

## CONTENTS

**"Is Universiti Sains Malaysia Ready or Mere Wishful Thinking"  
Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) 2008-2013**

*Ooi Keat Gin*

*pp. 3-5*

**Vital Statistics for Restoring True Academia**

*Edmund Ui-Hang Sim*

*pp. 6-8*

**The Higher Education "Revolution" in Sudan and its Impact on Research in Higher Education Institutions**

*Yasin Abdalla Eltayeb Elhadary*

*pp. 9-11*

**Malaysian Logistics Educational Needs: the Correlation between Logistics Programme, Knowledge and Competency**

*Dazmin Daud*

*pp. 12-14*

**News and Events**

*pp. 15-16*

**Publication**

*p. 17*

## New Economic Model and Universiti Sains Malaysia's APEX Strategy

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The engagement of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) with globalisation in its role as the pre-eminent higher educational institution in Malaysia has entailed a radical rethink in respect of how USM engages the competitive higher educational market place. While the USM strategy could be viewed in part as a recognition of some of the inevitabilities of contemporary global higher educational competition it also entails a strong critique of neo-liberalism and the 'cultural imperialism' that is at the root of neo-liberal globalisation. USM's strategy is predicated on several critical assumptions/insights.

Firstly, that there is no necessary universal model of success in higher education. Secondly, that understanding how to differentiate and engage as yet untapped markets can be the path to higher educational excellence as well as a way of engaging ethical commitment. Thirdly, that engaging competitive advantage in higher education entails understanding globalisation and market opportunities as heterogeneous and diverse and not homogenous. Engaging with a differentiated and heterogeneous market in higher education can be achieved through building diverse networks and diverse alliances with a range of institutions and organisations ranging from global civil society, through to the private sector. Finally, indigenous Malaysian values and cultural norms must be included

and respected in higher educational reform.

The possibilities of engaging and building networks and strategic alliances with industry, and civil society based on strong and long term social and institutional interactions of trust and reciprocity is part of USM's reformulation of competitive engagement. For example, establishing the Centre for Innovation and Consultancy (PIP), the Industrial Liaison Unit (UPI) at the Engineering Campus, USAINS Holding Sdn. Bhd, the Corporate Development Division, Centre for Medical Innovations and Technology Development (MITD), Engineering Innovation and Technology Development (EITD), and the Research Creativity and Management Office (RCMO) are critical efforts in forging connections to industry. Institutional links to civil society have been formed in part through the establishment of the Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) by USM which has forged links with civil society. Examples of projects underway include, establishing the Right Livelihood College within Centre of Policy Research and International Studies (CENPRIS), USM. USM's effort at forging diverse networks and research alliances is an attempt to realise a type of 'complementarity of competition and collaboration' argued for by Charas Suwanwela (Suwanwela, 2007).

## Market Advantage and the Complexities of Difference and Homogeneity

How then can USM engage competitive advantage, within its complex social, economic and cultural framework? Competitive advantage for USM relies on more 'strategic interaction' and collaborative modes of engagement with partners in civil society and industry. This collaborative and strategically focused model of focusing on and building on the advantages USM enjoys in the higher educational marketplace (evidenced through the blue ocean metaphor) is based upon a rigorous assessment of the limitations and opportunities that USM possesses. USM's APEX strategy engages a new direction that is both transformative yet also adequate and responsive to the cultural and socio-economic framework within which it operates (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Hall & Gingerich, 2004). This approach is in keeping with the underlying thrust of the New Economic Model which also recognises that draws 'on a number of strengths and unique advantages' that Malaysia has must be the basis of moving forward (New Economic Advisory Council, 2010: 8). Likewise with USM, moving forward must be based on the strengths it possesses. For example, the New Economic Model recognises that:

"Malaysia is a model of cultural, ethnic and biological diversity. Malaysia's rich and unique cultural heritage – and even its colonial history – are assets for forging relationships with many countries, especially in the high growth economies of China, India, the Middle East and Indonesia. Furthermore, Malaysia's diverse language networks help to support the development of tourism and industry links in those same markets. Malaysia's rich biodiversity can be harnessed to generate economic benefits from tourism, recreation, pharmaceutical applications and nutritional products." (New Economic Advisory Council, 2010: 8-9)

USM through its location in Penang with its rich intersection of cultures, heritage and its specific focus on scientific areas such as bio-diversity houses significant nationally recognised research intuitions such as the Malaysian Institute of Pharmaceuticals and Neutraceuticals as well as the National Poison Centre, and the Institute for Research in Molecular Medicine. These are among the many institutional research institutes which address the specific strengths that USM possesses as well as meshing closely with broader national aims as evidenced in the New Economic Model (USM, 2008a). In its commitment to innovation and strategically thought through research USM's approach builds on its strengths through networking and cluster based alliances.

For example, the Institute for Research in Molecular Medicine is an excellent example of USM's desire to move toward building a 'cluster based multidisciplinary research institute [s]' (USM, 2008a: 65). This provides a rich example of the type of approach to multidisciplinary and trans-disciplinary research that is strategically focused. The framing of research directions which engage and build strategic alliances, clusters and relationships with diverse industry, and civil

society partners can help solidify advantages by focusing on research strengths that are recognised as part of a broader national agenda. According to USM's strategic plan, 'USM is strategising itself to be more autonomous, accountable, and will provide incentives for partnership and business, the right mix of skills for the labour market and the community.' (USM, 2008b: v)

Strategic coordination and the building of collaborative forms of research are strategies that address USM's strengths. USM aims to rethink how to compete and leverage from its strengths and 'unique advantages' (New Economic Advisory Council, 2010: 8). USM can strive towards competitive leverage in a market strategy that is attuned to building networks of trust and reciprocal alliances aimed at engaging the issues that are the central focus of Malaysia's New Economic Model. The cultural, economic and network variables that frame USM's approach to competition forge a particular path to competitive advantage that draws on its strengths. The collaborative and strategically networked way USM seeks to engage the problems of competition and engagement with excellence in higher education is the hallmark of 'thinking outside the box' and a significant contribution to new economic and social thinking which is so necessary for Malaysian higher education and Malaysia's economic development.

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# “Is Universiti Sains Malaysia Ready or Mere Wishful Thinking”

## Universiti Sains Malaysia and the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) 2008-2013

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On 3 September 2008 Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) was publicly inducted into the Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX) by Malaysia’s Minister of Higher Education Y.B. Dato’ Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin. The limelight immediately focused on USM, the nation’s second oldest university (established in 1969), not only from the 19 other public universities, and scores of private tertiary institutions but also politicians from all denominations and the general public concerned of the state of higher education in the country.

The induction of USM in APEX “does not mean,” as Dato’ Professor Ir. Dr. Sahol Hamid Abu Bakar, chief executive officer of MoHE’s Programme Management Office (PMO), reiterated “that USM has achieved the [world-class] status, only that the university has the most potential to achieve it” (Chapman & Simrit 2008). Despite the official anointment the imperative question posed is whether USM is ready or mere wishful thinking on its part. Responding to this semblance of doubt is the aim of this paper.

### The Accelerated Programme for Excellence (APEX)

The key word of APEX is *transformation*, viz. a fast track (Accelerated) development Programme to transform institutions of higher learning to attain Excellence thereby recognised as world-class tertiary institutions. Malaysia’s timeline of excellence, monitored by the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), is for a local institution to attain world-class university status in global rankings to reach the 100 listing within five years (2013), and among the top 50 by 2020.

The genesis of APEX dates back to 27 August 2007 when then Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi launched the National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2020 and the National Higher Education Action Plan (2007-2010). The underlying thrust of the Strategic Plan is to develop human capital through the transformation of higher education. The Action Plan implements this transformation process “focussing on institutional excellence, a robust higher education ecosystem with diverse institutional missions, and clear, coherent and aligned national policies to enable transformation” (quoted from USM, 2008: 2; MoHE, 2008). The Strategic Plan and the Action Plan are “Malaysia’s latest response to the increasing demands arising from [the] globalisation era and the internationalisation of higher education” (Morshidi, 2009: 3).

### USM’s Transformation Agenda

In its *Transforming Higher Education for a Sustainable Tomorrow* (2008) presentation to the APEX Selection Committee chaired by Professor Emeritus Dato’ Dr. Mohamad Zawawi Ismail, USM delivered a seven-point summation of its laudable assets: (1) remarkable accomplishments in teaching and learning as well as research and innovation, (2) basic infrastructure, (3) multi-disciplinary research clusters, (4) one of the champions for sustainability development, (5) evolvment of a futures scenario plan “up to 2025 which features global outreach and sustainability-led programmes” (USM, 2008: v, 4). Furthermore USM showcased its local and global recognition, namely (6) “anointed [by MoHE in 2007] as one of four research universities,” and, (7) “was rated as the only ‘excellent’ (or 5-star) university in the Academic Reputation Survey conducted” by MQA in 2006. Additionally it “gained recognition as the United Nation University’s Regional Centre of Expertise (UNU-RCE) in 2005 on Education for Sustainable Development.” In its sustainability-led growth USM adopts the “Blue Ocean Strategy” (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005) allowing it “to expand [its] existing boundaries and change the rules of the game which, in turn, will render competition irrelevant” (USM, 2008: vi).

USM identified several areas for its transformation process where each of the respective areas is subjected to the “Eliminate/Reduce-Raise-Create” matrix summarised in Table 1.

**TABLE 1** Transforming higher education in USM

Eliminate/ Reduce	Raise	Create
Bureaucracy	Global agenda	“People-led” local solutions
Resource gap	Autonomy	Sustainability
Talent mismatch	Accountability	
	Quality of services	
	Future relevance	

Source: After USM (2008: 20)

Since September 2008 comments and remarks, some rather unsavoury, were thrown in the public and private sphere as well as in cyberspace as to USM’s readiness and capabilities. Condemnations were rife when USM faced a technical glitch in the intake of undergraduates for the 2009/2010 Academic Session. In recollecting that episode Vice-Chancellor Professor Tan Sri Dato’ Dzulkipli Abdul Razak in his annual

address (3 February 2010) to USM's community said that "we stood alone then." Therefore is USM ready or mere wishful thinking?

### USM is "Ready and Capable"

The APEX University Research Agenda (AURA) Project (2008-2014) could to some extent address the concerns of USM's readiness and capabilities. AURA started in late 2008 aimed at recording and evaluating the experiences of the USM community (academic and administrative staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students) as well as the perception and attitude of stakeholders (MoHE, industry, general public) towards USM undergoing the transformation process under APEX. In its first year of research covering the pre-APEX period and the initial year of APEX (2009), two groups of AURA researchers explored the readiness of the USM community in facing the APEX challenge.

The AURA-Understand, Expect, Aspire (UEA) Group in a pilot study that focussed on "understanding," "expectations," and "aspirations" of both the staff of the university and the student community towards USM being inducted to APEX produced encouraging outcomes. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students had high understanding, high expectation towards the university, perceived high expectation of the university, and high aspirations (Premalatha et al. 2010: 7-15). Although the findings are preliminary and the research is on-going, such initial results put USM in good stead albeit amongst the student population.

However more telling was the work undertaken by the AURA-Governance Group that addressed issues of governance, performance, competencies as well as service qualities all at the pre-APEX stage. The last mentioned relates directly to USM's intention in seeking to raise the "Quality of services" (Table 1). Tables 2-5 summarise the AURA-Governance Group's findings.

The first study looks at internal control system in the Responsibility Centre (RC) including schools, departments, centres, etc. (Hasnah & Effiezal, 2010). It comprises five dimensions: control environment, risk assessment, information and communication, control activities and monitoring. Table 2 summarises the findings showing strengths and weaknesses, notable of the latter is on the issue of "risk" ("risk assessment" refers to the identification and measurement of an event that could have an impact on the achievement of the RC's objectives) (Hasnah, 2010: 1).

The second area of concern is competencies and performance of both academic and administrative staff (Noor Hazlina & Siti Rohaida, 2010; Siti Rohaida & Noor Hazlina, 2010; Zamri & Tajul, 2010; Tajul & Zamri, 2010a; Tajul & Zamri, 2010b). Competency of academic staff is evaluated based on five dimensions, viz. teaching, supervision, research and publication, consultancy, and networking. For administrative personnel competency is on six aspects: organising, proactive and innovative, teamwork, leadership, problem solving, and technical competency. Table 3 shows a summary of the

findings.

**TABLE 2** Governance at responsibility centres (RC)

Responsibility Centres (RC)	
Competency	
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management ensures that staff has the skills and experience to perform their tasks.</li> <li>• Strategic plans support RC's objectives.</li> <li>• Staff are encouraged to provide recommendations for improvement.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of understanding of the concept of risk.</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of association of strategies set up by RC, procedures and action plans set by RC related to risk.</li> <li>• Lack of understanding of association of risk to the achievement of RC's objectives.</li> <li>• Lack of system to report misconduct without fear or retribution by others.</li> <li>• Lack of assessment and monitoring of deviation to assess non-achievable targets set.</li> <li>• Lack of policies to resolve conflict.</li> </ul>

Source: Hasnah (2010: 1-2)

**TABLE 3** Competency of academic and administrative staff

	Academic	Administrative Staff
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teaching, supervision, research and publication, consultancy and networking.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organising, proactive and innovative, teamwork, leading and technical competency.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of networking and linkages</li> <li>• Lack of research and publications at international level.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem solving skills.</li> </ul>

Source: Hasnah (2010: 3)

Performance of academic staff is evaluated based on five domain namely research, publication, supervision, academic recognition, teaching, and involvement in society.

Performance of administrative staff on the other hand has two dimensions, notably (1) quality: accuracy, neatness, thoroughness, priority, concern; and, (2) quantity: workload, performance, maintenance, and delivery. The findings are shown in Table 4.

The third research concern is service quality of both academic and administrative personnel (Malliga and Ishak, 2010; Ishak and Malliga, 2010). Six criteria of measurement are utilised, viz. tangibility (appearance of the physical facilities, equipment, personnel and materials), reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), responsiveness (willingness of staff to help customers and provide prompt service), assurance (knowledge, skill, courtesy and competency of staff to inspire trust and

confidence from customers), empathy (ability to share and understand another's emotion and feelings) and accessibility (approachability and ease of contact). A summary of the results are in Table 5.

**TABLE 4** Performance of academic and administrative staff

	Academic	Administrative Staff
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High national grant, academic recognition and publications.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>They perform well in terms of priority, concern, maintenance and delivery.</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of involvement in society and international research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Does not meet the workload set and deadlines to deliver.</li> <li>Lack of thoroughness and low accuracy.</li> </ul>

Source: Hasnah (2010: 3)

**TABLE 5** Service quality of academic and administrative staff

	Academic	Administrative Staff
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability, empathy, tangibility, responsiveness and assurance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tangibility, responsiveness and assurance</li> </ul>
Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accessibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability</li> <li>Empathy</li> <li>Accessibility</li> </ul>

Source: Hasnah (2010: 4)

## Concluding Remarks

The research findings on the pre-APEX period of two AURA research groups – AURA-Understand, Expect, Aspire (UEA) Group, and AURA-Governance Group – have indicated some degree of readiness and capabilities. At the same time weaknesses and shortcomings relating to governance, performance and competencies, and service qualities need to be addressed. Nonetheless AURA has shown that the USM community is ready and capable to face the challenges of the implementation phase of the transformation process commencing from 2010. No one is naïve to think that the APEX journey is without bumps and obstacles, potholes and other adversities ahead, but with fortitude and steadfastness the majority of passengers (USM community) shall arrive at the designated destination with a fulfilled sense of accomplishment.

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# Vital Statistics for Restoring True Academia

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## Introduction

The global expansion of access to higher education and its influence on renewed interest in global and national university ranking has prompted Malaysian universities to relook and rethink about academic quality. Restoring or improving the academic standards of universities has to start with an analysis of the inherent quality of academics. Little has been done hitherto to systematically address the quality of academics in the local context. Hence, an empirical exploration of students' perception of lecturers in a local public university was carried out. The small questionnaire survey (n=69) gauged students' candid views on the attributes, attitudes and aptitude of lecturers with respect to effective instruction. The caveat here is that the data is from responses of science students only.

## General Perception

A convincing majority (83 per cent, Table 1) of students believe that public speaking skills of lecturers are more crucial for effective instruction. Most of the respondents (64 per cent) also feel that lecturers' competency in knowledge to be less important than oratory skills. This suggests that lecturers need to improve their public speaking skills in order to teach well. Effective communication, and not amount of knowledge, influences a better learning environment as far as the students are concerned. To my knowledge, there has been one related study (Beardsley, 2001) but of which focused on verbal communication skills of students rather than lecturers. This article may be the first to highlight a positive association between oratory proficiency of lecturers with instructional effectiveness.

Additionally, most students (67 per cent, Table 1) deem that the English proficiency of lecturers to be important for effective instruction. They consider lecturers with good English to be better teachers. This can be envisaged of Malaysian science students from current cohorts who studied science and mathematics using English at secondary and pre-university levels. It remains to be explored, whether this is similar for the arts and humanities. Although studies have been done on the association of students' English language skills with academic performance in a non-native speaker environment (Johns, 1981; Graham, 1987), even in the Malaysian context (Ting et al. 2009), literature to date reveals no such studies on lecturers. This survey results represent novel findings of a parallel relationship between lecturers' English proficiency and teaching capability in the local context.

Most of the respondents (72 per cent, Table 1) are convinced that lecturers active in research and publication teach better. They also supported a positive association between good credentials in research and publication of lecturers with effective instructional skills. Hence, there is a general preference among students for research-active lecturers. A clear majority of students (80 per cent, Table 1) concur with the idea that the availability of research information, and not just textbook facts, influence effective learning. All these imply that teaching alone, without an unequivocal involvement in research, does not complete the role of an academic. Quintessentially, students reckon that good lecturers come from good researchers. Academics weak in research and publication should reassess their attitude if they are to gain recognition and respect from students.

**TABLE 1** Results (in %) from survey done on students' (3rd year cohort) feedback regarding attributes, attitudes and aptitudes of lecturers in relation to effective teaching and learning

Student responses		Description of questionnaire items
Yes (%)	No (%)	
83	17	• Lecturers who can speak well can teach well also.
36	64	• Competency in knowledge outweighs oratory skills in effective teaching.
77	23	• Lecturers with good English are better teachers/supervisors.
33	67	• Lecturers' English proficiency does not affect teaching skills.
72	28	• Lecturers who are active in research and publication teach better.
48	52	• Research and publication capabilities do not affect teaching skills.
94	6	• Incorporation of current research information supports better learning.
20	80	• Textbook information alone is sufficient for effective learning.
57	43	• ICT-savvy lecturers teach better.
41	59	• ICT competency of lecturers does not affect effective teaching.
96	4	• Flexibility and leniency provide a more conducive learning environment.
57	43	• Lecturers who are strict and demanding produce better students.

The results on ICT factor show that between 57 to 59 per cent (Table 1) of students are of the opinion that instructors have to be competent users of ICT in order to teach better. Nonetheless, ICT-competency is not an overwhelmingly advantageous factor. Students who supported ICT competency (of lecturers) as a positive influence on teaching do not exceed 60 per cent. In fact, studies by Keller and Cernerud (2002) concluded that an e-learning environment is neither a bonus for the education process nor positively received by students. Hence, despite the relevance of ICT, pedagogical activities in universities cannot be devoid of a human-to-human interaction.

The last finding is confusing. Firstly, almost all respondents (96 per cent, Table 1) have a penchant for lecturers who provide flexible and lenient learning environments. This setting is construed as favourable. Secondly, an unanticipated but noticeable majority (57 per cent) feels that strict and demanding lecturers provide real guidance. The two results contradict. One would think that students who prefer leniency would naturally abhor strict lecturers. Perhaps, this study reveals a pervasive problem of immaturity among university students nowadays who are undecided in the necessary requirements of good study habits. For experienced lecturers, this is unsurprising, although it can be disturbing news for external stakeholders of local universities.

## Language and research factors

In correlating teaching, research and language factors, 55 per cent (Table 2) of students feel that research-active lecturers good in English provide better instruction. Only six per cent of students think that good instructors are neither from those proficient in English nor research-active. In general, students prefer lecturers who are good in English and competent in research and publication. From this, can English proficiency be connected to research and publication credibility? If yes, it means that research-active academics, who publish well, naturally have better command of English. The sum of these attributes makes them better teachers. Whether this situation is true in the soft sciences (arts and humanities), remains to be investigated.

In linking factors of research-active lecturers, research information in teaching materials, and the limitation of textbook facts, 58 per cent of students (Table 3) maintain that the combination of all three factors is necessary for a conducive learning environment. The remainder indicated confusion or inconsistency over their preferences (Table 3). This finding strengthens the fact that university students, in general, are aware of the importance of the research agenda and construe the outcomes of research as important for knowledge acquisition.

**TABLE 2** Findings on students' perception of language, research and publication factors on effective university teaching (as processed from survey data)

Responses (%)	Description of factors
55	• Lecturers with good command of English, and active in research and publication teach better.
6	• English language proficiency and research and publication capabilities do not influence good teaching skills.
22	• Lecturers with good English skills, but not research and publication prowess provide better instruction.
17	• Research and publication skills, but not English proficiency, affect teaching skills of lecturers.

**TABLE 3** Findings on students' perception of research-driven teaching in determining conduciveness of university learning environment (as processed from survey data)

Responses (%)	Description of factors
58	• Research-active lecturers who make available current research information, and not just textbook facts alone, provide a better learning environment
3	• A good learning environment requires the availability of more than just textbook facts, but does not need research-active lecturers and research information.
13	• Research-active lecturers who make available current research information provide a better learning environment, but textbook facts alone can also do.
19	• A good learning environment does not require research-active lecturers but does need current research information rather than just textbook facts.
6	• A good learning environment does not require research-active lecturers but does need current research information, although textbook facts alone can do also.
1	• Research-active lecturers who give only textbook facts provide better learning environment. No comments on the research information factor.

This is encouraging for academics who believe that a true learning culture embodies a research culture. The urgency of this cannot be under-rated in light of the dangerous increase in lecturers keen in providing school-styled education to students. Their attitudes towards the processes of education are harmful to true academia. Unlike school syllabus, university education is beyond textbook-based curriculum. A notable portion of the curriculum comprises courses on academic writing, research methodology, recent development in research, and a small research project. Lecturers weak in research and publication cannot be a positive educational factor. Studies have shown that the inclusion of research elements in medical curriculum does have a positive influence on medical students' attitudes towards medical science (Hren et al. 2004; Vujaklija et al. 2010). Research-led teaching has also been emphasised in dental education so that students are in touch with new and changing ways of diagnosing, treating and preventing dental diseases (Ford et al. 2008). Clearly, in these examples, research-active lecturers have to be a major part of the effecting factors. Research-led teaching has also been linked to the inducement of creativity and other employability skills of students (Verran, 2010). In short, research-led teaching by research-active academics is sacrosanct for true academia to ensue. To quote from Pauline Ford et al.

“Research is and should be a fundamental activity of universities such that the best teaching cannot occur in an environment lacking active and enthusiastic research and scholarship.” (Ford et al. 2008: 45)

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Within the context of a local university, undergraduate science students perceive a conducive learning environment to be characterised by the presence of research-dynamic lecturers who are good in English and public speaking, competent ICT users, understand student limitations, and strict on rules of faculty-student engagement. The criterion of research-led teaching must also be emphasised as necessary in creating a favourable academic environment.

A sure way of ameliorating true academia is for university management to exercise wisdom in staff recruitment and support. In recruitment, candidates with PhD qualification, with good research and publication, and passionate in their knowledge area will represent the best choice. In staff support, research and publication activities should be well supported and rewarded, while elements antagonistic to research should be contained. Apparently, such university environment can only be realised by a university leadership that excels in research and publication. Studies by Goodall (2006) revealed a positive correlation between the global ranking position of a university with the research and publication credentials of its top university management. In the words of Amanda Goodall,

“Better universities are run by better researchers.”  
(Goodall, 2006: 404)

Restoring true academia must not be a trivial matter for Malaysian universities. The downfall of a nation's academia due to deteriorating quality of academics may not be reversible if early signs are ignored and necessary remedial actions are not duly taken.

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# The Higher Education “Revolution” in Sudan and its Impact on Research in Higher Education Institutions

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## Introduction

This paper aims to present the effects of higher education “revolution” in Sudan in the early 1990s on its research situation. In this context higher education encompasses all post-secondary education including both public and private universities, institutes, colleges, diploma and research centres in the country (NCHESR, 2009). The higher education “revolution” has expanded student enrolments, opened door for female students, made higher education accessible (open university) and reduced the socio-economic cost by having regional universities. Nevertheless, the “revolution” reform has led to the degrading culture of research and concentration on teaching only. There are various factors contributing to the deterioration of research, among others, lack of research funding, research policy, lack of academic freedom and poor English language.

## Higher Education “Revolution” in Sudan

The year 1990 is considered as a turning point of the higher education situation in Sudan. The year witnessed the birth of higher education “revolution” adopted by the National Salvation “revolution” that came to power in June 1989. This regime declared that the situation of higher education in Sudan had severely deteriorated in all aspects and there was an urgent need for “revolution” reform.

The major objectives of higher education “revolution” of 1990 were as follows:

1. Increase student intake at all institutions and reform admission policy (from elite students to all). The number of students in public institutions increased from 4,000 in the early eighties to 350,000 in 2006 and 472,000 in 2008 (MHESR, 2010).
2. Geographical distribution of universities in different states of Sudan including rural areas avoid’s concentration of institutes in the capital.
3. Open chances for private higher education institutions and relate educational programmes with the local environment and the needs of society.
4. Abolish student boarding and subsistence schemes.
5. Encourage all students studying abroad to continue their studies at Sudanese institutions.
6. Use Arabic language as the language of instruction and research.

Due to the “revolution”, both public and private higher education institutions (HEIs) in Sudan have witnessed rapid expansion. The number of public HEIs increased from five universities and one polytechnic in 1989 to 30 universities and the number of private HEIs is now approaching 43

universities and colleges (see table 1).The expansion of HEIs happened at too a rapid rate that the major role of university in basic and applied research had been neglected and also does not consider the need of the country. This has led to the claim by academics that higher education “revolution” in Sudan has stronger political influence rather than academic achievement.

**TABLE 1** The number of HEIs before and after the “revolution”

Type of institutions before 1989	No.	Type of institutions after 1989	No.
Public university	4	Public university	30
Specialised college and institutions	10	Private university	5
Private institutions	2	Private college and institution	35
Egyptian university (Cairo university branch)	1	Academies	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>

Source: National Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research (2008)

Geographicals, 70 per cent of private HEIs are located in Khartoum (CBS, 2007). Not only are they concentrated in one location, these private institutions are also not well-prepared to address issues related to diversification besides having low enrolment. There are no major differences between disciplines offered by public and that of new private institutions. It may be said that private institutions are based on profit rather than addressing the needs of the country.

The positive side of the “revolution” is the increase of the number of students enrolled in HEIs. The distribution of universities in the states has helped to reduce cost of travelling and accommodation in towns or in Khartoum. Due to that, the percentage of female enrolled for higher education in relation to male jumped from 16 per cent in 1975 to 53 per cent in 2003 and today it is approaching 60 per cent (El Tom, 2003). In addition, the “revolution” has made higher education accessible for all regardless of socio-economic status and constraints. Accessible higher education has been made possible by the opening of non-conventional education such as distance education which also serves as a response to the growing social demand for more diverse academic programmes. But lack of qualified teaching staff and education infrastructure coupled with the mass waves of students has led to low quality and quantity output of research. Currently, university environment is not conducive to conduct quality research.

## Governance

Administratively, higher education in the country comes under the responsibility of Sudanese state. The foundation of official body responsible for higher education goes back to 1975 during the May regime (1969-1985). Prior to this, HEIs were subordinate to government ministry and departments. In the 1970s, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR) took over the responsibility related to higher education (MHESR, 2008).

This system persisted until the higher education “revolution” in the year 1990s. The “revolution” eliminated many acts and introduced new ones. For example, the higher education act of 1990 (amended in 1993 and 1995) provides the legislative basis and framework for the country’s higher education. This Act indicates that MHESR covers all higher education institutions (public, private and foreign) legally established by laws and Acts. The National Council for Higher Education and Scientific Research (NCHESR) is a new body created by MHESR to take the responsibility of formulating policies and programmes of higher education within the general framework of the State national policy.

Among the changes was to replace the name of the position held by the president of Sudan as the ‘sole chancellor’ of all higher education institutions to ‘guardian’ of higher education. Moreover, the guardian is now responsible for the appointment of universities’ vice-chancellors, their deputies, chairpersons of university council and most of university council members.

The NCHESR is the responsible body for formulating policies, plans, objectives, funding and all matters regarding higher education within the framework of national policy. It is also responsible for granting licenses for establishment of higher education institutions besides determining the educational and research plans. These new policies have eliminated the academic freedom and stripped the power off the universities.

## Admission Policy

In order to make higher education accessible the revolution has introduced a new admission policy. Thus in 1997 NCHESR has given permission to each public university to admit additional 25 per cent of the competing, fee-paying students. These students share the same facilities with students entering through normal admission. Private HEI students are given incentives up to 12 per cent less than the minimum corresponding score for the general admission determined by general competition. It is interesting to note that the fees paid by private students are determined by the university, compulsory and not subject to any negotiation. The annual private fees range from \$1,000 dollar for social studies, to \$6,500 for engineering electricity up to \$8,500 for medicine. In this regard it seems that the government is supporting rich families at the expense of the poor ones. Sawyer (2002) states that there is a growing tendency for educational system as whole, and the field of higher education in particular to reproduce existing social inequalities. At the end this will

affect research and create knowledge divide within the country between who have access and benefit from higher education and those who lack it (Teffer, 2007).

**“While many countries have been adopting the concept of Research University in order to compete globally and cater to local needs, universities in Sudan still lack the capacity to develop a Research University.”**

## Funding

Historically, funding of higher education in Sudan came from the government and this trend continued till the birth of higher education “revolution” 1990. Since then private bodies became major partners in sponsoring higher education. The rapid expansion of the HEIs has resulted in remarkable funding decline. Currently public HEIs in Sudan are financed by the private sector. They receive little support from the State. The level of public funding for higher education has been sharply reduced or remained when the number of universities jumped from five to 30 universities. The Sudanese public universities responded to this financial cut by amending their admission requirements so as to increase student intake, and raise student fees. Universities’ struggle for funding contributes negatively to the standard and quality of higher education. The rapid expansion in student intake without corresponding increase in the quality of academic environment has had negative impacts on research performance at higher education institutions. Up to the present there is no direct fund for research at Sudanese universities.

## University Staff

The rapid expansion of higher education was not accompanied by the increase of staff quantity and quality. The number of staff holding PhD is declining compared to the rapid increase of students enrolled, not to mention the small number of professors. Female staff comprises half of university staff in both public and private institutions due to more females enrolled in higher education after the 1990s. University position also became less attractive for men. As a result, staff workload keeps increasing, depriving universities and staff adequate time for research. Consequently, there has been very little high quality research outputs. An academic supervisor has to supervise more than twenty students in Masters and PhDs, teach in both private/public universities and serve as a consultant. Staff are

encouraged to be trained locally instead of abroad so as to cut down funding and avoid the influence of westernisation. In addition the Islamic ideology adopted by today's regime has caused the termination of collaboration, assistance in research funding and staff exchange with many countries.

The expansion of intermediate diploma is another problematic phenomenon in university. In 2003 the number of students enrolled at university of Khartoum was 26,872, of whom 5,850 took intermediate diploma representing 21.8 per cent of the students. They share the already deteriorated facility with public students. This situation poses more barriers to appropriately conduct research.

## Discussion

Research or Research University is central to higher education all over the world. In Sudan the 1990 Act which was modified in 1993 and 1995 states clearly that one of the objectives of establishing universities is to expand scientific research that suits the local social needs. Despite this and the urgent need of knowledge society (UNESCO, 2005), up to the present there is no clear policy on research. Currently there is no concrete link between government departments and university. While many countries have been adopting the concept of Research University in order to compete globally and cater to local needs, universities in Sudan still lack the capacity to develop a Research University.

This phenomenon began during the colonial era when university was needed to produce manpower for administrative jobs and research was not the main priority. There are several factors that cause the lack of attention on research. These include problem of funding, brain drain, lack of research capacity, gap between researchers and policy maker, lack of clear policy, lack of university autonomy and academic freedom. Further, hostility is always hovering between the university and the political regime which has, in turn, impacted negatively on the research and university outputs.

To improve the situation of research in HEIs, bottom up approach is not effective. A top down approach could prove to be more fruitful if there is a will to improve the situation of research in universities. Without mutual understanding between university and policy makers, clear research policy, government-university link and academic freedom, efforts to improve research would be futile. Overall there is an urgent need for a robust research university, which is crucial for enhancing quality of university output and addressing all issues related to sustainable development. In this respect, universities should establish networks and act as centres of excellence at the local, regional and international levels.

## Conclusion

This paper has shown that the number of public and private HEIs has increased dramatically due to the slogan of higher education "revolution" adopted by the current regime. This has led to the increase of female students and reduction of the

socio-economic cost to study in the capital and main towns. On the negative side, this paper reveals that the unplanned expansion has led to degraded quality of higher education institutions in terms of production of poor graduates and research output. The state of research in Sudan's HEIs is lamentable due to over-concentration in teaching, lack of research funding, paucity of research culture and time, capacity, constraints, and above all absence of political will.

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# Malaysian Logistics Educational Needs: the Correlation between Logistics Knowledge and Competency

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## Introduction

The “educational needs” is a condition of the necessity for education on a specific topic identified by a gap in professional or working practice (Lai, 2010). In relation to logistics, it is a situation that refers to the discrepancy or gap between what the logistics industry expects of a competent logistician and what actually occurs at present. Studies regarding the relationship between logistics programmes offered by higher education institutions (HEIs) and logistics educational needs (LEN) have received considerable attention in the logistics education literature (for examples see Gravier & Farris, 2008; Wu, 2007). Such interest might be attributed to the belief that logistics programmes facilitate logistics graduates’ knowledge of logistics, non-logistics and related competencies.

However, the study using Malaysian samples has not been widely pursued. Studies related to the problem were conducted by Razzaque and Sirat (2001) and Goh and Pinaikul (1998). Razzaque and Sirat made a comparison between Singapore and Malaysian logisticians based on views from top management and did not include element of courses in logistics programmes while Goh and Pinaikul studied the need for higher education institutions in Thailand to supply competent logisticians.

This study seeks to further explore the nature of the relationship between these variables based on the Malaysian scenario. In Malaysia, the Third Industrial Master Plan 2006-2010 (IMP3) stresses on the development of workforce requirements for Malaysian logistics graduates. This is stated in the IMP3 in Chapter 25:

“Within the national education system, there are limited programmes on transport and logistics offered by public and private universities, at both diploma and degree levels. Most programmes offered by institutions of higher learning cater for working adults, where entry requirement takes working experience into consideration” (IMP3, 2006: 731).

The study hypothesises that a logistics programme is directly or positively related to LEN. Specifically, it proposed that competency would be more related to a logistics programme than knowledge of logistics or knowledge of non-logistics. A multidimensional approach to the concept of LEN is adopted in this study.

Specific LEN items include knowledge of logistics functions, knowledge of non logistics functions, logistician competency, working experience, courses in logistics programme, interdependence skills, group management skills, integrity, and communication skills (see Gravier & Farris, 2008; Golicic,

Bobbitt, Frankel & Clinton, 2004; Myers, Griffith, Daugherty & Lusch, 2004; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2004; Pryor, Sloan & Amobi, 2007; Wu, 2007; Cherington & Schneider, 1967; Stock, 2002; Christopher, Magrill & Wills, 1998; van Hoek, 2000; Murphy & Poist, 2007). Many of these studies grouped into courses in logistics programme, knowledge of logistics, knowledge of non-logistics, and competency.

## Measures

A self-administered questionnaire was employed for gathering data in this study. The questionnaire contained questions on logistics programme, knowledge of logistics, knowledge of non-logistics, competency, and a series of demographic questions. The subjects were logistics practitioners working in logistics firms located in Malaysia. The sample comprised 128 logisticians employed in 889 logistics firms in Malaysia. The response rate registered was 14.4 per cent. The items in LEN were constructed based on literature reviews (Gravier & Farris, 2008; Knemeyer & Murphy, 2004; Wu, 2007; Cherington & Schneider, 1967; Stock, 2002; Christopher et al., 1998; van Hoek, 2000; Murphy & Poist, 2007; Myers et al., 2004; Pryor et al., 2007; La Londe et al., 2007)

This instrument consists of 41 items and was designed to capture the three dimensions of LEN namely knowledge of logistics, knowledge of non-logistics and competency. Eleven items measure dimension of knowledge of logistics, seventeen items measure dimensions of knowledge of non-logistics and thirteen items measure dimension of competency. All the scales employ a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (extremely unimportant) to 5 (extremely important). The internal consistency (measured by Cronbach’s alpha) for overall LEN scale and for knowledge of logistics, knowledge of non-logistics and competency in this study were 0.95, 0.86, 0.90 and 0.90 respectively. Twenty-seven items were omitted due to the low communalities values. A value of 0.5 was used as a cut-off point for communalities (Hair, Anderson, Tatham and Black, 2006).

The items in logistics programme were constructed based on literature reviews from Gravier and Farris (2008), Golicic et al. (2004), Myers et al. (2004), Knemeyer and Murphy (2004), Pryor et al. (2007), Wu (2007), Stock (2002) and van Hoek (2000). There were twelve items measured for the construct. The items were actual work practice, doctorate holder in teaching and delivering, logistics practitioner in teaching and delivering, multi-discipline syllabus, internship programme, learning outcomes, effectiveness, efficiency, skill requirements, change module, orientation, and customer relationship management module. In order to ensure consistency with the measures of LEN, a five-point response was employed, ranging from 1 (extremely

unimportant) to 5 (extremely important) into the items. The internal consistency for this scale in this study was 0.81.

## Analysis and Results

This study employed correlation and factor analysis for inferential analysis. Factor analysis has been widely employed to confirm the multidimensionality of a dimension (Malhotra, 2010). The outcome of a confirmatory factor analysis of the LEN measures is reported in Table 1. In the analysis, varimax rotation method was used. The statistics generated indicate that the sample and model were adequate (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy, 0.85; Bartlett's Test of Sphericity with a Chi-square value of 734.41 significant at  $p < 0.001$ ,  $df = 91$ ). The results indicate that LEN is multidimensional and has three dimensions, which can be appropriately labelled as competency (factor 1), knowledge of logistics (factor 2), and knowledge of non-

logistics (factor 3). These dimensions contributed for 60.93 per cent of the total variance. Competency captured the highest percentage of variance (39.31 per cent), followed by knowledge of logistics (13.27 per cent), and knowledge of non-logistics (8.35 per cent). In this study, factor analysis was not conducted on the measures of logistics programme in order to explore the possibility that the construct might also be multidimensional.

Table 2 demonstrates the means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the variables of interest. Results indicate that the respondents' LEN was important where the mean range for the dimensions of LEN was between 4.11 and 4.27. Among the dimensions of LEN, the mean of competency was the highest (4.27), while the mean of knowledge of non-logistics was the lowest (4.11). It can also be seen that the level of knowledge of logistics was slightly higher than the mean value for knowledge of non-logistics.

**TABLE 1** Factor analysis of the logistics educational needs measures

Item	COMP	KL	KNL
A value added perspective: Providing ingenuity, innovation and creativity	0.789		
Negotiation skills	0.739		
Ability to approach problems with clear perception of organisational and political reality	0.723		
Ability to work effectively with others	0.719		
Pro-activity: Prevention of problem situations	0.688		
Marketing skills	0.666		
Sensitivity and consciousness about professional image	0.657		
General logistics management		0.817	
Global logistics/supply chain management		0.789	
Manufacturing logistics		0.785	
Transportation		0.591	
General knowledge of finance, sales, marketing, customer service, corporate law, human resource management, information system, and geography			0.781
Understanding corporate culture			0.726
International business environment			0.668

Note:

COMP = Competency

KL = Knowledge logistics

KNL = Knowledge non-logistics

- Factor 1 (COMP) eigenvalue (5.504), percentage of variance (39.31 per cent)
- Factor 2 (KL) eigenvalue (1.858), percentage of variance (13.27 per cent)
- Factor 3 (KNL) eigenvalue (1.168), percentage of variance (8.35 per cent)

**TABLE 2** Means, standard deviations and intercorrelations of the research variables

No.	Variables	1	2	3	4	Mean	SD
1	Competency	1	0.430**	0.475**	0.691**	4.27	0.49
2	Knowledge of logistics		1	0.494**	0.526**	4.19	0.53
3	Knowledge of non-logistics			1	0.512**	4.11	0.53
4	Logistics programme				1	4.26	0.38

\*\*  $p = 0.01$ ;  $n = 128$

As for the intercorrelations, the correlation coefficients between variables indicate that the three dimensions of LEN were relatively inter-correlated among each other. The correlations between the variables of interest further indicate significant relationships between each dimension of LEN and logistics programme. Among the dimensions of LEN, competency represented the dimension most highly correlated with the latter.

## Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study support the belief that LEN is a multidimensional concept as proposed by Keller and Ozment (2009), Gravier and Farris (2008), Wu (2007), La Londe et al. (2007) and Murphy and Poist (2007). Using the Malaysian logisticians as respondents, the study adds to the previous studies that Malaysian LEN can take competency, knowledge of logistics and knowledge of non-logistics dimensions.

On the relationship between LEN and logistics programme, it is interesting to note that a direct, significant and positive association exists between all dimensions of Malaysian LEN and the latter. A differential relationship that characterises the link between these variables suggests that Malaysian logistics practitioners demonstrated a different degree of perception towards logistics programme. This would demonstrate a different dimension of LEN for logistics graduates. Moreover, the findings of this study suggest that Malaysian logisticians with a high level of perception of logistics programme would tend to produce competent elements for logistics graduates. On the other hand, Malaysian logisticians with a lower level of perception of logistics programme would be more inclined towards producing logistics graduates with knowledge of non-logistics.

The findings of this study offer some interesting guidelines to HEIs in Malaysia in designing logistics programme. Any HEI that intends to develop an effective logistics programme would obviously have to ensure a high degree of competency is present in the curriculum.

Finally, there are some limitations to this study which need to be considered. First, the application of correlations as evidence of the association between the dimensions of LEN and logistics programme should not be confused with cause-effect relationships. This means that the correlations only suggest relationship, but not causality between the variables of interest. Secondly, the findings should not be generalised to other samples. The use of other types of samples in future research may produce different results.

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### Seminar on the Establishment of Malaysian Branch Campuses Overseas: Sharing Ideas and Experiences

*Reported by Noorazmahani Md. Kasim*

The seminar organised by National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) was held at Grand BlueWave Hotel, Shah Alam on 19 July 2010. The seminar is part of a study process formulated to assist the Malaysian government's aspiration to export Malaysian Higher Education abroad. The seminar started with a welcoming address by the Seminar Organising Chairman, Professor Badaruddin Mohamed followed by the opening remarks by the Deputy Director-General (Private Sector), Department of Higher Education, Y.Bhg. Datin Professor Ir. Dr. Siti Hamisah Tapsir.

Drawing on a similar Japanese concept, the seminar, despite being intentionally small and intimate with 60 participants including the secretariat, was effective and fruitful as emphasis was placed significantly on the discussions arising from the Q&A sessions and on the presentations by international and local speakers who were selected based on their expertise and field experience. There were six invited speakers, the first speaker was Professor Dr. Rohana Yusof from the Higher Education Leadership Academy (AKEPT) followed by Associate Professor Frank Sheehy from Australia, Y.Bhg. Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Mohamed Salleh Mohamed Yasin from Council of the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, Professor Robin Pollard from Monash University, Sunway Campus, Mr. Gurpardeep Singh from Asia Pacific University College of Technology and Innovation (UCTI) and Professor Ian Pashby from The University of Nottingham Malaysia Campus. One international student from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Ms. Gelareh Abooli, was invited to present her perspective to pursue higher education at the branch campus.

The presentations covered most of the aspects on the establishment of Malaysian branch campuses abroad such as the issues and challenges encountered in the process of establishing branch campuses, the framework of quality assurance in higher education, a review of practical models, the potential and feasibility as well as impacts and regulatory issues in the host and home country.



The purpose of this seminar is to provide a platform to share opinions and ideas. This process study will lead to policy statements and guidelines that the Ministry of Higher Education could use when formulating strategies for setting up overseas branch campuses.

The seminar became a good discussion and idea sharing session. It was also very useful and informative for the research team which would add towards making the ongoing research a success.



Research members and seminar participants.

# Charting New Directions for Muslim Universities Muslim Universities Vice-Chancellors'/Presidents' Forum

Reported by Noraini Mohamad Yusof & Ooi Poh Ling

In conjunction with the Fifth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research (5th ICMHESR), Universiti Sains Malaysia in collaboration with Higher Education Department, Ministry of Higher Education took the initiative to organise the Muslim Universities Vice-Chancellor's/Presidents' Forum (MUVCF). The National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN) was the secretariat.

The MUVCF was able to bring together vice-chancellors and presidents from selected universities who are committed to discussing the future of ummah based on Islamic thoughts and understanding and at the same time refrained from following blindly the model and thinking of the West.

The theme of MUVCF was "Charting New Directions for Muslim Universities: Must We Subscribe to Western Ideological and Philosophical Constructs?". The main objectives of the forum were to gather Islamic academics and experts who are committed to chart the future of ummah with new approaches and idea, free from the influence and domination of the West; to build a strong cooperation among universities that agree there is a need for ummah to chart the development path for higher education which is different from the conventional Western ideology; and to come up with short-, medium- and long-term strategies and actions in shifting thinking, focus and approach of ummah development in 1441H. These objectives encourage new ideas and approaches with the stress on 'collectiveness' and 'alliance'.

MUVCF was attended by 45 vice-chancellors/presidents and management representatives from local and international universities. Participating international universities included the National University of Singapore, University of Karachi, Shariff University of Technology, University of Southern Mindanao, University Islam Sultan Shariff Ali, Prince of Songkla University, Mindanao State University and Universiti Brunei Darussalam. Local university participants included both public universities and private universities. The public universities are Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Pendidikan Sultan

Idris, Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Terengganu, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, International Islamic University Malaysia, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak and Universiti Sains Malaysia. The private universities included Asia Pacific University College of Innovation and Technology, International Islamic University College Selangor, Al-Madinah International University, Universiti Tenaga Nasional and Taylor's University.

The invited guest speaker was Dr. Savas Alpay, Head of Directors, Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries, Turkey. He presented a research report entitled "Higher Education and Scientific Research in the Islamic World".

Participants were divided into two groups to further discuss the importance of Islamic higher education model. It is hoped that disadvantages of the current system could be addressed. Both groups presented their discussion taking into account all aspects of higher education. The two-day deliberation had resulted in thirteen resolutions for MUVCF which were presented to the Deputy Minister II of Higher Education. These resolutions included all features of higher education such as assessment in higher education from an Islamic approach and the need to respond to problems associated with intellect and structure and dominance of the Western higher education approach.

In conjunction with the forum, a dinner was held on 19 October in the hotel to welcome forum participants. The dinner was hosted by Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. This event provided further opportunities for the participants to establish collaborations between the universities.

MUVCF was officially closed by Y.B. Dato' Saifuddin Abdullah, the Deputy Minister II of Higher Education on 20 October 2010. He stated that Islamic model of higher education will not only unify higher education institutions in the Islamic countries but also prepare future generations for future challenges. He believed that it would not be impossible to achieve an Islamic higher education model that can correspond with current affairs and global development.

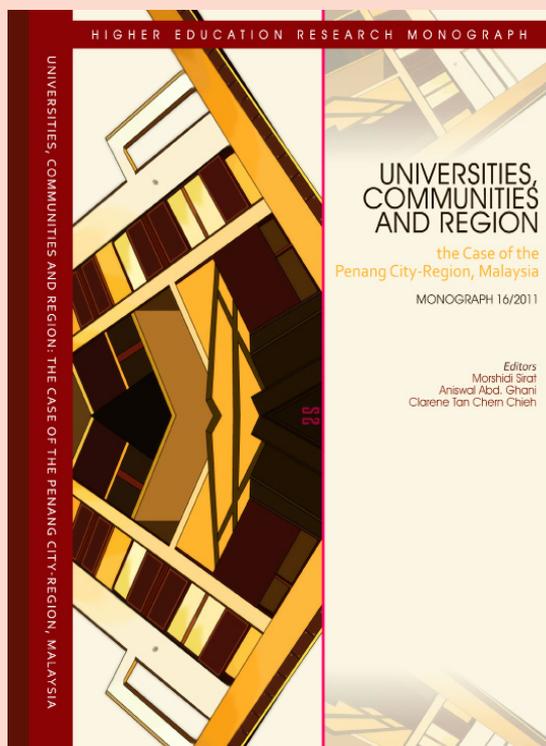
Overall, MUVCF achieved its objectives with the conclusion that it will continue its effort in constructing models that will inspire universal and Islamic values.



The forum participants.

## Universities, communities and region: the case of the Penang city-region, Malaysia

In July 2007, George Town, Penang was listed as a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Site. Even before such an honour was bestowed, the Penang city-region was already well



known globally for its semiconductor industry. Hence, provision of education, particularly, higher education in such a region is essential for continual growth in order to maintain such prestige. This monograph provides a comprehensive overview of the Penang city-region, detailing the development of its socio-economic and cultural organisation. The authors present in-depth analyses on the way higher education institutions in this city-region, particularly Universiti Sains Malaysia, contribute to changes in the social, cultural and economic aspects of the region. The chapters cover a wide range of topics on the state of Penang, from a thorough introduction to the region and characteristics of its higher education system to an extensive review of its research and teaching-learning contribution to industry and local community development. Readers will also come to know and appreciate the efforts of higher education institutions in the area of capacity building in community engagement. Through the examination of past trends, chapter contributors also highlight future prospects of the Penang region as an established based for higher education. Many areas discussed are linked with factors beyond the region itself for besides Kuala Lumpur, Penang is one of the most accomplished states in Malaysia. Thus, this meticulously written analysis is not merely catered for those whose interest lie in the said city-region but also for those who are concerned with the future welfare of Malaysian higher education as a whole.

### *Editors*

Morshidi Sirat, Asniwal Abd. Ghani and Clarene Tan Chern Chieh

# Calling for Articles and News Briefs

## Guidelines on Submission of Manuscripts

1. Manuscripts should be written in English, typed using Times New Roman 12 point font, and double spaced on only one side of A4 size paper with ample left and right margins on Microsoft Word.
2. The length of the manuscripts should not exceed 1,500 words. An abstract of about 150 words should be included.
3. Authors are responsible for obtaining permission to use any published material. The publisher shall not be held responsible for the use of such material.
4. Citations in the text should include the author's last name and date of publication, e.g. (Ashton, 2001). If quotations are used, page numbers should be indicated, eg. (Ashton, 2001: 30).
5. Endnotes may be used.
6. Include tables and figures within the text. Number tables and figures consecutively.
7. The reference list should be arranged in alphabetical order and should include only works cited in the text.

### Examples:

Altbach, P. G. (2004). *The costs and benefits of world-class universities*. Retrieved 23 October 2005 from <http://www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2004/04jf/04jfalhb.htm>

Mahadhir, M., Ting, S. H. and Carol, D. (2006). *Learning materials and human factors: Looking at the chemistry in the genre-based approach classroom*. Proceedings of 2<sup>nd</sup> Science and Art of Language in Teaching International Conference, 'Change: Bridging Theory and Practice', 20 - 22 November, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Pulau Pinang.

Watkins, D. (1998). A cross-cultural look at perceptions of good teaching: Asia and the West. In J. J. F. Forest (Ed.), *University teaching: International perspectives*. New York: Garland.

Wolfe, R. N. and Johnson, S. D. (1995). Personality as a predictor of college performance. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, Vol. 2, 177-185.

Yule, G. (1996). *Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

8. All submissions should include a cover page containing the title, name of author(s), designation, affiliation, mailing/ e-mail address and telephone/fax number. A brief biographical note of the author(s) should also be included.
9. Manuscripts submitted must not be those already published or those which have been offered for publication elsewhere.
10. Manuscripts received will be acknowledged but not returned.
11. Submission of a manuscript will mean that the author agrees to transfer copyright of his/her article to the publisher if and when the article is published. Authors who wish to send their articles to be published elsewhere should seek the written agreement of the publisher.
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