CHANGES IN DEMAND: THE ROLES
OF ACADEMIC LEADERS IN MALAYSIA

Dr. Zuraina Dato Mansor,

Faculty of Economics and Management
Universiti Putra Malaysia.

Prof. Chun Kwong Han,

Faculty of Economics and Management
Universiti Putra Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Education stands as an important investment in building human capital, who will become a driver for innovation and economic growth in the world-wide market. It is only through improving the educational status of a society that the multi-faceted development of its people can be achieved and prolonged.The main objectiveof this study is to discuss the transformational process of academic leaders' roles and responsibilities due to the impacts and implications of the globalization and internationalization of Malaysian higher educationalinstitutions (HEIs). The paper is focused on the roles and responsibilities of academic leaders within the HEIs based on research conducted with academic leaders from public and private universities. The respondents were asked about their strategic objectives and their responbilities in supporting the globalisation objectives and how they cope with the dynamic environmental challenges from within or outside their organizations.

Keywords: Globalization, Transformational roles, Academic leaders, Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION:

"We are blessed that Malaysia has a plural society with varied cultures, languages and ethnicities. It is a fertile ground of diversity, creativity, innovativeness and inventiveness. The main challenge is how to effectively harness these natural gifts and translate them into actions that could benefit the society, organizations, industries and ultimately the nation, in terms of economic gains. Employers should therefore recognize and reward creativity-based contributions and innovation-based executions, while learning institutions including schools, colleges and universities should promote creativity and innovation led co-curriculum activities.(RazaliMahfar, 2010)

The opening quotation in this paper perpetually proposed that strategic aim of globalization and internationalization of Higher Educational Institutions(HEIs) in Malaysiashall cater for the development of spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social domains of Malaysian individuals who are multi-cultural, multiethnic and multi-religious, and to comply with the interest to promote the socioeconomic, cultural, political and national development of Malaysia. Historically, the Government has played its role by introducing various phases of economic development such as introducing the New Economic Policy in 1971 to give an impetus to the policy of higher education. Later, the government had introduced national development policies such as National Industrialization Policy and Look East Policy to create a greater demand for knowledge and skilled workers in areas such as engineering, applied science and technology. But our public HEIswere not able to cope with the demand for skilled workers, which brought to the establishment of private colleges and universities, and further the establishment of foreign universities branches.Consequently, this has created a positive effect to the higher education players as there are needs to open more HEIs to fulfill the demands for training skillful human capital either they come from local or foreign countries, which can be seen as good opportunities to fulfill the country's economic and social interests.

The transformational process of social and economic development in Malaysia receives continuous support from the government. This is proven with the establishment of the Private Higher Education Act 1996, the National Accreditation Board Act 1996, the National Higher Education Council Act 1996, and the National Higher Education Fund Loan Act 1999 enacted by the Parliament of Malaysia (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2001) to hasten the development and implementation of exportation of degree programs to international students by the public and private HEIs. As a result, there was an influx of students pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate programs from overseas especially from China, Indonesia, as well as Middle Eastern and African countries. Later, the new Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) was set up in 2004 to manage the increased number of students.

The Malaysian government believes that improvement in the quality of higher education services in the public and private sectors should be a continuous process. Thus, it is important to ensure that our HEIs are able to compete with the rest of the world in providing quality education and are able to realizing the government's objective of achieving world-class educational standards and transforming Malaysia into an education hub by 2015. The National Higher Education Strategic Plan was developed in 2007 to focus on helping Malaysian public and private higher education institutions to become world-class institutions. There are seven major initiatives or strategic plans being promoted within the plan including to widen the accessibility and increasing equity, improving the quality of teaching and learning, enhancing research and innovation, strengthening higher education institutions, intensifying internationalization, enshrining lifelong learning, and reinforcing the delivery systems of the MOHE.

In 2010, the government has launched its 10th Malaysia Plan (2011-2015) or theso called 10MP 2011-2015,which will be ajump-start to push the nationtowards a high-income economy. According to the 10MP will provide the policy framework and strategies to achieve high-income status by 2020. The plan also draws on the foundations laid down by the 1Malaysia concept and builds upon the Government Transformation Programme (GTP), the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP), and the New EconomicModel (NEM) to offer new policies and strategies.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

Marshall, Adams, and Cameron (2001) stated that over the years much have been written about the centrality and importance of 'academic leadership' to the success of HEIs (see for example the work of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, (1990); UCoSDA, (1994); the Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education Management, (1995)). However, it was apparent that the term, even though commonly used, has no

mutually defined. He cited that, for example, Gmelch&Miskin (1993); Leaming, (1998); and Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, and Tucker, (1999), the term 'academic leadership' has been described as to refer to the collection of tasks, duties and responsibilities by individuals appointed to formal positions within universities. Most notably, these individuals populate the academic positions of Vice Chancellor, Dean, and/or Head of Discipline/Department. Further Marshall et. al (2001) cited that the term is also used to describe the qualities or characteristics of particular individuals who are recognised by others as being academic leaders.

Marshall et. al (2001) also noted that the term can be described as anyone who holds an academic appointment, and this is based on the definitions by Trowler, (1998) and Taylor, (1999), where both of them suggested that all academics are considered to be academic leaders as they are assumed to be at the forefront of their discipline, and active in the definition of future directions and strategies within their academic programmes and research.

This study will be using the definitions by Trowler, (1998) and Taylor, (1999) that all academics are academic leaders and they are at the forefront of their discipline, and active in formulating future directions and strategies in their academic programmes and research. Thus, based on this definition, the study aims to focus on the academic leaders' challenges and responsibilities in supporting the social motivesfrom the internationalization of our HEIs. This comes as a package whereby their roles and responsibilities becomes more dynamic and challenging. In other words, the purpose of this study is to discuss the impact of the management role of the academic leaders inthe internationalization process of higher education institutions (HEIs).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

This research focuses on how the academic leaders manage their respected universities in supporting the social perspectives from the internationalization process of the institutions.Based on this objective, we conducted interviews with 15 academic leaders from selected public and private universities as the primary source of information . They were chosen because they are the presentleaders or previously have been selected as the leaders at their current or other academic institutions and play a significant rolein decision making especially with regard to the benefits of the universities as a whole. More specifically, the study involved the universities whichhave gained the 'Research Universities (RU)' titles. Details of the interviews with the respondents are shown in Table 1.

The research is aqualitative study, and data were collected from in-depth interviews and supported by secondary sources such as from journals, reports, blogs and institutions websites.

IMPACT OF INTERNATIONALIZATION PROCESS ON HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:

What activities are initiated in the internationalization process? The current trends in higher education are significant changes affected by the process of globalization and internationalization**.** Global competition has intensified the internationalization activities of HEIs in the Asia-Pacific region and specifically in ASEAN. In Southeast Asia, an annualdialogue on internationalization of higher education has intensively occurred since 1990, which then followed by the efforts from various parties sharing common interests in the activities such as the government, universities and other educational institutions (Ratananukul, 2012). Globalization in variousmultidimensional aspects of life has triggered many nations to make necessary and compulsory adjustments and be more adaptive to achieve the what-so-called global standard.

It was reported that under 'Global Schoolhouse' initiative, Singapore is seeking to become a regional hub for international education, while Taiwan, Korea and Japan all are ambitious to increase the inflows of international students, with theintention either to generate revenue or to attract young skilled migrants. Even Malaysia is targeting to become a "centre of higher education excellence" by 2020. The purposes are to make Malaysia an education hub in the region and internationally, to develop human capital with 'first-class mentality' and to reposition the country's higher education to meet current and future challenges (MOHE, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Our business communities and players need graduates that are able to transfer their knowledge and skills to help achieve their objective of high performance industries and business players. The fast growth of markets and fierce competition from globalization has called for participation and contribution of national governments and education ministries to establish and promoteinternational education that are universally accepted and supported. Thus, it is undeniable that the roles and responsibilities of higher education leaders will be more significant in making international education the "glue" that binds peoples of the world, as the involvement of education leaders will advance international education objectives and curricula and be beneficial to future human capital

knowledge, skills and abilities.

This study shows that majority of our public and private universities are on their way to strengthening their internationalizationstrategies especially when it come to bringing more international students to the universities, putting efforts towards achieving international recognition and awards, involving in staff and students mobility programs, and many more. Thus, economically, the globalization of HEIs in Malaysia is positively supported with the influx of students enrolling themselves into our HEIs.

Demand:

The demand for higher education is increasing and the number of foreign students from the ASEAN region is expected to increase as more foreign universities come to operate in Malaysia. Table 2 shows statistical data regarding enrolment of students in the Malaysian Public and Private universities and colleges for period from 2002 to2007. The statistics show that with the increased number of people enrolled in the universities, educational opportunities must also increase to meet the demand. Based on our study, our respondents either from public and private agreed that the internationalization process promotes the intake of international students from year to year. The institutions are getting quite a number of students from neighbouring countries such as Thailand, Indonesia, Brunei, China, Japan and even a lot more from the Middle East including Nigeria, Kenyaand so on. Thus, with this favorable demand of education market, Malaysia HEIs' leaders and players must be preparedto take more challenges when implement strategies that would respond positively to trends and demands of students joining our tertiary education institutions.

Table 3 shows the number of private higher education providers from year 2002-2007.

Based on MOHE 2010 statistical report, Malaysia is ranked as the 11th worldwide appealing country to students.This is proven with the number of international students enrolling in public or private universities that increased significantly from below 2000 in 1975 to more than 100,000 international students from more than 150 countries.We are proud to be the hub of education choice and able to offer quality international education at an affordable cost (MOHE, 2011). According to a report by The News Strait Times on June 2010, the gross output of private education in Malaysia has increased by 44 per cent in2005 to RM7 billion in 2008.Thus, the government with its 10th Malaysia plan has put a target to increase the contributionof private education toGDP by two per cent in 2015 andattracting 150,000 international studentsby 2015.These objectives are possible as it was stated that besides the relatively low cost of education, many choose to study here because they recognize Malaysia as an ideal gateway to develop their Asian networks and relationships. They are also able to learn from Malaysian's great diversity, rapid economic development and peaceful and harmonious multicultural society.

ACADEMIC LEADERS' CHALLENGES:

In the 10th Malaysia plan, one of the strategies is to develop and retain first class talent. Within the strategies, the VCs are called to rebranding theinstitutions where necessary to lift up their image, to choose only the best and to be held accountable for their institutions rating.(The News Strait Times, June2010)

The Rating System for MalaysianHigher Education Institutions (SETARA)will be extended to all privatedegree-conferring tertiary institutions.During the 10th Malaysia Plan period,the rating system will also gobeyond institutional ratings to providerating for each institution's departments.The university's vice-chancellorwill be held accountable for the performanceof the university, with theconsequence of non-renewal of contractin the event of poor performance,Performance-based funding forpublic tertiary institutions will also beimplemented, with the aim of providinga transparent funding mechanism.The government is also seeking toharmonize tertiary education capacityand level the playing field for bothpublic and private higher educationinstitutions. (The News Strait Times,June2010)

All universities in Malaysia have the similar task in performing the goals of teaching and learning. However, in order to respond to the government new plan, all leaders must be able to transform and be able to provide high quality product and services to the society. According to a leader in a public universitiy in Malaysia, amonsgt the challenges faced by the Malaysian public and private universities in today's market and environment are: 1) to become the university of choice from the perspective of future market; 2) to be highly ranked by SETARA and if possible other recognizable ranking bodies such as THES; 3) to be recognized and awarded with Academic Performance Audit (APA); 4) to be given an autonomy for self accreditation (SWA); 5) to ensure the graduate employablity is high; 6) to inculcate a quality culture by introducing the ISO; 7) to increase the proficiency of English amongst staff; 8) to support the national government call for 1Malaysia and New Economic Model; 9) to continously call our experts in overseas to come back and serve the nation; 10) to share

information via effective communication; and 11) to grab the opportunities for research based on the various programmes developed by the national government.

In order to uphold the universities' challenges, the leaders who are taking up the responsibilities must be somebody who has that capability in stimulating people to drive a shared mission and vision. Ibrahim Bajunid (2012) wrote thatall academic leaders are expected to be the guardians of academic integrity and professionalism. They shall struggle in the pursuit of elegant thinking par excellence. They can be thought leaders and even intellectual elites to represent the society. Academic leaders also can provide exemplary leadership in their academic specializations and niches, and as public intellectuals on broader matters. The strengths of these academic leaders constitute the knowledge capability and competencies of society. The challenge for each academician and academic leader is to be the best they can be in their respective fields and contribute maximally towards the betterment of society.

According to House (2004) a leader shall be able to influence others and to direct their efforts to achieve success. His definition suggests that academic leaders should be able to bring together all of his members, then give clear and understandable directions, and finally he should empower them to do the required task using the members' competencies and creativities, to achieve the specified shared objectives.

As stated by one academic leader,

"Being an academic leader, I should be able to motivate, inspire, direct and lead my faculty members and continuously supported them towards the achievement of shared objectives".

Another source stated that:

"Competitiveness and leadership position is all about being there first before others; and this requires not only doing better than others but also learning faster than the rate of change and putting the new knowledge into practice to produce superior goods and services, both in the public and private sectors, and delivering them to customers more efficiently and effectively than competitors. It requires a discipline of learning, unlearning and relearning, i.e. to have the will to let go of old habits or what have been successful in the past, and to embrace new ways of doing things since the present and the future pose new challenges"

From another point of view, the universities must be able to stand out and perform various options and initiatives to transform themselves from national level to global and international level. As stated by Knightand De Wit (1997) for example, they quoted that among the organizational strategies that can be performed are expressing the high commitment by the senior leaders, active involvement of faculty and staff either in teaching or learning or research, articulating rationalesand goals for internationalization, sought to gain international recognition especially with regard to institutional mission statement, planning and policy documents.

QUALITY AND ACCREDITATION OF EDUCATION:

The quality control of public and private HEIs in Malaysia is placed under the charge of Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA). MQA comes under the responsibility of the Ministry of Higher Education that acted as a national body to implement the national framework known as the Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), to accredit higher educational qualifications, to regulate the quality of higher education providers, to establish and maintain the Malaysian Qualifications Register. As a quality assurance body, the functions of MQA are:

 i. To implement MQF as a reference point for Malaysian qualification.
 ii. To develop standards and criteria and all other relevant instruments as national references for the conferment of awards with the cooperation of stakeholders.
iii. To assure quality of HEIs programmes.
 iv. To accredits courses that fulfill the set criteria and standards.
 v. To facilitate the recognition and articulation of qualifications.
 vi. To maintain the Malaysian Qualifications Register (MQR).

Overall, the government has aimed that the MQA will benefit national higher education and the development of human capital (MOHE, 2011). In another point, regarding getting the programmesoffered by the institutions, the majority of the academic leaders that we interviewed suggest that it is important to get their programmes accredited. This is because by achieving accreditation, the institutions must develops and implements a plan to meet the required standards, which includes a high quality teaching environment, a commitment to continuous improvement, and curricula responsive to the needs of businesses.

INTERNATIONAL RANKING:

Recent studies have repeatedly shown that universities in East Asia are increasingly under pressure to compete internationally, and due to the concern for value for money and public accountability have altered the way higher education is governed (Kim 2004, Mok 2004). There is also a pressure for university to outperform, and in this case, Mok (2007) further suggested that if, in the past, university performance are commonly being weighted based on the university ranking and international benchmarking, but the more recent trend is that the universities must include the elements of research performance in order to enhance global competitiveness. For example, we know that *Times Higher Education*'s World University Rankings is developed to create the gold standard in international university performance comparisons. Based on this ranking, the performance indicators include capturing the full range of university activities, from teaching to research to knowledge transfer. These 13 elements are brought together into five headline categories, which are:

- *Teaching* — the learning environment (worth 30 per cent of the overall ranking score)
- *Research* — volume, income and reputation (worth 30 per cent)
- *Citations* — research influence (worth 30 per cent)
- *Industry income* — innovation (worth 2.5 per cent)

Based on the QS World ranking universities 2012 list, one of our research universities,Universiti Malaya,is listed at number 156. To be in the list is not easy. They are competing against high impact and cited research. And, because of these, our universities always faced difficulties especially to compete in the highly cited research publications.

STAFF QUALIFICATIONS:

Another important concern which can affect the ranking and reputation of the institutions is the academic staff qualifications. In order for students to obtain bachelor and postgraduate degrees, universities must recruit more lecturers with higher qualifications so that they can improve the quality of the teaching-learning process. It is suggested that HEIs with higher-qualified lecturers will create an opportunity to indulge in research and development, which will in turn attract postgraduate students.

Malaysian Higher Education Minister, Dato' Seri KhaledNordin in his 2010New Year speech, he has stressed that in order for us to compete internationally, the universities in Malaysia must be able to train their academicians to achieve 75% lecturers with PhD for Research Universities, and 40% lecturers with PhD for other universities. Additionally, he suggested that all universities to bring in more industrial experience people and international academic professionals to contribute towards teaching and research activities so that the institutions would be able to produce more creative and niche programmes and employability ofstudents.

OTHER CHALLENGES:

From profit driven to performance driven. In the past, the private higher institutions were established to cater the demand for tertiary education and making profit out of their services, but nowadays, not only the private institutions, but all leaders whether they are in the public universities or private institutions, are called to transform themselves to think like business entrepreneurs in order to promote their universities. The government is aware of this challenge to transform profit-driven IPTS into performance-driven institutions. In this regard, the government is ready to play the role of a regulator and facilitator, to ensure their roles are strategically balanced.

Institution strengths and competitiveness. The HEI itself must be able to stand out and perform variable options and initiatives to transform themselves from national level to globalization and international level. As stated by Knight (2008) for example, she quoted that among the organizational strategies that can be performed are: expressing the high commitment by the senior leaders, active involvement of faculty and staff either in teaching or learning or research, articulating rationale and goals for internationalization, sought to gain international recognition especially with regard institutional mission statement, planning and policy documents.

Quoting the concluding statement by Respondent 13*, "If we want to change the society, we must begin with changing our good self, then we can change people who are close to us, then people who are working close to us, then we can inspire others to change for the betterment of lives. Being a leader we must communicate and continuously get involvement and engagement from those surrounding us"*

*Student preference will depend on the universities' status.*Every student wantsto enroll in well-ranked institutions. This is because their marketability and employability is highly depending on the status and rank of

the universities. Therefore, the leaders must actively try to upgrade their level to a higher and reputable position.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

In this era of the knowledgeand innovation economy, it is unavoidable for many countries to take part in the globalization and internationalization of the HEIs. Governments have to respond and transform their policies and programs to ensure their education is facilitating the cooperation, for example in terms of signing MOUs with other international education providers, organizing educational fairs and conferences, provide available funds for students and teaching staff to travel and so on.

From this research, the majority of the respondents referred their understanding for internationalization as receiving international students into the institutions, involving in international mobility and exchange programme, international approach in teaching and learning as well as the activities of signing MOUs with international institutions. These suggest that at the basic level they are sharing the objectives of how to be globalizing institutions. However, there are afew respondents who admitted that even though they and their universities are participating in these internationalization programmes, their understanding and commitment are still very shallow and need a lot to do to catch up and be at par level with other highly ranked international competitors, especially if they want to improve in their international world ranking list. They also believed that the roles and responsibilities of the academic leaders are important in strategizing the institutions to become world class players. All universities be they private or public, have their strategic plans in what they want to achieve in short term and long term. And, based on the reported activities, it is undeniable that all of our universities are already involved in international activities, including continuously receiving collaborative agreement with overseas universities on programme exchanges, staff and student mobility and so on. The next thing to be concerned is of course how to be inthe top world universities list, so as to become a continuous favorable hub for higher education especially after 2015 when the Asian education systems become borderless.

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Table 1 : Details of Interviews with the Respondents

Respondents	Types of institution	Job designation
R1	Public university	Academic Registrar
R2	Public university	Assistant director for APEC
R3	Public university	Dean of Faculty
R4	Public university	HRM manager
R5	Public university	HRD manager
R6	Public university	Assistant Director for Institute of Asian-Europe
R7	Public university	Senior Research Fellowship
R8	Public university	Deputy VC
R9	Public university	Head of Accreditation unit
R10	Private university	Senior Director of Strategic Management
R11	Private university	Director of Strategic and Corporate Planning Centre
R12	Private university	Senior Manager of Internationalization Department
R13	Private university	VC
R14	Private university	Ex VC of Public University
R15	Private university	Ex Dean for Faculty of Education

Table 2: Total Student Enrolment in Higher Education from 2002-2007

Institutions	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Public Universities	64061	70481	81075	80885	89633	128839
Private Universities	165763	163480	169834	113105	144775	167788
KTAR	7374	10599	9523	12808	13969	12289
POLYTECH	23329	28300	32752	36912	41138	40218
Community College	2099	4325	5189	5387	6721	8919
Total	**262626**	**277185**	**298373**	**249097**	**296236**	**358053**

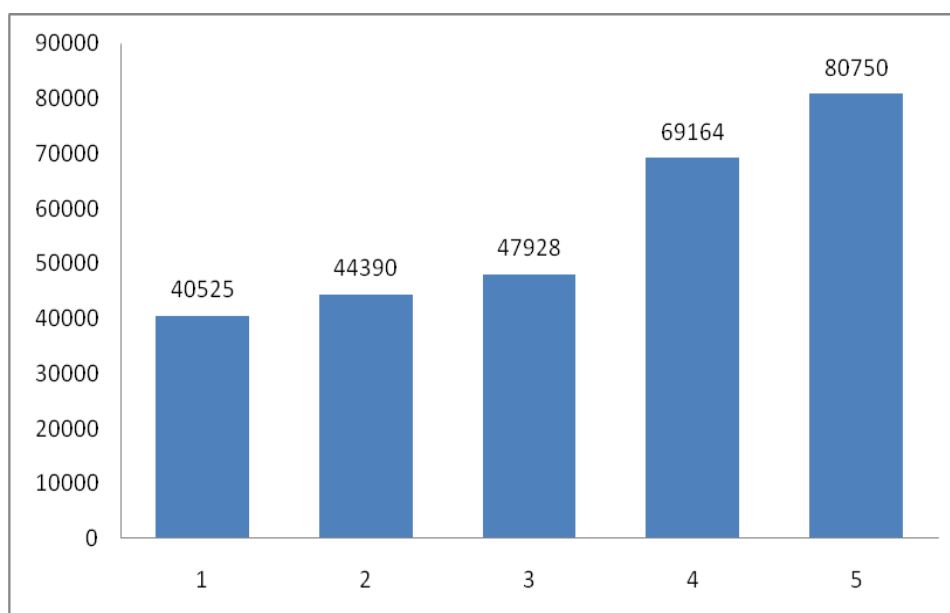**Source:** Higher Education statistics 2007, Ministry of Higher Education, Malaysia

Table 3: Number of Private Higher Education Providersfrom Year 2002-2007

Private Higher Education Provider	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
University status	11	11	11	10	12	18
University College Status	1	5	10	11	15	15
Long Distance with University Status				1	1	
University status with local branch	3	3	11	11	14	15
University status (Foreign Universities Branch)	4	4	5	5	5	4
Private HE with no university status	518	519	533	532	482	488
Total	**534**	**539**	**559**	**559**	**515**	**525**

Source: Higher Education statistics 2007, Ministry ofHigher Education, Malaysia

Figure 1: Total Students' Enrolment in Public and Private Higher Education Institutions, Year 2005-2009

Source: http://jpt.mohe.gov.my/menupemasaran.php