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## **Developing Competent Leaders in Malaysian Higher Education:**

### **An Interview with the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaya, Y. Bhg. Datuk Rafiah Salim**

*By Shukran Abdul Rahman and Munir Shuib*



*Y. Bhg. Datuk Rafiah Salim*

To compete with the best in the world, and hence be recognised as world class, universities must establish a strong academic reputation. University leaders must therefore ensure that their institutions uphold the academic tradition to "publish or perish" and pursue excellence in teaching, learning and research.

It is primarily for this reason that the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) has launched its National Higher Education Strategic Plan and the corresponding National Higher Education Action Plan 2007-2010. The action plan is an initiative

of the Malaysian government in the pursuit of excellence and improving quality in all aspects with the objective to lift Malaysian higher education to new heights.

For the initiative to succeed in bringing the country to the forefront of world academia, especially in the international playing field, the vice-chancellor of each university must lead their institution to play its part in materialising the plans.

In an interview with IPPTN, the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaya, Y. Bhg. Datuk Rafiah Salim shares her views

about the National Higher Education Strategic Plan with particular reference to leadership.

Datuk Rafiah believes that the plan is comprehensive embodying a clear vision and providing clear directions towards attaining Quality Higher Education in Malaysian higher education institutions (HEIs). The plan serves as a detailed guideline for all stakeholders in the pursuit to make Malaysian HEIs stand tall together with other world higher education providers. She commends the government for its efforts to date, especially on its emphasis on leadership and the attention given to empowerment and issues of accountability.

**“A leader makes or breaks an organisation. If you don’t have the right leadership, your organisation will collapse”.**

Having a grand plan is one thing; implementing it is another. For Datuk Rafiah, how the plan is to be implemented must be addressed and monitored. “A fish rots from the head”, she notes. “A leader makes or breaks an organisation. If you don’t have the right leadership, your organisation will collapse”, she adds. Effective leadership, in other words, is fundamental to strategic higher education outcomes.

Therefore, the development of academic leadership should be given priority by the government. Emphasis must be on identifying potential academic administrators, and to training officials of HEIs to acquire the necessary qualities and competencies of good leaders.

Many countries have established training centres for academic leadership. Such centres have been instrumental in producing competent professionals who have brought excellence to their academic institutions, and positive impacts to their country. At the home front, an academy for academic leadership has just been established in the form *Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi* (AKePT).

Lauding the idea of establishing such a centre, Datuk Rafiah, who had been actively involved in various leadership organisations, thinks that an academy to train academics to take leadership and managerial roles would help produce more competent officials in mobilising Malaysian tertiary education towards the desired goals”. Although the move for such a centre is timely, a comprehensive strategy is imperative for the centre to be effective. This includes devising programmes which would ultimately bring about the kind of leadership at HEIs as envisaged by the National Higher Education Strategic Plan.

For Datuk Rafiah, among the first step which AKePT should take is to establish a competency model of leaders or senior officials of HEIs. This involves the identification of essential knowledge, critical skills, desirable values and behaviours and other required abilities of HEI officials. The competency model would serve as an important reference for many HEI’s related responsibilities. The next step is for AKePT to design a leadership programme based on that competency model. In addition, the academy should conduct scenario planning and lead change management programmes.

Such programmes as those mentioned above, according to Datuk Rafiah, will enable AKePT to develop leaders who have the required merit and are prepared and competent in leading and managing academic institutions, equipping them with the required knowledge, skills, abilities and other leadership traits.

**... among the first step which AKePT should take is to establish a competency model of leaders or senior officials of HEIs. This involves the identification of essential knowledge, critical skills, desirable values and behaviours and other required abilities of HEI officials.**

Another equally important issue to address is the appointment of AKePT leadership, who must also possess certain competencies. The leader of AKePT must be a professional who is capable, competent, respected by academics, trusted by their colleagues and peers, and should be the role model of academic leaders. They are also role models for vice-chancellors, deans and academic administrators.

Datuk Rafiah believes that a leader of an institution plays a pivotal role in the progress or the decline of performance of the institution. For that, she believes, the incumbents for strategic posts must be judiciously selected through proper recruitment and selection processes. To ensure that the HEIs administration is filled with suitable candidates, the best brains from all sources should be recruited, instead of restricting the pools to a limited territory.

**The leader of AKePT must be a professional who is capable, competent, respected by academics, trusted by their colleagues and peers, and should be the role model of academic leaders.**

As she puts it:

“Currently we are not allowing ourselves to getting the best – why can’t we advertise globally? Why can’t we head hunt? Why do we restrict ourselves to just our shores? As long as we use the system being used today, it limits our chances of getting the best people. If you are looking for talent, the best way is to advertise or head hunt”.

In addition to the issue of university leadership appointment, the implementation of the strategic plan, according to Datuk Rafiah, faces a number of major challenges. The biggest one, she stresses, concerns autonomy. Autonomy, she notes, is something that is simple as a concept but highly complex in reality. Even though as laid out in the plan, universities are granted

autonomy by what she terms “the power that be”, she maintains that there may be a certain degree of resistance by that “power” to allow that autonomy to be exercised by the universities.

On the other side of the coin, there is a related challenge of exercising the given autonomy by university leaders. University leaders, she notes, must have the capacities and capabilities to exercise the given autonomy. Autonomy is associated with the empowerment granted to HEIs to decide on academic related affairs, which must be practised with full professionalism. To her, it is imperative that autonomy is practised by competent leaders, substantiated by accountability and enthusiasm to bring about the desired improvements.

A further challenge is financial constraints. The government, she acknowledges, spends a huge amount of money on education. However, she sees that the money is spread too thinly. As a result, universities are forced to “make do with what they have” and compromise on various pertinent aspects such as the quality of academics and investments on infrastructure.

**“... Currently we are not allowing ourselves to getting the best – why can’t we advertise globally? Why can’t we head hunt? Why do we restrict ourselves to just our shores?...”**

It is clear that in order to successfully achieve the objectives set forth by MoHE in the strategic plan, university leaders have a lot to grapple with. An exceptionally high level of competency including innovation and creativity, professionalism and accountability among the leaders are certainly needed in order to effectively translate the plan into reality.

# Celebrating IPPTN's 10 Years of Excellence and Achievements: Views of Past Directors

Aniswal Abd. Ghani & Munir Shuib

2007 marks IPPTN's 10th anniversary. This year saw the publication of four books and two research monographs. These numbers are significant to the 22 - personnel institute of which only six are full-time administrative staff. The director, associate research fellows and bulletin editors have full-time day-jobs as professors, associate professors and lecturers in their respective universities. Logistically, a number of them are from Universiti Sains Malaysia.

The history of IPPTN is not at all chequered but one of resilience, creativity, growth and epitomises *Malaysia Boleh*. The first Director was given a post comma and a task **full stop**. The brainchild of Y.Bhg. Dato' Professor Dr. Hassan Said at the then Ministry of Education, IPPTN was officially launched by the Minister of Education, Y.A.B. Dato' Sri Najib Abdul Razak with fanfare in Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Pulau Pinang. This is significant as IPPTN has continued to be decentralised from the hub of educational activity centring around Kuala Lumpur.

The first Director, Professor Baharuddin Salleh, a professor of Phytopathology and a former Dean (School of Biological Sciences), had what his two successors albeit in varying degrees also enjoyed, the dubious pleasure of being the Director of the Institute. They were given an impressive designation and accompanying tasks and a "fullstop". They had no funding. No researchers. No staff. No office. In short, their "full stop". Professor Baharuddin's task was to establish the institute and expand on the research already approved by the then Higher Education Section, Ministry of Education. He held the Directorship for just six months as he was later appointed USM's Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

Professor Abdul Ghani Salleh reminisced, "I took over from Professor Baharuddin in 1997. IPPTN had no office space to call its own. Like my predecessor, I had to function as the Director of IPPTN from my own office. Apart from planning and carrying out research work pertaining to issues in higher education, my first task was to find office space and support staff."

Needless to say all the Directors, to date, have turned out to be no mere inspired choices. In a very short year, Professor Ghani Salleh (his more known moniker) acquired the use of two rooms which were specially renovated to be IPPTN's office space.

Professor Ghani Salleh's success in property acquisition is not without irony. He is after all a Professor in Housing (Affordable Housing). The rooms in D18, at the time USM's Computer Centre, marked the beginning of IPPTN's physical presence. IPPTN's activities pertaining to research were bubbling along in virtual reality. Professor Baharuddin had earlier inherited and had made inroads into the approved research from the Higher Education Section of the Ministry of Education.

Professor Ghani Salleh's regret was that he had no time to initiate his own research and leave his mark as a researcher in the position. Within a year and after all the prerequisite game playing, "my love affair with IPPTN was just blossoming", he reflected, "I had to let the job go." He was given the mantle of the Dean of the School of Housing, Building and Planning, the second time.

Professor Ghani Salleh is all for better higher education. He has his reservations regarding the quality of students universities admit into their graduate programmes. His future for IPPTN is about quality, about content and about internationalisation. Most importantly to him, "We must be sincere in what we are doing."

Y. Bhg. Dato' Ghazali Othman, the third Director, may have left the position sometime back. He held the honoured top job of Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Student Affairs) for some years. On paper he is a retired academic and as with academics of his calibre he is far from retired. His passion for research is unwaned and his vision for IPPTN invigorating.

Taking up the baton from his predecessor, he initiated four research projects, two of which were directed by the Ministry of Education. The two top-down research projects meant that there was money. Nonetheless, he still had major chunks of the "full stop" to remove. Juggling his day job as a lecturer and researcher at the School of Education with being the Director of a one-man show organisation, he had to initiate research ideas and most taxing of all, canvassed for funding for those research. He won an IRPA grant for a 3-year research.

When he took over, he had one stenographer and one typist. These two were full-time. He recruited an associate research fellow and researchers but they were all "unpaid" part-time staff. He had relied heavily on



the research expertise and personnel of the Centre for Policy Research (CPR), USM. According to him, “they know research.” He had only glowing words for his research fellows and technical assistants from the CPR.

The former Deputy Vice-Chancellor told us he foresees six on the job challenges in the future. The first is that IPPTN is yet to have professional researchers. Secondly, the other perennial grouse, “to look for money [...] to look for projects” syndrome. He feels that, “recruiting research fellows from universities bring out problems of legitimacy,” his third challenge. He adds, “There is no independence.” Universities’ academics would inevitably reflect their “paymasters”: politics and philosophy. This led on to the question of acceptance of the findings. To Dato’ Ghazali, “Research is independent. The truth speaks for itself.”

Therefore, in this respect he is not unlike Professor Baharuddin who, “... strongly and **honestly** (his emphasis) believe[s] that IPPTN should be located and placed under the arm of the newly established [...] Ministry of Higher Education. Currently and fortuitously, IPPTN functions on “goodwill” as the executive control rests with the CEO of the university. This relationship inevitably produces delay. Thus his third, fourth and fifth challenges centre on independence: of findings, of policy, and in decision-making.

Professor Baharuddin too would like to see “delocation” of IPPTN. “The Institute,” he says, “would be more effective with full-time researchers and in Putrajaya, the locale in which all the movers and shakers congregate.” IPPTN has yet to tap the expertise from the Klang Valley academe where the bulk of Malaysian universities are located.

Finally, Dato’ Ghazali feels that IPPTN must focus on policy research. His experience, however, makes him realise that this way forward is bound to produce, in his word, “duplications”. Universities have some variants of policy research entity. USM has its CPR with its own resources. Professor Baharuddin, on his part envisaged, “...the Institute [IPPTN] must act as an independent but guided national referral centre in higher education.” Unless, the roles of each research entity are clearly demarcated, redundancy will be a natural and a very certain outcome.

What does it take to be a Director of IPPTN? All the Directors, past and present have two day jobs: full-time academic position – preparing and giving lectures, formulating assessments and correcting all of them, carrying out research in own specialised field, etc.; and full-time administrator and “girl-Friday” of a research institute – initiate national research, lobby for grants, recruit, personnel, manage an office, etc. The job specs require a researcher, an administrator, a scholar, a lobbyist, a spokesperson and undeniably a workaholic

who has expertise in time management. The Director of IPPTN is no desk job and certainly not a trophy posting. For this 10th anniversary, numbers may be significant but really not that important. The hard work set by past Directors is not about numbers but about achieving. They all have enormous amount of energy and have standards. Aptly, this 10th anniversary is Celebrating Excellence and Achievements.

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## Addendum

The views of past Directors, particularly pertaining to future scenarios, reflect the constraints of management and organisation of IPPTN whilst these inspirational men were in office. It is a testament to their concerns and visions of a successful IPPTN that the last few years have addressed almost all the major issues that would hinder the legitimacy and effectiveness of IPPTN. The team of Associate Research Fellows now numbers 11 and only four are from USM. The other researchers are experts in various fields from other Malaysian universities. Active partnerships and collaborations are established with higher education researchers in Germany, Japan, Thailand, USA and Australia. Such ventures are expanding. Past experiences also underline the need for IPPTN to be located in a university. Access to a vibrant academic library and other academic supports are vital tools for research excellence. The current organisation allows IPPTN in Pulau Pinang to have access to other universities’ libraries and services, with their long-established niche specialisations, as and when required. Technology and the digital age redefine the concept of being in the physical periphery. It would not be so easy to argue that IPPTN’s current organisational arrangement is not cost effect and does not eliminate redundancy. In addition, “delocation” distances IPPTN from the Ministry of Higher Education and ensures its independence. IPPTN’s autonomy allows it to provide the Ministry with alternative views: research speaks to the “paymaster” but not for the “paymaster”. Research and scholarship have the right environment to be de-politicised and sustain academicism. Ten research monographs, four edited books, numerous journal articles and chapters in books is the current track record. Records are there to be bettered.

For more information, *IPPTN 10 Years: Celebrating Excellence and Achievements* provides a good up-to-date overview of the Institute, its history, vision and mission.

# Equality of Opportunity and Student Support Schemes

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## Introduction

A positive link between investment in education and labour income has received much attention in the early literature such as Mincer (1958) and Becker (1962). It is a known fact that education particularly higher education plays an important role in promoting intergenerational mobility and economic equality as such that it is considered a tool for redistributive policy. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, higher education shall be accessible to all on the basis of merit. For this reason, subsidising higher education might be used as one of the policy options to promote equal access and redistribute income. Public provision of higher education will enable students from poor families to take part in higher education and later on benefit from future higher earning thus reducing inequality in the society.

In the 1950s and 1960s there was a dominant view that public education including higher education should be made available free of charge. This was essentially justified on the ground that education results in higher social mobility and provides opportunity for the poor to get education. However as time goes by the policy of free education seems to confront many challenges including fiscal pressure, consistent rises in unit costs of providing education and rapid growth of student enrolment. Hence, globally we have witnessed radical changes on higher education system as a whole and higher education financing in particular. The World Bank (1986) has backed the movement by outlining several strategies such as introducing or raising tuition fees and replacing scholarships with student loans.

Today, loans have become one of the most important student support schemes being implemented in more than 50 countries worldwide. Even though student loans can be regarded as a way to reduce government's burden in financing higher education, it also raises vital issues in terms of equity. Many opponents of student loans believe that this type of student support will deter those from poor families from borrowing thus this group of people will be under-represented in higher education.

The debate on the efficiency and equity of cost recovery especially student loans has received much attention among the advocates and the opponents of cost recovery. In Malaysia, as in other countries, the issue of cost recovery especially student loans has received much attention among students, parents and policy makers. Realising that the financing reform towards

cost recovery will continue to be the main agenda for years to come, this paper aims to analyse the current status of the introduction of cost recovery in the context of Malaysian higher education system and relate it to the issue of accessibility. The discussion will stress on the student support schemes especially student loans and a few recommendations will be put forward to improve the current state.

## The Concept of Cost Recovery

Basically, cost recovery indicates revenue generated from those who directly benefit from education. According to Albrecht and Ziderman (1992), cost recovery refers to the revenue generated from charging tuition fees and delayed cost recovery refers to the tuition deferment through the introduction of student loans or a graduate tax. For countries which have introduced tuition fees, cost recovery would mean increasing fees above what is currently charged. The introduction of cost recovery is nonetheless proven to be politically difficult and receives many objections from the public who perceive this as the deprivation of the rights of the poor. Therefore, with the introduction of cost recovery, there must be some financial support introduced alongside which can relieve the pressure of poor but eligible students who want to participate in higher education. Salmi (1992) and Tilak (1997) stressed this important issue by stating that cost recovery cannot be implemented without some sort of financial support to academically qualified poor students. Evidence in many countries shows that increases in tuition fees are accompanied by loan schemes and graduate tax being introduced in order to ease students' financial constraints.

## Loans

Unlike investment in other physical goods such as housing or machinery which can be used as collateral against borrowing in the capital market, investment in human capital lacks this collateral security, hence imperfections in the capital market will restrict poor students from borrowing. Therefore, making financial resources available to academically qualified poor students through student loans is seen as a necessary step to help them get access to higher education. Loan programmes have been introduced in various forms in terms of repayment schemes and administration. Two basic types of repayment schemes are mortgage type loans, where the repayment is in fixed instalments over a fixed period, and income contingent loans where repayment is a certain percentage of the borrower's

annual income making the repayment period endogenous. The drawback of mortgage type loans is the possibility that it will deter potential students from borrowing since students have to pay an open-ended proportion of their income whereas the returns from their human capital investment are uncertain. Income contingent repayment, on the other hand, limits this burden. The administration of the loans programmes can be carried out either by autonomous public lending institutions or publicly or privately owned commercial banks.

## Graduate Tax

The idea behind the implementation of a graduate tax is to fund higher education with specific tax revenues derived from graduates who benefit directly from higher education. The tax upon graduates is considered as the repayment of the costs of their education. The graduate tax is considered an equity contract in the sense that it allows the government to finance the cost of education and later on claims on part of students' future incomes (return on their investment) through tax. The concept behind the graduate tax is similar to that of deferred fees in which instead of loans now the government provide grants to cover costs of higher education. Graduates will only have to repay after graduation and when receiving earnings from their employment.

## Overview of Higher Education Financing Reform in Malaysia

Education is one of the major items of public expenditure in Malaysia and the government continues to steadily allocate 19-20 per cent of the National Budget for the education sector and almost 5 per cent goes to financing public institutions of higher education. High priority given to the education sector by the Malaysian government can be clearly seen in terms of its expenditure as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP). In 2005 for example, the public expenditure on education was above Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average of 5 per cent of GDP. In Malaysia, public education is highly subsidised particularly at the university level. It is reported that about 80-90 per cent of university revenue comes from the

government. Due to this high subsidisation, the fees paid by the students only cover less than 10 per cent of the actual cost. The numbers of public and private universities have increased dramatically over the past 10 years. Currently there are 20 public universities offering certificate, diploma, first degree and postgraduate degree education. Enrolment at public universities also has increased at a significant rate and as shown in Table 1, the enrolment is projected to increase further by 2010. The increase in demand for public higher education is attributed to several factors:

- Growth in income due to the rapid development of the Malaysian Economy.
- Financial crisis in 1997, resulting in a drastic reduction in the number of students sent abroad.
- Rapid growth of information technology and the nation's quest for vision 2020 which addressed the issue of developing human capital.

The increase in demand for more places causes the government to exhaustively use the already limited funds available. For that matter the government is in immediate need to find new funding mechanisms to assist public universities to ensure that the capacity of these universities to increase enrolment is met without affecting qualities. According to the Ministry of Higher Education, a number of funding approaches have been introduced such as the establishment of means test scholarship and loan schemes, and allowing universities to develop new ways of raising revenue such as through consultancy, services, and rental of premises. The Malaysian government also encourages involvement of private sector in providing higher education.

Despite huge budgets allocated for higher education and the establishment of new public higher education institutions, shortage of places for qualified candidates still persist. According to a report by the Ministry of Higher Education, only one third of those who are academically qualified will get places in public local higher education institutions. For instance, in 2007/08 academic session of 135,558 applications, only 25,842 places are available.

**Table 1: Total enrolment at public and private higher education institutions 2000, 2005 to 2010**

| Level of study | No. of students |                |                |                |                |                |                  |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|
|                | 2000            | 2005           |                | 2010           |                |                |                  |
|                | Total           | Public         | Private        | Total          | Public         | Private        | Private          |
| Certificate    | 105,570         | 37,391         | 94,949         | 132,880        | 141,290        | 143,480        | 284,770          |
| Diploma        | 208,454         | 98,953         | 131,428        | 230,381        | 285,690        | 188,680        | 474,370          |
| First Degree   | 230,726         | 212,326        | 110,591        | 322,917        | 293,650        | 134,550        | 428,200          |
| Masters        | 26,181          | 34,436         | 4,202          | 38,638         | 111,550        | 5,770          | 117,320          |
| Phd            | 3,490           | 6,742          | 140            | 6,882          | 21,410         | 270            | 21,630           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>574,421</b>  | <b>390,388</b> | <b>341,310</b> | <b>731,698</b> | <b>853,590</b> | <b>472,750</b> | <b>1,326,340</b> |

Source: 9th Malaysia Plan, Schedule 11-6, pg. 257



## Student Support Scheme

It is learned that students especially from less advantaged economic groups choose not to enter private higher education institutions particularly due to large differences in fees charged between public and private higher education institutions. This is well recognised since the issue of accessibility greatly depends on the financial contribution of the government and also the financial status of the students. In this regard in order to ensure that the financial burden will not be an obstacle for the high ability students to have access to higher education an appropriate policy regarding student support schemes should be put in place. In general there are two types of student support schemes currently provided by the government i.e. scholarships and student loans.

Before 1990's, student support scheme was normally in terms of scholarship. Almost every bumiputera student who enrolled in public universities in the 60's and 70's received scholarship to pursue their study. However due to increase in the number of enrolment and financial stringency, student loans were then introduced. In Malaysia, the student loans are primarily managed and distributed by the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (NHEFC) or *Perbadanan Tabung Pendidikan Tinggi Nasional* (PTPTN). These loans are intended to subsidise part of the education fees and living expenses especially for the less advantaged socio-economic group. Since its establishment in 1997 the total loans distributed amounted to 15 billion which have been distributed to 900,000 students. Students from private and public higher education institutions are eligible to apply for the loan. However the amount of loans differs according to institutions, level of education, field of study and net income of parents/guardian of the students. For example, students from public higher education institutions doing their first degree in science may receive a full loan of RM6,500, whereas students from private higher education institutions doing the same programme may receive a loan of RM16,000.

The move by government to replace scholarships with student loans has been seen as a strategic move by many politicians as a way to release the government's burden (increase efficiency). However, other stakeholders such as parents and students especially those from poor financial backgrounds perceived it as a deterrent for having access to higher education. There were hot debates and considerable objections by the public at the early stage of its implementation.

The introduction of student loans was not without problems. Like any other student loans in developing countries, PTPTN encountered problems pertaining to the repayment by the borrowers. Dating back to 1999, there were 38,484 graduates who owed the fund at the estimated RM867 million. Even though many believe that the problem of defaulting is due to students' inability to make a repayment, a thorough and in-depth

study is yet to be carried out to confirm the matter. In order to overcome the problem of defaulting, various measures have been taken by the government such as having the defaulters' names blacklisted and asking borrowers to have individual file number issued by the Inland Revenue to make loan recovery easier to administer.

The shift towards cost recovery by introducing student loans is a good move to ensure public-private sharing of higher education costs but a number of strategies need to be considered to improve the effectiveness of the student support scheme. This is very important as any policy regarding student support scheme must guarantee that the students receive appropriate assistance in order for them to get access to higher education and reduce the burden on the government.

## Some Recommended Strategies

### Targeting Student Loans

Giving student loans to each individual student would be a very expensive policy to carry out especially when the subsidised interest is very large and the possibility of defaulting is very high. If the government's intention is to increase the number of participation, loan targeting may be an appropriate policy. Ziderman (2004) pointed out that a large subsidy on student loans provided to every student taking higher education is unjustified. He listed several ways of loan targeting:

- i) To target only poor students. However in terms of efficiency this kind of targeting might not be a good solution, since poor students are high risk borrowers, and lead to a greater propensity of defaulting.
- ii) To target students of greater academic ability. This will ensure the internal efficiency of the loans scheme since high ability people are less likely to dropout, have a high probability of securing better position in life and hence a low probability of defaulting on loans repayment.
- iii) To restrict loans to students only in occupations with short supply. This, according to him, will lead to greater external efficiencies of the scheme.

One problem which may arise with targeting is that the loans do not reach the target group. In many cases the social characteristics of recipients do not correspond to the planned distribution of recipients (Salmi, 2003). One example is the Jamaica Student Loan Bureau where the data shows that in 1997, about 62.3 per cent of loan recipients came from the highest income group. Salmi (2003) also raised the issue of stringent guarantee system which can discourage or eliminate applicants from less affluent families. Thus according to him, a more transparent eligibility criterion is needed to ensure that the most deserving students actually benefit from the system.



### Introducing Income Contingent Loan

The uncertainty of future returns from investment in higher education may result in students' refusal to borrow. The best approach to deal with this problem is to introduce Income Contingent Loan where the repayment is contingent upon income. Students only make the repayment after being employed and reaching certain threshold level of income. This type of loan will reduce the borrowing risk and attract more students to borrow. Australia, for example, has successfully adopted the system of deferred fees through Income Contingent Loan and suggests that higher fees can be introduced without adversely affecting the participation of students from less well-off families.

### Introducing a Graduate Tax

The problem with mortgage-type loans which deter students from borrowing is due to the nature of the loan which requires fixed repayment whereas the students face uncertainty of future earning. If students can insure against their uncertain future income this problem could be overcome. However, this solution is unlikely to materialise due to the nature of human capital investment which brings with it the problem of moral hazard and adverse selection. In this case, the graduate tax with the future repayment depending on lifetime income may provide a better solution. The idea of introducing a tax on graduates has long been proposed as a method of recovering the cost of education and at the same time widening the access among the poor through the provision of insurance against future uncertainty. The original concept of a graduate tax was developed based on the idea that graduates will not have to pay upfront the cost of their education which will initially be borne by the government. Graduates will only have to pay it later on during their working life at a certain rate of tax.

### Conclusion

The rising cost of providing higher education and the rapid increase in the demand for places have caused many governments to resort to the new financing mechanism known as cost recovery. Cost recovery recognises the importance of private sharing towards the cost of education. It has also been seen as an effective method to release the government's burden in financing education. From the discussion above it is clear that Malaysia, as many countries around the world, is moving towards cost recovery. This can be clearly observed from various policies being implemented such as corporatisation of universities, establishment of private universities and the shift from scholarships funding to student loans. As far as student support schemes are concerned the introduction of student loans can be considered a good method of recovering the cost of education. However, in taking such a step the government must be extra careful of the consequences brought upon by the loans scheme which might deter poor students from getting access to higher

education. In such a case where mortgage type loan is available, loan targeting might be more appropriate as it will reach the target group and reduce burden on the part of government. Other methods of student funding might be of advantage such as Income Contingent Loan and Graduate Tax.

**As far as student support schemes are concerned the introduction of student loans can be considered a good method of recovering the cost of education. However, in taking such step the government must be extra careful of the consequences brought by the loans scheme which might deter poor students from getting access to higher education.**

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# Core Skills Provision in Higher Education

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Concerns about poor level of skills in the workforce and perceptions of a mismatch between the actual competencies of young graduates and those required by employers is an issue that has been widely discussed in the Malaysian media. A study on graduates' unemployment conducted by the National Higher Education Research Institute (2003) highlights employers' dissatisfaction with the level of the graduates' abilities with regards to communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving skills and their initiative and proactive skills. In another recent study by the same institute (2005) it went on to highlight a need for the development of more relevant core skills in the undergraduate programme. Employers ranked the following as important skills that must be integrated in the university curriculum: industrial training/exposure to work environment; communication skills, personal qualities, interpersonal skills, thinking skills, ICT skills and management skills (time and people management). However, both the studies did not outline how this can be done.

## Purpose of Study

There has been an increasing pressure on higher education to promote the development of core, transferable and employability skills into the heart of undergraduate learning experience. The purpose of this study is to identify the development of core and generic skills provisions in courses offered in two Malaysian universities. Seven set of core skills identified are: subject content competency, communication skills, numeracy, ICT skill, learning how to learn skill, working with others, and problem solving skill. The overlapping of these skills as 'core' or 'generic' is unavoidable given the complex nature of their relationship and dependence upon the nature of the discipline. The content and process of 16 courses are analysed based on a model of course provision developed by Dunne et al. (2000).

## Sample

The sample reported in this study is part of a larger sample which involved four universities. In the present study, the courses were selected from two universities and they represent a mix of professional and non-professional disciplines. The courses selected are foundation courses offered at each department. It is assumed that these foundation courses would best describe the knowledge discipline in terms of content and core skills required for the profession or job prospects of graduates. The professional discipline is

represented by education courses (teacher preparation) and the non-professional discipline is represented by courses from the Biology departments and the Human Resource departments. Data on course provision, including statement of purpose, course objectives, content, delivery modes and assessment structure were acquired through the course syllabus. The syllabus were analysed and supporting data were acquired through interviews with the lecturers and students.

## Core and Generic Skills: A Definition

The conceptualisation of core skills in higher education has seen a number of definitions and interpretations (Bennett et al., 2000; Tribe, 1996; Drummond et al., 1997; Assiter, 1995). Much of the confusion is semantic in nature with the term 'core' being used interchangeably and with other terms including personal, transferable, key, and generic. Similarly, these skills are also referred to as competencies, attributes, capabilities, elements and learning outcomes. For the purpose of this paper, the term 'core skills' consists of both discipline-based skills and generic skills; and refers to those skills necessary for an individual to develop their fullest potential in an area of study, context or workplace. The term 'generic skills' refers to the skills which can 'support study in any discipline, and which can potentially be transferred to a range of contexts, in higher education or in the workplace' (Dunne et al., 2000).

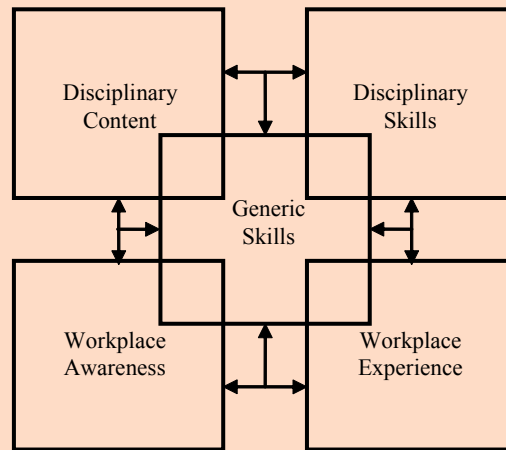
## A Framework of Analysis of Core Skills

A synthesis of generic skills by Dunne et al. (2000) provides a basis for the development of a framework of analysis of core skills in this study. In this view, core skills are the specific behaviours that an individual uses to perform successfully on a particular task and reflect the vocabulary of teaching objectives or learning outcomes that lecturers might use in their courses. Skills are behaviours that must be taught, learned, and performed whereas competence represents judgements or evaluations of behaviours within and across situations. Six categories: communication skill, numeracy, ICT skill, learning how to learn skill, working with others, and problem solving skill are generic in nature. They can potentially be applied to any subject specific areas of study and to any course in higher education and to the workplace.

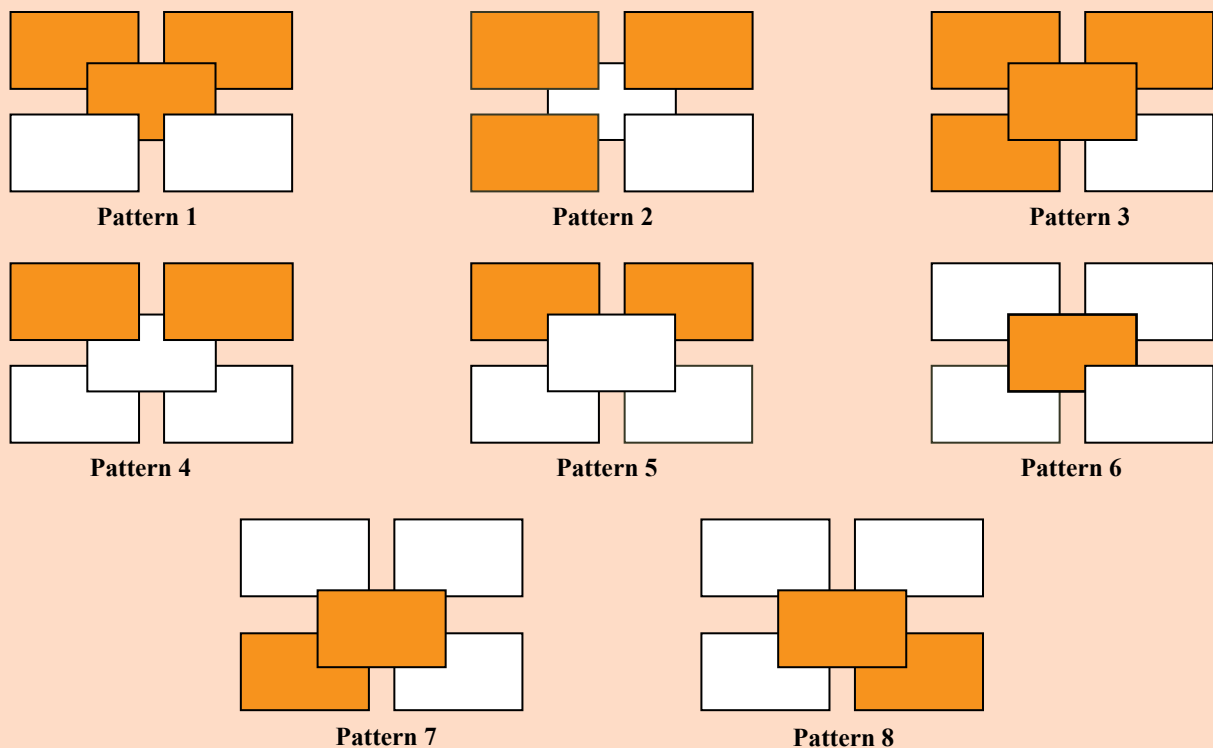
A model developed by Dunne et al. (2000) provides a meaningful basis to analyse the relationship of core skills. The model distinguishes five elements of course provision in higher education: disciplinary content

knowledge, disciplinary skills, workplace awareness, workplace experience and generic skills, as shown in Figure 1. As pointed out by Dunne et al. (2000), there is enormous variation across disciplines about what are considered the necessary core skills, and, as a consequence, in the generic skills planned for. In some disciplines, generic skills may be seen as disciplinary skills, such as the teaching of presentation and communication skills in the department of language studies and education. In other departments, the same

skills may be considered generic and may be taught separately. Thus, the same skills can be taught either as specific discipline-related, or as more flexible generic skills. As shown in Figure 2, the generic skills element overlaps into the other four elements, illustrating the extent of their relationships. The elements 'workplace awareness' and 'workplace experience' represent efforts within university courses to provide learning settings to enable the application of theoretical knowledge to approximate the activities of the workplace.



*Figure 1: A model of course provision*  
Source: Dunne et al. (2000)



*Figure 2: Patterns of provision of core skills*

## Patterns of Core Skills Provision

All the course syllabus analysed can be described in terms of the five elements of the model, but each fits the model in a different way, according to teaching objectives and the processes and contexts used for learning. The fit of each module can be described, or mapped, as a series of patterns which can then be compared to identify the different approaches to developing core skills within the curriculum. Figure 2 illustrates eight patterns of provision that have been identified in the data.

### Pattern 1

Planned Learning Outcomes:

Major: □ Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Generic skills

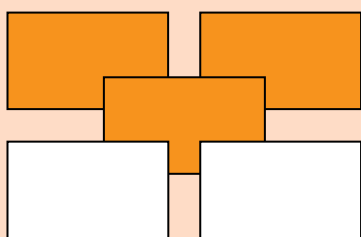


Figure 2.1

Pattern 1 (Figure 2.1) shows that disciplinary and generic skills are of equal importance; generic skills are the means by which learning of the disciplinary skills and knowledge is acquired. An example of this course is 'Technocrat and Development' which focuses on the process of development and the role and obligations of technocrats in nation building. Substantive and syntactic knowledge of the discipline which focus on political, economic and globalisation topics are developed through the use of generic skills which are made explicit in the course syllabus and students are evaluated through presentations of their assignments. It also emphasises the ethics of technocrats in development which reflects the importance of the six generic skills in this model.

### Pattern 2

Planned Learning Outcomes:

Major: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Workplace awareness

Minor: Generic skills

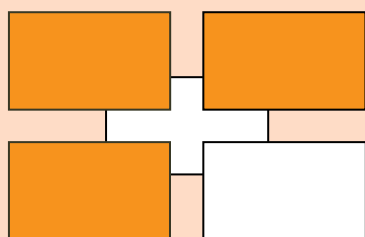


Figure 2.2

The focus of Pattern 2 is on substantive knowledge and its application at the work environment. Application to the workplace is through case studies and simulations as part of classroom activity and students are evaluated. The three main elements of disciplinary content, skills and workplace awareness provide the means for the acquisition of generic skills. An example of this pattern is a course in 'Cross cultural Management'. Communication skills and group work assignment are emphasised as part of the learning and understanding of cross cultural concepts, leadership, conflict resolution, human resource management and decision making.

### Pattern 3

Planned Learning Outcomes:

Major: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Workplace awareness, Generic skills

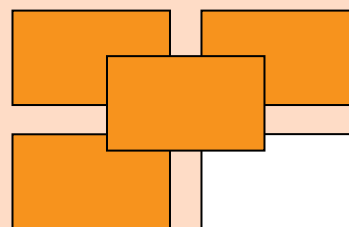


Figure 2.3

Skills provision in Pattern 3 emphasises four basic elements of the model - disciplinary content, disciplinary skills, generic skills and workplace awareness. An example of such a course is, 'Organisation of Sports'. As described in the student handbook, it makes clear the links between disciplinary skills, disciplinary content knowledge, and at the same time emphasising generic skills in the processes of learning and in the workplace. The course synopsis states:

This course focuses on the supervisory and organisational skills involved in physical education classes, co-curricular activities in schools and sports club. It provides information in the organisation of various games and sports activities. Through these activities, students will acquire a sound concept on fitness; cultivate attitudes of social responsibility and acquire cooperative skills through group interaction. The course will also provide opportunities for the application of ethical principles and creative self-expression. This course serves as a vocational laboratory for those who may become teachers of physical education, athletic administrators or leaders of youth sports in the community.

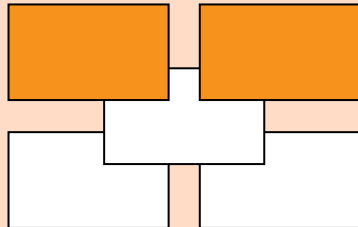
Although conventional in terms of content, the variety of processes in which students are involved, the expectations for application of a range of skills, the demand for active participation in organising sports activities and group functioning, and the monitoring



and assessment of generic skills all reinforce the centrality of skill development. Organising sports and recreational activities is dependent on teams of students functioning well together, and the importance of this is emphasised throughout the course.

**Pattern 4**

Planned Learning Outcomes:  
 Major: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills  
 Minor: Generic skills

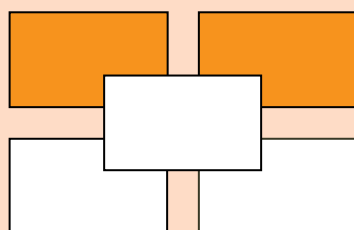


**Figure 2.4**

Pattern 4 emphasises the distinctive substantive and syntactic knowledge of the discipline. The acquisition of generic skills is not a main focus but a by-product of the process of acquiring disciplinary content and skills. An example of such pattern is seen in the course ‘Food Microbiology’ where the focus lies in the basic principles of food microbiology and issues in the procedures and techniques of controlling microbial contamination of food. Generic skills such as communication skills, group work, internet and library search skills, are included ‘...to give students practice in problem solving, in researching topics in food microbiology, and in communicating your knowledge clearly and effectively.’

**Pattern 5**

Planned Learning Outcomes:  
 Major: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills



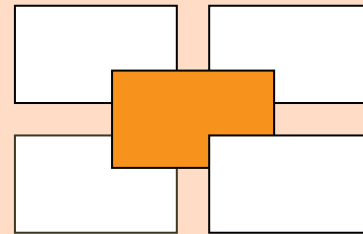
**Figure 2.5**

The focus of Pattern 5 is exclusively on syntactic and substantive knowledge. An example of such pattern is seen in a course in industrial mathematics ‘Sampling and Quality Control’ where generic skills are not seen as instrumental in enhancing the learning and understanding of statistical concepts, principles and procedures. Students are assessed on individual capacity to solve statistical problems and to do assignments.

Other courses in this department seem to have similar patterns with no emphasis on generic skills.

**Pattern 6**

Planned Learning Outcomes:  
 Major: Generic skills □□  
 Minor: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Workplace awareness

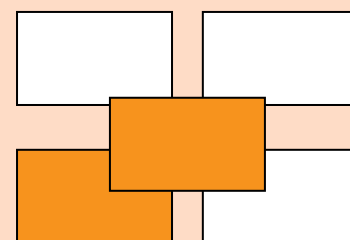


**Figure 2.6**

Pattern 6 emphasises the role of generic skills in preparation for the profession, an example of which can be seen in any teacher education programme. An integral part of teacher preparation is a set of transferable skills which includes communication skills, presenting skills, questioning techniques, group dynamics and interaction. These are seen as generic for all subject specific courses demonstrating that such skills are to be valued and important as they form the foundations of becoming an effective teacher. A course in ‘Curriculum and Pedagogy’ illustrates the integration of theory into practice, where students are taught to do lesson plans and implement them through micro teaching sessions. Through these sessions, skills are made explicit and assessed, and practice is provided through video recording.

**Pattern 7**

Planned Learning Outcomes:  
 Major: Generic skills, Workplace awareness □□  
 Minor: Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Workplace experience



**Figure 2.7**

An example of Pattern 7 can be seen in a B. Ed. programme in a course titled ‘Pre Practicum’ where students are placed in schools to observe

the teaching and learning environment. Students are expected to work closely with a cooperating teacher and to use the relevant generic skills such as communication skills, working with others and learning how to learn skills and to prepare a report on their experiences and observations.

acquired in theory, to acquire new skills and knowledge in the workplace, the taking of responsibility and the development and use of generic skills, especially communication, problem-solving, management of self and task at the workplace.

**... the term 'core skills' consists of both discipline-based skills and generic skills; and refers to those skills necessary for an individual to develop their fullest potential in an area of study, context or workplace.**

### Conclusion

Content analysis of course structures suggests that core skills are being taught with rigour with emphasis on certain elements as provided in the model. The patterns indicate that this is done in many different ways, whether within the context of the discipline or the workplace, and with different emphases. As such, they provide models of practice for lecturers wishing to incorporate specific core (i.e. those that are transferable and generic) skills within their courses.

Eight patterns were identified based on the data. Pattern 4 and 5 are the most common where the emphases on core skills are disciplinary knowledge and skills, with little or no emphasis on generic, personal and transferable skills. The model of course provision (Dunne et al., 2000) could be used as vehicles for developing generic and transferable skills at the workplace. This study not only provides validation for the model, it also presents opportunities for further development in the Malaysian setting and use as a curriculum planning tool to transform purposes into practice.

### Pattern 8

Planned Learning Outcomes:  
 Major: □ Generic skills, Workplace experience □  
 Minor: □ Disciplinary content, Disciplinary skills, Workplace awareness

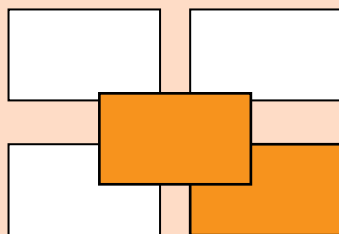


Figure 2.8

Pattern 8 emphasises the importance of work placement as part of the preparation for the profession. Generic skills represent the means by which disciplinary content and skills are applied. Students are expected to do their practicum or industrial training for a period of 8-12 weeks. They are required to apply knowledge and skills

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# The Philosophy of Higher Education of the 21st Century

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n educational system can never be organised along Utopian lines. It is constrained by the possibilities that exist within the socio-politico and economic infrastructure from where it springs from and whose benevolence it feeds and nurtures on. An educational system is viable as long as it retains its legitimacy and contributes to the overall growth and harmony of the socio-politico and economic environment. Should the system, for any reason, become dysfunctional, it ceases to retain its legitimacy, becomes inadequate and demands change (Zainul Ariff, 1986: 2).

The above statement reflects the general idea of how education evolves. The realism of the philosophy of education vis-à-vis socio-politico-economic context within which it exists gives rise to its objective of providing an opportunity to better understand and cope with life in general. The basic skills and knowledge acquired throughout primary and secondary education should have fully prepared the students to enter the world of higher education at tertiary level. The reason is to be further equipped to deal with the world at large and be part of the work force contributing to political stability and economic development of a country. The objective of this paper is to examine the philosophy of higher education of the 21st century.

The question of what is the philosophy of higher education should lead us to its purpose and the aim which it seeks to fulfil that is, by providing opportunities of further learning. The aim of training students to become professionals, administrators, academicians, consultants and scholars that becomes the cornerstone of excellence give higher education its shape. In other words, higher education aims at producing knowledgeable, marketable and employable graduates. The efforts of ensuring comprehensive excellence is obtained and the involvement of lifelong learning in one's life have given rise to the synthesis of extra-curricular and academic activities to be part of graduation requirement. The integrated personality which the philosophy of higher education seeks to produce, involves not only the integration of soft skills within the academic curricula, but also its systematisation through the 'codification' of learning outcome matrixes. In wanting to not lose out in this new economic-based knowledge production, higher education institutions the world over, look into ways of attracting students and harnessing new talents that are not only knowledgeable in theoretical knowledge but also in practical knowledge, hence be marketable and employable. The reason for this harmonisation is to

meet the demands of the governments and the industries of this globalised age. Hence, higher learning institutions began to steer into a seemingly new direction, charting the way from what was once a knowledge-based philosophy of higher education to an economic-based philosophy of higher education.

Thereon, two assumptions are made. First, the philosophy of higher education of this post-modern age is economic-based and secondly, the philosophy of higher education of the great civilisations of yesteryears was knowledge-based. From these two assumptions, the hypothesis formed is that there is a shift in the worldview of higher education from that of creating a well rounded, knowledgeable, ethical moral person to that of producing a marketable and an employable graduate. It must be noted too that this philosophy of higher education of post-modern age is not limited to only producing materialistic graduates but it has also made an impact upon academicians as well, particularly with regard to their contributions in research areas which are taken to be one of the major criteria for promotions rather than for the purpose of the propagation of knowledge.

**The integrated personality which the philosophy of higher education seeks to produce, involves not only the integration of soft skills within the academic curricula, but also its systematisation through the 'codification' of learning outcome matrixes.**

In order to address this hypothesis, a survey in the history of the philosophy of higher education was undertaken. Beginning with postmodernism, the survey traces the thoughts of Confucius, Plato, St. Augustine, and al-Farabi, representing great civilisations of yesteryears, namely, Chinese, Greeks, Medieval Europe, and the Muslims. The purpose of this survey is to put into perspective the philosophy of higher education from 5th century BC to the 21st century AD. After having completed the survey, an analysis on the worldviews of these civilisations was carried out in order to test the hypothesis.

The philosophy of higher education of Confucius in the 5th century BC was to train the masses for promotions into the civil services. This was because civil service was monopolised by the aristocrats. Confucius developed the idea of a virtuous and ethical civil servant based on the philosophy of *jen* which carries the meaning of benevolent, loyal, respectful, magnanimous, kind, wise, courageous, diligent, tolerant, filial piety and respects the elderly. For Plato, the philosophy of higher education was to produce a philosopher-king. This was to ensure justice as in 'giving everyone his due' is understood properly, hence a just and knowledgeable ruler would rule this city state. Representing the scholars of the medieval European civilisation, St. Augustine, the 5th century church father, reinforced 'the idea of the two swords' in politics, where the Pope and the King had autonomous power to rule the kingdom based on Christianity. At the same time the role of the king was reduced as a vassal to the Pope. Hence, the philosophy of higher education was to Christianise politics. For al-Farabi, a 10th century Muslim thinker, the philosophy of higher education was to provide the understanding of the unity of *tawhid* and mundane life. For him, only the virtuous and the learned would be able to ensure that the proper administration of the state as well as to ensure the development of the community will take place based on the religion of Islam.

The philosophy of higher education of the twentieth century turns toward globalised mercantilism as capitalism became firmly ingrained in world economy. From trading industrial goods and transfer of technologies, this globalised mercantilism finds new products that are more lucrative, namely, arms trade, currency trading and the latest, higher education. As a result of the material benefits that come together after having obtained higher education degrees, people turn toward tertiary education. The involvement of the people in twentieth-century higher education institutions shifted from an "elite system of higher education, involving only a small minority of the population, to mass systems (Scott, 1995) in which the assumption is becoming that most people will participate and on more than one occasion" (Tight, 2003: 4). More and more people demand access to higher education, and as the demand increases people are inundated with the liberty to pick and choose the best higher education institutions at competitive rate.

Hence, the traditional selection based on curriculum to enhance one's knowledge and to fine tune one's skills is not the only criterion which is used to select their university. Branded, world ranking higher learning institutions are sought after. This has created a race among higher learning institutions to improvise their services in terms of providing the most updated-marketable courses, academicians, research activities and facilities. This race to be a world class university based on education excellence has driven higher education sector to be the new business centre: a business centre where knowledge becomes a commodity traded across the borders.

**... there is a shift in the worldview of higher education from that of creating a well rounded, knowledgeable, ethical moral person to that of producing a marketable and an employable graduate.**

In conclusion, this newfound trade capitalises in giving of degree certificates, offerings of popular courses, training of academicians, producing employable graduates and churning up of academic writings. For the purpose of societal recognition, students' achievements, as well as administrative, academic and scholarly contributions are condensed to statistics that are quantified as yardsticks for purposes of honours and academic promotions. Post-modern philosophy of higher education therefore, reduces knowledge to the status of goods and services. In other words, higher education qualifications have become commodities that are traded and paraded.

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# Strengthening Human Capital in the Islam Hadhari Era through Academic Programmes in a Public University in Malaysia: A Case Study

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## Introduction

his study is related to human capital issue, as mentioned by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi during the tabling of the 9th Malaysian Plan (Rancangan Malaysia ke-9 – RMK9 [Malaysia, 2006]). One of the main focuses in RMK-9 is the aspect related to human capital development which should be in line with the concept of *Islam Hadhari*.

The concept of *Islam Hadhari* as inspired by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, emphasises on the obligations of each and every Muslim to acquire knowledge towards making themselves into competent masters of intelligence pertinent to all areas of expertise. In addition, it is aspired that the quality human capital commodity would have the ability to identify and integrate the acquired knowledge with religious concepts as both of these entities of knowledge are unified as one constituent and not as separable aspects (Abdullah, 2004). Qualified and quality human capital is a crucial asset for the process of nation development (Altbach, 1991; Johari, 2000; Sufean, 2002).

**The concept of Islam Hadhari as inspired by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, emphasises on the obligations of each and every Muslim to acquire knowledge towards bridging themselves as competent masters of intelligence pertinent to all areas of expertise.**

**Findings of the study show that all academic staff embed the Islamic values in their syllabus and in their teaching and learning with the purpose of exposing students to two different perspectives of academic investigation, namely secular and Islamic.**

However, in order to promote the *Islam Hadhari* concept in Malaysia, educational organisations, especially the universities should offer academic programmes that can spur and help in producing quality human capital, both physically and spiritually. The fundamentals behind the aspect pertaining to quality human capital do not solely depend on the factors associated with their skills and knowledge but also correlate with their personality, attitude and moral standings (Mahayuddin, 1986).

## Purpose of the Study

This study is a part of a larger study related to the issue of human capital development. The study was carried out with the purpose of investigating the relevant approaches that has been adopted by one of the public universities in Malaysia in integrating Islamic Education into its academic programmes.

## Methodology

This study is based on a case study and utilised two techniques of data collection, namely interviews and document analysis. It is applied to one particular

**As a whole, the findings of this study demonstrate that the university has taken various initiatives to integrate Islamic Education in its academic programmes in its effort to strengthen the production of the quality of human capital pool and to produce the aspired human capital as inspired in Islam Hadhari.**

public university in Malaysia, involving, as the unit of analysis, the participation of seven top management personnel selected through purposive sampling from the university as respondents. For the document analysis, data triangulation technique was implemented. All documents for this process were provided by the University Planning Unit and every faculty of the university in which this study was carried out.

### **Findings**

The establishment of the selected university in this study is mainly based on the purpose of realising the aspiration of Muslims all over the world towards being the pioneering leader of knowledge in all areas of expertise. Even though in general the university is considered Islamic, the academic programmes offered are not limited to Islamic studies. It also offers a wide range of academic programmes related to other fields such as science and technology, literature and medicine. However the uniqueness of each and every programme offered in this university is assimilated with the concept of Islamisation, whereby Islamic values are embedded in the development of the curriculum of the programme.

Findings of the study show that the university employs a varied methodology in its effort to integrate Islamic values in every academic programme pertaining to the area of studies. For example, in the area of Syariah, Revealed Knowledge and Islamic History studies, the integration is done directly since these areas of studies are related to Islamic Education. However, in fields such as science, technology and English literature, the integration is done indirectly. This integration process requires a certain amount of creativity, especially in terms of interpretation of research findings in which Islamic values are assimilated and related.

□

In the process of this integration, the mission is not solely shouldered by the top level management of this university. In fact, it also involves all academic staff in every faculty. Finding shows that all academic staff embed the Islamic values in their syllabus and in their teaching and learning with the purpose of exposing students to two different perspectives of academic investigation, namely secular and Islamic. To produce students who are well-versed in skills and knowledge and to develop their attitude, moral and spiritual quality, the university also makes it compulsory for all students to attend courses based on Islamic education. Examples of such courses are Islamic Ethics, Fiq Qul-Dakwah, Islamic Worldview etc.

### **Conclusion**

As a whole, the findings of this study demonstrate that the university has taken various initiatives to integrate Islamic Education in its academic programmes in its effort to strengthen the production of the quality of human capital pool and to produce the aspired human capital as inspired in Islam Hadhari. Furthermore, it can be said that the core focus of development of this university is not solitarily on the elements pertaining to skills and knowledge. It also emphasises on the positive development of personality, moral and spirituals component that stand as a pillar pertinent to human capital.

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# The phonotactics of English Coda: A Case Study of Yemeni Speakers of English

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## Introduction

The Arabic language phonology system plays an important role in the production of second language phonology of Arab speakers of English, particularly with regard to language transfer. This notion can be seen in Ellis (1994: 316) as he points out that "there is a widespread recognition that transfer is more pronounced at the level of the sound system than at the level of syntax". The salient aim of this paper is to provide insights into the pronunciation of English phonotactics by Yemeni university students.

## Related Literature

Some of the major phonological problems associated with the pronunciation of English language by Yemeni speakers of English can be attributed to the interfering effect of the mother tongue on one hand (Abu-Rabia and Kehat, 2004) and English phonological phonotactics on the other hand. Moreover, previous studies have demonstrated that some factors in a syllable of a particular language stand as phonotactic constraints (see Fery and de Vijver, 2003). Fery and de Vijver's (2003: 18) analysis, based on Blevin (1995), illustrates that this problem is due to "consonant clusters". Crystal (1997:65) defines consonant clusters as "a term used in the analysis of connected speech to refer to any sequence of adjacent consonants occurring initially or finally in a syllable, such as the initial [br] of *bread*, or the final [-st] of *best*".

Sahu (1999) argues that EFL Yemeni learners demonstrate a lack of competence in their pronunciation of words. He remarks the following:

"A vast majority of learners across grade levels have demonstrated, during in-class and out-of-class interactions, a shaky and perfunctory command of English and those, who seem to possess some competence in the language, make frequent violations of the acceptable grammatical norms, rendering most of their utterances minimally acceptable. In so far as most of their utterances are phonologically flawed, they are, to a considerable extent, unintelligible as well".

Rababah (2003) asserts that many Arab learners have certain difficulties in speaking especially with regard to pronunciation and phonological errors. He cited different learners from different Arab countries such as Yemen, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan and Jordan. He attributes these difficulties to several reasons, i.e. students start learning English language at level 7; language teachers are native speakers of Arabic; Arabic

is used everywhere and English is not used in daily situations, etc. In brief, the literature (see Abu-Rabia and Kehat, 2004; Rababah, 2003; Sahu, 1999) shows that there is a consensus that the pronunciation of English phonotactics constitutes difficulties in speaking not only for Yemeni university students but also for Arab university students.

## Methodology

Interlanguage Theory is adopted as a framework for the present study, since it "offers a general account of how L2 acquisition takes place" (Ellis, 1997: 34). As far as the method for data collection is concerned, Labovian model was utilised. This method is basically based on the sociolinguistic model developed by Labov (1966) and extended by Dickerson (1974). Alias Abd Ghani (2003: 115) states that the Labovian model "emphasises the significant influence of inner psychological (mental) processes upon individual speakers' patterns of stylistic variation". He goes on to add that this model "aims at describing accurately the systematically variable patterns of a speaker's speech production in a multiplicity of situations" (p. 115).

The subjects in this study are 10 postgraduate students from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). They are all native speakers of Arabic from Yemen. The subjects are similar as they were exposed to English in their native country, Yemen. Their ages range from 29 to 44 years old.

The stimuli for this study are nine words used in the two tasks of Labovian model: word list reading and passage reading. The stimuli are: *ethics, linguistics, terms, breasts, tempt, text, attempts, tempts* and *texts*. However, the passage reading was adapted into the mode of separate sentences. This adaptation is based on the same method employed by Monahan (2001).

## Findings and Discussion

The findings of the study reveal that Yemeni speakers of English insert a vowel sound within the three positions of English codas (CC, CCC and CCCC). For instance, the words *terms, tempts* and *texts* were pronounced as /tɜ: məs/, /tempət/ and /tekəstɪs/ consecutively. This phenomenon of vowel insertion has been found varying in the three positions of the English coda and each position has different patterns of phonotactics. The types of vowels which have been found in the English coda were /ə/ and /ɪ/. However, the former occurs more often than the latter. Apart from

the phenomenon of vowel insertion, other phenomena that occurred include the processes of “substitution”, “reduction” and “deletion”.

The word list reading, in fact, shows the state of consciousness of the subjects. They appeared vigilant and are conscious of their pronunciation while reading the words. The passage reading, on the other hand, shows the state of casualty/unconsciousness. This suggests that the subjects did not pay attention to pronunciation when they articulated the words. In other words, it can be said that the subjects articulated the words spontaneously in the case of passage reading while for word list reading the subjects paid more attention since these words are rendered to them individually.

Therefore, the second task of the Labovian method in this study, that is passage reading, shows its effectiveness on getting the real situation and the state of articulation of Yemeni speakers of English more than the first task, word list reading. Hence, the inaccurate production of pronunciation for the words in the syllable-final consonant clusters in the three positions in the passage reading recorded a higher percentage than in the word list reading. In brief, passage reading demonstrated its effectiveness much more than the word list reading. To sum up, the most significant finding is that the subjects face greater difficulty of articulation when there are more consonant sounds in a syllable.

**The word list reading, in fact, shows the state of consciousness of the subjects. They appeared vigilant and are conscious of their pronunciation while reading the words. The passage reading, on the other hand, shows the state of casualty/unconsciousness.**

## Conclusion

Feedback gathered from the study would enable Yemeni university students to know how to correct their pronunciation of English. In turn, they would be able to improve their speech performance. This study will assist these speakers in producing fluent and accurate pronunciation of English with special regard to syllables while speaking English language.

## Recommendations

Since pronunciation plays a vital role in speaking skill, being conversant of such errors as demonstrated in the findings would help teachers to rectify mispronunciations of their students and their own as well. The findings of the study are deemed significant to both teachers and students and could provide important rules to follow in the pronunciation of words in the target language. In short, the findings could be taken as a reference for students as well as teachers of English toward the production of correct English pronunciation.

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# Enabling Academic Entrepreneurship in Malaysian Universities: An Organisational Perspective

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## Introduction

Universities in the 21st Century are faced with many challenges which brought about the need to change. These challenges and the need for change have been spurred by the changing role of universities in the society and the pressure to prepare students for a world of lifelong learning, of greater uncertainty and complexity, and greater probability of self employment. Universities are also pressured to play an enhanced role in contributing to international competitiveness of economies particularly via the process of research commercialisation and contribute more to local and regional economic and social development (Ali, 2004; Jain & Yusof, 2007).

Malaysian scientists and inventors have been capable and successful in winning various awards locally and internationally for their research and inventions. This demonstrates that Malaysia does not lack in innovation and production of new knowledge. Nonetheless, the issue seems to be that Malaysian universities have not been very successful in marketing, commercialising and transferring technology, research and inventions to industries (Berita Harian, 30 April 2007, pg. 11).

Instead of depending totally on the industry to spearhead these entrepreneurial initiatives and activities, universities' leadership and their stakeholders should confront this issue and concertedly create an organisational mindset and internal work climate in the university environment and system conducive for the development of academic entrepreneurship. The main purpose of this article is to shed some light on how to enable academic entrepreneurship from an organisational perspective.

## The Higher Education Landscape

Malaysian universities are not excluded from the challenges and need for change faced by universities in other parts of the world. Ireland et al. (2006) posited that the pressure for entrepreneurial behaviour is triggered by developments in the external environment. In the Malaysian context, the driver has definitely been the Malaysian Government. Several initiatives had been undertaken to stimulate research excellence and further development of science and technology activities in Malaysian universities (MoHE, 2006). Recently, RM2.9 billion involving research grants have been allocated under the purview of the

Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) for the duration of the Ninth Malaysian Plan (Berita Harian, 30 April 2007, pp. 11).

In addition, the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) recently launched the National Higher Education Strategic Plan and the National Higher Education Action Plan 2007 - 2010 which have a specific thrust on enhancing research and innovation. Among the goals of this particular thrust include the development of six research universities, increasing the number of researchers, creating twenty internationally recognised centers of excellence, building a culture of innovation and commercialising 10 per cent of research products (The Star, 2 September 2007, pg. E9).

These plans are expected to transform the landscape of higher education in Malaysia. Yet, these events that offered propitious opportunities for Malaysian universities should not be limited to mere achievement of scientific reputation but should also be creatively extended towards the advancement of the academic entrepreneurial framework that results in economically valuable and beneficial innovation. Universities that separate teaching and research from innovation and entrepreneurialism leave untapped a vast resource that could be used for the betterment of their supporting communities (Vickers et al., 2001).

## Defining Academic Entrepreneurship

Based on content analysis and review of 146 published papers, Rothaermel et al. (2006) identified that there are four major research streams emerging in the area of academic entrepreneurship: (1) entrepreneurial research university, (2) productivity of technology transfer offices, (3) new firm creation, and (4) environmental context including networks of innovation. In investigating the phenomenon in the United Kingdom, Brennan et al. (2005) conceptualised the field of academic entrepreneurship as a confluence of three overlapped streams of research on technology-based firms, the commercialisation of academic discipline knowledge and the role of universities in society.

The organisational context of the university setting is central in the dynamic for entrepreneurship to take place and better addresses important relationships between academic entrepreneurs, host institutions and parent academic disciplines. Based on this perspective,

academic entrepreneurship is defined as encompassing the acts of organisational creation, renewal, or innovation that occur within or outside a higher education institution. Thus, an entrepreneurial university can be regarded as a university that extensively practises academic entrepreneurship. In other words, the academic entrepreneurship processes and activities are embedded in the university system, encultured in its academic faculties, embodied in its community of practice and embrained in each individual academic (Brennan et al., 2005; Brennan and McGowan, 2006).

## **Organisational Transformation in Enabling Academic Entrepreneurship**

Nurturing the academic entrepreneurial paradigm would certainly require a shift from a focus on (basic) research and teaching to the development of a collective, innovative, entrepreneurial and sustainable source of science and technology. Further, this calls for facilitation from inside the university system to accelerate technology diffusion (Rothaermel et al., 2006). In this respect, conflicts arising from periodic creative tension between teaching and research, applied and basic, entrepreneurial and scholastic interests are inevitable. For the academic entrepreneurial paradigm to be sustainable, compromised, normative change and reconciliation of different and seemingly opposed ideological elements such as entrepreneurship and the extension of knowledge need to be facilitated and embedded in the university system. In addition, academic and non-academic organisational elements must be integrated into a common framework (Etzkowitz, 2003).

Under these circumstances developing academic entrepreneurship in an existing university which has been governed in a bureaucratic manner into an administrative system that facilitates entrepreneurship, would require strong entrepreneurial leadership with managerial skills capable of overcoming various hierarchical and internal constraints, and conflicts (Jain & Yusof, 2007). From the organisational context, the main challenge to be faced by Malaysian universities wanting to nurture academic entrepreneurship is the ability to build an entrepreneurial mindset which pervades the entire university organisation and the internal work environment that supports academic entrepreneurship.

Ireland et al. (2006) posited that an entrepreneurial mindset represents a way of thinking about opportunities and commitments, decisions and actions necessary to pursue them, especially under conditions of uncertainty that commonly accompany environmental change and strategic adaptation. When adopting an entrepreneurial mindset, organisational actors increase their ability to sense opportunities and mobilise the resources required to exploit them. To develop this mindset, the leadership of the university has the responsibility to create a work environment that is

highly conducive to entrepreneurship, and when the appropriate conditions are in place, employees of all types will naturally unleash their entrepreneurial potentials.

Some quarters may worry that by becoming entrepreneurial, universities will lose their 'real' identity as an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. In fact, some observers now begin to worry that combining research with scientific entrepreneurship or the structural coupling between "science and money" may have gone too far (Jain & Yusof, 2007). The issues arising from the negativity of academic capitalism can actually be managed and controlled by developing an academic entrepreneurship model that is grounded on ethical rationality. The ethical rationality should be founded on universal beliefs and values agreed by all stakeholders in guiding the direction of the university. Instead of the rational be based on profitability, productivity or speed, market share or control, let it be based on ethics-centeredness. With ethical rationality as the compass, the entrepreneurial activities, processes and end output would take into account not only economic costs but social costs and environmental costs as well (Nasruddin et al., 2006; Abdul Razak, 2007).

**Enabling academic entrepreneurship requires a strong conviction especially on the part of the university leadership and essentially on the part of its stakeholders.**

The transformation in enabling academic entrepreneurship will also change the role of the university. An entrepreneurial university is a place where research is translated into economic goods i.e. "the capitalisation of knowledge". As universities engage in economic activities, they "shift their institutional role from purely eleemosynary to partial self-generation" (Etzkowitz, 2003). When the university is capable of generating revenue from the capitalisation of knowledge, there is an additional revenue stream other than tuition fees payable by students and it becomes less dependent on government support. By becoming more independent, the university has the ability to turn strategic entrepreneurship into sustainable entrepreneurship, as the engine and source of sustainable competitive

advantage at the national and regional levels. This demonstrates the expansion of academic entrepreneurship from an organisational growth regime into a regional economic and social development strategy (Jain & Yusof, 2007).

A case in example was the transformation that took place at Stanford University, USA. The transformation included the organisation of group research; the creation of a research base with commercial potential; the development of organisational mechanisms to move commercialisable research across institutional borders and finally the integration of academic and non-academic organisational elements in a common framework. The first two elements are within the framework of the research university; the next two are part of the transition from the research to entrepreneurial academic models; the last element is a feature of the entrepreneurial university (Etzkowitz, 2003). This demonstrates that academic entrepreneurship emerges from collective efforts.

## Conclusion

The nature of the university evolves through time. Traditionally, universities have been viewed as the "high protecting power of all knowledge and science, of fact and principle, of inquiry and discovery, of experiment and speculation" (Klofsten & Jones-Evans, 2000). The industrial revolution in Europe and the conception of the modern university in the 19th Century had in fact changed the nature of the university as the liberator and protector of knowledge to producer of industry-ready workers. This was recently referred by the Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Sains Malaysia, Professor Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak, as the "assembly-line education". In this century, universities are required to evolve again and be important engines of sustainable technological development and economic growth (Klofsten & Jones-Evans, 2000; Abdul Razak, 2007).

Enabling academic entrepreneurship requires a strong conviction especially on the part of the university leadership and essentially on the part of its stakeholders. Creation of an organisational climate in a university environment conducive for the development of an academic entrepreneurship strategy is a complex task that requires the efforts of many committed individuals. These individuals are located in the industry, academe and government and often lack the coordination in their activities. Thus, a concerted effort needs to be organised and through proactive measures and organisational renewal, academics, researchers and scientists should be motivated and encouraged to maximise the potential of commercialising their ideas and create value in society.

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# Global Higher Education Forum (GHEF), Malaysia 2007

Nor Azreen Zaimul

On 6th and 7th November 2007, the National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN), Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia and International Association of Universities (IAU), supported by Universiti Sains Malaysia, successfully organised The Global Higher Education Forum (GHEF), Malaysia 2007 at Hotel Nikko, Kuala Lumpur. GHEF 2007 gathered policy-makers, higher education researchers and experts from all over the world to deliberate on higher education issues with a view to sharing of experiences and visions. It aimed to develop an informed understanding of the emerging and future directions of higher education in developed and developing countries.

The forum was officiated by Y.B. Dato' Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of Higher Education Malaysia, who was impressed with the cooperation of the organisers in gathering academics from all over the world. He also expressed his hope that GHEF be held annually with the support of Malaysian universities. The Minister also launched four books published by IPPTN and USM Press on higher education, namely '50 Tahun Pembangunan Pendidikan Tinggi di Malaysia',

'Globalisation dan Internationalisation of Higher Education in Malaysia', 'Governance and Leadership in Higher Education' and 'Higher Education in Asia-Pacific: Emerging Trends in Teaching and Learning'.

The forum attracted 319 participants from 45 countries including 33 speakers and panellists. A total of 23 academic papers were presented in three plenary sessions and six parallel sessions according to the themes of the forum; 'Global Mobility, Access and Equity in Higher Education', 'Governance, Leadership and Quality of Higher Education' and 'Transnational, Cross-border Education and Lifelong Learning'. 19 academics from IPPTN and Malaysian universities acted as rapporteurs. They were led by the Vice-Chancellor of USM, Y. Bhg. Professor Dato' Dzulkifli Abdul Razak.

The participants enjoyed the experience tremendously and expressed a great sense of satisfaction having gained a better understanding and appreciation of the diversity that exists in higher education in the world today.



Minister of Higher Education Malaysia, Y.B. Dato' Mustapa Mohamed officiating the forum.



At the book launch.



Professor Dr. Goolam Mohamedbhai discussing HE issues with the Vice-Chancellor of USM and Professor Deepak Nayyar.



The Director of IPPTN with participants.



# Book Launch at GHEF 2007

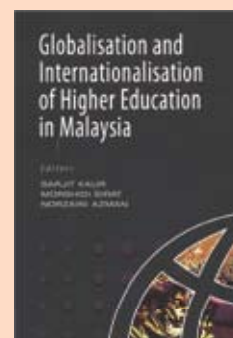
National Higher Education Research Institute and Universiti Sains Malaysia Press published four new books which were launched at the Global Higher Education Forum (GHEF) Malaysia 2007.

These books can be purchased from Penerbit Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia.

Website: <http://www.penerbit.usm.my>

## 1) Globalisation and Internationalisation of Higher Education in Malaysia

**Editors:** Sarjit Kaur, Morshidi Sirat and Norzaini Azman



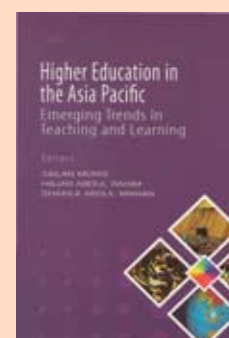
## 2) Governance and Leadership in Higher Education

**Editors:** Munir Shuib, Sarjit Kaur and Rozinah Jamaludin



## 3) Higher Education in the Asia Pacific: Emerging Trends in Teaching and Learning

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## 4) 50 Tahun Pembangunan Pendidikan Tinggi di Malaysia (1957 - 2007)

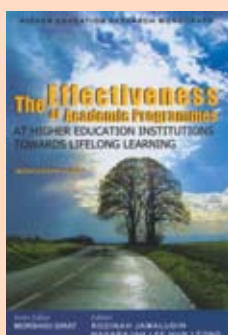
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## New Monograph

### The Effectiveness of Academic Programmes at Higher Education Institutions Towards Lifelong Learning

This monograph outlines the findings of a research which explores the effectiveness of academic programmes at higher education institutions towards lifelong learning. The objective of the research is to explore students' perception towards the effectiveness programmes offered at higher education institutions in Malaysia in facilitating lifelong learning. To realise this objective, lifelong learning programmes at higher education institutions were assessed in terms of course content, learning materials, teaching and learning strategies, the role of instructors, and the support system. This study also examined how these factors influence the students' attitude towards learning and their motivation to learn.



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## National Conference on Skills & Competencies in Education 2008 16 February 2008



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# **SYNERGISTIC COLLABORATION BETWEEN CENTRES FOR THE RESEARCH/STUDY OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

A meeting of Directors and representatives of selected Centres for the Research/Study of Higher Education will be held from 20th – 21st February 2008 in Penang. This event will be hosted by Malaysia's National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN). With increasing pressures of massification of higher education and the ever increasing demands placed on the provision of quality higher education, it is envisaged that collaborative networking and synergistic research activities are the way forward in the sphere of higher education around the globe. This meeting aims to forge closer links and encourage effective collaboration among staff at these centres of higher education so that the research activities, outcomes and strengths of each centre can be better understood. This concerted effort will help pave the way for future collaboration and networking as many contextual parameters currently afflicting universities in some countries are seen to be central realities worldwide.

The participating institutions include Malaysia's National Higher Education Research Institute (IPPTN, Malaysia), Centre for Higher Education Policy Analysis (CHEPA, University of Southern California, Los Angeles), Centre for the Study of Higher Education (CSHE, The University of Melbourne, Australia), Research Institute for Higher Education (RIHE, University of Hiroshima, Japan) and the Centre for Asia-Pacific Social Transformation Studies (CAPSTRAN, University of Wollongong, Australia).

## **WORKSHOP ON HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY RESEARCH AND MANAGEMENT IN CLMV COUNTRIES: SHARING OF EXPERIENCES AND IMPARTING OF SKILLS**

A workshop on 'Higher Education Policy Research and Management in CLMV Countries: Sharing of Experiences and Imparting of Skills' will be held early 2008 in Penang. This event will be hosted by IPPTN and AUN Secretariat, Bangkok, Thailand. The main objectives of the workshop are to narrow the gap between ASEAN 6 and CLMV Countries with respect to awareness on higher education policy issues in global and international era, and develop a generic system model for the management of higher education policy research for ASEAN with sub-models appropriate for the CLMV Countries. The workshop will gather participants from CLMV Countries, ASEAN 6, AUN Secretariat and Malaysia.

# Calling for Articles & 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.
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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:

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.

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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.
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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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