

CHAPTER 7: CHALLENGES AND IMPLICATIONS TO GOVERNMENT

In the post-crisis economic era, business of higher education becomes a multi-millions business in the light of surging demand in the higher education not only by the local population but also the foreigners. At the same time, the private education market is widely open to those who wish to exploit the newly emerging business opportunities, with a minimal intervention of government. This does not imply that the non-state intervention is the best condition to grow, as the growth in the private education is impossible if no supportive policies and rewarding mechanism are in place to promote Malaysia as the centre of education excellence in this region.

Apart from the genuine effort of the government in spearheading this vision, the reasonable cost of education and living expenses are the attractions. The roles of Private Education Department of MOE was refined and empowered under PHEI Act 1996 to monitor the qualities of the private education and the functions of the PHEIs. It meant to ensure all the planning, policies and directions are in consistent with the national education policy. Recently, we can witness of the MOE's efforts to promote Malaysian education fair throughout the world as part of the internationalisation of higher education process.

In order to promote a truly internationalisation process of our Malaysian education, especially promoting MBA education either by public or private sector, the quality of MBA education should be assured of its international-rated standards.

Assurance by LAN is an important condition but not necessary sufficient as far as MBA is concerned. If possible, the MBA itself should be rated as by the MBA quality assurance specialists before the approval given to the private colleges to run the MBAs. Lately, there are many private colleges run the MBA programme before the approval is obtained.

To avoid private colleges abusing their marketing position, all the advertisements and other promotional materials should secure the approval of an empowered authority. Though there are institutions such as MAPCO to monitor all its members, its supervising roles are not cover those are not members of MAPCO. On the other hand, MAPCO is also facing problems relating to the information asymmetric. The position of supervision should be taken seriously by the MOE to ensure all the materials for public reviews are checked as not to give any unjust or misleading information.

Moreover, the MOE should ensure all the private colleges submit – without any compromising – all the relevant data to the Ministry to analyse. This requires a strong enforcement of the MOE team to ensure the objective of transparencies is achieved. By understanding the behaviours and trends of private colleges, more credible, effective, relevant and sustainable policies should be drawn. With the information on hand, a check and balance could be conducted to see how far we are moving towards meeting the nation's needs. By keeping the house in order, the internationalisation of higher education will be smoothened and could gain the respect from the international communities.

Besides, a more collective and consolidated effort from private colleges and government through MOE must be deployed in ensuring the quality private education is provided. This is not only confined to the joint marketing efforts, but also in importing more prominent and reputation foreign degrees at lower cost. For example, to negotiate with first-tier or second-tier Universities in US to offer MBA degrees at much subsidised cost of delivery, to promote international students and faculty staff exchange, to promote inter-cultural learning and to set up branches overseas. With this, private sectors will resume more active roles in the internationalisation of higher education, together with public sector. This will have a positive effect on technological development and thus on economic growth.

As far as MBA education industry is concerned, more joint efforts can still be put together between two main sectors, private and public (including public universities). After all, there are many long-term opportunities for the postgraduate programmes, as the MBA is becoming a pre-requisite qualifications for many business organisations nowadays. MBA itself has to undergo for a substantial refinement over the time to meet the requirements of competitive market and human development needs.