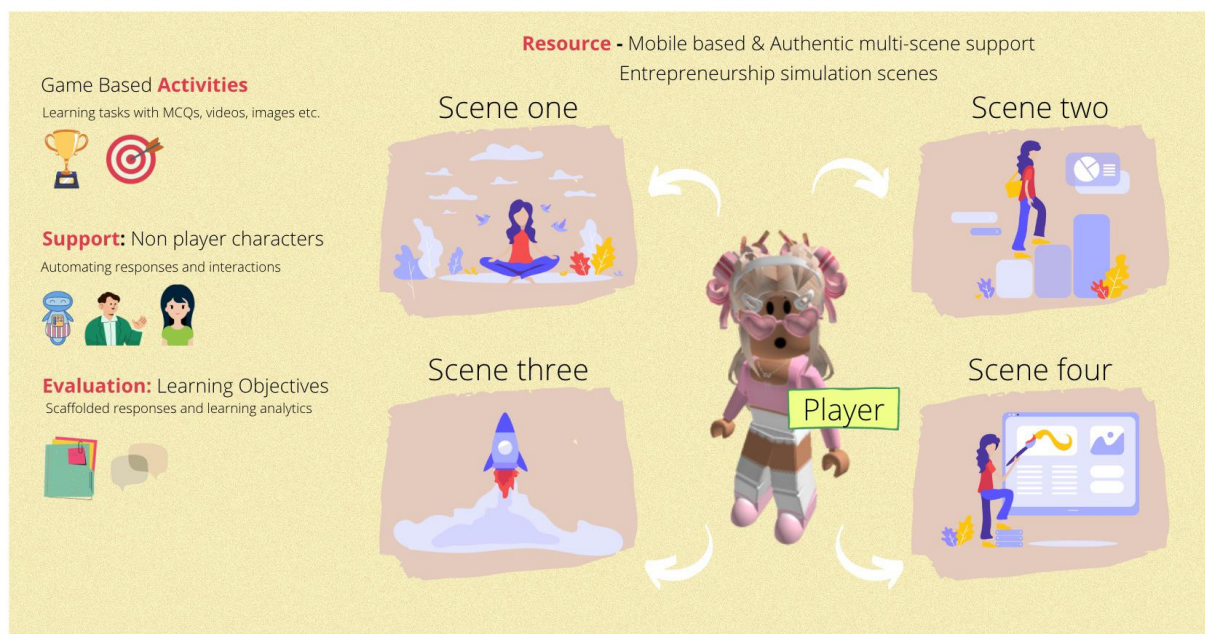
The Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Ministry of Higher Education of Malaysia, launched an initiative to examine whether education can play a role in transforming the digitization efforts in rural areas of Malaysia on the basis of an international effort to develop ICT in rural areas by Asia Pacific Telecommunity (<https://www.apc.int/APTICT>).

- Academic researchers were invited to assess and discuss opportunities as a working group. Feedback on the potential for rural entrepreneurship was discussed during

outreach to the Ministry of Rural Development. Despite the existence of established initiatives for entrepreneurship, youth entrepreneurship could not be explicitly found in rural agricultural innovation programs.

- Discussion participants included professors and instructors from community colleges and universities that offer agricultural education.
- A plan was put up to create entrepreneurial scenarios that feature simulations focused on agriculture in order to encourage young people to pursue their own business ventures. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industries also supported and participated in the entrepreneurship program.

Based on the activities conducted for training and design of metaverse curriculum for language learning, sustainability, agriculture innovation, and entrepreneurship a metaverse conceptual model is proposed at Figure 2.



Metaverse conceptual model

Figure 2: The proposed metaverse conceptual model

5. DISCUSSION

Research Question 1: Do educators see the teaching and learning benefits of a government-led partnership to advance digital social learning?

Instructors thought the government-led project, by the Department of Polytechnic and Community College Education, Malaysia's Ministry of Higher Education, was intriguing.

There are several potentials for collaboration because education significantly contributes to human capital, particularly for themes that are digital in nature. This is essential given that many of the issues raised seem to be related to a lack of digital literacy (World Bank, 2018, 2021). The metaverse approach was also thought-provoking and distinctive by instructors. Additionally, they were more inclined to make an attempt to come up with suggestions for implementing the technology in the classroom. Scene integration opportunities between institutions can support communal learning, which has been shown to boost learning motivation [8]. More project spin-offs are also anticipated, following in the footsteps of the industry-focused metaverse entrepreneurship development program. As the environments are pending and onboardings are ongoing at the time of writing this paper, the results of the new learning methods remain to be seen.

Research Question 2: How does a metaverse-based learning model enable institutional integration across boundaries?

The initiative has many possibilities for interdisciplinary topics such as language learning, green technology and sustainability, and entrepreneurial education. Scenes, for instance, can be distributed among instructors across institutions. This can help students see how the subjects they study are related to one another, which raises the educational material's authenticity (Wong et al., 2022). With the help of games and narrative-style tales, non-player characters can introduce students to learning content. The metaverse model (Figure 2) can improve industry and educational institution collaboration on a local, regional, and global scale.

1. The ability of the metaverse, with its authoring tools also allow for easy localisation of content thus helping to better achieve SDG goals.
2. At the same time, the ease of maintenance of content can allow more international integration of scenes between instructors (Hwang & Chien, 2022).

6. CONCLUSION

Research Question 1: The findings of this investigation suggest that the initiative was well-received by instructors and fostered new, inventive uses of technology. Additionally, there are plans to combine scenes from Malaysia and Hong Kong, which will allow for more international cooperation.

Research Question 2: This initiative's conceptual model was created, and it is novel.

This study is one of the few that examines the use of the metaverse in education, whereas the majority of studies on the subject focuses on its technical features. It is anticipated that subsequent studies will present empirical data on the metaverse onboarding in Polytechnics and Community colleges.

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Accelerating Sustainable Higher Education Internationalisation Aspirations: Strengthening International Collaboration in Higher Education via Foreign Universities Partnerships

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ABSTRACT

International collaborations between higher education institutions bring significant contributions to the overall ecosystem of an organisation, from the personnel, students, and the global community as a whole. The internationalisation of an institution is one of the mechanisms communities adapt to the idea of globalisation. This paper discusses the effective methods of strengthening international collaboration between Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and German universities via a dual-degree programme. The dual-degree programme is designed to invent graduates who are extensively prepared to face the future challenges of globalisation. The institution has implemented various approaches to strengthen the programme's strong foundation to intensify the primary purpose of internationalisation, such as establishing a comprehensive German language proficiency test to prepare the students for the dual-degree programme. However, language is not the sole approach to boost internationalisation as intercultural skills, extensive academic collaboration programmes, and mobility programmes are interconnected to the idea of internationalisation. These approaches are momentous to ensure the dual-degree programme's efficacy in attaining the purposes of academic collaboration and enriching students' experiences. In addition to the approaches adopted, different initiatives are recommended to improvise the internationalisation notion to facilitate the advancement of the internationalisation programme of the university. In conclusion, the essence of internationalisation requires various concepts to be implemented by the institution to strengthen international collaboration.

Keywords: Internationalisation; dual degree; collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation has been invented as a revolutionary instrument in higher education institutions worldwide. The concept of internationalisation as a strategic policy is regarded as vast, and diverse as it necessitates a progressive consolidation of various aspects, such as political, economic, shareholders, and academic principles. The dimension of internationalisation is defined as the integrated development of international, intercultural, or globalisation into the aspiration, objectives, or transmission of tertiary education (Knight, 2003) to strengthen the education and research qualities for both learners and the

organisation to produce significant beneficitation to the community (De Wit et al., 2015). The globalisation of education has directed a united exertion by higher education institutions (HEIs) around the globe to generate blueprints to initiate and intensify international collaborations in higher education setups. The current trend of global education has initiated the exigencies of HEIs to escalate students' global exposure, infusing internationalisation essence and enhancing their visibilities internationally. Internationalised programmes such as mobility activities and dual-degree courses are equally important in ensuring the effectiveness of internationalisation.

The formulation of dual-degree programmes is considered more systematic and comprehensive to encompass the internationalisation of higher education institutions (HEIs) (Knight, 2011). Generally, dual-degrees contain a variety of principles and aspirations (Chevallier, 2013), as the programmes' purposes are to nourish robust international collaborations, captivate brilliant expertise, and encourage students' mobility (Goodman & Rulan, 2013). Collaborative academic programmes are believed to have an impactful role in implementing internationalisation strategies where the students can broaden their perspectives and skills to compete in a global market. A dual-degree programme, as executed by Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), is a degree in an identical subject area awarded by two universities, one of which is an international university.

The collaboration between UMP and a German university for a dual-degree programme can lead to the sustainability of partnerships while simultaneously boosting international engagement and academic quality. Thus, this paper discusses the efficient ways of enriching and strengthening the international partnership between Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and German universities, mainly through a dual-degree programme.

Strategies to Boost International Partnerships

Two distinctive dimensions of governing international partnerships are both institutions' programme delivery approach and responsibilities. The delivery of the partnership programme varies from traditional physical teaching to supported distance learning. On the other hand, partnership responsibilities have numerous features, such as providing comprehensive academic and teaching assistance, effective promotion, and curriculum development (Davis et al., 2000). Efficient international collaborations rely on many other factors, including sufficient resources, contract implementation effectiveness, and scrupulous quality assurance (Davis et al., 2000). Even though the equilibrium between essential and adequate requirements is vague, it is widely accepted that managing international

partnerships is the primary key to strengthening the quality of partnership programmes. The nature of the accord between the institutions is one of the most pivotal components of international partnerships management. The endeavour of visits between host and home universities, feasible agreements, and observation arrangements are interconnected to the quality of partnerships (Abramson et al., 1996). Other than partnership management, the other strategy adopted by the institution to tackle the challenges in providing learning and teaching assistance of the German dual-degree offered at UMP is adopting a technological approach to teaching and learning processes. Including technology in learning and teaching activities is believed to be extensively impactful in assisting the students in comprehending the programme's content comprehensively. The other approach that possesses substantial impact in strengthening international partnerships is the quality of the programme offered by the institution, as quality is an important marker in ensuring the sustainability of the programme in the long run.

The German dual-degree programme offered at UMP requires the instructors and the learners to take a new turn in exploring the dimension of learning, especially learning a new language. In order to enhance the learning and teaching experience, the instructors and the learners must invent practical strategies to be implemented in the learning and teaching processes to achieve the programme implementation goals. Exploring various learning and teaching approaches is critical as the syllabus's formulation should cater to the learners' learning requirements with the resources planned and executed in the lessons (Nunan, 1984).

2. GERMAN DUAL-DEGREE PROGRAMME AT UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA PAHANG (UMP)

Successful international collaborations require a diversity of patrons to guarantee the efficiency of the implemented programmes, as establishing a rewarding education partnership is challenging. Numerous catalysts strengthen successful international partnerships, such as continuous commitment, economic factors, educational programmes and learning activities, risk management, and quality. The partner's suitability plays a significant role in having a sustainable academic partnership and an identical vision for collaboration. The key to thriving in a shared vision is an impactful academic collaboration between the institutions. Substantial academic collaboration is a fundamental element in every collaborative formulation, as it can be a profitable investment for both institutions to work concretely in sustaining and enriching the foundation and framework of the

collaboration. Internationalisation of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Malaysia is aligned with the 'Global Prominence' shift of the Malaysia Education Blueprint for Higher Education 2015-2025.

Furthermore, to support the agenda of offering extensive innovative programmes, UMP started its international partnerships with German universities as one of its internationalisation strategies. As a recognised technical university, UMP chooses German higher institutions for their technological evolutions and innovative structure of the higher education system. Therefore, UMP believes this initiative will significantly strengthen and enrich the academic quality and internationalisation effort. Moreover, the inclusion of the German University of Applied Sciences or *Fachhochschulen* (FH) education system into the UMP's undergraduate engineering programmes that started a decade ago has driven the university to initiate an innovative international partnership via a dual-degree programme between UMP and German Universities. Presently, UMP manages several dual-degree programmes, and the university is enthusiastically exploring more partnership opportunities to invent such courses with other universities in Germany.

The Implementation of The German Dual-Degree Programme at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)

The formulation of German universities' partnerships programmes offered at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) commenced in 2009, right after the proposal of the Malaysian government to embrace a new engineering education model based on the *Fachhochschulen* (FH) system for the local technical universities that are categorised under Malaysian Technical Universities Network (MTUN). The FH academic model was explicitly designed to innovate the fields of engineering, technology and business. The purpose of the invention of the FH system is to cultivate the application of practical knowledge (Mckeag et al., 2010). After decades of development, the FH system has successfully established a comprehensive and potent utilisation of its applied and functional characteristics, as now the features are receiving universal recognition. One of the FH's superior strengths is the infusion of the practical-based programme with sufficient theory application. This academic model equips the students to prepare for the demands of the globalised world. The other uniqueness of the FH system is the impressive background of the teaching staff, as the professors possess a minimum 3-year industrial experience. Thus, the employment of the FH academic model in the national technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is undoubtedly an

excellent strategy to strengthen the educational quality and the internationalisation strategy for the specified field in the Malaysian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The implementation of the UMP and Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA) dualdegree programme started with a visit to Germany on the 23rd of November 2009, and a Letter of Intent (LOI) was signed between UMP and HKA. The institutions' discussion continued in February 2010 as the UMP academic delegation visited HKA to further review the programme structure. In March 2010, a board from UMP was involved in roundtable discussions with the German companies' CEOs in Malaysia to acquire industrial feedback from industry experts. The HKA team conducted an official audit at UMP in March 2010 to verify the academic facilities and staff requirements before the finalisation of the Mechatronics Engineering programme. The initial discussion of implementing the Automotive Engineering programme between the institutions was also held in the same month. Finally, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UMP and HKA was signed in Kuantan on the 27th of May 2010. Simultaneously, an MoU between UMP and the German-Malaysian Institute (GMI) was also signed on the same date as GMI is one of the programme feeders. Figure 1 illustrates the timeline of the execution of the UMP-HKA dual-degree programmes at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). The implementation was initiated in 2009 and successfully implemented in 2010.

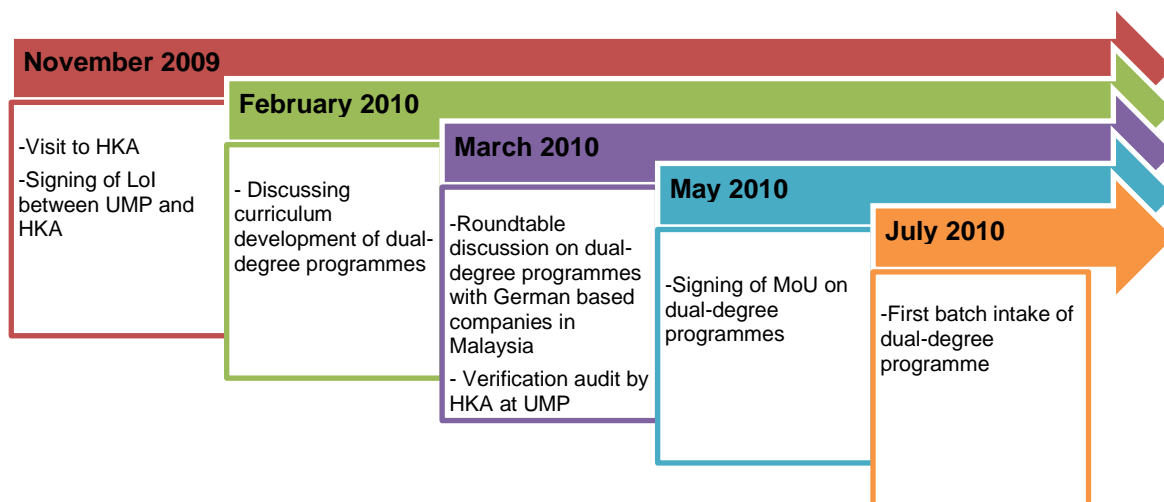


Figure 1: Timeline of the implementation of UMP-HKA dual-degree programmes

The Structure of The German Dual-Degree Programme Aat Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)

The collaboration programme between Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) and German universities aims to provide extensive exposure to engineering theories and hands-on skills. The dual-degree programme is formulated to suit German and Malaysian accreditation requirements as this programme offers a close industrial collaboration with engineering experts from Germany. The dual-degree programme is designed to be relevant to the Malaysian and European accreditation standards, as it is fully accredited by the Board of Engineers Malaysia (BEM) and the Engineering Accreditation Council Malaysia (EAC), both of which are recognised internationally. These dual-degree programmes require a minimum of 135 SLT credits, as EAC requires. It also fulfils 210 ECTS credits based on the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) framework. Furthermore, students are required to undergo a 6-month internship programme in relevant industries. The graduates of the programme are prepared with fundamental skills that are beneficial for them to work with multinational organisations around the globe. The learning experience gained from the German experience professors will prepare them to give an outstanding professional performance to graduate engineers. Upon completion of the programme, graduates will acquire a dual-degree with a certificate from a German university and a UMP certificate.

The Number of Student Enrolments in Dual-Degree Programmes at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)

Table 1 indicates the number of student enrolments in dual-degree programmes offered at UMP from 2016 to 2021. Even though the number of enrolments in 2018 slightly decreased, the figure grew gradually until 2021. The increment of enrolments starting from 2019 has proven that the UMP dual-degree programmes are proportionate to global standards. Consequently, international partnerships via dual-degrees programmes demonstrate a substantial component of the global internationalisation of higher education institutions.

Table 1: The number of students intakes for dual-degree programmes

YEAR	NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS
2016	36
2017	66
2018	36
2019	49

YEAR	NUMBER OF ENROLMENTS
2020	62
2021	56

*Source: UMP German Academic Collaboration Centre Annual Report 2021

Various implications are allied with standardised degree programmes awarded by two Higher Education institutions. Students who enrol in the dual-degree programme at UMP will be awarded two different degrees, one from the home university, UMP, and the other from the partner institution. The German dual-degree students will have the chance to physically attend lectures conducted by the 'Flying Professors' before going to the partner universities in Germany. The 'Flying Professors' are professors from the universities in Germany who conduct several courses in the programmes at UMP. After ten years of implementation and collaboration, UMP is now harvesting the profits of this collaborative effort. Since 2017, 134 students have secured internships at multinational or German-based companies; in 2021, 14 students completed their internship programmes in Germany. The other prominent achievement of this internationalisation strategy happened in 2020 when UMP witnessed another batch of 20 students had completed their dual-degree programmes. Some graduates secured places to continue their post-graduate studies in Germany; the rest were fully employed by various Malaysian and German-based companies.

3. CONCLUSION

The arrangement of international education partnerships with foreign higher education institutions has culminated in advanced challenges for university administrators. Most of the challenges demand effective and collaborative efforts from all parties to ensure the sustainability of the partnerships. Building and strengthening international collaborations require consistency in various aspects such as communication, partnership management, and the programme's quality. Building a robust and comprehensive structure that demonstrates a continuous commitment to the partnerships is critical. Other than strategies, resources, and reputations, key factors like communication and trust appear to be significant in developing and maintaining effective partnerships between the institutions. Higher Education Institutions' (HEIs) internationalisation strategy entails an ongoing collaborative effort from the institutions to enhance and strengthen the partnership. To produce a rewarding partnership, both institutions must utilise the strengths both parties possess, such as participating in active mobility programmes, venturing into extensive research activities, and

exploring new approaches that can strengthen and enrich the agenda of internationalisation. The expansion of international partnerships is a current trend that functions via international networking, and the sustainability of the partnerships will only work when cooperation and involvement agents are blended into the strategy (Mader et al., 2013). The success of the UMP dual-degree programme with German universities is ultimately connected to the extensive support from internal and external organisations and networking. The surge of enrolment numbers for the partnership programme has again manifested the remarkable quality of the UMP dual-degree programme. It has also further proven that foreign universities' partnerships are influential in enriching the internationalisation agenda.

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International Students in Websites of Public and Private Universities in Malaysia: A Discourse Analysis through Academic Capitalism Framing

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ABSTRACT

University websites provide information that may influence international students' choice of an institution. In the context of Malaysia, studies on university websites remain minimal and highly contextual. To address this gap, this study will conduct a discourse analysis on websites of both public and private universities in Malaysia. A total of 40 websites were selected to form a corpus. The analysis involved the identification of significant collocates for the key words "international" and "student(s)". These collocates were then discussed through academic capitalism framing. The findings indicated that university websites offered information that was either procedural, or that which explained how an institution was international. This analysis painted international students as customers requiring assistance from a university. Findings also showed that being an international student in Malaysia would bring about social mobility through interactions with other international students.

Keywords: Discourse analysis; international students; university websites

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, Malaysia and the greater region of Southeast Asia have enjoyed the financial returns and the inflow of human resources through the arrival of international students (Nachatar Singh, Schapper, & Jack, 2014). The arrival of international students is mediated by various reasons, such as affordable tuition fees and living expenses, safety of the host country, and the reputation of the institution (Ahmad, & Buchanan, (2017). Aside from these, another mediating reason is the information available to prospective international students. In fact, recent studies have indicated how information from university websites is often considered trustworthy and taken seriously in students' decision-making process

(McNicholas, & Marcella, 2022). As such, it is crucial that universities provide information in their websites that would persuade international students to select them. While studies on university websites have been conducted in other parts of the world, there remains a limited amount of such studies pertaining to Malaysian universities (Ooi, Ho, & Amri, 2010). Hence, to address this gap in the literature on university websites in the Malaysian context, this study aims to conduct a discourse analysis on a corpus of selected university website pages. Specifically, this study will use the academic capitalism framing to analyse the portrayal of international students in both public and private university websites.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Internationalization of Universities in Malaysia

The movement of international students has shifted from east-to-west, to east-to-east. Asian tertiary institutions located in China, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia have witnessed an influx in international student arrival. The internationalization of universities in Malaysia is reported to be driven by several factors, which are economic: to generate revenue through fee-paying international students; socio-cultural: to encourage intercultural exchange; academic: to support academic collaborations either in teaching or research; and political: to promote the status of the nation as an international education hub. Among these factors, the economic factor may be considered significant, given neoliberal approaches taken by the nation and educational institutions. The neo-liberalization of higher education may be characterized as the reduction of state welfare and support to public universities in lieu of institutions' ramping up on their own efforts in economic efficiency, along with the establishment of more privatized universities. This has also brought about an increase of private universities in Malaysia, and the corporatization of public universities, where state institutions are encouraged to create income-generating programs. The internationalization of higher education in Malaysia is thus the effect of the nation's educational and economic aspiration and its response to globalization. To this end, Malaysia aims to be an educational hub for international students from around the globe. This is supported and promoted by national policies and educational blueprints, where structures have been laid to attract foreign investors and to adjust teaching practices, such as the choice of the language of instruction (Munusamy, & Hashim, 2019).

International Students in Malaysia

In terms of attracting international students, Malaysia has enjoyed its status as a destination country for many from within the region, particularly from ASEAN member nations. This is partly due to the country's proximity to ASEAN and other Asian countries, the ease of air travel and access, and the similarities of cultural norms (Chao, 2020). The growing number of international students has subsequently encouraged the increase of educational institutions that are either funded by the state or through fee-paying students.

Aside from expanding the options for tertiary education, the increase of institutions has allowed students from disparate socio-economic backgrounds to enjoy an international and overseas study experience. This is apparent in Malaysia, where international students coming from rural and lower-income areas have been able to enroll into university programs at an affordable cost. Furthermore, given the largely positive experience of studying in Malaysia, researchers have reported the high possibility of international students returning for further education.

The economic returns that Malaysia reaps from international students, however, is not one that is experienced by other countries in the region. Researchers have pointed out the imbalance in international student movement. Moreover, intra-ASEAN international students may not be that many, as they typically rely on the availability of financial assistance from the host or their home countries (Chao, 2020).

3. METHODOLOGY

In the previous section, the aspirations of Malaysia to become an educational hub for international students were discussed. To offer a better understanding of this matter, this study aims to analyse the discourse of university websites in Malaysia. In particular, this study will use academic capitalism framing to determine the portrayal of international students in the websites of both public and private universities in Malaysia.

This next section will explain the context of the data, which is university websites, as well as how data was collected to create a corpus, and subsequently analysed.

Context of Data: University Websites

Websites of any organization may be viewed as an 'electronic storefront'. A website can provide

“frames of symbolic representations that inform and lure these potential stakeholders in to take a closer look, and perhaps interact with the firm in some capacity. The selected text, images and colors, as well as the structure of the arrangements (e.g., the layout of information, or the configuration of hyperlink paths) creates impressions not only about the product or service offered, but also about the characteristics of the organizations that provide them” (Winter, Saunders, & Hart, 2003, p. 311].

Given that the Internet is ubiquitous, websites have become a primary space where information about a higher education institution may be readily accessed. Researchers reported that international students are typically represented in university websites as being an aggregated group. This gives the sense that there is a global representation of that university, which may amount to a prestige asset (Ford, & Cate, 2020). Moreover, university websites depict learning and living experiences of university students as holistic (McNicholas, & Marcella, 2022). It is also common to find information about how an institution may offer ‘social mobility’ to prospective students, instead of equitable and public good that was traditionally associated with any institutions for learning (Saichai, & Morphew, 2014). Marketing a university as offering social mobility is effective, especially to convince students who are still considering whether to join the university (Zhang, 2017).

Data Preparation and Collection

The data for this study is derived from university websites of both public and private institutions in Malaysia. These universities were identified through www.studymalaysia.com – a one-stop comprehensive online portal for prospective local and international students.

Table 1: List of institutions included in the study

Public	Private
1. Universiti Malaya (UM)	1. Multimedia University (MMU)
2. Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	2. Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN)
3. Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM)	3. Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (UniRAZAK)
4. Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	4. Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP)
5. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM)	5. International Medical University (IMU)
6. Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM)	6. Universiti Selangor (UNISEL)
7. Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM)	7. Open University Malaysia (OUM)
8. Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	8. Malaysia University of Science & Technology (MUST)
9. Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS)	9. AIMST University (AIMST)
10. Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)	10. Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)
11. Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI)	11. Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL)
12. Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)	12. Wawasan Open University (WOU)

Public	Private
13. Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)	13. Albukhary International University (AIU)
14. Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM)	14. Al-Madinah International University (MEDIU)
15. Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM)	15. International Centre for Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF)
16. Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP)	16. Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LKW)
17. Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP)	17. Management and Science University (MSU)
18. Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA)	18. Asia e University (AeU)
19. Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK)	19. UCSI University (UCSI)
20. Universiti Pertahanan Nasional Malaysia, (UPNM)	20. Quest International University (Quest)

In this website, both public and private universities in Malaysia are listed: there are 20 public universities and 50 private universities. Information in this website was consolidated from the official Malaysian Ministry of Education website. To ensure that the data was comparable, only the first 20 private universities listed were included in the data collection. All in all, 40 websites contributed to the data for this study (see Table 1).

Information from website pages that were directly linked or indirectly related with international students was collected. Then, the data was read thoroughly and iteratively for the purpose of coding. There were two codes that emerged from this step, the first code is *procedural information*, which refers to university websites that offer information on application and registration processes, visa or accommodation services for international students, or even tuition fee payment methods. The second code *information on the internationalization of the institution*. This code presents information about how an institution positions itself as an education hub for international students, or how its programs are international.

After coding, the framing of international students was analysed through the identification of significant collocates of the key words “student(s)” and “international” through a free corpus tool (AntConc) (Loo, & Lagason, 2022).

Data Analysis: Academic Capitalism Framing

This study utilized academic capitalism framing as its analytical tool. Academic capitalism is concerned with market-like strategies and behavior of an institution (Winter, Saunders, & Hart, 2003) and the monetization of knowledge and educational experiences (McClure, 2016). In this study, the academic capitalism frame is defined as experiences that are personally, academically, and professionally rewarding (McClure, 2016). These experiences will be induced through the identification of significant collocates of the key words

“international” and “student(s)”. Collocates have been found to provide insights into discursive patterns, which may uncover implicit meanings (Ajšić, 2021). It was decided that collocates within a three-word span to the right of the key words will be considered. This span was decided given that the genre of websites would normally have shorter texts. Furthermore, since these collocates would take on the predicate position of the key words and phrases (nouns), they would provide attributive information which may help us better understand information associated with “international student(s)” (Åhäll, & Borg, 2013), particularly those concerning procedures of being an international student in Malaysia, and the internationalization of a Malaysian institution.

4. FINDINGS

There were 40 website pages analysed in this study: 20 from public universities and 20 from the private universities. Information from these websites contributed to the creation of a corpus that consisted of 2736-word tokens, and 885 word types. In the iterative reading and subsequent coding of information, it was found that slightly more than half of the public and private university website pages provided information about procedures, while the remaining about the internationalization of the institution (Table 2).

Table 2: Types of information presented in university websites

Website information type	Public	Private
Procedural information	25% (n=10)	30% (n=12)
Information on internationalization	25% (n=10)	20% (n=8)

Collocates of the words “international” and “student(s)” were identified through AntConc. These words were found to be significant based on the comparison of the corpus data (university website texts) with a benchmark corpus (top 5000 words from the Corpus of Contemporary American English). Due to space constraints, only the first four significant collocates were included for analysis. The significant collocates, their concordance lines, and the source of information (institution) are provided in the tables below.

Table 3: Collocates, concordance lines, and institution for the analysis of “international”

Key word	Collocates	Concordance	Institution
International	Students unit handle	The International Students Unit handles all matters pertaining to international students.	Private – UniRAZAK
	Students to get	Assists international students to get adjusted in the new environment	Private – MSU

	Student population comes	University of Malaya is the first choice of Malaysia's top students and our international student population comes from more than 80 different countries.	Public – UM
	Students even prior	The unit provides services to the international students even prior to their arrival in Malaysia.	Private – UniRAZAK

When considering the concordances of the significant collocates for “international” (Table 3), we could see that the information is largely procedural, and originating from websites of private universities. The procedural information, while helpful, framed students as requiring services and the institutions as rendering these services.

Table 4: Collocates, concordance lines, and institution for the analysis of “student”

Key word	Collocates	Concordance	Institution
Student	pass for current	Providing services pertaining to visa & immigration matters including processing student pass applications for new students and renewal of student pass for current students	Private – AIU
	you can join	As a UniKL student, you can join various clubs and societies based on your interests in each campus, and participate in programmes for new students such as International Welcome Week and International Orientation.	Private – UniKL
	community of more	With an international student community of more than 1,000 students from 65 countries worldwide, you can choose from over 140 programmes in 12 campuses located throughout Peninsular Malaysia.	Private – UniKL
	Student society supports	In MSU, the International Student Society supports all international students and activities	Private – MSU

For the key word “student” (Table 4), findings showed that the significant collocates were identified from the websites of private institutions. The information gleaned from the concordances was procedural- again, with the students framed as requiring services; nonetheless, there were also experiences for international students in relation to clubs or societies, and the possibility of meeting students from a wide range of countries studying different programs.

For the key word “students” (Table 5), significant collocates pointed towards concordances that reflect the contribution of graduate students, as well as international students in terms of promoting multiculturalism and diversity, leading to a better understanding of self and of others.

Table 5: Collocates, concordance lines, and institution for the analysis of “students”

Key word	Collocates	Concordance	Institution
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Students	Play a valued	Graduate students play a valued and important role in the School's contribution to scholarship and research excellence.	Public – UTHM
	From enrolment until	To provide support services to all international students from enrolment until the completion of their studies.	Private – UTAR
	Experiences in terms	UM believes that a multicultural and multinational campus will enrich students' experiences in terms of social and cultural diversity.	Public – UM
	Build a stronger sense	We know from experience that the diversity helps students build a stronger sense of who they are, while developing better perspectives of not only their own, but equally important, others' strengths and abilities.	Public – UMP

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Findings from this study are aligned with literature regarding international students in Malaysia, and the internationalization of universities in Malaysia. Based on the type of information presented, it seemed that international students had been framed as customers, where they are promised help and services for their relocation to, and studies in Malaysia. International students were also framed as being able to experience social mobility through the potential interaction with other international students; however, there was no distinction made about the types of international students or where they may come from. This reflects the aggregation of international students as a homogenous group (Ford, & Cate, 2020). This could be quite misleading as it paints the picture of students being similar and able to assimilate well.

Besides help and services offered to international students, other information were focused on the types of activities for international students, and their potential contribution to the university. Such a discursive framing presents a promotional discourse, where experiences are perceived as valuable for international students, and the academic benefit that international students may bring to the institution. It is important to note, though, that while international students may bring about “scholarship and research excellence”, as seen in the website of UTHM, all of this will ultimately contribute to the institution’s ranking in the global educational sphere. This is a form of economic mileage that institutions can gain from international students, which aligns with the neoliberal and globalization agenda in the higher education realm (Munusamy, & Hashim, 2019).

Based on the findings of this study, an implication worth pointing out is the possible shift in international students’ decision-making process in their pursuit for higher education in Malaysia. The lack of critical insights as to how institutions in Malaysia serve the

educational needs of international students may signify the established reputation of Malaysian universities. It may also be the case that explicit information on websites is not required, due to other factors such as word of mouth regarding an institution, which was not examined in this study. Students may also gauge the standing of universities, such as the global ranking of universities, from other online sources.

6. CONCLUSION

This study sought to understand how international students were framed based on the academic capitalism perspective. Through a corpus and discourse analysis approach, it was found that international students were framed as customers who would receive help and services in their relocation to Malaysia. International students were also framed as being given the experience of social mobility, particularly through the opportunities to interact with other international students. Finally, international students were also framed as an economic source for institutions, especially through their contribution towards scholarship and research. To expand on this current study, future researchers could consider a comparison of information presented in university websites with international students' actual experiences.

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Effect of Social Entrepreneurship Antecedents on Students' Social Entrepreneurship Competency: Evidence from Students' Social Entrepreneurship Organizations in Chinese Universities

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to predict the effect of empathy (EM), moral obligation (MOB), self-efficacy (SE), and social support (SS) on social entrepreneurship competency (SEC). Drawing upon theory planned behavior (TPB) and experiential learning theory (ELT), using stratified random sampling and cross-sectional research design, the study collected and analyzed 384 questionnaires with a response rate of 73.8% from students ENACTUS universities members in the Guangdong province, China. The study revealed that MOB, SE, and SS were significantly influenced SEC. Although EM records an insignificant effect on SEC. The results also indicated that EL positively influences SEC substantially. This study addressed the critical role of EL in strengthening students' social entrepreneurial competency. The study advances TPB by elaborating on new insights to determine the importance of EL and students' social entrepreneurial skills to develop existing social entrepreneurial competencies.

Keywords: Empathy; moral obligation; self-efficacy; social support; social entrepreneurship competency; experiential learning; theory planned behavior; experiential learning theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims at examining the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education on social entrepreneurship competencies with a scope of ENACTUS universities members of Guangdong province in China, which explore the impact of the antecedents and experiential learning on social entrepreneurship competencies of university students in Enactus China. Due to poor productivity and efficiencies of social corporations along with lack of human skills and performance, therefore, governments expectation are giving more attention to social entrepreneurs to tackle these socially issues (Amini, Arasti, & Bagheri, 2018). Hence, researchers (Bornstein, 2007; Cukier, Trenholm, Carl, & Gekas, 2011) have viewed social entrepreneurship as the major solution to handle and deploy valuable resources to create

social and economic benefits. Social entrepreneurship tend to be critically important for governments, societies, and manufacturers to overcome major social issues (Brock & Steiner, 2009) and bridge the gap between societies and entrepreneurs (Mair & Marti, 2006). Despite the crucial role of social entrepreneurship in educational institutions, researchers Short, Moss, and Lumpkin (2009), have noticed that students and managers are suffering from knowledge and skills along with competencies that need to be acquired in social entrepreneurship context. In addition, educational managers are required to possess valuable knowledge and social spirit to succeed and advance both economic and social missions (Mair & Marti, 2006). Therefore, managerial competencies and entrepreneurial mindset can be achieved if education quality and accumulated experiences are relevant to social entrepreneurship (Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008). Due to lack of empirical research addressing an in-depth analyses in educational social entrepreneurship, it is still confused what kind of competencies and skills that should be taught to polish students social entrepreneurship (Miller, Wesley, & Williams, 2012).

This paper seeking to search and examine relevant competencies-based social entrepreneurship among Chinese students in higher education institutions. The study come out with a new model under social entrepreneurship and experiential learning lenses. The study aims to level up student's entrepreneurial mindset to acquire valuable competencies to contribute to social entrepreneurship outcomes. The study begins with introduction and highlighting major points in social entrepreneurship, followed by second section discussing relevant literature review of the study concepts, and then presenting methodology, data analysis, and then concluded with illustrating study findings and discussion.

2. PROPOSED HYPOTHESES AND MODEL

Empathy and Social Entrepreneurship Competencies

Social entrepreneurship researchers postulate empathy as a foremost enhancement of social business comportment and a well-stipulated constituent in mindset (Jolliffe & Farrington, 2006). Individual capability to envisage the feelings or thoughts of others (Amini et al., 2018). With social mission and willingness to aware of or benefit marginalized people, more interest should be rendered to people within a very specific group, such as underprivileged people (Kouprie & Visser, 2009). As such, the assessment on the imagination extent of a latent charity-oriented entrepreneur is needed on the concerns and antiphon regarding those socially unfortunates. As one of the core competencies, empathy can influence the

entrepreneurs having deep appreciation and compassion for others (Korte, Smith, & Li, 2018). The prosocial behavioral model of Batson (1987) was adapted to exemplify the progression of how well empathy works in potential social entrepreneurs (B. R. Smith & Stevens, 2010). As a return an altruistic motive in social entrepreneurs is created to alleviate the suffering of others. In this context, empathy is identified as an emotional driver by students who engaged in activities of Enactus China in feeling and compassion the marginalized people and protection of environment (Korte et al., 2018).

H1: Empathy significantly influence social entrepreneurship competencies.

Moral Obligation and Social Entrepreneurship Competencies

Moral obligation is defined as a sense of responsibility to do or not to do with moral or immorally by individual who encountered with a moral situation (Beck & Ajzen, 1991; Leonard, Graham, & Bonacum, 2004). In their model, Mair and Marti (2006) pay close attention to Kohlberg's moral verdict stage (Kohlberg, 1981) as the second premise of social enterprise aspirations. According to Kohlberg, individual moral judgments are divided into three levels: (1) determined by broad social agreements; or (2) self-interest, meets the social norms/authorities; or (3) universal moral principles. Instead of measurement of a person's scope of the obligation, the Kohlberg model is tending to measure a person's moral obligation. In the background of SEAS, the result of ethics is the level to persons who believe that society is ethically duty-bound to address marginalized groups of society will be on measuring. To avoid confusion with self-efficacy, this project is deliberately measured at the social level rather than at the individual level. China government has attached great importance to college students' moral education. In addition, integrating Chinese excellent traditional culture education with college students' moral education. In the background of China, the study of social entrepreneurship and traditional culture and Eastern management philosophy is a rewarding action. Thus, we hypothesis:

H2: Moral obligation significantly influence social entrepreneurship competencies.

Self-Efficacy and Social Entrepreneurship Competencies

Self-efficacy describes an individual's perception and ability to perform an expected behavior (Gist, 1987; Schunk, 1984). Self-efficacy is associated with an individual's belief in good performance (Bandura, 1982). In commercial morals research, it has been found to forecast the probability of entrepreneurial performance (Chen, Greene, & Crick, 1998) and the

possibility of personal cheating (Elias, 2009), engaging in civic events or participating report (MacNab & Worthley, 2008). Mair and Marti (2006) hypothesized that in the background of social entrepreneurship, high levels of self-efficacy enable people to recognize that social risk creation is feasible, which has a positive impact on the construction of matching behavioral intentions. I. H. Smith and Woodworth (2012) suggest that cultivate social entrepreneurs' self-efficacy should be a key component of social entrepreneurship education. Therefore, this study suggests social entrepreneurial self-efficacy as a measure of whether an individual can have a significant social impact in large and complex problems.

H3: Self-efficacy significantly influence social entrepreneurship competencies.

Social Support and Social Entrepreneurship Competencies

According to action psychology, supporting systems or networks can also help achieve goals. In the past, the importance of the network to corporate intent has been recognized (Davidsson & Honig, 2003). Therefore, it is sound to suggest that "social support is needed to trigger the behavioral intentions of social enterprises" (Mair & Marti, 2006). Therefore, in the setting of social entrepreneurship, individuals will calculate the level of backup of people's efforts in their own networks. This support may come from friends, kinfolk and collaborators. Furthermore, a mounting sum of institutes have joined this field. Social entrepreneurs are fortunate to be financed by many foundations, risk patrons and socially influential financiers (Bugg-Levine & Emerson, 2011; Tjornbo & Westley, 2012).

H4: Social support significantly influence social entrepreneurship competencies.

Experiential Learning and Social Entrepreneurship Competencies

The style of social entrepreneurship teaching should not only serve as a motivator of partakers but also a booster to their knowledge acquisition by employing a constructivist method (Weimer, 2002). Thus, entrepreneurship pedagogy should engross experiential learners in the job-grounded encircling of self-supervision, self-orientation, deliberation and self-sufficiency (Huq & Gilbert, 2013). As a process of learning, experiential learning was identified as an effective method to incorporated social entrepreneurship into the curriculum for business school, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in order to enhanced understanding of knowledge as well as entrepreneurial competencies (Awaysheh & Bonfiglio, 2017). The main aim of most entrepreneurship education is to

improve some level of entrepreneurial competencies. Within such objective, entrepreneurial competencies refer to knowledge, skills and attitudes with an effect on the willingness and capability to undertake jobs in the entrepreneurial way so as to create new value and societal change. This definition is consistent with the understanding of competencies in general and entrepreneurial competencies as well in much of the literature (Fisher et al., 2008; Sánchez, 2011). Hence, we hypothesis:

H5: Experiential learning significantly influence social entrepreneurship competencies.

3. METHODOLOGY

Sampling and targeted respondents

Based on the Morgan (1970), the population of 800 demands a minimum sample of 260. Using stratified random sampling cross-sectional research design, a total of 520 questionnaires were distributed to the students engaged with ENACTUS across all 25 universities members in the Guangdong province, China. A total of 384 questionnaires with a response rate of 73.8% were appropriate as the study dataset for the final analysis.

Measurement of Variables

Measurement of this study composes of 60 items which adapted from social entrepreneurial antecedents scale (SEAC) (Hockerts, 2015), social Entrepreneurship competency assessment (Capella-Peris, Gil-Gómez, Martí-Puig, & Ruíz-Bernardo, 2020) and experiential learning scale (ELS) (Young, Caudill, & Murphy, 2008). SEAS is used to validate the relationship between social entrepreneurial intention and its antecedents: empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, and apparent obtainability of social support.

4. DATA ANALYSIS, MEASUREMENT MODEL AND RESULTS

PLS statistical tool allows researcher to conduct and assess all tests associated with measurement and structural models, along with predicting the model relevancy (Q^2) through blindfolding procedures (Hair Jr, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & Kuppelwieser, 2014). Convergent validity contains of several tests, namely outer loading, factor loading, and average variance extracted (AVE). Results show that item loading were ranged between 0.505 and 0.932 (Hair Jr et al., 2014). While, composite reliability was higher than 0.7 (Chin, 1998). The second step of measurement model assessment is discriminant validity. To do so, the study tested

Fornell and Larcker criterion to compare the constructs correlation with the square root of AVE of a particular construct. Sorted values indicate that the bold values are higher than the values within the respective row and column, indicating that the study succeed the discriminant test.

Structural Model

Structural model results were presented in the Figure 1 and Table 1. Results revealed that empathy (EM) negatively and statistically insignificant ($B = -0.05$, $t = 1.07$, $p > 0.05$) on SEC, hence, H1 were not supported. As presented in the Table 1, moral obligation (MOB) has a positive and significant ($B = 0.09$, $t = 2.21$, $p < 0.05$) impact on SEC. Thus, H2 were supported. Besides, Figure 1 shows that self-efficacy (SS) has a negative path but statistically significant on SEC ($B = -0.07$, $t = 1.82$, $p < 0.05$), indicate that H3 supported. Social support has a significant impact and positively correlated ($B = 0.502$, $t = 10.74$, $p < 0.05$) indicate that H4 were supported. Finally, experiential learning (EL) positively and significantly ($B = 0.43$, $t = 7.49$, $p < 0.05$) influenced SEC. inferring that H5 were supported.

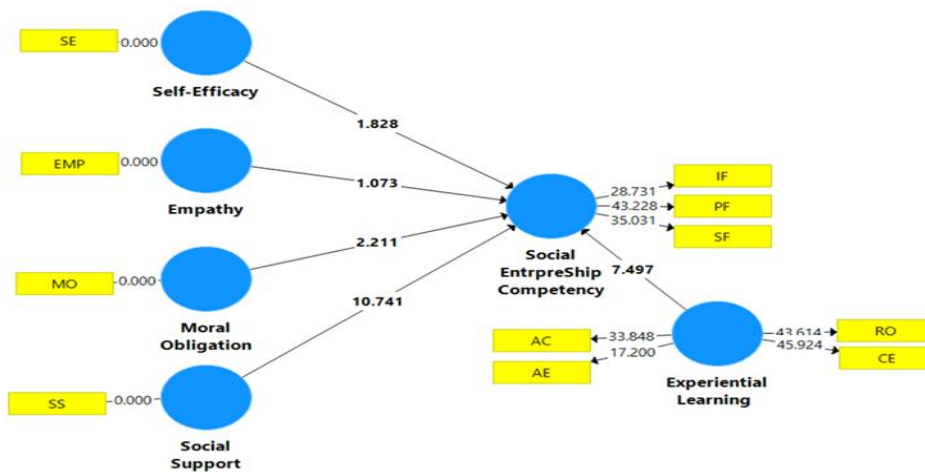


Figure 1. Structural Model

Table 1. Structural model results

H	Relationship	Beta	T- Values	P- Values	Confidence Interval (BC)		Decision
					LL (2.5%)	UL (97.5%)	
1	EM -> SEC	-0.050	1.073	0.141	-0.131	0.022	Not Supported

H	Relationship	Beta	T- Values	P- Values	Confidence Interval (BC)		Decision
					LL (2.5%)	UL (97.5%)	
2	MOB -> SEC	0.097	2.210	0.013	0.023	0.168	Supported
3	SE -> SEC	-0.079	1.827	0.034	-0.146	-0.006	Supported
4	SS -> SEC	0.502	10.741	0.000	0.422	0.574	Supported
5	EL -> SEC	0.430	7.497	0.000	0.332	0.525	Supported

Source: PLS Algorithm

EL: experiential learning, EM: empathy, MOB: moral obligation, SE: self-efficacy, SS: social support, SEC: social entrepreneurship competencies. ** $p < 0.01$ T values > 1.64 (p values < 0.01).

Importantly, results also shows that R^2 value was 0.572 while Q^2 recoreded a value of 0.356 suggesting that the model was relevance and the variables are well-explained the variance (Chin, 1998).

5. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study is to assess the relationship between social entrepreneurship antecedents (e.g., empathy and moral obligation) on social entrepreneurship competency. The results indicate that moral obligation and social support have significant and positive impact on SEC. Self-efficacy have significant and negative impact on SEC. In addition, experiential learning recorded significant and positive effect on SEC. While empathy recorded insignificant relationship with SEC. Suggesting that hypotheses (e.g., H2, H3, H4, and H5) are supported. The study revealed that there is only one direct hypothesis was not supported which tested the relationship between empathy and SEC. Hence, this study stands on TPB and EL lenses to extend the body of knowledge in particular social entrepreneurship in the light of educator's point of view.

Theoretical Implication

The most successful and mature framework for analysing behavioural intent in entrepreneurial research, the TPB classical model can be expanded and adapted and provide a specifically analyse approach for social entrepreneurship (Tran & Von Korfflesch, 2016). By adapted and improved the TPB model, researcher transferred the focus on the students of high education and identify the relationship between potential distinctive precursor of social

entrepreneurship behavior intention and the effectiveness of social entrepreneurship education (Hockerts, 2015). As such, this study extended and answered the calls for developing a new theory to add to the broader academic discussion about experiential learning and social entrepreneurship behaviour. It is evidence for future researchers to confirm the association between these variables. To our knowledge, this study is an early effort in incorporating and assessing SEA and SEC in the context of entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship.

Practical Implication

This presents study contribute to advance research in entrepreneurial development which can be improved when teaching and training enhances students levels of self-esteem and confidence, leading to empower self-control over their lives either in the society or economic atmosphere (Urban & Teise, 2015). The present study offers a new perspective on social entrepreneurial competency, as it is in an Asian setting. With these results, it enriches the theoretical foundations of social entrepreneurship.

6. CONCLUSION

Many insights have presented involved in social entrepreneurship antecedents, empathy, moral obligation, self-efficacy, social support, experiential learning, and social entrepreneurship competency throughout this study. This is one of the pioneering studies, from the perspective of the fast-growing economy of China among Chinese Students Enactus Universities. The present study has significant implications for the body of social entrepreneurship literature, as well as put forward some sensible suggestions to the policymakers and educators. In fact, this study has powered SEA and SEC literature by supporting past studies and extending TPB lens along with experiential learning theory.

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The Presence of Social Support among International Students in Malaysia: A Systematic Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

The number of international students' enrolment at Malaysian Public Universities constantly increasing in the last 10 to 15 years. This is aligned with government aspiration which is expecting to receive about 250,000 international students (IS) in the year 2025. Despite a hopeful increase in international student numbers, some international students reported experiencing adjustment problems and issues, especially in academic, psychological, and sociocultural aspects. However, it is believed that social support is one of the potential coping mechanisms that can help IS during their adjustment phase. By using a qualitative literature analysis, this paper report the research findings of Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to explore the role of social support in helping international student's adjustment problems and issues especially during their adjustment period to home country. This search put social support in general as it can be from any sources such as family, peers, academic instructor, special person and society. The findings reveal that the presence of social support can give positive impact to IS especially in emotional, psychological and IS's resilience in campus. It is no doubt that the presence of social support will enhance IS's experience and quality of stay in host country. In a nutshell, social support networks are an essential strategy that can be used by public universities in Malaysia especially during the adjustment phase of IS.

Keywords: International student; social support; academic adjustment; psychological adjustment; sociocultural adjustment.

1. INTRODUCTION

Every year, students around the world travel to further their education. The number of international student (IS)'s enrolment increases rapidly all over the world. Same goes to Malaysia. The era after September 11 shows new trend that IS from middle east or Muslim country prefer to further their studies in Asian region compared to the traditional host countries; United States, United Kingdom and Australia. In the year of 2015, Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE, 2019) reveals that around 151,979 IS enrol their studies in Malaysia compared to 40,525 in 2005. And this number continuously increase until 170,898 in the year of 2018 MOHE, (2019).

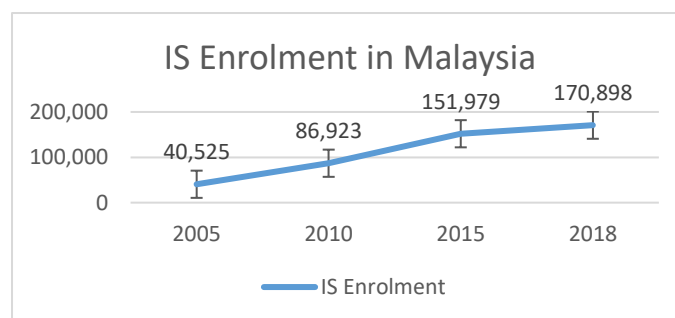


Figure 1: IS enrolment in Malaysia 2005-2018 (MOHE, 2019)

However, IS always reported experiencing problematic situation while pursuing higher education outside of their home country. In fact, according to study, IS normally encounter more difficulties than their local friends (Sabouripour, & Roslan, 2018). This can happen as early as they arrive to the host country. Scholars reveal that IS face problems related to immigration and visa procedure [3], different living culture (Schartner, 2014), different usage of language and slang (Ahrari, Krauss, Suandi, Abdullah, Sahimi, Olutokunbo, & Dahalan, 2019), weather (Rahim, Raof & Nasir, 2018), unfamiliar academic systems (Lashari, Kaur, & Awang-Hashim, 2018), emotional issues (Khosravi, Azman, Khosravi & Koshravi,m 2018), and problems to make friend (Ahrari et.al., 2019). These problems might affect their academic performance, psychological state and sociocultural experience, or worst, lead them to drop out from university (Schartner, 2014).

Not to overstate issues, but scholars mention that, students with adjustment issues are more likely to perform poorly in school, which may increase stress and raises the chance of academic failure and dropping out country (Ahrari, et.al., 2019; Lashari, Kaur, & Awang-Hashim, 2018; Saburipour & Roslan, 2018). Scholars believe that excellent academic achievement alone might not be sufficient to reduce the impacts of social difficulties (Lashari, Kaur, & Awang-Hashim, 2018). A study among 10 international postgraduate students in Malaysia by Ahrari et al., (2019) mentioned IS believed that having more interactions would help them feel less homesick, lonely, and isolated in home country (Ahrari, et.al., 2019). Hence, this shows that, even if they struggle in studies, IS who are socially integrated may decide to stay because of the relationship satisfaction they have made. Therefore, despite of their problems, previous studies demonstrate that the presence of social support can help IS to better adjustment in the host country (Bhochhibhoya, Dong & Branscum, 2017; Chuah & Singh, 2016; Lashari, Kaur, & Awang-Hashim, 2018; Sabouripour, & Roslan, 2018).

2. METHOD

This study will use a systematic literature review method. Using this method, instruments that related to social support towards international students will be identified and analysed critically. The search will focus on instruments involving aspects of IS adjustment using social support such as social support, family support, peer support, society support, and special person support. Other than that, this search will also focus on three aspects of adjustment which are academic adjustment, sociocultural adjustment and psychological adjustment to learn their adjustment phase. The search was conducted using specific term in English language either by searching the term itself or combining between two or more terms with “and” and “or”. Some of the terms are “international students”, “social support”, “family support”, “peer support”, “society support”, “special person supports” “academic adjustment”, “sociocultural adjustment”, “psychological adjustment” and others. The searching phase was conducted in Scopus and Google Scholar database to identify the latest literature review that relevant to the context. The search was limited for any publications in the last 10 years only.

3. FINDINGS

The findings present the analysis of selected literature. Overall, the researcher has divided the analysis of these literatures into 6 main points namely:

- a) International student enrolment in Malaysian public universities
 - b) International student’s issues in academic aspect during adjustment phase
 - c) International student’s issues in sociocultural aspect during adjustment phase
 - d) International student’s issues in psychological aspect during adjustment phase
 - e) The presence of social support in helping international student’s adjustment to host country
 - f) The role of social support in helping international student’s adjustment to host country
- Information gathered has been summarized in Table 1 below.

Table 1: IS’s adjustment in 3 aspects and the role of social support.

Author/s	Focus	Method/s	Findings
Ahrari et al., (2019)	IS’s adjustment in academic, sociocultural and psychological aspects.	Semi structured interview among 10 international postgraduate students in	-Academic: Different learning approach, Received academic support from lecturer/student support services -Sociocultural: Discrimination, Communication issues, culture shock.

Author/s	Focus	Method/s	Findings
		research universities in Malaysia	-Psychological: Feeling safe, Loneliness, Anxiety.
Lashari et al., (2018)	Examine the role of social support in helping academic and psychological aspects of IS.	Questionnaire among 200 IS in 3 Public Universities in Malaysia	Social support has been searched in general (friends, family, special person and society). Findings show social support have relationship with better psychological experience.
Roberts et al., (2015)	The presence of social support from IS's perspectives	Using mix methods: interviews with service providers, student focus groups, and a large-scale survey.	-Not all, but majority of IS aware with social support services provided. -Some support services such as; library, International Office and Health service described as importance and very useful. -Issues regarding social support services; language, time and cost. Paid services provided like mentoring support and buddy system.
Bhochhibhoy a et al., (2017)	To discover the sources of social support among IS and the relationship with their mental health conditions.	Questionnaire among 328 IS in all study level in south western public universities in US	Different sources of social support will be resulted in different mental health condition of IS. IS who receiving support from home country, reported have better condition in their mental health compare to IS who only receive support from host country.
Sabouripour & Roslan, (2018)	This research examines the role of social support in helping IS's resilience in host country.	Questionnaire among 291 international undergraduate students in UPM.	IS with higher number of social support will lead to better resilience in host country. And this is also associated with their race. From this research, IS from Middle East country reported having higher resilience compared to IS from Asia and Africa because of the independence culture of their home country.
Arandas, M. F., Loh, Y. L., & Sannusi, (2019)	Explore IS's reasons to enrol in UKM and their issues.	Questionnaire among 108 IS in UKM.	-IS's Reasons for enrolling in UKM are because of; ranking, fees, faculty, programs and also lecturers. -IS's issues faced are; difficult immigration process, poor accommodation, discrimination and bureaucracy issues.
Chuah & Singh, (2016)	Examine IS's perspective about the role of social support towards IS.	Questionnaire to 400 undergraduate IS in 4 research Universities in Malaysia	This study reported that majority IS expecting social support from host country in form of emotional, practical, informational and social companionship during their stay in host country. It is also found that the four categories of social support can help IS with better experience in host country.

Author/s	Focus	Method/s	Findings
(Rahim et al., 2018)	IS's issue in sociocultural aspect.	Interview with 6 international undergraduate's students in UMK.	-Hard to understand conversation/lecture because of different slang used -Different principle in interaction -Poor social hygiene -Different and extreme weather experience.
(Khosravi et al., 2018)	Psychological issue among IS.	Research among newly registered IS in USM using questionnaire; 60 participants and focus group discussion among 30 participants from IS.	Female IS reported experience higher level of psychological issues than male. 4 categories of psychological issues are: somatic symptoms, anxiety or insomnia, social dysfunction and severe depression.
(Deni, A.R., Tumar, A., Houghton, A.-M. and Crosling, 2021)	IS's issues in academic and sociocultural	Mix Methods study. A survey among 53 IS in Private University in Malaysia and followed by interview to 12 participants.	-Academic issues; problem to understand spoken language and problem to form assignment group with local. -Sociocultural issues; managing time, adapting to local food, weather and making new friends. -Successful adjustment in academic will influence to better adjustment of sociocultural. -Majority IS well adjusted in first year. But some are still struggle to adjust in their second year of study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

IS are always reported in uncertain environment during their campus life. This is due to many challenges they faced compare to their home country. Referring to literatures above, IS's issues can be categorized into three aspects, which are academic, sociocultural and psychological issues.

Academic

Language is the most frequent issue that happen among IS. A study by Deni, A.R., Tumar, A., Houghton, A.-M. and Crosling, (2021) reveals that, from 12 IS that participate in the research, 7 of them have to deal with language either with academic instructors, classmate or management. Even though they already knew and use English language before, but different accent and slang use among local make it tough for them. This also supported by Rahim et al., (2018), stated that the Malay accent in English language among locals make it harder for IS to communicate. People especially in rural area of Malaysia, not used to speak

in English (Rahim, Raof & Nasir, 2018). Other than that, regarding to their study, 45% from total participants indicates that they have problem working in group. Local students prefer to form group among them. Even after offering them self to work with local students, still no one wants to form group with IS. This led them to feel lonely and lower their motivation to study (Deni, Tumar, Houghton, & Crosling, 2021).

Sociocultural

Ahrari et al., (2019), from his qualitative study among 10 international postgraduate students reported that, IS always feel not accepted in Malaysian community. People tend to look bad on them especially if they are from African region. People incline to think that they are up to something bad and as consequences, they always expect a worst from public like they not deserved to receive good from others. This situation, however, bring them in negatives emotion, which the researcher also reported that IS described their stay in host country as sadden experience, triggered their anxiety, feeling depressed, loneliness and no confidence to socialize with others.

To date, search in local newspaper also reported issues face by IS in Malaysia. An article from *Sinar Harian*, on 23 July 2022 reported that IIUM has been hold and delayed IS's passport and visa without any appropriate reason. This situation happens to more than 300 IS in the campus. Consequently, IS reported face many problems and psychological issues. They feel afraid to go outside from their campus since they didn't hold the document, cannot go back to their home country for any emergency and celebration and need to pay for immigration compound because overstay at host country without valid document (Aida, 2022).

Back in 2019, The Star newspaper also reported that IS had received maltreatment from enforcement members. Without any solid reason, an IS from Chad, Ahmat Ali Zen has been arrested while walking to return to his home. Even though has indicate his valid visa document, he still can't been release from jail until the university management decide to intervene in this issue. Ahmat then has been released. However, he was found with blood stains on his shirt. This case however revealed that, Ahmat is not the first one to face this situation. Some IS who came from Africa also share that they also have been treat badly and being arrested without reason (Christina Chin, 2019).

Psychological

Another study by Khosravi et al., (2018), among IS in USM reported that 43.3% of IS in their campus are having psychological distress. This is either they experience somatic symptoms, anxiety, social dysfunctions or severe depression. Their finding also revealed that unmarried IS, and IS who choose to stay in hostel is more likely to experienced psychological distress. This psychological distress condition, happen to them to the point that they feel demotivated to continue their daily life, feeling anger, anxiety, social dysfunction and getting sick. This psychological distress is believed will not just happen to them without any issues. Since they are in new place, facing different routine, being far from family, friends and culture, problems will be more distressing than usual (Khosravi et.al., 2018).

The role of social support

It can't be denied that the number of literatures included in this article is minimum. However, each article shared valuable information, and even unrecognized issues that happen among them. Hence, these problems lead to the importance of social support among IS. It is reported that the number of IS enrolment in Malaysia expand year by year (MOHE, 2019), but the increasing in IS's number also comes with responsibilities. The authorities need to play their roles in order to increase the quality of service during the stay of IS in Malaysia.

Social support can help IS to interact with others, distract their attention from their worries, listen to their concern and offer them support. A quantitative study by Lashari et al., (2018) which analysed the role of friends as social support found that there is a significance relationship with their psychological adjustment. The presence of friends as social support helps them experience less acculturation stress in campus life. However, finding in this research also address that the present of friends as social support is not significant in their academic adjustment (Lashari, Kaur & Awang-Hashim, 2018). Since friends didn't have any authorities in campus, they might not fully able to help in their academic aspect. Nevertheless, the presence of friends as social support can help make them feel better by listening to their problems and comfort them.

In fact, another study by Chuah & Singh, (2016), found that, IS expect to receive support in four categories which are emotional, practical, informational and social companionship from host country (Chuah & Singh, 2016). Hence, this is aligned with what has been recommend by Bhochhibhoya et al., (2017) in their research, which suggest that IS would best receive social support from nearby people who live in the local community.

They might know better to local culture, hence can give better practical and informational support especially when incident like Ahmat Ali Zen happen to them (Christina Chin, 2019). Moreover, from a quantitative study among 108 IS in UKM found that, IS really need someone to listen to their problems, and give suggestion or recommendation for life situations that happen to them (Arandas, Loh, & Sannusi, 2019). The act of listening to them, give response and suggestions, even though might look simple, but will make them feel appreciated, prevent them to feel lonely and boost their experience in host country.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Further research on the importance of social support in assisting international students' adjustment should be promoted. In fact, analysed literatures before has been acknowledged social support to be the most efficient way of assisting international students with adjustment issues especially from the experience of traditional host countries (Bhochhibhoya, Dong, & Branscum, 2017; Roberts, Boldy, & Dunworth, (2015). Recent studies describe social support in general. It can be from family, friends, academicians, International Student Society (ISS) and special person (Ahrari, et.al., 2019; Bhochhibhoya, Dong, & Branscum, 2017; Lashari, Kaur & Awang-Hashim, 2018). Since most of public universities in Malaysia have their own ISS on campus, this is a crucial area to pay attention to. In fact, research about support to IS in Malaysia usually conducted in general and not focusing to any party like ISS. Then it may be wise to conduct more similar research regarding their effectiveness. It is also understandable that the presence of ISS is function as a platform for both parties; international students and management to achieve mutual understanding. Usually, it will act like one stop centre for them to refer, get guidance and mingle around. Hence, it is impossible to not find ISS, since it is well established at each public university in Malaysia. Since IS in need of social support in 4 aspects as mentioned before; emotional, practical, informational and social companionship (Chuah & Singh, 2016) a further research should be made regarding this area.

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A Narrative Review Paper: The Gateway to Asia: Bringing in an Influx of International Students to Malaysia through Malaysia's Unique and Head-Turning Narratives

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ABSTRACT

Higher Education in Malaysia, particularly private higher education is one of the contributors to the country's economy through services sector. Throughout 2015-2020, Malaysian economy grew at an average annual rate of 2.7%, mainly driven by the services and manufacturing sectors. The services sector was significantly contributed by the traditional services subsector at 71.1%, while the balance 28.9% was by the modern services subsector, in which private education services is one of the subsectors. According to the data by Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS), Malaysia has recorded a downward trend in 2018 and 2019 and steady increase of international students' applications in 2020 and 2021. The positive trend signals a growing interests from international students in pursuing study in Malaysia. Furthermore, according to the data by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), it is seen that the biggest fraction of international students in Malaysia is from South Asia region and considerable portions of them are from East Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Southeast Asia (SEA) and Africa regions. Thus, it can be concluded that the data predominantly shows that a very small fraction of international students is from the first-world or high income countries. Therefore, the current marketing narratives are suggested to be reviewed and improved by incorporating Malaysian identity across online and offline touch-points; boasting Malaysia's expertise and advancement; leveraging Malaysia's Foreign University Branch Campuses; defining Malaysia via niche industry-focused curriculum and universities; and empowering international alumni as Malaysia's Mini Education Ambassadors (MEA).

Keywords: branding; marketing; promotion; education; international

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher Education in Malaysia, particularly private higher education is one of the contributors to the country's economy through services sector. Throughout 2015-2020 (period of the Eleventh Malaysia Plan - 11MP), Malaysian economy grew at an average annual rate of 2.7%, mainly driven by the services and manufacturing sectors. The services sector was significantly contributed by the traditional services subsector at 71.1%, while the balance 28.9% was by the modern services subsector (fairly small portion), in which private education services is one of the subsectors. The modern services subsector recorded a higher growth of 5.1% per annum in the 11MP period compared with 3.2% by traditional services subsector. However, in 2020, Malaysia registered only 3.8% of value-added growth for services sector,

missing the target set at 6.2% of value-added growth. Not only that, Malaysia recorded a total exports of RM91.7 billion in 2020, not hitting the target set at RM184.4 billion (Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister Department, 2021).

According to the data by Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS), Malaysia has recorded a steady increase of international students' applications in 2020 and 2021, and the number is predicted to show a positive growth in 2022 and beyond. There were 30,342 applications processed in 2020 and 40,140 in 2021, showed a 32% increase and it is predicted that Malaysia will receive 50,000 international students' applications, a 25% increase, by the end of 2022 (Figure 1). The positive trend signals a growing interest from international students in pursuing study in Malaysia. Whereas based on the data by Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), for the international student's mobility across Higher Learning Institutions (HLIs) in Malaysia, a gradual downward trend can be seen in 2018 and 2019, and the number of international students started to gradually climb up in 2020 and 2021. Moreover, the number is projected to further increase in 2022, to be in line with projection made by EMGS (Education Malaysia Global Services, n.d; Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia. n.d.).

It is seen that Malaysia continues to receive a tremendous number of international students from China for five consecutive years and the data picks up a significant upward trend in 2020 and 2021 (Figure 2). Figure 3 shows that the biggest fraction of international students in Malaysia is from South Asia region and considerable portions of them are from East Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Southeast Asia (SEA) and Africa regions (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, n.d.). Therefore, it can be concluded that the data predominantly shows that a very small fraction of international students is from the first-world or high-income countries.

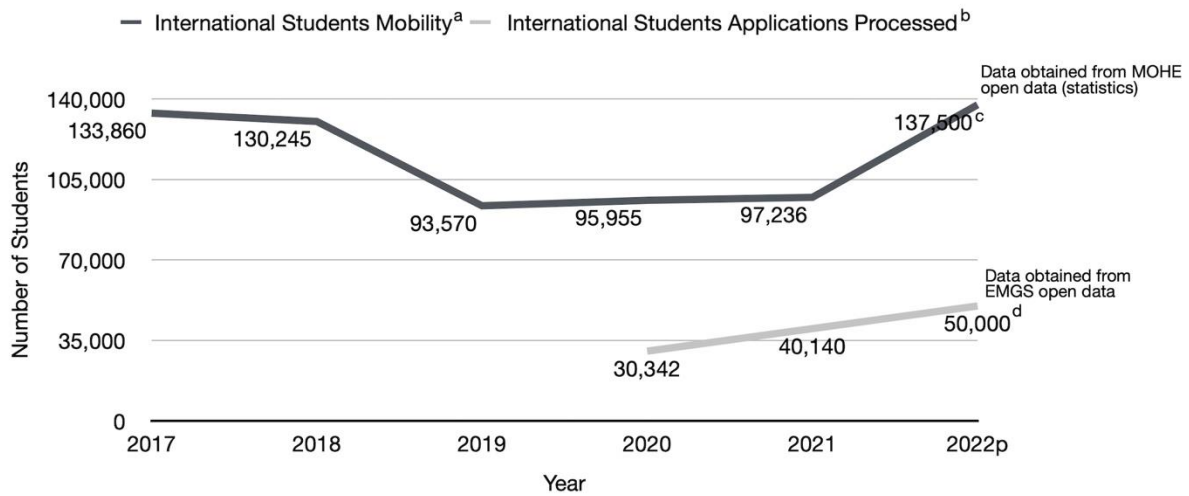


Figure 1: The Number of International Students Mobility and Applications Processed in Malaysia for 2017-2022 (Education Malaysia Global Services, n.d.; Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, n.d.). P - Projected; a - Data across public universities, private HLIs and polytechnics; b - Applications processed by EMGS; c - Projection by author; d - Projection by EMGS

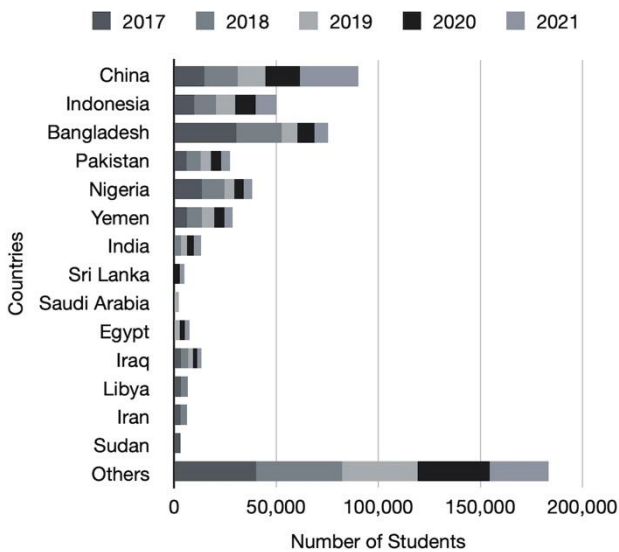


Figure 2: The number of international students mobility for 2017-2021, by countries (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, n.d.)

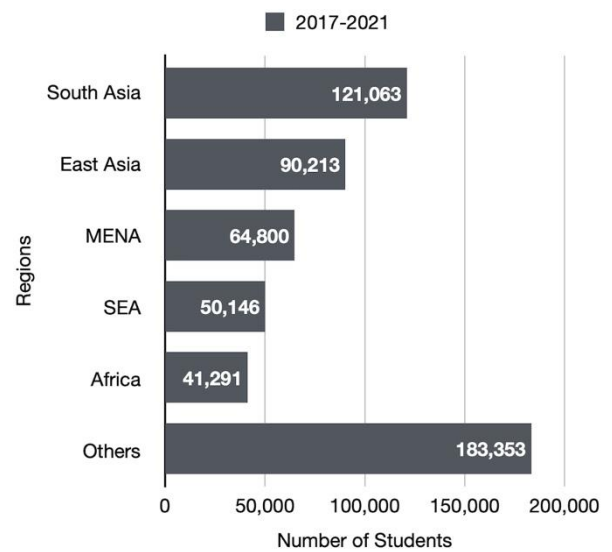


Figure 3: The number of international students mobility for 2017-2021, by regions. MENA – Middle East and North Africa; SEA – Southeast Asia (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, n.d.)

International students come to Malaysia for a variety of reasons. In most instances, the main reasons include Malaysia’s high quality and world class higher education, with most of prominent Malaysian public universities and international university branch campuses are

ranked among the top 200 in QS World University Rankings (QSWUR) 2023; affordable cost of living and tuition fees; safe and peaceful communities; multicultural society; natural diversity; and well developed health tourism/ecotourism (Yuk, 2019).

The internationalisation of higher education in Malaysia is taken charge by EMGS, a Company Limited by Guarantee (CLBG) under the purview of MOHE that is responsible in promoting Malaysia as the international education hub of choice. EMGS aims to position Malaysia as the Top 10 education destination by offering the best of world-class Malaysian education to the global community. It also promotes Malaysian education institutions and products globally through tours and participation in international exhibitions and conferences. Moreover, it operates a One-Stop Centre that provides services to the international students that are pursuing study at Malaysia’s public and private HLIs, language and training centres. It is also the principal body that manages the movement of the international students in Malaysia, including facilitating the visa processing (Education Malaysia Global Services, n.d.).

2. INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION AGENDA

As mentioned earlier, higher education in Malaysia is a part of the modern services sector (especially private higher education) that contributes to the country’s economic growth through the total of exports. The influx of international students pursuing their study in Malaysia have a multiplying effect to the Malaysian economy as these students will spend domestically, thus helping to grow the economy, especially through their spending in the Malaysian tourism industry. This is in line with the findings of a study, which indicated that the international students in Australia had an influential ongoing effect on the Australian tourism industry over and above their education-related activities and expenditures (David, 2003) Considering the importance of the Malaysia’s higher education internationalisation agenda, its strategies and initiatives are rigorously laid out in the national policies (below) and these policies will help to explain further the connection of the agenda with Malaysian macroeconomic aspect.

The Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education), 2015-2025 [MEB(HE)]

The internationalisation of Malaysia’s higher education agenda is clearly outlined in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education), 2015-2025 [MEB(HE)]. The strategies and initiatives are laid out in the MEB(HE) under “Shift 8: Global Prominence”, in which under the

Shift 8, the Government, through MOHE aspires to develop Malaysia as an international education hub with a difference, valued for its quality and competitive advantage in providing affordable and value-for-money higher education along with an added value of rich cultural experiences. This includes the continuous expansion of Malaysia's higher education capacity to host international students, with a target enrolment of 200,000 international students by 2020 and 250,000 by 2025. As of 2020, the target enrolment of 200,000 international students was not successfully achieved due to some issues and challenges (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015).

The Twelfth Malaysia Plan, 2021-2025 (12MP)

The internationalisation of Malaysia's higher education is also discussed in the 12MP, mainly its contribution to the Malaysian economy through concerted efforts in increasing export of local products and services to further reduce the services trade deficit. The potential of private HLIs will be leveraged by introducing niche programmes to attract international students. Strategic collaboration between private HLIs, and large corporations as financial partners, will be encouraged. This collaboration will mutually benefit both parties by improving the sustainability of the private HLIs and ensuring the right talent for the corporations. Furthermore, private HLIs in Sabah and Sarawak will also be encouraged to introduce niche programmes, such as robotics and artificial intelligence, to attract local and international students. In addition, collaboration between private HLIs and enterprises as strategic partners will be encouraged to provide students with industry skillsets through coaching and mentoring, as well as on-job-training. This collaboration will increase the supply of talent to meet the needs of the industry (Economic Planning Unit, Prime Minister Department, 2021)

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Splashing Malaysian Identity across EMGS' Website

Websites as one of the information sources have progressed into an excellent facility that helps tourists in obtaining a wide range of information related to various aspects that include exploration of opportunities, entertainment options, learning benefits and available communication channels, thus playing a critical role in attracting more tourists (Maazouzie, 2020). On the note of that, EMGS' website that serves as a one-stop centre for international

students services should be “furnished” with a comprehensive information and “clothed’ in the Malaysian identity to “greet” the international prospects in proudly Malaysian way. Table 1 below summarises the recommendations for improvement of the EMGS’ website and other EMGS’ affiliated websites (if any).

Boasting Malaysia’s Expertise and Advancement

Malaysia is a leading country in the world for Islamic financial sector as well as Halal products and services industry. This is further supported by the State of the Global Islamic Economy 2022 Report that ranks Malaysia first among 81 countries and regions in the Global Islamic Economy Indicator for the ninth straight year due to Malaysia’s thriving market for Islamic finance and a range of Halal products and services (DinarStandard, 2022). Furthermore, Malaysia’s long track record of building a successful domestic Islamic financial industry of over 30 years gives the country a solid foundation. At present, Malaysia’s Islamic banking assets reached USD 254 billion as at December 2019 with total funds placed with Islamic banks currently represent 38.0% of total banking sector deposits (Bank Negara Malaysia, n.d.).

Our niche and strength in Islamic finance, including financial technology (fintech) sector, and Halal products and services industry present solid opportunities to EMGS to further leverage our strong Islamic and Shariah-compliant products and services through vigorous promotion of our higher education system-the under/postgraduate and professional skills enhancement programmes related to Islamic finance as well as Shariah-compliant and Halal products and services that are being offered by HLIs in Malaysia, including Shariah-compliant healthcare services (i.e., advocated by USIM). EMGS should begin to concentrate around the narration that promotes Malaysia as a wise study destination that has strong connection with the global, highly renowned and innovative hub of Islamic banking/fintech and Halal products

Table 1: Summary of Recommendations for Improvement of the EMGS’ Official Website

Context	As-Is	To-Be	Suggested Actions	Reference/ Benchmark
1 Website interface	The website visitors are greeted with simple, clean, plain and no apparent identity of Malaysia.	A website interface that displays and greets the website visitors with Malaysian identity: Rich multicultural heritage - made known to the world as “Truly Asia” and/or “The Gateway to Asia”.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Incorporate colours from the Malaysian flag: red, white, blue and yellow. 2. Transform the website visitors’ experience through interactive graphics/ visuals and audio i.e., pictures of iconic landmarks in Malaysia i.e., UNESCO Heritage Sites, Putrajaya (Green City), KL (Vibrant City), Sabah and Sarawak (Biodiversity) as well as Malaysia arts and culture i.e., <i>batik, songket, Wau Bulan, congkak.</i> 	Study in the UK’s Portal: https://study-uk.britishcouncil.org/why-study/world-universities
2 Website information	The website is furnished with important information but they are too wordy, repetitive, menus are not strategically placed and less emphasis is given on the Malaysia tourism as well as international students’ honest lifestyle testimonials.	A website with important information and menus that are well structured into three main clusters. All information should be inserted into each category accordingly. Redundant information should be summarised.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The website should display menus that are divided into three main clusters: “Why Malaysia”; “Study in Malaysia”; and “Living in Malaysia”. 2. The existing submenus should be re-arranged into each menu cluster accordingly. 3. The new submenus should be created and inserted into each menu cluster accordingly. 4. For example, “8 reasons to study in Malaysia” and “Why Malaysia” should be combined/ summarised to become “10 interesting things about Malaysia” and placed under “Why Malaysia” main menu cluster. 	Study in Hungary’s Portal: http://studyinhungary.hu/why-hungary/menu/your-stories.html

and services industry. This initiative is in line with Strategic Thrust outlined in the Shared Prosperity Vision 2030 (SPV2030): Strategic Thrust 2: Key Economic Growth Activities (KEGA) and KEGA 1: Islamic Finance Hub 2.0 (Second wave – Fintech) as well as Halal and Food Hubs (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019).

Moreover, Malaysian companies and talents in the local animation scene have successfully penetrated premier international markets. Animation series and films produced by local companies and talents have successfully exported our very own creative products and services (i.e., *Upin-Ipin, Ejen Ali* and many more are still in the production), thanks to our solid digital media ecosystem and higher education system. EMGS should capitalise *Upin-Ipin* and *Ejen Ali* as the “ambassadors” to attract international prospects to come to Malaysia to pursue study or even receive trainings to become experts in film making, animation, digital media or creative programmes in our renowned local universities. This initiative is in line with Strategic Thrust 2 in SPV2030 via KEGA 4: Content Industries

(Animation, Programming, Entertainment, Culture and Digitalisation) (Ministry of Economic Affairs, 2019).

Putting Malaysia's Foreign University Branch Campuses into the Limelight

These foreign university branch campuses are opened up and made available in Malaysia to serve one main objective: to promote cross-border mobility of local as well as international students and academic staff (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015). With these branch campuses set up in Malaysia, we open up opportunities and options to people in the neighbouring (Southeast Asian) countries to receive quality education from world-class foreign universities via international branch campuses set up in Malaysia, which are a lot closer to their home countries. Furthermore, living cost in Malaysia is far lower than in the United States of America (US), United Kingdom (UK) and Europe (Cost of Living Index., n.d.).

On this note, EMGS should leverage our advantages and strengths by focusing on the aggressive promotion of these international branch campuses. The top 100 QSWUR ranked international universities with branch campuses in Malaysia such as Monash University Malaysia, University of Southampton, Malaysia Campus and University Nottingham Malaysia Campus will be powerful magnets to attract international prospects to come to Malaysia (a country with affordable living cost) to further their study, without having to fork out a substantial amount of money to study in the UK or Australia. EMGS should create a narration of "receiving similar quality education, only for a more affordable alternative. A peace of mind." This might help set the context of not having to travel far to get the quality education because the access to the similar quality education is being offered and made available to them in Malaysia, only for a lot cheaper tuition fees and lower living cost. This is closely related to an economic theory of "opportunity cost".

Defining Malaysia via Niche Industry-Focused Curriculum and Universities

There are four government-linked universities (GLUs) in Malaysia that comprise of Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP), Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Multimedia University (MMU) and Universiti Kuala Lumpur (UniKL). These industry-focused/industry-related universities are at the forefront of their own discipline, niche to the respective university. Their niche expertise, experience and influence in dedicated industry as well as discipline can be a strong selling point both for under/postgraduate and professional skills enhancement programmes. For instance, UTP is affiliated with Petronas, Malaysia's world-renowned oil

and gas company, and this worldly influence can thus be a powerful value proposition in attracting international prospects to come and study in Malaysia, especially in one of these GLUs.

Another untapped opportunity is Asia School of Business (ASB): a campus established by Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), in collaboration with Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan School of Management (MIT Sloan). ASB was founded in response to the need for qualified, industry-ready talents to fill the needs of the exponential growth and opportunities of Asia. Interestingly, the same core courses and rigorous curriculum that are delivered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA are taught in ASB's MBA full-time and MBA for Working Professionals degree programmes – taught by both MIT Sloan's world-renowned faculty and ASB's residential faculty. In 2021, ASB launched its third-degree programme in partnership with MIT Sloan: the Master of Central Banking (MCB), a one-of-a-kind programme in the marketplace. The residential programme provides a rigorous graduate-level, central banking-focused curriculum that includes Asian and emerging market perspectives, which distinguishes it from many other banking and finance programmes. At ASB, students get a global education, with a uniquely Asian perspective, complemented with hands-on Action Learning projects across the globe (Asia School of Business, n.d.).

Empowering International Alumni as Malaysia's Mini Education Ambassadors (MEA)

Alumni play a major role in the promotion of Malaysian higher education system. Their feedback, testimonials, reviews and/or word-of-mouth (WOM) are very powerful to attract other prospects, especially people in their home countries. WOM marketing is one of the most powerful forms of advertising as 88% of consumers trust their friends' recommendations over traditional media (Investopedia, n.d.). These prospects in their home countries will start exploring what Malaysia has to offer and eventually come to Malaysia for study and even work.

The HLIs in Malaysia and EMGS should empower these alumni, especially renowned or prominent international alumni as the "Malaysia's Mini Education Ambassadors (MEAs)" to mainly influence, attract and persuade their people in the home countries (through convincing and honest testimonials) to come to Malaysia to study because Malaysia has abundant possibilities and unique qualities. The prospects in the home countries may refer to these MEAs for further guidance and information. In return for their contribution, these MEAs will be paid commission per student, who are successfully enrolled in a programme in any HLI in Malaysia.

4. CONCLUSION

All of our strengths, values and potentials, if properly leveraged, can catapult Malaysia to higher levels. Given all of these qualities along with strong branding and concerted promotional strategies, EMGS as well as HLIs can help accelerate the achievement of our key target: transforming Malaysia into a global education hub. This target, once achieved, may contribute immensely to the Malaysian economic growth, not only through modern services subsector alone, but also tourism sector.

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Memperkasa Peranan Persatuan Pelajar Antarabangsa sebagai wakil di UTM bagi Merapatkan Jurang Perbezaan Sosio-budaya antara Pelajar Antarabangsa dan Komuniti Tempatan UTM

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ABSTRAK

Peningkatan enrolmen pelajar antarabangsa yang melanjutkan pelajaran di Malaysia sama ada di Institut Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA) atau di Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) kian meningkat. Pada tahun 2019, jumlah bilangan pelajar antarabangsa di Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA) negara adalah berjumlah sekitar 182,536 orang. Pada tahun 2020 pula, bilangan pelajar antarabangsa telah menurun kepada 177,710, hal ini berikutan wabak virus Covid-19 yang telah melanda dunia seterusnya menyebabkan semua aktiviti pendidikan, perniagaan, ekonomi dan pelancongan terjejas dan lumpuh. Walaubagaimanapun, peningkatan kemasukan telah berlaku pada tahun 2021, di mana jumlah bilangan pelajar antarabangsa di Malaysia meningkat sebanyak 181,901 orang. Senario pendidikan tinggi di Malaysia mengalami perubahan ideologi bagi memenuhi aspirasi pembangunan negara dan pasaran antarabangsa. Ini selaras dengan hasrat Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi untuk menarik minat 250,000 pelajar antarabangsa seterusnya menjadikan Malaysia sebagai hab pendidikan global. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti peranan ISS bagi merapatkan jurang perbezaan sosio-budaya di dalam kampus. Seramai 20 orang wakil pelajar antarabangsa yang terdiri daripada ahli jawatankuasa tertinggi dalam Persatuan Pelajar Antarabangsa di UTM telah dipilih sebagai responden melalui kaedah persampelan rawak mudah. Hasil kajian mendapati komunikasi yang lemah dari segi perbezaan bahasa, amalan dan norma merupakan aspek yang menjurus kepada jurang sosio-budaya di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa dan komuniti tempatan. Oleh yang demikian, pemerksaan terhadap peranan ahli persatuan pelajar antarabangsa telah menjadi elemen yang sangat penting untuk merapatkan jurang perbezaan sosio-budaya yang wujud. Selain itu, Universiti juga harus bertanggungjawab mewujudkan persekitaran yang harmoni dan lestari agar jurang perbezaan budaya, agama dan bahasa dengan komuniti tempatan UTM serta masyarakat setempat dapat diintegrasikan.

Kata kunci: Persatuan Pelajar Antarabangsa; IPTA; sosio-budaya; UTM

1. PENGENALAN

Menjelang abad ke-21, Institusi-Institusi awam dan swasta di negara Malaysia tidak ketinggalan menjadi salah satu destinasi pilihan utama untuk pelajar antarabangsa melanjutkan pengajian di peringkat tertinggi. Disamping kadar pertumbuhan ekonomi negara yang semakin pesat serta pembangunan teknologi yang berkembang maju faktor tersebut turut menjadi penyumbang kepada minat dan potensi pelajar antarabangsa untuk melanjutkan pengajian di dalam negara ini. Dalam tempoh sedekad yang lalu, peratusan

aliran kemasukan pelajar antarabangsa ke negara ini telah meningkat dengan ketara sejajar dengan pengiktirafan yang diterima oleh Universiti di Malaysia dari pelbagai aspek seperti hasil penyelidikan, penerbitan, teknologi robotik dan inovasi serta perbadanan harta intelek. Institusi-institusi awam dan swasta di Malaysia juga telah banyak melahirkan modal insan yang berdaya saing dan kompetitif dalam mendepani cabaran alaf baru.

Melihat kepada kesungguhan pelbagai pihak terutamanya pengurusan Universiti dalam memainkan peranan melahirkan modal insan yang berjaya telah sekaligus mendorong institusi seperti Universiti Teknologi Malaysia untuk memenuhi tanggungjawab melahirkan penjaan modal insan yang cemerlang dan berketerampilan di pasaran global. Pada dasarnya, Universiti yang sifatnya sebagai wadah pendidikan dapat membentuk modal insan yang seimbang dari segi kecerdasan intelektual, emosi dan spiritual serta bersahsiah unggul. Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) yang kini di bawah pimpinan Naib Canselor Yang Berbahagia Prof. Datuk Ts. Dr. Ahmad Fauzi Bin Ismail juga tidak ketinggalan dalam merealisasikan UTM sebagai hab kecemerlangan ilmu bertaraf global.

Seterusnya, UTM dalam memacu kegemilangan menjadikan universiti sebagai institusi akademik dan penyelidikan yang berpaksikan kemanusiaan dalam satu usahanya telah membuat penstrukturan baru dengan menggabungkan pusat pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa (ISC) dengan UTM International (UTM-i). Tujuan penstrukturan semula ini adalah untuk memperkasa fungsi dan jenama UTM di peringkat nasional dan antarabangsa serta meningkatkan kualiti dan keberkesanan aktiviti dan program pengantarabangsaan. Empat unit utama yang menjalankan fungsi UTM-i adalah Unit *Global Strategy & Engagement*, Unit *Global Education & Experience*, Unit *Corporate & Student Services* dan UTM-i Kuala Lumpur.

UTM berusaha memastikan kelestarian dan keharmonian pelajar antarabangsa di dalam kampus sentiasa terjaga. Di samping itu juga, UTM-i telah memberikan kerjasama dan memainkan peranan penting dengan memberi sokongan yang padu kepada pelajar antarabangsa agar dapat menyesuaikan diri dengan komuniti tempatan. Unit Global Education & Experience telah dipertanggungjawabkan bagi mewujudkan satu persatuan khusus buat pelajar antarabangsa yang dikenali sebagai *International Student Society Council* (ISS). Persatuan pelajar ini terdiri daripada 18 buah negara yang mewakili komuniti pelajar antarabangsa di UTM. Pembentukan persatuan ISS merupakan salah satu usaha untuk mahasiswa antarabangsa berpeluang melibatkan diri dalam pelbagai aktiviti di kampus seperti mana mahasiswa tempatan berpeluang bergiat aktif dalam sukan dan persatuan di samping menggerakkan komuniti pelajar melalui Majlis Perwakilan Pelajar di Kampus UTM. Walaubagaimanapun, umumnya mahasiswa antarabangsa juga tidak terlepas daripada

pelbagai masalah dan tekanan seperti isu sosio budaya yang disebabkan oleh jurang perbezaan antara negara asal mereka dan budaya tempatan. Tambahan pula mereka perlu belajar dengan cepat untuk mengadaptasi bahasa, norma dan amalan masyarakat tempatan agar mereka tidak berasa tersisih menjadi sebahagian daripada komuniti masyarakat samada di dalam kampus mahupun di luar kampus sepanjang tempoh pengajian. Jadual 1 menunjukkan enrolmen pelajar antarabangsa yang berdaftar di UTM bagi tahun 2018 hingga 2021.

Jadual 1: Pendaftaran Pelajar Antarabangsa di UTM Sesi 2018/2019 hingga Sesi 2021/2022

Bil	Sesi	Bilangan Pelajar
1	2018/2019	4049
2	2019/2020	4358
3	2020/2021	4807
4	2021/2022	5079
Jumlah Keseluruhan		18,293

2. MEMPERKASA PERANAN *INTERNATIONAL STUDENT SOCIETY COUNCIL (ISS)*

Pengukuhan Struktur Persatuan ISS

UTM-i bertanggungjawab membangun peranan penting kepada kewujudan persatuan ISS yang merupakan duta kepada Universiti Teknologi Malaysia dengan negara asal pelajar antarabangsa. Platform khusus ini merupakan suatu inisiatif bagi membantu komuniti pelajar antarabangsa di UTM memiliki nilai tambah peribadi serta mencipta suatu pengalaman yang baik terhadap persekitaran kampus yang kondusif, memperluas jaringan sosial dan budaya, memahami norma dan amalan masyarakat tempatan serta bertanggungjawab terhadap kebajikan dan keselamatan dikalangan ahli komuniti. Setiap pelajar antarabangsa mempunyai peluang yang tinggi untuk menjadi pemimpin di kalangan komuniti persatuan yang diwujudkan.

Dalam memperkasakan persatuan ISS mendepani cabaran di dalam kampus, UTM-i telah melantik seorang Presiden *Central* dan beberapa ahli jawatankuasa dari kalangan pelajar antarabangsa berdasarkan syarat dan kriteria yang telah ditetapkan. Tempoh

lantikan presiden dan ahli jawatankuasa dilakukan secara penggiliran mengikut semester sekiranya perlu dirombak atau dimansuhkan peranan ahlinya. Dalam struktur persatuan ISS ini, Presiden *Central* akan turut dibantu oleh empat orang ahli jawatankuasa tertinggi yang terdiri daripada Naib Presiden, Naib Presiden, Setiausaha dan Bendahari.

Pengukuhan struktur ini dimantapkan lagi dengan peranan ahli dalam pengurusan aktiviti dan proses pembelajaran pelajar supaya lebih mudah diurus. Bagi memastikan setiap kaedah penyampaian menjadi lebih berkesan setiap pelajar dari pelbagai negara berpeluang melantik seorang wakil dari negara mereka menjadi ketua di kalangan ahli komuniti yang dinamakan '*President of Country Chapter*'. Jadual 2 menunjukkan carta organisasi persatuan ISS di UTM bagi tempoh lantikan sesi 2021/2022.

Jadual 2: Carta Organisasi Persatuan ISS UTM Sesi 2021/2022



Setelah melalui fasa pelantikan, ahli jawatankuasa yang bertanggungjawab perlu memainkan peranan masing-masing berdasarkan tugas yang diamanahkan. Di antara peranan penting yang dipegang oleh presiden dan ahli jawatankuasa di dalam persatuan ISS adalah seperti merancang program atau aktiviti berimpak tinggi yang dapat menghasilkan output dan memberi manfaat baik kepada komuniti mahupun universiti. Di samping itu, presiden dan ahli jawatankuasa juga diberi tanggungjawab untuk mempromosikan program atau aktiviti yang dapat memperkenalkan lagi seni warisan dan budaya asli masyarakat negara mereka bagi menarik minat dan penghayatan masyarakat setempat serta komuniti pelajar tempatan untuk mengenali budaya luar dengan lebih baik.

Selain daripada menjadi perantara antara komuniti pelajar antarabangsa dengan UTM dalam pelbagai aspek, presiden dan ahli persatuan perlu bekerjasama dengan UTM-i/ISS/Strategic Partners yang lain untuk menyelesaikan isu-isu yang melibatkan pelajar antarabangsa UTM samada dalam bidang akademik, kebajikan, keselamatan, norma dan budaya serta aktiviti kelangsungan hidup. Di samping itu, persatuan ISS adalah induk yang perlu sentiasa tampil ke hadapan dalam memberi sokongan yang berterusan kepada rakan-rakan pelajar antarabangsa yang ada terutamanya pelajar baru yang sedang dalam proses menyesuaikan diri dengan keadaan persekitaran agar dapat mengadaptasi amalan budaya tempatan dengan lebih cepat. Melalui kemahiran ini, pelajar dapat memperluaskan rangkaian kenalan di kalangan komuniti yang mempunyai pelbagai latar belakang sekaligus dapat meraikan kebersamaan serta berkongsi kelebihan antara mereka supaya menjadi lebih akrab dalam memperpanjangkan hubungan.

Pemantapan melalui program dan aktiviti

Memandangkan UTM-i merupakan induk yang sentiasa memberi sokongan terhadap peranan kepemimpinan ahli persatuan ISS dari segi idea, *input* dan *output*, apa jua cadangan aktiviti yang berkualiti boleh dilaksanakan mengikut keutamaan dan kemampuan pelajar bagi memperoleh impak yang tinggi sebagai hasilnya. Selain bertanggungjawab membantu rakan-rakan pelajar dalam komuniti menyesuaikan diri dengan persekitaran kampus yang lestari dan kondusif, pelbagai penglibatan program seperti kursus pembangunan diri, kepimpinan, kemahiran, kebudayaan dan interaksi sosial telah dimantapkan lagi dikalangan ahli mengikut kesesuaian dan keselesaan mereka. Menurut Singh, Schapper dan Jack (2014), pelajar akan berasa selesa dan mudah mengikuti pembelajaran apabila mereka memahami amalan sosial di negara destinasi pilihan mereka. Oleh yang demikian, persatuan ISS amat prihatin untuk membantu rakan-rakan dalam komuniti pelajar antarabangsa merasai pengalaman yang menyeronokkan dan berfaedah untuk mereka sama-sama berkongsi tentang amalan budaya masyarakat setempat seterusnya mengadaptasi cara hidup rakan-rakan negara yang berlainan bangsa.

Secara umumnya, pelajar-pelajar antarabangsa yang melanjutkan pengajian di dalam sesebuah institusi pengajian tinggi pasti terikat dengan pelbagai peraturan Universiti. Oleh itu, bagi mengurangkan tekanan dan rasa ketidakselesaan terhadap persekitaran baru, persatuan ISS telah mempertingkatkan keupayaan dan kemahiran mereka sebagai wakil pemimpin pelajar untuk hadir ke program latihan yang dianjurkan oleh UTM-i seperti ISS *Management Camp*, *Leadership Camp*, program debat dan pidato dan sesi *engagement* bersama ahli pengurusan tertinggi UTM.

Program yang dianjurkan bukan sahaja dapat memupuk bakat kepimpinan mereka sebagai wakil pelajar yang berketerampilan dan berdaya tahan bahkan juga dapat memberi ruang kepada ahli persatuan ISS untuk mengenali rakan-rakan pelajar dengan lebih dekat di samping mewujudkan zon komunikasi yang lebih selesa. Program sebegini jelas sangat membantu dalam mengenalpasti jurang sosio budaya yang ketara di antara pelajar antarabangsa dengan komuniti tempatan di samping dapat membina perhubungan sosial yang baik dalam kehidupan di kampus.

Tidak dapat dinafikan kadangkala terdapat sebilangan pelajar tempatan yang mempunyai sikap prejudis terhadap pelajar-pelajar baru (Williams & Johnson, 2011). Namun begitu, perkara seperti ini tidak seharusnya terjadi sekiranya pelajar-pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa lebih bersifat terbuka untuk menerima perbezaan budaya masing-masing dan cuba untuk saling mencari persamaan dalam diri mereka. Lantaran itu, Persatuan ISS sendiri telah mengambil inisiatif menganjurkan sebanyak mungkin program aktiviti kemasyarakatan bagi menggalakkan keterlibatan pelajar antarabangsa dan tempatan dalam aktiviti seperti kesukarelawanan seterusnya dapat memupuk jalinan ukhuwah antara mereka.

Aktiviti sebegini sememangnya dapat mempengaruhi serta menarik minat pelajar untuk lebih cenderung berkomunikasi dan bersosial sekiranya mereka kerap hadir dalam acara bersemuka. Berdasarkan laporan tahunan UTM-i bagi tahun 2021, persatuan ISS telah berjaya menganjurkan sebanyak 129 aktiviti dan program di bawah naungan UTM-i. Jadual 3 menunjukkan jumlah aktiviti yang telah dijalankan oleh ISS sepanjang tahun 2021.

Jadual 3: Senarai Aktiviti ISS Sepanjang Tahun 2021

BIL	JENIS AKTIVITI / PROGRAM	BIL PROGRAM
1.	Academic Enrichment	33
2.	Appreciation and Award	19
3.	Community Service and Volunteerism	5
4.	Entrepreneurship	3
5.	Leadership/Association/Club	26
6.	Spirituality and Culture	20
7.	Sport and Recreation	22
8.	Work Experience, Career Development and Counseling	1
JUMLAH KESELURUHAN		129

3. ISU DAN CABARAN

Smith dan Khawaja (2011) telah mengenalpasti beberapa cabaran utama yang dihadapi oleh pelajar semasa berada di luar negara. Antara cabaran besar yang sering dihadapi oleh kebanyakan pelajar adalah seperti perbezaan bahasa, masalah kekangan kewangan, diskriminasi, sistem pendidikan dan juga sistem budaya yang berbeza. Selain daripada itu, Ayob dan Yaakub (2016) pula menyatakan bahawa dengan adanya peningkatan jumlah pelajar antarabangsa setiap tahun, kebanyakan Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam di Malaysia bakal menghadapi pelbagai cabaran dari aspek akademik, persekitaran, komunikasi, bahasa dan sebagainya dalam usaha mendorong mempromosikan Malaysia sebagai destinasi pendidikan di peringkat global. Dalam konteks cabaran ini, pada tahun 2020 apabila negara berhadapan dengan krisis pandemik Covid-19, situasi keadaan sosio ekonomi di pelbagai sektor turut sama terganggu.

Oleh yang demikian, UTM yang berada dalam sektor pendidikan telah bertindak memperkasakan sistem sokongan pelajar dalam menangani cabaran krisis Covid-19 disamping menyediakan pelbagai fleksibiliti serta kemudahan yang dapat membantu pelajar berhadapan dengan cabaran teknikal, sosio-ekonomi mahupun emosi dalam meneruskan pengajian mereka.

Selain itu, pelajar antarabangsa juga sering berdepan dengan fenomena '*Culture Shock*' yang merupakan suatu kejutan budaya yang tidak dapat dipisahkan daripada pengalaman seseorang ketika ia berada jauh daripada keluarga, tempat tinggal atau mengalami perbezaan dalam norma kehidupan. Dengan adanya platform Persatuan *International Student Society* (ISS) yang terdiri daripada wakil pelajar dari kebanyakan negara seperti Indonesia, Nigeria, Bangladesh, China, Pakistan, Egypt dan lain-lain lagi, proses adaptasi pelajar menjadi lebih mudah dan cepat.

Tidak dinafikan persatuan ini terdiri daripada latar belakang pelajar yang berbilang bangsa dan berbeza budaya namun mereka mempunyai daya usaha dan ketahanan mental yang tinggi untuk berdaya saing dalam menyesuaikan diri sebagai warga komuniti UTM. Persatuan ISS juga sentiasa mencari ruang dan peluang dengan pelbagai pihak dari dalam dan luar UTM supaya mereka dapat membuktikan bahawa cabaran seperti sosio budaya bukanlah satu halangan untuk mereka lebih gigih lagi menerima dan mengadaptasi perbezaan jurang yang ada. Selain itu, persatuan ISS amat berharap penerimaan mereka dalam komuniti tempatan perlu didedahkan dengan lebih terbuka, ini dapat membantu

mereka memperbaiki jurang komunikasi atau konflik interaksi dari segi kehidupan sosial, perbezaan agama dan budaya atau percanggahan pendapat.

Sebagai sebuah persatuan yang diiktiraf di UTM, Persatuan ISS yang aktif seharusnya menjadi duta yang mampu membina modal insan berperanan penting kepada universiti kerana mereka adalah wakil pelajar yang mampu membina reputasi UTM di peringkat global seterusnya menjadi brand UTM yang dapat dikomunikasikan dengan efektif di peringkat antarabangsa. Mereka juga dapat dijadikan sebagai penghubung bagi UTM merealisasikan matlamat universiti bertaraf dunia. Dalam mendepani cabaran-cabaran yang dihadapi, peranan persatuan ISS yang mencabar akan diperkasakan dengan lebih giat lagi dengan sokongan kerjasama dan komitmen yang tinggi dari semua pihak.

4. STRATEGI MENDEPANI CABARAN SOSIO BUDAYA DI KAMPUS

Kepelbagaian etnik dan budaya bukanlah satu perspektif baru dalam komuniti masyarakat tempatan pada hari ini. Fenomena konflik bahasa dan bangsa khususnya di Institut Pengajian Tinggi yang mempunyai pelajar berbilang bangsa sentiasa menjadi cabaran dalam penyampaian dan komunikasi yang berkesan. Jurang seperti ini seharusnya ditangani dengan berkesan bagi mengelakkan sebarang konflik dan kegagalan penyesuaian oleh pelajar itu sendiri. UTM melihat jurang sosio budaya di kalangan pelajar antarabangsa dan komuniti tempatan dapat dipupuk dengan penerimaan nilai budaya secara terbuka. UTM sentiasa memberi sokongan idea dan konsep kepada warga kampus untuk sama-sama menjadikan universiti sebagai wadah yang lestari dengan kepelbagaian budaya. UTM juga sangat peka dan prihatin dengan fasa perkembangan penyesuaian pelajar di dalam kampus, sehubungan dengan itu, bagi meningkatkan keyakinan dan keupayaan diri pelajar antarabangsa khususnya persatuan ISS telah menjalinkan kerjasama dengan pelbagai jabatan di UTM dan pihak luar untuk menganjurkan pelbagai program di peringkat universiti, industri dan antarabangsa. Antara program yang telah di jayakan adalah seperti program Sayembara Bahasa Melayu anjuran Kelab Debat, Pidato dan Pemikiran Kritis – Pidato dan sajak bagi pelajar antarabangsa, GEMA anjuran Bahagian Aktiviti Hal Ehwal Pelajar, program Cultural Exchange anjuran Jawatankuasa Mahasiswa KTDI, International Student Orientation Program, Engagement session bersama Naib Canselor dan pengurusan tertinggi UTM, Leadership Camp, program khidmat masyarakat dan lain-lain lagi.

Program fizikal yang realistik sememangnya dapat membantu kehadiran pelajar dalam komuniti melibatkan diri secara kerap, tambahan lagi aktiviti sebegitu mampu merapatkan jurang sosio budaya komuniti tempatan dengan proses adaptasi yang lebih baik. Disamping

itu, persatuan ISS harus diberi pengiktirafan atas peranan yang besar kerana mampu mempengaruhi rakan-rakan pelajar di bawah komuniti mereka untuk lebih terdedah dengan aktiviti masyarakat tempatan. Walaupun penyesuaian terhadap persekitaran akan mengambil sedikit masa, tetapi pihak UTM yakin bahawa generasi muda yang berbilang bangsa mempunyai daya ketahanan diri dan intelektual yang tinggi untuk meneruskan kelangsungan hidup sebagai pelajar di dalam kampus. Bagi mengekalkan keamanan dan keharmonian di kalangan warga kampus, persatuan ISS juga boleh menjadi moderator yang fleksibel. Kelebihan mereka sebagai pemimpin dalam persatuan telah dapat mempengaruhi sokongan komuniti tempatan untuk menerima perbezaan secara terbuka seperti gaya pemakaian, adat dan kepercayaan, cara pemakanan, gaya pemikiran serta pemahaman bahasa yang berbeza.

Pemimpin dalam persatuan ISS selain itu harus lebih menunjukkan sikap terbuka agar perkongsian dan penyaluran maklumat menjadi lebih jelas. Peranan mereka menjadi lebih signifikan dalam sesuatu masa. Ini kerana mereka adalah kumpulan elit yang menjadi agen perubahan kepada kelestarian dan kesejahteraan dikalangan warga komuniti kampus dan rakan-rakan pelajar.

5. KESIMPULAN

Sebagai hab pendidikan tinggi yang bertaraf global, program pementapan kepada modal insan haruslah kerap dipertingkatkan agar pelajar lebih berdaya saing di peringkat antarabangsa. Usaha UTM untuk menarik lebih ramai pelajar antarabangsa melanjutkan pengajian di kampus ini dapat memanfaatkan komuniti tempatan untuk merapatkan jurang sosio budaya. Di samping itu juga dengan adanya kemasukan pelajar antarabangsa ke dalam sistem pendidikan di Malaysia telah dapat menjadikan komuniti tempatan mempelajari norma baru dari segi interaksi, silang budaya, pendedahan dan pengalaman, keterbukaan minda, persaingan yang kompetitif dan gaya kehidupan sosial dunia luar. Apabila Malaysia bebas daripada pandemik Covid-19 secara berkesan, berkemampuan menjadi pilihan antara institusi pendidikan tinggi yang menjadi rujukan dan diteladani oleh masyarakat dan industri bagi aspek pembelajaran, penyelidikan dan impak yang diberikan untuk kesejahteraan diri. Dengan peningkatan yang pesat pelajar antarabangsa di dalam Malaysia, sudah semestinya peranan mereka akan lebih terserlah dan akan memberikan respon atau impak yang tinggi terhadap sesuatu aktiviti, isu, kebajikan dan pencapaian akademik.

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Enhancing Internationalization Activities and University's Global Visibility Via Alliance: A Perspective Of UTM ATU-Net

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ABSTRACT

Institutional Internationalisation is one of the utmost agendas for every university and higher learning institution around the globe to enhance their academic and research quality, as well as sustaining their global visibility and branding. This strategy is extremely important as the world has become more open and everyone in university needs to interact, works together and strives for the well-being and prosperity of mankind. As this global visibility will lead to a sustainable international collaboration, therefore it is a must for every university and higher learning institution in this era to have a good partnership with other institutions from other countries. In this borderless world, any academic programme and research activities will also become more inclusive and comprehensive if it is organized in synergy with other institutions, especially from different countries. As a young university, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia has outlined three main models of collaborations to outreach any potential international partners from all over the world. The first model is bi-lateral agreements which is based on one to one agreement between UTM and another institution. The second model is focusing on academic networks or consortiums of universities based on niche focus areas. The last model is a strategic international collaboration with reputable universities. Focusing on the collaboration via alliances, rather than just being a member of other international networks, UTM has also formed its own alliance which is known as Asia Technological University Network (ATU-Net). Therefore, this paper will illustrate how UTM establishes and manages ATU-Net and its impact on enhancing UTM's global visibility. The impact, which is visible through the addition of UTM's new partners, more joint activities and programmes with other international education institutions, aligns with the significant improvement in UTM's global ranking.

Keywords: Internationalisation, global visibility, international collaboration, alliance

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationalisation is a vital activity that must be actively strategized and implemented by every university and higher education institution. This activity has been playing a major role in uplifting and maintaining the quality of research and academics in any higher education institution. According to the Cambridge Dictionary (2022), internationalisation refers to the action of becoming or making something international. Meanwhile, when we focus on internationalisation in higher education, it refers to the process of commercializing research and post-secondary education, and international competition for the recruitment of foreign

students from wealthy and privileged countries in order to generate revenue, secure national profile, and build an international reputation. On the other hand, Cantwell and Maldonado [2] stated that internationalization, by contrast, is described as strategies by which colleges and universities respond to globalisation. This basic conceptual difference constitutes the essence of university administration worldwide. Knight (2008) defined internationalisation as the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of higher education at the institutional and national level.

One of the main impacts of interorganisational is the enhancement of the university's global visibility. According to Cambridge Dictionary (2022), the term visibility refers to the degree of which something is seen or known about. The dictionary by Merriam-Webster (2022) then refers visibility as capability of being readily noticed. Therefore, global visibility in the higher education context can be considered as the state of a university or institution to be known and recognized in the international higher education community.

One of the key elements of interorganizational activities towards global visibility is by actively participating in a network or alliance. In general, alliance refers to a number of institutions or organisations that work together for a common goal, interest and objectives. Alliances are also typically formed between two or more corporations, each based in their home country, for a specified period. Their purpose is to share the ownership of a newly formed venture and maximize competitive advantages in their combined territories (Delaney, 2019). Alliances and partnerships can also be defined as the enhancement of organisational creativity and innovation in more organic ways (Stensaker, 2018). On the other hand, Gray and Wood (1991) mentioned that a collaborative alliance can be described as an interorganizational effort to address problems too complex and too protracted to be resolved by unilateral organizational action.

Furthermore, the activities or initiatives to collaborate with other parties or institutions are also in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17 of revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development (Goal 17, 2022). It stated that a successful development agenda requires inclusive partnerships at the global, regional, national and local levels built upon principles and values, and upon a shared vision and shared goals placing people and the planet at the centre. Therefore, this paper will enlighten on the establishment of Asia Technological University Network (ATU-Net) and how UTM establishes and manages this alliance as well as its impact toward enhancing UTM global visibility.

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF GLOBAL VISIBILITY FOR UNIVERSITY

To stay relevant in this volatile world, universities and higher learning institutions will always need global visibility. The needs are higher especially for the lower ranking or newly established universities. Generally, by having a significant global visibility, it can lead a university to have a better position in most of the rankings. Once the ranking and reputation of a university is acknowledged widely, it will attract a good number of potential new students to further their study in that university. Based on the report on the global student experience 2022 insights and analysis from the world's largest student survey published by TRIBAL i-graduate stated that university reputation is the second highest reason for potential students when deciding the preferred university after the future career impact (Tribal & Ripmeester, 2022). This statement is supported with a case study by Proboyo and Soedarsono (2015) which was conducted on a number of high school students in Indonesia on influential factors in choosing higher education institutions in 2015. The findings showed that the highest influential factor related to attributes from higher education institutions is the reputation of an institution followed by the success of the alumni. Table one shows the top ten factors of student's decision in choosing their preferred higher education institutions.

Table 1: Influential Factors Related to Attributes from Higher Education Institutions (Top 10)

Factors	Percentage
Reputation	16%
Success of the alumni	10%
Values	10%
Achievement of the students	9%
Affordable cost	9%
Lecturers' quality	9%
Physical facilities (building, parking space, classrooms, etc.)	8%
Supporting facilities (internet, computer lab, etc.)	8%
Non-academic activities	7%
Access to campus	7%

In addition, having a good global visibility will also lead to attracting more research collaborators and high-quality potential lecturers and researchers to work with the university. In terms of student and staff mobility, undoubtedly the university will become the top choice institution among the students and staff who wish to do their mobility programme. Furthermore, having a good global visibility will also attract other institutions to do a joint

internationalisation programme and activities such as conference, webinar, scientific discussion, sharing session and many others.

3. THE ADVANTAGES OF BEING IN THE ALLIANCE

One of the methods to increase internationalisation activities and enhance global visibility is by actively taking part in the alliance. A new member of an alliance, especially for a newly established university will get a speedy visibility and being acknowledged by the other institutions. This will surely provide a very good platform and opportunity to collaborate with more partners in a quicker way. This initiative will lead the university to have more quality and beneficial contacts that are important for their academic reputations.

By being a member of an alliance, it will also enlarge and provide more channels of marketing and promotion for the university to broaden the publicity of their programme or activities. At the same time, the staff and students from the university could also participate in various programme and activities organized by other universities. In most of the cases, each member will share and promote their activities and programme to the members of the alliance. Therefore, an alliance could be considered as a very good platform for staff and students at each member university to exchange ideas, knowledge, and expertise among them. Consequently, it will contribute to enhancing their skills, talent, knowledge and capacity building. At the same, the staff and students could also learn and understand the diversity of culture, customs and languages of other members especially from other countries.

On the other hand, all members in the alliance could have an opportunity for a shared costs and resources among them. For example, an alliance could organize a four-day Virtual International Staff Week of which four universities from its member universities might be selected to be the host for one day consecutively. By organising this joint programme, the member universities have managed to share part of the costs and resources such as promotion, the virtual platform, the coordination process and other things. Related to this, in most of the cases, there will be a special fee for the university staff and students from the members of alliance to take part in a programme organized by the other members.

4. ATU-NET – A REMARKABLE JOURNEY

Asia Technological University Network (ATU-Net) is a strategic international alliance of which Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is the Chair. It was established on 9th August 2016 during the 8th University Presidents Forum at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Johor Bahru, Malaysia, with the purpose of connecting technology-focused institutions of higher

learning in Asia (ATU, 2016). Its mission is to support member universities in achieving world-class quality of education and research in engineering and technology through strategic international alliance. With the objective of providing the opportunities for capacity-building, including joint teaching, among member universities, the members of ATU-Net have grown steadily from only 18 members from 10 countries in 2016 to 44 members from 15 countries in 2022. Table two illustrates number of university and their origin countries.

Table 2: Number of Universities and Their Origin Countries

Country	Number of Institutions
Indonesia	10
Malaysia	7
Philippines	5
Thailand	3
Brunei	1
Vietnam	1
Japan	1
Pakistan	1
Bangladesh	1
India	1
Total	31

Instead of its ambitious mission to enhance student and staff mobility in selected thematic areas between member universities, this network was also established to boost the excellence collaborative academic and research projects in collaborating with other member universities. At the same time, ATU-Net also became a platform to share best practices in producing innovative and entrepreneurial graduates in a sustainable environment.

ATU-Net now focuses on strengthening international relations and partnership, increasing the mobility across the network. Therefore, among the recent activities of ATU-Net are International Staff Week which aimed at capacity building of staff with international offices, matching-grant research collaboration, online global classrooms as well as University Presidents Forum.

The structure of this network is led by a Chair which is the Vice-Chancellor of UTM together with a Co-Chair from a different university. Each Vice-Chancellor and Rector from every university member will become Board members for ATU-Net. The board member will have their annual meeting at 4th quarter of the year. To ensure the smoothness of running of this alliance, there is another middle level management meeting named as Steering

Committee that is responsible to implement any decision or plan that has been discussed during the board meeting. To ensure the implementation of each programme, three Special Interest Groups (SIG) were formed to plan and organize activities based on their focused area. The three SIGs are Research and Publication, Marketing and Membership, and Student Mobility.

5. ATU-NET – STRATEGIC ACTIVITIES & MOVING FORWARD

Since its establishment, ATU-Net has organised various programme in synergy with each member institutions to promote a continuous cooperation and providing a platform of capacity building and enhancing graduate's qualities among its members.

In terms of capacity building among staff in its member institutions, ATU-Net has collaborated with several universities to organise a series of related programme. In 2018, this network has jointly cooperated with UTM to organise the New Academia Learning Innovation (NALI) Exhibition and Competition 2018 or NALI 2018. This programme offers a platform for participants to promote and exchange their project, innovations or practices related to the framework that comprises student-centered and blended learning philosophy, multiple learning modes and materials towards achieving entrepreneurial academia. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the similar programme which was NALI 2020 was organised fully online via several virtual platforms. This collaboration programme was then organised again in 2022 via the same platform.

On the other hand, during the first year of COVID-19 pandemic, ATU-Net in collaboration with UTM, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM), Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT), Japan and Suranaree University of Technology (SUT), Thailand has organised an online sharing session programme. The session was focusing on the roles of higher education institutions in managing COVID-19 and its impacts and the way forward in upholding the strength and prominence of this field. In that year as well, ATU-Net has organised three series of University Presidents Forum which is co-hosted by UTM, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM), and Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT), Japan. This programme has attracted more than 600 participants from more than 100 countries from all over the world. This yearly programme was again organised in the virtual platform in 2021.

At the same time, to enrich the culture of research and innovation among the researchers in its member institutions, ATU-Net has come out with Young Researcher Grant scheme with the allocation up to RM10,000.00 for each selected recipient.

In accordance with its mission to provide a platform for capacity building for its members, ATU-Net has also organized a few series of International Staff Week started in 2019 which was held physically at UTM. This programme was focused on providing an opportunity for members of staff of the international office from its member institutions to share best practices in various areas related to international relations and activities. It also serves as the medium to enhance skills in managing international offices and understanding the intercultural differences and uniqueness among each participant. To ensure the continuous development of skills and learning process during the pandemic, this programme was organised virtually in 2021 and another series in 2022.



Figure 1: International Staff Week 2019 organized by ATU-Net at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

As student activity and mobility is a vital fragment in any internationalisation initiative, ATU-Net has also organised various programme that focus on producing quality graduates with excellent international exposure. There are three signature programme organized by ATU-Net which are ATU-Net Student Leader Forum (ATU-Net SeLF2020), Virtual Asia Exploration (VAX) and also ATU-NET Hackathon. ATU-Net SeLF which was held in 2020 and 2021 focuses on providing a medium for student leaders from member institutions to meet and share their knowledge and experience with their counterparts from different universities based on the given theme.

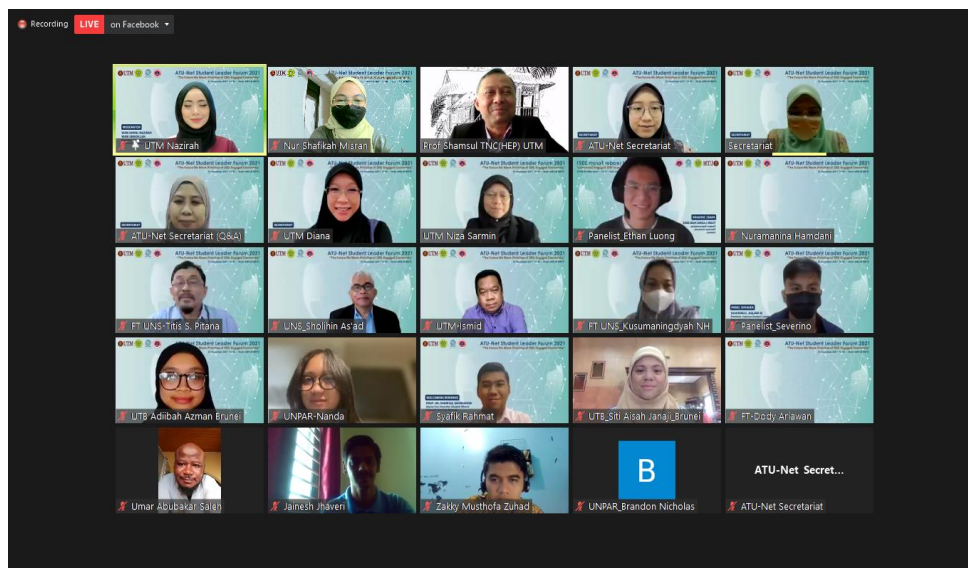


Figure 2: ATU-Net Student Leader Forum (ATU-Net SeLF2020) organized virtually by

ATU-Net at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Johor Bahru, Johor, Malaysia

Aside from that, Virtual Asia Exploration (VAX) is created to provide opportunities for the students to study cultures and technologies in 5 countries (Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Japan) from the faculties of ATU-Net member universities. During the programme, instead of only learning about cultures, the programme is also curated to let the Participants learn about new technologies, application methods, as well as inculcate a teamwork spirit through various assignment and group activities. Another signature student-related programme by ATU-Net is ATU-NET Hackathon by which the programme is crafted to give opportunities for students from the member universities to get together for problem solving activities and come out with an innovation. On the other hand, ATU-Net also organised an Online Global Classroom (OGC) which was held to encounter the challenges to organise student mobility programme during the pandemic. This is a new model of learning and campus experience for students to continuously learn and meet with other students from other countries despite the hurdles of going abroad.

Other than the aforementioned programme, ATU-Net has also organised ATU-Net IoT Innovation Camp in the year 2017 where it became a medium for self-expression and online socialization for the participants to form relationships and create real connections. To provide training on the introduction and development of personal branding and engagement in the online platform, ATU-Net has organised MSavvy 2018 which exposed around 50 students from China, Japan, Philippines, Thailand, and Malaysia to various methods and strategies in communicating across cultures on the internet. There are also a series of seminar and

webinar organised by ATU-Net member institutions that collaborated with this network such as Virtual Mobility Programme – Teen-IDEAS, Virtual International Social Business Summer Program (ISBSP), Student SDG Virtual Workshops: Envisioning 17 SDGS for 2030 and other programme.

6. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, UTM, being a member and actively participating in various programme and activities in an alliance in particular of ATU-Net has helped this University to increase its visibility and global reputation. This can be seen from the significant growth of UTM's position in the world university ranking especially in the QS WUR, where UTM has climbed up from the rank of 355 in 2014 to the rank of 191 in 2022. Moreover, in terms of academic reputation, from 2017 to 2022, UTM managed to increase more than 60% of its peer's nomination on this indicator [9]. Furthermore, UTM also managed to increase nearly 40% of its score on international students' indicator. In short, the active participation and engagement of UTM in the ATU-Net has proven to become one of the key elements and approaches of enhancing internationalisation activities and UTM's global visibility. However, UTM International will consistently find and look forward to having more programme and activities that could contribute to the strategic objectives in ensuring UTM could maintain its visibility and branding in the global world.

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Higher Education Service Quality as Predictors for International Students' Continuance Intention of Study In Private Universities: The Mediating Role of Trust

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ABSTRACT

The internationalization of higher education and intense level of competition among tertiary education providers require universities to continuously improve its service quality. The national agenda to achieve 250,000 international students enrolment by year 2025 as projected in the Malaysia Higher Education Blueprint 2015 to 2025 (MEBHE) provides opportunity to consistently increase the enrolment of international students. However, the scenario experienced by the nation is continuous declining trend of international student enrolment since 2018. The literature showed that many studies have been undertaken in the past, but little has explored the integration between the mediating role of trust in the context of higher education service quality in Malaysia. This study is one of the preliminary attempts to study the HESQUAL model with an integration of the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing and the IS Continuance Theory within the context of private universities in Malaysia. The research objectives are, RO1: To investigate the influence of HESQUAL on trust in Malaysia's private universities; RO2: To investigate the influence of trust on the continuance intention of study; and RO3: To analyse the mediating role of trust between HESQUAL and international students' continuance intention of study. Positivism worldview using quantitative method guided this research. Data collection was administered through web-based survey questionnaire and a total of 395 respondents contributed to the survey out of which 346 data were usable. SPSS and SmartPLS software were used to analyse the data. The findings confirmed the significance of mediating role of trust with the HESQUAL dimensions towards continuance intention of study except the support facilities quality. Statistical findings proved the conceptual model with medium predictive power that signifies its replication for future research.

Keywords: Internationalization; service quality; continuance intention; trust; HESQUAL

1. INTRODUCTION

In the current global arena, the intensiveness of globalization and internationalization is permeating into the higher education institutions around the world (Nor & Asmawi (2018)). This competition intensive scenario has become an interesting exploration in the education industry worldwide. Globalization has supported a growing internationalization activity in

higher education industry, considerably increasing the enrolment of international students and creating opportunities for universities especially the private higher education institutions (PrHEIs). Borderless education and mobility of international students in securing high quality tertiary education services are profoundly contributed by the development in the economical, technological, and social aspects (Rahimizhian et al., 2020). The growing emphasis on education tourism and the massification of higher education institutions had promoted the mobility of international students at an unprecedented rate (Paulino, 2019). The mobility of international students around the world is expected to be on a growing pace and lead to increased competition among the higher education providers (Hans de Wit & Altbach, 2021). With such emphasis on the internationalization of higher education (Fadli Fizari et al., 2017), it is projected that the global enrolment of international students would grow into fourfold from 1.8 million in the year 2000 into 7.2 million in the year 2025. A recent report by the OECD indicates that there are about 5 million international students continuing their studies abroad and this number is expected to grow to 8 million in upcoming years. From the perspective of Asian nations, China is anticipated to be one of the leading countries, drawing over 500,000 international students and elevating it to the fifth position globally (OECD (2019)).

The financially viable living conditions, a high-quality tertiary education system, intensive promotion activities, and the desire to become an international education hub are among the key factors for countries like China, India, and Malaysia to continuously attract the international students (OECD, 2019). Malaysia's international student population has grown significantly from 32 students in 1970 to 136,293 students in 2017. Recognizing the importance and contributions of higher education sector to the nations' economic development, Malaysia has promoted the higher education to an industry. The country has developed an aspiration to be established as the international education hub with 250,000 enrolments by year 2025 as envisaged in Shift 8, the Global Prominence in the MEBHE. This is echoed from the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations as its 2030 sustainability agenda (Inga & Paulo, 2021).

This record of international student enrolment has steadily declined since 2018, and the impacts have worsened with the global pandemic of COVID-19 for the past three years. However, in this phase of endemic the country is expected to continue its efforts to revitalise the aspiration of achieving the international education hub status. In the extremely competitive market scenario, the tertiary institutions must elevate the level of customers satisfaction through services for its sustainability in this global sphere. Researchers strongly recommend that service quality is the greatest tool that distinguish a business from its competitors, guide towards gaining a competitive advantage in attracting new customers

(Alshamsi et al., 2021) and acknowledged as a key element in ensuring customer retention. Intensive marketing efforts must therefore be complemented with superior level of service quality within the PrHEIs to garner international students' continuous intention of study.

This paper attempts to investigate the influence of higher education service quality on trust and further to the international students' continuance intention of study. Past researchers have explored various service quality models in tertiary institutions, but the Higher Education Service Quality (HESQUAL) model that includes both functional and technical aspects (Teeroovengadum et al., 2016) with a focus on international students' continuance intention are understudied in Malaysia. The integration of underpinning theories, the Commitment-Trust Theory of Relationship Marketing by Morgan & Hunt (1994) for trust and Information System (IS) Continuance Theory by Bhattacharjee (2001). for continuance intention along with the HESQUAL model by is expected to provide new findings to this research aspect. Further, this research is expected to add to the existing body of knowledge on the mediating role of trust between HESQUAL and continuance intention. HESQUAL incorporate the service quality dimensions that includes Administrative Quality, Core Educational Quality, Support Facilities Quality, Physical Environment Quality and Transformative Quality.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The assessment of service quality is becoming an integral part for organization to ensure competitiveness and gain customer's trust for continuous patronage of the services. Naturally, the goal of any business organization is to ensure the retention of existing customers especially in a highly competitive business environment such as the PrHEIs. Sustaining the level of trust between the higher education institutions and the students is a positive determinant of long-term relationships that exist between both parties (Ghosh, Whipple & Bryan, 2001) and the declining level of trust has been found to weaken the relationship (Andaleeb, 1994).

The concept of service quality began with the initial work by Gronroos (1984). which was later developed by Parasuraman et al. (1985). Parasuraman's service quality model known as SERVQUAL serves as the foundation for research conducted worldwide. The other widely used models is the Cronin and Taylor's SERVPERF model that focuses specifically on performance. A review on the service quality models in higher education since 1996 provided ten different models, and the HESQUAL was found to be a holistic model with emphasis on both functional and technical aspect of quality. Service quality is often

correlated with customer satisfaction and loyalty in the business context. In higher education establishment, trust is regarded as a cognitive understanding whereby the customer develops and a high expectation of future service performances and wish to experience similar or enhanced level of satisfaction. As students consistently experience satisfaction within the services of higher education institution, they tend to build expectation and expect similar services to satisfy their needs in the long term.

Thus, it is true to say that trust once established promotes a long-lasting relationship in comparison to perceived satisfaction. The linkages between trust and commitment in the relational exchange that exist between the customer and organization is supported by the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. A student who develops trust in the university's services tend to complete the studies, spread positive word of mouth, continue studies to a higher level in the same institution and support the initiatives taken by the university.

Successfully retaining the existing customers help organizations to effectively reduce the marketing cost of finding new customers. In the higher education setting, PrHEIs must continuously search for new customers at every new intake, and this is a costly affair for the institutions. The continuance intention to use the services is a vital marker for profitability of business as it is anticipated that the cost incurred to acquire new customers is five times higher than retaining existing customer (Bhattacharjee, 2001) The studies related to continuance use or intention is rampant in the technology-based research and must be explored in wider context in universities. Table 1 lists past studies on continuance intention undertaken in higher education institutions in Malaysia. The international students, particularly during this period of post pandemic demand for enhanced service quality that decide on their continuance intention to study in the higher education institution. This aspect of continuance intention by Bhattacharjee (2001) is therefore a critical area to be considered for retaining the international students in Malaysia.

Table 1: Intention Related Studies in Higher Education Institutions of Malaysia

Scholars	Context of Research
Mahmod et al. (2005)	Acceptance of e-MBA programme
Ramayah (2006)	Online library usage
Luan and Teo (2009), Teo et al. (2009), Wong (2013)	Technology usage
Ramayah et al. (2010)	e- learning use continuance

Scholars	Context of Research
Letchumanan and Tarmizi (2011)	e-books usage
Ibrahim et al. (2011)	Use of educational games
Koe and Saring (2012)	Intention to study in Malaysian public university by foreign undergraduates
Abdelaziz et al. (2013)	Computer and internet usage
Jambulingam (2013)	Mobile technology adoption
Bakar et al. (2013)	Student portal continuance use
Krishnan and Sajilan (2014)	Effect of social media on intention to select private universities
Edrak et al. (2015)	Factors influencing international students' intention to study in Malaysia
Najib et al. (2015)	Student housing and personal attainment
Shahijan et al. (2016)	Behavioural intention of international students
Mosbah et al. (2019)	Intention to pursue postgraduate studies in public and private universities in Malaysia
Yaakop et al. (2020)	Continuance usage intention of web-based educational tools
Inam et al. (2020)	COVID-19 influence on international students' intention to study in Malaysia
Nazarudin et al. (2020)	Intention to enrol in Master degree courses
Owee Kowang et al. (2021)	Entrepreneurial intention among undergraduates in Malaysia
Abdul Rani and Abdul Razak (2021), Abdul Razak et al. (2021)	Use of e-campus

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

The following framework was drawn after the intensive review of higher education service quality, trust and continuance intention to study the international students in PrHEIs in Malaysia. This model is supported by the well-established underpinning theories and a holistic model of service quality.

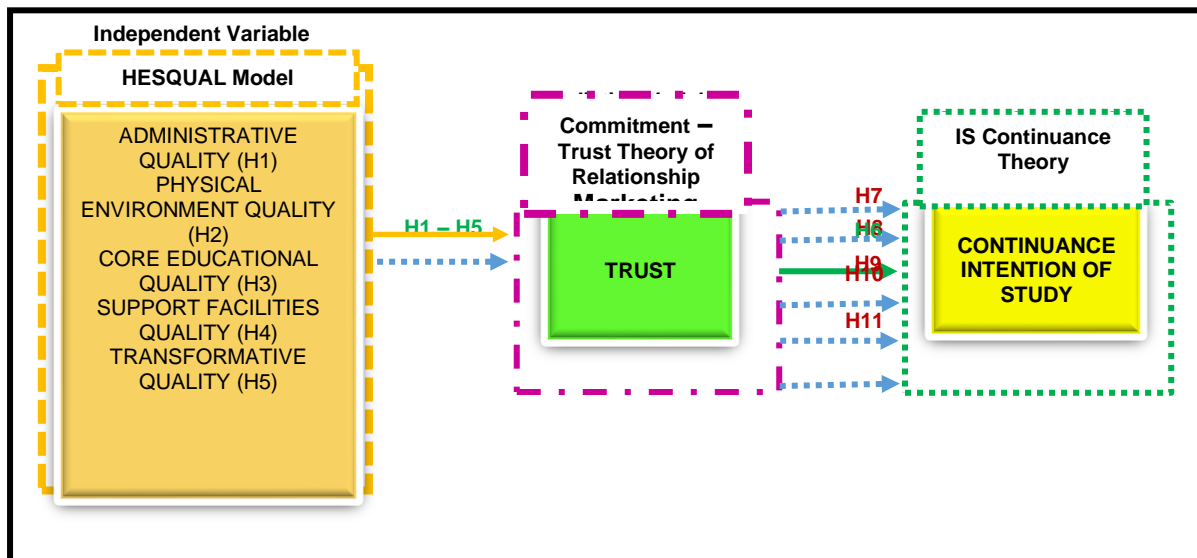


Figure 1: Proposed Research Framework

The HESQUAL model consist of five dimensions of service quality as shown in Figure 1 and this forms five hypotheses (H1 to H5) to study the relationship between HESQUAL and trust. The sixth hypothesis (H6) studies the relationship between trust and continuance intention of study. Remaining five hypotheses (H7 to H11) studies the impact of trust as mediator in this framework. Out of these eleven hypotheses, six hypotheses (H1 to H6) are direct, and others are indirect effect. The outcome of the study is expected to reveal the relationship of between the variables.

Administrative services are critical components of a university's service delivery. provided by non-academic staff to students. Administrative processes with minimal bureaucracy, well documented administrative procedures, and transparency in handling the international students' services are part of this subdimension. The empathy shown to the students makes them feel special, cared, and appreciated in the university and it influence the satisfaction and trust towards the university. Students who develop trust in the services are expected to use the services continuously and recommend the services to fellow friends and family. The influence of administrative quality on trust, and continuance intention of study is hypothesized in:

H1: Administrative Quality has a positive effect on Trust

H7: Trust positively mediates the relationship between Administrative Quality and

Continuance Intention of Study

This physical infrastructure dimension refers to adequacy of cafeteria, library, recreational and sports infrastructure; learning setting such as adequate classrooms, teaching equipment and conducive study ambience; and general infrastructure such as safety and the outlook of buildings and grounds (Teeroovengadum et al., 2016). The international students choose to travel to another country for higher education. The higher education institutions must value this decision and provide sufficient physical support infrastructure. Such services will boost students' confidence towards the university, create pleasant living conditions that helps in the overall learning and living within the institution. The influence of physical environment quality on trust, and continuance intention of study is hypothesized as follows:

H2: Physical Environment Quality has a positive effect on Trust

H8: Trust positively mediates the relationship between Physical Environment Quality and Continuance Intention of Study

Academic delivery is the pulse of every higher education institution that must be given utmost importance in comparison to other dimensions of service quality. The core educational quality consists of various sub dimension such as academic services, teaching staff, pedagogy, curriculum, and competence of academics which are highly relevant and essential towards evaluating the key determinant of service quality in PrHEIs. The primary services of higher education institution are to provide good academic services, ensure the programme is of international standards and obtained the necessary recognition status. The influence of core educational quality on trust, and continuance intention of study is exhibited through:

H3: Core Educational Quality has a positive effect on Trust

H9: Trust positively mediates the relationship between Core Educational Quality and Continuance Intention of Study

Student support services are defined as a set of facilities and activities designed to make the learning process smoother and more enjoyable for the students and this attributes towards strong liaison between the institution and the students. A good use of support services among the students at higher education institutions shows a positive relationship between students' academic performance and the support system available in the university that promotes a successful learning experience. The support facilities quality in HESQUAL model (Teeroovengadum et al., 2016) covers facilities such as cafeteria, information

technology, transport, sports and recreational, photocopy and printing, and availability of extra-curricular activities. International students are miles away from their families and they require good support services to sustain in the institution. The influence of support facilities quality on trust, and continuance intention of study is covered by:

H4: Support Facilities Quality has a positive effect on Trust

H10: Trust positively mediates the relationship between Support Facilities Quality and Continuance Intention of Study

According to Gronroos (1984), service quality consists of three broad dimensions namely the functional quality of the encounters between service provider and customer, the technical quality of the output and the corporate image of the company. The view on technical or transformative quality is rather limited for service quality models developed thus far in higher education sector and the HESQUAL model (Teeroovengadum et al. (2016)) addressed this gap by including the transformative quality to indicate the development of the students throughout their tenure of studies not only from the perspectives of the core knowledge but widely in a holistic manner. The aspect of transformative quality is crucial to assess the change process underwent by the individual since the enrolment into the university. The influence of transformative quality on trust, and continuance intention of study is hypothesized by:

H5: Transformative Quality has a positive effect on Trust

H11: Trust positively mediates the relationship between Transformative Quality and

Continuance Intention of Study

Relationship commitment and consumer trust model developed by Morgan & Hunt (1994) found trust as a strong mediator in establishing successful relational exchange. In the higher education setting, the university is treated as organization and the students as customers, whereby both are committed into the relationship marketing through the services offered by the university. This attribute towards the continuance intention theory proposed by Bhattacharjee (2001) has been widely applied in the studies relevant to information systems. The application of this theory is critically low in the higher education perspectives focusing into service quality aspect that influence the trust and continuance intention of study. The relationship between trust and continuance intention of study is reflected through:

H6: Trust has positive effect on Continuance Intention of Study

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is based on positivism worldview and applies the quantitative method. Data collection was completed using survey questionnaire with international students enrolled in private universities and foreign branch campus universities. Due to absence of sampling frame, a non-probability sampling using purposive sampling method was adopted. The proposed framework for this research consists of independent variable with five dimensions, a mediator and dependent variable. Questionnaire was prepared in English language and mostly adopted/ adapted from past research. A total of 50 items with two qualifying questions were included in the questionnaire with 7-point Likert scale. Pre-test and pilot test was conducted as proposed by Sekaran & Bougie (2016) whereby 15 respondents participated in pre-test and 37 for pilot test. Final survey used web-based application that yield 395 responses over a period of three months and 346 samples were usable. The response rate was satisfactory since a sample size of 200 respondents is considered adequate for Structural Equation Modelling (SEM). Data analysis was completed using two main statistical tools which are SPSS version 25 and SmartPLS version 3.3.3.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The descriptive analysis as shown in Table 2 was carried out using SPSS after completing the data preparation, data cleaning, multivariate assumption, and linearity testing. This was followed by the descriptive analysis for all indicators.

Table 2: Profile of Respondent

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Gender			
Male	179	51.7	51.7
Female	167	48.3	100.0
Age			
Below 20	51	14.7	14.7
21 – 30	286	82.7	97.4
31 – 40	9	2.6	100.0

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
Parents' Annual Income			
Below USD 25,000	52	15	15
USD 25,001 – USD 50,000	101	29.2	44.2
USD 50,001 – USD 75,000	106	30.6	74.8
USD 75,001 – USD 100,000	60	17.4	92.2
More than USD 100,001	27	7.8	100.0
Mode of Study			
Full Time	340	98.3	98.3
Part Time	6	1.7	100.0
Level of Study			
Foundation	31	9.0	9.0
Degree	296	85.5	94.5
Masters	19	5.5	100.0
Year of Study			
Year 1	54	15.6	15.6
Year 2	92	26.6	42.2
Year 3	112	32.4	74.6
Year 4	53	15.3	89.9
Year 5	35	10.1	100
Programme Code			
0 - General Programmes	25	7.2	7.2
1 - Education	8	2.3	9.5
2 - Arts & Humanities	9	2.6	12.1
3 - Social Sciences, Business & Law	107	30.9	43
4 - Science, Mathematics & Computing	24	6.9	49.9
5 - Engineering, Manufacturing & Construction	65	18.8	68.7

Demographic	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
7 - Health & Welfare	104	30.1	98.8
8 - Services	4	1.2	100.0

Measurement Model

The analysis of research model in this study was conducted through SmartPLS version 3.3.3. This software was used to evaluate the two-stage analytical procedures, namely the psychometric properties which is the validity and reliability of the measurement model as well as the parameters estimates of the structural model. Bootstrapping method with 5,000 subsamples was adopted to test the significance of the path coefficients and the loadings. The assessment of internal consistency reliability is assessed through two common tests, that is Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Composite Reliability (CR) Index. The findings of Cronbach alpha is reported between 0.812 to 0.864 and fulfils the threshold of 0.7. For the internal consistency, the composite reliability value should be greater than 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). and the findings with the range of 0.875 to 0.898 meets this requirement. The convergent validity of the model is examined using the average variance extracted (AVE) of at least 0.5 or more which is deemed satisfactory (Hair et al., 2017). Based on the findings, all the constructs in this study achieved satisfactory AVE values ranging between 0.539 to 0.639. This signifies that the measurement model possesses adequate internal consistency reliability and capable to proceed for further analysis.

Table 3 : Reliability and Validity of Construct

Construct	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Administrative Quality (ADM)	0.841	0.888	0.615
Core Educational Quality (CORE)	0.862	0.894	0.549
Physical Environment Quality (PHY)	0.836	0.875	0.539
Support Facilities Quality (SUPP)	0.812	0.876	0.639
Transformative Quality (TRANS)	0.864	0.898	0.596
Trust (TRUS)	0.853	0.891	0.576

Construct	Cronbach Alpha (α)	Composite Reliability (CR)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Continuance Intention of Study (CONT)	0.835	0.880	0.552

The discriminant validity is measured using HTMT technique introduced by Henseler et al. (2015). The first technique is to evaluate the HTMT value which is greater than 0.85 (Kline, 2011). and the second technique using bootstrapping (Henseler et al., 2015) that was utilized to measure if the HTMT value is substantively different from 1.00. The lack of discriminant validity is present if the confidence interval comprises of this value (Henseler et al., 2015). Findings in Table 4 shows the combined results of both techniques and none of the upper bound of the confidence interval of bootstrapping result is greater than 1.00. Thus, it can be determined that both reliability and validity conditions are fulfilled for this study.

Table 4 : HTMT Criterion

	ADM	CONT	CORE	PHY	SUPP	TRANS	TRUS
ADM							
CONT	0.417 CI_{.90} (0.318, 0.515)						
CORE	0.679 CI_{.90} (0.582, 0.761)	0.522 CI_{.90} (0.420, 0.613)					
PHY	0.502 CI_{.90} (0.407, 0.581)	0.431 CI_{.90} (0.331, 0.527)	0.584 CI_{.90} (0.504, 0.657)				
SUPP	0.702 CI_{.90} (0.619, 0.770)	0.455 CI_{.90} (0.346, 0.559)	0.833 CI_{.90} (0.773, 0.883)	0.773 CI_{.90} (0.706, 0.831)			
TRANS	0.667 CI_{.90} (0.574, 0.742)	0.491 CI_{.90} (0.391, 0.588)	0.648 CI_{.90} (0.551, 0.727)	0.748 CI_{.90} (0.674, 0.807)	0.781 CI_{.90} (0.706, 0.845)		
TRUS	0.483 CI_{.90} (0.383, 0.571)	0.848 CI_{.90} (0.792, 0.896)	0.577 CI_{.90} (0.488, 0.655)	0.460 CI_{.90} (0.365, 0.547)	0.467 CI_{.90} (0.374, 0.554)	0.518 CI_{.90} (0.422, 0.603)	

Structural Model

The validity of the structural model is evaluated using two aspects that is, the coefficient of determination (R^2) and path coefficients. The mediation analysis for this research is according to Preacher and Hayes “bootstrapping the indirect effect”. As discussed in (Ramayah et al., 2018), the collinearity issues are evaluated using the VIF value. Based on the finding, the VIF value falls between the range of 1.000 to 2.709 conforming to a value below 5 (Hair et al., 2011) and 3.3 (Diamantopoulos & Siguaw, 2006). and proves that collinearity is not a concern in this study. The R^2 value reflects the degree of variance in dependent variables that is explained by the independent variables. Based on the findings, the Trust (TRUS) recorded R^2 of 0.320 reflecting that 32.0 percent of its variance can be explained by the independent variable and Trust (TRUS) explains 51.3 percent of the variance in Continuance Intention of Study (CONT). These values are greater than 0.20 which are considered high in consumer behaviour research (Hair et al., 2017). The effect size (f^2) measures the relative influence of an independent variable on a dependent variable. The findings indicates that, Core Educational Quality and Physical Environment Quality has small effects on Trust. While the Administrative Quality, Support Facilities Quality and Transformative Quality provides no substantial effect size. However, there is a substantial effect reported for Trust to predict the Continuance Intention of Study.

There are six hypotheses showing direct relationship that was developed and tested in this study. The acceptance or rejection of the proposed hypotheses is determined using the path assessment results. The results projected in Table 5, provides a consistent value of path coefficients that varies between -1 and +1. The values recorded for this study ranges from -0.130 to 0.716. As recommended by Hair et al. (2017). the strength of the path coefficients is reflected by this result whereby values closer to +1 indicate strong positive relationships, while values closer to 0 indicate weaker relationships. The next assessment is to evaluate the t-statistics with t-value ≥ 1.645 and having significance level at 0.05. Based on the findings in Table 5, all hypotheses were supported except H5.

Table 5 : Path Coefficient

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	BCI LL	BCI UL	t-value $t > 1.645$	p-value $p < 0.05$	Decision
H1	ADM \rightarrow TRUS	0.110	0.064	0.003	0.210	1.722	0.043	Supported
H2	PHY \rightarrow TRUS	0.166	0.071	0.043	0.279	2.351	0.009	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	BCI LL	BCI UL	t-value $t > 1.645$	p-value $p < 0.05$	Decision
H3	CORE \rightarrow TRUS	0.348	0.070	0.226	0.457	4.964	0.000	Supported
H4	SUPP \rightarrow TRUS	-0.130	0.078	-0.258	0.003	1.660	0.049	Not Supported
H5	TRANS \rightarrow TRUS	0.168	0.077	0.040	0.292	2.193	0.014	Supported
H6	TRUS \rightarrow CONT	0.716	0.029	0.659	0.756	25.092	0.000	Supported

The bootstrapping technique using 5,000 subsamples with a significance level of 0.05 and one tailed test was conducted. The results for specific indirect effect obtained from this test is the mediation analysis as presented in Table 6. Based on the findings, four out of five mediation relationship tested in this study are statistically significant and supported. H10 on support facilities quality was not significant. Table 7 summarizes the hypotheses testing concluded for this study.

Table 6 : Specific Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Relationship	Indirect Effect (β)	Std. Error	BI LL	BCI UL	t-value $t > 1.645$	p-value $p < 0.05$	Decision	Mediation Analysis
H7	ADM \rightarrow TRUS \rightarrow CONT	0.078	0.046	0.004	0.154	1.721	0.043	Supported	Full Mediation
H8	PHY \rightarrow TRUS \rightarrow CONT	0.119	0.052	0.039	0.211	2.285	0.011	Supported	Complimentary (Partial Mediation)
H9	CORE \rightarrow TRUS \rightarrow CONT	0.249	0.051	0.167	0.335	4.866	0.000	Supported	Complimentary (Partial Mediation)
H10	SUPP \rightarrow TRUS \rightarrow CONT	-0.093	0.056	-0.183	0.002	1.659	0.056	Not Supported	No Effect (No Mediation)
H11	TRANS \rightarrow TRUS \rightarrow CONT	0.120	0.056	0.027	0.209	2.162	0.015	Supported	Complimentary (Partial Mediation)

Table 7 : Summary of Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	Decision
H1	Administrative Quality has a positive effect on Trust	Supported
H2	Physical Environment Quality has a positive effect on Trust	Supported
H3	Core Educational Quality has a positive effect on Trust	Supported
H4	Support Facilities Quality has a positive effect on Trust	Not Supported
H5	Transformative Quality has a positive effect on Trust	Supported
H6	Trust has positive effect on Continuance Intention of Study	Supported
H7	Trust positively mediates the relationship between Administrative Quality and Continuance Intention of Study	Supported

Hypothesis	Relationship	Decision
H8	Trust positively mediates the relationship between Physical Environment Quality and Continuance Intention of Study	Supported
H9	Trust positively mediates the relationship between Core Educational Quality and Continuance Intention of Study	Supported
H10	Trust positively mediates the relationship between Support Facilities Quality and Continuance Intention of Study	Not Supported
H11	Trust positively mediates the relationship between Transformative Quality and Continuance Intention of Study	Supported

The statistical outcome of this study provides scientific evidence towards answering the research objectives. The first objective was to investigate the influence of HESQUAL dimensions on trust. As projected in Table 5, it is proven that all dimensions except H4 have positive influence on trust. Hence in answering the first research question, the study confirms that the HESQUAL dimensions (Administrative Quality, Physical Environment Quality, Core Educational Quality, and Transformative Quality) are asserting positive influence on trust compared to the influence shown by Support Facilities Quality.

The second objective was to investigate the influence of trust on continuance intention of study. The linkage between trust and continuance intention in the context of higher education service quality, is to the best of the researcher's knowledge, is yet to be studied in this country. The findings from the current research agrees with a consistent and positive relationship between trust and international students' continuance intention of study in Malaysia's private universities. For the third objective, this research aims to study the mediating role of trust between HESQUAL and continuance intention of study. Based on the outcome presented in Table 6, this study confirms that trust has full mediating effect between administrative quality and continuance intention; and significant partial mediating effect between Physical Environment Quality, Core Educational Quality, Transformative Quality, and continuance intention of study. Trust has no mediating effect between Support Facilities Quality and continuance intention of study. An overall assessment of the findings indicates that all HESQUAL dimensions except the Support Facilities Quality have significant impact in assessing the continuance intention of study among international students in Malaysia.

In general, the outcome of this study would help private university management to understand on: 1) how international students build their level of trust through the higher education service quality experienced by them, 2) how to promote a quality culture among the staff delivering the core and supplementary services to the international students, and 3)

how to encourage the continuance intention of study among the international students that translates into customer retention in the universities. Not only that, but it also provides an important insight into strengthening the competitive advantage of the private universities as well as elevating Malaysia's aspiration to be the preferred international education hub in the region.

This research encountered few limitations that includes the absence of face-to-face data collection due to the global pandemic and closure of universities during the actual survey period. There were many challenges to contact the university management for seeking approval to conduct the research in the university. Future research may adopt a physical data collection to improve the response rate and reach out to wider range of respondents from different countries and faculties. Conducting this research during a non-pandemic period using the same research model may provide different output. Besides the international students, other stakeholders involved in providing the services may also be included in future research. Since this is a cross sectional study, it was conducted for a specific period. In assessing the association of trust developed by students through service quality towards the continuance intention may require a longer period of assessment as in longitudinal study. This can be considered for further exploration.

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Keberkesanan Medium Promosi Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS): Sebelum, Semasa dan Pasca Covid-19

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ABSTRAK

Promosi adalah strategi utama kepada hampir semua Institut Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) terutamanya Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) untuk mengangkat nama IPT dan menarik minat pelajar untuk memohon pengajian. Medium promosi yang berkesan sangat diperlukan mengikut keadaan semasa yang tidak menentu seperti penularan Pandemik Covid-19 pada tahun 2020 dan keadaan endemik. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji keberkesanan semua medium aktiviti promosi yang diguna oleh Bahagian Pemasaran, Jaringan Industri dan Komuniti (BPJIK) Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS) bagi tahun sebelum, semasa dan pasca Covid-19. Kaedah kajian ini berbentuk kuantitatif iaitu analisa deskriptif dari data-data yang diperolehi daripada pihak BPJIK. Kajian ini juga mengenal pasti permasalahan dan cadangan penambahbaikan melalui sesi temubual daripada 2 responden yang mewakili pihak BPJIK dan Pusat Pengurusan Akademik (PPA). Hasil kajian mendapati jurang perbezaan yang ketara diantara bilangan permohonan, penawaran dan kemasukan. Punca perbezaan ini adalah kerana UniSHAMS tiada garis panduan yang jelas tentang tugas kerja di setiap Kulliyah, Pusat dan Bahagian (KPB). Dicadangkan UniSHAMS mempunyai sistem pemprosesan permohonan dan penawaran yang sistematik ; mempunyai prosedur operasi standard (SOP) kerja yang jelas dan bertulis; dan mengaktifkan semula Jawatankuasa Induk Promosi sebagai platform perbincangan dan penyelarasan kerja promosi.

Kata Kunci: Promosi,; Universiti; Pemasaran; Pengajian Tinggi, Covid-19

2. PENDAHULUAN

Promosi adalah medium pemasaran yang harus dilakukan secara berterusan bagi memperkenalkan dan mengukuhkan jenama universiti kepada masyarakat umum (Suanda et al., 2010). Pelbagai kaedah promosi digunakan oleh pihak Universiti bagi menarik minat pelajar-pelajar lepasan SPM, STPM, STAM, Matrikulasi, Diploma dan sebagainya untuk menyambung pengajian ke peringkat Pra Siswazah (program Sijil, Diploma dan Ijazah). Tidak ketinggalan promosi juga dibuat kepada graduan Ijazah dan Sarjana untuk menyambung pengajian ke peringkat Pasca Siswazah (program Sarjana dan Doktor Falsafah). Kajian ini dibuat adalah untuk mengkaji tahap keberkesanan medium promosi yang digunakan oleh Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah (UniSHAMS) dalam mempromosikan Institut Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (IPTS) itu kepada masyarakat luar tempatan dan antarabangsa.

UniSHAMS yang dulunya dikenali sebagai Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kedah Darul Aman (INSANIAH) ditubuhkan pada 2 Januari 1996. Pada ketika itu, INSANIAH hanya menawarkan program Pengajian Islam berkembar dengan Universiti Al-Azhar, Mesir dalam bidang Usuludin, Syariah dan Bahasa Arab. Pada tahun 2000, INSANIAH telah menawarkan program Diploma Pengurusan dan Diploma Perakaunan, diikuti dengan Diploma Teknologi Maklumat pada tahun 2001. Pada 18 Mei 2006 INSANIAH dinaiktaraf sebagai Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIN). Pada tahun 2009, KUIN telah menawarkan 40 program pengajian daripada peringkat asasi sehingga Doktor Falsafah. Pada 8 Februari 2018, KUIN telah dinaiktaraf sebagai Universiti Penuh dengan nama UniSHAMS. Sebuah IPTS milik kerajaan negeri Kedah yang mempunyai 6 Kulliyah dan 2 Pusat Pengajian yang menawarkan 42 program bermula dari peringkat Asasi sehingga Doktor Falsafah.

UniSHAMS mempunyai satu unit yang sangat aktif mengadakan promosi untuk 42 program yang ditawarkan. Bahagian Pemasaran, Jaringan Industri & Komuniti (BPJIK) merupakan bahagian yang dipertanggungjawabkan untuk melaksanakan promosi pukat produk UniSHAMS secara menyeluruh dan berkala, menerusi medium yang bersesuaian dengan menggunakan sumber kewangan yang diluluskan oleh Lembaga Pengarah Syarikat (LPS). Manakala, proses penapisan dan penawaran adalah di bawah tanggungjawab Pusat Pengurusan Akademik (PPA) bagi program-program peringkat Pra Siswazah dan Pusat Pengurusan Siswazah (PPS) bagi program-program di peringkat Pasca Siswazah. Kajian ini hanya fokus pada promosi untuk program-program Pra Siswazah, dari program asasi sehingga Ijazah Sarjana Muda.

3. PENYATAAN MASALAH

Pihak BPJIK telah memperuntukkan jumlah perbelanjaan yang agak besar untuk aktiviti promosi, tetapi jumlah kemasukan pelajar dari program Asasi sehingga Ijazah Sarjana Muda ke UniSHAMS amat tidak memberangsangkan. Berdasarkan rekod, UniSHAMS mempunyai capaian permohonan dan jumlah penawaran yang tinggi. Namun, rekod pendaftaran kemasukan bagi keseluruhan program untuk pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa masih di tahap yang rendah di mana kurang 30% prospek pelajar yang ditawarkan berjaya hadir atau mendaftarkan diri di UniSHAMS. Keadaan ini telah menimbulkan banyak persoalan terhadap tahap isu kemasukan pelajar dan isu berkaitan tahap keberkesanan promosi mula dipersoalkan memandangkan pihak LPS UniSHAMS telah pun meluluskan peruntukan promosi yang tinggi setiap tahun.

Cabaran untuk meningkatkan kemasukan pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa bertambah sukar apabila penularan wabak Covid-19 telah menghadkan pergerakan secara fizikal dan telah mengubah cara pelaksanaan bekerja. Perubahan corak pembudayaan kerja secara bergilir dan atas talian ini telah memberi kesukaran yang sangat tinggi untuk diadaptasi oleh semua jabatan. Secara tidak langsung, ianya telah merencatkan banyak aktiviti promosi dan seterusnya, memberi kesan kepada kelancaran proses penawaran. Perubahan mendadak untuk setiap proses ini kepada atas talian telah menyebabkan berlakunya beberapa masalah yang tidak dapat dijangka (Abdul Razak, Hassan, & Shaharuddin, 2021).

Perubahan teknik pengajaran dan pembelajaran (PdP) secara atas talian turut menimbulkan kesan kepada ibu bapa dan pelajar untuk diadaptasi. Kajian daripada Ngoc (2021) mendapati mahasiswa mula hilang motivasi, tiada disiplin dan kurang berinteraksi semasa PdP secara atas talian ini. Faktor sosioekonomi bagi ibu bapa yang terjejas pendapatan juga mendorong ketidaksediaan dan ketidakmampuan untuk menyediakan kelengkapan pembelajaran dalam talian kepada anak-anak (Jafar, Amran, Mohd Yaakob, & Yusof, 2020). Ketidaksediaan ini telah mendorong pelajar hilang arah, fokus dan minat untuk meneruskan pengajian seperti biasa, tetapi lebih berminat untuk mambantu keluarga menambah pendapatan menerusi platform gig, menjadi pempengaruh media sosial, dropship, pemandu e-hailing dan lain-lain (Fadzill, 2022). Rentetan dari perubahan gaya hidup ini telah menyebabkan kaji selidik Jabatan Perangkaan mendapati 72.1% lepasan Sijil Peperiksaan Malaysia (SPM) tidak mahu menyambung pengajian (Mutalib, 2022).

Justeru, kajian ini akan membuat analisis trend permohonan, penawaran dan kemasukan pelajar ke program pra siswazah di UniSHAMS bagi tahun 2018 sehingga 2022

iaitu fasa sebelum pandemik COVID-19 , semasa dan pasca COVID-19, mengenalpasti permasalahan dan memberi cadangan untuk penambahbaikan.

4. SOROTAN KAJIAN

Promosi adalah bentuk komunikasi untuk memasarkan produk (program yang ditawarkan oleh Universiti) dan ianya adalah satu keperluan kepada setiap universiti untuk memperkenalkan dan memperkukuhkan jenama Universiti kepada masyarakat umum khususnya pembeli (bakal pelajar, ibu bapa pelajar dan orang awam) (Suanda et al., 2010). Proses pemasaran adalah tindakan dan aktiviti pemasaran yang melibatkan analisis peluang pemasaran, pemilihan kumpulan sasaran, perancangan strategi promosi dan campuran pemasaran dan implementasi (Solcansky & Simberova, 2010). Pihak UniSHAMS juga mempunyai proses pemasaran tertentu dan bahagian khusus yang menjalankan aktiviti pemasaran.

Amini, Darani, Afshani, & Amini (2012) mengkaji keberkesanan strategi pemasaran yang diwakili oleh 4 campuran pemasaran iaitu Channel, Price, Promotion dan After Sales Services, dan Imej Korporat terhadap Ekuiti Jenama. Keputusan menunjukkan kesemua elemen termasuk promosi adalah strategi pemasaran yang memberi kesan yang positif terhadap Imej korporat dan ekuiti jenama. Risdiyanto & Kurniyati, (2015) mengkaji hubungan 7 campuran pemasaran iaitu Produk, Harga, Lokasi, Promosi, Orang, Fisik dan Proses terhadap Pengajian Tinggi Swasta (PTS) di Kabupaten Sleman Yogyakarta. Hasil dapatan menunjukkan ketujuh pembolehubah tidak bersandar mempunyai pengaruh yang signifikan pada pemilihan PTS. Menurut kepada keputusan koefisien beta menunjukkan urutan kekuatan pengaruh adalah harga, lokasi, produk, orang, promosi dan fasiliti fizikal.

Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) juga ada menjalankan kajian untuk mengenalpasti keberkesanan aktiviti promosi UniMAP dan menilai strategi pemasaran semasa yang digunakan untuk menarik minat pelajar ke UniMAP untuk sidang akademik 2008/2009 (Al Bakri Abdullah, Hussin, Suanda, Ghazali, & Mahmudin, 2007). Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa 36% responden mengenali UniMAP melalui internet, 13.4% melalui pameran, ceramah (8.9%), promosi khas (6.6%) dan 8% responden tidak tahu langsung kewujudan UniMAP. Ini menunjukkan bahawa responden mengenali dan memilih UniMAP ketika mengisi borang UPU Online. Ini adalah konsisten dengan cara permohonan untuk kemasukan ke Institusi Pengajian Tinggi Awam (IPTA) termasuklah UniMAP. Walaubagaimanapun, UniMAP tetap memikirkan keperluan yang sangat penting mengatur strategi promosi yang betul dan agresif bagi memastikan jumlah kemasukan ke UniMAP

akan menjadi lebih baik.

Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) mengkaji keberkesanan kempen perhubungan awam (PR) dalam mempromosikan UTeM. Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan yang masyarakat luar masih kurang terdedah dan kurang yakin untuk memilih UTeM (Omar & Abdul Latif, 2011). PR adalah salah satu strategi promosi bagi menjalinkan hubungan yang rapat dan baik dengan masyarakat luar melalui penyebaran maklumat. UniSHAMS juga mengamalkan strategi PR untuk merapatkan hubungan dan menyebarkan maklumat kepada badan korporat, sekolah-sekolah, individu-individu dan komuniti. Berdasarkan kepada keputusan yang dijalankan oleh UTeM, aktiviti PR yang paling berkesan untuk memberi peluang ibu bapa dan bakal pelajar mengenali UTeM dan memperkenalkan kursus-kursus yang ada di UTeM adalah promosi "Jom Masuk Universiti" anjuran Karnival Pengajian Tinggi Negara 2010 (Omar & Abdul Latif, 2011).

Penularan wabak Covid-19 pada awal tahun 2020 telah memaksa semua IPT mengubah model aktiviti promosi (Abdul Razak et al., 2021). Hasil dapatan (Abdul Razak et al., 2021) daripada kajian yang dijalankan di USIM menunjukkan 120(98.4%) responden bersetuju penggunaan media sosial digunakan untuk mempromosikan program akademik. Walau bagaimanapun, sebanyak 29 (23.8%) menyatakan kandungan di laman web USIM tidak menarik. Ini membuktikan bahawa setiap IPT harus memastikan laman web rasmi Universiti sentiasa dikemaskini dengan kesediaan semua maklumat yang berkaitan. Laman web rasmi IPT boleh menjadi medium utama kepada semua orang awam di dalam atau di luar negara untuk mendapatkan segala maklumat berkaitan program dan Universiti. Dengan perubahan gaya hidup yang terbatas pergerakan fizikal, penggunaan media sosial seperti Facebook, Telegram, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter dan lain-lain boleh menjadi medium untuk penyebaran maklumat kepada orang ramai (Abu Bakar & Quah, 2018).

Kajian ini dibuat untuk menganalisa medium promosi yang digunakan dan yang paling efektif untuk membuatkan UniSHAMS dikenali oleh pemohon. Kajian ini juga akan mengenalpasti permasalahan jurang yang berlaku dan memberi cadangan untuk penambahbaikan.

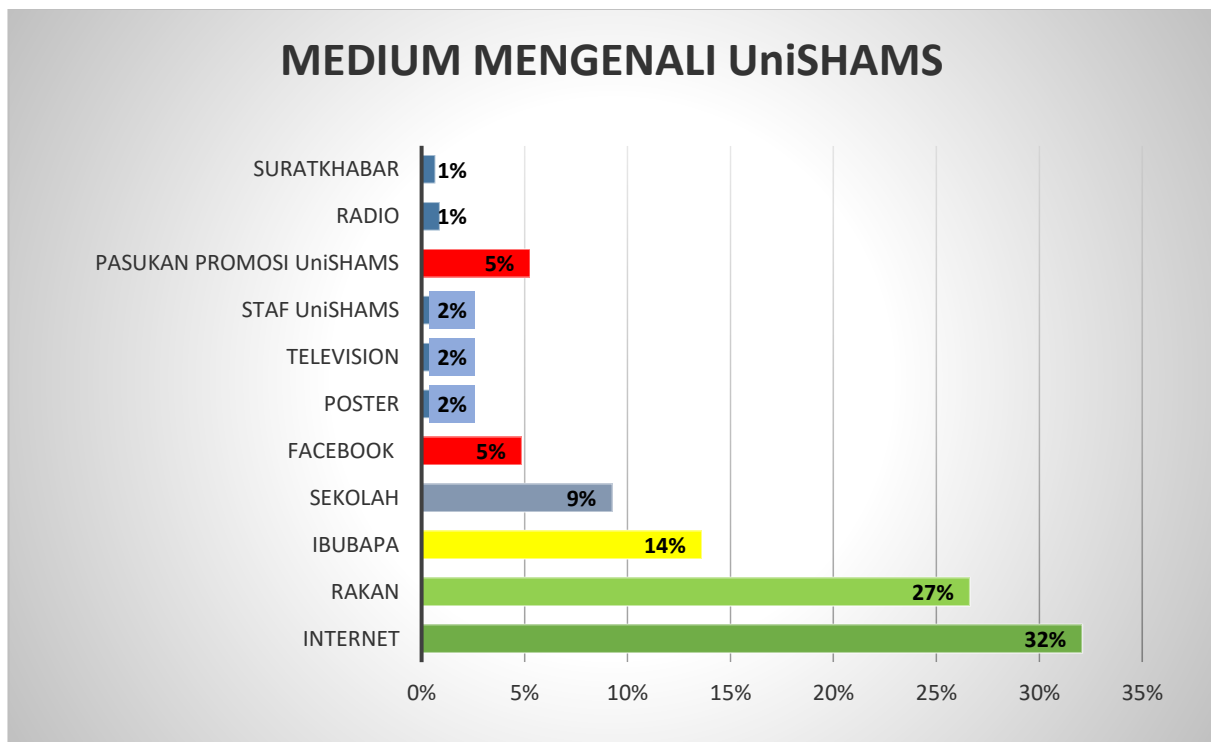
5. METODOLOGI

Kajian ini menganalisa medium promosi pemohon mengenali UniSHAMS dan juga keberkesanan setiap medium promosi yang diguna dengan bilangan permohonan untuk program asasi sehingga Ijazah Sarjana Muda bagi tahun sebelum, semasa dan pasca Covid-19. Kaedah kajian ini berbentuk kuantitatif iaitu analisa deskriptif dari data-data yang

diperolehi daripada pihak BPJIK dari tahun 2018 sehingga 2022. Kajian ini juga mengenal pasti permasalahan dan cadangan penambahbaikan melalui sesi temubual separa berstruktur dengan dua responden yang mewakili pihak BPJIK dan PPA.

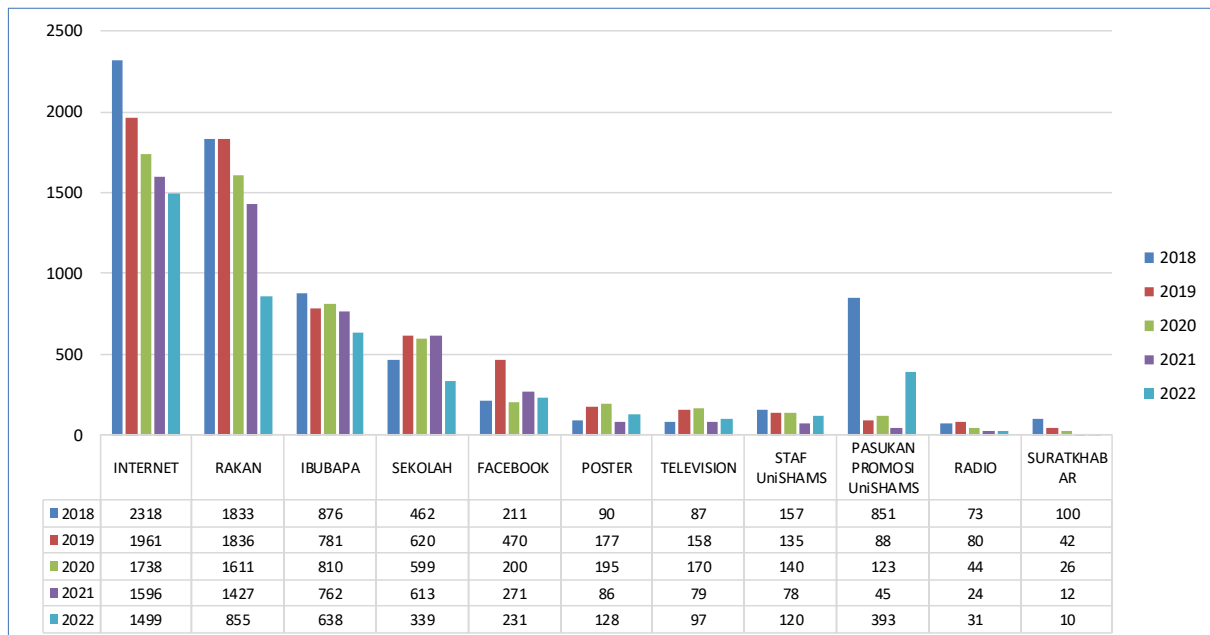
6. DAPATAN KAJIAN

Analisa Medium Mengenal UniSHAMS



Rajah 1: Medium Pelajar Mengenal UniSHAMS

Rajah 1 di atas menunjukkan peratusan bagaimana pelajar mengenali UniSHAMS. Secara keseluruhannya bagi tahun 2018 sehingga 2022, menunjukkan bahawa 32% pemohon mengenali UniSHAMS adalah melalui internet, diikuti dengan pengaruh rakan yang menyumbang 27% keputusan permohonan untuk memilih UniSHAMS. Hasil dapatan ini selari dengan kajian yang telah dijalankan untuk Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP). Suanda et al., (2010) mendapati 55.1% responden mengenali UniMAP melalui internet dan faktor kedua yang menyumbang responden untuk memilih UniMAP adalah melalui rakan iaitu sebanyak 43.8%. Pengaruh Ibu Bapa dan sekolah juga turut memberi kesan dimana sebanyak 14% dan 9% responden mengenali UniSHAMS melalui medium ini.



Rajah 2: Kaji selidik Permohonan Kemasukan Pelajar

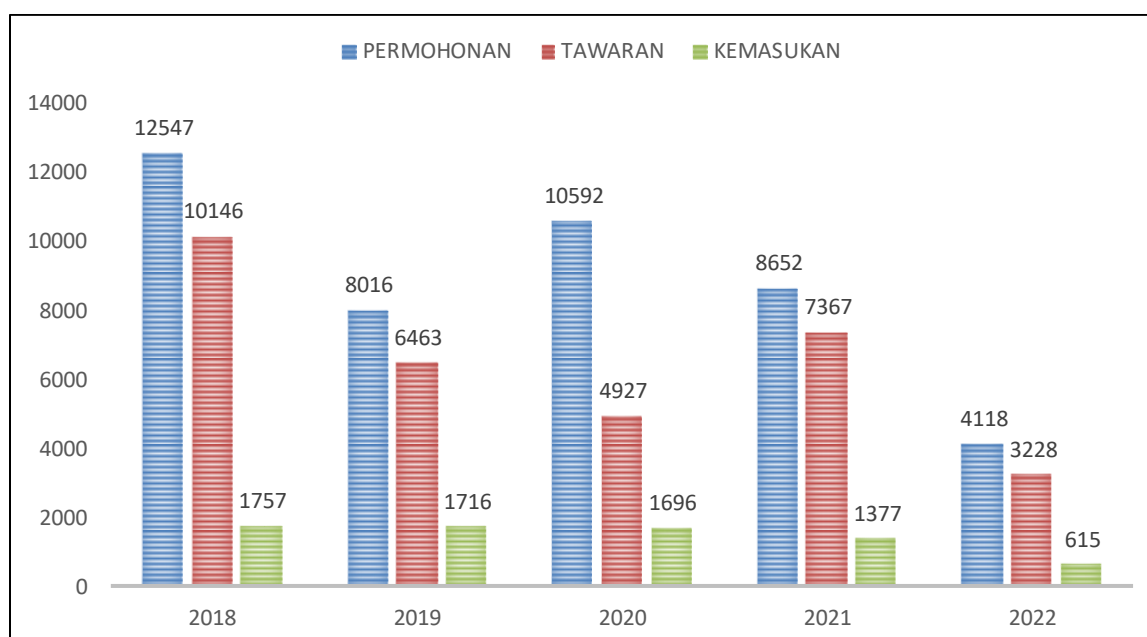
Berdasarkan pada Rajah 2 di atas menunjukkan bahawa majoriti permohonan kemasukan pelajar keseluruhannya dari peringkat asasi sehingga Ijazah Sarjana Muda adalah diketahui melalui sumber internet. Melalui medium internet, jumlah permohonan kemasukan pelajar yang tertinggi adalah pada tahun 2018 iaitu seramai 2318, dan trend menunjukkan penurunan pada 2019 dengan 1961 pelajar, diikuti 1738 pelajar pada 2020, 1596 pelajar pada 2021 dan 1499 pada 2022. Permohonan kemasukan pelajar juga dipengaruhi oleh rakan sebaya mereka. Keputusan menunjukkan bahawa pengaruh permohonan kemasukan melalui rakan adalah tertinggi pada tahun 2019, berjumlah 1836 pelajar, dan mula menurun sebanyak 12% pada tahun 2020 dan 2021. Pada tahun 2022 menunjukkan penurunan sebanyak 40%.

Selain itu, sumber terendah untuk permohonan kemasukan pelajar datang daripada sumber lain seperti poster, televisyen, kakitangan UniSHAMS dan pasukan promosi, radio dan akhbar. Faktor permohonan kemasukan melalui pasukan promosi UniSHAMS sangat dipengaruhi pada tahun 2018 iaitu sebanyak 851 permohonan. Tetapi, penurunan yang sangat ketara iaitu sebanyak 90% pada tahun berikutnya sehingga tahun 2021. Ini adalah kerana penularan pandemik COVID-19 yang menghalang pergerakan secara fizikal oleh pasukan promosi UniSHAMS. Tetapi pada tahun 2022, pasca COVID-19 mengaktifkan

semula pergerakan pasukan promosi, menjadikan medium mengenali UniSHAMS melalui pasukan promosi meningkat 773%.

Statistik Permohonan, Tawaran dan Kemasukan Pelajar

Keputusan statistik ini menunjukkan bahawa jumlah permohonan kemasukan paling tinggi adalah pada tahun 2018, dan bilangan permohonan menurun 10% ke 13% secara berterusan dari tahun 2019 sehingga tahun 2022.



Rajah 3: Statistik Permohonan, Tawaran dan Kemasukan

Rajah 3 di atas menggambarkan bagaimana proses kemasukan pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa ke UniSHAMS untuk program asasi sehingga Ijazah Sarjana Muda. Pihak BPJIK dengan kerjasama banyak pihak termasuk Kulliyah dan Pusat Pengajian akan berdaya usaha melakukan promosi melalui pelbagai medium. Selepas permohonan daripada sasaran pelajar telah diterima, PPA akan membuat proses penawaran mengikut pada permohonan program dan kelayakan keputusan peperiksaan (SPM/STAM/Matrik/Sijil/Diploma) pelajar tersebut. Merujuk pada statistik pada Rajah 3 di atas, menunjukkan bahawa permohonan kemasukan yang tertinggi adalah pada tahun 2018, diikuti dengan tahun 2020, 2021, 2019 dan 2022. Ini membuktikan usaha gigih yang telah diatur dan digerakkan oleh pasukan promosi BPJIK dengan kerjasama Kulliyah dan Pusat

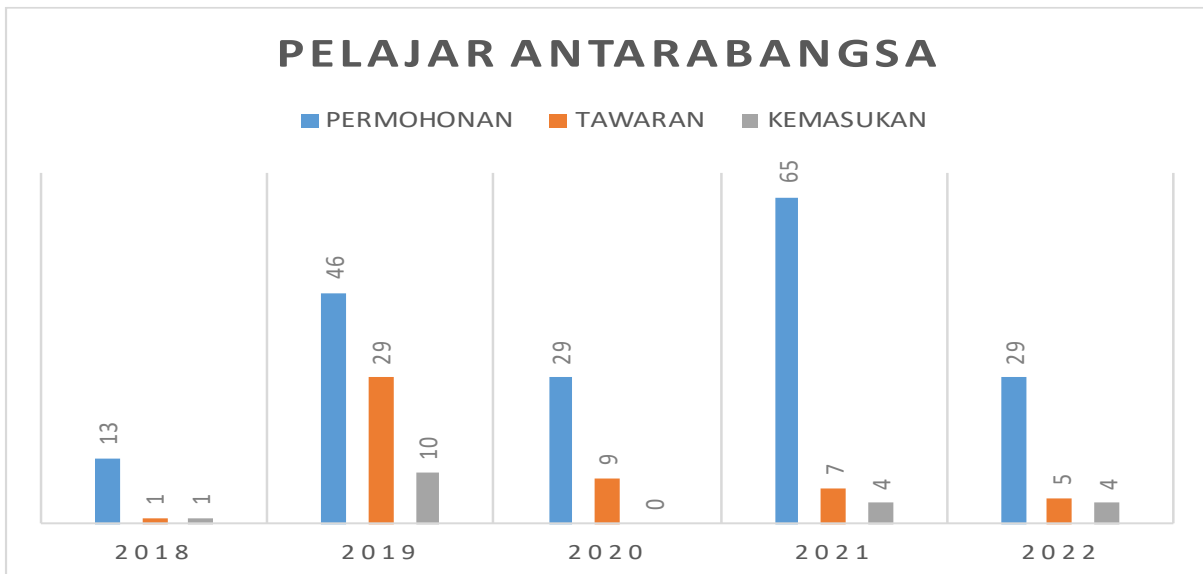
Pengajian bagi sasaran mengenali UniSHAM dan membuat tindakan untuk mengisi borang permohonan.

Tindakan yang seterusnya iaitu tawaran program kepada pemohon yang layak dilakukan oleh pihak PPA. Merujuk pada Rajah 3 menunjukkan bilangan tawaran adalah di antara 80% ke 85% daripada jumlah permohonan bagi tahun 2018, 2019 dan 2021. Manakala bagi tahun 2020, statistik menunjukkan bilangan tawaran hanya 47% berbanding dengan jumlah permohonan yang kedua tertinggi iaitu sebanyak 10,592. Ini membuktikan jurang perbezaan yang sangat tinggi berbanding dengan tiga tahun yang lain iaitu sebanyak 53%. Penularan COVID-19 dan pelaksanaan Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) telah merencatkan urusan kerja pada semua jabatan di UniSHAMS. Pada tahun 2022, bilangan permohonan sangat tidak memberangsangkan berbanding dengan sebelum dan semasa Pandemik COVID-19. Ini adalah kerana minat untuk belajar di kalangan lepasan SPM semakin pudar. Rentetan daripada pelaksanaan PKP dan Pengajian dan Pembelajaran dari Rumah (PdPR) secara atas talian telah membuka ruang dan peluang kepada anak-anak muda menceburi perniagaan secara atas talian dan bekerja dalam sektor ekonomi gig seperti penghantar makanan dalam talian.

Penentu segala usaha daya dari pihak BPJIK, Kulliyah, Pusat Pengajian dan PPA adalah bilangan kemasukan pelajar. Merujuk pada Rajah 3 kemasukan tertinggi adalah pada tahun 2018 iaitu seramai 1757 pelajar, diikuti tahun 2019 seramai 1716 pelajar, 2020 seramai 1696 pelajar, 2021 seramai 1377 pelajar dan 2022 seramai 615 sahaja. Statistik menunjukkan penurunan bilangan kemasukan sebanyak 2% pada tahun 2019 dan 2020. Manakala bagi tahun 2021 penurunan adalah sebanyak 19% dan bagi tahun 2022 penurunan yang sangat tinggi iaitu sebanyak 55.34%.

Jika dibandingkan dengan bilangan tawaran setiap tahun, jurang kemasukan sangat berbeza. Bagi tahun 2018, dengan jumlah tawaran sebanyak 10,146 hanya 1757 sahaja yang mendaftar sebagai pelajar UniSHAMS. Jurang perbezaan yang sangat ketara di antara jumlah tawaran dan jumlah kemasukan. Merujuk pada Rajah 3, peratusan perbezaan adalah 83% pada tahun 2018, 73% (2019), 66% (2020), 81% (2021) dan 80% (2022). Analisa menunjukkan tiada jurang yang sangat ketara jika dibandingkan tahun sebelum, semasa dan pasca COVID-19.

Pelajar Antarabangsa

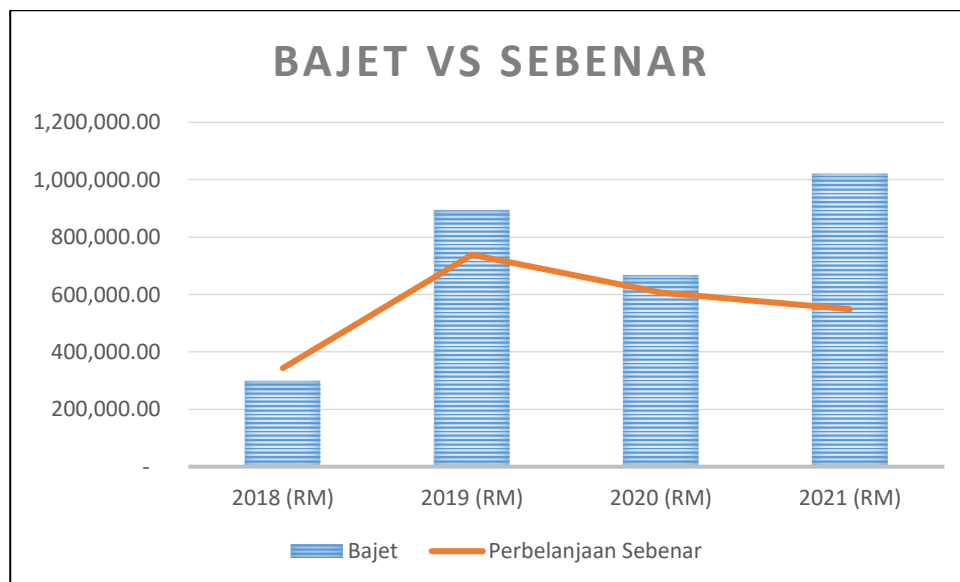


Rajah 4 : Statistik Permohonan, Tawaran dan Kemasukan

Rajah 4 menunjukkan bilangan pelajar antarabangsa daripada jumlah statistik keseluruhan permohonan, tawaran dan kemasukan pada **Rajah 3**. Responden daripada BPJIK menyatakan untuk pelajar antarabangsa, tiada medium promosi khusus dilakukan untuk menarik minat mereka ke UniSHAMS. Pihak BPJIK hanya menumpang edaran *brochure* melalui program lawatan ke UniSHAMS dan program menandatangani Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) atau Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) di antara UniSHAMS dan mana-mana Universiti Luar Negara.

Hasil statistik menunjukkan permohonan pelajar antarabangsa ke UniSHAMS memberangsangkan, tetapi jumlah penawaran dan kemasukan sangat tidak memuaskan. Antara negara yang menunjukkan peningkatan kemasukan ke UniSHAMS adalah dari negara Indonesia dan Thailand. Ini adalah kerana, UniSHAMS banyak mempunyai MOA dan MOU dari negara Indonesia. Kedudukan UniSHAMS yang hampir jaraknya dengan sempadan Thailand antara faktor kemasukan pelajarannya menyambung pengajian di UniSHAMS.

Perbelanjaan Promosi

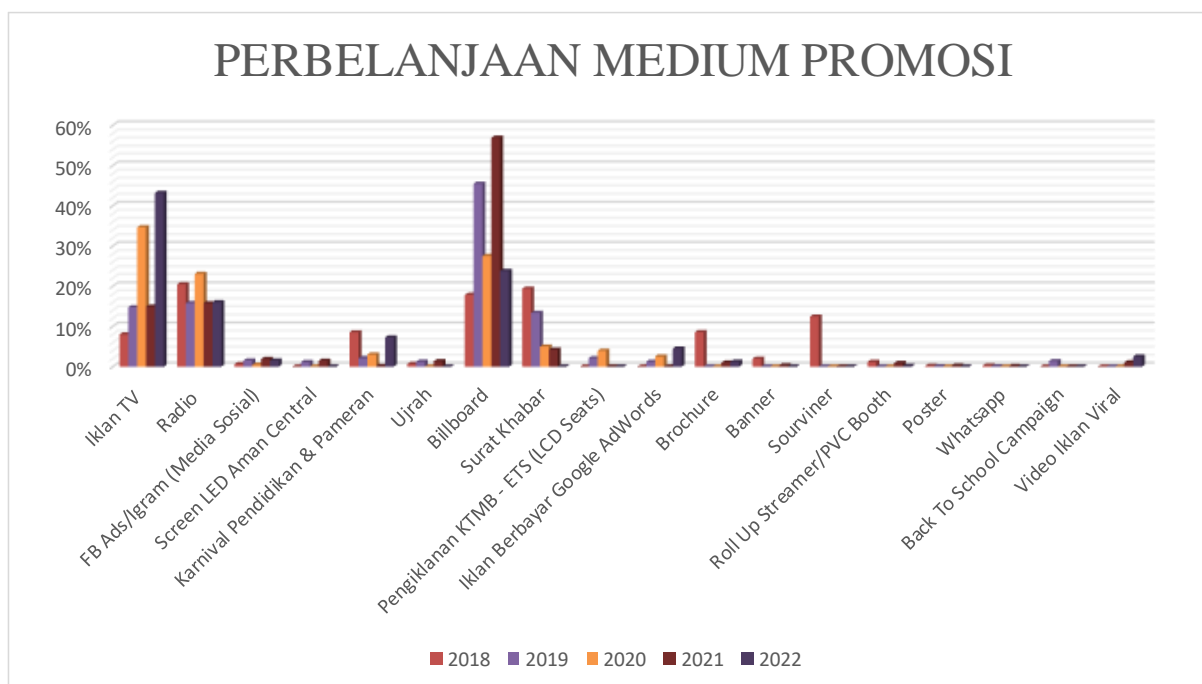


Rajah 5: Peruntukan dan Perbelanjaan Sebenar

Rajah 5 menunjukkan peruntukan promosi bagi tahun 2021 adalah tertinggi berbanding dengan tahun-tahun lain. Tetapi jika dibandingkan dengan perbelanjaan sebenar hanya pada tahun 2018 ianya melebihi peruntukan yang diberi. Punca utama adalah kerana Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIN) telah dinaiktaraf universiti penuh UniSHAMS pada 8 Februari 2018. Pihak BPJIK secara agresif menyertai karnival pendidikan dan pameran. Pada tahun 2018 juga terdapat perbelanjaan cetakan brochure, banner dan souvenir kerana perubahan nama Kolej Universiti Insaniah (KUIN) ke UniSHAMS. Tetapi peruntukan promosi bagi tahun 2018 adalah yang terendah. Antara faktor lebih perbelanjaan juga adalah medium promosi melalui cetakan suratkhbar dan saluran radio.

Bagi tahun 2019, didapati terdapat peningkatan peruntukan sebanyak 200% . Ini adalah kerana, UniSHAMS telah mendapat kelulusan untuk menambahkan bilangan iklan *billboard* di lebuh raya Utara Selatan., Iklan di TV dan promosi melalui radio. Pada tahun 2020 jumlah peruntukan dikurangkan kerana penularan COVID-19 dan pelaksanaan Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) telah menghadkan aktiviti promosi secara bersemuka. Medium promosi melalui iklan TV dan radio telah ditingkatkan. Peruntukan pada tahun 2021 meningkat sebanyak 60% dari tahun 2020, tetapi perbelanjaan sebenar yang telah digunakan hanya 46% daripada keseluruhan peruntukan. Dalam keadaan masih dalam PKP dan bekerja dari rumah (BDR), 57% dari perbelanjaan sebenar telah digunakan untuk

penambahan bilangan iklan *billboard*. Manakala perbelanjaan iklan TV dan radio juga berkurang pada tahun 2021.



Rajah 6 : Perbelanjaan Medium Promosi UniSHAMS

Rajah 6 di atas menunjukkan peratusan perbelanjaan medium promosi dengan lebih terperinci bagi setiap tahun 2018 sehingga 2022. Perbelanjaan untuk *souvenir* hanya berlaku pada tahun 2018. Manakala, cetakan brochure dan banner berlaku pada tahun 2018 dan 2021. Perbelanjaan bagi medium promosi yang terlibat setiap tahun adalah Iklan TV, Radio, Media Sosial, *Billboard* dan Surat Khobar. Perbelanjaan yang tertinggi pada tahun 2018 adalah radio (20%), pada tahun 2019 adalah *billboard* (45%), Iklan TV (35%) pada tahun 2020 dan *billboard* (57%) pada tahun 2021. Pada tahun 2022, BPJIK banyak fokus pada medium TV melalui siaran Malaysia Hari Ini (MHI) dan TV Al-Hijrah untuk sasaran kepada ibu bapa.

Daripada jumlah keseluruhan perbelanjaan promosi bagi tahun 2018-2022, perbelanjaan promosi yang tertinggi adalah medium “Billboard” iaitu sebanyak RM847 ribu (37%), diikuti dengan perbelanjaan promosi melalui Iklan TV RM524 ribu (23%), radio RM400 ribu (18%) dan suratkhobar iaitu sebanyak RM 176 ribu (8%). Perbelanjaan bagi lain-lain medium promosi seperti Karnival Pendidikan dan Pameran, Brochure, Cenderahati, Pengiklanan KTMB – ETS, FB /INSTAG ADV, Screen LED Aman Central, Ujrah dan Iklan berbayar Google AdWords adalah di antara 1% ke 4% sahaja daripada jumlah perbelanjaan promosi.

Manakala perbelanjaan promosi yang paling rendah yang digunakan adalah melalui medium Whatsapp. Pihak BPJIK menggunakan Billboard untuk penjenamaan dan imej Universiti. Evans, Molly, Eva, & Miles (2020) juga mendapati menunjukkan bahawa pengiklanan melalui billboard mempunyai faktor penyumbang utama ke arah kejayaan pemasaran produk atau syarikat.

Perbincangan dan Kesimpulan

Penularan wabak Covid-19 telah mengubah budaya kerja, pengajaran dan pembelajaran di Institut Pengajian Tinggi (IPT). Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) menjejaskan banyak operasi kerja sebelum adaptasi secara alam maya dapat dilaksanakan sepenuhnya. Ketidaksediaan pihak staf pengurusan dari segi fasiliti seperti komputer riba, capaian internet, akses kepada sistem, fail dokumen dan lain-lain telah menghadkan kelancaran urusan kerja. Ketidaksediaan dari segi pengurusan anak-anak dan keluarga juga menjadi faktor ketidaksempurnaan kerja. Pada tahun 2020 peralihan Bekerja Dari Rumah (BDR), tidak secara automatik urusan kerja dapat dijalankan. Responden dari PPA menyatakan semasa PKP proses kerja tidak dapat terus dilakukan kerana sistem tidak boleh akses dari rumah. Ini menunjukkan UniSHAMS tidak mempunyai plan kotingensi standard untuk menghadapi situasi kecemasan seperti Pandemik Covid-19. 60% responden daripada kajian Diab-bahman & Al-enzi (2020) menyatakan syarikat tidak mempunyai plan kotingensi standard dan dicadangkan untuk diwujudkan untuk sebarang kecemasan di masa hadapan.

Responden BPJIK menyatakan tugas utama pasukan promosi adalah untuk bergerak aktif membuat aktiviti promosi dan mendapatkan jumlah permohonan. Seterusnya adalah tugas pihak PPA untuk memasukkan permohonan ke dalam sistem dan membuat penawaran. Disebabkan kekangan staf dan bebanan kerja lain, pihak PPA menyerahkan tugas tersebut kepada pihak Kulliyah, tetapi dinafikan.

Ini dapat disimpulkan bahawa pengurusan permohonan dan penawaran di UniSHAMS masih tidak teratur dan didapati tiada prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang jelas tentang pegawai yang bertanggungjawab dengan tugas permohonan, semakan dan penawaran pelajar baru. Responden BPJIK juga menyatakan masalah tanggungjawab dua jabatan yang berbeza tetapi tiada penyelarasan kerja selepas promosi. Bagi tahun 2022, proses penawaran dan kemasukan terganggu kerana gangguan sistem mengakibatkan telefon pejabat tidak berfungsi dan sistem tidak boleh akses. Ini telah memberi kesan yang sangat besar kepada gerak kerja di PPA.

Hasil daripada kajian ini, dicadangkan supaya UniSHAMS mempunyai garis panduan yang terperinci yang bertulis dan didokumentasikan. Ini adalah bertujuan untuk mengurangkan salah faham dan kegagalan mengikut garis panduan yang telah ditetapkan. Isu permohonan secara manual, dicadangkan proses permohonan juga dilakukan secara dalam talian bagi mengelakkan keciciran borang permohonan. Ini selari dengan kajian dijalankan oleh Abdul Razak et al. (2021) yang mendapati USIM seharusnya memikirkan untuk memudahkan proses permohonan bagi menarik minat pelajar dan disebabkan Covid-19, proses permohonan secara atas talian sangat relevan. Bagi meningkatkan jumlah pelajar antarabangsa, pihak BPJIK juga harus mengatur beberapa strategi dan medium promosi yang bersesuaian bagi menarik minat pelajar dari luar negara Malaysia menyambung pengajian di UniSHAMS. Kekuatan UniSHAMS yang mempunyai ramai pensyarah antarabangsa terutamanya dari Timur Tengah boleh menjadi daya penarik pelajar-pelajar selain dari negara Indonesia dan Thailand. Dicadangkan juga Jawatankuasa Induk Promosi diaktifkan semula sebagai platform perbincangan dan penyelarasan aktiviti promosi untuk meningkatkan bilangan pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa untuk menyambung pengajian di UniSHAMS.

PENGHARGAAN

Kajian ini mendapat pendanaan penuh dari Pusat Pengurusan Penyelidikan, Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah melalui Geran Penyelidikan Universiti (GPUi).

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Internationalization of Higher Education at the Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT

Globalization requires internationalisation. Higher education must embrace the internationalisation agenda by implementing innovative, strategic programmes and approaches. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) is one of Indonesia's top universities, and it has a long-term plan for internationalisation. Technically, international programmes such as International Program for Islamic Economics and Finance (IPIEF) execute the internationalisation process. In line with internationalisation, IPIEF refers to the department of economics' vision and mission to become a reputable international programme (2015-2020) and research excellence university (2020-2025). IPIEF's programmes indicate serious efforts and commitments based on integrating Islamic and conventional values in its curriculum. Integration aims to show that internationalisation isn't just about pragmatics, but also about values. International instruments are divided into five pillars and buffered by activities within each pillar. IPIEF proposes a masterplan as a raw model with standardised input, process, and output business models, vision, and mission. Internationalization agenda is expected to showcase university agenda as part of international community and promote community impacts.

Keywords: Internationalization; Economics Department; IPIEF UMY; Yogyakarta; Indonesia

1. INTRODUCTION

Many universities around the world are prioritising internationalisation. Some analyses show the main forces driving higher education's internationalisation. Inevitably, globalisation is believed as a driving force. Global dimension increases in a networked environment where higher education is accessible to all. Higher education can no longer avoid global effects. Cantu (2013) notes a distinction between globalisation and internationalisation in higher education. The former is a social and economic progress, while the latter are higher education institutions' globalisation responses. Internationalization was a dynamic response to diversity and multiculturalism to create global competencies.

There are unresolved issues about internationalisation in higher education. Jones and Killick (2013) suggest value-based and pragmatic internationalisation rationales. According to them, social responsibility, ethics, and justice are linked with social problems like poverty

or social injustices. The latter emphasises the skills and qualities students need for a globalised world. According to the issues, it's interesting to see the top 10 universities ranked by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS)¹. These Top 10 universities agree to actively design policies, plans, programmes, strategies, and approaches at various levels of decision making to promote internationalisation in higher education by subject (economics and econometrics). Internationalization requires active policymaking, not drift. In details, the practises of internationalisation at these 10 Top universities as follows:

Table 1: Approach to Internationalization

Rank	University	Approach to Internationalization
1	Harvard University (USA)	Promoting socially-beneficial programmes through regional partnerships, such as affordable housing, health, and education.
2	Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)	The university focuses on three important agendas: (1) advancing the frontiers of knowledge in science, technology, and other fields; (2) solving the world's most challenging problems; and (3) educating future leaders with values that will better humanity.
3	Stanford University (USA)	Center for Global Business and the Economy exposes students and faculty to global leaders by developing a perspective on the country's business, political, and social climates as well as business opportunities and challenges.
4	University of Chicago (USA)	Attracting talented students and staff who contribute to strategic collaboration with global impact..
5	University of California, Berkeley (USA)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring together staff and faculty with international education interests to share Berkeley's international activities. 2. Connect UC Berkeley's international stakeholders to strengthen cross-unit collaboration and share best practises, innovations, and challenges. 3. Provide a space for all staff levels (from entry level to senior administration) to connect around Berkeley's international programmes and topics of interest.
6	London School of Economics and Political Science (UK)	LSE is a centre of academic excellence and innovation in the social sciences. LSE is the top UK university for 'world-leading' research, according to the latest rankings. LSE ranks second in the UK for research outputs, impact, and environment. 58% of LSE's research was world-leading and 35% was excellent
7	Princeton University (USA)	Internationalization is integral to Princeton's research, teaching and learning. The University's grassroots approach fosters international collaborations and research. Traveling is the best way to understand and contribute to our globalised world.
8	University of Oxford (UK)	Deeper engagement with key countries/regions, international collaborations, international educational experiences for all students, and international student recruitment and funding. It seeks high-quality students and has no international student quota.
9	Yale University (USA)	Yale University hopes its undergraduates will develop a spirit of inquiry and a lifelong passion for learning. Initially, undergraduate study is characterised by diversity of subject matter and approach,

¹ The rank is arranged according to six metrics: (1) academic reputation (40%), (2) employer reputation (10%), (3) faculty/student ratio (20%), (4) citations per faculty (20%), (5) international faculty ratio (5%), and (6) international student ratio (5%).

Rank	University	Approach to Internationalization
		and later by concentration in one of the major programmes or departments.
10	University of Cambridge (UK)	Learning and teaching are emphasised. The strategies are (1) a conducive educational environment (facilities), (2) attracting and supporting outstanding students from the UK and abroad, (3) research-active staff, (4) career- and life-relevant knowledge and skill development, and (5) producing future leaders.

USA = United States of America; UK = United Kingdom

Source: QS World Ranking based Subject Economics and Econometrics (2022)

According to Table 1, internationalisation approaches are primarily value-based. Top 10 universities collaborate to share impacts, not just meet internationalisation targets. Table 1 shows that most top 10 universities are in the US. Cantu (2013) reveals three internationalisation strategies: (1) promoting study abroad programmes, such as student outbound programmes and impact-based intership programmes on global engagement; (2) international students, such as recruiting the best quality students through reduced fees or scholarship; and (3) internationalising the faculty by internationalising curriculum to fit global demand. Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta has been trying to engage actively with internationalisation by sending students, lecturers, and alumni abroad and organising collaborative programmes such as joint research, joint conferences, and visiting fellows.

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY) has a history of educational excellence and research and a dynamic programme of international collaboration. UMY's internationalisation agenda is based on "Catur Dharma" (Teaching, Research, Community Services, and Islamic Character Building). According to figure 1 on the Road Map for Strategic Development 2015-2040, UMY has been working hard to become a reputable international university in the first term (2015-2020). In the second phase, UMY aims to become an ASEAN research powerhouse. The university has strategic goals, indicators, targets, and programmes to become a reputable international university. UMY aims to be ranked QS, ASEAN University Network-Quality Assurance (AUN-QA), international standardised curriculum, and broadened international collaboration, including building International Program Enabler Institution (IP).



Figure 1: Road Map for Strategic Development 2015 - 2040

The IP is created at the department level and swings to promote faculty and university internalisation. UMY's 8 IPs are coordinated by the Vice Rector of Internationalization and Cooperation. International Program for Islamic Economics and Finance is a mature IP (IPIEF). IPIEF is the Department of Economics' international swing. It was founded in 2009 with Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya, Indonesia's Department of Islamic Economics. So, the IPIEF is selected as a case study to describe UMY's internationalisation programme by referring to five interrelated reasons, as follows:

First, IPIEF is recruiting more excellent and diverse students. According to Figure 2, IPIEF has 214 active students and more than 100 alumni in Indonesia and abroad. IPIEF also has full-time international students from Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Yaman, Bangladesh, and Gambia.

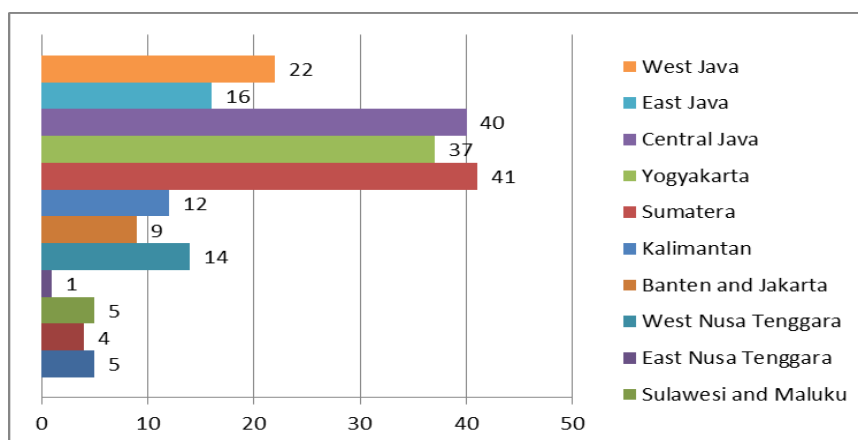


Figure 2: The Number of IPIEF's Students based on Regions

Source: Admission Bureau UMY (2019)

IPIEF has adopted local and global knowledge in the curriculum² to increase partners and joint research, teaching, and enterprise activities. IPIEF's curriculum combines modern and Islamic knowledge. The 146 credit-hour curriculum includes integration, Islamization, and internationalisation. Courses cover the three spirits' substance and mythology.

Third, IPIEF works to expand faculty and university partnerships. IPIEF has facilitated MoU and MoA signings with strategic foreign and domestic institutions in the last two years.

IPIEF has enough international-competent staff. IPIEF has 18 lecturers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Australia, Switzerland, the UK, and Saudi Arabia.

Fifth, IPIEF has expanded the internationalisation agenda coordinated by International Relations and Cooperation UMY. Students mobility programme (inbound and outbound), joint research, joint conference, international summer school, and visiting fellow are collaboration agendas.

Having discussed the brief implications of globalisation in higher education and UMY's response to internationalisation, there is still a lack of information and study on what constitutes a good "global higher education institution" in terms of fortifying students' skills (pragmatic approach) or the spirit of academic impacts for a sustainable future (value-based approach).

Using IPIEF as a case study, this paper proposes balancing pragmatic and value-based approaches. The paper contributes conceptually to national impact factor as internationalisation. Internationalizing higher education doesn't harm Islamic values of bettering humanity.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Globalization prompted internationalisation. It implies free people, free information, and a free market. How can higher education institutions remain academic powerhouses for future generations? Some argue that universities should provide equal quality access. This chapter discusses internationalisation, integration through internationalisation, measuring internationalisation, and internalisation design.

² The curriculum adopts the curriculum in Department of economics.

Defining Internationalization

Internationalization is a university's interaction with national policy, per Cerna (2014). Table 2 shows interesting state-university internationalisation conditions. The university needs strategy, financial and human resources, and commitment. The state is asked to support immigration, universities, and internationalisation. Both elements must be in place simultaneously to boost internationalisation. In today's dynamic global environment, this ideal combination is rare. Mismatch or clash conditions sometimes occur, requiring university resilience in responding to such dynamic situations as state-provided facilities are considered exogenous (Horta, 2009). Internationalization depends on each university's strategies and goals (Crăciun, 2018).

Table 2. Interaction between national policies and university strategies towards international students

University State	Facilitates Internationalization Clear strategy, sufficient resources, and autonomy)	Hinders Internationalization No Adequate funding, no clear strategy, lack capacity, and limited autonomy)
Facilitate Internationalization (Favourable immigration policies, funding for universities, clear internationalization policy)	Positive Synergy	Mismatch/Clash
Hinders Internationalization (Restrictive immigration policies, insufficient funding, no clear international policy)	Mismatch/Clash	Negative Strategy

Source: Henard, Diamond, and Roseveare (2012), in Cerna (2014)

According to the UK's Higher Education Academy, internationalisation prepares graduates to live in and contribute to a globally connected society. Cantu (2013) defines internationalisation as a response to globalisation that promotes study abroad programmes, international student recruitment, and faculty internationalisation. According to the definition, internationalisation is a response to globalisation that connects higher education institutions to global society, culture, economy, and labour markets.

Integration Process Through Internationalization

Internationalization promotes globalisation in higher education and ensures smooth integration of culture, heritage, and identity. Promoting international students and staff in

diverse communities and classes is essential to internationalisation. Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017) create several spheres related to internationalisation results' integration.

Social Integration refers to student and staff interaction and social cohesion, which can influence academic performance. Some students do inbound or outbound programmes. Gradually, they will join new communities with different backgrounds and be forced to adopt new traditions. If they can adapt to a new environment, they enjoyed the process and formed a new habit, which affects their academic performance.

Academic Integration refers to cohesion of students and staff from diverse backgrounds in classrooms and courses, which equips graduates with global skills. Figure 3 shows a remarkable scenario for technically executing integration by combining cooperation-competition and international-national nexus. European experience shows that cooperation promotes internationalisation, academic exchange, and intercultural learning. European higher education realised that education is a public good that should be transparent and updated. By focusing on mutual benefits and positive impacts, cooperation and competition don't conflict. Higher education realises that national interests must be preserved, globalised, and ultimately serve humanity. A set of regulations promoting internationalisation should be guided by a strategic vision-derived into strategic actions-to balance global competitiveness and national priorities and interests.

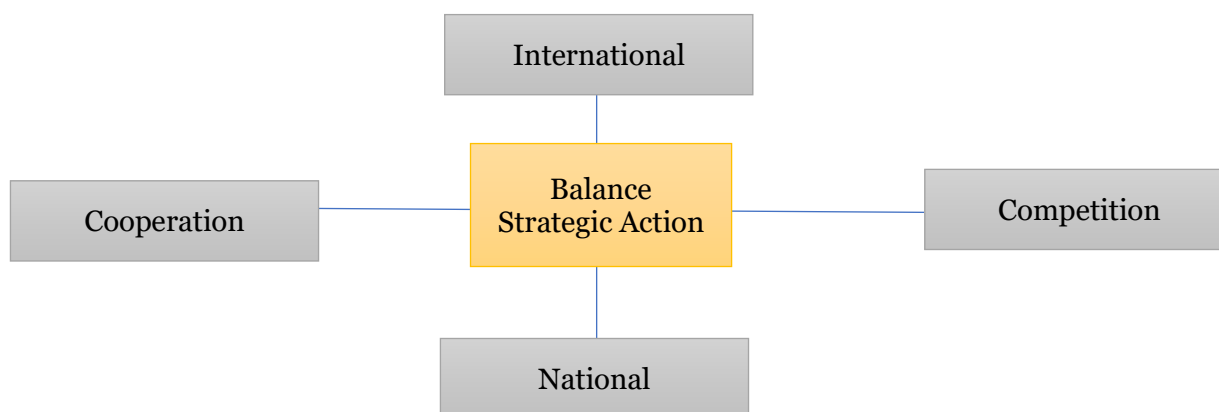


Figure 3: Strategic Options for Enhancing Global Competitiveness

Source: Wende (2015)

Measuring Internationalization

Internationalization measures are released. Some European universities set indicators to assess their level, such as student and staff participation in internationalisation. Spencer-

Oatey and Dauber (2017) set some measure indicators to support the goal of preparing students for life and work in an intercultural and globalising world.

1. How many active students study abroad each year?
2. Has the unit defined internationalisation strategy?
3. What percentage of the unit's international students are exchange or mobility students in a given year?
4. How many semester courses are taught in English?
5. What percentage of the unit's academic staff takes an English course and passes the English Proficiency test in a given year?
6. Are all supported facilities available to international students?
7. Student outbound – What percentage of the unit's students participate in outbound programmes?
8. What percentage of the unit's academic staff are foreign visiting fellows?
9. Does the unit provide an international student mentor or "buddy"?
10. What percentage of the university's degree or postgraduate programmes are international/joint/double/multiple degree programmes?

Benchmarking organisations that rank universities' internationalisation is another way to measure the internationalisation agenda. Most parameters are international student and staff composition, as well as international movement and research. Table 3 shows Times Higher Education, QS University Ranking, and U-Multirank parameters. These organisations agree that internationalisation is measured by the proportion of involved students and staff to the total in a given year. Students and staff mobility programmes are used to measure a college's internationalisation.

Table 3: Parameter for Internationalization

Parameters	Organization		
	THE	QS	U-Multirank
Composition International Students			
Composition international staff			
Composition international diversity			
Inbound and Outbound Student mobility			
International student support (religious facilities)			
International Joint Publications			

Source: Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017)

Design of Impacting Internationalization

Higher education should have societal impact (Gann, et al. 2016). Higher education should build its international trajectory to move towards a reputable international university or programme. According to Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017), a reputable international university needs a trajectory of internationalisation. Pre-Internationalization begins with a culturally homogeneous campus. As higher education becomes more diverse, it internationalises structurally. Once part of the international community, higher education becomes internationalised. Given an active and dynamic international interaction, such as exploring students' and staffs' internationalisation experiences, the competency is internationalised. The stages of internationalisation require a solid commitment that connects integrated communities and global education, as shown in figure 4.

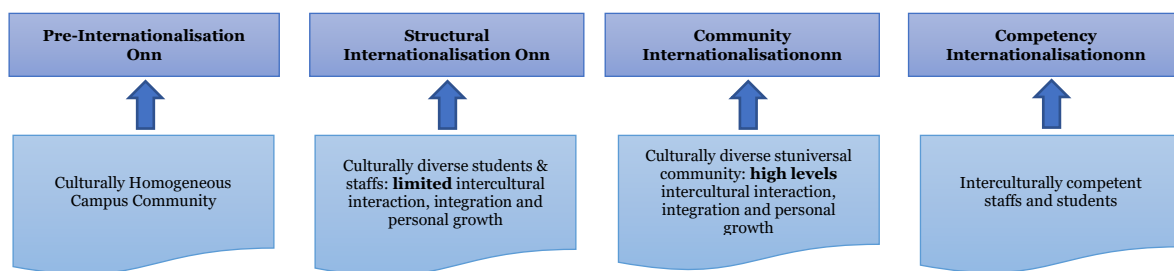


Figure 4: Development Stages of Internationalization

Source: Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017)

Higher education must develop an impact system after elaborating subsequent steps. Figure 5 shows Spencer-Oatey and Dauber's (2017) innovation model, which includes research and experiential education across the private, public, third, and broader community.

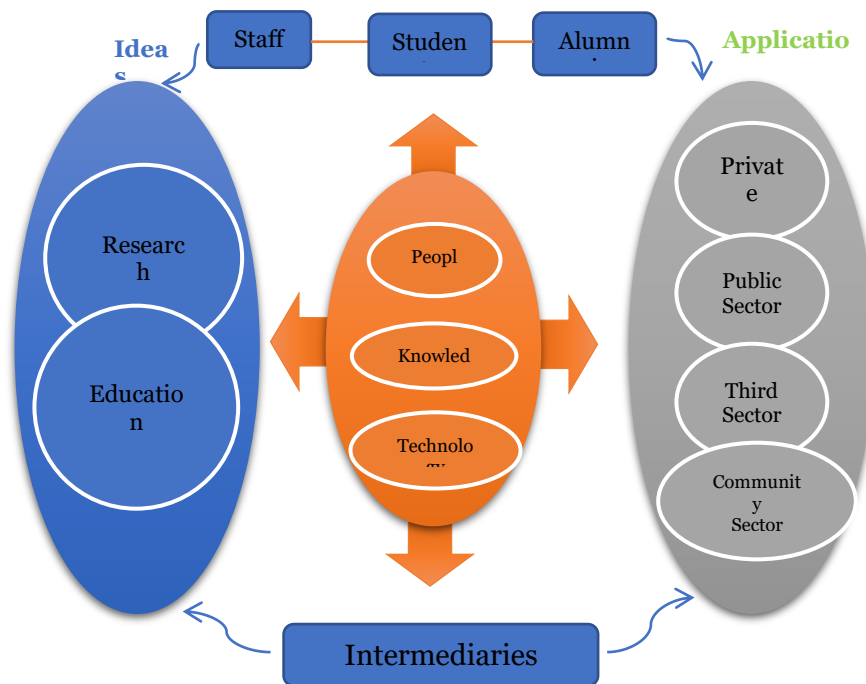


Figure 5: Societas Impact System

Source: Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017)

The model requires dynamic people, knowledge, and technology flows. Figure 6 shows that the model requires internationalization-savvy students and staff. Knowledge is gained through joint research, international conferences, and visiting fellows. Talented students and staff combined with effective research and publication lead to technological advancement and commercialization.

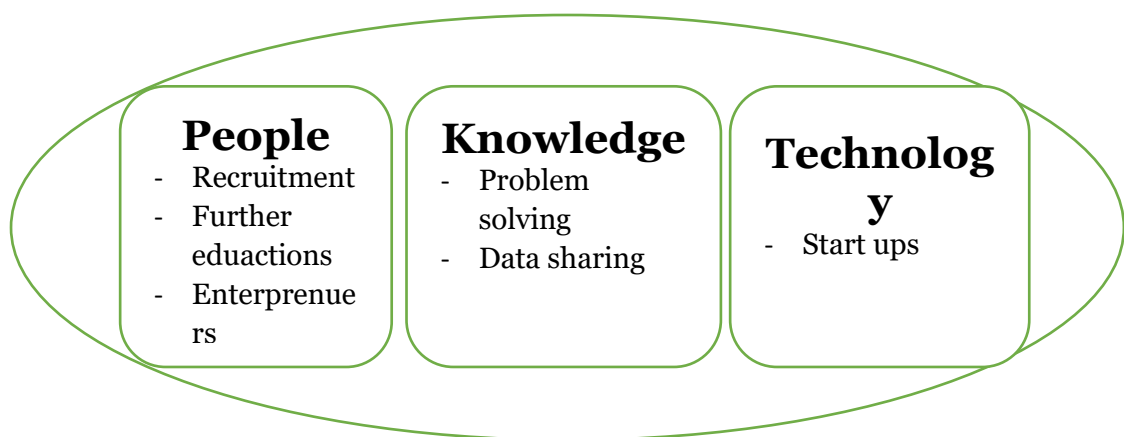


Figure 6: Pathways to Societal Impact

Source: Spencer-Oatey and Dauber (2017)

Once the model is set up and running, the internationalisation mechanism is designed. The flows ensure internationalisation stages are achieved through colliding productivity growth, as shown in figure 7. Flows include:

1. Convene – Promoting lecture mobility. Conferences and student mobility exchange ideas (research, education) and their applications (related parties).
2. Commercialize – Research and education are ways to transfer technology to society. Every research and education will produce results that can be connected through internationalisation.
3. Challenge – Research projects should discover and solve global problems with all parties involved (private, public, third, and community sectors).
4. Long-term collaboration between universities and external partners. The partnership would create mutual benefits, with one party's results strengthening knowledge and the other sharing community impacts.

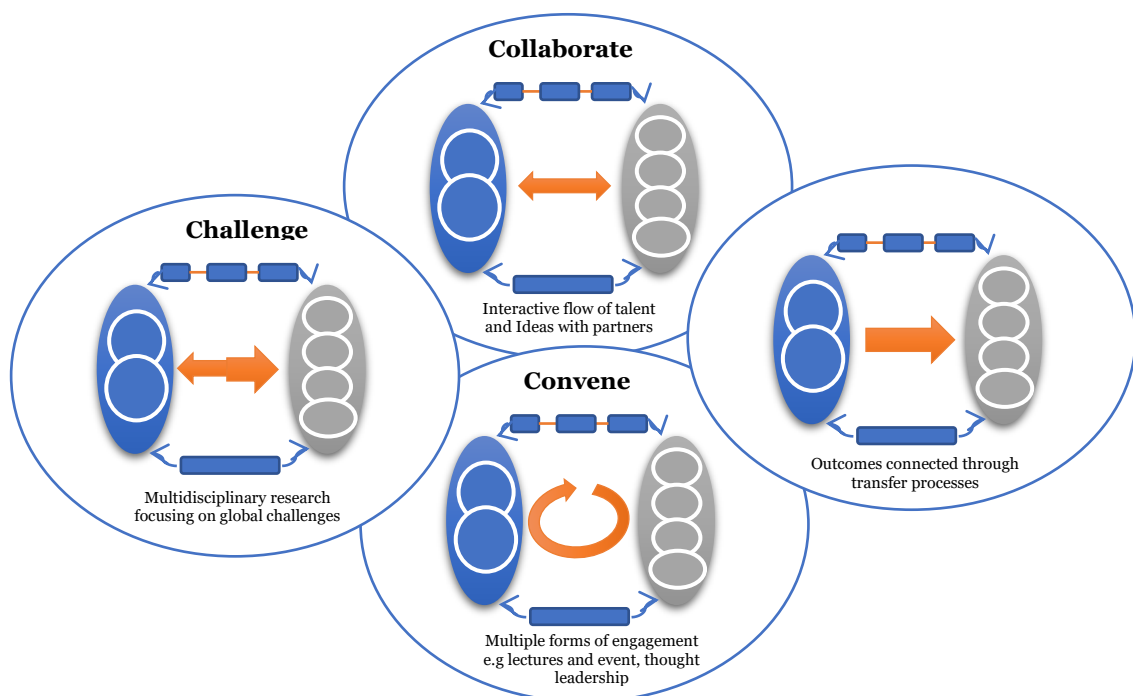


Figure 7: Mechanism for Societal Impact

Source: Gann et., al (2016)

Strategy for Intensifying Internationalization Agenda

Institutions interested in internationalisation can learn from diverse motivations, experiences, and challenges. Internationalization goals will affect teaching, learning, research, community life, and administrative goals, as well as infrastructure and capabilities. Many institutions seek to realise a vision.

Maddox (2016) proposed international agenda strategies. He suggests organising the summer session programme for domestic and international students. This programme is used because it can build global partnerships and long-standing faculty relationships. Building international strategy for external partnerships must use a common framework to ensure alignment, common goals, and experimental elements. The partnership's approach must be mutualist to enable teaching, learning, research, and intercultural readiness in a globally connected environment.

Lilley et al. (2016) argued that universities must equip students with ethical and critical cognitive skills to become ideal global citizens. A global citizen has a global mindset that leads to ethical behaviour. Woldegiyorgis, et al. (2018) explained that the approach to student and staff mobility differs, with international student mobility being a management-driven strategy led by the institution without significant faculty input except in the classroom. This makes student mobility competitive. Staff mobility is a cooperative and collaborative activity since it is driven by individual faculty with similar research interests.

Duong and Chua (2016) looked at the strategy more technically, requiring institutions to teach in English. The use of English as a medium of instruction can support teachers' professional growth. Switching to English would be an important part of the international curriculum for international recognition or accreditation and would improve teaching and learning for lecturers and students.

Gao (2014) suggested strategies for policymakers to build internationalisation spirit. According to Gao (2014), the pursuit of academic excellence drives universities' international agendas. Policymakers must create a conducive environment in research and teaching by (1) recruiting research-capable candidates from overseas, (2) integrating the international dimension into the curriculum, and (3) recruiting international students by reducing or subsidising university scholarships. Table 4 shows key dimensions and components of internationalisation, including students, staff, policymakers, and culture.

Table 4: Key Dimension for Internationalization Strategy

Dimension	Component
1. Student	Internationalized Student body
	Internationalized student experience
2. Faculty	International profile of faculty
	International experience of faculty
3. Research	International joint research projects
	International research income
	International research achievement
4. Curriculum	Globally accredited degree program
	International joint degree program
	International program/program offered in foreign languages
5. Governance	International presence in leadership
	Resources invested on International activities
	International service system
6. Engagement	Engaging international alumni
	International networks and partnership
7. Culture	A multicultural campus
	Integration of international and domestic students/staff

Source: Gao (2014)

3. INTERNATIONALIZATION AT INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FOR ISLAMIC ECONOMICS AND FINANCE

Brief History

Dr. Mashyudi Muqorrobin started the International Program for Islamic Economics and Finance (IPIEF) in 2009 with Universitas Airlangga, Surabaya. IPIEF is part of Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta's Economics Department. IPIEF is Indonesia's first Islamic economics and finance programme. It's a 3–4-year full-time programme. It provides a great framework for Islamic economics, banking, and finance. The curriculum's emphasis on research gives students an edge in academia, the private market, or the public sector. It combines economics, banking, and finance with Islamic knowledge to meet real-world career goals. Its partners are top universities where students can participate in exchange and mobility programmes. IPIEF graduates structure the learning environment. IPIEF graduates should be able to generate and apply knowledge, engage in the community, and lead productive lives.

Vision, and Mission

1. IPIEF's vision comes from the university and department. IPIEF envisions a reputable economics, banking, and finance programme in ASEAN. IPIEF has four missions to achieve its vision.
2. Fostering national and international cooperation to enhance Islamic Economics and finance (Internationalization)
3. Providing an academic and Islamic education to create well-behaved, globally competitive Islamic Economics scholars (akhlaq al-karimah) (Academic Excellence)
4. Islamic Economics and finance research and development for the ummah (Research Core Based)
5. Dedication and empowerment to impact society (Empowering People)

Programs for Internationalization

IPIEF has five strategic pillars: academic, internationalisation and partnership, student and Al Islam Kemuhammadiyahhan (AIK), human resources and alumni, and finance.

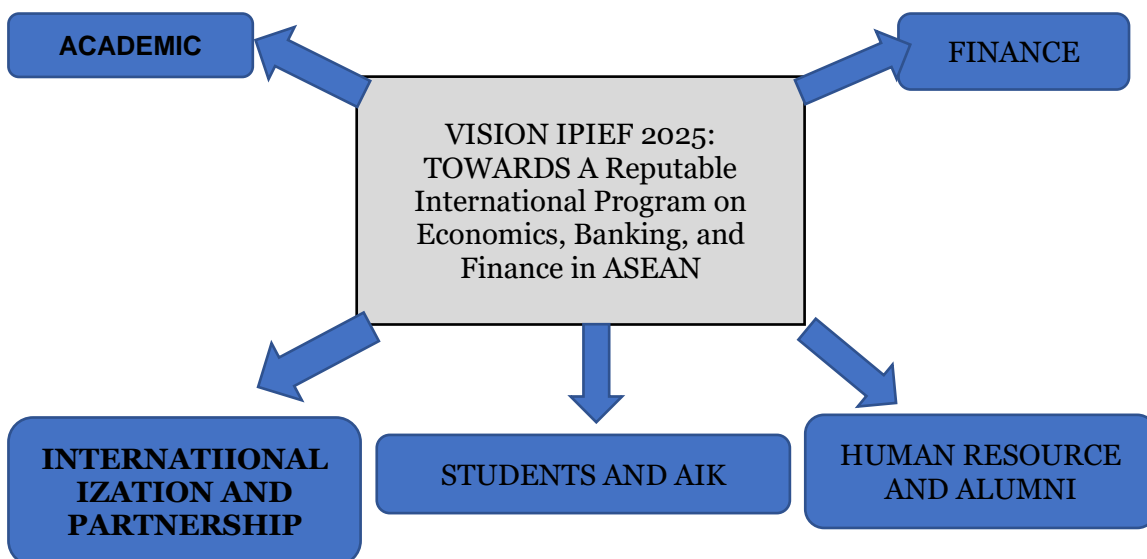


Figure 8: Strategic Pillars of IPIEF

Source: Author

According to its vision and mission, IPIEF tries to integrate value-based and pragmatic approaches to internationalisation by developing SWOT analyses and proper strategies (table 5).

Table 5. Swot Analysis and Strategy

		<i>Internal Factors and Strategies</i>		
		<i>Strengths</i>	<i>Weaknesses</i>	
		<p>1. The Department of Economics has planned ASEAN's internationalisation until 2025. The lecturers, who hold PhDs from prestigious domestic and international universities, support this vision.</p> <p>2. The Indonesian Ministry of Higher Education has rated the Economics Department "A" (Excellence) until 2026.</p>	<p>1. Lecturers' lack of international publication in reputable journals, including citations.</p> <p>2. Few international collaborations, especially with top universities for research and publication.</p>	
<i>External Factors and Strategies</i>	<i>Opportunities</i>	<p>1. Top leaders and university management's support for internationalisation</p> <p>2. Ministry of Higher Education Indonesia recognises UMY as a top university.</p>	<p>Internal Strategies:</p> <p>a. Intersecting the research camp with experts on publishing in indexed journals.</p> <p>b. Increasing collaboration with top 500 universities.</p>	<p>c. Full scholarships for full-time international students.</p> <p>d. Promoting transfer credit international programmes, such as summer courses</p> <p>e. Promoting internal and partner university team teaching can lead to joint research and publication.</p>
	<i>Threats</i>	<p>1. The world's universities' competitiveness. Virtual learning platforms could reduce academic institutions' offline learning activities.</p> <p>2. Higher-qualified university graduates in the labour market threaten graduates who lack job-market skills.</p>	<p>External Strategies:</p> <p>a. Students with national or international certifications.</p> <p>b. Equipping students with intensive Foreign English programme, example English and Arabic and ensuring their language proficiency measured by TOEFL (English) and TOAFL (Arabic)</p>	<p>c. Internationalize the curriculum.</p> <p>d. Promoting university-industry link-and-match programmes, such as structured internships.</p> <p>e. Promoting dual or joint degree programmes with partners.</p>

Source: Author

The pillars are then specifically elaborated into various programs as shown in Table 5, as follows:

Table 6: IPIEF Program 2017-2025

ACADEMIC PILLAR			
Strategy	Main Strategy	Indicator	Work Plan
Academic excellence through research and society empowerment based on local wisdom	Curriculum development leads to competitive competence by referring to international learning standard	Availability of standardized international course outline	Workshop on curriculum standarization and course outline development
	Research development which can strengthen the multidimensional research dicipline	Roadmap on research development	1. Workshop on roadmap development 2. Managing International Journal of Islamic Economics and Finance (IJIEF)
	Development of the unigness in study program to promote international academic reputation.	Promoting research commercialization	Copy right and patent
Human Resource and Alumni Pillar			
Strategy	Main Strategy	Indicator	Work Plan
Human Resource development who has work hard spirit and integrity for implementing catur darma.	Capacity building for implementing catur darma based on Islam and professionalism with the technological support.	Complete Databases on all things related to study program	Official website development
	Rewards based on work performance	Complying with indicator of achievement strategies set by university	Achieving the performance indicators set by university once a year
	Promoting the tracing graduates career by comparing between graduate competence and job sector.	Minimal 50% of graduates are working linier with their competence obtained from study program	Regular focus group discussion with graduates and job providers Regular tracer alumbi survey among graduates

Finance Pillar			
Strategy	Main Strategy	Indicator	Work Plan
A transparent and accountable financial management	Completing financial management report with the principles of transparent, professional, and accountable.	Matching financial reporting with program	Regular monitoring and evaluation on financial reporting twice a year by finance board officer
Students and AIK Pillar			
Strategy	Main Strategy	Indicator	Work Plan
Promoting a high qualified student with integrity and morality for nation development.	Upgrading admission system which enables to receive a high quality new student, either from domestic or foreign source.	The fulfillment of stipulated quota of new admission students into IPIEF	Targetted and intensive promotion into Islamic boarding schools Strengthening institutional branding through intensively uploading international exposure achievement into IPIEF's social medias
	Developing students' achievement which have global and islamic paradigm.	Students are able to reach Commulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) by minimum 3,50 and english score (TOEFL) minimum 500.	Intensive English program during the study program (3 years english program) Intensive academic motivational program through intellectual discussion and coaching program.
	Internalize Al Islam and Muhammadiyah Values into academic curriculum and learning program	Students are able to pass the Muhammadiyah course which is put into the curriculum	Providing related book of Muhammadiyah movement and history
Cooperation and Internationalization Pillar			
Strategy	Main Strategy	Indicator	Work Plan
Promoting IPIEF as a reputable international program in ASEAN	Developing and extending international network and collaborations with various parties for the	Number of foreign languages capability Graduates with English Proficiency higher than 525	Organizing International conference once in every two years

	attainment of the reputable international program	Numbers of International member association among lecturers Percentage of full time foreign students against total students Percentage of foreign lecturers against total lecturers Percentage of outbound and inbound students against total students The degree of foreign languages practiced in learning process	Organizing international summer course program once a year Promoting transfer credit program to universities' partner Conducting team teaching with foreign lecturers
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Source: Author

Steps Forward

According to previous discussion, IPIEF is trying to become a reputable international programme by following a university-set roadmap. To strengthen its position and run smoothly towards global competence, IPIEF proposes the materplan, which emphasises standardising input, process, and output. Standardized flows would have quality and globalised societal impacts. Figure 9 suggests prioritising:

1. Standardizing admission and promotion increases student enrollment. This is to recruit talented and qualified students for internationalisation.
2. Standardizing catur dharma academic process (teaching, research, social emporement, and inculcating Islamic values). This requires talented, committed national or international staff.
3. Alumni and Cooperation is based on sharing in a globalised world.

By promoting these three items, university internationalisation will be smooth and always align with the university's map, which is excellence and Islamic.

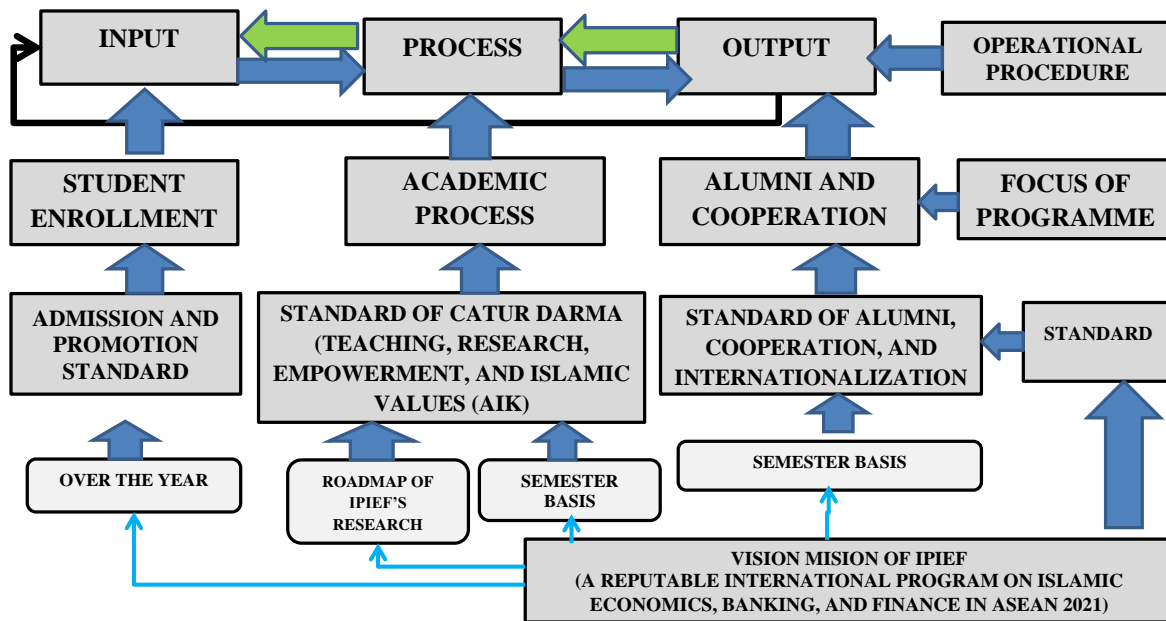


Figure 9: A Masterplan for Internationalization

Source: Author

4. CONCLUSION

Globalization forces internationalisation. Higher education institutions must set strategies and policies that promote sharing and leaving impacts. As a committed university to internationalisation, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is working to become an Internationally Reputable University by 2020. This spirit must be supported by all units, including the Department of Economics' International Program for Islamic Economics and Finance (IPIEF). IPIEF practises align with the university's vision. IPIEF has transformed itself by dividing its programme into 5 pillars: academic, internationalisation and partnership, human resources and alumni, finance, and student and AIK. IPIEF sets goals and monitors them annually in accordance with the internationalisation agenda. IPIEF proposes a masterplan for university internationalisation. The masterplan standardises input, process, and output, which flow under a stated vision and mission. Internationalization is a must, so the university actively promotes IPIEF. IPIEF is committed to building a reputable international programme on economics, banking, and finance in ASEAN by 2025 by focusing on impact and values.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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Enriching the Experience of International Mobility Students through Joint Strategies and Efforts: Feedback from International Students and the Success of Share Coil Course at Universiti Malaysia Sabah

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 pandemic and its afterward endemic phase has caused a huge change on the educational institutions, yet provided new opportunities for universities gaining new breed of online generation, and enabling universities to be more diversified and potentially to extend for hybrid teaching and learning. International mobility programme has always been a good input and resource for universities, and the experience by students completed their course have extensive influence to the junior at their respective institution, in becoming new batches of international mobility students. This paper will discuss on two different perspectives of international mobility students based on the conventional programme right before the pandemic, discussion on the feedback and several cases being mentioned, as well as the new SHARE COIL course that getting more popular amongst 32 partner universities listed under COIL. Results on the impact of SHARE COIL course enriching students experience are also being reported in this paper. The paper here provides an insight that would always be meaningful to the international mobility students came from different countries within the past many years. It is concluded that the success of international mobility programme could be much impacted by the facilitation process exercised by the international relations office of each respective universities, and requires joint effort for a great internal ecosystem. Added-value could be well obtained when there is mutual understanding and commitment between management to provide full support, international relations office to facilitate, and faculty to execute. Coordinators for mobility students and education exhibitions would indirectly impact the success of the programme as well.

Keywords: International mobility, Internationalization, Strategies, Cooperation, and Enriching Experience

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization is a process of interaction and integration of people, companies and governments of different countries and regions, that was initially thought would be based on solely or exclusively commercial has effects on the environment, culture, political systems, development, and economic prosperity as well as the welfare of human beings around the world. Internationalization of education sector refers to a comprehensive institutional transformation process that aims to integrate international and intercultural dimension in the mission and substantive functions of higher education institutions [Codina, Nicolás, Lopez, and Hernan, 2013]. Globalization described by Codina et al. as the result of the internationalization of the economy first, through the formation of economic blocs and the establishment of new business relationships, which with the use of information technologies, and internationalization refers to integrate the international dimension in education, and as a response to the challenges and needs that globalization brings. All of these are achievable through academic programs such as student exchange: study of foreign language, mobility of academic and administrative staff, short-term and long-term mobility of students. The internationalization of higher education considers the academics and students are most visible and important not only as recipient of knowledge but also producers of it [Codina et al., 2013; Corral, 2003], and in regards of the mobility of students, the terms evoke the idea of migration of students to another country to obtain a degree or training in a specific discipline [Codina et al, 2013].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND ENDEMIC PHASE IN MALAYSIA

Malaysians have responded well as the COVID-19 crisis enters its second year. The progress of vaccination was impressive with the result of 95 percent of adults in Malaysian have been fully vaccinated even by the early November in 2021. [Ahmad, Purnamasari and Hambali, 2022]. Survey conducted by World Bank shown that employment had gradually improved, following the reopening of the economy and the relaxation of movement restrictions in August 2021. COVID-19 has made huge changes in the execution education system in the country. School teachers are dealing with issues and challenges in the medium and teaching methods used at school level as well as other educational institutions [Haron, Aneeis, Che Noh and Anuar, Ishak and Ismail,

2022]. Haron et al. highlighted the application of Adaptive Leadership model in managing educational institutions especially during and post pandemic with the four main principles of it:

- i. Emotional intelligence – The ability to recognize own feelings and others, that can build trust with others and foster quality relationships.
- ii. Organizational justice – Fostering the culture of honesty and knowing the best policies to introduce for the good of the organization, for people to embrace whilst having the quality to accommodate people’s views, for it to be valued and respected.
- iii. Development – A leadership quality entails learning new things, and discover new strategies that work, with both employees and the company to experience growth and development.
- iv. Character – Having a deep sense of character, being transparent and creative.

Haron et. al. pointed out that there are few key principles for educational leaders to consider: Develop open thinking; Develop the situation through action; Focus on the team, not the individual; Design an improvement process; and Foster safe emotions. In April 2009, a detailed Guideline [MyGaris Panduan] was prepared by the *Majlis Keselamatan Negara* and Ministry of Health Malaysia [MOH] with the full cooperation from the ministries and agencies outlined the strategies to reopening safely education and care facilities. In the Guideline, there are four key factors to consider in making safer choices: Location; Proximity; Duration; and Masking.

Table 1: 1 4 Key Factors to Consider in Making Safer Choices

Factors	Higher Risk	Lower Risk
Location	Poorly ventilated enclosed spaces	Well ventilated open areas
Proximity	No physical distancing or crowded	With physical distancing
Duration	Prolonged duration	Short duration
Masking	Mask-off	Mask-on

Source: MYGARIS PANDUAN

Based on the guideline, the reopening of the education and care sector must be prioritised for the continued learning and social development of children students, trainees and residents alike, and management must be empowered to assess the risks and implement appropriate actions to maintain a conducive and safe environment.

Recently, Kaur (2022) mentioned that the COVID-19 pandemic has become synonymous with international mobility restrictions, with hiring freeze o international scholars and prominent countries like United States, Canada, Australia, Britain, China, Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia

witnessed a sharp decline in enrolments and stalled the internationalization agenda. According to Kaur, Malaysian Education Ministry along with academics, staff and students responded in extraordinary ways including the digitalization of teaching and learning, curricula were digitized, web tools were employed, video conferencing platforms were brought in, as much as the academics, students and staff were train. Malaysia has implemented a smooth transition from physical to virtual classrooms, that was attributed to pre-existing massive open online courses and blended learning policies based on the Malaysia Education Blueprint 2015-2025. Further explained by Kaur, the digitalization of curricula and forced professional development facilitated innovate ways of remote student engagement. Malaysia has a larger community of tech-savvy individuals who are open to strategic partnerships with foreign institutions to run joint programme remotely and offer flexible programmes for international students. This year, Malaysia's internet penetration rate stands at 89.6%, being one of the highest in Southeast Asia. To continue with the initiative and exercise of digitization, the Education Ministry has allocated RM64.8 billion to cope with the pandemic.

Student Mobility Programmes at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

At recent years, there were several active mobility programmes that have taken place hoping students would still be able to gain the mobility activities for intercultural learning either virtually during the pandemic or physically during this endemic time. The several programmes for mobility funded by various parties are ERASMUS, AIMS, and SHARE.

Erasmus

Mobility has evolved and taken new forms in the world with a large number of programs such as ERASMUS, which promote mobility in Latin America (Codina et al, 2013); to the current Erasmus+ which is an EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe, with an estimated budget of €26.2 billion, nearly double the funding compared to its predecessor programme from 2014 – 2020 (Erasmus+). Erasmus+ 2021-2027 programme focuses on social inclusion, green and digital transitions and promoting young people's participation in democratic life.

The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS)

Another initiative on students mobility which is The Asian International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme, a SEAMEO RIHED's flagship regional initiative that has supported 5,000 mobility of students and enhance cooperation in higher education among countries in Asia. AIMS was launched in 2010, as a pilot project with the participation of Malaysia, Indonesia, and Thailand, currently expended to include 9 Member Countries and 78 participating universities, offering undergraduate students a semester-long exchange in one of 10 discipline (SEAMEO).

European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE)

More recent, a people-centred ASEAN community programme (SHARE) was officially launched in 2015. SHARE is a programme by EU and ASEAN to strengthen regional cooperation and enhance the quality, regional competitiveness and internationalization of ASEAN higher education institutions and students.

It is a flagship project of the ASEAN Education Sector that aims to promote regional harmonization of higher education and introduce an ASEAN scholarship inspired by the European Erasmus scholarship, thereby facilitating the creation of ASEAN Higher Education Space in support of a people-centred ASEAN community (SHARE). SHARE was officially launched in 2015, with a €15 million European Union (EU) grant funded programme. SHARE has provided 500 one semester intra-ASEANN scholarship for ASEAN university students and the new phase will support 300 more students before the end of 2022.

The SHARE Consortium (2021-2022) is comprised of the British Council, the DAAD, ENQA, and Nuffic. The SHARE Extension will see the programme continue its support of the ASEAN Secretariat and regional stakeholders to enable greater harmonisation and internationalisation of ASEAN higher education. SHARE will achieve this in support of the third ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021-2025, through enhancing policy dialogue harmonisation of ASEAN Higher Education, supporting the further development of the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF) and ASEAN Quality Assurance Framework (AQAF) and further developing a common credit transfer system and scholarship programme for intra-ASEAN student mobility while ensuring equal opportunities for all.

SHARE supports ASEAN's ambition to build a regional higher education space. This includes:

- Increased and enhanced mobility for university students throughout ASEAN through more cohesive qualifications frameworks, quality assurance, an ASEAN-wide credit transfer system and an ASEAN-branded scholarship scheme.
- Greater equality in opportunities for exchange through improved connectivity across higher education in ASEAN.
- Strengthened ties between ASEAN universities and increased EU-ASEAN university partnerships.

The SHARE Programme is fully committed to the implementation of the third ASEAN Work Plan on Education 2021 – 2025. A central aim of the SHARE Programme Extension is to catalyse the transfer of ownership of programme outcomes to ASEAN entities and nominated organisations to be embedded within sustainable ASEAN-led structures and processes.

DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNATIONALIZATION INITIATIVES AND PRACTICES OF UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

This section discusses on the internationalization initiatives and practices of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) based on the efforts and effectiveness of internationalization programme before and during pandemic of COVID-19, internationalization strategies and promotions by the university, and the importance of cooperation and involvement of all parties in making international mobility programme a success.

The following discussion is based on the feedback obtained from faculty coordinators for international mobility, in relations to their experience in managing mobility programmes and extra-curricular activities.

Efforts and Effectiveness of Internationalization Programme in Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) has responded well in managing the pandemic crisis at early time back starting from March 2020, especially in managing the international mobility students, and administrating their needs to travel back during the movement control order periods. With the change of physical class to online class, the internal UMS learning management system was used frequently to kept international students well informed on classes information, assessment details,

and arrangement of teaching and learning activities. For mobility programme, the conventional (physical/face to face) mobility extra-curricular activities were still being exercised and conducted virtually.

Before Pandemic

Before the pandemic, Universiti Malaysia Sabah has been actively organizing field trips, sports, community services, arts and hobbies activities for the students, bringing them for visits at several popular tourist hotspots locations, and interesting places in Sabah. The activities organized covering places like the popular Kinabalu Mount and National Park, recreational activities at Tuaran district, cultural activities in Kota Kinabalu city, educational visit to Labuan, as well as other interesting locations and activities. For instance before the pandemic, each semester coordinators of international mobility have successfully brought the international mobility students to actively participate '*A Walk to Remember*', for wedding receptions of KadazanDusun, and Bajau ethnicities. All of the activities organized by the coordinators were considered interesting as the activities are named differently, and enriched with curiosities. For example, sports event that was named as *Clash of the Titans*, Crocodile Farm Visit as *Welcome to the Wild*, visits to Kundasang and Ranau which popularly named as Journey to Heart of Borneo, as well as visit to Labuan (of what being named as Journey to the Pearl of Borneo), as well as Sabah State Artists in the Making, a programme that promotes green building in Kota Kinabalu, and arts being displayed at Sabah Art Gallery Centre. Through observation and feedback, the coordinators found that the setting of activities and name of it, would increase the cohesiveness between participants, which are essential to keep the students safe when participating the activities. Such effort in securing the wellbeing and safety of the international mobility students was always the priority of the coordinators appointed at various faculties in Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

During Pandemic

Hence during the pandemic, most of the activities were still being conducted (virtually) and broadcasted live to the international mobility students. Apart from that, certain courses conducted in the university have included international mobility students. For instance, course BT22303 Human Resource Management (Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy, UMS) have

actively organized virtual activities every semester during the pandemic, since 2020. The popular activities were: Getting to know your Sabah, Crisscrossing Malaysia: Through Folk Games and Culture, and Malaysia: A Celebration of People and Culture. One of Coordinators of mobility students, Mr. Andy Lee Chen Hiung stated the importance of conducting as much activities as possible with the objective of familiarizing them with Sabah culture and interesting places, for them to 're-visit' Sabah after the reopening of border and entry of international mobility students. The sense of belongingness and 'coming home' or 'Re-visit Sabah' were essential, as the international mobility students deserve more than just academic activities. It is hoped that the international mobility students would be able to learn more of the context of Malaysian, and get to socialize with the local students (like those taking course Human Resource Management) conducted courses for them, being part of the hands-on activities.

Internationalization Strategies and Promotion for Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) post COVID-19 pandemic

Apart from international mobility, the university has also continued to extend and renewed active collaboration of memorandum of understandings (MoUs) that were signed with other universities. The research activities were carried on after the restriction on movement was lifted and researchers are allowed to conduct fieldwork and travel for data collection. Research activities like articles publication are well maintained, and staffs exchange were implemented as well.

Series of webinars were conducted throughout the pandemic. Conferences and seminars that were organized virtually were still being conducted after pandemic phase. One example is Seminar on Business and Management 2021 organized by Faculty of Business, Economics and Accountancy are being upgraded from national level to international level this year in December 2022. Sustainable practices creates the value of continuous improvement in quality of teaching and learning, shares of experience, and increase the visibility at international levels.

On the facet of international mobility, Universiti Malaysia Sabah has actively participated the recent European Union Support to Higher Education in the ASEAN Region (SHARE) programme that provide scholarship for students. SHARE virtual mobility and Collaborative International Learning (COIL) since the pandemic time and participated series of workshop for capacity building. The information obtained were often shared with faculty members especially for COIL courses that promotes partner universities to conduct academic course together.

Learning experience for the local students have increased and enriched through the collaboration. From COIL, local students obtained the chance to learn from academics at different institutions. The experience of it are found to be fascinating and interesting, as compared to the conventional teaching and learning students would get from the existing lecturer from respective university. With COIL, the activities are partnered and it provides new experience in teaching and learning activities. Assignments conducted through SHARE COIL, requires the mixture of students from two or three universities countries completing the task together. In the recent batches of COIL, UMS has successfully collaborated with Phnom Penh International University and *Institut Pertanian Bogor*. It is observed that some other universities are also willing to conduct joint courses with Universiti Malaysia Sabah for teaching and learning activities.

Importance of Cooperation and Involvement of All Parties in the Internationalization of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

Involvement of all parties in ensuring the success of internationalization are essential. Top management support to the Centre of Internationalization and Global Engagement UMS (to be referred as International Relations Office) would empower better the coordinators from each faculty to exercise their task more efficient and appreciate the meaning of the job. With joint resources and mutual understanding between the international relations office and faculty are extremely decisive to ensure all units in the university are moving towards the same goals with each parties having their objectives being executed.

Promotions and education exhibitions that were conducted by the international relations office plays significant impact to study application. There was an example of how Bruneian students selected Universiti Malaysia Sabah based on the personality and attributes displayed by the university during an education exhibition before the pandemic.

A case shared by an international mobility student from Brunei, informed her lecturer that the decision to apply to Universiti Malaysia Sabah was due to the fact of good image building and great personality of the delegates from UMS during the education fair in Brunei, perceived as 'safety assurance' to the parents of hers that she will be in good hands. It was happened to be the course lecturer was part of the delegate. The student informed the respective lecturer clear explanation, simple procedure and instant study application being process would be the key factors for the application decision, and perception towards assurance for wellbeing and safety is

an added value to applicants to study abroad. Such case has been shared and found to be interesting as the variables are very much adaptive and contextual. Hence, the team that represent IRO and university would always play a significant role to the public perception and the image building of the university.

Second case to be shared is the feedback obtained from China. China case study is interesting due to fact that the decision to apply to Universiti Malaysia Sabah was based on the factors of location, language and food similarity for them to apply to the university. However it is, it was found to be interesting that after several batches of short-term international mobility students that have joined the university, stated that they decided on joining the university was due to past experience of the seniors from early batches. The attributes were wellbeing was taken care, safety always comes first, and instant responses from respective lecturers that they had experienced. The word of mouth was impactful to the juniors applying for short-term mobility. The case was being clarified and triangulated to respondents from other universities from China that joined the similar short-term mobility programme.

Third case would the collaboration and joint efforts by industry and partners to the university. The case is reported of the experience they had, with the informative tour and speech provided at various locations such as Kundasang National Park, Tuaran Crocodile Farm, Sabah Art Gallery, Yayasan Pembangunan Labuan, and Universiti Malaysia Sabah International Campus in Labuan as well as other location as well.

Fourth case to be shared here is the media portrayal of interesting locations to the international mobility students came from China. The excitement of coming to Universiti Malaysia Sabah sometimes indirectly related to the famous islands like Sipadan (Semporna district~ some students did not realize the distance from Kota Kinabalu to Semporna which is more than 500 KMs), Bohey Dulang (known as Pearl Island among the Chinese from China, written as 珍珠岛 pronounced as Zhen Zhu Dao), Kundasang (famous for cattle farm), and Mantanani Island popularly known as Mermaid Island (美人鱼岛 pronounced as Mei Ren Yu Dao). Based on the feedback and observation made, universities or education institutions would need to package more of interesting places as part of the activities for teaching and learning or perhaps extra-curricular activities.

ENRICHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS EXPERIENCE

This section discusses on the feedback of short-term mobility students that have participated SHARE COIL course Batch 7 (Social Entrepreneurship) that has ended recently, a collaboration between Phnom Penh International University (Cambodia) and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS). A total number of 100 students have participated the COIL course within the period of two months. Social Entrepreneurship was a joint collaborative online courses that developed by instructors from both universities. The 100 students were successfully given scholarship paid by the SHARE Consortium (2021-2022) is comprised of the British Council, the DAAD, ENQA, and Nuffic. The scholarship consists of internet allowance for online course, and materials allowance, and scholarship allowance was paid in Euro.

The results were generated based on the questionnaire distributed to international students and local students participated the SHARE COIL Course- Social Entrepreneurship (Batch 7). The items including their feedback on (1) SHARE Supports ASEAN's Ambition to Build a Regional Higher Education Space in the Region, (2) Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses, (3) How much did COVID-19 influence have on the initiation and sustainability afterward? (4) Key messages that can influence resilience and sustainability.

All of the items are measured using a five-point likert scale: from 1 – Strongly disagree, 2 – Disagree, 3 – Neutral, 4 – Agree, and 5 – Strongly agree.

SHARE Supports ASEAN's Ambition to Build a Regional Higher Education Space in the Region

A total of 53 respondents have provided feedback to the SHARE COIL course – Social Entrepreneurship that was successfully completed recently, and ten feedback as follows:

SHARE supports ASEAN’s ambition to build a regional higher education space in the region. Which of the following outcomes are envisaged?

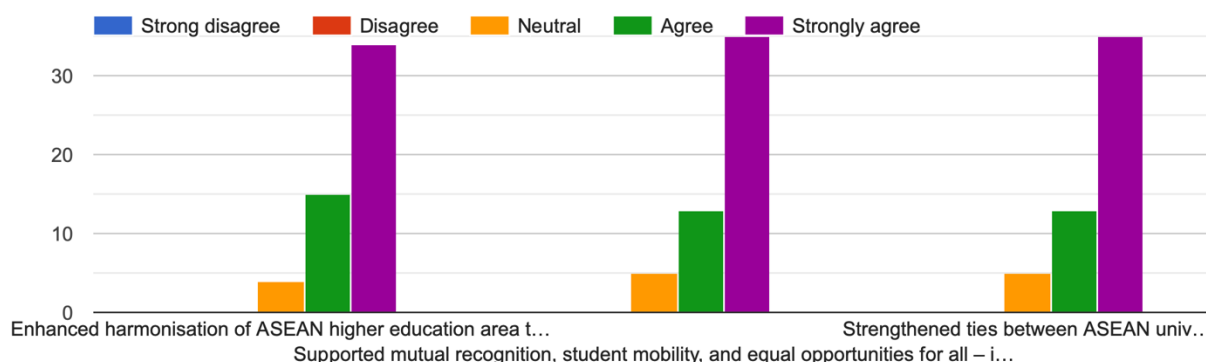


Figure 1: SHARE Supports ASEAN’s Ambition to Build a Regional Higher Education Space in the Region

Table 2: Strengthened ties between ASEAN universities and increasing opportunities for EU-ASEAN university partnerships.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	64.15%
Agree	13	28.30%
Neutral	5	7.54%

Table 3: Enhanced harmonisation of ASEAN higher education area through the formulation of ASEAN higher education frameworks.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	34	64.15%
Agree	15	28.30%
Neutral	4	7.54%

Table 4: Supported mutual recognition, student mobility, and equal opportunities for all – including female students and people with disabilities – among higher education institutions in ASEAN and strengthened people-to-people connectivity.

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	35	64.15%
Agree	13	28.30%
Neutral	5	7.54%

Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses

The enabler factors were measured based on the following factors: Task-technology fit, instructor attitude, family support, perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitude, and continuation.

What are the enable factors for the SHARE COIL course that you have attended?

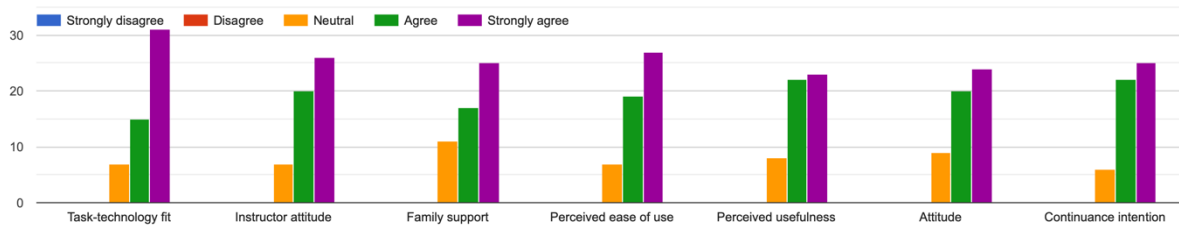


Figure 2: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses

Table 5: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Task – Technology Fit)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	31	58.49%
Agree	15	28.30%
Neutral	7	13.20%

Table 6: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Instructor Attitude)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	26	49.05%
Agree	20	37.73%
Neutral	7	13.20%

Table 7: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Family Support)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	47.16%
Agree	17	32.07%
Neutral	11	20.75%

Table 8: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Perceived Ease of Use)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	27	50.94%
Agree	19	35.84%
Neutral	7	13.20%

Table 9: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Perceived Usefulness)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	43.39%
Agree	22	41.50%
Neutral	8	15.09%

Table 10: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Attitude)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	24	45.28%
Agree	20	37.73%
Neutral	9	16.98%

Table 11: Enable Factors for SHARE COIL Courses (Continuation)

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	47.16%
Agree	22	41.50%
Neutral	6	11.32%

How much did COVID-19 influence have on the initiation and sustainability afterward?



Figure 3: COVID-19 Influence on Initiation and Sustainability Afterward

Table 12: The role of partnerships; nobody can deal with a pandemic on their own

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	23	43.39%
Agree	19	35.84%
Neutral	9	16.98%
Disagree	1	1.88%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.88%

Table 13: Becoming more agile in responding to unexpected events

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	22	41.50%
Agree	25	47.16%
Neutral	6	11.32%

Table 14: Health, safety and wellbeing became central to the resiliency and sustainability discussion in a way that it has never occurred before

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	28	52.83%
Agree	16	30.18%
Neutral	8	1.88%
Strongly Disagree	1	1.88%

Key messages that can influence resilience and sustainability include:

Table 15: Demonstrate: protect stakeholders

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	25	47.16%
Agree	22	41.50%
Neutral	6	11.32%

Table 16: Culture: have a plan & be ready to react

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	56.60%
Agree	16	30.18%
Neutral	7	13.20%

Table 17: Awareness: act on credible & reliable information

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	30	56.60%
Agree	16	30.18%
Neutral	7	13.20%

Table 18: Behaviour: communicate with & educate people

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Agree	29	54.71%
Agree	18	33.96%
Neutral	6	11.32%

3. CONCLUSION

From the feedback obtained and observation being made, it is clear that in order to enrich students learning experience, all parties must be collaborative in ensuring the successful of short-term mobility programme with added-value could be delivered by international office for application and facilitation purposes, and the invaluable care of the coordinators and lecturers for the international mobility students. It is also made to known the choices made by several countries being the major host of the international mobility students are influenced by general environments (external factors outside the control of organization) and specific environments (stakeholders, controllable by the organization) as well. Indeed, Sabah has a great potential for international mobility students especially for short-term programme and it would greatly attract the upcoming batches based on the good word-of-mouth provided by the seniors who came to Sabah and experience the great people and culture of it, for being well taken care during their stay as international mobility students.

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Isu Linguistik dalam Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi Penutur Asing

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ABSTRAK

Matlamat penawaran kursus Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi oleh Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi di IPTA dan IPTS adalah bertujuan untuk membantu pelajar asing supaya dapat bertutur dengan menggunakan Bahasa Melayu mudah serta dapat membiasakan diri dengan budaya dan kehidupan di Malaysia. Walau bagaimanapun, terdapat beberapa permasalahan yang didapati berlaku semasa pelajar mengikuti kursus ini selama satu semester. Hal ini kerana, kursus Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi merangkumi komponen linguistik yang menjadi teras utama dalam pembelajaran bahasa dan pada masa yang sama terdapat juga beberapa elemen budaya Melayu yang bercanggah dengan budaya penutur asing yang tidak tepat apabila diterjemahkan menerusi aplikasi sedia ada dalam laman web. Oleh itu, objektif makalah ini akan membincangkan masalah-masalah penutur asing dalam mempelajari Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi dari sudut linguistik, iaitu fonetik dan fonologi, morfologi serta sintaksis. Makalah ini akan menggunakan video tugas akhir yang dihasilkan oleh pelajar Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi di Universiti Xiamen Malaysia sebagai data kajian. Perbincangan akan dibahagikan mengikut komponen linguistik supaya permasalahan yang timbul dapat dijelaskan dari sudut bahasa secara khusus. Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat masalah yang timbul semasa proses pembelajaran semasa penutur asing mengikut kursus Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi, namun permasalahan ini dapat diselesaikan sekiranya elemen linguistik diambilkira dalam pengajaran kursus ini.

Kata kunci: Bahasa Melayu; penutur asing; linguistik; komunikasi; budaya

ABSTRACT

The aim of offering the Communication Malay language course by the Ministry of Higher Education at IPTA and IPTS is to help foreign students to be able to speak using simple Malay and to familiarize themselves with the culture and life in Malaysia. However, there are some problems that occur when students follow this course for one semester. This is because the Communication Malay language course includes the linguistic component which is the main core in language learning and at the same time there are also some elements of Malay culture that conflict with the culture of foreign speakers which are not accurate when translated through the existing application on the website. Therefore, this paper will discuss the problems of foreign speakers in learning Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi from a linguistic point of view, namely phonetics and phonology, morphology, also syntax. This paper will use the final assignment video produced by Malay Language Communication students at Xiamen University Malaysia as research data. The results of the discussion will be divided according to the linguistic component so that the problems that arise can be explained from a specific language point of view.

Keywords: Malay Language, foreign speakers, linguistics, communication, culture

1. PENDAHULUAN

Linguistik merupakan kajian saintifik dan mendalam terhadap satu-satu bidang bahasa. Kajian linguistik bahasa mengambilkira kesemua aspek yang meliputi sesuatu bahasa tersebut. Smith (2022) berpendapat bahawa linguistik merupakan kitaran bahasa dan penggunaan bahasa yang merangkumi komuniti bahasa serta penggunaan bahasa untuk berkomunikasi. Oleh itu, linguistik merangkumi aspek keseluruhan bahasa tersebut sehingga suatu bahasa itu berupaya untuk digunakan secara berterusan dengan betul dan tepat. Komuniti dan penggunaan bahasa saling memainkan peranan agar bahasa yang digunakan mematuhi tatabahasa bahasa tersebut dan pada masa yang sama mampu menyampaikan makna yang tepat. Abdullah Hassan (2012) pula menyifatkan ilmu linguistik ilmu yang mengkaji banyak perkara mengenai bahasa dan mengajar serta belajar bahasa juga merupakan sebahagian daripadanya. Bertitiktolak daripada kenyataan sarjana bahasa ini, komponen linguistik memainkan peranan penting dalam penguasaan bahasa Melayu komunikasi bagi penutur asing. Penyampaian bahasa Melayu komunikasi yang mengambilkira komponen linguistik membantu penutur asing memahami dan menguasai bahasa Melayu dengan mudah dan boleh digunakan secara berterusan.

2. SOROTAN LITERATUR

Kajian terkini oleh Nurul Ain Alizuddin (2022) yang menumpukan kepada kesalahan sintaksis yang berlaku dalam kalangan pelajar asing semasa proses membina ayat ayat majmuk gabungan,

ayat majmuk pancangan, ayat majmuk campuran, ayat aktif dan ayat pasif. Hasil dapatan kajian menunjukkan kekerapan pelajar asing untuk membina ayat yang tidak gramatis adalah tinggi. Seterusnya, pembangunan kit video yang telah dijalankan oleh Junaini Kasdan et al. (2018) menunjukkan bahawa pelajar asing berminat untuk mendalami budaya masyarakat Melayu. Namun terdapat kekurangan dari segi alat bantu yang membolehkan golongan ini mendalami budaya secara dalam talian. Oleh itu pembinaan kit video adalah bertujuan untuk membantu pelajar asing agar minat untuk mempelajari bahasa Melayu dapat ditingkatkan. Kajian oleh Punitha Vathi Muniandy, Abdul Jalil B. Othman & Sharir B. Jamaluddin (2017) pula mendapat pembelajaran secara tidak formal mempunyai kesan yang lebih cepat berbanding pembelajaran formal secara dalam bilik kuliah. Penutur asing lebih berminat untuk mempelajari bahasa Melayu apabila cara pengajaran berasaskan pensyarah dan pelajar ditukarkan kepada pelajar dengan pelajar. Kedua-dua kajian ini secara tidak langsung menunjukkan bahawa penutur asing dari golongan pelajar asing ini turut menunjukkan minat terhadap bahasa Melayu, namun demikian pengajaran yang berasaskan pelajar lain perlu diteliti sebaiknya. Hal ini kerana, pelajar yang terlibat untuk proses komunikasi dengan penutur asing yang merupakan penutur natif bahasa Melayu dan mempunyai pemahaman dalam penguasaan bahasa Melayu akan menyumbang kepada kefahaman yang baik dalam kalangan penutur asing namun sebaliknya berlaku sekiranya pelajar tersebut hanya membantu menterjemahkan sahaja kosa kata dalam bahasa Melayu itu sendiri mengikut pemahaman sendiri. Selain itu, kajian oleh Amirul Mukminin Mohamad (2020) membincangkan tentang penggunaan aplikasi *Quizizz* sebagai kaedah penilaian bagi pelajar asing yang mengikuti kursus bahasa Melayu. Pembahagian pelajar asing kepada dua kumpulan yang berbeza pemahaman dari segi penggunaan aplikasi secara umumnya tidak mempengaruhi tahap penguasaan bahasa Melayu pada penilaian akhir kursus. Hasil perbincangan juga lebih menjurus kepada penggunaan aplikasi dalam pengajaran bahasa Melayu kepada penutur asing dengan paparan data kuantitatif dan pengkaji tidak menyentuh berkenaan faktor ataupun isu-isu yang mempengaruhi pembelajaran bahasa Melayu dalam kalangan penutur asing. Kajian terdahulu telah pun banyak dilakukan dengan menumpukan kepada kaedah dan tahap pemahaman penutur asing semasa pembelajaran bahasa Melayu, namun keperluan kepada perbincangan komponen linguistik dalam pembelajaran bahasa Melayu pelajar asing amatlah perlu bagi mengupas isu berkaitan supaya halangan pembelajaran ini dapat diselesaikan serta membantu meningkatkan pemahaman yang tinggi terhadap bahasa Melayu.

3. METODOLOGI KAJIAN

Kaedah kajian ini akan menggunakan rakaman video tugasan akhir pelajar Universiti Xiamen Malaysia yang mengikuti kursus umum universiti iaitu, Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi selama satu semester sebagai data kajian. Berdasarkan rakaman video ini, hasil dapatan kajian akan dihuraikan menggunakan kaedah kualitatif sepenuhnya bagi membincangkan komponen linguistik yang terlibat secara langsung semasa kuliah dijalankan. Berdasarkan analisis ini, perbincangan yang menjurus kepada beberapa komponen linguistik yang memainkan peranan utama bagi pemahaman penutur asing terhadap bahasa Melayu khususnya.

4. ANALISIS DAN PERBINCANGAN

Hasil dapatan kajian akan dibahagikan kepada empat komponen linguistik, iaitu fonetik dan fonologi, morfologi serta sintaksis.

Fonetik dan Fonologi

Fonetik merupakan ilmu linguistik yang mengkaji bunyi dalam bahasa. Indirawati Haji Zahid & Mardian Shah Omar (2012) menyatakan bahawa kajian fonetik tentang penggunaan organ pertuturan dalam menghasilkan bunyi bahasa merujuk kepada bidang ilmu fonetik manakala bunyi bahasa yang dikaitkan dengan sintaksis, morfologi serta semantik pula merujuk kepada ilmu fonologi. Hasil pemerhatian daripada rakaman video menunjukkan bahawa pelajar asing tidak dapat menyebut sesetengah perkataan dalam bahasa Melayu dengan tepat. Walaupun tidak dapat dinafikan bahawa, ketepatan gagal dicapai sekiranya penutur tersebut bukanlah merupakan penutur natif bahasa Melayu, namun bunyi bahasa yang menyimpang jauh daripada bunyi asal juga menjejaskan makna dalam bahasa Melayu. Berdasarkan rakaman video tersebut, sebutan para pelajar dapat dirumuskan dalam transkripsi fonetik menerusi Jadual 1 di bawah:

Jadual 1: Sebutan Perkataan Bahasa Melayu Penutur Asing

Bil.	Perkataan	Transkripsi Fonetik	Sebutan Penutur Asing
1.	China	[◆●i.na]	[◆●ai.na]

Bil.	Perkataan	Transkripsi Fonetik	Sebutan Penutur Asing
2.	Sambil	[sam.bil]	[s̥am.bil]
3.	Dari	[da.ri]	[d̥.ri]
4.	Tempat	[t̥m.pat]	[d̥m.pat]
5.	Memakan	[m̥m̥.kan]	[m̥m̥.kan]

Kegagalan ini boleh dirumuskan berpunca daripada lidah yang sudah terbiasa dengan penghasilan bunyi bahasa ibunda. Oleh itu, pelajar cenderung untuk menyebut mengikut sebutan bahasa yang digunakan sehari-harian. Tambahan lagi, sistem tulisan bahasa ibunda yang menggunakan bentuk aksara tersendiri berbanding penutur asing yang menggunakan sistem tulisan rumi juga turut mempengaruhi proses pemahaman terhadap bahasa Melayu. Hal ini kerana, bentuk bunyi, iaitu fonetik sesuatu bahasa tersebut lahir daripada bentuk huruf yang digunakan. Sekiranya, penutur asing tersebut tidak terbiasa atau tidak pernah menggunakan sistem bunyi tersebut maka proses pemahaman itu akan memakan masa dan mengganggu penguasaan bahasa asing pada tahap awal lagi. Oleh sebab itu, pentingnya pengajaran sesuatu bahasa itu mengambilkira aspek bahasa ibunda dan bentuk tulisan yang dikuasai pelajar sebelum memperkenalkan bunyi-bunyi bahasa Melayu kepada pelajar.

Morfologi

Tumpuan kedua pula merujuk pada penggunaan kosa kata dalam kalangan penutur asing semasa mengikuti kursus Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi. Morfologi merupakan salah satu komponen linguistik yang mengkaji perkataan dalam bahasa. Berdasarkan pemerhatian daripada rakaman video, senarai perkataan yang digunakan untuk menyiapkan tugas akhir merupakan bentuk-bentuk kosa kata mudah. Hal ini kerana, tahap pemahaman yang ingin dicapai bagi kursus ini adalah supaya penutur dapat bertutur menggunakan bahasa Melayu mudah dan berkomunikasi dengan masyarakat sekeliling. Jadual 2 di bawah menunjukkan beberapa bentuk kosa kata yang berjaya dikuasai oleh pelajar asing semasa mengikuti kursus ini selama satu semester.

Jadual 2: Perkataan Bahasa Melayu Penutur Asing

Bil.	Contoh Perkataan
1.	Saya

Bil.	Contoh Perkataan
2.	Nama
3.	Gembira
4.	Telur
5.	Hidung
6.	Umur
7.	Satu
8.	Besar
9.	Dari
10.	Itu

Senarai perkataan dalam Jadual 2 di atas jelas menunjukkan bahawa tahap pemahaman penutur asing berada pada awal dan cenderung untuk menggunakan perkataan yang melibatkan suku kata yang mudah. Bentuk perkataan yang mempunyai imbuhan dan proses kata terbitan lain tidak menjadi pilihan pelajar kerana pengajaran awal tidak didedahkan dengan bentuk perkataan yang tergolong dalam aras tinggi, kesukaran untuk menyebutnya, atau kegagalan untuk memahami makna perkataan tersebut. Oleh itu, dari segi morfologi penutur asing tidak mengalami kesukaran yang tinggi untuk menguasai golongan kata mudah kerana setiap dari satu perkataan tersebut hanya mempunyai satu makna khusus.

Sintaksis

Aspek sintaksis pula merujuk pada pembinaan ayat dalam bahasa Melayu. Permasalahan yang timbul dalam kalangan pelajar asing semasa mengikuti kursus ini ialah ayat yang dibina bagi tujuan dan penulisan berbeza dengan ayat yang ingin digunakan untuk tujuan komunikasi. Hal ini berlaku dalam kalangan pelajar asing yang sudah terbiasa dengan bahasa negara mereka yang hampir menyamai dengan bahasa Melayu. Kekeliruan ini juga menyebabkan pembinaan ayat yang tidak gramatis dan susunan kata yang tidak tepat bagi menghasilkan ayat yang bermakna. Tambahan lagi, penggunaan laman web yang tidak berautoriti dan terjemahan ayat hanya secara mengalih bahasa semata-mata dengan menepikan budaya Melayu khususnya. Penggunaan bahasa baik dalam lisan mahupun tulisan merupakan cerminan budaya masyarakat penuturnya. Oleh itu, sebaiknya suatu bahasa tersebut diterjemahkan mengikut konteks dan situasi bahasa

tersebut agar kesantunan berbahasa dapat dipelihara. Antara pembinaan ayat yang dihasilkan oleh pelajar asing menerusi rakaman video tugas akhir ialah;

Jadual 3: Ayat Bahasa Melayu Penutur Asing

Bil.	Ayat	Pembetulan
1.	Saya berasal dari China.	Saya berasal daripada China.
2.	Anjing terkejut, tulang kepunyaan anjing itu kelihatan lebih besar daripada tulang kepunyaan aku.	Anjing terkejut, tulang kepunyaan anjing itu kelihatan lebih besar daripada tulang kepunyaannya.
3.	Dan saya akan membaca ramalan untuk anda semua hari ini.	Saya akan membaca ramalan untuk anda semua hari ini.

Hasil pemerhatian daripada video pendek yang dihasilkan oleh pelajar asing menunjukkan bahawa, para pelajar menghasilkan video sepenuh bergantung pada petikan sedia ada dalam laman web. Berdasarkan ayat yang dibaca jelas menunjukkan hampir 80% ayat tersebut diambil daripada laman sesawang kerana ayat tersebut bersifat ayat majmuk. Pelajar yang mengikuti kursus ini dijangkakan dapat membina ayat bahasa Melayu yang ringkas dan mudah difahami. Kemudahan capaian internet ini juga sedikit sebanyak mempengaruhi pemerolehan bahasa dalam kalangan pelajar asing. Hal ini secara tidak langsung menyebabkan pelajar hanya membaca teks dan tanpa memahami isi kandungan teks. Pada masa yang sama, pelajar juga tidak dapat menyebut kata asli bahasa Melayu dengan jelas kerana aspek sebutan juga dipengaruhi oleh budaya masyarakat penuturnya. Kepanjangan serta kependekkan konsonan dan vokal tidak berlaku secara tiba-tiba malah telah diwarisi menerusi makna yang terkandung dalam setiap frasa. Selain itu, aspek intonasi juga memainkan peranan penting apabila ayat dilafazkan. Pembacaan dalam video secara mendatar secara menunjukkan bahawa pelajar tidak peka akan isi-isi penting yang sepatutnya ditegaskan dalam maklumat yang ingin disampaikan. Bahkan pelajar juga tidak berhenti apabila bertemu dengan noktah dalam setiap ayat. Hal ini secara tidak langsung menyebabkan penyampaian secara berterusan tanpa intonasi yang betul dan tepat. Kepentingan intonasi dalam ayat amatlah penting bagi memastikan suatu penyampaian tersebut bermakna. Oleh sebab itu, pelajar asing perlu didedahkan dengan pembacaan ayat-ayat pendek terlebih dahulu sebelum membina serta membaca ayat yang telah digabungkan.

5. KESIMPULAN

Hasil perbincangan secara keseluruhannya menunjukkan bahawa elemen linguistik memainkan peranan penting dalam teknik serta kaedah penyampaian bahasa. Pengajaran bahasa secara berperingkat mengikut komponen linguistik yang sepatutnya menjadikan penyampaian lebih bermakna dan mudah difahami. Oleh sebab itu, kajian yang lebih mendalam amat perlu supaya pelajar asing bukan hanya mempelajari Bahasa Melayu Komunikasi sebagai syarat bergraduat semata-mata tetapi sebagai bahasa ilmu yang memberi manfaat kepada mereka. Penguasaan pelajar asing ini dalam bahasa Melayu secara tidak langsung menunjukkan bahawa bahasa Melayu merupakan bahasa yang mudah lentur dan mudah dikuasai oleh semua. Penguasaan dalam kalangan pelajar asing ini juga secara tidak langsung menunjukkan bahawa keutuhan bahasa Melayu itu sendiri dan mampu mendukung makna dalam pelbagai bidang ilmu.

6. CADANGAN

Kajian berkenaan bahasa Melayu dalam kalangan pelajar antarabangsa dan penutur asing masih giat dijalankan. Terdapat pelbagai usaha kerajaan dalam memartabatkan bahasa Melayu dipersada dunia. Bahasa Melayu itu sendiri mempunyai nilai kebolepasaran merentasi sempadan antarabangsa kerana penuturnya wujud bukan hanya di negara kita. Oleh itu, usaha ke arah memartabatkan bahasa Melayu menerusi penutur asing ini perlu berterusan dari masa ke semasa. Kewujudan pelbagai universiti swasta dan juga kemasukkan pelancong asing memerlukan kepada sebuah aplikasi mudah alih yang memudahkan pembelajaran bahasa Melayu di universiti dan pada masa yang sama untuk kegunaan para pelancong asing untuk berkomunikasi semasa berada di Malaysia. Usaha ini perlu melibatkan pensyarah, pelajar dan juga institusi berwajib yang memandang serius ke arah memartabatkan bahasa Melayu dan juga sebagai nilai tambah kepada sektor pelancongan negara. Aplikasi ini perlu mengambilkira semua aspek termasuk pemahaman sedia ada penutur asing sebelum mereka sampai ke Malaysia. Selain itu, aspek penggunaan huruf atau aksara dalam kalangan penutur asing ini juga menyumbang kepada tahap pemahaman sedia ada yang bakal digunakan apabila mengikuti kursus bahasa Melayu. Penglibatan semua pihak ini secara tidak langsung mampu menghasilkan sebuah aplikasi yang mesra penutur asing.

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Melonjakkan Aspirasi Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi yang Mampan

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ABSTRAK

Penjenamaan pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi negara telah dilaksanakan secara berterusan sejak dua dekad lalu. Beberapa dasar pengantarabangsaan telah diperbaharui dan diperkenalkan untuk mempergiatkan program promosi pendidikan negara ke mata dunia. Untuk negara menjadi hub pendidikan asia dan dunia, pelbagai inisiatif dilaksanakan sehingga membawa kepada kewujudan agensi kolaborasi seperti Jabatan Imigresen Malaysia, Education Malaysia Global Services dan sokongan dari institusi pengajian awam dan swasta bagi memastikan peta pendidikan negara dapat dilukis glokal & global. Namun cabaran penjenamaan antarabangsa pendidikan negara kini perlu diperhalusi lagi dari segi strategi komunikasi penjenamaannya (*branding communication strategy*) dan ianya boleh dimulakan dari pelbagai sudut seperti meningkatkan taraf kedudukan indek tinjauan antarabangsa, merubah klise program promosi antarabangsa, memperkemaskan reputasi pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa oleh IPT dan dasar keselamatan negara boleh melebarkan lagi jaringan ekosistem promosi pendidikan ke pentas dunia. Kertas ini cuba merungkai permasalahan penjenamaan antarabangsa pendidikan negara yang belum mempunyai penyelesaian dan kaedah baru untuk mengatasinya. Kertas ini memberikan perpektif baru didalam melihat kejumudan program penjenamaan pendidikan negara yang kini semakin kerap diasak oleh negara-negara rakan Asean kita seperti Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam dan Filipina yang sudah mula mengorak langkah untuk menjadikan pendidikan sebagai salah satu sumber pendapatan negara dan bakal menyumbang kepada pembangunan kemanusiaan, sosial dan permodenan masing-masing. Segala pendapat yang ditulis adalah berbentuk makro dan ditujukan kepada penyata polisi pendidikan negara untuk mula memikirkan kepentingan penjanamaan pengantarabangsaan pendidikan negara yang baru untuk menyambut kedatangan masa depan dunia yang tidak ketentuan ini.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Tinggi, Dasar Pengantarabangsaan, pengurusan Universiti, pelajar antarabangsa

1. TARAF TINJAUAN KEDUDUKAN INDEK ANTARABANGSA

Taraf kedudukan negara didalam indek kajian antarabangsa perlu ditingkatkan didalam membantu penjenamaan negara. Disini saya merujuk bukan sahaja kepada ranking pendidikan dunia seperti Ranking QS, tetapi kepada ranking negara seperti dibawah ini:-

- *Quacquarelli Symonds: Best Student Cities 2022, Kuala Lumpur ranked 31st out of 115 global cities,*
- *A.T. Kearney: Global Cities Outlook 2019, Kuala Lumpur ranked 76th out of 130 global cities,*
- *Boston Consulting Group: Cities of Choice Global City Ranking 2021, Kuala Lumpur ranked 39th out of 45 global cities,*
- *Economist Intelligence Unit: Safe Cities Index 2021, Kuala Lumpur ranked 32nd out of 60 global cities,*
- *EF English Proficiency Index 2019, Kuala Lumpur ranked 19th out of 94 global cities*
- *Foreign Policy: The Global Cities Index 2014, Kuala Lumpur ranked 53rd out of 84 global cities,*
- *GoCompare: Best Cities For Millennials To Start Businesses, Kuala Lumpur ranked 30th out of 45 global cities,*
- *Hoopa Top 50 Instagram Destination 2015, Kuala Lumpur ranked 29th out of 50 global cities,*
- *Hoopa Top 50 Instagram Destination 2019, Kuala Lumpur ranked 39th out of 50 global cities (penurunan ranking didalam masa hanya 4 tahun)*
- *IESE: Cities in Motion Index (CIMI) 2019, Kuala Lumpur ranked 100th out of 174 global cities,*
- *Nestpick: Generation Z City Index 2019, Kuala Lumpur ranked 95th out of 110 global cities,*
- *Time Out: The 48 best cities in the world in 2019, Kuala Lumpur is ranked 46th out of 48 cities*
- *ValueChampion: Top Millennial-Friendly Cities in Asia-Pacific, Kuala Lumpur ranked 14th out of 20 global cities*

Ranking yang tersenarai diatas adalah indikasi umum berkenaan perubahan tingkahlaku sosial masyarakat dunia yang perlu diambil kira sebagai papan laras daya tarikan untuk potensi pelajar datang belajar ke Malaysia. Perubahan tingkah laku sosial perlu dikaji seluas mungkin untuk memastikan program penjenamaan pendidikan negara memenuhi keperluan dan kehendak sasaran masyarakat. Ini adalah tanggungjawab konsular, agensi seperti EMGS dan Education Malaysia untuk memberi input sebenar bagaimana persepsi pendidikan di Malaysia dibandingkan dengan negara pesaing terdekat. Papan laras ini juga boleh dijadikan rujukan utama untuk

merangka pelan rancangan strategik komunikasi penjenamaan pendidikan negara secara terperinci mengikut negara dan kumpulan masyarakat sasaran. Perkongsian maklumat ini juga boleh diambil sebagai batu ukur kemajuan pendidikan sebagai industri pemangkin ekonomi perlancongan, pelaburan terus antarabangsa, pertukaran perdagangan dan sumber manusia profesional.

Untuk negara mencapai KPI 250 ribu pelajar pada 2025 nanti, pihak kementerian perlu melakukan sesuatu untuk mengubah cara penjenamaan pendidikan negara supaya kita tidak terus bersaing dikawasan perang yang kita tidak pasti akan menang. Selain itu, kesedaran secara holistik dunia V.U.C.A perlu dianalisa supaya pendidikan negara kekal relevan tidak lagi ketinggalan berbanding negara lain di Asia.

2. MERUBAH KLISE PROGRAM PROMOSI ANTARABANGSA

Sudah sekian lama, pasaran pendidikan antarabangsa sentiasa dimomokkan dengan program promosi pendidikan negara menceritakan pencapaian kualiti pendidikan, suasana pengajian yang kondusif, *mixed learning*, Bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa penghantar serta adunan silibus *homegrown* program dari diploma sehingga sarjana yang berasaskan buku teks dari luar negara. Dimana identiti pendidikan negara ini jika dilihat dari setiap sudut pengajian di Malaysia adalah salinan dari sumber pendidikan luar negara seperti Australia, United Kingdom dan negara maju lain.

Pendidikan negara memerlukan ide-ide baru untuk dapat kita dibezakan dengan negara lain didunia. Daya tarikan negara kita sangat meluas, bukan sahaja tarikan *edu-tourism* yang dicanang sekian lama tapi keaslian identiti negara ini dari segi pola keabjilan bahasa, budaya, etnik dan sejarah yang tertera untuk dipra-tontonkan kepada mata dunia. Persoalan yang perlu dijawab adalah siapa pendidikan Malaysia dimata dunia? Disini dinyatakan kelebihan pertama yang kita jarang bahaskan didalam program promosi atau penjenamaan sebagai satu maklumat laras penyampaian iaitu kita dilahirkan didalam komuniti yang mengamalkan empat bahasa besar dunia. Bahasa Arab, Bahasa Cina, Bahasa Tamil dan Bahasa Inggeris.

Selain bahasa ibunda negara, empat bahasa ini sudah cukup untuk kita mengenalpasti sasaran geografi potensi pasaran pelajar antarabangsa. Dengan kekuatan penggunaan bahasa ini sahaja, jika digunakan lebihnya boleh menyuntik minat kumpulan sasaran untuk datang ke Malaysia. Dari pandangan makro, kementerian boleh menggalakkan penggunaan empat bahasa

dunia ini didalam silibus serta medium komunikasi utama selain dari pelajar antarabangsa mempelajari bahasa ibunda kita. “Bahasa Melambangkan Penyatuan Bangsa” *tagline* pengantarabangsaan pendidikan negara yang boleh dipertimbangkan. Ianya mempunyai maksud yang amat mendalam jika boleh diperhalusi dan digunakan sebaik mungkin didalam semua program penjenamaan pendidikan negara yang baru.

Dari bahasa ke budaya, program pertukaran budaya yang dijalankan secara terpencil atau besar-besaran sudah dilaksanakan sekian lama. Namun ianya tiada penganjukkan yang tertonjol hasil dari semua program ini. Sebagai penambah perisa kepada program penjenamaan pendidikan negara, IPT yang masih beroperasi selepas tsunami pandemik melanda dunia sepatutnya boleh mula merangka penubuhan sebuah Pusat Budaya Asia atau Dunia (*Asia Culture Centre*) atau (*World Culture Centre*) yang bertindak sebagai alat keseragaman aktiviti budaya serantau yang boleh dirancang aktiviti dan kawalannya oleh pihak kementerian dan IPT sendiri. Pusat ini penting untuk melombong maklumat setiap budaya dan keunikan masyarakat dunia agar kita mempunyai infomasi terbaru akan perubahan sikap dan sosial sesebuah negara selain menyelitikan keunikkan bahasa dan budaya kita sendiri secara berstruktur.

Pendidikan negara perlu bersaing menggunakan pelbagai senjata komunikasi penjenamaan yang membolehkan maklumat sampai ke corong minda dan mengajak penduduk dunia memandang ke Malaysia untuk menyambung pengajian. Kesesuaian program komunikasi promosi akan disulamkan dengan gambar-gembar (*hype*) budaya dan sosial berlaku dipentas IPT di Malaysia.

Selain itu, hasil dari pengumpulan maklumat ini boleh juga disalurkan kepada agensi pemantauan seperti PDRM, Jabatan Imigresen Malaysia, Bahagian Inspektorat di Jabatan Pendidikan Tinggi malah MQA dan EMGS yang boleh dihadam dan menjadi nilai baru pembangunan polisi antarabangsa dan penambahbaikan proses kerja sedia ada.

3. REPUTASI PENGURUSAN PELAJAR ANTARABANGSA OLEH IPT

Operasi pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa dipandang remeh oleh pengurusan tertinggi IPT yang memegang lesen mengambil pelajar antarabangsa. Bermula dari pertengahan 90an, kehadiran pelajar asing sudah mula heboh ditularkan di media massa. Pelbagai isu sosial dan jenayah dikaitkan dengan pelajar antarabangsa sehingga ke hari ini. Setiap kali demam kerendah pelajar

antarabangsa ini dipropagandakan, agensi kawalan dan pemantauan sentiasa dijadikan kambing hitam dan jalan keluar untuk sesetengah pihak bagi mengelak dari isu sebenar yang berlaku.

Kekhilafan utama sentiasa datang dari akar pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa di IPT itu sendiri. Kejahilan pemilik IPTS atau pengurusan tertinggi IPTA memahami betapa kompleksnya menguruskan operasi pejabat antarabangsa yang melibatkan People, Process dan Physical Evidence (diambil dari teori 7P's Marketing Mix) mengakibatkan pemilihan kepimpinan pejabat antarabangsa serta kakitangan sokongan 'tangkap muat' dipertanggungjawabkan sebagai barisan hadapan berdepan dengan konflik dan isu yang tidak mereka fahami. Sememangnya kesilapan ini kerap berlaku, dan sejarah telah membuktikan rekod-rekod isu terlebih tinggal, kelewatan proses dan lain-lain isu berbangkit adalah kerana ketidakpastian apa tindakan awal yang perlu diambil untuk menyelesaikannya.

Kekerapan pertukaran kakitangan sokongan untuk menjalankan proses kerja di pejabat antarabangsa juga menjadi punca ketidak-konsisten operasi di pejabat antarabangsa. *Staff turnover* yang tinggi berpunca dari tekanan kerja akan ketidak fahaman proses pengurusan pelajar yang kompleks biasanya antara sebab kegagalan IPT mengurus (hanya organisasi yang mempunyai pemimpin yang berpengalaman berada di pejabat antarabangsa sahaja mampu menguruskan dengan baik), senarai masalah pelajar antarabangsa bukan sahaja wujud untuk urusan akademik, malah tindakan masalah seperti kewangan, tekanan perasaan (*home sick*), penguasaan bahasa, tekanan aktiviti sosial (*cultural shock*), pasport atau dokumentasi rasmi serta pengulangan proses di pejabat antarabangsa sepanjang tempoh pengajian pelajar di IPT boleh mengundang ketidaksempurnaan pengalaman pelajar semasa keberadaaan di Malaysia.

Elemen negatif diatas perlu diatasi segera. Kementerian telah lama mengeluarkan satu standard operasi pejabat antarabangsa yang kerap dikemaskini, namun *bad management* tetap berlaku. Ini bukan lagi masalah yang datang dari sistem mentadbir, tapi pentadbir itu sendiri. Kementerian perlu lebih proaktif dengan tindakan untuk melaksanakan sistem latihan berterusan kepada pengurusan IPT akan kepentingan memantapkan operasi pejabat antarabangsa ini, selain memantau pengambilan kakitangan di pejabat antarabangsa yang sesuai mengikut pangkat, pengalaman dan kelayakan akademik, sesi pencerahan dan pertukaran yang lebih kerap dijalankan sesama agensi kawalan dan IPT serta perkongsian maklumat yang lebih cepat, telus dan konsisten terutama selepas pihak kementerian mengumumkan satu-satu polisi baru untuk pelajar antarabangsa ini.

Imej jelas yang dibawa oleh pelajar balik ke tanahair masing-masing adalah pengalaman pahit tidur dilokap imigresen, ditahan anggota polis kerana tiada butiran diri, ditahan di pusat hiburan kerana berlibur bersama rakan atau menjadi mangsa kepada industri perdagangan manusia. Sesungguhnya, semua ini tidak baik untuk penjenamaan pendidikan negara bagi tempoh jangka pendek dan panjang.

4. DASAR KESELAMATAN NEGARA

Isu sensitif yang bakal disentuh ini bukanlah untuk merubah struktur dasar keselamatan negara di setiap pintu masuk negara namun pandangan kepada proses yang berlangsung sekarang boleh ditambah baik secara langsung. Negara kita sememangnya terkenal dengan amalan toleransi yang tinggi wujud dari sifat semulajadi budaya sosial campuran yang beriraskan cermin berbagai rupa bangsa, etnik dan agama. Namun pada sesetengah isu yang biasa disuarakan oleh pelajar antarabangsa adalah kefahaman pemprofilan negara yang agak ketara sehingga menanam satu jenis jenayah yang digelar ‘jenayah persepsi’ dikalangan agensi kawalselia dan masyarakat umumnya.

Jenayah persepsi ini amat kritikal sehinggakan sampai ke akar umbi, mengakibatkan ada negara-negara yang tidak mempunyai reputasi baik hasil dari kegagalan berfungsi didalam sistem perundangan negara seperti dianak tirikan dari menjadi pelajar di IPT. Memang diakui bahawa, ada segelintir golongan pelajar yang datang dari negara yang sama menjalankan aktiviti yang tidak bermoral seperti terlibat didalam sindiket perjudian, perdangangan manusia, pelacuran, pertukaran wang haram dan lain-lain lagi. Namun begitu jika dilihat, pihak penguatkuasaan begitu cekap menjalankan intipan dan tangkapan kepada ‘geng kongsi’ ini. Dilihat semula pada skala yang lebih besar, sindiket sebegini bukan sahaja dating dari sesebuah negara yang biasa diprofilkan oleh pihak berkuasa, malah ianya wujud dimana-mana negara didunia dan ianya bukan lagi rahsia kepada kita semua.

Maka pemprofilan sesetengah negara yang diletakkan dibawah senarai syak adalah tidak memberi apa-apa impak kepada aktiviti ‘pintu belakang’ ini. Malah rakyat kita sendiri juga terlibat melakukan perkara kotor ini dimerata dunia tetapi tidak pernah diprofilkan oleh negara negara lain didunia seperti apa yang dilaksanakan di Malaysia. Sesungguhnya usaha agensi kawalselia amat disanjung tinggi, dan persetujuan semua disini untuk memastikan keselamatan negara terjamin dari anasir luar yang terpesong, namun ketinggian budi bicara menyantun semua

masyarakat dunia adalah lebih baik dan dihormati. Negara kita dianggap syurga oleh sesetengah negara jiran, kelebihan ini boleh disalurkan kepada tenaga positif yang lebih *agile*. Penjenamaan pendidikan negara boleh dimanfaatkan dengan menggunakan kelebihan negara kita yang sekian lama diakui oleh negara-negara jiran dan tiba masanya pihak kementerian mengkaji kesaksamaan program promosi yang lebih terarah dan fleksibel untuk kebaikan semua warga pendidikan dan ekosistem didalamnya.

Dasar keselamatan negara juga perlu dipermudahkan bagi sesetengah isu yang melibatkan pelajar antarabangsa, seperti proses kebenaran pas khas yang tidak lebih dari dua kali, penukaran pas tanpa perlu pulang ke negara asal, isu pelajar tinggal lebih masa yang boleh dimudahkan, memudahkan proses kelulusan tempoh belajar lebih dari durasi yang diluluskan, budi bicara kepada pelajar yang mempunyai CGPA yang rendah disebabkan isu-isu tahap penguasaan pengajian mereka dan agensi kawalselia juga sentiasa memahami perubahan polisi antarabangsa yang datang dari sesetengah negara yang tidak mempunyai kedutaan di Malaysia, negara-negara dimana perang sedang berlangsung, kekurangan yang ada pada negara dunia ketiga dan segala perihal yang berlaku yang melibatkan perubahan kepada sistem perhubungan dua hala negara dari segi proses dan polisi pengantarabangsaan masing-masing. Kebijakan diplomasi agensi kawalselia menggunakan ruang-ruang keistimewaan yang boleh ditawarkan kepada yang memerlukan bakal mewarnai penjenamaan pendidikan negara secara menyeluruh.

Selain itu, penulisan akan dasar-dasar baru oleh pihak Kementerian perlu diperhalusi dengan makenisme tambahan maklumat lanjut akan pelaksanaan dasar yang dikeluarkan. Seringkali IPT mensalahtafsirkan pemahaman dasar yang ditulis untuk kelebihan perlanggungan aktiviti operasi yang kadang kala menimbulkan tanda tanya dikalangan IPT yang berdagang didalam industri pendidikan negara sendiri.

Perbezaan pendapat mentafsir dasar datang dari pelbagai sumber maklumat yang tak sekata, pengolahan ayat yang berada di 'grey line', jurang ilmu pentafsir dan kekurangan input terhadap sesuatu perkara yang bersekutu dengan maksud sebenar dasar serta penyelewengan maklumat yang disorok untuk mengelakkan penyetujuan akan dasar baru yang diwartakan.

Kelemahan ini dipandangan remeh oleh sesetengah penulis dasar, namun impaknya amat besar kepada pengguna terakhir iaitu pelajar sendiri kerana maklumat sebenar tidak sampai kepada tujuan dasar ditulis. Ini menjejaskan konsistensi dasar dan perlaksanaan diperingkat bawah dan kelemahan ini menjadikan seluruh sistem operasi lumpuh. Kesepaduan maklumat perlu diintegrasikan didalam satu saluran utama kepada IPT dan pelajar, pemahanan akan

keberkesanan dasar perlu disampaikan secara lebih jelas dan teratur. Sistem S.O.C.O atau *Single Overriding Communication Objective* sepatut digunakan disetiap susur galur penurunan dasar dan perlaksanaan agar pecanggahan maklumat diantara agensi kawalan, IPT, pelajar dan industri pendidikan tidak mengalami kecamukkan kiblat bagi melonjakkan aspirasi pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi yang mampan.

5. KESIMPULAN

Cabaran penjenamaan antarabangsa kini menjadi cabaran semua pihak, pernyataan diatas kepada empat perkara seperti taraf tinjauan kedudukan indek antarabangsa, merubah klise program promosi antarabangsa, reputasi pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa oleh ipt dan dasar keselamatan negara adalah proses 'reprogramming' dalaman untuk pendidikan negara dilonjakkan kemata dunia. Empat element pemasaran seperti market segmentation, positioning, kajian pasaran baru dan prinsip 7P's dijadikan asas empat dasar perubahan lonjakan yang dinyatakan didalam kertas ini. Disamping itu analisis keperluan dunia VUCA perlu dikaitkan agar platform baru lonjakkan dapat diselaraskan dengan kehendak pasaran. Masih banyak ruang yang boleh dibaiki oleh negara untuk meletakkan pendidikan sebaris dengan negara maju di Asia dan Eropah. Penulisan ini memfokuskan kepada bagaimana pendidikan negara boleh bereksplorasi dengan menggunakan strategi komunikasi penjenamaan yang terbaik didalam usaha memperbaiki mutu pengurusan pendidikan negara bagi tujuan pengantarabangsaan. Usaha dari semua sektor didalam ekosistem pendidikan perlu disatukan agar dapat kita berganding bahu merungkaikan dunia semasa yang penuh ketidak tentuan dan kompleks ini. Kunci kejayaan melonjakkan aspirasi pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi yang mampan adalah membina satu budaya baru pendidikan tinggi negara yang eksklusif, asli dan bermutu tinggi.

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Enriching International Students' Experiences through the Local Encounter: A Sharing from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS)

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ABSTRACT

To be a top player in internationalisation, universities attempt to provide international students with an overall rich and rewarding experience that kick-starts their careers post-graduation, especially in terms of employability in the post COVID19 pandemic era. However, the international student experience should also serve to remind international students of a positive and memorable time in their lives, filled with a myriad of opportunities for cross-cultural learning. Thus, from the moment they arrive in their host country, universities could help international students to connect meaningfully with local students and also the local community. Using archival study, the authors offer a conceptual discussion on the notion of "local encounter" to demonstrate the exposure international students can gain from taking part in local events designed for them; examples from Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) are used as evidence. The research finding shows that there continues to be room for practitioners to rethink how they may enrich their overall international student engagement through the local network, an area that is often underrepresented in international education studies.

Keywords: Local encounter; international student experience; local-international student bond; local community; cross-cultural competency

1. INTRODUCTION

The past years had taught us that the pursuit of knowledge involves the keen ability to adapt fairly quickly in the "double disruption" era of rapid technological advances and the COVID19 pandemic Russo, A. (2020) ³. While university students seek to embrace and adjust to the idea of remote and online learning, universities continue to ensure the marketability and employability of their graduates by accelerating the quadruple helix collaborations between universities and government, industry and community partners. Universities also seek to monitor that both local

³ "Double disruption" referring to the dual impact of technology and pandemic recession indicates that the new emerging skills are in self-management such as resilience, stress tolerance and flexibility.

and international students' educational experiences remain as rich and rewarding as they were in the pre-pandemic.

One of the concerns of host universities for their international students is their adaptation to the local culture. Many international students find it hard to acquire the academic culture in their host country, for instance when it comes to studying in groups and speaking up in class (Wang & BrckaLorenz, 2018). They may also not realise that they are delimiting their social networks and support, if they do not actively seek to get to know the local student life. According to Constantine et. al. (2014), understanding attitudes, behaviours, values, and cultural beliefs in a particular country is necessary for cross-cultural adaptation Constantine et. al. (2014). Kim (2015) asserts that cultural adaption entails the process of adaptation of oneself in a new environment, where comfort would eventually surface and help one become used to the new surrounds Kim (2015). The adaption process can occasionally take longer to complete for a person to feel at ease; he or she avoids embarrassment because of the disparity in values and different cultural spheres.

While it cannot be denied that the international student's needs are complex, the international students' exposure to local encounters, be it with the local student body and/ or the local community, is a critical but often neglected area for study in the internationalisation of education. Other than helping to improve their ability to communicate with others from differing socio-cultural backgrounds, studies of international student experiences can help practitioners understand the effect, for instance, of local sentiment towards international students, such as that currently with Muslim international students abroad whomay fear backlash from local non-Muslim residents given Islamophobia. Some female Muslims feel pressured to mute their religious identity by taking off their hijab in public (Aslam, 2021). Affected students may withstand racism and prevent it from affecting their studies but the unwanted experience does stain their overall international student experience. Just as how COVID19 can prevent students from crossing borders for study, hostile social climates can also prevent international students from engaging with others and enriching their experiences.

Thus, universities need to ensure that each encounter with the local is a positive, rich and rewarding one. In this paper, the authors discuss the idea of 'local encounter' and suggest that opportunities for international students for local engagement are plentiful and can vary with or without much facilitation by the university. Universities also consider how local students miss out on the benefits of engaging with international students, if the latter does not take advantage of their cross-cultural learning and experience. The help of local students to guide international

students as they navigate university life as well as the role of the local community in welcoming them are important aspects for universities to consider as they tailor activities for the international student. The examples of student and community engagement in this paper come from the Centre for International and Global Engagement (CIGE), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS).

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: LOCAL ENCOUNTERS AS ENRICHING THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The term “local encounter” in this paper is used to describe the event in which the international student acquires a new experience involving local students and the local community. Local encounters are thus viewed as a subset of the overall international student engagement experience. The focus of the local encounter is the social integration of the international student and the development of skills such as cross-cultural communication and intercultural understanding.

The Local-International Student Bond

Before embarking on their journey, many international students who desire to study overseas look forward to sampling what the local culture has to offer, usually in terms of its food, music, dance and language [6]. Part of their time in their new host country therefore, international students can be considered as tourists who contribute to the domestic economy. However, as they settle into their study, the social and cultural transition can prove difficult. International students need to make new friends inside or outside their host university to prevent social isolation but some prefer finding friends among other international students including from their home country. While some other international students only seek to maintain social connections with family and friends through online meetings, leaving little room for local encounters (Resch & Amorim, 2021).

Local students play a strong role in enriching the international students’ experiences. From the start, the former must recognise how creating and maintaining layers of social networks allow both local and international students to grow as individuals during their university studies. The activities organised by the university on one hand help to foster greater understanding and appreciation of diversity on campus and on the other, they provide local students with unique opportunities to learn about another culture by talking to international students rather than read about foreign cultures from a book (Mustapha et. al., 2021). Once local students appreciate the need for social inclusion and cross-cultural competence, they can be called upon to form a bond

with international students and so help them replace their lost social networks in the transition to studying abroad.

Universities in turn need to remain vigilant about the strength of the local-international student bond. There is little impact towards international students' cross-cultural adaptation, if activities are inconsistent and infrequent, not to mention poorly attended (too few local students take part). The type of activity also matters. Those that provide are more impactful are those that carry more meaning, for instance, language learning (of the host country's language) and mentoring or buddy programmes that allow local and international students to build and maintain relationships over a period of time, for the entire duration of the latter's stay abroad (and even beyond) (Resch & Amorim, 2021).

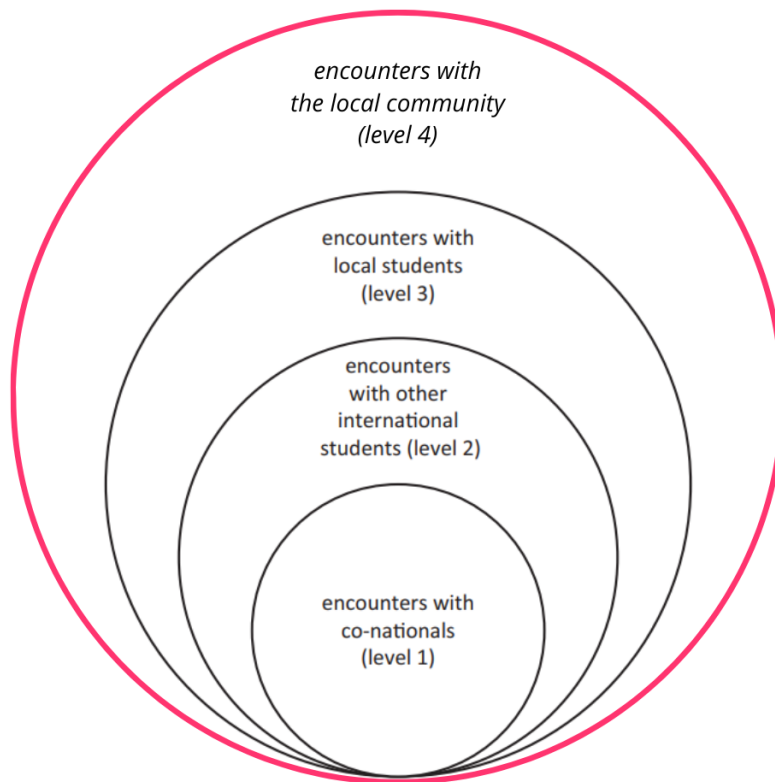


Figure 1: Layers of encounters by international students (Resch & Amorim, 2021); the outermost concentric circle added by Tangit & Din (2022) in this article to reflect the local encounter as extending to the community level

4. THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

While increased contact between international and local students is associated with greater satisfaction and better academic performance, Lawley et al (2009) found that community interactions also yield positive results, with reciprocal benefits. For instance, Australian host teachers at local Australian schools reported higher levels of motivation when supervising American student interns owing to the cultural exchange and mutual learning of each other's differing teaching curriculum and practices. The experience being personally and professionally rewarding made host teachers say that they would recommend the engagement with other colleagues. The international students similarly reported higher levels of satisfaction coupled with improved ability to interact with people professionally and socially. Structured programs like internships thus ensure that universities can deliver the international students' need for professional experience with the community being the primary stakeholder.

The focus on community engagement can make the international student's tertiary education be marketed as a holistic experience. The international student-university-community engagement can be described as a value co-creating endeavour where all involve gain advantages not only in terms of economics but also in the development of mutual and reciprocal relationships and the sharing of knowledge and skills. Fleischman et al (2014) thus advocate six major types of community engagement activities for international students: spontaneous occurrences and daily interactions (highly unstructured), informal social gatherings and casual employment (semi-structured) and formal social organisation participation and professional work experience (highly structured) Fleischman et al (2014).

However, from the international student perspective, the local encounter is arguably also about giving oneself a better domestic experience: from having a good time at a beach BBQ or a local community concert or festivals to working with locals and hanging out with them as friends. In fact, international students are inclined to look for the unscripted, spur-of-the-moment occurrences that give them a sense of the character of the community that they engage in. In this sense, the university must keep in mind that there is a wide range of activities for social integration that may not need heavy facilitation, but still allow international students to develop networks of friends to share different cultural experiences (Fleischman et al 2014). The chart below shows the different engagement types suggested by Fleischman et al (2014). The authors suggest a gradient focus: the proposed default for enriching international student experience could be set

at 'moderate community involvement' with allowances for self-initiated activities by the international student on one end and the highly structured activity, such as internship and practicum, on the other. Here, the university is responsible to carefully facilitate such programs, as these are to prepare international students for the immediate job market.

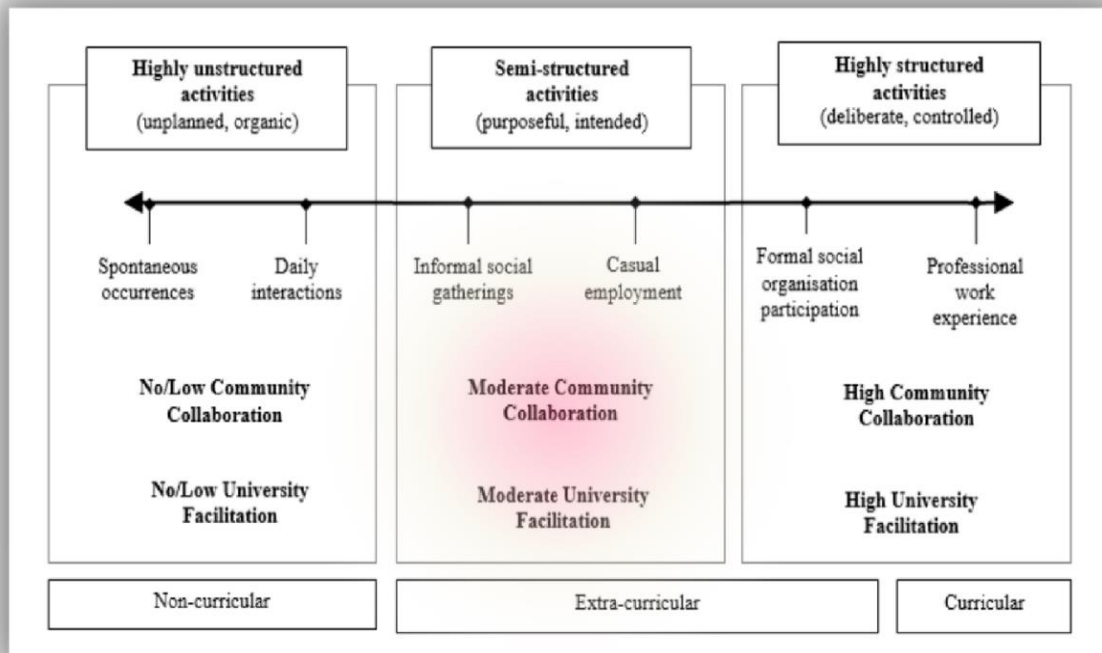


Figure 2: Continuum of international student engagement/ experience (Fleischman et al 2014); the proposed starting point of moderate community collaboration proposed by Tangit and Din (2022) in this article

The following section now describes the international student engagement at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) to demonstrate the range of international student experience.

5. UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH (UMS) AND INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

UMS started internationalisation in 1997/1998 with the first international student batch arriving that same year. Today, the number of international students stands at 1144 students. Like local students, opting to engage in community projects and programs such as 2U2I (2 years-university-1 years-industry) are open to international students. Similarly, experiential learning embedded in coursework through the teaching pedagogy of “SULAM” (Service-Learning Malaysia - University for Society) are taught to both domestic and international students. At pre graduation, UMS through the Centre for Internationalisation and Global Engagement (CIGE) will counsel international students concerning career development. CIGE also periodically conducts surveys on international students' satisfaction with their studies, services and engagement on campus.

For Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), internationalisation has at its core the openness and desire that all international students may experience the warm hospitality that the local culture has to offer. For instance, it is quite common to infuse both local and international student activities with a distinctive Sabahan flair, whether through the use of local songs, dance, food and/ or language. This and fostering the local-international student bond are one of the many ways in which international students come to know local culture and people. In some cases, foreign university partners and collaborators request that UMS plan a cultural component in joint activities, to cap off their students' study period. International students are often encouraged to undergo a homestay experience in local communities and to conduct projects with the communities concerned.

Othman et al. (2018) interviewed twenty first year international students at Universiti Malaysia Sabah and found that from the perspective of UMS's first-year foreign students, there are three primary factors. The three key components are (i) a new experience; (ii) the culture of the higher education institution; and (iii) seeing the outside world. Meanwhile, three factors, i.e., Culture Shock, New Expatriate Experience, and Food Access, predominate in the propensity of foreign students to get significant experiences through expatriating to the country of their choice (Othman, 2018). In other words, not only do these international students feel that they could study for their degree in UMS, but they could also explore and learn the cultures and new experiences in their country of choice. The diversity of cultures and languages that they are immersed in at UMS, on the other hand, made them excited to profoundly experience the local cultures and

languages. Their stay at UMS also allows them to use the opportunity to the fullest to explore and visit interesting places in the destination country.

These are some of the engagement activities that CIGE has conducted at UMS:



Figure 1: International students introduced to a traditional game (a type of Southeast Asian mancala game called *congkak* in Malaysia)



Figure 2: International students introduced to traditional Sabahan food (typically involve rice and starch from the sago palm)



Figure 3: International students exploring popular tourist site (Mt. Nombuyukong, third highest mountain in Malaysia found in Sabah)



Figure 4: International students participating in university sports competition



Figure 5: International students involved in a social activity (tree planting) (“Greening Malaysia” campaign to plant 100 million trees by 2025)



Figure 6: International students involved in community service with unregistered Filipino children



Figure 7: International students involved in community service to help the poor (feeding program)



Figure 8: International students with officers from UMS Centre for Internationalisation & Global Engagement involved in community service to help the poor



Figure 9: International students celebrating Eid (a major holiday in Malaysia)

Ideally, every international student would be able to increase in his/ her cross-cultural competency because of the frequency and depth of experience engaging with local students and people in the community. However, practitioners should also expect for when the local encounter did not go to plan, perhaps due to a mismatch of expectations and the international student finding the encounter to be overall a negative one. In this respect, practitioners should remember that international student activities are not about personalising or tailoring the experience to suit a particular international student's culture or preference but rather to allow skills of communication and understanding of other cultures to manifest and flourish. In so saying, even negative experiences could be food for thought for universities to consider how to improve for instance on the delivery of international student activities.

6. RECOMMENDATION FOR EXPERIMENTATION: MEASURING THE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT EXPERIENCE

In this paper, we have seen how ‘local encounter’ extends from the bond with local students to the local community through the facilitation of the host university. Further, the decision to employ unstructured versus structured measures can depend on many things, for one, whether pragmatically other international student engagement needs (such as bonding with local students) can be met at the same time. Meanwhile, community stakeholders’ input on design and delivery is also key in the matter of assessing the richness of the international student activity. Basically, the university is free to use the local encounter concept as an across-the-board policy or establish a dedicated program altogether that enriches the international student experience based on purely local encounters. To this end, it is important to consider what matters at hand for the university, whether for instance, ranking on a most hospitable or friendly university list is desirable since would-be international students typically use this as a guide when assessing the openness of the local community.

There is room for experimentation in this regard, the university for instance, in the attempt to measure the international student experience, could develop a matrix that lists positive versus negative experiences and study those against a wish list (most enjoyable experiences desired) by international students. This rubric could also take into account the views of local students and communities as what they relished as rewarding experiences involving international students. Challenges may arise however in how to create a baseline for international student experiences that considers quality over quantity. For instance, organisers with limited budgets may have to consider the creative assessment of international student experiences, if they cannot hold multiple activities targeting specific objectives (Heo & Lee, 2019)⁴. These concerns and other issues raised by program coordinators on the ground need to be addressed prior to embarking on a large-scale survey of international students’ experiences.

Still, the most obvious limitation in measuring and understanding the international student experience is in gathering anecdotal evidence to counter the dearth of first-hand stories. For this, international students need to be approached to inform on whether they are flourishing: are they engaging in meaningful experiences that give them a sense of meaning

⁴ A study on the creation of a chatbot by Jeongyun Heo and Jiyeon Lee to engage international students and academics to share on their academic and campus life (2019) indicates that universities could also use technology to acquire data throughout international student engagement.

and purpose; of confidence and achievement (Glass et. at., 2014)? How did their experiences with local students and the local community help them in these areas? The lack of such stories also implies that perhaps universities have simply not asked them to share or provided a space for reflection. This leads to the authors' main recommendation that there is a strong need to establish the international student voice on the very topic of their experiences and to allow them to set the narrative. From there, a transparent and meaningful dialogue could be had and surveys and interviews harnessing their experience can take place with their full consent and participation.

In short, the opportunities for many qualities local encounters cause universities to (re)view their duty of care to their international student bodies. Quite literally, for practitioners, this means starting and/ or ending planning meetings by asking the question whether they will and/or have given "that special touch" to their international students' experience so that these have rich and rewarding experiences with local students and the local community. The additional heuristic approach in measuring impact could then also take into account other aspects such as ethics. For instance, in relation to the COVID19 pandemic, universities ought to also consider informing would-be (and present) international students of the limitations on face-to-face study experience and other problems relating to the COVID19 pandemic that beleaguer the local students and communities (such as maintaining health care including mental health (Glass et. at., 2014). Malaysian students who studied abroad in the past few years reported experiencing isolation, stress and loneliness and did not realise their extent in the unprecedented pandemic event.⁵

7. CONCLUSION

Practitioners may have started seeking to enrich the international student experience by lightly infusing or sprinkling existing programs and activities with something local, be it a cultural song or dance. Or perhaps, program coordinators have simply seen to it that there are always some local students in attendance alongside international students. However, gone are those days when host universities could initiate the local-international student bond at a welcome party then leave the process of maintaining the initiated relationships to the self-organisation of students. Today, international students long for unique experiences that can remind them of great memories while studying overseas and universities can do much to keep the international

⁵ Ex-UMS student, Russell Rohny, took up and completed postgraduate studies in the U.K. in 2020 and (at the time of this article) is preparing to return for more studies at the same university. Russell says, "This time, I will make sure I really get to know the local people and culture, because this experience was denied to me the last time."

student experience nurtured and enriched by organising activities that have been mentioned throughout this paper, and more. This focus on heightening the local experiences therefore, as suggested in this paper, could well help to create an exciting difference for the host university. If nothing else, to send a message to its international students that their positive experiences matter. That these experiences have the power to make them feel at home, belong in, and enjoy their temporary country of residence while undergoing skills training.

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Universiti Malaysia Kelantan: International Promotion Strategies in the Global Pandemic Era

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ABSTRACT

The economic recession due to the COVID-19 crisis has influenced the affordability of most international students to further their studies overseas. The fear of the global health crisis and the lockdowns has affected the demand for international education, including international student recruitment. This paper discusses the experience of the international office of Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, a public university in Malaysia, in enhancing marketing and promotional strategies during the pandemic to attract international students. It analyses the marketing and promotional strategies implemented, including the strengths and constraints faced in getting international students. This paper is divided into several subheadings, which are the strategies employed to attract international students, including repositioning brand visibility, student recruitment agencies, digital marketing, and virtual info day, where each strategy is scrutinised and assessed thoroughly based on the author's observation as the person involved in international promotion. All the strategies employed were found to be the most effective types of marketing strategies to be implemented during the pandemic. The findings would assist policymakers, universities and international office personnel in reviewing their current promotional strategies.

Keywords: International student recruitment; promotion; marketing

1. INTRODUCTION

It is undoubtedly that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the education system around the world in general (UNESCO, 2020) and has resulted in the closing down of education institutions (Owusu-Fordjour et. al., 2015) from primary to tertiary levels. Developing countries are agonised by economic weakening and the closure of their education system (Haleem et. al., 2020). This has caused limitations not only on students' ability to go to schools and colleges but also on higher learning institutions' ability to attract new international students to register. It is reported that 59% of the world's higher education institutions (HEI) had to stop all campus activities, and the institutions were completely closed. 30% of the HEI were partially open, and another 10% were open with containment measures put in (Marinoni et.al., 2020).

The pandemic has also changed how potential HEI students think about furthering their studies locally or overseas. 46% students believed that their HEI enrolment would be affected, and another 26% believed that the impact would happen to international students (Marinoni

et.al., 2020). The impact of the pandemic on international student recruitment cannot be taken lightly, as international students contribute to a university revenue via the tuition fees paid. Indirectly, by being in a foreign country, they contribute to the country's economy. It is understood that international students make an enormous contribution to the nation's economy, and international student admission has helped in economic losses (Firang & Mensah, 2021). However, the lesser number of international students recruited due to the pandemic has had a chain effect on the economy.

Thus, it is evident that international student recruitment is vital to a university, as well as the country, as they support the university financially and the country's economy indirectly. Malaysia is no exception to this critical situation, and Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK), as one of the public universities in Malaysia, and an HEI provider, has been greatly impacted by the difficulties in recruiting international students. It is stated in Malaysia, international student applications were down to 30,000 in 2020 due to the pandemic, as compared to 50,000 in 2019 (Karim, 2021). The number slightly increased to 33,000 in 2021 as the pandemic was normalising. Due to this factor, HEIs in Malaysia had to re-evaluate their promotional strategies in order to sustain the number of international students registered at their respective institutions.

This paper, therefore, analyses the marketing and promotional strategies implemented by Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, which include repositioning brand visibility, student recruitment agencies, digital marketing, and virtual info day. The analysis will be done mainly via the author's observation of the implementation of these strategies during the pandemic. The observation would include the author's judgement on the strengths and constraints of each strategy based on the return on investment recorded.

2. BACKGROUND

Though UMK is affected by the development of the pandemic, it is important to note that it has benefitted from the increasing number of registered international students from China and Indonesia, where in the past, they may have chosen the USA, Australian or European universities. Due to the seriousness of the pandemic in these countries and the lockdowns, they resorted to choosing Southeast Asian countries to further their studies, including Malaysia. UMK, having offers programs such as business and entrepreneurship, humanities and creative technology, became a choice for these students as these are among the popular subjects in China and Indonesia. During the pandemic, UMK saw a five-fold increase in its international students.

Nevertheless, UMK might do better in recruiting more international students should there be no restrictions on doing physical promotions. The office of UMK International, the international office of UMK that is responsible for international student promotion and recruitment, had to utilise the dominance of the internet, where it took the opportunity to reach prospective students via the online platform. It was somewhat challenging and UMK had to spend the time to explore which is the most effective online platform that would ensure it gets the students and promise the return on investment. Knowing that UMK is the 19th public university and not well ranked is a great challenge. UMK has to compete with the rest of the more reputable and research universities in Malaysia to attract international students. Not only that, the locality of UMK in the west coast of Peninsular Malaysia is another setback. Most of the international students prefer public universities located in the city due to the widespread availability of facilities and amenities. Located in Kelantan, a one-hour flight away from the capital Kuala Lumpur, or six-hour using land transport and hardly known to the rest of the world, repositioning the university brand visibility and creating attractive marketing strategies are essential to ensure UMK programs reach the world out there.

Repositioning Brand Visibility

In 2020 when the pandemic started, UMK had about 30 international students coming from 14 nations. There was a vital need to make UMK seen and known. With the lockdown there were no other ways to ensure university visibility reaching the international market except to build a strong online brand via the digital platform. The Internet becomes a crucial touch-point between institutions and students.

Focusing on the university website where the heart of online branding and marketing activities is was the first step taken to ensure the visibility of the UMK. Faculties were requested to update information about their programmes, academics and activities. Information about student academic experience, future employability and campus life were provided and updated in the university website to engage and help potential students in their decision-making process.

Concurrently, other online channels were utilized to strengthen UMK brand identity across platforms. Popular tools and social media such Facebook, LinkedIn, TikTok, WhatsApp and WeChat were utilized to increase the brand awareness.

Student Recruitment Agencies

One of the main strategies adopted by UMK in attracting international students is by using the service of student recruitment agencies that are either based locally or overseas in the home countries. Plenty of literature suggests that the use of international agents to recruit international students is a tacit marketing approach because tertiary institutions can gain significant returns (Yang et. al., 2017; Nikula & Kivistö, J. (2018). In the UK and Australia, for instance, education agents helped to secure 40% and 75% respectively of enrolments in schools, vocational institutes, English-language training centres, and universities (ICEF, 2019). Correspondingly, in New Zealand, 48% of overseas students were recruited through an education agent in 2017 (Grace, 2019). This suggests that student recruitment agent is the main contributor to international student recruitment. When the university plan demanded higher levels of recruitment, it was clear that agents could provide a quick response, as “agents are a very quick way in to getting students” (Raimo et. al., 2015).

Prior to the pandemic in 2019, UMK had only two student recruitment agencies with only 38 international students. During the pandemic in 2020, UMK recruited another ten student recruitment agencies. The statistic of the total number of international students showed that there was an increase, where the number recorded was 137 students. Though not all of the students came through student recruitment agents, as much as 70% of the number were recruited by the agencies. In 2021, UMK further recruited another ten student recruitment agencies, and this corresponded with a further increase of international students, which was 240. From the statistics, it was clear that the increasing number of student recruitment agencies paralleled the increasing number of international students. Agents are committed to international student recruitment due to their distinctive roles and functions. This relates to increasing numbers (and/or diversity of international students) in the institution (Raimo et. al., 2015).

From the case of UMK, we could see the strength of student recruitment agencies in attracting international students to register and study at a particular university. The strength comes with the capability of the agencies to market the academic programs abroad in the home country, which was impossible for the university personnel to do due to travel limitations. Even without limitations, it would be impossible for university personnel involved in marketing to be in many places or countries at a time. With agencies located in the specified countries and dedicated to doing academic program promotion there, the promotional burden is lifted. Not limited to academic program promotion, student recruitment agencies could also act on behalf of UMK in introducing the university to its overseas counterparts. In many cases, UMK

is introduced to its foreign counterpart universities and colleges where it could work on mobility or other exchange programs. The agents, mainly the established ones, also assisted in connecting UMK with a foreign university or higher education institution, with the intention of having the latter as a feeder to UMK. Through further discussions and agreements, these foreign institutions could send their students or lecturers to further their studies at UMK.

Other than that, the agencies also act as an informant to UMK, in the sense that they would notify UMK personnel involved in student recruitment of the market situation of the particular country. They would supply UMK with data on interests, demands, behaviours, and nature of the potential students in the home countries to help the university to further plan its promotional strategies. This would be the information that one would not get unless through a partner that works on the ground, and in this case, the agents who are doing the groundwork in the countries they reside.

On the contrary, the abovementioned strengths do not come without constraints. One of the issues faced is in the selection of reliable agencies to ensure that the agencies recruited would certainly provide students. This is difficult to do unless the agencies recruited have already recruited students to other universities. However, there are also possibilities that new agencies are more aggressive in the promotion and able to recruit more students. Recruiting and registering new student recruitment agent is not a delicate but not a simple task either, as the persons in charge in the international office would have to process the application through several stages that would take a minimum of three to four months to complete, from meeting the agencies, physically or virtually, receiving the application, assessing the application documents, approving the application at the initial level, and at the university level, preparing and signing the agreement form, and drafting the appointment letter.

Facing this issue, UMK took a stand to first recruit as many agencies as possible. It has to be noted, however, that this decision was taken since UMK started out with no agencies. The agencies recruited were filtered through a less strict screening process that abides by the university's standard of procedures. Thus, as long as they have the necessary documents such as company registration, bank statement, annual report, and testimonies, they were most likely be accepted as an agent. All of the agencies are given a two-year contract, and only after the contract ends, they are strictly screened for renewal. If they have managed to send students to UMK, they will have a higher chance of being renewed, and all of these processes will go through the evaluation and selection committee under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic and International) office.

Not just that, to ease the load of dealing with the agencies, UMK resorted to creating a simple but useful portal on the website for agents and future agents' reference. This portal

provides the agencies with the application forms, the process of how to apply, and promotional materials that include brochures, videos, PPT slides, a guidebook, and tuition fees. This strategy has somehow eased the task of the persons in charge in UMK in dealing with the agencies, as the latter could simply get the information from the portal. However, when it comes to detailed negotiation or some information that requires decision-making, then a meeting will be held.

Based on this experience, it is highly recommended that an institution that is doing academic promotion has a person in charge, to the least, to be dealing with the agencies. This dealing would include inviting agencies to collaborate, sharing promotional kits with the agencies, calling or setting a meet-up for discussions, and assisting the agencies in all matters related to student recruitment. Having someone to focus only on assisting the agencies will affect smoother communication between the institution and the agencies. The easier the agents can retrieve information and refer queries, the easier the promotional activity can be done in the home country. This will result in a higher possibility of recruiting new students. UMK has been prompted by the agencies many times on this matter. Hence, this strategy is highly recommended.

Digital Marketing

There is an increasing trend of HEIs using digital marketing to reach potential students (Kusumawati, 2019). As most of the internet views, an estimation of 72.3%, are coming from smartphones (Dolan, 2022), this is the reason why HEIs are using digital marketing to promote their academic programs (Kusumawati, 2019). As the pandemic has accelerated long-term trends of increased time spent with most mobile behaviours (Dolan, 2022), resorting to digital marketing for HEIs is something that should be expected. To add to that, the environment of intense competition globally amongst universities and budget cuts pressure universities to become more strategic and focus on international student recruitment (Choudaha & Chang, 2012).

Prior to the pandemic, UMK was not involved in any digital marketing activity. However, due to the constraints of the pandemic, UMK resorted to digital marketing via Facebook and Instagram advertisements. The daily advertisements focus on promoting the academic programs of UMK, where Facebook and Instagram size posters were published and advertised. While it is not guaranteed that students can be easily recruited to this platform, it appears that this kind of promotion helps in reaching thousands of potential students. This can be seen from the number of reaches and the number of responses received from the advertisements. For

instance, with RM1000 spent in a month for digital marketing, the advertisement will reach more or less 100,000 news feeds. And from there, the turnout, which is the number of potential students that would respond via email or text messages, would be around 50 to 80. Though in terms of percentage, it seems low, taking recruitment into consideration, where convincing people to relocate to a different country to further their studies is not an easy task, it is a huge number.

Digital marketing, from UMK's experience, is crucial in the sense that it supports the promotional strategy, which is student recruitment agency. A student recruitment agency cannot be left doing the promotional activities unaided. The university is responsible for a better outcome and for assisting the agents, and digital marketing is the way to go. When agents distribute the academic program brochures in the home countries and explain the university to the potential students, through whatever channel that they use, having the potential students see the university through the advertisement they scroll in their social media news feed will convince them more on the reliability of the university. This is because they do not just know about the university from their fellow countrymen, which are the agents, but also from social media.

Digital marketing is proven effective in the education industry (Aima, 2015) in reaching the target group, but it does not come without constraints. One of the constraints is, of course, the return on investment from the budget spent to run the advertisements. As mentioned above, though digital marketing yields a lot of reach and responses, it does not promise a promising turnover. Turnover in digital marketing refers to the outcome of an investment, or in this context, the number of students registered. The challenging part of digital marketing, from the UMK experience, is not doing the marketing itself but securing the potential students who are reaching from the advertisement. It is believed that a good response to queries from the advertisements is very crucial in securing the students. Fast and clear responses are always appreciated and gain the potential students' trust in the university. Students often post questions that go unnoticed or unanswered, therefore, HEIs must be present, available, accessible, and responsive in order to connect with students in digital marketing such as social media (Kusumawati, 2019).

UMK's experience in digital marketing also shows that a poster made for digital marketing should list the academic programs offered, as simple as it could, to catch the eyes of the potential students, instead of a simple poster that invites students to study at the university. A poster with the name of the academic programs will attract more likes, which means it attracts more attention. This can be explained with simple logic because when students are looking for a place to further their studies overseas, the first thing that they have

in mind is, of course, the program that they will pursue, apart from the fees and qualifications. This will save the targets from having to filter so many advertisements and browse each university's website for the programs that they offer.

It is also recommended for an HEI to hire a professional digital marketer to do the digital marketing task, as this task can be tedious and exhaustive. HEIs ought to hire a marketer to communicate the right message at various stages of the funnel, raise brand awareness and loyalty, drive traffic and customer engagement, and implement methods that lead to conversions and sales (Kusumawati, 2019).

As higher education social media administrators must have the ability to multitask in carrying on conversations with multiple people at once, often across multiple platforms, and at times, using multiple devices, this can be time consuming for the promotion personnel at the HEI. A professional digital marketer, depending on the subscription package chosen, can assist in creating the advertisement poster, copywriting, blasting the advertisement, and analysing the advertisement data to ensure the advertisement is kept relevant from time to time. All the HEI personnel have to do is just to provide them with the information, review the poster and the copywriting, and suggest the target group for the advertisement to be covered. This, indeed, will save a lot of time for HEI personnel to focus on other important matters.

Virtual Info Day

Info day, a day or session that is held to brief potential students on the academic programs offered by an HEI, is another strategy that can assist in recruiting international students. Due to the pandemic and the limitation to travel overseas, UMK resorted to organising virtual info days. The virtual info day is meant to not only gather and brief potential students about studying at UMK, but it is also a means to support the first two aforementioned strategies, which are student recruitment agencies and digital marketing. With the student recruitment agencies promoting on the ground in the home countries and the digital marketing virtually via social media platforms, the virtual info day will give potential students a chance to meet the HEI personnel directly, listen to the briefing, and ask any questions related to furthering their studies, including fees, courses, program structure, visa costing and cost of living.

From UMK's point of view, virtual info day has its advantage as compared to participation in virtual education fairs. This is because competition between universities does not exist, as the potential students in the virtual info day are there solely to know about the university. In a virtual education fair, participating HEIs will have to compete with each other, as potential students have a wide range of choices to select from. The intense competition among

universities (Choudaha & Chang, 2012) is obvious and newer or smaller universities, such as UMK, will always have to compete with bigger and older universities in education fairs, and in this case, smaller universities, despite being established, always lose to its bigger counterparts. Virtual info day is a strategy that would eliminate this kind of competition, as potential students are gathered only to be briefed about the university.

Virtual info day has its strength in being cost-effective. If an HEI has to spend as much as RM5000 to RM8000 for a virtual education fair, it can only cost a minimum of RM1000 to RM2000 for a virtual info day. Similar to digital marketing, the information on the virtual info day, the poster that includes copywriting, date, time, registration link, and zoom link will have to be blasted through Facebook and Instagram advertisement so it can reach as many targets as possible. The cost needed for the virtual info day is solely for the purpose of this advertisement. The potential students who see this advertisement can register through the link provided, and they can join the zoom link on the designated date and time. The invitation to the virtual info day can also be shared via social media, including Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and WhatsApp through links and connections of the international staff of the university. It is also imperative during the virtual info day that the university is well prepared to answer questions as appropriate as possible because it will help the potential students to make decisions accordingly. An effective virtual info day should include staff of different related departments of the university, such as the international office and the undergraduate and postgraduate centres, as well as international staff or students to talk about their experience studying at the university and living in the country. An HEI can also consider waiving the application fee for any applications that come from the virtual info day to attract more participants, and this information can be included in the advertisement poster. In the case of UMK, being a rather new university and still in the phase of making itself more visible to the international market, a two-hour virtual info day session that spends RM1500 would yield two-three applications, and this can be considered cost-effective as compared to the amount needed to paying commission fees to student recruitment agencies. Being cost-effective is crucial, as the environment of intense competition globally amongst universities and budget cuts pressure universities to become more strategic in international student recruitment (Choudaha & Chang, 2012).

3. CONCLUSION

To conclude, this paper has discussed the approaches engaged by UMK in international promotion during the pandemic, which are repositioning the university brand visibility, student

recruitment agencies, digital marketing, and virtual info day. Each of the strategy's strengths and constraints has been analysed and assessed based on the author's observation. It is found that repositioning university brand visibility, student recruitment agencies, virtual info day, and digital marketing would be the most effective types of marketing strategies to be implemented as they do not require travelling and can be cost-effective. More importantly, these marketing strategies could help to reach out to a larger audience more quickly than ever. Future studies on this subject can delve more into the statistics, where figures and data can be analysed to see the return on invested capital against the budget spent on each promotional strategy, where such findings will inform not only the international office on the preferred promotional strategy but also the university on needed budget allocation. All in all, the findings of this study would assist policymakers, universities and international office personnel to review their current promotional strategies, invest more in upgrading their skills on the promotional strategies, and concentrate more on them for a better outcome.

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Developing a Representative Model of Collaboration Strategies for UTHM – KOPO International Cooperation

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia and South Korea started a partnership in 1962 and since then the partnership has become stronger including in education. In line with this encouragement, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM) has strengthened its partnership with South Korean educational institutions through TVET Campus which has developed since 2017. One of the institutions is Korea Polytechnics (KOPO). UTHM-KOPO partnership is relatively new and considering this new pandemical era, a representative partnership model that considers both UTHM and KOPO's capacities and circumstances has not yet been well established. The absence of a representative model could result in complex challenges, especially in identifying important and necessary steps to internationalization, and further create financial, energy, and time loss. Thus, this study aims to develop a representative model of the internationalization management framework for Malaysian higher education. The development adapts the Define, Measure, Analyze, Design, and Verify (DMADV) technique which is commonly used in the field of quality management. There are two phases will be involved; (1) 'Define' and 'Measure' stages where a preliminary framework will be established and (2) 'Analyze', 'Design' and 'Verify' stages where a comprehensive internationalization framework will be developed. Both phases involve document analysis of policies, procedures, and monitoring processes, and meta-analysis of related internationalization acts and literature of Malaysia and South Korea. The framework will also be conceptualized against the current internationalization practices of both countries especially to embed any potential added-value elements in producing a systematic, practical, and economical model tool for UTHM and KOPO in operationalizing international activities. As such, planned internationalization activities could be well coordinated for a sustainable internationalization process. In the longer run, the model should assist the Malaysian and South Korean education ministries to monitor the progress of internationalization in both countries.

Keywords: Internationalization model, DMADV, international collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION: INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Malaysia has had a strong focus on internationalization since the introduction of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007-2020 and in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 (Higher Education). One of the countries that Malaysia has strategized for strategic partnership in education is South Korea. The partnership which started in 1962, has recently celebrated its 60 years of collaboration during the commemoration of diplomatic in February 2020. In fact, the (then) Prime Minister Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in his speech at the

ceremony welcomes proposals especially in the field of advanced technology and innovation through any governmental body and institutions to further elevate bilateral ties to strategic partnership starting for the years to come. This study embarks on the following objectives:

- i) To explore the areas of collaborative activities that align with the internationalization mission and vision of both institutions and their respective countries.
- ii) To identify the execution processes using DMADV quality management analysis technique.
- iii) To develop a representative model of collaboration strategies for UTHM – KOPO international cooperation.

The definition of the internationalization of higher education has been controversial as it has been used in a variety of ways in different countries. The definition depends on what best suits the purpose of those countries (Altbach & De Wit, 2015). The definition, however, is commonly linked with a process of change from the development of institutional activities such as institutional policies, programs, and strategies that suit the purpose of the national agenda to the inclusion of international dimensions in those activities (Knight, J. (2015). For instance, Arum et al., (1992) proposed that internationalization for US higher education refers to ‘the multiple activities, programs and services that fall within international studies, international educational exchange, and technical cooperation (Knight, 2004). with an emphasis on the notion that internationalization is a process, defined the internationalization of higher education in Canada as ‘the process of integrating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into the purpose, functions, or delivery of postsecondary education. Hudzik (2015) extended those dimensions with the view that in Finland, the focus of internationalization involves an education change process and a holistic view of the management at the institutional level. Hudzik (2015) defined the internationalization of higher education as ‘commitment and action to infuse and integrate international, global, and comparative content and perspectives throughout the teaching, research, and service missions of a higher education institution, achieving benefits in core learning and research outcomes and becoming an institutional imperative not just a desirable possibility.

However, still, Knight, (2015) expanded the definition of the internationalization of higher education and described it as ‘the process of integrating international, intercultural, or global dimensions– the sense of relationships between nations, culture, and countries as well as relating the diversity of cultures that exist within the institution, into a purpose, function, or delivery of post-secondary education. This definition, although the elaboration of the latest definition illustrated by Knight, (2015) has been widely accepted as the working definition used

to understand the internationalization of higher education. It offers 'breadth and depth into the practices of internationalization at the organizational level (Sanderson, 2008). The depth is reflected by the stratification of the internationalization process that involves a level greater than the institutional which, in this case, includes national and sector levels. The breadth of internationalization is demonstrated through the inclusion of intercultural, international, and global flows, reflecting that internationalization involves building relationships between and among different countries and diverse cultures (Sanderson, 2008).

Despite the wide acceptance of this definition, Knight's overall concept of internationalization has limitations. Sanderson, (2008) argued that Knight, (2004) conceptualization of internationalization does not really attend to the learning and teaching environment and that it is limited in terms of its ability to guide internationalization initiatives at the level of the individual. According to Sanderson, (2008), students and staff are the driving forces that give effect to and are affected by internationalization processes and, hence, should be included in the understanding of the process of internationalization. He further suggested that to understand the true extent of the processes and effects of internationalization, it is essential to investigate the purposes, practices, and experiences of key stakeholders at all levels. Accordingly, Sanderson, (2008) extended Knight's stratification of the national, sector, and institutional levels by adding levels to reflect the depth of internationalization dimensions: supranational and institutional. These extended levels are reflected in the Sanderson, (2008) diagram as presented in Figure 1.

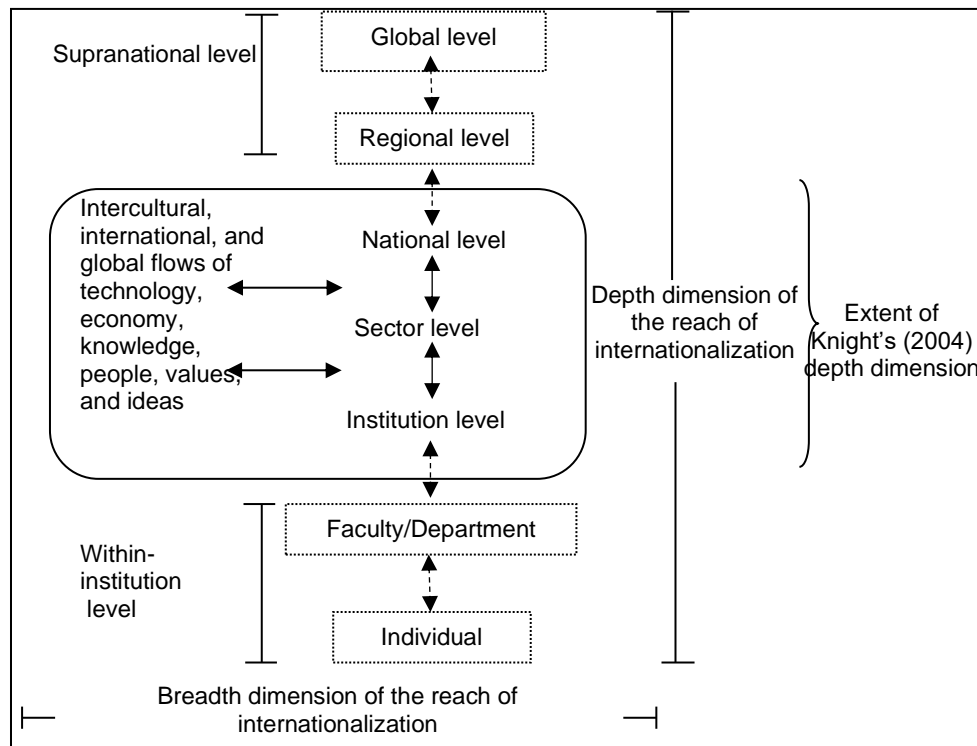


Figure 1: Sanderson’s extended internationalization dimensional framework

Sanderson, (2008) additional levels address the global and regional levels within the supranational level and, more importantly for the purposes of this study, the faculty/department, and individual levels at the within-institutional level. The argument presented by Sanderson, (2008) and his extended framework legitimized the idea of other researchers investigating the management of the internationalization process at all levels, especially at the within-institutional level (Yan & Berliner, 2011). Another limitation that is identified around the concept of internationalization portrayed by Knight (2004) is that internationalization is very conceptual and idealistic in nature – it portrays respect between different cultures and about people in different cultures working as best as they can to respect other cultures (de Wit & Altbach (2021). However, the literature illustrated there are challenges around the practice of internationalization especially in classrooms (between international students and staff), and this shows that internationalization is not as direct as how Knight portrays it. Sanderson, (2008) extended framework in Figure 1 portrayed the process of internationalization as consisting of three significant levels: the national, sector, and institutional levels. The national level is engaged with internationalization through four rationales, namely, the social/cultural, political, economic, and academic (Knight, 2015). How internationalization policy and plans are

developed depends on the rationales that motivate the nation, and this varies between countries (de Wit & Altbach, 2021; Hudzik, 2015; & Knight, 2015).

2. UTHM INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT WITH INTERNATIONALIZATION AND KOPO

In Malaysia, the growing trend of the internationalization of higher education started in the late 1990s and was mainly influenced by three major factors: (1) the progress and benefits of the internationalization of higher education institutions in Western countries; (2) the intention to build an education repertoire at the international level; and (3) the idea of the 'rise of Asia' that was developed to promote among Asian countries the sharing of common values and the use of higher education as a vehicle to promote regionalism in education (Sirat, 2010). These factors have been the major drivers for higher education in Malaysia to develop international activities such as academic mobility, global or multicultural education, and study-abroad programs. At the institutional level, internationalization engagement is motivated by five rationales, namely, the aim for international recognition, development of staff and students, income generation, strategic alliances, and research and knowledge production, which in turn, should coincide with the four rationales in the national level suggested by Knight (2004). Institutions are engaged through the implementation of internationalization activities and hence, as Knight argued, is where the actual process of internationalization activities is taking place. Examples of institutional activities in internationalization include collaboration in research with foreign universities, academic exchange programs between institutions, the development of branch campuses, and the recruitment of international students (de Wit & Altbach, 2021).

In the Malaysian higher education sector, which includes UTHM, strategies to internationalize universities often refer to activities that involve international collaboration. These activities include partnerships in research with international institutions and industries, academic programs with international institutions, and, most frequently, academic mobility activities, for instance, recruiting international students and the exchange of students and staff (Sirat, 2010). These strategies are commonly motivated by the political importance of the relationship with collaborating countries, economic benefits from the internationalization activities, intellectual advantage from academic exchange programs, and cultural promotion and learning with different international institutions. In 2004, a formal department was established to organize internationalization strategies that have been planned by the government. The department, which is known as the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has a major role in further strengthening the internationalization strategies. This is to be achieved by strengthening existing collaborations, searching for more opportunities for partnerships in

research, promoting the Malaysian education system to foreign countries, and conducting research on internationalization. MoHE has also established the Malaysian Quality Assurance system that controls the quality of education in Malaysian higher education institutions to ensure that education is competitive in the global market. As these strategies have been implemented, Malaysia has succeeded in significantly increasing the interest of local Malaysian students to enrol in Malaysian universities, as well as international students.

Since MoHE was established, four reports on the progress of internationalization of higher education have been produced. The first report summarised four main activities with foreign universities and industries that were under progress, namely exchange programs for students and staff, collaboration in research, and a joint curriculum to enhance the credit transfer available for international students. The second and third reports in 2007 reported on a set of targets for internationalization and more explicit strategies to attain these targets. The targets include (1) 10% of enrolment of international students, (2) 5% of international students in competitive disciplines (i.e., engineering), (3) 15% of international lecturers in local Malaysian universities, and (4) 'international scholarships' where the Malaysian government offered a scholarship for international students studying in local Malaysian universities (Munusamy & Hashim, 2021). The fourth report in 2009 was written by a group of researchers from the National Higher Education Research Institute. The report was based on a large-scale research project conducted with individuals and departments involved in internationalizing Malaysian higher education. The report focused on the progress, issues, and challenges of international students in Malaysia, as well as making suggestions for better management of the recruitment and welfare of international students. Since the establishment of MoHE was relatively new, the research took Australian higher education as the internationalization benchmark against which to assess the progress in the Malaysian case, especially in the recruitment and management of international students. With the progress of the internationalization of higher education, Malaysian universities have also worked to compete and be recognized in the international arena. The world ranking league has to some extent encouraged Malaysia to compete and be globally competitive in the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranking and making Malaysia the education hub in the Southeast Asian Region [9]. Accordingly, the MoHE performed its internationalization aims and targets which are made obvious in the latest higher education blueprint – the Malaysian Strategic Education Development Plan (PPM PT) 2015-2025. In response to these targets, Malaysian public universities that are governed under MoHE, must strengthen their efficiency in internationalizing their universities. Many strategies that have been undertaken are increased, for instance, collaborating on research with international universities, conducting exchange

programs of students and staff, developing partnerships with international industries, and recruiting international students (Sirat, 2010).

Polytechnics in Korea refer to vocational colleges that offer a comprehensive range of technical instruction worldwide and have been consistently focused on only educating the best technicians dedicated to practice and fieldwork. Korea Polytechnics (KOPO) also follows this definition to represent the new paradigm of vocational training, a future-oriented and dynamic image, and the innovative spirit of Korea's foremost vocational training institution. KOPO has a long history in vocational education in South Korea. In 1968, Joongang Vocational Training Institute (now Korea Polytechnics II) was established as the basis for vocational training program development in Korea through foreign investments and support. In the 1970s, polytechnics contributed to economic growth by training a manufacture-oriented workforce. This is evident by the opening of Seoul Jungsoo Vocational Training Institute (currently, Korea Polytechnics I) in 1973, the Polytechnic College Act and Enforcement Ordinance in 1977, and Changwon Technical College (currently, Korea Polytechnics VII). In the 1990s polytechnics focused on the contributions to the overcoming of the world economic crisis, and industrial restructuring through training multifunctional technicians. In 1997, the amendment of the Polytechnic College Act was done where an industrial associate degree was offered to graduates of multifunctional technician courses and in the next year (1988), Technical College Corporation was established. Soon, in the 2000s, the focus was on strengthening industrial competitiveness through the development of a skilled workforce in new growth driver industries and convergence industries by the establishment of several schools, training centers, polytechnics of bio-campus, and the change of corporate name to Korea Polytechnics or KOPO. To date, KOPO aims to maintain its reputation and increase its employment rate where currently the rate reaches 85.8%, among the top of all vocational colleges in South Korea.

3. METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This study will be conducted using a qualitative case study methodology that involves exploratory contextual analysis following the Define, Measure, Analyze, Design, and Verify (DMADV) technique as shown in Figure 2. This study is conducted using two techniques, (i) Interviews with UTHM and KOPO International Corporation Department Staff, and (ii) Document analysis on policies involving cooperation between Malaysia and Korea.

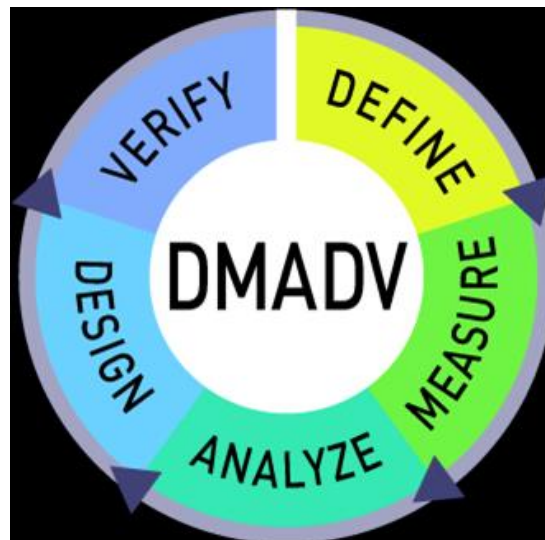


Figure 2: Define, Measure, Analyze, Design, and Verify (DMADV)

DMADV is a data-driven quality strategy that focuses on the development of new strategies and initiatives. The DMADV method or approach is often used when implementing new strategies because of its basis in data, its ability to identify success early, and its method, which requires thorough analysis. DMADV focuses on defining the customer's needs.

- measuring the customer's needs.
- finding process options that will meet the customer's needs.
- designing a business model that helps meet the customer's needs.
- verifying that the new model meets the customer's needs.

It is an integral part of a Six Sigma quality initiative. It is an integral part of a Six Sigma initiative, but in general, can be implemented as a standalone quality improvement procedure or as part of other process improvement initiatives. Six Sigma is defined by Linderman et. al., (2003) as "(...) an organized and systematic method for strategic process improvement and new product and service development that relies on statistical methods and the scientific method to make dramatic reductions in customer-defined defect rates". Academic research, such as Zhang et al. (2008) has tried to determine which elements in Six Sigma make it effective. Besides its role structure and focus on metrics, Six Sigma's structured improvement procedure is seen as a novel and effective contribution to quality management. Six Sigma uses a group of improvement specialists, and intensive differentiated training that is tailored for their ranks and is designed to improve their knowledge and skills in statistical methods, project management, process design, problem-solving techniques, leadership skill, and other managerial skills.

This study adapts the DMADV technique that emerged from the Six Sigma quality management control commonly used in the field of Quality Management (Ramzan. at. al., 2017). The Six Sigma phenomenon does not refer to a single, clearly delineated method. Rather, it refers to a related collection of practices in organizations. In short, during the define phase, project goals will be defined and deliverables. In the measure phase, the team measures the project's factors that are critical to its deliverables. Working in conjunction with the measure phase is the analyze phase when the team analyzes the process options that will best meet the customer's required deliverables. The design phase is the phase in which the team will document the detailed process that meets the customer's deliverables. The final phase of DMADV is the verification phase, in which the team will verify that the customer's needs are met using the newly designed process. Conceiving the Six Sigma method as a system of prescriptions, they discern four classes of elements:

Define

The goals of the first phase are to identify the purpose of this collaboration and set realistic goals as seen from the perspectives of UTHM and KOPO, to create the schedule and guidelines for the review, and to identify and assess potential risks. A clear goal of the collaboration and all activities are established during this step, and every strategy and goal must be aligned with the expectations of both UTHM and KOPO in regard to their mission of internationalization.

Measure

Next comes measuring the factors that are critical to quality, or CTQs. Steps taken should include defining requirements and market segments, identifying the critical design parameters, designing scorecards that will evaluate the design components more important to the quality, reassessing risk and assessing the process capability and outcome capability. Once the values for these factors are known, then an effective approach can be taken to start any collaboration process. It is important here to determine which metrics are critical to the stakeholders and to translate the customer requirements into clear project goals.

Analyse

Actions taken during this phase will include developing design alternatives, identifying the optimal combination of requirements to achieve value within constraints, developing conceptual designs, evaluating then selecting the best components, then developing the best possible design. In this stage, analysis of each activity of collaboration is analysed to determine the sustainability of the collaborations in different circumstances (finance, content, mission, vision, regulations, etc). After thoroughly exploring the different design alternatives, what is the best design option available for meeting the goals?

Design

This stage of DMADV includes both a detailed and high-level design for the selected alternative. The elements of the design are prioritized and from there a high-level design is developed. Once this step is complete, a more detailed model will be prototyped to identify where errors may occur and to make necessary modifications.

Verify

In the final phase, the team validates that the design is acceptable to all stakeholders. Will the design be effective at the execution level? Several pilot and production runs will be necessary to ensure that the quality is the highest possible. Here, expectations will be confirmed, deployment will be expanded, and all lessons learned will be documented. The Verify step also includes a plan to transition the product or service to a routine operation and to ensure that this change is sustainable. For any DMADV project, there may be more emphasis on certain components of the approach over others, though the goal remains the same: to address an identified issue and produce desired results in a way that can be maintained through normal operations.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION: TVET-CAMPUS AS INTERNATIONAL PLATFORM

Since 2017, UTHM has joined a multinational contract agreement with other eight (8) institutions from five (5) different countries in Southeast Asia's international platform called TVET-Campus. TVET- Campus was initially an initiative by the Korea Technical University of Education (KOREATECH) under the Ministry of Labour. This contract was created during the

2017 International TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) Policy Workshop (taking place from May 16-17), which KOREATECH organized. It was designed to establish KOREATECH's international reputation as a premier Asian vocational training university, as well as to promote academic exchange programs through cooperation with the participating universities. Signing the contract were Korean institutions which were KOREATECH and Korea Polytechnics (KOPO), Vinh Long University of Technology Education (VLUTE), Korea Vocational College of Hanoi, Vietnam-Korea Vocational College of Technology from Vietnam (VKTECH), Raja Mangala University of Technology Lanna (RMUTL of Thailand), National Polytechnic Institute (of Cambodia). These institutions had either been supported by the Korean Ministry of Employment and Labour, were founded by businesses, or are well-known vocational training institutions in their country. Since then, programs initiated by KOREATECH as collaboration initiatives among TVET-Campus institutions such as Winter School, Fall/Spring Exchange Programs, and Capstone Design Program have been made successful. Each year, UTHM has been sending students to participate and in addition, staff to KOREATECH as part of the international mobility programs. Each year as well, KOREATECH as the key institution of TVET-Campus organizes a yearly meeting among the committee of TVET-Campus where all representatives from each institution will meet and share experiences as well as discuss possible activities for the year.

However, in 2021, UTHM has taken a proactive step to host activities with TVET-Campus. The proposal was presented during the yearly TVET-Campus committee online meeting held in January 2021. Taking the experiences of the main researcher as the representative for UTHM at TVET-Campus, six (6) activities were proposed. Four of the proposals were responded to by interested institutions within TVET-Campus. They are 1) educational forum (two forums), 2) TVET-Campus Visiting Researchers to be appointed as part of Malaysia Research Institute for Vocational Education and Training (MyRIVET), 3) Educational Enhancement Workshop (3 sessions), and 4) Matching grant with three (3) TVET-Campus institutions which are VLUTE, VKTECH, and KOPO. The brief detail of the four programs is described in Table 1.

Table 1: TVET-Campus Programs organized by UTHM in 2021

Areas of Collaboration		Title / Topic	Detail
Academic	Forum	TVET-Curricula Innovative Strategies	April
		TVET Talent in Digital Era	May
	Workshop	TVET-Campus Professional Educator Enhancement Program	September

Areas of Collaboration		Title / Topic	Detail
Research	Visiting Researchers	Appointment of Eight Visiting Researchers	Each of the TVET-Campus institutions
	Matching Grant	TVET Assessment TVET Global corporation	VLUTE KOPO

For the matching grant proposal, all institutions had agreed to contribute a similar amount of funding (USD2500/each institution). All three proposals were distributed to three different research groups. They are the MyRIVET, Centre of Research Sustainable Professional Education for Excellent Development (CoR-SPEED), and research focus group Test Evaluation Assessment and Measurement (TEAM). For KOPO, CoR-SPEED led by the main researcher has been actively discussing the projection of a mutual research proposal. Since both UTHM and KOPO have never collaborated in a bi-lateral manner before, it is agreed that the focus of the invested funding will be to develop a representative model of collaboration strategies in the light of internationalization strategies, governance, policies of both UTHM and KOPO and in large Malaysia and South Korea. This model which is intended to be developed using a systematic approach of social science research could contribute to a meaningful collaboration which in turn, sustains the mutual understanding that UTHM and KOPO are starting to build.

5. CONCLUSION

An international collaboration between UTHM-KOPO has started to develop via the platform of the TVET Campus program initiated by KOREATECH in 2017. The collaboration becomes stronger with the activities initiated by the KOREATECH university since then where higher education institutions from five different countries collaborate under one flag to create, share, and transfer knowledge and academic activities. Many activities have been done since the establishment of TVET Campuses such as symposiums, member meetings, staff and student exchange, research collaboration, and the latest sharing knowledge program in 2021 organized by UTHM. Realizing that a platform such as TVET Campus could be the trigger for a more concrete relationship between educational institutions, UTHM and KOPO decided to collaborate in a study to research the model of best practice that these two organizations could develop to sustain collaboration.

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Strategi Promosi dan Pemasaran bagi Pengantarabangsaan UTeM: Promosi dan Pemasaran Pendidikan bagi Pasaran Republik Rakyat China

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ABSTRACT

The internationalization process of an organization is a process of increasing the visibility of the organization at the global level. This process takes into account the number of international students, student mobility programs, staff exchange, as well as collaborative collaboration in the academic and research fields. In order to realize the process, a creative and targeted promotion and marketing strategies play an important role. In the post-pandemic which the global situation that is still uncertain, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) has not been spared from the effects of the pandemic which has resulted in a drastic decrease of international student as well as various other internationalization activities. However, UTeM has taken some proactive steps to face this challenging post-pandemic situation. For example, UTeM has actively participating in online interactive promotion and marketing, empowering agents appointed for marketing purposes, increasing participation in online mobility programs, strengthening international relations through courtesy visits to foreign embassies in Malaysia in addition to participating in promotions at educational exhibitions in the international level. Through the steps that have been listed, several improvements are suggested to further improve the internationalization process at UTeM.

Keywords: Pemasaran; promosi; pengantarabangsaan; pameran pendidikan

1. LATARBELAKANG

Malaysia dilihat bersama-sama Korea Selatan, Singapura, Taiwan dan Hong Kong giat menjalankan pelbagai aktiviti pengantarabangsaan dalam persaingan untuk menjadi hab pendidikan yang terbaik. Hasrat Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi (KPT) adalah menjadikan universiti-universiti serta pusat pengajian tinggi awam dan swasta di Malaysia sebagai pilihan utama bagi pelajar asing melanjutkan pengajian di rantau ini. Dengan menjadikan Malaysia sebagai hub pendidikan serantau, ianya secara tidak langsung dapat dapat membantu kerajaan dalam membangunkan negara. Asas pendidikan diletakkan sebagai agenda penting dalam pembangunan negara.

Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara 2020 menggariskan pelan transformasi pendidikan bagi mencapai hasrat seperti yang dinyatakan di atas. Teras 5 dalam Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara menggariskan halatuju dan usaha pengantarabangsaan institusi pengajian tinggi (IPT) di Malaysia. Pengukuhan jaringan dan pengantarabangsaan merupakan pendekatan yang dapat mempertingkatkan keupayaan dan keberkesanan pengajian tinggi agar setanding dengan sistem pengajian tinggi yang terbaik di dunia.

Dalam menjadikan UTeM sebagai hub pendidikan teknikal utama di Malaysia, strategi promosi dan pemasaran sama ada di peringkat nasional mahupun antarabangsa adalah penting bagi memastikan UTeM terus menjadi pilihan utama dan relevan sebagai destinasi pendidikan teknikal. Dalam usaha mempromosikan UTeM, kaedah serta mutu pendidikan teknikal, fasiliti pendidikan, servis yang ditawarkan serta kredibiliti tenaga akademik turut perlu diambil kira.

Strategi yang berkesan dalam pemasaran dan pendidikan adalah kritikal kerana tanpa strategi yang betul, kualiti pendidikan yang ditawarkan tidak dapat diterjemahkan dengan baik, seterusnya akan mengakibatkan kegagalan dalam menarik minat bakal pelajar untuk memilih UTeM sebagai destinasi pendidikan mereka. Sehubungan itu, UTeM melalui Pusat Antarabangsa UTeM (UIC) telah mengambil beberapa langkah proaktif bagi mempromosi serta memasarkan UTeM sebagai hub pendidikan teknikal di Malaysia. Cabaran seperti kawalan pergerakan serta penutupan sempadan antarabangsa ketika pandemik COVID-19 juga telah sedikit sebanyak merubah konsep pemasaran yang digunapakai sebelum ini. Walau bagaimanapun, cabaran-cabaran ini dapat diatasi dengan pelbagai pembaharuan serta penambahbaikan kreatif yang membawa kepada konsep pemasaran yang baharu. Antara strategi yang diambil oleh UTeM termasuklah melakukan aktiviti promosi di pameran-pameran pendidikan antarabangsa secara atas talian mahupun bersemuka, mengaktifkan program mobiliti dengan menjalankan aktiviti mobiliti secara atas talian ketika pandemik COVID-19, serta memperkukuhkan lagi hubungan antarabangsa dengan institusi-institusi pendidikan serta agensi-agensi pemasaran pendidikan.

2. STRATEGI PROMOSI

Aktiviti Promosi Atas Talian

Promosi pendidikan di pameran-pameran pendidikan merupakan inisiatif utama dalam strategi pemasaran UTeM. Penyertaan UTeM di pameran-pameran pendidikan antarabangsa telah

berjaya meningkatkan nama UTeM di pasaran global. Sepertimana maklum, pandemik COVID-19 telah merubah hampir keseluruhan sistem kehidupan warga dunia – cara berkomunikasi, cara berfikir, tingkah laku, kebiasaan atau tabiat. Ini termasuklah perubahan besar terhadap sistem pendidikan dan bidang-bidang yang berkaitan. Bagi mendepani cabaran pandemik ini, UTeM telah mengambil beberapa langkah dalam mempromosikan pendidikan di UTeM. Antaranya dengan menjalankan aktiviti promosi secara atas talian.

2022 China International Education Exhibition Tour (CIEET)

UTeM telah menyertai promosi atas talian secara langsung yang bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan UTeM di pasaran China selain mempromosikan program-program yang ditawarkan di UTeM serta mencari peluang kolaborasi dengan institusi-institusi pendidikan di China. Program promosi ini diadakan bersempena dengan *2022 China International Education Exhibition Tour (CIEET)*.

CIEET merupakan pameran pendidikan terbesar di China. Semenjak ianya diadakan pada tahun 1999, sebanyak 15 edisi CIEET telah berjaya dilakukan di 20 bandaraya di seluruh China. Dari segi penyertaan pula, sepanjang 12 tahun penganjuran, lebih dari 1300 institusi dari 30 negara telah menyertai di dalam pameran ini. Ini menunjukkan potensi yang besar dalam mempromosikan universiti melalui lapangan pameran pendidikan ini. Perkara penting yang boleh diambil melalui aktiviti ini adalah pihak Universiti perlu melihat profil sesuatu pameran sebelum menyertai sesebuah pameran pendidikan. Ini penting kerana penyertaan di dalam pameran pendidikan yang besar mampu menarik lebih minat pelajar berbanding pameran dalam skala yang lebih kecil. Pulangan hasil dari penyertaan di pameran pendidikan atas talian secara langsung ini diterjemahkan melalui jumlah tontonan, seterusnya menggambarkan tarikan minat terhadap sesuatu aktiviti promosi.



(a)

0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0

(b)

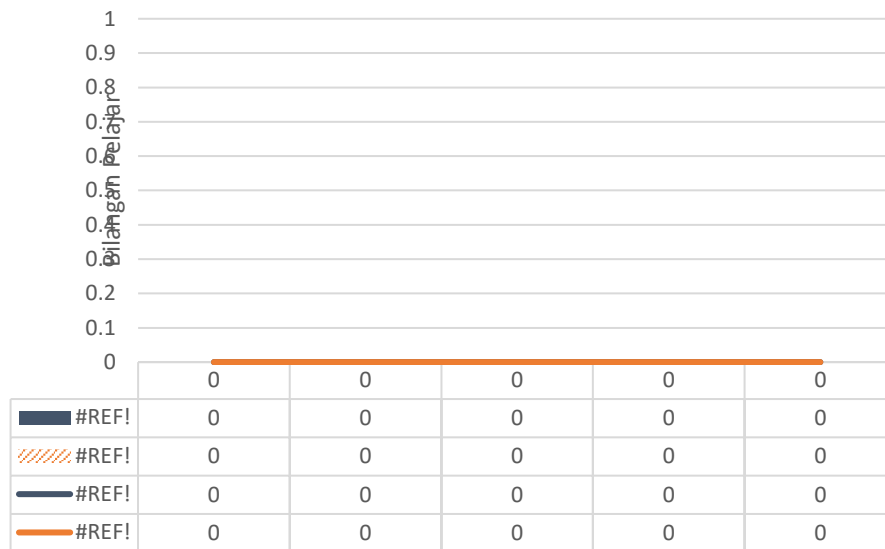
Rajah 2.1: (a) Sesi promosi atas talian secara langsung sempena 2022 China International Education Exhibition Tour (CIEET); (b) Jumlah tontonan sesi promosi atas talian secara langsung oleh 5 universiti Malaysia

Berdasarkan data yang diterima dari *Education Malaysia Beijing (EMB)*, **Rajah 2.1** menunjukkan sesi promosi atas talian secara langsung sempena CIEET dan jumlah tontonan sesi promosi atas talian secara langsung oleh 5 universiti di Malaysia. Secara keseluruhan, program promosi atas talian secara langsung CIEET pada tahun 2022 ini telah mendapat capaian tontonan sebanyak 10, 036 orang. Ini sekaligus menunjukkan prestasi pasaran pendidikan yang besar di China, dan langkah yang diambil bagi mempromosikan program-program pendidikan di pameran ini adalah suatu langkah yang tepat.

Mobiliti Atas Talian

Selain dari strategi pemasaran dan promosi secara langsung, keterlibatan pelajar UTeM di peringkat antarabangsa juga dilihat sebagai salah satu aktiviti mempromosikan Universiti secara tidak langsung. Kaedah pemasaran dan promosi secara tidak langsung ini mampu meningkatkan ketampakan (*visibility*) Universiti di peringkat global.

Seperti yang dinyatakan di atas, pandemik COVID-19 memberi kesan besar terhadap sistem sedia ada. Program mobiliti secara inbound atau outbound tidak terkecuali. Sekatan pergerakan di seluruh dunia, penutupan sempadan serta pemberhentian operasi penerbangan secara menyeluruh, antara faktor yang menyumbang ke arah pengurangan aktiviti mobiliti pelajar.



Rajah 2.2: Statistik pelajar mobiliti ‘inbound’ dan ‘outbound’ bagi mobiliti berkredit (C-) dan tanpa kredit (NC-) bagi tahun 2018 hingga 2022

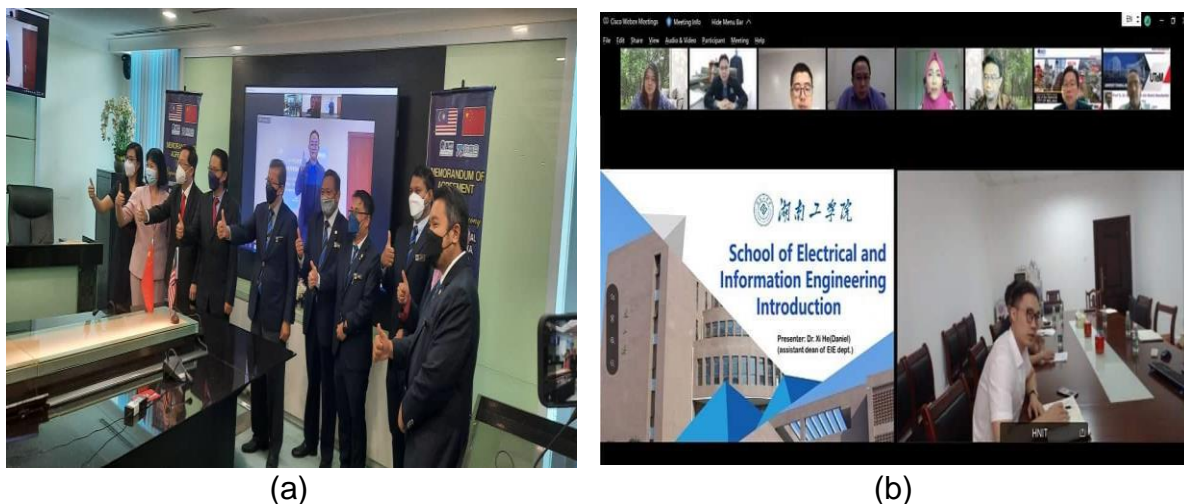
Namun begitu, aktiviti mobiliti secara maya atau atas talian merupakan solusi jangka pendek yang telah mengubah persepsi konvensional terhadap pelaksanaan aktiviti mobiliti. Malah, ianya telah diterima pakai oleh kebanyakan Universiti bagi memastikan aktiviti mobiliti dapat dijalankan. Tanpa mengubah konsep asal mobiliti pelajar, mobiliti atas talian tetap mengekalkan isi kandungan yang memberi pendedahan sepertimana yang dilakukan terhadap pelajar yang mengikuti secara bersemuka.

UTeM juga tidak ketinggalan dalam mempraktikkan aktiviti mobiliti secara atas talian ini. **Rajah 2.2** menunjukkan statistik pelajar yang mengikuti aktiviti mobiliti berkredit (C-) dan tanpa kredit (NC-). Sebagai makluman, aktiviti mobiliti secara atas talian telah berjaya dijalankan pada tahun 2021 dan 2022. Berdasarkan graf, terdapat pengurangan ketara bagi pelajar yang mengikuti aktiviti mobiliti berkredit bagi ‘inbound’ dan ‘outbound’. Walau bagaimanapun, bilangan pelajar yang mengikuti mobiliti tanpa kredit tetap menunjukkan bilangan yang konsisten walaupun ianya dijalankan secara atas talian. Ini menunjukkan penerimaan pelajar dan juga pihak Universti terhadap pembaharuan sistem mobiliti pasca pandemik.

Memperkukuhkan Hubungan Antarabangsa

Dalam mempromosikan sesebuah Universiti, keterlibatan Universiti tersebut di setiap peringkat, terutamanya di peringkat antarabangsa memainkan peranan yang bererti (*significant*). Hubungan antarabangsa ini dapat dijalin melalui aktiviti seperti pertukaran pelajar, staf, penerbitan bersama dan sebagainya. Ini dapat dilakukan dengan lebih sistematik

dan terjamin melalui pemeteraian (*seal*) memorandum persefahaman (MoU), memorandum perjanjian (MoA) atau surat hasrat kerjasama (LoI). Langkah menjalinkan hubungan dua hala bersama institusi antarabangsa dilihat sebagai satu platform penting dalam meningkatkan ketampakan (*visibility*) selain berperanan sebagai strategi mempromosikan Universiti di peringkat antarabangsa. Selain itu, kepentingan peranan agensi pemasaran pendidikan tidak dapat dinafikan. Peranan agensi ini dilihat sebagai penting dalam strategi pemasaran dan promosi sesebuah Universiti kerana selain dari peranan staf sedia ada, agensi-agensi pemasaran pendidikan ini akan bertindak sebagai penggerak kepada inisiatif pemasaran dan promosi Universiti.



Rajah 2.3: Majlis menandatangani (a) MoA bersama Zhongxing Education Management Co. Ltd; dan (b) MoU bersama Hunan Institute of Technology (HNIT)

Dalam hal ini, UTeM telah bergerak secara proaktif dalam menjalinkan kerjasama strategik dengan institusi-institusi serta agensi-agensi pemasaran pendidikan di peringkat antarabangsa. Sebagai contoh, satu MoA telah ditandatangani pada Januari 2022 di antara UTeM dan Zhongxing Education Management Co. Ltd, Wuxi (ZEM) untuk melaksanakan kerjasama strategic berimpak selama 10 tahun iaitu dari 2022 hingga 2032, sekaligus mengukuhkan kerjasama dua negara iaitu Malaysia dan China. Selain itu, UTeM juga telah menandatangani MoU bersama Hunan Institute of Technology (HNIT) selama 5 tahun dalam bidang kejuruteraan pembuatan (*Manufacturing Engineering*) (rujuk **Rajah 2.3**). Hubungan kerjasama ini dilihat dapat mempromosi tenaga kepakaran selain menggalakan berlakunya emindahan teknologi secara tidak langsung. Sebagai contoh lain, UTeM juga telah berkerjasama dengan konsortium Universiti Teknikal Malaysia (MTU) - Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP), Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia (UTHM), untuk mengadakan Forum Kerjasama Pendidikan (*Education Cooperation Forum*)

dengan Guizhou Institute of Technology (GIT) pada 24 Ogos 2022. Pada hari yang sama, UTeM bersama rakan universiti MTU telah menandatangani surat hasrat kerjasama (Lol) dengan GIT berkaitan Pendidikan Teknikal dan Latihan Vokasional (TVET) (rujuk **Rajah 2.4**).



Rajah 2.4: The second Malaysia -China (Guizhou) Education cooperation Forum (a); dan (b) Lol bersama Guizhou Institute of Technology (GIT)

Selain itu, UTeM turut bekerjasama dengan agensi penyelidikan seperti Southeast Asia Research Centre for Humanities and Association of Belt and Road Malaysia bagi menjayakan Belt and Road Initiative Symposium (BRIS). Program yang diadakan pada Ogos 2022 ini adalah bertujuan untuk membincangkan isu berkaitan peranan teknologi dalam merevolusikan industri pelancongan serta perjalanan Melaka sebagai salah satu destinasi pelancongan terkemuka dunia. Tetamu kehormat yang hadir adalah (H.E) Tang Rui, Menteri di Kedutaan Republik Rakyat China di Malaysia, Yang Berhormat Datuk Rais bin Datuk Wira Yasin, Exco Pendidikan dan Teknologi Negeri Melaka dan wakil dari Kedutaan Republik Rakyat China di Malaysia. Di majlis yang berasingan, UTeM turut menerima kunjungan hormat dari Education Malaysia Beijing (EMB) bagi mengeratkan lagi hubungan sedia ada. Lawatan serta kerjasama yang diadakan ini merupakan strategi pemasaran secara tidak langsung yang mempromosikan UTeM sebagai hub pendidikan teknikal di Malaysia.



(a)

(b)

Rajah 2.3: (a) Belt and road Initiative Symposium; dan (b) Kunjungan hormat Education Malaysia Beijing (EMB)

3. KESIMPULAN

Secara keseluruhannya, strategi promosi dan pemasaran terbahagi kepada strategi secara langsung dan tidak langsung. Kedua-dua strategi ini telah dijalankan bagi meningkatkan lagi ketampakan (visibility) disamping memperkasakan UTeM sebagai hub pendidikan teknikal di Malaysia. Strategi promosi dan pemasaran secara langsung dan tidak langsung seperti penyertaan ke pameran-pameran pendidikan di peringkat nasional dan antarabangsa, promosi secara atas talian, dan pemeteraian perjanjian di antara institusi dan agensi merupakan langkah yang diambil oleh UTeM bagi tujuan promosi dan pemasaran UTeM di peringkat antarabangsa.

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Strengthening International Collaboration through a Dynamic Initiative of the Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia (SALSA) Platform

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ABSTRACT

The internationalisation of higher education has been an important strategy in leaping knowledge dissemination and broadening the impacts to a larger community to increase visibility regionally and globally. Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia (SALSA) is an international cooperation platform for building research and training among the researchers, students, and industrialists between the three key founding members, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Malaysia, Institut Pertanian STIPER (INSTIPER), Indonesia and University of Los Banos (UPLB), Philippines. SALSA is envisioned to champion the scope of transforming a new generation of survival smallholders into agro-preneur by employing digitalisation approaches in supporting the sustainability of the tropical agri-food sectors in Southeast Asia. SALSA platform aims to highlight the international agenda in shaping research and development (R&D) programs linking multiple stakeholders in a cooperation platform. It is also to work on complex scientific questions underlying global agricultural issues. The idea of partnership platforms for research and training is involving the circular process of higher education, research, and innovation. In working in a collaborative platform, partners are established in different sizes and natures. Partners need the ability to be flexible and adaptable to the differences. Strengthening communication, would nurture good teamwork and maintain trust and commitment.

Keywords: Internationalisation strategy; sustainable development goals; collaborative platform; research and development; tropical agri-food sectors

1. INTRODUCTION

The internalisation of higher education has been an important strategy in leaping knowledge dissemination and broadening the impacts to a larger community to increase visibility regionally and globally. There are a lot of initiatives that could be planned and implemented. The international dimension of higher education has become more central on the agenda of international organisations and national governments, institutions of higher education and their representative bodies, student organisations and accreditation agencies (De Wit (2011). Sustainable Agricultural Landscapes in Southeast Asia (SALSA) is an international cooperation platform for building research and training between partners and researchers and

students. It is initially co-founded in 2017 by Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD), the University of Montpellier (UM), and the Association of Southeast Asian Institutions of Higher Learning (ASAIHL). In 2022, there are two other co-founders joined the platform, Institut Pertanian STIPER (INSTIPER), Indonesia and the University of Los Banos (UPLB), Philippines.

Primarily it is a global-scale initiative which focuses on the sustainability of major plantation sectors in Southeast Asia. This is in line with the current questions on the economic, social and environmental sustainability of tropical agri-food sectors, as this sector contributed USD 717 billion to the 2019 GDP across Indonesia, Thailand, Philippines and Vietnam [Food Industry Asia, 2021]. Besides the co-founding members believed, that it is the right time to address such issues by involving research, training, and development among stakeholders in a long-term partnership. The two main co-founders are UPM and CIRAD.

The objectives of the SALSA collaborative platform are to improve Southeast Asia's reputation in sustainable agricultural practices, to improve cooperation with other reputable research institutions, to improve smallholders' welfare and socio-economic status, and to strengthen network relations with local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The current scope of the collaboration involves transforming a new generation of survival smallholders into agri-preneur by employing digitalisation approaches.

Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) is an established university that strives to enhance and strengthen its research and development. It has taken various initiatives to complement its educational excellence and has entered various collaborative arrangements with other parties to enhance networking. UPM is the first university to offer an agriculture programme in Malaysia since its establishment in 1931. Besides, it is also the first in offering study programmes in bioscience, biotechnology, veterinary, food science and technology, and forestry. Given this array of disciplines, it becomes the primary choice of collaboration partners among international agencies.

Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products (INTROP) has been working with The French Agricultural Research Centre for International Development (CIRAD) since 2009 by hosting a CIRAD scientist as a Research Fellow. Throughout the past 13 years of working as partners through various programs and projects, we believe it is time to move to the next phase of collaboration involving more partners regionally.

CIRAD has initiated for many years the concept of multidisciplinary and multi-stakeholder platforms in partnerships at the regional level, which are specifically designed to address major issues of regional interest related to agricultural development. Such platforms are located in 23 settlements in tropical countries around the world and they are representing a worldwide

community of knowledge and innovation producers sharing means, expertise, decision process, activities and results and eventually contributing to the decision process among the policy-makers. Each platform carries a global research sector involving the international scientific community in the specific sector.

2. SALSA’s Initiatives

The SALSA platform aims to highlight the international agenda in shaping research and development (R&D) programmes linking multiple stakeholders in the cooperation platform. It is also to work on complex scientific questions underlying global agricultural issues. Among the strategies is to carry out networking and collaborative research between the stakeholders.

In 2015, United Nations has adopted a set of 17 goals to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all as part of a new sustainable development agenda. Each goal has specific targets to be achieved in the given timeline of 15 years. To achieve the goals, everyone has a role to play, government agencies, the private sector, and civil society.

The idea of partnership platforms for research and training is involving the circular process of higher education, research, and innovation as shown in Figure 1.0. It starts with a group of partners mainly in higher education institutions and research agencies, involving scientists, academics, students, and industrialists, who have the desire to work together and shared outlooks and objectives. It requires a long-term commitment to human resources, materials, and financial resources. The shared outlooks and objectives are within the scope of shared research themes emphasising the strengths of partners and opportunities that have been aimed to be reaped. Besides, the geographical area is important in setting up the partnership platforms as it affects the regional policies and political conditions. The critical mass of multiple competencies and activities is crucial in establishing a partnership platform (Rival, 2017).

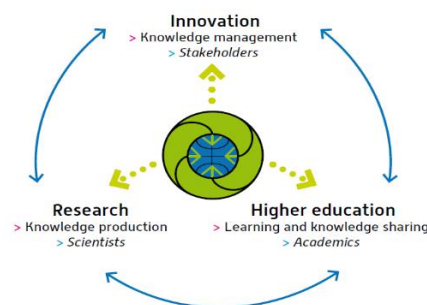


Figure 1: Research and training in the platform partnerships (Roda et al., 2018)

The common criterion of a partnership platform is involving an international community of thousands of knowledge producers (scientists, trainers, practitioners, civil servants, farmers, breeders, and others) cooperating within the research theme. The multiple stakeholders would

jointly be deciding to design and execute the action plan tailored to the platform. These exercises nurture shared confidence and respect for each other expertise as a result of often long-lasting collaborations in research and knowledge diffusion. Additionally, the platform needs the willingness to pool together the long-term, strengths to build a consistent capacity to tackle challenges for development at a national, regional and eventually, international scale (Rival, 2017). This includes the commitment to mobilise the partner's resources (human capital, funding, and logistics) to manage the platform and successfully implement the planned activities. Internationalisation is closer to the well-established tradition of international cooperation and mobility and the core values of quality and excellence (Van Vught et al., 2002).

In moving forward to carry out collaborative research, there are major priorities that need to be worked on. Mobilisation and concentration research strengths entail the specific research theme that the partners can work on. This is to ensure the experts who are working on the theme are capable and qualified. The second priority is to structure as organised research and training platforms or dynamic and flexible networks. This would determine the official communication channel and the informal path of interactions. The third priority is to design and construct the arrangement of multilateral agreements between the partners. It is to legally bind and protect the rights of all partners. Finally, mutual governance bodies must be created and subjected to periodical evaluations based on the agreed instruments (Roda et al. (2018)).

SALSA's Theme and Challenges

SALSA's research scope involves various pertinent issues, such as deforestation, transboundary haze, traceability in tropical commodities chains (i.e. palm oil, timber, coffee, cocoa), the credibility of sustainability standards, and lack of shared knowledge with the smallholder farmers. These issues reflect the agricultural concepts, for example, agricultural development versus conservation, intensive monoculture versus agroforestry, agri-industrial estates versus family farming, and performance versus resilience (Rival, 2017). Working with multiple stakeholders requires the concepts to be interchangeably connected in a complex network. It is demonstrated that research carried out by higher education has become a more respected area of theme-oriented, interdisciplinary involving various geographical areas than it was one or two decades ago. In the thematic priorities research, higher education responds strongly to actual developments and related public debates (Kehm & Teichler, 2007).

Each issue and concepts are to decipher territorial dynamics to understand and qualify the factors contributing to the issues. It is also requiring the operationalisation of ecological intensification efforts through sustainable and realistic agroecological practices. Besides, the

inclusivity of smallholders in the innovation pathways needs to be captured at a very early stage (Roda et al., 2018). All of this makes academic and vocational training on sustainable practices' fundamentals crucial.

International platform like SALSA is also facing a few challenges. All partners are established in different sizes and natures. They are cultured and moulded in certain ways of doing things. Working in a platform needs the ability to be flexible and adaptable to the differences. Strengthening communication, would nurture good teamwork and maintain trust and commitment. The partners should organise regular workshops in strengthening communication and teamwork. Figures 2.0 to 4.0 illustrate the brainstorming sessions between UPM, INSTIPER and UPLB.



Figure 2.0: Brainstorming session 1



Figure 3.0: Brainstorming session 2



Figure 4.0: Brainstorming session 3

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, SALSA is the collaboration platform that would be able to support INTROP and UPM in strengthening the internalisation strategies in the scope of transforming a new generation of survival smallholders into agri-preneur in employing digitalisation approaches in supporting the sustainability of the tropical agri-food sectors in Southeast Asia. It supports the research and development, and training activities among the partners and broadens the impacts to a larger group community.

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Pragmatic Marketing Strategies for a Small International Office

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ABSTRACT

To increase visibility of an institution and to recruit a growing number of international students, marketing and promotion of a university are vital. University Sultan Zainal Abidin is one of the youngest and smallest of the 20 public universities in Malaysia. It is also one of three Islamic public universities in the country. With limited resources in terms of a dedicated marketing team for internationalisation, the International Centre at UniSZA looks at marketing and promotion from a pragmatic perspective and has focused on 4 key areas that serve to increase international student enrollment at the institution. By supporting a well-functioning ecosystem on campus, collaborating with scholarship bodies, engaging with individual agents, and taking advantage of new opportunities, UniSZA has been able to recruit and maintain a healthy international student population. This in turn serves to support Malaysia's higher education internationalisation aspirations.

Keywords: Marketing; promotion; UniSZA; Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) is one of 20 public universities in Malaysia. It is one of the smallest in terms of size, and also one of the youngest (Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin 2022, January 1). Being small and new means that some of our operations are not yet at the same scale as other larger more established institutions of higher education. We do not have a dedicated marketing department that focuses on international student recruitment. Rather, it is the International Centre (IC), with a staff of seven, that strives to promote and market the university as best it can.

With limited staff, limited resources, and limited experience in marketing and promotion, the IC has to be creative in order to promote UniSZA to international students. IC tends to focus most of its promotional strategies on increasing international student enrollment.

This paper is a reflection of the things we actively do to increase international student enrollment at the institution. Have we been successful? The evidence shows we have. From being a smaller, newer institution, we have been able to maintain a 10% international student enrollment since 2018. Even with covid and travel restrictions in place throughout 2020 and 2021, we did not see a decline in our international student numbers. QS Asia ranking, for the specific item on international student enrollment, has placed UniSZA in the top 100 for the last three years. Among public universities in Malaysia, UniSZA has also consistently ranked near the top when looking at the international to local student ratio. Our current student population comes from over 40 different countries, with new nations joining the list each year. While a majority of our students come from the Middle East and Africa, Southeast Asia, East Asia and Central Asia are also important markets for us. And we are now seeing new students from Europe and North America too. This growing diversity of students and solid local to international student ratio are indicators that the marketing strategies we have embarked on are working.

The international Centre at UniSZA has worked closely with the university management in devising and implementing our overall strategic planning for the institution. UniSZA, being an Islamic university, places great emphasis on creating future proof graduates who are holistic, spiritual, and competent. We want our alumni to be able to adapt and thrive in a world which is volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, in short, a VUCA world. An important strategy for achieving this is to maintain a sustainable learning ecosystem with a strong international element. IC has a role to play here, especially in fulfilling international student enrollment. And this can best be done through promotion of the university, by realistically marketing who we are, and what we have to offer.

With a staff of seven at the International Centre, our resources are limited and we cannot rely heavily on traditional marketing techniques such as international education fairs, which require professional marketing plans, professional marketing materials, and dedicated marketing staff. With limited participation in overseas fairs, we have begun to look at different ways we can gain and maintain international students with the resources we have on hand.

This creativity has resulted in four areas IC has explored to ensure the university is able to distinguish itself from others in Malaysia. This in turn attracts international students to join our institution. These four areas which serve as marketing strategies include: one, ensuring the ecosystem at the institution remains responsive and conducive; two, that we work closely with overseas scholarship providers; three, that we work with agents who are competent and knowledgeable about our university; and four, that we take opportunities when they arise to participate in non-conventional ways of branding our university globally.

2. SUPPORTIVE ECOSYSTEM

Without a supportive ecosystem at the university, no matter how good your marketing materials might be, you will not be able to maintain a healthy international student population. When your new students arrive, if they are met with constant challenges that cannot be resolved, you will have difficulty retaining them. That is not to say challenges should never be experienced by students. However, by approaching challenges with a view to resolving them, we can best help our students. This supportive ecosystem results in creating an atmosphere or overall ambiance of attentiveness to students' needs. Indeed, ambiance has been reconsidered as a very important feature of university branding (Ali-Choudhury 2008). The International Centre has played a primary role in three main areas related to providing a conducive ecosystem for students. Friction is an idea explored by organizational psychologist Loran Nordgren where he advocates reducing obstacles as a way to succeed (Vendantam 2021). We at the International Centre try to reduce friction wherever it arises.

Applications

The application process needs to be simple, with clearly understood requirements, and consistent follow up and communication with the candidates. UniSZA has had a postgraduate online application system in place that is robust and reliable. But for undergraduates, IC has only just now completed the system that will serve to channel all undergraduate applications in an efficient and easy way. In doing so, we hope to support a more conducive ecosystem right from the start. Once admitted to UniSZA, students will have very few challenges in the classroom or with their supervisors. UniSZA was first established in 1980 as a state-run Islamic college, Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin (KUSZA). Since then, it has grown from a college which prided itself on maintaining close student-teacher relations, to a university that continues to embrace this culture. By supporting our candidates with an easy-to-use application system, and by maintaining a conducive learning environment, we are working to increase international student enrollment.

Accommodation

Outside of the classroom, student accommodation is another major ecosystem that needs to be in place to make the university conducive for studies. With accommodation on campus for 5,000 students, we have ensured all international undergraduate students are guaranteed on-

campus accommodation. Postgraduate international students are also provided with accommodation, but to a limited degree. However most, if not all postgraduate students who wish to stay on campus have been allowed to do so. These guarantees happen because the International Centre has maintained good relations with all university departments, looking at issues that arise from the broader perspective.

Language Courses

A third area IC has directly influenced the ecosystem at UniSZA is in establishing the university's only English proficiency language programme for international students, ELITE. With English language requirements a must for all of our students, the International Centre realised we could better promote UniSZA if we had an affordable, CEFR aligned, structured English language programme that would support applicants who lack the proper English language skills needed to succeed at university. ELITE serves two purposes, it enhances our ability to recruit more international students, and at the same time serves as income generation for the university.

A conducive ecosystem is certainly not limited to these three areas. The application process, easily available accommodation, and English language support services are just three examples where the International Centre plays a major role. By being directly involved in areas considered challenges, we have moved closer to reducing some friction for our students. In doing so, we hope to benefit through increased international student enrollment.

3. SCHOLARSHIP BODIES

In looking for new marketing opportunities we have found that engaging seriously with overseas scholarship providers is an important way to increase international student numbers and build a solid reputation in a foreign country. UniSZA has two examples that illustrate this.

First, in 2014 UniSZA began working with the state government of Kano, Nigeria. The government was looking for affordable education in an environment conducive to studies with limited distractions. We invited the delegation to visit UniSZA when they were in Malaysia surveying many universities. After a day of discussion and a tour of campus and the surrounding environment in Kuala Terengganu we were informed that the delegation liked the feel of the campus. They noted it was peaceful, Islamic, and our 11 faculties would meet the needs of their scholars. In the same year we received 120 master's students under full scholarship from Kano, Nigeria. The International Centre was busy from the very beginning of

the process, ensuring the applications were handled effectively, that visas were managed efficiently, and that accommodation met the needs of the newly arriving students. Constant communication with the sponsors, students and faculties was maintained throughout the study duration. All students graduated on time, and many returned to UniSZA for their PhD as self-sponsored students. Without ever holding any special promotional event in Kano, Nigeria, UniSZA has managed to maintain more than 120 full-time students from Nigeria since 2014.

Scholarship bodies provided UniSZA with a start in internationalisation. They are an important source of talented students, who are motivated, live full-time in Malaysia, and often have jobs waiting for them upon graduation. The scholarship body was happy with the university, and the students were happy with the university. Working closely with them afforded us a wonderful marketing opportunity. Our name is now well known in many parts of Nigeria, and as our alumni return home and work, our student enrollment has continued to grow from the region.

More recently we also began working closely with another government scholarship body in Nusa Tenggara Barat, Indonesia, LPPNTB. They approached Malaysia as one of their key destinations for their young scholars to do master's degrees in various fields. Malaysia became a country of choice because of its affordability and closeness to Indonesia allowing more scholars to be sponsored. There was an initial MoU signing between LPPNTB and many universities in Malaysia, but it soon became apparent to us that the signed documents and promotional materials alone would not be enough to have the name of our university stand out. The International Centre arrange for a visit to Lombok, Indonesia to meet with the LPPNTB staff and not only share information about UniSZA but answer all their questions as well. On that very day we secured one scholarship student who was waiting for admission to another institution. Over the next few months, we worked diligently with all enquiries, and followed up each and every application with the faculties to make sure communication lines were open both ways. Candidates could discuss with the faculty, and the faculty could advise the candidates what expertise the faculty had that could accommodate the needs of the students. In doing so, UniSZA secured 42 scholarship candidates from LPPNTB (Buletin UniSZA 2021, December). It must be mentioned again that scholarship candidates benefit the university too. They are dedicated, remain on campus full-time contributing to a more dynamic international environment for our local students, and are prolific publishers of academic articles too.

We have realised that a focused approach through working with scholarship bodies can be a very effective way to spend our time and resources, as the rewards in terms of student enrollment can be long lasting.

4. AGENT POLICY

In 2017 the International Centre set up UniSZA's first 'agent' policy for the institution. This policy was established to reward those students of ours who were actively recruiting new students based on word-of-mouth marketing. This form of marketing is often considered one of the best and most effective ways to promote a product or service, including higher education (Chandra 2022) (Karlíček 2010) (Alhakimi 2014). Several factors contributed to students promoting the university. First, our ecosystem was in fine working order. Students were happy with the quality of education they received, and the close relationship maintained between academics and students was strong. In addition, the university accommodation, support services, and affordable fees remained strong selling points. Add to that the location of the institution, near the beach in Terengganu, a place known for its beauty, safety, and friendliness, UniSZA students were able to promote our institution to their family and friends back home with confidence.

To reward these promotional efforts, IC worked out a payment scheme whereby any individual who applied to be an agent, would receive a simple one-time payment of RM500, RM600 and RM700 for individual undergraduate, master, and PhD students who registered. Most consumers tend to believe recommendations coming from their friends, and word-of-mouth promotion from our students served as a very strong promotion strategy. Again, we kept things simple with as little friction as possible, maintaining an efficient claim system for our agents. If the agents found it easy to work with us, they would bring in more students. The International Centre established the policy and is the final authority to approve the commission paid to all agents after student registration. In doing so, agents get their payment quickly. We have seen some of our international students who became our agents use this policy to cover the costs of their own education. Our agents are responsible for over 50% of all newly registered students each year, evidence that this policy works very well. In addition to recruiting students, agents also take on many tasks that would otherwise be done by staff at the International Centre. Agents play a role in communicating with the candidates while they are applying for their visa. Agents also keep in touch with the students they have recruited and sometimes bring to our attention areas the university can improve. In this way, agents not only recruit, but they also contribute to helping improve our role in facilitating higher quality education. This in turn leads to an increase in satisfaction among our students which supports continued word-of-mouth marketing.

The policy has proven to be so successful that we are now in the process of upgrading it, and improving the benefits offered to our agents for the hard work they continue to do in the name of UniSZA.

5. NEW OPPORTUNITIES

So far, we have looked at ways in which UniSZA has made an effort to increase international student numbers beyond what many consider to be traditional marketing techniques. We constantly strive to ensure our learning ecosystem is supportive of internationalisation, we work closely with select scholarship providers, and we reward individuals who recruit new students. These three methods have proven effective for us. What we will look at now are the new creative opportunities related to promotion and marketing that the International Centre is trying to explore. Higher education must pay attention to the 4 C's 21st Century Skills known as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication (Stauffer 2022), our office is no exception. We therefore have several creative examples to share, some are related to recruitment, and some are focused on raising awareness and branding our university internationally.

Our undergraduate target market is found among high school students, and our business is education. Combining these two, we see that running an international essay competition for high school students can be an opportunity to brand our institution both locally and internationally. For several years now the International Centre has co-organised an international English essay writing competition with cash and book prizes amounting to over RM8,000. The annual event has brought in thousands of entries from 43 countries. By being involved with this competition, not only is our university name spread throughout the world, but it affords us the opportunity to write to all diplomatic missions in Kuala Lumpur and promote our university. This simple act is an effective way of building new networks among education attachés and getting the name of our university known. For the most recent running of the competition in 2022, our marketing reached Germany (ASiS International Essay Writing Competition 2022). Will this effort result in direct recruitment of new students, who can say? But at the very least, it serves to brand our institution and allows us to reach out to high school students around the world.

UniSZA has always associated itself strongly with the community within which it operates. All our faculties share their expertise with local schools and local community organisations and our expertise is widely recognised. But our involvement is not limited to faculties alone. Our students play an important role in serving the community too. In 2021, at the height of COVID

related travel restrictions, the International Centre wanted to reach out to our international students and alumni and assist our students in carrying out community-based programmes of value in their home countries. We requested students and alumni to submit proposals on community projects they would do near their home. The university would provide them with RM5,000, and they were to complete their project over a period of several weeks. The projects would support the communities where our students lived and promote the good name of UniSZA in the process. Eight projects were selected in six countries including Nigeria, Palestine, Mauritius, Cambodia, Thailand and Indonesia (Buletin UniSZA 2021, April). Beyond the good will gesture, through the valuable assistance extended to the various communities in need, UniSZA was able to penetrate diverse areas around the world in a meaningful way with lasting results. This activity has strengthened a valuable and lasting relationship between our university, our students and alumni, and the international community. This is in keeping with our motto, 'Knowledge for the Benefit of Mankind'.

A third area we are experimenting with is related directly to student recruitment. We have seen in recent years a gap between what students submit as their research proposal in their applications and what faculties expect, particularly for postgraduate applicants. This gap can at times lead to delays in acceptance, or even a rejection. To avoid this, the International Centre has set up an one-day online seminar focused on proposal writing for postgraduate applicants. The aim of the seminar is to assist students interested in applying to UniSZA with their application process before they apply. The seminar is open to all who may be interested. Part of the seminar involves promoting the university as well. The seminar also is an avenue for us to better engage with our agents, as we can tailor the programme just for them, and we can run an event through the agents in the region they operate. This seminar is a cost effective and targeted way of reaching out to a very specific segment of the market who are either looking for a university in Malaysia to apply to, or are already considering UniSZA. Time will tell how effective we will be.

6. CONCLUSION

UniSZA has struggled with marketing and promotion owing to the limited resources and expertise available at the International Centre. However, over time, both creativity and necessity have allowed us to look at different ways to market our institution. In addition to the traditional promotional efforts through websites, education fairs, and online marketing, the International Centre at UniSZA has identified several strategies that have proven effective.

We first try our best to ensure the basic ecosystem at the university functions well. This begins with a trouble-free application process and includes support services like language proficiency courses and safe and affordable accommodation. Beyond the ecosystem, UniSZA focuses some of its resources on engaging with scholarship bodies overseas. By working closely with these agencies, we gain high quality international students who bring many benefits to our efforts at internationalisation. Our students and alumni are our best marketers. Their experience with the university is genuine, and their word-of-mouth marketing has proven to be most effective. In addition to these three strategies, we are constantly looking for new opportunities to promote the university internationally. Creativity is something we try to instill in our students and the International Centre attempts a creative approach too, especially when promoting the university. These new creative strategies involve co-organising international essay competitions, engaging with communities where our international students and alumni live, and conducting online seminars with potential applicants to the university. Some of these new strategies may not be as effective as others, but we will never know if we don't try. What we must always remember is that our efforts remain focused on supporting Malaysia's higher education internationalisation aspirations for the benefit of all.

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The Role of the International Centre in Enriching International Students' Experiences at UniSZA: Sharing Bounty of Memories with Heart and Soul

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ABSTRACT

In this fast-growing world, education is not spared either. People have been moving and studying abroad for some reasons to embark on their studies. Malaysia is one of the destinations in Asia as the chosen place for students to further their tertiary education. This paper starts by addressing some issues or reasons why people need to study overseas. In particular, this paper describes the roles that the office of International Centre (IC) in UniSZA need to play to cater to the need to their international students. The university wants their international students to get some valuable experiences and good time, personally and academically before they graduate and return to their country. Some problems are identified plaguing the international students in Malaysia, especially in UniSZA. At the same time, some efforts and endeavours have been made by the office of IC to facilitate the need of the international students. Method of the study is empirical based on the practices and activities done on and off the campus and their relations and impacts on the experiences they gain. The research finds that the office of IC has played its crucial role, albeit some constraints and limitation it has, to ensure the international students will enjoy their stay and study at UniSZA as a place with some good lasting memory in their minds. In summary, the office of UniSZA has given everything they have, with heart and soul, to make the students stay as a memorable one.

Keywords: International centre, international students, experiences, UniSZA, Malaysia

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia aspires to become an international education hub and more specifically on the trend of international students coming to Malaysia to pursue higher education. While internationalization of higher education is not a new concept to Malaysian higher education, the aspiration of becoming an international education hub was first articulated

in the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2007–2020, with the target of enrolling 200,000 international students by 2020. This target was further extended to 250,000 by 2025 in the Malaysia Education Blueprint (Higher Education) 2015–2025 (Abdullah, et.al, 2022).

The scholarly bias toward Western and English-speaking settings in the study of international education overlooks the experiences of international students in emerging education hubs in Asia. However, Malaysia, as one of the destinations for international students to further their studies in Asia, has a primary role in their choice of overseas university. More significant than the individual attributes of any one higher education institution, key social and cultural pull factors included the sense of Malaysia as a safe environment, shared cultural values with the students' own background, the financial benefits derived from low tuition fees and low cost of living, proximity to the students' home country as well as access to culturally important items such as halal and other dietary requirements. Understanding the significance of such national-level pull factors in study destination choice has important implications for the Malaysian government's strategy of competing in the global market for international students (Sing. JKN, et. Al, 2014).

According to the website of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2013), there are currently 20 public universities in Malaysia—5 of which are designated research universities, 4 comprehensive universities, and 11 focused universities. Consistent with their designation, the research universities focus on research, the focused universities concentrate on specific fields related to its establishment (e.g., technology, Muslim studies and location [Sarawak and Sabah]), while the comprehensive universities offer a variety of courses and fields of study. The research and focused universities aim for a ratio of 50% postgraduate and undergraduate students; the comprehensive universities aim for 70% undergraduate and 30% postgraduate students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2013).

Students from all over the world go across borders, continents, and oceans to study abroad in order to receive the greatest education possible. The fact is that studying abroad has a lot of great advantages, from enhancing one's social life to helping you find a good job. There are some reasons for studying abroad. It may seem odd to begin with this, but, firstly, it should be acknowledged that studying abroad isn't always simple. Going abroad to study has its special challenges, but it is all part of the adventure and fun. Before leaving their own country, one might have certain worries, but don't be alarmed—entirely that's normal. One of the things that makes the experience so useful and worthwhile is stepping outside of one's comfort zone.

Secondly, the opportunity to immerse oneself in a completely different environment is one of the main benefits of studying abroad for many foreign students. They will be able to meet people who have grown up in a different culture and see and do things they wouldn't imagine thanks to this enlightening trip. For instance, while living abroad, they will have the opportunity to experience new cuisine, listen to local music, participate in regional sports, and discover all that their host nation has to offer.

Thirdly, advancing one's professional chances is the primary motivation for earning a degree in the first place. Employers place a higher emphasis on graduates with foreign experience and education in today's globalised, interconnected society. Studying abroad enables them to improve their language skills, get an appreciation for diverse cultures, navigate the difficulties of living abroad, and broaden their perspective on the world. All of these qualities are sought after by contemporary employers when making employment decisions, and they will only grow more significant in the future.

Studying abroad is indeed a unique opportunity to see more of the world, which is itself a hugely rewarding and educational experience. There is no doubt that seeing other parts of the world will greatly affect one's character and worldview, and helps someone prepare for life in a global society.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In general, there are some purposes of studying abroad. Firstly, there is a perception that an international degree would enhance their job prospects and earning prospects. Besides, students value a foreign degree. Another factor is their desire to improve their language skills and to live in a different culture (Pirgaru, V., & Turcan, R. V. 2017).

Some other factors have also been found to influence student selection of a host country such as : knowledge and awareness of the host country in the students' home country, the level of referrals or personal recommendations that the study destination receives from parents, relatives, friends, and other 'gatekeepers' prior to making the final decision, cost issues include the cost of fees, living expenses, travel, and social costs, such as crime, safety, and racial discrimination, the environment, which is related to perceptions about the study "climate" in the destination country, as well as its physical climate and lifestyle, geographic proximity, which is related to the geographic (and time) proximity of the potential destination country to the student's country, and social links, which are related to whether a student has family or friends

living in the destination country and whether family and friends have studied there (Mazzarol, T., Kemp, S., and Savery, L., 1997).

There are some studies conducted in line with the international students' remarks and comments on Malaysia as their destination. A 2013 interview with 6 international students of the Linton University College in Malaysia found that the students can cope with the environment and academic life there. It is revealed that "the classroom teaching at LUC is very good and encouraging lecturers at LUC teach very well and make effective use of instructional material" and they prefer the practical and self-learning approach and "the education system in Malaysia is very easy compare to some developing countries system of education" (Olutokunbo, A. S., Ismail, I. A., & Suandi, T, 2013).

There are some citations reported from a few leading newspapers in the country citing the remarks from the international students in Malaysia. Firstly, "I chose to study at UCSI University because I wanted to experience Malaysia. Malaysia is one of the leading nations in electronics, particularly in the area of manufacturing I also wanted to experience new cultures that I would not be exposed to in Europe. Malaysia is a great place for foreign students when it comes to affordability. In France, everything is expensive. On average, apartment rentals are 500 euros (RM2,280) per month. A basic meal would cost around 3.30 euros (RM15) even at eateries on campus. A meal outside would be at least 6 euros (RM27). University fees here are also very attractive after taking into account the currency conversion rate" - Frederic Roussel, 24, exchange student in electrical and electronics engineering, UCSI University (The Star, 2022).

On the other hand, some African students are of the opinion that Malaysia is a conducive place to study where people can accept some diversity in culture. Since Malaysia houses various races and ethnicities, there is a "cultural tolerance". It is reported in Malay Mail that most international students in Malaysia are Africans in 2019. "The Africans don't feel like strangers here. There is cultural tolerance here. Lifestyle is more or less the same. The cost of education and cost of living is much cheaper in Malaysia compared to other parts of the world like United Kingdom, Australia or the US," he said (Malay Mail, 19 July 2019).

Some of the primary dimensions of international student connection vital to their academic and social experience and wellbeing have been identified as: connection with the content and process of teaching and learning, bonding between host teachers and international students, engagement with the university communities, interaction between domestic and international students and among international peers, integration into relevant social and professional networks, the host community, and the host society , and lastly connection with family and home communities (Tran, L. T, 2020).

On the other scenario, students have difficult adjustments due to the culture and language issue, consequently affecting their academic life. Interviews with postgraduate international students as well as academic and professional staff conducted by Singh and Jack (2021) revealed that students have problems “with grammar and sentence structure in their communications in English” and in “understanding information in Malay on campus noticeboards.” The language barrier also makes it hard for them to communicate in group work and with their supervisors. The differences in education systems also resulted in the international postgraduate students lacking research training and facing difficulties in understanding research methods in Malaysia. It is written that “a Yemeni student observed that research was never a part of his undergraduate or Master’s degrees in Yemen [and] Another student from Cambodia mentioned that only document analysis was primarily used for research in his home country.”

In another study, 10 international postgraduate students were interviewed with at least one year studying experience in Malaysia. Data were manually analyzed using thematic analysis which were used to understand participant experiences and develop themes using inductive approach. Analysis of the data revealed three major themes capturing the adjustment experiences of the study participants. These themes were classified through data analysis as: academic adjustment, psychological adjustment, and socio-cultural adjustment that are elaborated as follows. Academic adjustment was marked by the experiences and challenges related to the education process in Malaysian universities. From the psychological adjustment perspective, some students tend to feel stress and anxious when they encounter contrasted experiences in Malaysia with their home countries. For example, students from Iran feel more freedom and happiness in Malaysia while students from Africa tends to feel anxious especially talking about something related to politics or government. Socio-cultural adjustment refers to the students’ experiences that shaped or affected their social and cultural lives in Malaysia. For many, they were able to preserve their cultural practices and sustained positive relations with peers and with family and acquaintances. Others, however, reported incidents that caused unease due to perceived experiences of bias or discrimination. Several students experienced prejudice or racism from academic and non-academic staff as well as local students (Krauss, S.A, et.al, 2019).

3. THE ROLE OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, UNIVERSITI SULTAN ZAINAL ABIDIN (UNISZA) IN ENRICHING INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES ON AND OFF CAMPUS

Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA) started as Kolej Ugama Sultan Zainal Abidin (KUSZA). KUSZA was upgraded to a university status and became Universiti Darul Iman (UDM). UDM underwent a rebranding process on 14 May 2010 and became known as Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin (UniSZA). On November 29, 2013, a new UniSZA logo was introduced. UniSZA currently operates in three campuses, namely the Gong Badak Campus (Kuala Nerus) as the main campus, Medical Campus (Kuala Terengganu) and Besut Campus as well as operating a satellite office in Putrajaya. UniSZA is one of the youngest of the 20 public universities in Malaysia. It is one of three Islamic public universities in the country besides IIUM and USIM.

Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin is the right choice for many reasons. Located in one of the most beautiful parts of Malaysia, UniSZA offers affordable world-class education in a safe and conducive environment. Based on Islamic values, our education is open to all. Ranked 95 in Asia by QS for international student recruitment, UniSZA has been the first choice for thousands of international students coming from over 40 different countries. Our facilities are among the best. UniSZA is a public or government university operating the latest teaching hospital in the country. Our diverse science labs are comprehensive, complete, and equipped with the latest technology for our researchers and students. UniSZA academic staff are outstanding, with their international experience, many are leaders in their field. When choosing UniSZA, you are choosing excellence. Our lecturers put students first, where your needs are our priority.

The International Centre (IC) is responsible for assisting candidates interested in applying to UniSZA with their immigration needs. At the same time IC is also to answer any questions that people or applicant may have about the university. IC also works to serve their existing international students in a variety of ways including supporting their welfare while with UniSZA and ensuring their time at UniSZA meets all their needs. The International Centre (IC) is also responsible for all visa matters for UniSZA international students and their dependents. As one of the entities at the university which plays an important role as the front-runner dealing with the international students, the IC office and staff are demanded on giving their best service and concern towards all international students in many aspects, such as : their welfare, academic matters, social and cultural aspects as well as their self-development as individuals and as a group where the university tries to ensure that their studying time and experiences will be a rewarding one before they graduate and they will deem UniSZA as one of their most

memorable moment to cherish throughout their life time. The following aspects are elaborated as to give some clear pictures what the office of international centre (IC) in particular and the university in general have done to enrich the international students' experiences, both on and off campus.

Cultural, tradition, religious events, and involvement with local communities

Malaysia is known to have a variety of celebration every year, thanks to the rich culture and tradition. One of the most celebrated festival every year among the Muslim in Malaysia is the celebration of Eid-Mubarak or "Idul Fitri" that is celebrated among the Muslims after they fast for one full month during the month of Ramadhan according to the Islamic lunar calendar. The office of IC has played their role by hosting the Eid-celebration by inviting all international students to celebrate the special occasion by gathering on campus. Each and every student will be clad in their traditional costumes/attire for the celebration. In that scene, we can see a variety of unique and distinctive clothes from many countries with many designs and colors. In addition, they also bring their own countries' dishes to be shared with other students. Once the celebration on campus is over, the students are also encouraged to visit their friends rented house or hostel in order to get to know much closer on their respective culture. This activity has managed to build a good bond among international students at UniSZA.

Another noticeable event involving the international students is when our university held a special event in conjunction with the commemoration of the birth of the Prophet Muhammad. The program was held in the UniSZA's mosque and attended by almost all top management of the university, academic staff, non academic staff and students, both local and international. The event was very successful in forging close relations between international students and the top management of the university, academic staff and other fellow local students. It was in the event, where the Vice chancellor of UniSZA and Deputy vice chancellors got to know the international students more closely. On the other hands, the international students also felt that their presence and involvement in the event was appreciated, besides they also got to know the top management of the university.

On the other hands, for occasional time, some international students were also invited to attend a wedding event involving Malay bride and groom, and sometimes one of them is an international student who is married to a local person. This mixed – marriage has given some new perspectives for the international students on the culture and tradition of a wedding in Malaysia, especially the one that involves a Muslim couple.

In terms of a direct involvement of the international students with campus community and local community, it can be seen with their participation in some traditionally-arranged program in making special dishes in the Malay culture, known as “Lambuk and Syura” porridges. This porridge-making tradition is conducted every year in accordance to the Islamic lunar calendar. For this year, the international students were invited by the unisza mosque committee to join them in making “lambuk” porridge in the unisza mosque, together with other students and staff from all faculties and departments at UniSZA. They had the chance to know how the porridge was prepared, and at the same time they also got to know other people. Likewise, they were also invited to be involved in the process of making “Syura” porridge. This program was organized by the office of Deputy Vice Chancellor of Students Affairs involving the surrounding local communities. The event has given the international students on more exposure of the local community. They started to speak in the Malay language and the local community has accepted them happily.

Some events with the local community do not only involve religion-related matters, but also on environment awareness issues. There were two events that involved the international students where they participated in cleaning the areas of the community nearby. The first activity was known as “Beach Clean-up”, where a group of international students from a few countries had worked hand-in-hand with the local community in cleaning the beach. There were almost 30 international students and all staff from the IC office and the local community cleaned the beach at Seberang Takir fishing village. The second activity conducted by the international students was their involvement in “gotong-royong” or cleaning the environment in the village. They helped clean the surrounding areas, clogged water path, as well as cleaning the mosques. This activity has commanded some good appreciation and respects from the local community where all of them are highly welcome to perform their prayers in the mosque every day and they are no more regarded as “foreigners” due to their intense and sincere involvement in the local activities.

Last, but not least, there was an event where the international students were fully involved in helping victims of flood disasters in other states in Malaysia. The trip was organized by the university and the international students were fully committed to help the victims. This effort has commanded some praises from the university management and the flood victims themselves.

Trips and events for the international students to attend programs on and off the campus and mingle with other people/institutions

There are some trips attended by the international students that are also attended by other participants from other institutions, inside and outside of Terengganu. Those programs aim to give some more exposure and experiences for the international students to know other people or institutions in Malaysia. On 10 August 2022, there was a “Greet and Meet” with the minister of higher education in Kuala Lumpur where UniSZA has sent their international students there where UniSZA also had a Jordanian-themed booth. The students had the chance to mingle with the minister, the ministry officials and more importantly, they also met other delegates from other universities.

Another national-scale event was also attended by the international students when a seminar was held in Sungai Lembing, Pahang on Malay civilization. The program was attended by the regent of Pahang. On that occasion, the international students also had the chance to know more on the Malay civilization and got to know other participants from other institutions. Another conference has also just been held on 7 September 2022 in Kuala Terengganu on environmental issues. There were 18 international students involved in the event. The program has given them some ideas on the environmental issues in Terengganu, the place where they are staying at the moment.

On individual scene, there are some occasions where individuals from some countries have involved in a program in the state or national level. One Palestinian student lately has been involved in a parade in conjunction with the Malaysian 65th Independence Day in Kuala Terengganu. His presence has caught some eyes among the Malaysians present there. Another postgraduate student from Jordan has also been involved in a conference held by the Graduate school as a Master of Ceremony to help the organizer. Her presence has given some good impacts on herself, as well as from the perspective of the university where many students can join some activities held by the university. Another outstanding performance and involvement of the international student in the individual capacity is the participation of an international student in a Malay singing competition where he eventually became the winner. It is a testimony that our international students are well-accepted and it is a good jibe where a foreigner can sing perfectly a Malay song.

The office of IC has also involved the international students as well as the local students to be involved in a discussion with our university’s overseas partners. Just recently we have had an MoU signing with a German Muslim community where an Imam from a mosque in

Frankfurt in Germany has come to sign the MoU. Prior to the ceremony, there was a friendly dialogue between our international students with the imam, getting to know each other and more importantly, our students have also been imparted with some knowledge on the condition of Muslims living in Germany. The thought-sharing session has resulted in a good understanding among the Muslims in Malaysia, Germany and other countries.

Outdoor Activities/Nature

Terengganu is rich with natural beauty and diversity in their environment. Some international students do not have this natural beauty and they can find and enjoy them in Terengganu. The office of International Centre has arranged and conducted some trips to some places of interest in Terengganu. They were provided with buses and an itinerary was set by the IC office. For the ease and convenience of the trips, the students also need to pay a reasonable fees for their food, tickets.

The first trip we went was to Kenyir lake for birds-watching and boat-riding to the islands. We also conducted jungle trekking to see the richness of our natural resources and biodiversity in the forest. Apart from enjoying the scenery and fresh air along the voyage in the lake, the students were also taken to a Kelah sanctuary where a highly-protected species of fish called Kelah live in a secluded area of the lake. The students can play with the fish and that will give them some enjoyment and at the same time, they will also learn about conservation of a highly-endangered species that need stringent protection.

Another day trip organized to the international students is a city tour to Kuala Terengganu where they are introduced to some interesting places to visit such as the museum, local market, Chines temple, Hindhus temple, the old palace, Islamic Civilization Monuments, etc. besides visiting our newly launched attractions in Kuala Terengganu namely the draw-bridge and KTCC mall. This seightseeing trips will give the students some exposure on the diversity and richness of Kuala Terengganu as the capital city of Terengganu.

Students' Welfare

There are times where the international students are caught unaware in a situation where they badly need some help from the international office. The issues can involve health-related matters, visa matters or financial ones.

There are some cases involving our international students that need our attention and help. In one case, the student needs some transportation to the nearest hospital and the office

of IC needs to communicate with the hospital to ease the communication. Although the student has been covered with insurance, they also need to be accompanied to ease the communication with the hospital management. This matter can sometimes happen at night where the staff from the IC office has to go to the hospital to lend some help. Subsequently, the office of IC will make some follow up to check the student's condition once she/he has been discharged just to ensure that she/he is fine.

Another common case is involved visa-related matters and documentation for the students. There is a case that our student's passport is still with the immigration office due to some processes for a visa renewal. But due to some ad-hock and urgent matter, we need to expedite the process by going and appealing to the immigration since the student badly needs their passport because of some family matters. In this case, our staff at the IC office has to work around the clock to ensure that the student is helped to smoothen his journey back to his own country. Another case that the office of IC often encounters is when a newly arriving student is not given some clearance at the airport in Kuala Lumpur. For that case, we need to liaise with the EMGS officers-in charged the airport to help. But sometimes, we also need to liaise with and contact our satellite campus officer in Kuala Lumpur to give some help. This frequently happens at night, which is beyond our office hour. It is our duty to help our student to ensure their safety and subsequently they can continue their journey to our campus in Terengganu.

Sometimes, we also face some problems with international students who face some financial constraints. By right, and as a rule of thumb, being a student, they have to be financially-secured and have sufficient funds to support their basic needs such as : tuition fees, food, accommodation, etc. However, in some isolated cases there are some students who run out of money and they need to survive and on other occasion they need to pay for their tuition fees or examination fees before a viva voce. In this case, upon request by the student, we try to contact their faculties to inform his/her condition. If need be, we will help the students to see the office of Wakaf at the university with a reference letter/approval from the faculty. It is entirely up to the Wakaf office to evaluate and assess the student's condition whether he/she is entitled or not for some assistance. We, form the IC office, have put some extra efforts to channel the case to the concerned parties, namely the faculty and the office of Wakaf at the university.

Academic Assistance

We, at the office of IC, are aware that academic-related matters are not our main duty. However, there are cases where we need to get involved for the sake of the students in certain conditions. What is done by the IC office is for the sake of students' smooth-sailing study. One of the efforts done by the IC office is by arranging a meeting between students and their

faculties to discuss further in more details on the progress of the students' studies, the planning ahead and the expectations of the students to graduate. At the same time, the meeting is aimed at identifying some problems being faced by both the students and their supervisors to get some solution. This effort is done by the IC office, especially if it involves students who study under a sponsorship body, like the one we have at the moment from West Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia where they have sent 42 full-fledged scholarship students.

Another meeting initiative to help the students with their studies is by arranging a meeting between the IC office, the sponsoring body, the graduate school of UniSZA, bursary, faculties and their supervisors to update the progress of the students, rectifying some identified problems and subsequently try finding some solutions. This has been arranged by the IC office for the benefit of the students.

Student Recruitment

This is another type of involvement of UniSZA international students in increasing the enrolment of the international students to UniSZA. It is a fact that almost 50% of our students' enrolment comes from the agents, where most of them are our existing students and alumni. They have been so active in supplying some students. At the moment we have a figure over 1000 students every year and the figure is steady due to the strong support of our agents. The success stories of our students and alumni have attracted more students to register through words of mouths from these agents.

Global Community Heroes (for Graduates overseas)

There is a program initiated by the ministry where we need to involve our international students or alumni overseas to conduct some charitable work to help the local communities with some meaningful activities for the benefit of local people. The office of IC with the collaboration with the office of deputy vice chancellor for students affairs office has conducted a program called "Global community heroes" involving our students and alumni from six countries: Palestine, Thailand, Indonesia, Nigeria, Mauritius and Cambodia. They have come up with 8 community projects. The program has successfully put UniSZA in the world vicinity, especially in the countries where we have our students and alumni. In addition, the project shows our university's awareness on other countries, especially in helping the needy there.

Students Convenience for Help from the IC office & Resourcefulness in Helping students in general

The IC office of UniSZA is a small entity with 7 staff only to cater to over 1000 international students. However, this small office has managed to play its maximum role, albeit sometimes we have to work extra-mile to help the students. These dedicated 7 staff will work wholeheartedly to ensure the welfare and safety of the students.

The IC office often helps individuals or agents who want to bring in some students to unisza. We will try our best to give some needed information to facilitate the process of application and other related matters. We also sometimes get some requests from our alumni overseas to send their scroll upon graduation. We send them accordingly since we know that the scroll is very important for them in securing and applying for a job in their country. In other case, some students who love to spend their time to play football or futsal on campus, they find out that the lights are going out. They also come to our office and need some help to fix the lights. For that purpose, we take some gentle approaches by contacting and meeting the person in charge to expedite the process of fixing the lights.

In terms of accommodation matters, sometimes, our staff will give some helping hands to find a rented house for students who want to stay off campus, especially if they come with a family and dependents. Our resourcefulness in helping them has significantly eased their burden during their stay here. Even for some academic – related matters, the students need our help to liaise with their supervisor or the graduate school is there is any breakdown of communication among them.

In short, the office of international centre has to be ready and committed in giving some services to the international students, regardless of time and day, since the problems can come anytime unexpected. It is only with good intention to help ease their problem will be our drive to make them feel at home and feel attended.

4. CONCLUSION

In a borderless world nowadays, everyone has their own access to study, regardless of the location and time. There are some reasons why people prefer studying overseas to studying locally. The attractions of a new land or country, meeting new people, a prospect of a respected degree, securing good employment upon graduations, are some of the reasons why people venture and invest to study overseas.

UniSZA as one of the public universities in Malaysia is also one of the players in this education business. The awareness of a stiff competition from other universities has made UniSZA buck up, especially via its international office to give their very best service to their international students, be it for individual gain to develop themselves as a rounded person as well as making them successful in their academic journey by providing a conducive ecosystem in the university to facilitate the students in terms of their welfare, information-sharing, exposures to the local cultures, etc. thus making them a credible and rounded graduate once they complete their studies.

To sum up this paper, it reveals that the office of IC has been striving to help the international students to facilitate their studies. It is obvious that most of the international students at UniSZA have enjoyed some meaningful activities and gone through some interesting encounters with local cultures and tradition that can enrich their experiences as a person and subsequently can make a difference in their future life.

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The Meso-level Professionals Approaches to Internationalization of Higher Education at the MTU

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ABSTRACT

According to Jane Knight, in internationalizing higher education, it is best to practice the dynamic activity approach and process approach to internationalization. Giving attention to one approach alone could contribute to a less focused approach and could potentially hinder the institutions from receiving the maximum benefits of internationalization. This study is part of a larger research that explores the approaches to the internationalization of higher education in the experiences of meso-level professionals of a Malaysia Technical University (MTU, a pseudonym). A qualitative case study methodology is adopted to gain adequate information from the internationalization key actors of the institution through an in-depth interview and was analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings revealed that the major focus on internationalization from the perspective of meso-level professionals at MTU was viewed through a list of international activities which are the recruitment of international students, the execution of international programs, and the development of collaboration with international partners or organizations. This view represents the concept of the activity approach to internationalization per se. However, internationalization experts have long promoted the ideal practices of internationalization to be in a dynamic way between the activity approach and process approach. The result of this study offers the MTU valuable information on internationalization approaches to serve as a guideline in measuring the internationalization practices, strategies, and improvement of the institution.

Keywords: Internationalization of higher education; activity approach; process approach; meso-level professionals

1. INTRODUCTION

Internationalization is a familiar process in the higher educational setting. The terminology has evolved over the centuries and its interpretations sometimes brought certain confusion, especially regarding its purpose and importance. Knight (2004) suggested that the implementation of internationalization of higher education is through the integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into the setting of the institution. The concept introduced is the most relevant to be adopted at all levels of execution of internationalization in the current situation. It has been used widely and benchmarked by many countries in internationalizing their education including Malaysia (Sari & Faiz, 2020). It is because the concept was viewed as inclusive and holistic due to the inclusion of the identities of a nation and the culture of a country.

According to Knight (1994), every term present in internationalization introduces different types of concepts, hence, a comprehensive understanding of the key concept of internationalization is important for clarification of the process. Besides, lacking agreement on the concept itself also could hinder the institution in its internationalizing effort. In the end, it will reflect the development of an effective strategy and approaches to internationalizing the institution (Elkin, Farnsworth, & Templer, 2008). As to effectively advocate and achieve the ideal setting of internationalization, it is needed to identify and understand the concept to be adopted into the real setting of education of a country so that the maximum benefit of internationalization is reachable.

2. THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Over time, internationalization has become a broader and diversified concept (Knight & De Wit, 2018). In the higher educational setting, there are two ways of internationalization being conceptualized which are the activities approach and the process approach (Knight, 2004). The activities approach was viewed through a list of international activities that consist of three main elements of the international curriculum, international scholar and student exchange, and international technical and cooperation programs. On the other hand, the process approach is focusing on the efforts to integrate the international dimension into the teaching, research, and service functions of an institution (Knight, 1994).

There are also other approaches introduced over the centuries such as the national approach, institutional approach, competency approach and others (Knight, 1994; 2004; 2007). But the activities approach and process approach are found to be highly practiced in most higher education institutions globally (Sari & Faiz, 2020). Furthermore, every approaches are practiced by different types of institutions and were executed by different levels of actors who are involved in the whole process of internationalization.

The Activities Approach to Internationalization

The activities approach portrays internationalization through international activities such as curriculum, scholar and student exchange, and cooperation programs (Knight, 1994). This approach is similar to the concept of international education during its first appearance in the educational setting. It was viewed from the perspective of an emergence of a strategy for internationalization and action taken towards the policymaking of internationalization. Thus,

the activities approach is believed to force the top-down effect on internationalization as it was demonstrated at the national, sector and institutional levels (Knight, 2004). The actors at these levels are referred to as macro and meso-level professionals who view internationalization from the aspect of policies, rationales, funding, goals, benefits, outcomes, and impact (Knight, 2007).

However, Knight (2007) argued that the practice of the activity approach alone will cause the institutions more prone to isolate international activities from their daily operations which this could lead to a fragmented and irregular approach to internationalization. It can happen when the relationship, benefits, and effects that appeared between the activities are ignored. Besides, this approach is thought of as a highly abstract and complicated approach because of its processes of application (Sari & Faiz, 2020). Hence, the implementation of this approach may not successfully achieve the goals of internationalization because it does not take into consideration the effects and consequences of its application.

The Process Approach to Internationalization

The process approach is the process of integrating the international dimension or perspective into the major functions of the institution (Knight, 1994). This is where the international and intercultural dimensions were embedded into a wide range of activities, policies, and procedures of the institution because it needs to be centralized and sustained within the institution (Knight, 2004). Thus, this approach will focus more on the primary function of the institution which includes the curricular, extracurricular, and organizational aspects as this is where the real process of internationalization took place (Knight, 2007). This approach forces the top-down effect and bottom-up effect where it involves the actors from the meso-level professionals and individuals at the micro level.

According to (Knight, 2007), the process approach conveyed internationalization as an ongoing and continuous effort that took place at the institutional level. This approach is concerned with the institutional strategies to develop a practical mechanism for executing internationalization activities. As Sanderson (2008) and Faiz (2014) suggested that it is essential to take into consideration the purposes, practices and experiences of internationalization from the institutional level as well as from the individual level. It is because the focus on each layer of the process differs within the activities and emphasizes the experiences gained individually. The individuals involved in this approach include students, academic staff, and administrators of the department or offices.

The concept of internationalization is constantly undergoing an evolutionary and developmental in its quality (Knight, 2004). In recent years, most higher education institutions are leading towards internationalizing their institution to be in a position globally and head in line with other institutions. This effort required different approaches and strategies to accomplish internationalization. Yet, the focus is more likely on achieving the key performance indicators (KPIs) and standards set for internationalization (Sari & Faiz, 2020). In addition, the application of one approach alone in the internationalizing effort also could contribute to a less focused approach and hinder the institution from reaching the maximum level of internationalization (Knight, 2015).

Therefore, this research will further explore the nature of internationalization approaches in the experiences of the key actors of internationalization at the Malaysia Technical University (MTU). The findings then will extend a broader literature on the internationalization of higher education in improving the quality of higher education from the perspective of meso-level professionals who are the officers from the Chancellery Office, International Office, and three other international related offices as well as deans from four different faculties at MTU.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a qualitative case study methodology as to gain rich descriptive information on the internationalization of higher education at the MTU. Qualitative research is often defined as interpretive research where the interpretation is shaped by the participants' experiences, cultural values, and understanding as well as the background of those participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). This study explores the experiences of meso-level professionals in the internationalization of higher education as these experiences will provide an in-depth description of the phenomenon that can be obtained from the semi-structured interviews. Participants were purposively selected using specific criteria established to ensure that the participants chosen could provide rich, heuristic, and holistic information to address the research aim (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). All participants are provided with a set of interview documents as an initial overview of the study and confirmation of their detail's confidentiality. Then, the data were analyzed and were coded inductively where they were further gathered into central themes to the internationalization activity-process approach.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Initially, internationalization is purposely oriented to the institutional level only and it attempted to build the universality functions of an institution. Then, the evolution of internationalization throughout the centuries changed it into a process or a cycle of planned and spontaneous initiatives at both policy and program levels. Later, internationalization becomes fundamental in both the organizational structures and systems of the institutions and academic activities. Overall findings of this study, the meso-level professionals at MTU viewed the internationalization of higher education as a list of three main activities which are the recruitment of international students, the execution of international programs, and the development of collaboration with international partners and organizations. These activities framed the themes of the findings and resonate with the ‘activities approach’ stated by Knight (1994).

The Recruitment of International Students

The Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) targets 250,000 students from abroad to study in Malaysia in the year 2025. This target is delivered to public universities as their key performance indexes (KPIs). Public universities including MTU are expected to plan strategies and initiatives to support this national agenda. To support this agenda, each year international students at MTU it is targeted to increase by 200 international students from the previous year. According to Dean 2 of MTU, the initiative is to increase the number of international students and for this year about 1,000 students were targeted and became the key performance indexes (KPIs) for the university. For that reason, the number of international students has been the most common discussion delivered on internationalization as it is one of the major contributions to the income generation of the institution. For example, one of the chancellery officers stated that:

“...having internationalization into our shore is about having a long business, you know, plan is not a few days or a year or two years but it means a long term plan for the university.”

While the chancellery officer stated the above, Deans in the Faculty 1, 3 and 4 commented on the above claim that much of the concentration of the faculties was leading to efforts on international students’ recruitment. They commented:

“...as far as this office is concerned, normally this office focusing on the high in need matters with related to international students, the quality control and also the student affairs as well as many other important aspects, especially for postgraduate perspectives.” – Dean 1

“...one of the criteria is how many of the international students that collaborate or had to distribute to the faculty.” – Dean 3

“...the primary function of this faculty is to comply with the university’s aspiration. Firstly, to enroll more international students, postgraduate and undergraduate.” – Dean 4

Clearly, all deans have stated the above with a similar understanding of their responsibility to recruit more international students into their faculty. All faculties at MTU understand their requirement to put forward extra effort in recruiting international students as this has been one of the ways of income generation for the institution. In addition, it is also one of the primary functions of the faculty in complying with the university’s aspiration in achieving the targeted number of international students of the institution.

Most higher education institutions are exposed to decreased public funding and increased operational costs which mostly happened in an environment of increased responsibility and competition. This phenomenon has led to the kind of for-profit internationalization of higher education, especially when recruiting international students (Knight, 2004;2015). Although, there is an argument on the purposes of income generation of an institution, many have suggested that those incomes generated from international activities should be reinvested in the aspect of internationalization (Knight, 2004). For example, in an interview with the international officers, he said that,

“...by having international students, we can have a sustainable income because they pay more fees. Not only that, by having them here, we can create many opportunities, maybe we can be in the ranking because of international students”.

This idea is motivated by an accomplishment of a certain performance standard which includes the number of international students recruited by the institution that could secure the international visibility of the institution (Munusamy & Hashim, 2019). The international visibility can be seen through the ranking style system embarked by the institution. Although, this trend has been highly affected by the ways higher education institutions are naturally being projected (Knight, 2004). Yet, the motivation to be in the position of competitive ranking among the Malaysian institutions has been the aspiration for Malaysia in making the country an education hub of Southeast Asia (Sari & Faiz, 2020).

The Execution of International Programs

In the internationalization of higher education, the integration of international and intercultural dimensions into the service function of an institution through international programs contributes to the development of student skills, both local students and international students (Henard, Diamond & Roseveare, 2012). This process becomes central because it is associated with the organizational procedures, policy, support systems, and infrastructures that will facilitate the execution of international programs at MTU. An interview with the Dean of Faculty 1 indicated that:

“...in terms of internationalization, I would say that it is not being only captured through international students or international staff, but it also reflected through international programs, partnership and others.”

Thus, the implementation of international programs also has become one of the main KPIs of the internationalization of higher education at MTU. Meanwhile, an officer from the International Office argued that:

“...we can increase the students if we want to but, are we ready to support what they need? Because students, they come from different country, they come from different background. Of course, sometimes they think they want to be in the city but we are not in the city that is why we have to do something if we really want them to come.”

Yet, other participants do not comment on the above as they are more focused on the implementation of international programs, especially in the student and scholar exchange programs. For example, they indicated that:

“Beside the international students, which is the full time students. We also would like to have more mobility students or lecturers from other universities.” – Dean 2

“For academic purposes, the activity related to this internationalization is the mobility, student mobility.” – Dean 3

“I can see now that by having online program, teaching and learning online, a lot of students have enrolled to our program through mobility.” – Dean 4

Based on the above Deans' opinion, it shows that every faculty have made an effort in developing the international program, especially in mobility as to attract more international students and increase the visibility of the institution. Despite the challenges in developing the

mobility program, it is still feasible to promote the institution overseas just through the online program. All the deans are very welcome international students to their faculty and mobility is one of the kinds of international programs that help them in reaching to their KPIs.

It is appearing that mobility was the common program mentioned by the participants in relation to internationalization which was motivated by the KPIs set on international student recruitment. The increasing in this kind of program has been considered as an economic and political impact to the country because it has indirectly improved the financial stability on both sending and receiving countries (Knight, 2004). Despite many advantages of the mobility, many are still reluctant to mobile due to the current immigration, educational and social policy, and culture differences between countries involved (Kmiotek-Meier et. al., 2019). In some countries, the formation of mobility is not a regular program as its goal is commonly associated with international cooperation and exchange between the nations. Due to this, the implementation of the program become crucial for an institution in identifying the policies and practices of the countries involved prior to any involvement in mobility.

Developing Collaboration with International Partners and Organizations

Generally, many countries have made their involvement in the internationalization agenda predominantly as to improve the understanding and learning between the collaborating nations and partners (Munusamy & Hashim, 2019). The government is highly supports the initiative from the higher education institutions in developing and conducting the international programs with their partners in designated foreign countries (Kuroda, Sugimura, Kitamura, & Asada, 2019). The collaboration is expected to increase the number of students' exchange and strengthening the mutual understanding and cooperation with the international partners. Accordingly, this also happened in the MTU setting where internationalization has become the critical agenda for MTU to intensify its networking and collaboration with the higher education institutions globally. Although the MTU shows good achievements in establishing the collaboration between countries and partners around the world, one of the chancellery officers insisted that:

"I encouraged very much that our lecturers to have international collaboration, international projects. We need to have that sort of understanding among our lecturers or they themselves must understand, if we don't do that, then I don't think we could excel international."

Referring to the above claim, the statements relate to the above shows that the concentration of the academic staff at the faculty level leads to efforts in developing international collaboration with the rapport they have. For example, they indicated that:

“In collaboration with other universities, we have one collaboration with the university from Turkey. So, we are trying to do the inbound and outbound mobility but still in the process”.

– Dean 3

“...since his appointment as the head of the committee, he has done a lot of things which I have to praise him. I mean, he has done a lot of Mutual of Understandings (MOUs) and Mutual of Agreements (MOAs) with other universities, especially from Indonesia. So, we have a lot of MOU with foreign universities under the recognition of this committee.” – Dean 2

Based on the above comments, the Deans also considering in making networking with other partners or organizations to increase the faculty’s visibility and engagement. The deans of the faculties are very much encouraging their staff to create any collaboration or networking with the international partners or organizations that they have recognized with. This will allow the faculty as well as the institution itself to expand their collaboration with partners or organizations to the next level.

According to Henard, Diamond and Roseveare (2012) international networks among higher education institutions provide a platform to support and build trust with one another to continue efforts in internationalization. This kind of support can enable the national higher education system to deal with the complexities of a comprehensive internationalization effort. For example, an interview with the Director of international related office 3 indicated that:

“...industry partners and international players also looking for certain solution that they want us to solve. So, we might propose to them what are the solution that we can offer, if they are interested then we can have the engagement with that particular industries, international partners.”

An intensive networking through the cooperation and collaboration could led to a strong internationalization effort (Van der Wende, 2007) This was mentioned by the Director 1 of MTU that a high impact visit and collaboration is what a higher education institution should do in order to reach the global reputation and visibility. However, in achieving a greater internationalization, it needs a comprehensive cooperation and collaboration performed not only at the institutional level but also at the national level. Due to this reason, the development of collaboration with the international partners worldwide must considered the involvement of all rationales of internationalization as suggested by (Knight, 1994; 2004).

5. CONCLUSION

In internationalizing the higher education institutions, both forces of top-down (activity approach) and bottom-up (process approach) effect are important in determining the success of internationalization. It has been argued that the execution of internationalization need to take into consideration the purposes, practices, and experiences of internationalization at the institutional level as well as the individual level (Sanderson, 2008; Faiz, 2014). Therefore, it is necessary to shift the focus on activity approach and process approach to internationalization because it is how the ideal practices of internationalization should be (Knight, 2015). The findings revealed that the major focus on internationalization from the perspective of meso-level professionals at MTU was viewed through a list of international activities. This study has raised an important consideration that the international activities focused by meso-level professionals at MTU are the recruitment of international students, the execution of international programs, and the development of collaboration with international partners or organizations. While the implementation of internationalization of higher education must considered the practices of activity – process approach in the internationalization effort. This study calls for the importance of understanding the comprehensive of approaches to internationalization through the practices of activity – process approach with a dynamic relationship in between.

The study recommends that MTU to consider the experiences of individuals at the micro level as proposed by Sanderson (2008) to further explores the practices of internationalization of higher education at MTU. The practiced of the activity approach of internationalization at MTU have to be interconnected with the process approach as to reach the maximum benefits of internationalization as indicated by Knight (2015). Although the internationalization efforts at MTU has begun as early as in 2004, there is always spaces for MTU to make an improvement. It would be realistic if further study is conducted to explore the approaches to internationalization of higher education that being practice by the individuals at the micro level at MTU.

The findings of this study offer the MTU valuable information on ideal approaches to internationalization and serve as a guideline for measuring the internationalization practices, strategies, and improvement of the institution. It should also assist the MTU in developing a comprehensive policy of internationalization of the institution. At the same time, it would help Malaysia in achieving the targeted international students of 250,000 by the year 2025 as well as in becoming the international hub of higher education in this region.

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International Co-Authorship in Publications During and Succeeding PhD Study: A case study between Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka and Technical University of Denmark

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ABSTRACT

A significant number of local academicians were awarded opportunity to study abroad for their PhD. However, this figure is contradicted with the number of scientific articles published by one academician with his/her PhD supervisor. With the strict criteria being set by the Times Higher Education 2014 Ranking with regard to citations and internationalism, it is of great interest to strategize on the co-authorship work between local academicians and their foreign PhD supervisors. To illustrate this, a case study is presented in this paper involving an academia from Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM) and his former PhD supervisor from the Technical University of Denmark (DTU). A series of published journal and proceeding articles are listed, of which collaboratively written by both parties. The articles comprise the ones being published during and after PhD completion, with some awards achieved at the respective conferences. This case study is aimed to inspire other academicians in adapting the same strategy.

Keywords: International co-authorship; PhD abroad; research collaboration

1. INTRODUCTION

In 2019, a total of 73,314 Malaysian pursued their studied abroad across 56 countries, including Masters and PhD study. As one of the developing countries, Malaysia through the Ministry of Higher Education has been offering substantial amount of financial allocation in funding its academicians to write their PhD abroad (Wan, Kuzhabekova & Ispambetova, 2022). The two main sponsorship scheme, i.e., Bumiputera Academic Training Scheme (SLAB) and the Institutional Academic Training Scheme (SLAI) offers attractive package in funding the tuition fees, air tickets, insurance while also providing monthly allowance. Studying abroad closely engages Malaysian PhD candidates with international supervisors of one particular university, which opens the door for well-documented research collaboration and thus, joint publications.

In fact, globalization and enhanced scientific communication has also boosted up international research collaboration in the last decade, between the developed and developing

countries (Low, Kabir, Koh, & Sinnasamy, 2014). Not that improving the quality of published articles out of it, coverage and impact could also be significantly widen, which are strongly beneficial for authors coming from the developing countries. For instance, in India, Kundra and Kretschmer, (1999) and Basu (2000) have conducted studies focusing on the quality and quantity of Indian scientific publications and international research collaboration. Same goes for Colombia, which authors have demonstrated positive impact by international co-authorship on their local team productivity capacity (Ordóñez-Matamoros, Cozzens, & Garcia, 2010).

In Europe, scientist is motivated to go for international co-authorship for the sake of academic reputation, scientific recognition and opportunity for research funding (Kwiek, 2021). Meanwhile, the effect of international co-authorship can also be perceived on the citation impact for articles that are co-written by authors from old and young universities (Khor & Yu, 2016). The study shows that both did benefit from this kind of collaboration, as demonstrated in Figure 1. In this case, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka (UTeM), can be considered as a much younger university as it was established in 2000, as compared to Technical University of Denmark (DTU) that was established in 1829. In fact, DTU has just been ranked no. 104 in the world In QS World University Rankings 2023. For UTeM to get into the list, two important criteria to be taken into account are of course the number citations and internationalism [8]. It is therefore of great interest to strategize on how these two criteria can be scored; that is by utilizing the existing international network between UTeM academicians with their former PhD supervisors. This paper elaborates the effort that has been made by me (the main author) in jointly publishing a series of articles with my PhD supervisor, i.e., Clara Velte from DTU, during (from 2016 to 2019) and after completing my PhD.

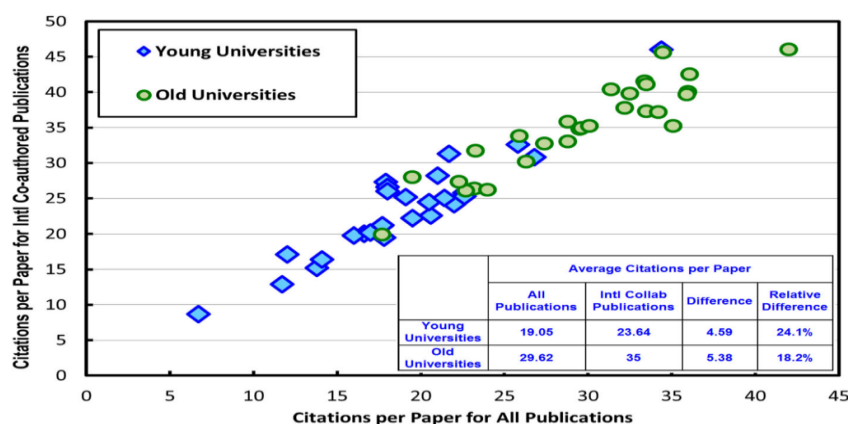


Figure 1: CPP for internationally co-authored publications against CPP for all publications for top young and old institutions in the Times Higher Education 2014 Ranking (Khor & Yu, 2016).

2. Collaborative writing and publications

At DTU, PhD candidates are given two options to either submitting their final written dissertation in terms of a complete monograph or compilation of either journal or proceeding articles (article-based PhD thesis). The latter is very typical for most of universities in the Scandinavian countries, where a comprehensive synopsis must be written on how each article relate to each other (Lee, 2010; Anderson & Okuda, 2019). Note that the included articles could also be the ones that have not been published, yet whether still under review or already in a complete manuscript. Being an academician myself, this article-based thesis appeared to be more tempting as I could boost up my research portfolio at the same time. At the time I submitted my thesis, I have successfully published two journal articles and one proceeding paper, together three complete manuscripts being ready for submission. The co-authorship publication also continued after I completed my study.

Co-authorship during PhD study

Not only being given opportunity to decide on the type of PhD dissertation I wanted to go for, my supervisor was also flexible in choosing which conference or journal to which I wanted to submit my research articles. I purposely chose to submit to local conference and journal in order to contribute to our national research scenario, especially when the submitted articles are jointly affiliated with a Danish institution, which is lacking in the overall pattern of co-authorship in Malaysia (Cheng, Hen, Tan & Fok, 2013).

We first published an article "Experimental Evaluation of Kolmogorov's $-5/3$ and $2/3$ Power Laws in the Developing Turbulent Round Jet" in the Journal of Advanced Research in Fluid Mechanics and Thermal Sciences (Yaacob, Schlander, Buchhave, & Velte, 2018), which is the same paper that I presented during the 1st International Symposium on Fluid Mechanics And Thermal Sciences held at Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology, Kuala Lumpur in May 2018. This SCOPUS-indexed publication cum our debut co-authorship since the first day of my PhD enrolment has really ignited our interest to publish more articles in the near future. Within the same month, I attended and presented another paper at another local conference, i.e., 1st UTM Emerging Scientists Conference 2018, organized by and held at UTM, Skudai. Our international co-authorship on this paper has vaguely contributed to my entitlement on the Best Oral Presenter (Physics track) during the closing ceremony. Most importantly, the same article "Mapping of the turbulent round jet developing region using a constant temperature anemometer (CTA)" has been published in the Malaysian Journal of

Fundamental and Applied Sciences Special Issue on Natural Sciences and Mathematics (ESCon 2018) (Yaacob, Schlender, Buchhave, & Marika Velte, 2018).

In the same year in November, my home university UTeM organized a conference, i.e., Symposium on Electrical, Mechatronics and Applied Science. Having some unpublished experimental data in hand, I took this opportunity to submit another paper with an intention to support my home university's event. Being tied up with time towards my final PhD deadline, I asked one of my co-authors, who was a DTU Master student under the same research group led by my supervisor, to fly to Melaka and present the paper on behalf of me. This time around, our paper "Validation of Improved Laser Doppler Anemometer (LDA) Based on the Fully Developed Turbulent Round Jet" (Yaacob, Schlender, Buchhave, & Velte, 2018), was announced to bring home The Best Paper Award by the organizer. Again, it shows how a collaborative writing could significantly contribute to the quality of a scientific article. This paper has later been published Proceedings of Symposium on Electrical, Mechatronics and Applied Science 2018 (SEMA'18).

Just after my thesis submission, while waiting for the viva date to be announced, I managed to present a poster "Turbulence Measurements in the Centerline Region of a Turbulent Round Jet Using a Software-Driven Laser Doppler System" at The 6th Mechanical Engineering Research Day (MERD'19). The poster presented part of my collaborative research work with my supervisor and luckily was announced to win one of the Best Poster Awards by the organizer. The two-page abstract submitted for this poster has then been published in the Proceedings of Mechanical Engineering Research Day 2019, which is indexed by WOS (Yaacob, Buchhave, & Velte, 2019). The full paper of this abstract "Statistical Description of the Turbulent Round Jet Developing Region Along Its Centerline" (Yaacob, Buchhave, & Velte, 2019) was then submitted and successfully published in Journal of Advanced Research in Fluid Mechanics and Thermal Sciences, indexed by SCOPUS.

Co-authorship after PhD study

As mentioned before, this collaborative writing does not halt at the end of my PhD journey in November 2019, especially when we still have some more ready manuscripts and unpublished data out of my experimental work. In 2020, we submitted a two-page abstract "Turbulence Measurements In The Developing Region of a Turbulent Round Jet Using a Software-Driven Laser Doppler System" (Yaacob, Schlender, Buchhave, & Velte 2020) to The 7th Mechanical Engineering Research Day 2020, organized by UTeM. The full paper of this "Mapping of

Energy Cascade in the Developing Region of a Turbulent Round Jet” (Yaacob, Buchhave, & Velte, 2022) was then submitted and successfully published in a SCOPUS-index journal, Evergreen in 2021.

In November 2021, we submitted and presented a two-page abstract to The 7th International Conference and Exhibition on Sustainable Energy and Advanced Materials (ICE-SEAM 2021). Though the paper elaborates and demonstrates only a small part of my whole PhD project, I was again announced as one the Best Presentation Award recipients during the closing ceremony event. This paper “Residence Times Representation of Turbulence Measurements by a Novel Laser Doppler System” (Yaacob, Schlander, Buchhave, & Velte, 2022) was then successfully published in Proceedings of the 7th International Conference and Exhibition on Sustainable Energy and Advanced Materials (ICE-SEAM 2021), which is part of Lecture Notes in Mechanical Engineering book series.

Both being academicians at our own home universities, my supervisor and I did also remotely extend our co-authorship work in writing non-technical / education-based articles succeeding my PhD study. Back when I was at DTU, I did assist my supervisor for couple of times in conducting experimental courses for DTU Masters and Bachelor students. We managed to submit and published three proceeding (Yaacob & Velte, 2019; 2020a; 2020b) and one SCOPUS-indexed journal articles (Yaacob & Velte, 2021). This synergetic collaboration bloomed with an offer for me to undergo an external research stay at DTU in August 2021 for two months. The experimental data collected during this period will be our next capital in writing more scientific articles in the near future.

3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this case study-based paper has highlighted the effort and initiatives made by the first author from an amateur university (UTeM) in getting engaged with a superior researcher from one of the world top universities (DTU) in terms of co-authorship of a series of journal and proceeding articles. It shows that how a regular PhD student-supervisor rapport can be elevated into a fruitful international collaboration even succeeding a PhD study. It is recommended that similar strategy could be implied to other academicians pursuing their PhD study abroad, especially at the high ranked universities worldwide.

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Inovasi Perkhidmatan dan Pengurusan Pas Pelajar Antarabangsa: Amalan Terbaik di UTM International

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ABSTRAK

Pengantarabangsaan kini telah menjadi salah satu agenda penting dalam Institusi Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) bagi membolehkannya bersaing di peringkat global. Untuk kekal berdaya saing, penerapan budaya inovasi dalam sistem penyampaian dan perkhidmatan sokongan merupakan salah satu usaha yang perlu dilaksanakan supaya sentiasa berada pada tahap berprestasi tinggi terutamanya apabila jumlah enrolmen pelajar antarabangsa semakin meningkat di IPT. Pelbagai isu dan cabaran perlu dihadapi dalam memastikan tahap kepuasan pelanggan dipenuhi. UTM International (UTM-i) sentiasa komited dalam memberikan penyampaian perkhidmatan terbaik kepada para pelajar antarabangsa. Persoalan sejauh manakah perkhidmatan yang diberikan khususnya dalam urusan pas pelajar benar-benar memberikan tahap kepuasan yang tinggi kepada pelajar antarabangsa UTM dan apakah inisiatif dan penambahbaikan yang dilakukan untuk memastikan tahap perkhidmatan berprestasi tinggi perlu diperhalusi. Sehubungan dengan itu, UTM-i telah melibatkan diri dalam soal selidik *International Student Barometer Survey Autumn 2017 dan 2018* yang menilai pengalaman pelajar dari aspek lima (5) komponen utama iaitu pengalaman ketibaan, pengalaman pembelajaran, hubungan, pengalaman kehidupan di Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) dan pengalaman perkhidmatan sokongan. Hasil dari soal selidik ini juga, UTM-i telah melaksanakan beberapa inisiatif dan penambahbaikan dalam perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pas pelajar. Justeru, kertas kerja ini merupakan satu bentuk perkongsian pengalaman terdahulu dan amalan terbaik berkenaan usaha UTM-i dalam menambahbaik sistem perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pas pelajar antarabangsa.

Kata kunci: Inovasi; pengantarabangsaan; kepuasan pelanggan; perkhidmatan; amalan terbaik

1. PENGENALAN

Penerapan budaya inovasi dalam organisasi telah menjadi salah satu agenda penting selaras dengan perubahan persekitaran yang dinamik dan semakin mencabar. Inovasi umumnya merujuk kepada kebolehan untuk mengaplikasikan penyelesaian kreatif kepada masalah dan peluang untuk menghasilkan nilai tambah yang lebih tinggi dan ianya boleh berbentuk produk, perkhidmatan, proses ataupun teknologi. Ujang (2010) dalam buku beliau *Budaya Inovasi: Prasyarat Model Baru Ekonomi*, inovasi menjurus kepada penambahbaikan dan penyesuaian kepada pemikiran, idea yang sedia ada sehingga memberi nilai tambah baharu yang boleh diguna pakai dan dimanfaatkan. Cabaran masa kini termasuk kesan pandemik Covid-19

memerlukan Universiti beroperasi dalam persekitaran pendidikan tinggi global yang semakin sengit dan perlu mencapai kecemerlangan dalam keadaan peruntukan yang semakin berkurangan menyebabkan agenda inovasi Universiti perlu dipertingkatkan. Menurut Yahya et al. (2009), tiga elemen utama iaitu komitmen pengurusan, langkah ke arah inovasi dan nadi inovasi seharusnya berinteraksi untuk mewujudkan inovasi perkhidmatan.

Sebagaimana umum tahu, pengantarabangsaan kini telah menjadi salah satu agenda penting dalam Institusi Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) bagi membolehkannya bersaing di peringkat global. Selaras dengan Pelan Strategik Pengajian Tinggi Negara (PSPTN), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) berusaha untuk mengintegrasikan dimensi pengantarabangsaan dalam ketiga-tiga elemen utama pendidikan tinggi iaitu pembelajaran dan pengajaran, penyelidikan dan perkhidmatan agar ianya kelak menjadi sebuah Universiti yang diiktiraf di peringkat antarabangsa. Knight (1999) turut berpendapat bahawa konsep pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi merangkumi fungsi universiti, pengajaran dan pembelajaran serta penyelidikan. Kajian Elkin et al. (2008) pula menunjukkan bahawa tumpuan strategik yang diberikan terhadap pengantarabangsaan akan mempengaruhi tahap pencapaian pengantarabangsaan yang diinginkan.

Antara usaha UTM untuk memperkukuhkan pengantarabangsaan adalah meningkatkan bilangan pelajar antarabangsa. Bilangan enrolmen di UTM kini mencecah 5,079 orang pada sesi 2021/2022. Pihak Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi (KPT) turut mensasarkan jumlah enrolmen seramai 250,000 pelajar antarabangsa menjelang tahun 2025. Selaras dengan peningkatan ini, UTM-i turut berusaha untuk memastikan sistem penyampaian dan perkhidmatan sokongan yang disediakan berada pada tahap yang berprestasi tinggi. Mohd Rashid et al. (2015) turut menyatakan bahawa pelajar akan kurang membuat perbandingan dan mengalami ketidakpuasan sekiranya penyediaan infrastruktur yang bagus dapat disediakan oleh institusi pengajian.

UTM-i sentiasa komited dalam memberikan penyampaian terbaik dari segi perkhidmatan kepada para pelajar antarabangsa di UTM. Namun sejauh manakah perkhidmatan yang diberikan khususnya dalam urusan pas pelajar benar-benar memberikan tahap kepuasan kepada pelajar antarabangsa UTM? Apakah inisiatif dan penambahbaikan yang dilakukan untuk memastikan tahap perkhidmatan berprestasi tinggi? Menurut Suryandari dan Husin (2018), kualiti perkhidmatan dan kepuasan pelanggan mempunyai perkaitan yang jelas dan jurang akan wujud sekiranya terdapat rasa ketidakpuasan terhadap apa yang telah diterima. Melalui hasil kajian Othman et.al (2017), beliau menyatakan bahawa jurang jangkaan pelanggan dan prestasi semasa dapat dikurangkan sekiranya kecekapan perkhidmatan diperbaiki. Justeru, kertas kerja ini merupakan satu bentuk perkongsian pengalaman dan

amalan terbaik berkenaan usaha Pejabat UTM-i dalam menambahbaik sistem perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pas pelajar antarabangsa.

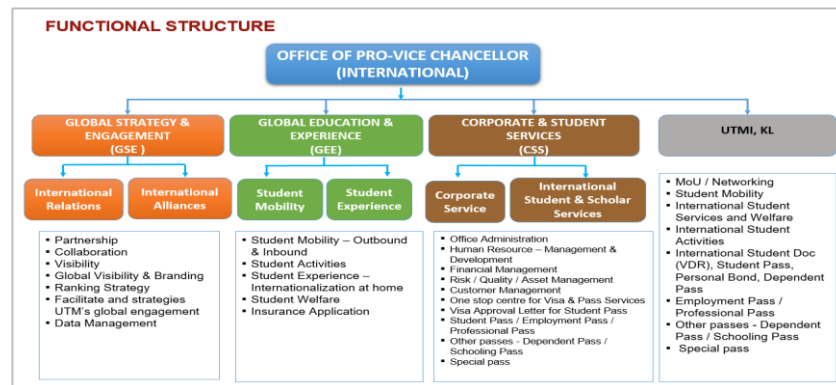
2. LATAR BELAKANG

UTM-i merupakan satu bahagian di bawah Jabatan Canseleri, UTM yang bertanggungjawab dalam pengurusan hal ehwal pengantarabangsaan UTM dan mempunyai kekuatan sumber manusia seramai 54 orang. Selaras dengan visi dan misi Universiti, visi UTM-i adalah *“to be a leading and referred international centre with a worldwide standing that drives UTM to be a global university with excellent reputation”* manakala misi pula adalah *“to expand UTM’s global reach and prominence, facilitate transformative global education and cross-cultural learning opportunities, and support the inclusion and wellbeing of its local and international communities.”* Bagi memperkukuhkan imej di peringkat antarabangsa, *tagline* UTM-i *“Bring UTM to the World, Bring the World to UTM”* telah diperkenalkan.

Struktur organisasi UTM-i terbahagi kepada 4 bahagian iaitu:

- i. Global Education & Experience (GEE)
 - a. Unit Student Mobility (SM)
 - b. Unit Student Experience (SE)
- ii. Global Strategy & Engagement (GSE)
 - a. Unit International Relations (IR)
 - b. Unit International Alliances (IA)
- iii. Corporate & Student Services (CSS)
 - a. Unit Corporate Service (CS)
 - b. Unit International Student & Scholar Services (I3S)
- iv. UTM International Kuala Lumpur Campus (UTM-i KL)

Struktur fungsi UTM-i adalah seperti di Rajah 1 di bawah.



Rajah 1: Struktur Fungsi UTM-i

Secara umumnya, pengurusan pelajar antarabangsa di UTM-i merangkumi pengurusan aktiviti pelajar, hal ehwal kebajikan dan pengurusan pas pelajar bagi memastikan mereka mendapat pengalaman kampus yang menyeluruh. Unit *International Student & Scholar Services (ISS)* adalah merupakan salah satu unit di bawah bahagian *Corporate & Student Services (CSS)* yang bertanggungjawab membantu para pelajar, staf dan tanggungan antarabangsa untuk memohon pas dari wakil yang dilantik oleh Kementerian Pelajaran Tinggi (KPT), iaitu *Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS)*, dan Jabatan Imigresen Malaysia (JIM).

3. METODOLOGI KAJIAN

Kertas kerja ini bertujuan untuk berkongsi pengalaman mengenai hasil soal selidik terhadap pelajar UTM melalui *International Student Barometer Survey Autumn 2017 (ISBS)* telah dilaksanakan pada tahun 2017 dan 2018. Soal selidik ini merupakan suatu kajian menyeluruh terhadap persepsi dan tanggapan pelajar antarabangsa sepanjang mereka berada di UTM dengan kualiti perkhidmatan serta pembelajaran di kampus serta mengkaji pengalaman mereka sepanjang berada di kampus. Sebanyak 129 universiti dari 17 negara telah menggunakan platform ini dan seramai 110,386 pelajar antarabangsa dan 85,220 pelajar domestik telah mengambil bahagian dalam ISBS sesi Autumn 2017.

Soal selidik ini menilai pengalaman pelajar dari segi 5 komponen utama seperti berikut:

1. Pengalaman Ketibaan (Arrival Experience)
2. Pengalaman Pembelajaran (Learning Experience)
3. Hubungan (Engagement)
4. Pengalaman Kehidupan di UTM (Living Experience)

5. Pengalaman Perkhidmatan Sokongan (Support Experience)

4. KAJIAN LEPAS

Secara keseluruhan, analisa soal selidik menunjukkan seramai 974 orang responden UTM telah terlibat dalam kajian ini di mana 489 orang (50%) adalah terdiri dari pelajar antarabangsa UTM. Analisa soal selidik menunjukkan bahawa tahap kepuasan keseluruhan pelajar adalah 83% berbanding dengan 91% pencapaian internasional dan 87% pencapaian nasional. Didapati juga hanya 77% pelajar akan mengesyorkan atau mempromosikan UTM kepada orang luar. Prestasi UTM dalam kesemua lima (5) komponen secara berasingan juga rendah berbanding pencapaian internasional mahupun nasional. Tahap kepuasan pelajar untuk setiap komponen adalah seperti Rajah 2 di bawah:

	Global ISBSB	Malaysia ISBSB	UTM
Recommendation	80%	73%	77%
% Satisfied			
	Global ISBSB	Malaysia ISBSB	UTM
Overall Satisfaction	91%	87%	83%
Arrival Overall	90%	90%	77%
Learning Overall	87%	87%	85%
Living Overall	87%	84%	74%
Support Overall	88%	85%	79%
Happiness	91%	88%	85%

Rajah 2: Tahap Kepuasan Pelanggan Mengikut Komponen

Berdasarkan dapatan ini, pihak UTM-i perlu meningkatkan tahap perkhidmatan yang ditawarkan bagi tiga komponen iaitu Pengalaman Ketibaan, Pengalaman Kehidupan di UTM dan Pengalaman Perkhidmatan Sokongan. Susulan dari itu, pihak UTM-i telah menyertai satu lagi soal selidik ISBS pada tahun 2018 berdasarkan komponen yang sama. Seramai 195,182 pelajar antarabangsa melibatkan 212 universiti dari 21 negara telah mengambil bahagian dalam soal selidik ini.

i-graduate		Arrival trends – international students		
Elements	2017	2018	First year vs 2018	
Internet access	41%	58%	10%	
Registration	74%	88%	15%	
Welcome	53%	64%	12%	
Arrival Overall	73%	81%	9%	
Formal welcome	77%	85%	8%	
Local orientation	71%	79%	8%	
Bank account	50%	57%	7%	
Accommodation Office	70%	77%	7%	
Host friends	67%	73%	6%	
First night	60%	65%	5%	
Study sense	79%	83%	4%	
Home friends	90%	93%	3%	
Other friends	89%	90%	1%	
Accommodation condition	55%	55%	0%	
Finance Office	85%	85%	0%	
Social activities	85%	83%	-1%	
Meeting academic staff	87%	84%	-2%	

Rajah 3: Perbandingan Pengalaman Ketibaan 2017 - 2018 (Arrival Experience)

Perbandingan pengalaman ketibaan untuk tempoh dua tahun (2017 – 2018) pada Rajah 3 menunjukkan majoriti terdapat peningkatan peratusan kepuasan pelanggan dalam aspek seperti akses internet, pendaftaran, selamat datang (*welcome*), ketibaan secara keseluruhan (*arrival overall*), selamat datang secara rasmi (*formal welcome*) dan orientasi.

i-graduate		Living trends – international students		
Elements	2017	2018	First year vs 2018	
Visa advice	56%	74%	18%	
Transport links institution	57%	75%	18%	
Internet access	47%	58%	12%	
Host culture	78%	88%	8%	
Good contacts	73%	81%	8%	
Transport links	53%	60%	7%	
Banking money	20%	27%	7%	
Accommodation cost	47%	53%	6%	
Social activities	77%	83%	6%	
Financial support	38%	43%	6%	
Other friends	88%	93%	5%	
Good place to be	84%	89%	5%	
Host friends	65%	70%	4%	
Living Overall	72%	76%	4%	
Safety	89%	93%	3%	
Campus buildings	78%	79%	2%	
Campus environment	80%	80%	2%	
Sport facilities	79%	81%	2%	
Worship facilities	90%	91%	1%	
Social facilities	70%	72%	1%	
Home friends	92%	93%	1%	
Accommodation quality	58%	57%	1%	
Eco-friendly attitude	88%	87%	-1%	
Living cost	78%	77%	-1%	

Rajah 4: Perbandingan Pengalaman Kehidupan di UTM

Manakala bagi perbandingan kehidupan di UTM pula, hasil dapatan soal selidik di Rajah 4 menunjukkan majoriti pelajar antarabangsa berpuas hati dengan perkhidmatan yang disediakan terutamanya peningkatan sebanyak 18% dalam aspek penasihat visa (*visa advice*).

i-graduate Support trends – international students		UTM	
Elements	2017	2018	First year vs 2018
International Office	64%	84%	20%
Student Advisory	78%	89%	11%
Support Overall	75%	82%	7%
Residential Assistants	75%	81%	6%
Accommodation Office	68%	74%	6%
Students' Union	88%	93%	5%
Catering	69%	73%	4%
Graduate School**	95%	96%	1%
Clubs/Societies	90%	90%	0%
Health Centre	88%	88%	0%
IT Support	87%	86%	-1%
Finance Office	89%	86%	-3%
Counselling	91%	83%	-8%

Rajah 5: Perbandingan Pengalaman Perkhidmatan Sokongan

Komponen yang terakhir iaitu perbandingan pengalaman perkhidmatan sokongan seperti di Rajah 5 menunjukkan UTM-i telah menunjukkan peningkatan dalam tahap perkhidmatan yang ditawarkan kepada pelajar antarabangsa.

Berdasar dapatan ini, dapatlah dirumuskan bahawa peningkatan tahap kepuasan pelanggan dalam komponen-komponen di atas adalah selaras dengan usaha inovasi dan penambahbaikan yang dilaksanakan oleh UTM-i terutamanya dalam perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pas pelajar antarabangsa.

5. PERKONGSIAN AMALAN TERBAIK DI UTM-i DALAM PERKHIDMATAN DAN PENGURUSAN PAS PELAJAR

Universiti telah mengalami perubahan demi perubahan selaras dengan perkembangan kesarjanaan ilmu dan keperluan negara dalam menuju ke arah pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi negara. Begitu juga dengan peranan UTM-i yang saban hari kian mencabar menyebabkan beberapa inisiatif dan penambahbaikan dilaksanakan dalam pengurusan pas pelajar terutamanya dalam aspek sistem perkhidmatan sokongan yang disediakan bagi bergerak seiring dengan perubahan yang berlaku. Di antara amalan terbaik yang dilaksanakan adalah:

i. Memperkasa Perkhidmatan dan Pengurusan Pelanggan UTM International

Kualiti perkhidmatan sokongan yang disampaikan sentiasa menjadi tumpuan utama dan dan perlu dipastikan agar berupaya mencapai ekspektasi dan kegirangan pemegang taruh dalam dan luar sebagai pihak berkepentingan UTM. Sehubungan dengan itu, bagi

memperkasakan kualiti perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pelanggan UTM-i, beberapa inisiatif penambahbaikan telah dilaksanakan iaitu:

a. Mewujudkan Kaunter Perkhidmatan *One-Stop-Counter Services (OSCS)*

UTM-i telah mewujudkan ***One-Stop-Counter Services (OSCS)*** atau Perkhidmatan Kaunter Seheni **bagi** memperkasakan kualiti perkhidmatan kaunter. Kaunter perkhidmatan merupakan salah satu komponen penting dalam pengurusan perhubungan pelanggan. Pengurusan kaunter yang diberi penekanan oleh UTM-i ialah mengambil kira tiga ciri penting iaitu Fizikal, Penyampaian dan Emosi. Perkhidmatan yang disediakan di kaunter perkhidmatan UTM-i merupakan satu reka bentuk perkhidmatan yang memerlukan pelanggan hadir sendiri semasa berurusan dan ia juga dijadikan sebagai perkhidmatan melalui Kaedah Khidmat Setempat. Kaedah ini dilaksanakan dengan memusatkan semua perkhidmatan kaunter di satu lokasi bagi memudahkan pelanggan mendapatkan perkhidmatan tanpa perlu ke kaunter yang ditempatkan di beberapa lokasi mengikut unit di UTM-i. Selain daripada menyediakan perkhidmatan utama UTM-i, kaunter juga boleh berfungsi sebagai tempat pertanyaan, pusat informasi, pusat aduan, tempat pembayaran dan tuntutan, pengambilan dokumen, permohonan perkhidmatan dan lain-lain yang berkaitan di Pejabat UTM-i, Bangunan S19.

b) Melantik Pegawai Khidmat Pelanggan Khas

Seorang Pegawai Khidmat Pelanggan Khas telah dilantik dari Kumpulan Sokongan khusus untuk memberi khidmat pelanggan pelajar antarabangsa memandangkan bilangan Pegawai Khidmat Pelanggan yang diperuntukkan di kaunter sedia ada adalah terhad. Lantikan khas ini bertujuan untuk mewujudkan petugas yang dilantik berupaya menjalankan kewajipan sebagai Pegawai Khidmat Pelanggan yang cemerlang, iaitu mempunyai ciri-ciri kesopanan dalam komunikasi dan mempunyai pengetahuan serta kompeten dalam urusan perhubungan pelanggan seperti pertanyaan, aduan dan sebarang maklum balas berkaitan perkhidmatan yang disediakan oleh UTM-i secara menyeluruh.

c) Menambahbaik Kemudahan dan Alat Kelengkapan di Kaunter

Kaunter Perkhidmatan yang disediakan mempunyai kemudahan dan alat kelengkapan yang mencukupi bagi memudahkan dan melicinkan urusan pelanggan di kaunter. UTM-i juga memastikan alat dan kemudahan tersebut sentiasa diselenggarakan dengan baik, disusun dengan teratur dan mudah dicapai, persekitaran yang bersih dan selesa. Secara umumnya, kemudahan asas dan kelengkapan penting yang disediakan di kaunter perkhidmatan UTMi seperti komputer, telefon, *printer*, mesin fotokopi dan alatulis. Bagi menambah baik perkhidmatan di kaunter supaya lebih efisien dan efektif, sistem nombor giliran yang lebih berkesan dan teratur iaitu *Queue Management System (QMS)* atau Sistem Pengurusan Penggiliran turut dipasang bagi memudahkan para pelanggan UTM-i melihat penggiliran masing-masing semasa dalam tempoh menunggu. *Monitor Ticket Display* juga digunakan kerana ianya mudah digunakan serta mesra pengguna.

d) Menambah Baik Ruang Kaunter Yang Lebih Kondusif

Kemudahan lain yang disediakan adalah ruang menunggu yang menyediakan kerusi sebagai tempat duduk pelanggan dan sistem nombor yang berfungsi dengan berkesan. Sistem nombor giliran merangkumi aras bangunan UTM-i yang mempunyai dua ruang menunggu. Kaunter perkhidmatan UTM-i menyediakan kerusi kepada pelanggan di hadapan kaunter semasa proses penyampaian perkhidmatan dilaksanakan terutamanya perkhidmatan yang memerlukan proses semakan dokumen, penerangan permohonan, penjelasan isu, perbincangan, nasihat dan perundingan dalam sesuatu fungsi. Kaunter juga memaparkan maklumat atau perkhidmatan yang disediakan, termasuk masa operasi dan nama pegawai atau staf bertugas.



Rajah 6: Ruang Kaunter Sebelum dan Selepas Penambahbaikan

e) Mewujudkan sistem kajian kepuasan pelanggan

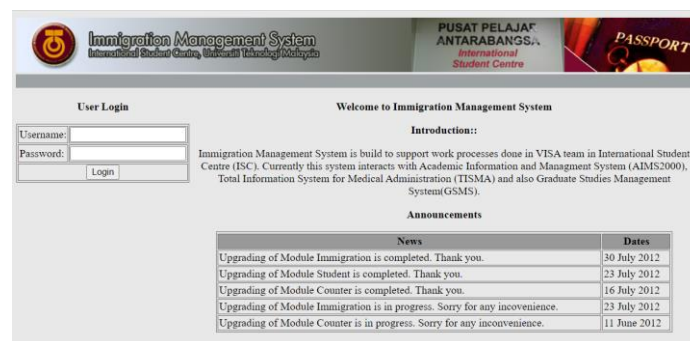
Mengadakan sistem kajian kepuasan pelanggan terhadap perkhidmatan yang diberikan secara “on the spot” setelah selesai urusan di kaunter. Kaji selidik bagi tahap kepuasan pelanggan telah dijalankan di kaunter iaitu melalui ‘stars rating system’ dengan menggunakan QR kod yang telah disediakan di kaunter setiap petugas yang bertugas. Sistem ini telah berkuatkuasa pada awal September 2020. Secara keseluruhannya kepuasan pelanggan yang telah direkodkan dapat membantu bagi penambahbaikan di kaunter untuk menaiktarafkan servis menjadi lebih baik di masa akan datang.

ii. Penambahbaikan Sistem Automasi Pengurusan Pas dan Visa Pelajar

Selaras dengan perkembangan teknologi, UTM-i juga telah berusaha memperbaiki sistem automasi pejabat ke arah yang lebih praktikal dan memudahkan pelanggan. Keperluan Universiti dalam memastikan sistem penyampaian perkhidmatan yang cekap dan berkesan terutamanya dari segi kebolehpayaan tinggi dalam penyimpanan rekod, bersesuaian, keselamatan dan kemudah capaian, beberapa sistem sokongan pengurusan pas pelajar antarabangsa telah dibangunkan dengan kerjasama pelbagai pihak terutamanya sokongan kemudahan dan perkhidmatan dari Jabatan Perkhidmatan Digital UTM (UTMDigital) seperti berikut:

a. Immigration Management System (IMS)

Sistem IMS merupakan sistem pertama yang diwujudkan di Unit I3S bagi membantu proses kerja dan perekodan maklumat pelajar antarabangsa berkaitan urusan pas dengan pihak JIM. Sistem ini dibangun menggunakan kepakaran dalaman UTM iaitu UTMDigital. Sistem ini telah dibangunkan pada tahun 2010 dan digunakan sehingga kini. Sistem IMS digunakan terutamanya oleh staf di kaunter di mana perekodan maklumat terus dilakukan apabila pelajar berurusan di kaunter termasuklah dalam urusan permohonan baharu pas pelajar dan tanggungan, pembaharuan pas pelajar dan tanggungan, *variation/progression*, pindahan cop, pembatalan pas, *Special Pass* serta *Overstay*.



Rajah 7: Immigration Management System (IMS)

b. Internationalisation Management System (Pass Renewal Module)

Pada tahun 2019, Sistem Pengurusan Pengantarabangsaan UTM-i telah dibangunkan oleh UTMDigital Kuala Lumpur dan telah mula beroperasi secara berfasa mulai Februari 2022. Sistem ini diwujudkan untuk menampung keperluan dan perubahan di dalam pengurusan pas pelajar yang semakin kompleks dengan kepesatan perubahan terhadap teknologi maklumat dan informasi. Sebagai permulaan, pembangunan fasa pertama sistem adalah tertumpu kepada modul *Pass Renewal* bagi memudahkan pelajar antarabangsa membuat permohonan pembaharuan pas pelajar yang akan atau hampir tamat tempoh secara atas talian. Sistem akan memberi peringatan secara e mel kepada para pelajar seawal tiga bulan sebelum tempoh sah pas pelajar tamat. Para pelajar boleh mengakses capaian ke sistem melalui *One Stop Services Centre myUTMPortal*. Manual Pengguna dan video juga disediakan untuk rujukan pelajar.



Rajah 8: Sistem Pengurusan Pengantarabangsaan UTM-i

iii. Pemantapan Proses Kerja Menerusi Sistem Pengurusan Kualiti UTM-i

UTM-i sentiasa menitik beratkan kualiti perkhidmatan yang disampaikan kepada pihak berkepentingan sama ada dalam atau luar UTM. Seiring dengan pelaksanaan Sistem Pengurusan Kualiti (SPK) berlandaskan ISO 9001:2015 mengikut format baharu oleh pihak Universiti melalui Pusat Kualiti dan Pengurusan Risiko (QRiM) UTM, UTM-i telah membangunkan 14 prosedur di bawah SPK UTM-i mulai tahun 2021 melalui beberapa siri bengkel penyediaan dokumen SPK. Langkah ini diambil bagi memastikan keseragaman proses kerja di peringkat UTM-i dan seterusnya menyumbang kepada kecemerlangan tadbir urus yang berterusan serta berprestasi tinggi. Seharusnya cara kerja yang jelas dan sistematik dapat menyumbang kepada peningkatan produktiviti jabatan serta mengelak dari timbulnya kelewatan, pembaziran masa dan ketidakcekapan. Ini secara langsung akan menyumbang kepada penambahbaikan dan peningkatan sistem penyampaian perkhidmatan UTM-i khususnya dan UTM amnya. Menurut Agus (2005), salah satu strategi penting untuk meningkatkan prestasi perkhidmatan organisasi sama ada bermatlamatkan keuntungan ataupun tidak adalah menerusi Pengurusan Kualiti.

Senarai prosedur UTM-i yang dibangunkan di bawah SPK untuk memastikan kehendak pemegang taruh serta perundangan dan peraturan dipenuhi adalah seperti Jadual 1 di bawah:

Jadual 1: Senarai Prosedur UTM-i di bawah SPK

Unit /Bahagian	Bil.	Nama Prosedur
CS - 4 Prosedur Kualiti	1	Prosedur Pengurusan Fasiliti
	2	Prosedur Pengurusan Pengambilan PSH

Unit /Bahagian	Bil.	Nama Prosedur
	3	Prosedur Pengurusan Pas Penggajian
	4	Prosedur Penyelarasan Data Penarafan Global
I3S - 3 Prosedur Kualiti	5	Prosedur <i>Pre-Arrival</i>
	6	Prosedur <i>Renewal</i> (Pembaharuan Pas)
	7	Prosedur <i>Post-Arrival</i> (Permohonan Pas Pelajar)
GEE - 3 Prosedur Kualiti	8	Prosedur Pengurusan Mobiliti Inbound
	9	Prosedur Pengurusan Mobiliti Outbound
	10	Prosedur Pengurusan Aktiviti Pelajar
	11	Prosedur Pengurusan Kesejahteraan Pelajar
GSE- 2 Prosedur Kualiti	12	Prosedur Pengurusan Acara Antarabangsa
	13	Prosedur Pengurusan Hubungan Antarabangsa
UTM-iKL-1 Prosedur Kualiti	14	Prosedur Pengurusan Pas Lawatan Ikhtisas (PLIK)

6. KESIMPULAN

Pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi telah menggerakkan organisasi untuk memberikan perkhidmatan yang berprestasi tinggi dalam memastikan organisasi kekal relevan dan berdaya saing di peringkat global. Seajar dengan perkembangan ini, tahap kepuasan pelajar antarabangsa terhadap sistem perkhidmatan yang diberikan merupakan satu aspek yang perlu dilihat secara serius kerana pelajar antarabangsa merupakan salah satu aset penting dalam pembangunan sesebuah universiti. Hasil kajian UTM-I terhadap persepsi dan tanggapan pelajar antarabangsa berdasarkan pengalaman pelajar antarabangsa di kampus mendapati tiga (3) komponen iaitu pengalaman ketibaan, pengalaman kehidupan di UTM dan pengalaman perkhidmatan sokongan perlu dipertingkatkan bagi memastikan tahap kepuasan pelanggan tercapai. Inisiatif-inisiatif seperti pemerkasaan perkhidmatan dan pengurusan pelanggan, penambahbaikan sistem automasi pengurusan pas pelajar dan pemantapan proses kerja menerusi Sistem Pengurusan Kualiti dapat menjamin kualiti perkhidmatan yang ditawarkan. Perkongsian pengalaman ini diharap dapat membantu IPT untuk memantapkan lagi kualiti perkhidmatan pelajar antara bangsa di IPT masing-masing.

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Enriching International Exchange Students' Experiences: From the Lense of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Globalisation is increasingly affecting every part of what is happening worldwide. With the help of globalisation, students everywhere can further their studies abroad. Activities such as student exchange programs and virtual cross-border forums had been introduced to help realise the mission. Nevertheless, the movement of international students has become more and more vulnerable to upheavals in politics, culture, economy, and public health, especially during the pandemic. Now, approaching the post-pandemic era, higher education institutions have been called to accelerate sustainable internationalization aspirations to make sure they are ready for a more cooperative global community. Past research had dwelled on the subject of post-pandemic learning with a variety of issues and solutions. International students had some problems managing their way of adapting to the locals and the normalities within the country. Thus, presented here are a series propositions to help sustain and enrich the international students' experiences who are studying at local institutes to be adopted by the institutions even during unprecedented uncertainties and some of the best practices implemented by Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), serving a student population of diverse cultures and backgrounds. A qualitative research method will be used to support the findings as well as acquiring data and information from various research papers that had been published before ranging from the year 2020 until today. Solutions like providing cultural exposure and digital learning demonstrated by the institution had been found to be practical enough for assessing the issue. Regardless, institutions hosting international students should be able to impart a more inclusive and multicultural environment throughout.

Keywords: globalisation, internationalization, enrich

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education (HE) internationalisation has been defined as “the exchange of people, ideas, goods and services between two or more nations and cultural identities” (Yang,2000). For many years, students across the world have grown accustomed to the idea of a physical exchange where they go abroad for a certain period to learn in a completely new setting. Through these exchanges, students would be able to grow their personal and professional profiles by sharpening their skills in multicultural competence, global citizenship, cross-cultural skills and also intercultural communication competence among other skills (Zhang & Zhou, 2019) of which are imperative to gearing them up for international job market. These

intercultural immersion experiences typically emerge during their stay at a culturally different place would force them to increase and adapt their intercultural competence levels (Zhang & Zhou, 2019).

It is no secret that students around the globe are becoming more mobile and more global. The growing demand for this activity is evident through the significant portion of international students' enrolment at higher education institutions worldwide. These students mainly seek education abroad to acquire wider international experience and develop their personal and professional skills to enhance their employability. In accordance with the national strategic plan to cement Malaysia's position as a global education hub with a targeted 250,000 international students by 2025 (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2015), the need to enhance the end-to-end international student experience arises.

We could not deny the fact that international students represent a valuable asset to universities in the form of increased revenue, more diversity, on top of current ranking games being in place. However, recruiting these students is not enough. Globally oriented higher education institutions need to adopt a more proactive role to ensure that their international students will accumulate an enriching experience that allow them to enjoy their time at the host university to the very fullest. In light of this, higher education institutions must ensure that course offerings are appealing enough to a global student market and that students can earn internationally recognized credentials.

While it is reasonable to expect students to adapt to local standards, we could not deny that international students are highly likely to confront challenges managing their way before getting accustomed to the locals, cultures, and the normalities within the country. Despite the benefits, international students may sometimes encounter challenges like struggling to adapt to a new culture, weather, language to homesickness whilst studying abroad.

The university stakeholders including the faculty members, administrative staffs, International Office and students are tasked with laying out and developing strategies that make ready and support international students – on top of gearing them up for the international job market.

In this paper, UKM will map out a few strategies and avenues that deemed to be effective to assess the issue - offering an inclusive and multicultural learning environment to the international exchange students for an enriching experience.

2. SUGGESTED STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE POSITIVE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Tran and Gomes (2017) mentioned that connectedness/disconnectedness is closely related to mobility and plays an important role in shaping international students' well-being, performance, and life trajectories. Consequently, it is vital to frame international student connectedness in a broader setting, not limited to the learning within the four walls of classroom. Ultimately, students' satisfaction is intimately based on their that they are treated as individuals, and that their communications are heard and attended to (Neuwirth, Jović, Mukherji,2020). A few compromises have been pinpointed to ensure enrichment of international exchange students experience in more productive ways.

Pre- information

Domestic students, alumni, academic and non-academic staff members can in fact be proactive about looking after international students' welfare and enriching their experience even before the students are physically present on campus. Academic and non-academic staff members can in fact can build rapport with students prior to their arrival.

This can be made possible via online platforms such as Zoom or even by email. Staff can attract students by replying promptly to email inquiries. A personalised conversation with academic and non-academic staff is essential for attracting students as this demonstrates a sense of belonging as well as meeting emotional, practical and information needs. Knowledge and guidance from these same people before arrival are known to be vital in creating positive, long-lasting experiences.

Pre-information that includes academic and social information provided by alumni of exchange programs are accepted positively as they act as brand ambassadors because of the trust incoming students place in them and their accessibility, thanks mainly to the word-of-mouth marketing.

In the case of UKM, UKM Global says its service acts as a hub to further promote the mobility and exchange programs to partner universities and international students – to furnish information on the programs and course offerings, university academic calendar, wide variety university facilities and services that includes free pick-up service, on campus health centre and sports facilities to name a few, accommodation booking assistance, and visa application procedures etc. Providing relevant academic and social information beforehand is prominent

to ensure international exchange students can integrate easily into the university ecosystem once they arrive.

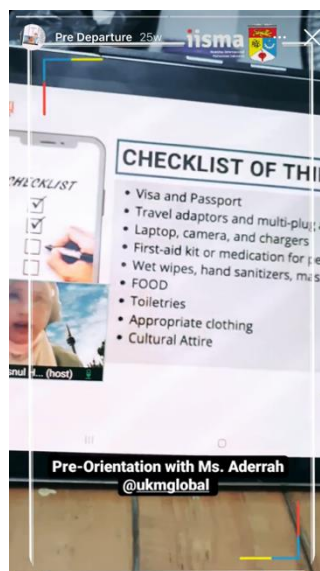


Figure 1: Pre-departure briefing session held by International Office

Creating Inclusive Learning and Social Environments

There is a need to cultivate an effective communication between domestic students and international exchange students. The creation of friendships and social networks would assist the exchange students with an identity in foreign surroundings.

UKM has their own variation of a ‘freshers’ week’, with the aim to elevate international exchange student integration and ease the ‘settling in’ process. During the ‘freshers week’, UKM gathers academic governance staff, academic as well as non-academic staff to spell out imperative information to international exchange students on university facilities, on-campus transportation, accommodation, structure and systems, course registrations, estimation on living expenses or academic assistance there is.

‘Settling in’ process entails advice, further assistance and support from the university to get familiar with the campus life and the Malaysian culture itself. UKM Global together with UKMbassadors - most of which are the domestic students would provide the international exchange students such assistance which is highly needed now considering students may not have connections through friends or colleagues studying in the host country. A strategy of information provision can enhance the level of awareness of the new academic and non-

academic environment so that international exchange students can adjust and adapt to it promptly.

Efforts to maintain peer interaction should run continuously to minimize the risk of international exchange students feeling isolated and without a social outlet. Having more extracurricular activities, student associations and sports that allows and encourages them to socialize with the Malaysian students could also be of help.

Building a campus community where international exchange students are fully integrated into the learning process and social environment can benefit everyone. Local students especially those without the time or financial means to pursue the exchange studies abroad — may have their only meaningful cross-cultural experience while interacting with international students on their home campus. There are substantial benefits to creating a diverse and inclusive campus community where all students feel equally welcome and engaged (Farnsworth, 2018).



Figure 2: Orientation/ Welcoming Reception organized by the University during pandemic

Cultural and Language-based Engagement

The fact that exchange or foreign students would find it hard to develop a relationship with their academic peers or staff seems to be a universal thing whether it be through online or face to face education (Fabricius, Mortensen & Haberland, 2017). There is a need for educators to facilitate student-student interaction within a diverse classroom of mixed races and nationalities whether online or offline to ensure active intercultural communication within the classroom (Stewart & Lowenthal, 2021).

Leading on from a better understanding of the native language, it is prominent for international exchange students to have social and cultural knowledge of the country they're now studying in. Terms such as 'lost in translation' and 'culture shock' are applicable here and can negatively impact social and academic experiences at university.

To overcome this, it could be useful for university lecturers to incorporate discussion on native culture into their classes. This can be done through the lecturer themselves, or by making a conscious effort to invoke peer interaction. Collectively, all members of the university play a notable role in imparting the academic culture and campus culture to furnish good quality services for international exchange students and community. Learning how to engage another culture is indeed a valuable professional skill.

Programs involving international students are always a great opportunity to inject cultural aspects as one of the main objectives of exchange programs is to learn more about other cultures around the world. At UKM, they offer native language-based course (preparatory program) such as the Intensive Malay Language Proficiency Course online and offline where it intends to assist international students in learning and elevating their Malay proficiency to a level that allows them to pursue their academic interests and enjoy campus life to the fullest. At the end of the course, international exchange students are expected to be able to meet the needs of daily life by communicating exclusively in Malay and gather, convey, and discuss information about recent events and social issues. To bring forward this goal, the International Relations Centre (UKM Global) would be the ones to further promote the Malay language course to UKM partner institutions worldwide and approach the international exchange students who show interest to learn the native language.

Meanwhile, for academic courses taught in English, UKM restructured the system in order to keep up with internationalization. Again, the International Relations Centre (UKM Global) acts as a hub as they would request the faculties to provide programs in English for exchange students as well as to promote the programs to their partner institutions. They would have to approach the faculties and ask if there are any programs that they can deliver in English because every faculty has different capabilities and values. This is due to the difference in goals among faculties.

Additionally, UKM Global lays out offline approaches to offer first-hand opportunities for international exchange students to enrich their university experience as well as the diverse cultures of Malaysia – a country of bustling melting pot of races and religions. 'Welcoming Reception', 'Ihya Ramadhan', 'Eid Celebration', to name a few, are some of the student engagement activities organized by UKM Global throughout the semester where it aims to impart cultural experience to international exchange students.

Embracing the new normal amidst COVID-19, UKM also put forward initiative that translates an existing program into a virtual environment on top of creating new program that is in-line with the virtual environment where it combines a few physical aspects from existing programs as well as newly added virtual elements for an optimum virtual experience.

The collaborations between UKM with partner universities in series of cultural immersion events bloom ever since pandemic hits. A student chit chat session with partner universities will be held every now and then where it serves as a platform to connect with each other and focuses more on the cultural exchange and it is more of a get-together where the local students and international exchange students socialize and get to know each other more through a virtual window.

With the presence of UKM ambassador, they will share the facts of the Malaysian culture with the international students and learn about the other cultures as well. Usually, the students would put together a cultural performance or even introduce the special holiday celebrations that Malaysia has instead of just a simple sharing session for more impact and to showcase the uniqueness of their cultures. They could also film a documentary video of them touring around their hometowns and these activities can be included as assigned tasks to add a tinge of spontaneous fun in the midst of academic learning. They could put on their special costumes and showcase it to their international friends and let them know how the special occasions are celebrated. Other than learning about each other's cultures, this also provides the students with the opportunity to build friendships and global networking events despite being halfway around the world.



Figure 3: Traditional Dance Performed by the International Exchange Students



Figure 4: University Eid Celebration

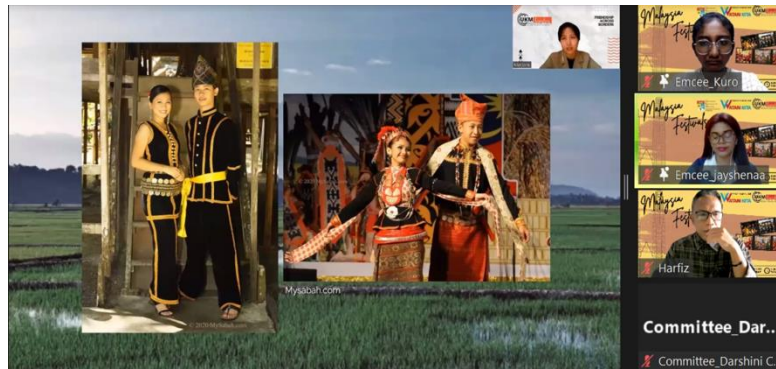


Figure 5: Virtual Student Chit Chat Session



Figure 6: Malay Language Proficiency Intensive Course offered by the University

Collaborative Online International Learning and Virtual Exchange (COIL/VE)

During the emerging situation, higher educational institutions demonstrated flexibility and strived to find online alternatives for students. Many participants felt the duty to find online alternatives for students and devoted considerable effort to achieve it. Online education and virtual exchanges for both incoming and outgoing students were also coordinated in cooperation with partner institutions. Through these online alternatives, students still had the opportunity to gain study credits and some international experience. Alternatively, Collaborative Online International Learning and Virtual Exchange (COIL/VE) is the way forward towards international virtual work.

Rubin (2019) mentioned that COIL is not a technology or a technology platform but rather a new teaching and learning paradigm that develops cross-cultural awareness across shared multicultural learning environments. This is only made possible using the internet and by digitizing classes for a remote-based learning form. This includes but is not limited to the use

of online web conference platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, Webex and Padlet.

With the help of Collaborative Online International Learning and Virtual Exchange (COIL/VE), intercultural elements have been fairly incorporated in the global classroom to ensure the vision of a more globalised community, rich with an understanding of cultures and religions worldwide of which includes showcasing video / picture presentation or virtual culture tours.

In the end, intercultural activities are always important to a better understanding between the citizens of the world. With the added convenience of virtual or online meetings like the COIL/VE, this would surely accelerate the mission of a civilized global community, full of respect and tranquillity. Indeed, UKM has been actively involved in promoting the use of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) program as a part of the university internationalization efforts.

The shaping of their capabilities in intercultural competence is the responsibility of the university to facilitate this student-student interaction in a virtual setting. If neglected, this could bring about problems for students in terms of the quality and satisfaction of their education and virtual exchange experience (Fabricius, Mortensen & Haberland, 2017). This in turn would hinder the creation of global citizens due to the current educational landscape. In hindsight, not all is bleak as the swift changes and adaptations by HEIs, and partners alike would bring endless advantages in these new waters.

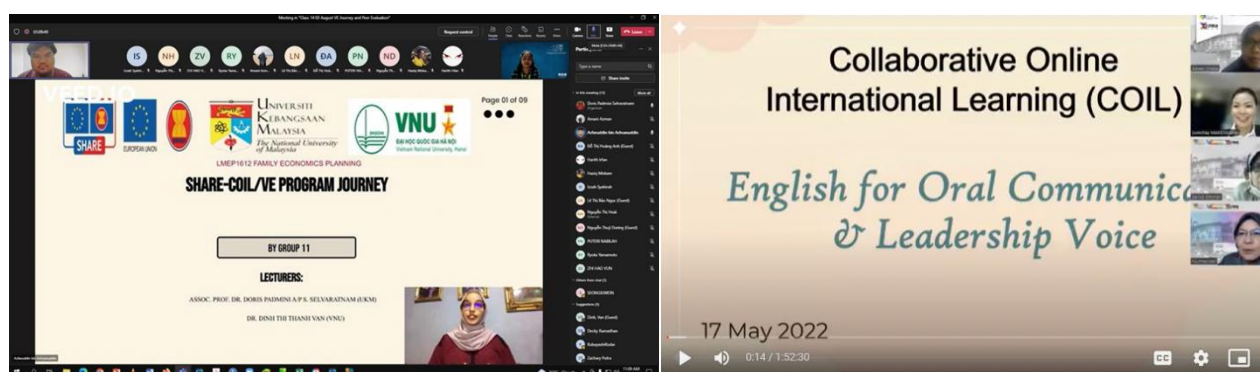


Figure 7: SHARE COIL/VE Program

Student Testimonial

An alumnus of UKM from Flinders University Australia, Jasmine, shared her experience through an interview. Attended an exchange program to UKM back in 2017, she was rather an

introverted student and has never attended any program abroad. Quoting from her *“While at UKM, I followed various activities organized by UKM. Although I felt uncomfortable at the beginning, but because I wanted to challenge myself, I finally managed to overcome my fear become comfortable and not shy to make new friends. The advantage of living on campus also helped me a lot to get involved in activities. A friend of mine who stayed outside the campus, they didn’t get as much experience as she did. That was what I have been informed.”*

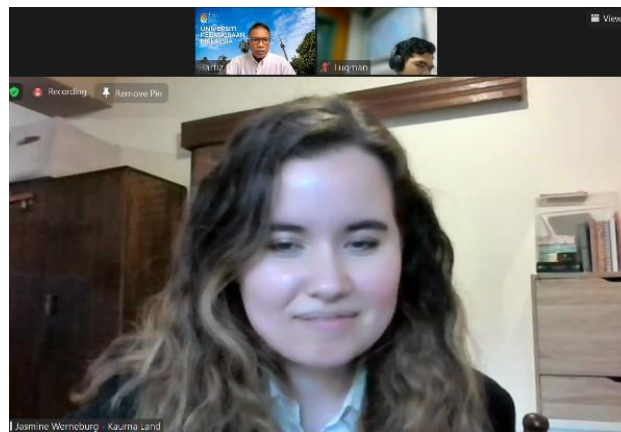


Figure 8: Jasmine, Flinders University Australia (2017)

Challenges

Not all efforts to enriching student experience can be undertaken easily without having to first face some challenges which can be the cause of the effort not achieving success. For example, the issue of internet access by students living in remote areas where internet facilities are less than satisfactory also existed in some developing countries. From UKM's experience, some feedbacks received from couple of students who participated in their virtual short-term mobility programs recently were that they sometimes could not join the program comfortably because of poor internet access and at times no internet connectivity at all. Hence, the participants cannot experience conducive learning. Internet access has been a constant problem, especially for the people in rural areas which receive limited connectivity options, and this problem was even more exacerbated during the pandemic when studies and even work were done from home (Lai & Widmar, 2020). It is highlighted in Lai and Windmar's work that while the residents of rural areas' most common challenge are internet speed, there is a large sum of people that do not even have access to any kind of internet speed.



Figure 9: U-LEAD 2022

The problem of the internet has been raised for a long time, but not much attention was given then. But now, due to the pandemic which resulted the use of technology become a priority, the issue received the attention of the responsible authorities. It is in the process of upgrading the facility and the work is still ongoing.

3. CONCLUSION

Most higher education institutions around the world are still adjusting and adapting in one hope to ensure the delivery of quality education for all and as well as providing an enriching experience to the international students. Of course, at this point in time, the solution to the issues is that 'not one size that fits all'. All in all, it can be concluded that a higher education institution must really dissect and determine the best solution that will fit into the countries and university's education environment. Above all, it calls for collective efforts from all university stakeholders to keep evolving, both in response to current global trends as well as in preparation for future challenges. Higher education institutions need to keep evolving, both in response to current global trends as well as in preparation for future challenges.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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The Effect of English Proficiency and Social Support on Academic Adjustment and Acculturative Stress Among International Students

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Malaysia has been attracting many international students to our public higher institution, which is expected to increase by the year 2025. This research objective examines the relationship between English proficiency and social support on academic adjustment and acculturative stress among international students. Guided by the Berry Acculturation Model (1997), this quantitative research design uses the survey method to collect data from the sample. A total of 129 data was collected. Results revealed a positive correlation between English proficiency and academic adjustment and a positive correlation between social support and academic adjustment, however no significant correlation on acculturation stress. Findings from multiple linear regression analysis further showed that English proficiency significantly predicted their academic adjustment. Neither main effects nor between-subjects effects of gender and length of stay in Malaysia is significant on students' academic adjustment and acculturative stress. This research will contribute to the international students to increase their awareness of the importance of English proficiency and social support on academic adjustment. It also gives insight to the public higher institution to create support services and the community and local students can be aware of giving help to the international students.

Keywords: Academic adjustment; acculturative stress; English proficiency; international students; social support

1. INTRODUCTION

Malaysia is one of the countries that offer top-notch education, attracting overseas students to study here. According to the Malaysia Educational Statistic (2018), 27,766 international students have enrolled in public higher education institutes alone. This trend makes up about 5.16% of the students enrolled in our tertiary education. The Ministry of Education has aspired to increase the accessibility of the international students' enrolment in higher education and improve the quality of graduates, institutions, and overall system by the year 2025 (Malaysia Education Blueprint, 2015 – 2025). It is then expected that the number of enrolments of international students will increase to 250,000.

Getting into a higher institution is an enriching experience for university students. It is a development process for young adulthood to bring opportunities for them to explore and learn

intellectual growth. However, university students have high exposure to stress, especially international students, which requires them to leave their home country and adapt to the new environment (Kosheleva et al., 2015). Acculturative stress as defined by Berry, Kim, Minde, and Mok (1987) defined is a type of stress involved in the acculturation process that includes physical, psychological, and social aspects, which can harm individual health status. It is also conceptualized as a stress reaction that occurs when individuals undergo acculturation to adapt to the new culture (Cura et al., 2016). Previous studies have identified that acculturative stress occurred when there is a lack of social support from their family and friends (e.g.: Ali, Yoenanto & Nurdibyanandaru, 2020; Yu, Bodycott, and Mak, 2019) and low English proficiency (e.g.: Jiang, Yuen & Horta, 2020; Xing & Bolden, 2019) which contributed to the difficulty to adjust. Therefore, this has brought the need to understand English proficiency and social support towards the academic adjustment and acculturative stress among international students.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Berry's Acculturation Model (1997) explains individual level suggests factors prior to acculturation include age, gender, education, pre-acculturation, status, migration motivation, expectations, cultural distance (language and religion), and personality. These factors will influence the individual's response towards acculturative stress through the acculturation experience, experience appraisal, strategies used, immediate effects, and long-term outcomes. In this framework, English proficiency, which is cultural distance, is a potential factor that exists before the acculturation; meanwhile, social support is a factor that exists during the acculturation, which could also impact acculturative stress.

Several studies have been done based on the model to understand the individual-level of the acculturation process. Yu, Bodycott, and Mak (2019) found that resources like English proficiency, social support, and low perceived discrimination help international students psychologically adjust to the unfamiliar culture. Kukatlapalli et al. (2019) also reported that students who possess the confidence and good English proficiency make a better academic adjustment than those who lack English. Bastien et al. (2018) found out that factors that influenced international students' academic adjustment include the length of stay, English proficiency, and help-seeking behaviour. Moreover, Chen and Bang (2020) reported that English proficiency before studying abroad is crucial for the students, and the high level of preparation regarding the host culture helps their academic success. Apart from academic

adjustment, previous studies have addressed international students' English language fluency and stress level (Xing et al., 2019; Jiang et al., 2020). A finding by Xing et al. (2019) further highlighted how their low English proficiency affected their academic acculturation process. Jiang et al. (2020) review the factors influencing life satisfaction among international students in mainland China which include quality of education, university support services, lack of interaction with the local students, financial stressors, language barrier, and perceived discrimination.

To extend the literature context, Cura et al. (2016) highlighted that when acculturative stress is lower, the student's academic adjustment increases. Also, academic achievement is positively correlated with the support given by family, friends, and school. Consistent with Hartwell and Ounoughi (2019), the interaction between local students and international students brings two-way benefits. The international students benefit from the local students in terms of the local language, familiarity with the education system, and reduce stress while the local students can learn a new foreign language and multicultural exchanges. Based from these arguments, four hypotheses are derived:

H1a: English proficiency of international students predicts their academic adjustment

H1b: Social support of international students predicts their academic adjustment

H2a: English proficiency of international students predicts their acculturative stress

H2b: Social support of international students predicts their acculturative stress

3. METHODOLOGY

Participants

The sample's inclusion criteria consist of international students studying pursuing a Diploma, Bachelor's Degree, Master's Degree, or Doctorate studies in UPSI. Both males and females are included in this study and have completed one semester of study in UPSI. Non-probability sampling is performed to recruit participants in this study. 129 international students were recruited from the study and included in the data analysis ($n= 60$ males, $n= 73$ females).

Measures

Perceived English Proficiency (PEP): Perceived English Proficiency (PEP) by Liao, Chao, Heppner and Ku (2012), to determine the individual's perceived ability in speaking, reading,

writing, listening, and overall English ability using five items. This questionnaire is a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (very poor) to 5 (very good). The sample items include "How good are you at understanding spoken English?". The average score of the five items is used to determine the level of English proficiency among international students, with a high score indicating a high level of English proficiency.

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS): Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet, and Farley (1988) developed the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) to determine the perception of social support received by international students' families, friends, and significant others. This questionnaire has 12 items with three subscales; Significant Others (4 items; e.g., "There is a special person who is around when I am in need"), Family (4 items; e.g., "My family really tries to help me"), and Friends (4 items; e.g., "My friends really try to help me"), and its responses is a 7-point Likert-type scale, 1 = Very strongly disagree and 7 = Very strongly agree. The score ranges from 12 to 84. A higher score on this questionnaire indicates a high perceived social support.

The College Adjustment Questionnaire (CAQ): The College Adjustment Questionnaire (CAQ) by Shirley and Rosen (2010) determines students' adjustment to university life. There are 14 items with three subscales; Academic Adjustment, which measures overall academic success (5 items; e.g., "I am succeeding academically"), Social Adjustment focus on social engagement (5 items; e.g., "I don't have as much of a social life as I would like") and Emotional Adjustment determine the students' emotional and psychological well-being (4 items; e.g., "I feel that I am doing well emotionally since coming to college"). It is a 5-point Likert-type scale with responses ranging from 1 to 5, 1 = very inaccurate and 5 = very accurate. The range of scores is from 14 to 70. A higher score on the questionnaire indicates high academic adjustment. Items 2, 8, 9, 11, and 13 are reverse coded.

The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS): The Acculturative Stress Scale for International Students (ASSIS) was developed by Sandhu and Asrabadi (1994) to identify the level of acculturative stress among international students. There are 36 items with seven subscales; Perceived Discrimination (8 items; e.g., "I am treated differently in social situation"), Homesickness (4 items; e.g., "I feel sad living in unfamiliar surroundings"), Perceived Hate (5 items; e.g., "Others are sarcastic toward my cultural values"), Fear (4 items; e.g., "I fear for my personal safety because of my different cultural background"), Stress due to Change/Culture Shock (3 items; e.g., "I feel uncomfortable to adjust to new foods"), Guilt (2 items; e.g., "I feel guilty to leave my family and friends behind") and Miscellaneous (10 items; e.g., "I feel nervous to communicate in English"). The range of the total score is from 36 – 180.

The high score derived from this questionnaire shows that the individual possesses higher acculturative stress.

Research Procedures

The advertisement is in the form of an email explaining the research, significance, participation criteria, and a web link to the survey. Participation was voluntary, and their confidentiality is assured. The instruments are available in English and Chinese language to increase the response rates among Chinese students. A back translation procedure is implemented.

Ethical Procedures: An application letter was sent to UPSI Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and International) to allow data collection in UPSI. The ethical application was sent to the Research Management and Innovation Centre (RMIC) UPSI for the ethical procedure in human research subjects.

4. RESULTS

This research collected $N=137$ international students from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI); however, data that did not fit the research criteria ($n=8$) were excluded from the analysis. The excluded data involved local students. There is no missing data reported in this study. A detailed overview of the participants' demographic profiles, including their gender, age, faculty, level of education, country of origin, and length of stay in Malaysia, is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Participants' Demographic

Demographic Variable	Categories	N	%
Gender	Male	60	46.5
	Female	69	53.5
Age	19 – 21 years old	18	14.0
	22 – 24 years old	61	47.3
	25 – 27 years old	27	20.9
	28 – 30 years old	10	7.8
	More than 30 years old	13	10.1
Country of Origin	Arab	3	2.3
	Bangladesh	44	34.1
	China	20	15.5
	Indonesia	6	4.7
	India	8	6.2
	Iraq	8	6.2
	Jordan	3	2.3
	Oman	16	12.4
	Somalia	10	7.8
	Thailand	1	0.8

Demographic Variable	Categories	N	%
	United Arab Emirates	1	0.8
	Nigeria	3	2.3
	Japan	1	0.8
	Iran	1	0.8
	Myanmar	1	0.8
	Singapore	2	1.6
	Namibia	1	0.8
Length of Stay in Malaysia	Less than a year	3	2.3
	1 – 2 years	69	53.5
	More than 2 years	57	44.2

$N=129$ participants are included in the analysis, including 60 males (46.5%) and 69 females (53.5%). The majority of the participants are from 22 – 24 years old (47.3%). The highest frequency of participants is from Bangladesh (34.1%), China (15.5%) and Oman (12.4%). Meanwhile, 88 participants are currently pursuing Bachelor's Degrees (68.2%), 44 participants are from Bangladesh (34.1%), and 69 participants have stayed for 1 – 2 years (53.5 %).

A full model entry was employed to regress all predictor variables onto the dependent variable to test if English proficiency and social support are good predictors of international students' academic adjustment. A standard multiple regression analysis was employed to predict international students' Academic adjustment by their English proficiency and social support. Table 2 displays the correlations between the variables.

Table 2: Person correlation between PEP and CAQ & MSPSS

		PEP	MSPSS
CAQ	Pearson Correlation	.363**	.203*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.021
	N	129	129

Based on Table 2, Pearson correlation results indicate a positive correlation between the international students' English proficiency and their academic adjustment ($r_s = 0.363$, $N=129$, $p < 0.05$). This also indicates that international students who are not fluent in using English will have a problem adjusting academically, which leads to academic difficulties. The result reported in Table 2 also indicates that a significant relationship is found between social support and academic adjustment ($r_s = 0.203$, $N=129$, $p > 0.05$). This result shows the importance of social support to help the international students' academic adjustment (Table 3).

Table 3: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.372a	.139	.125	.66819

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social support, English proficiency

In this case, the R^2 of 0.139 indicates that 13.9% of the variation in international students' academic adjustment is explained by the regression variables. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.139 indicates that more than a third of the variability in international students' academic adjustment could be predicted by their English proficiency and social support. For more information on the model, Table 4 shows the regression ANOVA, which tests for a linear relationship between the variables.

Table 4: The regression ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	9.049	2	4.525	10.134	.000b
Residual	56.255	126	.446		
Total	65.305	128			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic adjustment

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social support, English proficiency

The results in the ANOVA Table ($F(2, 126) = 10.134, p < .001$) indicate that the value of F is significant beyond the 0.01 level. The full model R^2 was significantly greater than zero, $R^2 = 13.9\%$. On the second step all the predictors were entered simultaneously, resulting in the "Coefficients", that provides the estimates of the regression coefficients (Table 5).

Table 5: Regression output (Regression Coefficients)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.573	.298		8.639	.000
English proficiency	.271	.072	.332	3.770	.000
Social support	.047	.047	.088	1.002	.318

a. Dependent Variable: Academic adjustment

Analysis of regression coefficients (Table 5) indicated that international students' academic adjustment was predicted by English proficiency ($Beta = 0.332, p < .01$). Social support ($Beta = -0.088, n.s.$) was not a significant predictor. The variables predicted

significantly 13.9% of the variance in Academic adjustment. The overall model fit was $R^2 = 0.139$. Thus, the better international student's English proficiency, the better an international students' Academic adjustment.

A full model entry was employed to regress all predictor variables onto the dependent variable simultaneously to test the relationship between acculturative stress as a dependent variable and English proficiency and social support as independent variables. A standard multiple regression analysis was employed to predict international students' acculturative stress by their English proficiency and social support. Table 6 displays the correlations between the variables.

Table 6: Pearson correlation between MSPSS and CAQ & ASSIS

		MSPSS	PEP
ASSIS	Pearson Correlation	.134	.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.131	.715
	N	129	129

Based on Table 6, the correlation between social support revealed no relationship with the acculturative stress among international students in UPSI ($r=0.134$, $N= 129$, $p > 0.05$). Thus, when international students receive high social support from family, friends, and significant others, this will not significantly help them to acculturative the stress. Table 6 also shows no significant relationship between English proficiency and acculturative stress ($r=0.032$, $N=129$, $p > 0.05$). indicating that whether international students have high or low English proficiency will not reflect their acculturative stress. To get more information about the goodness of fit of a model, the results about R Square are presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.135a	.018	.003	.76928

a. Predictors: (Constant), Social support, English proficiency

In this case the R^2 of 0.018 indicates that 1.08% of the variation in international students' acculturative stress is explained by the regression variables. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.018 indicates that a very little portion of the variability in international students' acculturative stress could be predicted by their English proficiency and social support. For more information about

the model, Table 8 shows the regression ANOVA, which tests for a linear relationship between the variables.

Table 8: The regression ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	1.375	2	.688	1.162	.316b
Residual	74.566	126	.592		
Total	75.941	128			

a. Dependent Variable: acculturative stress

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social support, English proficiency

The results in the ANOVA Table ($F(2, 126) = 1.162, p \text{ ns}$) indicate that the value of F is not significant. The full model R^2 was not significantly greater than zero, $R^2 = 1.08\%$ show a bad model to express the relationship between the variables. On the second step all the predictors were entered simultaneously, resulting in the “Coefficients”, that provides the estimates of the regression coefficients (Table 9).

Table 9: Regression output (Regression Coefficients)

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.619	.343		7.639	.000
English proficiency	-.014	.083	-.016	-.168	.867
Social support	.080	.054	.139	1.479	.142

Analysis of regression coefficients (Table 5) indicated that international students’ acculturative stress can’t be predicted by the two independent variables. Neither English proficiency (Beta = -0.016, ns) nor social support (Beta = 0.139, n.s.) were a significant predictor as both variables predicted only 1.08% of the variance in acculturative stress.

International students’ academic adjustment was subjected to a two-way analysis of variance having two levels of gender (male/female) and Length of Stay in Malaysia (1 - 2 Year/ More than 2 Year).

Table 10: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1.453a	3	.484	.936	.426
Intercept	1789.631	1	1789.631	3457.599	.000
Gender	.501	1	.501	.967	.327
LSM1	.906	1	.906	1.750	.188
Gender * LSM1	.028	1	.028	.054	.817
Error	63.146	122	.518		
Total	1885.560	126			
Corrected Total	64.600	125			

a. R Squared = .022 (Adjusted R Squared = -.002)

Table 10 shows the main ANOVA summary results. The main effect of gender was not significant, $F(1, 122) = 0.967$, $p = .327$. Similarly, the main effect of Length of Stay in Malaysia was not significant, $F(1, 122) = 1.750$, $p = .188$. Regarding the interaction effect, results show no significant effect, $F(1, 122) = 0.054$, $p = 0.817$. Such results reveal that international students have the same level of academic adjustment regardless of their gender or Length of Stay in Malaysia. International students' acculturative stress was subjected to a two-way analysis of variance having two levels of gender (male/female) and Length of Stay in Malaysia (1 - 2 Year/ More than 2 Year).

Table 11: Tests of Between-Subjects Effects

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	.576a	3	.192	.316	.814
Intercept	1106.466	1	1106.466	1822.262	.000
Gender	.317	1	.317	.522	.471
LSM1	.101	1	.101	.166	.684
Gender * LSM1	.129	1	.129	.213	.645
Error	74.078	122	.607		
Total	1197.681	126			
Corrected Total	74.654	125			

a. R Squared = .008 (Adjusted R Squared = -.017)

Table 11 shows the main ANOVA summary results. The main effect of gender was not significant, $F(1, 122) = 0.522$, $p = .471$. Similarly, the main effect of Length of Stay in Malaysia

was not significant, $F(1, 122) = 0.166, p = .684$. Regarding the interaction effect, results show no significant effect, $F(1, 122) = 0.213, p = 0.645$. Such results reveal that international students have the same level of acculturative stress regardless of their gender or Length of Stay in Malaysia.

5. DISCUSSION

This study revealed that English proficiency of international students able to predict academic adjustment of international students. Hence H_1 is supported. This result is consistent with the previous research discussed in the literature (Chen et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2019) in which all of this research does find that when international students can speak, write and understand the English language, they are more likely to adjust well academically. When migrating to another country, one's need to have high English fluency to adjust better. Their English language knowledge could help them understand the academic system since in UPSI especially, English is used as a lingua franca between the local students, lecturer, and international students. International students need to acquire English proficiency to create a variety of forms of social network not only among themselves but also with the locals. This could help them to ask for advice and understand the academic system much better.

This study also supported H_{1b} in which international students who receive support from family, friends, and significant others tend to adjust to their academic better. Those who created social networks or kept in touch with their friends often can receive support or advice on strategies to adjust better. Although international students are away from their families, they are still able to receive support from their families through phone or video calls as a way for them to maintain the relationship with their families. Significant other also helpful for the international students since they need someone special in their life to rely on and express themselves. This finding is coherent with the previous studies that highlighted the importance of social support in helping students have a positive academic adjustment (e.g., Cura et al., 2016). This is because social support includes a friendly environment, and healthy interaction between international students and their surroundings could act as a helping hand in their academics. Otherwise, they could feel helpless when they have trouble adjusting to the new academic system, especially during the virtual class. They need to be independent in finding the support system that could help them with their academics.

Interestingly, English proficiency of international students and social support do not predict international students' acculturative stress. Thus, H_{2a} and H_{2b} are not supported. One

strong argument is partly due to the common language Malaysian students speak i.e., Malay language. Because of this, regardless high or low proficiency of English the international students have, do not contribute significantly on the acculturation stress they are experiencing. Differ than academic achievement, in which international students need to communicate effectively to be successful on academic. Another reason is the invariability of the data collected, which could not observe the changes of a variable related to another variable. This can be proved by the sample majority of respondents that came from Bangladesh and China, which influences the result. This is because many international students originate from these two countries; thus, they tend to have a strong bond between themselves. This can be seen from the clubs or associations created by the students themselves to help and support each other. They could exchange advice and adjust better, which they have fewer chances of experiencing stressful acculturation.

Another plausible reason might be the situational factors in which this survey was carried out online during the pandemic COVID-19. Hence, most of the respondents are attending their virtual class in their home country, so they are not experiencing or could relate to the acculturative stress scale when answering the survey. For example, one of the dimensions in ASSIS, is homesickness, in which the respondent was at their own home country so they do not feel homesick during answering the survey. The current finding deviates from the previous research due to the data of international students that lean towards specific ethnic only which make it difficult to analyse whether the special ethnic identity has a significant to their acculturative stress or not.

6. STUDY IMPLICATION

This research will help diminish the struggle that international students often experience when studying abroad due to the language barrier. International students could be exposed to the importance of English proficiency by being aware and prepared for the program expectations in the host country. International students also need to understand the significance of social support in helping them adjust by maintaining the social network among themselves and the local students.

Moreover, this finding also allows higher institutions come up and strengthen the intensive language program that could improve their English proficiency before and during their study to assist students who are not proficient in using English on the importance of mastering the language and making them familiar with English usage in the academic area. Apart from

that, the institution may also organize a simple workshop or seminar for all lecturers or teaching staff to give them ideas on how to deal with and what needs to be considered when receiving international students in their class. Teaching staff need to be exposed to the adjustment period that international students have and consider when students experience difficulty adjusting academically.

The institution also may develop social support services such as a list of information of the institution environment or necessary resources that could assist international students in adjusting academically and psychologically. A study by Martirosyan, Bustamante and Saxon (2019) researched the current academic and social support services provided for international students found that the universities organized webinars and workshops to give information on academic life and instruction on how to achieve academic achievement in the host country setting. In addition, social events that can bring together all international students are also beneficial for their adjustment. Hartwell et al. (2019) found that the multicultural exchange helps international students increase their social connectedness. It exposes the local students as well to normalize and learn a new culture in their country.

7. CONCLUSION

This quantitative research study examined the studied variable guided by Berry's (1997) acculturation model. Based on the findings, there are relationships between English proficiency and social support with academic achievements positively. Further, English proficiency predicted academic achievement significantly. The study limitation is addressed to give the further researcher an insight on what's not to do and what needs to be improved in future studies.

The first limitation is that there is an invariability of the participants because the data collected majority came from the Asia countries and did not cover the Western countries. Moreover, the current finding has low generalizability due to the participants do not represent the whole population. This is because most of the participants are from Bangladesh and China. Still, the lack of respondents represents other countries, which the finding could not be generalized to the whole international students in UPSI and Malaysia. In addition, the surveys are only available in English and Chinese, which has caused a limitation to those who are not proficient in both of these languages to answer the survey. The following limitation is that the data collection process is carried out online only during the pandemic COVID-19 which international students were doing online distance learning in their home country. There are

chances that the participants involved in this study could not relate to the items in the acculturative stress scale. Thus, English proficiency and social support do not correlate with acculturative stress ($p > 0.05$) which deviates from previous researches discussed.

Despite the limitation and contrast of findings, this study provided information to the institutions and international students to enhance their acculturation experience. Future research can improve the study by increasing the number of international students from different regions as well. Future research needs to consider the international students from the Western region since current findings are only applicable to Asian countries. Next, the future researcher needs to increase the sample size to gain accurate data and outcomes on international students in UPSI. This is aimed to gain a clear understanding of whether English proficiency and social support do have a significant relationship with academic adjustment and acculturative stress or not. The outcome can also be generalizable to the other institution in Malaysia, not only in UPSI. Besides that, future researchers can translate the instrument into more languages to ensure the participants are more comfortable when answering the survey.

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The Internationalization and Promotional Strategies of Higher Institutional Centre of Excellence of Tropical Wood and Fibre through the Quintuple Helix Conceptual Framework

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ABSTRACT

Internationalization and promotion are associated but not the same matter. Internationalization contains the policies and practices commenced by academic systems and institutions and even persons to deal with the worldwide academic ecosystem. Promotion relates to publicizing a product, organization, or venture to increase sales or public awareness. The rationales for internationalization of high institutional centre of excellence involve the academic, the cultural/social, the economic, and many others. Specific initiatives such as knowledge sharing, research mentoring, innovation hub extension programs, and others have been put into place as part of the internationalization and promotional strategies of the Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products.

Keywords: Internationalization; knowledge sharing, research mentor, innovation hub extension

1. INTRODUCTION

The forestry sector and timber industry are facing a major challenge in balancing economic contributions with environmental sustainability as well as community well-being. The objective of HiCOE's recognition of the Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products (INTROP) is to assist the country in meeting and managing this challenge. The research program is designed based on a sustainable economic model (circular economy). The activities in the research program are implemented through the concept of the quintuple helix, which connects government, industry, academia, society, and the environment. Efforts are being intensified for visibility as a national reference centre in the field for tropical timber and fibres, especially timber from eucalyptus and bamboo, as well as fibres from oil palm and kenaf. The graduate studies program is enhanced across specializations through inbound and outbound programs highlighting INTROP's credibility in concentrating on and pioneering sustainable forest plantation innovation efforts in Malaysia.

The tropical wood and fibre niche area covers the whole supply chain of the timber industry. It started from upstream, whereby the resources, screening, and plantation development were carried out. Consequently, it provides the resource to mid-stream activities, which involve bio composite product design and biopolymer processing, as well as pulp and paper technology. The niche area also covers the environmental economics assessment. INTROP has the vision to be a referral centre in Tropical Bioresources and Biobased Materials of international repute. The vision is deliberately implemented by achieving its mission, to elevate lignocelluloses as one of the key drivers in the bioeconomy through dynamic innovations in tropical bioresources and biobased material. This paper aims to elaborate the strategy of HiCOE INTROP in internationalization activity as a regional referral centre in tropical wood and fibres.

The internationalization of higher education has grown more and more mature and has become increasingly important, complex, debatable, and even misunderstood. However, internationalization is wrong if it is presented to describe everything related to the long-distance, intercultural, global, or international world. Therefore, internationalization can lose its meaning and direction in relation to the five myths of internationalization of higher education: international students as agents of internationalization, international reputation for quality benchmarks, international accreditation, international institutional agreements, and Global Branding. Instead, internationalization should become a more crucial process-based approach for better quality education and student competence (Rosyidah & Rosyidi, 2020). Educational ecosystems need to be conducive to helping educational institutions to best adapt their core businesses; teaching and learning, research and development, commercialization and innovation, to rapidly changing industry environments (Barokas & Barth, 2018).

Quadruple Helix models place a stronger focus on cooperation in innovation and, in particular, the dynamically intertwined processes of co-opetition, co-evolution and cospecialisation within and across regional and sectoral innovation ecosystems (Carayannis & Campbell, 2009; Carayannis & Campbell, 2010; Carayannis & Campbell, 2012) that could serve as the foundation for diverse smart specialisation strategies (and introduce a move towards systemic and user-centric innovation structures) (Carayannis & Rakhmatullin, 2014).

2. HICOE INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY

The conceptual framework of the internationalization strategy has been implemented upon acceptance of the acknowledgment from the “Jabatan Pengajian Tinggi” (JPT) on the

admission into HiCOE phase two in 2021. The main input was created based on the recommendation of JPT of the quintuple helix innovation framework, which describes the interactions within a knowledge economy on five (5) vital elements, namely university, industry, government, public, and the environment. This input is a game changer in the HiCOE action plan because it desires more depth and meaningful impact on university contributions. In addition, the impact may be toward the sustainability of niche areas to be competitive, relevant, and visible.

The international strategy was implemented through an interaction that was mainly driven by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) among top universities in Europe and Asia Pacific. Furthermore, the Memorandum of Agreement also takes place on a specific project basis. Some active MoU, NDA, and MoA have captured more interaction scale between the UPM partners focusing on tropical wood and fibre are the Graduate School of Engineering, Osaka University, Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (JAIST), Kanazawa Institute of Technology and Moroccan Foundation for Advanced Science, Innovation and Research (MAScIR). In addition, the Centre De Cooperation Internationale En Recherche Agronomique Pour Le Development (CIRAD) France, Bangor University, United Kingdom, and Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland, are on the list (Pusat Strategi dan Perhubungan Korporat, 2022).

According to Chang Da Wan and Doria Abdullah (2021), significant developments are observed in internationalising public sectors, especially universities in research, with a focus on establishing international collaborations, securing international research grants, and joint publication activities (Wan & Abdullah, 2021).

However, in the niche of tropical wood and fibre, the collaboration has gone beyond standard activity, which also includes community and industrial engagement, exchange of knowledge and expertise through extensive webinars, mentor-mentee activity, and innovation hub extension programs.

International Conferences and Seminars

INTROP also organized many international conferences through a webinar to provide an active platform for sharing and disseminating research results. One of the international conferences that INTROP organized is International Conference on Sugar Palm and Allied Fibre Polymer Composites (SAPC). This conference focused on sugar palm and allied fibre composites which have high value-added to humans and the environment. SAPC can give impact to the

community through community engagement as it involves The Malaysian Society of Sugar Palm Development and Industry (PPIEM), which consists of a community from the local village. Sugar palm is a multipurpose tree with several traditional uses for making numerous local products. Twelve sugar palm products were successfully developed, including sugar palm fibre, sugar palm starch, roofing, rope, brooms, bottle, brushes, vinegar, berries, liquid sugar, fined sugar, and block sugar. These products can lead to better socio-economic empowerment of the rural people by increasing revenues and creating more job opportunities (Sapuan, Ilyas & Sherwani, 2020).

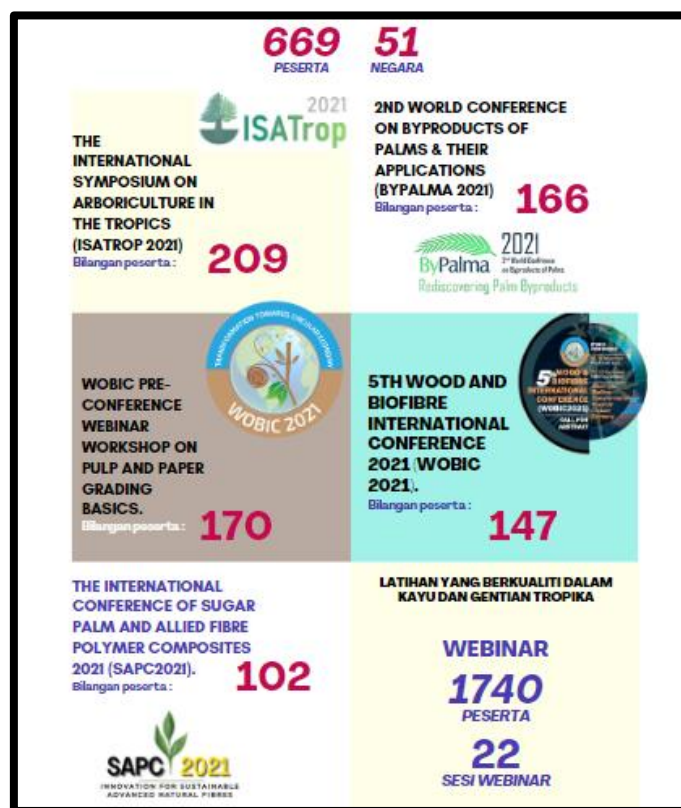


Figure 1a: Details of participation in various international knowledge-sharing sessions organised



Figure 1b: Details of speakers in various international knowledge-sharing sessions organised
International mentor mentee engagement

Professional talent in the niche area continues to be skilful and trained to become competent researchers. Therefore, INTROP develops the mentor and mentee activity in order to encourage young researchers, especially research officers, to gain valuable knowledge from their mentors. Therefore, mentors consisted of high-level professors from abroad, such as America, France, Japan, Spain, South Korea, Poland, and Thailand. The impacts that can be gained from the mentor and mentee activity are not only focused on the number of publications for research officers but also on developing research leadership among these young researchers. In addition, the activity is a long-term plan which can gain the trust between the mentor and the mentee, especially in creating high-quality research for producing high-impact research papers. Besides, it also can facilitate the development of appropriate training and supports to foster mentoring relationships in research and career settings (Keller et al., 2014).

The selection of the institutions and researchers to be engaged and attached to the young researchers is based on a long-term relationship that has been initiated for the past five

years and more. Making the engagement through mentor-mentee activity is to strengthen the ongoing activities and drive to have further programs involved a bigger group of researchers in UPM.

	Penyelidik Antarabangsa	Penyelidik INTROP	Institusi
	 Prof. Dr. Salim Hiziroglu	 Dr. Syeed SaifulAzry Osman Al-Edrus	 Oklahoma State University, Amerika
2	 Prof. Dr. Philippe Cadene	 Dr. Norfaryanti Kamaruddin	 University of Paris, Perancis
3	 Prof. Dr. Tatsuo Kaneko	 Dr. Ahmad Adlie Shamsuri	 Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Jepun
4	 Prof. Arnaldo Marin Atucha	 Dr. Sheriza Mohd Razali	 Universidad de Murcia, Sepanyol
5	 Prof. Dr. Kim Jaehwan	 Dr. Ainun Zuriyati Mohamed @ Asha'ari	 INHA University, Korea Selatan
6	 Prof. Dr. Hyun-Joong Kim	 Dr. Harmaen Ahmad Saffian	 Seoul National University, Korea Selatan
7	 Prof. Dr. Mariusz Maminski	 Dr. Chin Kit Ling	 Warsaw University of Life Sciences, Poland
8	 Prof. Sarawut Rimdusti	 Dr. Muhammad Aizat Abd Ghani	 Chulalongkorn University, Thailand

Figure 2: International Mentor mentee engagement and impact on INTROP HICOE internationalisation strategy

Innovation Hub Extension Program

This program begins with an initial discussion between the delegation Leave a Nest Co Ltd, Japan, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Wan Zuhainis, Director of Academic Excellence Division and INTROP UPM. Leave a Nest is the world’s first start-up company to offer knowledge manufacturing process technology as a service with a passion for solving challenges (deep issues which need solving in society) (Vijaya, 2022).

INTROP HICOE has currently registered four innovation hubs and is seeking international input and knowledge through industrial engagement with Leave a Nest. Dr. Yukihiro Maru, Group CEO of Leave a Nest, has two times visited INTROP with 12 business delegations, including the investor is looking forward to collaborating with UPM to bridge the corporates and university researchers to initiate the implementation of meaningful technology into the world, staying true with the company’s vision of advancing science and technology for

global happiness. The programme aims to be a strategic effort to increase the scale of commercialization research as well as the development of entrepreneurship programmes among researchers in Malaysia’s public universities.



Figure 3: Leave A Nest Group Delegations Visit to INTROP

3. CONCLUSION

Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products has specified the initiatives that have been applied for internationalization and promotional strategies. In addition, specific initiatives such as knowledge sharing, research mentoring, and innovation hub extension programs have been conducted as a High Institutional Centre of Excellence of Tropical Wood and Fibre.

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Arabic Travelogue: Aspiring Internationalisation through a GISO Experience

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ABSTRACT

Malaysia, once a colonised country, is becoming known worldwide in many aspects, one of which is gaining international attraction, education. Since its independence in 1957, the education plan in Malaysia has gone through tremendous reforms. In line with the fourth industrial revolution, Malaysia has not been left out to be up-to-date with the technological advancement in the 21st century education. This has resulted in Malaysia becoming a choice for education hub among international students. To continue the aspirations of the government, one of the ten shifts in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 is the internationalisation agenda. Many researches have been conducted to investigate the policies and strategies to increase the number of international student intake at tertiary level. However, there is lack of research on how Malaysian university students are also helping out in achieving the internationalisation agenda. Thus, this paper examines how Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) is responding to the internationalisation phenomenon. This paper begins by providing the background to the country's internationalisation agenda at tertiary level, and past studies that are relevant to the focus of the paper. Using USIM as a case study in its signature internationalisation initiative, the Global Islamic Student Outreach (GISO), this article examines one GISO activity conducted in 2018 by a group of students from the Faculty of Major Language Studies the activities. The outcomes of the programme is presented and future initiative taken by the faculty to maintain the international collaboration is highlighted.

Keywords: Internationalisation; collaboration; outreach programme; global; case study

1. INTRODUCTION

The higher education landscape in the world has gone through tremendous shifts, especially due to the industrial revolution. Education has shifted from national to global, from teacher-centred to student-centred, from focused education to flexible education and life-long learning (Azman & Abd. Aziz, 2006). These changes cause the need for a shift in education, which result in bringing Malaysia to a higher level, that is to be known internationally. In higher education, internationalisation has been defined as the process of integrating international dimensions into teaching, learning, research and service (Knight & De Wit, 1997, The International Association of Universities, 2003).

Internationalisation of Malaysian Higher Education

One of the ten shifts in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2015-2025 is the internationalisation agenda. Currently, there are 20 public universities, 37 Polytechnics and 105 Community Colleges. There are 477 private higher education institutions, of which 53 are private universities and 36 are private university colleges. Malaysia is one of the countries in ASEAN hosting a number of branch campuses from Australia and the United Kingdom. Malaysia like other developing countries is striving to take its higher educational systems to a higher level, whereby internationalisation is one of the seven key thrusts of the National Higher Education Strategic Plan (NHESP) 2020 (Aziz & Abdullah, 2014a). This thrust aims to achieve the target of 200,000 international students and to position Malaysia as a top-six destination for international students by 2020 (Mohd Ismail & Doria, 2013). Meanwhile, the Internationalisation policy focuses on six core strategies: student mobility, staff mobility, academic programmes, research and development, governance and autonomy including social integration and cultural engagement (MOHE, 2011).

Higher education internationalisation is consisted of two different parts such as internationalisation at home and internationalisation of cross-border education (Ashcroft et al., 2007). According to Knight (2003), internationalisation at home relates to the intercultural and international aspects of the teaching or learning process, curriculum and research, consisting of activities which can assist the students to establish their intercultural skills and international understanding without going away from the campus. Similarly, Daquila (2013). Cross-border education relates to activities for education purposes in abroad, that is internationalisation abroad (Naidoo, 2006). There are various types of cross-border education such as students' mobility, program mobility, and institution mobility (Stella, 2006).

Studies on Internationalisation in Higher Education

Previous studies have looked at internationalisation from the aspect of the challenges and (Jiang & Carpenter, 2013; Warwick & Moogan, 2013). Jiang and Carpenter (2013) have conducted a qualitative research in the UK to explore the challenging issues of an institution in the pursuit of implementing internationalisation strategy. They found issues such as 'resource allocation' that refers to the 'financial and human resources to strategy execution', 'communication', which is a crucial issue in most university levels, and 'operational process' as one of the most critical issues of 'operational process within faculties. For example, an

important challenge for academicians is excessive work as they elaborate that internationalisation conflicts with their teaching at home universities. 'Cooperation and coordination' is a main principle to attain a higher level of adherence in an organisation. 'Organizational culture and resistance to change' assigns to the culture of marketing in promoting internationalisation as a forceful task, since establishing partnerships and recruiting students are the fundamental jobs. 'Student support' attributes to the issues of student assists: focusing on English language, student agreements as well as transport and accommodation. Finally, 'external environment', including governmental policy, visa regulations and English-language requirements.

Another study by Warwick and Moogan (2013) focused on the comparison of UK institutions in understanding of internationalisation strategies suggested prerequisites for successful university internationalisation strategies. It is suggested that a university should have (1) an academic organised approach to strategic management to maintain flexibility in adopting changing circumstances in the external environment; (2) a close link between the organisation's resource capabilities and its external environment, maintained through ongoing organisational development; (3) an evident comprehensiveness of how the internationalisation strategy is going to be applied and supported within the organisation; (4) adequate two-way communication routes with staff; (5) appropriate progress among staff to support opportunities for internationalisation along with parallel systems to disseminate good practice developed in local-level initiatives and pilot schemes; and (6) ongoing commitment and support for internationalisation and its underpinning values from the top of the organisation and leadership of the internationalisation agenda from senior academics in the organisation, a review procedure in a system that can monitor and evaluate the development to revise the necessary strategies.

Focus of the Paper

Based on previous studies, there seems to be a lot of research on internationalisation strategies that institutions have taken to aspire international collaboration. However, in realising international aspirations, some universities taken an advanced/extended approach by involving home university students in the international agenda. One of the universities that exposes students to this agenda is Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. Due to the lack of research on the involvement of Malaysian university students towards the university internationalisation

agenda, this paper examines how Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) students are responding to the internationalisation phenomenon. Using USIM as a case study, this article examines one of the activities involved in the pursuit of internationalisation. As an Islamic based university, USIM encourages students to help achieve the aspirations of the internationalisation agenda through its signature programme named Global Islamic Staff/Students Outreach (GISO) programme.

Global Islamic Students Outreach (GISO)

USIM aspires to produce a generation of balanced multi-lingual leaders who are respected, referred and relevant with a social conscience. The social responsibility and awareness among staff and students are achieved through several programmes, one of which is the Global Islamic Staff/Student Outreach Programme (GISO). Recognised as USIM's highly successful flagship programmes, GISO outreach projects are merit based which are initiated and implemented overseas using funds raised by the staff and students. To date more than 40 countries have benefitted from this programme. Administered under Unit Kesukarelawanan, Bahagian Hal Ehwal Pelajar, USIM, GISO has been a signature program since 2011, aiming at creating a channel for USIM students to be actively involved in Islamic missions via various types of activities such as community engagement and volunteerism. It is an internationalisation programme in USIM with the aim of building soft skills and values among students. The focus is on regional and other minority Muslim countries around the world. There are four (4) main components of volunteerism – knowledge transfer, community engagement, cross culture and environmental sustainability. USIM is the only university in Malaysia that has a structured internationalisation programme that is recognised by the Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia. USIM hopes that GISO will empower the communities and provide capability towards the transformation of their life to a higher level with the acquired knowledge and experience. USIM hopes to fulfil its objectives of supporting international relation that promotes knowledge transfer and cultural understanding for the benefits of stakeholders. Figure 1 provides a summary of GISO programmes that have been conducted from 2011 to 2020, involving various countries - China, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Cambodia, Laos, Timor Leste, Vietnam, Thailand, Mauritius, Maldives, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, South Korea, Taiwan, India, Turkey, Singapore, Brunei and United Arab Emirates), Lebanon, Maghribi, Krygztan, Madagascar, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bornia Herzegoniva, Jordan and Poland.



Figure 1: USIM GISO PROGRAMMES (2011 – 2020)

(Source: www.usim.edu.my/pengembaraan-usim-giso/)

2. THE CASE STUDY: ARABIC TRAVELOGUE

The case study involved reporting the observation made during a GISO programme named 'Arabic Travelogue'. As the accompanying officer for the programme, the researcher observed the journey of the programme from the initial stage to the completion stage. The 'Arabic Travelogue' was conducted by a group of twenty students from the Bachelor of Arabic and Communication programme in Faculty of Major of Language Studies. The selection of destination to Yogyakarta is said to be a state based on Islamic principles with many boarding schools in Islamic Studies and universities as well as many historical places that can be visited. Moreover, a visit to Yogyakarta, Indonesia could provide exposure and clear description of Islamic civilization development and acquire the resources and benefits associated with various aspects of Islam that are very effective. 'Arabic Travelogue' consisted of three activities – an academic visit to Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta (UMY), a community visit to two orphanage homes (Panti Asuhan) and a cultural visit to two places of interest. The number of targeted participants involved in the programme were twenty Arabic education students from UMY, and twenty orphanage participants respectively from each orphanage home.

Academic Visit at UMY

The first programme was an academic visit to the Education Faculty of UMY. Two activities were conducted – a forum, and a seminar. Both activities aimed at usage of the Arabic language among both groups of students from USIM and UMY. The title of the forum was 'Challenges of Arabic Communication in the future'. The objectives of the forum were to create awareness among the student participants on the need for communicating in Arabic for the purpose of applying Islamic practice in the real world, to share of knowledge of the Arabic

language, to exchange ideas in developing communication skill in Arabic, and to expose students to the important aspects of Arabic communication for the spread of Islam and Da'wah. The forum involved one panel from USIM Arabic and Communication students, one panel from UMY, and also one lecturer from UMY Arabic programme. After the forum, the programme continued with a seminar named 'Education and Learning Seminar'. The seminar provided a platform for students (UMY and USIM) to present their academic project. The objectives of the seminar were to improve presentation skills and to share opinion on the projects that students conducted, as well to enhance students' critical and problem solving skills, specifically through the practice of the use of Arabic. The medium of communication for the forum and seminar was Arabic.

Community Visits

The next programme that was conducted was community visit to two orphanage homes – Panti Asuhan Yatim Putra Muhammadiyah, Yogyakarta and Panti Asuhan Aisyiyah, Yogyakarta. It involved twenty participants from each orphanage home, aged between 6 years to 13 years old. This was part of a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity conducted to the targetted community. The objectives of the community visits were to open students' mind about the Arabic language and give them opportunities to communicate in Arabic, as a platform for students to share knowledge and opinion about Arabic language, and to give students the knowledge on how to use Arabic language appropriately. The activities conducted during the community visits were an Arabic workshop and games. Through the Arabic workshop, targetted participants were able to gain knowledge about the importance of Arabic in education, and provide opportunity to participants to improve their soft skill when interacting and giving opinions on current issues. Once the Arabic workshop was done, USIM students conducted games– written MCQ quiz, explorace and oral – which required the participants to practise use of Arabic in simple daily conversations. USIM students also conducted a mini research based on their observations and experiences of the Arabic Workshop and games that they conducted. In the research, USIM students reported their observation about their orphanage participants' level of understanding of the Arabic language. They observed that participants had different learning styles, and that given more time and exposure to the Arabic language can improve the Arabic language skills among them. In addition, by giving a variety of learning strategies can increase their Arabic vocabulary.

Cultural Visits

The next activity was cultural visits to places of interest in Yogyakarta. From the cultural visits, USIM students prepared documentaries of the places of interest. Three main documentaries were produced – on Gunung Merapi, Candi Ijo and Malioboro Street. These documentaries were uploaded in Youtube. Through the publication of the documentaries, it showed that students could train themselves to manage and organise a large scale international programme, and introduce USIM and the Arabic and Communication Programme in FPBU at international level. Besides, students built good relationship between the communities in Yogyakarta specifically UMY and the orphanage homes, and also improved their soft skills and Arabic communication skills. This helped them to prepare to make future deals with the international communities from diverse backgrounds.

Outcome of the ‘Arabic Travelogue’

From the forum and seminar, it was observed that students increased their awareness on the need to give knowledge and awareness on the duties as Muslims who need to promote Islam. They learned to use Arabic in the real life, gained wider knowledge on the challenges of issues in Arabic language, built and strengthened their soft skills and improved their academic achievement for themselves, the community and the country. In addition, students were also able to understand the importance of applying the Arabic language in their degree programme, and also exchange knowledge, experience and confidence. They were also able to widen their scope on how to convey the idea of teaching and learning Arabic, how to tell others on its use in communication, and how to deal with the community.

3. CONCLUSION

This paper provides a sharing experience of a GISO programme conducted by one group of students from the Faculty of Major Language Studies, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. The GISO programme in 2018 has shed more future opportunities for both USIM and UMY to create other international collaborations. The Faculty of Major Language Studies took a step further by visiting UMY to discuss more collaboration between both parties. As a result, a Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2019. From then onwards, UMY has sent their academic staff to further their postgraduate studies in USIM, UMY became co-organiser for FPBU’s International Language and Education Conference in 2019 and USIM became the co-

organiser for UMY’s conference. Moving from there, UMY invited FPBU lecturers to become the external researcher for UMY research grants and invited FPBU lecturer for their Visiting Professor/Lecturer Programme in 2022/2023 academic session. A summary of the collaboration between UMY is shown in Figure 2.

In conclusion, the international collaboration between USIM and UMY has shown positive improvement from year to year. This shows that international linkage can result in many advantages for sharing of expertise and work, which brings added value to the quality of education in general.

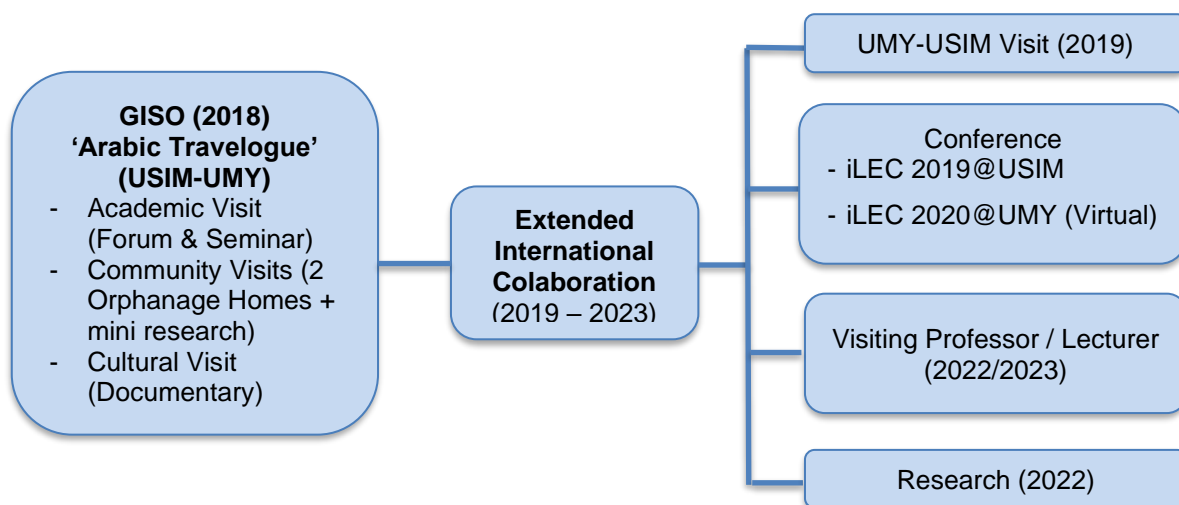


Figure 2: Summary of aspiring the internationalisation agenda through GISO

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International Students' Learning Experiences in Malaysian Universities

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ABSTRACT

Academic recognition from overseas universities is an important matter for international students. In fact, international students must go through various challenges which require them to adapt to the system and cultural differences. This study explores the learning experience of international students in Malaysia who are pursuing academic studies at a local university by focusing on the students' perceptions, values, and emotions towards the experience. A total of 47 international students participated in answering the question. Data were analysed using a frequency and thematic analysis. There are three types of learning experiences encountered by international students, namely positive experiences, negative experiences, and mixed experiences. Each type of experience is supported by statements that highlight the students' values, emotions and perceptions of the events that happened to them. It is hoped that this study can help educational institutions build a support system for international students as well as improve the quality of learning experience at local universities.

Keywords: International student; academic experience; adjustment

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education gives students the opportunity to improve their quality of life. The decision of international students to continue their studies at foreign universities exposes them to interesting learning experiences as well as building the potential and skills of students in various aspects before entering the world of work. The effect of globalization in the higher education sector has opened the door to foreign, or international, students by providing opportunities to travel and study abroad. The so-called cross-border phenomenon has driven the internationalization of higher education as international students have absolute freedom to choose the right course and university outside their origin country for themselves. Usually, most of them prefer to enrol at the top or popular universities in developed countries like Oxford University in Britain and Harvard University, in the United States of America.

To study and live away from home, there are many factors that should be considered by the international students. In previous studies, these factors have been discussed based

on the push-pull model which explains the international students' motivation and commitment to study overseas compared to their own country (Roberts & Ching, 2009). The push and pull factors have also been represented as external factors that affect students' decision-making. For example, there were three main factors that influenced Mainland Chinese students' decision to enrol at Hong Kong and Macau universities: financial, location and university reputation. First, the universities provided education scholarships to the students. Second, both countries are geographically located near their home country. Lastly, the universities have a good reputation and offer a high-quality degrees to international students (Li & Bray, 2007).

Other factors that positively influenced international students' decision to study abroad were internal factors (Wilkins, Balakrishnan & Huisman, 2011). The research has highlighted internal factors such as human and personal factors like students' characteristics, perceptions, as well as attitudes and motivations towards some aspects of religion and safety; these have significant effects on international student study destinations. Besides, their willingness and expectation to experience the high quality of learning process have encouraged them to choose universities or institutions outside their origin country. For example, most international students in Canada agreed to pursue their studies abroad because they feel safe and secure in the environment. They also believe that earning a degree from a prestigious university will improve their quality of life in the future (Chen, 2008).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The main purpose of studying abroad is to gain an academic or professional certificate in a particular field from a university or college. Previous studies have found that international students are struggling to adapt to their new academic environment because of differences in learning and teaching culture and values between the home and host countries, which have created some difficulties for these international students (Zhou, Jindal-Snape, Topping & Todman, 2008). One of the major problems experienced by international students is English skills, especially regarding their ability in writing, reading, and speaking. In the academic aspect, previous studies have shown international students' lack of academic skills: this refers to students' general skills in managing their studies in the classroom and transitioning into the Western teaching and learning style (Burns, 1991). Unsupportive classmates and lecturers, as well as low-quality environment and experience of learning (Andrade, 2006).

From other perspectives, most studies have found that there are many factors that contribute to international students' successful academic adjustment, such as self-regulation

and motivation (Yusuf, 2011). Previous studies also show that study management, learning preparation, and maximal class participation will help international students to adapt to the different teaching and learning cultures (Bianchi, 2013). International students with high self-efficacy and communication skills (English language) have also increased their chances to perform well in the academic area (Sherry & Chui, 2010; Yusuf, 2011). Also, positive learning experiences such as high-quality and well-organised courses and knowledgeable academic staff also help them to overcome their adjustment problems in the university (Li & Duanmu, 2009; Bianchi, 2013).

Literature in Malaysia that discusses international students' experiences is scarce. Yusliza & Chelliah (2010) proposed a model for international students' adjustment in Malaysian universities, however, no follow-up work has been reported (Yusliza & Chelliah, 2010). Studies on problems faced by international students in Malaysia reflect the literature in traditional host countries. However, it has been highlighted that the problem regarding the English language is different. This might be due to Malaysia being hybrid in nature in terms of language use. Malay is the first language whereas English is the second language. Since the medium of instruction at universities is English, there is a conflict between academic and everyday use of language (Manjula & Slethaug, 2011).

Thus, there is a need to explicate the learning support that universities in Malaysia offer and the level of acculturation that the international students experience. It has been reported that Malaysia is concentrating on the number of inbound students and not the quality of the entire process of internationalisation (Kaur, 2018). This strengthens the need for a quest to learn further about the practices of Malaysian universities in providing support for their international students. In line with that, it is befitting to also investigate the types of support for learning provided by renowned universities in traditional host countries. The matter of learning support should be explored from both aspects - the education providers (department in charge at the university) and the international students themselves. Being new in the role of host, Malaysia should learn from the traditional host countries. However, although the universities in host countries might give the best support system for their international students, Malaysian universities should not emulate the practices in full as Malaysia is unique. Malaysia provides a hybrid environment in terms of language and culture. Hence, it is important to explore international students' learning experiences while studying at Malaysian universities focusing on their life events, perception, values, and emotions.

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a survey was conducted. An open-ended online questionnaire was developed and validated by the experts to record the respondents' demographic information and academic experiences in Malaysia. The questionnaire was done as a Google form and the link was distributed to the 47 international students with the help from an international students' officer at six public universities. The sample contained more than twice the number of male (n = 30, percentage = 65%) more than female students (n = 17, percentage = 35%). The respondents come from more than 12 different countries as shown in Figure 1, with most studying in the field of social science (89%). The data gathered were in the form of words, thus the analysis done was thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The findings are presented in terms of themes as well as frequency of the themes.

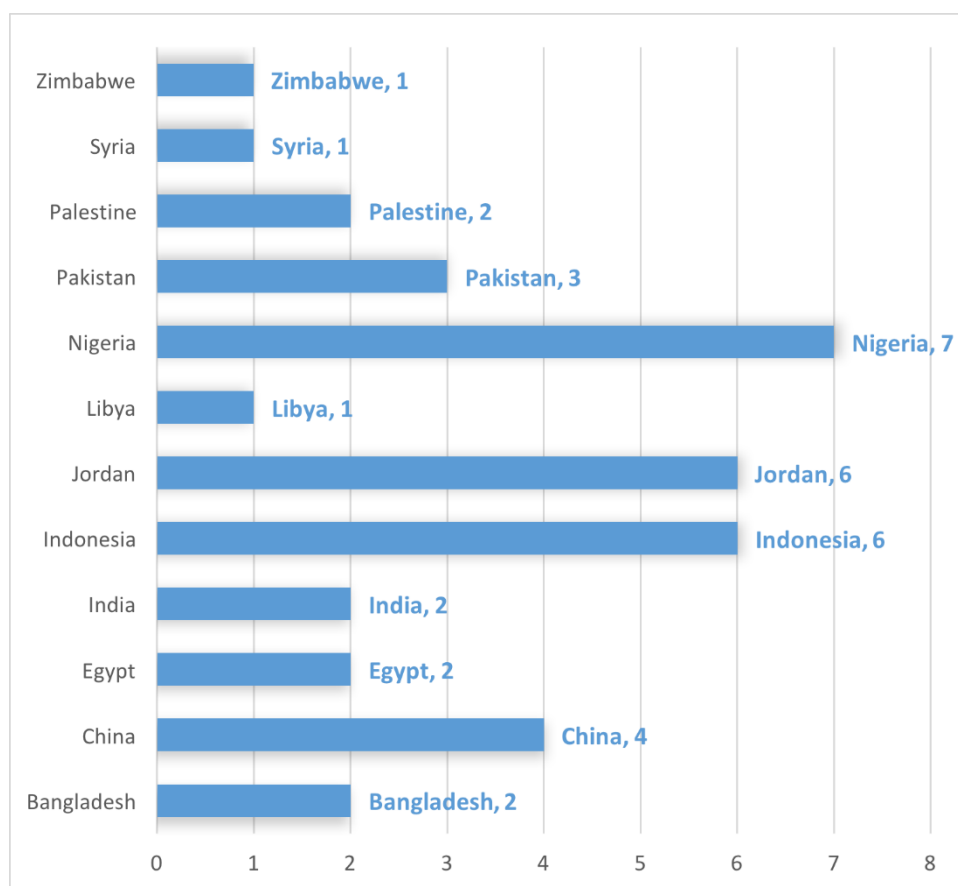


Figure 1: The statistic of international students' home country

4. RESULT

Three main themes that emerged from the analysis represented the international students' academic experience which are positive, negative, and mixed experiences at the host country universities. Based on the frequency analysis, more than 50% of international students report positive experiences, while others believe it is a mixed and negative experience as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequency Analysis of International Students' Learning Experience at Malaysian Public Universities

Themes	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Positive Experience	41	52.6
Negative Experience	20	25.6
Mixed Experience	17	21.8

Positive Experience

In this study, positive experience refers to any experiences that make international students embrace positive values, emotions or perception while studying in Malaysia. This theme was supported by five subthemes including the relationship with supervisor, learning environment and practices, the academic community, social support, and variety in learning methods.

Table 2: Subthemes of Positive Learning Experience

Subthemes	Statements
Relationship with the supervisor	<i>Supervisor support is (a) great (thing)</i>
Learning environment and practices	<i>Excellent environment</i>
Academic community	<i>I have built the rapport with the academic community of my supervisor's supervisees</i>
Social support	<i>All my professors and classmates have been supportive and cooperative especially as I face a big time difference, they have helped me ease my tasks.</i>

Subthemes	Statements
Variety in learning method	<i>Studying from home is very convenient. Saves money, available recorded lectures, and more time to do other activities</i>

Negative Experience

Negative experience refers to any experiences that make international students have negative values, emotions and perception while studying in Malaysia. There were seven subthemes that emerged from the analysis such as limited resources and access, communication problem, incompetent administrative and academic staff, unaccommodating university policy and management, outdated academic practices, different academic environments or systems, and psychological distress.

Table 3: Subthemes of Negative Learning Experience

Subthemes	Quotes
Limited resources and access	<i>Limited access to resources (e.g. papers, exercises, websites & etc.)</i>
Communication problem	<i>I do not like my group members for some courses always chat in Malay for group discussion.</i> <i>I faced language barriers as a few lecturers switched to Malay during their lectures.</i>
Incompetent administrative and academic staff	<i>dealing with rude staff and lecturers who did not want to speak in English to accommodate international students.</i>
Unaccommodating university policy and management	<i>Due to the university's poor management, I had trouble registering courses, and faced language barriers as a few lecturers switched to Malay during their lectures.</i>
Outdated academic practices	<i>Lectures also had problems with utilizing the online learning platform and communicating with the students.</i>
Different academic environment or system	<i>it was a bit hard at the beginning due to the differences in curriculum and academic culture</i>
Psychological distress	<i>A research student's journey is very lonely and lengthy. I feel too tired</i>

Mixed Experience

Mixed experience refers to any experiences that make students have a mix of positive and negative values, emotions and perception while studying in Malaysia. It also refers to participant statements that contain both positive and negative elements of experience as reported above. Among the examples of subtheme combinations highlighted from the analysis are social support (positive) and academic work (negative), relationship with supervisor (positive) and communication problems (negative), and variety of learning methods (positive) and incompetent administrative staff (negative).

5. DISCUSSION

As argued in previous studies, international students go through various events throughout their university studies. In this study, their experiences are studied through personal statements about events that affect certain emotions, values, and perceptions. The results of the analysis found that there are three types of experiences, namely positive experiences, negative experiences, and mixed experiences. The report on these three types of experience in general provides insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the local university's service quality to international students. In addition, the differences in culture and education system between the country of origin and the host country also provide various dimensions of experience for international students while in Malaysia. The exposure received while studying in Malaysia opens the boundaries of knowledge and skills for international students to be more independent and survive to ensure that they can complete their studies and gain academic recognition from Malaysian universities.

The positive experiences experienced by international students are more at 50% but are balanced by negative and mixed experiences. The themes and subthemes constructed from the data analysis also indicate that academic relationships and environments contribute to the diversity of those experiences. In addition, international students' abilities, and skills in better managing cultural differences and educational systems contribute to a more positive experience even though management inefficiency and unfriendly university policies give them a negative experience.

6. CONCLUSION

International students' academic experience at host country universities is one of the determinants of the successful adjustment process. This study was designed to explore the momentous events or incidents that affect international students' academic experience while studying at Malaysian public universities. From the results, international students perceived their academic experience from various perspectives based on the events or incidents that happened during their studies. While many parties anticipate international students will experience more positive events at the university, there is no doubt that negative events also have created mixed experiences for them.

The results of this study provide enlightenment to various parties to improve the quality of international students' management, teaching and learning experience in their respective universities. Everyone plays a significant role to build a positive learning experience and healthy campus environment for international students to succeed in their studies. The university management needs to revisit the existing university policy and improve the relevant terms and conditions that will increase the university efficiency in managing the administration such as visa applications, tuition fees and accommodation. Besides, the faculty management and lecturers at the university need to have the knowledge and skills to manage the students' diversities in the classroom. In addition, they need to master multicultural pedagogy and communication. It is hoped that this study can help educational institutions build a support system for international students as well as improve the quality of learning experience at local universities.

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The International Doctoring Endeavor... A Not-so-trivial Pursuit!

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ABSTRACT

A degree in medicine has long been one of the most sought-after pursuits for secondary school and university graduates worldwide. For various reasons, sizable number of students would flock overseas to pursue medical studies. These international medical students, while having their opportunities to follow their doctoring desire, they also have distinct challenges to overcome. One Malaysian medical school has a unique curriculum where students spend first half of their studies in Dublin, then return to Penang for the second half of the course. This brief report addresses some pertinent issues that international students frequently encounter.

Keywords: Medicine; curriculum; international students

1. INTRODUCTION

Numerous individuals worldwide have the desire to pursue a career a medicine. Proportions of them would enter medical schools in their own countries; however, many would choose medical schools in foreign nations for the following reasons: i) in many countries, the number of qualified applicants far exceed medical schools' available positions (The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, 2019); ii) medicine is a "graduate-entry" programme in North America, and many determined youngsters would desire to pursue their medical studies upon completion of secondary education (Garrud & McManus); iii) the qualities of medical education vary between countries (Aftab *et al.*, 2021); iv) to experience another country and gain independence (Byrne & Brugha, 2019; Özoğlu, Gür & Coşkun, 2015); and v) affordability of the education. These international medical students (IMS) constitute a sizeable fraction of future doctors all over the world; according to the International Federation of Medical Students Associations, there are currently about 1.3 million IMS in 130 countries.

Studying overseas would indeed allow students to satisfy their educational and personal wishes; however, IMS face interesting challenges, from language difficulties to cultural discrimination (Byrne & Brugha, 2019; Huhn, *et al.*, 2016; McGarvey, Karivelil, & Byrne, 2021). Moreover, as medical degrees are usually not "transnational", many IMS would face difficulties

in returning to their home countries for postgraduate medical training upon graduation (Morgan, Crooks & Snyder, 2017). Some countries would even not recognize overseas medical degrees (Herfs & Haalboom, 2007). Despite these hurdles, many would go abroad for their medical education.

The Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland (RCSI) & University College Dublin (UCD) Malaysia Campus (RUMC) is a foreign university branch campus located in Penang, Malaysia. The undergraduate medicine curriculum is a five-year “transnational” programme. Students spend the first 2.5 years in Dublin for ‘pre-clinical’ study – either at RCSI or UCD, then another 2.5 years of clinical study in Penang. Students receive the National University of Ireland (NUI) medical qualifications upon graduation, and the NUI degrees are well-recognised in Ireland, Malaysia, and many other countries. The uniqueness of this programme attracts many qualified students from Africa, Asia, Australia, Middle East, and North America. The IMS representation of each class is roughly 10% in recent years. As all students spend the first part of their medical training in Dublin, students from Malaysia can technically also be considered as IMS when they are studying in Ireland. As RUMC is strategized to further strengthen its IMS services, better understanding of our students’ needs and challenges as IMS is warranted. This article aims to address some IMS concerns that are particularly relevant to our institution.

2. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES

Malaysia is a multicultural country with Malays, Chinese, and Indians as the predominant ethnic groups. In addition, there are sizable populations of other Asians and Westerners residing in the major Malaysian cities and towns. The most current national census showed that over 60% of Malaysians practice Islam and it is considered as the religion of the federation. Intercultural difference is one of the biggest worries for IMS (Huhn, *et al.*, 2016). In one Irish qualitative study utilizing focus group discussions found that diverse cultural norms could significantly hinder intercultural friendship establishment; e.g., misunderstanding on personal space – closeness to each other, hugging, and shaking hands (Byrne, *et al.*, 2019; O’Reilly & Milner, 2015). For Malaysians practicing Islam, socializing may remain gender-specific – e.g., female students were uneasy going to the gymnasium when male students were present. Gathering would be restricted to places that do not serve pork or alcohol. Issues could occur from sharing accommodation and cooking utensils with non-Muslim schoolmates (Byrne, *et al.*, 2019; Brown & Holloway, 2008). Intriguingly, tension may also arise among students from a

similar culture if one chose not to conform to the home country's social norm when overseas (Byrne, et al., 2019). Malaysian students going abroad do not only potentially encounter cultural challenges from their Irish counterparts, but also from their own RUMC classmates from overseas. While we often identify individuals by their apparent ethnicities, the literature has indicated that categorizing students into specific ethnic groupings may not be appropriate. It is particularly important for those originating from multicultural societies, e.g., "Malaysians" and "Canadians".

The situation is somewhat reversed two-and-a-half years later when students return to Penang for their clinical training – the Malaysian students are no longer considered as IMS, but those who entered the programme from overseas continue to be IMS. For IMS originating from Europe or North America, they would likely to be more accustomed to the Dublin lifestyle, where those coming from the Middle East might find the Malaysian way of life more palatable (Mahmud, Amat, Rahman & Mohd. Ishak, 2010).

3. LANGUAGE BARRIER

The entire RUMC curriculum is delivered in English. All applicants must present evidence of satisfactory language command prior to acceptance. For IMS coming to Penang for their clinical studies, a short "medical Bahasa Melayu" course is offered. When IMS going to foreign countries where their mother tongue is not widely spoken – e.g., Asian students going to Western nations and Caucasian students arriving to Asia countries, they are often apprehensive regarding their communication capability (Yeh & Inose, 2003). The potential language issue could impact not only academic performance, but also integration and socialization (Gatwiri, 2015).

For many Malaysian students studying in an English-speaking country, language per se is often not a significant communication barrier, as they tend to be multilingual – able to converse in English and their own ethnical languages. Despite the apparent proficiency of languages, some students find appreciating accents, colloquialisms, jokes, and non-verbal communications challenging (Byrne, et al., 2019). Moreover, when it comes to academic or professional communications, non-native English speakers could be disadvantaged (Tayem, AlShammari, Albalawi, & Shareef, 2020). Although professional translators are provided for medical students during their clinical postings in Penang, the levels of quality and accuracy tend to vary, and at times insufficient when obtaining detailed psychiatric histories are required (Chapnick, 2019). While classmates are usually helpful to translate, IMS are in general

reluctant to continue “pestering” fellow students. Overseas students think that some clinical learning opportunities are missed due to language barrier. Malaysian students, on the other hand, they tend to have difficulty in using English in conveying information to patients in an easily understandable manner.

4. POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL TRAINING

Most IMS are bright students and have no trouble graduating from their medical studies. For those coming to RUMC, as they are not Malaysians, they cannot be considered for housemanship training in the country. Getting a postgraduate training position is probably the toughest battle for them. For some IMS, their home countries do not permit any foreign medical school graduate to engage in internship training, and some countries have extremely limited places for graduates trained in other countries (Mahmud et al, 2010). Out of all professions, medicine is arguable the most difficult for graduates from foreign medical school to obtain local training positions. Moreover, an undergraduate medical degree is virtually worthless if the graduate cannot continue into postgraduate training. At both RCSI and UCD, due to the high number of IMS, they provide excellent services to prepare students for returning to their home countries, e.g., review courses for licensing examinations, career advice and planning services.

At RUMC, the Virtual Learning Environment is used to provide career resources for the students. Students are encouraged to use commercial online learning platforms to prepare for licensing examinations, and the enrollment fee to the online course will be reimbursed upon completion of the examination. As RUMC students would need to return to Malaysia, they could therefore not be able to attend the RCSI review course for the Step 1 of the United States Medical Licensing Exam, which is usually held annually during students’ third year at RCSI. For students attending RUMC, many of them – local and international – plan to undergo internship training overseas, and the school does provide various resources to assist. Each year, a number of graduates with Honors will be successful in securing housemanship positions; however, several IMS in recent years are not able to transition into postgraduate training smoothly for academic and various personal reasons.

5. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

Studying abroad undoubtedly offers exciting and mind-broadening experiences. Despite all the prior preparation and apparent readiness of being an international student, challenges -

many unforeseeable - remain. Modern advances in telecommunication have likely alleviated some apprehension and brought home closer. In addition to maintain academic excellence, IMS would need to adapt different cultures, engage in new social circles, and manage their emotions. It is therefore understandable that IMS might not be able to capitalize on all the opportunities available when overseas. For many universities' "pre-departure orientation" sessions, much time is spent on reassuring the students when presenting what students should expect, and the negatives are often minimized or neglected.

Compared to some other countries, IMS in Malaysia experience relatively less language obstacles, as the majority of the population can communicate in certain level of English. In clinical settings, depending on the medical specialty, history-taking can be problematic at times as the essence of the communication could be "lost in translation". Furthermore, in social situations, IMS would feel left-out when their classmates are conversing in their native languages. The offering of a short "survival" language course cannot provide the required foundation for IMS to build upon.

Students choose to study medicine abroad for many reasons. One major deterrent for them not to go overseas is the potential difficulty in returning to their home country to practice. For example, students in Hong Kong would forego their offers to study at highly prestigious institutions overseas for this reason. International medical graduates often face more difficulties in securing internship training. RUMC has been improving its support for IMS in the recent years; however, more avenues could be explored to optimize IMS services. While some of the discussed issues are "generic" for all international students – and indeed most would be, the difficult in gaining postgraduate training in medicine is unique for IMS. Realizing and identifying the pitfalls in the "IMS journey" are the important initial steps towards change. Qualitative studies with focus groups can be the useful next step to gain more in-depth understanding of any institution-specific issues.

6. CONCLUSION

This brief article covers only the tip of the "IMS hurdling iceberg". There are many other issues that IMS would experience, e.g., homesickness, harassment, and discrimination. The awareness that students from overseas have different needs and struggles must be established among faculty members. Different institutions would likely have their unique sets of concerns. Getting students involved in qualitative discussions could be a useful initiative to

elicit specific issues. Only with more precise understanding of IMS' perceptions without prejudice, we can then develop tailored strategic solutions to optimize the IMS experience.

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Internationalisation Strategy and Marketing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs): A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have begun collaborating with international institutions to offer programs globally. These partnerships have enabled universities to build synergies and expand their boundaries by combining their resources with those of an international partner. As a result of increased globalisation and economic competition among higher education institutions worldwide, international partnership programs have become essential at the global strategic level of education. This research looks for e-resources and academic articles with the keywords and research gaps definition and conceptualisation of internationalisation strategy and marketing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). This study uses a systematic review of articles utilising Transfield's five stages, divided into three academic online databases, including Emerald, Science Direct, and Wiley to establish the basis for a critical debate on each study area. The study shows that the simultaneous implementation of multiple marketing strategies will result in synergy. It will, therefore, significantly contribute to the success of HEIs in achieving their internationalisation goals.

Keywords: internalisation strategy, marketing, synergy and higher education institutions.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the past, Malaysian universities have attracted many international students. Malaysia has become a popular destination for international students looking for post-graduate opportunities because of its universities' influx of international students. It was noted that international students have also been instrumental in Malaysia's economy. Not only do international students make financial contributions, but diversity in higher education also enriches students and helps them grow personally (Glass, Streitwieser, & Gopal, 2021)

Higher education institutions (HEIs) have recognised international partnering programmes' value and strategic importance. As a result, the number of international

partnership programs rapidly expands and influences higher education institutions' internationalisation strategies and goals (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016; Montgomery, 2016). The internationalisation strategies of higher education initially consisted of recruiting international students to study at their campuses (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). Before the turn of the century, technological advances and globalisation enabled higher education institutions to offer their programs internationally (Knight, 2016; Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). This new opportunity has stimulated cross-border educational activities at the global level (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Dowling-Hetherington, 2020).

Higher education institutions have begun collaborating with international institutions to offer programs globally (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). These partnerships have enabled universities to build synergies and expand their boundaries by combining their resources with those of an international partner (Bovill, Jordan, & Watters, 2015). As a result of increased globalisation and economic competition among higher education institutions worldwide, international partnership programs have become essential at the global strategic level of education.

This research looks for e-resources and academic articles with the keywords and research gaps definition and conceptualisation of internationalisation strategy and marketing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). As a result, a systematic review of internationalisation strategy and marketing articles published was conducted.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The internationalisation of higher education is the deliberate process of incorporating an international, intercultural, or global dimension into its purpose, functions, and delivery to improve the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society. The rationales for internationalising higher education are broadly classified into four categories: political, economic, sociocultural, and academic (de Wit, 2002; Knight, 1997).

The participants would employ internationalisation strategies based on their rationale and approach, which can be divided into two broad categories: programme strategies and organisational strategies (Knight, 1997, 2004; Knight and de Wit, 1995). a) Program strategies encourage internationalisation via academic activities such as student exchange programmes, the acceptance of international students, visiting scholars, and joint research programmes (Knight, 1997). b) Organisational strategies encourage internationalisation by institutionalising

the international aspect of their university's activities. For instance, care must be taken to ensure that university leaders, faculty and staff are engaged in internationalisation efforts, articulate international objectives and offer opportunities for faculty and staff development (Knight, 1997).

Internationalisation Strategies for Higher Education Institutions through Strategic Partnership

Higher education institutions' engagement in international activities initially consisted of recruiting international students (Knight, 2016; Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). Then, technological advancements and globalisation made it possible for institutions to deliver their educational programs abroad and partner with foreign higher education institutions (Knight, 2016; Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). Internationalisation strategies are a top priority for many higher education institutions (Taylor, 2016). This section details the HEIs internationalisation strategies through strategic partnerships.

The strategic partnerships of HEIs where higher education internationalisation has shifted from people-to-program-to-strategic-partnership mobility (Kosmützky & Putty, 2016). Collaboration in higher education has tested the boundaries and identities of institutions. This form partnerships to expand and consolidate resources (Bovill, Jordan, & Watters, 2015). A partnership may stimulate the competitiveness and performance of an institution (Borza & Crişan-Mitra &, 2015). Increased globalisation and economic competition between higher education institutions worldwide have made international partnership programs critical to the overall strategic plan for education. Improvements in technology have fuelled international partnership development. Institutions can collaborate by sharing cheap and easy course content (Fuicu et.al., 2017).

Internationalisation is increasingly expected as technology, and international program activities expand worldwide. In order to maintain status, institutions must establish international partnerships (Taylor, 2016). The study argues that managing multiple partnerships is an inefficient use of resources and inefficient for internationalisation. Institutions have noted that having fewer high-quality and highly engaged partners is better than having more uncommitted partners. Few partnerships can be successfully pursued in the long term (Taylor, 2016). A lower number of highly involved partners support a sustainable internationalisation strategy. Global partnerships contribute to academic collaboration (Montgomery, 2016). Hence, relevant research articles were analysed in greater depth from the internationalisation strategy to explore how Malaysian HEIs can employ the most effective application marketing strategies to

achieve their internationalisation goals. The next section will address this internationalisation-orientated marketing strategy for higher education institutions.

Internationalisation-Oriented Marketing Strategies for Higher Education Institutions

HEIs can use internal, international, online, and branding marketing strategies to enter the international market, develop communication channels, and build an identity or brand.

a) Internal Marketing

Internal marketing is an organisational strategy used to motivate and communicate with employees. Internal marketing focuses on two key activities: employee engagement and internal communication. Internal marketing is intended to assist employees in understanding their role in implementing the marketing strategy and to ensure external customer satisfaction (Rafiq & Ahmed, 2000). As such, key members of the higher education system are now facing more complex challenges, from teaching and research to administrative work. The business jargon is providing service, meeting targets, and satisfying customers (Miller, 2014). The primary objective of internal marketing is to ensure that staff and students benefit from their experiences within the institution to persuade them to take a positive view of the institution. A study conducted in the United States showed that the support and involvement of senior management was the most important factor in the success of higher education marketing (Kohut, 1989).

b) International Marketing

International marketing involves promoting a company's activities internationally across national borders. The export of educational services worldwide enables the higher education sector to meet its financial and other objectives. The university needs to use global marketing strategies to help meet customers' expectations and achieve their goals. Higher education institutions must implement these international recruitment strategies to provide them competitive advantages. Higher education institutions should also have clear positioning and understanding of the target market and be able to combine these elements. The most important influences on potential students can be broken down into two themes. The first theme is the attractiveness of the course, entrance requirements, university rankings, scholarships, employer recognition of the course, and university facilities. The second theme is based on social factors such as the institution's location, job opportunities, the appeal of the national culture, the cost of living, and influences from friends and family.

c) Online Marketing

The internet is a good way to build a brand and attract customers, and it is also an invaluable source of information for customers (Ferrell & Hartline, 2005). The internet enables HEIs to target information based on specific audience segments. A university's Web site can be a competitive weapon because it portrays the school to its stakeholders (Opoku, Hultman, & Saheli-Sangari, 2008). The HEIs need to have a good brand personality communicated on their website. The contents used to attract and convince prospective students about the qualities of the HEIs might also be important to the university's searchability and visibility (Kincl, Novák and Štrach, 2013). Organisations must be active in social media and monitor and manage communication (Hayes, Ruschman and Walker, 2009; Gallagher and Ransbotham, 2010).

d) Brand marketing

Chapleo (2010) and Chernatony and McDonald (2003) noted that a successful brand provides a lasting competitive edge and consistently drives superior profitability and performance in the market. Maringe and Gibbs (2008) suggest that organisations such as universities must develop a brand. As a result, HEIs such as universities and colleges have turned to brands as a solution (Pinar, 2011).

3. METHODOLOGY

This research is a systematic literature review highlighting internationalisation strategy and marketing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). A literature review is key in the hierarchy of scientific evidence-based knowledge generation. Tranfield et al. (2003) recommended five sequential stages as relevant to conducting a well-structured and evidence-informed literature review:

1. Planning the review
2. Identifying and evaluating studies
3. Extracting and synthesising data
4. Reporting descriptive findings
5. Utilising the findings to inform research and practice

Stage 1:

Planning the review

The primary objective of this review is to ascertain the nature and scope of the research

conducted on internationalisation strategy and marketing for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Stage 2: Identifying and evaluating studies

This research aims to address the past phenomenon of the internationalisation strategy and marketing and contributes to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Table 1 shows this research paper's inclusion and exclusion criteria for analysis.

Table 1: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion	Exclusion
Last 12 months	Beyond 12 months
Articles	Earlycite Articles, Book part and case study
Research Articles	Non-Research Articles
Academic Articles	Non-Academic Articles

Search strategy

This systematic review uses relevant articles that are appropriate to the topic of this study and conducts article searching using big digital data from e-resources. This paper uses a digital library with data on management and business, including Emerald, Science Direct, and Wiley. No consensus states how many digital libraries can be used, and the last years of the data should be used in the systematic review study (Hadi, Tjahjono, El Qadri, et al., 2020). The search period covers from August 2021 to August 2022.

Stage 3: Extracting and synthesising data

Papers were collected from three major databases: Emerald, Science Direct, and Wiley.

Results

Stage 4 and 5:

Stages 4 and 5 of Tranfield are combined and presented in this section. The results of recapitulation of inclusions and exclusions articles in this systematic review using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) developed by Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, and The PRISMA Group (Moher et al., 2009). Table 2 shows the results based on all the sources and groups of keywords mentioned above. When "internationalisation strategies " was used, 2402 articles were discovered. this figure dropped to 1752 when using "internationalisation strategies and marketing". When it used the keywords "internationalisation strategies and marketing and higher education institutions", "internationalisation strategies and marketing and higher education institutions and foreign

students"; 792 and 329 articles were produced accordingly. Following the careful selection based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, nine (9) papers about "internationalisation strategies and marketing and higher education institutions and foreign students and post-pandemic" were identified.

Table 2: Search Strategy

Database Online	Keyword Combination Used				
	Internationalisation Strategies	Internationalisation Strategies	Internationalisation Strategies	Internationalisation Strategies	Internationalisation Strategies
		AND	AND	AND	AND
		Marketing	Marketing	Marketing	Marketing
			AND	AND	AND
			Higher Education Institutions	Higher Education Institutions	Higher Education Institutions
				AND	AND
				Foreign Students	Foreign Students
					AND
					Post-Pandemic
Emerald	1190	1126	544	161	3
Science Direct	844	343	109	34	1
Wiley	368	283	139	134	5
TOTAL	2402	1752	792	329	9

This research further analysed the eight papers to gain some insights. Unfortunately, one of the papers was found to be unrelated papers. Hence, only eight (8) papers were included in this analysis, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Fraction of Papers by a Combination of Keywords

No.	Titles	Authors	Findings
1	COVID-19 and higher education: responding to local demands and the consolidation of e-internationalization in Latin American universities	Cordova, Floriani, Gonzalez-Perez, Hermans, Mingo, Monje-Cueto, & Salvaj, (2021)..	First, more focus and resources for local university stakeholders can impact traditional internationalisation activities. Second, revitalising foreign partnerships and strengthening "virtual internationalisation" may strengthen the international presence.

No.	Titles	Authors	Findings
2	Stepping up the game—meeting the needs of global business through virtual team projects	Swartz & Shrivastava, (2021).	Increase students' awareness of cultural diversity and the need for behavioural adaptations to interact with different cultures.
3	Crossing the ocean to teach international business. Is it worth the trouble?	Valderrey, Sánchez, Davis, & Szymanski, (2022).	Rigorous academic programs lead to a higher level of student satisfaction.
4	Global engagement in the post-pandemic world: Challenges and responses. Perspective from the UK	Tsiligkiris & Ilieva, (2022).	Many claims that the recent pandemic and shift to e-learning and blended learning will shape the future of PE. The post-pandemic shift of traditional education towards e-learning.
5	Globalising higher education through internationalisation and multiculturalism: The case of Indonesia	Sibawaihi & Fernandes, (2022).	For higher education to progress in internationalisation and multiculturalism, the government must formulate policies and encourage state institutions to be more autonomous.
6	Reimagining and redesigning teaching and learning in the post-pandemic world	Marmolejo & Groccia (2022).	A proactive view that higher education must respond to past, present, and future needs
7	International graduates on temporary post-graduation visas in Australia: Employment experiences and outcomes	Tran, Tan, Bui, & Rahimi, (2022).	The study also reveals an increase in precariousness, deskilling and vulnerability among foreign graduates working in the host country with temporary visas. Thus, this applies to students, host institutions and major target countries in an increasingly dynamic international education market.
8	Training business students to use online networking for self-development	Elenurm (2022).	Higher education should educate students to use online media to look for new opportunities, expand their network of contacts and think critically about disseminating information online.

4. DISCUSSION

As a result of recent economic conditions, diversification, decentralisation, internationalisation and fierce competition, the environment for higher education has changed radically. The internationalisation, the challenges of implementing initiatives and the growing importance of the quality of internationalisation. Implementing internationalisation had quantitative objectives, such as the number of international students. To achieve these goals, the workload and responsibilities of faculty, management and staff have increased, leaving some faculty overloaded and frustrated.

In addition, these changes have significantly impacted the operation and management of higher education institutions, and commercialisation has become a contentious way of supporting higher education. Accordingly, higher education institutions are introduced with four marketing strategies: internal, international, online, and brand. Higher education can strengthen internal and external relations and access targeted international markets by implementing these four marketing strategies. Additionally, the ability to establish channels of communication with relevant audiences across the internet and build its brand enables it to survive and grow in a highly competitive environment.

Notwithstanding this, it is not understood that higher education institutions should adopt marketing strategies or that marketing strategies are their sole objective. According to the literature, marketing in higher education is criticised for its impact on academic freedom, how quality is measured, the homogenisation of universities, and the discourse of students as consumers. A thorough literature review also shows a gap between higher education marketing theory and practice. As a result of the relatively limited amount of research on higher education marketing practices, the state of evaluation of higher education marketing is increasingly separated. The article hopes that a critical look at the marketing literature will shed light on the need for higher education institutions to reflect on the direction they should take. It also explores and identifies practices appropriate to their contexts.

Therefore, based on systematic literature review findings, HEIs can strengthen their internal and external relationships and access targeted international markets by implementing these four suggested marketing strategies and approaches. -

a) International marketing strategy

The international marketing strategy is intended to help HEIs enter international markets, export education and increase the mobility of international students. In particular, for HEIs, how to enter a new market with a different culture and political background and recruit good local students to come to study in Malaysia.

Firstly, the HEIs must establish contacts with the target market, such as local universities with similar goals, alumni or collaboration with formal organisations. Second, universities can build linkages and cooperation in foreign markets through the above methods. These could then be combined progressively with other marketing strategies to build the university's image and reputation in the foreign market, thus consolidating the university's market and cooperation abroad.

b) Internal marketing strategy

People are the key component of any internal marketing strategy, and the two main groups of individuals at higher education institutions are employees and students. Therefore, the HEIs should create a more harmonious working environment by improving the structure of employees and streamlining work content to implement internal marketing strategies through existing employees. For example, creating regular in-house surveys to understand employee needs and concerns.

Based on the principle of not compromising the quality of education, better addressing the needs of students and obtaining better feedback, students become a new promotional force for HEIs. Hence, internal marketing strategies can become the foundation for other marketing strategies, such as recruiting professional Internet staff to develop online resources for HEIs through a reasonable employee structure.

c) Online marketing strategy

In the last twenty years, the value and role of the internet in the organisation have been evident. It has become a key element of the university's development plan for HEIs to develop their Internet value, enhance their online resources and establish an online presence. Higher education institutions can establish an online presence by promoting offline activities and improving their official website to create an easy-to-use online portal. With the help of professionals, the university's online presence will be progressively improved to build an online brand. At the same time, it will help universities expand their international markets and connect with potential students to recruit good students.

d) Brand marketing strategy

Although the brand marketing strategy is a controversial tool for universities, it is also relatively difficult to build and maintain a strong brand image. Establishing a brand is inseparable from combining other marketing strategies; a good reputation favours the university's survival in a competitive environment. Thus, HEIs should periodically review the position of the brand and reshape the brand in order to build a dynamic brand effectively.

5. CONCLUSION

According to Hudzik (2015), international success is "dependent upon what happens in the university itself." This article aims at providing relevant information to international educators. Although the marketing strategy is controversial for HEIs, it does not mean that it cannot have a positive meaning for universities. In a case study, the universities of China and England demonstrated that marketing strategies could help HEIs differentiate themselves, improve

internal management, build a brand and attract the right students. However, in comparison to the autonomy of the English case university, the Chinese case university needs more advice from the central government and a more open attitude. Otherwise, it will be challenging for Chinese HEIs to implement marketing strategies within universities. However, even though English Case Studies University has relatively more autonomy, the university is always careful in implementing marketing strategies. This is linked with opposition voices and criticism of the excessive commercialisation of higher education institutions.

As a result, the application of marketing strategies to higher education institutions has been broken down into individual and combined marketing strategies and outlined below:

a) Individual marketing strategies:

Marketing Strategies	Application in higher education institutions
Internal Marketing	Create a clear division and department structure with work descriptions, apply market-related management plans to in-house staff, and regularly meet with the management committee. Improve working/teaching conditions at universities.
International Marketing	Develop a relationship with an international organisation and build a collaborative relationship.
Online Marketing	Disseminate information on the website and social media and establish the online presence and identity of the university (apply judiciously on the Internet and social media platforms)
Brand Marketing	Capitalise on the university's location advantages and build the university's reputation and identity.

b) Combination of marketing strategies:

Combining marketing strategies.	Application in Higher Education Institutions
Internal marketing in combination with international marketing.	Appoint senior staff to handle external engagement (institutional partnerships, international relations, marketing, recruitment, alumni relations, etc.)
Internal marketing plus brand marketing.	Identify/review internal university stakeholders (students and staff) with an in-depth understanding of their needs and requirements.
Internal marketing in combination with online marketing.	Combine offline activities and events with an online information publication (University Open Houses with Online Information Advertising; Online Continuous Graduation Ceremony) and establish a separate department to undertake and manage internet-related issues.
International marketing together with brand marketing.	Cultivate relationships with alumni and international partners for positive advertising and future loyalty.

Combining marketing strategies.	Application in Higher Education Institutions
International marketing in combination with online marketing.	Use the internet and social media to connect the university to international students, better understand its global markets and target audiences, and build a global reputation.
Brand marketing combined with Online Marketing	Rebranding the university's digital resources, including logo, website structure and content, and social media platform, to create an online image, differentiate it from its competitors and increase awareness.

The authors believe that the simultaneous implementation of multiple marketing strategies will result in synergy. It will, therefore, significantly contribute to the success of HEIs in achieving their internationalisation goals.

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Anak Malaysia di Bumi Australia: Satu Refleksi Penyelidikan

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ABSTRAK

Agenda pendidikan masa kini bersifat lebih global dan terbuka. Setiap negara di seluruh dunia berusaha untuk menjadikan institusi pendidikan di negara masing-masing bersifat holistik dan lestari melalui polisi pengantarabangsaan pendidikan. Secara tidak langsung, pintu sempadan antara negara mula dibuka bagi tujuan pendidikan sekali gus meningkatkan mobiliti pelajar di seluruh dunia walaupun terdapat pelbagai halangan dan cabaran yang ditempuh sebelum dan semasa berada di negara tuan rumah. Kertas refleksi ini mengupas pengalaman penyelidik melanjutkan pengajian di peringkat pasca siswazah dan menjalankan penyelidikan pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi yang memberi fokus kepada pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia semasa menetap dan belajar di universiti Australia. Proses refleksi tertumpu kepada pengalaman pemerhatian, pengetahuan dan kefahaman tentang isu dan cabaran serta manfaat yang diperolehi pelajar Malaysia sebagai pelajar antarabangsa. Kertas refleksi ini juga memberikan beberapa cadangan penambahbaikan pengurusan pelajar Malaysia di luar negara dan nilai tambah kepada polisi pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi di dalam negara.

Kata kunci: pelajar antarabangsa; penyesuaian; universiti Australia; pengantarabangsaan; pendidikan tinggi

1. PENGENALAN

Pendidikan ialah asas kepada ketamadunan suatu bangsa dan negara. Masyarakat yang menguasai ilmu dalam pelbagai bidang akan meningkatkan keupayaan sesebuah negara untuk menjadi lebih maju dan unggul. Agama Islam sejak dahulu lagi turut mewajibkan umatnya menuntut ilmu untuk kebaikan dan kesejahteraan diri individu dan masyarakat. Bahkan penuntut ilmu dijanjikan martabat yang tinggi serta ganjaran pahala dan syurga seperti mana sabda Rasulullah SAW:

مَنْ سَلَكَ طَرِيقًا يَلْتَمِسُ فِيهِ عِلْمًا، سَهَّلَ اللَّهُ لَهُ بِهِ طَرِيقًا إِلَى الْجَنَّةِ، وَمَا اجْتَمَعَ قَوْمٌ فِي بَيْتٍ مِنْ بُيُوتِ اللَّهِ، يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ، وَيَتَدَارَسُونَ مِنْهُ بَيْنَهُمْ، إِلَّا نَزَلَتْ عَلَيْهِمُ السَّكِينَةُ، وَغَشِيَتْهُمْ الرَّحْمَةُ وَحَقَّقَتْهُمْ الْأَمَلِيكَةَ، وَذَكَرَهُمُ اللَّهُ فِي مَنِّ عَزْدَهُ

Maksudnya: "Barangsiapa yang menempuh satu jalan untuk menuntut ilmu maka Allah SWT akan memudahkan baginya jalan untuk ke Syurga. Tidaklah satu

kumpulan berkumpul di dalam sebuah rumah di antara rumah-rumah Allah, membaca kitab Allah (al-Qur'an) dan mempelajarinya sesama mereka melainkan akan turun kepada mereka sakinah (ketenangan), diliputi ke atas mereka rahmat dan dinaungi oleh malaikat serta Allah SWT akan menyebut mereka pada malaikat yang berada di sisi-Nya". (Sahih Muslim)

Terdapat pelbagai kaedah, strategi, cara dan pendekatan pembelajaran yang boleh digunakan untuk seseorang individu menguasai ilmu tanpa mengira sempadan tempat dan ruang masa. Menjejak teladan cendekiawan Muslim terdahulu, pengembaraan ke luar negara bukanlah suatu yang asing bagi penuntut ilmu. Maka, tidak mustahil pada masa kini statistik menunjukkan peningkatan aktiviti mobiliti pelajar di seluruh dunia. Di Malaysia sahaja, seramai 9123 orang warganegara asing telah membuat permohonan melanjutkan pengajian di universiti awam dan swasta dalam negara sehingga Jun 2022 (Education Malaysia Global Services, 2022) dan tidak kurang 12906 orang warganegara Malaysia berada di Australia untuk mempelajari dan menguasai pelbagai bidang ilmu (Department of Education, 2022).

Memegang falsafah hadis Rasulullah SAW tentang hikmah keilmuan dalam Islam, penyelidik turut tidak melepaskan peluang melanjutkan pengajian di peringkat pasca siswazah dalam bidang psikologi pendidikan di The University of Sydney, Australia dan menjalankan penyelidikan pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi di yang memberi fokus kepada pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia semasa menetap dan belajar di universiti Australia.

Selama tiga tahun (2014 - 2017), penyelidikan bertajuk *A Study of Malaysian Undergraduate Students Adjustment in Australia* (Syed Sahuri, 2018) telah dijalankan dengan menggunakan kaedah campuran melibatkan strategi temu bual, jurnal reflektif dan soal selidik bersama 5 orang staf pengurusan daripada Education Malaysia Australia, Jabatan Pertahanan Awam (JPA) dan Majlis Amanah Rakyat (MARA) serta 385 orang pelajar asasi dan prasiswazah warganegara Malaysia yang sedang mengikuti pengajian di universiti Australia dalam pelbagai bidang pengajian seperti pengurusan, perubatan, kejuruteraan dan seni kreatif. Penyelidikan ini meneroka dan menghuraikan pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia sebagai pelajar antarabangsa di Australia secara menyeluruh, tanpa mengasingkan sebarang domain penyesuaian: penyesuaian akademik, sosiobudaya dan psikologi. Penyelidik menjangkakan bahawa penyelidikan berkaitan pengalaman pembelajaran dan kehidupan pelajar Malaysia di Australia akan mengembangkan literatur penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia di negara barat daripada perspektif yang berbeza (Berry, 2006).

Pengalaman penyesuaian diri penyelidik sebagai pelajar pasca siswazah mungkin berbeza daripada pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia yang lain kerana acuan pengalaman pendidikan bagi program Doktor Falsafah adalah berbeza. Walau bagaimanapun, ini tidak

mengehadkan minat penyelidik dalam menyiasat pengalaman penyesuaian akademik pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia. Sepanjang penyelidikan ini, penyelidik menghabiskan banyak masa mendengar pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia bagi membangunkan kefahaman yang mendalam dan meneroka perkara tersirat tentang pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia di Australia. Selain itu, pengalaman dan pengetahuan dalam amalan kaunseling membantu penyelidik mengurangkan bias dan menjadi lebih profesional dalam menilai pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia.

Sepanjang penyelidikan ini dijalankan, penyelidik turut memerhati dan mempelajari sesuatu daripada kekuatan dan daya tahan pelajar antarabangsa semasa proses penyesuaian diri dengan persekitaran dan budaya baharu. Memandangkan setiap pelajar antarabangsa di Australia mempunyai kisah penyesuaian mereka sendiri, penyelidik percaya bahawa pelajar antarabangsa akan menjadi pemandiri (*survivor*) di negara tuan rumah kerana keazaman dan motivasi tinggi serta sistem sokongan sosial yang sangat baik. Penyelidikan ini diharapkan dapat memberi manfaat kepada pelbagai pihak berkepentingan dalam pendidikan tinggi dalam usaha mereka untuk meningkatkan kualiti pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar antarabangsa ke arah usaha pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi.

2. REFLEKSI PENYELIDIKAN

Pelajar antarabangsa seringkali dikategorikan sebagai kumpulan pelajar berisiko tinggi (Marginson, 2014; Marginson, 2009b). Hasil dapatan refleksi penyelidikan pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia di Australia dirangkumkan kepada empat perkara penting iaitu penyesuaian akademik, rutin dan gaya hidup baharu, keluarga Malaysia dan kekal berhubung.

Penyesuaian Akademik Adalah Isu Utama

Tugas utama pelajar antarabangsa adalah untuk belajar dan memperoleh kelayakan profesional atau akademik daripada institusi pengajian tinggi di negara tuan rumah (Berry, 2006). Lebih daripada 30 kod penyesuaian akademik dihasilkan daripada analisis tematik di mana jumlah ini lebih tinggi daripada jumlah kod yang dihasilkan untuk penyesuaian sosiobudaya dan psikologi. Kebanyakan temu bual yang dilakukan di luar persekitaran akademik masih memberikan banyak maklumat mengenai penyesuaian akademik pelajar Malaysia. Malah, majoriti pelajar Malaysia juga mengulangi beberapa isu akademik seperti perbezaan budaya dan persekitaran pembelajaran dan masalah komunikasi dalam bilik kuliah

semasa melaporkan pengalaman penyesuaian psikologi melalui penulisan jurnal reflektif. Dapatan ini disokong oleh korelasi positif dan signifikan antara penyesuaian akademik dan dua domain yang lain. Oleh itu, penyelidikan ini membuat hipotesis domain akademik sebagai isu penting dalam penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia di Australia.

Penyelidikan ini mendapati bahawa pelajar Malaysia telah menonjolkan usaha sebenar untuk mengurus dan mengatur pengajian mereka. Keputusan analisis statistik daripada penyelidikan ini menunjukkan pengurusan masa mempunyai korelasi positif dan signifikan yang sederhana dengan aktiviti pembelajaran ($r = .40$) dan penilaian ($r = .35$) berbanding faktor lain yang membuktikan bahawa pelajar Malaysia komited dan bertanggungjawab untuk menjalankan tugas utama mereka sebagai pelajar antarabangsa di negara tuan rumah. Walaupun menghadapi pelbagai kesukaran dalam penyesuaian akademik, pelajar Malaysia mempunyai keazaman dan motivasi yang tinggi untuk menyelesaikan isu atau masalah yang timbul, terutamanya isu kemahiran bahasa Inggeris. Walau bagaimanapun, kegagalan untuk melakukan yang terbaik dan mencapai sasaran pembelajaran mereka mempunyai kesan yang besar terhadap kesejahteraan psikologi mereka.

Dari aspek sosiobudaya, persekitaran akademik menyediakan ruang kepada pelajar Malaysia untuk beramah mesra dengan pelajar lain dan membina hubungan persahabatan. Penemuan penyelidikan menunjukkan bahawa pelajar Malaysia mempunyai peluang yang lebih baik untuk berkawan dengan pelajar antarabangsa dan tempatan lain di dalam bilik kuliah berbanding di luar bilik kuliah. Tambahan pula, bilangan pelajar Malaysia yang kurang di dalam bilik kuliah telah menggalakkan pelajar Malaysia berinteraksi dengan pelajar lain dari latar belakang negara yang berbeza. Justeru, penyelidikan ini turut memberikan bukti tentang sumbangan persekitaran akademik terhadap penyesuaian sosiobudaya.

Pelajar Malaysia menjelaskan cara penyesuaian akademik mempengaruhi kesejahteraan psikologi mereka, sama ada secara positif atau negatif. Kebanyakan pelajar Malaysia kerap mengalami tekanan dan kemurungan kerana kaedah pengajaran dan pembelajaran yang berbeza. Namun, berdasarkan tinjauan soal selidik 64% pelajar Malaysia tidak tertekan dengan pengajian mereka di negara tuan rumah dan lebih daripada 85% berasa bangga dengan keupayaan mereka untuk belajar dalam persekitaran baharu.

Pembentukan Gaya Hidup Baharu

Proses penyesuaian telah mengubah kehidupan pelajar antarabangsa secara positif (Marginson, 2006). Perubahan ketara dan konsisten dalam aspek utama gaya hidup pelajar

Malaysia ini memberikan bukti tentang dinamik penyesuaian. Penyelidikan ini menemukan bahawa perbezaan dalam persekitaran akademik dan sosial di negara tuan rumah bertindak sebagai faktor luaran yang mengawal persepsi, nilai dan tingkah laku pelajar Malaysia. Sebagai tindak balas kepada perubahan ini, pelajar Malaysia menggunakan pelbagai strategi seperti menambahkan ilmu pengetahuan terhadap budaya setempat dan melibatkan diri dalam aktiviti kemasyarakatan untuk memulihkan keseimbangan dalam gaya hidup mereka.

Daripada temu bual dan jurnal reflektif, pelajar Malaysia melaporkan bahawa banyak perubahan berlaku dalam rutin mereka dan banyak aktiviti memberi kesan kepada persepsi, nilai dan tingkah laku sedia ada mereka daripada aspek jati diri Muslim, komunikasi, dan lingkaran atau bulatan persahabatan.

Jati Diri Muslim

Penyelidik mendapati pelajar Malaysia khususnya pelajar Melayu Islam mengalami perubahan dan cabaran dalam amalan agama semasa menyesuaikan diri di negara tuan rumah seperti kesukaran mencari tempat untuk menunaikan solat dan mencari sumber makanan halal. Situasi atau peristiwa yang dialami merupakan pengalaman yang bertentangan dengan persekitaran negara Malaysia yang merupakan negara Islam di mana terdapat pelbagai kemudahan dan keperluan fizikal seperti masjid disediakan. Selain itu, Malaysia juga mengamalkan undang-undang dan adat budaya yang mencerminkan nilai-nilai Islam. Justeru, dapatan daripada penyelidikan ini menunjukkan bahawa pelajar Malaysia perlu lebih berdaya tahan dalam mengekalkan identiti dan jati diri mereka sebagai seorang Muslim di negara tuan rumah.

Komunikasi

Di negara tuan rumah, kebanyakan pelajar Malaysia kerap menggunakan bahasa Inggeris untuk berkomunikasi dengan pengajar dan pelajar dalam persekitaran akademik. Walau bagaimanapun, penggunaan bahasa Melayu dikekalkan dalam berkomunikasi dengan rakan dan komuniti Malaysia. Keadaan ini menunjukkan perubahan ketara dalam cara pelajar Malaysia berinteraksi dengan orang lain berbanding penggunaan bahasa Melayu dalam kedua-dua suasana sebelum ini di negara asal.

Lingkaran atau bulatan persahabatan

Di negara tuan rumah, pelajar Malaysia meluaskan lingkaran persahabatan mereka kepada pelajar tempatan dan antarabangsa yang lain, selain rakan atau komuniti Malaysia baharu

mereka. Pelajar Malaysia berkawan dengan ramai individu dari latar belakang kewarganegaraan yang berbeza dalam persekitaran akademik selain membina hubungan yang kukuh dengan rakan Malaysia dalam persekitaran sosial.

Keluarga Malaysia

Penyelidikan ini mendapati pelajar Malaysia mempunyai hubungan yang kuat dan hubungan sosial yang rapat dengan rakan-rakan Malaysia (contoh: rakan serumah, senior, dan rakan sekuliah) dan komuniti (contoh: pegawai Malaysia, persatuan dan kelab) di negara tuan rumah. Sebelum ketibaan, sebahagian daripada mereka telah membina hubungan dan menjalinkan hubungan dengan kumpulan-kumpulan ini. Pada peringkat awal penyesuaian, rakan dan komuniti Malaysia membantu pelajar Malaysia dengan memberi bimbingan dan nasihat tentang cara menjalani kehidupan mereka dan menyediakan penginapan sementara dan perkhidmatan perjalanan di negara tuan rumah.

Penemuan ini menunjukkan bahawa rangkaian dan sokongan sosial yang kukuh daripada rakan dan komuniti Malaysia meningkatkan pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia seawal ketibaan mereka di negara tuan rumah. Berada jauh dari keluarga, pelajar Malaysia menganggap rakan dan komuniti Malaysia sebagai keluarga mereka, yang membuatkan mereka berasa dialu-alukan, selamat dan gembira di tempat yang berbeza. Selain itu, pelajar Malaysia lebih suka terlibat dengan aktiviti yang menghubungkan mereka dengan budaya dan masyarakat Malaysia. Justeru, mereka menunjukkan penyertaan dan penglibatan yang tinggi dalam pelbagai aktiviti yang dianjurkan oleh komuniti dan kelab Malaysia.

Kekal Berhubung

Kajian ini mendapati pelajar Malaysia mengalami pelbagai isu atau masalah dalam penyesuaian akademik dan sosial di negara tuan rumah yang menjejaskan kesejahteraan psikologi mereka. Kebanyakan masalah ini menjadi penghalang yang mengehadkan potensi dan hubungan mereka dengan individu lain dan persekitaran. Sebagai contoh, kekurangan kemahiran atau keyakinan bertutur atau menulis dalam bahasa Inggeris telah menghalang pelajar Malaysia daripada berkomunikasi dengan pengajar dan pelajar di dalam bilik kuliah. Oleh itu, sebahagian pelajar Malaysia mengambil kursus khas untuk meningkatkan penguasaan bahasa Inggeris mereka. Selain itu, beberapa pelajar Malaysia merasakan

bahawa mereka kurang bergaul dengan pelajar atau komuniti tempatan Australia. Dalam menyelesaikan masalah ini, pelajar Malaysia melibatkan diri mereka dalam sukan, sukarela, dan kelab sosial di dalam dan di luar kampus, untuk melibatkan diri dengan komuniti tempatan.

Dapatan penyelidikan ini menunjukkan bahawa perasaan berhubung dengan orang dan persekitaran di negara tuan rumah adalah penting kepada pelajar Malaysia. Pelbagai strategi digunakan oleh pelajar Malaysia untuk meningkatkan hubungan mereka dengan aspek akademik dan sosial. Penyertaan yang tinggi dalam pelbagai aktiviti akademik dan aktiviti sosial telah meningkatkan hubungan dan kepuasan diri pelajar Malaysia. Begitu juga sebaliknya, terputusnya hubungan dengan manusia dan alam sekitar menjejaskan kesejahteraan emosi atau psikologi mereka. Pelajar Malaysia yang merasakan tekanan dan kemurungan mungkin terputus hubungan dengan persekitaran akademik; dan mereka juga mungkin mengalami kesunyian dan kerinduan apabila terputus hubungan dengan persekitaran sosial di negara tuan rumah. Oleh itu, kajian ini sangat menunjukkan bahawa tahap perhubungan yang teguh dan tinggi dengan orang ramai dan persekitaran meningkatkan pengalaman penyesuaian pelajar Malaysia.

3. KESIMPULAN

Pelajar antarabangsa ialah aset berharga bagi kedua-dua negara: Malaysia dan Australia (Andressen, 1991). Mereka menyumbang kepada sumber kepakaran masa depan untuk membangunkan negara Malaysia, dan mengembangkan sektor pendidikan antarabangsa dan tinggi di Australia. Penyelidikan ini adalah sumbangan untuk meningkatkan kesedaran dan pemahaman tentang penyesuaian pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia di Australia. Dengan cara ini, pelbagai usaha boleh dilakukan untuk membantu proses penyesuaian pelajar antarabangsa, sekali gus mengurangkan masalah akademik, sosial dan psikologi dalam kalangan pelajar ini. Memandangkan pelajar antarabangsa Malaysia telah diiktiraf sebagai kumpulan penting pelajar antarabangsa kepada negara Australia, mungkin juga masanya telah tiba untuk kedua-dua pihak berkuasa negara dan negeri menyemak dasar pendidikan tinggi untuk menambah baik perkhidmatan universiti untuk pelajar antarabangsa.

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Students' Perception and Challenges towards Virtual Mobility amidst the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Virtual mobility (VM) has been defined as a form of mobility that aims to expand the student's experience and scope out of traditional mobility programs. The mobility programme was created to suit the current situation and changed into a virtual programme beginning in 2020 owing to the pandemic COVID-19. In order to promote mobility experiences throughout the pandemic and post-pandemic, virtual mobility (VM) has been introduced. The VM programme, however, may expose the participants to a variety of perceptions and experiences. This study describes a VM programme in which university students from Malaysia and Japan participated and aimed to give students the chance to experience mobility through online collaboration. To this aim, a qualitative approach, the e-interview method was used. This method is used to explicitly explain and identify the perception of the VM students about the program. The e-interview was distributed to the respondents and they submit their replies through Google form to be analyzed. Based on the perceptions of the respondents who participated in this programme, data were examined using Leximancer. The findings show that the respondent's perception of the VM can be divided into two, positive and negative perceptions. They also describe their experience during their involvement in this VM program. The respondents learn about the differences between their own culture and that of others through dialogue and group problem-solving during the VM programme. They emphasized the importance of the VM programme in assisting students in developing their intercultural competency. The findings also show that the VM is essential for a generation that will need to work in multi-ethnic and diverse teams and workplaces.

Keywords: COVID-19, experience, virtual mobility, students, e-interview

1. INTRODUCTION

Due to widespread educational institution closures in 143 countries (UNESCO, 2020) and dramatically altered working and study habits, traditional mobility (TM) transitions to virtual mobility (VM) (de Haas et al., 2020). From mid-April on, the number of new and active Covid-19 cases began to trend downward, demonstrating the efficacy of movement management and its observance (Tang, 2022). Hence, student mobility is one of the most crucial measures of the globalization of higher education and at the same time, still following the measure given by the government (Beech, 2018). It is most often driven by the reputation of foreign universities,

the quality of studies, the need for different cultural experiences, the financial interests of the universities themselves, recommendations from other students, external communication strategies used by higher education institutions, openness and freedom of academic thought of the institutions, high living and working standards, political reasons, e.g. postcolonial relations between states (Teichler, 2007; Wulz and Rainer, 2015; Roy et. al, 2019).

All higher education was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, but mobility programs were particularly heavily afflicted by the related restrictions and limitations. Higher education institutions (HEIs) in popular destinations like the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia have forecasted growth for Malaysia in 2021 (Mok et al., 2020). Aba et al found that intercultural communications are not a natural by-product of advancement in higher education for students (2016). The same technological resources used to create VM programmes were made available to support the mobility programme. In their courses, the universities have chosen to offer a variety of platforms and programmes. According to university experts, one of the most important themes in the process of globalisation and virtual mobility's was culture and cultural diversity (Salimi, Hervarz & Mohamaddi, 2019). Students engage with classmates from various cultures more regularly than they would in a traditional study abroad programme (Vogt & Wick, 2020). But this mobility initiative has been significantly harmed by the COVID-19 epidemic and its aftermath. The underlying idea behind virtual reality travel, which is now experiencing a boom in popularity, is that people can visit the world from the convenience of their own homes (Osman, 2022).

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AIMS Program and ATU-NET Program

Launched in 2010 under the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO), the AIMS Program has been the bridge in connecting the government, university, and students to achieve an integrated community among the participating members. Starting with Thailand,

Malaysia, and Indonesia as the original members, this program has already included 9 Member Countries and 80 Member universities. Aimed to expose students to diverse cultural environments and nurture their competence (Bacci & Bertaccini, 2021), AIMS has conducted many programs to facilitate this objective and to encounter the obstacles of the pandemic. Highlighting integration to facilitate multilateral cooperation (*SEAMEO RIHED's AIMS Program*, 2020) all the participating countries and universities have provided a platform for the students to share their experiences in exchanging cultural encounters to strengthen the provision of the international academic program.

ATU-NET Program Asia Technological University Network (ATU-Net) is a strategic international alliance of which Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) is the Chair. It was created on August 9, 2016, as part of the 8th University Presidents Forum at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM), Johor Bahru, Malaysia, to bring together Asian institutions of higher education that are technology focused. Its goal is to assist member universities in achieving top-tier engineering and technological research and education through strategic worldwide alliances. All Asian higher education institutions with a technology focus are eligible to join the network. Among the current members of this network are Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Thailand, Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India.

Malaysia AIMS Program, ATU-NET Malaysia, and ATU-NET Japan

For AIMS Malaysia, the exchange program includes the activity of inbound and outbound students from partner countries or universities that have the same niche areas. There are about 10 niche areas namely Hospitality & Tourism, Agriculture, Language & Culture, International Business, Food Science & Technology, Engineering, Economics, Environmental Management & Science, Biodiversity, and Marine Science. To encourage mobility activity, every participating university will send their students to universities abroad that have the same niche areas. About 10 selected public universities in Malaysia participated in this mobility program namely Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Malaya, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Universiti Malaysia Pahang, and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). All those universities were selected based on their strong niche areas that matched the AIMS niche areas. For Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) niche areas namely Hospitality & Tourism, Environmental Management & Science, Biodiversity, and Marine Science. Among

the AIMS Universities that match this niche is Dongguk University, Korea whose niche area is Hospitality & Tourism.

ATU-NET Malaysia consists of seven public universities in Malaysia that become members of ATU-NET. All those universities became members in 2016. UMT officially joined ATU-NET in 2018, since then participated actively in the activities conducted by the network. While in Japan, only one university became a member of this network which is Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT), Japan. SIT is a Japanese leading engineering institute that has played a core role in ATU-Net since its establishment. Based on the founding philosophy of “Nurturing engineers who learn from society and contribute to society”, SIT now aims to foster scientists and engineers who can contribute to the sustainable growth of the world by exposing our students to culturally diverse environments where they learn to cope with, collaborate with, and have ever-lasting friendships with fellow students from around the world. Therefore, ATU-Net is a very effective vehicle to provide students and faculties with opportunities for expanding their horizons through collaborations with Asian universities. Its hosting events such as the University President Forum and International Staff Week are also beneficial for multilateral network buildings and skill training.

When SIT was appointed as a chair of the Special Interest Group (SIG) mobility committee in January 2021, its initiative created a unique online course named Virtual Asia Exploration (VAX) in response to the high demand for mobility programs due to travel restrictions. Starting in 2021, ATU-NET established the VAX Program under the SIG Mobility and UMT became one of the host universities. Virtual Asia Exploration program or VAX Program is meant for students from all ATU-Net Member Institutions to participate in a virtual mobility program from May 2021. VAX is a two-credit course and will be focusing on two themes which are Engineering & Technology and Culture & History. There will be six hosting institutions conducting the lectures from Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Thailand, and The Philippines. The first batch VAX program lecture begins on the 27th of May and ends on the 26th of August 2021. The second batch of VAX program begins on 9th September until 23rd December 2021 and the third batch VAX program begins from 8th September 2022 until 8th December 2022. About fifteen (15) students from UMT participated in batch 1 and batch 2 of the Vax program. Consequently, five (5) SIT students have completed Batch 1 from 27th May to 26th August 2021, and 6 (six) students in Batch 2, respectively.

In this paper, a VM organized through AIMS UMT, and VAX program organized by ATU-Net and participated by UMT and SIT will be described and the main findings discussed. The collaboration was part of the AIMS Exchange Mobility Program under the sponsorship of the

Ministry of Higher Education and the ATU-NET SIG Mobility activity. This collaboration structures opportunities for virtual mobility and encourages interaction as well as active exploration of the host country while providing students with opportunities for reflective learning. This paper will first set out the overview of VM, highlight the objectives, and expand on the method design before discussing the evaluation and outcomes drawing from students' answers from the e-interview. Finally, it will finish with a conclusion and recommendation.

2. OVERVIEW OF VIRTUAL MOBILITY

The potential for virtual mobility (VM) to further internationalisation, innovation, and inclusiveness in higher education is significant. (Buchem et. al, 2018; Konstantinidis et.al, 2021). Thanks to virtual mobility efforts, students who lack physical mobility options can take part in online learning (Juškevičienė, 2022). Additionally, over the past two or three decades, some colleges have started to increase their international cooperation and activities to become more competitive on a domestic as well as an international level and to enter the new era of Covid-19, in which the potential future of as well as themes of creativity, motivation, cultural agendas, slow research, online teaching, and virtual and corporeal mobility are acknowledged and examined (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Heyang & Martin, 2021). While the benefit of the VM over physical mobility can be listed as sustainability, replicability, digital skill development, and environmental friendliness (Ganassin & Satar, 2021). Students were also proven to be able to overcome preconceived notions and develop their confidence as English communicators by utilising VM's effectiveness (O'Dowd, 2021). Therefore, one of the most significant and successful variables in aiding the process of virtual mobility is the university's cultural competence (Opp & Gosetti, 2014; Raby & Valeau, 2021). The most recent COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the traditional educational system, and a considerable shift to app-based learning has been made to ensure learning continuity (Karim et al., 2021).

The mobility program's other goal is for international students to become more adept at interacting with people from diverse cultures in addition to eradicating the inaccurate perceptions and prejudices propagated by the media (Baiutti, 2021). Students can gain intercultural experiences throughout their academic year through the mobility programme. The objectives of mobility programmes to internationalise both exchange and home-country students were less successfully attained as the pandemic era drew near (Koris, Mato-Daz, & Hernández-Nanclares, 2021). Despite being usually useful, the physical education curriculum has severe problems, such as financial and social exclusivity, which discourages many

children from participating (Dait and Hafiz, 2019; Deverell et al., 2020). While facilitating immersion experiences that develop the intercultural competencies of pre-service teachers, virtual reality (VR) can be used as a way to ensure global citizenship in higher education and meet university criteria to generate graduates for the global marketplace (Henderson, 2020). Most Southeast Asian students, especially those from Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, have a strong desire to learn about different cultures, develop their ability to solve global issues, and apply what they learn to other students in a multicultural atmosphere (Rahmawati et al., 2021). Therefore, during the pandemic Covid-19, the students at this region could benefit from the VR conducted by the universities around the world.

VR is a new option for students and is more accessible, especially to underprivileged students (López-Duarte et al., 2022). VR enables unconventional college students living in remote areas to have a global and multicultural experience (Zorina et al., 2019). VR not only taught them to appreciate the student's background roots, but the program also brought them a new type of scholarship because of their knowledge and technology illiteracy (Francisco, 2022). As a result of the traditional or physical exchange program, students are more internationally oriented goals, understand the cultural variety, engaged in intercultural experiences, increase academic performance, prepare them to be global citizens, and give them a major overview of the many lifestyles, cultures, and work ethics (Jiménez-Castañeda et al., 2018, Daniel 2018, Rahim, 2021). Students who returned to their home country reported online communication with other students to be more beneficial to their online learning experience and had a better academic transition than those who stayed in the host nation (Wilczewski, Gorbaniuk & Giuri, 2021). During traditional or physical mobility programs, the ability to adapt and culture shock is a major worry. Yakin and Totu (2018) have classified culture shock into three aspects which are language, socio-cultural and practical aspects. Virtual mobility programs have offered a solution to minimize the effect of culture shock and at the same time still produce the expected positive result (Pacheco, 2020). Hence, Dahdouh-Guebas and Vandebroek (2021) have stated that VR can reduce culture shock effects as it offers academic flexibility, mobility preparedness, and cultural immersion in host communities.

However, VR may have encountered some issues such as platform selection, lack of visibility for social media account logins, and unintuitive platform flow, and links. Other issues were related to the creation and formatting of the learning materials themselves, such as the fact that not all of the materials are written in English or translated, and the tasks and activities were not displayed correctly (Andone et al., 2020). Problems from aspects of teaching and learning, online access, career-related affairs, everyday routines, and social interactions are

among the obstacles or problems that the students might face as a result of the implications of VM (Yakin et al., 2021). Due to the short duration of the program, many questions the effectiveness of VM programs including the benefits of the program to their intercultural experience (López-Duarte et al., 2021a). Although there were several challenges during the VM program, it is not obvious how the students' intercultural experiences were explored. But, five research hypotheses derived from Kim's (2001, 2005, 2015) Integrative Theory of Cross-Cultural Adaptation that predicted favorable relationships between and among ethnic proximity, host communication proficiency, host interpersonal communication, and psychological health can be used as a guide to the efficiency of the mobility program towards the mobility students. This study highlighted the perception of the students towards the VM as well as the challenges of the VM during the COVID-19 pandemic. The improvement of VM education and training is one of the positive effects of the COVID-19 pandemic which also enables virtual intercultural exchange and cultural immersion, both of which need to be strengthened after the epidemic.

3. MATERIALS AND METHOD

AIMS Profile of respondents

For AIMS UMT VM, a total of 13 students of Bachelor of Tourism Management with Honours from various two ethnic groups and study programs joined the AIMS VM program from early 2021 until the end of 2021 and participated in this study. The students consist of 11 Malays and 2 Indians from different semesters in 2020-2021 who joined this AIMS Virtual Mobility for a semester at Dongguk University, Korea. The participants were all female, ages around 21 to 23 years old. Around 100% of students stayed in quarantine or self-isolation when completing the e-interview or online interview thus this will limit their intercultural experiences. They were all considered outbound students regardless of the VM that they join. In this paper, the perception of the inbound students, the Dongguk University students will not be discussed.

The AIMS UMT VM respondents were separated into two different semesters and in two different seasons. The First Phase starts from 2nd March until 30th June 2021, which is in the Fall season. While the Second Phase is from 30th August until 17th December 2021, which is during the Spring season. The AIMS program under Dongguk University Gyeongju Campus (DUGC), South Korea has been made especially for AIMS students with the subjects and courses offered only to AIMS students. They also include a basic Korean Language course as

part of the curriculum for their inbound students to understand the basic Korean language whilst studying there. The students study through virtual mediums and have classes and activities online as this is VM. At the time of the program, they cannot travel to Korea due to the pandemic situation. The students take classes and participate in activities online. They only ever interacted online or virtually with their professor, lecturers, and classmates. They had to complete online final exams at the end of the semester. At the program's conclusion, there will be a credit transfer, and this will be noted on their academic transcript.

VaX Program Profile of respondents

Ten (10) UMT students joined the ATU-NET MOBILITY SIG: VIRTUAL ASIA EXPLORATION (VaX) Batch 1 from 27th May to 26th August 2021. But nine (9) UMT students participated in the e-interview (online), which comprises Malay, Chinese, Indian and Sikh ethnicity and the majority of participants were female. Consequently, five (5) SIT students have completed Batch 1 from 27th May to 26th August 2021. Only two (2) SIT students participated in this study. This batch was the respondents for this study and mostly from the College of Systems Engineering and Science from Shibaura Institute of Technology, Japan. Around 100% of students stayed in quarantine or self-isolation when completing the online interview. At the end of the program, the student will earn credit hours for this program and will be awarded a certificate of completion. In this paper, only VaX Batch 1 is selected as a respondent of this study.

Overall, twenty-three (23) respondents of the outbound students and two (2) inbound students completed an online interview through the Google form provided. They were selected due to their participation in VM during the pandemic COVID-19 period. They were briefed on the instruction and if they have any questions related to the e-interview question, they can email the researcher. The email address and the details of the researcher were provided in this Google form. In this paper, the perception of both inbound and outbound students was described.

Research Design

Thematic analysis was used to examine the interview data (Braun and Clarke, 2006; Krippendorff, 2004). Leximancer, a computer-generated form of text coding where coding is automated by statistical processing, was used to analyse the interview transcripts. Since

precision is the most powerful type of reliability, using Leximancer as an analysis tool increases the data's reliability (Weber, 1990). Furthermore, it adds validity. Validity is the general applicability of the findings and judgments drawn from the study's inferences. There is a worry with qualitative analysis in general that the researcher may tend to conclude since they select the coding concepts. Researchers may potentially be biased, and their conclusions may contain inaccuracies. The purpose of Leximancer for this study was to provide objective results from which to make conclusions or, at the very least, to be utilised as a comparison (benchmark) of the researcher's findings. The transcripts of each interviewee's responses were collected and put through Leximancer. Concept maps and a theme synopsis were created. This method divides ideas into themes and displays the most prevalent theme first (with 100% relevance and the largest circle on the map), followed by the remaining themes with proportionality (representative) concerning each other. The spacing between themes on the final concept map illustrates this; as a result, some concepts are placed right next to others.

Procedure

The researcher conducted an e-interview or online interview due to the COVID-19 restriction during the study. This study time frame is from 18th May 2022 until 31st May 2022, this time frame was chosen after all the respondents finish their VM program and to give them ample time to settle down before the e-interview starts. First, the students were informed about the aims and procedures of the study, and participation was voluntary. They could decide to withdraw from the study at any time. The qualitative inquiry followed the interview guide approach using pre-set questions and guiding prompts (Cohen et al., 2018; Galletta, 2013). The e-interviews were conducted online and ranged from 10 to 15 minutes only. They answered the question by writing their answers and the researcher will follow up if necessary. The qualitative method served the purposes of the current study and yielded valuable results, allowed insights into the perceptions of the participants, and findings cannot be generalized to other students on other mobility programs during the pandemic.

The qualitative data from twenty-four (24) respondents that participated in the AIMS program and ATUNET program through an e-interview or online interview was sent out to the participants using the Google form. Participation was voluntary, and no remuneration was provided. The participants were asked to complete an anonymous e-interview or online interview question concerning their perception of the VM program during the COVID-19 pandemic. They are free to respond in Malay or Japanese if they feel it will help them better

explain their perception than in the English-language version of the prepared e-interview or online interview questions. The English language skills of all UMT and SIT participants were sufficient to understand the question in the e-interview or online interview. All 22 of the sample's respondents responded in English. The e-interview or online interview question was delivered to them within a week to finish it. If more information is required from them, the researcher will occasionally get in touch with them through e-mail considering the COVID-19 situation at the time of the study. The instrument has two sections—literally, the demographic section and the interview question and was created based on the literature review.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In total, 13 UMT students of various ethnicities enrolled in the AIMS VM program over two semesters in 2021, and every participant answered the e-interview. Eleven female Malay students and two Indian female students made up the only two ethnic groupings represented. They all studied for the Bachelor of Tourism Management with Honours and came from the same faculty, the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Social Development. Each student either takes part in the AIMS Spring Semester or the AIMS Fall Semester. In this study, only the outbound student's perceptions were taken into consideration. The perception of the inbound students, namely the students from Dongguk University who take part in this exchange program, shall not be discussed.

A total of 12 (twelve) UMT students from various ethnic groups and study programs join the VAX Batch 1 program (27th May to 26th August 2021). They were from various ethnic groups, and various faculties such as the Faculty of Business, Economics and Social Development and from Faculty of Ocean Engineering Technology & Informatics. However, only nine (9) students participated in this study. For SIT respondents, out of five (5) SIT students that completed Batch 1 (27th May to 26th August 2021), only two (2) respondents responded to the e-interview. The rest of the respondents were assumed not to agree to participate. In total, about 24 participants participated in this VM during this period. As for VAX Program the inbound and outbound student's perceptions were taken into consideration. They were asked about the benefits and drawbacks of the program as well as their perception of the VM. The respondents' use of English syntax, sentence structure, and word choice was not the focus of this study. This study focuses solely on issues linked to their perception and the challenges of the VM program.

5. THE PERCEPTION AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE VM EXPERIENCE

ATU-NET Virtual Mobility program

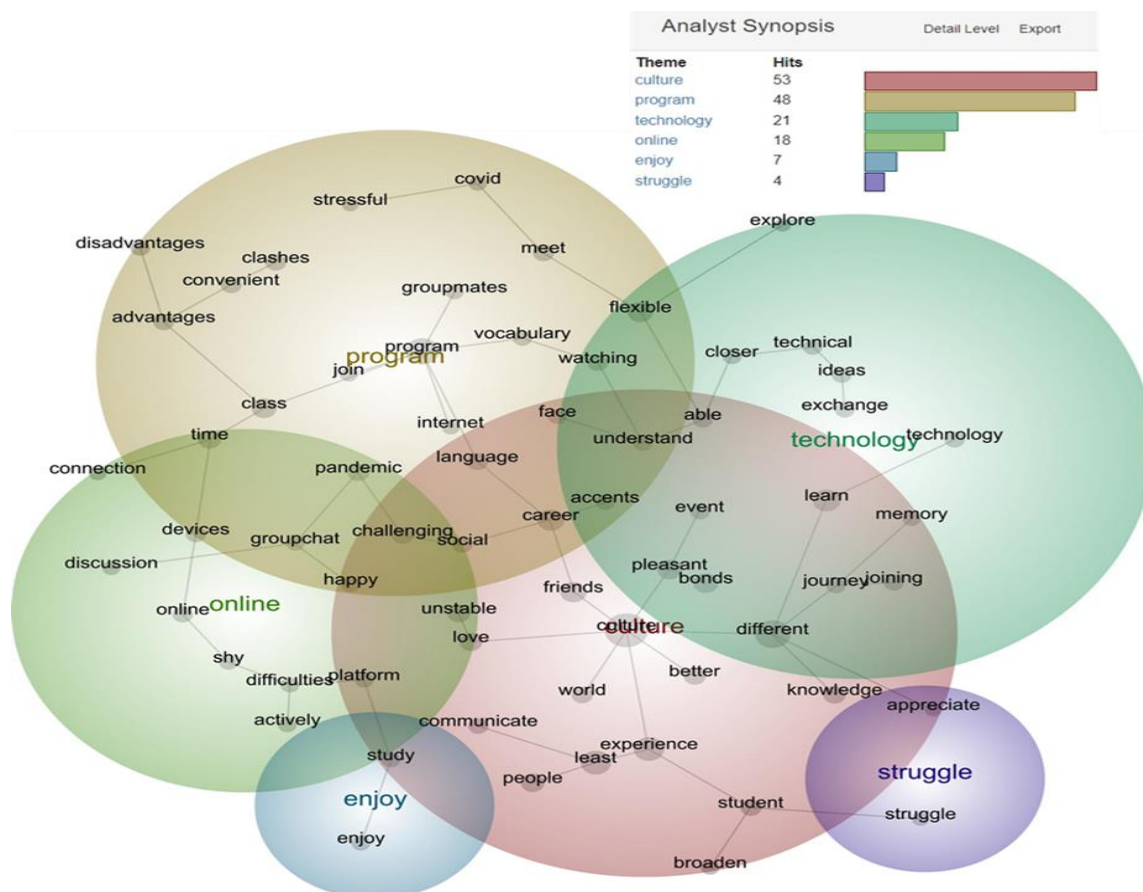


Figure 1: Leximancer concept map for respondents' perceptions about the benefits and challenges of the VaX Program Batch 1 (27th May to 26th August 2021), conducted during Pandemic COVID-19

Figure 1 illustrates the Leximancer concept map for respondents' perceptions about the benefits and challenges of the VaX Program Batch 1 (27th May to 26th August 2021)

conducted during Pandemic COVID-19. The map consists of 81 concepts (shown as small grey nodes) grouped into six themes (indicated by the larger coloured circles). Themes are mapped by colour. Hot colours (red, orange) denote the most relevant themes, and cool colours (blue, green) denote the least relevant. The six themes and their verbatim hits (in parentheses) were “culture” (53 hits), “program” (48 hits), “technology” (21 hits), “online” (18 hits), “enjoy” (7 hits) and “struggle” (4 hits).

The main theme denoted with the colour red is CULTURE which has 53 verbatim hits with thirty-three concepts visible on the map. The visibility of the concept seems to suggest that the program reflected meaningfully on how they responded to the student's acceptance and embracing of the different cultures. For example, the respondents mentioned how they felt closer to each other even though they are from other countries with different backgrounds, thus making memories.

“Being around people with different culture and background make me know more about this world compared with before this that I only know about self-country's culture and history. This experience makes me dare to make new friends with other country students and I can see how other people learn and I will push myself to be a better person”, Respondent XX

“Learning with people from different cultures and background could broaden my knowledge about this world, and I feel like I still do not know much about it”, Respondent XX

The theme of "program" is mentioned repeatedly by the respondents as a way of responding to students' advantages and disadvantages of the program. They viewed the program offered to the students through an online platform as being paramount to meeting diverse needs in the classroom. The program, for example, was conducted during the pandemic Covid-19 lockdown. Therefore, most of the time the program was conducted virtually, and students can only meet their group mates online. Moreover, some of the classes were conducted by different lecturers with accents. Making them hardly understand the English language used.

“The disadvantage of this program is this program is conducted during covid-19 pandemic this because us could not meet with our groupmates, we only can chat on social media”, Respondent XX.

“The challenge of this program is that sometimes I do not understand some professional vocabulary that the lecturer say, because the lecturers who give lectures are all from different countries, and they may speak English with accents or the lecturer are explaining some fields that I have not been familiar with, so I will not understand those words....”, Respondent XX

In terms of advantages, a few respondents stated that there are still advantages of the program. The program is very convenient as teaching videos are made available for all students, therefore, no students will be a dropout.

“One of the advantages of the program is that all lectures are being recorded so I can watch back the lectures. One of the disadvantages of the program is the timing of the program as the program clashes with my class but luckily all lectures are being recorded so I can play back the part I missed out”, Respondent XX.

“The advantage of this program is I can join two classes at one time, while the disadvantage of this program is it crash on my schedule, even though I can join two classes at once, this problem cannot be avoided if my class has a presentation on the day”, Respondent XX

Student learning about “CULTURE” as a theme is also clearly overlapping with other concepts that sit within the major theme of "TECHNOLOGY" which has 21 verbatim hits and "PROGRAM" with 48 verbatim hits. These themes are considered major as they have the most comprehensive number of linking concepts that explain the respondents' emphasis in their reflections on the ATU-NET Students Virtual Intercultural Experience program.

“It was really a pleasant memory for me by joining this event. Not only I can see different view on certain topics by other universities, but also, we create bonds that is lovely despite in the pandemic,” Respondent xx.

“I also learned about the technology that is used in each country. This program teaches new knowledge and gave me a memorable experience,” Respondent xx.

“We get to learn about the cultures and technologies of different countries in Asia from respective lecturers,” Respondent xx.

“I get to make friends from different country and most importantly able to learn the culture & history of different country as well as their technology,” Respondent xx.

The fourth theme is ONLINE, which has a verbatim hit of 18 overlapping with the smaller number of verbatim that is the theme ENJOY with 7 hits. The overlapping concentrated around the concept of study that connects with concepts of platform and enjoyment. The program reflections focus on the challenges and difficulties that happened when the program was conducted online. Most of the respondents stated that they are having difficulty with an internet connection, especially those who live in rural settings. The respondents discuss how they work hard at engaging their peers in their communication.

“The most challenging part of this program is communication, due to the pandemic Covid-19, we are using online platform like WhatsApp and Zoom to communicate with other countries’

friends. Some of them might very shy, therefore it is hard for me to spice up the meeting,” Respondent XX.

However, in reflecting on the program approaches (ONLINE), the respondents also noted the enjoyment (ENJOY) that they made while studying with new friends from different countries.

“It is an eye-opening experience as I get to communicate with them and ask them questions directly as it's my first-time having friends from different country. It has made me to be more understanding towards people and knowing everyone is just the same despite living in different country,” respondent XX.

“The greatest impression is that VAX is a great program that get to gather many students from different background, different country to study engineering basics knowledge and the cultures of specific countries together. The organiser must have put a lot if efforts and time in making this program success, especially some countries have different time zone, and every lecturer and student has different class timetable,” Respondent XX.

The final and small theme is STRUGGLE, a theme that shows how the respondents reflected meaningfully on the ATU-NET Student's Virtual Intercultural Experience. They understood that the program brings a lot of benefits and opportunities to them. The concepts of struggle and appreciation are more towards their emotional sentiments that reflect how everyone in the world is struggling to study and make ends meet during the time of Covid-19. Thus, making them appreciate life and the people around them even more.

“My struggle was nothing to compared with others and it taught be to always be nice and considerate with others especially during the hard times. Respect each other,” respondent xx.

“Through this experience, we need to respect other people's cultures, even if they are different from ours. We need to appreciate and learn from other people's cultures,” Respondent XX.

Figure 2 overleaf shows the concept map of ATU-NET Students' Perception during Pandemic COVID-19 with SIT, Japan. Based on the semantic analysis, shows that there are 5 main themes that emerged from the data set. The five themes are CULTURE with 12 verbatim hits, DISCUSSION (11 verbatim hits), DISADVANTAGE (8 verbatim hits), TIME (3 verbatim hits) and COMMUNICATION with 1 verbatim hit.

The theme CULTURE shows that respondents were introduced to different people with different cultures and backgrounds, thus creating an exciting experience for them. However, the excitement of learning about cultures was hindered by communication problems, Hence, the overlapped theme CULTURE with the theme COMMUNICATION.

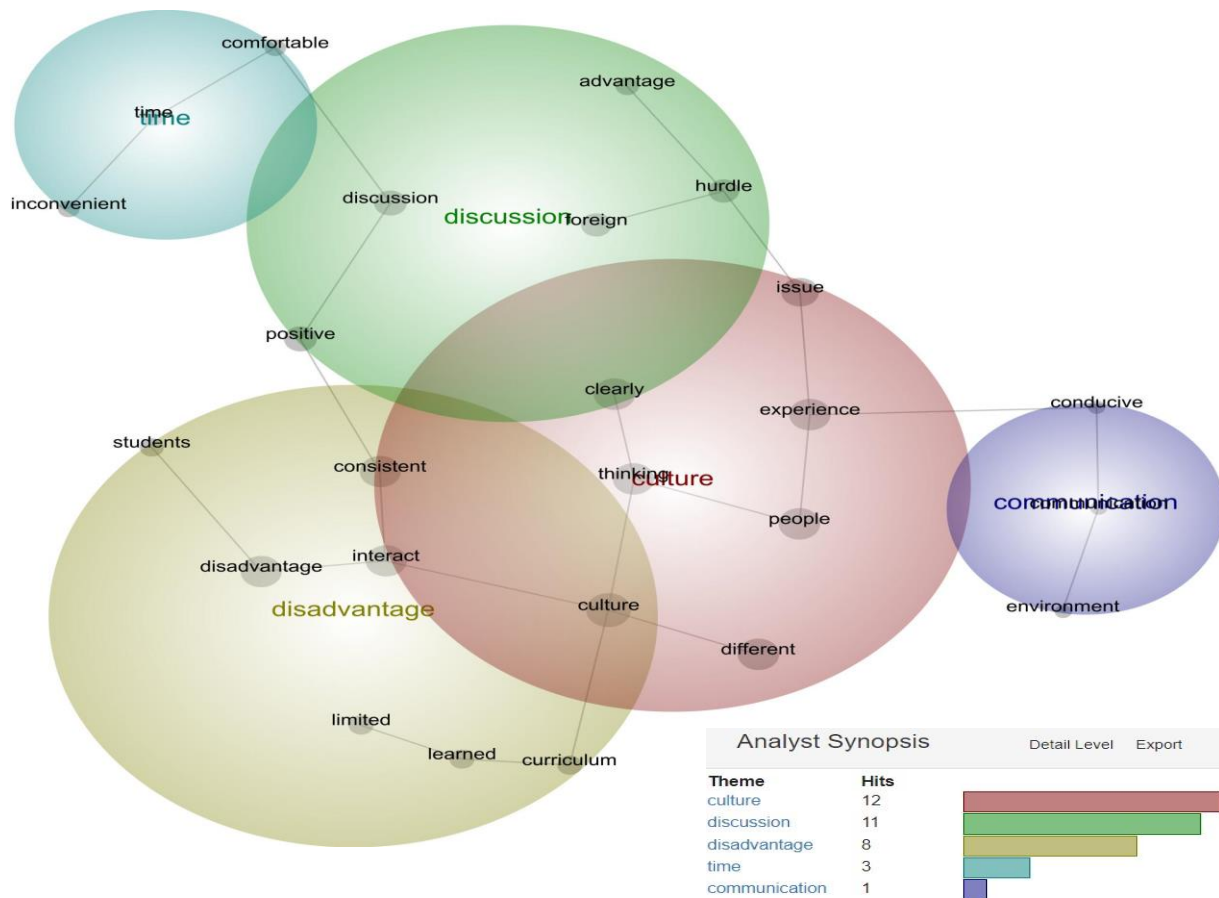


Figure 2: The concept map of ATU-NET Students’ Perceptions during Pandemic COVID-19 with Shibaura Institute of Technology (SIT), Japan.

“The main point of this program was that I was stimulated by people from overseas and learned about ways of thinking and values that I do not have. As I have not had much interaction with people from Southeast Asia, it was very good for me to learn about the culture and people’s way of thinking in this region,” respondent XX.

“Different countries of origin have different ways of thinking, and this program allowed us to clearly see the differences. I think it was a great benefit for me to be able to listen to real voices rather than just learning about them from the Internet,” respondent XX.

The theme DISCUSSION with 11 verbatim hits shows that the respondents have positive feedback regarding the discussion activity conducted during the program. However, the respondents would really appreciate it if the discussion session was conducted for a longer time, especially when the time difference is a barrier. Thus, overlapping with the theme TIME.

“One advantage was that I could have discussions with a variety of students from Asia regardless of location. However, I would have liked a little more time for discussion,” respondent XX.

“Online, they are held at the same time, so there is inevitably a time difference. This means that when one side is at a comfortable time, the other side is at an inconvenient time. However, I think the advantage is that because it is online, it is easy to have a conversation with someone from a foreign country, so the hurdle is low,” respondent XX.

The theme DISADVANTAGE with 8 verbatim hits shows the disadvantages of the program to the respondents. Communication is the main problem in this program. It seems that most of the respondents are having difficulty interacting with each other.

“The bad thing was that communication was not good. I wish the environment had been a little more conducive to talking to each other,” respondent XX.

“It was very good to be able to take the course from any location. On the other hand, However, I thought it was a disadvantage that it was difficult for students to interact with each other,” respondent XX.

This turned out to be an effective learning opportunity for all participants since they became able to study together with various students throughout Asia regardless of traveling costs and locational differences. This environment is especially advantageous for Japanese students since they usually have quite limited chances to team up with other Asians as long as they stay inside Japan, where the population is racially homogeneous.

AIMS Virtual Mobility program

Figure 3 illustrates the Leximancer concept map for respondents’ perceptions about the benefits and challenges of the AIMS Mobility: Students Intercultural Experience during Pandemic COVID-19 conducted during Pandemic COVID-19. The map consists of the 62 concepts (shown as small grey nodes) grouped into six themes (indicated by the larger coloured circles). Themes are mapped by colour. Hot colours (red, orange) denote the most relevant themes, and cool colours (blue, green) denote the least relevant. The five themes and their verbatim hits (in parentheses) were “learn” (74 hits), “class” (56 hits), “lectures” (33 hits), “enjoy” (5 hits) and “hospitality” (3 hits).

flexible schedule of class and recorded lectures are also among the positive reactions when asked about the advantages of the program.

“In addition, learning with people who have different cultures and background is amazing because I can get new knowledge and new experiences. The differences in culture and background make me realize how unique and amazing people in South Korea are,” respondent XX.

“Advantages of the program are the schedule is flexible and it didn't cost me much. As for the disadvantages, I couldn't tell if I was a part of an exchange program,” respondent XX.

The theme CLASS was repeatedly mentioned in the data text, showing the importance of classes in the program. Respondents are very satisfied with the experience of having an “exchange” program with a Korean university despite it being conducted online. The respondents feel as if they are in Korea.

“There was one time, I was having an internet problem, the lecturer was very understanding of my problem and told me not to worry and to take my time to solve it. During classes, the lecturers always share about the weather in Gyeongju, which makes me feel like I am at Gyeongju,” respondent XX.

However, there are a few disadvantages of the online program. The challenges include internet connection, different time zones, and the duration of the class being too long.

“The benefit that I get from joining this program is gaining new experience and knowledge when studying at a foreign university. The challenge is when I have a bad internet connection. It brings a lot of problems when it happens because I can't hear any of the lectures at that time,” respondent XX.

“Benefit that I got from this program is the class timetable. The class timing is great and flexible. What makes it so challenging is the duration of the class. Too long for a fully online program and sometimes it became too tiring,” respondent XX.

“The disadvantage is that sometimes we got confused with the different time zone,” respondent XX.

Even though there are minor challenges with the classes, it does not downgrade the overall experience of the program. Therefore, theme LECTURES with 33 verbatim hits shows that respondents are very satisfied with the learning contents.

“The greatest impression on me is when the lectures share lots of tourism-related knowledge and also shared other regional cultures. I felt that I need to study more to make sure I'm a knowledgeable person. Because whenever we get into the culture and tourism development

class, the lecture will keep motivating us to read more articles, tourism related news, so that in future will help us to share our knowledge with the tourist,” respondent XX.

“This program does give me a positive impact because I am usually scared to voice my opinion, but after joining the program with the support from the lecturers, I can now voice my opinion. As for the culture, there is a lot of new knowledge I've learnt about Korea because lecturers always share it with us, and I also can learn the Korean Language officially and from a native speaker. I am very happy. I am quite worried about the first day of class, however, all the worries went away when I experienced the class/program on my own. I am very glad to be part of this program at Dongguk University,” respondent XX.

The theme ENJOY overlaps with the themes LEARN and LECTURES under the concepts of “culture” in theme LECTURES and “Korea” in theme LEARN that connecting with both concepts of "enjoy" and "network" in theme ENJOY. This illustrates that the respondents have positive feedback about the program but at the same time face difficulty when the internet connection is not good.

“It's changing my perspectives about all the negative impressions I'm going to have if I joined this program at first. But this program is great and enjoyable!” respondent XX.

“We get to know their traditional food and yes it's an opportunity for us to learn the Korean language with Korean lecturers. The toughest challenge that I faced is the network problem,” respondent XX.

Lastly, the theme HOSPITALITY with 3 verbatim hits is referring to the lecturers of the program. It shows that the respondents are very happy with the way they were treated during the classes.

“I am very happy. I am quite worried about the first-day class; however, all the worries went away when I experienced the class/program on my own,” respondent XX.

“The best thing is I can get new Korean friends there! And, the lecturers are so sporting and kind. I am so happy to know them,” respondent XX.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The respondents found it extremely challenging to take part in any kind of mobility programme abroad due of their pandemic experience. Because there are no visa requirements, travel restrictions, or financial worries, VM creates new opportunities and minimises inconvenience. The results indicate that the respondents do have both favourable and negative opinions of the VM. They talked about their difficulties with the programme as well. Some of the

interviewees go on to say that they don't have many intercultural encounters, including cultural shock, physical touch, adaption, and conventions. Their international experiences are restricted to story-sharing, internet communication, and discrepancies in conceptions, views, and definitions. Physical intercultural experiences are needed to enhance their intercultural experience and awareness. It is suggested that in the future VM, the students will be invited to the host country or host university to truly experience the culture, norms, and adaptation for a short period.

Promoting intercultural learning in the context of VM is essential since the intercultural experience is made even more difficult in the setting of VM, when contact with the host culture may only be confined to the synchronous remote class sessions. It is recommended that the VM students receive pre- and post-orientations, much like when they join the physical mobility. The purpose of this orientation could be to introduce the host culture to the participating students. It is known that this was used in various university VM programs in Malaysia. As agreed upon by Koris, Mato-Daz, and Hernández-Nanclares (2021), this is a crucial procedure for fostering intercultural learning.

Since this program is also relatively new in Malaysia, it would be interesting to repeat this evaluation every year to see if the results remain the same, improve, or deteriorate. It is recommended that future VM could develop the inventory for VM collaboration as introduced by O'Reilly (2021) to serve as a guideline and discussion tool. This checklist serves as a roadmap for anyone who wants to launch the VM program in the future. The checklist was listed along with some of the important choices that needed to be made for this project, including finance, the use of digital technologies for collaboration, and reflection and evaluation of the collaboration. Liu and Shirley (2021), propose to incorporate a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) pedagogical approach and virtual reality (VR) technologies into the curriculum reform process, especially for the VM program. Informal integration strategies (such as learning guides, online peer-mentoring systems, virtual conversation groups, and online intercultural events) could be adapted to the virtual context following the recommendation of Leask (2009) and Catalano and Barriga (2021). To support students in higher education in a VM, this should be designed in the VM with the appropriate handbook.

This study is not without limitations that, nevertheless, warrant avenues for future research. First, the researchers have limited opportunities to reach out to students with similar research instruments during the COVID-19 pandemic when students are systematically invited by the university to participate in e-interview or online surveys to monitor how they perform in VM programs. To overcome this limitation, universities could develop research policies

promoting collaboration between researchers and the transfer of knowledge across research projects drawing on data collected from students. Second, due to the limited space in the e-interview, this research did not measure other intercultural experiences that could explain their cultural immersion in students' experiences. Finally, future qualitative studies could better contextualize research into students' VM perceptions and challenges from the host and home country, thereby exposing country-specific factors determining their perceptions and challenges. At this moment, COVID-19 has brought influence on nations and the world. To further defeat this virus and future viruses, the world would need a VM program to ensure the benefit of students mobility continues. Therefore, educational institutions must equip their faculties with the necessary tools and facilities to be global. Future VM should transform the person and enhance their ability to be global residents. In conclusion, VM creates the potential for transformative learning, and as such, can be an important driver in the strategic aim to achieve Mobility for All.

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Bridging the World through Internationalization in a Covid era: The UKM Global Webinar Experience

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ABSTRACT

When the pandemic hit and the physical movement restriction was enforced worldwide, all sectors especially international higher education reacted reactively towards the new and unprecedented challenges. The partnerships among universities and countries halted for a while before finding out that the virtual realm allows the relationship to carry on, and even foster old ones and create new partnerships via online means. UKM shares the challenges, the success stories and the best practices hosting webinars during the pandemic and how it helps to lessen the bridging gaps among partners, old and new. Not only webinars manage to gather enthusiast from all corners of the world, but it also connects parties with similar intention to start a new partnership and creates more opportunities for the masses to connect and engage.

Keywords: Webinar; partnerships; collaborations; virtual

1. INTRODUCTION

When the world is hit by the global pandemic COVID-19, most teaching and learning (T&L) at the higher learning institutions are moved online, regardless of the readiness of all the institutions. This abrupt transition caused higher education institutions to undergo drastic revamp of its T&L towards online platforms in a matter of weeks, instead of years in normal situation. In a blink of an eye, all institutions are entering a new realm of higher education, whether they are ready or not.

2. THE IMPETUS: COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The World Health Organisation (WHO) stated in its timeline of WHO's response to COVID-19 (WHO, 2020) that Wuhan Municipal Health Commission released a statement of cases of 'viral pneumonia' in Wuhan, People Republic of China on 31 December 2019. More similar cases

were reported and recorded.

On January 9, 2020, the Chinese authorities have determined that the outbreak is caused by a novel coronavirus. As more cases were detected in and outside of China, WHO declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020 and a pandemic on March 11, 2020. The situation led to many countries and regions imposed global restrictions that apply to all foreign countries and territories or prevent their citizens from travelling overseas.

The global pandemic created a lot of new and unprecedented challenges that force the whole world to be reactive to the current situation. There were travel bans, social distancing, new health issues and the countermeasures (a lot of vaccines) and many more.

One of the most impacted sectors is international higher education. Higher education was disrupted like never before (Rashid & Yadav, 2020). The immediate reaction of all institutions of learning, higher learning included, was to suspend all physical face-to-face teaching and meetings, closing all buildings to physical access and keeping everyone at their own homes. International students were forced to remain in their host countries, or were repatriated by their respective governments, as borders were closed for international travel.

The most evident and pivotal change that the whole world agrees on is to bring everything online, regardless of one's readiness towards it (Rajan, 2020). The sudden push towards virtuality raises concerns – are we ready – human resource wise, infrastructure wise, policy wise and most importantly, physical and mental wise as higher education is one of the least digitized and most people-intensive economic sectors (Sean & Jason, 2020). This point supports the IAU's conclusion that despite the difficulties in the adaptation to a completely different methodology for teaching, the Higher Education sector demonstrated reactivity in order to find solutions to the challenge raised by the pandemic, and of continuing teaching and learning (IAU, 2020).

Prior to the global pandemic, researchers, education practitioners and enthusiast alike would throng together and attend conferences, seminars and workshops all over the world. But all that were put to a halted stop when the pandemic hits and it affected the whole face-to-face meeting and networking sessions that have been going well.

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Interestingly, Malaysia was among the countries that are not well-prepared for such unprecedented phenomenon. Some countries instructed that all T&L are to be carried out online, but Malaysia went the other way. The MoHE took the unusual step to prohibit all digital learning activities on March 17, 2020 (Ministry of Higher Education 2020a; Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation, 2020). Both public universities and private HEIs were forbidden to conduct any T & L activities, including those online, as well as examinations, viva voce, student development and research activities during the restricted movement period (Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, 2020). This unpopular directive was later retracted, allowing HEIs to offer courses fully online to implement e-learning, provided that the institution could guarantee that every student had access to the Internet and that the lecturers were ready and fully equipped, with adequate infrastructure (Asia Pacific University of Technology & Innovation, 2020, Ministry of Higher Education, 2020b). This decision was taken to ensure that the right to sustain educational activities for all registered, full fee-paying students in HEIs was protected within the framework of equal opportunity and non-discrimination.

Since everything is pivoting to the online mode, why not bringing collaborations and partnerships online too? That exactly what UKM did in the early months after the WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic.

Abd. El-Aziz (2020) mentioned that even though the global pandemic happened, there were efforts to treat, cure, or provide a vaccine for COVID-19 proceeded both in isolation (i.e., within a single nation), and cooperatively, across national borders, even though there were fears that these efforts were carried out not in the name of the global interest. These collaborative efforts were done via changes of emails, sharing of findings and online meetings on various platforms throughout the world.

ICC (2020) applauds that the rapid sharing of scientific findings and updates of the new COVID-19 disease has enabled scientists and relevant authorities and bodies around the world to mobilise health, skill and knowledge assistant to the world, despite the international travel-ban enforcement. The sharing of these valuable information was done virtually and in real time, thus enable the whole world to work together and in tandem in accessing and coming up with possible and potential solutions to the world pandemic that is COVID-19.

After experiencing a few infectious disease incidents, the world realised that international collaboration is crucial in overcoming the diseases. Thus, global research collaboration has becoming increasingly important throughout the years. Kim (2020) shared that all studies have concluded that global research collaboration is increasing, when in 1996,

Royal Society recorded that the share of papers with more than one international author was only 25%.

It Started with A Webinar

Originally, UKM's collaboration with Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) was to hold a one-day seminar in September 2020. A few meetings took place in the end of 2019 and early months of 2020. When the pandemic hits, UKM was challenged by AKEPT to hold a webinar, specifically to address the university's management take on the new issues brought forward by the pandemic.

In the bid of understanding the new challenges in the latest international educational norms, on May 14, 2020, UKM brought together a list of education practitioners from the four corners of the world to discuss on an interesting matter, "Entering the New Realm of International Higher Education". The online panel discussed their strategy in embracing this new normal of education and the preparations involved in realizing the strategy.

The panellist includes the following, with Assoc. Prof. Dr. Abdul Latiff Ahmad (Director, UKM Global) moderated the session:

1. Prof. Shingo Ashizawa, Deputy Sec- Gen UMAP, Toyo University, Japan
2. Dr. Lily Freida Milla, Director III, Commission on Higher Education, Philippines
3. Prof Adriana Rojas Martinez, Director, Asia-Pacific Region, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico
4. Prof. Dato' Dr. Norazah Mohd Nordin, Dean, Faculty of Education, UKM, Malaysia



Figure 1: Entering the New Realm of International Higher Education Poster, May 14, 2020

After a very successful first session with the panelist, UKM realized that having online discussions to facilitate the webinar’s preparation is considerably easy and do-able, regardless of where the panelist is.

As the saying goes, the rest is history after the first webinar. UKM Global has hosted a total of 13 webinars since the pandemic started (4 of AKEPT, 7 with Toshiba International Foundation and 2 with National Cheng Kung University) with various international partners, new and old ones.

Table 1 below is the list of webinars that UKM Global has hosted and all these recordings are available on UKM Global’s website.

Table 1: List of webinars that UKM Global has hosted

No	Webinar	Title	Date & Time
1	AKEPT	Entering the New Realm of International Higher Education on	14 May 2020 (Thursday) 9.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
2		Values-Based Leadership in ASEAN Higher Education on	14 September 2020 (Monday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
3		Women Leadership in International Higher Education	17 November 2020 (Tuesday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
4		Universities Leadership in Challenging Times ... And the Way Forward	10 February 2021 (Wednesday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
5	Toshiba International Foundation	The Internationalization Experience of Higher Education Institutions in Japan and Malaysia	30 August 2021 (Monday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
6		Transdisciplinary Education and the Growth of Global Citizens	28 September 2021 (Tuesday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
7		International Virtual Learning Engagements: Understanding Concepts, Strategies and Executions	29 October 2021 (Friday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
8		The Importance of Associations in the Internationalization Strategies of Universities	22 November 2021 (Monday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
9		Embracing Language and Culture Through Internationalization	8 December 2021 (Wednesday) 2.30 pm (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
10		The International Mobility Experience of Students from Malaysian and Japanese Universities	25 January 2022 (Tuesday) 8.30 pm (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
11		Virtual Seminar and Workshop: Internationalization of the Future	24 May 2022 (Tuesday) 8.45 am - 12.00 pm (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
12	National Cheng Kung University	International Strategies on Student Mobility in the Era of a Global Pandemic	25 May 2021 (Tuesday) 10.00 am (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)
13		Virtual Student Mobility during COVID-19 from Student’s Perspective	22 October 2021 (Friday) 8.30 pm (GMT+8 Kuala Lumpur)

Along with the webinars, UKM finds that virtually meeting partners, old and new, is much easier and cost-effective as compared to pre-COVID era.

From Participants to Partners

Based on the feedback from the participants, the webinars organized by UKM Global are always awaited because of the topics that are relevant to current issues and the critical selection of panelists. The thought-provoking subjects and the critical and analytical sharing by the panelists managed to draw a large number of practitioners and enthusiasts from around the world, as far as the US and the UK. The webinars managed to successfully gather 300 - 500 participants from 10 - 12 countries for each webinar.

As UKM Global invited experts from all over the world as panelists, the webinar managed to showcase the expert's credibility and knowledge to the masses. UKM have received emails from former panelists that they have been contacted by the participants of the seminar to start collaborating – may it be for classes, research or projects.

UKM has also been approached by participants from the webinar – either to be introduced to the experts or to start discussing potential collaborations. There have been a few documents of collaborations been signed since then – all done virtually – starting from discussion up to signing the documents.

Apart from the participants, UKM has also signed documents of collaboration with some of the panelists too. The series of discussions that led to the webinar has sparked interests to further collaborate between UKM and the panelist that both sides feel the need to formalise the partnerships.

Not only UKM introduced the UKM's experts to the world, but the webinar has also enabled the participants to connect and interact with each other based on the same topic of interest during the webinar. These virtual meetings led to discussions and further in-depth exploration of the common interest from all parties involved.

Enrichment for All

Adam (2020) wrote that somehow, the global pandemic Covid-19 has 'forced' the world to start collaborating in ways that they have never dreamt before. Partnerships between academic institutions and humanitarian organizations are a unique and pragmatic approach to harness intersectoral collaboration and strengthen knowledge dissemination during pandemics. Babcock (2010) highlighted that such innovative partnerships have the potential to produce more sustainable and comprehensive public health responses.

With reference to above, UKM found out that international collaboration forged during the pandemic outlined different key performance indicators – ones that are more relevant to the current global situation.

Despite that there was physical traveling restriction all over the world, via the webinars, UKM managed to fulfill the activities listed in the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/ Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed. It is via the webinars too that UKM has managed to gather experts from all over the world within a virtual conference room, sharing their issues and best practices for the masses to learn from – all being done from the comfort of one's home – no matter what time zone they are from.

In retrospect to pre-pandemic period, for a conference to be held, all participants will travel to the conference venue and pay a handsome amount of fee to be a part of the conference. On top of that the traveling cost, one also must secure accommodation and transportation to fully attend the conference. During the pandemic, all is done with just a steady signal of internet line, very minimal fee and within the comfort of one's house (without even dressing up for the sessions). This is one of the sustainable points of hosting webinars and conferences online.

As such, in the context of UKM's webinar to strengthen the international collaborations, apart from meeting fellow partners and friends from all over the world, it also serves as a contact point for every attendee. Participants with similar interest met and connected during webinar before exploring their mutual interests post the webinar. The webinars are also a part of activities in fulfilling the collaboration agreement between UKM and the governing body of the grant (in this case, AKEPT, Toshiba and NCKU).

With the assistance of international associations that UKM is a part of, the invitations to attend the webinars were shared world-wide. The associations such as University Mobility in Asia and the Pacific (UMAP), The Association of Universities of Asia and the Pacific (AUAP), SATU Presidents' Forum and ASEAN University Network (AUN) assisted with sharing the invitations of the webinars to its members.

The Global Pandemic: A Blessing in Disguise for International Collaborations

In a joint statement by IAU and Erasmus Student Network (ESN) in 2020, they noted that moving forward, the international higher education community will find the 'right balance between face-to-face and online learning, between physical mobility and virtual exchange'. This further supports the notion that the world will continue to interact virtually, albeit that the world is opening again and slowly, yet surely easing into normalcy, pre-pandemic.

In spite all that, Littleton (2022) wrote that in 2021, the international student enrolments were down 17 per cent compared with 2019, and although overseas students can now return (and many have continued to study through remote learning systems), rebuilding international enrolment will be slow. Universities may never regain pre-COVID international enrolment levels.

As in the case of Malaysia, had it not been for the pandemic, the pivotal change to digital learning would take a while. The pandemic pushed the relevant authorities to enhance the facilities and infrastructures to ensure that Malaysians will have access to education despite the remote learning situation. The initiatives were done via extensive collaborations between the government and the relevant authorities, may it be government or private entities.

Whereas in UKM, the industry players, the alumnus and the society came together to assist the students in need, especially those with minimum access to online facilities and instruments and those that were most affected by the pandemic.

The pivotal change to online communication and collaboration during the pandemic has alerted the world that virtual collaboration is possible and at the current era, plausible, economical and sustainable.

UKM's webinars has opened more than one door for national and international collaborations when the participants attended the webinars, as are other webinars in the whole wide world. Even now when the physical traveling is picking up, webinars are still relevant and will continue to stay relevant in the years to come.

Not Without Its Challenges

Not all is without its challenges. As mentioned earlier, UKM was challenged by AKEPT to host an international webinar, just months in after Movement Control Order (MCO) was announced on 18 March 2020 in Malaysia and all non-essential business were ordered closed, universities included. With very minimal experience handling (even attending) webinars, UKM took on the challenge and sent staff to attend courses on webinar handling.

Then the next challenge was the infrastructure and digital gap. During the first few months of MCO, UKM were subscribed to Webex and believed that the whole world was also on the same page. After the first webinar, UKM shifted to Zoom for video conferencing purposes as the platform is more user friendly, considering virtual conferencing was not a popular choice pre-COVID era.

Coming up with an interesting and attention-grabbing title and subject is not an easy task. After which, UKM has also to identify and invite the relevant expert of the subject-matter to become a panelist in the upcoming webinar. During the few early months of the global pandemic, it was quite easy to invite panelist as there were only a few webinars. But as the pandemic crept into 6 months and more, it was becoming quite a hard task to invite a panelist as there were other webinars from all over the world and the panelist have a choice list to choose from. Here is where having a list of partners from all over the world helps in finding a panelist for the upcoming webinar.

And this situation applies to the audience as well. An attention-grabbing title with an interesting list of panelists are crucial to having a good crowd during the webinar.

Even when you have a great number of participants signed up for the webinar, the actual final number of attendees were always the deciding factor whether the webinar was a success or a flop. The declining number of attendees online during a webinar are an indicator that the subject discussed has lost its attraction.

UKM regards each webinar as a production, thus the 'crew' were trained extensively to host 'a successful production'. Thus, each webinar will have its flow manager, a montage, a colour scheme, a running order, an emcee, a timekeeper, social media hosts and many more crews that will be 'running' the show from behind the scenes.

As per a physical production, UKM will always have a rehearsal or two with the panelists prior to the day of the event, to ensure that they are using the right session link to the webinar, their audio and visual are clear and playable during the session and to ensure that they will be presented well on-screen too during the session (lightings etc).

The biggest hurdle that UKM has experienced was a digital divide among the participants where their internet connection was not strong enough to enable them to flawlessly listen and view the session. There were participants that were kicked out for more than a dozen times throughout the session and reached out to UKM to view the recording after the session ended. UKM has recorded and uploaded all the sessions on UKM Global's website so that the participants and everyone else may view them anytime.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The global pandemic COVID-19 introduced unprecedented challenges to the world, and thus requires new and unexplored solutions. COVID-19 has meant that social distancing has become a part of everyday life, a new norm of sort, it also meant that international traveling was prohibited to restrict the transmission of the virus. When physical traveling was banned,

most higher learning institutions reacted, some were forced, to pivot all T&L to online mode, regardless of their readiness from all aspects. UKM took a challenge by AKEPT to host a webinar on COVID-19 and its impact of the higher learning and found that virtual realm is an alternative to a greater collaboration with partners, old and new, locally and internationally. It started with a simple online meeting session with old partners that led to lengthy and in-depth discussions on potential subjects to be discussed online with fellow partners and then UKM hosted the first webinar. Realising that everyone is eager to get connected and virtual means were the only viable option available for everyone around the world, UKM collaborated with a few other grant governing bodies and international associations to host more relevant and thought-provoking webinars. UKM realized that webinars are the bridge that connects the minds of experts and audience in the virtual realm when physical distancing was in place, maintains/ elevates the visibility of UKM among friends and partners and encourages greater collaborations with international associations and bodies during the whole process. Ensuring the webinars hosted by UKM maintaining a steady stream of participants was no easy task as there were a lot of external factors to be given due consideration – the subject of the discussion, the credible and experienced panelists, the technology know-how, the production of the webinar, the different time zones of participant, the digital divide and the most crucial factor of all – maintaining the interest and focus of the participants. In a nutshell, when COVID-19 closed the chance for UKM to physically collaborate with partners, UKM explored the less-traveled route that was via virtual means and hosted webinars to strengthen the partnerships, to which partners from all over the world were also eager to be a part of.

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Strengthening International Collaboration in Higher Education Through Centre of Excellence in Fatwa Area: IFFAH Experience with IIFA⁶

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ABSTRACT

This article describes the experience gained by the Institute of Fatwa and Halal (IFFAH), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), from the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA). This study employs a descriptive approach. Implementing the *istiktab* method is one way to strengthen IFFAH, as evidenced by the findings. Besides, it could support the fatwa institution in Malaysia and create a holistic niche of expertise geared toward the welfare of the global community and ummah.

Keywords: *Istiktab, Fatwa, IFFAH, IIFA, USIM.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Institute of Fatwa and Halal (IFFAH) is one of the centres of excellence (COE) in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). IFFAH was approved on 9th January 2019, and it combines two centres of excellence, the World Fatwa Management and Research Institute (INFAD), which began its operations on 26th May 2003 and the Institute of Halal Research and Management (IHRAM), which started its operations on 1st January 2010.

By maintaining the existing functions of INFAD and IHRAM, IFFAH aims to create a niche holistic expertise globally that benefits the public regarding fatwa and halal. IFFAH is committed to USIM's aspiration toward the Barakah campus through integrating Naqli and Aqli knowledge in both areas (IFFAH, 2022). The objectives of IFFAH are:

- i. Provide professional services related to fatwa and halal scholarly studies.
- ii. Develop and lead in fatwa and halal scholarly talent in research, innovation and consultancy.

⁶ This paper has been presented in "Seminar on The Internationalization Of Higher Education 2022", held in Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) on 29th September 2022.

- iii. Foster innovative partnerships in the development of products and services for income generation.
- iv. Educate the community through fatwa and halal scholarly.

The vision of IFFAH is to be a fatwa and halal scholarly centre for the well-being of *ummah* and the universal. At the same time, the mission of IFFAH is driving excellence and sustainability synergies of fatwa and halal scholarly worldwide. IFFAH (2022) offers seven services in two areas; fatwa and halal, as follow:

- i. Research.
- ii. Consultation.
- iii. Training.
- iv. Laboratory.
- v. Publication.
- vi. Innovation.
- vii. Syariah Compliance.

To strengthen international collaboration in higher education through the centre of excellence in the fatwa area, IFFAH partnered with an international institution, International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA).

2. INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FIQH ACADEMY (IIFA)

The International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) is a universal scholarly organisation. It is a subsidiary organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). It was established following a resolution at the Third Islamic Summit of the Organization on 19th-22th Rabi al-Awal 1401H, corresponding to January 25th-28th, 1981. Its headquarter is in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Academy is endowed with a legal personality. Its members are eminent Muslim jurists, scholars, researchers, and intellectuals who specialise in jurisprudential, cultural, educational, scientific, economic, and social knowledge from different parts of the Muslim world.

The Academy is entrusted with elucidating the rulings and provisions of Shariah on issues of concern to Muslims around the world, in full independence and based on the Holy Quran and the Noble Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH). It also studies contemporary life issues,

performing an authentic and effective Ijtihad, aiming at providing solutions stemming from Islamic heritage and being open to the developments of Islamic thought (IIFA, 2022).

Objective, Mission and Vision

The objectives of IIFA are to:

- i. Achieve intellectual harmony and integration between jurists from recognised schools of Islamic jurisprudence and experts in the field of human, social, natural, and applied sciences to elucidate the positions of Shariah towards contemporary life issues.
- ii. Promote collective Ijtihad (*Ijtihad jama'e*) on contemporary life questions and issues, elaborate Shariah-based solutions, and clarify valid preferences among several legal opinions on the same problem. Following the interests of Muslims - individuals, communities, or States- and in full harmony with Shariah's legal arguments and ultimate purposes.
- iii. Coordinate between authorities of Ifta and institutions of jurisprudence inside and outside the Muslim world to avoid contradictions and hostilities between opinions on the same issue, especially in general matters that may cause conflicts.
- iv. Reject denominational intolerance, religious fanaticism, and communication of Islamic doctrines and their followers through spreading the spirit of moderation, openness, and tolerance among the followers of different schools of law and sects.
- v. Refute baseless fatwas that negate Islamic principles, established rules of Ijtihad, and scholarly Islamic schools of law without giving any recognized evidence.
- vi. Provide Shariah rulings on subjects from the lived reality to facilitate the development of legislations, laws, and regulations in line and harmony with the provisions of Shariah.
- vii. Express Shariah opinions directly when requested and translate them into the lived reality revolving around the challenges facing the Islamic *Ummah*, and on the documents issued by the OIC, international Islamic and non-Islamic organisations.
- viii. Issue fatwas to Muslim communities and organisations outside the Muslim world in a way that would preserve the values of Islam, its culture and traditions, which also aims at protecting their Islamic identity, with due respect to the essentials of citizenship and residence in non-Muslim societies.
- ix. Promote cooperation and complementarity between scholars of different schools of law regarding the fundamental principles of religion, reinforce commonalities, and respect for differences. This act could uphold the ethics of divergent jurisprudence while giving the opinions of the various schools of law due consideration when the Academy issues fatwas and resolutions.

- x. Renew the science of Islamic jurisprudence by developing it from within and through Shariah's legal deduction rules, rules, and objectives.
- xi. To facilitate cooperative interreligious and intercultural dialogue for the benefit of humanity in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat (IIFA, 2022).

The vision of IIFA is becoming a leading global jurisprudential reference to which turn the countries of the Muslim world and the Muslim communities for clarification of the positions of Shariah on issues of concern to Muslims. Besides, it aims to provide appropriate solutions to contemporary life problems derived from the Holy Qur'an, the Noble Prophetic Sunnah and the rich Islamic heritage.

While the mission of IIFA is to present Shariah reasonably, emphasising its merits and its full capacity to deal with the problems and issues of life and its ability to help humankind achieve happiness, stability, peace, security, and safety in this life and beyond. This mission is based on a comprehensive and integrated understanding of the Islamic religion, its foundations, sources, objectives, principles, and provisions (IIFA, 2022).

3. MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN IFFAH AND IIFA

Within the framework of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, IIFA strives to achieve intellectual convergence and knowledge integration between the leading scientific institutions in the member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and a desire to benefit from the great expertise and experiences of prestigious universities and scientific institutes within and beyond the Muslim world. Prof. Koutoub Moustapha Sano, Secretary General of the Academy, and Prof. Dr. Ts. Sharifuddin Shaarani, Vice Chancellor of the Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, signed a memorandum of cooperation between the two institutions at the Sama-Sama Hotel, KLIA, on 17th August 2022.

This new agreement aims to build a strategic partnership in mutual benefit from the two institutions' scientific and research capabilities and abilities and a joint study of recent calamities and issues to direct and rationalise them. The agreement also aims to organise conferences and symposia jointly, hold workshops and training, exchange publications, and represent the two sides in discussions with the knowledge of each in the field of common interest (IIFA, 2022).

Invitation To Write a Paper

Prof. Dr Irwan bin Mohd Subri, Director of IFFAH, USIM, has been invited by IIFA to represent Malaysia in 2019 and 2022. He was asked to write a paper for presentation at the IIFA conference, and the paper's findings were incorporated into an IIFA resolution to reference Muslim nations and the Muslim community as a whole.

Prof. Dr Irwan was tasked with writing a paper titled “Smart Contracts: Activation and Reversal Methods (Study of Smart Contracts and Their Relationship to Cryptocurrency)” in 2019. The 24th IIFA conference was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. In 2022, he was tasked with writing a paper titled “The Effects Of Modern Mental Illness On Muslim Eligibility Under Islamic Law”. At the end of 2022, the 25th IIFA conference will be held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Resolution on Smart Contracts

Resolution No. 230 (1/24) Smart Contracts: Activation and Reversal Methods (Study of Smart Contracts and the Extent of their Relation to Cryptocurrency)

On 4-6th November 2019, the Council of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held its 24th session in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Reviewing the research papers submitted to the Academy on Smart Contracts: Activation and Reversal Methods (Study of Smart Contracts and the Extent of their Relation to Cryptocurrency). The discussion's resolution is as follows:

First: confirmation of resolution 52 (3/6) of the sixth session of the International Islamic Fiqh Academy, held in Jeddah in 1990, with all of its paragraphs, regarding contracting using modern communication devices. This resolution applies to electronic contracts regardless of whether they are smart contracts.

Second: the concept of smart contracts, an automatically implemented contract between two parties based on the idea of a peer-to-peer system via a decentralised distribution network (blockchain), which operates by encoded (encrypted) currencies such as bitcoin and others.

Third, smart contracts are typically executed using cryptocurrencies on private, centralised or decentralised platforms.

Fourth: the Academy decided to delay adopting a resolution on the topic until a specialised symposium on smart contracts is held and, after adopting a resolution on cryptocurrencies, to study all facets of smart contracts, focusing on those mentioned in paragraph three (2). In addition, it would be prudent to invite technical experts in blockchain, cryptocurrencies, and related fields (IIFA, 2022).

The Method of *Istiktab* By IIFA

One of the uniqueness of IIFA is the *istiktab* method. *Istiktab* means asking scholars to write a paper about an issue to be discussed. It is unique because ten to fifteen scholars write and analyse one issue, which makes the issue more thoroughly discussed. According to Shubayr (2008), the *istiktab* method that IIFA practices have certain conditions related to the author or the written paper. The requirements for paper authors are:

- i. He must be a Muslim.
- ii. He must be an adult (*baligh*).
- iii. He must be a sane person.
- iv. He must know the Syariah law whether it is *usul* or *furu* '. It means that he must know the Qur'an and its knowledge (*'Ulum al-Quran*), know the hadith and its ability (*'Ulum al-Hadith*) and know the method of *istinbat al-ahkam* (deriving hukum).
- v. He must be a just person and protected from the causes of immorality and things that defame dignity.
- vi. He has high fiqh skills.
- vii. He is an expert and knows his local situation (Shubayr, 2008).

While requirements for written papers are:

- i. It should be written in detail and in-depth by referring to the sources.
- ii. It explains the principles and methods that are authoritative.
- iii. It is in the form of comparative jurisprudence of sectarian jurisprudence and choosing a strong opinion.
- iv. Following the method of previous scholars in discussion style and research etiquette.
- v. Committed to trusting knowledge, attributing ideas to writers and taking sectarian views from definitive books.
- vi. Focus on the topic of the discussion and do not go out of scope.

- vii. Mention Quran, hadith, and book references. In addition to organising the final reference according to the proper writing style.
- viii. Give attention to punctuation marks (*'alamat al-tarqim*) so the writing is understandable.
- ix. Clear and correct written language.
- x. The conclusion contains the study's results and opinions chosen by the writer.
- xi. It contains proposed resolutions to be taken by IIFA (Shubayr, 2008).

4. CONCLUSION

Due to IFFAH's focus on the fatwa niche, the cooperative relationship between IFFAH and IIFA provides valuable experience. Considering that IIFA is a recognised institution by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the implementation of the *istiktab* method is viewed as one of the ways to strengthen IFFAH to assist the institution of fatwa in Malaysia at the national or state level. This is because IFFAH is heavily involved in fatwa studies that help the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM) and the State Mufti Department make fatwa decisions.

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MoU Signing Ceremony Between IFFAH and IFFA at Sama-Sama Hotel, KLIA - 17th August 2022



Prof. Dr. Irwan bin Mohd Subri, Director of IFFAH, has been appointed as a rapporteur in 2019 for one session of the 24th IIFA Conference (4-6th November 2019)



Prof. Dr. Irwan bin Mohd Subri, Director of IFFAH, has been invited to represent Malaysia at the 2019 IIFA 24th Conference (4-6th November 2019).

Pengalaman Baharu Pelajar Melalui Kursus Latihan Industri di Negara Brunei: Satu Tinjauan

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ABSTRAK

Latihan Industri merupakan kursus wajib bagi pelajar-pelajar di IPTA/IPTS. Bagi Fakulti Pengajian Bahasa Utama (FPBU), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). Kursus ini diambil pada semester kelapan iaitu semester akhir pengajian. Kursus ini bertujuan untuk memberikan kemahiran dan persediaan kepada pelajar sebelum mereka menduduki alam pekerjaan yang sebenar. Dalam kertas kerja ini, pengkaji berkongsi tentang pengalaman sekumpulan pelajar Latihan Industri dalam mempromosikan Malaysia ke negara Brunei Darussalam melalui kursus Latihan Industri (LI). Metod kajian ini menggunakan analisis dokumen iaitu menganalisa laporan yang ditulis oleh pelajar sepanjang menjalani LI di Brunei Darussalam, seramai 11 orang pelajar. Antara hasil dapatan kajian adalah pelajar mendapat banyak pengalaman dan pengetahuan sepanjang menjalani LI dan kemahiran bertutur dalam bahasa Arab lebih dipraktikkan. Kursus ini juga banyak memberikan input yang positif kepada para pelajar agar dapat bersedia dengan pelbagai ilmu pengetahuan yang dipelajari secara praktikal di tempat Latihan Industri. Pelajar diberikan pendedahan dan pengetahuan yang sewajarnya agar dapat berkomunikasi dan berinteraksi dalam semua situasi di tempat LI dengan baik.

Kata Kunci: Latihan Industri; mempromosikan; kemahiran; Brunei; duta

1. PENDAHULUAN

Definisi Latihan industri merujuk kepada penempatan pelajar di sesebuah organisasi untuk menjalankan latihan praktikal yang diselia dalam industri yang dipilih, sama ada di luar ataupun di dalam negara, dalam jangka masa yang ditetapkan sebelum mereka dianugerahkan Sijil, Diploma atau Ijazah Sarjana Muda (Garis Panduan Latihan Industri USIM, 2019).

Garis Panduan Latihan Industri yang disediakan oleh USIM adalah sebagai panduan pelaksanaan Latihan Industri (LI) bagi pelajar Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). Garis panduan ini dibangunkan berdasarkan kepada Latihan Industri Institusi Pengajian Tinggi yang telah ditetapkan oleh Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi (KPT) iaitu telah meletakkan LI sebagai salah satu syarat wajib untuk diikuti oleh semua pelajar Diploma dan Ijazah Sarjana Muda. LI menjadi satu syarat wajib bagi memenuhi syarat penganugerahan Ijazah Sarjana Muda, USIM.

Hanya pelajar yang memenuhi syarat akademik yang ditetapkan oleh Fakulti masing-masing sahaja yang layak menjalani LI. LI memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk mempraktikkan teori yang dipelajari kepada situasi sebenar di alam pekerjaan. Selain itu, mereka dapat menerima pengalaman praktikal supaya dapat mempertingkatkan kebolehpasaran graduan. Garis panduan ini disusun bertujuan untuk memudahkan para pelajar, penyelia dan pihak organisasi memahami peranan masing-masing dalam melaksanakan LI. (Garis Panduan Latihan Industri USIM, 2019).

Kursus ini memberi peluang kepada pelajar menjalani latihan amali di jabatan atau agensi yang sesuai yang dipilih oleh pelajar dan dipersetujui oleh USIM selepas proposal menjalani penilaian khas. Tujuannya memberi pendedahan tentang bidang kerjaya dan persekitaran kerja, mempraktikkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran yang diperolehi dan mewujudkan jalinan kerjasama antara USIM dengan masyarakat luar. Tempoh latihan yang ditetapkan adalah sekurang-kurangnya 12 minggu pada semester ke 8 tempoh pengajian. Kursus ini merangkumi elemen Naqli dan Aqli, dimana sebahagian pelajar memilih LI untuk mengajar di sekolah-sekolah agama, manakala sebahagian yang lain di jabatan-jabatan kerajaan dan swasta. (Rangka Kursus Latihan Industri Sarjana Muda Bahasa Arab dan Komunikasi Fakulti Pengajian Bahasa Utama, USIM)

Kursus ini merupakan satu kursus yang ditawarkan kepada pelajar Sarjana Muda Bahasa Arab dan Komunikasi (SMBAK), Fakulti Pengajian Bahasa Utama, (FPBU), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM). Melalui kursus ini pelajar dapat mempelajari teknik dan pengalaman dan suasana kerja.

Proses Latihan Industri

Latihan Industri di USIM merupakan satu kursus yang dijalankan secara sistematik dan dilakukan secara bersistem menerusi sesawang khas yang disediakan oleh Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia.

Setiap pelajar yang sedang mengikuti latihan industri diwajibkan mempunyai kata laluan tersendiri untuk memasuki sistem tersebut. Sistem e-Li USIM yang disediakan sangat membantu pelajar dan penyelia sama ada penyelia dalaman di Univesiti dan penyelia industri di tempat industri untuk pengurusan kursus.

Sistem yang sama turut dibangunkan oleh Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) yang dipanggil Sistem Latihan Amali/Industri (SLAI). Sistem ini telah dibangunkan oleh Pusat Teknologi Maklumat UKM dan mula dilaksanakan pada tahun 2011. Sistem ini merupakan

satu komponen dalam portal Sistem Maklumat Universiti (SMU). SLAI bertujuan untuk merekod maklumat penyelia dan penyeliaan, mencetak surat dan laporan berkaitan latihan amali/industri, pelantikan penyelia, penilaian penyelia dan maklumat penyeliaan serta laporan dan surat (Muhammad Zul, 2016).

Antara item yang dipaparkan di sesawang e-li USIM adalah seperti berikut:



Rajah (1): Sistem e-Li Universiti

2. SOROTAN KAJIAN

Dasar Latihan Industri Institut Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia

Latihan Industri adalah bertujuan melatih para graduan dengan kebiasaan situasi di tempat kerja sebenar sebelum benar-benar bergraduat dan mendapat pekerjaan. Antara tujuan LI ialah memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk (1) Mendapat pengalaman praktikal yang sesuai dengan bidang pengkhususan masing-masing, (2) Meningkatkan kemahiran berkomunikasi di pelbagai peringkat di organisasi, (3) Mengaplikasi pengetahuan dan kemahiran akademik dalam alam pekerjaan yang sebenar, (4) Mengamalkan etika profesional dalam bidang masing-masing, dan (5) Mempertingkatkan kebolehpasaran pelajar supaya lebih berdaya saing. (Garis Panduan Latihan Industri USIM, 2019). Keberkesanan LI dapat dibuktikan oleh Kolej Universiti Islam Melaka (KUIM) ialah, yang pertamanya pembinaan personaliti, sahsiah yang baik berupaya menjadi asas kepada pembinaan pelajar yang berwibawa. Kedua

merupakan faktor kemahiran Insaniah yang banyak diterapkan di dalam kelas amali dan projek luar. Kemahiran yang dititikberatkan adalah kemahiran berkomunikasi, kemahiran penyelesaian masalah dan kemahiran bekerja secara berpasukan (Dziatul Nadiah,2020).

Antara objektif program latihan industri yang lain adalah untuk: mendedahkan pelajar kepada alam pekerjaan yang sebenar, mendedahkan pelajar kepada teknologi terkini dan juga pengetahuan yang terbaru dalam pasaran; mendedahkan pelajar kepada amalan spesifik dalam bidang pengkhususan masing-masing; mempertingkatkan pengetahuan, kemahiran (terutamanya kemahiran insaniah) dan pengalaman pelajar dengan organisasi; melahirkan graduan yang berkompeten; mempertingkatkan peluang pekerjaan; dan merapatkan jaringan antara pihak Institusi Pengajian Tinggi (IPT) dengan industri.

Manakala antara objektif khusus program latihan industri ialah memberi peluang kepada pelajar untuk memahami tanggungjawab alam pekerjaan yang sebenar; mendapat pengalaman praktikal yang sesuai dengan bidang pengkhususan masing-masing; mengaplikasikan pengetahuan dan kemahiran akademik dalam alam pekerjaan yang sebenar; menghayati nilai etika profesional; mengasah kemahiran insaniah yang sesuai dengan persekitaran pekerjaan; meningkatkan kemahiran berkomunikasi; menilai kebolehan kerjaya, pengetahuan dan keyakinan diri pelajar; mempertingkatkan kebolehpasaran pelajar supaya lebih berdaya saing (K. P. T. (2010). Dasar Latihan Industri Institut Pengajian Tinggi. Malaysia: Jabatan Pengajian Politeknik).

Objektif LI dapat dicapai melalui perbagai kaedah, antaranya pemilihan lokasi latihan yang bersesuaian, di samping kebolehan dan kemampuan pelajar yang sangat mempengaruhi majikan tempat mereka berlatih (Norhidayah et al, 2021). Tambahan pula, pelajar juga perlu dipersiapkan dengan program *upskilling* dan *reskilling* bagi memastikan pelajar sentiasa memenuhi dan kehendak keperluan industri (Noor & Abdullah, 2020). Antara program yang boleh dijalankan adalah penganjuran bengkel penulisan laporan yang mempunyai ciri-ciri teknik laporan yang baik serta mencipta budaya kerja yang berkualiti dalam kalangan pelajar (Hassan et al, 2021).

Hasil Pembelajaran Program

Bagi merealisasikan pencapaian optimum, beberapa hasil pembelajaran bagi kerangka kursus LI telah digariskan antaranya:

1. Pengenalan terhadap industri dan organisasi
2. Keterampilan dan sifat bertanggungjawab

Pengenalan terhadap industri dan organisasi merupakan agenda utama yang perlu dilaksanakan sebaik sahaja tempat latihan industri di jejak. Dalam fasa ini, bukan sahaja para pelajar memperkenalkan diri mereka, budaya dan negara Malaysia kepada komuniti dan organisasi di Brunei Darussalam bahkan organisasi dan komuniti tempatan di Brunei juga turut berbuat demikian.

Oleh kerana tempat LI yang dipilih oleh para pelajar merupakan dalam kategori industri pendidikan dan bahasa arab, maka bekerjasama dan tanggungjawab sosial terhadap isu-isu penggunaan bahasa Arab dan ilmu komunikasi dapat dipraktikkan oleh kedua-dua belah pihak. bagi para pelajar Malaysia, mereka biasanya akan mempromosikan sistem pengajian yang mereka tempuhi di Malaysia, pemerihaln mengenai institusi pengajian tinggi yang ada di Malaysia serta aliran-aliran pendidikan yang terdapat di Malaysia.

1. Mempertingkatkan kompetensi dan daya saing dalam bidang pengkhususan masing-masing;
2. Menghubungkan pengalaman di tempat kerja dengan ilmu yang dipelajari di IPT;
3. Kecekapan melaksanakan tugas menerusi ilmu pengetahuan
4. Kemahiran berfikir secara kreatif
5. Kemahiran berkomunikasi
6. Keterampilan dan sifat bertanggungjawab.
7. Kecekapan melaksanakan tugas menerusi ilmu pengetahuan

Objektif

Kajian ini mempunyai beberapa objektif iaitu:

1. Mempromosikan Malaysia ke Brunei Darussalam (duta kecil) secara tidak langsung melalui kursus Latihan Industri.
2. Pelajar Malaysia menimba ilmu baharu melalui pengalaman kerja di luar negara.
3. Membina rangkaian kerjasama atau hubungan dua hala dalam sistem pendidikan antara Malaysia dan Brunei Darussalam.

3. METODOLOGI

Metode kajian ini menggunakan kaedah analisa dokumen iaitu menganalisa laporan yang ditulis oleh pelajar sepanjang menjalani LI di Brunei Darussalam. 11 dokumen berkaitan laporan latihan industri pelajar dianalisis. Responden kajian terdiri daripada 11 orang pelajar

terpilih dari Fakulti Pengajian Bahasa Utama, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia. Kriteria pemilihan adalah berdasarkan pencapaian gred purata markah akademik yang tinggi iaitu 3.0 dan lulus temuduga yang diadakan.

4. DAPATAN KAJIAN

Hasil dapatan kajian mendapati bahawa pelajar telah mencapai objektif Latihan Industri kursus. Pelajar mendapat pengalaman daripada kursus yang dijalankan seperti mempraktikkan segala kemahiran yang ada di tempat LI, mempraktikkan kemahiran pertuturan bahasa Arab di tempat LI serta sebagai duta kecil kepada Malaysia. Melalui LI di Negara Brunei, pelajar telah mendapat pendedahan terhadap budaya dan cara hidup masyarakat luar negara, sistem pengajian di negara tersebut serta kemahiran-kemahiran asas lain seperti kemahiran IT, berkomunikasi serta kepimpinan melalui proses kerja dan latihan serta tugas yang diberikan oleh para pensyarah.

Tempat Latihan Industri

Seramai tiga orang pelajar daripada program Sarjana Muda Bahasa Arab dan Komunikasi terlibat dalam LI di Kolej Universiti Perguruan Seri Begawan (KUPUSB). Manakala seramai 8 orang pelajar yang terlibat menjalani LI di Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA), Brunei pada semester kedua tahun 2020. Pemilihan pelajar adalah berdasarkan kelayakan menerusi saringan temuduga oleh panel khas dan penilaian kertas kerja LI yang dikemukakan kepada pihak USIM Alamiyah. Selain itu, pelajar berkecukupan dalam bidang akademik, iaitu 3.0 ke atas. Para pelajar tersebut menjalani Latihan amali di Kolej Universiti Perguruan Seri Begawan (KUPUSB) secara bersemuka setiap hari, berbanding dengan pelajar yang menjalani Latihan di Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) yang bekerja dari rumah. Mereka yang menjalani LI di Brunei berada di pusat Latihan industri tersebut sepanjang tempoh Covid-19, selama 20 minggu.

1. Kolej Universiti Perguruan Seri Begawan (KUPUSB) ialah sebuah institusi Pendidikan berstatus universiti terletak di Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei. Sebuah universiti awam yang menawarkan program Pendidikan khusus dalam bidang agama.
2. Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali atau lebih dikenali sebagai UNISSA merupakan Universiti Islam bertaraf antarabangsa yang menawarkan pelbagai program merentas

disiplin berteraskan Al-Quran dan al-Sunnah. Ditubuhkan pada tahun 2007, ia membuktikan komitmen ke bawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan dan Yang Di-Pertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam dalam memartabatkan Islam melalui pendidikan, di bumi bertuah Negara Brunei Darussalam ini dan ke arah pembangunan ummah.

Pengalaman baru melalui Tugas LI (KUPUSB)

Beberapa pengalaman baru diperolehi oleh para pelajar sepanjang tempoh LI, antaranya:

1. Pengalaman kepimpinan dan pengurusan
2. Pengalaman kemahiran berbahasa
3. Pengalam sosial dan berkomunikasi
4. Kemahiran teknologi maklumat (IT)
5. Kemahiran interpersonal dan jati diri

1. Kemahiran kepimpinan dan pengurusan

Keunikan program LI di dua buah universiti ini dapat dilihat dengan kepelbagaian program yang dijalankan oleh dua buah institusi ini kepada para pelatih LI. Misalnya, Kursus Bahasa bilangan keempat bagi para guru yang sudah mempunyai diploma Pendidikan diadakan pada setiap tahun di KUPUSB, kursus dalam perkhidmatan ini bertujuan untuk pemantapan bahasa Arab di kalangan para guru agama. Hal ini dapat memberi ruang kepada para pelatih LI untuk menyertai penganjuran kursus latihan guru. Pelajar LI di KUPUSB diberi peluang mengajar kelas Nadi bahasa Arab iaitu mereka yang tiada latar belakang bahasa Arab, tetapi ingin mengajar Pendidikan Islam. Pelajar LI diberikan menerusi beberapa tugas seperti berikut:

1. Menyediakan beberapa surat rasmi untuk kursus latihan guru bahasa keempat anjuran Pusat Bahasa, seperti surat jemputan, tempahan dewan, tempahan peralatan media dan lain-lain. Tugas ini sudah semestinya memberi pendedahan kepada para pelajar kemahiran pengurusan masa dan kepimpinan kerana mereka ditugaskan untuk mengenali kawasan sekitar yang dinyatakan, individu-individu yang terlibat serta cara merangka surat yang berkaitan.
2. Merekabentuk iklan kursus bahasa guru dan buku program.

Tugas ini mendedahkan pelajar kepada kemahiran pengiklanan, bahasa yang digunakan, rekabentuk penulisan buku program serta kemahiran penggunaan grafik dan kemahiran IT.

3. Menyediakan ucpatama kursus bahasa guru.

Tugas penyediaan ucpatama melatih pelajar kemahiran penyusunan idea yang baik selain memahami secara mendalam atucara dan objektif program yang dijalankan selain kemahiran penulisan dan gaya bahasa bersesuaian.

4. Menjadi pengerusi majlis dalam program kursus latihan guru bahasa keempat.

Tugas selaku pengurus majlis membolehkan pelajar menimba pengalaman dalam kemahiran berkomunikasi selain latihan jati diri dan keberanian berinteraksi dengan audien.

2. Kemahiran berbahasa melalui menerusi Aktiviti Bahasa Arab

Pelajar LI berpeluang mengendalikan aktiviti bahasa Arab bersama peserta kursus bahasa Arab di universiti tersebut dalam aktiviti yang dijalankan setiap hari Sabtu. Antara aktiviti yang diadakan ialah:

- Permainan bahasa di dalam bilik darjah seperti memperkenalkan peralatan di dalam kelas sambil memainkan muzik.
- Permainan kotak beracun sambil berbisik-bisik meneka jawapan dan aktiviti bertutur dalam bahasa Arab berkaitan sesuatu topik yang dijalankan.
- Merakam video dan berkongsi aktiviti di Instagram.

3. Kemahiran sosial dan komunikasi melalui kerjasama erat dengan pensyarah atau penyelia industry

Para pelajar LI di Brunei juga diberi berpeluang dalam bidang penagajaran. Mereka diberikan latihan untuk mengajar pelajar university kursus tatabahasa dan morfologi Arab. Selain daripada itu, tugas pentadbiran juga dilaksanakan bagi membantu penyelia menyediakan bahan dan alat bantu mengajar.

Pelajar LI juga menyediakan buku perbualan bahasa Arab dan mereka bentuk alat pengajaran yang mengandungi istilah yang digunakan di universiti. Pelajar melaksanakan tugas ini bermula dengan mencari perkataan yang digunakan, memilih perkataan yang betul

dan memadankannya dengan frasa. Seterusnya, pelajar menyediakan dan menyusun teks dan merakamkan secara audio kesemua perbualan tersebut.

4. Kemahiran teknologi maklumat melalui pembinaan sesawang

Bagi para pelajar yang menjalani LI di UNISSA, mereka diberi peluang dalam kemahiran IT dengan pendedahan dan latihan pembangunan website Bahasa Arab jabatan Bahasa Arab bersama-sama para pensyarah dan pakar IT universiti tersebut. Kemahiran yang diperolehi adalah penyediaan bahan, rekabentuk dan sebagainya.

1. Penambahbaikan laman web Fakulti Bahasa Arab Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali, iaitu menambahkan beberapa maklumat di laman web UNISSA.
2. Membuat video Fakulti Bahasa Arab Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali untuk mempromosikan fakulti di peringkat tempatan, serantau dan global.
3. Mencari imej yang sesuai dari Internet untuk dimasukkan ke dalam cerita dan latihan kanak-kanak untuk semua yang membentuk cerita adalah daripada dua puluh cerita.
4. Senarai imej dari Internet dalam semua mata pelajaran Kamus Bergambar dan memilih dua puluh imej sekurang-kurangnya pada semua topik.
5. Kemahiran interpersonal dan jati diri

Sepanjang menjalani LI,

1. Pelajar LI mempunyai disiplin waktu setiap hari iaitu mula menjalankan tugas seawal jam lapan pagi sehingga jam 5 petang.
2. Bekerjasama dengan pekerja dan pensyarah asing serta mengetahui cara berurusan dengan mereka.
3. Semua perjumpaan antara staf dan pelajar dijalankan dalam bahasa Arab sepenuhnya.
4. Pelajar boleh belajar dengan pensyarah dan penyertaan pelajar universiti dalam kelas walaupun mereka dalam LI. Penyertaan kuliah setiap hari Isnin dan Selasa (Linguistik, Aplikasi dan Terjemahan).
5. Pengalaman bekerja di rumah sepanjang musibah Covid-19 (tanpa perlu ke fakulti).
6. Pelajar LI berpeluang menyertai kem serantau Arab pertama sebagai pembantu penyelia di mana banyak penyertaan daripada negara asing.

4. KESIMPULAN

Latihan Industri merupakan satu kursus yang wajib diikuti oleh semua pelajar Program Sarjana Muda Bahasa Arab dan Komunikasi. Kursus ini bagi melengkapkan program sebelum bergraduasi.

Pelbagai input positif diperoleh pelajar sepanjang menjalankan LI di Negara Brunei Darussalam. Pelajar mendapat banyak pengalaman dan pengetahuan sepanjang menjalani LI di kedua-dua buah universiti KUPUSB dan UNISSA. Selain daripada pengetahuan yang diperoleh di tempat LI, pelajar juga dapat memahami budaya dan adat resam masyarakat Brunei. Pergaulan bukan sahaja bersama-sama pelajar dari Brunei malah para pelajar luar Brunei seperti Indonesia dan Thailand juga. Silang budaya diperoleh sepanjang berada di Brunei.

Penulis ingin mencadangkan untuk penambahbaikan LI pada masa akan datang, pihak fakulti juga perlu melihat kepada pelajar LI ke luar negara sebagai duta kecil Malaysia, dan mereka seharusnya dibekalkan juga pengetahuan menyeluruh secara am berkaitan negara Malaysia. Hal ini dapat membantu memudahkan mereka mempromosikan Malaysia kepada pihak luar terutamanya dalam jaringan industri pendidikan. Selain itu, LI ini dilihat dapat mewujudkan kerjasama berterusan dalam bidang berkaitan pada masa akan datang. Pengetahuan yang mendalam berkaitan hal ini akan dapat membantu keyakinan negara luar untuk terus mewujudkan hubungan diplomatik dengan negara Malaysia seterusnya menggalakan pertukaran pelajar dan budaya.

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Building Aspiration for Kolej GENIUS Insan with Strategic Internationalisation Plan

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ABSTRACT

As a young, gifted institution, Kolej GENIUS Insan strives to make its presence felt in the academic landscape in this country and the region. This study explores the internationalisation programs that have been conducted by the college and discovers the participants' experience in their journey in some of the programs they joined. Their personal insights helped enlighten the effectiveness of the organised internationalisation programs in shaping their mind and understanding on cultural values of the place and people they visited. This paper analysed their individual reflections shared in the form of written journal, reports, and videos. In their own words, the students had been incredibly positive with their involvement in the programs as they valued the pristine environment, system and culture which were considered refreshing and tantalising to their conscience and awareness. This new form of learning was positively welcome by all participants as it successfully provided those lessons never imagined from their typical student's life in school. Their experience from the programs they joined would be valuable knowledge and skills that will stay with them in the years to come.

Keywords: Internationalisation; student mobility; gifted students

1. INTRODUCTION

Universities have always made the effort in improving the teaching and learning experience of the higher education institutions (HEI) to prepare and equip the graduates with the relevant and current academic and technical skills that will allow them to excel in their career and life. The quality of our current education system must match the expectations of the public and more importantly the potential employers as investment have been distributed in the millions every year from the government's budget. It is common to expect all graduates to be employment-ready and hitting the ground running while the reality is the young graduates are still trying and to a certain extent struggling, to find their footing in their job and new life. The lofty expectations from the stakeholders on the young employees have encouraged the improvements of academic program and curriculum as it responds to the needs and requirements for today's challenging work and life culture.

The Changing Phases of Education

While the level of education around the world is not consistent, the movement towards improving the quality of education is still ongoing, albeit at an awfully slow pace. There are so many factors that affect the transformation of education and the quality it offers at different corners of the world. While developed nations and regions have boasted their economic power and dominance, education has seen a steady and established system put in place. The same cannot be said about many other parts of the world as the basic effort of putting daily food on the plates of the normal citizen is still a major struggle. Political and leadership will change the future of a nation will play a major role in the struggle to have a quality education and unfortunately, some regions do not have the privileges to dictate their own path in the growth and development of their human capital. While the others keep on growing and reaching for Mars, Industrial Revolution 4.0 remains a very foreign concept for many individuals all around the world.

In today's world of education, teaching and learning goes beyond the four walls of the common classroom. Information and communication technology (ICT) has been responsible in enabling the transformation of teaching and learning at every level of education. From kindergarten to university, technology has a huge effect and impact to how learning happens today. Digitalisation of education is fast changing the way universities are offering their courses. Online platforms, flexible program, short courses, credit transfers, international branch campuses, visiting Professors and many other initiatives have been introduced to enable students to enrol in various programs and courses offered by established universities around the world. These are some of what have been transpired by the internationalisation program adopted by many HEI (Knight, 2020).

The quest taken by the internationalization program by various IHEs has changed the landscape of global trend in education. During the recent decades, such programs had proven to be successful in increasing students' mobility, developing intercultural understanding and global competencies; building greater regionalization of policies and programs (Knight, 2020). The internationalisation programs also helped in innovations in information technology, growing internationalizing the teaching/learning process and curriculum, resulting in the rise in academic networks and research partnerships. There were many success stories that had helped the HEI in planning, organising and implementing the programs for the benefit of their students and academic institutions.

USIM and the Internationalisation Mandate

The academic experience of learning during degree program has always been associated with the completion of the number of the required subjects with long hours of lectures and tutorials. The routine has been the normal academic practice in institutions of higher learning. The rise of the globalisation era presented a new approach in learning outside the classroom. The objectives of such students' mobility program are obvious as it helps them in discovering new experience and learning cultures which are foreign to them before. The planning, preparation and performing the actual activities are the real lessons that would not be found in any textbooks or academic assignments. The real-life experience would enrich them and at the same time teach the students the meaning of life and humanity from different global perspectives (Jampaklay, Penboon, & Lucktong, 2022). The appreciation and value towards this kind of experience is what is intended in many students' global mobility program organised by HEI.

There are various terms and definitions used to refer to internationalisation program undertaken by educational institutions. For this article, the internationalisation program will refer to the practice applied in the context of Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), generally, and Kolej GENIUS Insan (KGI), as a gifted secondary school in the country, specifically. The application of each program at the university and college level could also be different as it takes into consideration the target students and program goals. USIM implements an outreach program known as Global Islamic Students Outreach (GISO). It is quite an extensive and experienced program as it has been implemented for almost ten years, not during the COVID-19 pandemic though. While in KGI, the internationalisation program started only in 2017 with the visit by a group of university students from a neighbouring country of Thailand.

2. INTERNATIONALISATION INITIATIVE

Global Islamic Students Outreach (GISO)

This program began in 2011 with the intention of getting USIM students to be part of community service at the chosen city, preferably in a developing country. For the past nine years, until 2020 (before the pandemic), there were 452 successful trips with the participation of 10301 students covering 31 countries including Brunei, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Timor Leste, China, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan,

Australia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, India, Mauritius, Maldives, United Arab Emirates, Turkey, Lebanon, Morocco, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Austria, Czech Republic, Croatia, Bosnia Herzegovina, Jordan and Poland.

The total cost of all the trips for that duration was RM19,419,610.73 and USIM sponsored the total of RM2,028,503.00 (10.4%), while the balance was managed by students' collective contributions in their study fee (paid between RM450.00 or RM75.00 every semester for the duration of six semesters) and supported by various students' entrepreneurship programs organised over the years.

In the year 2019 alone, there were 117 GISO programs organised by USIM students, involving 2,789 students in 22 countries but in 2020, there were only 19 programs were completed as the COVID-19 enraged the world and the introduction the infamous Movement Control Order (MCO) throughout the nation that started on 18 March 2020 (Global Islamic Students Outreach. 2022).

Internationalisation Program at Kolej GENIUS Insan

Kolej GENIUS Insan was established back in 2015 as a school-in-a-university concept for students who have been identified as gifted and talented Muslim students (Zakaria, Mohd Ali, Amin, & Usop, 2021). The gifted and talented program is part of the new effort in moulding the new generation of human capital as outlined in the new Malaysian Education Blueprint (Ministry of Education, 2015). The specially designed academic program for the gifted students has taken into consideration the needs and requirements of Muslim gifted students in Malaysia (Spawi, Islieh, Kamaruddin, Ali, Amin, & Usop, 2022).

Kolej GENIUS Insan is the first academic program that has taken the effort to integrate the teaching and learning of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with the Islamic sciences and knowledge (Zakaria, Mohd Ali, Amin, & Usop, 2021). The integration of Naqli and Aqli knowledge (INAQ) in its curriculum has made KGI as a hybrid gifted and talented Islamic program that offer gifted Muslim students the opportunity to master the STEM subjects and understand the vast array of topics from the lenses of the Quran and Sunnah-the fundamental knowledge in Islam. This program has a niche area of education and has the potential to be expanded to other Muslim nations that have been looking for a similar approach to the development of gifted Muslim students of their own. The concept of INAQ for the gifted education program is enriched by its tightly knitted integration of STEM and the fundamental knowledge prescribed in Islam (Spawi, et. al., 2022).

As part of its internationalisation program, in 2017, the college appointed an international advisory panel (IAPM) among well-known academics from various international universities in Islamic institutions. The IAPM members were to recommend the college on activities and programs that could help KGI students' participation in various programs at international colleges and universities around the world. The internationalisation strategy was part of the expansion and continuous improvement process for the GENIUS gifted education program.

The KGI internationalisation program aims:

- To allow students to take part in various activities and socialise with international students' community
- To promote the college initiatives and talents for networking and sponsorship from various entities and organisations in the region
- To collaborate with international gifted schools and institutions in sharing knowledge and best practices in research and development of similar programs

The first activity was organised by the college in early 2017. The collaboration was set up with the Prince of Songkhla University (PSU) of Thailand. The program conducted a science camp for the students of PSU. There were 48 students of mixed gender joined the camp. It continued for the following two years and later interrupted by the pandemic in the year 2020. Other programs followed and they included short-term attachment, students' mobility, and international visits to countries such as Indonesia, Japan, South Korea and participation in internationally initiated program such as 'Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study'. Among the internationalisation programs that had been conducted by KGI are listed here:

Table 1: List of KGI Internationalisation Programs

No	Name of Program	Location	Year
1.	KGI-PSU Science Camp	KGI	2017-2019
2.	Global Insan Outreach	Indonesia	2019
3.	Academic Visit to Tokyo Metropolitan Mita High School and Toyama Super Science School	Japan	2019
4.	9th Toyama Science Symposium	Japan	2021
5.	Kennedy-Lugar Youth Exchange & Study (YES)	USA	2021-2022

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper employed a qualitative approach in analysing written journal, reports, and videos of the programs' participants. Program reports and videos were prepared by a few participants on voluntary basis and the videos were made available on KGI 's Facebook and other social media channel, including YouTube. There were two videos uploaded so far and the program reports for Toyama Science Symposium were prepared by six program participants. The participants' text and video records were randomly selected, and the analysis of the data was set to fulfil the following research objectives:

- To understand the program participants' opinions and views on the overall program's goals.
- To identify the success factors of the program from the participant's perspective.

Based on the objectives, the study was set to answer the following research questions:

- What are the participants' opinions and views on the program as a whole?
- How did the participants benefit from the program they attended?

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

From the internationalisation programs that had been carried out over the past few years, pre- and post-pandemic time, participants had been sharing positive views on the overall program. Since there were some programs that had been done in Japan, the participants were grateful for the opportunity to experience the different language and culture, away from the comfort of their home and people. The environment visiting a new country with a different weather condition was highlighted as a welcoming factor that left a heart-warming impact never felt before in their life. The melancholic tone was too strong in their truthful assessments of the wonderful experience, and they valued the lasting impression of their short, amazing journey of a temporary home.

The learning aspect was a prominent subject mentioned in the reports and video. The participants took the effort to explain in detail how learning occurred to them. The people in the new "house" were too good to be real as they mingled with their newly found friends and family. They started to look at their life and culture from a new perspective and the process of adapting oneself to the new system seemed so effortless as it received them with open arms. Those learning aspects were too precious to be left behind. The human aspects-the culture and the values learned and acquired from their adopted country moulded them to appreciate, value

and care.

Personal challenges and problems were also part of the adapting process (Heppele, Erika, Alford, Henderson, Tangen, M. Hurwood., A. Alwi., & ZAH Shaari, 2017). In some cases, such as the participant in the student's attachment program did mention that he felt isolated and alone at first, when he just arrived and was trying to adjust himself to the unfamiliar environment, language, and culture (Purwantoyo, Peniati, Rudyatmi, Avriana, & Sukmawati, 2019). Food and weather were common issues that the students had to deal with as they assimilated themselves to the adopted country. The adaptation process could vary individually, and it was taken as part of the learning steps everyone must take in their progress.

5. CONCLUSION

The increase in internationalisation program for KGI in the future will obviously benefit more students who are qualified. New programs and activities should be planned ahead to provide more opportunities to the gifted students as it suits them well academically. The curious mind will find the strengths and develop themselves with the "survival skills" to prosper in the new environment (Zakaria, Hilmi, & Spawi, 2017). With more successful internationalisation courses, the education program and the academic institution will have the advantage of getting notice by potential sponsors among business corporations or organisations. Financial aids as in scholarships for the students will also enhance the image and brand of the academic program and school. In addition, networking and research collaboration with other gifted institutions are also possible outcome of the program.

The students' shared insights and views underlined many important aspects that could be improved in future programs. Proper orientation and mental preparation could be offered to the selected participants. Training and guidance would also help them to settle in faster and better. Students are expected to face personal problems and the best way to handle it is to prepare them with the skills and knowledge needed in the new place and environment (Zakaria, Hilmi, & Spawi, 2017). It is a learning curve everyone should anticipate.

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Memperkasakan Agenda Pengantarabangsaan Pengajian Tinggi Melalui Platform Program Pelajar: Pengalaman dari *FEM International Mobility Student 2022 (FIMS 2022)*

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ABSTRAK

Agenda pengantarabangsaan di peringkat pengajian tinggi merupakan salah satu peranan dan strategi yang penting untuk memberi nilai tambah dalam aspek penyebaran ilmu dan meluaskan impak kepada komuniti di peringkat nasional dan juga global. Di Malaysia, aspirasi pengantarabangsaan ini secara khusus termaktub dalam Pelan Pembangunan Pendidikan Malaysia 2013-2025. Aspek kajian dan perbincangan mengenai agenda pengantarabangsaan ini lebih banyak tertumpu kepada aspek polisi dan strategi. Namun, kajian tentang keterlibatan pelajar dalam merealisasikan agenda ini didapati masih kurang. Justeru, artikel ini bertujuan mengetengahkan contoh aktiviti program pengantarabangsaan anjuran pelajar dan mengenalpasti impak program ini dalam mencapai aspirasi agenda pengantarabangsaan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kajian kes, artikel ini meneliti program *FEM International Mobility Student 2022 (FIMS 2022)* yang dianjurkan oleh Sekretariat Mahasiswa/Mahasiswi Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM (SekreFEM). Dapatan menunjukkan bahawa melalui penganjuran program ini, para pelajar memperoleh nilai tambah dalam aspek kognitif dan kemahiran insaniah di samping dapat merealisasikan objektif *knowledge transfer* di kalangan para peserta dari tujuh buah negara yang menyertai program tersebut. Secara umumnya, aspirasi pengantarabangsaan ini dapat direalisasikan oleh pelbagai pihak terutamanya oleh para pelajar sendiri di mana impak dan aspek penghayatan oleh pelajar adalah lebih mendalam dan menyeluruh.

Kata Kunci: Pengantarabangsaan; pengajian tinggi; program pelajar; SekreFEM; FIMS 2022

1. PENDAHULUAN

Agenda pengantarabangsaan pada peringkat pengajian tinggi merupakan elemen signifikan dalam memberi nilai tambah dalam aspek penyebaran ilmu dan meluaskan impak kepada komuniti pada peringkat nasional dan juga global. Konsep pengantarabangsaan sebagai dasar strategik dianggap sebagai luas dan pelbagai kerana ia memerlukan aspek integrasi yang bersifat progresif dalam pelbagai aspek seperti politik, ekonomi, prinsip akademik dan pemegang taruh. Pengantarabangsaan ditakrifkan sebagai pembangunan bersepadu di antara aspek internasional, antara budaya (*intercultural*), atau globalisasi ke dalam aspirasi, objektif, atau transmisi sesebuah pendidikan tertiar (Knight, 2003) melalui pengajaran, pembelajaran, penyelidikan dan perkhidmatan (Knight & De Wit, 1997, *The International*

Association of Universities, 2003).

Aspirasi pengantarabangsaan ini dapat mengukuhkan kualiti pendidikan dan penyelidikan bukan sahaja kepada organisasi, tetapi juga kepada pelajar khususnya untuk kemaslahatan masyarakat (De Wit et al., 2015). Globalisasi dalam bidang pendidikan dapat dilihat dengan usaha bersepadu oleh institusi pengajian tinggi (IPT) di seluruh dunia untuk menjana pelan tindakan bagi memula dan mempergiatkan kerjasama antarabangsa. Dimensi pengantarabangsaan ini dilihat penting perlaksanaannya bukan sahaja di peringkat kerajaan, institusi pengajian tinggi dan agensi akreditasi, tetapi juga di peringkat organisasi pelajar (De Wit, 2011). Landskap pendidikan tinggi di dunia telah melalui lonjakan yang sangat besar, terutamanya disebabkan oleh revolusi perindustrian. Pendidikan telah beralih daripada nasional kepada global, daripada berpusatkan guru kepada berpusatkan pelajar, daripada pendidikan berfokus kepada pendidikan fleksibel dan pembelajaran sepanjang hayat (Azman & Abd. Aziz, 2006). Perubahan ini menyebabkan perlunya anjakan dalam pendidikan yang membawa Malaysia ke tahap yang lebih tinggi, iaitu untuk dikenali di peringkat antarabangsa.

Malaysia seperti negara membangun yang lain sedang berusaha untuk membawa sistem pendidikan tingginya ke tahap yang lebih tinggi, di mana pengantarabangsaan merupakan salah satu daripada tujuh teras utama Pelan Strategik Pendidikan Tinggi Negara (NHESP) 2020 (Aziz & Abdullah, 2014). Dasar Pengantarabangsaan dalam pelan ini memberi tumpuan kepada enam strategi teras iaitu mobiliti pelajar, mobiliti kakitangan, program akademik, penyelidikan dan pembangunan, tadbir urus dan autonomi termasuk integrasi sosial dan penglibatan budaya (MOHE, 2011).

Aliran semasa pendidikan global menjadikan keperluan IPT untuk meningkatkan pendedahan global pelajar, menerapkan intipati pengantarabangsaan dan meningkatkan keterlibatan mereka di peringkat antarabangsa. Program antarabangsa seperti aktiviti mobiliti pelajar menjadi salah satu inisiatif yang sama penting dalam memastikan keberkesanan pengantarabangsaan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian mengenai impak program mobiliti anjuran pelajar masih didapati kurang. Justeru, artikel ini meneliti program *FEM International Mobility Student 2022 (FIMS22)* yang dianjurkan oleh Sekretariat Pelajar, Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM bagi melihat impak program ini dalam mencapai aspirasi agenda pengantarabangsaan.

Artikel ini selanjutnya disusun seperti berikut. Bahagian seterusnya menyediakan kajian literatur dalam konteks agenda pengantarabangsaan. Bahagian 3 memperincikan kajian kes dengan menyediakan latar belakang program dan perbincangan mengenai impak dan cabaran manakala bahagian akhir menyimpulkan kertas kerja ini.

2. KAJIAN LITERATUR

Latar Belakang Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi

Peningkatan globalisasi telah membawa kepada perubahan ketara dalam pendidikan tinggi dan salah satu cara utama peralihan ini berlaku adalah melalui pengantarabangsaan. Pengantarabangsaan telah menjadi konsep dan agenda strategik, yang didorong oleh "rasional dan pihak berkepentingan politik, ekonomi, sosiobudaya, dan akademik" (De Wit & Altbach, 2021). Program pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi mula diperkenalkan pada awal 2000-an (De Wit, 2020). Sejak daripada itu, program-program ini telah berkembang dari semasa ke semasa dengan menerima pakai pelbagai fokus dan objektif (De Wit, 2020). Asas utama program pengantarabangsaan dalam pendidikan tinggi ini ialah kebolehpayaan program ini diteruskan walaupun berlaku sebarang bencana atau kejadian bencana yang mungkin timbul (Amaratunga, Liyanage & Haigh, 2018).

Pengantarabangsaan pendidikan tinggi terdiri daripada dua bahagian yang berbeza seperti pengantarabangsaan di rumah (iaitu berkaitan dengan aspek antara budaya dan antarabangsa dalam proses pengajaran atau pembelajaran, kurikulum dan penyelidikan, yang terdiri daripada aktiviti yang boleh membantu pelajar membina kemahiran antara budaya dan pemahaman antarabangsa tanpa meninggalkan kampus) dan pengantarabangsaan pendidikan secara rentas sempadan (iaitu berkaitan dengan aktiviti untuk tujuan pendidikan di luar negara) (Knight, 2003; Naidoo, 2006; Ashcroft et al., 2007; Daquila, 2013). Terdapat pelbagai jenis pendidikan rentas sempadan seperti mobiliti pelajar, mobiliti program, dan mobiliti institusi (Mustapha et al., 2006).

Pengantarabangsaan Pendidikan Tinggi: Strategi, Isu dan Cabaran

Agenda pengantarabangsaan di peringkat pengajian tinggi mampu dilaksanakan dengan jayanya melalui pelbagai strategi. Dengan memfokuskan kepada perbandingan institusi United Kingdom dalam memahami strategi pengantarabangsaan, Warwick dan Moogan (2013) mencadangkan prasyarat untuk strategi pengantarabangsaan universiti yang berjaya. Cadangan tersebut ialah universiti harus mempunyai:

- i. pendekatan akademik yang tersusun akademik serta pengurusan yang strategik untuk mengekalkan fleksibiliti dalam semua keadaan yang mengambil kira persekitaran luaran;

- ii. hubungan rapat antara keupayaan sumber organisasi dan persekitaran luarannya, melalui pembangunan organisasi yang berterusan;
- iii. mempunyai halatuju komprehensif yang jelas tentang bagaimana strategi pengantarabangsaan akan digunakan dan disokong dalam organisasi;
- iv. saluran komunikasi dua hala yang mencukupi sesama kakitangan;
- v. aspek pembangunan kakitangan untuk menyokong peluang pengantarabangsaan; dan
- vi. komitmen dan sokongan berterusan untuk pengantarabangsaan dan nilai asasnya daripada pihak atasan organisasi serta peranan ahli akademik dalam organisasi, prosedur semakan dalam sistem pemantauan dan semakan semula strategi.

Selain itu, Cantu (2013) menyatakan bahawa terdapat tiga strategi pengantarabangsaan iaitu:

- i. mempromosikan program pengajian di luar negara, seperti program outbound dan program intership berasaskan impak terhadap penglibatan global;
- ii. pelajar antarabangsa, seperti merekrut pelajar yang berkualiti melalui pengurangan yuran atau penawaran biasiswa; dan
- iii. mengantarabangsakan fakulti dengan mengantarabangsakan kurikulum agar sesuai dengan permintaan global.

Antara lain, agenda pengantarabangsaan ini boleh dilaksanakan dengan penganjuran program sesi musim panas untuk pelajar domestik dan antarabangsa (Maddox, 2016). Program ini mampu membina perkongsian bersifat global dan mengeratkan hubungan fakulti yang telah lama terjalin. Pendekatan perkongsian yang dilakukan mesti bersifat mutualisme bagi membolehkan pengajaran, pembelajaran, penyelidikan dan kesediaan di antara perbezaan budaya dan persekitaran.

Aspek penggubalan dasar juga dilihat penting dalam strategi pengantarabangsaan. Menurut Gao (2015), kecemerlangan akademik dapat memacu agenda pengantarabangsa universiti. Penggubal dasar mesti mewujudkan persekitaran yang kondusif dalam aspek penyelidikan dan pengajaran dengan merekrut calon yang berkebolehan dalam penyelidikan dari luar negara, mengintegarsikan elemen pengantarabangsaan ke dalam kurikulum, dan merekrut pelajar antarabangsa dengan mengurangkan yuran pengajian atau menawarkan biasiswa universiti.

Duong & Chua (2016) pula melihat strategi pengantarabangsaan secara lebih teknikal iaitu keperluan institusi untuk mengajar menggunakan medium bahasa Inggeris. Penggunaan

bahasa Inggeris sebagai bahasa pengantar dapat menyokong pertumbuhan profesional pengajar. Selain itu, bahasa Inggeris dilihat akan menjadi elemen penting dalam kurikulum antarabangsa bagi tujuan pengiktirafan atau akreditasi antarabangsa serta akan menambah baik kualiti pengajaran dan pembelajaran untuk pensyarah dan pelajar.

Perlaksanaan agenda pengantarabangsaan ini tidak sunyi dari sebarang isu. Jiang & Carpenter (2013) menjelaskan bahawa terdapat permasalahan seperti sumber peruntukan yang merujuk kepada kewangan dan sumber manusia dalam pelaksanaan strategi; komunikasi yang merupakan isu penting di kebanyakan peringkat universiti; dan proses operasi sebagai salah satu isu yang paling kritikal. Sebagai contoh, cabaran penting bagi ahli akademik ialah kerja yang berlebihan kerana mereka menghuraikan bahawa pengantarabangsaan bercanggah dengan pengajaran mereka di universiti tempatan. Selain itu, aspek kerjasama dan penyelarasan adalah prinsip utama untuk mencapai tahap pematuhan yang tinggi dalam sesebuah organisasi dalam mencapai matlamat pengantarabangsaan. Budaya organisasi dan penentangan terhadap perubahan juga menjadikan aktiviti dan tugas mempromosikan pengantarabangsaan berat. Tambahan lagi, sokongan pelajar kepada isu bantuan pelajar, memberi tumpuan kepada bahasa Inggeris, perjanjian pelajar serta pengangkutan dan penginapan juga menjadi faktor kepada keberkesanan aktiviti pengaktabangsaan.

Isu dan cabaran tersebut membuka ruang kepada institusi pengajian tinggi untuk mendepaninya. Antaranya, Lilley et al. (2017) berpendapat bahawa universiti mesti melengkapkan pelajar dengan kemahiran kognitif yang beretika dan kritikal untuk menjadi warga yang bersifat global dan ideal.

3. METODOLOGI KAJIAN

Dalam penyelidikan, reka bentuk kajian boleh melibatkan kepada dua kaedah utama, iaitu eksperimental dan bukan eksperimental. Secara amnya, kajian eksperimental dan bukan eksperimental boleh dikaitkan dengan penyelidikan kualitatif atau kuantitatif, di mana tujuan untuk menjalankan kajian adalah berbeza mengikut kaedah yang ditentukan (Hua, 2016).

Kajian bukan eksperimental secara khususnya boleh dirujuk sebagai kajian hubungan antara variabel bebas dan variabel bersandar tanpa melakukan sebarang perubahan terhadap variabel bebas, di mana variabel bebas ini wujud secara semulajadi (Chua, 2011). Kajian ini juga melibatkan kepada pengagihan secara rawak ke dalam kumpulan-kumpulan, seperti yang

terdapat dalam kajian eksperimental. Kajian bukan eksperimental boleh dibahagikan kepada kajian tinjauan, kajian lapangan, kajian kes, kajian tindakan, dan kajian sejarah (Chua, 2011).

Kajian ini khususnya menggunakan kaedah kajian kes daripada program anjuran pelajar di USIM iaitu *FEM International Mobility Student (FIMS)* yang dianjurkan oleh Sekretariat Mahasiswa/Mahasiswi Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM (SekreFEM), untuk melihat aspek pengantariksaan yang diketengahkan dalam aktiviti penganjuran pelajar serta menganalisis impak dan cabaran yang dihadapi.

4. KAJIAN KES: FEM INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY STUDENT 2022 (FIMS 2022)

Latar Belakang Program

Program *FEM International Mobility Student (FIMS)* merupakan satu aktiviti kolaborasi antara Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM) dan universiti Islam luar negara serta universiti awam di Malaysia yang lain. Program ini merupakan anjuran Sekretariat Mahasiswa/Mahasiswi Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM (SekreFEM) dan sudah dijalankan sebanyak dua kali iaitu pada tahun 2021 dan 2022.

FIMS merupakan salah satu inisiatif daripada badan pelajar untuk membuka ruang kepada pelajar Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat untuk menyertai atau menambah pengalaman dalam aktiviti antarabangsa. Berikutan daripada pandemik Covid-19 yang menghadkan aktiviti antarabangsa daripada dijalankan, SekreFEM telah merangka program ini atas talian yang melibatkan beberapa universiti awam di Malaysia serta universiti luar negara iaitu Indonesia, Brunei, Turki, Afrika, Nigeria dan Somalia.

Secara umumnya, objektif program ini adalah untuk mencungkil bakat pelajar dan memajukan diri dalam bidang pelaburan, dan meningkatkan pengetahuan yang berguna berkaitan dengan kursus pengajian pelajar secara khususnya. Program ini juga adalah saranan daripada Dekan Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat (FEM), USIM untuk berkolaborasi dengan universiti lain dalam melaksanakan pelbagai program bersama. Selain itu, ia dapat meningkatkan kemahiran pelajar untuk mengumpul pengalaman dalam menguruskan program dengan negara luar. Ia juga dapat membentuk kemahiran insaniah dalam kalangan pelajar serta melatih mereka dalam mengendalikan program bertaraf antarabangsa. FIMS juga boleh dijadikan rujukan dan contoh kepada pelajar lain dalam menganjurkan aktiviti seperti ini pada masa hadapan serta membuka minda pelajar supaya tidak hanya tertumpu kepada aktiviti akademik sahaja malah mereka juga boleh membuat pilihan untuk terlibat dalam aktiviti

di luar waktu pembelajaran.

FIMS pada tahun 2022 bertemakan “Pembangunan Pasaran Modal yang Mampan dalam Perspektif Islam dan Konvensional”, di mana tema ini akan diaplikasikan dalam setiap aktiviti di dalam program yang akan mengupas isu pelaburan dalam Islam. Program ini dijalankan secara dalam talian merangkumi siri kuliah umum, muzakarah muamalat Islam, pertandingan mencipta produk atau aplikasi kewangan Islam menggunakan kontrak patuh syariah, lawatan Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia secara maya dan lawatan bandar Malaysia secara maya. Seterusnya, pihak USIM khususnya Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat juga berharap agar dapat sekaligus meneruskan lagi hubungan di antara universiti dalam mengadakan pelbagai aktiviti dan program bersama pada masa hadapan.

Aktiviti Program

FEM International Mobility Student 2022 (FIMS 2022) dijalankan selama 3 hari iaitu 8-10 Ogos 2022 menggunakan aplikasi Zoom. Program ini telah disertai oleh pelajar seramai 130 orang iaitu 117 pelajar tempatan dan 13 pelajar luar negara daripada 14 buah institusi Pendidikan dari tujuh buah negara. Jadual 1 menunjukkan pecahan peserta mengikut institusi. Para pelajar ini terdiri daripada pelbagai latar belakang berjaya mendaftar dan menyertai FIMS22.

Jadual 1: Peserta *FEM International Mobility Student 2022 (FIMS 2022)* mengikut institusi

Negara	Nama Institusi	Bilangan peserta
Malaysia	Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)	106
	Universiti Teknologi Mara (UITM)	4
	Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM)	4
	<i>International Centre of Education in Islamic Finance (INCEIF)</i>	1
	Universiti Melaka (UniMel)	1
	Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP)	1
Indonesia	Universiti Islam Malang	4
	Universitas Gajah Mada	1
	Universiti Darussalam Gontor (UNIDA GONTOR)	2
Brunei	Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali	2
Turki	Karabuk University	1
Africa	University of The Gambia	1
Nigeria	Kano State Polytechnic	1

Negara	Nama Institusi	Bilangan peserta
Somalia	Benadir University	1

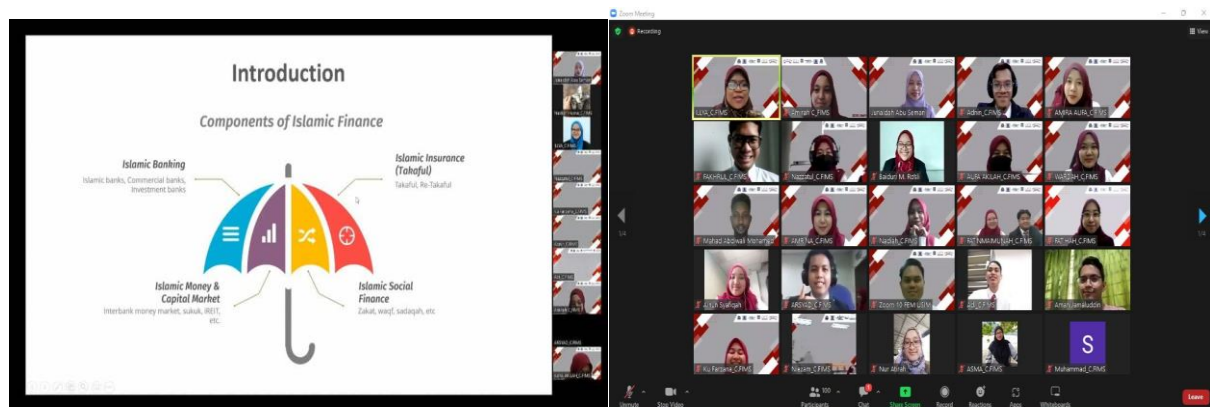
Program ini terdiri daripada tiga aktiviti utama iaitu empat siri kuliah atas talian (webinar), muzakarah muamalat Islam dan pertandingan inovasi (mencipta produk atau aplikasi kewangan Islam). Maklumat lanjut aktiviti-aktiviti tersebut adalah seperti berikut.

Siri Kuliah Atas Talian (Webinar)

Empat siri webinar telah dijalankan selama 2 hari iaitu pada 8 dan 9 Ogos 2022 menggunakan aplikasi Zoom. Siri kuliah ini dibentangkan oleh panel yang berpengalaman dalam bidang pasaran modal. Berikut merupakan slot bagi webinar tersebut.

i. Slot 1: “An Overview and Regulations of Islamic Capital Market”

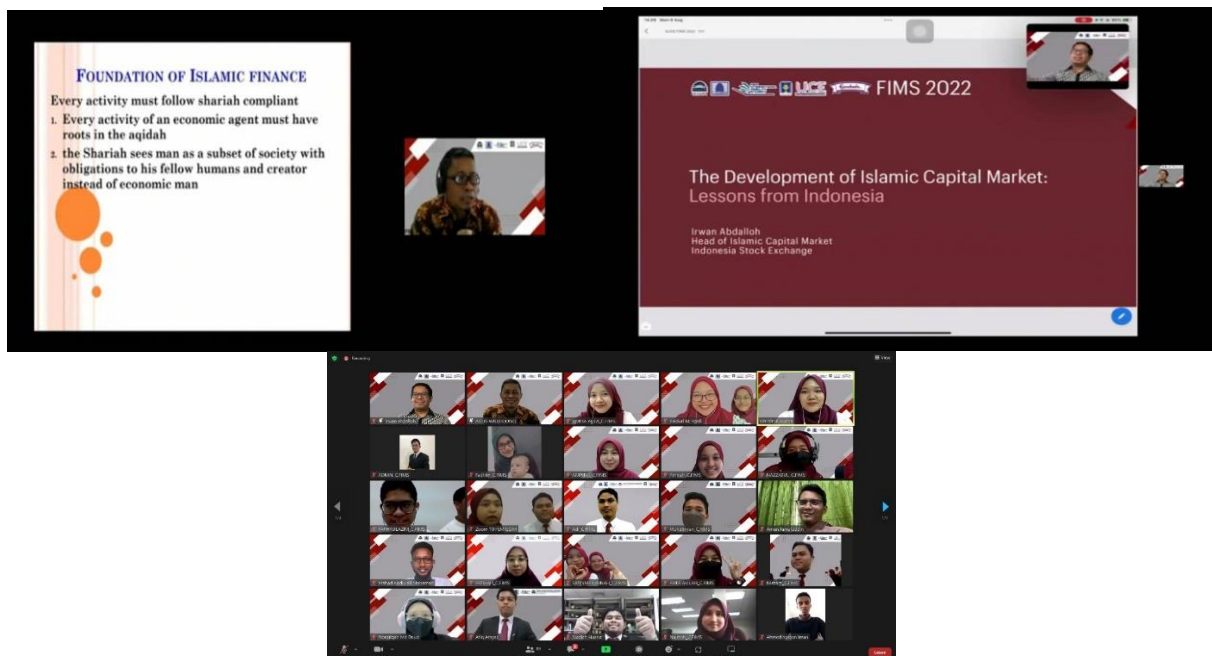
Slot pertama dijalankan setelah selesai majlis perasmian FIMS 2022 dan dibentangkan oleh Dr Junaidah Abu Seman yang merupakan Pensyarah Kanan di Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM. Slot ini bertumpu kepada penjelasan secara ringkas berkenaan apa itu pasaran modal oleh kerana sasaran peserta bukan sahaja daripada pelajar yang mempunyai latar belakang ekonomi dan perniagaan sahaja. Figur 1 menunjukkan aktiviti Slot 1 yang berlangsung.



Figur 1: Slot 1: “An Overview and Regulations of Islamic Capital Market”

ii. Slot 2: “Sustainable Development of Islamic Capital Market Globally”

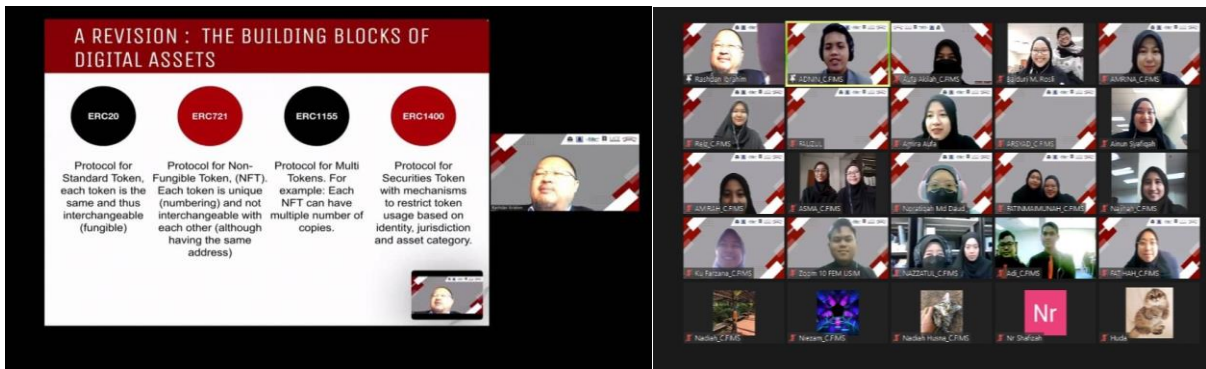
Slot kedua siri webinar ini pula menjelaskan berkenaan pembangunan mampan pasaran modal Islam di seluruh dunia. Panel yang dijemput ialah Dr Agus Widarjono iaitu Ketua Bahagian di Fakulti Perniagaan dan Ekonomi di Universitas Islam Indonesia (UII) dan Encik Irwan Abdalloh yang merupakan Ketua Jabatan Pasaran Modal Islam di *Indonesia Stock Exchange*. Melalui slot ini, peserta dapat mempelajari dengan lebih mendalam tentang perbezaan pasaran modal Islam lebih-lebih lagi di antara pasaran modal Malaysia dan Indonesia. Figur 2 menunjukkan aktiviti Slot 2 yang berlangsung.



Figur 2: Slot 2: “Sustainable Development of Islamic Capital Market Globally”

iii. Slot 3: “Digital Asset, Future of Investment Landscape”

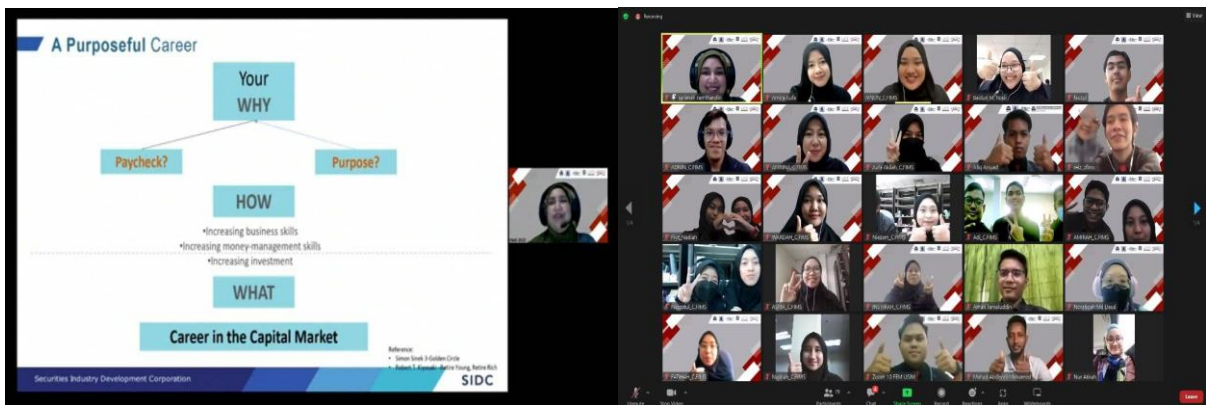
Panel yang dijemput untuk slot ketiga ini merupakan Encik Rashdan Ibrahim, Pengarah Eksekutif bagi iP2P Global Ltd, iaitu syarikat pembiayaan menggunakan konsep “peer-2-peer”. Slot ini membuka minda peserta dalam memahami kedudukan aset digital dalam industri pelaburan di masa hadapan. Figur 3 menunjukkan aktiviti Slot 3 yang berlangsung.



Figur 3: Slot 3: “Digital Asset, Future of Investment Landscape”

iv. Slot 4: “Islamic Capital Market Career Path”

Slot terakhir bagi siri webinar ini dibentangkan oleh Cik Sarimah Ramthandin, Pengarah Inovasi dan Penglibatan Industri bagi *Securities Industry Development Corporation* (SIDC), Malaysia. Slot ini memberi peluang kepada peserta untuk mengenali SIDC dengan lebih mendalam serta dapat mendalami prospek pekerjaan yang ditawarkan dalam bidang pasaran modal lebih-lebih lagi kepada graduan yang mempunyai latar belakang akademik dalam bidang ekonomi. Figur 4 menunjukkan aktiviti Slot 4 yang telah berlangsung.



Figur 4: Slot 4: “Islamic Capital Market Career Path”

Muzakarah Muamalat Islam

Selain daripada siri webinar yang mengkhusus kepada peserta yang berdaftar di bawah program FIMS, SekreFEM juga menjalinkan kerjasama dengan Sekretariat Pusat Islam (SPI), USIM dalam menjalankan program Muzakarah Muamalat Islam yang terbuka kepada orang awam. Muzakarah ini dijalankan melalui platform *Facebook Live* ini membawakan topik yang

menarik dan menjadi isu terkini dalam bidang pelaburan kewangan.

Muzakarah Muamalat Islam FIMS22 membawa tajuk “*Tawarruq; Practices and Appraisal*”, untuk mengupas isu-isu yang berkaitan dengan kontrak tawarruq yang menjadi kebingungan umum pada masa kini. Muzakarah ini dibincangkan oleh Dr Abdullaah Jalil yang merupakan Pensyarah Kanan, Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM. Program yang menjadi tatapan umum ini boleh memperkenalkan program anjuran pelajar kepada orang luar. Figur 5 menunjukkan program muzakarah yang telah berlangsung.



Figur 5: Muzakarah Muamalat Islam

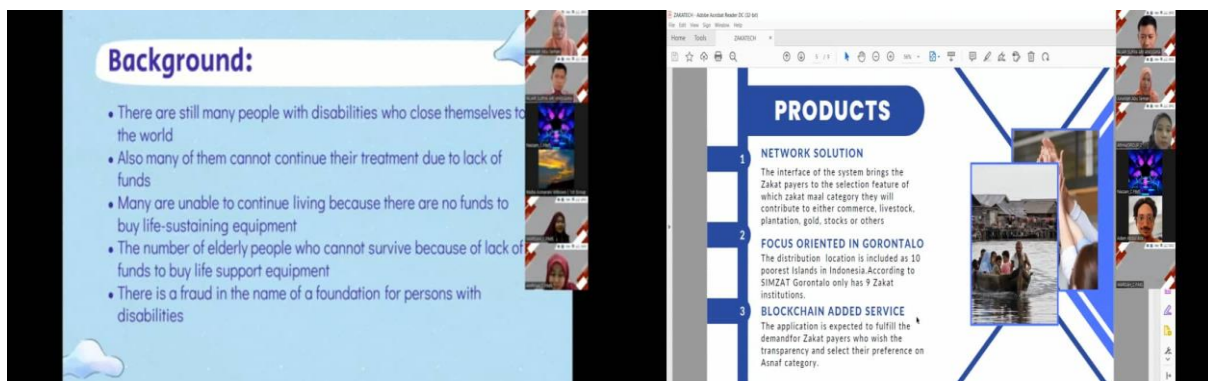
Pertandingan Mencipta Produk atau Aplikasi Kewangan Islam

Produk atau aplikasi terkini banyak diciptakan seiring dengan perkembangan teknologi semasa. Oleh sebab itu, pertandingan mencipta produk aplikasi kewangan Islam dijalankan untuk mencungkil idea dan bakat dari para pelajar dan seterusnya dapat membangunkan industri ekonomi dengan lebih mampan. Seiring dengan tema FIMS22, pertandingan pada kali ini mensasarkan peserta untuk membentangkan idea mereka sama ada berkaitan produk kewangan Islam, pelaburan, pembiayaan umum atau apa sahaja teknologi kewangan yang terkini.

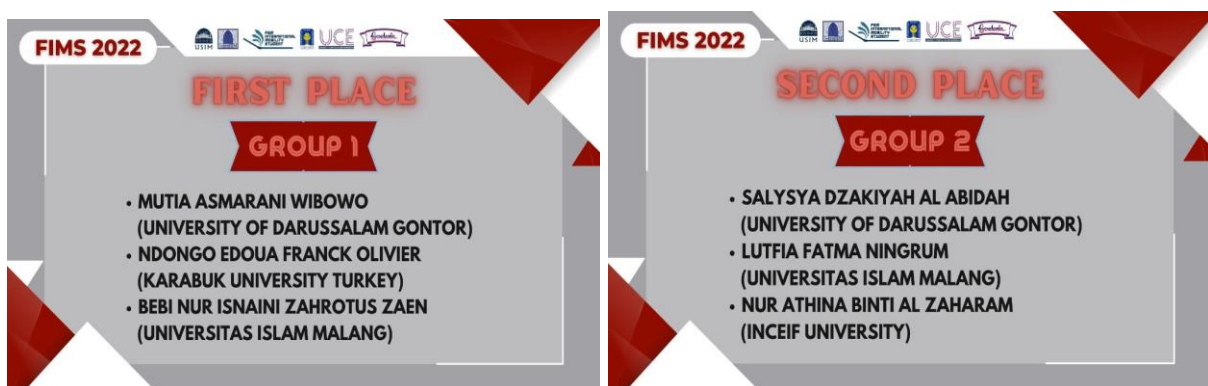
Penganjur program telah mendirikan kumpulan berdasarkan peserta yang berdaftar dan setiap kumpulan perlu menghantar kertas kerja yang mengandungi idea-idea berkenaan inovasi produk dan aplikasi. Kumpulan yang diwujudkan terdiri daripada pelajar berlainan universiti untuk memupuk kemahiran komunikasi yang tinggi antara peserta serta mereka dapat bertukar pendapat dan pengalaman sepanjang usaha menyelesaikan pertandingan ini. Sesi pembentangan oleh kumpulan telah dijalankan pada 10 Ogos 2022 di mana terdapat 2

kumpulan yang berjaya ke pusingan akhir. Kumpulan tersebut membentangkan hasil idea mereka iaitu aplikasi WeCare, aplikasi untuk kemudahan orang kurang upaya serta aplikasi Zakatech, iaitu produk inovasi berkenaan zakat.

Pemenang pertandingan ini telah ditentukan oleh hakim pertandingan yang dijemput dari kalangan ahli akademik. Hakim yang dijemput ialah Dr Junaidah binti Abu Seman yang merupakan Pensyarah Kanan Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat, USIM, Encik Fajar Surya Ari Anggara yang merupakan Pensyarah Fakulti Ekonomi dan Pengurusan, UNIDA Gontor dan Encik Adam bin Abdul Aziz iaitu Ketua Jabatan Pasaran Modal dan Korporat, Bank Islam Malaysia Berhad. Namun tujuan utama pertandingan ini bukan semata-mata untuk melahirkan sifat kompetitif dengan menawarkan wang ringgit sebagai ganjaran tetapi lebih kepada perkongsian pendapat dan pengalaman sesama peserta. Figur 6 menunjukkan sesi pembentangan dua buah kumpulan yang mara ke peringkat akhir manakala Figur 7 menunjukkan pemenang-pemenang bagi pertandingan ini.



Figur 6: Sesi pembentangan dua buah kumpulan yang mara ke peringkat akhir pertandingan mencipta produk atau aplikasi kewangan Islam, FIMS 2022





Figur 7: Pemenang- pemenang pertandingan mencipta produk atau aplikasi kewangan Islam, FIMS 2022

Lawatan USIM secara Maya

Program FIMS 2022 ini dimulakan dengan majlis perasmian oleh Dekan FEM, USIM iaitu Prof. Madya Dr. Zurina binti Kefeli@Zulkefli. Seterusnya program diteruskan dengan lawatan maya ke USIM dengan mempamerkan video korporat USIM. Slot ini bertujuan untuk memperkenalkan USIM yang merupakan penganjur program ini secara keseluruhannya. Lawatan maya ke FEM juga diadakan dengan mempamerkan video bangunan FEM. Lawatan ini bertindak sebagai pengenalan USIM kepada peserta dalam dan luar negara. Majlis perasmian ini bertumpu untuk menarik minat pihak luar dalam membina rangkaian bersama pelajar USIM terutama sekali Sekretariat Fakulti Ekonomi dan Muamalat. Figur 8 menunjukkan aktiviti program yang berlangsung.



Figur 8: Majlis Perasmian FIMS 2022 dan lawatan USIM secara maya

Impak dan Cabaran

Program kolaborasi antarabangsa antara pelajar ini sewajarnya dititik beratkan di peringkat IPT untuk memupuk para pelajar dalam membina rangkaian dengan dunia luar sekaligus dapat menjalankan aktiviti yang bertaraf antarabangsa. Melalui program FIMS 2022, ramai peserta dapat didedahkan dengan perkongsian ilmu melalui siri webinar dan pertandingan yang mampu membuat mereka lebih cakna dengan isu perbandingan pasaran modal Islam dan konvensional. Selain itu, program ini juga dapat mengisi kekosongan di atas keterhadapan pelajar yang tidak boleh bergerak ke luar negara untuk mencari pengalaman.

Namun begitu, antara cabaran yang dihadapi apabila program ini berjalan secara atas talian adalah kekurangan jumlah peserta yang menyertai sesi atas talian berbanding jumlah pendaftaran. Antara sebab yang menjadi punca terjadi adalah peserta yang mendaftar tidak komited terhadap program yang tidak mengenakan sebarang yuran. FIMS22 adalah program yang dianjurkan secara percuma menyebabkan segelintir peserta berkemungkinan mengambil ringan soal program ini.

Selain itu, perbezaan masa antara penganjur dan beberapa peserta luar negara juga menjadi kebimbangan semasa program. Peserta FIMS 2022 terdiri daripada tujuh buah negara. Kepelbagaian latar belakang universiti dan lokasi setiap peserta menyukarkan penyertaan penuh daripada peserta atas faktor berlainan zon waktu. Akan tetapi masih ramai yang menyertai setiap sesi yang dijalankan walaupun penyertaan tidak penuh. Cabaran ini boleh ditangani dengan penjadualan waktu webinar atau sesi pertandingan mengikut penyelesaian waktu yang paling sesuai oleh setiap peserta lebih-lebih lagi peserta luar negara.

4. KESIMPULAN

Agenda pengantarabangsaan ini perlu disokong dan dilaksanakan oleh pelbagai pihak yang berkaitan di pengajian tinggi khususnya para pelajar. Penganjuran program yang bersifat antarabangsa mampu memperkasakan pelajar dalam pelbagai aspek. Program kolaborasi pelajar iaitu *FEM International Mobility Student* (FIMS) hanya dapat dijalankan secara atas talian buat masa kini. Terdapat banyak kelebihan yang boleh diserap kepada para pelajar melalui program seperti ini sama ada atas talian atau lawatan ke salah satu universiti yang mahu menjalinkan kerjasama. Program seperti ini diharapkan dapat diteruskan dengan perincian isu yang lebih menarik serta mendapat sokongan daripada pelbagai pihak. Program FIMS boleh diperkembangkan lagi pada masa akan datang dengan kerjasama pihak yang

berkenaan dan boleh ditukar kepada program pertukaran pelajar secara bersemuka. Program yang dianjurkan oleh pelajar seperti ini sudah semestinya akan memberi faedah yang berpanjangan kepada pelajar yang lain. Keberkesanan program pengantarabangsaan yang dilaksanakan sendiri oleh para pelajar ini dilihat dapat memberi ilmu, pendedahan, pengalaman, kemahiran, nilai tambah dan penghayatan yang lebih mendalam kepada para pelajar.

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Malaysia's Higher Education Promotion and Marketing Activities: Observations from Malaysia's Diplomatic Missions Abroad

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to present opinions and feedback by Malaysia's Diplomatic Missions (Missions) abroad based on past experiences in respective host countries on Malaysia's promotion and marketing efforts in higher education. Malaysia's Missions play some role in the promotion and marketing in this sector, either facilitating Education Malaysia (EM) and the universities or carrying out the activities themselves. Missions include Embassies, High Commissions, Consulate Generals and Consulates. Missions were asked on feedback on three matters namely their evaluation of current promotional activities in attracting foreign students, the challenges faced as well as suggested solutions for improvement for their respective host countries. The findings presented would identify problem areas and suggestions for further research for improvement. In addition, the paper will suggest whether the Malaysian Missions could be further utilised to actively participate in the marketing efforts.

Keywords: Diplomatic; missions; marketing; promotion; education

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Education Malaysia (EM), Malaysia is already home to approximately 170,000 international students from 162 countries. The Government hopes that this number reaches 250,000 international students by 2025. The study seeks to compile and evaluate feedback received from Malaysia's Diplomatic Missions (Missions) on whether the country's marketing and promotional activities abroad have done enough to attract foreign students or are shortfalls attributed to other factors such as language, quality of education, lack of cooperation in education field between Government/Institutions such as MoU to encourage exchanges of students etc.

Diplomatic Missions consists of Embassies, Higher Commissions, General Consulates and Consulates. Currently, Malaysia has 106 number of active Missions abroad in 79 countries. This represents 41% of countries in the world. Missions are responsible in the conduct of strengthening bilateral relations with the host country on wide ranging fields including higher education, and relevant to this study, the promotion of Malaysia's higher education sector.

There is a dedicated government agency overseeing promotional activities namely EM, however EM offices abroad still operate under the ambit of Missions and their presence is not as extensive with presence in only 12 countries. In these countries, Missions complement and support EM in carrying out promotion activities. However, in countries without EM, the Missions either carry-out those activities themselves or it will be arranged by Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) by sending a delegation to participate or organise exhibitions. It is in this respect inputs and feedback of Missions is of much value for direction and further study.

All 106 Missions were requested to convey their inputs on the following three (3) questions, as follows:

1. How would you evaluate the current marketing and promotion activities in the countries under your purview?
2. What are the main challenges and barriers to attracting students from those countries?
3. What are the improvements on the marketing and promotion activities that can be implemented?

Out of 106 number of missions, 23 Missions conveyed their feedback.

2. FINDINGS

Table 1: Summary of Feedback from Missions

Country	Evaluation of Current Activities	Challenges / Opportunities	Suggestions for Improvements
Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting New Colombo Plan as source of foreign students • Several initiatives launched in 2022 on student mobility prog 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readiness to receive students from western countries • Need to understand the needs of Australian students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to promote Malaysia's niche expertise • Availability of up-to-date information • Introduce special packages/programs tailored for Australian students
Azerbaijan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picking up recently • Has the potential as a preferred destination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No direct flights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict • Increase visibility • MoU on Higher Cooperation • Work with scholarship funds • Focus on target groups

Country	Evaluation of Current Activities	Challenges / Opportunities	Suggestions for Improvements
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital marketing, social media, virtual campus tour • Positive testimonials • Appoint 'Ambassadors' of Malaysia Higher Education
Argentina	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very few since 1981 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority study locally • Tuition fees in public universities borne by Govt • If abroad, prefer Spanish speaking countries Spain and USA • Low potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twinning programmes between universities of both countries
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None carried out • EM London not forthcoming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has well known institutions in medicine, biotech, engineering and management • Institutions are state financed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MoU on Higher Education • Have promotion activities to start momentum
Bosnia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Done by IPTS • Should be intensified as there is potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer to study in Europe due to proximity and work opportunities in the EU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion to High School students • MoU on Higher Education • Intensify promotion activities
Brunei	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active and well received • Not much participation from Malaysian universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer 'premium' destinations like UK, US, Australia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion to high schools • Establishing 'one-stop centre' • To allow foreigners with student visa to work for 1 year after graduation • Allow industry practical training
Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada in the top world university rankings • Distance (expensive transportation cost) • Malaysian university ranking • Recognition of qualifications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce Co-operative Education (CO-OP) • University branding via digital devices • Social media marketing strategy
China	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active in education fairs and promotion events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of accurate information • Language barrier • Large coverage area • Irresponsible marketing by third party risk damaging good reputation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More readily available information digitally • Pooling of universities to jointly promote • Each university promote their own strengths and uniqueness to capture different segments

Country	Evaluation of Current Activities	Challenges / Opportunities	Suggestions for Improvements
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Local universities are available without cost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promote Malay language courses in renowned local universities
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out •Good potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •No follow up for exchange of MoU 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Malaysian universities to partake in exhibition
Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Should be intensified. Malaysia can offer a low-cost alternative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Prefers UK, Canada, Australia. Regarded as premium 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Participate in HK Education and Career Expo
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out •General promotion by Missions when engaging with locals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None apart from inactive promotional activity •Hungary, Slovenia and North Macedonia has potential 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Inform of scholarships in Malaysia for foreign students •Budget allocation for Mission
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out •Some collaboration between institutes on expert and student exchange program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •High cost compared to India •Lack of financial facilities •Lack of employment opportunities after graduation compared to the West 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Provide loans/sponsorship •Emphasise Malaysia's 11th ranking by UNESCO as preferred destination •Emphasise on value for money
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Have decreased since sanctions •Should be intensified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Banking restrictions on Iranian students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None presented
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Extensive with High School Tour, Pocket Talk, Alumni Networking Dinner •7th in number of student applications for 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •To have more activities in collaboration with EM
Lebanon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None •Due to current domestic situation, many youths wish to study abroad 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Promotion activities be made collectively with participation of few Malaysian universities
Morocco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Done by Mission continuously •Potential and interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •English qualification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Establish English language institute in Morocco •Short-term English courses before beginning studies in Malaysia
Oman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Regular participation in Education Exhibition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None •Has high regards for Malaysia 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Marketing strategy should also target expatriates that make 40% of population
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •English language proficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •There is keen interest •Conclusion of MoU can encourage student exchange and R&D •Polish companies express interest
Switzerland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None carried out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Switzerland itself is a student destination •High quality education in Switzerland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None suggested

Country	Evaluation of Current Activities	Challenges / Opportunities	Suggestions for Improvements
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None in the past few years •94 collaborations between institutions that encouraged exchanges of visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Language barrier •Those who wish to study in English go to Singapore 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Accreditation by Thai Education authorities •Promote scholarships •Exhibition on areas need by Thailand
Turkey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •EM needs to provide a clear strategy •Promote Malaysia's world ranking •Industry collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Depreciation of Lira •Lack of collaboration between industry players in employing graduates from Malaysian universities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More budget for promotion •Provide scholarships in strategic fields
Turkmenistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •None during pandemic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Local bureaucracy •International money transfers •English language •Food 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Information available in many languages like Russian •Opportunities from Russia-Ukraine conflict •Enhance collaboration between institutions

Evaluation of current promotion activities

For most countries, promotional or marketing activities have been non-existent. For countries such as Argentina, Canada, Czech Republic, and Switzerland these countries present challenges that seem too difficult to be overcome by any promotional activities and therefore have little potential. For example, Canada and Switzerland are education hubs themselves with high quality education and abundance of options and places for students. For Argentina and Czech Republic, the availability of local universities with costs fully borne by their Government generally makes it difficult to attract students to Malaysia. There are exceptions by giving full scholarships, or offering niche courses, but potential to attract large numbers seems low. The lack of promotion in these countries seems justified.

However, in comparison with Bosnia Herzegovina, Belgium, Hungary, India, Lebanon and Poland, there seems to be potential as there were keen interest by the students to pursue studies in Malaysia. While it is beneficial for Malaysia to explore and consider actively promoting in these countries, this however needs more than just Missions assessment of their potential and would require further verification considering other factors such as return-on-investment (ROI) and looking at priority countries.

Challenges

The common challenges faced in attracting foreign students in various countries can be listed as follows:

- i. Language barrier – for non-English speaking countries, there is a lack of interest as well as candidates due to inadequate English skills. For such countries, the opportunity to study English may interest them due to Malaysia's favourable cost of living and education as compared to US, UK, Australia etc.
- ii. Distance/Proximity – is often suggested in far reaching regions such as Latin America. Longer distance means higher transportation costs (more expensive flight tickets unavailability of direct flights). The idea of living and studying in a location half around the globe, unfamiliar with the country, culture and language seems too daunting compared to other more familiar and closer destinations.
- iii. An education hub/centre themselves – education powerhouses like Switzerland and Canada offer excellent education quality, facilities, recognition onshore. To attract students from these countries, Malaysia would either need to compete with their education or provide niche offerings. One exception is Japan, while possessing excellent education, the Government still send students abroad including Malaysia. Further studies are needed on the reason, and whether it could be replicated to other education centres.
- iv. Availability of free higher education onshore – countries such as Argentina and Czech Republic that offer free higher education would be a tough sell. Countries with similar facilities present a low potential and collaboration in higher education should be in other forms such as exchange programmes, gap year programmes, joint research and development (R&D) etc.
- v. Prefers more 'premium' education – locations/countries with higher income per capita like Hong Kong whose population can afford 'premium' education will always prefer those destinations such as US, UK or Australia for prestige and better work prospect. However, there are always segments of the population that would consider Malaysia as a lower cost alternative.

3. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Signing of MoUs

Some Missions have suggested for the conclusion of MoU on Higher Education Cooperation in order to garner interest through exchanges of students, short-courses and R&D. The MoU may not necessarily be Government-to-Government but also at the level of institute-to-institute of higher learning from both countries. This however involves beyond the boundaries of marketing and promotion, but a more holistic approach to attracting foreign students. Malaysian Missions in Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Poland have informed of interests from universities in their respective countries to collaborate further and conclude an MoU with Malaysian universities.

Digital Marketing

A number of Missions have suggested the use of digital marketing for improvements. This indicates that Malaysia has yet to fully or even begin to utilise this tool. The idea of studying abroad half way around the globe in an unfamiliar culture and environment could be alleviated through such use of technology. The use of virtual campus tour, video presentations on living conditions and success story from Student 'Ambassadors' would provide familiarity, alleviate concerns, change negative perceptions and inspire potential candidates to try something novel. Other advantages of digital marketing are well known such as the ability to reach wider audiences, cost effectiveness, and reduce the need for physical marketing and promotion.

Target Market Segments

According to the Embassy of Malaysia in Tokyo, promotion activities towards high schools have been successful in Japan. Malaysia received the 7th highest in student applications from Japan in 2022. The younger demography is more impressionable and therefore marketing campaigns targeting this particular group should be intensified and replicated in other countries. Even if these activities fail to attract them to Malaysia, it helps provide positive awareness and interest of Malaysia amongst the younger generation of the population. The Embassy of Malaysia in Sarajevo also suggested taking the same approach for the Bosnian market.

In countries with a significant size of expatriate population that are middle class such as in Oman and most countries in West Asia, promotional activities should also be tailored to cater for this group. For example, Kuwait has a population of approximately 4.6 million of which expatriates account for 60% (The Public Authority for Civil Information, 2018) of the population with the largest communities being Indian and Egyptian (Toumi, 2014).

Student ‘Ambassadors’

Appointment of Student ‘Ambassadors’ from amongst locals or existing foreign students who have personal success stories to share fond experience and memories of studying in Malaysia would further boost Malaysia’s reputation as preferred education destination. For markets, where Malaysia as a country is less known, these ‘Ambassadors’ play a significant role in ‘endorsing’ Malaysia’s higher education, giving confidence in the country’s quality education and favourable living conditions. Universities should identify among their existing foreign students or alumni members of potential candidates to take up the role.

Monitor Third-Party Agents

According to the Embassy of Malaysia in Beijing, China, local third-party agents promoting Malaysia’s higher education have been irresponsible in conveying inaccurate or even wrong information. For example, the agent would over promise on the ease of university enrolment without fulfilling the necessary qualification requirement. Third party agents need to be screened more thoroughly before appointed as well as need to be monitored closely to ensure high conduct. Conveying incorrect or inaccurate information can harm Malaysia’s reputation and integrity.

Take Opportunities from Threats

The current geopolitical developments such as Russia-Ukraine war, may provide opportunities for promotion activities. In 2019, 80,470 foreign students pursued higher education studies in Ukraine mostly in medicine, medical practice, dentistry, management and pharmacy (Erudera, n.d.). The top 5 foreign students in Ukraine are from India, Morocco, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Nigeria (Erudera, n.d.). Due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict these students will have to find

alternatives. Therefore, there exists opportunities for Malaysia to capture the Ukrainian foreign student market.

Similarly, the domestic situation in Lebanon have led to the increase of Lebanese students venturing overseas to study. One could say the economic and political turmoil in Sri Lanka provides opportunity. Malaysia should look to intensify promotion in those countries.

Establish Direct Flights to KL

The Embassy of Malaysia in Azerbaijan informed that the availability of direct flights between KL and Baku would help in edging interests to study in Malaysia. Establishing direct flights require consideration of many factors and in this regard, the Ministry of Higher Education, the Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Transport could coordinate and identify potential countries to establish direct routes.

Provide Funding to Missions

Several Missions have informed of a lack of promotion activities in their host country that has potential in attracting students. In these situations, it is necessary to provide Missions with necessary funding/budget to carry out promotional activities without the need to wait for EM or Malaysian universities. It is understood that EM as well as universities have their own priorities and targets and are constrained by short-term ROIs. Missions may not be too restricted by these factors and therefore would have more leeway to spend more resources on marketing and promotion on high-hanging fruits. Certain countries with potential may require long-term commitment in promotion.

In this regard, EM may wish to source some of their funding to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Missions to carry-out promotion activities in countries without an EM office. Promotion activities could be carried out by participating in exhibitions and conferences, high school and university tours as well as engagement sessions with companies and senior government officials.

Collaborate with Scholarship Bodies

For countries that lack interest to study in Malaysia, the use of scholarships in attracting students should be utilised fully. Universities could provide funding to students from certain

nationality that are of strategic interests. In addition, universities could forge collaboration with scholarship bodies in securing students sponsored by those bodies to study in Malaysia.

Promote Malay Language Courses

In countries with low potential, the Embassy of Malaysia in Czech Republic suggested for the establishment of Malay language courses in reputable universities, preferably with a solid Eastern Studies faculty. It would help garner interests and encourage student exchange programmes. Malaysia may start exploring, engaging or promoting Malay language education in renowned Czech universities such Charles University in Prague, Palacky University in Olomouc and Masaryk University in Brno. This suggestion could be implemented in other countries as well.

Collaborate in R&D with Foreign Companies

According to the Embassy of Malaysia in Poland, Polish companies in Malaysia have expressed interest to collaborate in R&D in the field of technology development. These collaborations will provide opportunities to enhance university-private sector collaboration and attract students from Poland to study in Malaysia via scholarships, employment opportunities etc.

Provide Pre-University English Courses

For countries with English proficiency deficiency like Morocco and Thailand a possible solution would be to provide intensive English course prior to receiving these students back home. Similar to how Malaysia sends students to Japan by prepping them with intensive 2-year Japanese language classes, Malaysia could offer something similar to tackle this particular problem. The Embassy of Malaysia in Morocco even suggested setting-up an English language institute.

4. CONCLUSION

The world has slowly returned to normalisation and the opening up of travel restrictions and borders following the endemic stage of the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries whose education

sector have been affected by diminishing foreign students are eager for the numbers to return to preCOVID-19 levels or more. Given the above, it is timely that Malaysia intensifies efforts in promotion and marketing activities or risk being left behind the competition. The global education sector is becoming more competitive and Malaysia in order to realise its goal of attracting 240,000 foreign students by 2025 must act strategically, effectively and act immediately.

Some or all of the suggestions for improvement maybe obvious or well researched by the Ministry of Higher Education or the research community. Nonetheless, it is important to tailor these solutions according to the different markets/countries. Malaysia's Missions in general are of the opinion that more could be done to promote and attract foreign students to Malaysia.

Malaysia's Missions abroad should be utilised fully in promoting the higher education sector. With presence around the world, having established deep ties and connection in their respective host countries, Malaysia's Missions abroad should be armed with the necessary funding, training and promotion materials to fill in the void left by EM or other education agencies whose presence globally are understandably restricted.

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Perkembangan Bahasa Melayu di Negara China Memberi Kesan kepada Hubungan Diplomasi Malaysia-China

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ABSTRAK

Kertas kerja ini adalah untuk melihat perkembangan Bahasa Melayu di Negara China yang telahpun sebenarnya bermula pada zaman Dinasti Han iaitu semasa adanya hubungan tamadun alam Melayu dan Tamadun China pada sekitar 100 tahun masihi. Hubungan dengan China telah meningkatkan martabat Bahasa Melayu apabila istana China memberi perhatian kepada Bahasa Melayu sebagai salah satu bahasa asing. Maharaja China telah menubuhkan Biro Jurubahasa (Da Tong Shi) dan Bahasa Melayu diletakkan di bawah Jabatan Bahasa-Bahasa Islam (Hui Hui Guan), bersama-sama dengan Bahasa Arab, Parsi dan beberapa bahasa Islam lain. Akademi Bahasa itu dikekalkan dalam zaman Dinasti Qing tetapi diubah namanya menjadi Hui Tong Si Yi Guan dalam tahun 1748. Perhatian kepada Perhatian kepada bahasa Melayu kemudian disusuli dengan penyusunan kamus Melayu-China yang berjudul Man La Jia Guo Yi Yu (Senarai Perkataan Melaka) dan menjadi rujukan penting hingga abad ke-16. Seawal tahun 1960-an, perkembangan berkaitan pengajaran dan pembelajaran Bahasa Melayu telah digerakkan ke institusi pendidikan tinggi di China. Setelah Malaysia menjalin hubungan rasmi dengan China pada tahun 1974. Hubungan diplomatik Malaysia-China telah diangkat tarafnya sebagai "Perkongsian Strategik Komprehensif" semasa lawatan Presiden China, Xi Jinping ke Malaysia pada tahun 2013 dan ini secara jelas menunjukkan asas pembinaan dan persefahaman bahasa di peringkat awal menjadi pemangkin hubungan diplomasi Malaysia-China yang lebih utuh. Kesannya, kita dapat lihat hubungan diplomasi Malaysia-China khasnya dalam bidang pendidikan terus berkembang secara positif. Buktinya, sebanyak 13 buah institusi pendidikan tinggi China yang menawarkan pengajian Melayu dan berjaya melahirkan lebih kurang 1000 orang lepasan siswa dalam program tersebut.

Kata kunci: Tamadun, Diplomatik, Perkongsian Strategik Komprehensif, Diplomasi

1. PENDAHULUAN

Latar Belakang

Kerajaan Malaysia menerusi institusi pengajian tinggi tempatan berusaha memartabatkan bahasa Melayu di peringkat dunia melalui pelaksanaan Kursus Pengajian Melayu di beberapa

buah universiti terkemuka dunia. Hingga kini, terdapat lebih 140 buah institusi pengajian tinggi di dunia termasuklah di Amerika Syarikat, United Kingdom, Jepun, China, Rusia, Belanda, Mesir, Iran dan Pakistan menawarkan kursus pengajian Bahasa Melayu.

Kini, sebanyak 13 buah institusi pendidikan tinggi yang aktif di China yang menawarkan pengajian Bahasa Melayu. Ini secara langsung telah menggalakkan penutur Bahasa Melayu di Dunia. Selain itu, usaha-usaha perkembangan Pengajian Bahasa Melayu ini juga dilihat sebagai satu pemangkin kepada Pengukuhan hubungan diplomasi pendidikan antara Malaysia-China.

Secara umumnya, program pengajian Melayu di China berfokus pada pengajaran bahasa dan persuratan Melayu, bermatlamat untuk memupuk individu yang mahir menguasai kebolehan mendengar, bertutur, memahami dan berkebolehan menterjemah apa sahaja bahan yang berkaitan dengan bahasa Melayu.

Di samping itu, jurusan-jurusan bahasa Melayu di China tidak terhad kepada kajian bahasa Melayu sahaja, sebaliknya merangkumi kajian kebudayaan dan kemasyarakatan Melayu.

Harus ditegaskan bahawa pencapaian dan kejayaan melahirkan graduan jurusan bahasa Melayu yang bermutu tinggi di China adalah berkait rapat dengan bantuan dan sokongan berterusan yang amat berharga daripada pihak-pihak Malaysia yang terlibat serta kerjasama erat yang terjalin antara kedua-dua pihak, misalnya Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Malaysia, Kedutaan Besar Malaysia ke China serta institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi Malaysia tempatan, misalnya UM, UKM, USM, UITM dan sebagainya.

2. HASIL

Dalam tempoh masa 60 tahun, iaitu sejak pengajaran dan pembelajaran bahasa Melayu di China mula membenih, berakar, bertumbuh sehinggalah berbuah dengan subur, terdapat beberapa detik bersejarah penting yang bukan sahaja menandakan pencapaian perkembangan bahasa Melayu di China, tetapi juga menjadi lambang kepada hubungan ilmiah dan pendidikan antara China dan Malaysia.

Yang pertama ialah penubuhan Pusat Pengajian Melayu China. Pada 20 Jun 1997, Pusat Bahasa Melayu ditubuhkan di BFSU sebagai hasil persetujuan antara kerajaan Malaysia dan kerajaan China untuk bekerjasama dalam bidang pendidikan, khususnya tentang pengajaran bahasa Melayu di China.

Pada 1 September 2005 pula, Pusat Bahasa Melayu BFSU dinaikkan taraf menjadi Pusat Pengajian Melayu China. Sejak ditubuhkan, Pusat Pengajian Melayu China telah berfungsi sebagai pangkalan kegiatan ilmiah dan pengembangan bahasa, kesusasteraan dan kebudayaan Melayu di China.

Detik bersejarah yang kedua ialah penubuhan Kursi Pengajian Melayu Malaysia-China di BFSU. Pada awal tahun 2007, secara rasminya Kursi itu telah ditubuhkan dengan Prof Datuk Seri Dr Awang Sariyan dilantik sebagai Penyanggah Kursi Pengajian Melayu China yang pertama dan yang ketiga, manakala Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Taib dilantik sebagai Penyanggah Kursi Pengajian Melayu China Kedua oleh Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi Malaysia.

Kursi yang mula berfungsi pada awal tahun 2008 ini berperanan memperkenalkan bidang-bidang baharu dalam pengajian Melayu, meningkatkan program ilmiah pada peringkat ijazah pertama dan ijazah lanjutan, melaksanakan penyelidikan dan penerbitan, serta membantu penubuhan dan peneguhan program bahasa dan juga pengajian Melayu di institusi pengajian tinggi di China.

Menurut statistik setakat Mei tahun ini, sejumlah 41 orang pensyarah China dan tujuh orang pakar asing dari Malaysia menjadi tenaga pengajar di 13 institusi pengajian tinggi China. Sejumlah 457 orang siswa peringkat sarjana muda dan enam orang sarjana sedang belajar di kampus. Sejumlah 965 orang lepasan peringkat sarjana muda dan 10 orang sarjana berjaya menamatkan pengajian masing-masing dalam tempoh 60 tahun ini. Dalam pada itu, pelbagai aktiviti dan program pengembangan bahasa Melayu diteruskan antaranya perkongsian kejayaan pelajar, setakat ini, siswa-siswi jurusan bahasa Melayu di China pernah mendapat johan dua kali, naib johan lima kali dan tempat ketiga satu kali dalam sejumlah 14 sesi Pertandingan Pidato Antarabangsa Piala Perdana Menteri. Inilah salah satu bukti kejayaan pendidikan program pengajian Melayu di China. Selain itu program-program silang budaya diteruskan antara pelajar China dan pelajar Malaysia. Dapat dilihat kesungguhan pelajar China untuk memilih pengajian Melayu ini sebagai satu langkah awal untuk memberi menjadi pemangkin kepada hubungan diplomasi Malaysia-China. Ini dapat dibuktikan dengan penempatan pegawai-pegawai di Kementerian Luar Negeri juga mengambil mereka yang telah bergraduasi dalam bidang pengajian Melayu di China untuk bertugas sebagai diplomat. Hakikatnya, dengan adanya bakat dan kebolehan berbahasa Melayu ini akan memudahkan proses interaksi dan persefahaman dan menjaga hubungan diplomasi Malaysia-China.

Satu lagi detik bersejarah ialah penubuhan Sekretariat Penggerak Pengajian Melayu China (SPPMC). Pada 4 Januari 2019, dengan bantuan dan sokongan Pejabat Pendidikan

Malaysia Beijing , Kedutaan Besar Malaysia ke China. Mesyuarat Meja Bulat Perkembangan Jurusan Bahasa Melayu di China Kali Pertama berjaya diadakan di BFSU. SPPMC telah ditubuhkan dalam mesyuarat ini bertujuan untuk menggalakkan komunikasi dan kerjasama antara institusi-institusi pengajian tinggi yang menawarkan kursus bahasa Melayu di China, di samping memperkukuh hubungan kerjasama dalam bidang pendidikan dan kebudayaan antara China dan Malaysia.

3. PERBINCANGAN

Melihat kepada perkembangan bahasa Melayu di China ini, terdapat beberapa cabaran yang perlu dilihat secara serius antaranya penyelidikan pelbagai aspek tamadun Melayu dan China, terdapat juga keperluan dari perkongsian bahan dan pertukaran kepakaran dalam bidang bahasa dan budaya Melayu.

Selain itu, perkembangan kerjasama para akademik dan industri bagi melihat keperluan bakat-bakat yang mempunyai kefahaman dan mereka yang mempunyai komitmen yang tinggi untuk memperkukuhkan persahabatan Malaysia-China. Datuk Seri Dr. Noraini Ahmad, Menteri Pengajian Tinggi telah memperkenalkan konsep “Quadruple Helix” yang mana mengetengah jaringan kerjasama pelbagai sektor antaranya kerajaan, bukan kerajaan, komuniti dan industri untuk terus memperkembangkan kerjasama Pendidikan Malaysia-China.

4. KESIMPULAN

Apa yang dapat dilihat adalah bahawa, perkembangan bahasa Melayu di China menjadi salah satu pendekatan bagi memartabatkan bahasa Kebangsaan di peringkat Global. Dengan adanya permintaan dan juga kesungguhan negara China untuk menyokong usaha pengembangan bahasa Melayu ini maka, semua pihak samaada agensi kerajaan dan bukan kerajaan perlu ada kebersamaan dan kesepakatan bagi menjayakan aspirasi menjadikan bahasa Melayu sebagai bahasa utama di peringkat ASEAN dan dunia.

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Usaha-usaha pengembangan bahasa Melayu ini juga telah didokong oleh Kementerian Luar Negeri melalui Diplomasi Kebudayaan yang mana peranan besar telah digerakkan oleh kedutaan dan pejabat konsulat di luar negara khususnya di negara China. Gabungan sarjana dan pejuang bahasa Malaysia-China juga yang sentiasa berdiri utuh atas nama pejuang bahasa telah bersama-sama sepakat untuk terus mengangkat perjuang bahasa Melayu ini.

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